

11<sup>th</sup> IPB Erasmus Week

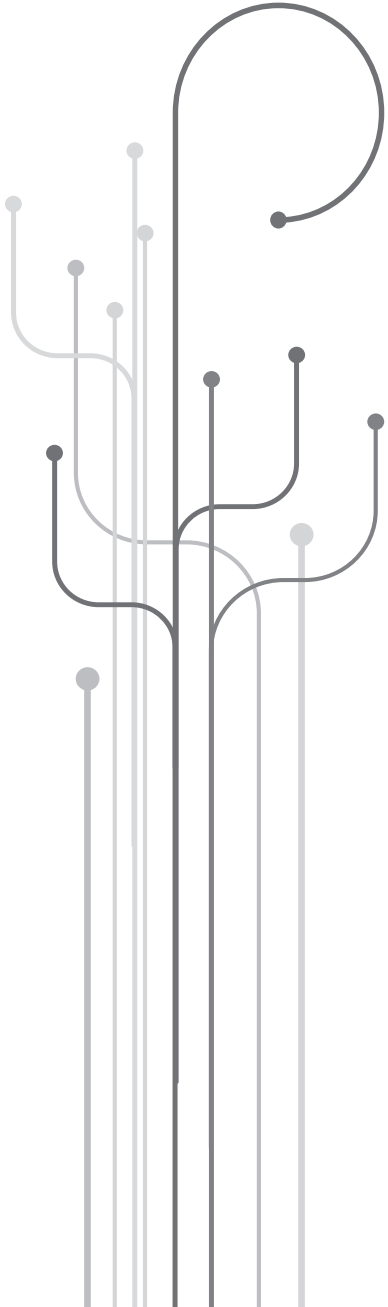
# Teaching Crossroads

Edited by

Elisabete Silva

Clarisse Pais

Luís S. Pais



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**Título:** Teaching Crossroads: 11th IPB Erasmus Week  
**Editores:** Elisabete Silva, Clarisse Pais, Luís S. Pais  
**Edição:** Instituto Politécnico de Bragança · 2016  
5300-253 Bragança · Portugal  
Tel. (+351) 273 303 200 · Fax (+351) 273 325 405  
<http://www.ipb.pt>  
**Execução:** Serviços de Imagem do Instituto Politécnico de Bragança  
**Capa:** Soraia Maduro  
**Tiragem:** 40 exemplares  
**ISBN:** 978-972-745-210-1  
**Online version:** <http://hdl.handle.net/10198/11262>

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# Is Mirandese a poor second? – Portuguese linguistic heritage Será l mirandés l pariente probezainas? – Fazienda de la lhéngua en Pertual

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## Abstract

Portugal has proudly presented herself to the world as the oldest monolingual country in Europe, where only one language had been spoken since immemorial times. This assertion consisted of an important means of national identity (Ferreira, 2002, p. 65), enhanced by the Portuguese dictatorship in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which comes to explain international amazement when the acknowledgement of Mirandese as the second official language took place with the law no. 7/99, just at the very end of the first millennium. In fact, the language that takes its name from the region where it is spoken – Miranda do Douro –, dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, even before the birth of Portuguese nationality, and stems directly from Latin via Asturian-Leonese branch of languages, bearing resemblances with the currently surviving languages, as well as with Portuguese, until it was finally “discovered” by José Leite de Vasconcellos in 1882. Mirandese has been given a new lease of life by means of the translation into Mirandese of canonical and liturgical literature, the production of prose, poetry and theatre in Mirandese, as well as the compilation of traditional oral literature. It is then our aim to provide a thorough historical perspective of Mirandese and elicit its identity, along with

**an overview of Mirandese literature (translated or not) and a reflection on the importance of the law no. 7/99 for the assertion of the language.**

**Keywords:** *minority languages; language policy; Mirandese; law no. 7/99; spelling convention.*

## Introduction

Daqueilho que to la giente gusta ye de falar de si mesmo ou d' ancuntrar-se a si mesmo an la fala de ls outros. Por isso, bou a cuntar-bos un cachico de la mie bida para berdes se an eilha ancuntraís algo que seia tamien buosso. I tamien para que sábades por que razones you, que nun naci an terras mirandesas nin falo mirandés, m' antresso por esta lhéngua i stou hoije eiqui a falar-bos subre eilha. (Barros Ferreira, 2003, online)

The topic of Portuguese culture and language, which has been the motto of my participation in the IPB's Erasmus Week, intends to broaden participants' knowledge of the country, enabling them to have a taste of Portugal without having to leave Bragança. Among the various aspects focused on, I highlight one which I personally envisage of considerable importance: language or rather languages. For centuries, Portugal asserted herself as the oldest monolingual country in Europe, disregarding not only regional varieties, but also the minority language spoken in Miranda do Douro and surrounding areas. This fact was only altered at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Leite de Vasconcellos "discovered" the language and wrote seminal work on Mirandese. It was in his "Mirandese Philology" that Leite de Vasconcellos established not only all necessary conventions for this language to become a written language, with an alphabet, phonological, morphological and lexical rules, but also gathered traditional oral literature. Despite his philological efforts, Leite de Vasconcellos foresaw the death of Mirandese and the construction of Douro's dams and the arrival of "outsiders", along with the intense migration movements of the 1960s, seemed to support this gloomy prediction.

According to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ETS 148, 1992), a regional or minority language is a language "traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population and [thus] different from the official language(s) of that State". In this charter, it is recognised the need to protect "the historical regional or minority languages of Europe, some of which are in danger of eventual extinction, [which] contributes to the maintenance and development of Europe's cultural wealth and traditions", because "to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right" of every European citizen.

According to the *Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa* (CLUL), Mirandese is the minority language spoken in northern Portugal, on a 500-km<sup>2</sup>

plateau in the vicinity of the Spanish border that follows the winding route of the River Douro. Historically, it stems from Asturo-Leonese branch of languages, with which it shares a number of phonetic features, resulting from a lengthy period of common evolution. Having survived to the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an oral language, the Portuguese Parliament only acknowledged Mirandese as an official language in Portugal in 1999, along with the publication of its “Spelling Convention”, whose first version appeared in 1995.

