



VASCO DA GAMA  
AND THE LINKING OF  
EUROPE  
AND ASIA

Edited by  
ANTHONY DISNEY  
and EMILY BOOTH

OXFORD

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## Chapter Twenty-eight

# Vasco da Gama and the Later Portuguese Colonial Presence in India

Teotonio R. de Souza

A visible resistance, but also a visible cooperation between the Portuguese and some Indian groups, date back to the first voyage of Vasco da Gama to India. It was a matter of coincidence of mutual interests, which could mean gains, or avoidance of trouble. It did not matter if the dominant Muslim groups of the population first contacted by the Portuguese felt threatened and manifested hostility. The diary of the first voyage of Vasco da Gama tells us about locals who were trying to approach the Portuguese ships offshore to sell their wares. Despite the suspicions of the Portuguese, it is not certain that all of them were spying on the new arrivals.

But preliminary to commencing the main substance of the paper, I wish to present a few modern assessments by some prominent Indians on the impact of the Portuguese arrival in India in 1498.

### I

While the Portuguese argonaut had set sail from a distant *Finisterra* on a voyage of 'discovery', a maker of modern India would discover India from within the confines of the Ahmadnagar fort, where the British had detained him in 1944. We read in Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*:

In April 1944, two thousand years were completed and a new millennium began. This has been the occasion for celebration throughout India, and the celebrations were justified both because it was a big turning point in the reckoning of time and because Vikram or Vikramaditya, with whose name the calendar is associated, has long been a great hero in popular tradition.<sup>1</sup>

And he goes on to say that actually there was no ruler called Vikramaditya in the period that marked the beginning of the era named after him. But there was one in the fourth century AD who fits the description. However, his rule affected only a part of northern India, while he is celebrated as a defender against foreigners and a hero of the unity of India. Nehru sees this as an instance of the manipulation of the past for nationalist motives.

Nehru's *Discovery of India* is pretty accurate in its assessment of the Portuguese power in India:

With all his great prestige as the Grand Mughal and his strength as a land power, he (Akbar) was powerless at sea. Vasco da Gama had reached Calicut via the Cape, in 1498; Albuquerque had seized Malacca in 1511 and established Portuguese sea-power in the Indian Ocean. Goa on the western coast of India had become a Portuguese possession. All this did not bring the Portuguese in direct conflict with Akbar. But Indian pilgrims going to Mecca by sea, and these sometimes included members of the imperial family, or of the nobility, were often held up for ransom by the Portuguese.<sup>2</sup>

Behind the failure of the Mughals to withstand the new power, Nehru discovered an absence of the dynamism that moved the advancing European culture. He came to the conclusion: 'A foreign conquest with all its evils, has one advantage: It widens the mental horizon of the people and compels men to look out of their shells. They realise that the world is much bigger and more variegated place than they had imagined.'<sup>3</sup>

## II

Salman Rushdie's latest provocation seems to be directed towards the Portuguese discoveries and its aftermath. *The Moor's Last Sigh* chides:

Had it not been for peppercorns, then what is ending now in East and West might never have begun. Pepper it was that brought Vasco da Gama's tall ships across the ocean, from Lisbon's Tower of Belem to the Malabar Coast: first to Calicut, and later, for its lagoony harbour, to Cochin. English and French sailed in the wake of that first-arrived Portugee, so that in the period called Discovery-of-India—but how could we be discovered when we were not covered before?—we are 'not so much sub-continent as sub-condiment', as my distinguished mother had it. 'From the beginning, what the world wanted from bloody mother India was daylight-clear,' she'd say. 'They came for the hot stuff, just like any man calling on a tart'.

Then he goes on to describe Prince Henry the Navigator as a homosexual, Camoens, a little goateed stick of a man, persecuted by the ghost of Belle, Francisco da Gama who made himself a fool with the discovery

of 'Gama rays', and Morais Gama-Zogoiby, the villain of the piece, the 'Moor', a physical and cultural deformity.<sup>4</sup>

### III

Archana Masih, a journalist of 'Rediff On the Net', flashed a long report through the World Wide Web early this month. It contained her interview with the most recent Indian biographer of Vasco da Gama, but she started with:

May 20, 1998 will mark 500 years of Vasco da Gama's arrival in India. Plans for a proposed celebration have fallen on rough weather. Amidst allegations that he marked the advent of colonialism, the Portuguese explorer is trapped in controversy in new age India. With four small ships, 171 men, food reserves for a minimum of three years, a short and swarthy aristocrat took off from the western tip of Europe fringing the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Ten months later, past the Equator and vast expanses of unknown waters, he reached the lucrative Malabar coast of peninsular India. The voyage connected Europe to India, and Vasco da Gama sailed into the pages of history. Five hundred years later, the Portuguese explorer has been sucked into a whirlpool of controversy far more treacherous than the ones he encountered on his travels.

