

WHO FRAMED YORITOMO-TASHI? TO BE OR NOT TO BE

QUEM TRAMOU YORITOMO-TASHI? SER OU NÃO SER

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This article offers a case study of the early-twentieth century Portuguese reception of Yoritomo-Tashi, supposedly a Japanese philosopher who became known through the editing work of B. Dangennes, one of the pseudonyms of a French female author of self-help books by the name of Berthe Blanchard (18[-]–1940). Reception is examined on the basis of translational paratexts used as (re)framing devices to tell different stories about a same author figure and the books he is purported to have written, ultimately shaping the literary and cultural system to which Yoritomo-Tashi belongs. The first (European) Portuguese translation of his work to circulate, made by Bernardo de Alcobaça in 1912, whose paratext frames a Japanese source (con)text, will be discussed as an assumed translation of a non-existent (Japanese) original, that is, as a pseudo indirect translation. The other three existing adaptations were translated by the end of the 1920s by a different agent, A. Victor Machado, who seems to be aware that Yoritomo-Tashi is a pen name and who gradually restores Yoritomo-Tashi/Dangennes to the French literary system via the paratext. Questions will also be raised about the complicity of the Portuguese translators with Dangennes's fictitious translation project. This complicity, as shaped by the paratext, will be shown to influence the de facto belonging of an author's work to the Japanese-Portuguese translation system and to be evidence of a persisting exoticism in early twentieth-century Europe.

Keywords: Paratexts. Japanese literature. Pseudo indirect translation. Literary system.

O presente artigo oferece um estudo de caso centrado na receção, no início do século XX, de Yoritomo-Tashi em Portugal. Trata-se de um pretense filósofo japonês, que foi dado a conhecer através do trabalho de edição de B. Dangennes, um dos pseudónimos de uma escritora francesa de livros de auto-ajuda, de nome verdadeiro Berthe Blanchard (18[-]–1940). Analisa-se a receção a partir dos paratextos das traduções portuguesas, entendidos como mecanismos de (re)enquadramento que contam diferentes histórias sobre um mesmo autor e os seus livros, os quais, em última análise, constroem o sistema literário e cultural a que Yoritomo-Tashi pertence. A primeira tradução a circular em português (europeu), pela mão de Bernardo de Alcobaça em 1912, e cujo paratexto sugere um (con)texto de partida japonês, será discutida como uma tradução

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A shorter version of this article was presented at the international conference *Translation as Reframing*, which took place at the University of the Azores on 27–28 June 2019, and it provides a response to the appeal that I made in a broader study (Pinto 2016) for more thorough research on the subject of Yoritomo-Tashi.

assumida de um original (japonês) que não existe, ilustrando um caso de pseudotradução indireta. As outras três adaptações existentes datam do final da década de 1920 e foram produzidas por um agente diferente (A. Victor Machado), que parece estar a par de que Yoritomo-Tashi é um pseudónimo, devolvendo gradualmente, por via do paratexto, Yoritomo-Tashi/Dangennes ao sistema literário francês. Os tradutores portugueses serão também questionados quanto à sua convivência com o projeto de tradução fictícia de Dangennes/Blanchard. Mostrar-se-á em que medida esta convivência, conforme moldada pelo paratexto, influencia a efetiva pertença do trabalho de um autor ao sistema de tradução japonês-português, para além de funcionar como vestígio do exotismo patente na Europa do início do século XX.

Palavras-chave: Paratextos. Literatura japonesa. Pseudotradução indireta. Sistema literário.

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1. Introduction

The first novels by a Japanese author to be translated into Portuguese appeared in early twentieth-century Portugal in 1906 and 1909. These consist of *Nami-ko* (*Hototogisu* in Japanese) by Tokutomi Kenjiro (1868–1927) and *Os 47 Capitães* (*Iroha Bunko* in Japanese) by Tamenaga Shunsui (pen name of Sasaki Sadataka, 1790–1843).

Nami-ko was Tokutomi's first novel; serialized in the *Kokumin shinbun* newspaper between November 1898 and May 1899, and published in book form in 1900 (Kockum 2006, p. 129). Singled out at the time for its apparent realism (Lavelle 2016, p. 98), it is considered to be a best-seller, having been “the first modern Japanese novel to be translated into languages other than Chinese, and achieve widespread critical and popular acclaim outside Japan” (Kockum 2006, p. 129). The Portuguese translation by Couto Nogueira (writer and lawyer Eurico de Couto Nogueira Seabra, 1871–1937) was originally serialized in the *Diario Illustrado* newspaper in 1905. As a serial (*folhetim*), the translation was published under the pen name of Portugal da Silva. As early as 1904, a Spanish translation of the novel was already circulating in the Iberian American market. It is openly based on the English version, also dated 1904 and made directly from the Japanese. On the one hand, the English, Spanish and Portuguese versions bear in the title the name of the novel's main character. On the other, not only is not Couto Nogueira known to have mastered the Japanese language, but just like the Spanish edition, his rendering includes a translation of the translators' introduction to the English version. It is likely that the Spanish intermediating text served as the basis for the Portuguese translation; more importantly, the cover of the Portuguese edition uses the same watermark illustration as the 1905 reprint of the Spanish translation. Interestingly, the cover (i.e. image, design and colours) of the first Spanish edition (1904b) is the same one used in the Portuguese version of another novel, *Os 47 Capitães*.