As put forth in previous work (cf. Martins, 2014), the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed serious development in linguistic geography, specifically carrying out linguistic atlases which allowed for the mapping of national and regional varieties in Europe based on phonetic, morphological and lexical features.

Barros Ferreira & Martins (1987, pp. 33-34) state that linguistic atlases enable to show the differences and resemblances between languages and dialects, whereas linguistic monographies allow the thorough study of a particular language or variety. Therefore, a linguistic atlas consists of a series of maps of a region, which facilitate the comparison of what happens linguistically speaking in one area to others. These authors mention different atlases, such as the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* (ALE) and the “Atlas Lingüístico da Península Ibérica” (ALPI – *Linguistic Atlas of the Iberian Peninsula*), the latter made up of 75 maps with a focus on historical phonetics.

On the other hand, in the words of Przemysław Dębowiak (2008), there can be identified three different stages in the history of Portuguese linguistic geography, namely due to the work of Leite de Vasconcellos, Paiva Boléo and Lindley Cintra. The first and foremost work was conducted by Leite de Vasconcellos, who presented, in 1893, the first classification of Portuguese dialects on the basis of the aforementioned characteristics. Then Paiva Boléo followed with his *Linguistic Survey* in 1942, in line with other European surveys, and managed to confirm Leite de Vasconcellos’s data. One of the innovating aspects was that Paiva Boléo focused on the identification and limitation of the several isoglosses (i.e. isophones and lexical isoglosses) in Portugal, allowing for further work to build on. The third stage of Portuguese linguistic geography is led by Lindley Cintra with his *Linguistic Atlas of the Iberian Peninsula*, following work from 1962 on the lexical areas of the Portuguese territory. It was in 1971 that he came up with “Nova Proposta de Classificação dos Dialectos Galelo-Portugueses” (*New Proposal for the Classification of Galician-Portuguese Dialects*). Based on phonetic features, Lindley Cintra presented a classification which is still the most widely accepted: the north, coastal areas and northwest are viewed as the most conservative, whereas the south, the inland and the centre and south are regarded as the innovating. By going beyond political and administrative borders, Lindley Cintra classified the dialects into Galician dialects, Portuguese northern dialects (encompassing *transmontanos*, *alto-minhotos* and *baixo-minhotos*, *durienses* and *beirões*) and Portuguese centre-southern dialects (i.e. centre-coastal, centre-inland and south). As a result, Przemysław Dębowiak

(2008) defines the north dialects as more conservative, by including, for example, ancient features no longer identified in other regions. These dialects, as a whole, developed in a more stable region, less prone to foreign invasions or human migrations, with the exception of those occurring in the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of the Portuguese dictatorship.

Bearing all this in mind, this paper will be organised into three parts, all of which are intertwined as pieces of a far more complex jigsaw puzzle. The first part will focus on the historical background of Mirandese language from the period in which it was a “mere” oral language to its “discovery” by Leite de Vasconcellos, who provided it with philological and literary documentation. Added to this, attention will be devoted to the geographical areas where Mirandese is spoken and varieties that arise there, as well as to some of their phonetic and lexical features, attempting to elicit its linguistic identity. Secondly, as a result of this gradual assertion of Mirandese from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we shall briefly present a number of the works originally written in Mirandese or translated into Mirandese either from Portuguese or from other foreign languages. At last, we intend to offer a thorough explanation concerning the importance of 1999 as the date when Mirandese was finally acknowledged as an official language in Portugal, but also received full recognition by means of its “Spelling Convention” and other critical work.

## Brief history of Mirandese and its linguistic identity

José Leite de Vasconcellos is a landmark in the “discovery” of Mirandese, the language that dates back to circa the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, even before the foundation of Portuguese nationality, which is commonly accepted as being 1143 (Quarteu & Frías Conde, 2002, p. 89). He was a renowned Portuguese linguist, philologist and ethnographer, whose doctorate thesis focused on Mirandese – “Esquisse d’une dialectologie portugaise” – and was published in 1901. His interest for the language arose when he came across a Medicine student in Porto, in 1882, who was originally from Miranda do Douro. His first contact with this “língua charra” (rude language) led him to visit the region in 1884 to study it and this encounter ultimately resulted in his 830-page-long Mirandese philology, organised into two volumes.

According to Przemysław Dębowski (2008), Leite de Vasconcellos’s thesis:

foi a primeira obra de síntese mais pormenorizada, decrevendo e classificando as variedades diatópicas do português e que, apesar de imperfeita e já um pouco antiquada, sempre constitui um ponto de partida obrigatório para quem estiver interessado nos falares de Portugal. Convém mencionar que até hoje não a veio substituir nenhum outro trabalho comparável que apresentasse uma extensa imagem actualizada dos dialectos portugueses.

Mourinho (1987, p. 75) sets off Mirandese as a neo-Latin language that encompasses the council of Miranda do Douro, as well as three locations in the council of Vimioso, although it might have been spoken by some populations in the council of Mogadouro, namely Urrós and Bemposta. According to Raposo (1987, p. 55), Mirandese is spoken by 15,000 people in Miranda do Douro villages (except Atenor and Miranda itself) and in three parishes in Vimioso (i.e. Vilar Seco, Anueiro and Caçarelhos) and has cast its influence in Vimioso, Mogadouro and Bragança. It was described by Leite Vasconcellos (cit. Mourinho, 1993) as a rustic language used along the traditional activities of agriculture and breeding cattle – it is the “*língua do campo, do lar e do amor*” (language of the fields, home and love). From Martins’s point of view (2002, p. 56), this statement may also have had a negative effect on Mirandese, because by recognising the importance of the family in the language transmission it might have condemned it to not having the ability to convey more elevated, abstract and scientific thoughts or concepts, as it often happens with minority languages.

As mentioned above, Leite de Vasconcellos published two volumes on Mirandese language between 1900 and 1901 – “*Estudos de Philologia Mirandesa*” (“*Studies in Mirandese Philology*”) –, the first being about the structure of the language and the second with Mirandese documentation and other texts, such as literary ones (cf. Annex). Later, he also gave to light work on his “*Opúsculos*” (*Opuscules*).

