

BETWEEN PRIMERS AND CATECHISMS: the alphabet in the service of the empire (1502-1798)

Entre cartinhas e catecismos: o alfabeto a serviço do Império (1502-1798)

Entre cartillas y catecismos: El alfabeto latino al servicio del Imperio portugués (1502-1798)

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Abstract: This article examines how the imposition of the Latin alphabet related to Portuguese imperial expansion between the 16th and 18th centuries. It analyzes the pre-textual elements of selected primers and catechisms from the period, linking them to contemporary legislation and to the educational, linguistic, and cultural historiography on the topic. The study concludes that teaching and learning the alphabet—understood as the “first letters” in the strict sense—relied on two pedagogical compendia, primers and catechisms, which correspond to three phases of Portuguese imperial expansion: (1) the use of Portuguese in Africa and Asia (1502–1563); (2) the colonization of Indigenous and African languages (1563–1757); and (3) the “civilization” of Indigenous peoples (1757–1798).

Keywords: literacy; primers; catechisms; colonization.

Resumo: Este artigo discute o modo como a imposição do alfabeto latino relaciona-se com a expansão imperial portuguesa entre os séculos XVI e XVIII. Para tanto, buscamos analisar os elementos pré-textuais de algumas Cartinhas e Catecismos da época, relacionando-os com a legislação e a historiografia educacional, linguística e cultural referente ao assunto. Concluiu-se que o ensino e aprendizagem do alfabeto, ou das “primeiras letras”, em sentido estrito, no período recortado, foi viabilizado por dois tipos de compêndio pedagógico: Cartinhas e Catecismos, que se relacionam com três momentos da expansão imperial portuguesa: 1) o português na África e na Ásia (1502-1563); 2) a colonização das línguas indígenas e africanas (1563-1757); e 3) a “civilização” dos povos indígenas (1757-1798).

Palavras-chave: alfabetização, cartinhas, catecismos, colonização.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza cómo la imposición del alfabeto latino se relacionó con la expansión imperial portuguesa entre los siglos XVI y XVIII. Se examinan los elementos pretextuales de una selección de cartillas y catecismos de la época, vinculándolos con la legislación contemporánea y con la historiografía educativa, lingüística y cultural sobre el tema. El estudio concluye que la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del alfabeto—entendido como las “primeras letras” en sentido estricto—se apoyaron en dos compendios pedagógicos, cartillas y catecismos, que corresponden a tres fases de la expansión imperial portuguesa: (1) la difusión del portugués en África y Asia (1502–1563); (2) la colonización de las lenguas indígenas y africanas (1563–1757); y (3) la “civilización” de los pueblos indígenas (1757–1798).

Palabras clave: alfabetización; cartillas; catecismos; colonización.

INTRODUCTION

The term "alphabetization", by its very etymological root, immediately reminds us of "alphabet," a word of Greek origin that, through its Latin form [*alphabetum*], came to have two basic meanings in the Portuguese language: a set of letters "placed in order" that form a writing system, according to the definition of Rafael Bluteau (1638-1734) in his *Vocabulário português e latino* (Bluteau, 1712, p. 280); and "the first letters that are made known to those who learn to read," according to Antonio de Moraes e Silva (1755-1824) in his *Diccionario da lingua portugueza* (Silva, 1789, p. 55). From a grammatical, or linguistic, perspective, an alphabet is a form of phonetic writing, as it seeks to represent, through graphemes (minimum units of writing), the phonemes (basic units of sound) of a language, through highly complex combinatorial operations, as noted by Havelock (1995, p. 31).

From this perspective, the word "alphabet", even though it describes the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, *alpha* and *beta*, is related to "alphabetization", that is, to the act of teaching and learning the *Primeiras Letras* [First Letters], an expression that in Portuguese means teaching "elementary knowledge," to use Hébrard's expression (1990). Unlike the modes of knowledge appropriation of oral social forms, in which "know-how" is activated only in particular situations of use and learning occurs through practice, in a process of acquisition that presupposes mimesis and identification (Vincent et al., 2001, pp. 22-23), the alphabet presents itself as something objective, which must be taught and learned methodically and systematically, despite having coexisted for many centuries with social practices based on orality. Thus, mastery of the written language, starting from its rudiments, gradually becomes necessary to gain access not only to school but also to various sectors of social life. However, despite its functionality and importance, recognized since its inception, the alphabet, understood as literacy, only became universal during the Renaissance, with colonization and the spread of writing technology and printed books, imposing new ways of seeing, feeling, and being in the world on various human groups, often violently. The importance of the alphabet in the late Renaissance, that is, in sixteenth-century Europe, and its relationship with the colonization process can be illustrated by the figure of Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), professor of Rhetoric at the University of Alcalá and author of the first vernacular grammar: *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492), whose preface states that "language has always been a companion of the empire" (Nebrija, 1492, p. i). Although not a precedent in its genre (Auroux, 1992, p. 14), Nebrija's Grammar is a pioneer in several ways, especially regarding the interconnections between letters, language, and territory, or territoriality, especially because it was published in the year that European colonial expansion began on what became known as the American continent, with the arrival of the Spanish on an island that now belongs to the Bahamas, on October 12, 1492.

Not by chance, in the sixteenth century, the alphabet had already acquired an indisputable primacy over oral social forms. An eloquent example of such primacy is the case of the chronicler Pedro de Magalhães de Gândavo (c. 1540-c. 1580), author of *Regras que ensinam a maneira de escreuer a orthographia da lingoa portuguesa* [Rules that teach the way to write the orthography of the Portuguese language] (1574), the first work of its kind in the Portuguese language. In *História da província Santa Cruz* [History of the Province of Santa Cruz] (1576), he states that the language used along the coast of Brazil lacked three letters: F, L, and R, “a thing worthy of astonishment, because in this way they have neither Faith, nor Law, nor King” (as cited in Alcides, 2009, p. 39). Thus, to the extent that it serves the needs of the Prince, or the Monarchy, as well as the Church, in their colonial endeavors, the alphabet, and therefore literacy, beyond the violence involved in its implementation, is related to territorial expansion, that is, with territoriality, and with the construction of a memory for the conquered lands (Gruzinski, 1999).