This historical narrative is a rewriting of the famous vendetta involving 47 masterless samurais (*rōnin*) who in 1701–1703 avenged the death of their master by killing the high-ranking official of the shogunate who was held responsible for his death. The novel was translated into Portuguese by Ribeiro de Carvalho (1880–1942), whose name is clearly displayed on the book cover, though without any mention of the source

language of the translation. Ribeiro de Carvalho is known for translating mostly from the French and for having rendered into Portuguese a great number of works by the Spanish writer Vicente Blasco Ibáñez. By the time his translation came out (1909), French (1882) and Spanish (*ca.* 1908) versions of Shunsui's work were circulating in Europe, each made from the English (direct) translation (1880). Even if Ribeiro de Carvalho followed the French version, the Spanish edition was most probably the main source for his translation, whose title is a literal rendition of the Spanish.

This preamble shows that the first Japanese novels to appear in Portugal were translated indirectly into Portuguese; today, indirect translation is still the predominant vehicle for rendering this East Asian literature into European Portuguese (Pinto 2016, 2019). Indeed, this was one of the assumptions on which my postdoctoral project on the external history of translations from Japanese into Portuguese rested.¹ Paratextual analysis has been one of the privileged qualitative methodological approaches to this kind of historiographical practice, and it is also the approach followed in this article.

When conducting bibliographical research at the National Library of Portugal with the aim of identifying the works that have been translated in the interval from 1543 (generally accepted as the date when the Portuguese first arrived in Japan) until 2014 (when I started this project), I came across a book published in 1912 under the title of *A Gymnastica da Energia: Como se Aprende a Ser Forte* [The Gymnastics of Energy: How One Learns to Be Strong].² Presented under the author name of Yoritomo-Tashi, the book – as indicated on the title page – was translated by Bernardo de Alcobaça. This pseudonym is generally attributed to Pedro Herculano de Morais Leal, about whom little is known, except that he translated Emilio Salgari for the Lisbon-based publisher Romano Torres (Cabral 2014). No information is given on the source language or text of Alcobaça's translation, but the name of the author leaves no room for doubt as to his cultural provenance: readers immediately relate the name Yoritomo-Tashi to a Japanese origin. In fact, the Japanese origin of the book is predicated on the basis of two framing devices: the name of the author that sounds Japanese, and the paratext of the Portuguese translation, specifically the cover image that presents the image of an Asian figure, a Japanese man, with a mischievous look, dressed in traditional costume and holding a *wagasa* (oil-paper umbrella) (see Figure 1).

¹ Cees Koster (2002, p. 4) defines the internal history of translation as “the kind of history to be constructed from texts”, whereas the external history concerns “the kind of history to be constructed from contexts”. In line with this complementary opposition between text and context, Alexandra Assis Rosa summarizes the distinction as follows: “During the 1980s and 1990s, a highly significant research project on the history of literary translation practice (the ‘Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereich. Die literarische Übersetzung – 1985–1997’) was undertaken by a special research group based in Göttingen, Germany, who suggested a further distinction within the history of translation practice, namely between the internal and external history of translation. The internal history of translation is defined as the analysis of textual-linguistic features of translated texts in terms of their successive reformulations through retranslation, of how textual-linguistic features are maintained or shifted, and of the motives underlying such shifts. The external history of translation, on the other hand, focuses on identifying the works that have been translated, and establishing when and by whom, the publishers involved, the frequency of retranslation, and the circumstances under which this took place” (2013, pp. 8–39).

² This translation is not listed in A. A. Gonçalves Rodrigues's (1999) catalogue of translations in Portugal. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

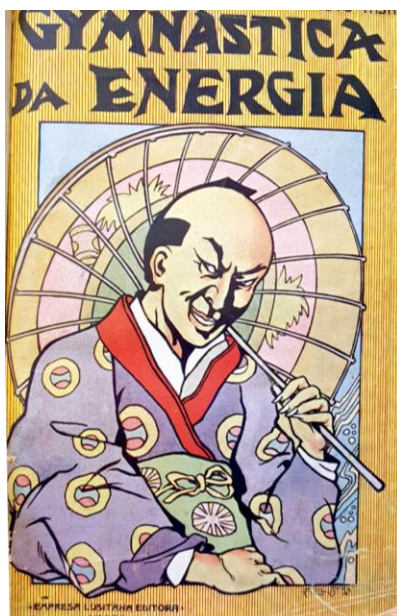


Figure 1. Book cover of Bernardo de Alcobaça's translation *A Gymnastica da Energia* (1912^a).

