A THIRD HYPOTHESIS FOR THE ETYMOLOGY OF PORTUGUESE *ATÉ*

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RESUMO: *Duas hipóteses são correntes para explicar a preposição portuguesa "até": uma delas a associaria ao árabe, enquanto a outra seria o advérbio latino "tenus", raramente utilizado. A nova hipótese apresentada neste artigo - latim "intro" / "intra" – tem uma maior distribuição entre as línguas românicas além de resolver algumas irregularidades de aspecto fonético diacrônico, presentes em ambas as explicações.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: lingüística histórica; preposição; português.

Small words can cause big problems in the historical analysis. The adverb and preposition *até* is normally connected with the Spanish *hasta* by the Arabic *ħatta*, which has the same meaning. However, another completely distinct etymon, that is to say, **ad-tenus,* was suggested as an alternative to explain Portuguese difficulties which arose from the Arabic etymon. In this paper I will propose a third one.

The acceptance of each one of those etyma will lead to complex phonetic questions. If the Arabic *hatta* is analyzed, the following problems emerge:

– The initial *ħ-* is a voiceless pharyngeal consonant in Arabic, which normally becomes an *f-* in Portuguese (*ħurr > forro*; *al-ħalwa > alféloa*). In Spanish, the same sound became an *f-* or an aspirated *h-*. There are no examples of an initial pharyngeal Arabic *ħ-* which was omitted by aphaeresis. In Spanish, there are examples of *fasta,* but **fata,* the expected form, is not recorded in the Ibero-Romance languages.

– The geminate *-tt-* normally becomes an *-t-:* the outcome of Spanish, i.e. *-st-* is also irregular.

– The 'imāla phenomenon in Arabic could explain the sound *é* in *até.* Steiger (1932, p.258) mentioned Arabic transcriptions like *haté, hatte, hatti,* but in Spanish the vowel is always *a*.

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The phonetic problems of *ad tenus,* which would naturally result *atẽos or *ateos, were eliminated by a hypothetical vulgar expression *ad *tenes.* In order to show the rightness of that starting point, very different arguments were considered: Nunes (1945, p.369) is convinced that *tenus* would have an archaic form *tenes (LINDSAY, 1937)*,* which amazingly survived in Portuguese. Silva Neto (1958) attenuated that affirmation by reasoning that *tenus* had become *tenes by means of a mixture with its synonym *fines,* very similar to what is happened with the etymon *finus for Italian *fino,* that is a vice versa crossed form with *tenus.* If his arguments were accepted, the following presuppositions must also be assumed:

– *Fines* and *tenus* would occur in a large area of Romania. In the Iberian Peninsula, *fines* is found only in Catalan *fins,* but not farther. No vestiges of *tenus* are found in Italian dialects. Thus, it is difficult to understand the change *fines > *finus* as a crossed form with a word which was not effectively used. Moreover, *tenus* was a very rare word, even in Classic Latin. The complex form *ad tenus* was never found.

– From *ad *tenes* it is possible to explain forms like *atẽes,* but the lost of the –*s* is very doubtful. Piel (1960, p.238) admitted that *atẽes* came from *ata* followed by the preposition *en* and the paragogic –*s,* which was developped from the analogy with expressions like *(de)pois que, des que, os que, mais que*. It seems to be right, because *atas que* occurs until the 16th Century. In the 13th Century one can easily find examples of *mentres que, antes que.* Also in 17th Century there are phrases in Sardinian like *innantis de que* (Manoliu, 1965, p. 343).

– An s-less form (**attene,* from *ad tene) was proposed by Vasconcelos (1900, p.446), but the lost of the final -*s,* which is always retained (for instance in the plural accusative of the nouns and in the singular second person of the verbs) cannot be explained.

The assimilation of *ata en* > **atãe* > *atẽe* is not a problem. Silva Neto (1958, p.760) also acknowledges an *atoo* from *ata o* and an *ateesta* from *ata esta*. The paragogic –*s* is very clear in other words like *trões,* which occurs in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (CSM) and cannot be explained with both etyma. All those arguments eliminates the hypothesis of a continuation of **tenes*. Other Ibero-Romance forms like *troa* indicate that final -*a* or -*en* is another preposition, i.e. *intro ad* > *troa, intro in* > **troẽ* > **trõe* > *trões.* The complex prepositions for the meaning "limit" are extremely regular in many languages: German has *bis zu, bis in, bis an, bis auf, bis nach;* in French one can say *jusqu'à, jusqu'en, jusque chez, jusque vers;* in Romanian one normally says *până în, până la;* in Italian there are *fino a, fino in, fino da* and in modern Portuguese *até a* is also possible.