THE PORTUGUESE IN AFRICA AND ASIA (1502-1563)

While the process of Spanish colonial expansion began in 1492, the year of the publication of Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana*, in Portugal it began with the capture of Ceuta in 1415, motivated by at least three predominant factors: commercial interest in African gold, for which the Crown had obtained financing from Portuguese, Italian, and German bankers and merchants for its military campaign; the propagation of the Christian faith, which led, just two years later, to the establishment of a Roman Catholic diocese, where Bishop Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas (1480-1544) was appointed; and, no less important, the myth of Prestes João, the legendary Christian sovereign of the East mentioned by Marco Polo (1254-1324) and by Prince Pedro (1392-1449), in his *Carta de Bruges* [Letter from Bruges], sent to King Duarte I (1391-1438) in 1426, giving an account of everything he saw in the “seven parts of the world” (Coelho, 1996). Of the three factors listed above, it was the spread of the Christian faith that would trigger the process of universalization of the alphabet, through the production of Primers, dedicated to its teaching and spelling in Portuguese, shortly after the arrival of the printing press in 1465. As Américo Cortez Pinto (1896-1979) eloquently informs us, among “the most authentic glories that in the history of civilization belong to the Portugal of the Discoveries” is the fact that it was the first country to print “ABC Primers to teach reading to the African and Asian Peoples.” According to the author, it was King Manuel (1469-1521), who became known as a persecutor of the Moors and Jews, who was responsible for sending Primers and Catechisms to the overseas conquests, having been the first “Head of State” to understand that teaching the language was the best way to propagate and establish what he called “the spirit of a Homeland.” Thus, in 1515, he sent 2,500 volumes and a printing press as a gift to the

Negus, that is, the king of ancient Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia). Among the volumes there were 2,000 Primers and 42 Catechisms (Pinto, 1948, p. 238). As Cristóvão (1998, p. 698) explains, few Primers have survived because, in addition to being frequently handled and easily deteriorating, they were considered "minor literature," with no guaranteed place in libraries.

It is important to distinguish between these two types of pedagogical compendia. The Primer contains the rudiments of reading, and the Catechism the material of Christian Doctrine. One precedes the other, although both types sometimes appear in the same Compendium. According to Verdelho (1995, p. 58), at the beginning of the 16th century, thousands of Primers were printed in Portuguese, as "the expansionist campaign demanded, in the first instance, a good functionalization of the vernacular language", enabling the exchange between the metropolis and the newly conquered territories. Thus, they became fundamental devices for the formulation of the first Grammars (Mariguela, 2010, p. 43). These Grammars, like the Primers, are inextricably linked to the colonization process, as we saw in the case of Nebrija, but this relationship is also very explicit in Fernão de Oliveira (1507-1561), in his *Gammatica da Linguagem Portuguesa* (1536), and in João de Barros (c.1496-1570), in *Gramatica da Lingua Portuguesa* (1540), works that served the Portuguese expansionist project, making the language an instrument of unity and cohesion in the construction of the empire (Lemos & Franco, 2019, p. 31). In the case of João de Barros (2008), his *Cartinha para aprender a ler* [Primer to Learn to Read] (1539) was composed when the author served as Feitor da Casa da Índia, a position to which he had been appointed in 1532 to teach Portuguese to the princes of the East (Pinto, 1948, p. 254).

João de Barros's Primer is innovative in several ways. In this first illustrated textbook in history, the author presents the letters of the alphabet associating them with illustrative drawings, a playful and pedagogical resource that would only be explored more than a hundred years later, particularly in Johann Amos Comenius's (1592-1679) *Orbis sensualis pictus* (1658). Dedicated to Prince Philip, born in 1533 and whose premature death occurred in 1539, almost eight months before the work was printed, the Primer, immediately after the frontispiece, contains a *Tauoa*, that is, a summary describing its entire contents, which includes the *Grãmatica da lingua portuguesa: e ortografia com que se á de screuer* [Grammar of the Portuguese language; and the orthography with which one should write]; *Hum diálogo em louuor da nossa linguágem e Hum diálogo da viciôsa vergonha* [A dialogue in praise of our language]; His intention was to publish it in a single work, together with the *Dialogue of Vicious Shame* and the *Grammar of the Portuguese Language*, which includes the *Diálogo em Louvor da nossa linguagem* [Dialogue in Praise of Our Language], in 1540, but the *Primer* was published a year earlier.

Although there are still some copies of handwritten or printed Primers without a defined author or date, as we can see from the survey by Rossi (2017), who collected

in the digital collection of the National Library of Portugal and the Public Library of Évora a total of nine sixteenth-century Primers – João de Barros', Frei João Soares' (1507-1572), *Cartinha para Ensinar a Ler, com as Doutrinas da Prudência Adjunta Uma Solfa de Cantigas para Atiçar a Curiosidade* [Primer to Teach Reading, with the Doctrines of Prudence Attached, A Solfa of Songs to Arouse Curiosity] (1554) and seven anonymous ones –, the first copy of the genre, dated 1502, was found by Isabel Villares Cepeda and released to the public in 1988, in a paper at the *Colloquium on the Ancient Book* held in Lisbon. According to the author, only six Gothic pages have survived, whose typographical characteristics were similar to those of the Italian printer Giovanni Pietro Bonomini of Cremona (Giovan Pietro Bonomini), who began working in Lisbon in 1501 (Cepeda, 1992). Her hypothesis is that the mutilated part of the Primer referred to the linguistic part, since the remaining pages, two folded in 16-point format, are dedicated to the basic principles of Christian Doctrine, consisting of seven texts in Portuguese: five are prayers—Our Father, Hail Mary, Hail Holy Queen; the list of the Ten Commandments and the Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy: Our Father, Hail Mary, Hail Holy Queen; the Ten Commandments; the Seven Works of Mercy; the Prayer to the Host; and the Prayer to the Chalice. This canon, it seems, became the model for other sixteenth-century Letters, according to the same author in another article (Cepeda, 1995, p. 258).

Before this discovery, it was believed that the first published Primer dated from 1534, five years before the publication of João de Barros's, and was printed by the French typographer Germão Galharde, who settled in Lisbon around 1519 and, in 1539, obtained a royal decree from King João III (1502-1557) granting him a monopoly on printing such booklets for ten years (Pinto, 1948, p. 249). According to Rossi's survey (2017, p. 71), there are three other editions of Letters, all anonymous, published by Galharde, two undated and one from 1554: *Cartinha pera e[n]sinar leer: cõ as doutrinas da prude[n]cia e regra de viuer em paz, Nouame[n]te empremida cõ privilegio del Rey nosso señor* [Letter to teach how to read: with the doctrines of prudence and the rule of living in peace, Newly pressed with the privilege of the King our lord], Lisbon, [undated]; *Cartilha pera ensinar a leer* [Primer to teach how to read], Germão Galhardo, Lisbon, [undated]; *Cartinha para ensinar a leer. Cõ as doctinas da prudencia. E os dez mandamentos da ley: Cõ suas contras. Agora nouamente*, [Primer to teach how to read. With the doctrines of prudence. And the ten commandments of the law: With their contras. Now newly], Germão Galharde, Lisbon, 1534. The gap of more than thirty years between the publication of the first two dated Primers indicates that many copies were lost, especially if we consider, as Cepeda (1995, p. 258) states, that during this period there were "massive shipments of Primers to recently discovered lands."

