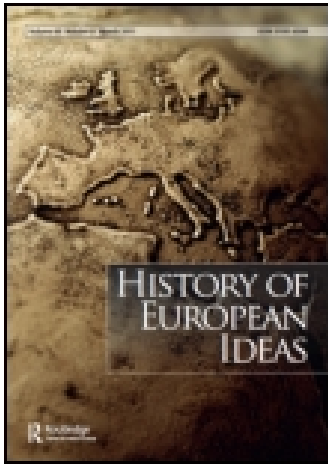


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### Landmarks of Economic Terminology: The First Portuguese Translation of Elémens du commerce

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## Landmarks of Economic Terminology: The First Portuguese Translation of *Elémens du commerce*

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### Summary

The history of languages is closely related to the history of other human activities. Ideally, hypotheses that are designed for linguistic questions on independent grounds should help to consolidate theories in other knowledge fields, such as the history of ideas. This paper deals with the first Portuguese translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce*, considering it as a lexical *corpus*. The linguistic analysis aims to contribute to the general knowledge about this text and its translations. Furthermore, a lexical analysis of Portuguese data can also be understood in the broader context of Romance languages. To this end, we analysed three linguistic expressions, perceived to be representative case-studies: identifying *circulação* as a terminological loan, the terminological use of a common word (i.e. *gênero* vs *denrées*) and the contrast between terms from different languages (e.g. *matéria prima* vs *matière première*). Translations are obvious tools for communicating new ideas. Carrying out linguistic analyses of translations can help to document how ideas take shape. Furthermore, translation studies provide linguistic evidence that is essential for the study of terminology from a diachronic and inter-linguistic standpoint. Data provided by translated texts helps to clarify the date when neologisms were first introduced in a given language. It also helps to identify possible sources of words and to decode the meaning behind lexical innovation. This paper is an example of the output of a contrastive lexicographic approach to Forbonnais's text.

**Keywords:** François Forbonnais; terminology; translation studies; Portuguese.

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### 1. The First Portuguese Translation of *Elémens*: Its Reception and Some Linguistic Issues

In 1754, François Véron Duverger de Forbonnais (1722–1800) published *Elémens du commerce* anonymously.<sup>1</sup> The book was widely disseminated in Europe, like many other

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<sup>1</sup> François Véron de Forbonnais, *Elémens du commerce* (Leiden, 1754).

essays on economics that were published without explicit authorship.<sup>2</sup> These were read either in the original language or as translated versions that did not take long to appear.

Published in 1766, the first Portuguese translation of *Elémens du commerce* did not contribute to the dissemination of Forbonnais's name in Portugal, since it made no reference to the author. Due to a lack of evidence, it is impossible to say whether the translator consciously omitted the name, or whether he was misinformed. Regardless, the intense intellectual debate on economics that was taking place in France at that time reached Portugal diffusely. Charles-Louis de Montesquieu (1689–1755) was probably the most reputed author in Portugal, given the fact that his book *De l'esprit des loix* (1748) was received as a seminal text for economics, politics and legislation.

Forbonnais was probably a minor reference at this point. Not only did he publish the work anonymously, but also because his points of view were more than once mistakenly assigned to Montesquieu. Cases in point are the *Extrait du livre de l'esprit des loix* (Amsterdam, 1753), *Considérations sur les finances d'Espagne* (Dresde, 1753) and *Recherches et considérations sur les finances de France* (Liège, 1758). Although other reasons might apply, this context has to be taken into consideration to understand why the first Portuguese translation of Forbonnais's text was assigned to Montesquieu.

The first Portuguese translation (*Elementos do commercio*) was published in 1766 by José Manuel Ribeiro Pereira, who had a degree in law.<sup>3</sup> It is understood that he had no formal education in modern languages, yet that did not keep him from translating literary texts such as Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742) and Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699).<sup>4</sup> His translations were not seemingly motivated by any special interest in economic matters, but rather on editorial reasons, related to the commercial success of classic French texts from the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Pereira's translation of Forbonnais's text was dedicated to the then Prime Minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, as a tribute to the excellence of his government's economic policy.<sup>6</sup> Pereira's decision to assign the authorship of this book to Montesquieu indicates, as mentioned before, that Montesquieu was perceived as an authority in the fields of economics, law and state administration. In the *Prologo*, Pereira makes a comparison between Pombal and Montesquieu, praising the Portuguese prime minister for excelling at executing Montesquieu's economic planning.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Christine Théré, 'Economic Publishing and Authors, 1566–1789', in *Studies in the History of French Political Economy: From Bodin to Walras*, edited by Gilbert Faccarello (London, 1998), 1–56.

