

THE SUPPRESSION OF KONKANI IN GOA

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By the end of the 17th century, when the Portuguese decided to suppress Konkani, the language spoken in Goa, their once so vast an empire in the East had vanished. The Dutch had captured their strongholds and settlements in Ceylon and South India and except for Macao and what they called their Solor and Timor Archipelago, also those farther east. At the same time the Nayaks of Ikkeri had seized their forts on the Kanara Coast and though they did not eliminate them completely, henceforth they were very much dependent on and controlled by them. On the other hand the English, besides being entrenched in various ports and places, controlled the Persian Gulf trade and to a large extent also that of North-West India. The only portions of their former possessions in India they retained were the Goan Provinces of Ilhas, Bardez and Salsette and the island of Angediva, the enclaves in the north comprising territories in and around Bassein and Damaun and the lonely ports at Chaul, south of Bombay and Diu on the Gulf of Cambay. But their hold on Goa itself was precarious to say the least. On several occasions the Dutch blockaded their harbours. For a number of years the Mahrattas constituted a threat to their security. As late as 1683 they invaded the Goan territories and it was only because they had to defend their own borders against Mogul incursions that they lifted the siege and Goa was saved. Moreover the Goa treasury was almost permanently exhausted which made it impossible to recruit and equip an army sufficiently strong to guarantee its safety¹. Finally they could not depend on the loyalty of the own inhabitants, not even of all those who had been christianized.

It was in these circumstances that the authorities in Goa decided to suppress Konkani and make the use of Portuguese compulsory in their territories. They were of the opinion that by making the population Portuguese-speaking they would attach them more closely to themselves. Moreover it would be impossible for the people of the surrounding areas who up to then withstood all attempts to make them Christians to converse with them and perhaps influence them. We must bear in mind that many Christians in Goa had as yet not shed all traces of their former religion and were still attached to some of its ancient rites and practises. This move was therefore both of a political and a religious nature.

It might be well to add here that a relatively large section of the population was already acquainted with Portuguese like today, so many

¹ M. J. G. DE SALDANHA, *História de Goa*, Vol. I (Nova Goa 1925) 180ff.

Indians speak and write English. After all during this period Portuguese was the commercial language in great parts of the east. In India even the Dutch and the English made use of it in their commercial dealings, also in their negotiations with the Courts of Indian Princes. Many treaties were drawn up in Portuguese². According to an English dispatch of 25 July 1719, it was "the common language of India amongst all Europeans"³. If Portuguese was so prevalent in other parts, how much more in Goa, where the Portuguese had been in control for so many years. Their descendants, the educated, those employed in Government-service, the Clergy, all knew and made use of Portuguese.

However, the imposing of a foreign tongue on a population did not originate neither in Goa nor during this period, neither would it be the only country where in the course of history such a policy would be introduced. Thus Dom Pedro Fernandes Sardinha († 1556), the first Bishop of Brazil, who incidentally served as Vicar General of the Goa Archdiocese before his elevation to the episcopacy, prescribed the use of Portuguese both for the missionaries and the local people⁴. And in 1683 the Spanish King made it compulsory for the Philipinos to learn Spanish⁵.

In the course of the following year, on 27 June 1684, the Viceroy, Dom Francisco de Távora, Conde de Alvor (1681—6) issued a decree (*Alvará de Lei*) in which after determining that in future widows were allowed to remarry, the Portuguese language was imposed on the population. The relevant portion of this law runs as follows,

"... it is not less proper that the natives (of these territories) cease making use of their own language and all learn to speak Portuguese ... moreover it is more convenient for the Parish-priests to instruct them more adequately in the Mysteries of the Faith, in which (Konkani) perhaps they do not explain (them) as their importance demands or because the Parish-priest is not an expert in the language of the country or because the Parishioners do not know Portuguese; hence the lack of one or the other causes damage on the political level as well as to the spiritual welfare of the souls ... and in order to foster communication among all, the natives will apply themselves to the study and use of the Portuguese language and the Parish-priests and the schoolmasters will teach the children Christian Doctrine in the same idiom so that in time it will become the common (language) for all, without making use of the maternal (tongue) ... for which I assign three years within which all will in general speak in the Portuguese tongue and they will use it in all the contacts and contracts they make in our territories and not in any manner (use) the language of the country under pain of proceedings against them ..." ⁶.

² Bombay Record Office, Vols. marked Portuguese idiom.