This choice of cover clearly plays on the western turn-of-the-century fear of the Yellow Peril, that is, the perceived threat of the growing power and diaspora of East Asian peoples in the West that culminated in the Second World War with the emergence of Japan as an imperialist and colonial power.³ This cover is not so different from the cover image illustrating the French book *L'Énergie en 12 leçons* [literally, *Energy in Twelve Lessons*], which was designed by a L. Damaré (see below, Figure 2, second image from the left). The major difference between these two book covers – and it cannot be stated too often that translators do not usually have a say in peritextual matters (Tahir Gürçağlar 2011, p. 115) – lies in the fact that the Portuguese cover places great emphasis on the foreignness of the figure by making more explicit the figure's costume (a male kimono, *hakama*) and by adding an element of oriental exoticism, the *wagasa*, that is being held by a rather menacing figure with talon-like nails.

L'Énergie en 12 Leçons was published in 1911 by Éditions Nilsson in Paris and is indeed the source text of Alcobaça's translation. The French book is presented as a translation from the Japanese commented on by B. Dangennes, who readers know from the beginning to be a woman based on the “avant-propos” [foreword] introducing the book. One retranslation of *L'Énergie en 12 Leçons* and adaptations of two other works of Yoritomo-Tashi into Portuguese followed in the late 1920s, written by Alberto Victor Machado (1892–1939):

- a) Yoritomo-Tashi. (1927). *O Triunfo na Vida pela Força da Vontade* (Adapt. A. Victor Machado). Lisbon: Livraria Popular de Francisco Franco. (Translation of *L'Art d'influencer* [1912b]);

³ With reference to colonial Japan, it is enough to remember that “[i]t gained control over Taiwan and the Liaodong peninsula (China), saw its claim to the Ryūkyū islands recognised (1894–1895), as well as its hold over Manchuria and Korea, some years later (1904–1905) – Korea would be formally annexed to Japan in 1910” (Fernandes Pinto 2019, p. 135). To this useful summary, one should add the Japanese offensive in Timor, resulting in its occupation from 1941 to 1945.

- b) Yoritomo-Tashi. (1927/28). *Para Ser Enérgico* (Adapt. A. Victor Machado). Lisbon: Livraria Popular de Francisco Franco. (Translation of *L'Énergie en 12 leçons* [1911]);
- c) Yoritomo-Tashi. (1928). *O Bom Senso* (Adapt. A. Victor Machado. Pref. B. Dangennes). Lisbon: Livraria Popular de Francisco Franco. (Translation of *Le Bon sens en douze leçons* [1913]).

All three of the books above listed are identified on the title page as adaptations by A. Victor Machado; all three adaptations were published by the Livraria Popular de Francisco Franco, a Lisbon-based publisher that targeted a wide, mass readership by offering affordable books, in addition to using its book series to cover a range of genres; and all three translations were specifically published within the series “Biblioteca de livros úteis e científicos” [Library of useful and scientific books]. This series is supposed to have published around 38 books between the 1900s and the 1930s, both translated and original works. These works can be roughly divided into manuals or practical handbooks (for example, the handbook on how to be a cook) and the ‘everything-you-should-know’ guide, providing all sort of instructions, rules, recommendations and advice on how to behave (for example, *Tudo que as Meninas Solteiras e Senhoras Casadas Devem Saber* [Everything Single Ladies and Married Women Should Know] or *Tudo que o Homem Casado Deve Saber* [Everything a Married Man Should Know]). Despite the allegedly scientific character of the books in the series, almost all of them were published under pen names, a practice that casts suspicion on their actual scientific value and worth.

Except for the identification of Yoritomo-Tashi on the title page of these three books and except for the forewords that precede each translated text mentioning his name, none of the covers of Machado’s adaptations establishes a link, either overt or covert, to a supposed Japanese original text or author. This is surprising, since book covers are the material elements readers first see and touch before seeing and reading the (actual) translated pages, thus mediating the translation to the reader and informing readers’ expectations about the text. As Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar has emphasized, paratexts reveal “the way translations are presented to their readers, which in turn informs the researcher about the conventions, concepts and expectations of a society regarding translated texts” (2011, p. 113). Contrary to Alcobaça’s inaugural translation whose peritext overtly mediates a Japanese originary source culture to a Portuguese ultimate target readership, Machado’s later renderings evoke the mediating agency of a third person by the name of “B. D.”; these are the initials of the author of the forewords to Machado’s three adaptations, which in the last published book, readers learn, stand for B. Dangennes.