<sup>3</sup> François Véron de Forbonnais, *Elementos do commercio*, translated by José Maria Ribeiro Pereira (Lisbon, 1766).

<sup>4</sup> Edward Young, *Noites selectas de Young*, translated by José Maria Ribeiro Pereira (Lisbon, 1781); François Fénelon, *As aventuras de Telémaco*, translated by José Maria Ribeiro Pereira (Lisbon, 1780). For further details on this translation, see Monica Lupetti and Marco E. L. Guidi, 'Translation as Import Substitution: The Portuguese Version of Véron de Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce*', this issue.

<sup>5</sup> The translation of Télémaque by Pereira was the first translation of this text into Portuguese (*Aventuras de Telemaco, filho de Ulysses*, 1765). It was reviewed in 1780 and reprinted in 1784. In 1785, he published *Aventuras finais de Telemaco*, with a follow up of the plot, which he invented. Meanwhile, other translations were published: *O Telemaco*, translated by Manuel de Sousa (1770), reprinted in 1776 and 1785; *Aventuras de Telémaco. Traduzido em verso português*, translated by Joaquim José Caetano Pereira e Sousa (1768), reprinted in 1787. De Sousa was the author of a French-Portuguese dictionary.

<sup>6</sup> Also known as the Marquis of Pombal, Sebastião José (1699–1782) was the Foreign Office Minister between 1750 and 1755, after which he became the Prime Minister of King José I until 1777.

<sup>7</sup> 'Offereço a V. Excellencia, vertidos no idioma Portuguez, os Elementos do Commercio, que compoz Carlos Seconda de Montequieu [I offer your excellency, translated into Portuguese, the *Elementos do Commercio*, written by Charles Secondat de Montesquieu], Varão quem tanto que no mundo existir a veneração dos Sabios, durará para sempre impresso na lembrança dos homens o seu nome pela grandeza das suas obras'. By comparing Pombal to Montesquieu, the translator says that the Prime Minister 'sabiamente illustra as maximas mercantís

Pereira's translation keeps the original chapter structure and, judging by the lexical selection, it seems to offer a literal transposition of terms, aimed at introducing terms that were not yet present in Portuguese terminology.<sup>8</sup>

However, we have identified some omissions that seem to have an impact on passages concerning social and political organisation. The study of these excerpts, in the framework of broader studies on the Portuguese social and political context, is not within the remit of our present paper. This hiatus may shed some light on mismatches between the economic doctrine disseminated in France and the Portuguese state administration policy.<sup>9</sup>

This Portuguese translation was probably less important than equivalent translations into other languages: in Portugal, whoever was interested in reading the translation could also read the original French text. The poor quality of the translation was also a factor: Inocência, a librarian at the National Library who published a bibliographical dictionary, expressed a negative opinion about it, accusing the translator of poor taste and excessive deference to the source language.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the Portuguese translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce* appears to attribute new meanings to existing Portuguese words and to borrow terms from the French. As we argue and hope to demonstrate, it is possible to establish that the translation fostered an exclusive terminology for economics and demonstrates the perviousness of the Portuguese lexicon to specialised vocabularies from the French. Furthermore, comparing languages that receive terminology from French allows us to identify terminological solutions that were originally developed in Portuguese and remained unchanged, despite contact with the terminology of the original language. These cases seem to demonstrate that the development of economics terminology in Portuguese also relies on its own general lexicon.

## 2. Terminologies and Linguistic Contact

Economics, understood here as an area of activity or as a scientific domain, requires a specialised language, able to express the distinction between concepts. This structured set of specialised vocabulary, organised within a particular field of knowledge or technical area, is a terminology that can be organised and taught.

A number of factors favour the possibility of having a stable terminology. In the case of economics, they all concur:

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deste escritor preclaro, e que as sabe fazer praticar, e proporcionar igualmente que elle as soube escrever [wisely illustrates the mercantile ideology of the famous writer, and adequately brings it to reality]'; see Pereira, in Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 5–6. All translations are my own.

<sup>8</sup> This is the case for the translation of *assurance* by the neologism *segurança* instead of *seguro* and the translation of *manufacturiers* by *manufacturarios*; see respectively Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 5 and Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 4; Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 81 and Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 66.

