

TADIA
The African Diaspora in Asia

Explorations on a Less Known Fact

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Manumission of Slaves in Goa During 1682 to 1760 as Found in Codex 860

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Introduction

The centre piece of my presentation is one particular and interesting manuscript of the Goa Historical Archives. I had made my notes of it in the 1970s, while working on my doctorate, but never had an opportunity of exploring it. This codex is numbered 860 and contains details about manumission of slaves in Goa during the period 1682-1760. Curiously, the “Fathers of Christians” involved in this process of manumission were several Jesuits until the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1759. The last four folios cover the year 1760 under a non-Jesuit, probably an Augustinian monk, appointed to take over the Old College of St Paul, while the Jesuits were detained before being deported.

Pre-Islamic and Islamic Practice of Manumission

Manumission or *alforria* as the Portuguese called it and which constitutes the main theme of this paper was a pre-Islamic Arab custom for earning religious merit. Prophet Muhammad recommended it also, and as such it entered in Quran and Hadis. Thus, for instance, if a Muslim failed willingly to observe the fast during Ramzan, the offender could expiate his guilt by the manumission of one male slave (*ghulam*) for every day he broke his fast. The *Hidaya* and *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri* are the most authoritative texts for the study of Muslim slavery in medieval India. They deal with all aspects of Muslim law dealing with purchase, sale and manumission of slaves. Muslim society was incomplete without slaves which permeated almost every sphere of Muslim life.

There were at least four types of manumission, known as *wajib* (obligatory), *mubah* or *halal* (in accordance with Sharia), *mustahaj* (pious act) and *haram* (prohibited). It could be done orally or in writing, but there were rules to be observed with proper form and proper words. It is interesting and important to note on this occasion when we are discussing African diaspora, that captured slaves, if *kafirs*, could not be freed. To be a *kafir* was a disqualification, both in *ghulam* (male slaves) and *bandi* (female slave). The female slaves for Muslims were meant for cohabitation and for generating children, and they detested the *kafirs*. The non-Arab captives could be put to death or reduced to slavery. If converted to Islam they could be freed as *Zimmis*. But the *kafir* was also seen as useful for undertaking jobs that were prohibited for Muslims as below their dignity. Once a slave converted to Islam there was always

the option of freedom. A Muslim slave purchased by an infidel was considered free after entering an infidel territory, and the slave of an infidel upon becoming Muslim acquired the right to freedom. As we shall soon see, the Portuguese applied quite faithfully the Islamic tradition to slaves converted to Christianity or to slaves of the non-Christians entering the Portuguese jurisdiction.

By the custom known as *tadbir*, a master manumitted his slave by declaring that he/she would be free only after his/her death. Such a slave was then known as *mudabbir*. It was not a very welcome change of status for old slaves who could then hardly find a new buyer or master. At times the *mudabbirs* conspired to get rid of the master with the hope of becoming free earlier. Islamic law provided also for partial manumission, being exempted from a particular type of work from a specific date. He could be freed one-third and pay for other two-thirds to become fully free. Slaves could marry more than one wife at a time with the permission of the master, but never without such permission. If married slaves converted to Islam, their marriage was respected. If only one partner became Muslim the marriage became void automatically. Children of Muslim parents were regarded as Muslims.

Every slave girl could be used as concubine, and as such the slave girl or *bandi* and concubine were synonymous. She had to have all the qualities required for this purpose. Excessive sexiness was also regarded as defect. A slave girl who conceived from the master could not be sold, and the offspring was considered to be free. This gave the woman the status of *istawad* and made her *am-walad* with right to be free after the death of the master. The master had full control of *bandi* but he could declare free some parts of her body. When a pregnant slave was bought, the offspring was part of the purchase, and if the mother was declared *mudabbir* the offspring also shared her freedom. An absconding *ghulam* or *bandi* could not be purchased and had to be returned to the master. Incidentally, the Goa Municipality had a slave retriever in its service. You may find some relevant documentation published in my *Medieval Goa* (1979: 267). A master had unlimited power over the slave and could amputate or kill the slave with impunity. It was regarded as natural death. Even though slavery was a recognized institution in India since ancient times, particularly as a means of payment of debts, slaves were treated as a rule less cruelly than in early Egypt, Greece or Rome. During the Mauryan rule, as Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (Shastri 1986) informs us, a master was not to punish a slave without reason. If a master ill-treated his slaves the State could punish such master. Emperor Ashoka laid down in his Edict IX that all people should treat their slaves with sympathy and consideration. There were similar attempts in the Christian tradition, and we can see it in Portuguese India, though the reality did not always correspond to the good intentions and legislation.