³ J. TALBOYS WHEELER, *Madras in the olden Days* (Madras 1861) II, 307.

⁴ V. WILLEKE, *P. Vicente do Salvador als Missionshistoriker*: NZM 21 (1965) 299.

⁵ A copy of this decree is preserved in the Archives at Pastrana, Spain.

⁶ (J. H. DA CUNHA RIVARA), *Ensaio Histórico da Língua Konkani*, in: *Grammatica da Língua Konkani composta pelo Padre THOMAZ ESTEVÃO* (Nova Goa 1857) LXXI.

The above gives the contents of the law as far as imposing Portuguese and suppressing Konkani is concerned. It has to a large extent been translated from Cunha Rivara's transcription of the decree. On reading it one gains the impression that its execution and implementation would concern the clergy very much, almost exclusively, they and the schoolmasters, the latter often employed by the clergy in their schools. However, when going through the original, one discovers that the enforcing of its provisions was to be the task of all those holding authority. We read:

"And all shall observe this *Alvará de Ley* exactly ... and it shall be promulgated in all the territories of this State in order that it come to the notice of all. It shall be notified to the Chancellor of the same State, to the Captains of the Provinces and Forts, the Parish-priests of the churches, the households, the ministers of justice, officials and persons who should have a knowledge of it, in order that they may observe and obey it and have it obeyed..."⁷

Subsequently the Viceroy sought the approval of the King for his decree. A Procurator of the Crown and, so we presume a number of Councilors studied the law, agreed with it and in accordance with their views the King gave his royal assent in an *Alvará* dated 17 March 1687. In the decree the King only stresses the benefits he thought the State would derive from its introduction. It is curious to note that he does not single out the clergy as the ones to implement the provisions of the law. He only speaks of officials and others⁸.

As has been noted above, the clergy too had to concern themselves with executing the original decree of 1684. Now it is strange that the same clergy largely ignored its provisions. Thus we find that two Franciscans, Manoel das Entradas and Jorge das Saídas from Varatojo,

⁷ "E este aluará de ley se cumpra inteiramente ... e se publicará em todas as terras deste Estado para q. venha à noticia de todos. Notificação athé ao Chrel. do mesmo Estado, Cappitães das terras e fortzas. delle, Parochos das Igras., casados os ministros de justiça officiaes e psas. a que o conhecimento disto pertencer para q. ally o cumprão e guardem e fação cumprir." Historical Archives of Goa (HAG), *Monções do Reino* (MR), Vol. 49, f. 291.

⁸ "... me escreueo o dito Conde VRey em carta de 20 de Janro. do anno passado de seis centos oitenta e seis em razão de ser conveniente, justo e necessario que eu mandasse confirmar o dito Aluará da Ley e ao q. respondeo o Prodr. de minha Coroa a que se deu uista. Hey por bem e me praz de confirmar (como por este confirmo) o dito Aluará da Ley, uistas as razões de conueniencias assim políticas como para a conseruação de meus Vassalas no Esto. da India se seguem da execução delle. Pello que mando ao meu VRey ou Goudr. do mesmo Estado e ao V. gl. de minha fza. delle e mais ministrao offes. e pessoas a que pertencer, cumprão e fação cumprir este *Aluará* de confirmação de ley muito inteiramente como nelle se conthê e se declara no que mandou passar o dito Conde de Aluor VRey, sem dúuida nem contradição algũa e com as mesmas pennas, preuilegios e circumstancias contheudas na dita Ley..." HAG, MR, Vol. 52, f. 86. CUNHA RIVARA, p. LXXII, reproduces only that portion which commences with *uistas as razões* and ends with *da execução delle*.

a well-known Friary in Portugal, whose members were specially trained to preach missions were invited to conduct such missions in Goa. They preached for Portuguese congregations and also for Konkani-speaking ones. Since they did not know this language they made use of interpreters. Thus the Venerable Joseph Vaz served as such and for some months accompanied them from village to village. This was after he returned from Kanara, somewhere between 31 January and 16 Juli 1684 and 25 September 1685 when he joined the Oratorians⁹, hence after the promulgation of the decree suppressing Konkani. After his departure others took his place, for we know they continued their apostolate, though some Vicars did not welcome them in their Parishes¹⁰.