The reactions of Asians, or rather of different Indian groups or individuals, to the arrival of the Portuguese, reflected the social, economic and political realities of the times, regions and particular societies or individuals. Hence, it is not easy to draw a still picture of these reactions as valid for changing times and circumstances. Considering the fact that my research has been mostly on the Portuguese in India, it is obvious that I can speak with greater confidence of the early Indian response to the Portuguese. About the other Asian reactions, I shall scratch the surface. Besides, it is important to note that it is a matter of Asian response to the Europeans, and not just to the Portuguese.

The Portuguese enterprise in Asia included numerous individuals and groups of other European nationalities, particularly Italians, Flemish and Germans. While the former groups were more commercially motivated, Germans like the Fuggers acted as big financiers of the Portuguese trade; but many less-celebrated figures were the mainstay of the Portuguese defence needs in Asia, as gunners of their fleets and fortifications.<sup>5</sup> The Portuguese missionary enterprise in Asia was equally a multinational effort. To take the case of the Jesuits who were in the forefront till the suppression of the Society of Jesus in the mid-eighteenth century, nearly half of their membership in Asia came from non-Portuguese nations of Europe, and included Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Belgians, Austrians, Poles, Englishmen, Frenchmen, and even Croats.<sup>6</sup> In reality, Francis

Xavier, Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, De Nobili, are the better-known Jesuit celebrities of the Portuguese *Padroado* in Asia, and they were not Portuguese. The native response to Europeans, and to the Western brand of Christianity, was a prime concern to each of them, and they contributed significantly to mitigate the cultural one-sidedness of the European missionaries.<sup>7</sup>

The reactions of the Asians to the Portuguese appear to have been influenced by the latter's systematic tendency to interfere in the culture of the local people by means of conversion and miscegenation drives. In places where the Portuguese military presence was strong, as was the case in Goa and various other settlements along the west coast of India, the natives could hardly remain indifferent to the Portuguese. While large sections of the population had to fall in line, willingly or with varying degrees of resignation, with the Portuguese colonial and cultural impositions that were enforced through European religious structures and Inquisition procedures, there were also significant migrations of the more unbending types. A Jesuit visitor who travelled through Kanara in the seventeenth century calculated 30,000 Goans, chiefly Hindus, had migrated thither to escape the religious and other pressures. It was among these communities of Goans that appeared the proverbial Konkani, saying '*Goeant firangi na mbunno hhoim?*' ('Who dares say that the Portuguese are not in Goa?'), a rhetorical assertion of the futility of resistance of those who had stayed behind.<sup>8</sup> However, despite such lamentations of futility by those who migrated to distant places, expressions of resistance within Goa were never fully absent, and the Hindu community utilized its economic clout to vindicate and safeguard its heritage and traditional interests.<sup>9</sup>

The colonialists' hopes of winning over new converts for their cause were not always realized. The colonial superiority complex, and ethnic conflicts, often held the upper hand, and contributed to brewing discontent among converted native co-religionists. The cases of Matheus de Castro in the seventeenth century, and the Pinto conspiracy in the mid-nineteenth century, are well-known illustrations of this; but an ongoing resentment of the natives, who felt themselves taken for granted as Christians, can be detected in existing Portuguese documentation from the sixteenth century onwards. This contains protests of the natives against their exploitation and ill-treatment, not only at the hands of the lay Portuguese or half-breeds, but even by their European parish priests and their few privileged native collaborators.<sup>10</sup> Curiously, the native priests were the most disenchanted and led the protest and revolutionary movements against the Europeans, not only in Goa, but also in the

Philippines,<sup>11</sup> and in Japan, where several native members of the Society of Jesus left the order because they had not been promoted to the priesthood. One of them, Fabian Fukansai, published an anti-Jesuit tract in 1620, denouncing the pride and arrogance of the European missionaries and their contempt for their Japanese colleagues. This may have helped to enhance the ill-feelings that led to the decisive persecution of the Jesuits and the expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan in the wake of the Shimabara rebellion.<sup>12</sup>

While utilizing European sources, we need to bear in mind their concerns and concepts of resistance and collaboration. Resistance is often tantamount to an anticipated fear, and collaboration could be wishful thinking. Hence, these phenomena may be untrue, or misrepresentations, from the native point of view. There are plentiful references in the missionary accounts to the 'devil at work', meaning native resistance to the missionary efforts. A deeper analysis of the socio-economic context often reveals that the native resistance is to the new social and economic interests that they saw lurking behind the missionary front.<sup>13</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam's treatment of Vasco da Gama has analysed the reported instances of collaboration by Abraham Zacuto and Ibn Majid as appropriated symbols of Asian wisdom and science, and as a way of gaining legitimization for the national venture in the eyes of other peoples, somewhat along the lines of the Magi from the East tracing the star of Bethlehem, in Christian messianism.<sup>14</sup>