In the second volume of his studies, Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, pp. 4-6) claims that the origin of Mirandese is Latin, which he managed to prove by means of a complete correspondence between Latin and Mirandese phenomena, which affected and influenced the language in terms of, for instance, the formation of the plural and feminine of nouns, pronouns, numerals, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs. He goes as far as to state that Latin and Mirandese are two different stages of the same language. Nonetheless, it is obvious that Mirandese is one of the languages that makes up the linguistic system of the Iberian Peninsula, resulting from a direct stage of Latin modified in loco by the people that inhabited that place.

Despite some authors’ hypotheses, the Land of Miranda was not deserted at the time of the Romans and if there was an ancient population there must also have been an ancient language as well, which is documented by numerous archaeological vestiges, such as tombs, inscriptions and the like. However, Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, pp. 7-9) argues that there are no barbarian remainders in this region, although some Germanic and Arab words have survived to these days – e.g. *Sendim* and *Atenor*, respectively. Both words might be borrowings, since Zamora was under the Goths and Arabs’ rule.

Another aspect Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, p. 10) raises is the fact that Mirandese was not the only language spoken at this region – there were also *Riodonorês* and *Guadramilês* –, a fact that also comes to show that the region of Miranda was much larger than what it is nowadays. Notwithstanding, he highlights the fact of how

extraordinary it is for Trás-os-Montes to offer three linguistic systems that are so unique in themselves.

Mirandese finds itself caught between Leonese territory, on one side, and the River Douro, on the other, thus enjoying the perfect conditions to develop “uma falla especial” (Leite de Vasconcellos, 1901, p. 11) or special way of speaking. It was for centuries determined by its relative isolation<sup>1</sup>, having established contact with the rest of Portugal by means of roads, newspapers and primary schools. We should bear in mind that the railway to Miranda was only concluded in 1938, when it finally arrived at Duas Igrejas. The full railway line was 105-km long, connecting the station of Pocinho to Miranda do Douro, past Torre de Moncorvo and Mogadouro. The complete journey took three and a half hours and, in 1975, there were 4 operational connections in both directions. However, it was reduced to only 2 by 1980. In 1986, it ceased to transport passengers and, in 1989, it was definitely closed down<sup>2</sup>.

Another peculiarity we must not overlook is the effect of the construction of the dams in Miranda (cf. Sérgio Ferreira, 2011 and 2012) and the opening of this community to national “outsiders”, which, according to Moreira (1962, p. 15), were looked upon in suspicion and displeasure, because of speaking the national language. Mirandese people would call these outsiders impostors: “Chamam “impostor” no sentido de pretensioso e vaidoso a quem tal fizer. Falar português é falar “fidalgo” índice de preciosismo pouco grato ao mirandês” (Moreira, 1962, p. 15).

In this context of confinement, in the words of Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, pp. 11-15), Spanish phonetics does not particularly influence Mirandese, nor its morphology, but rather its lexicon. The same occurred with Portuguese, whose influence was more powerful on Mirandese lexical elements, even if the relation between Mirandese and Portuguese was stronger and more intimate.

As far as documentation is concerned, Mirandese offers few examples of archaic documents, besides the odd inscription or tomb, as mentioned above. Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, pp. 16-25) refers to some documents from the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, related to the demarcation of places and parish memories, from where he retrieved Mirandese words.

In this second volume, Leite de Vasconcellos (1901, pp. 28-29) presents Mirandese as a set of popular and indigenous ways of speaking that encompass three different sub-dialects or dialectal varieties: border or northern Mirandese (from the so-called dry border); *Sendinês* or southern Mirandese; and normal or central Mirandese. The first is defined by a number of morphological differences, whereas the second is distinguished by significant phonetic features; however, lexical differences may be identified on the whole territory. Leite de Vasconcellos (1901) also suggests the existence of a 4<sup>th</sup> variety that would include Mirandese varieties in Vimioso, calling it western Mirandese, although he acknowledges the lack of elements to support this statement.

Elaborating on Leite de Vasconcellos's data, Barros Ferreira & Martins (1987, pp. 33-37) sustain that the aforesaid linguistic atlas – ALPI – facilitates the comparison of Mirandese to Portuguese and Galician, in line with what Menéndez Pidal (1906) upheld earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also to other Leonese varieties and Castellano, as it is shown in the following three tables. These tables summarise data about the phonetic features of these varieties.

Latim	Mirandés, português, galego, leonés	Castelhano
F-	f-	ϕ (+ leon. ori.)
[ks]	[s]	[x]
-C'L-, -LL-	[λ]	[x]
-CT-	-it-	[tʃ] (+ leon. ori., sul)
[ow], [ej]	[ow], [ej]	[o], [e] (+ port. sul e leon. ori.)
-SC + i, e	[s]	[θ] (+ leon. ori., sul)
CL-, FL-, PL-	[tʃ]	[λ] (+ leon. ori.)

**Table 1:** Comparison of Latin to Mirandese/Portuguese/Galician/Leonese, on the one hand, and Castellano, on the other (Barros Ferreira & Martins, 1987, p. 34)

There is also a series of phonetic features that connect Mirandese to Portuguese, Galician and Leonese dialects of the north of Spain that Castellano does not exhibit.

Latim	Mirandés e dial. leon.	Gal. e port.
-L-, -N-	-l-, -n-	0
-LL- -NN-	[λ] [ñ]	-l-, -n-
[ε] < $\overset{u}{E}$	[jé]	[ε]
L-	[λ]	l-

**Table 2:** Comparison of Latin to Mirandese/Leonese varieties, on the one hand, and Portuguese/Galician, on the other (Barros Ferreira & Martins, 1987, p. 36)

Similarly, some phonetic phenomena distinguish Mirandese and Leonese varieties from Portuguese and Galician. Finally, within the Leonese territory, Mirandese has its own identity and presents a greater phonetic resemblance to the dialects of the north of Portugal.

