

Universidade de São Paulo - Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas
Programa de Pós-graduação em Filologia e Língua Portuguesa

LINGUÍSTICA HISTÓRICA DO PORTUGUÊS

Disciplina de Pós-graduação

Apontamentos

Tema II

A Língua Portuguesa em textos fundamentais
do século XVIII e da transição para o XIX

PONTO 2.2 –

A questão da gênese e o advento do método histórico-comparado (*introdução*)

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2.2 A questão da gênese e o advento do método histórico-comparado (*introdução*)

यदिह तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न तत् क्वचित् ।
yadiha tadanyatra yannēhāsti na tat kvacit .

“o que se vê aqui pode estar noutra parte; o que não se vê aqui não está em lugar algum”.

2.1 Algumas obras importantes no início dos anos 1800

1786: JONES, William. “On the *hidus*”. The 3rd Anniversary discourse of the Asiatick Society. Londres, 2.02.1786. In Lehmann, Winfred P.: A Reader in Nineteenth Century Historical Indo-European Linguistics, 1967.

< <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/read01.html> >

1808: SCHLEGEL, Friedrich. “Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Altertumskunde)”. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1977. *On the Indian Language*. Tradução de Ellen J. Millington. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1977.

< <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/read02.html> >

1818: RASK, Rasmus. “Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse” (Copenhagen, 1818), in Rasmus Rask, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen*, ed. by Louis Hjelmslev, Vol. I (Kopenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1932).

< <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/read03.html> >

1820: BOPP, Franz. “Analytical Comparison of the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Teutonic Languages”. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1989.

2.2 Comentários

W.P. Lehmann, *A Reader in Nineteenth Century Historical Indo-European Linguistics* (1967):

Sobre William Jones:

“Sir William Jones's celebrated discourse is given here in full to illustrate the context from which linguistics developed in the nineteenth century. With his contemporaries, Jones was interested in better knowledge of ancient history. In the pursuit of this knowledge, language was only one means. The commemorative address of his successor as president of the Asiatick Society, Sir John Shore, states explicitly that for Jones language was a tool, not an end in itself: 'But the judgement of Sir William Jones was too discerning to consider language in any other light than as the key of science, and he would have despised the reputation of a mere linguist. Knowledge and truth, were the object of all his studies, and his ambition was to be useful to mankind; with these views, he extended his researches to all languages, nations, and times'. A glance at the other annual discourses supports this statement on Jones's wide interests and the subsidiary position of linguists, which it maintained to the middle of the nineteenth century.” Lehmann, 1967..

Sobre Schlegel:

“Like Jones's Discourse, Friedrich von Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* prepares for the important early works in nineteenth-century linguistics. Schlegel's aim too is to encourage general study of antiquity, not only of language; the section on language makes up only approximately a fourth of his book, which goes on to deal with other “media of satisfying our curiosity concerning . . . the early age” of mankind. Schlegel's book was important for arousing interest in Sanskrit, especially in Germany; it also makes the first mention of aims that were to be central to linguistics, notably “comparative grammar”. Because its prime importance is its encouragement to others, only excerpts are given here, though the entire book is delightful to read. I have included one paragraph of citations comparing the vocabulary of Sanskrit and German; it may illustrate the advances made over Schlegel by his successors. And his lists of grammatical criteria for establishing relationships illustrate the enthusiasm of a popularizer rather than the care of a scholar. From the selections translated, students may learn to know the contributions of Schlegel's work as well as its shortcomings.

With his successors, Schlegel is interested in finding a common source for the languages which after Jones were held to be related. In interpreting the early conception of “source” or “derived from” we must be careful to avoid our own

definitions, which are based largely on the work of subsequent linguists. In his excellent introduction to the centenary edition of Rask, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen XIII-LXIII*, Holger Pedersen discusses sympathetically the use of these notions at the beginning of the nineteenth century for determining the relationship of languages. Schlegel indeed speaks of a family-tree, but derives the European languages from Sanskrit on the basis of its greater antiquity, not by positing intermediate stages. Accordingly, the relationship he suggests between German and Sanskrit should not be equated with our deriving German from Proto-Indo-European.

Schlegel's emphasis on grammar in determining relationships merits great credit. His demand for precise agreement of vocabulary items may be understood when we compare the fanciful etymologies of his predecessors; insistence on rigor was essential to stop further such fabrications. Yet while he asks for complete agreement in determining cognates, Schlegel permits the use of forms which differ, though he has not yet hit upon the concept of determining "rules" for such differences; his citing of an "analogy" between Latin *p* and Germanic *f*, Latin *c* and Germanic *h*, is a step on the way to the more comprehensive sets of rules given by Rask and Grimm.

Schlegel also is applauded for introducing the term "comparative grammar" into linguistics. In basing this term on comparative anatomy and incorporating the notion of family trees for languages, he drew on biology for linguistic methodology, foreshadowing Schleicher and his reliance on Darwinism. These adoptions of methodology and the attention he drew to Sanskrit are the most important contributions of his book."

Sobre Rask

"Perhaps the most brilliant of the early linguists, Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) made his primary contribution in accordance with a topic proposed for a prize by the Danish Academy of Sciences in 1811. The topic directed the structure of his monograph, and according to Pedersen led to some of its shortcomings. It requested competitors to "examine with historical criticism and indicate with appropriate examples the source from which the old Scandinavian language is to be derived most securely; also to indicate the character of the language and the relationship in which it stood from the oldest periods and during the Middle Ages on the one hand to the Nordic, on the other to the Germanic dialects; also to determine precise principles which must be followed in any statement of the origin and comparison of these languages."

After discussing general principles, Rask surveyed the evidence with regard to neighboring languages: Greenlandic Eskimo, Celtic, Basque, Finnish, Slavic, Lettish, Thracian and the Asiatic languages. His survey of the relationship with Thracian (a term he adopted from Adelung to refer to the ancestor of Greek and Latin, hence one which we might equate with Indo-European) makes up approximately half of his monograph and contains the well-known statement relating Icelandic obstruents to those of Greek and Latin. Grimm himself indicated his indebtedness to this statement; after coming to know it he speedily rewrote the first volume of his grammar of 1819 and included in the second edition of 1822 the section presented below on the Germanic consonant shift. Rask's statement is presented here, with a few other excerpts to illustrate his fine grasp of linguistic principles.

As Pedersen and others have pointed out, Rask must be credited for his use of "system" and "grammatical criteria" rather than vocabulary in carrying out the request of the Academy. Although we applaud him for his methodological advances, we regret some of his terminology, for example, his name Thracian for "Indo-European". Since he did not know Sanskrit at the time he wrote his monograph, his group of Indo-European languages was still small, though in it he accurately provided the answer to the first request of the Academy. For the Germanic branch he used the term Gothic, which he divided into Scandinavian and Germanic (of which [Moeso-]Gothic was in turn a subbranch)."

Sobre Bopp:

"Franz Bopp is often credited with providing "the real beginning of what we call comparative linguistics" (Pedersen, *Linguistic Science*, p. 257). In keeping with this achievement his external career was distinguished. His publication resulting from four years of study in Paris, 1812-1816, led to general recognition. After visiting London and publishing there, he became professor of Sanskrit and comparative grammar in Berlin in 1821. Teaching and publication made up the rest of his life; his publications are on the whole admirable, except for a suggestion that the Malayo-Polynesian languages are related to the Indo-European. Apart from this lapse, editions, monographs and successive editions of his grammar, with translations into English and French, made him the dominant figure in Indo-European comparative grammar throughout the first half of the nineteenth century".