

## Portuguese missionary linguistics: linguistic thought and grammatical theory in Luso-Oriental works of the seventeenth century

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**Resumo:** No que concerne à política de expansão e difusão do português, verifica-se, paralelamente ao ensino da língua portuguesa, a aprendizagem das línguas das terras recém-descobertas. Primeiro como modo de catequizar na língua mãe e mais tarde como actividade válida *per se*, no âmbito da acção missionária dos missionários Jesuítas e Franciscanos. Assim teve início o processo de teorização gramatical sobre línguas não europeias, que conheceu um momento decisivo de consolidação no século XVII, com gramáticas, dicionários e vocabulários escritos quer em português quer em latim.

**Palavras chave:** Linguística portuguesa missionária, teoria da gramática, pensamento linguístico do século XVII.

**Abstract:** The policy of the expansion and diffusion of Portuguese: in parallel with the precept of the Portuguese language, there was the learning of the languages of discovered lands. Firstly, it was an attempt to apostolise the mother tongue, and later, once gone the psychological era of the Crusades, it was a valued activity *per se*, within the scope of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries' activities. Thus begun a process of grammatical disciplining of non-European languages. Setting out in the Portuguese Renaissance with a lexicography-type approach, this process was consolidated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a decisive moment in the elaboration of arts and grammars, of dictionaries and vocabularies of Far East and Amerindian languages, written in both Portuguese and Latin.

**Key words:** portuguese missionary linguistics, grammatical theory, seventeenth century linguistic thought.

### Introduction

When, in 1492, Antonio de Nebrija formulated the famous topic of linguistic expansionism “Siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio,” [‘Language has always been the companion of the empire’], so desired by the Catholic kings, the Portuguese Royal Court of the time harboured identical preoccupations. This, in turn influenced a policy of the expansion and diffusion of Portuguese – a policy that, 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, it was an attempt to apostolise the mother tongue, and

later, once gone the psychological era of the Crusades, it was a valued activity *per se*, within the scope of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries' activities.

Thus begun a process of grammatical disciplining of non-European languages. Setting out in the Portuguese Renaissance with a lexicography-type approach, this process was consolidated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a decisive moment in the elaboration of arts and grammars, of dictionaries and vocabularies of Far East and Amerindian languages, written in both Portuguese and Latin. As is widely-known, José de Anchieta's grammar of Tupi, *Arte de grammatica da lingua mais usada na costa do Brasil*, and a dictionary, the famous trilingual *Dictionarivm latino Ivsitanicvm, ac iaponicvm*, are the first to be published in 1595. However, from then onwards, the flow of publications linking 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: in the same century grammars and dictionaries of Japanese, Chinese, Annamite, Tamil and Konkani, were published whilst Portuguese America merely brought forth Tupi and Kiriri<sup>1</sup>. 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.

### 1. Portuguese missionary linguistics

Various sources of 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese history have shown the beginning of a policy of exporting printed works intended to spread the Portuguese language in Africa and particularly in the East, which was one of the major concerns for king Dom Manuel I (1495-1521). Reading manuals (called *cartilhas*<sup>2</sup>) and Christian doctrine books (namely catechisms) were sent to the Congo and to Cochin right at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as part of a Colonial Empire building programme, inspired by the above mentioned Nebrija's theme. There was also a need—established by the preceptorate of the Portuguese Language—to learn Eastern languages, as a means to improve communication and hence teaching, along with that conventional policy of faith and Empire dissemination. On the subject of communication, it fell on the already Christianised and literate natives, as well as on

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<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that printing, which only arrived in Brazil in the 19th Century, was present in Portuguese India (Goa) from 1556 onwards. About three decades later, Jesuit missionaries took European printing to Macau, and in 1590 it moved on to Japan, where it was used in Amakusa and Nagasaki.