Latim	Mirandés e port. N.	Outros dial. leoneses
ŏ >[ɔ]	[ɔ]	[we]
ō >[o]	[wo], [wɔ]	[o]
S-, -SS- -S-	[s] [z]	[s]
KE-, KI-; -KI-, -TI-	[s] ou [z]	[θ]

**Table 3:** Comparison of Latin to Mirandese/Portuguese, on the one hand, and Leonese varieties as a whole, on the other (Barros Ferreira & Martins, 1987, p. 37)

As far as morphology is concerned, Barros Ferreira & Martins (1987, pp. 39-40) mention archaic words and expressions that can still be identified in Mirandese. For instance, *bubela* or *boubielha* (PT “poupa” > one of the birds from the family Upupidae) is an archaism that is only known through Medieval Galician-Portuguese literature. Mirandese words *antenado* (PT “enteado” > stepson) and *pulburino* (PT “redemoinho” > whirlwind) are examples that bear such a long-lost form that they enable to shed light on the current meaning of the words in Portuguese. A final instance consists of “joaninha” (> ladybird) which, in Trás-os-Montes, assumes the form of *pata-sol* or *pata-sola* (> paw-sun or paw-sole), whereas, in Mirandese, it is *cunta-dedos* or *cunta-me-los dedos*, forms that are also similar in Almeida and Sabugal in the district of Guarda, according to these authors. This is coherent with what occurs in Leonese territory, where it is recommended that the lady bird should “contar os dedos e voar para Deus” (count fingers and fly to God) (Bouza Brey, 1948, 1950 cit. Barros Ferreira & Martins, 1987, pp. 39-40).

All in all, Mirandese is defined by Mourinho (1987, p. 80) as bearing the perfect and complete linguistic structure, directly stemming from popular Latin in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, thus possessing a richer and more complicated phonology than that of Portuguese and Spanish. This author claims that this is reflected on the evolution and conservation of intermediate vowel sounds, of its indefinite diphthongisation and of its vowel and consonant dispersion into intermediate forms. Mirandese morphological independence is also shown in its pronouns, articles, some prepositions and verb inflection. Notice the following examples taken from the Mirandese Spelling Convention (1999, pp. 29-31):

(1) the personal pronouns subject: *you, tu, el/eilha, nós, bós, eilhes/eilhas* (PT: *eu, tu, ele/ela, nós, vós, eles/elas*);

(2) the definite articles: *l, ls, la or l', las* (PT: *o, a, os, as*);

(3) the indefinite articles: *un, ãa, uns, ãas* (PT: *um, uma, uns, umas*);

(4) the contractions of prepositions with articles: (4.1.) the definite articles and the preposition 'cun' – *cul/cun l, cula/cun la, culs/cun ls, culas/cun las* (PT: *com o, com a, com os, com as*), 'de' – *de l, de la, de ls, de las* (PT: *do, da, dos, das*) – and 'por' – *pul, pula, puls, pulas* (PT: *pelo, pela, pelos, pelas*); (4.2.) the indefinite articles and the preposition 'en' or 'an' – *nun, nũa, nuns, nũas* (PT: *num, numa, nuns, numas*);

(5) verb to do/make: *fago, fais, fail/faç, fazemos, fazeis, fáien/fázen* (PT: *faço, fazes, faz, fazemos, fazeis, fazem*).

Along with the name of Leite de Vasconcellos, others should also be mentioned: D. Ramon Menendez Pidal, who established the Leonese affiliation of Mirandese; the philologist A. R. Gonçalves Viana that standardised Mirandese orthography; and the Swedish Erik Staaf, the latter publishing a volume on the ancient Leonese dialect in 1907.

## Literary production and translation

Ã Abril  
Augas mil  
Coladas por um mandil  
(cit. Mourinho, 1987, p. 82)

It is possible to comprehend from the above-presented information that Mirandese was a spoken language only, without any written support, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it began being cultivated by various literate Mirandese people. Mourinho (1987, p. 77) illustrates this by mentioning names such as the Abbott Manuel Sardinha and Father Francisco Meirinhos, who translated short literary texts into Mirandese. Added to this, Bernardo Fernandes Monteiro, a civil servant at the Custom Services in Porto, conducted extensive translation work, i.e. St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, the Four Gospels by Matthew the Apostle, Luke the Evangelist, Mark the Evangelist and John the Apostle, and a few short stories and dialogues in the monthly newspaper "O Mirandês".

Furthermore, Mourinho (1987, p. 77) mentions Trindade Coelho, due to the fact that he transcribed Leite de Vasconcellos's first writings in the Lisbon daily newspaper "O Repórter", which would be basis of his Studies of Mirandese Philology. Trindade Coelho published several texts and comments about Mirandese in this same newspaper, entitled "Echos", as well as excerpts of liturgical service texts from Bernardo Fernandes Monteiro's translation. Two final examples are Francisco Garrido Brandão, who composed an *entremés* (short, comic theatrical performance

of one act) in Mirandese, Portuguese and Galician entitled “Sturiano i Marcolfa” (two proper names), and Alfredo Cortez with his play “Saias” (*Skirts*) from 1938.

Notwithstanding, Mourinho (1987, p. 75) claims that there were written forms of this language scattered in ancient documents, such as letters, wills, donations, exchanges, lawsuits and contracts, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. A number of these documents were written down by scribes who were part of the Monastery Saint Mary of Morerueta, whereas others were the result of the intervention of less literate scribes who were Mirandese themselves and thus escaped the prescriptive rules of Portuguese (Mourinho, 1987, p. 75).

Returning to Mirandese literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mourinho himself also published texts in Mirandese: in 1941-42, he composed the legend “Siête hermanas” (*Seven sisters*), which was recited at the Society of Geography and published later in the Second *Transmontano* Congress, in which he also published “Nós somos de Pertual” (*We are from Portugal*). Between 1946 and 1947, Mourinho launched his “Subsídios para um tratado de dialectologia portuguesa” (*Subsidies for a treaty on Portuguese dialectology*), including sections on Mirandese dialect, the expansion and vitality of Mirandese and its literature, Mirandese grammar and phonology and the origins of Mirandese, followed by “Diversidades subdialectais do mirandês” (*Subdialectal diversities of Mirandese*) in 1960. Two years later, in 1962, the first book in Mirandese would be published by Mourinho – “Nôssa Alma, nôssa tiêrra” (*Our soul, our land*, cf. Annex) – following the orthographic rules in line with Vasconcellos’s guidelines. In 1984, Mourinho put out the first volume of “Cancioneiro tradicional e danças populares mirandesas” (*Mirandese traditional chansonnier and popular dances*).