But certainly not all cases of resistance and collaboration were only imagined. Should I say that at times even Nature seemed to be cooperating with the new European colonists? This too can have its legendary aspect, and be put to serve partisan politics: but we need to look for the scientific credentials, if any. I wish to cite the fact of Vasco da Gama's first arrival on the Malabar coast at a time of year when staying in the Indian Ocean during the three months of the monsoon could only be a daredevil performance. Was it superior Portuguese navigational knowledge, or had the monsoons failed that year? If we add nine days to convert the calendar of the diarist of Vasco da Gama's first voyage from the Julian into the Gregorian, Vasco da Gama could not have escaped the fury of the monsoons, almost from the start.<sup>15</sup>

I am given to understand that, according to recent investigations of a Goa-based scientist of the Indian Institute of Oceanography, there exist three pockets of the Kerala coast, unique in the world, which retain a quantity of sediment in suspension during the monsoons, reducing the turbulent impact of the seasonal winds on the sea. It was not without

reason that da Gama was advised by the local people to put his ships into Pantalayini, or Pandarane to the Arabs and the Chinese navigating in Indian waters. They had discovered this phenomenon centuries before the arrival of Vasco da Gama. What matters for our purpose is that Vasco da Gama did not fail to receive local advice, and he did not fail entirely to accept it. I say entirely, because the diarist of his voyage reveals that with their customary suspicion of local advice, the Portuguese anchored only near the place at first.<sup>16</sup>

If King Manuel of Portugal was seeking allies among the St Thomas Christians of India, his expectations were not entirely unfounded. Despite the fact that relations soured with the heavy-handedness of the Jesuits, and the politics of Portugal under John III (which led to the crisis of the Synod of Diamper at the close of the sixteenth century and its troubled aftermath), there are indications that the initial response of the St Thomas Christians to the arrival of the Portuguese was one of hope to recover their own dwindling economic and political importance in Malabar. The earliest written testimony is a letter in the Syrian language sent by the local church authorities to their Catholicos in East Mesopotamia.<sup>17</sup> On the occasion of the second 'bloody' visit of Vasco da Gama to India, when he threatened all and sundry, friends and foes, he was approached by a delegation of St Thomas Christians, willing to pay obeisance to the king of Portugal.<sup>18</sup>

The scenario in Goa was not very different. We have the figure of Timmayya, to whom is attributed the initiative of suggesting to Afonso de Albuquerque the conquest of Goa, with his military assistance. He may have had his own personal scores to settle and political ambitions that he cherished. According to Tomé Pires, Goa had a large Hindu population, and many among them were of high social and economic status.<sup>19</sup> There are suggestions in the Portuguese documentation that Timmayya belonged to a lower caste, and that his collaboration could be motivated by intentions of rising socially. He became inconvenient to the Portuguese at a later stage; but initially, as described by the Portuguese chronicler João de Barros, when 'Afonso de Albuquerque heard Timmayya, he was all ears, and could not believe he was hearing a gentile, but took him rather as a messenger of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>20</sup>

In the face of Bijapuri resistance to the conquest of Goa, the Portuguese played the card of protecting the interests of the disaffected local Hindu population. The same Portuguese chronicler narrates how the Goan Hindus took an active part in the defence of the territory, and even accompanied Albuquerque in his naval sorties. There were others who revealed the Goan love for music by playing Portuguese tunes in

Albuquerque's military band.<sup>21</sup> And there was no lack of women who fell for the Portuguese men and married them, while others merely satisfied their biological needs.<sup>22</sup> A contemporary Portuguese writer, Tomé Pires, who wrote a detailed manual of strategic information about places, people, customs and commerce of the Indian Ocean region, does not fail to mention the Goan women who dressed exquisitely and danced well.<sup>23</sup> We have the published receipts of the payments sanctioned by Afonso de Albuquerque, and these include references to rewards issued to the Goan Hindus, who were vying with each other to bring more chopped heads of their former Muslim masters. Several of the local collaborators who were wounded in these exercises received compensations from the Portuguese.<sup>24</sup>

