Introduction

Anyone familiar with Fernando Pessoa’s archive is aware that deciphering his handwriting remains a most painstaking task, even if accustomed to it after years of regular practice. Different generations of editors have contributed to the publication of thousands of texts, as well as to the completion and revision of many others; yet, seventy years after the pioneering editorial work of João Gaspar Simões and Luís de Montalvor, more than half of Pessoa’s archive still awaits transcription and publication.

Not only concerned with unpublished texts, some Pessoan editors still deal with the revision of a fraction of the posthumously published documents. The small corpus I intend to examine here comprises this latter group: (§ 1) a Portuguese poem published by Manuela Parreira da Silva, Ana Maria Freitas and Madalena Dine (Poesia 1902-1917, 2005; henceforth P02-17); (§ 2) an unfinished
French poem brought to the press by Patrick Quillier (*Fernando Pessoa. Œuvres poétiques*, 2001; henceforth *Œuvres*); (§ 3) three fragmentary English odes initially attributed by Pessoa to Charles Robert Anon and then to Alexander Search. These fragmentary poems were first critically published by João Dionísio in *Poemas Ingleses* (1997, tome II; henceforth *PI.1*) and subsequently (two of them and without the textual variants) by Luísa Freire in *Alexander Search. Poesia* (1999; henceforth *ASP*). Stanzas pertaining to one of the two odes also included in Freire’s edition were critically published by Jerónimo Pizarro and myself in *Cadernos* (2009, tome I). The revision of the odes concerns the transcriptions given in these three different editions.

I propose to undertake the revision of the selected corpus partly with the aid of metrics (study of versifying) arguing, in each case, that this discipline offers valuable tools for the stabilization of texts. Because metrics is not limited to aiding in the stabilization of exclusively handwritten documents, I shall also consider (§ 4) a typewritten English poem transcribed by Christopher Aureta and published by Teresa Rita Lopes in *Pessoa Inédito* (1993; henceforth *Plne*). This latter poem, without modification, was subsequently included by Luísa Freire in *Poesia Inglesa* (2000, tome II; henceforth *PI.2*).

It should be said from the outset that the relevance of metrics in textual criticism has been argued by other editors. In the preface to Plautus’s *Menaechmi*, for instance, A. S. Gratwick states:

> For an editor, a proper understanding of the playwright’s metrical technique is, in its way, as good as a fresh MS of high quality […]. For in Plautus we find celebrated some of the most attractive qualities of the Latin language, and the metrical texture of his writing is as much an inseparable part of that as alliteration, anaphora, or any of the more visible things that commentators are wont to talk about.

(1993: viii)

The “metrical texture” referred to by Gratwick corresponds to one of the three requirements for “a satisfactory editorial solution” given by Martin West in his *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (1973). West worded it thus: a suitable editorial solution should correspond “in language, style, and any relevant technical points (metre, prose rhythm, avoidance of hiatus, etc.) to a way in which the author might naturally have expressed that sense” (1973: 48; my italics).

As Luís Prista has shown in the re-edition of a Portuguese quatrain by Fernando Pessoa (Prista, 1995: 199-201), attention to the technical aspects of a text

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8 The numerous transcriptions of “Poems by Alexander Search” done by Georg Rudolf Lind are found in Pessoa’s archive (78 Annex). The three fragmentary odes here reviewed are not found among these transcriptions.

9 The first time a term is introduced it will appear in italics. Unless self-explanatory, terms shall always be defined; the definition will appear in parentheses.
may prove useful for the editor. In Prista’s case it was the attention given to the rhyme scheme of the quatrain likely followed by Pessoa. But Prista’s instruments were not limited to metrics. Taking into account a paleographical study of the autograph document and the sense in context (two other requirements argued by West) he arrived at a different editorial solution. In the process of my revisions these two requirements will not be disregarded.