In order to summarize, Silva Neto's (1958) arguments for justifying both etyma (an Arabic one for *ata, atá* and a Latin one for *atẽes*) are not valid. It is possible to accept a dialectal variation but the etymology is the same for both words.

There are also other variants, which have a close resemblance to the above mentioned *tro.* Silva Neto quoted *atro* and *atra,* which are, in his point of view, mixed forms between *tro* and *ata* (p.755). He also quoted crossed forms with final –*s*: *atães, ataas, tães* (p.758).

So, if the crossed forms hypothesis is left, it is possible to conceive a large number of theoretical variants (precisely 48) with or without an initial *a-,* with or without a nasalized vowel, with the vowels *a, e* and *o,* with or without a consonantal cluster -*tr*- instead of a -*t*-, with or without an ending -*s*. There are only combinations of -*tr+o*-, never **-t+o*- (**ato, *atõe, *atos, *atões, *to, *tõe, *tos, *tões*) and there is no -*tr+e*- (**atre, *atrẽe, *atrẽes, *tre, *trẽe, *tres, *trẽes*). The hypothetical forms can be reduced in this way to 32 possibilities. In the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* it is possible to list 15 variants in 84

occurrences. I will intend to arrange all those forms in order to establish their origin, as the scheme at the end of this paper shows.

The following words have no nasalized vowel or –s: *ata* (40 times: 47.62%), *ate* (5 times: 5.95%), *atro* (twice: 2.38%). Without an initial *a-* are; *ta* (8 times: 9.52%), *te* (once: 1.19%), *tro* (6 times: 7.14%), *tra* (twice: 2.38%). There is no *atra.*

With the nasalized vowel there are only: *atẽe* (5 times: 5.95%) and *tẽe* (once: 1.19%). There are no **atãe, *atrõe, *atrãe, *tãe, *trõe, *trãe*. With the final -s are: *atães* (once: 1.19%), *atẽes* (4 times: 4.76%), *tẽes* (once: 1.18%), *trões* (8 times: 9.52%). There are no *atas, atés, *atros, *tros, *atras, *tras, *atrães, *atrões*. Forms like *atras* and *tras* would be homonyms with the preposition which is originated from *(ad) trans*.

The commonest form is not always the most ancient. The ancientness of *tro* is able to be compared to that of *ata,* notwithstanding the distance between the occurrence percentages. Therefore, if the most frequent form is not necessarily the most ancient one, it is possible to suggest another starting hypothesis. If we say that *tra* is so ancient as *tro,* i.e. if *tra* is not considered a crossed word, then we will be able to contemplate the survival of the pan-Romance *intra/ intro* pair also in the Iberian Peninsula. Those forms would be the most ancient of all.

It is possible to deduce *ta* from *tra,* which was oftener used than *tro.* Other examples of lost of *-r-* in consonantal clusters are easily found: in the *Cantigas* there are two occurrences of *ent* instead of *entre: ent'outros* (CSM 37:14), which also occurs in the *Corónica Troiana* and in spoken Asturian. The same can be said for *para > pra > pa* in colloquial Portuguese, Spanish, Mirandese and Asturian (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, 1949, p.398; VASCONCELOS, 1900, p.446). That simplification should be happened very early: *tro* became soon an archaic word and because of that it hardly appears in other texts. It never developed a form **to.* Therefore, we can find at the end of this period, three forms: *tra, ta,*

tro. The speakers in the epoch of the writing of the *Cantigas* presumably felt *tra* more ancient than *tro.* For that reason, they replaced *tro,* from the manuscript *T,* by *tra,* in the manuscript E, in the verse CSM 94:33, to preserve an archaic flavor. The three forms *tra, ta* and *tro* were followed, from that time on, by the preposition *en: tra en* (50% of the occurrences of *tra*), **ta en* and *tro en* (66.66% of the occurrences of *tro*).

