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Onomasiological cyclicality in the expression of concessive relations

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In this paper, I discuss processes of language change which have led to the constitution of concessive connectives in two genetically related languages, Latin and Portuguese. I focus on the diachronic developments of the Latin *licet*, and of *bem que* and *embora*, from Portuguese, whose sources are etymologically different: the modal verb *licere*, the emphatic adverb *bem* and the volitive adverbial phrase *em boa hora*. The main purpose is to investigate whether the three phenomena could be taken as stages of an onomasiological cycle of a semantic-pragmatic nature, as proposed by Hansen (2018). Based on studies in Latin linguistics about *licet* and on the analysis of the grammaticalization processes for *bem que* and *embora* in an interactional diachronic sample, I shall argue that, in the three instances of evolution, there has been a stage in which *licet*, *bem* and *embora* have acted as *assent markers*, and that this usage, in combination with contextual traits, has been crucial to sustain the inferential processes which enabled the concessive interpretation. The similar source and target meanings and the continuity of inferential processes over time also suggest that this is a recurrent path of renewal of the concessive meaning which displays a cyclicality pattern.



1. Introduction

This paper deals with the development of concessive connectives in two genetically related languages, Latin and Portuguese. In Latin, I focus on the conjunction *licet*, as in (1), and in Portuguese, on the conjunctions *bem que* and *embora*, as in (2) and (3), extracted from the corpus of this research. *Licet* has not been retained in Romance languages, *bem que* is falling into disuse in modern Portuguese, and *embora* is widely used in oral and written genres to express different concessive nuances.

- (1) *Et licet ille boni propositi praemium non requirat, nos tamen ei honestam uicem de tua amicitia exsoluere.* (Symm., *Epist.* IV, 66)
 ‘**Although** he does not need to be rewarded by his excellent intentions, we nevertheless repay him due to his friendship’
- (2) *Mr. Frankilim, bem que muito joven ainda, é formado Doutor em Mathematicas!* (XIX-2/ZA)
 ‘Mr. Frankilim, **despite** being yet so young, is a graduated Doctor in Mathematics!’
- (3) *Ser professor é algo muito sério, não é simples ser professor, embora haja uma fala geral e corrente de que qualquer um pode ensinar* (XXI-1/LPF)
 ‘Being a teacher is something very serious, it is not easy to be a teacher, **although** there is a general and current discourse that anyone can teach’

In the paths of change which have led to the constitution of these connectives, the source constructions are etymologically different: the modal verb *licere*, the emphatic adverb *bem* and the volitive adverbial phrase *em boa hora*. However, the functions which these constructions have developed over the course of time and the inferential pattern which they have put into play are very similar, which suggests that this is a recurrent path of renewal of the concessive meaning. Based on studies in Latin linguistics about *licet* (Bertocchi & Maraldi, 2009; Spevak, 2005) and on the analysis of the grammaticalization processes for *bem que* and *embora* in a strongly interactional diachronic sample, I shall argue that, in the three instances of evolution, there has been a stage in which *licet*, *bem* and *embora* have acted as *assent markers*, and that this usage, in combination with particular contextual traits, has been crucial to sustain the inferential processes which enabled the concessive interpretation.

The key question guiding this study is to assess whether these three phenomena as a whole represent stages of an onomasiological cyclic evolution of a semantic-pragmatic nature, according to the notion of onomasiological cyclicity proposed by Hansen (2018). In the view of that author, a cyclic pattern is revealed when phenomena develop in different moments, in one or more related languages, and have similar meanings at the starting and end points. This cyclicity would be grounded on the continuity of inferential patterns over time, irrespectively of specific cultures and linguistic systems, so that similar source meanings should support similar types of contextual inferences (Hansen, 2018, p. 127).

The analyses shall be conducted within the theoretical frame of grammaticalization (Bybee, 2010; Heine & Kuteva, 2007; Traugott & Dasher, 2002) along with assumptions of pragmatic theories about concessivity (Moeschler & Spengler, 1982; Rossari 2014, 2015). Priority shall be given to changes in meaning, herein appearing as instances of *subjectivization*, a process in which the meanings become more closely linked to the beliefs and attitudes of the speakers, as is the case of concessive relations. Pragmatics shall be assumed to be the driving force of change, in the sense that contextually induced pragmatic inferences provide enrichments to what is said and, through systematic repetition over time, these inferences might be absorbed by the item or construction, thus becoming semantically codified.

The paper is organized as follows: in section 2, I discuss concessive relations from three aspects: definition and identification of the main concessive types; the potential for renewal of form and meanings in time; and from the perspective of the prototype of a generic and abstract argumentative concessive schema, which shall subsidize the analyses. In section 3, I outline the adopted criteria in order to build the diachronic sample and the main methodological procedure. In section 4, I present the analysis and discussion of the paths of change of *licet*, *bem que* and *embora*. In section 5, I finish with the final remarks, followed by the references.

2. The concessive relations

2.1. The notion of concession

Broadly speaking, concessive relations arise from the assertion of two events in a context of incompatibility. The typology of the relations is vast, as is the array of the syntactic structures which perform them. In this paper, three widely recognized concessive types (see Latos, 2009; Moeschler & Spengler, 1982; Pander Maat, 1999; Rudolph, 1996) shall be discussed: concessives of *negated causality*, *restrictive concessives* and *argumentative concessives* (see Spevak, 2005, for a complete typology), as in (4) to (6). The concession through negated causality is based on the negation of a causal implication (*normally if p, not q*), and the restrictive concession, on a rectification or mitigation of the validity of a given content or part of it (*q, even though p*). The argumentative concession, in turn, presumes a dialog situation and a double argumentative move in which a fact is granted and immediately presented as irrelevant (*it is true that p, but q*).

- (4) *Embora tenha chovido muito, o rio não transbordou*
'Although it rained very much, the river did not overflow'
- (5) *Os sintomas são os mesmos da gripe comum, embora mais fortes*
'The symptoms are the same of the common flu, though they are stronger'
- (6) *Embora haja quinze milhões de desempregados famintos, a economia vai bem*
'Although there are fifteen million hungry unemployed people, the economy is doing well'

In (4), the concessive relation is established between world facts. The fact that *it rained very much* allows us to pragmatically presume, based on experience and world knowledge, that *the river is going to overflow* as a result, and a contrast is established precisely by the frustration of this assumption, since the river did not overflow. This concessive type is canonic and is closely linked to anteposition of the concession. In (5), there is no assumption of causality. This relation is established by means of restricting the validity of the previously stated content, a kind of correction. Following the logic of this way of functioning, the concessive is always postposed. In (6), conversely, the relation is established between a move of accepting a content's truth, for whom the other(s) or the public opinion etc. are accountable, and a second move which argumentatively weakens this content in order to support a different position than might be expected. In these three types, the concessive meaning emerges from the complex construction in which the connective is an essential element, given its procedural character.

The third type, the argumentative concession, makes the affinity explicit which exists between the ideas of assent and concession. Assent is inherent to the concessive argumentative move, as it was of the rhetoric figure of speech *concessio*, which, being circumscribed especially to the legal sphere, consisted in a strategy of simulating agreement with the opponent in order to gain advantages, thus counteracting potential objections to the opposite view (Letoublon, 1983; Spevak, 2005). As we shall see, in the historical development of the concessives with *licet*, *bem que* and *embora*, evidence is found that the genesis of change lies in argumentative moves which include assent. Although each of the sources has its specificities, as I will seek to show, they allow us to concede (for various reasons) a fact which afterwards will be presented as being irrelevant.

2.2. The derived nature of concessives and the issue of cyclicity

The domain of contrastive relations, which encompasses the concessives and the adversatives, is among the most prone to renewal over time, which is explained to a great extent by the subjectivity potential which is inherent to the constructions (Mauri & Ramat, 2012; Meillet, 1948[1912]). The derived nature of concessivity has been made evident in cross-linguistic studies, which have identified universal and free-choice quantification, emphatic assertion, temporal coexistence, volition, causal and conditional relations and negative human feelings as the most productive semantic sources (Harris, 1988; König 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Kortmann, 1997; Letoublon, 1983, among others).

Portuguese has not inherited Latin concessive connectives. In order to express concessive values, in addition to juxtaposition and intonation, Portuguese has developed a range of typically phrasal connectives (*ainda que*, *bem que*, *apesar de (que)*, *por mais que*, *sem que*, *mesmo se*, etc.) through grammaticalization processes at various stages of its history. Even in Latin, concessivity was already a derived notion (Bertocchi & Maraldi, 2009; Spevak, 2005), which is reflected in the complex morphology of Latin connectives (except *licet*), such as *quamquam*, *quamvis*, *etsi*, *etiamsi*, *tametsi* and *quamlibet*, formed by the amalgamation of two or three grammatical words.

