

Censoring Translations in 18th-Century Portugal: Censorship Practices Regarding the Portuguese Vernacular, 1770-1790

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Abstract

In the final period of the Portuguese *Ancien Regime*, the censorship structure established during the reign of Dom José I served as a direct and fundamental agent in defining the scholarly rules governing the Portuguese language. Throughout the last decades of the eighteenth century, the censors regulated texts that were printed or circulated within the Empire, and also corrected and defined spelling rules, literary styles, grammar, and, in particular, the use of “foreign” words. Having been widely documented in the written opinions expressed by the censors themselves, the effects of this normative action are especially visible in the texts translated into Portuguese at the time.

Keywords

Translations, History of the Book, Portuguese Empire, Censorship, 18th Century

Resumo

No período final do Antigo Regime português, o aparato censório montado no reinado de D. José I foi um agente direto e fundamental na definição da regra culta do vernáculo lusitano. A atuação dos censores ao longo dessas décadas regulou os textos impressos ou que circulavam pelos domínios do Império, mas também ocorreu no sentido de corrigir, regular e definir normas de ortografia, regência, estilo literário e, particularmente, a importação de vocábulos “estrangeiros.” Fartamente documentada nos pareceres escritos pelos próprios censores, esta atuação normatizadora é especialmente visível no que diz respeito aos textos traduzidos para a língua portuguesa no período.

Palavras-chave

Traduções, História do Livro, Império Português, Censura, Século XVIII

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*The translator of this third tome [of the medical works of Willian Buchan], Manoel Joaquim Henriques de Paiva, is also a well-known physician at this Court and I consider that, in this work, he has satisfied all the precepts of a good translation [...]*²

The idea of a “good translation,” reflecting a given political or cultural context, has long been explored by historians concerned both with identity processes and the idea of cultural interchanges. Therefore, one can assess the relevance of translations in general through the amount of writing generated about how to translate (or how *not* to translate) any body of literary or scientific work. When we search for such relevant texts in Portugal during the late 1700s, we find a large volume of writing about translations, including editorial paratexts (any additional texts not included in the original work, such as prefaces, dedications, and letters to the reader) and epitexts (texts about the book, not included in the actual edition, such as letters to the editor, censorship documents, and catalogues) (Genette, 2009: 17). The latter include the many documents generated by the *Real Mesa Censória* (referred to hereafter as RMC), the censorship structure created by the Marquis of Pombal, which continued to operate under different names until the first decades of the nineteenth century (Martins, 2005; Tavares, 2014; Villalta, 1999).

Throughout the period of the *Ancien Regime*, censorship can be regarded as having been a fundamental exercise in power that was particularly and intimately related to the world of books and writing since it meant control over the behavior and practices that books reflect, sustain, or stimulate (Jostock, 2007: 10-11). This was also true in places where the Enlightenment occurred mostly under the control of the state, such as in Portugal or Spain (Goméz, 2001; Abreu, 2007; Neves & Ferreira, 1989). However, prohibiting or allowing the publication of a book involves the very complex procedure of “permanently overcoming omissions and renewing outdated indexes [...] and exercising the power to plug the legislative loopholes that oblige censors to guide themselves by subjective criteria, while often being conditioned by political, social and economic conjunctures” (Martins, 2005: 135). Such a statement can also be applied to the most famous censorship official of pre-revolutionary France, Malesherbes, who allowed free literary criticism while, at the same time, sought to limit open attacks on the Catholic religion and the monarchy (Negroni, 1995).