With this corpus of analysis in mind, the purpose of the present article is to examine paratexts as reframing devices that tell different stories about a same author figure (Yoritomo-Tashi) and the books he is purported to have written, ultimately framing the literary and cultural system to which he belongs. For Tahir Gürçağlar, paratexts are “[t]he most concrete links that connect translated texts with their immediate or larger socio-cultural contexts” (2018, p. 288). In order to better understand the workings of these links in this case study and how paratexts serve as mechanisms of manipulation of cultural transfers, the article is divided into two sections: the first section addresses the dual authorship Yoritomo-Tashi and B. Dangennes, or B. D.; the second section explores the

way translational paratexts frame and oppose an apparently uninformed translator (Bernardo de Alcobça) to a knowledgeable translator (A. Victor Machado), thus impacting on the literary frame (system) to which the author Yoritomo-Tashi supposedly belongs.

2. Dual authorship: Yoritomo-Tashi and B. Dangennes

The first book to appear in the literary market under the name of Yoritomo-Tashi, *L'Énergie en 12 Leçons*, was compiled and edited by B. Dangennes, who introduces Yoritomo-Tashi in her foreword as a celebrated philosopher “dont la mémoire est révérée par les hommes de sa race, comme celle d'un des plus profonds philosophes de son temps” [whose memory is revered by the men of his race as one of the deepest philosophers of his time] (B. D. [1911], p. 7).

More significantly, in the foreword Dangennes explains the genesis of her edition but does so by composing a narrative that makes her foreword far more like a frame narrative within the book. She explains that she had just visited a local museum in a small town, a museum with as many old, dusty artefacts as the manuscript collections stored there. Among the existing manuscript collections was a translation by a close friend of her family, identified as Commander B..., who had recently passed away (B. D. [1911], p. 6). In that same museum in the middle of nowhere, her friend had years before found manuscripts by an ancient Japanese philosopher, a fortunate coincidence for someone who, as Dangennes points out, had visited Japan endless times, who is compared to Pierre Loti in his love of Japanese women, and who Dangennes declares to have “une connaissance approfondie de la langue du Japon” [a profound knowledge of the language of Japan] ([1911], p. 6). So profound, in fact, that *Commandant B...* dedicated the last years of his life to translating those Japanese writings (B. D. [1911], p. 7). The manuscript of his translations is also, according to Dangennes, preserved in the same local archive. Dangennes finishes the foreword to her foray into oriental antiquity by asserting that she was so captivated and overwhelmed by the timeliness of the philosopher's teachings and writing style that “il m'a semblé intéressant de *transcrire* à ce sujet les maxims fondamentales de sa doctrine, dont l'opportunité s'adapte avec une prescience merveilleuse aux désirs et aux besoins de notre existence moderne” [to me it seemed interesting to *transcribe* the fundamental maxims of his doctrine on this subject (energy), the occasion lending itself with a wonderful prescience to the desires and needs of our modern existence] ([1911], p. 8; my emphases). The timeliness and relevance of Yoritomo's precepts to early twentieth-century society are emphasized across B. D.'s forewords to his books: e.g. “la doctrine, toute vibrante de vérité, s'applique aussi bien aux besoins de notre époque qu'à ceux des temps où elle fut énoncée” [the doctrine, vibrating with truth, applies to the needs of our time as well as to those times in which it was enunciated] (B. D. [1912], p. 5).

On the basis of the recently discovered translated manuscript *topos*, which seems to be imbued with the orientalist trope and project of rescuing the philosophical splendour of a lost Asian past (e.g. Said 2003, p. 79), the reader is informed that in *L'Énergie en 12 Leçons* Dangennes provides a copy of a manuscript containing the translation carried

out by her old friend, who is only identified as B. just like B. Dangennes herself. On the one hand, Dangennes claims only her role as editor and commentator, leaving the question of authority over the translation to an unknown and unnamed specialist whose expertise can no longer be put to the test. Indeed, the use of a letter to conceal the identity of an anonymous friend introduces a fuzziness about the translator's identity that invites readers to suspect Dangennes's personal involvement in the translation and therefore identify her as "B...". On the other hand, as editor she establishes a paratextual frame – the foreword – that mediates her attitude as an editor towards the work by creating a normative distance between editor and translator, which serves as a claim of authenticity and credibility regarding both the Japanese manuscript and its translation.