In view of these facts, the hypothesis for which I seek empirical support is that, although Portuguese has not inherited any Latin concessive conjunction, the means of concessive expression which emerge in different states of Portuguese could replicate analogous tendencies to those of the constitution of connectives in Latin, and in the historical derivation between these two languages, these tendencies would stand for indicators of continuity in the scenario of deep remodeling undergone by the concessive system, in addition to being indicators of *cyclicity* in diachronic developments.

Meillet (1948, pp. 140–141) was one of the first to conceive the existence of renewal cycles in grammatical change. To him, grammaticalization consists in a permanent procedure of linguistic renewal impelled by expressivity: *les langues suivent ainsi une sorte de développement en spirale: elles ajoutent des mots accessoires pour obtenir une expression intense; ces mots s'affaiblissent, se dégradent et tombent au niveau de simples outils grammaticaux; on ajoute de nouveaux mots [...] l'affaiblissement recommence, et ainsi sans fin.* [languages follow a kind of spiral development: they add accessory words to achieve an intense expression; these words weaken and become mere grammatical tools; new words are added [...] weakening resumes, without end]

In particular, the history of conjunctions, according to Meillet (1948, pp. 171–173) develops as a repeated and continued effort in pursuit of expressivity. However, not all conjunctions would have the same predisposition. He states that Romance languages feature a stable set of conjunctions which dates back to Latin forms, as is the case in Portuguese of the conjunctions *e*, *ou*, *se* and *que*; and another group of conjunctions with a special meaning, such as the contrastive ones, which is marked by instability. In the second group, creations would occur constantly due to the need of expressing contrast with an ever-renewed emphasis. In this perspective, the history of concessives, which displays periodic renewals of their expression means in Portuguese and other languages, seems to be a locus to observe cyclical changes.

Recent research, such as Hansen's (2018, 2020), has suggested the existence of onomasiological cycles at the semantic and pragmatic levels. These are recurrent evolution processes in either one or two languages which descend from each other, in which a particular meaning at the *content level* gives room to one or more meanings at the *contextual level*. Hansen (2018) defines linguistic uses at the content and contextual level respectively as:

“(...) bear saliently either on a state-of-affairs in some real or imagined world that is referred to in their host clause or on the relation between that state-of-affairs and other (real or imagined) states-of-affairs.

(...) express speakers' comments on the relation between described states-of-affairs and the discourse itself (including, but not limited to, the subjective attitudes to the states-of-affairs in question that may be entertained by either the speaker, the hearer or some relevant third party).”

(Hansen, 2018, p. 129)

Two or more phrases could be involved in a cycle and the older one could disappear or be circumscribed to certain text genres and particular language registers. As an example, Hansen illustrates the repeated evolution of a deictic temporal adverb to a contrastive marker undergone by three etymologically different items: Latin *nunc* ('now'), *or*, from Old French, and *maintenant*, from Modern French.

2.3. A prototype of argumentative concessive schema

When it is present, the connective is always part of a larger connection mechanism. In concessive relations, the articulated parts pose restrictions on interpretation, and the connective provides the instructions to interpret the relation between the parts. These instructions include a supposed incompatibility, which is contextually induced (Lang, 2000; Moeschler & Spengler, 1982), resulting from the speaker's or writer's assessment and leading to an expectation being abandoned.

The generic idea of incompatibility underlying the concessive nuances requires refinement in order to achieve a better understanding of the potential factors that motivate semantic change. From Rossari (2014, 2015), we can draw a refinement proposal which is particularly relevant for the phenomena discussed herein. The author's focus lies on correlative concessive constructions from French of the type *certes p, mais q*, which are common in dialogical contexts, where the first member starts with an assent adverb (*certes, en effet, d'accord, soit*), and the second, with a contrastive connective (*mais*).

Rossari proposes a more general concessive schema, in which the level of contribution of each construction component to the concessive meaning is defined. The schema helps explain not only *certes p, mais q*, but also other ways of expressing concession, such as, for instance, constructions with *peut-être* and the epistemic future in Italian. In that schema, the contribution of the members is made in such a way that the sequence *certes p* expresses assent, and therefore retrieves a previously mentioned content or one which is available in the speakers' mental universe. In other words, *p* is presented as factual. Nevertheless, by itself *certes p* does not enable a concessive reading; it must be followed by *mais q*, which adds the communicatively most relevant content to the context at hand. That means that *q* is focal. Thus, there is a difference between the discursive statuses of *p* and *q*, this difference being explored in order to express concessivity. For Rossari, the incompatibility at the core of the concessive meaning has an informative character; more precisely, it is a discrepancy between the informational statuses (presupposed vs. focal) of the segments *p* and *q*. The argumentative move which sustains this discrepancy can be synthesized in (i) and (ii):

- (i) The assent marker presents the content of *p* as being *agreed* or *granted* by Speaker 1 (S1); however, this content has been *conceived* previously by a Speaker 2 (S2), thus being a known piece of information, so that *polyphony* is established: two discursive positions meet and the assent of S1 regarding the enunciation of S2 prevails.
- (ii) The content of *q* is endorsed by S1, being the main content.

In other words, in Rossari's proposal (2014, 2015), the achievement of a concessive interpretation between p and q requires the concomitant existence of two traits: the contrast between the discursive/informative statuses of p and q and the possibility of interpreting p as previously conceived or as already existing in the discursive background. The distinction between *agreed* (p) and *endorsed* (q) is essential: the first is background information, the second is central.

3. Material and methodology

The analysis of the Latin constructions is based on data from Spevak (2005), and the analysis of the constructions in Portuguese is based on a diachronic sample compiled from a set of texts in various genres extracted from seven digital platforms, which are listed below. To build the sample, aiming at representativeness and balance, guidelines have been set regarding the time frame (Old, Middle, Classical and Modern Portuguese);¹ the geographical setting (European and Brazilian varieties), the typological diversity of the text sequences and a similar amount of material for each state of language², in order to obtain quantitatively and qualitatively comparable sets. The Appendix provides the full list of texts, featuring the reference abbreviations.³

Regarding the textual typology, the corpus includes works which present narrative, argumentative and prescriptive sequences. A decisive criterion to define the works was the existence of interaction contexts, since they are the place of the negotiation of meanings, of the ongoing pursuit of more expressive and effective argumentation strategies, and therefore, the place of potential linguistic innovations (Traugott, 2010). Furthermore, given that, first and foremost, concession is an act of argumentative and interactive nature (Letoublon, 1983; Moeschler & Spengler, 1982), it was expected that these contexts might provide data that is relevant to the research.

For texts from the 13th to the 15th century, the occurrences have been mapped manually, by means of tools available for documents with DOC and PDF extensions. For the 14th to the 21st century, I have used the computer tool *Sketch Engine*⁴ which enabled me to recompile the corpora, control the word count and extract occurrences in their usage contexts. Although Sketch speed up the data preparation step, it has some recognition limitations for past tense data, due to the specificities of spelling and delimitation of the graphic word, so that manual checking was required for each text.

¹ The periodization follows Lindley-Cintra (see Castro, 2017, p. 147), who proposes four non-discrete stages: *Old Portuguese* (XIII to XV), *Middle Portuguese* (XV to XVI), *Classical Portuguese* (XVI to XVIII) and *Modern Portuguese* (XIX to XXI).

² For each century, around 1 000 000 words have been computed, except for Old Portuguese, where fewer texts are available. For the material of the 13th, 14th and 15th century, I have obtained 117 804, 565 686 and 585 219 words in total, respectively.

³ Databases: Tycho Brahe Parsed Corpus of Historical Portuguese www.tycho.iel.unicamp.br/~tycho; Digital Corpus of Medieval Portuguese <https://cipm.fesh.unl.pt>; Acervo digital da Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa <https://bndigital.bnportugal.gov.pt/>; Base de dados do Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa <http://www.clul.ulisboa.pt/>; Project "História do Português Brasileiro" <https://sites.google.com/site/corporaphpb>; Project "História do Português Paulista" <https://phpp.fllch.usp.br/corpus>; Acervo digital da Biblioteca Brasileira www.bbm.usp.br.

⁴ <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>.

The methodology follows a predominantly qualitative path. The diachronic processes are analyzed primarily based on the link between source semantics, the contextually induced inferential processes and the type of concessive meaning. The concessive schema presented by Rossari (2014, 2015), discussed in section 2.3, shall be used as a methodological support which will allow us to identify development stages in the perspective of change.