If literally thousands of *Paravas* of the fishery coast sought Portuguese military protection, accepted Christianity, and became *Colambucos*,<sup>25</sup> early in the sixteenth century and later, it was entirely due to the fact that they saw in the Portuguese a potential ally that could enable them to survive as a community against Muslim oppression. It was a complex socio-economic scenario, in which the Muslims of Kayalpatnam and Kilakkarai resisted the Portuguese assaults, with the support of Calicut. The interior-based local ruler, Martanda Varman, got involved because of his military need for elephants and horses. In the wake of the declining Pandya fortunes, he had captured Kayalpatnam. His interests became involved in the new struggle in the area following the arrival of the Portuguese. Rulers in Ceylon and elsewhere in the East also saw opportunities and threats with this evolution.<sup>26</sup>

The complexity of the situation was not limited to the Portuguese *vis-à-vis* the natives. The European religious orders, like the Jesuits and the Franciscans in South India (and it happened with other religious groups elsewhere in the East, including China and Japan), were quite often at loggerheads. The Jesuits accused the Franciscan Bishop of Cochin of seeking to place his subjects as vicars in the churches of the Fishery coast. The Franciscan Bishop of Cochin was reluctant to recognize the Jesuit Francis Ros as bishop of Cranganor in 1607. The two reached almost a battle situation with threats of violent conflict over the control of the Fishery coast. The Franciscans had a more friendly and accommodating approach in their dealings with local Christianity, while the Jesuit mood is reflected by Gaspar Fernandes, a Jesuit writing from India in 1618: 'The archdeacon is a terrible Keralite [Malabar] by nature, very discreet, and knows how to get his way, with little fear of God and less scruples of conscience.'<sup>27</sup> The Jesuits denounced the

Franciscan Bishop for wanting to appoint 'a black priest [*um clérigo preto*] as father of Christians [*Pai dos Christão*]'<sup>28</sup>

The Jesuits as usual got the better of the situation by representing to the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon that divisions among Christian *Paravas* were harming strategic state interests. The Jesuits had congregated several thousand *Paravas* on an island called the Island of Kings (today part of Tuticorin port?) to protect them against the persecutions moved by the ruler of Tuticorin and the Muslim entrepreneurs. The protection and unity of the *Paravas* was considered essential for Portuguese trade and presence in the region. They were potential allies in war, just as king Manuel had envisaged in the case of the St Thomas Christians when he sent Vasco da Gama in search of Christians and spices. The *Paravas* did actually contribute substantially with cash and services for the construction of the Mannar fort, and regularly supplied foodstuffs to Malacca.<sup>29</sup> Portuguese control of the Kanara ports, especially Bhatkal and Mangalore, on which Calicut depended for rice supplies, had further weakened Calicut's resistance. And the progressive squeezing of Calicut and its Moplah trade by the end of the 1530s made possible Francis Xavier's feat of massive conversions of the *Paravas*.

The friendly relations of the ruler of Cochin (Kochi) with the Portuguese at a time of dire need is another historic example of politics of convenience. Cochin had discovered the political advantage that would accrue to it by diverting the Portuguese away from Calicut. Later, following the collapse of Vijayanagar, the pretensions of the ruler of Travancor (Venad) in assuming the title of 'Perumal', and his interest in wresting the control of Quilon from the Portuguese, also served to give Cochin a common cause with the Portuguese. It is important to know, however, that the politics of convenience was always more complex than it appeared, and the Portuguese settlers in Cochin were often in collusion with the raja of Cochin, to the detriment of the state interests of the Portuguese.<sup>30</sup>

An important factor that called for concessions from, and reluctant accommodation by, the Muslim rulers of India and the Indian Ocean region, was the need to safeguard the *haji* pilgrims to Mecca. Portuguese chronicler Barros described the general Muslim reaction to the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean:

These kings and princes, as merchants through whose hands ran the commerce of spices and oriental riches, seeing that with our arrival in India, in the brief space of five years, we had taken control of the navigation of those seas, and they had lost the commerce which they had dominated for so many years, and especially were an insult to their House of Mecca, since already we had reached

the gates of the Red Sea, seizing their pilgrims, all of these things were so serious for them and so sorrowful, that not only those directly offended, but all of them in general so hated us they each in their own way sought our destruction.<sup>31</sup>

A brother of Zain-ud-din, author of the famous *Tohfut-ul-Mujahideen*, wrote a long poem from Malabar in the early sixteenth century which noted how the 'Portuguese forbade ships to set sail for Mecca, and this was the worst calamity', and they 'restricted vessels from sailing on the sea, especially the vessels of the greater and lesser pilgrimage'.<sup>32</sup>

The second voyage of Vasco da Gama to India provides a classic example of Portuguese intransigence: he captured a vessel returning from Mecca with many *hajjis* and some rich merchants of Calicut and their families. Vasco da Gama paid no heed to their plea for a fair deal, and burnt and sank the vessel. It seemed to be da Gama's way of avenging the killing of the Portuguese of Cabral's earlier fleet, or even the humiliations to which he had been subjected during his first visit. In his study, Subrahmanyam has reported this with much flavour, using the opportunity to launch yet another provocative broadside against 'third world' moralists distinguishing between the Eastern and Western ways of reacting to evil. Saradindu Bandhopadhyaya's *Rakta Sandhya* serves to bring this home to his readers.<sup>33</sup>