In Portugal, censors were also concerned with protecting king and country, but theirs was a much more complex role since they were also responsible for the educational

² RMC, cx 14, Aug. 3, 1788.

system built after the Jesuits had been expelled from Portuguese territory in 1759. As a consequence, they were constantly concerned with the purity of the language, having debated spelling and grammar on several occasions throughout the 1760s and 1770s (Tavares, 2014: 188). In 1771, for example, there was a long debate about two texts meant to be used as school textbooks, which lasted from May until August and involved five censors and eight long handwritten documents expressing their conflicting opinions on the books under scrutiny.³

These handwritten opinions, the *pareceres*, are the basis for this study. They were written by the many censors who held the position over the years, expressing their opinions on a variety of books sent to the RMC for an analysis of their content based on a 1769 law outlining what was considered permissible to print in Portugal (Villalta, 1999: 213). These opinions were, therefore, also expressed about any translation into Portuguese that editors or translators wished to print and sell. Ranging from mere bureaucratic notes—a few lines saying that the book in question could be published—to entire treatises on the matters being discussed, which sometimes ended up being longer than the original work (Tavares, 2014: 432), these written pieces were the final word on the publication of any book, stating whether it was worthy (*digno*) or unworthy (*indigno*) of “seeing the public light” (Tavares, 2014: 15).

In the case of translations into Portuguese, historians have demonstrated that during the eighteenth century, particularly from the 1770s onwards, there was a consistent increase in the number of books published. João Paulo Silvestre (2007: 153) states that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not see the publication of many translations, while works in Spanish and Latin dominated the Portuguese book trade, as the catalogues of libraries and Portuguese booksellers show. However, “translations from French works slowly conquered their own space as the eighteenth century progressed,” and António Rodrigues (1992) indicates that about 400 translations were published in Portugal during the second half of the eighteenth century, compared to only 266 during the whole of the previous century.

In fact, we find in the documents of the RMC a great many requests to be allowed to publish translations (together with their respective answers) concerned with checking both the subject matter of the books (which should not offend either the Crown or the Catholic faith) and the form, content, and structure of the translations themselves. Today, this allows us to see what the RMC censors thought about a “good” translation, i.e. how

³ RMC, cx 7, 1771.

they tried to shape the Portuguese language into a vernacular rule (which is also true for their writings in general, but is particularly visible in their analysis of translations). This work can be seen as a continuation of the early attempts to establish clearly defined grammatical rules (Leite, 2011: 667).

Although it is difficult to determine if a *parecer* is a response to a translation (as it was for the censors, who often complained that the authors did not specifically identify all the translations they submitted for analysis), a total of 125 *pareceres* dealing with translations into Portuguese were found for the period from 1771 to 1794. We can divide these opinions into two sets. One relates to the period when Pombal was in office (until 1777), with 61 documents, and the other, from 1778 to 1794, has 64 documents dealing with changes to the censorship structure during the reign of Maria I (Martins, 2005: 58-88; Abreu, 2009), although many of the censors of the first period continued to work well into the second period. This division is used to check the idea that the first few years under Pombal might have set the tone for a vernacular scholarly rule.

When accepting a good translation and allowing it to be printed, censors tended to praise the translator, particularly if he was known to them. Such was the case with Jose Caetano de Mesquita, celebrated by the censor Fr. Francisco de Sá for his translation of Massillon's *Conférences et discours synodaux sur les principaux devoirs des ecclésiastiques* in 1771, stating that the translated work was as worthy as the original, since the translator had already demonstrated his "exactitude and precision" in other works.⁴ This particular opinion was confirmed one month later, when another translation by Mesquita (Claude Fleury's *Les devoirs des maîtres et des domestiques*) was read by Fr. Francisco Xavier de Santa Ana, who wrote that, "had the translator not already acquired among us the fame of being wise and scholarly, the present translation would suffice to establish that fame."⁵

The censors used similar vocabulary when defining a good—or perfect—translation. Being clear, exact, or precise, and conserving the energy, efficiency, erudition, and elegance of the original text were characteristics often invoked to make their point that such translations should be granted the license for publication that their authors or publishers had requested. Thus, a good translation was one that did not "disfigure the eloquence of the original,"⁶ which was an often made judgment.

⁴ "[...] na tradução não perdem o merecimento, tendo o tradutor já mostrado em outras obras á sua exação e pontualidade [...]" RMC, cx 7, n. 28, Apr. 13, 1771.