Perhaps the most republished Primer was that of Friar João Soares' (1507-1572), entitled *Cartinha para Ensinar a Ler, com as Doutrinas da Prudência Adjunta Uma Solfa de Cantigas para Atiçar a Curiosidade* [Prime to Teach Reading, with the Doctrines of Prudence Attached, A Solfa of Songs to Stir Curiosity] (1554). Fernando Castelo-Branco

(1971, p. 134-147), in his pioneering text on the subject, states that the Primer was initially part of his *Cartinha para ensinar a ler e escrever, com o tratado dos remedios contra os sete peccados mortaes* [*Book of Remedies against the Seven Deadly Sins*], published in Lisbon in 1543 and kept in the Public Library of Évora, but it was lost and cataloged separately. The author attributes the Primer to Friar João Soares based on typographic characteristics, which would be very similar to those of the editorial workshop of João Barreira and João Álvares. Rossi (2017, p. 72) lists three editions of the work: an undated one, entitled *Cartinha para ensinar a ler e escrever, com o tratado dos remedios contra os sete peccados mortaes* [*Primer to Teach Reading and Writing, with the treatise on Remedies against the Seven Deadly*] Sins, printed by João Álvares and João de Barreira in Coimbra; one from 1660 and another from 1672, noting that the editorial history centered on the dating of the first edition of this Little Letter is quite complex, since, according to the bibliographic information available in various studies, it dates from 1554.

The structure of the genre Primer was summarized by Castelo-Branco (1972, p. 293) objectively, as a small book divided into two parts, one intended for teaching the alphabet and spelling and the other, “always much larger,” composed of texts of a religious nature for reading, like a “true catechism.” After compiling descriptive records of the nine Primers published in the 16th century that she was able to identify, comparing the textual and paratextual information of each one, Maria Antonietta Rossi states that their invariability leads her to the conclusion that they are reissues of the same basic Primer (Rossi, 2017, p. 78). Regarding the synonymy between the terms *Cartinha* and *Cartilha*, in Portuguese, the author observes that they have different meanings in the *Dictionarium latino lusitanicum & vice versa lusitanico latinum* (1570), by Jerônimo Cardoso (1508-1569), in which *Cartilha* means alphabetical table, and *Cartinha*, epistle, but that in the *Thesouro da Lingoa portuguesa* [*Treasure of the Portuguese Language*] (1647), by the Jesuit priest Bento Pereira (1606-1681), the terms appear as synonyms. In the following century, only the variant *Cartilha* began to be used for this type of pedagogical compendium, and its use lasted until at least the beginning of the 20th century (Boto, 2004), although Bluteau, in his *Vocabulario portuguez e latino* [*Portuguese and Latin vocabulary*] (1712-1728), records three variants of the term – *Cartilha*, *Cartinha* and *Carta da ABC* –, taking up both Jerônimo Cardoso and Bento Pereira, as well as the scheme proposed by Nebrija, in his *Vocabulario de Romance en latín* [*Romance vocabulary in Latin*], published in 1585: *Cartilla que enseña a leer. Abecedaria tabula. Elementaria tabula* [*Primer that teaches reading. Tabula alphabet. Tabula elementary*] (as cited in Rossi, 2017, pp. 64-66).

The aforementioned author concludes that the term *Cartinha* originates from the translation of the Latin *Chartula*, which was an instrument of religious teaching through formulas that every Christian should know by heart, which is why Cepeda (1995, p. 257) defines it as a “catechism of formulas”. Rossi (2017, pp. 69-70) adds, however, that the variant *Cartilha* occurs in communicative use through the

phenomenon of linguistic borrowings from Castilian, whose corresponding term *Cartilla* is recorded in lexical works. Indeed, as early as 1638, shortly before the end of the Iberian Union (1580-1640), the first edition of *Cartilha para saber ler em Christo e Compendio do Livro da Vida Eterna* [*The Primer on How to Read in Christ and Compendium of the Book of Eternal Life*], by António Pimentel, was published in Lisbon by Jorge Rodrigues. A second edition was printed in 1656 at Henrique Valente de Oliveira's printing workshop, with the following title: *Cartilha para saber ler em Christo e Compendio do Livro da Vida Eterna* [*The Primer on How to Read in Christ and Compendium of the Book of Eternal Life*], now amended again in this latest printing.

Regarding the aforementioned distinction between Primers and Catechisms, an illustrative example is the *Cathecismo Pequeno da doutrina e instruçam que os xpaãos ham-de creer e obrar përa conseguir a benaumenturança eterna* feito e copilado pollo reuerendissimo senhor dom Dioguo Ortiz bispo de cepta. *Emprimido com priuilegio dei Rey nosso senhor etc.* [*The Small Catechism of the doctrine and instructions that Christians must believe and act to obtain eternal blessing, written and compiled by His Most Reverend Dom Dioguo Ortiz, Bishop of Cepta. Printed with privilege of King Our Lord, etc.*], by D. Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas (1457-1519), published in 1504 by the Italian printer João Pedro Buonhomini de Cremona, in Lisbon. According to Cristóvão (1998, p. 691), this is the first copy of its kind in the Portuguese language. A representative of the high Castilian nobility in the service of the Portuguese court, where he was highly regarded by the Portuguese monarchs, D. Diogo Ortiz studied Astrology at the University of Salamanca and lived in Portugal from 1476 until his death, in Almeirim, having been a cosmographer to D. João II (1455-1495) and Bishop of Tangier (1491-1500), Ceuta (1500-1504), and Viseu (1505-1519), thus being an official agent of the Portuguese kingdom's colonial enterprise.