4. Paths of change towards concession

4.1. *Licet*: from modal verb to concessive subordinator

The modal verb *licere* existed throughout the Latin period, in syntactic constructions with monovalent or bivalent predicates, being combined primarily with the infinitive. Initially, it functioned as a modal deontic, having the value of permission to do something, and later developed the epistemic value of possibility. The data in (7) and (8), extracted from Spevak (2005, p. 84), provides examples of deontic and epistemic values, respectively:

(7) *Non mihi crines depectere, non unguis subsequisse licet* (Ov., *Fast.* 230)
‘I neither **have permission** to untangle my hair nor to cut my nails’

(8) *Iam licet uenias, marite; uxor in thalamo tibi est* (Catull. 61)
‘Now (you have permission >) you **may** come, husband, your wife is in your bed’

Recent studies on Latin linguistics (Bertocchi & Maraldi, 2009; Spevak, 2005) show that the present tense third-person singular form, *licet*, in co-occurrence with the subjunctive, became a concessive conjunction over the course of a slow and gradual evolution process, indicated by ambiguous uses of *licet* between modality and concession. In the classical period, the conjunction role is rare, but in late Latin, *licet* was among the most frequent concessive connectives.⁵

The data in (9) and (10) represents ambiguous contexts, in which pragmatic enrichment takes place (*bridging context*, according to Heine, 2002; *critical context*, according to Diewald, 2002). In (9), which has been discussed by various authors (Bertocchi & Maraldi, 2009, Ernout & Meillet, 1951; Spevak, 2005), the permission or possibility value is used to grant the other(s) the freedom of saying or doing: ‘let them object, I accept it, no matter what!’. In (10), discussed in Spevak (2005, p. 87), *licet dicat* (‘may say’) does not refer to an actual process, but to a possibility, ‘in case he says’, which is plausible given its habituality (*sicuti solet dicere*, ‘as is usual’). In these contexts, the concessive nuance is of an argumentative type, presuming a dialogism whose arguments have different weights.

⁵ In Portuguese, a reminiscent form of the root *licere* is in the masculine adjective *lícito*, ‘what is just, allowed, legal’.

- (9) *fremant omnes, licet; dicam, quod sentio* (Cic., *De orat.* I, 195)
 ‘The others **may** object, but I will say what I think’
- (10) *Licet iste dicat emisse, sicuti solet dicere, credite hoc mihi, iudices* (Cic., *Verr.* II, 133)
 ‘He **may** well say, as is usual, that he has bought the objects; judges, believe me’

According to Spevak (2005), the possible concessive reading of (9) and (10) is based on the relation between *licet*, which marks assent, and other contextual factors, such as the contiguity between two pragmatically contrastive propositions, the occurrence of the subjunctive and the position of *licet* necessarily on the first member of the construction. The concessive reading related to assent is also strengthened by the fact that *licet* had an autonomous use to express assent, as in the dialog in (11):

- (11) *Intro abi; et quamquam hoc tibi aegre est, tamen fac accures.*
 - *Licet* (Plaut., *Cas.*, 421)
 ‘Come back; and even though it is difficult for you, try to do things well!’
 – **Alright**’

At a later stage of change, *licet* becomes a hypothetical concessive subordinator, as in (12). These are cases in which the hypothetical value is associated with protases referring to circumstances which would have had the power to affect the content of the nuclear clause, but eventually prove to be insignificant. *Licet* undergoes one more semantic change, losing the conditional nuance and beginning to express factual concession, as in (13), in which the subjunctive mode prevails, with the only function of marking a syntactic dependency (Spevak, 2005, p. 156).

- (12) *Licet uastum traieceris mare, licet, ut ait Vergilius noster, ‘terraeque urbesque recedant’, sequentur te, quocumque perueneris, uitia.* (Sem., *Epist.* 28.1)
 ‘**Even if** you cross the vast sea, **even if**, as Virgil says: ‘Countries and cities are left behind’; your vices will follow you wherever you go’
- (13) *Et licet horrida nox sileat, lucis habet tamen illa ducem.* (Prud., *Perist.* III, 49)
 ‘And, despite the terrible and silent night, she has a guide who shines on her’

Evidence of the historical development between modality and concession in other languages is mentioned by Bybee et al. (1994, p. 227). Among other phenomena, the authors highlight the synthetic future tense in Spanish, where the concessive meaning would have been derived from the probabilistic use in interactional contexts.

4.2. Bem que: from emphatic adverb to concessive conjunctive periphrasis

Table 1 shows in absolute numbers the mapping results of the adverbial and conjunctive patterns of *bem* in the longitudinal sample.⁶ The adverbial uses of *bem* are very frequent in all time spans. The first uses of the concessive conjunction *bem que* have been documented, with reduced frequency, in the transition from Middle to Classical Portuguese, a period in which, according to the data, Portuguese already had a range of concession markers (*como quer que*, *pero*, *ainda que*, *posto que*, *conquanto*, *sem embargo de*) and displayed other renewal processes under way, such as, for instance, *apesar de (que)*, which derives from the negative emotion expressed by the noun *pesar* ('sorrow') and develops into a factual concession, and *nem que*, which derives from an emphatic negative source, *nem* (lat. *nec*, 'and not') and develops into a hypothetical concession.

	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX	XX/XXI
<i>bem</i> Adv.	120	414	656	626	1397	675	951	918
<i>bem que</i> Conj.	0	0	0	5	2	38	97	9
total	120	414	656	631	1399	713	1048	927

Table 1: Absolute frequency of *bem* and *bem que* from a longitudinal perspective.

The adverb *bem* (Lat. *bene*, 'well, fortunately') is multifunctional. Depending on the context and scope relations, it can act as a *modal*, *intensifier* or *focalizer*. The *modal* adds a positive evaluation about a process, state or quality, such as in "sentir-se *bem* ('feel well'); estar *bem* vestida ('being well-dressed'); unhas *bem* tratadas ('well-cared nails')". The *intensifier* indicates the highest degree in a scale and can affect predicates, circumstances or qualities, such as in "constipação *bem* forte ('quite strong cold'); vida *bem* cheia de aventuras ('life quite full of adventure'); chegar *bem* cedo ('arrive quite early')". The *focalizer* singularizes the piece of information to its right and can affect nouns, adverbs and verbs, highlighting or specifying them, such as in: "os mouros eram *bem* quinze mil ('the Moorish were well fifteen hundred'); estavam *bem* ali ('they were right there'); é *bem* capaz de estar gostando ('it is quite likely that he/she is enjoying it')".

All three usages are found from Old through Modern Portuguese. I will discuss only the *focalizer*, which is the most frequent in the data set and seems to be related to the change.⁷ Following Ilari's proposal (2002), I take it that the focalization carried out by *bem* implies

⁶ In this mapping, neither have other conjunctive uses of *bem* been taken into consideration, such as *nem bem*, *bem como*, nor the interjective uses and the dozens of noun expressions with *bem*.

⁷ There is a tendency in languages to select adverbs that are analogous to *bem* to compose complex concessive connectives, as is the case, for instance, of *bien que* in French; *benché* and *sebbene* in Italian; *bien que*, *si bien* in Spanish; *per bé que*, *si bé* in Catalan; *de bine ce* in Romanian; *obwohl* and *wiewohl* in German (Kortmann, 1997, p. 97).

verification operations which depend on the comparison to some parameter which is either explicit or recoverable in the context. Such operations consist in verifying a number; the identity of individuals, places and times; of properties and relations; and even in verifying the factuality. In the latter, which we are interested in exploring, *bem* emphasizes the speaker's commitment to the truth of the utterance, suggesting that endorsing other opinions would not come into question. According to Ilari (2002, p. 194), this emphatic use is a *polyphony marker*: "(...) sugere-se que é possível fundamentar a afirmação na observação imediata dos fatos ou em premissas facilmente compartilhadas, e evocam-se, polifonicamente, opiniões divergentes" ["(...) it is suggested that the statement can be supported by the immediate view of facts or easily shared assumption, and, polyphonically, divergent opinions are summoned"].

In the investigated data, the emphatic adverb *bem* typically occurs in contexts with complement constructions exhibiting the following characteristics: (i) *bem* is in the nuclear clause and the clause content falls under the scope of *bem*; (ii) the clause subject is in the first person; (iii) the predicates are most frequently cognition verbs (*saber*, *entender*, *compreender*, *crer*) and, to a lesser degree, verbs of speaking (*dizer*, *jurar*, *aconselhar*) and volition (*querer*, *sofrer*); (iv) the present indicative prevails. As an example, consider (14) to (17), which is data from Old Portuguese,⁸ prior to the emergence of the conjunctive use:

- (14) *A prouar averey eu se poderey
guarir sem a hir ver, pero **ben** ssey
que o non ey de fazer (XIII-1/CAM)*
'I will have to prove whether I can heal without seeing, so I **well** know that I am not going to do it'
- (15) *E el disse: – De todo em todo nō temo, ca **bem** sey ca se pecador for ante a face de Deus que yrey eu ant'ela. (XIV-1/PP)*
'And he said: – I am not afraid, because I **well** know that if the sinner is before God, I shall go before her'
- (16) *Eu **bem** cuydo que nō foy per sa força, mas per boa fe e per boa asperança que havia em Deus (XIV-2/FS)*
'I **well** understand that it was not by his own strength, but by the good faith and the hope he had in God'
- (17) *Amygo sygue me e soterra o meu corpo depoy que eu morer. ca **bẽ** creo per deos ca ueras galardõ por êde (XIV-1/LMT)*
'Friend, follow me and bury my body after I die, because I **well** believe that you will be rewarded by God for that'

⁸ For the reference to data in Portuguese, I use the following convention: at the end, between parentheses, the first number indicates the century, the second indicates whether it is the first or second half and the abbreviation refers to the source text, according to the Appendix.

