

FROM THE OUTSIDE IN, AND VICE VERSA

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Abstract:

Travellers to Goa in the Early Modern era, like Linschoten, Pyrdard de Laval, Tavernier and Hamilton, chronicled their times in Goa through their writings. Watercolour paintings, engravings and numerous maps were produced by European artists and cartographers. Vice versa, the firang did not escape the local attention or caricature. In a dramatic representation of where the medium of power lies, the locals enriched their song, dance and other forms of folklore as the firangi made their appearance. This paper is a study of the complex colonizer/colonized relation expressed in and through art.

In modern times, we see places and people in numerous new ways - newspapers, television, cinema and the internet along with the older media of books, paintings, theatre and other forms. European people in the 16th century had to rely only on the narratives, illustrations and maps of adventurers who had been to those distant places. If we examine the cartography, landscapes and illustrations of Goa by the travellers and artists from Europe from the 16th to the 18th century, we should gain some good insights into how they depicted Goa and its people. This is our take on what they seem to have seen, drawn and painted.

In the Age of Exploration, from the 15th to the 17th century, European cartographers copied century-old maps and also produced their own based on explorers' observations and new methods of surveying. The groundbreaking invention of the magnetic compass, telescope and sextant allowed for increasing accuracy. In 1492, Martin Behaim, a German cartographer, made the oldest extant globe of the Earth. Due to the sheer physical difficulties involved in map-making, early cartographers frequently lifted material from earlier works, a practice we find in our writing today. Hence the similarities in maps of Goa drawn by early engravers like Theodore de Bry, Matthaus Merian, Jacques Nicolas Bellin and Alain Manesson Mallet.

A map dated 1574 by Girolamo Ruscelli (16th cent-1566), an Italian Cartographer shows a disproportionately large Goa on the west coast of a narrow waisted India. The Mercator projection of the world map which showed regions north and south of the Equator as disproportionately large, thus making Europe look larger than it actually is, was challenged by the more realistic Gall-Peters projection which corrected the Euro-centric image of the world. Though the distortions arose from the limited cartographic techniques and data at that time, it suited colonial rulers to portray their conquests as larger than life and in the centre of the world, revealing maps as colonial and 'political' tools.

The earliest depiction of Goa is probably the copper engraving titled '*Goa fortissima India urbs in Christianorum potestatem anno salutis 1509 deuenit*', published in the town book '*Civitates Orbis Terrarum*' by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg. The first Latin edition of volume I was published in 1572. It appears to combine an aerial view, map and landscape all in one. Ships sail in the Mandovi waters, medieval looking buildings are shown in three dimensions and a 'pagoda' stands on an island, likely Divar, off the city of Goa.

This and other map-like aerial townscapes used a mixed perspective; the overall view appeared aerial, showing the layout of features as if seen from directly above, but individual features of importance (such as churches and other significant edifices) were depicted larger than scale, in three dimensional perspective.



Auctions at the marketplace on Rua Direita in the City of Goa - from Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's Itinerario

The point of view in a 1646 map by Matthaus Merian moves higher in the sky and shows a flattened view of city roads and properties, though hilly areas are still in relief. North direction is oriented to the bottom of the map. Elephants are shown working on the waterfront and a number of ships sail in the bay. A cartouche provides a numbered key to 43 locations in the city. Divar, Choraó, Narva and three other islands are also shown. '*Goa Indiae Orientalis Metropolis*', an engraving dated 1719, by Pieter Boydewyn van der Aa, shows landmarks like the Camara (Municipality), Misericordia, Bazar Grande and prominent churches in the city. Maps by Alain Manesson Mallet, dated the same year show a narrower field of view. A map from 1747 titled '*Planta da Ilha de Goa na India e suas terras confinantes*' is a simpler political map showing the Island of Goa and the two provinces of Bardez and Salcete. Terras do Bonsulo, Terras dos Dessays Ranés, Reyn. De Sunda indicate the areas that would eventually come under the New Conquests. The map is devoid of physical features apart from hilly markings to the east. The north direction is oriented to the left of the chart. A 1764 map of the '*Carte de Port de Goa et ses Environs*' (Map of port of Goa and surroundings) by Jacques Nicolas Bellin, a French hydrographer, has place names like Pangi (Panjim), Fort de Mourmougon (Mormugao) and Aribanda (Ribandar). By the late 19th century maps of Goa had standardized, with a fully flat view, scale indication, north orientation upwards and legends for physical features.