<sup>9</sup> An example of an omission in the translation is marked in italics below: 'Peu de citoyens l'embrasseroient dans une nation où ils n'auoient pas l'espérance d'être distingués à proportion des services qu'ils rendent; où le détailleur & l'artisan seroient vûs du même oeil, & rangés sous la même classe que celui qui les fait vivre : enfin où cette profession ne pourroit être suivie sûrement ni paisiblement, soit par les recherches dans leurs profits, soit par l'incertitude des loix'; see Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 229–30; Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 2, 18.

<sup>10</sup> 'A linguagem da versão abunda em neologismos e construcçõesafrancezadas patenteando a cada passo provas da imperícia e mau gosto do traductor [The language of the version has plenty of neologisms and French constructions that show the insufficient proficiency and bad taste of the translator]', 'todas estas traducções [...] são tidas na mesma conta. Ninguem as procura, nem as lê, [all of these translations are equally evaluated. No one looks for them, no one reads them]'; see Inocência Silva, *Dicionário bibliográfico Português*, 23 vols (Lisbon, 1858–1923), V, 10–11.

- Specialised languages are used and shared by a great number of professional agents and have a social value recognised by non-professional language users;
- There is ample documentation of the activity;
- There is an official academic training for the relevant field of activity;
- It is based on a natural language that is used for mutual understanding (generally English, nowadays), which provides a common reference and guarantees equivalent terminologies for different languages (ethnolects).

Contact between languages and cultures has been thoroughly explored in the study of the history of science. In fields such as literature, art, philosophy and economics, historians pay special attention to the reception and transformation of foreign stimuli, identifying predominant cultural influences, the time lag of response and the emergence of independent concepts. The lexicon, linguistic interferences, creation and dissemination of neologisms can all be the basis for the study of these different perspectives.

Linguists pay attention to language contact and to the emergence of neologisms, to identify their lexical or semantic origin and to assess the length and path of the transfer process. This helps to explain the changes that occurred in the shift process between languages. Furthermore, they seek to isolate all of the steps, if any, that induced a transformation in the target language.

A neologism occurs when a new word or phrase is introduced, but also when a word or phrase gains a new meaning. When this innovation is attributable to an interlingual contact, it is called a loan. A loan is, therefore, a word or phrase that is borrowed from a source language, keeping its original meaning. Sometimes the loan is not completely assimilated by the target language. In such cases, the incompatibility reveals itself in writing, which preserves its original form (e.g., *big bang*, *bestseller*, *bluff*, *brainstorming*). This sort of loan is called a foreignism. Purists, who are unaware of the purpose of terminology, tend to see foreign words as unhealthy contaminations.

Over time, loans tend to be assimilated, and they may acquire new meanings and an independent evolution. Evidence of the integration of a loan comes precisely from the acquisition of new meanings or from undergoing derivational processes that may not exist in the source language.

For instance, the term *retail* ('to sell in small amounts') is translated differently into each romance language (Table 1), even though the words share a common origin, from the Late Latin verb *TALIARE* ('to cut').<sup>11</sup> The similarity between the English and the Portuguese forms is explained by the linguistic contacts that took place in the long history

Table 1. Multi-lingual summary of the term *retail*.

Language	retail	to retail	retail dealer
Portuguese	retalho	vender a retalho	retalista
Spanish	detall	vender al detal	detallista
French	détail	détailler	détaillieur détaillant
Italian	dettaglio	vendere al dettaglio	dettagliante

<sup>11</sup> Roger Wright, *Early Ibero-Romance: Twenty-One Studies on Language and Texts from the Iberian Peninsula between the Roman Empire and the Thirteenth Century* (Newark, DE, 1994), 100.

of economic relationships and commercial trades between Portugal and England which began in the fourteenth century.

The semantic loan occurs when translating words from a source language. A word or a phrase, pre-existent in the target language, changes its meaning after entering into contact with another language, and it acquires a new, wider or narrower meaning. Such changes are seldom visible synchronically. A return to the moment of creation and dissemination of the terms is required, as well as the monitoring of their route from language to language.

We will now present the above-mentioned case studies. The first one concerns the transposition of the French terminological use of *circulation* into the Portuguese word *circulação*. The second regards the translation of the French term *denrée* into the Portuguese word *gênero*. The last example discusses the status of the Portuguese expression *materia primeira* as a translation of the French *matière première*.