The data from (14) to (17) illustrates the function of assertive reinforcement. In all cases, the speaker's level of adherence to the content is high, meaning that he explicitly states his belief in the truth. The emphatic marking of the truth implies in the existence of potential reasons to question it, establishing a dialogical scenario, in which antagonistic positions naturally coexist.⁹ Being something disputable, the frequency of justifications with *bem* along the enunciations seems understandable, such as in (14), (15) and (17). *Bem* is commonly found in adversative construction with *mas*, as in (16), which displays a correction strategy.

The data from (18) to (20), in turn, enables a concessive reading. These are correlative constructions of the type *bem p, mas q*, which realize the concessive schema (see Section 2.3). The concessive reading is pragmatic, being achieved compositionally based on a particular combination of *bem*, *mas* and other contextual traits, as I will discuss next.

- (18) (...) *bẽ auenturada he a virgyndade que salua (...) Ca ela he amada de deos e amiga de todolos anjos. E aquela que a ha semelhãça ha de deos e aquela que a nõ ha nõ ha semelhãça de deos, porque ha perdida a sua entegridade e a acha de corõpymẽto. E depoy a molher bẽ pode alimpar se do pecado per pẽdẽça. mas nõca ẽ nehuũa guysa pode cobrar a virgindade nõ a entegridade dela.* (XIV-1/LMT)
 ‘(...) blessed is the virginity that saves (...) Because it is loved by God and friend of all angels. And the one who possesses it is similar to God and the one who does not have it bears no similarity with God, because she has lost her integrity. And the woman may **well** cleanse herself from sin by penance, **but** never, in no way whatsoever, can recover virginity or integrity’
- (19) Rvano: *Hum moderno escritor diz q̃ esta noffa casfia lignea nõ he dos antigos porq̃ diz que he preta, e sem cheiro, e q̃ se algũa casfia ha que he chamada por dioscorydes a pseuda casfia q̃ quer dizer canella falsa.*
 Orta: **Bem** podia ser q̃ falseficafẽ ha canela antigumẽte **mas** aguora nõ há rezã p a fazer tal coufa por ha muyta abundãcia q̃ della ha. (XVI-2/CSD)
 ‘Rvano: A modern writer says that our cassia is not that of the ancient people because he says that it is black and odorless (...) it is called pseudo-cassia, which means false cinnamon
 Orta: It might **well** have been that they falsified cinnamon back in the day, **but** now there is no reason for that, because it exists in abundance’
- (20) Taramella: **Bem** fei, que ella he huma Princeza, e eu huma criada; **mas** tenho a consolaçaõ, que eu o naõ roquey, para que me quizeffe. (XVIII-1/TCP)
 ‘I **well** know that she is a princess and I am a maid, **but** I have the consolation that I did not beg her to want me’

⁹ This position is followed by Anscombre (1980, p. 118): “(...) le simple fait que renforcer une assertion, c’est par là-même signaler que cette assertion avait besoin de l’être, et qu’elle pouvait donc être combattue. C’est de cette façon qu’une marque de renforcement devient une marque de concession”. [(...) the mere fact of reinforcing a statement is in itself an indicator that this statement needed to be reinforced and therefore could be questioned. That is how a reinforcement marker becomes a concession marker].

The excerpt in (18), which tells the stories of Christian martyrs, presents the sayings of Saint Nereus about the importance of virginity. In the complex construction, *p* and *q* are contents which are stated and presented with different discursive statuses. In *p*, the speaker *accepts* the possibility of a woman cleansing herself from sin through penance, which is *conceived* by another instance, the religious institution; however, in *q* the speaker *endorses* the fact that the purification is insufficient to restore the woman's integrity. These moves are assured by linguistic means: (i) the emphatic adverb *bem* indicates assent to the content of *p*, which conveys background information (that is, religious rules); (ii) the modal verb *poder* along with *bem* indicates that this is something which has not come to pass in the moment of enunciation; and (iii) *mas* indicates that the content of *q* is the most important and is in a contrast relation to the enunciation *p*. In this perspective, the emphatic adverb and the modal verb act together in assigning a lower discursive status to *p*, whereas *mas* (associated to negative polarity) ensures the centrality of *q*. In this case, the possibility is granted before being qualified as less relevant.

The data in (19) is part of the *Colóquio de simples e drogas e cousas medicinais da Índia* ['Colloquium of simple medicines and medicinal things from India'], by the physician-botanist Garcia de Orta. The work is built as a dialog, in which Dr. Orta reveals his thoughts to Ruano, an imaginary listener. The concessive schema is performed in a quite similar way to that in (18), with a convergence of the roles of *bem* and the modal verb; the difference lies in the fact that *p* takes up a part of the immediately preceding enunciation (by Ruano); and also in the role of the modal, which is aimed here at mitigation of the assent. Again, the prevalent move is that of accepting what has previously been said by the other and endorsing a different position. A similar interpretation also seems to apply to (20), taken from the play *Labyrintho de Creta*, which is representative of the Portuguese comic theater from the 1700s.

In these correlative structures, such as (18)–(20), a fundamental change takes place: the assertive strength of *bem* is weakened. The adherence is weaker now. Additionally, the speaker is not the entity in charge of the asserted content anymore; (an)other enunciator(s) are included, so that there is polyphony. Polyphony is thus a trace shared by the source and bridging context, but it is performed in different ways. In source constructions, by using the emphatic adverb *bem*, the speaker emphasizes his position, and for that purpose, polyphonically raises potential objections with the intention of counteracting them. In correlative structures, conversely, the speaker emphasizes the point of someone else's position, in order to weaken it for the sake of the position endorsed by him.

The occurrences of the periphrasis *bem que* in (21) to (23) are among the first to be documented in the 16th and 17th century. There, *bem que* is a grammatical word, standing at the left border of *p*, and the connection *p* and *q* falls under its scope; additionally, it provides instructions for a concessive interpretation.

- (21) (...) *hum delles se chama cacollaa quebir, e outro cacollaa ceguer, que he tanto como se dixeffe cardamomo mayor e cardamomo menor, e per estes dous nomes jam conhecidas estas duas maneiras de cardamomo dos fificos Arabios e mercadores, e ambas ha na India, e a mayor quantidade he de Calecut ate Cananor, bem q̃ em outras partes do Malauar ha aja, e na Iaoa, mas não he tanta quantidade nem tam branco da casca* (XVI -2/CSD)
 ‘(...) one of them is called cacollaa quebir, and the other, cacollaa ceguer, which is as if one said major cardamom and minor cardamom, and by these two names these two types of cardamom are known by the Arab physicists and merchants, and both exist in India and in greater amounts from Calcutta to Kannur, **although** they exist in other parts of Malabar and in Jaoa, but neither in such great amounts, nor with such a white peel’
- (22) (...) *veyo a portar a Lagos, botou a gente em terra, e fezse na volta de Lisboa, e à vista do cabo de sam Vicente encontrou sinco fragatas de Dunquerque, as quais lhe déram tal cassa, que não teve outro remedio mais, que valerse da fortaleza de Sagres, e desta maneira escapou, bem q̃ com grandissimo dano: os soldados vieram todos por terra, e entráram nesta Cidade a oito do mes.* (XVII-1/G)
 ‘(...) he anchored in Lagos, left the people on land and returned to Lisbon, and when he sighted the Cape of Sao Vicente, he met five frigates from Dunkirk, which pursued him, so that he had no other solution but to resort to the Sagres fortress, and thereby escaped, **though** with serious damage: all soldiers came by land and entered this city on the eighth day of the month’
- (23) *Ferimos ao inimigo dez peffoas. Tiue mos perda de cinco mortos com balas de artilharia, & quinze feridos. Era este Forte, bem que piqueno, mui importante por razão de feu fitio, & com elle ganhado ficou perigosa a conferuação do Forte do Buraco de Sanctiago (...)* (XVII-2/RDS)
 ‘We hurt ten enemies. We had five casualties due to artillery bullets and fifteen wounded. This fortress, **despite** being small, was very important due to its position, and when it was taken, the preservation of the fortress of Buraco de Santiago was threatened’

In a possible interpretation for (21), the content of the concessive clause with *bem que* (*although they exist in other parts of Malabar and in Jaoa*) introduces a reservation towards the previously stated content (*both exist in India and in greater amounts from Calcutta to Kannur*), indicating that both types of cardamom at hand also exist in other parts of the Malabar coast and not only in the two mentioned cities. In (22) and (23), the concessive segments are parenthetical (prepositional phrase and adjective phrase, respectively) and also add reservations to the content of the main clause. These pieces of data already anticipate traces of concessive constructions with *bem que* which are frequent in the 18th and 19th century: express a restrictive nuance in 90% of the data; they can articulate clause and non-clause segments and, in case of clause segments, they co-occur with the subjunctive mode, which expresses argumentative irrelevance rather than eventuality or hypothetical status.

