

# The pombaline writings about public instruction<sup>1</sup>

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## *Obra completa pombalina: os escritos sobre instrução pública*

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### ABSTRACT

This article intends to establish a canon of the pombaline writings about public instruction in general, and the teaching of Humanities in particular, which are responsible for what is conventionally called in the educational historiography by the name of pombaline reforms. Additionally, it aims to investigate the way those writings provoked the foundation and affected the development of public instruction in Brazil. To attain such purposes, based on the theoretical support of cultural history and cultural studies, it is used the historiography dedicated to the period, manuscripts and documental, legislative, literary, and epistolary sources, as well as textbooks and periodicals published in the period.

*Keywords:* History of Education. Humanities. Marquis of Pombal. Brazilian Education.

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## RESUMO

O objetivo deste projeto é estabelecer um cânone dos escritos pombalinos relativos à instrução pública de modo geral, e ao ensino de Humanidades de modo particular, responsáveis pelo que se convencionou chamar, na historiografia educacional, de reformas pombalinas, bem como investigar o modo como tais escritos provocaram a fundação e afetaram o desenvolvimento da instrução pública no Brasil. Para tanto, apoiando-se no suporte teórico da história cultural e dos estudos culturais, foi utilizada a historiografia sobre o período, manuscritos e demais fontes documentais, legislativas, literárias e epistolares, assim como compêndios e periódicos publicados no período.

*Palavras-chave:* História da Educação. Humanidades. Marquês de Pombal. Educação Brasileira.

## Introduction

Falcon (1993), in his book about what he calls *The pombaline epoch*, classifies the pombaline writings in seven thematic groups. The first group, according to the author, is composed of writings about the Anglo-Luso economic relations and covers the period from 1738, the year Pombal arrived in London as a diplomat, during the reign of D. João V, until 1778, when, after the death of D. João V and his fall of the ministry, he defended himself from his political opponents. The second group is composed of the *Instructions* that were produced in the first years of Pombal's government. These instructions were intended to several authorities, such as the *Public and secret royal instructions* sent to his brother Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado (1700-1779), on May 31, 1751, the same year he was nominated as the General-Captain and Governor of Pará. The third group refers to Pombal's polemic works, like the *Historical Compendium of University of Coimbra*, published in 1771. The fourth group is composed of the pombaline legislation, whereas the fifth one is about his diplomatic correspondence in general. The sixth group, in turn, is constituted of Pombal's *Very Secret Observations*. The seventh and last group is composed of the material produced after Pombal's fall, in 1777, in which his speeches praising his own government are found.

However, the same author, in addition to recognizing the privileged place, in the enlightened ideology of the "juridical optimism" – that is, "the

belief in the unlimited power of the laws in promoting men's well-being and happiness" (FALCON, 1993, p. 113) – is also capable of noticing the importance, for the historians, of the laws promulgated during the pombaline government. These laws pose great difficulty for one to have an overview of their sets, considering the great number of collections of laws published during the nineteenth century and the fact that many manuscripts can be found only in archives or in a fragmented way, such as those by Ribeiro (1871) or Francisco Trigoso de Aragão Morato. Moreover, Ribeiro and Aragão Morato are the ones who organized the *Collection of the written and manuscripted legislation* Falcon used as its main source (MARCOS, 2006).

An aspect of the pombaline legislation which cannot be disregarded by those who intend to analyze it is its enlightened character. The common and general sense is that the Portuguese enlightenment was incomplete or imperfect. Some historians consider it as being awkward, given the degree of delay of Portugal in relation to the great European nations. In their narratives, visitors mention this delay could be observed principally in the religious traces rooted in the mentality and customs of the Portuguese people and evident in their architecture and even in their clothes. Those who, thus, conceive the Portuguese Enlightenment generally assume that the enlightenment, or illustration, is something finished, almost an essence, which has its perfect models in France and England and that as a genuinely European phenomenon could not be successful outside its center. In this way, they ignore the condition of the discursive construction of illustration and its basic assumptions by historiography, literature, philosophy, and even by official documents issued by absolutist states or by enlightened despots.

One consequence of this type of perspective is that the study of Pombaline legislation, for example, can only be carried out in terms of lag or delay in relation to a certain European modernity, reducing it to a peripheral manifestation conducted in precarious conditions. Due to that, it ends up reproducing the discourse of the Pombaline legislation, since one of its main characteristics is the high degree of historical self-consciousness, sometimes unfolding in true foundational discourses concentrating on the invention of a glorious tradition of the Portuguese people. All in all, be it in the arts, in the arms, and in the letters, during the time of the "great navigations", also the time sung by the poet of *Os Lusíadas*, they had conquered America, Africa and the Indies, leaving the other European people awestruck – including their Iberian rivals - the Spaniards. In this respect, the Pombaline legislation can be seen as one of the representational strategies in building a culture and a national identity, as Hall highlights (2005).