The Christian and the Portuguese Slaving Traditions

Early Christianity fitted itself into the existing social institutions, including the institution of slavery. The letters of St. Paul confirm this adjustment. Christian monasteries used slaves in medieval Europe and the practice continued in the monasteries elsewhere in the world where Europe expanded its power since the 16th century. One of the papal bulls, *Dum diversas* of 1452 authorized the Portuguese to conquer and enslave the Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers inimical to Christ. Soon after their takeover of Goa and establishment of a State-controlled trading system, there were Portuguese who sought private trade and this gave rise to the so-called “*grande soltura*” (the great freedom) soon after the death of Afonso de Albuquerque. Several Portuguese, many of them criminals and renegades sought to escape from justice in Goa and made their living as freebooters along the Coromandel Coast, Bay of Bengal and further East. The *Peregrinations* of Fernão Mendes Pinto, provides a graphic description of the Portuguese adventures and their excesses, including their active involvement in slave trade. The early Chinese reactions to the Portuguese were provoked by the Portuguese slave trade. Another variant of slave trade, namely, the trade in eunuchs in Bengal was of ancient date and Duarte Barbosa describes how “the Moorish merchants of this city (Bengala) often times travel up country to buy heathen boys from their parents or from other persons who steal them and castrate them, so that they are left quite flat. Many die from this; those who live they train well and sell them. They value them much as guardians of their women and estates and for other low objects. These eunuchs they hold in high esteem as men of upright character, and some of them become their lords’ factors, and some Governors and Captains of the Moorish Kings, so that they become very rich and had great estates” (Dames 1921: 147).

The presence of Bengali slaves and eunuchs in Goa is mentioned in the contemporary Jesuit records, and also in the manuscript we are presenting here. In her recent research on Bengal, Rila Mukherjee (2006) has studied the Portuguese joining hands with the Arakanese in large scale slaving as a way of making up for their losing political control in the region in the early 17th century. This provoked the anger of Shah Jahan in 1632 and resulted in the take over of Hugly. He took some thousands of Portuguese men, women and children as captives to Agra. Lahori described the slave trade conducted by the Portuguese from Hugly in *dingas*, *ghrabs* and *jaliyas*: “These hateful practices were not confined to the lands they occupied but they seized and carried off every one they could lay their hands upon along the sides of the river” (1990: 32). While Lahori referred to the economic aspect of the Portuguese activity in Bengal, Khafi Khan touched upon the religious aspect: “They built villages and in all matters acted very kindly towards the people and did not vex them with oppressive taxes, but minors were converted to Christianity, whether brahmins or sayyids, and sold into slavery” (Lahori 1990: 211). The Dutchman Linschoten, who spent six years

in Goa at the close of the 16th century has left a lurid description of slave market and slave exploitation in Goa. Pyrard de Laval, a Frenchman who spent two years in Goa during early 17th century also left a detailed description of slavery in Goa. For numbers of slaves in various Portuguese settlements in India and elsewhere in Portuguese Asia, we have Antonio Bocarro's *Livro de Plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoações do Estado da India Oriental* (c.1635) wherein we read about 800 married settlers in Goa city, each owning at least two slaves, mostly Africans, but also of other provenance. These could bear arms for defence, but there were other named as "useless" slaves, black and Asian. Bocarro mentions that in the city of Goa there were also native married settlers numbering about 2,500, and these too owned slaves. The convents had their slaves, not included in the estimates. Rudi Bauss (1997: 21-26), Celsa Pinto (1994) and Pedro Machado (2004) have worked out estimates of the numbers of African slaves shipped to India, particularly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, till the official abolition of slavery in the mid 19th century. We are handling here the situation prior to their studies. As far as my knowledge goes, the earliest census in the Monsoon Volumes of Goa archives is dated 1697 for 38 parishes, and includes Whites and 3,467 slaves. Hence, we can calculate from the manuscript discussed here the proportion of those who were manumitted. Curiously, almost all the manumitted slaves were native Indians of different castes, predominantly from *gatural* caste (which needs to be identified) with Black Africans as rare exceptions. We can understand this fact by comparing the Goan colonial society with the contemporary Portuguese society at the time and later. We need to comprehend the slave treatment in the Portuguese metropolitan society in order to comprehend the Goan scenario.