<sup>2</sup> *Cartilhas* (or *cartinhas*) were beginners' manuals for catholic reading and dogma. According to studies carried out by Fernando CASTELO-BRANCO (1988: 309-323), these pedagogically incipient works generally showed two essential parts, the first being an introduction to reading and the second for religious indoctrination. These manuals, which were designed to teach the alphabet, show how close school teaching materials and Christian doctrine were.

foreign languages experts, the task of *tongues* or interpreters<sup>3</sup> when mediating the first contact. The need for interpreters coupled with news from the missionaries, regarding the powerful means of evangelisation through the languages of the discovered lands led Portuguese educational policy towards a grammatical description of the Asian Languages, as being ‘copious and abundant in vocabulary’<sup>4</sup>. In the area of Iberian missionisation, this process of grammatisation of non-European languages progressed simultaneously with the first description of the two vernaculars of the peninsular (Castilian and Portuguese). In neighbouring Spain, the publication of Nebrija’s grammar and the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 catalysed the onward march of linguistic coding in the new American world. As for Portugal, the writers of the two first Portuguese language grammars, published in 1536<sup>5</sup> and in 1540<sup>6</sup>, respectively, were the first to apportion lexicographical inclusions to the Oriental linguistic group.

The following chronology of historiographical cycles may be established from a diachronic perspective:

1. The first approaches to lexicography, contemporaneous to narratives and travel accounts<sup>7</sup>, which from early 16<sup>th</sup> century fed Western imagination for the mystery of Sinic scripts were introduced by Renaissance grammars.

2. Simultaneously, grammatical descriptions of the languages of India and China bore witness to the linguistic activity of the first missionaries. Pedagogical tools such as catechisms and *cartilhas*, such as the *Cartilha em Tamul e Português* (Lisbon, 1554), written by three Malabar are typical of this period. This *cartilha* is a good example of the methodological strategy used in these didactic manuals: besides the bilingualism – in this case, Tamil and Portuguese – allowing bilateral linguistic learning, the speech is presented as a questionnaire between master and disciple, aiming at an audience not yet initiated in the precepts of Christian morality.

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<sup>3</sup> In India, these were called *topazes* (from Dravidian *tuppasi*) and in the Far East, they were *jurubaças* (from the Malayan *jurubahasa*: *juru* “expert, master” and *bahasa* “tongue”). These were responsible for contacts with foreigners.

<sup>4</sup> The following is an extract from a letter by Father Lourenço de Mexia, written in Macau in 1584 about Japanese language: “A lingua he a mais graue, & copiosa θ) creio ha, porθ) em muitas cousas excede a grega, & latina, tẽ infinidade de vocabulos, & modos pera declarar a mesma cousa, & tẽ tãto que fazer em se aprẽder, θ) não somente os nossos θ) ha mais de vinte annos que la andam, mas os naturaes aprendem cousas nouas” (Garcia 1997: II, 123v). [The language is the solemnest and most copious that I believe there is, for in many things it exceeds Greek and Latin. It has infinite words and ways to say the same thing, and it is so hard to learn, that not only our fellows, who have been there for more than twenty years, but also the natives learn new things].

<sup>5</sup> Fernão DE OLIVEIRA, *Gramática da linguagem portuguesa*.

<sup>6</sup> João DE BARROS, *Gramática da lingua portuguesa*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., for example, *The Summa Oriental of Tomé Pires* an account of the Far-East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515 (translated from the Portuguese MS in the Bibliothèque de la Chambre des Députés, Paris, and edited by Armando CORTESÃO, 2 vols., London, Hakluyt Society); *Tratado das cousas da China* (Évora, 1569-70), by the Dominican Frei GASPAR DA CRUZ (translated and annotated by Charles R. BOXER, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, London, Hakluyt Society, 1953).

3. Lastly, the 17th century witnessed the turning point in missionary linguistic production in the Portuguese Far East. Besides Konkani, Japanese seized the attention of Jesuits until the end of the Philippine Dynasty (1640), when Japan shut off its contact with Portugal (it is worth noting that all the Luso-Nipponese works published in the archipelago date from early 17<sup>th</sup> century). Starting in the second half of the century a similar interest was shown for Annamite. This coincides with the establishment of the Jesuits in Cochin China once commercial contacts were initiated. Was it not for the good auspices of two great institutions: the Church of Rome and the Portuguese Crown (Matos 2004: 157) and this increase in linguistic activity would have not eventuated.