The Pombaline legislation was applied throughout the territories of

Portuguese America, as they were formed after the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. The treaty, for the first time, took into consideration the legal principle of usucaption (*Uti Possidetis*) according to which the land belongs to those who occupy it. With this agreement, Portugal ensured the possession of most of the Amazon Basin and Spain was left with most of the lower part of the Plata. In fact, it was in the hands of the all-powerful minister, who represented the king and the state at the same time, that the reformist laws concerning the richest and most extensive Portuguese rule were enacted. The management of economic resources, the colonial administrative reorganization, the means of education and culture were privileged fields of the Pombaline intervention. In order to reinforce his centralist and antiautonomistic policies towards colonial territories, Pombal expelled the Jesuits, prevented the formation of local elites and intellectual cadres, extinguished the network of schools of the Society of Jesus, prevented the founding of universities in the colonial territory, and imposed obstacles to the creation of a periodical press or even simple print shops to edit books.

## **Language policy**

The first Pombaline legislative piece referring to its language policy is the Law of the Directory, issued on May 3, 1757 and confirmed by the Charter of August 27, 1758, which extended the effects of the law, previously restricted to the State of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, to all the colonies of Portugal. It is perhaps one of the most important documents of language policy in the eighteenth century, considering its pioneering, extensive and rich historical information and the fact that the main aspects of the Pombaline legislation are present: the discursive construction of the notion of a polished and civilized Europe, that contrasts with the supposed delay of temporal administration and of the Jesuit pedagogy; the regalism, by presenting itself as a paradoxical union between the civil society, the absolutist state and the Christian faith; the modern pedagogy, whose main feature is the softness of the method, in contrast to the punishments and rigours of traditional teaching; and, finally, historical self-consciousness, unfolding in the invention of a tradition of the Portuguese people, hence going back to the times of the great navigations of the sixteenth century. This last aspect is the most important one, because it is the basis for the formalization of the Portuguese nationalist discourse, as well as for the

consolidation of the idea of nation and national identity (RENAN, 2006; ANDERSON, 2008). It seems that without the Pombaline policy, it would not exist such a large country united by the speaking of a single language, regardless of the judgment other people might make of the anthropological and cultural consequences of this policy. After all, it can be considered both one of the greater imperialist aggressions of the eighteenth century and a “miracle” of the Portuguese colonization.

In order to avoid simplifications, it must be emphasized that even a hundred years after the enactment of the Law of the Directory (1757), seeking to make the use and teaching of Portuguese official, to the detriment of the immense linguistic variety of Africans and Indigenous people that inhabited the country, the so called “General Language”<sup>2</sup> continued to be used until the late nineteenth century. Even more eloquent is the case of the former Portuguese colonies in Asia and Africa, in which, even after the rediscovery of the language as an “imperial force”, during the organization of the General Agency of Colonies, under Salazar’s government (1889-1970), and its independence, with the creation of schools, lyceums and universities, the percentage of speakers of Portuguese remained below fifty percent<sup>3</sup>. As Renan (2006) recommended at the end of the nineteenth century, it is always worth remembering that languages cannot serve as a basis for the constitution of modern nations, particularly because dynastic communities have never failed to authorize marriages of princes who spoke different languages, not to mention that there were always geographically contiguous regions that lived harmoniously with multiculturalism and multilingualism. Even so, the Pombaline language policy, which forced, through laws, the use and later teaching of the Portuguese language in all Portuguese domains, was undoubtedly fundamental to the process of linguistic unification of the country, whose consolidation would take place only in the 20th century.

2 According to Borges (2001, p. 211), in historical terms, “general language” refers to the linguistic and ethnic process established in Brazil by the complex catechetical-colonizer, whose employment points to three meanings: a) in a general sense, it refers to the languages that have arisen in South America as a result of the contacts between agents of the colonization fronts and the indigenous groups; b) specifically, it designates the indigenous languages, developed and instituted in São Paulo and Amazonia, and spoken by a supra-ethnic population; c) it also refers to the grammatization of those languages.

3 In 1980, five years after the independence of Mozambique, the General Census of the Population placed Portuguese in the sixteenth place among the languages of the country, with only twenty-five percent of speakers, of which a little more than one percent used it as their mother tongue (PEREIRA, 2009, p. 278).

Although the consequences of the Law of the Directory are far from consensual, there is no doubt that it was an effective instrument to favor Portuguese colonial interests. In spite of that, it is not possible to say the same of the “native” population to whom it was addressed. The decree of freedom of Indigenous people and the disintegration of missionary villages, once protected by religions, paved the way for the voracity of settlers, who decimated the population that still retained its cultural and social identity in many ways (NETO, 1988). The anti-Jesuit propaganda promoted by the Pombaline legislation even predicted that if the Jesuits were not caught up in time, not even all the armies of Europe associated could control them. It is not by chance that, due to such propaganda, the first reason invoked for their expulsion had to do with the question of Brazil and the problems that aroused concerning the application of the Treaty of Limits.