Américo Cortes Pinto's (1896-1979) hypothesis, in *Da famosa arte de imprimissão* [*Of the famous art of printing*] (1948), is that the Primers printed in large quantities by D. Manuel for the Congo in 1488 and 1490, as well as those shipped to Abyssinia with the Embassy of 1512, were produced by D. Diogo Ortiz de Vilhega, and these Primers should not be confused with his *Small Catechism*. Furthermore, the Spanish bishop's *Catechism* does not include the part relating to the teaching of the alphabet, restricting itself to doctrine, nor does it appear to be intended for children, as it is voluminous, resembling more a summarized theological treatise than the rudiments of Christian doctrine. For Cristóvão (1998, p. 692), of the various Letters from the 16th century, it is possible that some may be by D. Diogo, but there is insufficient evidence to attribute authorship to him.

THE COLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES (1563-1757)

The endeavor to expand the faith in Portuguese through Primers and Catechisms did not continue in the second half of the 16th century and into the following century. In the Spanish case, Mignolo (1992, p. 196) states that the two obstacles to the implementation of Nebrija's program in New Spain were, first, the friars' belief that their objectives would be better achieved by learning and writing grammars of Amerindian languages rather than teaching Castilian to the natives; and second, the conviction that the *Studia Humanitatis* were the best educational model for civilizing the New World colonies. However, a determining factor, not considered by the author, is the unfolding of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which, by combating the Protestant Reformation, gave a new dimension to the militancy of the new religious orders, such as the Society of Jesus, founded in 1534 and recognized by papal bull in 1540.

From then on, the missionaries imposed themselves an unprecedented linguistic undertaking: the grammatization of "exotic languages," to use Buescu's (1983) expression, or, in Mignolo's (1992, pp. 303-304) terms, the colonization of indigenous languages, understood as a process involving actions and strategies employed by missionaries and men of letters to (re)organize Amerindian speech and writing through the imposition of the Latin alphabet. Buescu (1983, pp. 10-13) explains that the success of this "second performance" of the same mental operation that presided over the formalization of vernacular grammars is due to the fact that the irregularity or anomaly that previously characterized the inferiority of "vulgar languages" was eliminated with the introduction of a new concept: that of the universal model, key to what the author calls "de-Babelization or new Pentecost." It is no coincidence that, from the mid-16th century and throughout the 17th century, Franciscan, Capuchin, Dominican, and Jesuit missionaries will be committed, especially in Spanish and Portuguese America, to produce Catechisms and Grammars.

In Portuguese America, four *Arts of Language* and at least four Catechisms were produced. Regarding Grammars, in chronological order, we have: the *Arte da grammatica da lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil* [*Art of Grammar of the Language Most Used on the Coast of Brazil*] (1595), composed by the Jesuit priest José de Anchieta (1534-1597); the *Arte de grammatica da lingua brasilica* [*Art of Grammar of the Brazilian Language*] (1621), by Luiz Figueira; the *Arte da lingua de Angola* [*Art of the Language of Angola*] (1697), by Pedro Dias (1621-1700), which describes Kimbundu, a Bantu language that was spoken in the region of the Kwanza River, called Angola by the Portuguese of the time (Rosa, 2002, p. 3); and the *Arte de grammatica da lingua brasilica da naçam Kiriri* [*Art of Grammar of the Brazilian Language of the Kiriri Nation*] (1699), by Luis Vicencio Mamiani. Regarding Catechisms, the following were published: *Catecismo na lingoa brasilica, no qual se contem a summa da doctrina christã*.

Com tudo que pertence aos Mystérios de nossa Fé & bõs costumes [Catechism in the Brazilian language, which contains the summa of Christian doctrine. With everything that pertains to the Mysteries of our Faith and good customs] (1618), composed in the form of a dialogue by Father Antonio d'Araujo; the *Catecismo da doutrina christã na Lingua Brasilica da Nação Kiriri [Catechism of Christian Doctrine in the Brazilian Language of the Kiriri Nation]* (1698), by Father Mamiani; and finally the *Katecismo indico da lingua Kariris acrescentado de varias praticas doutrinaes, & moraes, adaptadas ao genio, & capacidade dos Indios do Brasil [Indic Katecism of the Kariri Language with the addition of various doctrinal and moral practices, adapted to the nature and capacity of the Indians of Brazil]* (1709), by Fr. Bernardo de Nantes, organized in the form of a bilingual dialogue. All these Compendia were written by Jesuits, with the exception of the last one, written by a Capuchin priest.

Maecenas (2020, pp. 214-216) analyzes the prefaces of the aforementioned Grammars and shows, through tables, that their content is very similar, consisting of letters; spelling; pronunciation; nouns; verbs; declensions; explanations, etc., although their structure, form, and order of presentation showed their own characteristics. In the case of the Catechisms, in addition to the traditional content, with the rudiments of the Christian doctrine, songs, prayers, and questions and answers about the Ten Commandments, the Introductions or "Warnings" contain a lot of information and phonetic and phonological descriptions of the local languages. Therefore, they constitute compendia intended for the Master Priests, so that they could communicate with indigenous groups and catechize them orally through prayers, songs, and rituals of the Catholic church. In this sense, they are a tool for learning the language, not for teaching it.

The *Catechism in the Brazilian Language*, which contains the summa of christian doctrine, with all that pertains to the Mysteries of our Faith and Good Customs, printed in Lisbon at the Miguel Deslandes printing workshop in 1618 and composed by Father Antonio d'Araujo, immediately after the Licenses and some "Songs in the Language, for the Children of the Holy Doctrine," presents a "Prologue to the Reader" in which the author explains the origin of the work and defends the need to help the "natives of the land" learn their language, because "communication with those whose language must be learned and written in it" was necessary. Next, the "Tables of Numbers" presents the chapters of the nine books into which the Catechism is divided. The author also writes a "Warning for the pronunciation of the language contained in this book" and a "Catalog of all holy days of obligation and fasting" (Araujo, 1618, p. xi-xv).

In the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine in the Brazilian Language of the Kiriri Nation* (1698), by Jesuit priest Luis Vicencio Mamiani, also printed in the Miguel Deslandes printing workshop, the author explains, in the Introduction entitled "To the Reader," that "it was time to compose a Catechism also in the Kiriri language, as there is in other languages, to facilitate the conversion of these Barbarians by the new Missionaries," going on to state that his experience of "twelve years of language

among the Indians" authorized him to undertake such an endeavor, for which he not only sought to understand and speak the language by ear, but also consulted the "oldest religious languages" to know its roots and foundations (Mamiani, 1698, pp. ii-iii). Mamiani's Catechism is divided into three parts: 1) Prayers and Principles of Faith; 2) Mysteries, Commandments, Sacraments, "and everything else that every Christian is obliged to know"; 3) Instructions to the "Parish Priest of the Indians." The difference in relation to Father Araújo's Catechism lies on the fact that this one presents all the material in a bilingual format, from the "Songs in the Kiriri language for the Children of the Doctrine to sing with the version in Castilian verses of the same meter", to the prayers of dialogues.