First, B. Dangennes is the pen name of a rather successful French female author of self-help books by the name of Berthe Blanchard (18..–1940), founder of the Société des auteurs dramatiques féminins [Society of Women Playwrights] in 1910. Second, Yoritomo-Tashi is also a pen name, among others, of Berthe Blanchard. The Japanese philosopher's true identity was known at least from 1918 (Lorenz & Jordell 1918, p. 851), that is, six years after Alcobaça's translation came out and nearly a decade before Machado carried out his adaptations. This means that all the titles published in France under the authorship of Yoritomo-Tashi by B. Dangennes⁴ denote a false self-referential editing work of a false existing translation. In other words, Yoritomo-Tashi's writings are literary forgeries, although the Japanese philosopher's actual existence has been discussed time and time again. There is even a Wikipedia page in Spanish providing a short biography of Yoritomo-Tashi as a twelfth-century Japanese statesman and philosopher.⁵ The biographical data presented in this webpage is similar to that of Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), the founder of the Kamakura shogunate and its first shogun, from whom Blanchard might have drawn the inspiration for her fictional philosopher.⁶ However, Yoritomo is also the name of a character after which Bonis-Charancle and Romain⁷ named their play *Yoritomo: Pièce Japonaise en 2 Actes* [Yoritomo: Japanese Play in Two Acts]. Published exactly one year before the first appearance of Blanchard's character (1910), the play had premiered on 29 February 1908 at Théâtre Montparnasse in Paris, and it was part of the repertoire of the Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques [Society of Drama Writers and Composers]. As noted, Blanchard was a dramatist, therefore this play is likely to have been her major source for creation.

⁴ My research led to the identification of four books, with first editions printed roughly between 1911 and 1913. To these a second Yoritomo-Tashi series should be added, the book titles suggesting that Dangennes rewrote rather than edited a translation from the Japanese: B. Dangennes [19-]. *La Force par le calme en 12 leçons: D'après les doctrines japonaises de Yoritomo Tashi*. Paris: Éditions Nilsson; and B. Dangennes [19-]. *L'Esprit d'organisation en 13 leçons d'après les doctrines japonaises de Yoritomo Tashi*. Paris: Éditions Nilsson.

⁵ See https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoritomo_Tashi.

⁶ On the other side of the Atlantic, several publications attest to their authors' faith in the actual existence of this Japanese philosopher. For example, in 1917, Harry F. Howard praised Yoritomo-Tashi in his book *Rich vs. Poor* as "the great Japanese genius" (p. 157); in the September 1936 issue of the Canadian journal *Revue dominicaine*, the chronicler Léon Lorrain convincingly referred to the nine-centuries-old teachings of the "philosophe japonais Yoritomo-Tashi" [Japanese philosopher Yoritomo-Tashi] (1936, p. 101).

⁷ Hardly any information can be found on these writers; their names may possibly be noms-de-plume.

In addition to Yoritomo-Tashi, Dangennes created two other fictional oriental writers who do not, however, seem to have enjoyed the same success as Yoritomo-Tashi, namely the Greek Xanthès and the Indian Sankara. Each authored one book: *L'Art de la Parole en 12 Leçons* (translated into English as *Speech: How to Use it Effectively*) is authored by Xanthès, whereas Sankara is the fictional author of *La Mémoire en 12 Leçons: Comment l'Acquérir, comment la Développer* [Memory in Twelve Lessons: How to Acquire it, How to Develop it]. The first is presented as a translation from the Greek and the latter as a translation from “l'hindou”, the Hindu, erroneously mistaken for Hindi, the language. Both books are commented on by B. Dangennes and were published around 1913.

Dangennes's introductions play a fictional game of make-believe, demanding the suspension of disbelief by the readers, which is very much in keeping with the eighteenth-century French tradition of travel writing that explores the Orient as a fictional, imaginary site, as illustrated, for example, by Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721). In *L'Art d'Influencer* [The Art of Exerting Influence], published in 1912, Dangennes (B.D. 1912, pp. 5, 7) adds that Yoritomo-Tashi was an old shogun and that she was lucky to find more manuscripts by the shogun translated by her deceased friend.⁸ The unexpectedness with which newly discovered manuscripts pop up from the deceased's archive and give rise to one more new publication presupposes the readers' willingness to disregard the fact that they are actually receiving an original work in order to take pleasure in the text and its genre.

It is enough to skim through Yoritomo-Tashi's works to realize that they read as treatises on a given subject, providing definitions and explanations that are intermingled with supposedly translated quotations by Yoritomo. The philosopher's authoritative voice is introduced in the texts between inverted commas, as in direct speech, through phrases such as “dit Yoritomo” [Yoritomo states that], “il ajoute” [he adds], “il conte” [Yoritomo says that], “dit le philosophe japonais” [says the Japanese philosopher], “poursuit Yoritomo” [Yoritomo carries on] – a discursive construction that resembles the books of sayings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC). In this way, the philological exercises of commenting and translating become inextricably linked and undermine the fictitious presentation of the texts themselves as (French) translations. The Portuguese versions of Yoritomo's works preserve this narrative scheme as well as the Japanese local colour.