The work of Christianization would be under the responsibility of the prelate of the diocese, because it was a “merely spiritual” matter. Regarding the “Civility of the Indians”, it would fall under the exclusive competence of the Officers and the first measure to be taken was the establishment of the obligation to use the “Language of the Prince” (PORTUGAL, 1830, p. 508-509). The text of the law presents two movements. The first movement concerns the enlightened concept of a “polished (or civilized) nation”, for it denounces the will of the legislator to place the kingdom of Portugal in the condition of a nation, just like the “other polished nations in the world”. To do so, the State would have to use a national language, the “Language of the Prince”, to affirm itself before the others – the other nations and the “Peoples conquered” –, building, therefore, a national identity. The second movement refers to the obstacle that would have to be faced in order to impose the Portuguese language: the “general language”. For the legislator, it was a “truly abominable, and devilish invention” of the Jesuits to make the Indigenous peoples deprived of civilization and remain rustic and barbaric.

Therefore, in contrast with the work of Jesuits, who made use of the “general language” in their pedagogical and catechetical practices, the Law of the Directory gave a first step towards the constitution of Portuguese as a National Language. It was made possible by its grammatization (AUROUX, 1992) and schooling (VINCENT, LAHIRE and THIN, 2001), because they served as the support for the construction of a Portuguese national identity, though it could only be consolidated, in the view of the legislator, by systematically erasing all linguistic diversity and forbidding boys and girls, as well as the Indigenous population, from using the “language that was proper of their Nations, or the general call”.

As the “Language of the Prince” was the “fundamental basis of Civi-

lity”, it was determined that “two Public Schools” would be established in all villages, one for the boys and another for the girls, in which the Masters were to teach the “Christian Doctrine”, reading, writing, and counting, “in the form practiced in all the Schools of the civilized Nations” – in the girls’ schools, counting would be replaced by “spinning, lace making, sewing”, and other “things proper to that sex”. Both Masters, men and women, who should be “people endowed with good manners, prudence, and ability”, would be paid by the parents or the tutors of the pupils, “competing each one of them with the portion, whether to be arbitrated, or in cash, or in which will always be attentive to the great misery, or poverty, to which they are presently reduced”. Nevertheless, girls, in the absence of women as Masters, would attend boys’ schools until the age of ten (PORTUGAL, 1830, p. 509).

The rapporteur of the Directory was the brother of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado (1770-1779), executor of the “Royal Public and Secret Public Instructions” issued by the minister on May 31, 1751, the same year in which he had been appointed as the General-Captain and Governor of Pará, with the Royal Order of April 19<sup>4</sup>. It seems that the execution of the Law of the Directory was under the responsibility of Governor Melo e Castro, a substitute of Mendonça Furtado, who, by the Decree of July 19, 1759, was appointed Assistant Secretary of State of the Count of Oeiras. As to the scope of such a policy, especially after the Memorandum of Confirmation of August 27, 1758, in Grão-Pará or in other captaincies, the question still poses a challenge to historiography.

However, the key to understanding the application of the Law of the Directory was suggested by Andrade (1978, p. 12), who provided a true finding of the Overseas Historical Archive in the Pernambuco box: a *commercial and military instruction, initially in Portugal, and later in Brazil, with the coming of the royal family in 1808*, similar to the text of the Directory corrected by Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva. For the author, it would suffice to find the official statement that accompanied the document to consider it the only copy of the compendium used in the classes in Pernambuco from 1759 to 1760. In fact, it is a Catechism used as a primer for the teaching of the language, in the manner of the existing ones: the small Catechism of

4 However, in a letter dated March 20, 1759, the General Ombudsman of Pernambuco, the Judge Gama Casco, writing to Sebastião de Carvalho and Melo, refers to “one directory” asking “to translate the French language into our language and then having one more primer, so that the Masters and the director can be taught by it” (ANDRADE, 1978, p. 8-9).

the doctrine and instruction that the Christians can believe in and work to obtain the eternal blessing, by D. Diogo Ortiz in 1504, and the Grammar of the Portuguese language with the commandments of the holy mother Church, by João de Barros in 1540.

If in 1757 the Law of the Directory emphasized the need to impose the “Language of the Prince”, forbidding boys and girls from using “the language proper of their Nations” as early as in 1827, a few years after the Kingdom of Brazil had negotiated, through England, its independence, the Law of October 15, ordering the creation of schools of first letters in all the cities, towns, and most populous places of the Empire, established in its sixth article the “grammar of the national language”– that is, the Portuguese language – among the subjects to be taught by the teachers (BRASIL, 1878, p. 72).