It must be noted that learning Eastern languages was the subject of a deliberation by decree issued by the five “Provincial Councils of Goa”, which were held between 1567 and 1606. These ecclesiastical courts comprised high-ranking representatives of the Franciscan Order and the Company of Jesus. From the first to the last of these Councils came recommendations ‘for the clergy to learn the languages of the lands where they preach’, ‘that they translate compendia of Christian doctrine in the language of the land’, and ‘that they write teaching books’ (Rivara 1862: 10 e ss.). The ecclesiastical power has a steady preoccupation to push in a short period for vernacular teaching. The same policy had been carried out by civil authorities. The political powerbase of Portugal, while united with the Castilian crown between 1580 and 1640 was supportive of a movement to promote Asian languages. Although the interests of the two neighbouring kingdoms did not always coincide, it is worth noting that Portugal’s attention concentrated its major attention on the Far East whilst Spanish interests centred on Latin America. Whether for reasons of political diplomacy or convenience of interests, the Portuguese administration determination to disseminate these languages is clear, from a number of documents dated from the time of dynastic union. During the reign of Spanish monarch Phillip III (1598-1621), examples of this protectionist attitude can be found in correspondence exchanged between Lisbon and the State of India. Letters signed by the King compelled church ministers to know local languages. As recorded in the following letter from King Phillip III (dated 1620), relating to two provinces in Portuguese India:

Pelo muito que convem ao serviço de Deus e meu que se cumpra inteiramente a ordem que tenho dado para que os ministros das christandades de Salcete e Bardês saibão a lingoa ordeno ao arcebispo dessa cidade que nas visitas que fizer se informe disto particularmente e que achando que a não sabem alguns dos providos daquellas igrejas vos dê conta disso para proverdes outros em seu lugar (Rego 1974: VI, 328).

[For what is deemed as convenient for the service of God and myself, let this order of mine be totally accomplished, so that the ministers of the Christian ministries of Salsete and Bardez

shall know the tongues of those places; I order the archbishop of Bardez that while on his rounds he should especially inform himself about this issue, and that were he to find among the servants of those churches any who does not know these tongues, he should inform you of this so that you may proceed to replace them with who do]

The replies, signed by governors of India, clearly show the repercussions of these Royal orders:

[...] *procurarey que se cumpra o que Vossa Magestade tem mandado, (...) proceder no provimento das igrejas conforme a ordem que Vossa Magestade sobre isso tem dado, em caso que os religiosos que as tem a cargo não saibão dentro em tres annos a lingoa da terra (...). De Goa a 10 de Janeiro de 1621. Fernão d'Albuquerque (Rego 1975: VII, 178).*

[I will endeavour to have your Majesty's order fulfilled (...) to provision the churches according to your majesty's orders, in the case those clergymen who are in charge have not learned the native tongue within three years (...). From Goa, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1621. Fernão de Albuquerque]

## **2. Luso-oriental lexicography from the 17<sup>th</sup> century**

The combined analysis of the lexicographical works included in the **Appendix**, allows the following generic remarks to be made:

a) To begin with, works by Portuguese Franciscans are rare. The whereabouts of the few known and never published manuscripts<sup>8</sup> are unknown. In what regards Jesuit missionaries' work it is a different scenario altogether, not so much because of the fate of those works, many of which have also been lost, particularly Luso-Sinic and Japanese dictionaries, but because even despite these losses, the number of surviving works is more significant.

b) The second generic aspect from the selection of lexicographical works reveals that in most cases, the classical language is excluded from the interlinguistic mix. This is a mark of originality and also marginality, not only because of Latin's hegemony – the international language of culture –, but also in the context of other didactic works – catechisms and grammars – which, given the linguistic training of missionary staff in local languages (Zimmermann 2004: 13), turned to the classical language as a way of activating their use by Europeans, knowledgeable of old arts.

