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# **PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD FOR THE NATIVE CATHOLICS: THE FATHER OF CHRISTIANS AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR CONVERTS (GOA, c. 1540–1710)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The office of the Father of Christians was created in the 1530s, with the purpose of instituting a person responsible for the care of catechumens and converts living in the State of India. The position of the Father of Christians was instituted in a historical context marked by systematic efforts to Christianize native populations by granting privileges to converts while restricting or persecuting local non-Christian populations. The purpose of this article is to analyze a facet of the work of the Father of Christians: his efforts to support catechumens and converts, “putting them in public posts or with people who could help them,” as the 1595 Instruction emphasized. The following documentary sources will be analyzed to achieve this objective: the laws of the State of India, the correspondence exchanged between the Fathers of Christians, the kings of Portugal and the viceroys, and dozens of records (produced between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth century) that demonstrate to whom such catechumens and neophytes were given to serve and what kinds of trades they would be taught.

**Keywords:** Father of Christians; Portuguese Empire in Asia; Goa; Conversions.

## PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD FOR THE NATIVE CATHOLICS: THE FATHER OF CHRISTIANS AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR CONVERTS (GOA, C. 1540–1710)

The office of Father of Christians was created with the purpose of instituting a person responsible for the care of catechumens and converts who lived within the set of conquests, factories and fortresses administered by the Portuguese Crown from the East African coast to the Far East, a set of possessions of which Goa was the political-administrative and ecclesiastical center.<sup>1</sup>

The position of Father of Christians was instituted in the 1530s, in a historical context characterized by changes in the guidelines regarding the conversion policy adopted by the Portuguese Crown in Goa. This meant the transition from an atmosphere of coexistence between Catholics and non-Christians to a phase marked by systematic efforts to Christianize native populations by granting privileges to converts while restricting or harassing local non-Christian populations. This change in orientation became evident from the 1540s onward, according to studies of the history of Catholic missions in Goa.<sup>2</sup>

This juncture was characterized by restrictions and persecution of those who professed non-Christian beliefs, when the Bishop of Goa (Dom João de Albuquerque) made an appeal to the King of Portugal. In a letter written in 1548, the Bishop of Goa mentioned that some “honorable” gentiles (native leaders, members of Brahmin caste) had been removed from their positions. The bishop asked the King for “license to give” such “offices to Christians,” in addition to asking for authorization to “abate some honorable gentiles,” arguing that these actions, his efforts, and those of the Jesuits would make the conversion of all the populations of Goa feasible within a period of one or two years. In particular, the petition made by the bishop to the governor of the State of India<sup>3</sup> stands out: that the post (*tanador-mor*, that is, chief judicial authority in the district) formerly occupied by the Gentile Krishna be granted to a native convert named Lucas de Sá.<sup>4</sup>

The request made in 1548 by Bishop Dom João de Albuquerque exemplifies one of the strategies in pursuit of the spread of the Catholic faith in Goa: the granting of privileges, employment posts in particular, to natives who converted to Christianity, to the detriment of Hindus and Muslims.<sup>5</sup> It was one of the means used

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<sup>1</sup> Catarina Madeira Santos, “Goa é a chave de toda a Índia.” *Perfil Político da capital do Estado da Índia. 1505–1570* (Lisbon: Comissão para Comemoração dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1999), 201–7.

<sup>2</sup> Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa under Portugal. 1510–1610* (New Delhi: Concept Pub., 2002); Célia Cristina da Silva Tavares, *Jesuitas e Inquisidores em Goa* (Lisbon: Roma Editora, 2004); Ângela Barreto Xavier, *A Invenção de Goa: Poder Imperial e Conversões Culturais nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Lisbon: ICS, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> The State of India (*Estado da Índia*) was the name given to the set of fortresses, settlements, and conquests administered by the Portuguese Crown in territories located from the East African coast to the Far East. Luis Filipe Thomaz, *De Ceuta a Timor*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Difel, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> António da Silva Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente; CNCDP, 1995), vol. 4, 133. Letter of João de Albuquerque to King of Portugal, November 28, 1548.

<sup>5</sup> Rowena Robinson, *Conversion, Continuity and Change* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), 48.

to encourage conversions, a strategy widely advocated by the Father of Christians. The purpose of this article is to analyze this facet of the work of the Father of Christians: his efforts to ensure that positions were effectively granted to native converts as a way of supporting catechumens and neophytes.

This study focuses on the role of the Jesuits who served as the subsequent Fathers of Christians in Goa, with attention to how they sought to ensure that converts were effectively provided with posts that, in India, had previously been occupied by gentiles. The analysis will be based on correspondences exchanged between the Fathers of Christians, the kings of Portugal and the viceroys of the State of India.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the study will analyze how the Father of Christians sought to send catechumens and neophytes to serve in the homes of Christian masters who lived in Goa—which will be investigated based on the records known as the Letters of Manumission of Goa Slaves.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, this article seeks to analyze the role of the Father of Christians in managing the destinies of the newly converted populations of Goa, in search of a transition from their gentile past to a new Christian life that would not lead them into a situation of social limbo—neither on the one hand, the rejection of the convert by his original religious group, nor on the other hand, destitution on the part of Christians. In this sense, we will deal with specific cases of native catechumens and converts who were referred by the Father of Christians to practice a trade, although often exercised this trade as a subordinate, a dependent or under tutelage.

The first part of this article deals with the attributions of the position of the Father of Christians, created in a context of transformations in religious politics, when there was a transition from a period of religious coexistence (between Christians and non-Christians, pragmatically tolerated) to a phase characterized by a search for the systematic conversion of the inhabitants of Goa.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Such letters were published in: Joseph Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1969); Joaquim Heliodoro Cunha Rivara, *Arquivo Portuguez-Oriental*, reprint. (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> The “Letters of manumission” contain hundreds of references to converts or catechumens described as “free and manumitted” people, who are taken—usually from the House of Catechumens—by Christian residents in Goa to serve in their homes, with permission from the Father of Christians. The records were produced between the years 1682 and 1760. Directorate of Archives and Archaeology (hereafter DAA), Panaji, Codex 860. Teotónio R. de Souza, “Manumission of Slaves in Goa during 1682 to 1760 as found in Codex 860,” in *TADIA. The African Diaspora in Asia. Explorations on a Less Known Fact*, ed. Kiran Kamal Prasad and Jean-Pierre Angenot (Bangalore: Jana Jagrati Prakashana, 2006), 167–81; Glenn Ames, “Religious Life in the Colonial Trenches: The Role of the Pai dos Cristãos in Seventeenth Century Portuguese India, c. 1640–1683,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (2008): 1–23; Patricia Souza de Faria, “O Pai dos Cristãos e as populações escravas em Goa: zelo e controle dos cativos convertidos (séculos XVI e XVII),” *História (São Paulo)* 39 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-4369e2020001>.

<sup>8</sup> Délio de Mendonça divided the religious policy adopted in Goa by Portuguese agents into three phases: Pragmatic Religious Tolerance (1510–1540); Militant Conversion Drive (1540–1580); Conversions or Political Stability (1580–1640). Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*.

The second part of this study situates the laws that dealt with the granting of public posts to Christians at the expense of gentiles and Muslims, as part of the measures adopted in the State of India, from the 1540s onwards, which were intended to favor conversions to Catholicism.<sup>9</sup> It intends to indicate what the role attributed to the Father of Christians was in the midst of this religious policy; more specifically, it aims to discuss what the duties of the Father of Christians were according to the laws and ordinances that dealt with the privileges of Christians in the occupation of offices. It briefly discusses the extent to which the Father of Christians was conceived as an agent responsible for providing advice both on the “procedure and life” of converts aspiring to occupy posts and on the poor Christians who, in the absence of a job and other conditions of survival, would be allowed to beg in the streets of Goa.

The third section of the article addresses the action of the Father of Christians in search of compliance with the laws in favor of conversion, more precisely the laws that determined that posts should be given to Christians, to the detriment of gentiles. The objective is to analyze the letters that two Fathers of Christians (Ignácio Martins and Alexandre de Sousa) wrote to the kings of Portugal and to the viceroys, between the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, to denounce the distance between norms and practice, petitioning for laws favorable to converts approved in the past (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) to be confirmed by the monarch and effectively fulfilled in India.