The Age of Enlightenment in 18th century Europe tried to mobilize the power of reason in order to reform society and advance knowledge. Emphasis on learning, art and music became more widespread. Landscape painting has its origins in Greek and Roman times, with murals of landscapes painted on the walls of luxurious villas. However, it was in the Renaissance of the 16th century that landscape gained in popularity. The 'Classical' vision of the land as a place for aesthetic pleasure was revived and people looked at the landscape with renewed interest. But landscape painting was still not produced in its own right at this time, with early Renaissance painters presenting landscape largely as a backdrop to religious scenes and portraits. In the 18th century, particularly after the Industrial Revolution, the Grand Tour began. Wealthy tourists began travelling across Europe, particularly Italy, visiting places famed for their art and architecture in the quest of the Renaissance education in art. They would often buy souvenirs, such as *capricci* (imaginary paintings showing ruins or intact architecture in pastoral settings) and other landscapes.

In the 18th and 19th century landscape paintings of Goa focused on Old Goa, the Ilha de Goa of that time. Jacques Nicolas Bellin's '*Vue de Goa*' of 1750 dispenses with any cartographic intentions and renders a landscape scene of the city of Goa complete with ships in the water and elephants on the river bank and buildings awash in a surreal light. James Forbes (1749–1819) was a British artist and writer. Forbes travelled to India in 1765 as a writer for the British East India Company. His engraving 'Goa Harbour', Plate 29 from his *Oriental Memoirs*, shows the majestic Mandovi river framed by hilly land with Fort Aguada, São Lourenço church of Sinquerim and the Reis Magos Fort clearly discernible. John Johnson (c.1769-1846) served as surveyor with the Bombay Engineers, passing through Goa on survey work in 1800. His watercolour paintings include vistas of Old St. Paul's church in Old Goa, Panjim from Mandovi River and a view of Old Goa showing the Rosary Church and the New St Paul's Seminary, which fell into ruin early in the 19th century. Another watercolour shows the causeway built by the Conde de Linhares linking towns of Ribandar and Panjim. All these works are in the style of pastoral landscapes of Europe, showing a few human figures at leisure or enjoying walks. As the industrial revolution unfolded, aesthetic sensibility turned from culture to nature and the romantic gaze shifted from music and art to the Alps, the Riviera in France and the landscapes.

The richest illustrations of life in Goa in the 16th century come from Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1562-1611), a Dutch traveler who lived in Goa on the west coast of India between 1583 and 1588. In this time he acted as secretary to the Portuguese archbishop Dom Vicente da Fonseca. After he returned to Europe he wrote a series of accounts of the Indies using his vast first-hand experience as well as a number of Iberian maps, books, and manuscripts he had collected during his travels, some copied clandestinely from well guarded sources. His most famous work is the celebrated *Itinerario*, first published in 1596. It describes all of maritime Asia from Mozambique to Japan and is illustrated with 36 colored engravings made from original drawings by Linschoten. The richly detailed scene depicting the Rua Direita of Goa, is one of the most well-known engravings of the series and also surely the inspiration for the modern Goan artist Mario Miranda's illustration of a 16th century marketplace in Goa. The natives and built environment in Goa were interpreted through eyes trained in the European idiom. Thus the resting man in a plate showing a *Mesquita* (mosque) and *Pagode* (temple) is depicted like a Greco-Roman nude; and the plate titled '*Indorum Casa, Villa et Vici circa Goam*' shows a bathing village maiden à la Botticelli's Venus, albeit with her hands less concerned with covering herself.