It is known that the majority of missionary linguistic production (by Jesuits and other religious orders) was characterised by its contrastive features regarding Latin, no matter what language was studied. In the current case, apart from the tri-lingual

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth remembering that the press in Goa, Macau and Japan was always submitted to the Jesuits. On the other hand, Franciscans and Dominican missionaries who had begun moving into Japan at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century were mainly Spaniards.

dictionary of Annamite-Portuguese-Latin (Alexandre de Rhodes 1651) and the *Vocabularium Benedicti Pereyra conversum in linguam concanicam* (Miguel Almeida, MS)<sup>9</sup>, both compiled using Latin, all other works compare Portuguese with the native languages (Japanese, Chinese, Annamite, Konkani and Tamil), as if to bestow equal value on the Romantic and Non-European languages. Given the context of a learned Christian Europe such is surprising from a cultural perspective. It also has linguistic implications in the structure of the dictionaries' items: with Latin absent, the definitions (as a lexicographical operation), both in Portuguese and in the native language tended to be more paraphrastic than those dictionaries where Latin was also used as a translation language.

For a more in-depth, although necessarily brief analysis let us look at the first Vocabulary published in the 17th Century: *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam com a declaração em portuguez, feito por alguns Padres, e Irmãos da Companhia de IESV* (Nasagaqui, 1603). Toru Maruyama (2004: 145) has already shown this to be a classic work of Japanese history and culture. From a lexicographical point of view, one could add that it is of no lesser importance in linguistic terms. A preoccupation with procedural rigour is shown on some of the reflections in the preface texts about the chosen lexicographical strategy. This shall only be seen again in other dictionaries during the second half of the century. They record orthographical rules; phonetic guidelines regarding the prosodic quantity of some syllables; information about the register of dialectal variations (Kami and Shimo dialects), registry levels of language (common language) and stylistic variations (poetic register). Considering all these facts, the *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* reminds us of the European tradition of *Thesauri*, whose exhaustive nature is seen in the network of synonyms, in often paraphrastic definitions, in phraseology as well as in the above mentioned information regarding levels of language register and stylistic and metaphorical variations. That being said, because translation equivalents do not always exist, given the widely differing cultural worlds of the languages in question, abundant contextualization in Portuguese enables the semantics of the Japanese vocabulary to be successfully rendered, thus compensating for the inevitable loss of information, which always occurs in interlinguistic confrontation.

While on the subject of Portuguese-Japanese dictionaries, there are rumours of a manuscript called *Vocabulario portuguez japonico*, by Father Manuel Barreto, who referred to the work in the prologue of another manuscript<sup>10</sup>. Nothing can be said about this volume, however, since its whereabouts are unknown, and the same can be said of the Luso-Sinic dictionaries by Fathers Gaspar Ferreira and Álvaro Semedo. The manuscripts by these two Portuguese missionaries did not fare as well as the *Dicionário Português-Chinês* by the Italians Ruggieri and Ricci. The latter,

<sup>9</sup> As the title suggests, its lexicographical model was the work *Prosodia in vocabularium trilingve latinum, Ivisitanicum, et hispanicum digesta* (Évora, 1634), by the 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese Jesuit, Father BENTO PEREIRA.

<sup>10</sup> Manuel BARRETO (1564-1620) mentions this Japanese Vocabulary in the prologue of another manuscript, *Vocabularium Lusitano Latinum*.

recently published, is considered as the first bilingual European-Chinese dictionary. As for Gaspar Ferreira and Álvaro Semedo's dictionaries, while their authorship has been proven in bibliographical records<sup>11</sup>, the manuscripts themselves, which supposedly belong to the Peking library, have not been found.