The Pombaline reforms in the field of public education not only provoked the institutionalization of Portuguese teaching with the Law of the Directory in 1757, but also reformulated the teaching of Latin and rhetoric, by the Charter in 1759. In that same year, the Statutes of Commerce Classes were published and, two years later, the Statutes of the Royal College of the Nobles, documents that eventually established, albeit indirectly, modern foreign languages as a subject of instruction in commercial and military instruction, initially in Portugal, and later in Brazil, with the coming of the royal family in 1808<sup>5</sup>. The Charter of September 30, 1770, in turn, made it obligatory to teach the grammar of the Portuguese language in Latin classes, and two years later, with the Law of November 6, 1772, the creation and administration of the so called “Lesser Schools” – or “first letters”, as they came to be called in Brazil – in Portugal and its domains.

## The Humanities

As Carvalho (1978, p. 42) observed in his classic book about *The Pombaline Reforms of Public Instruction*, before the reform of the teaching of humanities promoted by the Charter of June 28, 1759, the cabinet of D. José I sought to solve, through public instruction, the most urgent problems

<sup>5</sup> Later, the living languages became an obligatory subject for those who wanted to study medicine or mathematics, as it can be seen in the Letter of Roboration of August 28, 1772, with which the new Statutes of the University of Coimbra were published.



of the Portuguese kingdom, creating the necessary conditions for the realization of the economic recovery efforts undertaken by the government. The so-called General Law of Minor Studies is undoubtedly the most important Pombaline legislative piece on language teaching. With such a reform, a new meaning would be given to the teaching of Humanities, making the study of grammar and rhetoric more compatible with the modern linguistic and pedagogical orientations of the so-called “century of the lights”. Education was then officially administered by the State, now responsible for controlling the selection and career of teachers and, consequently, institutionalizing the teaching profession. Attention is drawn, in Charter, to the prominent place occupied by the “culture of sciences” in the Pombaline discourse, since “the happiness of the Monarchies” depended on it, by being preserved by the purity of religion and the equality of justice. In this way, if science was useful to the Rule of Law – Justice – it would also be useful to the Christian faith, since, through the “Public Studies”, it could cause the “Vassals” of El Rey to progress for the benefit of the Homeland and the Church (PORTUGAL, 1830, p. 673).

One of the main characteristics of the Pombaline legislation discourse is presented to the reader at the beginning of the preamble of the law: the union between the Christian faith, the monarchy and the modern State. In order to equate the relations between these apparently disparate terms, the discursive strategies necessary for the imaginary construction of the Portuguese nation are to be adopted: foundational myths and invention of tradition (HALL, 2005). In what regards the Portuguese case, a tradition that held public studies fomented by the kings in the name of the sciences, giving support to the monarchy and to the church. Indeed, with faith in progress, the philosophical enthusiasm and the pursuit of happiness and reason did not prevent the presence of religion, especially of Christianity, in a kind of “enlightened Christianity”, considering that faith in God is the condition for virtue and happiness, as Falcon (1993, p. 97-98) explains.

Thus, in order to imagine a nation, it was necessary not only for religious and dynastic communities to enter into relative decline, but also for a new way of apprehending the world to be configured by conceiving history as a chain of causes and effects, implying a radical separation between the notions of past and present. It was when the medieval conception of time – having past, present and future mixed – gave way to an “empty and homogeneous time”, making the idea of simultaneity possible (ANDERSON, 2008, p. 54). This idea supported two genres that provided, in the eighteenth century, the technical means necessary to “represent”– or “narrate”, as Bhabha (2006) states – the “imagined communities” corresponding to

nation – the newspaper and novel in the English case, for example. In the case of Pombaline governance, the narrative of the Portuguese nation was mainly enforced by legislation.

The Charter of 28 June 1759 is also a libel against the Jesuits, whose “Method” was taking, according to the legislator, the kingdoms and domains of Portugal to ruin, and “not only of the Arts, and Sciences, but even of the same Monarch, and Religion”. In this way, Ignatius of Loyola’s disciples appear as the great cause of the calamitous state the “Human Letters”, “basis of all Sciences”, were found. Such an anti-Jesuit propaganda, as Carvalho explains (1978, p. 41), was due to the conflicts between the cabinet of D. José I and the Roman Curia rather than to the supposed delay of the pedagogical program of Jesuits, since the Portuguese intellectuals were convinced of the inconveniences that brought to the Portuguese economy the accumulation of real estate and other privileges enjoyed by the religious orders.