Theodore De Bry (1528–1598) was a German goldsmith, engraver and publisher. His 'Collection of Voyages' or '*Grands et Petits Voyages*' was replete with illustrations and maps. A page from 'Petits Voyages' depicts a battle between the Portuguese Armada and Turkish soldiers on horseback in Goa. Another engraving dated 1601– '*Designatio Horrendi Cvivs-Dam Latrocinii, in Goa Civitate Patrati*' is a very

early view from Goa, an intriguing scene of apparent adultery with one person being stabbed and others showing great distress, with a pastoral scene in the background.

Some of the most dramatic illustrations of 18th century Goa focus on the Inquisition. Jean Frederic Bernard and the renowned engraver Bernard Picart (1673-1733) included '*La Procession de L'Inquisition, a Goa*' in their study of religions of the world. 'Procession of Inquisition in Goa' shows a solemn parade of monks, heretics to be burnt at the stake and other worthies. An alphabetical key at the bottom of the drawing tells us that the effigies carried by the men walking just in front of the Grand Inquisitor represent those heretics who escaped the Inquisition by dying in prison!

Lynn Avery Hunt and others write of how Bernard and Picart saw the Inquisition and its victims. "We can therefore distinguish two sets of engravings about the Inquisition in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*: first, the representations of the inquisitorial system, shown as heavily ritualized and communal; second, the images of individuals, the isolated and saddened martyrs. Bernard and Picart chose a systematic display that gave a lurid picture of the institution, on the one hand, and a benign one of its victims, on the other. The crowd, ignorant and slavish, was opposed to the individuals, who represented principled opposition."

Individuals in their various occupations have been profusely depicted by travellers, notably Antonio Lopes Mendes in his book *A India Portuguesa*. His characters and scenes include *bailadeira* (dancing girl), *sipay de administração* (soldier), *joguy em Dargaly* (yogi at Dargalim), *prossad* (offering), *zontro* (feni distillery) and numerous other occupations. The book '*Imagens do oriente no Seculo XVI*' contains reproductions of images found in a 16th century codex. It contains depictions of characters from Goa such as '*Maynatos canaris que lava roupa por dinheiro canaries de tera de guoa jintios* (washermen)', '*fereyros canaris de guoa jintios* (ironsmiths)', '*bramenes de guoa ouriuez jintios* (goldsmiths)' and more.

How did the Goan see the foreigner? Not much painting is in evidence. Unflattering imagery would probably not have escaped colonial censorship. But more importantly, we were and are primarily an oral culture, more performative and less fixed by text. This accounts for why we did not have an abundance of print and so also why we have a lot of 'song and dance' about the *paklo*, the European.

Many Konkani proverbs refer to the foreign rulers in critical and cautionary tones. Teotónio R. de Souza examines the genesis of some popular Konkani proverbs in his essay 'The Portuguese in the Goan folklore'. *Sorop mhoncho nhoi dakhlo, firngi mhoncho nhoi aplo* (None dare say that a snake is small or that a Portuguese is one of us). *Chodd firngi bhas, haddank urta mas* (Too many Portuguese speeches leave the bones with meat). *Faz favor, kottent dhunvor* (Too many speeches, smoke in the coconut shell). *Goynchi neai tea gorar poddum* (May he be a victim of Goan (Portuguese) justice).

Some proverbs also tell of change in society and language. *Sermanvak gellim axên, sermanv zalo firangi bhaxên* (I went to hear the sermon with great enthusiasm, but the sermon was in Portuguese). *Girest pielear alegre mhonttat, dubllo pielear bebdo mhonttat* (When a rich man drinks he is called an aristocrat, when a poor man drinks he is a drunkard). As nepotism and sycophancy abounded, rivalries spread. *Firngeanchea paeam melolo hoi, punn Kan'ddeachea sangata jielolo nhoi* (It is better to die at the feet of a Portuguese than to live in the company of the Goan christians).