While the initial parts of this study discuss general and normative frameworks that supported the action of the Father of Christians, the final parts of the article seek to explore a more practical and daily dimension of the activity of the Father of Christians in search of support for catechumens and converts. It involves the delivery of catechumens or neophytes to Christians who reside in different parishes throughout Goa so that these catechumens and new converts would serve in their homes with the obligation of teaching them Christian manners and a trade.

Based on the analysis of dozens of records produced between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth century, we intend to exemplify to whom such catechumens and neophytes were delivered, what types of crafts they would be taught, and what other forms of support promised by the Christian masters who took them (usually from the Catechumen House) to serve in their homes. Thus, this final part, which is the analysis of the action of the Father of Christians, will address examples of how he proceeded in delivering specific people identified by name (men and women, catechumens or neophytes), to a destination (the house, the specific address of the resident Christian who welcomed them) and the person responsible for supporting them.

This article intends, therefore, to clarify that facet of the work of the Father of Christians in directing native converts to occupy trades, working against the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; Xavier, *A Invenção de Goa*.

challenges of complying with laws that promised privileges to those who converted and, in many cases, supporting of catechumens and neophytes through the delivery of them to masters for their service in their homes under the consent of the Father of Christians. In short, the goal is to analyze how the Fathers of Christians tried to provide some forms of livelihood for catechumens and converts.

### TO FAVOR CHRISTIANITY: THE DUTIES OF THE FATHER OF CHRISTIANS

Originally, the Father of Christians was a lay position. However, it later came to be occupied by members of religious orders in the main settlements and fortresses administered by the Portuguese Crown within the State of India. Indeed, the different religious orders had played the role of the Father of Christians. In Goa and Salcete the position was normally carried out by members of the Society of Jesus, in Bardez and Bassein by Franciscans, and in Mahin, Tarapur, Daman and Chaul by Dominicans.<sup>10</sup>

On December 18, 1548, the layman Rui Barbudo wrote to the King of Portugal, mentioning the other letter he had sent in the previous year in which he had dealt with “the things necessary for the good of these Christians and people of the land, of which I am in charge,” in order to occupy the role of Father of Christians. Rui Barbudo asked the sovereign to assign a “judge to hear their demands verbally,” as he claimed the native Christians were involved in continuous, never-ending quarrels by which they would exhaust all their financial resources in court. Rui Barbudo stated that he was unable to meet so many judicial demands from native Christians, “which is an infinite thing,” due to the work he had with the demands of the Portuguese. Indeed, the Father of Christians Rui Barbudo estimated that there was a population of 5,000 Christians living on the island of Goa (Tiswadi), with many more in Salcete, Bardez, Diu and Bassein: “I claim [there] to be more than seven thousand souls.”<sup>11</sup>

In 1555, the Jesuit António de Quadros mentioned that, on the island of Divar, there lived “a very virtuous Portuguese man and our friend who, for the love of God [...], took up the office of Father of those Christians, who is there to defend and do justice for all the damages that are done to it.”<sup>12</sup> Additionally, Quadros mentioned that each religious order has “a Father of Portuguese Christians, who is careful to defend them [native Christians], and to judge their petitions” in minor cases, as well as seeing to the punishments.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Maria de Deus Beites Manso, “O Cristianismo na Índia: da difusão ao confronto (séculos XVI–XVII),” in *População: Encontro e Desencontros no Espaço Português, Atas do Curso de Verão da Ericeira*, (Ericeira: Mar de Letras, 2003), 75–84; Paolo Aranha, *Il Cristianesimo Latino in India nel XVI Secolo* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 156–63; Tavares, *Jesuitas e Inquisidores em Goa*.

<sup>11</sup> Rego, *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 4, 174–78.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 48. December 12, 1555.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 212; *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 48; Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 200–201: “From Governor



According to Anthony D'Costa, the position was held by Portuguese laypeople in the early decades of its existence. Posteriorly, the title of Father of Christians was given to the priest in charge of the function, who had a lay assistant. The person responsible for assuming the role of judging the quarrels of native Christians came to be designated as Protector or Judge of the Christians and no longer as "Priest."<sup>14</sup> This article analyzes the actions of the Jesuits who had the role of Father of Christians in Goa.<sup>15</sup>

According to the *Instruction to Father of Christians*, this officer should have helpers, among them, a "Brother who will always be his companion and helper." He should also have a secular Father of Christians, that is, a lay person, "as there has always been," who will help the priest Father of Christians, and solicitor for the affairs of Christians and helpless prisoners. Moreover, the Father of Christians should have the help of an interpreter, preferably a married man, so that his wife could be responsible for the instruction of the catechumen girls.<sup>16</sup>

In consonance with the *Instruction*, the office of Father of Christians included the following actions: executing matters related to conversion; instruction, provision, and baptism of catechumens; and support for the newly converted. Among some of his obligations, sometimes during the year, the Father of Christians was required to visit the villages on the island of Goa and the surrounding areas to learn about the orphans and catechumens who live in these locations. Orphans who were children of "infidels" would be collected at the College of Saint Paul. The Father of Christians also presided over the Catechumen House.<sup>17</sup>

Catechumenates functioned with schools of religious orders, among them, the Catechumen House of the College of Saint Paul, located in Goa, administered by the Jesuits. In 1572, the Catechumen House was moved to a house adjacent to the aforementioned school, functioning in this location until 1762, when it was moved to Betim, south of Bardez.<sup>18</sup> The Catechumen House received financial support from the Portuguese Crown,<sup>19</sup> as well as from private donations.<sup>20</sup>

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Francisco Barreto on the Father of Christians being a judge of the Christians of the land in certain cases." (*Do governador Francisco Barreto sobre o Pay dos Christãos ser juys dos christãos da terra em certos cazos*).

<sup>14</sup> Anthony D'Costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa Islands, 1510–1567* (Bombay: Heras Institute, St. Xavier's College, 1965), 139–40; Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 71–74; 200–201.

<sup>15</sup> Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 135–37. The Society of Jesus was suppressed in 1759, and the Father of Christians disappeared from Goa when the houses for catechumens were extinct in 1842.

<sup>16</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 15–16. Father Alessandro Valignano was appointed Visitor of Jesuit Missions in Asia and was responsible for the revision of the mentioned Instruction (1595).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes, "A problemática da conversão ao cristianismo em Goa: Os Catecúmenos de Betim (Séculos XVIII–XIX)," *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 3 (2002): 277–305.

<sup>19</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 5, part 3, doc. 920, 1159.

<sup>20</sup> Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 223. According to D'Costa, the Jesuits in 1552 started lodging catechumens at St. Paul's and "put them through a course of instruction lasting between two and three months. [...] They are provided with food and lodging, and about the year 1557 Governor Barreto allotted 50 khandis or roughly 223 tons of rice for them. In the early years the number of catechumens maintained ate the time was ten, twelve, or fifteen. [...] It is true that when the movement towards Christianity grew under Viceroy Bragança, the number of Catechumens sometimes exceeded 700 and

According to the *Instruction* of 1595, during the period in which they resided in the Catechumen House, catechumens could not engage in dialogue with “infidels” or other people who might convince them not to be baptized. Regarding routine instruction, Catholic doctrine was required to be taught every day, usually once in the morning and once in the afternoon, for all catechumens together. However, if necessary, the doctrine should be taught individually. “Each day two practices will be carried out, men catechumens and women catechumens,” teaching them “the things of our faith” and denouncing the “falsity of their sects and idolatries, according to what each one is necessary, especially to the Moors, Jews and yogis.”<sup>21</sup> So, Catholic doctrine was taught to catechumens, in addition to discreditation of the traditions and beliefs that had been originally taught to them by their family members.