In the subsequent period, the apposition of an initial *a-* took place. That prosthetic *a-* is also jointed to other prepositions: *tras* and *atras* (respectively 20% and 80% in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*) arose from Latin *trans*. The same can be said about *pós* and *após,* *diante* and *adiante.* That *a-* came from the Latin preposition *ad* and occurred in a large number of adverbs, just as *in-* or *de-*. If one admits that *tra* originated *ta,* the form *ata* is easily deducible from *a+ta.* There is also *atro,* but no examples of *atra:* this shows that, before the prosthetic forms, only *ta* and *tro* are effectively used. The form *inté* that is known in Brazilian and European Portuguese, and also in Mirandese (VASCONCELOS, 1900, p.446) comes from an *em+té* (like *empós* from *pós*). The prosthetic forms are also used with *en: ata en* and *atro en.*

Without a followed preposition, *ata* occurs only 9 times in the *Cantigas*: six times with toponyms, twice with common nouns and once with the adverb "enton". With conjunctions, *ata* occurs once with "quando": *ata quando de Deus tal sinal ouveren* (CSM 309:27) and 24 times (60%) with "que". The phrase *ta que* appears in the majority of the occurrences of *ta* (87.5%).

When those phrases were formed, *tra* and *tro* were effectively used only followed by *en: tra en que a foi fazer* (CSM 94:33); *da cabeça tro ena verilla* (CSM 19:28). The combinations with *en* correspond to 66.66% of those of *tro* and 15% of those of *ata.* An evidence of that preposition combination is that there are no phrases like **tra que* or **tro que.*

It is possible to list only the following ones: *ata que, ta que, ata en que, tra en que, tro en que.* The form *ata en que* easily became *atãe que* and *tro en que* converted into **trõe que.*

The change of *-a > -e* took place from the assimilation of *a* and the preposition *en* that followed *ata* or *ta* (*ata en > ate en, ta en > te en*): the only occurrence of *te* in the *Cantigas* is: *des Janua te en Charthes* (CSM 379:21). The whole set of occurrences of *ate* are followed by *en.* The only different solution is found in the verse *ata na cima* (CSM 203: 27). The entirety of occurrences shows that neither the vowel *e* nor the nasality can be attributed to Latin *tenus.* The assimilated *e* was subsequently related to *até* and no longer to *en.* Then: *ata eno > ate eno > atẽeno > atee no > até no: até nos fundamentos* (CSM 33:37).

Later, the forms with *-s* have appeared: *atães que, atẽes que, tẽes que, trões que.* The optional use of the preposition *en* occurs beside the inherited uses without it as in *tra u se farte* (CSM 366:61), *ta o reyno* (CSM prólogo), *tro o mosteyro* (CSM 94:77); *ata setembro* (CSM 333:51). The analogy also acted on *trões* in this only verse: *trões o convent' a porta* (CSM 59:84).

If the words *tro* and *tra* are really the most ancient and related to *até* not by crossing but by inheritance, it is necessary to assume that the etyma of both archaic words are not either Arabic *hatta* nor Latin *tenus,* but the pair *intra/ intro,* found in all Romance languages. The semantic derivation "inwards" to "until" is undeniable in regard to *tro.* There is no reason to accept another etymon for *tra*.

The aphaeresis of *in-* of *intra* is not surprising: in Italian *infra* originated *fra* with a still more complicated semantic changing. The syllable *in-* was not specially stressed as other disyllable prepositions show: the form *pra* is only deducible from a **pará,* not from the *para.* The same is possible to say about *intra* and *infra:* they originated *tra* and *fra* respectively only through **intrá* and **infrá.*

But not all questions are answered: where does the Spanish word *hasta* from? The most ancient form in this case is *fasta.* It is harder to solve it, and it is not the aim of this paper, but if one admits that the preposition *hacia* comes from **faz(e) a* < Latin *faciem ad* through a grammaticalization process like Galician *cara,* it is perfectly acceptable that *fasta* could come from **faz(e) ta.* The initial stage **fazta* would become *fasta* through adaptations alike to that of Latin *amicitiam > *amiztad > amistad.* Writing forms as *hadta* could reflect the interdental voiceless sound form /θ/, just as in *iudicare > judgar > juzgar.* Writing alternations with that special *ceceo* in words like *mezquino/ mesquino* are common since the time of El Cid (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, 1949, p.120, 198). Moreover, there are also dialectal forms such as *fastra* and *hastra* in Galician (CALERO, 1966, p.181; FERREIRO, 1996, p.361), which is thought to be a result a common Galician *st/ str* alternation, but a **faz(e) tra* could be also previewed.