In 1709, the *Indic Katecism of the Kariris language* was published in Lisbon by the printing workshop by Joaquim da Costa Deslandes, with the addition of various doctrinal and moral practices, adapted to the genius and capacity of the Indians of Brazil, by the Capuchin friar Fr. Bernardo de Nantes, who seven years earlier had published a *Relation de la Mission des Indiens Kariris di Brezil situés sur le Grand Fleuve de S. François du costé du Sud a 7 degrés de la ligne equinotiale*, translated in Brazil in 1977 by Barbosa Lima Sobrinho (1897-2000) and published with the title *Relação de uma missão no Rio São Francisco (Relação sucinta e sincera da missao do padre Martinho de Nantes, pregador capuchinho, missionário apostólico no Brasil entre os índios chamados cariris)* [*Relation of a mission in the São Francisco River (Brief and sincere report of the mission of Father Martinho de Nantes, Capuchin preacher, apostolic missionary in Brazil among the Indians called Cariris)*]. It is interesting to note that the author, in the Introduction, makes a point of assuring his readers that his Catechism is different from what "came to light a few years ago", since the language of the Kariris of the São Francisco River was as different from the "Karirirs called Kippea", whose speech had been grammatized by Mamiani, as Portuguese was from Castilian (Nantes, 1709, p. v.).

An aspect little explored by historiography is the missionary work of converting enslaved African peoples, something exemplified by the *Catecismo na língua dos Ardas* [*Catechism in the language of the Ardas*] (1708), written in Brazil by the Angolan Jesuit Manuel de Lima (1554-1620), as well as by the translation of the *Christian Doctrine* (1566), by the Jesuit Marcos Jorge (1524-1571), into the African language by Father Baltazar Fernandes (1580-1667) in 1580 (Casimiro, 2005, p. 186). A few years later, the Italian Jesuit Jorge Benci de Armino (1650-1708) established the principles according to which enslaved black people should be converted or educated in *Economia Cristã dos Senhores no Governo dos Escravos* [*Christian Economy of the Masters in the Government of Slaves*], a book printed in the printing workshop of Antonio de Rossi, in Rome, in 1705. For Casimiro (2005, pp. 187-188, 190), Jorge Benci's "ideological vision" is reflected in *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia* [*First Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia*] (1707), a set of laws organized by Dom Sebastião Monteiro do Vide (1643-1622) which constitutes, according to the author, the first official Catechism published in Brazil by the Catholic church, with the

objective of directing catechetical action in Portuguese America. Thus, Father Jorge Benci would have established the reasons why colonial masters and missionaries should also catechize enslaved Africans, and not only indigenous populations, something that was standardized by the aforementioned *Constitutions*, which also provided, according to the author, a doctrinal model entitled *reve Instrucção dos Mystérios da Fé, Accomodada ao Modo de Fallar dos Escravos do Brasil, Para Serem Cathequisados Por Ella* [*Brief Instruction of the Mysteries of the Faith, Adapted to the Mode of Speaking of the Slaves of Brazil, to Be Catechized by It*], with the contents of the Tridentine dispositions adapted to the “capacity” of understanding of the “slaves”.

THE "CIVILIZATION" OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (1757-1798)

The production of Catechisms in "general languages" was interrupted when the Portuguese state prohibited the conversion of indigenous peoples by the Jesuits and began a process of updating the colonial system, adopting practices then considered Enlightened (Falcon, 1993), and seeking to establish economic conditions that would allow it to compete with foreign kingdoms (Maxwell, 1996, pp. 72-73). The priests of the Society of Jesus were definitively expelled in 1759, but their conflict with the Portuguese crown began in 1751, a year after King José I (1714-1777) assumed the throne, when Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado (1701-1769) was appointed to the post of Captain-General and Governor of the State of Grão Pará and Maranhão, executor of the “Public and Secret Royal Instructions” issued by his older brother, the minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), later Count of Oeiras (1759) and Marquis of Pombal (1769), as he became known in history. Mendonça Furtado was charged with abolishing the Jesuits’ temporal administration in the Indian settlements of Pará, promoting their "freedom" and integration through education and miscegenation, as mandated in the Alvará of June 7, 1755. He was also the likely author and one of the main people responsible for implementing the Directory that should be observed in the Indian Settlements of Pará and Maranhão, of May 3, 1757.

The Directory law, as it became known, contains 95 paragraphs covering the following topics: civilization of the Indians; distribution of land for cultivation; forms of taxation, agricultural production, and marketing; expeditions to collect native species; labor relations between the Indians and the settlers; the establishment of villages, settlement, and maintenance of the villages through descents; the presence of white people among the Indians; marriage and the regulation of the role of the "Director," who would replace that of the missionaries (Almeida, 1997, p. 166). His great innovation was to establish, as a "fundamental basis of Civility," the prohibition of the use of the local language and the imposition of the "language of the prince" as the official language, creating schools for boys and girls of Christian Doctrine, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic – in girls' schools, Arithmetic was replaced by

"spinning, lacemaking, sewing," and the "ministries proper to that sex." The law also determined that teachers be "people endowed with good customs, prudence, ability, and such as to be able to perform the important obligations of their jobs," and should be paid by the students' parents or guardians, and that girls, in the absence of female teachers, should attend boys' schools (Portugal, 1830, pp. 508-509).

As there are no records or unofficial reports about how these schools of reading, writing and counting were established among the indigenous populations, that is, in the locations where the villages [*aldeias*] were elevated to towns [*vilas*], all we have left is the existence of a Catechism, as Banha de Andrade (1978) calls it, or Primer, as Flexor (2001, 2002) names it, that is, a handwritten document entitled *Breve instrucçam para ensinar a Doutrina Christã, ler e escrever aos Meninos e ao mesmo tempo os principios da lingua Portuguesa e sua orthografia* [Brief Instructions to Teach the Christian Doctrine, Reading and Writing to Children and at the same time the principles of the Portuguese language and its orthography]. The document was found in the Pernambuco box of the Overseas Historical Archive, transcribed and first published by Andrade (1978), who states that its handwriting is very similar to that of the text of the *Directorio* corrected by Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva, governor of the Captaincy of Pernambuco between 1756 and 1763. For the author, it would be enough to find the official letter that accompanied the document to consider it the only copy of the Compendia used in the Pernambuco classes from 1759 to 1760.