Before turning to the poems that I shall undertake for revision, let us add that, in Pessoa’s case, the value of metrics as an aid will be heightened by the use of his private library. Held at the Casa Fernando Pessoa in Lisbon since 1993 and now easily accessible in digital form, Pessoa’s book collection contains most, if not all, of the canonical verse forms that he learned and eventually put into practice. Not only are they present in the private library but they also carry the traces of his keen desire for apprenticeship; numerous poems in books, particularly those dating from the Durban years, are marked, underlined, commented upon and/or scanned (see Ferrari, 2012: Appendix IV). Consequently, the private library, along with certain marginalia (annotations in the margins, flyleaves and/or other parts of a book) will serve as precious guides. In this vein, though scattered in the author’s archive, metrical sketches, scansions and/or other notes on meter and rhythm will also be perused. Thus, the revising process will be conducted, as far as possible, with an eye (and ear) on the stages of the creative process itself.

1. A Portuguese Short-Line Poem Destined to Ondas

One of Pessoa’s earliest Portuguese poetry projects, datable from 1909, bears the title “Ondas.” In a notebook under the heading “Portuguese Works” we find it among some forty other titles of the most diverse sorts (e.g., feminism, on rhythm, essays on philosophy, inter alia; see 144D-1 to 3; Escritos sobre Génio e Loucura, 2006: I, 37-38). In this very notebook there figures a more specific reference to this never-concluded book of verse. In Roman numerals and under “‘Ondas’ | Livro

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10 Dealing with classical texts (i.e., with authors whose textual witnesses are not available), West’s third requirement concerns the clarification of transmitted corruptions that the “presumed original reading” may have undergone (1973: 48). In Pessoa’s case, most of the autograph materials being available, this requirement may be simply characterized as a paleographical inspection of the textual witness in question.

11 His reading differed from those proposed by Lind and Coelho in Quadras ao gosto popular (1965) and by Sobral Cunha in Quadras e outros cantares (1997), respectively.

12 And has been since October 2010: http://casafernandopessoa.cm-lisboa.pt/bdigital/index/index.htm. Jerónimo Pizarro, Antonio Cardiello, and I have co-directed the digitization of Fernando Pessoa’s private library. The paper publication of A Biblioteca Particular de Fernando Pessoa (Pizarro, Ferrari and Cardiello, 2010), which accompanies the site, gathers in one volume the majority of the books, magazines and newspapers that were in Pessoa’s possession at the time of his death, on 30 November 1935.
primeiro” Pessoa quoted the *incipit* of the first eight Portuguese poems (of a total of twenty; the last twelve entries were left blank) (144D-4). If we trust the date on the textual witnesses, he composed them between 15 November 1908 and 27 January 1909. In this section I wish to focus on the two existing witnesses of poem VII, dated 31 December 1908.\(^\text{14}\)

\[\text{Fig. 1. (34-25).}\]

\(^{13}\) In all they comprise approximately 200 lines: I. “Tenho em vez de pensamento...” dated 15 November 1908 (34-15; *P02*-17, 2005: 32-33); II. “Canção”: “Ide buscal-a, Desejos...” dated 15 November 1908 (34-6; *P02*-17, 2005: 28); III. “Abenlied”: “O orvalho da tarde beija...” dated 15 November 1908 (34-7; *P02*-17, 2005: 29); IV. “Suspiro”: “Suspiro, quero ir contigo...” dated 15 November 1908 (34-8; *P02*-17, 2005: 29-30); V. “Nocturno”: “Dorme, creança, dorme...” dated 27 January 1909 (34-26; *P02*-17, 2005: 43-44); VI. “Marinheiro-monge...” (34-36 and 38); VII. “Choras? Cáia o teu pranto...” dated 31 December 1908 (34-25; cf. *P02*-17 2005: 40; Ferrari, 2012: 367); VIII. “Para que vens? Já perdi...” dated 31 December 1908 (34-14; *P02*-17, 2005: 30-31). Besides counting the texts signed Lança, Pip, and Pancracio (see Silveira, 1988), there are approximately a dozen Portuguese poems in Pessoa’s archive dated prior to 15 November 1908. These poems were written in 1902 and 1908, respectively. There is also a *quadra* with a rhyme scheme *xaxa* dated 27 August 1907 (17-2; *Quadras*, 1997: 188).