In that way, both prepositions *até* and *hasta* would be related each other not by a common Arabic origin, but by the same Latin word *intra.* That third etymology for *até* has the advantage of integrating Portuguese forms into the Vulgar Latin. A correlation *de+ex(tra) ... intra* was perhaps the source of its special meaning in the languages of the Iberian Peninsula (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, 1950, p.375-376). Both previous hypotheses are very doubtful: *hatta* because of its exoticism and *tenus* because of its preciosity. The set of prepositions is formally very conservative, in regard to other morphology classes, as that of the conjunctions. It is difficult to assume that an Arabic preposition could be so pacifically integrated into this set. On the other side, the semantic meanings of the prepositions are easily changeable because of the contextual phrases in which they can be used. It is also very improbable that an archaic postposition (or, at least, seldom even in literary contexts) like *tenus* would have had a so large diffusion in Portuguese as *até* did. When one deals with etymology, it is clear that exotic solutions or preciosities do not help, but just increase the unreliability of hypothetical forms.

Other forms found in manuscripts could cause some uncertainty: Menéndez Pidal speaks about the Leonese prepositions *adta, adte* in the 10th Century, which would be originated from *hatta.* That is improbable, due to historical reasons: they are certainly representations of the prosthetic forms. The same could be said of *ata* in Spanish, sometimes written *hata*, already in the *Glosas,* together with *troa* (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, 1950, p.374-376). Precarious information about *fata* in Portuguese and Spanish (mentioned e.g. in REW §4077; LOKOTSCH, 1927, p.844) evidence how urgent more precise studies with a statistical bases on philologically reliable editions are needed.

Regardless of the existence of preposition *intra* in practically all Romance languages, its principal meanings are the inherited "inwards, into" and the developed "in" and "towards" ones. Also etyma like *intus* and *intus ad* are acceptable in these forms: in Romanian, *în* and *întru* are positional variants. In Arromanian there are *tu, ntu, ntru, tra.* In Megleno-romanian: *tri, tra, tru* (ROSSETTI, 1978, p.161-162; COTEANU, 1961, p.258-274). In Dalmatian there was *ent* (BARTOLI, 1906, p.130). In Logodurese: *intro* (REW §4514). In Calabrese: *intra, nta, ntad, nt', ind'.* In Sicilian: *intra, nt', nd'.* Napoletan has *intro, indo, ind'.* Salernian, Lucanian and Apugliese: *inda.* In Toscan there is *entro* but in Dante Alighieri's Commedia one can find an expression like *intra tre soli* (Inf. 6:69). Umbrian has *entra* (archaic), *t', nt'.* Roman has *nd'.* Romagnol: *te.* In San Marino there is *at.* Bolognese and Lucchesan has *ind'.* In Genovese: *int.* In Venetian: *nt', t', int'.* In Istrian: *nt', nd'.* In Triestian: *int'.* Milanese: *ind', int'.* In Bergamo and Trento one says *ind'.* Lombardian has *entro, int'.* In Piemontese: *enta, té, inter, nt', ant, nta, nt', nd'* (ROHLFS, 1969, p.210, 221-224, 227-230, 259). Friulan has *t'.* Sobresselvan has *enta, enten.* Old Provençal has a lot of variants, some of them are said to be influenced by Latin *usque,* like French *jusqu'à* comes from *usque ad* (LEVY, 1902): *tro que, tros que, tro enta, entro, entro a, entro en, entroca, entroga, entrogas, entrusca, entruscas, entruscas a, entrusques que, troi, truei, truesque, tro a, tro en,*

trosca. Gascon has *enta, ta, enti, ent, ende, enda, nta, endà, andà, enà, tad, entò, entou, to* (MISTRAL, 1932). In other Ibero-Romance languages similar forms are found everywhere: in Aragonese, *enta, ta, troa, tro, entro* (ROHLFS, 1935, p.36, 137; GIFFORD; HODCROFT, 1966; KONTZI, 1970, p.372-381). In Valencian, *handa, anda.* In Maestrazgo one says *hasda, handa.* Old Catalan has an *entrò* and in the dialects of Huesca and Segria there is also an *enta.* Murcian has *inda.* (COROMINAS, 1954, *sub verbo "hasta"*).