Altogether, Yoritomo's French books are pseudotranslations that underwent two different reception modes in Portugal: that of an assumed translation derived from the Japanese, which is in fact a pseudo indirect translation (Alcobaça's translation)⁹, and that

⁸ “Aussi est-ce avec une joie grave que j'ai de nouveau rouvert les manuscrits où mon ami, le défunt commandant B., a transcrit dans notre belle langue les préceptes et les réflexions de celui qui fut, en même temps, un conducteur d'hommes et un meneur d'âmes” [It is also with extreme joy that I discover new manuscripts by my friend, the deceased Commander B., who has transcribed into our beautiful language the precepts and reflections of a man who was simultaneously a guide of men and conductor of souls] (B.D. [1912], p. 5).

⁹ This term was first used in the same vein by Vanessa Hanes in relation to Heitor Berutti's Brazilian translation of Agatha Christie's novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*: “[H]e was producing what might be called a ‘pseudo-indirect translation’, i.e. making his translation appear to have been derived from the

of adaptation, in the sense of a rewriting process that seems to hint at instability in terms of the conveyed source system and that is, however, more attuned to the source narrative scheme above described (A. Victor Machado's adaptations).

3. Paratextual framing of translators, translations, and ultimate source texts

In 1912, Bernardo de Alcobaça authored a pseudo indirect translation of Yoritomo-Tashi's first published work by carrying out the transfer of an assumed Japanese text into Portuguese. A search of the Portuguese national bibliographical database PORBASE reveals that Bernardo de Alcobaça was quite productive as a translator, especially of French and Italian authors, among whom Emilio Salgari stands out, as well as of erotic novels. On the one hand, as shown, the cover of his *A Gymnastica da Energia* establishes a direct link to the Japanese culture. On the other hand, the book conceals the assumed indirectness of his translation exercise, for it bears no reference to the French language carrier – that is, to B. Dangennes, or to *Commandant B...*, or to any French source or mediating text whatsoever. This pseudo indirect translation includes a short preface that is not signed, but justifies the textual selection for translation on the basis of the success of the book abroad, again without mentioning any link to the French culture or to Japan, for that matter:

Entre os livros uteis ultimamente publicados no estrangeiro, este, que hoje oferecemos ao publico, é um dos que nos parece mais digno de ser lido e meditado, pois contém doutrina excelente e util ensinamento. ([N.N.] 1912, n.p.)

[Among the useful books recently published abroad, the one we offer today to the public is one that seems to us the most worthy of being read and meditated upon, for it provides excellent doctrine and useful lessons.]

The preface also underlines the simple and accessible writing style of the philosopher, who is placed on the opposite end of scholars' "complicada erudição" [complicated erudition], and classifies "Yorotomo"'s work – *Yorotomo* is a misspelling that is repeated twice in the preface – as "criteriosamente commentado" [thoroughly commented upon] ([N.N.] 1912, n.p.). So thoroughly that it is sometimes difficult to tell where the unnamed commentator's or translator's work begins or ends. More striking is the dyslexia-like difficulty Dangennes and consequently her Portuguese translator Alcobaça struggled with in fixing the spelling of the name of an ostensibly renowned and prestigious philosopher: the cover and title page of both the first French and Portuguese books name the philosopher as "Yorimoto-Tashi"; all the subsequent works under this Japanese authorship correct the spelling to "Yoritomo-Tashi" (see Figure 2).

French, giving it 'French airs', since at the time French literature still played a prestigious role in Brazil" (2017, p. 216).