\(^{14}\) While in the notebook Pessoa writes “Choras? Cáia o teu pranto...” (i.e., “câia” with the diacritic indicating the acute accent), in the two existing versions of the poem (figs. 1 and 5) he omits it.
Below I quote the lines of verse\textsuperscript{15} (fig. 1) as they were first published in modern European Portuguese orthography by Parreira da Silva, Freitas and Dine:

\begin{quote}
Chorar? Caia o teu pranto  
Sobre a minha alma a sangrar  
Como cai sobre a terra o manto  
Do orvalho ou do luar.
\end{quote}

(34-25; P02-17, 2005: 40)

My reading differs from theirs in the following: (1) inclusion of the verses below the dotted line (i.e., lines 5 and 6); (2) line 1: “Choras” instead of “Chorar”; (3) line 4: no period after “luar”; (4) line 4: the line is indented. Here is a possible new transcription:

\begin{quote}
Choras? Caia o teu pranto  
Sobre a minha alma a sangrar  
Como cai sobre a terra o manto  
Do orvalho ou do luar  
Eu quero ver-te ao ouvir meu canto,\textsuperscript{16}  
Sorrir em teu chorar.
\end{quote}

(34-25; Ferrari, 2012: 160)

Although the last two lines were written with a different writing instrument, it is arguably a six-line poem in no set form that combines two lines of different lengths (given here in metrical syllables and with the following rhyme scheme): 6a 8b 8a 6b 8a 6b. This addition remains well in accordance with the \textit{strophe design} (the length of lines and the line-end rhyme scheme) of the composition.\textsuperscript{17} Note that the three added words in line 4 (“orvalho ou do”,\textsuperscript{18} also penned with a different writing instrument) correspond to the number of metrical syllables required for the

\\textsuperscript{15} Building on Jakobson’s three-way verse distinction (1960), modern metrists have opted for the term \textit{verse instance} to describe an actual line of verse and the term \textit{verse design} for the specific meter of that line. This helps differentiate the contents of each, because the verse instance clearly consists of linguistic material, while the verse design does not (if it did, all the lines in the poem would be the same). In fact, the meter (or \textit{verse design}) is an abstraction that consists of a \textit{template} comprising sub-units that we now call \textit{positions} and a set of rules or constraints (\textit{correspondence rules}, also known as \textit{realization constraints}) for crafting verse instances. Correspondence rules determine the \textit{quantity} (e.g., in syllable-based meters such as Shakespeare’s sonnets there is a maximum size of one syllable per position in the line [except for the last]) and the \textit{quality} (e.g., except for the first position in an English iambic pentameter, a strong syllable of a polysyllabic word is constrained from occupying weak positions) (see Duffell 2000: 286, n. 3 and 2008: 13).

\textsuperscript{16} The crossed-out line (“Se a tua alma é triste o teu choro é santo”) has nine metrical syllables as opposed to eight, which is the length of the one below, as well as of lines 2 and 3.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Strophe design} also includes the number of lines in a given poem.

\textsuperscript{18} Regarding quotes from lines of poetry, punctuation not belonging to the quotation itself will be placed outside of the quotation marks, where pertinent.
hexasyllabic line. The regularity throughout this piece is a sign of the attention the author gave to structure.

In order to solve the second difference ("Choras" vs. "Chorar"), we may turn to the way in which the word that closes the poem appears written on the manuscript. The last letter of the verb that closes the poem (fig. 2) does not resemble the one that opens it (fig. 3):

Moreover, it should be noted that, syntactically speaking, the verb in the closing line could only be in the infinitive:

Should these two evidences not suffice, the examination of a second textual witness (fig. 5), likely destined for Pessoa’s “Tratado de Prosodia e Poetica” and datable from 1909, will seal the matter.

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19 Above the lines of verse we read: “Em poesia vale o rhythmo tanto como a grammatica” (122-2r; Fernando Pessoa e a Nova Métrica, 1993: 97; henceforth FPNM). For the genesis and content of Pessoa’s treaty see Ferrari (2012).
The complete poem would read thus:

NOTHING.

The day sickens into the lakes
The colour that its pallor wears…
A loss of contour overtakes
The landscape, and the horizon bears
Like a defeated flag the dim
Purposelessness of its dead rim.