In 1987, the First Meeting on Mirandese Language and Culture was held in Miranda do Douro. In this event, Raposo (1987, p. 55) argued that there were little literature in Mirandese and it was then of the utmost importance to produce more literature that would be felt as modern. According to this author, the fact that the teaching of Mirandese started officially in the school year 1986/1987 (as an optional subject in Basic Education in Miranda do Douro) would have a positive effect on the development and ultimately the survival of Mirandese. Added to this, other undertakings would also be highly significant, such as the creation of a Centre for Mirandese Studies (cf. web references), of literary competitions and of radio and TV programmes, the increasing publication of fiction and non-fiction books and also of dictionaries and, finally, the staging of plays.

In the aftermath of this event, considerable literary production has come to light, according to the information retrieved from the bibliography coordinated by Barros Ferreira (2015), in which we can find three sections on Zone Ia. Bragança/Miranda (Ferreira & Barros Ferreira, 2015, pp. 53-101), concerning themselves with language, literature and culture.

In relation to literature, this bibliography is organised into prose, poetry, theatre and traditional oral literature. In both prose and poetry, we can find an inescapable name: Amadeu Ferreira and his pseudonym Francisco Niebro. Apart from his various chronicles in newspapers and on blogs, we could mention “Las cuntas de Tiu Jouquin” (*The tales of Mr. Jouquin*, 2001) and “Lancanto de las arribas de l Douro” (*The enchantment of Douro’s Cliffs*, 2001), as well as some short stories, e.g. “Amanhai-bos cumo podirdes” (*Manage as you can*, 2001) and “La biaige” (*The journey*, 2001). It is also worth referring to some of Amadeu Ferreira’s works: “Ditos dezideiros. Provérbios mirandeses.” (*Mirandese proverbs*) and “Lhéngua Mirandesa: Manifesto an Modo de Hino.” (*The Mirandese Language: Manifesto in the form of a Hymn*), both from 2014.

As far as Amadeu Ferreira’s pseudonym is concerned, it is worth referring to “Las biaijes dua folhica” (*Journey of a little leaf*, a poetry book for children) and “L bolo de l beiso” (*The flight of the kiss*, with a Portuguese translation), both from 2001, “Cebadeiros” (the name given to the organic matter decanter that occurs in agriculture gutters) and “Deixa-te quedar” (*Stay put*, also with a French translation) from 2002. In later years, we could mention “Ars Vivendi Ars Moriendi” (2012) and “Belheç. Velhice.” (*Old Age*, 2015).

Amadeu Ferreira’s brother, Carlos Ferreira, is also among Mirandese writers and thus we should mention “Lhonas lindainas, sacadielhas, cuntas de camino I outras cuntas” (*Jokes, puns, charades, tales of the road and other tales*, 2002), “Cuntas que me cuntórum, seguidas de l Gato de das Botas” (*Tales I was told, followed by the Puss in Boots*, 2002) and “L miu purmeiro lhibro an mirandés. O meu primeiro livro em mirandês” (*My first book in Mirandese*, 2005), along with his 2001 play, named “L barbeiro que dou an doutor” (*The barber who became a doctor*). Francisco Niebro also published the play “Garabatos i Rodadeiras” (children’s toys made up of a wheel – *rodadeira* – and a curved stick that guides it – *garabato*) performed at the Basic Education School in Sendim, in 2001.

Furthermore, we must allude to the literary-competition-winner José Francisco Fernandes (“Miranda yê la Mie Tiêrra” > *Miranda is my homeland*, 1998, and “Miranda, Mie Mirandica” > *Miranda, my little Miranda*, 2002, in terms of poetry, and “Miranda, Cousas i Causos” > *Miranda, Things and Cases*, 2002, for prose), Tinta Nubrada with “Dies Cuntados” (*Counted days*, 2002, online), Emílio Pires Martins with “La proua de ser sendinês” (*The pride of being Sendinês*, poetry, 1999) and Manuel Preto with “Bersos mirandeses” (*Mirandese verses*, poetry, 1993).

Other less known names worthy of mention are Bina Cangeiro (“La fardela de las lhembrâncias” > *Memory Bag*, 2003; “La paixarina azul i outras cuontas” > *The blue butterfly and other tales*, 2010), Alfredo Cameirão (“Tortulhas. Cuontas deste mundo i de l outro” > *Tortulhas* (name of a rivulet). *Tales of this world and the other*, 2009), Valter Deusdado (“L Ancuontro” > *The Gathering*, 2011) and Fonso

Roixo (“L Purmeiro Libro de Bersos” > *The first book of verses*, 2009; “L Segundo Libro de Bersos” > *The second book of verses*, 2014).

In terms of traditional oral literature, we must touch on Mirandese collections of oral stories, which, in the case of this language, is of outstanding importance, since Mirandese was an oral language until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and thus its heritage is safeguarded in these stories that were passed on from generation to generation of Mirandese speakers and form also the core of its literature. In addition to Leite de Vasconcellos and Mourinho’s records, we should point out others worthy of mention, such as António Bárbolo Alves with three books from 1999 to 2002 – “Lliteratura oral mirandesa – recuolha de textos an mirandés” (*Mirandese oral literature – text records in Mirandese*), “Cuntas de la Tierra de las Faias” (*Tales of the Land of Beeches*), “Cunta de bruxas” (*Witch tales*), “Las bruxas i l çapateiro” (*The witches and the shoe-maker*) and “La cunta de Juan Suldado” (*The tale of John, the Soldier*) –, Manuel da Costa Fontes, who compiled “Romanceiro da província de Trás-os-Montes” (*Chansonnier of the province of Trás-os-Montes*, 1987) and Maria Aliete Dores Galhoz, organiser of a volume entitled “Romances tradicionais” (*Traditional romances*, 1987).

A final word must be said about translation into Mirandese. As presented above, translation was conducted since Leite de Vasconcellos “discovered” Mirandese. Since then, translation has been conducted from various languages, namely from Latin, Portuguese and French. Examples of this activity, carried out by various authors, some of which already alluded to, consist of the translation of: (1) poems by Horace, Virgil, Catullus and Ovid, (2) the Fables of La Fontaine, (3) an anthology of Portuguese poetry, as well as “Mensagem” (*Message*) by Fernando Pessoa and “Os Lusíadas” (*The Lusíads*) by Luíz Vaz de Camões, (4) two Asterix’s adventures (i.e. “Asterix, L Goulés”, 2005, and “Asterix, L Galaton”, 2006<sup>3</sup>) and (5) liturgical texts and the four gospels.