⁵ "[...] O seu traductor, se não tivera já adquirido entre nós os creditos de Sabio e erudito, bastaria a prezente tradução para lhe estabelecer este conceito." RMC, cx 7, n. 38, May 6, 1771.

⁶ RMC, cx 9, n. 51, Nov. 27, 1775.

Referring to the translation (by the hermit Fr. Manoel da Ave Maria) of Esprit Fléchier's *Panegyriques des saints et quelques sermons de morale*, Fr. Francisco Xavier de Santa Anna wrote that "the translator sustains, in our language, the elegant force, the pure style and the weight of reason of the original."⁷ Evaluating the translation of the *Difesa di Cecilia Faragò. Inquisita di Fattuchieria* by José Dias Pereira (DeNipoti & Pereira, 2014), Fr. Jozé da Rocha happily notes "the fulfilment of the precepts respecting the purity of our language and the energy of the words."⁸

One final example comes from the censor Fr. Mathias da Conceição, when expressing his opinion on the translation of Giuseppe Constantini's *Lettere Critiche, Giocose, Morali e Scientifiche ed Erudite*:

The translator faithfully follows the steps of the author, translating not only the substance of the discourses, but also their spirit, force and eloquence. This translation, besides the civility it can bring to His Majesty's subjects who are ignorant of the original language, might serve as an example for any other translator.⁹

As far as the examples of good translations are concerned, we cannot see much difference between the two groups of documents (those that coincided with Pombal's "rule," and those that came after 1778), emphasizing once again the continuity of policies and intent, despite historiographers' insistence on a complete cultural transformation between the kingdoms of Dom José I and Dona Maria I. Censors such as Xavier de Santa Anna and Fr. José Mayne continued to value translations that closely followed the intent and organization of the original texts, commending the translators who succeeded in doing this.¹⁰ It helped if the translator was one of them. Writing about the translation of the Bible by the censor Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, Fr. Jose da Rocha found "purity of

⁷ "o Traductor sustenta no nosso idioma a força da elegancia, a pureza do estillo, e o pezo das razoens que ellas tem no seu Original." RMC, cx. 8, n. 87. Dec. 14, 1772

⁸ "vejo nella felizmente dezempenhados os seus preceitos, tanto pelo que respeita a pureza da nossa língua, como pela energia das palavras com q o Traductor se explica." RMC, cx. 8, n. 23. Set. 15, 1774.

⁹ "O Traductor fielm.te segue os passos do Autor traduzindo não só a substancia dos seus discursos, mas tãobem o seu espirito, a sua força e a sua eloquencia. Cuja tradução além da civilidade que pode trazer aos vassallos de V. Mag. ignorantes do idioma original, pode servir de exemplar a outro qualquer traductor," RMC cx 10, n, 97, Oct. 7, 1777.

10 RMC, cx 10, n. 48, Aug. 13, 1778; RMC. cx 13, n.20, Oct. 5, 1784; RMC, cx 14, n. 25, Apr. 18, 1788.

expression, clarity, and the most difficult passages illustrated with many knowledgeable notes and critical analysis.”¹⁰