Timothy Walker (2004 a and b) has given us a picture of the freed (manumitted) Black slaves in Portugal and their treatment by the Portuguese Inquisition when accused of magical practices. Newly freed and masterless slaves were deemed more dangerous than normal slaves. Since a freed slave served symbolically to question the legitimacy of the institution of slavery and their ownership by the Whites, it provoked tension in the society dominated by the white slave masters who felt uneasy about legalized manumission. Inquisition was used to reinforce the institution of slavery by punishing more severely the freed slaves and more leniently the normal slaves. That was how the Portuguese society seemed to treat the social elements which the white elites deemed inconvenient. Their slaves were too valuable to be banished or sent into exile. A freed slave and first-time offender was often punished severely with banishment to State galleys. Timothy Walker comes to the conclusion that only 10 per cent of those accused as *curandeiros* or sorcerers were of Black descent. This should not be surprising if we take into account the demographic ratio of the Blacks in Portugal around that time. It is interesting to note, however, that two-thirds of the Black accused were women. As a result of the prevailing Portuguese folk imagery of *mouras encantadas* a harsher

treatment was meted out to Black women who seemed to represent a threat of seduction to the White men. The masters were never held responsible for the behaviour of their slaves and as such were not pulled up by the Inquisition. But neither were their slaves generally punished after trial. It is the freed slaves and Whites who were generally punished with banishment which was dreaded by the tightly knit Portuguese family bonds. While Blacks were sent to internal exile and a few to Brazil, the Whites were condemned to no more than two years of internal exile, and were rarely sent to colonies in Africa and Asia.

In conclusion, the freed slaves were those who were punished most severely and the enslaved Blacks most leniently. The poor White offenders occupied the middle ground. Hence, the manumitted slaves were most vulnerable in the modern Portuguese society. The Inquisition sentences reflected the dominant social criteria which placed the freed slaves at the bottom of the society, below the slaves and the poor Whites. Presence of slaves in Algarve and Lisboa regions of Portugal represented almost 10 per cent of the population as could be checked from the baptism records, although some arrived already as baptized and did not enter in these statistical sources. The American market reduced the number of slaves brought to Portugal and those who were still there were mostly born in the territory. This number went on decreasing owing to the custom of manumission. They were used for all sorts of menial works and many were hired for such services by their masters. Thousands of female Black slaves were thus used for supplying water to private houses for payment which they shared with their masters. Many worked for the convents and they were either bought or came as patrimony of those who joined the monastery. The slaves were present also in the countryside as workers in the field cultivation. Many parish priests were slave owners. The condition of these domestic slaves was very different from that of the colonial slaves. Much depended upon the good will of the owners and the good behaviour of the slaves. In many cases the female slaves were manumitted by their masters not always declaring openly that they had fathered their children who were baptized with the name of the mother, without mentioning the father. The manumission was a legal way of freeing a slave, but the transition to full freedom was generally slow and the situation could be reverted if the ex-slave failed to show gratitude or to be helpful to the former master when required.

As regards the marriage of slaves, the masters were generally uncooperative because the Church required that they could not be sold or sent to work to distant places where they could not live their married lives. Many owners would include a clause in the marriage contract to state that they allowed it only under condition of not losing the rights over the slave as before. There was also a general opposition of the slave masters to their definitive manumission. Manumission was a current practice, but it required almost always that the manumitted slave handed over a part of his value

in cash to the former master. This was almost a kind of self-sale that permitted the master to buy a new slave. Manumissions without such value-exchange were an exception and were motivated by pious intentions of the masters of gaining merits before God. Such cases were also often delayed till the slave was old and was of little use in terms of labour that could be exacted from him or her. At times the manumission was conditional, requiring service during the life-time of the owners, and at times the condition of service could be required from the children of the manumitted slaves. But there were cases in which the masters helped the manumitted slaves to be able to continue working to gain their livelihood. Though in rare cases, some masters would even give them a house and a piece of land. The ex-slaves with such privileged conditions often joined confraternities of Blacks, generally named after Our Lady of Rosary, in which they could help each other and create conditions for freeing other slaves. Tendency of the slaves to run away was common. The legislation took measures to block any assistance to such run away slaves, and there were even extradition laws to guarantee return of the slaves who crossed the borders of the country (Fonseca 1999).