### 3. *Circulação*: A Keyword for the Terminology of Economics

The French word *circulation* is registered in dictionaries as a term related to economics since the late seventeenth century. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (1694) provides a meaning that can have a literal interpretation ('Mouvement de ce qui circule', e.g., 'la circulation du sang'), and a figurative meaning, concerning money transactions: 'Ondit fig. La circulation de l'argent, pour exprimer le mouvement de l'argent qui passe d'une main à l'autre'.<sup>12</sup>

Portuguese dictionaries from the first half of the eighteenth century made regular use of the relevant information available in French dictionaries for the description of Portuguese words. In the case of *circulação*, the figurative meaning was never transposed. Consider the entry in Bluteau's Portuguese dictionary:

*Circulação*. A ação de andar à roda. *Circulatio, onis*. Fem. Vitruv. *Circulação do sangue*.

*Circular*. Verbo. (Termo da Medicina, e da chimica) Na Medicina, Circular se diz do sangue, que muytas vezes no dia por meyo das veas, e arterias passa do coração para as extremidades do corpo, e dellas se restitue ao coração.<sup>13</sup>

In one of the first French-Portuguese dictionaries, the figurative meaning is also disregarded, probably implying that it is unnecessary to understand the meaning of the French word:

*Circulation*, s.f. *Circulação*. La circulation du sang. A *circulação do sangue*.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, in French, *circulation* is used in connection with words that mean 'money' and 'goods'; as a single word, it means the trade of goods and capital. It is often used by Forbonnais, for instance, in lexical combinations which the author explains by paraphrasing. Therefore, it is assigned a terminological status:

Lorsque le Commerce est considéré par rapport à un corps politique, son opération consiste dans la *circulation intérieure* des denrées du pays ou des colonies,

<sup>12</sup> Académie Française, *Le dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris, 1694), s.v. *circulation*.

<sup>13</sup> Rafael Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, 10 vols (Coimbra-Lisbon, 1712–1728), s.v. *circulação*, *circular*.

<sup>14</sup> José Marques, *Nouveau dictionnaire des langues française, et portugaise* (Lisbon, 1758), s.v. *circulation*.

l'exportation de leur superflu, & l'importation des denrées étrangères, soit pour les consommer, soit pour les réexporter.<sup>15</sup>

Quando o Comercio he considerado a respeito de hum corpo politico, a sua operação consiste na *circulação interior* dos géneros do paiz, ou das Colónias, a exportação do seu superfluo, e a importação dos géneros estrangeiros, assim para os gastar, como para os reexportar.<sup>16</sup>

Le Commerce intérieur est celui que les membres d'une société font entr'eux. [...] Cette *circulation intérieure* est la consommation que les citoyens font des productions de leurs terres & de leur industrie dont elle est le premier soutien.<sup>17</sup>

O Comercio interior, he o que os membros de huma sociedade fazem entre si. [...] Esta *circulação interior* he o consumo que os cidadãos fazem das produções das suas terras, e da sua industria; de que elle he a baze.<sup>18</sup>

Ainsi l'opération de la *circulation* n'est autre chose que l'échange réitéré des denrées contre l'argent, & de l'argent contre les denrées.<sup>19</sup>

Assim a *circulação* não he outra coiza mais, que a repetição da troca dos géneros pelo dinheiro, e do dinheiro pelos géneros.<sup>20</sup>

Pereira's translation is literal and it borrows a terminological corpus established for French. This perception of the translator is confirmed by consulting the first edition of Forbonnais's texts. The book *Elémens du commerce* compiles and extends a series of articles he published one year before in the Diderot and d'Alembert *Encyclopédie*.<sup>21</sup> There, these terms appear in the middle of the entries, typed in italics, which reinforces their status as lexical units.

The Portuguese translation is acceptable because the same proximity of meaning that comes from the original French term is also understandable in Portuguese (*circular*, 'circular motion').

Other translations exhibit not only lexical calques, but also semantic loans. In eighteenth-century dictionaries, the verb *girar* and the noun *giro* are frequently used to account for circular movements, related to a journey ('girar por algum lugar'; 'girar alguma coisa').<sup>22</sup> In the translation of 'l'argent qui circuloit', Pereira is able to distinguish between regular and specialised use, so he chooses, accordingly, a common equivalent in Portuguese (*girar* instead of *circular*):

La *circulation* naturelle est interrompue à mesure que l'argent qui circuloit dans le commerce en est retiré.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 6–7.

<sup>16</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 5–6.

<sup>17</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 53.

<sup>18</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 43

<sup>19</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 91.

<sup>20</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 105.