## 1999 as the hallmark in Mirandese acknowledgement

Falar hoje sobre política linguística não interessa se se limitar à exclusiva indicação de formas concretas de difusão da língua, sem se saber exactamente onde, como e para quê.

(Mira Mateus, 2009, p. 73)

This excerpt by Maria Helena Mira Mateus reflects a shared feeling about the current state of Mirandese in Portugal. After 1999, little or nothing has been done by the central powers in terms of Mirandese language policy and thus the outcry of the mentors of Mirandese legal acknowledgement has been frequently heard. However, added to this, Barros Ferreira (2000, p. 57) elaborates by claiming that it is not only essential to reconstruct the language, but above all turn it into some-

thing cherished by everyone, to prevent it from crumbling down not long after. Protecting Mirandese comprehends also dignifying it so as to avert the stigma that has always surrounded its use (cf. “língua charra” vs. “língua fidalga”). Providing Mirandese with a spelling convention and official acknowledgement presents it in a completely different light: as an independent and self-sufficient language system and thus fully standardised (Barros Ferreira, 2000, p. 62).

Mirandese was acknowledged in 1999 as the second official language in Portugal, according to the law no. 7/99 (from 29<sup>th</sup> January) and following the Parliament session on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1998, where the law was unanimously voted. This law also acknowledges people’s right to speak Mirandese in administration and at school, where only Portuguese was allowed before (Martins, 2002, p. 58).

In addition to the law, the “Convenção Ortográfica da Língua Mirandesa” (*Mirandese Spelling Convention*) was also approved, whose existence was first supported by António Maria Mourinho (Barros Ferreira, 2000, p. 55). In 2000, an amendment to the convention was suggested, in order to integrate *Sendinês* into the common writing.

Barros Ferreira (2000, pp. 63-65) briefly presents the process by which the spelling convention was developed. It was first discussed in the Regional Meeting of the Portuguese Linguistics Association in 1993, with a view to facilitating the teaching of the language, which had started back in 1986/1987, without a recognised writing system. This was due to the fact that written Mirandese experienced great diversity of writing conventions: it varied from writer to writer and even the same author could write the same word differently and often in the same text. Therefore, in Barros Ferreira’s perspective (2000, pp. 63-64), the need for a spelling convention had to comply with two demands: on the one hand, the agreement of representatives of the main varieties of Mirandese and, on the other hand, it would have to achieve a level of abstraction that would enable different readings according to possible pronunciations. This required also reaching a compromise as far as written conventions were concerned, so that it could be used as a tool for collective recognition for all the language community. The team that would be in charge of this convention was made up linguists (most of which from the already-mentioned CLUL) as well as representatives of the different varieties of Mirandese. The first proposal for a convention was put forth in 1995 (Barros Ferreira, 2000, pp. 65-66), bearing in mind specific aspects, such as the historical perspective of the language, restricted graphical variation in the same words and respect for the fact that children could be using both Mirandese and Portuguese in a situation of bilingualism or diglossia, giving preference to the more economical forms, but without disregarding the individuality of the language in the Portuguese and Leonese contexts.

Returning to the Mirandese Spelling Convention, this document is divided into the following parts:

- (1) presentation of the document and general principles (1999, pp. 9-12), which explain the underlying guidelines for this convention;
- (2) Mirandese alphabet with the identification of its phonemes and the presentation of examples (1999, pp. 13-15);
- (3) particularities of Mirandese orthography and their pronunciation (1999, pp. 19-23);
- (4) orthography of diphthongs, especially the decreasing and increasing oral diphthongs, and nasality (1999, pp. 24-25);
- (5) complementary signs, i.e. accents, apostrophe and hyphen (1999, pp. 26-28);
- (6) orthography of morphological paradigms, such as definite and indefinite articles, prepositions and their contraction with the articles (examples of which were shown above), pronouns, conjunctions and connecting phrases, adverbs and adverbial phrases, interjections (1999, pp. 29-36)
- (7) conjugation of some verbs (1999, pp- 37-59);
- (8) brief lexical sample, with some toponyms, numerals, days of the week and family relations (1999, pp. 60-62).

Cristina Martins (2002, pp. 48-54) analyses the situation before and after the 1999 law according to a group of different criteria which are elaborated below, namely the legal framework, administration and political bodies, the presence of Mirandese in the media, the teaching of the language, chansonniers and literature, scientific writing, scientific conferences, work and publications and, at last, other promotion activities.

In terms of the legal framework, before the law, there was no legal recognition of linguistic minorities in Portugal, which was still presented as the oldest monolingual country in Europe. Moreover, before the law no. 7/99, it is worth mentioning another legal document produced by the Ministry of Education on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1985, which allowed Mirandese to be taught at schools in Miranda do Douro as an optional subject. After the law no. 7/99, a legislative order enshrined the right for formal learning of Mirandese in the public education system in Portugal, without being exclusive to Miranda do Douro.

As far as administration and political bodies are concerned, before 1999, Mirandese was only used in erratic posters and official invitations by the Miranda do Douro City Council and was spoken by the City Council President and other representatives in commemorative events. It should be alluded that the opening session of the Portuguese National Assembly was done in Mirandese by the then Member of Parliament Júlio Meirinhos, when discussing the proposal of the law that was to be passed. After the law, the language was more frequently used in the situations where it had already been under use, as well as in the regular sessions of the City Assembly in Miranda by some of its members. Nonetheless, Martins (2002, p. 58) states that, despite the legal recognition, the use of Mirandese is still residual.

Concerning the media, before the law, there is no known case of the use of Mirandese as a linguistic tool in newspaper activities and the interest in this language is residual. The media only started focusing their attention on this language with a view to presenting it in the shape of reports or documentaries. However, it must be mentioned that, even in the preceding period, the University Radio of Minho broadcast short humorous chronicles in Mirandese, twice a week, between 1994 and 1996, put together by António Bárbolo Alves. From 2001 on, news articles and chronicles have been regularly published in Mirandese on the website of the “Diário de Trás-os-Montes” (*Trás-os-Montes Daily Newspaper*), as well as a radio programme in Mirandese on the Radio Mirandum – FM, under Domingos Raposo’s responsibility. The role of mass media must not be overlooked, as Ferreira & Martins (2012) elaborate on, being an essential part in the assertion of a minority language within the context of a mainstream and overpowering national language.