Souza (2019, pp. 193-194, 424) located it in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* [Overseas Historical Archive], in Portugal. According to the author, after receiving a copy of the *Directorio* sent by the Secretary of State for the Navy and Overseas Affairs Tomé Joaquim da Costa Corte Real (c. 1703-1771), Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva would have made an analysis of the paragraphs applicable to the Captaincy of Pernambuco and its annexed areas and prepared a document, which he gave the following title: *Direcção comque interinamente se devem regular os Indios das Novas Villas, e Lugares, que Sua Magestade Fidelissima manda erigir das Aldeas pelo que pertence as que estão situadas nesta Cappitannia dePernambuco, esuas anexas enquanto o mesmo Senhor não determina o Contrario, dando nova emelhor forma para oseu Regimen* [Direction with which the Indians of the New Towns and Places should be regulated temporarily, which His Most Faithful Majesty orders to be erected from the Villages to which those situated in this Captaincy of Pernambuco and its annexes belong, until the same Lord determines otherwise, giving a new and better form to its Regime]. The document was sent with an Official Letter dated March 6, 1759, to which was attached the *Breve Instrucçam para ensinar aDoutrina Christã, Ler e escrever aos Meninos e aomesmo tempo osprincipios daLingoa Portuguesa e a SuaOrtografia* [Brief Instruction to teach the Christian Doctrine, Reading and Writing to Children and at the same time the principles of the Portuguese Language and Its Orthography, a manuscript consisting of a Primer and an Instruction for Teachers], documents of utmost importance, transcribed and published by Souza (2019).

The *Direcção* has 117 paragraphs, some of them, such as the sixth to the ninth, reproduced from the *Directorio*, although its intention was to adapt it, as much as possible, “to the nature of the peoples, who intend to civilize themselves”, and it brought attached a model of “Term, which the Directors make to satisfy the obligations, which they are responsible for”, through which the Directors and Masters committed themselves to observe what was established in the law, but also in the *Direcção* and in the *Breve Instrucçam*, subsequently receiving copies of the *Directorio* and the Catechism (as cited in Souza, 2019, pp. 194-195). Regarding the *Brief Instruction*, its structure follows that of a sixteenth-century Primer, in which three components are essentially intertwined: initiation to reading, elements of Christian Doctrine, and brief warnings to the Teachers. This also corresponds to the structure of certain Catechisms that, in addition to Prayers, Songs, Commandments, and Explanations, also provide an introduction with the rudiments of reading—letters, syllables, nouns, verbs—before reaching syntax. This is why Andrade (1978) refers to the document as a Catechism, and Flexor (2001, 2002) as a Primer. Souza (2019, p. 198), in turn, states in a footnote that “there are passages where the boundaries between the Primer and the ‘Instruction for Teachers’ are not well defined.”

Regarding its origin, Flexor (2001) relates it to the “book of Andrade”, referring to the *Nova escola para aprender a ler, escrever, e contar* [New school to learn to read, write, and count] (Figueredo, 1722), by Manoel de Andrade de Figueiredo (1670-1735), which is unlikely, since this mention will only appear in the *Estatuto que hão de observar os mestres das escollas dos meninos nesta capitania de S. Paulo* [Statute that the teachers of the boys' schools in this captaincy of São Paulo must observe], sent by the Governor and Captain-General of São Paulo, Luís António de Sousa, to the Count of Oeiras, on May 12, 1768 (Andrade, 1978, pp. 17-18). On the other hand, the aforementioned researcher is correct in indicating that the Primer was made “by a French priest” and ordered to be prepared by a priest in Pernambuco. Casimiro (2005, p. 198), in turn, states that the *Breve Instrucçam* has an unknown author and is implicitly addressed to the Masters.

Banha de Andrade (1978, p. 8) seems to confuse the *Breve Instrucçam* with the *Directorio* when he claims that Mendonça Furtado translated and adapted it from French, although, in a footnote, he reproduces an excerpt from a letter from the judge Bernardo Coelho da Grama Casco dated March 20, 1759, sent to Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, in which he states that Governor Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva had created, for the new towns, “a directory that he had translated from French into our language, and thus a primer, for the instruction of the Masters and the director, whom he appointed.” Souza (2019, p. 198), in turn, reproduces the part of the letter sent by Lobo da Silva to Secretary of State Tomé Joaquim da Costa Corte Real, in which the Governor of the Captaincy of Pernambuco informs him that the *Brief Instruction* was translated from a French primer by Father Francisco Guedes Cardoso e Menezes, Secretary of the Jesuit Reform, Judge of the Residuals of the Bishopric, and

Archdeacon of the See of Olinda, and approved by the Bishop of Olinda, D. Francisco Xavier de Aranha (1692-1771). The author believes that the work was completed between the end of 1758 and the first months of 1759.

In any case, the *Breve Instruçam* follows the model of the then-existing Primers and Small Catechisms, in which the teaching of reading is articulated with the basic elements of Christian doctrine. Thus, the following elements are initially presented: "Current Roman Letters"; "Roman Capital Letters"; "Vowel Letters"; "Abbreviated Letters"; "Accent Letters"; "Punctuation"; "Syllables" – of two and three letters –; and "Names" – of men, women, and cities. In the section dedicated to "Masters of Schools," we can observe the "usefulness" – a term dear at the time – of these agents for the State, represented by the king and his ministers, and the church in the formation of christians and vassals, so that they could well serve God, their country, and the interests of the monarchy (as cited in Souza, 2019, p. 429).

Thus, teachers were to be "easygoing, gentle, and modest" with their disciples, so that fear of punishment would not make the habit of going to school odious. However, they would use "the blows of discipline or a cane" when they noticed that their mistakes stemmed from laziness, or applaud those who knew more, to instill in them "a noble emulation." At school, they were required to place "an image of a holy crucifix or painting," making the disciples kneel at the entrance, cross and bless themselves, explaining the meaning of such a ritual. Regarding the content of Christian doctrine, the teacher was to teach his disciples the Our Father; the Hail Mary; the Creed; the four "Symbols of Faith"—the Nicene, the Constantinopolitan, and the Creed of Saint Athanasius—the meaning of faith; the act of contrition; the ten precepts of the Decalogue; the three theological virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity—; the fourteen works of Mercy; the seven sacraments of Holy Mother Church—Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Penance, Extreme Unction; Holy Orders and Matrimony—; the seven mortal sins and the fourteen Articles of Faith, alerting them to the need to venerate the "crosses" and pray devoutly, and to kneel before bed and upon waking (as cited in Souza, 2019, pp. 430-448).