Further in the Statutes enacted in Goa for the Franciscan Province of St. Thomas in 1686 and 1697 where they speak about what has to be observed in the Parishes, many of them in Bardez, they administer, nothing is said about teaching Portuguese to the Parishioners in accordance with the decree of 1684, something one would expect were they serious about obeying its provisions. This strikes one, as in other places they refer to the decrees of the Provincial Synods which had to be observed in the Parishes¹¹.

In the years 1689—90, João da Paixão, a member of the Franciscan Province of the Mother of God, traversed parts of Kanara and Sunda to administer the Sacraments to the Catholics who for a long time had not been able to receive them. He visited among others the villages of Geddem and Chandor in Kanara, Karwar, Sodashivghar and Cabo de Rama in Sunda¹². Now the Christians both in Kanara¹³ and Sunda¹⁴ were of Goan stock. To administer to these people João da Paixão must have used Konkani, thus proving that at least some Friars knew this language and made use of it, even if it was outside Goa. We may presume that Fr. João did the same within its borders.

We also find that even after a decade had passed since the promulgation of the decree of 1684, a number of books were written in Konkani partly for the benefit of Parish-priests, Missionaries, Confessors and Preachers, as is clearly stated in the titles. They were a grammar, a

⁹ S. G. PEREIRA, *Life of the Venerable Joseph Vaz* (Galle 1953) 30.

¹⁰ Letter of King to Viceroy, February 1688, HAG, MR, Vol 53, f. 163.

¹¹ A. MEERSMAN, *Statutes of the Franciscan Province of St. Thomas the Apostle in India, 1686—1697*, Studia No. 13—14 (1964) 327—9.

¹² Report of JERÓNIMO DOS REIS, Vic. Prov., dd. 20 Jan. 1691. HAG, MR, Vol 53 B, ff. 514—15.

¹³ That the Catholics of Kanara were almost exclusively of Goan extraction is stated in the Statistics of 1722, where we also find the village of Chandor mentioned, not however, Geddem. A. MEERSMAN, *Some eighteenth Century Statistics of the Archdiocese of Goa and of the Diocese of Cochín*: Indian Church History Review 2 (1968) 105.

¹⁴ That most of the Catholics in Sunda too were originally from Goa is stated in the Jesuit Report of 16 November 1751. HAG, MR, Vol. 124A, f. 255.

vocabulary and a *Confessionário* and were composed in the years 1694—6, the first by Simão Álvares, the other two by the same and his father, Lourenço Álvares¹⁵.

That neither the Archbishop nor the Franciscans in their Parishes of Bardez were concerned about observing the decree of 1684 is clear from the following. In 1698 Dom Agostinho da Anunciação, Archbishop of Goa (1691—1713), conducted a visitation of the Parishes in Bardez and in a writing, dated 2 Dec. 1698, he certified the following:

“... I have seen and heard most of the Religious (Franciscans of the St. Thomas Province) instruct and preach in the mother-tongue of the people to the edification of the faithful and the confusion of the pagans who thus heard their own errors refuted in their own language”¹⁶.

Perhaps it was due to this statement of the Archbishop that on 16 December 1700 the Viceroy was able to write the following to the King:

“By this letter I am supplying the information which your Majesty ordered me to do concerning the Religious of St. Francis and their Missions. It is certain that they are working very much in accordance with their obligations”¹⁷.

Some years after this a Franciscan, Domingos de S. Bernardino, wrote a book or booklet in Konkani. It was an explanation of the Creed¹⁸. This Friar at one time taught Konkani and in 1713 functioned as Commissary of the Holy Office for Bardez¹⁹. In 1720 we find him as Parish-priest of Parra in Bardez²⁰. Later he was elected Vicar Provincial to complete the term of the Provincial, Manuel do Nascimento, who had died (1726—7) and Provincial of the St. Thomas Province (1730—3)²¹.

That during this period there was an ample supply of Konkani-speaking Friars for the Parishes in Bardez and elsewhere is evident from the memorial the Provincial, Clemente de S. Iria (1721—4) composed around the year 1722. He writes:

“The Province of St. Thomas has had up to thirty-two Masters in the language (Konkani) and excellent preachers in the same idiom. In the last few years thirteen of the best have died, but even today notwithstanding the bad

¹⁵ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, pp. CXVII, CCXXI.

¹⁶ The Portuguese original and an English translation of the whole document can be found in: A. MEERSMAN, *Notes on the Study of Indian Languages by the Franciscans*, NZM 16 (1960) 52—53.