Related to the teaching of the language, it was already referred that, since 1986, the language had been offered as an optional and after-hour subject in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years of Basic Education in Miranda. After the law, these teaching experiments went on and, in the school year of 2000/2001, the offer was extended to Sendim, another experiment was also carried out with primary school pupils and the first courses in writing Mirandese for literate adults were made available. Several Mirandese courses are opened in higher education institutions, such as at UTAD (University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro) in 1999/2000, as part of the Master’s in Portuguese Language and Culture and as a free language course, but also at the School of Education of the IPB (Polytechnic Institute of Bragança) in 2004/2005, to mention just a few. The first summer course in Mirandese Language and Culture was organised in 2001, followed by another one held in 2011 with the participation of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto.

As for chansonnier and literature in Mirandese, Martins (2002, pp. 50-51) adds on to what was presented above. The Mirandese chansonnier was basically oral and there should be mentioned song festivals organised by the City Council. The year 2000 witnessed the creation of the Mirandese rock group called “Pica Tumilho, Agrícola Rock Band”<sup>4</sup> from Sendim, which launched their first album “Sacho, Gaçpólia i Rock n’ roll” (*Hoe, New wine and rock n’ roll*) in 2000 and, in 2008, their second “Faíçca, uã stória d’amor e laboura” (*Faísca* (proper name), *a story of love and agriculture*), with all their songs in Mirandese. In terms of literature, in 1995, the first literary competition was promoted by the City Council, whose winner was José Francisco Fernandes (who died in 2015), and repeated again in 2001.

Scientific writing was non-existent in Mirandese before the law, although authors, such as Bárbolo Alves, Raposo and Amadeu Ferreira embody the first attempts. Related to scientific conferences, even before the law, there are some events that should be cited, namely the “Primeiras Jornadas de Língua e Cultura Mirandesas” (*First Meeting in Mirandese Language and Culture*) held in 1987, the 1993 Regional

Meeting of the Portuguese Association of Linguistics, which organised a round table on Mirandese, not to mention numerous meetings promoted by the Asturian Language Association. In the aftermath of 1999, events in and about Mirandese started cropping up in both Portugal and Spain, for instance, one such event is about ecolinguistics and minority languages, which is going to occur in June 2016 at the University of Aveiro and in Miranda do Douro, and the “1º Simpósio Internacional Línguas e variedades linguísticas ameaçadas na Península Ibérica: Documentação e revitalização” (First International Symposium on Languages and endangered linguistic varieties in the Iberian Peninsula: Documentation and Revitalisation), organised by CIDLES – “Centro Interdisciplinar de Documentação Linguística e Social” (Interdisciplinary Centre for Social and Language Documentation) in July 2016.

In terms of scientific work and publications, apart from the pivotal work by Leite de Vasconcellos and other publications by António Maria Mourinho, references to Mirandese are also made in the work of several authors, such as Joseph Piel (1930), Herculano de Carvalho (1952, 1957, 1960), Kurt Baldinger (1958), Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1962, 1968) and several other Portuguese scholars, namely Manuela Barros Ferreira, Telmo Verdelho, Cristina Martins, to mention just a few. Publications include proceedings of academic events and some dissertations and theses, the first of which was by Maria da Conceição Azevedo Moreira, entitled “A vida do povo mirandês através do seu vocabulário” (*The life of Mirandese people through their vocabulary*), a graduate dissertation in Romanic Philology by the University of Coimbra from 1962. In 1994, Martins defends her master’s dissertation at the University of Coimbra on the sociolinguistic situation of Mirandese, with a view to code-switching and language choice. Later, in 1997, António Bárbolo Alves is awarded his master’s with a dissertation on Mirandese lexicon by the University of Minho. After the law, the Spelling Convention is put forward in 1999, and its amendment in 2000, as well as numerous works on Mirandese by the above-mentioned scholars and by “Grupo de Estudo da Língua Mirandesa” (GELM – *Study Group on Mirandese Language*) created in this same year. In 2001, the website [mirandes.no.sapo.pt](http://mirandes.no.sapo.pt) is set up with the support of CLUL and has remained highly active since then. A year later, in 2002, António Bárbolo Alves presents his doctorate thesis to the University of Toulouse also on Mirandese lexicon. It should also be mentioned the fact that numerous academic work has been developed within the three study cycles of higher education (HE) in several HE institutions not only in Portugal, but also in other European countries (cf. “A situação da língua mirandesa – Bi- e plurilinguismo numa comunidade minoritária no Nordeste de Portugal” > *The situation of Mirandese language – bi- or plurilingualism in a minority community in northeast Portugal* (2014), by Evelin Gabriella Hargitai, from Budapest, Hungary). For instance, at the School of Education of the IPB, a piece of work from 2014 was conducted within the master’s in Social Education – “A língua mirandesa, um meio

de comunicação na socialização” (*Mirandese language, a means of communication in socialisation*) by Carlos Manuel Rêgo.

As far as other promotion and dissemination activities are concerned, Martins (2002, pp. 53-54) alludes to the creation of GELM in 2000 and of the “Associação de Lhéngua Mirandesa” (*Mirandese Language Association*) in 2001, whose headquarters were at the time in Lisbon. This same year, Barros Ferreira represents Mirandese in the National Committee for the European Language Day. From 2000 onwards, two websites start presenting texts in Mirandese, namely [www.bragancanet.pt/picote](http://www.bragancanet.pt/picote) (currently inactive) and [www.sendim.net](http://www.sendim.net). Worthy of mention is also the setting up of the “Centro de Estudos António Maria Mourinho” (*Study Centre António Maria Mourinho*) in 2004. At last, one last example is related to the fact that the “Associação de Desenvolvimento Astúrias/Portugal” (*Development Association Asturias/Portugal*) has published, in 2015, a document in four languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Mirandese and Asturian, offering Mirandese the status of international language.