The censors—probably due to the secrecy in which their opinions and observations were held (Tavares, 2014: 690)—were at their most caustic when dealing with what they considered “bad” translations, consequently engaging in an “offensive”(as opposed to a “deffensive”) censorship (Tavares, 2014: 694) in the sense that they sought to define (among other things) how the Portuguese language should be used by the translators (and by Portuguese writers in general). Such was the case with a persevering translator, the priest Jacome Faria Galiza. He had published a book about visiting the ailing and the dying (Galiza, 1770) whose second and third editions were published in 1784 and 1799, respectively, and sought to obtain the necessary licenses for a number of translations he had completed. Firstly, he submitted to the RMC his French to Portuguese translation of an “Analysis of the letters of Saint Paul,” which the censor Fr. Luiz do Monte Carmello considered “interesting,” “useful,” and “necessary.” However, the same censor also considered that the translator (and his “amanuensis”) “lacked sufficient knowledge, not only in orthography, but also, and mainly, in terms and phrases of the Portuguese language.”¹¹ In that same year, Galiza submitted another translation for approval, “Ceremony of the Virgin Mary,” which was read by Xavier de Santa Anna. The censor pointed out that, due to his poor knowledge and inadequate use of the Portuguese language, the priest lacked “the multitude of specific, distinct terms, and an understanding of the dialect.” Thus, every work he translated was “without any elegance, almost reaching the point of indecency in some passages,” and the translation would only result in mockery of the translator.¹² Needless to say, both works had their printing licenses refused by the censors. One year later, Galiza tried again, this time with a translation from Italian of Ludovico Antonio Muratori’s (a.k.a., Lamindo Pritanio) treatise on Christian devotion. Xavier de Santa Anna was again the reader of this work and pointed out two major flaws that justified prohibiting the publication. The book would be quite useful, firstly, if the translator had “a perfect knowledge of our language,” and secondly, if he did not try to

¹⁰ “[...] nesta tradução encontro pureza da linguagem, estilo claro, propriedade de expressões, e as passagens mais dificultosas illustradas com mtas notas cheias de Erudição e critica.” RMC, cx 14, n. 04, Jan, 21, 1790.

¹¹ “[...] mas o Traductor, e o seu Amanuense, carecem de sufficiente instrucção não somente na Orthografia, mas tambem, e principalmente nos termos e frases proprias do Idioma Portuguez.” RMC, cx 7, n. 10, Feb. 15, 1771.

¹² “Este Padre tendo pouco uzo e conhecimen.to do idioma Portuguez, tem excessivos dezejos de traduzir nelle algumas Obras que necessitam huma vastidão de termos específicos, e individuaes, e huma propriedade de dialecto, que elle certamente ignora: Desta falta nasce a de que tudo quanto tem querido traduzir he sem elegancia, chegando a ter algumas passagens que passam a indecencia. [...]. RMC, cx 7, n. 91, Nov. 14, 1771.

make unnecessary amendments to the original work. The first flaw implied the use of non-existent words. The second was almost a crime of *lèse-majesté*, since the priest expressed opposition to public charity at churches, a practice approved by the Portuguese kings.¹³

Another translator at odds with the censors was the priest Custódio da Silva Barbosa, who tried to obtain printing licenses for his translation of Claude Fleury's books on the manners and customs of the ancient Christians and Israelites. The censor, Francisco de São Bento, considered the work "so full of defects and poorly translated passages that, without being corrected, it cannot be given the required licenses."¹⁴ Since the only published translations we found of Fleury's books were written later by João Rozado de Villalobos e Vasconcellos, Barbosa was quite probably unable to correct his own versions. However, one year later he translated Michel Manduit's *L'Évangile analysé selon l'ordre historique de la Concorde*, which was read by Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, who refused the license (unless the work was corrected) because of the poor translation and his unwarranted use of another author's preface as his own.¹⁵ One more refusal came from Dom Luís da Anunciação de Azevedo, Bishop of Angola, regarding Barbosa's translation of *Explication de l'épître de Saint Paul aux Romains*, by Jacques-Joseph Duguet. According to the censor, the many defects of the translation could be ignored if the translator did not have such "little knowledge of the Portuguese language."¹⁶ In 1773, Barbosa submitted his translation of the second volume of Manduit's book. After painstakingly correcting it, the censor Francisco de São Bento argued to the other censors that the work should not be granted a license because "of the many grammatical errors, improper words and French expressions" that would probably be present in the remaining six volumes of the work, which "he will probably continue to translate and will not find anyone willing to take on the same work of correcting them."¹⁷

Other translators had their work evaluated by the same standards and orthography seems to have been an important issue for the censors. Fr. Joaquim de Santa Anna e Silva, analyzing the Portuguese translation of Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, criticized the spelling adopted by the translator, who chose to suppress the "h" in many words, not use capital letters after a full stop, "and other similar uses which one individual cannot adopt

¹³ RMC, cx. 8, n 67, Oct. 16, 1772.