As previously said, the concessive with *bem que* is falling into disuse since the 20th century; nowadays, mainly in informal genres, uses of *bem que* are common to express a desire in autonomous utterances, such as in (24).

- (24) *Geni, bem que você podia cantar um pouco pra mim* (XX-2/AJ)
 ‘Geni, you could **well** sing a bit for me’

The investigated data suggests that, while the concessive *bem que* recedes, another concessive periphrasis which is also formed by the adverb *bem* is conventionalized as a productive option for expressing factual concessivity in Portuguese. We are referring to *se bem que*, which emerges at a later time than *bem que*, according to **Table 2**, which presents the absolute frequency of *bem que* and *se bem que* from a longitudinal perspective (for a comparative study on the evolutions of *bem que* and *se bem que*, see Longhin, 2022):

	XV	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX	XX/XXI
<i>bem que</i>	0	5	2	38	97	9
<i>se bem que</i>	0	0	0	11	34	51

Table 2: Absolute frequency of *bem que* and *se bem que* from a longitudinal perspective.

The occurrences (25) to (27) provide usage examples of *se bem que* in modern Portuguese:

- (25) *Só sei que cresci naturalmente como crescem as plantas e os gatos. Se bem que os gatos são menos espertos e as plantas menos travessas do que eu na minha infância.* (20FMP)
 ‘All I know is that I grew up naturally as do plants and cats. **Though** cats are less smart and plants less cheeky than I was in my childhood’
- (26) *É condição essencial que o feijão seja novo para que a feijoada se torne apetitosa, preferindo-se o denominado— mulatinho, si bem que outros dêem mais valor ao feijão preto.* (20ACB)
 ‘It is essential for the been to be fresh for the feijoada to be tasty, so that the so-called — *mulatinho*, is preferred, **although** others prefer black beans’
- (27) *A não seguir-se essa via, melhor fora, no seu entender, dar liberdade imediata e incondicional a todos os escravos existentes no Império e aceitar as consequências de semelhante medida, que lhe parecia, não obstante, catastrófica na prática, se bem que teoricamente defensável.* (21HGB)
 ‘Rather than following this path, it would be better, in his view, to give immediate and unconditional freedom to all slaves in the Empire and accepting the consequences of that measure, which nevertheless seemed disastrous in practice, **though** theoretically acceptable’

The data in (25) to (27), along with the other pieces of data gathered in the corpus, point out particularities of complex constructions with *se bem que*, such as possibility of realization in indicative and subjunctive mode ((25) and (26), respectively), the varying clause order, with a preference for postposition, and prevalence of the concessive meaning of restriction, which supports functionalist studies in various samples of Brazilian Portuguese (see Neves, 2011).

The constitution of *se bem que* puts into play the modification expressed by the adverb *bem* and the conditionality of *se*, another productive source of concessive connectives in languages (König 1988). The starting point appears to be the use of the conditional mold to express opposition, weakening the conditional implication and the hypothetical value of the protasis *p* in order to express contrast, as suggested by the data from (28) to (30), extracted from texts of the 17th century. In these pieces of data, chronologically preceding the occurrences of *se bem que*, the concessive reading depends on specific contextual arrangements, such as, for instance, anteposition of the protasis, structural paralelisms with lexical opposites, bipolarity or emphatic correlations of the type *bem... (muito) melhor* ('(much) better').

- (28) *Pesando-se tudo, parece que nem o mais aturado estudante desta Ordem pode dizer que estuda muito. Pois que diremos, se considerarmos que, sendo a força do estudo dos principiantes dos dezasseis até os vinte cinco anos, não sejam isentos por essa razão de nenhuma das obrigações de casa de noviços, na qual, além das gerais, há outras ocupações, que, se bem são todas em favor da observância, são em todo contrárias e distractivas do estudo.* (17-1/VFB)

'Taking everything into account, it seems that not even the most assiduous student of this Order can claim to study much. So what shall we say, if we consider that, while studying is enforced on beginners from sixteen to twenty-five years, they are not spared for that reason from none of the home duties of novices, where, in addition to the general occupations, there are others, which, **despite** being all for the sake of observance, are thoroughly contrary and distractive to the study'

- (29) (...) & *se bem* recusou o sacerdocio, **não** resistio menos ao Bispado como elle affirma de sy. (17-1/TFV)

'And **though** he refused priesthood, he did not resist less to the diocese, as he states'

- (30) *Aqui nam pode o enfermeiro resistir mais, vendo o charitativo offerecimento do Padre, que se bem o disse por palaura, muito melhor o executou por obra.* (17-1/CCJ)

'Here the nurse could not resist any longer, seeing the kind offer of the priest, who, **despite** having said it in words, did it **much better** in works'

In (28), the writer supports the point of view that the novices' study is impaired due to the various duties and occupations which they have to fulfill, following the rule of the house where they live. By means of two parallel predicates which *ser* ('to be'), the conditional *se* ponders favorable and unfavorable aspects. The presence of *bem* in *p* reinforces the writer's adherence to observance,

to submission to the house rules; however, in *q*, he argues that the rules hamper the study, reinforcing the initial argument. In (29), the construction has an explicit negative in the apodosis *q*. From the argumentative point of view, *bem* modifies the protasis, providing assertiveness, but the negation of the apodosis is the decisive argument. In (30), *bem* is part of an emphatic correlation with another adverb “*bem... muito melhor...*” (‘though... much better’), and both adverbs indicate positive values in a potential evaluation scale. In contrast to (28) and (29), in (30) *bem* is an intensifier which, on an evaluation scale, increases the importance of the content of the protasis, whereas *melhor* underscores the superiority of the content of the apodosis, establishing a concessive reasoning in which something important is considered to be insufficient. In all three cases, the irrelevance resulting from the protasis is taken as the less favorable argument, which afterwards becomes one of the traces codified in the semantics of *se bem que*.

Despite the presence of *bem*, the emergence of *se bem que* seems to deviate from the assumed cyclicity which I discuss in this text, given that the potential motivating contexts involve different uses of *bem*, and in these contexts conditionality is prevalent. However, the emergence of concessives with *se bem que* helps to elucidate, at least to a certain extent, the retreat of *bem que*. Both periphrases specialize in expressing restrictive concessive relations, thus concurring, but *se bem que* is more flexible than *bem que*, since it occurs with both the indicative and the subjunctive mode. In this respect, I relate to the explicative hypothesis of Montero Cartelle (2000), for whom the continuity of a connective in language has a correlation to more flexible constructions in terms of form and function, as seems to be the case of the history of concessive connectives in Spanish.

4.3. *Embora*: from a volitive adverb to a concessive subordinator

Ali (1931), a Brazilian philologist, links the concessive conjunction *embora* to the phrase *em boa hora* (‘in_{PREP} good_{ADJ} time_{GENERIC NOUN}’), which is used to wish success, a proper time for something, whether sincerely or out of courtesy, given the common sense that success of human acts depended on the time at which they were performed. The negative counterpart *em má hora* (‘in bad time’), to curse¹⁰, also existed. According to Ali (1931, p. 217), the semantic change was triggered when the adverb, in the context of optative clauses, began to indicate that an individual grants the possibility of a fact or, at least, does not object to it. As an example, Ali mentions the utterance “*Ria embora quem quiser, que eu em meu siso estou*” (‘Whoever wants may laugh as much as they want, because I am in my senses’), an excerpt from a theater play by Gil Vicente. In other words, *embora* is acting in the function of assent.

¹⁰ In both cases, *em boa hora* and *em má hora*, the combined processing of the word sequences and its repeated usage led to weakening of the meaning of the parts and to phonetic wear and fusion. Monte Carmelo’s spelling guide (1767, pp. 118, 521) registered already in the 1700s the adverb *embóra* as an abbreviation of *emboa hora*, and the expressions *aramá* or *hora má* as an archaic plebeianism.

Two more research works on *embora* have provided important support. Guimarães (1987), from a pragmatic perspective, interpreted the change undergone by *embora* as a product of a difference of perspective between speakers. From the *time* category (proper time to perform something), the constructions would have slipped into the category of *quality* (something is good) and to the category of *opposition*. For Guimarães, the transition between *quality* and *opposition* would be caused by a displacement of argumentative positions. Lima (1997) focused on the semantic-pragmatic changes which led to the constitution of the concessive meaning from the perspective of grammaticalization. Based on sparse and dated data, he proposed stages of evolution, where initially a transition from time expression to approval would have occurred; and, afterwards, out of the implication between the ideas of approval and concession (i.e., *I approve implies I do not oppose*), the contrastive meaning would have emerged. For the author, the concession begins to be conveyed at the pragmatic level, by conversational implication, and only later, at the semantic level.