Mughal-Portuguese relations were punctuated by frequent tension, chiefly in Gujarat, due to Portuguese threats to *hajj* shipping from Surat and other ports. We have in Pires' *Summa Oriental* a short and clear definition of the Portuguese strategy: 'a Kingdom without ports is like a house without doors', rhyming 'portos' and 'portas' in his Portuguese text (*Reino sem portos casa é sem portas*).<sup>34</sup> When Akbar's aunt Gulbadan Begum and some other important ladies of the imperial family left for Mecca in 1576 some serious concessions were made to the Portuguese, but later put in doubt, after the ladies were safely back. The Portuguese had begun seeing the Mughals as their 'hidden enemy' behind most threats to their presence in western India.<sup>35</sup>

We need to balance the above picture of Portuguese treatment of Muslim pilgrims, and trade. A Jesuit account of mid-sixteenth century Malacca conveys the impression that interest in spiritual matters was minimal, and that illicit trade flourished:

The Muslims, and even kazis, utilize ships owned by the Portuguese, and on the pretext of being merchants and carrying goods they reside in places where

they have converted many to their religion and customs. They are so zealous in this mission, that many arrive from Mecca, Cairo and Constantinople and fan out to most remote regions to expand their creed. In the same boat by which Fr. Baltazar Dias embarked in Bhatkal, 20 leagues away from Goa, also embarked a Muslim with many others in his company, and carrying arms. He was going to Borneo, where his companion had converted a large section of the local population, and even the local ruler had become his convert. These Muslims are a terrible pest, and in Siam, a very important kingdom of this region, when these kazis preach, many listen to them with open mouths and shaking their hands, claiming that the breath of those words sanctifies their hearts.<sup>36</sup>

This critical and negative report confirms indirectly that in reality, with obvious exceptions and periods of tension, there was accommodation and compromise on either side. The private trade conducted by Portuguese merchants (clerics not excluded) did not recommend any wanton state action that would disrupt the trade network to the extent of blocking all chances of profitable evasion. The state too would not wish to lose the considerable yield the Portuguese customs derived from the Mecca or Jeddah-bound trade. Occasional rich seizures were generally a way of reminding people of, and enforcing, the licensing regulations, and were not intended to kill the goose that laid golden eggs.<sup>37</sup>

Once in direct contact with the reality of Asian trade and politics, Afonso de Albuquerque had tried to ensure Portuguese control of the straits of Hormuz and Singapore as a way of forcing their way into the Asian trade network on either side of the Indian subcontinent. The immensity of the task and the allurements of quick profits soon went beyond the capacity of Albuquerque to check, and he himself became a political victim of what has been described as a '*grande soltura*', a large-scale Portuguese privateering alongside official activity, leading at times to unbridled and high-handed behaviour by the adventurer element. It had become difficult to identify and distinguish official from private interests in the Portuguese 'shadow empire' to the east of the Bay of Bengal. Possibly this feature permitted the Portuguese to make the best of either status; but they also paid dearly for this ambiguity through native reactions that did not always care to distinguish the private from the official initiative.<sup>38</sup>

Portuguese freelancers or renegades could be found in most unexpected regions of Southeast Asia. They entered the services of the local rulers as mercenaries in large numbers, as was the case in Siam, Pegu and Martaban, where their numbers ran into hundreds. Fernão Mendes Pinto, the author of the *Peregrinação*, records meeting 700 Portuguese

mercenaries in Martaban, where he was sent to lure them back to Malacca at the request of its Portuguese captain, in order to assist in defence against impending Achinese threats. Just then Martaban was besieged by the forces of Burma, and the Portuguese mercenaries belied the expectations of the ruler of Martaban that they would fight for him in his desperate plight. Disappointed, he could only lament: 'Ah, Portuguese! Portuguese! How badly they have repaid everything I did for them on so many occasions! I thought I had earned the treasure of their friendship and had them as loyal subjects to help me in just such an extremity as this!' He still let his Portuguese captain leave Martaban in safety, and gave him two bracelets off his own arm, but not without reminding him: 'Do not forget to tell all your Portuguese friends how hurt I am by their ingratitude, which I am determined to denounce before God on the day of reckoning and accuse them of criminal behaviour!'<sup>39</sup> But his shock was greater when he saw his Portuguese captain and soldiers in the victory parade of the ruler of Burma. The victorious enemy was equally shocked, and on request of the defeated king drove the Portuguese away, insulting them for their cowardly behaviour and calling for them to shave off their beards to avoid fooling people that they were gentlemen, while they were no better than prostitutes. The author of *Peregrinação* claims to have been there, and confesses that he never felt so ashamed in all his life of being Portuguese.<sup>40</sup>