According to Délio de Mendonça, catechumen houses were very important in promoting conversions. “They prevented relapses by strengthening the faith of the converts, too. [...] The catechumenate was supposed to cut off all the roots of Hindu practices and idolatries while they were being prepared for baptism.” The stay at the Catechumen House could function as a test period, in which the catechumen was constantly under the care and supervision of the priests and others responsible for his catechesis.<sup>22</sup>

After receiving the necessary instruction in the Catechumen House and learning “according to the capacity of each one,” the catechumens could finally be baptized. In addition, there were stereotypes that guided the decision of how long it would take to be indoctrinated, for example, yogis or foreign Muslims and Jews could only be baptized after three months of catechesis, which the Father of Christians was expected to consider, since such guidelines were found in the decrees of the First Provincial Council of Goa.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the transition from catechesis to baptism, the Father of Christians was responsible for seeking godparents to support the neophytes and be able to obtain “Christian dress” for them. Such clothing would be in accordance with the quality (status), craft and caste of each one. In addition to the baptism record book of the church in which the baptism was performed, the Father of Christians was mandated to zealously record, independently, information about the date, the Christian name (and the name the catechumen had before baptism), the land of origin, and the caste of the convert.<sup>24</sup>

Concerning the phase after baptism, the Father of Christians was required to seek the means for the neophytes to remain faithful to the new religion. In this sense, he needed to pay particular attention to foreign neophytes, “so that they get

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their stay at the catechumenate was shorter.” D’Costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa Islands*, 136.

<sup>21</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> There were houses for catechumens in Cochin, Tuticurim, Bengal, Bassein, Daman, Mozambique, Thana, Malacca. Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 222.

<sup>23</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

married” in lands where Christians live and start living in them, without risk of returning to the past way of life.<sup>25</sup> Further on, we will demonstrate the work of the Father of Christians in seeking to direct converted natives (especially women) to the homes of Christian elites who promised to grant dowries for the marriages of such natives.

Another fundamental role for the Father of Christians was to ensure that some position (work) was granted to the converted natives or to direct them to the care of someone who would help the neophytes to learn (and exercise) a trade.<sup>26</sup> If necessary, the neophytes could be kept for a while in the Catechumen House, until such measures were taken, and they were not left destitute.

#### LAWS IN FAVOR OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE GRANTING OF JOB POSTS TO CONVERTS

The conversion to Catholicism tended to have negative economic consequences for converts from Hindu families, especially those who came from wealthy families, who dispossessed those relatives who were converted to Catholicism.<sup>27</sup> Without the financial support of their families, it was essential to create conditions for the material survival and social insertion of converts in the Christian communities under Portuguese administration. This was one of the roles attributed to the Father of Christians, contained in the principle of the 1595 Instruction: “Remind the Father who takes care of the Father of Christians how important this work is” and that “the poor Christians have” no one else, besides the Father of Christians “to assist them in their needs.”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, it was necessary to prevent the new converts from maintaining contact with non-Christian relatives, for fear that they would return to old beliefs. In this sense, the granting of trades and positions was essential to guarantee the livelihood of the converted natives and to avoid spreading the idea that the converts could only survive by begging.

Since the 1540s, the main agents of the conversion policy adopted in Goa have highlighted the importance of Brahmins being banned from occupying offices in the State of India. In this context, the vicar Miguel Vaz declared, in 1545, in a letter to Dom João III, the importance of the governors to use Portuguese or other Christians for the position of interpreter, denouncing the risks associated with the permanence of this function in the gentile hands, as was the case with Dadaji, who replaced his father (Krishna) as an interpreter. In the same year, Governor Martim Afonso de Sousa passed a provision in response to Miguel Vaz’s demand, forbidding the Brahmin from serving the State of India’s officials. In 1548, Bishop

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<sup>25</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> Teotónio R. de Souza, *Goa Medieval: A Cidade e o Interior No Século XVII* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1994), 114.

<sup>28</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 18–19.

Dom João de Albuquerque request that Lucas de Sá (native Christian convert) would replace the Gentile Krishna, as referenced at the beginning of this article.<sup>29</sup>

In the midst of the enactment of laws to encourage conversions in India, Governor Francisco Barreto determined that the office posts, in law and in finance, could no longer be occupied by non-Christian people. Thus, as of that order of June 25, 1557, no official of the State of India (finance administrator, treasurer, storekeeper, accountant, royal customs tenant, registrars, notaries) should use Brahmins or other gentiles. In this way, positions that were traditionally held by the native gentiles would be performed only by Christians. In addition, all *mocadões* (heads) of the offices of the parts of India were required to be Christians. This rule applied to Goa and to cities and fortresses in the parts of India.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, on March 23, 1559, a law mandated that state officials in India no longer engage Brahmins or other infidels in any office of law or finance; they should be replaced with Christians.<sup>31</sup> Délio de Mendonça points out that this law was established when D. Constantino de Bragança, one of the most fervent viceroys regarding this conversion policy, ruled the State of India. Thus, Constantino de Bragança (1558-1561) “excluded all the Brahmins from his government and took Christians in their stead. Preference for Christians in public posts formed part of measures to entice Hindus to be converted too.”<sup>32</sup>

In the minutes of the First Provincial Council of Goa, celebrated in 1561, secular justices were called upon to enforce the aforementioned law, that is: that no office of law or of finance should be occupied by an “infidel” and that it should be destined for Christians. Among the jobs that should be carried out exclusively by Christians, the following are mentioned: clerk; *xarrafo* (money changer, currency expert); *mocadão* (boat master); *naique*;<sup>33</sup> *parpatim*;<sup>34</sup> *sacador* (village tax collector); *língua* (interpreter); attorney or solicitor in court.<sup>35</sup>

On January 25, 1571, a royal charter determined that the positions of interpreter should be occupied by Christians who had the skills to perform the aforementioned function for a period of three years.<sup>36</sup> On April 3, 1582, a royal charter forbade

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<sup>29</sup> Jorge Flores, “Religião, ‘Nação’, Estatuto: Os Desafios de uma ‘Dinastia’ de Intérpretes Hindus na Goa Seiscentista,” in *Raízes do Privilégio: Mobilidade Social no Mundo Ibérico do Antigo Regime* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2011), 537–65; D’Costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa Islands*, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 7, doc. 46, 206.

<sup>31</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 49–50; Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 7, 267.

<sup>32</sup> Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 181.

<sup>33</sup> *Naique* is a word used for chief of native soldiers or courier of courts.

<sup>34</sup> Parpotim, according to Bluteau, is the one who communicates what happens in the village. Dalgado defines “parpatin” as the village crier; village porter or server. Rafael Bluteau, *Vocabulário Portuguez & Latino: Aulico, Anatomico, Architectonico* (Coimbra: Colégio das Artes da Companhia de Jesus, 1712–1728), vol. 6 and vol. 9; Sebastião Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 1919), 181.

<sup>35</sup> Rego, *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 10, 358.

<sup>36</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 77–78, 255.

gentiles to occupy “public office” and could no longer act as “tenants and contractors” of the yield of the Portuguese Crown in the State of India.<sup>37</sup>

In this legislation, the word “office” was often used with the meaning “public employment positions” (as were the posts of law and finance in the State of India),<sup>38</sup> but there were contexts in which the rules referred to different occupations, such as the prohibition of employing gentiles in the production of religious images, so that only Christians could act as painters, goldsmiths, smelters or coppersmiths (officials who made boilers, candlesticks, and metal basins) in the production of crosses, chalices and candlesticks for churches—a determination established in the First Provincial Council of Goa, celebrated in 1567.<sup>39</sup>

In the *Book of the Father of Christians*, there is a brief description about the provisions that related to the role of the Father of Christians in recommending native Christians for the occupation of posts in the State of India.<sup>40</sup> This brief description states that the Governor of the State of India, António Muniz Barreto (1573–1577) determined that the Father of the Christians should draw up ordinances and present information about “all the Christians of the land” (that is, native Christians) “who would ask for posts and positions.” Later, under the Viceroy Mathias de Albuquerque (1591–1597), Portuguese authorities proposed to change the way of granting public posts to native Christians, however, the Viceroy maintained the existing prerogative that the Father of Christians be responsible for ordinances and information about native Christians.<sup>41</sup>

Viceroy Francisco da Gama (1597–1600) maintained this rule. In the same way, Viceroy Aires de Saldanha (1600–1605) gave the offices to those who had been recommended by the Father of the Christians.<sup>42</sup> On February 15, 1619, a royal provision reiterated the aforementioned procedure that is: the posts were to be granted to native Christians in India based on testimonials presented by the Father of Christians.<sup>43</sup>

In this sense, the Father of Christians Baltasar Garcez, a Jesuit, presented information about the life of the native Christian Belchior Gonçalves. On September 22, 1609, “with respect to his poverty,” Belchior Nunes received “the position of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 104–105.