In the present study, the investigation in texts from Old Portuguese yielded scarce data for the meaning of good fortune or cursing, of which (31) and (32) are representative. However, there is data in which *em boa hora* is linked to the expression of a positive evaluation of the state of affairs, such as (33). In these cases, *em boa hora* is often followed by a reason, which can be taken as the speaker's perspective superseding the common sense view.

- (31) (...) *viinham (...) corremdo todos e braadamdo:*
 - *Portugall! Portugall! por elRei dom Joham! em boa hora venha o nosso Rei!* (XV-1/CDJ)
 '(...) all came running and shouting:
 - Portugal! Portugal! For King John! **In good time** may our King come!'
- (32) (...) *e lhe catou o rosto e vio como era morto começou a dar vozes e fazer muy grande doo, ho mayor do mūdo, dizendo assi:*
 - *Ay, conde Sam Diaz, que ã maa hora me geerastes, ca nūca homẽ assi foy desterrado como eu agora!* (XIV-2/CGE)
 'and he grabbed his face, saw that he was dead and began to speak and express his sorrow, the greatest in the world, saying the following:
 - Oh, count Sam Diaz, **damned is the hour** when you conceived me, because never has a man been expelled like I am now!'
- (33) *A Rainha e o Comde rresponderam, que tornasse muito em boa hora, que ell averia desembargo como chegasse.* (XVI-1/CDJ)
 'The queen and the count answered that he should come quite **in good time**, because he would have no encumbrance when he arrived'

The data mapping of *embora* in the corpus of Middle to Modern Portuguese has evidenced a variety of uses, which possibly are involved in more than one path of change. The uses which

seem related to the emergence of the concessive meaning are displayed in **Table 3**.¹¹ The frequencies point towards important facts. The use of the adverb *embora* as an assent marker is always more frequent than that of success and prevails until the second half of the 18th century, a period in which the first concessive uses have been identified. The concessive conjunction has been documented from the 19th century on and its frequency is high in texts from the 20th/21st century. In the expression of concessivity, *embora* oscillates between the categories of adverb and conjunction.

	XVI		XVII		XVIII		XIX		XX/XXI	
	1a	2a	1a	2a	1a	2a	1a	2a	1a	2a
'success' adv.	10 37%	3 18%	3 10%	1 4%	4 16%	0	0	1 2%	0	0
assent adv.	17 63%	14 82%	26 90%	24 96%	21 84%	18 82%	3 10%	5 9%	0	0
concessive adv.	0	0	0	0	0	4 18%	6 20%	13 22%	31 15%	40 17%
concessive conj.	0	0	0	0	0	0	21 70%	39 67%	173 85%	202 83%
total	27 100%	17 100%	29 100%	25 100%	25 100%	22 100%	30 100%	58 100%	204 100%	242 100%

Table 3: Adverbial and conjunctive patterns of *em boa hora* ~ *embora* from a longitudinal perspective.

In the following I shall discuss the contexts in which *embora* expresses assent, the contexts which display double compatibility with assent and concession, and the contexts with a concessive value.

The data from (34)–(37) provides instances of *embora* in the role of assent marker. The contexts are marked by conflict situations, in which the acceptance expressed by *embora*, which can be paraphrased as *yes*, reinforces an unexpected or unwanted situation or fact.

¹¹ Among the uses of *em boa hora*~*embora* which are not featured in Table 3, are: a) departure adverb, used with movement verbs, such as in “(...) levou tudo o que tinha de feu, foi fe *embora*” [‘he took all he had, and went away’] (XVIII-1/SVP); b) masculine noun, always in plural, to express compliments, as in: “Aceite o Snr. Dr. Joaquim Manoel de Macedo, os *emboras* sinceros do seu mais insignificante admirador” [‘Mr. Dr. Joaquim Manoel de Macedo, please accept the sincere compliments of your most insignificant admirer’] (XIX-2/LV).

- (34) *E se o padecente é homem animoso, e não está desmaiado naquele passo (como acontece a alguns) responde-lhe com muita soberba e ousadia, que o mate muito **embora**, porque o mesmo tem ele feito a muitos seus parentes e amigos. (XVI-2/HSC)*
 ‘And if the suffering one is a brave man and has not fainted (as it happens), answer him with much pride and courage, that he should be killed **indeed**, because he has done the same to relatives and friends’
- (35) *Lançandoos do corpo de hũ endemoniado, rogãraõlhe, que os não mandasse para o inferno: & o Senhor lhes concedè, que ficassem **embora** nesse mundo. (XVII-2/MRM)*
 ‘Expelling them from the body of a possessed man, they begged that he should not command them to depart into hell: and the Lord granted them to remain **indeed** in this world’
- (36) (...) *o corpo morto de Xavier, morto, & sem vida, parte, & nam todo obedeceo com tal generofidade, & fineza, que fendo naquelle estado fo a metade de si mefmo, consentio que ate dessa a metade lhe cortassem hũa parte taõ principal; como se differa: Com tanto que a obediencia fique inteira, espedacefe **embora** o corpo, cortem quanto quizerem. (XVII-2/XDA)*
 ‘(...) the dead body of Xavier, in part and not as a whole, obeyed with such generosity and finesse that, while being in that state, only half of himself, he agreed that even of that half they cut a main part, as they said: As long as obedience remains whole, tear apart the body, **yes**, cut as much as you want’
- (37) *Taramella. Ay, deixe-me, não seja importuno, antes que lhe perca o respeito. Esfuz. Perde-o muito **embora**, que niffo pouco se perde. (XVIII-1/TCP)*
 ‘Taramella: Oh, leave me alone, don’t be inconvenient, before I lose respect.
 Esfuz: Lose it **regardless**, because little is lost thereby’

In (34), an excerpt of reported speech, the imprisoned warrior emphatically claims with pride and courage during the ritual in which he is to be killed that they should kill him, and justifies this with the argument that he has done the same to relatives and friends. A contiguous explanation is also found in (37), in direct speech. In this dialog, in view of the impending risk of losing respect, the individual does not oppose and qualifies it as being irrelevant: ‘let it be lost, it doesn’t matter, because little is lost’. In (36) the acceptance of an unlikely fact, ‘cutting body parts’, is presented, yet under the condition that obedience is kept (‘as long as obedience remains whole’). In (35), unique data is found: there is a lexical cue, the verb *conceder* (‘grant’). Here, as well, the conflict context is prominent, since it is explicitly granted that the evil spirit expelled from a body may remain in the world. In sum, these are contrastive contexts in which *embora* indicates little relevance or non-opposition.

In (38) and (39), below, *embora* is part of the concessive schema in correlative constructions which are similar to those discussed for *licet* and *bem*. In the complex construction, there is a recurrent move whereby the first member *p* presents emphatic acceptance (with *embora*) of an available content; and the second member *q*, headed by a contrastive connective, provides

the focal information. Again, the concessive reading emerges pragmatically from a particular combination between *p* and *q*. In **Table 3**, this data is computed as assent adverbs.

- (38) A. *Torno a dizer, que as letras não são mais que vinte e duas, e provo. O Ypsilon pertence ao I, o til ao M: logo não acrescenta duas letras: logo não são mais que vinte e duas.*
 A. *Se elle fora o L, como dizia, foubra que antes de si tinha huma destas letras, e a outra depois de si, I, K, L, M.*
 C. *Seja **embora**; mas para ser affirm, he necessario acrescentar ao I huma rasgadura, e ao M hum penacho. O penacho será para mim como vencedor; e a rasgadura para elle como roto, e vencido.*
 A. *As letras per me, são vinte e duas; per te, são vinte e quatro. (XVIII-1/VS)*
 ‘A. I say again that the letters are not more than twenty-two and I prove it. Upsilon belongs to I, tilde to M; therefore, they do not add two letters: those there are not more than twenty-two. If it were the el, as you said, you would know that before it was one of these letters and another one after it, I, K, L, M.
 C. **So be it**; but to be so, one must add a rip to the I and a crest to the M. The crest shall be to me like a winner, and the rip for it, as being torn and defeated.
 A. The letters are twenty-two for me; for you, there are twenty-four’
- (39) D.L. *Ladrao, velhaco, tu descendo por huma corda os altos muros de meu quintal? Pois com effa mesma corda te atarey de pés, e mãos, até que amanhaça, para entregarte à justiça. (...)*
 D.L. *Anda cá, ladrao, mostra cá os pulfos*
 Simic. *Naõ tenho febre.*
 D. L. *Anda, que atado has de ficar.*
 Simic. *Senhor, por sua vida, que me não ate; basta o enleyo, em que me vejo.*
 D.L. *Dize, a que vieste a este quintal?*
 Simic. *Ora Senhor, ate-me muito **embora**, mas não me aperte por isso.*
 D.L. *Por isso he que eu te aperto, has de confessar a que vieste. (XVIII-1/TCP)*
 ‘D.L. Old thief, are you descending from the high walls of my yard on a rope? So with the same rope I will bind your feet, and hands, until the morning dawns, to deliver you to court (...)
 D.L. Come on, thief, show your wrists
 Simic. I don’t have fever.
 D.L. Come on, because arrested you shall remain.
 Simic. Sir, for your sake, I ask that you don’t arrest me; the mess in which I find myself is enough.
 D.L. Say, why did you come to this yard?
 Simic. Well, Sir, arrest me **regardless**, but do not press me for this
 D.L. That is why I press you, you shall confess why you came’