Konkani dulcists with their brisk rhythms also refer to the *paklo*, the white foreigner:

*Yede ratiche tede ratiche pakle
bhountai khaddache
ani maim moje filoz keleai
goddache...
moddgonvam teuviagher,*



Market place in Cidade de Goa in the 16th century, by Mario de Miranda

*teuviager mez kelam redondo
tinga ek cheddum nachota cheddum nachota orxem korun bhenddu
teka ek paklo choita paklo choita burkam galun tonddu.
paklea teka choinaka re choinaka re
bhail nu cheddun tem randdu.*

loosely translated as:

Bearded white men roam at night
My mother has made rice-jaggery cakes...
At a carpenter's house in Margao, a round table has been made,
A girl dances there with swaying hips,
A foreigner watches her, with his eye to the keyhole.
Don't watch her, O foreigner,
She's no maiden, she's a widow.

*Santanichea dongrar pakle apoitai
tamddem kapodd nesliar rupia dakoitai.*

On the Santana hill, white men call
If you dance with your red dress, they offer money.

*Farar Far zatai ranantum
Pakle martai Ranneanku
Ranne martai pakleanku
Farar Far zatai ranantum.*

Shots ring out in the forest
The Portuguese kill the Ranés
The Ranés kill the Portuguese
Shots ring out in the forest.

Zagor, an early form of folk theatre is still performed today, notably in Siolim by members of both Hindu and Catholic communities. The 'other' is depicted here too through various characters. In his study of Konkani tiatr 'When the Curtains Rise', André Rafael Fernandes explains — 'Examples of these are Khan Saib, the 'Muslim merchant'; Firanghi, the 'foreigner' who has become synonymous for the historical European; Kapro, Khapri or Hapshi, the 'African' who formerly came to India as a slave; Paklo, the historical 'Portuguese' who for some embodied a sort of equivalent of any White men, and in some festivals a hippie, the representative of the international backpacker tourists who started frequenting Goa's beaches since the 1960's and who in the jagar or zagor play usually are depicted rather scantily dressed and with a somewhat strange, drug-influenced behaviour.'

The irony of reversed perspective is delightfully expressed in a cartoon in modern times, which depicts a scenario of Portuguese conquistadors viewing naked natives contrasted with a modern scene of the natives viewing naked hippies on the beach.

The colonial other was assimilated into the self by many in the higher classes via land, titles, and jobs. But the lower classes that were disenfranchised used folk forms to critique and condemn the conqueror, using 'weapons of the weak' – the slippery, transient, ephemeral and yet lasting oral utterance. The colonial rulers captured space in Goa and rebuilt it into new 'place'.

Space refers to location somewhere and place to the occupation of that location. Space as a concept is ever present but turns into a place with human interaction and intervention. The Portuguese added the glory of built space to their legacy but the true authentic place and 'sense of place' has remained in the memory of the native. The European depicted the 'otherness' and peculiarities of the native and this also was a justification to convert what he saw as a native 'space' into a Christian 'place', sometimes brutally as in the flight of the deities.

In "A Kind of Absence – Life in the Shadow of History" Joao da Viegas Coutinho wrote of three images of Goa.



A village scene in Goa - from Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's Itinerario

The first that sees Goa after liberation being returned to an essentially Indian and predominantly Hindu culture where Portuguese colonialism is both unfortunate and an aberration. The second image sees Goa as uniquely fashioned by the colonial experience. It is a view ambivalent, ambiguous and often oblivious of the original trauma of colonialism, living within a kind of post traumatic stress disorder in identifying with the aggressor. The third view Viegá Coutinho argued makes room for heroes and villains from both sides above. More importantly it is the story of actors, the multitude of men and women who were caught in a history they did not initiate and yet to quote Viegá Coutinho “transformed an alien epic into a story of their becoming.” They did so and they keep doing it and must always do so.

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