¹⁷ “Senhor, Por esta carta vejo o que V. Magestade me mandó sobre os Religiosos de São Francisco e suas Missões: he certo que obrão muy conforme às suas obrigações...” Viceroy to King, 16 December 1700. Quoted by FORTUNATO COUTINHO, *Le régime paroissial des diocèses de rite latin de l'Inde des origines (XVI^e siècle) à nos jours* (Louvain 1958) 70. CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. LXXVII also refers to this document.

¹⁸ CUNHA RIVARA, p. CLXV; MARCELLINO DA CIVEZZA, O.F.M., *Saggio di Bibliografia sanfrancescana* (Prato 1879) 431.

¹⁹ F. X. DA COSTA, *Anais Franciscanos em Bardês* (Nova Goa 1926) 10.

²⁰ HAG, MR, Vol 86A, f. 39.

²¹ A. MEERSMAN, *The Provincials of the ancient Franciscan Provinces in India*: Archivum Franciscanum Historicum (AFH) 60 (1967) 96.

times and the shortage of personnel we still have eleven who are continuously occupied in the pulpits, preaching Missions and on other days when there is a concourse of people. In imitation of their predecessors, they and more than forty others do the same in the confessionals. The latter, though they do not preach in the language, since for this there is need of an extensive vocabulary, know and understand enough for the confessional”²².

From the manner in which the Provincial expresses himself, the Franciscans of his Province were not observing the decree of 1684, nor did they seem to have any intention of doing so.

From the above and the absence of any reactions or references to the decree on the part of others, it is clear that neither the Franciscans nor others observed the law suppressing Konkani. Hence it comes as a surprise that in the twenties and thirties of the 18th century, the Franciscans began insisting on the implementation of the decree. Thus the Procurator of the St. Thomas Province, obviously on behalf of the Provincial, requested the Viceroy, Dom João de Saldanha da Gama (1725—32), to insist on the observance of the decree. This he did by virtue of a *portaria*, dated 11 November 1728. But it lasted only a few days, when, so it seems; it was withdrawn²³. Subsequently the same Procurator, Ubaldo da Visitação, requested an official copy of the royal letter confirming the original law. The copy he received bears the date of 20 December 1728²⁴. A few years later the Provincial and some Friars of the St. Thomas Province requested the authorities in Lisbon to issue a document ordering the law of 1684 to be strictly observed²⁵. This was done by virtue of a *Provisão* of the *Conselho Ultramarino* or Department of Overseas Affairs, dated 19th Jan. 1732 and addressed to the Viceroy. It runs as follows:

“I make known to you Viceroy and Captain General of the State of India that (the following) was represented to me on the part of the Provincial and other Religious of the Order of St. Francis of the Province of St. Thomas in India. By virtue of an *alvará* of 17 March 1687 and by another issued to him when the Count of Alvor was Viceroy of this State (1691—6), I confirmed for him that the inhabitants of these territories should speak Portuguese and that they be catechized and instructed in the same, since it was considered

²² CLEMENTE DE S. IRIA, *Notícia do que obravão os Frades de S. Francisco, Filhos da Provincia de S. Thomé*, Publ. by A. DA SILVA REGO, *Documentação para a História do Padroado Português no Oriente*, 12 Vols (Lisboa 1947) V, 407.

²³ Report of DOMINGOS DE S. BERNARDINO, dd. 27 Nov. 1732. A. MEERSMAN, *Annual Reports of the Franciscans in India, 1713—1833*. The first part of this collection has been published in: *Studia*, No. 25, 1969.

²⁴ It might be mere coincidence, but it is remarkable that in 1728 a decree was promulgated ordering the Indians, even those in the interior of Maranhão, to learn Portuguese. M. WERMERS, *O Carmo em Portugal* (Lisboa-Fátima 1963) 239.

²⁵ It might be well to point out that only the Friars of the St. Thomas Province, who were in charge of the Church in Bardez, were involved in this controversy and not the Friars of the other Province, that of the Mother of God.

useful for the welfare of those souls and would contribute towards the security of those areas. This was observed up to the present, when the Archbishop of this city (Goa) by virtue of a Pastoral ordered that they should cease to teach Portuguese and forbade any of the native Brahmins to learn it. And since the Province of the supplicants finds itself in possession of those Parishes, which constitute these territories, to administer them and on account of the experience (they have) on the spiritual as well as on the political plane for the preservation of the State, they are aware of the harm which this provision will cause, in which the Archbishop did not have the right to interfere, (therefore) they asked me to grant him the favour to order him to observe the said *alvarás*. In deference to the same, it seems (good) to me to order you to say that you oblige the supplicants to observe the said *alvará*²⁶ in the same manner they have always been observed and to command the Procurator of the Crown of this State to use the means which are permitted (to see) that the Archbishop does not infringe on the royal jurisdiction and to revoke the orders which he may have promulgated against this *alvará*."