We could in this context recall briefly the early Chinese reactions to the Portuguese. Describing China, Tomé Pires, the author of *A Summa Oriental*, a manual of strategic information about lands, people and commerce of the Indian Ocean region, completed around 1515, reports a view of some Portuguese who had been to China, that its inhabitants were weaklings, who greatly feared foreign pirate-merchants, and that the governor of Portuguese India who had conquered Malacca, could have taken control of the entire coast of China, with ten additional ships.<sup>41</sup> It did not take long for Tomé Pires himself to gain first-hand experience of Chinese power and politics. He was chosen to lead the first Portuguese embassy to China in 1516. The embassy faced immense bureaucratic delays, and when it reached Peking nearly three years later, the emperor refused to receive it. The Portuguese were given to understand that they had done wrong in conquering Malacca, and should restore it to its legitimate ruler. The Chinese were also unhappy with the violent and arrogant behaviour of the Portuguese who attempted to build a fort in the island of Taman (or Lin Tin), hanged a sailor, and allegedly purchased Chinese children.<sup>42</sup>

The Portuguese embassy on its way out of Peking suffered humiliations and ill-treatment, and condemnation to death. Another Portuguese embassy met a similar fate in 1522, and the survivors had to desist. Two letters that are attributed to two members of the first embassy, Cristóvão Vieira and Vasco Calvo, seem to repeat the idea of Chinese military weakness in the same terms as did Tomé Pires in the *Summa Oriental*. They added that the Chinese in Canton were hard-pressed by hunger and the oppression of their Chinese rulers, and were only waiting for a signal from the Portuguese to revolt. Apparently this was more of a wishful thinking by the Portuguese captives, who wanted their own liberation, and were obviously suggesting some military operation for their release.<sup>43</sup> We may recall that Francis Xavier had convinced himself that Japan could be converted only by reaching its cultural suzerains in China first. But the difficulties of entry left him dead near Canton, off the Chinese coast, before a Chinese merchant, who had been promised a large sum of money, could take him secretly to the mainland.<sup>44</sup> It was only in 1582 that the Jesuits could officially enter the Chinese imperial court, and its Board of Mathematics and Board of Rites. But, not unlike the contemporary case of the Jesuits at the Mughal court, the long-term impact of these high visibility performances needs a more careful assessment as Asian responses to cultural offers of Europe, and not as mere political-strategic gimmicks.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, 3rd edn, 1947, pp. 75-6.

<sup>2</sup> Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> T.R. de Souza, '500 Years After: From the New World to the New World Order', *Boletim do Instituto Menezes Bragança*, no. 167, 1993, pp. 134-41.

<sup>4</sup> S. Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, London, 1995, pp. 4-5, 9, 21, 28, 57, 241. Refers to 'traditional Lusophilia of persons of Goan extraction', p. 327.

<sup>5</sup> L. de Albuquerque and J.P. da Costa, 'Cartas de "Serviços" da Índia (1500-1550)', *Mare Liberum*, vol. 1, Lisbon, 1990, pp. 365-6. In a letter dated 21 November 1545, the 'condestable mor' of Portuguese India reported to the home government that he faced a crisis situation in finding gunners for the fleets and fortifications. While the fleet requirement was for 200 gunners, he could hardly find 130. He required at least forty to fifty German gunners with experience and trusted service, and asked for gunners to be sent from Portugal. He lamented that the only arrivals from Portugal had been tailors and cobblers.

<sup>6</sup> D. Alden, *The Making of an Elite Enterprise: The Jesuits in the Portuguese Assistancy, 16th to 18th centuries*, Madison, 1992, pp. 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> T.R. de Souza, 'The Christian Missions in the Aftermath of Discoveries: Tools for Shaping the Colonial Other', in Souza (ed.), *Discoveries, Missionary Expansion and Asian Cultures*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 40-1.

<sup>8</sup>T.R. de Souza, 'The Portuguese in Goan Folklore', in C. Borges and H. Feldmann (eds), *Goa and Portugal: Their Cultural Links*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 187.

<sup>9</sup>T.R. de Souza, *Medieval Goa*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 116–8.

