

Translational Processes in two Works of the Arda (1658) and the Mina (1741) Languages

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The first known catechism of the Arda language with the title *Doctrina Christiana, y explicacion de sus misterios, en nuestro idioma Español, y en lengua Arda* [Christian Doctrine, and explanation of its mysteries, in our Spanish language, and in the Arda language], was published in Spain, in 1658, by the Capuchin Order, intended for the Mission of 1659. This mission was authorized by King Filipe IV of Spain, who even eighteen years after the Portuguese secession (1640) had declared himself Portuguese King. In their 1929 work, Labouret and Rivet identified the Arda Language with the Gen, Popo or Mina languages. While the catechism is a collective work, the compilation was organized by José de Nájera, with the collaboration of Bans (emissary of the Ardan King Tojonu) who was later baptized with the name Felipe Zapata.

There are also two manuscript vocabularies written by António da Costa Peixoto, a layman from the north of Portugal, describing what he calls the general language of Mina. The first manuscript is entitled *Alguns apontamentos da lingoa Minna com as palavras portuguezas correspondentes* [Some notes on the Mina Language, with the corresponding Portuguese words], dated from 1731. The second one was written ten years later, in 1741, in Minas Gerais, Brazil, locality of S. Bartolomeu, near Vila Rica (nowadays Ouro Preto), with the title *Obra nova da Lingoa g[er]^{al} de mina, traduzida, ao nosso Igdioma por Antonio da Costa Peixoto, Naciognal do R[ei]n.º de Portugal, da Provincia de Entre Douro e Minho, do comcelho de Filg[uei]r.^{as}* [New works of the general language of Mina, translated to our language by António da Costa Peixoto, a native of the Portuguese kingdom, from the Entre Douro e Minho Province, municipality of Felgueiras]. Having been published partially by Luís Silveira in 1944, this second manuscript is the development of the first one and it will be the object of my analysis.

Arda and Mina are tonal languages of the cluster of the Gbe languages, part of the Kwa Languages family of the Niger-Congo Languages A group (non-Bantu Languages). While these works have two different intentions and purposes, their authors appear to have had similar translation problems: How to transfer European, Christian and Catholic concepts to these African languages, with their own specificities?

Thus, in this paper I intend to analyze the solutions found in these two descriptions of African languages originating from the Benin Coast, in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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