<sup>38</sup> Bluteau, *Vocabulário Português & Latino: Aulico, Anatomico, Architectonico*, vol. 6.

<sup>39</sup> See: 1<sup>st</sup> Provincial Council of Goa (Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 10.); Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 117. This rule was confirmed in 1588 by the Viceroy Dom Duarte de Meneses. Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 224–27.

<sup>40</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 26–28; Rivara, *Arquivo Português-Oriental*, fasc. 5, part 2, doc. 782, 911. The Book of Father of Christians contained instructions and copies of provisions and laws related to the spread of the Christian faith.

<sup>41</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 27–28; Rivara, *Arquivo Português-Oriental*, fasc. 5, part 2, doc. 782, 911–12.

<sup>42</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 27–28; Rivara, *Arquivo Português-Oriental*, fasc. 5, part 2, doc. 782, 911–12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 914nd; Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 125; 275.

clerk before the bailiff of the Customs of Goa,” to work for three years, receiving a salary for his services.<sup>44</sup>

Gonçalo de Moraes, a native Christian, who requested confirmation of his permanence in the post as “solicitor, appraiser and clerk of executions before the Provider of dead” in Goa.<sup>45</sup> On March 18, 1614, the royal provision stipulated that the procedure which required the Father of Christians to give information about the life of the native Christian be followed, so that such a person can be appointed to a position for a period of three years.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to this important role—of providing information about converted natives so that they could occupy trades—he was additionally tasked with providing information about those who, not having a job, were allowed to beg in Goa. This power was obtained after the Father of Christians sent a petition to the viceroy, because of the “great number of poor people” who go to the city of Goa “to ask for alms.” “Many of them take leave of work that they could do, giving themselves to the idleness [...] of begging, thus causing [...] the crippled and the blind” to lead a more impoverished life. Viceroy Dom Miguel de Noronha declared that, because of this situation, there was a shortage of workers in the villages and in the cultivation of the lands. Consequently, the Viceroy determined that poor men and women could only beg for alms if they brought, in writing, a statement from the Father of Christians that they were truly poor. If people asked for alms without having such documents produced by the Father of Christians, they would be punished “with scourges” (whipped) and, if the practice recurred, they would be subjected to forced labor (the men taken to serve on galleys and the women to work in the Gunpowder House in Goa).<sup>47</sup>

## COMPLIANCE AND CONFIRMATION OF PRO-CHRISTIAN LAWS

The above cases demonstrate the role of the Father of Christians in recommending native Christians for occupying positions and posts in the State of India, as they produced ordinances and information on the “procedure and life” of such Christians. However, the participation of native Christians as urban officials like delegates in tax collection or other occupations in the urban economy of Goa was quite marginal, according to Teotônio de Souza.<sup>48</sup> Some of the native Christians, however, after receiving training at colleges of religious orders, served

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<sup>44</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 5, part 2, 912–13nd. In the original language, the post was described as: “*escrivão dante o meirinho da alfândega da cidade de Goa.*”

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 913nd. In the original language, the post was described as: “*solicitador, avaliador, e escrivão das execuções dante o Juízo da Provedoria mor dos defuntos.*”

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 914nd.

<sup>47</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 155–57. Goa, January 14, 1630.

<sup>48</sup> Souza, *Goa Medieval*, 114.

as court solicitors and as low-status clerks in various departments of the State of India.<sup>49</sup>

Depending on the economic and political circumstances that challenged the State of India, governors and viceroys were less strict, by not demanding compliance with the laws that determined the appointment of converts to occupy public posts in the State of India. Jorge Flores analyzed the natives who assumed the role of interpreter (*língua*) for the State of India. The author asserted that, between 1550 and 1590, the natives who assumed the post of interpreter of the State of India were Christians. Jorge Flores identified a “considerable group of minor officers” who served as secretaries for state officials in India, most of whom came from the Sarasvat Brahmin caste, converted to Catholicism. For instance, Aleixo de Sá, a Brahmin, worked in the Secretary of State between the 1630 and 1650 decades; and Cristóvão Meneses worked for the viceroy Conde de Linhares (1629-1635) and later served in the Secretary of State.<sup>50</sup>

However, in general, the governors and viceroys of the State of India were quite pragmatic throughout the seventeenth century, recruiting Hindus as interpreters without forcing them to convert to Christianity, with Hindus being “shenvis,” a subgroup of the caste saravast, who specialized in administrative and diplomatic activities. Between 1599 and 1714, a single Brahmin family monopolized the role of interpreter of the State of India. It is important to highlight how in Goa, as in other regions of India, language and literary skills required for an administrative career were acquired (and passed on) within a family. If during this period there were Christian Brahmins who held positions in the State of India, such as Bartolomeu Lobo and Guilherme Pereira, it is also important to note that Hindus continued to occupy public posts, which led the Father of Christians to complain to kings and viceroys.<sup>51</sup>

In general, the State of India’s economic and geopolitical challenges led viceroys and governors to adopt more pragmatic attitudes towards measures in favor of conversions. Because of this, the Jesuits who held the position of Father of Christians in Goa wrote letters to the King of Portugal to denounce how the laws and provisions in favor of converts were not being enforced. In this section, letters written by Ignácio Martins and Alexandre de Sousa will be analyzed. Both were Jesuits who served as Fathers of Christians in Goa, respectively, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>50</sup> Flores, “Religião, ‘Nação’, Estatuto,” 541–48. The statements made in this and the next paragraph follow the considerations made by Jorge Flores.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 548–52.

<sup>52</sup> In the searched documents, it was possible to find the following information about the period in which the two Jesuits acted as Father of the Christians: Ignácio Martins between 1696 and 1698, and Alexandre de Sousa between 1706 and 1713. Charles Borges stated that Alexandre de Sousa was appointed administrator of Bassein in 1715. Charles J. Borges, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542–1759: An Explanation of Their Rise and Fall* (New Delhi: Concept Publ., 1994), 52.

Father of Christians Ignácio Martins wrote to the King of Portugal to report that, in the city of Goa, the post of *naique de cobrar os feitos*<sup>53</sup> had been created, and a person was appointed to the post of interpreter, however, such position was not designated to native Christians, disregarding the laws of the State of India. In response to the request of the Father of Christians, in 1699, King D. Pedro II wrote to the Viceroy of the State of India instructing that, “vacancies of some offices tend to be” occupied by a “natural of the land” be granted to native Christians able to perform these posts for the period of three years, “so that they reach everyone”, that is, so that a larger number of native Christians would have the opportunity to occupy a post and receive a salary for himself.<sup>54</sup>

On January 20, 1711, the Father of the Christians Alexandre de Sousa, Jesuit, said that there were many obstacles that the gentiles presented which hinder the conversion of the natives, as in the well-known the case of an almost blind elderly man who lived in the Catechumen House. The man spent his whole life working as coral carver. However, he was disowned by a gentile relative because he intended to convert to Catholicism. Alexandre de Sousa rooted his arguments in previous royal laws that encouraged Christianization in the State of India, as in the law that determined that those who converted to Catholicism would receive the inheritance of deceased gentile relatives, to the detriment of other non-Christian relatives. Alexandre de Sousa complained that, in India, the authorities were treating these laws as if they were “antiquated,” and not complying with these laws, so that the same disregard continued in relation to the assignment of public posts to the newly converted.