¹⁴ "[...] está tão cheio de defeitos e de passagens mal traduzidas que sem as emendas prim.ro não se lhe pode conceder a licença que pede." RMC, cx. 7, n. 56, 1771.

¹⁵ RMC, cx. 8, n. 26, May, 10, 1772.

¹⁶ RMC, cx. 8, n. 37, Jun., 26, 1772.

¹⁷ "[...] porq. constando esta obra de 8 volumes elle os hade continuar a traduzir e não hade achar q.m queira tomar o mesmo trabalho de os emendar [...]" RMC, cx 8, n. 4, Mar. 11, 1773.

against the common practice of an entire nation.”¹⁸ The censor then reminded his peers that the RMC had planned to discuss the issue of a standard orthography, but had not done so until that moment.

Besides spelling and grammar, most *pareceres* dealt with the ineptitude of translators to fully convey the meaning of the original texts, due to a lack of knowledge of the Portuguese language, or to interventions of their own. Regarding the translation of Prévost’s *Elements of Politics* submitted to the RMC by Lieutenant José Antonio da Silva Rego, the censor, Fr. Joaquim de Santa Anna e Silva, criticized both the poor orthography as well as the translator’s insufficient knowledge of the proper forms of addressing the different authorities in the Kingdom.¹⁹ Another translation of Prévost by Silva Rego (this time the *L’art de plaire dans la conversation*), was also described as particularly inept by the censor (Fr. José da Rocha), since he “did not write a phrase in which the poverty of his talents was not manifested, nor a page in which one cannot find many mistakes.”²⁰

After 1777, the censors appear to have been less vehement in expressing their views on translations and translators, placing less emphasis on the grammatical aspects of the final works. Instead, many translated works were suppressed or redacted due to dogma. This was the reason why Fr. Francisco de São Bento prohibited the printing of the book *Direção das Almas*, a “work translated from the French language;” the translator needed to learn Portuguese and “the doctrine of the author [was] extremely lax and flawed.”²¹ It was also the main motive for Fr. Luis de Santa Clara Povia to demand that a book called *Regra do clero*, also French in origin, should only be published if the corrections he indicated were taken into account, since “the translation is a rather unfortunate one, and I deem the translator [inept] since he is not versed in Sacred Theology.”²²

The honorable exception might have been the very active censor—who was also a regular translator—the doctor Manoel Joaquim Henriques de Paiva. Acting within the context of changes to public health policies in Portugal during the second half of the eighteenth century, in the footsteps of his (probable) relative António Ribeiro Sanches (Pita, 2009: 93), Paiva was among the writers (and translators) devoted to disseminating modern scientific medical knowledge (Boto, 1998: 112; Araújo, 2014: 267). As a censor, he

¹⁸ “[...] e outros usos semelhantes a estes, os quaes não pode por em estabelecimento hum, ou outro particular contra o commum da sua Nação inteira.” RMC, cx 7, n. 13, 1771.

¹⁹ RMC, cx 8, n. 7, May, 13, 1774.

²⁰ RMC, cx 8, n. 11, Aug., 11, 1774.

²¹ “Os erros da Lingua na tradução da obra são frequentes. A doutrina do Author da pag. 7 e 8 he laxissima e falta.” RMC, cx 10, n. 53, Sep. 3, 1778.