The Jesuit visitor of the Asian missions Alexandre Valignano noted in 1576 that many slave masters donated slaves to the Jesuit residences. He feared that many of such slaves were illegally captured. The Jesuit General wished that slaves of all Jesuit residences in the Portuguese empire ought to be set free, as it had been done in the Jesuit Province of Sicily. The Indian authorities had replied that it was difficult to function in India without slaves, and as to the title of slavery and good treatment, this had been ensured. The Jesuit lay brothers could not do in India the type of jobs they were doing in Europe. “In this country no one serves another, except the slaves and some native boys” (Wicki 1968: 638-39).¹ He had earlier written to Jesuit Superior General, Mercurian, that in India even poor native Christians had their slaves, and that it was very cheap to have them and maintain them, because the only costs were cheap clothes and rice. Besides, in the houses of the Society of Jesus, the titles of captivity were examined carefully by two or three Fathers deputed by the Provincial for this purpose. The menial jobs were considered as below dignity for the Whites. Those with illegal or uncertain title were freed and their service was paid for. Those who had already served during some years were also granted their letter of manumission (Wicki 1968: 214-15, 266).

The Church Provincial Councils of Goa have recurrently dealt with the issue of slaves, particularly regarding the slaves that belonged to non-Christians. In the very first Council held in 1567, it was mentioned in Decree 16 that non-Christians should not possess a Christian slave. If they happened to buy or sell one, such a slave would be considered free. The same would apply to any slave of non-Christian master on becoming Christian without receiving any price for it. If the slave was brought for sale,

they should not be paid more than 12 *cruzados*, and this would be applicable only if the slave was sold within three months after entering the Portuguese jurisdiction. Beyond this time limit the slave would be considered free. The same applied to slaves belonging to Jews or Muslims. As regards slaves, who might belong to the jurisdiction of allies, to be baptized, the mutual accord had to be respected, namely, if the allies returned slaves to the Portuguese or paid for them, the Portuguese also had to respond in the same manner (Rivara 1992: 178). Another decree of the same Council in its 4th session referred to cruel treatment meted out to slaves by some masters to the point of killing some slaves. The Council prohibited the practice of punishments with fire or cane, and invited denunciation by those who might come to know of such punishments being practised. The council also Prohibited forcing the slaves to work on Sundays and religious days of obligation, or making them pay for things they lost or happened to break at home. The masters were advised to treat well their sick slaves and to advise them to frequent the Sacraments (Rivara 1992: 51).

The Third Council in 1585 repeated decree 13 of the First Council and decree 8 of the Second Council extending the freedom of slaves belonging to non-Christians also to Melaka. Repeated also the prohibition of Muslims taking slaves through the Portuguese jurisdiction. A fine of 50 *pardaus* and excommunication was imposed upon the Captains and ship masters who permitted embarkation of such slaves without the knowledge of the Viceroy or the Prelate. They should force the masters to sell their slaves to Christians, or failing Christian buyers to non-Christians of the Portuguese jurisdiction. This decree envisaged in particular the situation that prevailed in Hormuz (Rivara 1992: 135-37). The decree 30 of the same Council refers to the practice of some slave owners giving Christian names to their slaves without baptizing them. The masters were obliged to baptize a slave within six months after acquisition or within a month if the slave was 10 years of age or less. There was a fine imposed upon the defaulters.²

Decree 2 of the 5th session of the Third Council ordered the slave masters to redeem within one year any of their slaves who might have been captured in wars or any such conflicts. The Council considered it to be their duty of gratitude and also defence of faith. If they were not redeemed within this period and succeeded in escaping from captivity they should be considered free. There was an annexe to the proceedings of this Council. It was a quote from the Justinian code stating that Christian captives of Jews, gentiles or heretics persons in India, could not be considered legitimate slaves, even if any of their masters might later accept Christianity (Rivara 1992: 177-78, 183-84).

Decree 4 of the first session of the Fourth Council cited Decree 1 of the 4th session of the First Council (did not correspond in the APO) listing five legitimate titles for possessing a slave. No other slave brought frequently from China, Japan, Bengal and elsewhere should be considered legal for sale or possession. A Jesuit

report of 1571 has mentioned that many had 15 to 50 female slaves each. Masters and even servants and male slaves slept with them (Wicki 1962: 409). The Council decreed that the eunuchs from Bengal should be all considered as free. The fifth Council repeated a decree of the fourth about masters not impeding the marriage of their slaves and to sell them when married to freed slaves giving an impression that these could accompany them wherever they might have to go. Such sales should be restricted to the coast extending from Diu to Comorin, and not beyond.³ The Fifth Council banned female slaves of less than fifty years of age from selling foodstuffs or stitch work on the streets. The masters who permitted this should pay a fine of 20 *pardaus* for each breach of this order (Rivara 1992: 267).