Besides Chinese and Japanese, another linguistic barrier that had to be overcome, was that of the Annamite language of the Dai-Viet kingdom, which begins to appear in Portuguese sources mainly from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on. The *Dictionarium annamiticum lusitanum et latinum* (Roma, 1651), published under the authorship of the French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes, was, according to the information in the preamble, elaborated "Ad lectorem", by Fathers António Barbosa and Gaspar do Amaral, responsible for the Annamite and Portuguese segments, respectively. This dictionary is preceded by a brief, school-type grammatical manual, which lays out the normative metalanguage of morphological classification. Besides a phonetic component, there are seven classes of Annamite words, defined according to criteria of formal variation: on one side, the paradigms of nouns, pronouns and verbs; on the other, the group of "orationis partibus indeclinabilibus", with prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions and interjections. This grammatical excursion ends with some "Praeceta quaedam ad syntaxim pertinentia", thus making it a good example of syntax conceived as an extension of morphology. Another peculiarity of this dictionary is the extensive "Index latini sermonis", which appears as an appendix to the lexicographical text. It is a Latin lexical *corpus*, which, having page numbers for the relevant occurrences in the dictionary may be considered a Latin-Annamite version, where Latin is no longer the language of translation, but attains the status of source language. The dictionary, which could thus be used through its Latin entries alphabetised in the index, began to be actively used by European missionaries. From the perspective of lexicographical practice, common bilingual dictionary strategies are used: there is copious contextualization of the vocabulary entries, with respective Portuguese and Latin translations, or with explanatory semantic definitions of concepts unfamiliar to the Western world.

In missionary lexicography, then, the culturally-explicable lack of translation equivalents was solved either using a variety of definition types which allowed the bridging of lexical gaps resulting from a lack of isomorphism between the lexis of the languages, or, when this was not possible, gaps were simply left empty next to the entries. This occurs in the *Dicionário Português-Chinês* by Ruggieri and Ricci, and in various dictionaries of Konkani attributed to Portuguese missionaries. For instance, in the *Vocabulário da língoa da terra* [Konkani], compiled by Father Diogo Ribeiro in 1626, the following series of entries were left untranslated in Konkani: "Vua pendurada", "Vua passada", "Vua moscatel", "Vua ferral", "Vua branca." This lexical corpus relating to diverse species of a fruit (grapes) belonging

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<sup>11</sup> Such as Samuel COULING'S *The Encyclopaedia sinica* (1917); Diogo BARBOSA MACHADO, *Bibliotheca lusitana* (1741-1759).

to a wine-producing country like Portugal, was not easily translatable given the limitations of the referential world. From the many dictionary manuscripts in the Goan vernacular, the Vocabulary by Diogo Ribeiro is one of the most often cited and the one that has the highest number of manuscript copies, many of which anonymous and even having different titles, which complicates their identification. They may be found in Goan and Portuguese libraries and have yet to be fully studied. This Vocabulary allowed access to the lexicon of the two languages, containing as it does a first part in Portuguese-Konkani and a second in Konkani-Portuguese, with their obvious different lexicographical characteristics. This might explain the great diffusion of manuscript copies. The Konkani-Portuguese version has a larger number of entries, almost encyclopaedic, to portray new realities to the European.

Before we conclude, a final and brief allusion to an anonymous manuscript kept in the National Library of Lisbon, the *Vocabulario da lingua canarim* (Portuguese-Konkani)<sup>12</sup>, whose structure clearly shows the didacticism of missionary linguistic works. The Vocabulary, with over 1000 entries, occupies 224 pages. It is followed by two annexes: the first being a small catechism written in Konkani, in the form of a dialogue between Master (*Guru*) and Disciple (*Sissu*). Through an attractive question/answer method (an accepted teaching method since the middle Ages), the Master proffers a series of lessons on Christian duties for those who have not been initiated in the Christian doctrine. This catechism, annexed as it is to a Vocabulary, is proof that grammatical description was constantly altered by catechistic intentions. On the other hand, it clearly shows how subordinate religious teaching was concerning language normatisation. The anonymous author of this Vocabulary, deploring the lack of “an original written by a good master of the Konkani script” (fl. 224), also provides a second annex, entitled “Aos que querẽ leer por este caderno” [‘To those who care to read from this book’], which contains reflections of a phonological nature and reading instructions for Konkani characters. These observations demonstrate great interest in the ingenious system of transcription to Romance script, which the catholic missionaries employed when adapting to phonologically different structures.