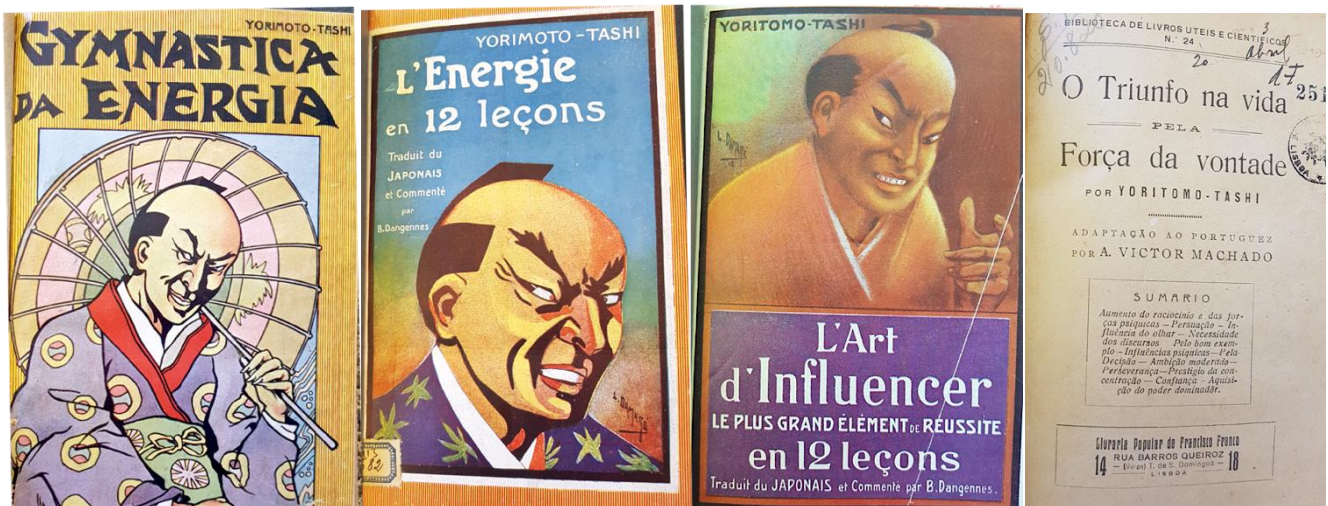


Figure 2. Sample of book covers in Portuguese and French of Yoritomo-Tashi's works.

The usefulness of Yoritomo-Tashi's work as a justification for translating was certainly acknowledged fifteen years later with A. Victor Machado's new renderings. His first rewrite was not however of *L'Énergie en 12 Leçons*, this was his second in a decade when the true identity of Dangennes had already been unveiled, hence Machado is expected to be an informed, knowledgeable translator who could either play along with Blanchard's fictional project or simply ignore it. A. Victor Machado was more prolific as a writer (particularly as a playwright who was also connected to the Portuguese press) than as a translator, his translated repertoire also included some adventure books by Salgari. The covers of his translations add no Japanese or Eastern colour to the texts (see Figure 3), thus deleting the putative *Japaneseness* of the books, not only because they do not publicize the name of the philosopher, but also because they make use of images that are familiar to western readers by emphasizing either a Greco-Roman or European cultural sphere.



Figure 3. Covers of A. Victor Machado's adaptations of Yoritomo-Tashi's works.

This ‘sudden oriental indifference’ is at odds with an epoch of craving, albeit more and more residual, for things Japanese (*e.g.* Genova 2016). The European appetite, especially for artworks, was curbed by Japan’s expansionist policy and increasing militarism throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The peritextual toning down of the exotic character of the books in the Portuguese market could, on the contrary, be construed as a way of emphasizing the universal validity of Yoritomo-Tashi’s teachings that would apply across western civilization and thus participate in a kind of world literature.

Machado’s first published adaptation was that of *L’Art d’Influencer*¹⁰ with his *O Triunfo na Vida pela Força da Vontade* [Triumph in Life through Willpower]. It includes a first-person foreword signed by B. D., but it leaves out any explicit reference to a French mediating stance, since it does not clarify who this B. D. is. The foreword refers to old manuscripts by a deceased old friend, B. (who bears no military rank) who “*transcreveu do idioma niponico as reflexões e preceitos d’aquela que foi[,] ao mesmo tempo, um sabio conselheiro dos homens e um verdadeiro conductor das almas*” [has *transcribed* from the Nipponese idiom the reflections and precepts of one who was simultaneously a wise counsellor of men and a true leader of souls] ([1927], n.p.; my emphases). Except for the image cover that does not add a touch of oriental colour to the text and makes this a less successful pseudo indirect translation, the foreword is complicit with Blanchard’s forgery.

The covert retranslation *Para Ser Energico* [How to Be Energetic] includes a one-page foreword that is again attributed to a “B. D.” and seems to be addressing the Portuguese reader directly. Contrary to the previous foreword, this one refers to Yoritomo-Tashi as “um dos mais profundos filósofos do seu tempo” [one of the most profound philosophers of his time] (B. D. [1927/28], n.p.), yet it does not classify him as Japanese. The fictional game around a Japanese ultimate authorship seems to have come to a halt. Rita Bueno Maia, Hanna Pięta and Alexandra Assis Rosa list as the most common motives for retranslation “an aged or flawed first translation, the wish to supersede a previous version, a different function, editorial, economic, ideological or political reasons” (2018, p. 80).¹¹ These scholars also refer to Andrew Chesterman’s retranslation hypothesis (2000), according to which first translations tend to be more target-oriented whereas retranslations are more source-oriented. *Prima facie*, Machado’s adaptation seems to confirm this hypothesis, detaching Yoritomo from an Asian background, hence excluding this fictional writer from the Japanese literary system and rendering his geo-cultural sense of belonging rather vague or ambiguous. So far, no documentation has been found on the reasons behind Machado’s retranslation fifteen years after Alcobaça’s rewriting.

