

HSITORIOGRAFIA LINGUÍSTICA PORTUGUESA: O PROCESSO DE GRAMATICALIZAÇÃO DE LÍNGUAS EXTRA-EUROPEIAS (OCEANO ÍNDICO)

Maria do Céu Fonseca
University of Evora, Portugal

1. Introduction

When, in 1492, Antonio de Nebrija formulated the famous topic of linguistic expansionism “Siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio” [‘Language was ever the companion of empire’], which the Catholic kings so desired, the Portuguese Court of the time housed identical preoccupations, which in turn influenced a policy of the expansion and diffusion of Portuguese – a policy which, from the reign of Dom João II (1481-1495) onwards, was taken to Africa and to Asia, before arriving in America. In parallel with this precept of the Portuguese language, fed by the hegemony of Latin and by European pro-vernacularism, a second front existed in the overseas policy of Portugal: the learning of the languages of discovered lands, firstly in an attempt to apostolize the mother tongue, and later, after the psychological era of the Crusades had passed, as a valued activity *per se*, within the activities of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries.

In this way, a process of grammatical disciplining of non-European languages was begun. Beginning in the Portuguese Renaissance with lexicography-type approaches, the process was consolidated in the 17th century, a decisive moment in the elaboration of arts and grammars, of dictionaries and vocabularies of oriental and Amerindian languages, written in both Portuguese and Latin. As is widely-known, the first published results date from 1595, with José de Anchieta’s grammar of Tupi, *Arte de grammatica da lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil*, and a dictionary, the famous trilingual *Dictionarivm latino lvsitanicvm, ac iaponicvm*. But from then on, the flow of publications which linked the erudite and European languages with the ‘exotic’ languages shifted from East to West, which were historically, culturally and linguistically two completely different areas of Portuguese missionary activity. This differential can be evaluated in terms of the publishing panorama: grammars and dictionaries appeared in Japanese, Chinese, Annamese, Tamil, Konkani and Kannada, in the same century that Portuguese America merely brought forth Tupi and Kiriri. Leaving aside the linguistic missionising of Brazil, the purpose of this paper is to analyse aspects of a

grammar and lexicography within Luso-Oriental linguistic activity, with notes on the efforts of the Portuguese administration to divulge the languages of Japan and China.