### 3. Luso-oriental grammars from the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Available documentation only highlights the work of two Jesuits: João Rodrigues and Tomás Estêvão, the only grammar authors who managed to see published their Grammars of Japanese and Konkani, respectively. As far as it is known, Konkani was the first vernacular language of India to have a Grammar printed in the 17th century in the actual dialect of Goa, and a later work in a Northern dialect influenced by Marathi, which would only be published two

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<sup>12</sup> The Kannada language at the time was not the language of the state of Kanara, which has a Dravidian language, but Konkani the Goan vernacular.



centuries later<sup>13</sup>. While in Goa printing had existed from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the grammatical heritage of Konkani, which was even richer than that of Japanese, was mostly handwritten, generally by the Franciscans, as is also the case with lexicography.

Editorial production in Japanese seems to have trodden a more fortuitous path, with the two famous Grammars of Father João Rodrigues among an editorial heritage, which began in the final years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and extended for three centuries until its death knell was sounded by the expulsion of Jesuits and Christians from the Japanese archipelago. The merit always attributed to the first Grammar of João Rodrigues is due to the originality of the publication when compared to other grammatical manuals of Japanese, which probably served as its information source. This is certainly the case with the work *De institutione grammatica libri tres. Coniugationibus accessit interpretatio Iapponica* (Amacusa, 1594), known as the Japanese edition of the Latin Grammar of Father Manuel Álvares, although the Japanese translation is limited to the system of verb conjugation. The exclusivity of this Latin Grammar by the Jesuit from Madeira Island was due to its being the only book officially adopted in the Company of Jesus' schools, both within and beyond Europe. This explains its broader version with a Japanese declaration by various Amakusa College clergymen. This seems to betray the want to allow the reader access in a single work to the rules of Latin grammar and the basics of Japanese grammar, in this case "De verborvm coniugatione" (Álvares 1594: 12v). Later, making use of declinations, prosodic and syntactical material, Jesuit missionaries adapted their colleague's work, but not without introducing a number of original simplifications. Such simplification was not in any way unusual. All the missionary Grammars are, primarily, didactic Grammars with a few elements of a normative or preceptive nature, but lacking speculative theorising, which are understandable given their immediate pedagogical objectives. Regarding these objectives, the most effective would appear to be easy-to-use schematic alphabetisation tables, using mnemonics. Therefore, with regard to verbal flexion, almost a hundred pages of this so-called Japanese Grammar are entirely taken up with Latin, Portuguese and Japanese verb conjugations, presented in a succession of synoptic tables, providing a global reading. This methodological structuring, where schematisation allows for theoretical simplification, was not undertaken by chance. It rather corresponds to a tendency seen in other grammatical compendia, which are also marked by a strong practical component.

With regard to this aspect, it is significant that Father João Rodrigues, sent to press the careful synopsis *Arte breve* (Macau, 1620), with fewer than half the number of pages, conceived as a purely didactic work sixteen years after publishing *Arte grande* (Nagasaki, 1604). The writer pays lengthy service to the strategy of

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<sup>13</sup> These two Grammars, both in Roman script, were recommended in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the study of the Konkani language, along with the study of Portuguese.

educational practice in the starting chapters of the first book of *Arte breve*, with in-depth recommendations on the correct choosing of teaching staff, teaching materials and learning methodologies, all-important aspects in the didactics of language.

Other original aspects must be highlighted. It is well known that the grammatical description of European vernaculars in the Latin mould became a universal model, able to cover all linguistic phenomena, even those foreign to the classical paradigm. It is therefore easy to understand the subordinateness of Portuguese missionary linguistics to the Latin model, although this did not preclude a methodologically contrastive perspective. This is clearly seen in João Rodrigues, whose grammatical description, deriving from the classical model, synthesises elements of two different grammatical traditions: the Japanese, documented in rich literary tradition and the Greco-Latin legacy. This explains the work structure, in terms of organisation of fields of study, which follows a plan specifically adjusted to the characteristics of the language being described, a sign of linguistic realism in the face of the grammatical facts observed. A handful of these grammatical aspects will now be briefly analysed.