Decree 15 of the 4th session of the Fifth Council lamented that despite many bans and decrees of the past Councils the captivity of slaves and their abusive exploitation had been on the rise and there appeared to be no way of checking it. The Council authorized all the Bishops in their respective jurisdictions to keep a watch on the ports where slave trafficking took place, deputing virtuous and responsible persons to examine the titles of captivity and hand these in writing to the respective slaves. They should also issue the certificates of legal possession to the respective slave masters. Any slave who was not thus examined and without such certificate should be considered freed (Rivara 1992: 267-68).

The Council also decreed that sick slaves abandoned by their masters and living on streets and in hospital of the poor should be considered free if their masters did not take them back. This also applied to slaves who were punished cruelly with hot irons, with leather straps, by pouring hot liquids, by pressing any part of their body with weights, by throwing pepper, oil, vinegar or salt into their eyes, by breaking their teeth or by whipping them repeatedly. Anyone incurring violation of this order should pay a fine of fifty *pardaus* (Rivara 1992: 269-70). All these abuses seemed to have continued despite a special team of judges sent from Portugal to handle cases of abuse of justice and failures to do justice. In the standing order issued for the functioning of the “*alçada*”, we read about the numerous slaves who were brought by force from Bengal, China, Maluco and elsewhere by capturing them. The viceroy and representatives of the Board of Conscience were entitled to be present while these cases were reviewed and any captive with unjust title was ordered to be freed (Rivara 1992: V(II): 782). Fr. Alexandre Valignano as Visitor of Jesuit missions instructed the Father of Christians in September 1595, among other things, to look after the *alforria* of the slaves, particularly of those owned by the Portuguese, who tended to offer more resistance. In case they failed to yield to appeals to conscience, the cases were to be entrusted to the lay attorney of the Christians.⁴ When the monastery of St. Monica was established in Goa at the opening of the 17th century it admitted 18 widows in the

first batch of inmates. One of them, the founder-inmate, Filipa Ferreira from Thana came to the convent with her 200 slaves.⁵

Goa Historical Archives: Codex 860

The Codex 860 is entitled *Cartas de Alforria aos Escravos, 1682-1759*. Although the end indicated is 1759, the actual date extends to 1760. The Codex contains 112 folios, not all of them bound in the numerical order. Fls. 13, 15 and 14 (in this order) appear after 53. They contain deeds of manumission obliging the slave masters to set their slaves free after no more than 10 to 12 years from date. The overwhelming majority of nearly 750 slaves involved were females and of *kunbi* caste, aged below 20. A great majority of the slaves was indicated as belonging to the *gatal*, *curumbim* (*kunbi*) and *balgati* castes. We are not sure what is the exact meaning of *gatal* (not found in Dalgado's *Glossário*). It is not likely to be related to Ghats since Balghati also meant the same. The other castes mentioned were *cancana*, *shudra*, *charado*, *yogi*, *maratha*, *mainata* (*dhobi*), *vania*, etc. Till fl. 53 there were, on average, four to five terms in each folio. After that, the average was two per folio. Most of them were Hindus who were baptized after being bought or acquired. Referred to the slaves from the old three talukas of Goa, and, among slave masters, we found some priests and convents. Some of these slaves were orphans entrusted to some families by the Father of Christians. The Father of Christians was a State appointed official to look after the protection and welfare of converts to Christianity. The office was usually entrusted to a priest of a Religious Order. The deeds implied obligation to teach good manners and Christian doctrine, to treat them charitably in their illness, and to arrange their marriage when they attained the right age. In Fl. 95 we read about a girl aged nine and whom her master undertook to get married with a man of the same caste after another four years. The deed also obliged the slave owners not to transfer the ownership to anyone else without informing the Father of Christians in advance. Several deeds were mere declarations that the persons described were already treated as free and no longer as slaves. The first Father of Christians conducting the manumission procedure was a Jesuit priest, Luis de Abreu, who died in 1686. He started acting on manumissions with the authority granted to him by the Archbishop D. Alberto da Silva. He was followed as Fathers of Christians (Fl.56) by several other Jesuits whose names appear in this Codex as Pedro Prado (1688), João Henrique (1694), Ignacio Mascarenhas (1698), Alexandre de Souza (1713), Antonio Freire (1734), Manuel de Abreu (1737), Antonio Estanislao (1740), Antonio Ferreira (1753), Luis Pegado (1753), Manuel de Guevara (1754-6), Antonio de Basto (1756) and Joaquim Dias (1758-9). As already indicated, this volume went beyond the end date indicated in the cover, and referred to Rev. Fr. Theodoro de Santa Maria as superior of the old college of St. Paul and Father of Christians. Obviously, he belonged to another religious order that was entrusted with the care of the Jesuit residences.