<sup>10</sup>de Souza, *Medieval Goa*, p. 119. National Archives of Lisbon, *Monção* 56: ff. 285 ff. This is a long transcription of the sworn complaints of villagers in Jafnapatam against the oppression they suffered at the hands of Jesuit and Franciscan parish priests. Some of the grievances are about their children being forced to water and manure the gardens of the parish house under the pretext of attending catechism classes, about adults pressed into keeping night-watch over parish plantations, about private detention cells of the parish priests, and the physical punishments to which the natives were subjected there. The inquiry was conducted by the captain of the fort of Jafnapatam on the instructions of the viceroy Filipe Mascarenhas in 1645.

<sup>11</sup>M.J. Mananzan, 'The Spanish Expansion and Christianity in Asia', in M.D. David (ed.), *Western Colonialism in Asia and Christianity*, Bombay, 1988, pp. 30–6; J.N. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, Quezon City, 1981.

<sup>12</sup>C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, Manchester, 1994, pp. 337–8.

<sup>13</sup>T.R. de Souza, 'Why Cuncolim Martyrs? A Historical Re-assessment', in T. de Souza and C. Borges (eds), *Jesuits in India: In Historical Perspective*, Macau, 1992, pp. 37–47.

<sup>14</sup>S. Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama*, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 62, 121 ff.

<sup>15</sup>E.G. Ravenstein, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 198–200.

<sup>16</sup>Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, p. 130. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup>L.F.F.R. Thomaz, *A Carta que mandaram os padres da Índia, da China e da Magna China—Um relato síriaco da chegada dos Portugueses ao Maabar e seu primeiro encontro com a hierarquia cristã local*, Lisbon, 1992. Provides useful and detailed explanatory notes. My translation here is based on his Portuguese translation of the Syrian and Latin versions. The letter dated 1503–1504 states *inter alia*:

We are pleased to inform our Fathers that a king from the Western Christians, our Frangi brethren, has sent powerful ships to these parts of India, which they reached after crossing the seas during a whole year ... After acquiring pepper and other goods they returned to their land. They opened a new route and learnt it well. Six months later the same king—may God keep him—sent another batch of six ships to Calicut. This city is full of Ismahili Muslims, who were furious at this interference of Christians. Instigated by them the pagan ruler of Calicut ordered the Frangis in the city to be killed. There were seventy of them, and five priests. The others aboard their ships escaped and sought refuge with our Christians at Cochin. Also the king of Cochin provided them comfort and vowed to protect them with steadfastness. In the meantime more Frangi ships arrived, and they dealt fiercely with the ruler of Calicut and killed many of his supporters. The Frangis established a fort at Cochin, and placed three hundred men in it with weapons to launch stones and fire balls. In further encounters with the men of Calicut, the Frangis destroyed three thousand of them. The Frangis also sought alliance with Cananore, and here too they were welcomed and given a place to set up base ... Their country is known as Portugal, and their king Emmanuel.

<sup>18</sup>A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Bangalore, 1989, vol. 1, p. 269 ff. Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, pp. 218–9.

<sup>19</sup>A. Cortesão (ed.), *A Summa Oriental de Tomé Pires e o Livro de Francisco Rodrigues*, Coimbra, 1978, p. 216.

<sup>20</sup>J. de Barros, *Décadas da Asia*, Livraria Sam Carlos, Lisbon, 1973, vol. 2, p. 429.

<sup>21</sup>A.B. Bragança Pereira, *Arquivo Português Oriental*, Goa, 1937, Book IV, vol. 1, part I, pp. 843–4. Ten Goans played trumpets, *tabaques*, *sestros* and drums.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Pay to *bailarinas* and *meretrizes*, pp. 524, 736. Cf A. Bulhão Pato (ed.), *Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque*, Lisbon, 1942, p. 40. Albuquerque was writing to his king that Indian women, the hard work and the hot climate of the region had a terrible effect on his men. He was promoting their marriages with great enthusiasm and reported success. But he also complained that many were getting easily bored with sleeping with their newly converted consorts, and sought Hindu partners.

<sup>23</sup> *A Summa Oriental de Tomé Pires*, p. 217.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 407–26, 461–6, 525, 554, 886, 910. The names of some are mentioned as Balaji Naik, Madhva Rau, Gopam Naik, Nage Naik, Yojna, Malogi, Damu Naik, Dagu Naik, Krishna etc. Some of these had other locals in their service, including some who acted as Portuguese spies against Bijapur.

<sup>25</sup> *Pukkutha venuma?* Do you want to enter the caste (of the *Farangis*)? (*Kullam + Pukkas* = caste + enter). This was the question asked of the candidates for baptism. De Nobili opposed this approach. Cf ARSJ, *Goa*, 66, ff. 80–119. He describes the efforts of the Jesuits to protect the local Christians in the 'Ilha dos Reis', against the attacks of the Hindu ruler of Tuticorin during the first decade of the seventeenth century. This island is now part of the harbour.