With regard to the question of occupying such positions, Alexandre de Sousa declared to the King of Portugal that he was aware of a single case of a native Christian who had been provided with a low position, “which I had requested for him,” while there were some native Christians “who holding six, eight, ten, and more offices, which they lease to others,” because state officials in India claim that they are their servants. Alexandre de Sousa denounced to the King that the provision “which orders that such posts not be provided without first consulting the Father of Christians” was not being fulfilled. For this reason, the Jesuit then asked the King to confirm all previous provisions and royal laws that focused on spreading Christianity.<sup>55</sup>

On October 29, 1712, Alexandre de Sousa wrote to the Viceroy of the State of India to address the provision granting posts to converted natives, after the Father of Christians presented testimony about such Christians, a provision which, according to Alexandre de Sousa, had not enforced for years. According to the

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<sup>53</sup> In this context, *naique* means a native subordinate officer who assists court officials. In the Treasury Board (*Junta da Fazenda do Estado da Índia*), there are several records of natives serving as *naique* of the Public Treasury Court (*Juízo dos Feitos da Coroa e da Fazenda*).

<sup>54</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 319–20.

<sup>55</sup> Mira Mascarenhas, “The Church in Eighteenth Century in Goa,” in *Essays in Goan History*, ed. Teotónio R. de Souza (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1989), 88; Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 6, supp., doc. 44, 134–35.



Father of Christians, the reason was that the authorities were granting the posts to their own servants and friends, to whom they would concede “three and four posts, not leaving one for a catechumen.” Alexandre de Sousa argued that the royal provisions that favored Christianity had not been repealed, while listing almost 40 laws that favored Christianity passed by previous kings or viceroys.<sup>56</sup>

The King of Portugal wrote to the Viceroy of the State of India about Father Alexandre de Sousa’s complaints on the lack of compliance with the provisions in favor of Christianity. The king asked the Viceroy to take note of the letter’s contents, inform him what these provisions are and which of them should be confirmed or revoked, following the Viceroy’s opinion.<sup>57</sup> On March 15, 1712, the King of Portugal wrote again to the Viceroy regarding Sousa’s demands, including one which would prevent a gentile petition being accepted: that the orphaned children of gentiles no longer be housed at the Catechumen House, but be sheltered elsewhere, like in the Goa jail. The King determined that the procedure should not be changed, leaving the orphans of Gentiles to remain in the Catechumen House.<sup>58</sup>

The viceroy replied that he “had no news that Your Majesty’s orders for the distribution of the same public posts have changed until that date,” claiming that such positions had been granted to natives who had converted to Catholicism, however, the Viceroy thought it prudent to notify the King of Portugal that “[The House of Catechumens] was in itself of such poor quality,” that it had been afflicted by numerous diseases, and had a public reputation as being unhealthy, to the extent that Catechumens commonly did not want to learn the doctrine, if it meant they would have to live in that house. The Father of Christians recognized this concern, so he gave some catechumens to Christian dwellers in Goa, who took up residence in their private houses.<sup>59</sup>

In 1714, the King of Portugal wrote to the Viceroy of the State of India about the information that Alexandre de Sousa had sent in November 1712, noting the importance of such laws and provisions required to support the evangelization in India in the manner that the Monarch had ordered them to be fulfilled. The King of Portugal also mentioned what the viceroy had reported about the region with regard to the sanitation of the Catechumen House, “it is so diseased and so frequent with infirmities,” leading Catechumens to refuse to study the Christian doctrine in that location and prefer “to be in private homes where the same Father of Christians had placed them.” The opinion of the King of Portugal was that he did not want the natives to be instructed in the Catholic faith in any place other than the Catechumen House. For this reason, he guided the Viceroy to look for ways to build another house, in a more sanitary location.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 6, suppl., doc. 44, 135–48. Goa, October 29, 1712.

<sup>57</sup> Rivara, fasc. 6, doc. 44, suppl., 133.

<sup>58</sup> Rivara, fasc. 6, supp., doc. 45, 152.

<sup>59</sup> Rivara, fasc. 6, supp., doc. 44, 151. Goa, November 10, 1712.

<sup>60</sup> Wicki, *O Livro do Pai dos Cristãos*, 408–9.

The final excerpt of the aforementioned letter from the King of Portugal alluded to the apparently recurrent practice of placement of Catechumens in the houses of private Christian families, for several reasons: the transfer of catechumens who lived in the Catechumen House to private individuals (Christian gentlemen), under the auspices of the Father of Christians.<sup>61</sup>

### SERVICE IN HOUSES OF “CHRISTIAN GENTLEMEN”

There is yet another dimension of everyday life in Goa linked to the world of work, over which the Father of Christians would also have an influence. It is about domestic work, which encompasses both the tasks related to the home proper of “gentlemen and ladies” residing in Goa, as well as the trades that local Christians (normally boys) started to perform for certain masters or bosses under the consent of the Father of Christians.

The services of converted natives were widely used to equip the fleets of the State of India and to perform domestic services, a type of work that we will analyze below.<sup>62</sup> According to A. J. R. Russell-Wood, in India, artisanal trades tended to be performed by indigenous populations.<sup>63</sup> Existing craftsmen in the State of India ranged from poor joiners and carpenters to wealthy jewelers and goldsmiths.<sup>64</sup> The Portuguese “employed masons, carpenters, turners, ropemakers, caulkers, [and] saddlers” to meet the demands of navigation in their territories in India.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to the essential jobs for maintaining Goa’s mercantile and urban dynamics, it should be noted that the agrarian life that existed in its surroundings also required a series of professional activities. Each village had a certain number of employees, “whose non-agricultural services were essential for the village’s economic self-sufficiency.”<sup>66</sup> The rural communities of Goa had reference to the trades of carpenter (*thovoi*), blacksmith (*vinami*), washer (*dhobi*), potter (*kumbhar*), barber (*malo*), basket weaver (*mahar* or *faraz*), shoemaker (*chamar*), and goldsmith (*shet*). Carpenters repaired gates that prevented flooding of the fields. Blacksmiths produced plows, hoes, and other agricultural tools. Potters made clay for both domestic and agricultural use. The basket weaver made, among other things, mats, baskets, sieves, and essential items for cleaning and storing rice. Shoemakers produced slippers, as well as lashes for whips and for pots of water. Barbers and washers performed their work generally as personal assistants to the

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<sup>61</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 6, doc. 44, supp., 153.

<sup>62</sup> Souza, *Goa Medieval*, 114.

<sup>63</sup> Russell-Wood, “Grupos Sociais,” vol. 2, 169–91.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 169–91.

<sup>65</sup> Chauhan, “Marketing in Goa during the 16th Century.”

<sup>66</sup> Souza, *Goa Medieval*, 80–81.

inhabitants. Goldsmiths provided gold and silver ornaments, tested coins, and pierced the earlobes of women and men.<sup>67</sup>

There are several documentary records that demonstrate the role of the Father of Christians in intermediating the relationships established between native Christians and the “elites” (men and women) who would enjoy their services for a few years, performing trades such as carpenter, shoemaker, goldsmith, washer, or barber (blood letter). This facet of the work of the Father of Christians will be analyzed below.

As already mentioned, Father of the Christians Ignácio Martins denounced to the King of Portugal that the native Christians were not being appointed to occupy public posts, in disagreement with the laws that determined this. To circumvent the situation, the priests who occupied the position of Father of the Christians were depositing converted natives in some houses, so that wealthy Christians would support them, explained Ignácio Martins.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, on January 26, 1699, Antônio Fernandes, *casado*<sup>69</sup> and a resident of the parish of Saint Lucia in Goa, took, from the hands of the Father of the Christians, a boy from the *mainato* caste (washer) to work at his home. The boy’s given name was Antônio, who was 13 years old and was “free and emancipated.” Antônio Fernandez promised that he would teach the boy the trade of carpentry and always report news when the Father of the Christians demanded it.<sup>70</sup>

Another record refers to the boy named João, born on the mainland (*Terra Firme*), a 10 year-old *curumbi* caste, who had been “bought to become a Christian,” which is why the Father of Christians determined that the boy should serve Manuel de Almeida (*casado* and living in Goa, at *Rua Direita*) for ten years “with the condition to teach him the trade [of shoemaker] and do him good.”<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Brás de Sousa declared that he received the boy André—a recently baptized catechumen—who was under authority of the Father of Christians of Goa, the Jesuit Alexandre de Sousa. He promised to teach the boy good manners, make him hear Mass on Sundays, holy days, prevent him from communicating “with his gentile relatives” and give him the freedom to go and speak to the Father of Christians whenever he wished. He was also obliged not to let go of the boy (“not leave my home”) without the permission of the Father of Christians, that is, he acknowledged that he could neither hand the boy over to serve someone else nor sell him. Finally, he declared that he was committed “to teach him the gilding trade, or make him learn another one, if so inclined.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 80–82.