We have extracted from this manuscript volume some details that we thought interesting and those which did not fit into the usually accepted categories: We have a *kunbi* from Sankilly bought for 49 *xerafins*. The intention to baptize him was indicated as the only justifying title for his slavery. A “*negrinha*”, Black female aged 15 and Muslim, now Maria, was to be set free by her owner Pedro Ferreira after 8 years. Britis de Oliveira was of *gatural* caste, aged 14, and bought in the slave market. She was robbed and cheated into slavery. She was to be set free after six years and with the obligation on the part of the owner of arranging her marriage. A Christian cobbler, Manuel d’Almeida, owned a *kunbi* boy from the mainland. He had bought him with the intention of converting him to Christianity. A resident of St Estevão (Jua Island) presented a “*negrinha*” of *gatural* caste aged 14, bought with the aim of baptizing her. How come we have here a black girl of *gatural* caste? A girl called Lingi before conversion and belonging to *gatural* caste was now Joana and was to be set free after 10 years. Could the old name serve as a clue to identify *gatural* caste, which loomed large in this codex? Quite a few male and female slaves belonged to *curumbim* (*kunbi*) caste and were Hindus before conversion. We had an interesting case of Natalia, belonging to Abassy (*habshi*) caste, and several girls of Koli caste and they were from the Northern province (Bassein). A “*bicho*” named Estevão belonged to *gatural* caste and was from Honawar. Margarida aged 40 was married to a Black slave of the same owner, Francisco da Costa, resident of St. Anne parish (Telauli), one clear instance of hybrid African identity? Antonio, aged 45, was described as belonging to “*mulato*” caste. A priest, Manuel Jacques de Noronha, resident in St. Mathias (Malar) owned two slave boys, one *kunnbi* and the other *shudra*. Several other slave owners were from the island of Chorão. The slaves were of *gatural* caste not Africans as mentioned elsewhere in this paper. There were cases of slaves freed in the parish of St. Bartholomew (Chorão) of *gavlli* and *linganatu* cases. They belonged to Fr. Francisco Rodrigues. A girl slave, Maria, was 10 years old and belonged to *tacuru* caste (Thakur / Tagore from Bengal?). Two slaves were still Hindus: Ghirea, 14 old from Bhalagaty, and a girl Khenchu, 24, also from Bhalagaty. A girl of 16, Pascoela, was of *faras* caste (*mahar*). A “*negrinha*” named Macota, was in the parish Chimbél of Ribandar. A girl, Mariana, aged 15 from the House of Cathecumens, was given to João da Silva, resident in the Mormugão fort, in May 1686 to be his servant. She was declared free. There were some other such cases of young boys and girls, including one Hindu girl three years old, of *kunbi* caste, from the House of Catechumens in 1694-8, given in adoption to private families. A girl of *kunbi* caste was given out from the Cathecumenate in 1709 to Joseph da Silva from Taleigão. He promised to bring her up in Christian life and take care of her marriage when she attained the age of 12. This age corresponds to the Konkani proverb: *bara, chol govachea ghara*. Antonio da Lima, from Chorão, promised to set free a mother and her daughter following the death of his wife. In 1712, we had a Capuchin friar