The *Breve Instruçam* makes very clear the importance of schooling for every "honest man." In this sense, the document represents a time when reading and writing were already considered relevant knowledge for all of society, hence the responsibility of the Masters to instill in their disciples respect for their parents and those who taught them, so that they would accept punishments with humility. In the final explanations, we note the compendium's Pombaline affiliation, as it criticizes methods that teach the declensions and conjugations of Latin and living languages ignoring the basic rules of the Portuguese language (as cited in Souza, 2019, pp. 472-473). However, this affiliation has been questioned by historiography. Coelho (2006, p. 92; 114), for example, states that the Directory was provoked by the local situation itself, that is, "from the backlands to the sea", and not the other way around, as its formulation would have resulted from the concessions that the Pombaline

administration had to make in the face of opposition from social agents existing in the Colony, for which he seeks to show that the text of the laws of “freedom” of the Indians – not only the Pombaline decrees of June 6 and 7, 1755, the first abolishing indigenous slavery, and the second, the temporal power of the missionaries, but also the laws of 1609 and 1680, which preceded them, designed and published to guarantee the freedom of the Indians over their persons, as well as over their territory.

In any case, undeniable evidence that the first normative attempts at Pombaline educational reforms took place in Portuguese America lies in the fact that the *Directorio* contains the main discursive aspects of Pombaline legislation, especially the myth of a civilized and Enlightened Europe that contrasts with the supposedly backward pedagogy of the Jesuits, destroyers of a lost Golden Age. The law sought to impose on the Indians the so-called “means of Civility,” which included the “dictates of rationality” and their conversion, that would be the responsibility of the diocesan prelate. As for “civility”, something innovative in Portuguese legislation (Santos, 2012), under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Directors, one of the main measures was the mandatory use of the “Language of the Prince”, which was not sufficiently widespread due to the “general language”, which, according to the legislator, was a “truly abominable and diabolical invention” of the Ignatians, who wanted to deprive the Indians of civilization, keeping them rustic and barbaric (Portugal, 1830, pp. 508-509).

The Directory remained in force until its extinction, by the Royal Charter of May 12, 1798, signed by D. Francisco de Souza Coutinho (1764-1823), Governor of the Captaincy of Grão-Pará, between 1790 and 1803, younger brother of D. Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho (1755-1812), who became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and War when D. João (1767-1826) and his court arrived in Brazil. According to Almeida (1997, pp. 46-47), this law did not present new solutions for the conflicts arising from the coexistence between indigenous groups and whites in the missionary villages, although it rejected the *Directorio* because of its excesses. Indeed, according to the same author, “the concept of descent is softened” through a set of accumulated knowledge and experiences that sought to prepare them for communication and dealing with other men, rather than conquering or subduing them through violence. In a Circular Letter dated September 1, 1790, and addressed to all the Directors of Grão-Pará, D. Francisco de Souza Coutinho blamed the Directors for the region's state of decline, caused by excessive ambition that was causing population decline. Thus, the information he obtained from the complaints he received was decisive in the revocation of the *Directorio*. In other words, the *Directorio* was prohibited not so much by its nature, but by its non-compliance.

While in Portuguese America the state's institutionalization of elementary education, in the strict sense, occurred even before the Decree of June 28, 1759, which imposed a new method for teaching the Humanities, in the metropolis it only occurred with the Law of November 6, 1772, which regulated the creation and administration

of the *Escolas Menores* [Schools of Minors] published the same year as the reform of the University of Coimbra. However, as early as 1770, a Decree of September 30 regarding the "Schools of Reading and Writing" ordered when the "Masters of the Latin Language" received students into their classes, should instruct them "for six months" in the Portuguese Grammar composed by António José dos Reis Lobato. According to the legislator, until then, the lesson had been taught through litigation and court rulings, "which only serve to waste time and accustom the youth to pride and the entanglements of the court." Thus, it mandated that, instead, teaching should be done through printed materials, "or manuscripts of various kinds," "especially through the Small Catechism of the Bishop of Montpellier, Charles Joaquim Colbert, commissioned to be translated from French by the Archbishop of Évora for the instruction of his diocesans" (Portugal, 1829, p. 498).

According to Andrade (1978, pp. 15-16), the first Lisbon edition of the translation referred to in the law was printed in Lisbon in 1765 by the Miguel Manescal da Costa printing workshop, with the following title: *Instrucçoens Gerais em forma de catecismo nas quaes se explicão em compendio pela Sgrada Escritura, e Tradição, a Historia, e os Dogmas da Religião, a Moral Christã. os Sacramentos, as Orações, as Ceremonias, e os usos da Igreja* [General Instructions in the Form of a Catechism in Which They Are Explained in Compendium by Holy Scripture and Tradition, History and Dogmas of Religion, Christian Morality, the Sacraments, Prayers, Ceremonies, and the Customs of the Church]. The Catechism would have been translated by order of the Count of Oeiras himself, who had spread it in the kingdom and colonies in the year of its first edition, reaching approximately eighteen editions until 1884. Adão (1995, p. 244), in turn, states that this was not the edition adopted in schools, for in 1770 a Compendium was printed by the Regia Officina Typografica with the title of *Catecismos da diocese de Montpellier impressos por ordem do bispo Carlos Joaquim Colbert, traduzidos na lingua portugueza para por elles se ensinar a doutrina christã aos meninos das escolas dos reinos, e dominios de Portugal* [Catechisms of the diocese of Montpellier printed by order of Bishop Carlos Joaquim Colbert, translated into Portuguese so that they could teach Christian doctrine to children in schools in the kingdoms and domains of Portugal], divided into three parts, with an appendix containing a *Catecismo pequeno para os Meninos, que ainda não estão confirmados* [Small Catechism for Children, who are not yet confirmed]; a *Compendio da Fé, que deve ler-se nas Igrejas Paroquiais todos os Domingos á estação* [Compendium of Faith, which must be read in the Parish Churches every Sunday at the station] and some prayers to be said morning and evening.