²² “A traducção porem não he das mais felizes, porq. julgo o Traductor mto pouco [apto?] por nada versado na Sagrada Theologia.” RMC, cx 13, n. 21. Nov., 1786.

evaluated medical books and translations and often focused on the mistakes made by translators. For example, although he considered that the Portuguese translation (from Latin) of Jacob Plenck's "system of tumors" should be printed, he thought that the unnamed translator "adulterate[d] and distort[ed] the original meaning, in many places" and was also unclear and careless regarding "the new words" that such works required. The result was that the "style" was so confused that the reader would benefit very little from the book.²³ The translation of William Cullen's book on practical medicine also provoked Paiva to define his idea of a good translation:

In order to subject any language to his laconic style, one should have a perfect knowledge of the writer's language, the equivalent terms [...] and the discreet usage of alternative and didactic words, and above all, to know and understand his complete doctrine, in order to express it with equal clarity and represent his style with the same conciseness.²⁴

According to Paiva, the translator did not possess any of the above requirements, using French or Latin words for which there were Portuguese equivalents and adopting a "barbaric air" that should be avoided in medical books.

This critical tone continued in other *pareceres*, with translations being defined as "abstruse and unintelligible,"²⁵ or deserving of "Royal forgetfulness,"²⁶ or so full of mistakes that the censors refused to correct them due to the insurmountable work involved (and, therefore, refusing the required license for publication).²⁷ The one mistake that most censors vehemently condemned, however, was the indiscriminate use of foreign words in the translations: the barbarisms, Anglicisms or Gallicisms—collected together under the general (and reasonably untranslatable) term of *estrangeirismos*. Such was the case with the translation by Antonio José de Palma of François Genet's *Theologie Morale*, which Fr. Francisco de Sá thought would be more commendable "if the author did not use

²³ "[...] seu traductor, alem de adulterar e depravar em muitos lugares o sentido do original, não tivesse faltado á clareza, e discrepta adopção de termos novos, que em obras taes se requer" RMC, cx 13, n. 22, Dec. 6, 1784.

²⁴ "[...] para sujeitar-se qualquer idioma estrangeiro ao seu estilo laconico, cumpriria ter-se alem do perfeito conhecimento da linguagem deste escritor, o dos vocabulos equivalentes da [ileg.] e da discreta adopção dos termos facultativos e didaticos, e sobretudo possuir-se, e entender-se completamente a sua doutrina, afim de exprimi-la com igual clareza, e representar o referido estilo com a mesma concisão." RMC, cx 14, n.8, Feb., 25, 1788.

²⁵ RMC, cx 14, n. 49, Jun., 30, 1788.

²⁶ RMC, cx 14, n. 63, Sep., 15, 1788.

²⁷ RMC, cx 15, n. 11A, Feb., 28, 1791.

antiquated words and phrases, and some Gallicisms, which made it indecent, obscure, and sometimes unintelligible, particularly to the common clergyman who does not know the French words [...].”²⁸ Fr. Luiz do Monte Carmelo confirmed this opinion, commenting that the translation by Jozé da Silveira Lara of “Instruction of a father to his daughter” was “faithful” only regarding the concepts, particularly because the translator was aware that “many Gallicisms cannot be literally reduced to our phrases.”²⁹

The censors would sometimes offer examples of such words. In his analysis of Custódio da Silva Barbosa’s translation of Manduit, mentioned above, António Pereira de Figueiredo noted that it was a mistake common to most translators and went on to criticize the use of the word *entretenimento*, which, according to the censor, was a Spanish adaptation of the French word *entretien*, but was, as far as he knew, non-existent in Portuguese.³⁰ Years later, another censor went to the trouble of making up a list of inappropriate words used by a translator in a book of medicine compiled from several French manuals. The list included words like *bandages* and *cloportes*, among others.³¹ Fr. Luiz de Santa Clara Póvoa also indicated that, in the translation of Esprit Fléchier’s *Eloquence*, the translator used the word “*detailhe*,” which was neither French nor Portuguese, but was *afrancesada*.³² Still, the influence of French words—if we consider that most of the translated works were French in origin, or that the translators wrote the Portuguese version from a French translation—was the “frailty of almost every translator.”³³ However, contrary to problems with orthography, Gallicisms were not always a definite deterrent, since most censors demanded only that corrections be made in order to grant the requested licenses for publication.