<sup>68</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 6, doc. 603, 1301; Faria, “O Pai dos Cristãos e as populações escravas em Goa: zelo e controle dos cativos convertidos (séculos XVI e XVII).” December 15, 1695.

<sup>69</sup> The word “Casado” was used with a specific connotation, it means Portuguese man who come to India in service of the King, married a native woman and settled down there.

<sup>70</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 59r, January 26, 1699.

<sup>71</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 3v, September 9, 1682.

<sup>72</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 62r, July 8, 1707.

On January 27, 1688, Antônio Francisco, a master hatter living in the city of Goa, “took a Moor to have in his house” to “indoctrinate and instruct” and to teach him his trade. The catechumen boy’s name was not mentioned in the record. The Father of the Christians stressed that the boy, being catechumen, “free and emancipated,” could not be delivered by Antonio Francisco to anyone and he should present the boy whenever the Father of Christians so required.<sup>73</sup>

Fernão Gomes, *casado* and resident in the parish of Santa Luzia de Goa, introduced the 14-year-old boy Domingos, described as “weaver caste” and a native of the Ghats, to the Father of Christians, claiming that he had the boy in his house to support him, since Domingos was “emancipated and free.”<sup>74</sup>

Diogo Rodrigues—tailor, *casado*, resident of the parish of Saint Lawrence—took catechumen José into his home. The catechumen was of a free caste, without obligation of slavery, so that Diogo Rodrigues undertook to teach José his trade as a tailor, having the catechumen in his service for a period of four years.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Pedro Vaz, barber (blood letter), took the catechumen Agostinho, a *bengala* caste, with the obligation to teach him his barber trade.<sup>76</sup> Brás Dias—*casado* and living on the island of Combarjua, parish of Saint Braz—took Afonso, a *sudra* caste, 7 years of age, with the commitment to teach him the Christian doctrine and the craft of carpenter, keeping the boy for a period of ten years.<sup>77</sup>

The Father of the Christians ended up occupying a central position in the management of the daily life of young men and women catechumens and newly converted on the one hand, and of those responsible for the indoctrination and support of such young men and women on the other. Portuguese residents of Goa, officials of the State of India, priests and nuns declared to the Father of Christians of Goa their commitment to the good treatment and referral (spiritual, professional, or marital) of the boys and girls who lived under their tutelage. For example, there are cases of secular priests, who enjoyed relative social preeminence in Goa, who committed themselves to the Father of Christians to ensure this type of treatment for catechumens.

Father Francisco do Rego (1638–1689), Brahmin from the village of Neurá, vicar of the Church of Saint Matthew, took from the College of Saint Paul the Elder, “a catechumen boy deposited by M. R. Father Bento Correa, of the Society of Jesus, Father of the Christians.” Francisco do Rego declared that the boy would remain in his power to “teach and indoctrinate” him and that he was obliged to provide information about the boy whenever the Father of Christians required it.<sup>78</sup>

The priest João da Cunha Jacques, vicar of the Church of Saint Stephen, introduced himself to the Father of Christians to look after the young man called

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<sup>73</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 55v, January 27, 1688.

<sup>74</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 3r, September 22, 1682.

<sup>75</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 70r., June 28, 1712.

<sup>76</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 70v, June 28, 1712.

<sup>77</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 72r.

<sup>78</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 56r, February 11, 1688.

Damião, 17 years old, *alparqueiro* caste—one who makes a widely used type of sandal which leaves the toes out.<sup>79</sup> The Father of Christians limited the time of service Damião had to render to the priest to five years and, after this period, the boy would be free from the obligation to serve him.<sup>80</sup>

#### THE PATHS OF NATIVE CHRISTIAN WOMEN: DOWRIES AND DOMESTIC SERVICE

In relation to native Christian women, it is possible to identify that the attention of the Father of Christians was, above all, to find Christian masters responsible for providing dowries for their marriages. For example, Manoel Pereira de Castro, *casado* and resident in Goa, took a girl named Mónica “with an obligation to help with the dowry, or part of it, and leave her to marry when she reached the age for this.”<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Manuel Garcia, *casado* and living in Mormugão, took the 12-year-old girl named Teresa “for the comfort of my house, to raise her,” to provide her a dowry and seek a marriage for her. He said he would neither put her out nor remove her from his home without the consent of the Father of Christians.<sup>82</sup>

Father Bernardo de Sousa, a resident of Goa, took two neophytes who were in the hands of the Father of Christians—the Jesuit Alexandre de Sousa. They were a mother and daughter, respectively called Margarida and Marta. Father Bernardo de Sousa obliged himself to support the two neophytes and arrange a marriage for Marta, as soon as she was of age.<sup>83</sup>

Nicolau dos Remédios, from the village of Neurá the Great, who lives in the parish of Saint Matthew, received the girl Sebastiana, catechumen of six years, who was under the power of the Father of Christians. He promised to teach the girl good manners, not to hand her over to anyone without permission from the Father of Christians, and to handle her marriage.<sup>84</sup>

In return, before marriage, the Father of Christians authorized such women to serve in the homes of their Christian masters. Mateus Barreto—resident of the parish of Holy Spirit of Naroá—received the girl Jacobina, *chardó* caste. He declared to the Father of Christians that he was committed to teaching the girl the Christian doctrine and manners and that “after a few years of service,” he would grant her a dowry so that she could get married and be supported.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerário, Viagem ou Navegação para as Índias Orientais ou Portuguesas*, ed. Arie Pos and Rui Manuel Loureiro (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para a Comemoração dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1997), 176.

<sup>80</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 8v, September 25, 1682.

<sup>81</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 60v, March 8, 1706.

<sup>82</sup> DAA, Codex 860, f.60r, February 4, 1706.

<sup>83</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 60v, February 23, 1706.

<sup>84</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 61v, June 22, 1707.

<sup>85</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 56r, April 6, 1688.

The analysis of the Father of Christians' actions concerning the delivery of catechumens or neophytes to serve in the homes of Christians allows for the unveiling of the different degrees of non-free work to which they were destined. For example, Mariana Pereira, a sister of the Third Order of Saint Francis, "took a mixed-race girl by name Constância, more or less aged 12, who is not a captive", but was received as a pawn for only nine *xerafins* (the silver currency of India). Mariana Pereira took the girl with the obligation of giving her status as a free person after nine years of service, or earlier if Constância's father (Fernando Cafre, who serves Mathias Coelho Loureiro) paid the pledge or if it was proved that he had pledged her without living in a situation of extreme need. If Constância were redeemed before nine years of service, the Father of Christians would take into account the time she had already served.<sup>86</sup>

There are several cases in which such women were recognized as undoubtedly "free" where the Father of Christians would set several years for which they must serve the Christians who took them from the Catechumen House.<sup>87</sup> For instance, Manuel da Costa took home the catechumen called Luiza, 10 years old, declared free and emancipated. However, the Father of the Christians determined that she should serve Manuel da Costa, who pledged to give her "married status" in addition to "good treatment and teach good manners, for five years."<sup>88</sup>

In other cases recorded by the Father of Christians, mention is made of the promise that catechumens (or neophytes) were taken to serve in the home of Christians only for as long as they desired. On January 31, 1704, Antônio da Silva—Portuguese, *casado* and resident of the city of Goa—appeared before the Father of Christians and took a young girl named Rosa, *curumbim* caste, 25 years old, and recently converted to Catholicism. Antônio da Silva took her to have her "at his house and to serve him as long as the girl want[ed] to serve," so he signed a register committing himself to the agreement.<sup>89</sup>

After analyzing the former cases, we can consider that, although the obligation to grant dowries for the girls' marriage has been quite recurrent, there is also reference to the role of the Father of Christians, mediating the delivery of catechumen boys to serve in the homes of Christians, demanding in return that they grant dowries for the weddings of such boys. For example, Ventura da Costa, *mainato* caste, took a catechumen boy (called Alexandre), also from the *mainato* caste. The Father of Christians gave the boy to him, with the requirement that

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<sup>86</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 60v, August 15, 1706 (See also: f. 59v, September 24, 1705). This case seems to be an example of people used as a pledge. In the example cited, Constância's father probably owed a debt. Because of that, his daughter was used as a pledge in a situation of extreme need. On the practice of pawns and debt bondage, see: Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c. 1600–1810," *The Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (December 15, 2001): 67–89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3647216>; Gwyn Campbell, "Slavery In the Indian Ocean World," in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, ed. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (London: Frank Cass, 2010), 52–63, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203840573.ch3>.