The Archbishop of Évora responsible for translating the book was Cardinal José Cosme da Cunha (1715-1783), who was also Inquisitor General of Portugal. In the Introduction he wrote for the 1770 edition (Colbert, 1770), entitled "To the Reader," he states that the "great Work" of the "Illustrissimo Carlos Joaquim Colbert, Bishop of Montpellier" had its importance assured by being addressed, at the same time, to a diverse audience: "for the sheep, and for the Pastors, for the secular, and for the

Ecclesiastics, and generally for all people, and for all states," so that it was shameful that such a universally received work had not yet been translated into Portuguese, since it was indispensable for a "Minister of the Altar" who prepared himself for the priesthood with the "lights of science." The , as it came to be known, is divided into three parts: the first deals with the "existence of God," his nature, attributes, and work; the second, the virtues and sins, the Commandments and precepts of the Church; and the third, Grace, Sacraments, Prayers, and the ceremony of the Mass. In addition to these parts, the book includes two short Catechisms "for the use of children." An important aspect of the Introduction, and one that perhaps justifies Pombal's commitment to disseminating the book in Portugal and its domains, is its anti-Jesuitism, which appears when the Archbishop of Évora comments on the banning of the Montpellier Catechism on January 21, 1721, on charges of Jansenism (Cunha, 1770, pp. ii-iii, v).

When the Law of November 6, 1772, was published, the Catechism became a component of primary school studies, along with the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also the "General Rules of Portuguese Orthography" and the "Rules of Civility in a Brief Compendium." The latter consisted of a set of conventions governing how men should conduct themselves toward their peers, superiors, and subordinates. Although the Montpellier Catechism did not cover the subject, no such Compendium was published during the administration of D. José I's minister. This did not prevent the Royal Censorship Board from rejecting, on December 2, 1774, the *Novo Tratado da Civilidade para a educação da Mocidade Portuguesa* [New Treatise on Civility for the Education of Portuguese Youth], translated from French by Father Custódio da Silva Barbosa, for considering the work "full of plebeian terms" and "useless in this Kingdom due to the diversity of customs" (as cited in Adão, 1995, p. 254). According to Santos (2012, pp. 226, 228), the legislation enacted between 1755 and 1758 introduced the verb "civilize" and the adjective "civilized" into regulations and reflections regarding the Indians, with the *Directorio* being primarily responsible for the adoption and dissemination of the noun "civility." In fact, Bluteau's *Vocabulary* did not record the words "civilize," "civilized," or "civilization." The term "civility," however, was recorded with the meaning of "discourtesy, rudeness, rusticity," and not with the meaning that Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) attributed to it in *De civitate morum puerilium* (1530), translated into Portuguese as *A cidade pueril*.

FINAL REMARKS

Given the above, we can see that literacy, conceived as the teaching and learning of the alphabet, is an inseparable component of the colonization process, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, being motivated by it and used as an instrument of domination and conversion to Christianity. In this sense, both colonization and

literacy, in the strict sense, in this period, were made possible by two types of pedagogical compendium: the Primers and the Catechisms, which assume different configurations in three distinct phases, each one relating to three moments of Portuguese imperial expansion: 1) Portuguese in Africa and Asia (1502-1563); 2) the colonization of indigenous and African languages (1563-1757); and 3) the "civilization" of indigenous peoples (1757-1798).

The sixteenth-century Primers, the oldest copy of which dates back to 1502, although preceded by manuscript material produced in previous centuries, constitute the first printed manuals for teaching reading in the vernacular. In the Portuguese case, they are associated with the promotion of a linguistic policy articulated with the great project of propagating the Christian faith and imperial expansion, thus enabling the consolidation of the vernacular initially as a vehicular *lingua franca* and, later, in the eighteenth century, as an official language, giving rise to the group of territories known as Lusophony, which encompasses around 250 million Portuguese speakers as a means of national and international communication and education. The seventeenth-century Catechisms prepared for indigenous populations, in turn, were motivated by new guidelines arising from the Council of Trent (1545-1563). They were not pedagogical compendia intended to teach reading through the rudiments of Christian doctrine, like the sixteenth-century Primers. Rather, they were specifically intended for teaching local, or "general" languages for the training of Master Priests, who were supposed to convert, or catechize, into the language of the other. This is why their *Adverências* (Admonitions) contain detailed explanations of the phonetic and phonological aspects of each language. Thus, the apparent setback regarding literacy in Portuguese represents a shift in perspective regarding the conversion of the indigenous peoples, conditioned by the new political and social relations arising from the colonization process at the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, but also by the shift in focus of religious orders beginning in 1563, that is, after the Council of Trent.

From 1757 onwards, with the *Directorio* law, the need to rationalize colonization led the State to intervene in the literacy process, using the Primer and the Catechism as pedagogical instruments at the service of the Portuguese crown, but with a new configuration, since they were once again written in the "language of the prince" with the aim of "civilizing" the indigenous peoples, making them vassals of the king of Portugal. From a legal point of view, the *Directorio* is the first Portuguese government instrument to regulate elementary education, that is, the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic, but in practice, it was restricted to reading and Christian doctrine, as suggested by the only copy of the Compendium used during this period, a mixture of a Primer and Catechism entitled *Breve Instrução para ensinar a Doutrina Christã, Ler e escrever aos Meninos e aomesmo tempo os principios daLingoa Portuguesa e a Sua Ortografia* [Brief Instructions to teach Christian Doctrine, Reading and Writing to Children and at the same time the principles of the Portuguese Language and Its Orthography], a handwritten document that Directors and Teachers were obliged to follow.

The emphasis given by the *Directorio* to the mandatory use and teaching of the Portuguese language, something reinforced by the Portuguese crown, which with the Alvará of September 30, 1770 indicated the *Arte da Grammatica Lingua Portugueza* composed by António José dos Reis Lobato as a mandatory grammatical compendium, meant that the Catechisms ceased to be instruments of literacy, restricting themselves to conversion, that is, to the teaching of Christian doctrine, as suggested by the *Catecismo Pequeno* of the Bishop of Montpellier Carlos Joaquim Colbert, ordered to be translated from French by the Archbishop of Évora, which remained in use until at least the end of the 19th century. Thus, when the *Directorio* law was extinguished, by the Royal Charter of May 12, 1798, the teaching of the alphabet, the exclusive object of the Primers, was diluted in the rudiments of Grammar, and the Catechism became a content of Christian doctrine, both ceasing to be privileged instruments of colonization to constitute themselves as curricular components of elementary education, together with the “Rules of Civility”, as established by the law of November 6, 1772.

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