<sup>21</sup> François Véron de Forbonnais, 'Commerce', in Denis Diderot and Jean Baptiste d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 17 vols (Paris, 1751–1772), III, 690–99.

<sup>22</sup> Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, s.v. girar.

<sup>23</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 96–97.

*A circulação natural se interrompe à proporção que sahe do Commercio o dinheiro, que nelle girava.*<sup>24</sup>

This translation presents a combinatorial solution of some significance in Portuguese, since we repeatedly find it occurring with the word *dinheiro* ('money') in dictionaries that were published in subsequent years:

Circulation. s.f. Circulação, movimento do que circula § *Circulation de l'argent*, Circulação, *gyro do dinheiro*.

Circuler, v.n. Circular, mover-se circularmente. Diz-se do sangue. § Fig. Circular, gyrrar: Diz-se do dinheiro. § *Faire circuler des billets*. Fazer circular, *gyrrar bilhetes* no Commercio.<sup>25</sup>

Circulação, s.f. Giro em Roda: v.g. a circulação do sangue §. fig. *O giro, do dinheiro*, v.g.<sup>26</sup>

In short, although *circulação* was already a Portuguese word (meaning 'circular movement'), the contact with the French terminology of economics is responsible for the attribution of a new meaning, i.e., 'exchange of money'. The first translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce* can therefore be considered a landmark for this semantic neologism.

#### 4. Independent Terminological Traditions: The Case of *Denrées* and *Géneros*

In French, *denrée* is the term that designates 'merchandise', that is, produce for consumption. A second term, *genre*, is used to refer to 'genus', 'species', i.e., common properties that characterise a group or species. In Portuguese, however, only one word, *género*, is used for both meanings. The two French terms appear, for instance, in the following excerpt of *Elémens du commerce*. In the Portuguese translation, the term *género* is used for both meanings:

Ces mots de *bon marché* ou de *cherté* d'une marchandise, ont une application relative à son *genre*, à sa qualité, à sa plus belle fabrication [...]. Nous entendons ici en général, par ces mots, le plus haut ou le moindre prix d'une *denrée* comparée à une autre de même *genre*, de même qualité, de même perfection de travail.<sup>27</sup>

Estas palavras de *barato*, ou *caro* de huma mercadoria tem huma aplicação relativa ao seu *genero*, sua qualidade e o seu bom fabrico [...]. Nós aqui só entendemos por estas palavras, o mais alto ou o mais baixo preço de um *genero* comparado a outro do mesmo *genero*, da mesma qualidade, e da mesma perfeição do trabalho.<sup>28</sup>

In the French terminology of economics, both *denrée* and *genre* belong to a semantic field that includes other terms, namely *marchandise* and *production*. When terms like *marchandise(s)* or *production(s)* occur, the Portuguese translator's choices are unequivocal: *marchandise* is *mercadoria*; *production* is *produção*. This means that *mercadoria*

<sup>24</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 109.

<sup>25</sup> Joaquim Sá, *Nouveau dictionnaire françois-portugais*, 2 vols (Lisbon, 1784–1786), s.v. circulation, circuler.

<sup>26</sup> António Morais Silva, *Diccionário da lingua Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1789), s.v. circulação.

<sup>27</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 279–80.

<sup>28</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 159.



was a well-known word and *produção* was already available with a meaning close to the one that the French text wanted to express.

Lorsque le Commerce est considéré comme l'occupation d'un citoyen [...] son opération consiste dans l'achat, la vente, ou l'échange des *marchandises* dont d'autres hommes ont besoin.<sup>29</sup>

Quando o Commerciohe considerado como a ocupação de hum cidadão [...] a sua operação consiste na compra, na venda, ou na troca das *mercadorias*, de que os outros homens necessitam.<sup>30</sup>

Par le mot *Commerce* on entend dans le sens general, *une communication réciproque*. Il s'applique plus particulièrement à la communication que les homes se font entr'eux des *productions* de leurs terres & de leur industrie.<sup>31</sup>

Pela palavra *Commercio* se entende geralmente *huma comunicação reciproca*; e mais particularmente se aplica á comunicação, que os homens fazem entre si, das *producçoens* das suas terras, e da sua industria.<sup>32</sup>

The term corresponding to *marchandise*, that is *mercadoria*, has been available in Portuguese since the thirteenth of fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> *Produção*, conversely, was a recent term at the time—etymological dictionaries trace it to the eighteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the word *produção* appears in dictionaries from 1697 onwards, meaning 'that which is produced, grown';<sup>35</sup> and in Bluteau's *Vocabulário* (1712–1728) it is frequently assigned the same meaning.<sup>36</sup>