According to Falcon (1993), the struggle against the Jesuits was the manifestation of Pombal’s rejection of aristocratic domination. However, at the economic level, such domination was in perfect harmony with what the Jesuits represented at the ideological level. It is worth noting the legislator’s rhetorical ability. After relating the Jesuits to a cultural and pedagogical backwardness that contrasted with the civilized nations of Europe, he makes Portugal to become a forerunner of European modernity. In order to do so, he evokes a mythical time – the sixteenth century – when the “Portuguese nation” was respected in an internationally recognized community: the “Republic of the Letters”, being conceived retrospectively, in the form of a chronological narrative. It is in the name of this invented tradition that the legislator orders, paradoxically, that “the old method be restored, reduced to the simpler, clearer, and easier terms now practiced in the more polished nations of Europe” (PORTUGAL, 1830, p. 674-675).

The Charter, as far as it is known, also established the position of Director of Studies, the authority responsible for its execution and to whom the teachers were submitted. His approval determined who was able to take up the teaching profession after the exams of their moral and intellectual qualities (PORTUGAL, 1830). With the institution of the Director of Studies, the process of nationalization of education is consolidated and, for the first time, uniform procedures are regulated in the selection and appointment of teachers, who become State employees. Likewise, the requirement of the license to teach consolidates the professionalization process of the teaching activity, establishing a canon of technical and intellectual competences, as well as a career outline, something that, according to Nóvoa (1991), will serve as an affirmation tool of teachers in the struggle to improve their

social status. Therefore, with the General Law of Minor Studies of 1759, the teaching profession is institutionalized in Portugal and its domains, being regulated both the Royal Classes and the selection and appointment of Royal Teachers, who become employees and representatives of the Portuguese State.

In Charter, there are “Instructions for Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Rhetoric grammar teachers” as well, signed, specifically, by the Count of Oeiras. These “Instructions” are not only a guide for teachers, showing them strategies to be used as to “lesson time”, “class hours” or to the procedures to be followed in the case of pupils’ indiscipline or their advanced studies, but also a genuine piece of scholarship, both from a pedagogical and a linguistic and literary point of view, since they indicate the compendia to be used – or prohibited – by students and the reference books of teachers, in consequence constructing the ideal school canon to the new profile of the Portuguese State.

The General Law of Minor Studies was thought of in a transcontinental perspective, since the “new Method” needed to be implemented in regions as distant and as diverse as the captaincies of colonial Brazil and possessions in the East. Even with all the difficulties for its implementation – especially in the Brazilian case (ANDRADE, 1978) – the guidelines of this reform of teaching humanities were able to “give a new direction to education, both in the metropolis and in the colony, in terms of methodological, content and organizational renewal”, as Hilsdorf (2003, p. 15) states, in contrast to Azevedo’s (1971) reading of the post-Pombaline era in terms of decadence and transition.

In order to have an idea of the scope and continuity of Charter of June 28, 1759, fifty years later, with the publication of the Decision n. 29 in July 14, 1809, creating a Public Chair in Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, one in French and another one in English, the legislator established that, for the teaching of both languages, teachers should observe “time”, “hours of lessons” and “attestations” of the use of disciples, being the same that was established “and practiced” by the Latin Grammarians. As to the influence of the Pombaline legislation in legislative pieces issued in Brazil after its Independence, the Imperial Letter of April 30, 1828, approving the Statutes of Casa Pia and the College of S. Joaquim of Orphan Boys in the state of Bahia can be used as an example. The letter was addressed to the President of the Province and signed by the Provincial of Literary and Scientific Establishments in Brazil, the Viscount of Cairu (1756-1835). The statutes, in turn, had been sent by a representation of the provider and of the messengers and administrators of the establishment. “Education in general”,

according to Chapter I of Title III, which dealt with schoolchildren, had as its objective “to perfect and direct the physical and moral faculties of man, for the benefit of the individual who receives it, and of the civil society of which he is a member”. The reference to the example of “enlightened nations”, as well as the discourse of the union between reason and religion, for instance, is still present.

## **Mathematics and foreign languages**

It was under the Pombaline ministry that living languages – that is, modern foreign languages – were for the first time the subject of legislation, and their knowledge was indicated and then demanded in establishments destined for military instruction, as it can be seen in the Letter of Law of March 7, 1761, with which the Statutes of the Royal College of the Nobles were published – former College of Arts directed by the Jesuits –, officially opened on March 19, 1766. The Plan of Studies of the new institution brought some news, because in addition to the usual subjects of teaching of Humanities (Latin, Greek, rhetoric, philosophy and theology), some elements of mathematics, astronomy and physics were present, and the study of French, Italian and English languages was recommended. In Title VIII, devoted to their respective teachers, the law repeated the pedagogical discourse thought the time by defending the usefulness of the many books written in those languages. As for the method of teaching, it was prescribed the repeated use of practical exercises of “viva voz” (live voices) and that the grammatical explanations should be spared in their excesses. The compendiums would have to be both useful and enjoyable, as well as “correct”, and the teachers, though they did not need to reside in the college, like those of other subjects, would have “commendable customs” (PORTUGAL, 1830, p. 782).