All those forms evidence that *intra* and *intro* (perhaps also *intus* and *intus ad*) occur in all Romance languages. It is not necessary to realize more complex etyma. The prevalence of *ata* over against the other variants could be reinforced by the bilingualism with the Arabic but it is not the cause of it. Since the speakers already knew the form *hatta,* they had a tendency to prefer *ata,* that sounded alike, but the form *ata* is more ancient than that bilingualism situation, in which it is common to create associative etymologies, like French *choucroute* from Alsatian *sûrkrût,* or English *crayfish* from French *crevice,* or French *contredanse,* from English *country dance.* In the set of grammatical morphemes similar phenomena also occur: it is said that Romanian masculine vocative *-e* continues the Latin ending of the second Declension reinforced by Slavic masculine vocative *-e.* Such explanation made easier the acceptance of Slavic feminine vocative *–o* in Romanian. It is not impossible that *ata* and *hasta* acquired a semantic and syntactic similarity to Arabic *hatta* because of that linguistic adaptation, which began to occur in the 10th Century, i.e. about 300 years before the *Cantigas.*

Título: Uma terceira hipótese para a etimologia do *até* português

ABSTRACT: *Two hypotheses are current to explain the origin of the Portuguese preposition "até". The first one would attach it to Arabic, whereas the second one would be the rarely used Latin adverb "tenus". The new hypothesis – Latin "intro" / "intra" – presented in this paper has a larger distribution inside the Romance language and furthermore it can solve some irregular diachronical phonetic aspects of both explanations.*

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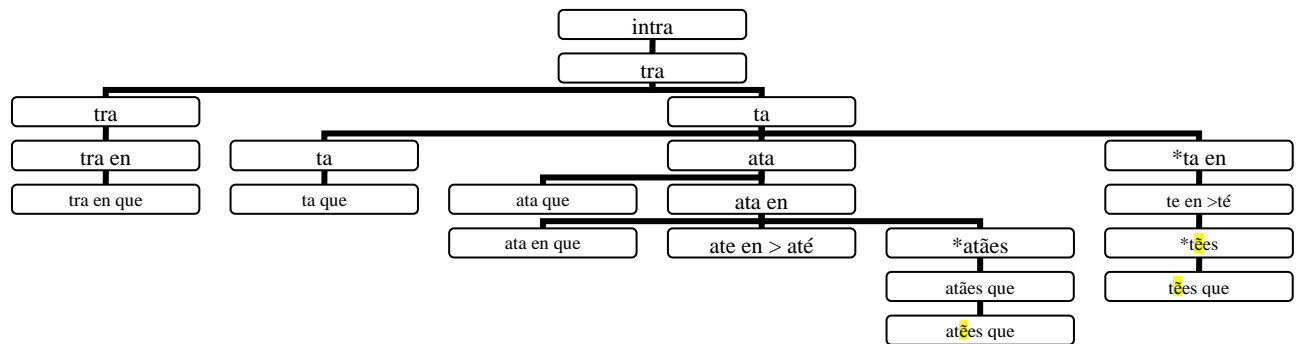
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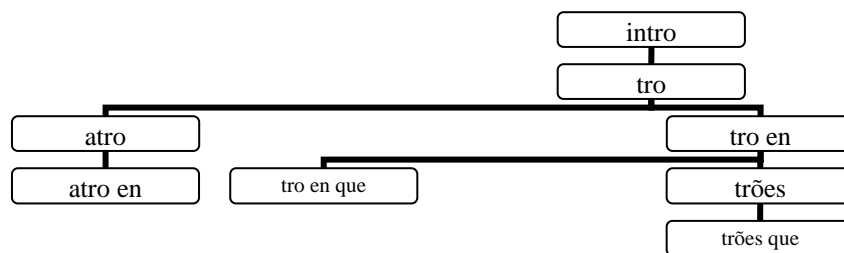
Abbreviations:

CSM = METTMANN, W. (ed.) **Cantigas de Santa Maria**. Coimbra: Por ordem da Universidade, 1959.

REW = MEYER-LÜBKE, W. **Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch**. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1935.

Schemes:

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                            ┌──────────┐
                            │  intra   │
                            └──────────┘
                            ┌──────────┐
                            │   tra    │
                            └──────────┘
        ┌──────────┐                      ┌──────────┐
        │   tra    │                      │    ta    │
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  ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐              ┌──────────┐
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                                       │ atẽes que│
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Fig. 1: Prepositions and adverbs originated from Latin 'intra'

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                    │  intro   │
                    └──────────┘
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │   tro    │
                    └──────────┘
     ┌──────────┐                  ┌──────────┐
     │   atro   │                  │  tro en  │
     └──────────┘                  └──────────┘
  ┌──────────┐   ┌───────────┐   ┌──────────┐
  │  atro en │   │ tro en que│   │   trões  │
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Fig. 2: Prepositions and adverbs originated from Latin 'intro'