The same happens with *genre*, matching the Portuguese word *género*, which is registered since the fifteenth century with the meaning 'class, set with similar characteristics'.<sup>37</sup>

Une étoffe de la qualité la plus inférieure, pourra être appelée parfaite dans son *genre*, comme celle de la qualité la plus supérieure, si toutes deux valent également leur prix.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Antônio Houaiss, Mauro Villar and Francisco Franco, *Dicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa* (Rio de Janeiro, 2009), s.v. mercadoria; Antônio Geraldo da Cunha, *Vocabulário histórico-cronológico do português medieval* (Rio de Janeiro, 2007), s.v. mercar; José Pedro Machado, *Dicionário etimológico da língua portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1967), s.v. mercadoria (dates the word to 1339).

<sup>34</sup> Houaiss, Villar and Franco, *Dicionário Houaiss*, s.v. produção, dates the word to 1720; see also Cunha, *Vocabulário histórico-cronológico*, s.v. produto; Machado, *Dicionário etimológico*, s.v. produção.

<sup>35</sup> Bento Pereira, *Prosodia in vocabularium bilingue* (Evorae, 1697), s.v. productio.

<sup>36</sup> Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, s.v. Zéphyro ('Zéphyro: Fabuloso Nume que na opinião dos Gentios favorecia a criação das flores, e frutos da terra, que dava alento às plantas, vigor, e vida a todas as *producçoens* do campo'); Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, s.v. Physico ('Para as *producçoens* da natureza, he necessidade Physica achar a fôrma disposições na matéria').

<sup>37</sup> Houaiss, Villar and Franco, *Dicionário Houaiss*, s.v. género; Cunha, *Vocabulário histórico-cronológico*, s.v. género; Machado, *Dicionário etimológico*, s.v. género.

<sup>38</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 275–76.

Huma droga da mais inferior qualidade, poderá ser perfeita no seu *genero*, como a outra de qualidade mais superior, se ambas valerem igualmente o seu preço.<sup>39</sup>

*Denrée* is different because there is no direct corresponding form in Portuguese:

Les *denrées* d'un pays en général sont les productions naturelles de ses terres, de ses rivieres ou de ses mers, & celles de son industrie.<sup>40</sup>

Os *generos* de hum paiz em geral são as produçoens naturaes das suas terras, dos seus rios, ou dos seus mares, e os da sua industria.<sup>41</sup>

Les peuples intelligens qui n'ont pas trouvé dans leurs terres de quoi suppléer aux trois especes de besoins, ont acquis des terres dans les climats propres aux *denrées* qui leur manquoient.<sup>42</sup>

Os povos inteligentes, não tendo achado nas suas terras com que supprir às tres especies de precizoens, adquirirão terras nos climas propios aos *generos*, que lhe faltavão.<sup>43</sup>

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Bluteau registers *género* with the same meaning as *mercadoria*; but this is an ancillary meaning:

Género. Gráo Metaphysico, que abrange muitas espécies. Essencia, ou natureza universal, que pode estar em duas, ou muitas cousas de diferentes especies, e numero. Genus, eris; Genero (Termo Grammatical.) O que constitue a diferença dos nomes fazendo os masculinos, ou femininos.

O genero humano. Todos os homens em geral.

Genero. O que tendo a mesma natureza, se separa de tudo, o que lhe nãohe semelhante. *Genero de mercancia*. Mercis genus, eris.<sup>44</sup>

In 1789, Morais still defines *género* merely as the resemblance of attributes, or properties, to be found in individuals that belong to two or more otherwise different species.<sup>45</sup> *Género*, therefore, was a polysemic word, that is, a word that has at least two different meanings. Although the secondary meaning was infrequently used, its existence allows for its recycling as a terminological resource and a good translation for *denrée*.

Cases of polysemy often undergo frequency shifts, promoting a particular meaning to the status of being most frequently used. This is probably what happened in the case of *género*, in Portuguese. In the sixteenth century, the word *género* was always synonymous to 'type, class, group', but in the seventeenth century, *género* was already being used as an equivalent to 'goods'. It is precisely this secondary, less frequently used meaning that would become the translation of *denrée*.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 6–7.

<sup>43</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, s.v. *género*.

<sup>45</sup> Silva, *Diccionário da lingua Portuguesa*, s.v. *género*.