Taking the above-mentioned into account, Martins (2002, pp. 56-57) also discusses the patterns of diglossia in the periods before and after the law. With the approval of the law no. 7/99, the neglect for Mirandese linguistic idiosyncrasy, which always led to the hostility of outsiders (cf. the construction of Douro’s dams) and their discrimination of Mirandese speakers, should have been routed out. However, the stigma has not only set out from the “outgroup”, but also from the “ingroup” (cf. Gumperz’s concepts, 1982): when confronted with outsiders, Mirandese themselves started stigmatising speakers of their own language, enhancing the feeling of inferiority and ridiculousness.

## Conclusion

The linguistic heritage of any country is unmistakably related to its linguistic varieties and also other languages spoken. The sheer idea that a country is so unified that allows no variety or variation is a fallacy that was proved wrong when the 800-year monolingual Portugal acknowledged Mirandese as its second official language. Therefore, in line with the Charter on regional and minority languages (1992), recognising these languages is “an expression of [national] cultural wealth”. This same document upholds that resolute action should be taken not only for encouraging the use of these languages in spoken and written and in both public as private life, but also for establishing cultural relations between national governments and local ones in their own languages. As a consequence, investment is paramount in the areas of teaching, from pre-school to higher education and also in adult and continuing education, which require, for instance, official coursebooks and teacher training, as well as of translation and interpreting, demanding also university training for these professionals. There should also be, at the very least, one TV and one radio channel in Mirandese, supported with financial assistance.

What Leite de Vasconcellos once called “the language of home, love and fields” has since then been equipped with the essential means (e.g. official recognition, original and translated literature) to become a standardised minority language. Nonetheless, Mirandese has also since then lost its three dimensions, being the family that which most suffered. According to Martins’s study (2002, p. 59), parents will only speak Mirandese to their children if they feel that “essa opção representa, quer para si, quer para a sua descendência, uma clara mais valia social e simbólica” and thus the highly important role of the school. Consequently, only those who are over 50 will be totally bilingual and proficient in Mirandese, whereas younger speakers will not be proficient in Mirandese, since their knowledge will be residual, even if they are studying it at school. In line with this, we uphold that Mirandese should be offered as an optional subject in all levels of study from pre-school to higher education, as well as in the whole country and not be restricted to Miranda do Douro and surrounding areas. Mirandese should also become a part of teacher training degrees to allow for the recognition of the language and the profession of teaching Mirandese. Based on these proposals, the language would bear the possibility of crossing the borders of Trás-os-Montes and be made available throughout Portugal, cheating extinction and avoiding entering the toll of dead languages.

According to Hagège (2009), a language can be lost in two generations and there is one language that disappears every 15 days: Mirandese has fooled death when Leite de Vasconcellos predicted its disappearance in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the question remains – will it survive the new millennium in a country that has become oblivious to its existence and where family no longer plays the role of passing on the language from generation to generation? It is our strong belief that, throughout the whole process of “discovery”, defence and acknowledgement, the central government has failed Mirandese people, culture and language and ultimately Portuguese linguistic heritage as a whole.

## End-of-text Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the myth of isolation in the context of Mirandese language, cf. Sérgio Ferreira (2011 and 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Blog “Os Caminhos de Ferro – Retratos e relatos do Portugal ferroviário”.

<sup>3</sup> The new adventure “Asterix and the Missing Scroll” was launched in 2015 and will also have a Mirandese edition, according to the publisher ASA. José Pedro Ferreira, Amadeu Ferreira’s son, and Carlos Ferreira will be in charge of the translation.

<sup>4</sup> “Pica Tumilho” means lavender mincer; this herb would be minced and then placed on the streets during winter to ferment with water and mud and later be used to fertilise the fields.

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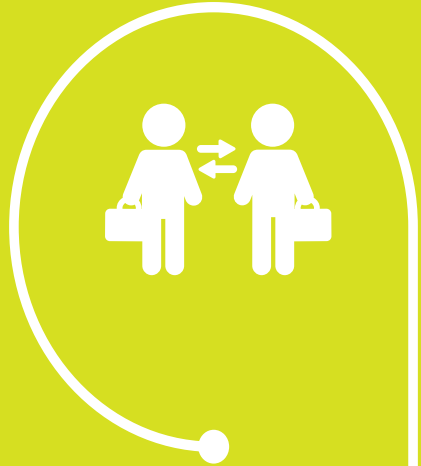
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## Annex

<p>La lhéngua mirandesa</p> <p>Quien dirie q'antre ls matos eiriçados, Las ourrietas i ls rius desta tierra, Bibie, cumo l chougarço de la sierra, Ua lhéngua de sonidos tan bariados?</p> <p>Mostre-se i fale-se essa lhéngua, filha Dun pobo que ten neilha l choro i l canto! Nada por cierto mos coutiba tanto Cumo la form'an que l'eideia brilha.</p> <p>Desgraciado d'aquel q'abandonando La pátria an que naciú, la casa i l huorto, Tamien se esquece de la fala! Quando Lo furdes a ber, talbeç que steia muorto!</p> <p>(José Leite de Vasconcellos, "Flores Mirandesas" ("Mirandese Flowers"), 1884)</p>	<p>La Nôssa Lhéngua</p> <p>Armanos cantai ã charro, Na nossa lhéngua q'hardêmos; La fala de nôssos pais Yê l pertués que tenemos.</p> <p>Ah! Fála nôssa i siêmpre biba, Falada i nunca screbida!... Tu sós La mais rica eiterna i nobre hardança Qã beisos de criança Me dórún cul pã negro Mius pai i mius abós.</p> <p>Falai-la, mius armanos. Guardai-la!... Stimai-la!...</p> <p>Yê fala probe, Mas nobre.</p> <p>Yê armana doutras falas Que falã ouropeus i amaricanos, Asiáticos i africanos... Baliêntes i cristianos!...</p> <p>...Se ã «charro» digo «mai»!... Fai-me lhembrar ternuras Agradables i puras De quien me dou sou peito Al son d' l amor nun ai!...</p> <p>Se chamo pur Jásus, Relhembro no miu seno, La fé, la eiterna lhuç... El bun bibir sereno Que m'ansinou a ber Miu pai cum' s' fusse a ler, No altar i nuã Cruç!...</p> <p>(António Maria Mourinho, "Nôssa Alma i Nôssa Tiêrra" ("Our Sould and Our Land"), 1961)</p>
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# Intensive Programmes Erasmus+ Mobility of Individuals