In the preamble of the law, all those elements characteristic of the Pombaline legislation are present: the association between “Spiritual goodness and the temporal happiness of the States”, providing “the propagation of the Faith, and the augmentation of the Catholic Church; and for the service of the Sovereigns, and the public utility of the Peoples”; historical self-consciousness, translated by the invention of the tradition of great kings protecting the sciences and instruction, such as the Infante Dom Henrique, Dom Manuel and D. João III, this one responsible for the foundation, in

the city of Coimbra, of the “sumptuous Collegio das Escolas Minor das Linguas, e Artes”, where distinguished teachers had taught, such as André de Gouveia, the brothers Marçal and Antonio de Sousa, Edmundo Rosset, Vicente Fabricio, Antonio Caiado, Pedro Margalho, Ayres Barbosa, André de Resende, Pedro Nunes and Diogo de Teive; the idea of nation, related to the idea of a polished or civilized Europe; and the presentation of the Jesuits as the cause of the economic and cultural decline of the “Portuguese nation”. In this respect, the legislator narrates in detail the episode of the taking of the College by priests of the Society of Jesus (PORTUGAL, 1830).

The Statutes of the Royal College of the Nobles were enthusiastically received, especially by the General Director of Studies, D. Tomás de Almeida, who took an active part in the project and in the same year of the publication of the statutes sent several copies to all the governors and commissioners of Brazil (ANDRADE, 1978). According to Braga (1898), the Letters on the education of youth (1760), by Ribeiro Sanches, originated from his correspondence with the Principal de Almeida, General Director of Studies, when the Portuguese physician proposed the Royal Military School of Paris, established in 1751, as an ideal model that could be imitated in his country. Thus, the Royal College of the Nobles would have been inspired by his ideas. This hypothesis is also embraced by Carvalho (1978). However, the functioning of the institution, at least until 1772, when the University of Coimbra reform abolished the teaching of mathematics in the College, seems to have been marked by failure, with French and English teachers being hired only in 1785. Amongst the causes listed by Rômulo de Carvalho (1959), there are: deficiency of administration, Plan of Studies not adapted to the schoolchildren’s age, teaching by foreign teachers in foreign languages, social situation of students who were accustomed to the liberties of their class and had attitudes incompatible with a regime of discipline, and displeasure of teachers, who were forced to accumulate administrative functions. The College was abolished with a decree of January 1838 (RIBEIRO, 1876).

Its Statutes are a clear example of the illustrated guidelines of the Pombaline educational policy. They served as a model for the preparation of the Statutes of the Royal College of Mafra, published with the Charter of August 18, 1772; for the Statutes of the Royal Military Academy of Rio de Janeiro, published with the Decree of December 4, 1810, and for the Statutes of the Royal Military College of Light, issued by the Charter of May 18, 1816. It is possible to trace its influence even in the Imperial College of Pedro II, since the Decree of December 2, 1837, when converting the Seminary of St. Joachim of Rio de Janeiro into the “collegio de ensino

secundário”, seemed to make an option for this specific term, instead of Lyceum or Ateneu, as it is noted by Gasparello (2004, p. 49-50). The reason why is because in the previous year the Minister of the Empire, in his report presented to the Legislative Assembly, had proposed the creation of a Lyceum at the Court, where the “Schools were to be assembled and the Compendiums fixed, as well as the discipline of economics, and everything under the eyes of a Director”, in order to prepare the youth for the “Major Schools”.

According to Gasparello (2004, p. 50-52), the government would have opted for the term “College” because “Lyceum”, according to the *Dictionary of the Portuguese Language* (1789) by Antonio Moraes e Silva, had the meaning of “scientific teaching lessons”, associating the Establishment with a modern and republican conception, unlike “College”, which designated a classic and “disinterested” culture. Such a distinction, however, does not apply to the Brazilian case, if it is taken into account the classes of “scientific teaching” of military colleges created during the Pombaline and Johannine periods, whose model was the Royal College of the Nobles of Lisbon. The model of the new establishment, as Vasconcelos himself admitted, was French, a fact that even served as his defense in a session of May 19, 1838, in the Chamber of Deputies, against Manuel do Nascimento’s accusations that his speech had been the speech “of a friar”. In order to defend himself, the minister argued that the French regulation, once conceived or restored by Napoleon Bonaparte, aimed at creating military men, not friars.