<sup>46</sup> 'O Olandês mandava aos seus socorro de gente, artelharia, munições, armas, mantimentos, e refrescos com ordem, que descarregadas as embarcações, metessem nellas os *generos*'; see Rafael de Jesus, *Castrioto lusitano* (Lisbon, 1679), 84–85.

It is likely that this secondary and rare meaning became more commonplace due to the translation of French texts, such as those by Forbonnais. Indeed, the use of *gênero* as ‘product, merchandise’ became increasingly common from then onwards. While in 1789 the largest Portuguese dictionary did not accept that *genero* might mean ‘goods’, available documents prove the opposite. At least since 1756 the word had been used in legislation to refer to *mercadoria* such as hams, sardines and olive oil, among others.<sup>47</sup>

In this second case, we deal with the search for a term that is made necessary by the course of events, namely by the translation of Forbonnais’s book, but no direct transposition from the French is available. The word *denrée* evolved from the Latin DENARIU – ‘money’ – which yielded *dénérée* in French, meaning ‘something that has value, goods’. The Portuguese word *dinheiro* ‘money’ has the same Latin etymon, but it never meant ‘goods’.<sup>48</sup> The solution apparently consisted of adopting a sort of hypernym of *denrée* in French (i.e., *genre*), which was possible because *gênero* in Portuguese can have a general or more restricted meaning.

### 5. Attempts to Harmonise Terminologies: *Matière première*, *materia prima*

Another interesting case concerns the Portuguese translation of the French term *matière première* from Forbonnais’s text. Its first lexicographic register occurs in the 1690 edition of Furetière’s dictionary.<sup>49</sup> This expression was probably formed in French from the Latin expression *materia rerum prima*, long used in philosophical dissertations. In Portuguese, the philosophical expression used for centuries was *matéria prima*.<sup>50</sup> At the time, the expression *materia primeira* was rare, and its occurrence was not terminological.<sup>51</sup>

In the field of economics, the consensual translation since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been *matéria prima*, but we have detected some instances of the use of *materia primeira* in the eighteenth century that deserve to be further observed and better explained. The difference between *prima* and *primeira* is tenuous. They are both adjectives and are almost equivalent in meaning. The same happened with their Latin etymons, as Latin dictionaries testify.<sup>52</sup>

In Latin, the difference between these two adjectives has a morphological underpinning (*primarius* is formed by suffixation of *-arius*, probably to the root of *primus*). It also has a visible effect on their usage rate: the shorter form’s frequency seems to decrease in time. Most Roman languages have inherited the Latin form *primus*, but in French (cf. *prime*), Castilian (cf. *primo*, *-a*) and Portuguese (cf. *primo*, *-a*) these words are seldom used as synonyms of *premier*, *primero* and *primeiro*, respectively. They occur almost exclusively in terminological phrases, illustrated in Table 2:

<sup>47</sup> ‘Relação geral dos gêneros permitidos pelo Alvará de 11 de Dezembro de 1756’, 6 November 1788 (Portuguese legislation).

<sup>48</sup> *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. *denrée*, <http://atilf.atilf.fr/> (accessed 10 January 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (The Hague, 1690), s.v. *matière*.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Na Filosofia toma-se por qualquer sugeito, ou sujeito, capaz de receber fórmassubstanciaes, ou accidentaes, em quanto se considera com abstracção de todas ellas, e esta se chama *materia prima*’; see Bluteau, *Vocabulário português e latino*, s.v. *matéria*.

<sup>51</sup> ‘E quem namve que esta só seria entam a *materia primeira* de todas as cousas’; see João de Lucena, *História da vida dom padre S. Francisco Xavier* (Lisbon, 1788), 219.

<sup>52</sup> Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu> (accessed 10 January 2014).

Table 2. Similarities of meaning between the Latin etymons of *prima* and *primeira*.

<i>prīmus, a, um</i>	<i>Prīmārius, a, um</i>
<i>adj. sup. the first, first</i> (properly only when three or more are referred to.)	<i>adj. one of the first, of the first rank, chief, principal, excellent, remarkable</i>

French *de prime abord* = au premier abord, en premier lieu.

Castilian *hilo primo* = hilo muy blanco y delicado, con el cual, encerado, se cosen los zapatos finos.

Portuguese *obra prima* = o que é perfeito em seu gênero.