The third and last adaptation by A. Victor Machado, *Bom Senso* [Common Sense], is presented through its cover as ‘good family reading’. Its title page informs readers for

¹⁰ A Brazilian Portuguese translation followed in 1932: Yoritomo-Tashi (1932). *A Arte de Vencer em 12 Lições* (Bandeira Duarte, Trans). Rio de Janeiro: Flores & Mano. It includes a “Prefácio da tradução francesa” [Preface to the French translation], *L’Art d’influencer*, therefore assuming the French text (1912b) to be a translation from the Japanese. The book cover image includes a Japanese flag.

¹¹ For a more nuanced reflection on retranslation, see: Albachten, Ö. B. & Gürçağlar, S. T. (2019).

the first (and last) time that the “B. D.” who wrote the preface is in fact “B. Dangennes”. On the one hand, the link to a French source text is paratextually established. On the other, although no information is given on B. Dangennes, whose name connects this figure to a French-speaking context, again the author Yoritomo-Tashi is not related to a Japanese origin. Significantly, in the Portuguese preface to this book, B. D. declares that sitting in an empty room in a provincial museum, “folheei novamente os preciosos manuscritos, traduzindo os conselhos daquele de quem nós temos saboreado a psicologia penetrante e notavel” [I have again skimmed through the precious manuscripts, translating [myself] the advice of that one whose penetrating and remarkable psychology we have tasted] (B. D. [1928], p. v). Although B. Dangennes reclaims the authorship of the supposed translation, the preface does not, however, detail the source language. Again, ambiguity prevails. Furthermore, the *topos* of the discovered translated manuscript disappears, though the centuries-old nature and usefulness of the teachings provided in the book are reiterated. With this third adaptation, which cannot be considered part of the Japanese-Portuguese translation system, a more direct channel of translation from the French seems to be restored, at the very least in view of the prefacer’s French surname.

4. Concluding note

What was the outcome or impact of these reception processes? Apart from translations themselves, I have not yet been able to find any other textual object documenting readers’ reaction to, or the function of these Yoritomo-Tashi works in the Portuguese translation system in order to determine whether these translated items were actually read and accepted as Japanese literature and hence part of the Portugal-Japan system of intercultural exchanges. The marginality of the genre professed by Blanchard – at the opposite end of Tokutomi’s realistic novel or Tamenaga’s historical rewriting – may explain the silence of the Portuguese press on Yoritomo-Tashi and the lack of translators’ testimonies on the corpus analysed.

As a researcher on the external history of translated Japanese literature in Portugal focusing on the identification of cultural transfers across time, space, agency, and function, for which paratexts as contextual frames for the translations are a relevant source of data, I immediately accepted the first Portuguese translation of Yoritomo-Tashi as an indirect translation of a work of Japanese authorship. This epistemological fault resulted from my own expectation of finding an indirect translation, which, as mentioned earlier, prevails as the pattern of importation of Japanese literature into Portuguese. Only when I came across Machado’s adaptations and their strangely out-of-place covers did I start wondering whether I was being a victim of a kind of researchers’ suspension of disbelief.

The micro-history of translation in Portugal that constitutes this case study, in which the framing of Yoritomo-Tashi in the Portuguese literary system reveals a shift from pseudo indirect translation to (indirect) translation, a shift that gradually restores Yoritomo-Tashi/Dangennes to the French literary system, highlights the idiosyncratic nature of translation and eventually illustrates a pitfall in researching the external history of translation when there is no epitext available for analysis.

Either way, pseudo indirect translation and translations of pseudo-translations contribute to constructing a world system of literature and translation. The fictitious or counterfeit transcriptions of a phantom manuscript of non-existent translations helped Dangennes/Blanchard to conceal her role and gender as a female author and delve into an exotic culture and philosophy of which she had no authoritative knowledge. Both the fictitious writer, displaced on to an oriental character, and the genre of self-help literature held marginal status. Perhaps the history of self-help literature in translation could shed light on its conventions and possibly show that authorial and textual forgery are part of its literary protocols. In the case of Yoritomo-Tashi, pseudo indirect translation can be construed, on the one hand, as a remnant of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century orientalist philological appetite for manuscripts. On the other, it seems to be a symptom, or residue of a persisting exoticism in Europe, according to which Blanchard's fictionalizing project would be a French female response not only to the western allure for the East but also to the therapeutic appeal of the East by shaping an understanding of Japanese philosophy as regenerative.

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