Antonio de Assunção who presented two Bengali boys whom he declared freed. He further declared that they had come willingly from their country to become Christians. A barber resident in S. Lourenço (Agaçaim) accepted a Bengali boy as free and promised to teach him to be a barber within two years. In 1716, a black woman (*cafra*) was given by the Father of Christians to Pascoal Mendes Thomas, resident in the city of Goa, to work as house servant and as a free person. In 1727, there was a Hindu boy Bacha of *tallogui* caste, baptized as Antonio. He was orphan of parents from Sunda. In 1733, we found two young sisters who were orphans of Muslim parents from Bicholim. They were handed over by the Cathecumenate to Diogo de Miranda, a Portuguese white, married and resident in the city of Goa. We had an interesting case in August 1736 of a couple from Navelim in Salcete, who took care of a “godchild” (*afilhada*), a cathecumen spinster, about 20 years old, of weaver caste, allowed her to marry her Black slave who would remain a slave, and she would remain free and so the children they might have, as customary. In 1739, Gonçalo Pinto Brandão, from Lisbon, brought with him to Goa a young free Black (“*cafrinho forro*”) from Mozambique, on condition that he would be taken back to his country by himself or through someone else. Brandão presented Judge Pedro da Silva, resident in the city of Goa, as his surety for fulfilling his obligation. There was a statement of Fr. Martinho do Rosario, Commissary General of the Hospitallers of St. John, declaring that Agostinho do Rosario, Black of *macua* caste was his slave and had served him during many years with much dedication. Declared him free on condition that he continued serving him during the rest of his life-time as he did heretofore. Yet another case, one of the last ones in the codex and dated 2 June 1760, referred to one year old boy of an unknown father and a Hindu prostitute from Cumbarjua. I have published elsewhere about the Cumbarjua Island being acquired by the Jesuit procurator Fr. Gonçalo Martins, who shifted to that island all activities of prostitution from the city of Goa, so as to avoid public scandal, but also as a source of revenue for the Society of Jesus. Some of the entries in the Codex presented here required knowledge of this background: A child was entrusted to a Christian couple of St. Mathias (Malar) to be breast-fed (*criar com leite do peito*) and given all care that was required. The couple would receive two *xerafins* per month to cover the expenses. There were a few other cases of this nature, including one of a child four days old entrusted to a couple in the city.

The following information may help us to understand to some extent the pressure for manumitting slaves during the period covered in the Codex presented here. In 1758, the Viceroy Count of Ega repeated a law issued in 1624-5 banning the enslaving of Chinese. A similar law of 1751 ordered that no Japanese should be captured and enslaved (Wicki 1969: 90). It mentioned that even the Fathers of Christians were accomplices in accepting declarations during baptism to cover the intentions of the slave buyers who claimed that the young slaves would be a burden to their parents who would kill them,

or that they would be captured by pirates. The law mentioned that baptism had become a door to slavery, instead of being a door to freedom (Wicki 1968: 361-63). The commonly mentioned title for slavery in this manuscript we have just analysed confirms the point raised by the viceroy. By way of conclusion we did not see more than a dozen references to African slaves from among three hundred and odd cases.

Old Habits Die Hard: A Slow End of Slavery in the Portuguese Empire

In her earlier cited research, Rila Mukherjee suggests that just like the Arakanese who moved into slave trading when they lost their commercial power, the Portuguese too turned to slaving with greater intensity when their commercial power was broken by the Dutch and the English. Unlike the other Europeans in Asia, the Portuguese always remained a coastal power which derived from their control over ports. This control in turn was determined by the nature of their trade. The massacre of the Portuguese by the Arakanese at Dianga in 1607 soon after the latter had thrown out the Portuguese from Chatighan; the execution of Filipe Nicote de Brito, the Portuguese adventurer and ruler of Syriam by the Mons-Burmese in 1613; the defeat of the Portuguese by the Kandy forces in Ceylon in August 1630; and finally the fall of Aceh in 1636 and Malaca in 1640 in the wake of Dutch conquests in the Indonesian archipelago signified the collapse of the informal Portuguese network of trade in the Bay of Bengal. The Portuguese officially “stayed” back only at the slave port of Pipli, in Orissa. In such a perishable commodity like slaves, the flow of supplies to the slave markets could only dry up with time. In societies where the emergence of a market for land was blocked by patrimonial ownership, and where the self-sufficiency of the labourers was a fact and not fiction, the drying up of supplies of slaves meant the drying up of the market as a whole. This line of argument makes sense in the context of my analysis in *Medieval Goa* of the Portuguese attempts to enter the land market in Goa from the start of the 17th century by ignoring or violating the native customary rights and traditional land ownership and administrative practices.

Manucci, who spent one year and three months in Goa in the last quarter of the 17th century, describes how during the invasion of Goa by Sambhaji in 1683 and when the viceroy was facing a perilous situation militarily, an Augustinian monk, Fr. Pedro da Silveira, got together a band of Black slaves and kitchen servants whom he ordered to hold sugar canes and advance in the direction of the invading Marathas pretending to bring reinforcements. The Marathas were taken in by the ruse and the viceroy could retreat safely.⁶ Manucci also refers to high degree of criminality in Goa, and shops were closed before sunset. The mischief makers employed their *kaffir* slaves for vandalism. He refers to households possessing even 100 *kaffirs*. There is an instruction of the king of Portugal to his viceroy in India, dated 23.3.1733, requesting him to remedy the oppression to *ganvkars* of Chorão island at the hands of the White settlers