Let my heart forsake everything.\(^{79}\)
I shall be richer by all I.
Every breath, each passing wing
Takes me from myself. The whole sky
Eats into my self-consciousness
And detracts my true distress.\(^{80}\)

For my true sorrow is not that
The day is sad as I am sad,
But that no moment can abate
That pain that is all I have had\(^{81}\)
To take with me and see and feel
While life goes by like a mere wheel.\(^{82}\)

No. Deeper things than skies and plains
Are dark and lower’d o’er in me.
My sorrows are more empty pains
Than of which plains can symbols be.\(^{83}\)
And my void weight of life and self\(^{84}\)
Resembles nothing but itself.

Metrically speaking, the opening line of the poem is either very subtle or very poorly constructed: second-foot inversion is generally avoided by L1 English poets (see Duffell, 2008). This line may be employing mimesis or it may simply be unmetrical, a syllabic octosyllable (like the French octosyllabe or Portuguese octossílabo with mandatory stress only in position 8). The syllabic octosyllable never caught on in England, even in Anglo-Norman (see Duffell, 2008: 73-83). Also, in the second strophe, Pessoa seems to slip from composing feet into counting syllables as in Portuguese.

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\(^{79}\) Let my heart forsake ever<↓>/y\thing.

\(^{80}\) And detracts <complete> my true distress.

\(^{81}\) That <sadness> [↑ pain] that is all I [→ have] had

\(^{82}\) While life goes by like a <□> /mere\wheel.

\(^{83}\) Than <those> [↑ of which plains] landscapes can symbols be.

\(^{84}\) And <all> my [↑ void] weight of life and self
In spite of these metrical incongruences, particularly in the first two stanzas, it would be hard to argue that “Nothing” was not begun on 62r and finished on 62v. In fact, the textual witness of the typescript poem entitled “Emptiness” (31-34r; PI.1, 1999: III, 52), confirms this. “Nothing” appears to be an earlier draft of “Emptiness” (31-34r; PI.1, 1999: III, 52 and 155), which, with a few minor differences, became part of the third section of the The Mad Fiddler (PI.1, 1999: III, 155). An inspection of this later draft (typewritten and without handwritten emendations), critically transcribed by Marcus Angioni and Fernando Gomes, solved the two misreadings mentioned above, namely “pain” and not “pang” (line 3) and “void” and not “own” (line 10).

Final Note

The considerable number and diversity of documents extant in Pessoa’s archive lead us to believe that he did not throw much into the wastepaper basket: (un)finished texts in prose and poetry in Portuguese, English, and French, fragmentary essays, translations, thematic bibliographies, aphorisms, projects, postcards, horoscopes, letters (sent and received), commercial ideas, to-do lists, debts, quotes, inter alia; this man kept everything. His creative process, like that of many others before and after him, often involved reading—planned, pre-compositional work, contact with selected pages... Writing for Pessoa was about processes.

Now, in order to analyze the work habits of a writer one needs to enter “la coulisse, l’atelier, le laboratoire, le mécanisme intérieur,” as Louis Hay reminded us over three decades ago through the words of Baudelaire (1979: 227). And when the name of such writer is Pessoa, the sensitive aural Fernando Pessoa, this entails (both for editors as well as literary critics) utmost attention to the wide range of metrical models he gradually acquired and often skillfully practiced.

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85 The editors of this critical edition refer and transcribe (49A3-62), but do not mention the incomplete publication in Plne (1993: 194).
Bibliography

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

1.1. FERNANDO PESSOA’S ARCHIVE

National Library of Portugal (Archive 3)

1.2. FERNANDO PESSOA’S WORKS


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II. Other Works by Fernando Pessoa


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III. Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library

ADDISON, Joseph and Richard STEELE (1896). The Spectator. A new edition, reproducing the original text both as first issued and as corrected by its authors. With introduction, notes and index by Henry Morley. London; Manchester; New York: George Routledge and Sons, Limited. (Casa Fernando Pessoa 8-3).


IV. Works Cited on Fernando Pessoa