We might also add the concern with “barbarisms” and solecisms, or grammatical imperfections, identified by the censors in the translations, such as in Prévost’s *L’art de plaire dans la conversation* mentioned above, in which there was a “mixture and corruption of foreign words,” resulting “in a language unknown until this day.”³⁴ Twelve years later, another censor (the doctor Manoel de Moraes Soares) saw the same problem in Francisco Puyol de Padrell’s translation of *Domestic Medicine; or, The Family Physician*, by William

²⁸ “Esta tradução seria mais Luivavel se o Auth não se servisse de palavras e phrases antiquadas, e de alguns Francezismos, q o fazem escabroso, escuro e as vezes inintelligel, principalm.te ao comum do clero, q ignora os termos Franceses” RMC, Cx. 8, n. 35, Jun., 29, 1772.

²⁹ “[...] porque muitos Gallicismos não se podem reduzir Literalmente ás nossas Frazes.” RMC cx. 11, n. 21, Apr., 15, 1779.

³⁰ RMC, cx. 8, n. 26, May, 10, 1772.

³¹ RMC, cx. 13, n. 29, Dec., 4, 1786.

³² RMC, cx 8, n. 14, Jul., 9, 1774.

³³ RMC, cx 9, n. 51, Nov., 27, 1775.

³⁴ “da mistura e corrupção de vocabulos estrangeiros, [...] do que rezulta o parecer esta Arte escrita em huma linguagem até aqui desconhecida.” RMC, cx 8, n. 11, Aug., 11, 1774.

Buchan, which had “some solecisms and barbarisms through the mutation of words,” but could be published after the suggested corrections were made.³⁵

What, after all, should a translation have been like in the view of the many censors at work (in both of the time frames defined above)? The already-mentioned Henriques de Paiva gave us some guidelines, but other censors also specified their views on the matter. Francisco Xavier da Santa Anna insisted that the most important qualities of any translation were not only clarity and precision,³⁶ but also a respect for the virtues of the original text, as was the case with Claude Fleury’s *Histoire ecclésiastique*, translated into Portuguese by Luiz Carlos Moniz Barreto in 1772. In his *parecer*, Xavier da Santa Anna praised the translation as being one of the “most complete,” because it maintained the “propriety, sophistication and elegance with which its author wrote.”³⁷ Five years later, Fr. Luis de Santa Clara Póvoa, reviewing a translation of Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, commended the translator (Pedro José da Fonseca) for his freedom and clarity, and the translation for entirely representing “the admirable thoughts found in the original, not omitting any word which might be necessary or important.”³⁸ The same concept was often invoked when the translation was not considered by the censors to be as good as the original text. Fr. Mathias da Conceição criticized a translator (Luiz António Alfeirão) because his work lacked “the spirit and force” of the original book. According to the censor, this had happened due to the translator’s use of “antiquated words, of little or no use in political writings of the present century.”³⁹ The same tone was adopted by Fr. Francisco de Sa when reviewing the *Works* of Madame de Lambert, translated by Joaquim Manoel de Siqueira in 1776. The censor considered the translation “of little merit” because it lacked the “essence of a translation, which is clarity,” for Siqueira used exotic, common, and strange words.⁴⁰ That same year, the censor praised another translation for being “pure, efficient and current, without the stain of foreign or antiquated words.”⁴¹

One last example of what censors expected to find in Portuguese translations was given by Fr. José Mayne in 1788, who wrote that the translator “did not [commit any] fault

³⁵ RMC, cx 14, Jul., 10, 1788.

³⁶ RMC, cx. 7, n. 91, Nov., 14, 1771

³⁷ “A presente he certamente das mais completas, porque sendo muito fiel, conserva a propriedade, erudição, e elegancia com que a escreveu o seu Author.” RMC, cx. 8, n. 56, Sep. 1, 1772.