Thus, the teaching of foreign languages in Portugal was instituted in the context of the Pombaline reforms of public instruction. In the syllabuses of military education establishments, the touchstone is the development of “Mathematical Sciences”, so important for the formation of the “perfect military”, who would be able and instructed to deal with fortifications, bombings, and tactics of war, as well as with architecture and civil construction. Its consecration as an academic course, in 1772, highlights its important role in studies, be they preparatory or superior. Accompanying its process of institutionalization are the modern foreign languages, whose study allowed access to what was published on the subject in foreign countries, especially in France and England.

As in Portugal during the Pombaline period, foreign languages in Brazil followed the process of institutionalization of the mathematical studies, represented mainly by military academies, training centers of a sector of civil society, or the local elite, excluding all those who were not “vassals”, and then “citizens”, i. e., slaves and free and dispossessed men. Their study, likewise, was justified as a means of access to “Mathematical Sciences” by

the translation of works and authors who no longer wrote them in Latin, but in the languages of their respective nations. In this way, it is no coincidence that the creation of the first public English and French chairs in Brazil, in 1809, is declared in the same document the Mesa do Desembargo do Paço provides one chair of Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry. In the same way, it is not surprising that the military and navy colleges and academies, both in Portugal and in Brazil, are the first institutions responsible for inserting foreign languages into their curriculum.

## **The university reform**

As Carvalho had noted (1978), the reform of the University of Coimbra constitutes the crowning of the pedagogical measures practiced by the cabinet of D. José I since the secularization of the missions of Grão-Pará, resulting from the Law of the Directory, confirmed by the Charter of August 17, 1758. The task had been entrusted to the Board of Literary Providence, created on December 23, 1770, under the supervision of Cardinal da Cunha and Marquis of Pombal, and composed by the president of the Royal Table of Censors, D. Manoel do Cenáculo, and the doctors Francisco Antonio Marques Giraldes, José de Seabra da Silva, José Ricaldi Pereira de Castro, Francisco de Lemos de Faria Pereira Coutinho, Manoel Pereira da Silva, and João Pereira Ramos de Azevedo Coutinho.

In 1771, the *Historical Compendium of the University of Coimbra* was published. It was a work sponsored and supervised by the Marquis of Pombal and constitutes one of the major historiographic monuments produced during the pombaline government. The details of the damage done by the Jesuits are reported in the document, being both the Minor and the Major Studies seriously damaged as well.

The Letter of Roboration of August 28, 1772, chronicles all the episodes concerning the creation of the Board of Literary Providence and the composition of the Historical Compendium and is of the uttermost importance for the development and institutionalization of teaching of modern foreign languages in Portugal and its domains, since the new Statutes of the University of Coimbra, in addition to the reformulation of the theological course, natural and philosophical sciences (medicine and pharmacy) and legal (civil and canon law), created two new courses: the philosophical course

in the place of the courses of arts and mathematics, and the study of living languages, then recommended for the mathematical and medical courses.

The Title II of Book III, devoted to the preparation for the mathematical course, divided the students into three classes: the ordinary ones, intended for the whole course (Chapter I, § 3); the obligors, who were destined for other faculties – medical students were obliged to attend three years of the course (§ 4), and those of theological and legal courses the first year (§ 5) –; and the volunteers, a category relative to those who wished to be instructed out of curiosity, “for the ornament of their spirit, as it is well suited to all Classes of Persons, and especially to the Nobility” (§ 8). The minimum age required for admission to the course was fifteen years old (Chap. II, § 2).

With regard to the preparatory studies (Chapter III), applicants should have full knowledge of the Latin language “which by these Statutes is required, for all Colleges”, as well as some rudiments of Greek, although such instruction was not required in the enrollment it was compulsory for those who wished to obtain a PhD at the end of the fourth year of the course (article 3). The following article, though, recommended the “intelligence of the living languages of Europe” (PORTUGAL, 1772). To enter the medical course, students should be at least 18 years old (Book III, Chapter I, Title I) and have the necessary knowledge of the Latin language “so that they understand it and write it correctly, and of the Greek language”, in order to understand all the writings of Medicine, whose optional terms are “almost all in Greek” (Article 2). Students, however, could be admitted to enrollment in the first two years of the course if they had not studied Greek and must attend the classes of the professor of that language in the University, with requirement of certificate to attend the third year (§2.). As to the living languages, the same recommendation was made in article 4: “It is also to be desired that the Medical Students are instructed in the living languages of Europe; especially in English and French, in which many important Works of Medicine are written every day” (PORTUGAL, 1772).

In the second part of the Statutes, the legislator justifies the inclusion of the mathematical sciences – and together with them, as an instrument or access to their knowledge, the living languages – at the University of Coimbra, in order to give an academic status to the new course. With the mathematical course, any student could be admitted to the navy without examinations and would be given preference for the engineering posts (§ 10), being their qualification also necessary for the exercise of the profession of architect (§ 11). As to the teaching profession, in places where there were university mathematicians who were willing to teach their science, no one else could teach it publicly or privately (Liv III, Title III, Chapter I, § 2).