The occurrence in (38), taken from Father Antonio Vieiras’s writings, is part of a dialog in which a dispute without final agreement takes place about the letters of the alphabet. At a given point, speaker C accepts the arguments of A, as an act of courtesy, then rejects them. (39) is taken

from a theater play; it presents a scene in which a conflict is installed when the character Simic trespasses DL's property using a rope and is caught. DL reacts and uses the same rope to arrest the trespasser, who resists and begs not be arrested. The utterance with concessive value is produced by Simic as a reply to DL's question about the reason for trespassing. Simic emphatically accepts the prospect of DL arresting him, which is surprising in view of the previous context, but is understandable considering the pressure to confess the reason of the crime. In other words, both situations are negative for Simic, but he assigns different statuses to them, 'better to be arrested than to confess'. At the end, in the last utterance, another contextual cue confirms the conflict scenario: the speaker uses a cleft sentence, a focal strategy which triggers contrast by exclusivity, and thereby highlights the centrality of the content of the second member (*Por isso he que eu te aperto*, 'That is why press you', in which *that* anaphorically retrieves the question about the motive of the crime).

Data such as (38) and (39), which is compatible with the concessive reading, features the following characteristics: *embora* is always in a post-verbal position and is frequently intensified by *muito*, which shows its adverbial character; the verb occurs in the subjunctive or imperative mode; *embora* in most cases is amalgamated, equaling a single morphological form. These characteristics suggest that the change in syntactic category occurs at a later point than the semantic change.

As a conjunction, *embora* expresses a factual concessive relation; in particular, the nuances of negated causality and restriction. The constructions may include articulation of clause segments such as (40), and non-clause segments, as in (41), a type of parenthesis which is prosodically independent from the nuclear clause. The concessive segment, whether a clause or not, has a variable position, meaning that it can be anteposed, interposed or postposed. The construction also displays variability in the tense-mode selection, yet the subjunctive tenses prevail. Cases such as (42), which retain traits of the adverbial source, as suggested by their non-initial position, have been computed as concessive adverbs.

- (40) *O seu soneto, infelizmente, nao pode ser publicado. Falta-lhe forma mais cuidada, **embora** nelle haja outras qualidades, como a do rythmo.* (XX-1/RA)
 'Your sonet unfortunately cannot be published. It lacks a more thorough form, **although** it has other qualities, such as that of rhythm'
- (41) *A safra de algodão, **embora** pequena, vai sendo de muita boa qualidade.* (XX-1/CP)
 'The cotton harvest, **despite** being small, is of great quality'
- (42) *Itaboraí desincumbiu-se da missão, tendo, **embora**, guardado segredo.* (XXI-1/HGB)
 'Itaboraí discharged himself of the mission, **although** he kept it a secret'

4.4. Discussion

The data has indicated a quite similar correlative structure for the three phenomena, which enables similar types of inference directed towards concession, based on an old argumentative schema between what is apparently *accepted* (out of irony, attenuation, kindness or credibility) and what is *endorsed*. In this structure, the *assent marker* is a decisive element in the construction of the concessive relation: thereby, the speaker approves and reinforces an argument which is available in the co-text or the universe of shared human knowledge, weakening this argument for the sake of another; the factuality required in concession is ensured; and incompatibility is created.

The histories of Latin and Portuguese show, with a distance in time spanning centuries, that different linguistic elements – *licet*, *bem*, *embora* – have been recruited for marking assent in the correlative structure, (re)activating an argumentative schema which dates back to classical rhetoric, in the figure of *concessio*. Thus, *licet*, *bem* and *embora* participated in the concessive schema and served as a systematic resource for this reasoning, promoting inferential enrichments based on the conceptual affinity between assent and concession.

Obviously, this is not exclusively a phenomenon of Romance languages; the emphatic assertion of truth, approving or agreeing to something, is acknowledged as being one of the cross-linguistic historical sources for concessive relations (König, 1988).¹² In any case, it is significant that this is a recurrent channel of change in Latin and in Portuguese. Furthermore, achieving some understanding of change phenomena which recurrently have expanded the concessivity system of one or more languages can enable the analysts to make predictions about future paths of change within this domain of meaning.

Rossari (2014, p. 22) concludes, from a diachronic perspective, that for *certes*, in French, no semantic change has occurred, since “their concessive use is not the result of an evolution in their meaning, but the result of their integration in one peculiar discourse configuration”. The case of the constructions examined here seems to be different. The data suggests that the use of assent markers in the correlative structure led to an initial change, the weakening of the assertive potential. Afterwards, as this usage was repeated, the concessive value, which previously depended on the particular arrangement of the parts *p* and *q*, is internalized as a conventionalized trait in those items themselves, which gradually take on other connection traits, such as, for instance, the increasing establishment of the position at the left margin, the widened scope over the relation between states of affairs and the instructional marking.

¹² Many references are provided about the historical transition from emphatic assertion to concession: Rivarola (1976), Anscombe (1980), Rodríguez Somolinos (1995), Detges & Waltereit (2009), Rossari (2014, 2015).

One last aspect to be highlighted refers to the main research question in historical semantics and pragmatics, which is the interpretation validity of linguistic data produced in other times, in genres which most likely have already changed. In fact, this is a challenge for historical sciences. The interpretations presented herein are the result of the analyst's work, being explicative hypotheses, which gain plausibility when one makes use of methodological resources such as: the identification of distributional traits which correlate to the different readings; the consideration of the text as the unit of analysis, given that the access to the full texts of the sample and not just to the excerpt obtained by a computer tool is essential to understand communicative purposes, argumentative positions and relations between the subjects. The data reinforces the importance of the interaction contexts in grasping cues of change and in the manifestation of concessive relations.

5. Final remarks

The described facts reinforce the importance of pragmatics in triggering and conducting changes towards more procedural and intersubjective meanings and allow for some approach to the notion of cyclicity, in the terms of Hansen (2018). The three paths depart from etymologically different sources, undergo similar inferential processes and renew the mechanisms of concession marking across different time ranges, in Latin and in Portuguese: *licet* emerges and declines in the Latin period; *bem que* emerges between Middle and Classical Portuguese and declines in Modern Portuguese; *embora* emerges in Modern Portuguese and nowadays is a connective for various concessive nuances. On the other hand, at the source lies a strongly pragmatical meaning, namely assent, and not one of content.

Additionally, the three paths feature specificities which go beyond the etymological and chronological differences. Even though the argumentative concession, favored by the correlative structure, is the concessive type which seems to be at the origin, expansions have occurred: *licet* expressed hypothetical concession before expressing factual concession; *bem que* specialized in restrictive concession; and *embora* serves to express various concessive nuances. The specificity of the concessive meaning along with modal choices (indicative and/or subjunctive) and the competition with *se bem que* could possibly help understand the regression of *bem que* and the maintenance of *embora*. *Bem que* was closely related to subjunctive and to restrictive concession, losing ground to *se bem que*, whereas *embora* is combined with both indicative and subjunctive mode and shows versatility in expressing concession.