<sup>26</sup> J.M. Flores, 'The Straits of Ceylon, 1524–1539: The Portuguese–Mappilla Struggle over a Strategic Area', *Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies*, vol. 2, 1995, pp. 57–74. It was not so much the pearl fishery that was important for the Portuguese, but control of the Gulf of Mannar and safe access to the cinnamon of Ceylon, breaking the Mappilla monopoly over it. In Ceylon the Portuguese had gained the cooperation of the ruler of Kotte, Bhuvaneka Bahu, but had to face the hostility of Mayadune, the ruler of Sitawaka. Control of the Gulf of Mannar permitted the Portuguese to control the supply of rice from the Coromandel coast to Ceylon as a strategic weapon and guarantee of cinnamon in exchange. The Portuguese trade between Malacca and Malabar also required control of the Fishery coast. The Portuguese *casados* of Cochin had their own interest in the trade between Kerala and Coromandel. The Mappilla Marakkars of Calicut had been playing havoc with their *padaws* in the Coromandel waters in the first half of the sixteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> 'O arcediogo é terribilíssimo Malavar por natureza, mui dissimulado, e que sabe fazer suas coisas, como pouco temor a deus e menos escrupulos de consciência', ARSJ, *Goa* 17, f. 235.

<sup>28</sup> ARSJ, *Goa* 64, f. 185. Cf J. Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, Lisbon, 1969. This was a state functionary, generally chosen among the religious orders, to look after the spiritual and temporal interests of the new converts.

<sup>29</sup> ARSJ, *Goa* 64, ff. 48–56, 141, 146–7. Goa Historical Archives, *Monções* 26 B, ff. 468–9.

<sup>30</sup> J.A.R. da Silva Tavim, *O rei que foi em peregrinação a Varanasi, Cartas de Rama Varma, Rajá de Cochim*, Lisbon, 1997. S. Subrahmanyam, 'Cochin in Decline: Myth and Manipulation in the Estado da Índia', in Rothermund and Ptak (eds), *Portuguese Asia: Aspects in History and Economic History (16th and 17th centuries)*, Stuttgart, 1987, pp. 58–95.

<sup>31</sup> Barros, *Décadas da Ásia*, vol. 1, viii, p. 1. Text translation from M.N. Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca: The Indian Experience 1500–1800*, Princeton, 1995, p. 83.

<sup>32</sup> Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, p. 83. Quotes from M.A. Muid Khan, 'Indo-Portuguese Struggle for Maritime Supremacy (as gleaned from an unpublished Arabic *Urjuzal Frhul Muhyin*)', in P.M. Joshi and M.A. Nayeem (eds), *Foreign Relations of India: From the Earliest Times to 1947, Prof. H.K. Sherwani Felicitation Volume*, Hyderabad, 1976, pp. 172, 176.

<sup>33</sup> Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, pp. 208–9.

<sup>34</sup> *A Summa Oriental de Tomé Pires*, p. 215.

<sup>35</sup> S. Subrahmanyam '“O inimigo encuberto”: a expansão mogol no Decão e o Estado da Índia', *Povos e Culturas*, vol. 5, Lisbon, 1996, pp. 115–68. This discusses, on the basis of some correspondence of the Portuguese viceroy Conde de Vidigueira, his hidden role in the death of Prince Murad in Ahmadnagar at the close of the sixteenth century.

<sup>36</sup> J. Wicki (ed.), *Documenta Indica*, Rome, 1954, vol. 3, pp. 537–8.

<sup>37</sup> Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, pp. 163–4. M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> L.F.F.R. Thomaz, *De Ceuta a Timor*, Lisbon, 1994, p. 354. R. Ptak, 'Piracy along the Coasts of Southern India and Ming-China', in A.T. Matos and L.F.F.R. Thomaz (eds), *As relações entre a Índia Portuguesa, a Ásia do sueste, e o Extremo Oriente*, Macau-Lisbon, 1993, pp. 255–73.

<sup>39</sup> F.M. Pinto, *The Peregrination*, Michael Lowry (transl.) and L.S. Rebelo (Intro.), Manchester, 1992, p. 204. There were Portuguese mercenaries fighting for either side. Cf M.A.M. Guedes, *Interferência e Integração dos Portugueses na Birmânia, ca. 1580–1630*, Lisbon, 1994, p. 52, n. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Pinto, *The Peregrination*, pp. 211–12.

<sup>41</sup> *A Summa Oriental de Tomé Pires*, p. 364.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> A. de Gouvea, *Asia Extrema*, vol. 1, Horácio Araújo (ed.), Lisbon, 1997, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> M.J. Costelloe (transl.), *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*, Anand, 1993, p. xxiii.