

Oliveira, Fernão de, b. 1507, Aveiro, Portugal, d. 1581?, place unknown; humanist, author of the first grammar of Portuguese.

O. led a troubled life. In 1520, he entered the Dominican monastery at Évora and became a pupil of André de Resende. Persecuted by the Inquisition on account of his heretical ideas, he went first to Spain from 1532 to 1536, later to Italy from 1540 to 1542, and then to England from 1545 to 1551, and to North Africa from 1552 to 1553, before returning to Portugal in 1554 to teach rhetoric at the University of Coimbra.

Despite its appearance four years before J. de → Barros' grammar, Buescu (2000: 756) denies that O.'s *Gramática* is really the first grammar of Portuguese, because it is more a set of notes than a grammar in the full sense, as O. himself declares at the beginning. It is a work full of enthusiasm for the national language, as were all grammars in the 16th century. True, O.'s grammar is rather incomplete and limits its subject to pronunciation (spelling and prosody) and only touches on morphology, with no syntax at all; he promised to correct these limitations in the future (Louro undated[1930]:5–6).

The *Gramática* contains fifty chapters, ten of them devoted to the articulation of sounds in Portuguese and indicating his graphic representation, nine to the syllable, and one to accentuation. From chapter XXX to XXXIX, O. deals with the derivative morphology of words, distinguishing five types (article, noun, pronoun, adverb and verb). Then, there are two chapters dealing with dialectology and history. And finally, his *Gramática* ends with inflectional morphology. Regarding word class, O. does not take a clear stance. Initially, following the *Cratilo*, he differentiates between noun and verb. Then, he divides words into variable (with declension) and non-variable (without it) (Buescu 2000: 758). In spite of the scant attention paid to morphology, however, O. succeeds in rejecting the existence of the neuter gender and cases in Portuguese other than in pronouns.

Coseriu (2000[1975]) considers O.'s grammar superior to those not only of his contemporaries but also of many of his successors in the Romance domain. What makes his one of the more original grammars in the Renaissance, is, according to Coseriu, the distinction between system, or scheme, and performance, carried out through studying the sounds of Portuguese. It makes him the first phonetician of the Portuguese language, *avant la lettre*, with intuitions about phonology. It is interesting to note that O. distinguishes between closed and open vowels (*e*, *o*) just like the Italians G. G. → Trissino (1524) and C. → Tolomei (1539).

(1536): *Gramática da Linguagem Portuguesa*, Lisboa (repr., with a preliminary study, by M. L. Carvalhão Buescu, Lisboa, 1975; facs. ed. by the Ministerio de Cultura e Coordenação Científica, Lisboa, 1981; crit. ed., semi-diplomatic and anastasic, by A. Torres and C. Assunção, Lisboa, 2000; digital photog. ed. in: *Tesouros Impressos Grammatica da Linguagem Portuguesa de Fernão De Oliveira*, http://purl.pt/369/galeria_gramatica.html).

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