The summary chart below lists etymologies, source and target meanings and the likely conventionalization period of the connectives.

item/ construction	etymology	source meaning	target meaning	language/period of conventional- ization
<i>licet</i>	modal verb	assent	hypothetical conc. > factual concession	Late Latin
<i>bem que</i>	positive evaluation adverb	assent	restrictive concession (nowadays an archaism)	Middle > Classical Portuguese
<i>embora</i>	adv. volitive phrase (< <i>em boa hora</i>)	assent	various con- cessive nuances	Modern Por- tuguese

Appendix

<p>13th century</p> <p>1201–1250: Notícia de Torto (13NT); Cantigas de amigo (13CA); Testamento de D. Afonso II (13TDA); Cantigas de amor (13CAM)</p> <p>1251–1300: Cantigas de Santa Maria (13CSM), Foro Real Afonso X (13FRA), Dos Costumes de Santarém (13DCS); Documentos Notariais (13DN), Tempos dos Preitos (13TP), Chancelaria D. Afonso III (13CDA)</p>
<p>14th century</p> <p>1301–1350: Arte de Trovar (14AT), Foros de Garvão (14FV), Dos Costumes de Santarém (14DCS), Vidas de Santos (14VS), Narrativa de livro de linhagens (14NL), Cantigas de amor (14CA), Textos Notariais in Clíticos da História do Português (14TN), Chancelaria de Dom Afonso (14CDA), Livro dos Mártires (14LMT), Trasladação de S. Nicolau (14TSN)</p> <p>1351–1400: Crónica Geral de Espanha (14CGE), Livro de Montaria (14LM), Corte Imperial (14CI), Alphonse X – Primeyra Partida (14PP), Flos Sanctorum (14FS)</p>
<p>15th century</p> <p>1401–1450: Horto do Esposo (15OE), Livro dos Ofícios (15LO), Demanda do Santo Graal (15DSG), Livro da Ensinança de bem Cavalgar Toda Sela (15LEC), Leal Conselheiro (15LC), Crónica de Dom Pedro I (15CDP), Penitencial de Martim Perez (15P), Livro do Regimento Évora (15LRE)</p> <p>1451–1500: Tratado de Confissom (15TC), Carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha (15CC), Sacramental (15S), Livro das Tres Vertudes (15LTV), Crônica del-Rei D. Diniz (15CDD), Crônica del-Rei D. Afonso Henriques (15CDA), Castelo Perigoso (15CP), Do Dia do Juízo (15DZ), História de mui nobre Vespasiano (15HNV); O Livro de Naturas (15LN)</p>
<p>16th century</p> <p>1501–1550: Regra de São Bento (16OSB); Documentos do Mosteiro de Chelas (16MC); Crônica del-Rei D. Afonso Henriques (16CAH); Regra e Estatutos da Ordem de Santiago (16OST); Ordenações da Índia (16OI); Cartas, D. João III (16CDJ); Teatro, António Ferreira (16TAF); Teatro, António Ribeiro Chiado (16TC); Livro das constituições e costumes que se guardam no Mosteiro de Santa Cruz (16LCC); Gramática, João de Barros (16GJB); Diálogo da Viciosa Vergonha (16DVV); Da Pintura antiga (16DPA)</p> <p>1551–1600: História da antiguidade da cidade de Évora (16HCE); Arte da guerra do mar novamente escrita por Fernando Oliveira (16AGM); Teatro, Francisco Sá de Miranda (16TSM); Peregrinação (16P); Teatro, Gil Vicente (16TGV); Comédia Ulysippo (16CO); Colóquios dos simples e drogas, he coufas medicinais da Índia (16CSD); Leys e provisões que elRey dom Sebaftiã noſſo ſenhor fez depois que começou à gouernar (16LP); Regra Geral, Gonçalo Fernandez Tranquoso (16RGF); Décadas (16D); História da Província de Santa Cruz (16HSC); Regras da Companhia de Iesv (16RCJ); Arte de Grammatica da lingua mais vfada na coſta do Brafil (16AGL)</p>

17th century

1601–1650: Trattados das Festas e Vidas dos Santos (17TFV); Livro I da vida de Frei Bartolameu dos Mártires da Ordem dos Pregadores (17VFB); Arte da lingua Brasílica (17ALB); Discursos vários políticos (17DP); Jornada dos Vassallos da Coroa de Portugal pera se recuperar a cidade do Salvador (17JVC); Advertências Espirituaes para mais agradar a Deos noffo Senhor (17AE); Da Monarchia Lusitana (17ML); Avto das Padeyras, chamado da Fome, ou do Centeo e Milho (17AP); Gazeta (17G); Chronica delrey Dom Joam I (17CRJ); Chronica da Companhia de Iesv nos Reynos de Portugal (17CCJ); Corte na Aldea, e noites de inverno (17CNA)

1651–1700: Cartas do Padre Antonio Vieira da Companhia de Jesus (17CPV); A Arte de Furtar (17AF); Relaçam diária do sitio, e Tomada da forte praça do Recife (17RDS); Compendio de muitos e variados remédios de cirurgia & outras coufas curiosas (17CR); Vida do venerável Padre Ioseph de Anchieta da Companhia de Iesv (17VVP); Diálogos de varia história, em que se referem as vidas dos senhores Reys de Portugal (17DVH); O Fidalgo aprendiz (17OFA); Nova Lusitânia, historia da guerra brasílica (17NL); Maria Rosa Mystica (17MRM), Palavra de Deos empenhada, e desempenhada (17PDE); Serman da quarta sefta feira da Quaresma (17SQ); Cartas, José Brochado (17CJB); Xavier dormindo Xavier acordado (17XDA)

18th century

1701–1750: Katecismo indico da lingua Kariris (18KI); Por rumos na agulha (18PRA); Cultvra e Oplência do Brazil por suas drogas, e minas (18COB); Apologia a favor de Padre Antonio Vieira (18APP); Auto novo e curioso forneira de Aljubarrota (18AN); Supplemento ao Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino (18SVP); Obras de Alexandre Gusmão (18OAG); Cartas de Aldeamento de índios (18CAI); História da América Portugueza (18HAP); Folhetos de ambas Lisboas (18FAL); Successo lamentavel da destruiçam do Porto e seus suburbios (18SDP); Desengano de allucinados (18DA); Theatro comico Portuguez (18TCP); Voz sagrada, politica, rhetorica e metrica (18VS)

1751–1800: Reflexões sobre a vaidade dos homens ou discursos moraes (18RSV); Obras de Claudio Manoel da Costa (18CMC); Collecçam dos principaes sermoens que pregou o P. Antonio Vieira (18CPS); Diálogo em que se trata do vício do jogo (18DVJ); Málaca conquistada pelo grande Affonso de Albuquerque (18MC); Dizertação a respeito da Capitania de São Paulo e sua decadencia (18DCS); Cartas, Pina Manique (18CPM); Nova Palestra, em que as senhoras da moda entretem as tarde do sermaõ (18NP); Tragédia do Marquez de Montua (18TMM); Cuidados para o aceio da boca (18CAB); Helminthologia portugueza (18HP); Systema ou collecção dos regimentos reaes (18SCR); Descrição da grandiosa quinta dos senhores de Bellas e noticia de seu melhoramento (18DGQ)

19th century

1801–1850: Cartas brasileiras: cultos (19CB); Os jardins ou a arte de aformosear as paisagens (19OJ); Ensaio sobre perigos das sepulturas dentro das cidades e nos seus contornos (19EPS); Sangue limpo (19SL); E o preços eram commodos – anúncios de jornais (19AJB); Perigos do ananismo (18PA); Cartas de leitores de jornais (19CL); Compêndio de arithmética (19CA); Cozinheiro imperial (19OCI); O cavalleiro teutonico (19CT); Lições de boa moral de virtude e de urbanidade (19LBM); Tratado descriptivo do Brazil (19TDB)

1851–1900: O Instituto dos meninos cegos de Paris (19IMC); História e descripção da febre amarella epidemica (19DFA); Zaira Americana (19ZA); Romances e novellas (19RN); Physiologia das paixões e affecções (19FPA); Luxo e vaidade (19LV); Notícias para a história e a geografia das nações ultramarinas (19NHG); Cozinheiro nacional (19OCN); Feira dos anexins (19FAX); Os Voluntários da Pátria (19VP); Novellas do Minho (19NM); Do principio e origem dos índios do Brazil (19POI); Cartas para Cícero Dantas Martins (19CCM)

20th/21st century

1901–1950: Brasil Marcial (20BM); Cartas sem moral nenhuma (20CSM); Correspondência passiva de Washington Luiz (20CWL); Dom João VI no Brasil (20DJ); A revelação dos perfumes (20ARP); Cartas Particulares (20CP); Arlequin revista de atualidades (20RA); Memória de um Sargento de Milícias (20MSM); A arte culinária da Bahia (20ACB); O Livro das Noivas (20LN); Compêndio narrativo do peregrino da América (20CNP); O café na história e no folclore e nas belas-arts (20OCH); História dos feitos recentemente praticados durante 8 anos no Brasil (20HFB); Portugal, o Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico (20PMA)

1951–2012: História das bandeiras paulistas (20HBP); Cangaceiros e fanáticos (20CF); Contos populares e lendas (20CPL); Abre a janela e deixa entrar o ar puro e o sol da manhã (20AJ); O cão siamês ou Alzira Power (20CS); O caso Morel (20OCM); Revista da Faculdade de Direito (20RFD); A vida como ela é (20AVE); Roteiro de filme, Memórias Póstumas (20FMP); História geral da civilização brasileira, o Brasil Monárquico (21HGB); Língua portuguesa falada na cidade de São Paulo (21LPF)

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Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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