³⁸ “[...] representa por inteiro os pensamentos, q se admirão, e encontrão no Original, e não omitte palavra alguma, q possa ser necessaria ou importante.” RMC, cx. 9, n. 3, Jan. 10, 1777.

³⁹ “[...] vocabulos antiquados, pouco, ou nada uzados nos escritos policos e correctos do presente seculo [...]” RMC, cx. 10, n. 38, Apr., 20, 1777.

⁴⁰ RMC. Cx 9, n. 15, Mar. 14, 1776.

⁴¹ “[...] A tradução he pura, expedita, e corrente, sem a manchar com estrangeirismos, ou palavras antiquadas [...]” RMC. Cx 9, n. 27, May 17, 1776

regarding the laws of translation,” clearly expressing the original ideas notwithstanding the presence of “dry and pompous words.”⁴²

The “laws of translation” were never made explicit by any censor, although some translators expressed their adherence to the ideas of D’Alembert (1763) in his *Observations sur l’art de traduire*. The Brazilian-born translator Manoel José Nogueira da Gama acknowledged this in his translation of Lazare Carnot’s *Réflexions sur la métaphysique du calcul infinitésimal*, when he advocated the need for more translations in order to advance Portuguese science (Harden, 2010: 273-6), as did António de Araújo (Count of Barca) in his translation of *A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day* (Dryden, 1799), making it quite explicit in his preface that he followed all the advice given by D’Alembert.

We can conclude that the censors, who were probably quite aware of such ideas, were also concerned with the establishment of some standards for the translations they reviewed. One of these standards, which coincides with D’Alembert’s ideas, was the complete and profound knowledge of both languages (Portuguese and the original language, which could be either Latin, English, Italian, German, or—mainly—French). As we have seen, this was a recurrent theme in the *pareceres*, often referring to the translators’ lack of familiarity with either the original language or the Portuguese vernacular rules.

Demands for clarity of expression and faithfulness to the original ideas were also common among the censors. These were often accompanied by criticisms of the indiscriminate use of words of foreign origin, as well as of “antiquated” words no longer in use during the second half of the eighteenth century. In essence, the censors were laying down rules of usage when they tried to establish how, how often, and in which cases it was correct—or incorrect—to adapt French, Latin, or English words to the Portuguese translations or to resort to archaic terms, which might be re-signified, particularly in the context of new scientific or literary uses.

This article focuses on the importance of the ideas or ideology of the Enlightenment for understanding what the censors and translators did in their daily work and we have shown that their efforts were aimed at attempting to shape scientific and national linguistic identities. Moreover, the main objective here was to show that what these men understood as enlightened ideas was not necessarily what philosophers and historians have defined as such in the centuries after the ideas were debated and disseminated across Europe.

⁴² “[...] a Tradução aparece alguma coisa enfarinhada de palavras secas e amofinadas pela falta de uzo.” RMC, cx 14, n. 25. Apr., 18, 1788.

Translators seemed certain that their work was a practical and necessary way to engage Portugal in the debates of the Enlightenment, and that, in doing so, they were major contributors to the “glory of the Nation” (Harden, 2010). The censors—who were actually agents of the monarch with the very explicit obligation of contributing to that effort (Tavares, 2014)—seemed to agree, and, as such, there was little difference between the years under Pombal and the subsequent period, underscoring the perceived continuity of his ideas into the first decade of the nineteenth century (Villalta, 1999).

Therefore, the efforts made and the attention paid towards the translations by the many agents of the printed word (translators, publishers, and censors) can show the modern historian how an “enlightened” identity was being built around the publication of the many Portuguese translations, as well as how the contact with—and the interference of—the ideals of the Enlightenment (however these may be defined) were being interpreted by those agents (Araújo, 2014). The attempts at defining grammar, orthography and the vernacular use of the language can be seen as the catalyst for these multifaceted practices.

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