The implications of this piece of legislation for the teaching of the living languages in Brazil are evident because, if on the one hand the creation of the first public chairs of French and English was associated with mathematical studies, as it has already been said, on the other hand, foreign languages – first French and later English, became a mandatory requirement for students to have access to surgical and legal studies. Indeed, on February 23, 1808, when the “Instructions for the Teachers of Surgery” were published, signed by the Royal Surgeon of the Kingdom, who had appointed José Manuel Estrela (1760-1840) to the Chair of “Speculative and Practical Surgery” and José Soares de Castro (1772-1840) for that of “Anatomy and Surgical Operations” in the same date (SANTOS FILHO, 1967, p. 468), the teachers could not hire “practitioners without knowledge of the French language as required in the Hospital of Lisbon, for the dispensation that occurred in Latin” (CAMPOS, 1941, p. 36). In the case of the legal courses, students were required to have only the knowledge of the French language, since its creation, in 1827, also required knowledge of the English language from 1831 on.

## Some considerations

In spite of the importance of all Pombaline legislation, not only for public instruction, but also for several other sectors of the State, it is necessary to relativize the rhetorical fury of the attacks of the Pombaline legislation, especially the Charter of 1759, against the Jesuits, if it is taken into account the daring of the minister to try to undermine, through his legislative interventions, at the same time in a Herculean and Quixotic way, a long pedagogical tradition of almost two centuries. In the last part of the preamble of such legislation, the most important piece of legislation on public instruction and on the teaching of humanities in the Pombaline period, the focus is on the order to be given: the “general reform”. However, paradoxically, from “the old Method”, that is, prior to the Álvares grammar practiced in the golden ages of the Portuguese nation and which, “reduced to the simplest, clearest and easiest terms”, “is now practiced by the polished Nations of Europe”. This is the typical discursive strategy of the Pombaline legislation for the invention of an honorable tradition for the Portuguese nation: by electing the enemy, he becomes responsible for the state of Portugal’s delay and lag with respect to civilized Europe.

Thus, his memory has to be erased because it is a strange element in the development of Portuguese culture, since it represents an interruption of the formative process of the “imagined community” (ANDERSON, 2008) of the Portuguese people.

What stands out in his legislative writings is a kind of “historical self-consciousness”. According to Carvalho (1978, 54), it constitutes the main characteristic of the Portuguese Enlightenment. As he points out, it “is not a formula that has been imposed, made and finished”, but an expression of a precise historical moment, with all of its spatio-temporal peculiarities. Such “historical self-consciousness”, however, when assuming the air of recovery of a lost time, is configured as a discursive strategy for the construction of the Portuguese national identity, since it mobilizes foundational myths, electing the sixteenth century as the age of the Portuguese colonial expansion and camonian poetry. Once again, the myth of Europe assumes the role of civilizational parameter in an attempt to support the golden age of Portuguese culture, while the priests of Society of Jesus represent the delay of the present situation. In this way, the Pombaline legislation takes on a redemptive aspect. While projecting the structural changes it proposes and orders into the future, it looks to the past and (re)writes it, by constructing – or inventing – a tradition that shows itself in full harmony with the guidelines established by the Pombaline government (FRANCO, 2006).

Carvalho (1978, p. 190) concludes his pioneering study affirming the Absolutism and the Enlightenment of the Pombaline reforms of public instruction, since the crown claimed for itself a task that until then was in the hands of the ecclesiastics and the programs and directives of the reform were presented as “authentic expression of modern thought”, although in other passages it has attempted to relativize this Enlightenment by defining it as “eclectic” and “reformist” or “regalist”. Falcon (1993, p. 363) is exhaustive in identifying the enlightened character of the Pombaline legislation, whose “vocabulary and thought-forms typically illustrated, justify reformist measures in sharp contrast with positions set over a long tradition throughout time”. Perhaps this is the main paradox of the Pombaline Enlightenment: the union between the Christian faith, monarchy and modern state, responsible for triggering the discursive strategies necessary for the imaginary construction of the Portuguese nation: foundational myths and the invention of tradition. In what regards the Portuguese case, a tradition that held public studies fomented by the kings in the name of the sciences, giving support to the monarchy and to the church. In this respect, it should be remembered that the faith in progress, the philosophical enthusiasm or the pursuit of happiness do not prevent the presence of Christianity, albeit

from a kind of “enlightened Christianity”. After all, faith in God is a condition for virtue and happiness. In the case of the Pombaline reforms, the discourse of its legislation appropriates religion to place it at the service of the State, school and Portuguese nation.

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