Notice that in these languages, the long form has an unrestricted use, and in French this preference also affects terminological expressions such as the following:

French *nombre premier;*  
*matière première.*

Castilian *número primo;*  
*matéria prima.*

Portuguese *número primo;*  
*matéria prima.*

In Italian and Romanian, the long Latin form (i.e., *primarius*) has not been inherited, so the short form occurs in common and in terminological uses:

Italian *prima volta;*  
*matéria prima.*

Romanian *prima data;*  
*materie primă.*

French *première fois;*  
*matière première.*

Castilian *primera vez;*  
*matéria prima.*

Portuguese *primeira vez;*  
*matéria prima.*

Data provided by linguistic comparison are therefore coherent: Italian and Romanian prefer the old Latin form. The most recent form is preferred by French, Castilian and Portuguese, but they also preserve the oldest form of the word in terminological terms (to a bigger extent in the case of Castilian and Portuguese).

Considering what has just been said, the incidence of *materia primeira* in Pereira's translation of Forbonnais contradicts the expected:

Si les *matieres premieres* sont du crû des colonies, l'état perdra en outre le bénéfice de la navigation.<sup>53</sup>

Se as *matérias primeiras* são do cruo das Colónias, perderá o Estado além disso a navegação.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Forbonnais, *Eléments*, 51.

<sup>54</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 40.

Enfin, la confection d'un pareil traité exige une profonde connoissance du commerce des deux nations contractantes, de leurs ressources réciproques, de leur population, du prix et de la qualité des *matieres premieres*.<sup>55</sup>

Finalmente a factura de hum semelhante tratado requer hum profundo conhecimento do Commercio das duas naçoens contractantes, dos seus mútuos recursos, da sua povoação, do preço, e das qualidades das *matérias primeiras*.<sup>56</sup>

Until the late eighteenth century, other authors also used this new economics term:

Os direitos interiores actualmente impostos sobre as manufacturas, ou os de entrada, que se cobrão sobre as *matérias primeiras*.<sup>57</sup>

Ninguém duvida já que sem a cultura da terra todo o commercio he precario, porque lhe faltão os primeiros cabedaes, que são as producções da natureza: que sem as *materias primeiras* as manufacturas não podem subsistir.<sup>58</sup>

Por tanto hum methodo prompto e pouco despendioso de trabalhar estas duas *matérias primeiras* nas suas numerosas fabricas, produzirá a preferencia dos seus tecidos em outras partes.<sup>59</sup>

Records found in the nineteenth century rehabilitate the traditional philosophical term by electing *matéria prima* as an economics term that remains unchanged to the present date.<sup>60</sup>

From a linguistic point of view, the appearance of the expression *materia primeira* for a period of 30 years is explained by contamination from French sources. However, its subsequent rejection, demonstrated by the recovery of *matéria prima*, seems to indicate that the foreignism was not well received—and it confirms Inocêncio's negative judgement on the quality of the translation.<sup>61</sup>

## 6. Closing Remarks

Texts that give birth to a terminological tradition are a very interesting source of information for linguists. Terminology is the exercise of communication not only between languages, but also between words of the same language. When a speciality domain starts to draw the attention of a large number of speakers, the terms have to adapt to common words, those that bear unspecialised uses. The study of translations can clarify these adjustments, considering that they are intended to disseminate knowledge and therefore meant to clearly explain meaning.

In this paper, we presented three different case studies from the Portuguese translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce: circulation, géneros, and matéria prima*. The

<sup>55</sup> Forbonnais, *Elémens*, 78.

<sup>56</sup> Forbonnais, *Elementos*, part 1, 61.

<sup>57</sup> *Gazeta de Lisboa*, 1 June 1787, 3.

<sup>58</sup> José Inácio da Costa, 'Memoria agronomica, relativa ao concelho de Chaves', in *Memorias economicas da Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1789), 351–98 (351).

<sup>59</sup> *Correio mercantil e economico de Portugal*, 6 November 1798, 356.

<sup>60</sup> '[...] e conhecendo os lucros que Portugal podia tirar das manufacturas e sedas, huma vez que a matéria prima não viesse de paizes estrangeiros'; Sebastião Trigo, *Historia e memorias da Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1823), part VIII, section II, xviii.

<sup>61</sup> I. Silva, *Dicionário bibliográfico Português*, V, 10–11.

analysis we presented provides solid evidence that the translation of terminological lexica helps to consolidate an equivalent terminology in the target language, either by direct transposition of the source terms or by showing how to do it by strictly using the resources of the target language.

The compared study of this terminological sample has shown the adequacy of the methods we adopted. The results seem to encourage the replication of this type of study, by including a larger sample of texts from the economics domain and a broader number of languages.