<sup>87</sup> Faria, "O Pai dos Cristãos e as populações escravas em Goa."

<sup>88</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 57r., October 8, 1694.

<sup>89</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 59v.

Ventura da Costa “give him a good education” and see him married “within two years [...], helping with a dowry of eight *xerafins*.” If he did not get the boy married within two years, Ventura da Costa would pay the same eight *xerafins* “at the end of the said two years, which I will hand over to the said” Father of Christians, in addition to his commitment to report on the catechumen whenever asked. Additionally, Ventura da Costa stated that he would not allow the catechumen to walk “through gentile houses” and would force him to hear masses.<sup>90</sup>

The following case refers both to the promise to teach the native boy a trade and to grant a dowry for his marriage. This notes the catechumen Caetano, who the Father of Christians (the Jesuit Alexandre de Sousa) gave to Antônio Lopes and José Rebelo, a father and son who lived in the same house, in the village of Mandur, parish of Saint Matthew. Both promised to “teach him our goldsmithing business as much as possible,” “raise him as our son in good manners,” make him “fulfill the obligations of Christians,” prevent him from having “communication with gentiles, who are yet relatives,” and give news of him to the Father of Christians, when required. Finally, “we are obliged to help the said catechumen for his wedding, when it is time, if he decides to marry.”<sup>91</sup>

#### TO WHOM THE CONVERTED NATIVES WERE GIVEN

In short, the promise of the gentry who took the boys to serve in their homes was to teach them Christian doctrine and a trade. However, there were also cases of gentlemen who undertook the obligation to provide a dowry for the future marriage of the converted boys or, more often, in the case of the converted girls.

Less frequent are the references to payment agreements, as was the case with the promise of João Batista—resident in the village of Sancoale, lands of Salcete, parish of Our Lady of Good Health—to the boy Antônio (16 years old, born in *Terra Firma*): “This man said that [after] serving for a few years in his house, he would give the boy something like *moxara*” (allowance or monthly payment).<sup>92</sup>

In brief, the following topic is always present in the analyzed records: the promise of guardians to give information to the Father of Christians about native Christians, usually taken from the Catechumen House, who came to serve them in their homes and not to “let them go,” that is, not to pass them on to others without the Father of Christian giving permission to do so.

Generally, we have no way of knowing whether these commitments were honored, as a counterpart to the years of service provided by young men and women in their homes. Some succinct information, written on the side of the records produced by the Father of Christians, points to situations in which there were some changes, often related to the masters who took native Christians into

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<sup>90</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 61, January 29, 1707.

<sup>91</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 62v, January 27, 1708.

<sup>92</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 64r, February 18, 1709.

their homes. This care in registering precisely in which house the converted boys and girls were—serving Christian masters—was one of the duties of the Father of Christians. In effect, a decree of the First Provincial Council of Goa determined that the Father of Christians should have a record book that contained “the names of the young men, the people to whom they were given and the time they were given.” The objective was to “always know about them,” so that the masters to whom the free converted natives were given—“to serve them”—would not sell them as if they were slaves.<sup>93</sup>

In this sense, there are records associated with this attribution of the Father of Christians, to know “of the people to whom [the converted natives] were given” for their service. Such people were not allowed to “let them go,” to pass them on to other people, without the Father of Christians giving them permission to do so. The fulfillment of this guidance contained in the decree of the First Provincial Council of Goa can be found in several records, such as in the register dated 1708, referring to the case of Antônio de Sousa Cardoso. As a resident of the city of Goa, he had taken Luiza (catechumen, 30 years old, born in Surat) into his home, declaring that she was previously “at Bento Ferrão’s house,” a resident in the parish of Our Lady of Mercy.<sup>94</sup> The following year, another change was registered: the same catechumen Luiza was transferred from the home of Antônio de Sousa Cardoso to the home of Afonso Leitão, with permission from the Father of Christians. The new master kept the promises the previous one made and stressed by stating that “I wanted to help her with some dowry, if she wishes to get married.”<sup>95</sup>

In another record, it appears that José Toscano, solicitor of the Catechumens, took the boy named Antônio, 10 years old, who was in the possession of the Father of Christians (Alexandre de Sousa). He promised to give Antônio a good education, treat him like a son and “make him learn the tailor’s trade.” However, on the side of the record it is stated that: “This entry is not valid” as the aforementioned boy was already “with his mother” in the parish of Saint Thomas in the city of Goa.<sup>96</sup>

On September 14, 1709, José da Silva Vicêncio, a resident of Taleigão, in the parish of Saint Michael, took the girl named Dominga who was under the power of the Father of Christians. Later, the girl’s movement was recorded: “This catechumen named Dominga returned to the Catechumen House”, and Joseph da Silva Vicêncio was freed “from the obligations contained in this record.”<sup>97</sup>

In another record it is said that Agostinho da Silveira—*casado* and living in the parish of Santa Luzia—took a girl to his home, who was in the hands of the Father of Christians. The girl was called Mônica, she was the daughter of Raulu Chatim

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<sup>93</sup> Rego, *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. 10, 384.

<sup>94</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 63v, September 13, 1708.

<sup>95</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 65v, August 1709.

<sup>96</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 63v, April 27, 1708 (See also: fl. 61v, June 17, 1707).

<sup>97</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 65v, August 18, 1709.



and Eleguem, who live on Rua dos Ourives.<sup>98</sup> Agostinho da Silveira made several promises, including granting a dowry for Monica's marriage. However, on the record, the following information was added: "This girl has already married with some dowry given by Father Alexandre de Sousa," the Father of Christians.<sup>99</sup>

On June 28, 1712, it was recorded that the catechumen Agostinho, *bengal* caste, was serving the barber Pedro Vaz. Later, on May 3, 1714, information was added that "Agostinho stays at the home of André Cardoso, a resident of Campo de São Lázaro," who started to assume the obligations of teaching the Christian doctrine and good manners to the catechumen, while the barber "is released" from the obligation of teaching him his trade as a barber. Another record, from December 1714, states that Agostinho was no longer at André Cardoso's house.<sup>100</sup>

There are interesting records regarding converted natives who were given to other native Christians to serve them. José Carvalho, a man converted to the Christian faith—whose gentile name was Vanhê Naique, *sudra* caste, resident in Tivim, Bardez lands—took a young man called Manuel, also a native convert, who was related to his wife. José Carvalho's promise was to teach the boy Christian doctrine and good manners, in addition to taking him to work. On the record, it is said that this "young man lives on the palm orchard of Dona Francisca Ana de Lencastre."<sup>101</sup>

Pascoal de Sousa, a converted native, took the boy José, son of Saptu Chaty and Santai Xetin, from the possession of the Father of Christians. One of Pascoal de Sousa's duties was teaching José the goldsmith trade—interestingly, the surnames of the boy's parents suggest that they came from a goldsmith caste. Another promise was to prevent José from being transferred to anyone else's home, including that of his brother, the gentile Siva Chaty, who lived on Dom Sotto Mayor's palm orchard.<sup>102</sup>

It is worth mentioning the Chatim (or Chetty) caste is associated with the goldsmith, whose status was passed on to descendants. Scholars point out that the gold and silver mining trade remained among Hindus of the Chatim caste for more than three hundred years, so that the goldsmiths of the family "Chatim must have been the successors of famous goldsmith Rauluchatim, who was in the service of Afonso de Albuquerque and D. Manuel during their stay in Lisbon," between 1518 and 1520.<sup>103</sup>

Ventura Castelino was also a converted native—a resident of the Santa Luzia neighborhood, goldsmith caste—who took, from the Father of Christians, a boy

<sup>98</sup> *Chatim* was a term used to designate merchants (according to Dalgado) or more specifically a type of rich gemstone merchant. Bluteau, *Vocabulário Português & Latino: Aulico, Anatomico, Architectonico*; Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático*.