The conception of grammatical compendia, in the tradition of European grammar, is based on the traditional division of subjects into three parts, conceived according to the units described: on one hand, sounds, letters and syllables; on the other, words and groups of words, dealt with in terms of morphology and syntax. This western tradition is clearly visible in Tomás Estêvão and the anonymous writer of the Konkani Grammar. They organised their grammatical items into sections on orthography (prosody), etymology (morphology) and syntax. João Rodrigues followed a different path, with *Arte breve* being made up of three books, which do not coincide with the traditional grammatical parts. The first book is an introduction to the study of Nipponese grammar: besides information on orthography and prosody, the book includes the complex system of verb conjugation and the treatment of non-declined nouns. The description of the third book is of a stylistic nature, made up of morphological and syntactic rules, with a view to their normative application in epistolary art and in writing in general. Finally, the second book, which is the most synthetic of the three, is also the most clearly attributable to Latin grammar, although it maintains a contrastive vision. The whole morphological description, which is the subject of the book, is based on an acute perception of “difference”. The classical model is not used here for grammatical comparison, but rather as a reference point for similarities and differences. For instance, with regard to the so-called “parts of speech”, one of the essential points of the grammatical building, the author places side by side the classical Greco-Latin system and the three classes of words inherited from the Japanese treaties on poetic art: *noun* (“na”), *verb* (“kotoba”) and *particle* (“tenifa”). The presentation of a “postpositional” class in the *Arte breve* is another sign of grammatical realism João Rodrigues now defines a “postposition” in its relation to a preceding noun, referring to the same syntactic criterion used to justify the use of a preposition in Latin grammar. The same applies

to the Konkani Grammar. Although the linguistic analysis states, “there is nothing but postpositions in this tongue” (Estêvão 1640: 73r), an aprioristic conception of grammar leads Tomás Estêvão to classify the items as “prepositions”, against the evidence of their postpositional use.

In conclusion, a brief note on syntactic material. In *Arte breve*, the section relating to syntax, which is still included in the second book, is configured according to the Latin Grammar model of Father Manuel Álvares. “Precepts” or compositional norms are presented, followed by “appendixes” which specify the general rule being expounded. The generic character of these rules and the succinct way in which they are treated suggest a deliberate intention of grammatical text simplification, justified by the author in terms of its further development in *Arte grande*. As in Manuel Álvares’, on one hand, syntax is divided into “transitive and intransitive,” and on the other “just, & figured,” where the classic “figurae constructionis” are dealt with. The most distinctive aspect of this work when compared to the other missionary Grammars, including those of the Amerindian languages is the inclusion of grammar and rhetoric on an equal footing within syntax. The humanistic vision of the *eloquentia perfecta*, that João Rodrigues considered essential for its construction was not adopted in the oral languages of the Americas, since they lacked the weight of literary authorities and models, which were beneficial to the Japanese grammarians.

### Concluding remarks

The aim of spreading the Portuguese language throughout the Far East territories, which is sometimes presented as a simile for the expansion of the imperial language of Rome, was part and parcel of a programme common to the expectations of the Nebrija era. The three objectives set by the Castilian grammarian, as well as by the Portuguese Renaissance authors Fernão de Oliveira and João de Barros, in their founding works on the normatisation of the Peninsular vernaculars, were making Latin easy to learn, codifying the language and then using it to build the empire. However, when comparing this Renaissance linguistic ideal with the proclamations of 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese grammarians half a century later, there is certainly a difference in attitude and critical orientation. The historiographical demarcation line is highlighted by the conception that “exotic” languages could achieve the *status* of a grammatical language, a sign of originality as well as of marginality in the grammatisation of European vernacular. Once cultivated, the languages could become a vehicle for any content. Instead of their destruction, through the militancy of Portuguese, one can notice an equal defence of the grammatical pedagogy of the Portuguese vernacular and the languages of the discovered lands. This would be achieved through an alleged comparative study, with Portuguese and Latin as its languages of confrontation. In this manner, “reducing the barbarian tongues to a grammatical method” was a linguistic way of

life for the writers of that century, especially the Jesuits, in their production of a grammaticography and lexicography of non-European languages.

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#### APPENDIX

##### Luso-oriental lexicography from the 17<sup>th</sup> century

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