who were using their many Black slaves to threaten the *ganvkars* and to rob their field products (Xavier 1852: 70-73). On 12 November 1787, the prior of the Augustinian convent in Daman proposed to his colleagues if they would agree to selling the Black Manoel who suffered from “*excesso vicioso*” (excess of ill-temper), which was the cause of many complaints and made him unwanted. He mentioned that there was a Frenchman in the town buying slaves and proposed to sell the Negro to him for 140 rupees. All agreed. A follow-up document mentions the purchase of a “*cafrinho*” for serving the convent. They paid 162 *xerafins* for him. He was sold that same year for 315 xs. because of his restless character, bad habits and unwillingness to work.⁷ In 1810, Portugal signed a treaty with Great Britain to cooperate in abolishing slavery gradually in its colonies, but the lack of political consciousness caused surprise and strong reactions in the Portuguese society when the English navy began taking effective measures against slave-trafficking. In a new treaty with England in 1815 Portugal committed itself to abolish slave traffic to the North of the Equator, and agreed to limiting such trafficking to the Portuguese colonies. In 1817, the two countries came to an agreement that navies of two countries could jointly check the slaving vessels in the northern hemisphere. Even so, in 1820s, Portugal was the only country that still maintained a legal slave trade and the abolitionism was seen in Portugal as foreign intervention in the Portuguese national sovereignty. This political discourse was well exploited by the slave owning interests to promote a go-slow policy. The old mentality of saving the savage African was covered under a new discourse of saving the national pride. The pro-abolitionist voice remained muted till the British Parliament passed in the summer of 1839 a bill of Palmerston giving the British the right to unilaterally intercept and capture any slaving vessel. Many vessels bearing Portuguese flags were thus captured or sunk. In July 1842, the bill was replaced by a fresh Anglo-Portuguese treaty that extended the abolition to southern hemisphere under dual control. The display of force by England and the fear of losing its colonies led Portugal to give in. The slavers then lost interest in carrying on the traffic in the Portuguese jurisdiction (Marques 1999: 46-53). Timothy Walker has published an interesting analysis of the popular and official resistance to slave abolition based on the records of Goa archives. He refers to a significant percentage, almost 15 per cent of manumitted slaves in the first quarter of the 19th century Goa. However, he laments the non-existence of registers of manumission for this period for confirming the census figures. But very interesting are the conclusions of his analysis of the slave registry conducted in Goa province-wise in 1855 under the British pressure. On the basis of the ambiguity of the language utilized and the number of unutilized pages in each codex, he presumes that the responsible State officials knew the probable number of slaves while issuing the registration books with a definite number of folios for each book. After the registration most volumes were virtually empty or with only a few pages used. In all nine provinces

only 134 slaves were registered! The legislation had threatened that all unregistered slaves would be deemed as freed. But probably the past experience of the slave owners and in good Portuguese tradition even till date must have convinced the slave masters that no action would be taken by the authorities for their non-compliance (Walker 2004a: 63-79).

We know that despite the growing and effective pressures for ending slavery, the Portuguese colony of S. Tomé and Príncipe developed cultivation of cocoa and coffee at the close of XVIII century, and during 1876-1900, nearly 55,869 “free” labourers were “contracted” in Angola to serve the “*roças*”. It was a situation of covert slavery, and according to Alfredo Margarido, my veteran colleague at the University and who spent many years of exile in that Portuguese colony during the Salazar regime, states that the situation in S. Tomé and Príncipe reflected the Portuguese attitude towards slavery in its colonial world in general and that only the end of African anti-colonial wars permitted the Africans to put an end to “the slavery that was alive in Portuguese African colonies under various legal cover-ups.”

Notes

¹The issue was discussed in wide consultation held by Valignano in the Goa Province of the Society of Jesus in December 1575 at Chorão residence.

²Ban repeated in Decree 6 of the 2nd session of the Fifth Council in 1606 (Rivara 1992: 142-43).

³This was the area within the Portuguese control. A defaulter would pay a fine of 200 pardaús (Rivara 1992: 217).

⁴*Doc. Ind.*, XVII, Rome, 1988, p. 88.

⁵*O Oriente Português* (NS), 1931, n.1, p. 87.

⁶*O Oriente Português*, VIII, 1911, p. 108.

⁷*O Oriente Português*, XIII, 1916, nn. 11 & 12, pp. 350-1. The British occupation troops had used the convent as infirmary.

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