<sup>99</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 66r, October 13, 1709.

<sup>100</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fols. 70v–71r.

<sup>101</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 65, April 3, 1709.

<sup>102</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fol. 67r, April 16, 1710.

<sup>103</sup> Rui Oliveira Lopes, "Arte e Alteridade. Confluências da arte cristã na Índia, na China e no Japão, Séc. XVI a XVIII" (Universidade de Lisboa, 2011), 151–52.

named Manuel, 16, also from the goldsmith caste, son of Saptu Chaty and Santay Xetin, both deceased. Ventura Castelino promised to teach Christian doctrine, good manners, and the trade of goldsmith.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the last aforementioned cases referring to native boys taken to the homes of converts suggest that there was a search for young men who were born into families recognized for mastering an art, a craft, as was the case with the families of Hindu goldsmiths.

The examples cited in the previous part of the article suggest that the practice of Portuguese and native Christians collecting young men and women at the Catechumen House was recurrent in Goa. Thus, the Father of Christians used the strategy of making agreements with private individuals in order to direct the catechumens to occupy a trade or receive a dowry.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to its importance in the history of Catholic missions in the Portuguese East, the Father of Christians' office has been the subject of studies that favor a more general understanding of its meaning in the history of conversions to Christianity of the inhabitants of Goa.<sup>105</sup> In other studies, the focus is on specific aspects of the Father of Christians' role concerning specific human groups, such as orphaned children of gentiles or slaves.<sup>106</sup> In this article, the objective was to deal with one of the actions expected of the Father of Christians, to support catechumens and converts by putting them in some public posts or with people who can help them, according to the 1595 *Instruction*.

From the 1540s and 1550s, laws and provisions were promulgated by the kings of Portugal and by viceroys to encourage the conversion to Christianity of the native populations of the State of India, and of Goa, in particular. At that juncture, one of the "soft" and persuasive means of stimulating conversions was to favor the

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<sup>104</sup> DAA, Codex 860, fols. 67r–67v, April 16, 1710. On the role of Christian fathers in the conversion of orphaned children to Gentiles, see:

<sup>105</sup> Maria Benedita Araújo, "O 'Pay Dos Christãos'. Contribuição para o estudo da Evangelização da Índia.," in *Missionação Portuguesa e Encontro de Culturas. Actas do Congresso Internacional de História* (Braga: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1993), 305–24; D'Costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa Islands*; Ângela Barreto Xavier, "Itinerários Franciscanos na Índia Seiscentista e algumas questões de História e de Método," *Lusitania Sacra* 18, no. 2 (2006): 87–116; Xavier, *A Invenção de Goa*; Aranha, *Il Cristianesimo Latino in India nel XVI Secolo*; Tavares, *Jesuitas e Inquisidores em Goa*; Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*.

<sup>106</sup> Ames, "Religious Life in the Colonial Trenches"; Souza, "Manumission of Slaves in Goa During 1682 to 1760 as Found in Codex 860"; Patricia Souza de Faria, "A Inquisição de Goa e a conversão compulsória de órfãos," in *Estudos Inquisitoriais: História e Historiografia*, ed. Marco Antônio Nunes da Silva and Suzana Maria de Sousa Santos Severs (Cruz das Almas: Editora UFRB, 2019); Camila Domingos dos Anjos, "A Cruz e o Império: A expansão Portuguesa e a cristianização das Bailadeiras e viúvas em Goa (1567–1606)" (Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, 2016); Nandini Chaturvedula, "Imperial Excess: Corruption and Decadence in Portuguese India" (Columbia University, 2010).

converted natives in accessing employment by the State of India, to the detriment of those who did not convert.

In the normative sphere, that is, with regard to laws, the Father of Christians acquired centrality in this process of leading new converts to concrete opportunities for survival or a dignified existence. Thus, it was up to the Father of Christians to give information about the “life and procedure” of the converts, that is, to give his approval so that the natives were designated for the occupation of public posts.

One of the conclusions is that such centrality of the Father of Christians was, however, challenged in the daily life, since the laws were not being fulfilled, motivating petitions to kings and viceroys in search of confirmation of the laws that guaranteed privileges to neophytes, in this particular case, access to positions in the State of India. There was no lack of complaints from the Fathers of Christians to the kings of Portugal, denouncing how the Portuguese treated the gentiles with great honor, welcoming them into their homes and engaging with them, especially the more affluent gentiles with whom the Portuguese got involved “in dealings and business.”<sup>107</sup>

Second, this essay mentioned that another competence of the Father of Christians was to define who is truly poor, who would be allowed to beg as a way of survival. Thus, according to the laws, the centrality of the Father of Christians in the management of the destinies of the converted natives is notorious, whether favoring their insertion or reintegration into the world of work, or agreeing on forms of survival admitted exclusively to the “poor.” These forms were classified as signs of idleness and therefore repressed precisely with its opposite, compulsory work in galleys or in the Gunpowder House of Goa. The Father of Christians was therefore idealized as the manager of the destinies of converted men and women, who acted in search of supporting the neophytes, but without threatening the social order. In doing so, he was reducing the chances of converts turning to idleness and begging with its disruptive potential of the social order on the one hand, while on the other, he was providing presumably docile human workers (after catechesis and the learning of “good manners”) to serve in subordinate offices of the State of India or in the houses of Christian gentry.

Third, this essay’s expected contribution was to demonstrate, from a smaller scale of observation, how the Father of Christians sought to circumvent the restrictions he encountered when trying to direct neophytes to occupy positions in the State of India. As Father Ignácio Martins stated, it was up to the Christian priest to distribute the catechumens “to several houses” of Christian gentlemen and ladies, since the State of India’s official posts were not assigned to native Christians; otherwise, they would be left destitute. The distribution of young men and women into the upper-class households (and others)<sup>108</sup> was explained both by

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<sup>107</sup> Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, fasc. 6, doc. 603, 1300.

<sup>108</sup> The catechumens and neophytes were delivered to men and women belonging to the local elite (gentlemen, state officials in India), *gauncars* (people who claimed to be the original village settlers and had control over the agricultural land), priests (some of them from the Brahmin and *Charado* castes, the

the search for “support” for catechumens and converts, as well as by the advantages obtained by men and women who welcomed them. These advantages such as the years of service rendered in their houses, with access to the labor of boys already familiar with an art or a trade having been born into families of specific castes dedicated to a type of work, from the prized goldsmiths to washers or basket weavers.

This essay explores in a broad sense this aspect of the Christian Father as an agent of support for neophytes and converts. The Father of Christians tried to make up for the lack of neophyte appointments to positions in the State of India by other means of support. In this sense, the Father of Christians’ role worked as a mediator in the relationship between catechumens and the Christian gentlemen and ladies to whom they were given to serve. Thus, the Father of Christians enabled the incorporation of catechumens (and neophytes) into Goan Christian society, albeit in a subordinate manner, directing them to perform a trade and especially domestic work.

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most valued in Goa), nuns, widows. They were also handed over to seamstresses, goldsmiths, craftsmen (master tailor, master hatter), salesmen, and washermen (*mainatos*). DAA, Codex 860.