A later hand has added the following

"Of this either they have denied (the authenticity) of the copy because from a reply made by de Conde de Sandomil, Viceroy (1732—41), on 19 January 1734—5 it appears that the allegation referred to in this same letter was not as in truth it should be"²⁷.

When perusing the above document, we find a number of points which strike us and which raise a number of questions. In the first place we are likely to ask whether it is true that the Franciscans were the original inspirers of the decrees of 1684—7. Is it reasonable to presume that the scribe charged with drafting the reply, since it was the Franciscan Provincial and a number of Friars who had requested the present statement, took it for granted that they were the original instigators and accordingly formulated his conviction. After all the draft does contain a number of inaccuracies such as the statement regarding the implementation of the decrees and the impression he gives as if the Franciscans were administering all the Parishes in Goa. But even if we accept the imputation as correct, we are equally obliged to conclude that they were the only ones to inspire and support them. It is too much to believe that the Viceroy merely at the suggestion of the Franciscans introduced the legislation imposing Portuguese and suppressing Konkani and that the King then approved it. Others must have been consulted as well. Hence the Franciscans alone cannot be held responsible for this measure. Further from this document we cannot infer that it was malice which prompted the Franciscans to seek the introduction of the legislation and that it was the culmination of years of laziness and indiscipline on the part of the

²⁶ Of this document CUNHA RIVARA, p. LXXIII, publishes only the above. The rest we are taking from the still extant original.

²⁷ "Desta carta se tem negado o traslado, perq de hũa resposta feita plo Sor. VRey Conde de Sandomil em 19 de Janeiro de 1734(5) consta q. a allegação referida nesta mesma carta não for como na verde. devia ser." This note bears no date. HAG MR, 101A, f. 676.

Friars, as has been suggested²⁸. If this were the case, would the authorities have listened to them at all? Moreover, as has already been noted, there is no evidence that the Franciscans or anybody else for that matter bothered very much about enforcing them. In other words they did not enjoy any popularity among the majority of the Franciscans. It seems that only the Provincials and a few Friars supported the proposal to impose Portuguese. But we should not accuse them of bad faith. They may honestly, though shortsightedly, in accordance with the ideas current in the contemporary world, have considered it a good measure. It is a fact that the Provincials who functioned as such at the times the decrees were published were men of some standing. Of Diogo da Madre de Deus (1683—6) it is said that he exerted himself to collect sufficient funds to support the boys and orphans at Reis Magos, that as Provincial he saw to it that the church of Colvale, damaged during the Mahratta invasion of 1682, was repaired and that he succeeded in obtaining grants for the missionaries engaged in the Mission around Quilon²⁹. As far as Ignacio do Rosario, Provincial (1686—9), is concerned, in two documents

²⁸ This is one of the theses of CUNHA RIVARA in his *Ensaio Histórico da Lingua Konkani*. Hence he compiled a kind of *Chronique scandalous* of the Portuguese Franciscans in India. This has been taken over by others: RANGEL, *Grammática de Konkani* (Nova Goa 1933), Introduction; FORTUNATO COUTINHO, *Le régime paroissial*, 65 ff.; JOSÉ PEREIRA, *Gaspar de S. Miguel O.F.M., Arte da Lingoa Canarim, Sintaxis Coppiosissima, A syntax of standard Konkani*, published in: Journal of the University of Bombay, N.S., 36 (1967) Part II, p. 7; Idem KAREL PRIKRYL, *Principia Linguae Brahmanicae, a Grammar of Standard Konkani*, Archiv Orientalni 36 (Prague 1968) 630. There is no doubt that many disorders occurred among the Friars. But it is equally true that the Franciscans produced several authors who wrote in Konkani, compilers of vocabularies and grammarians, among the latter GASPARD DE S. MIGUEL, described by Dr. JOSÉ PEREIRA as the greatest Konkani Grammarian of all times. The Friars owed their reputation for indiscipline partly to the following. Frequently they were involved in controversies with certain instances regarding the occupancy of Parishes or with the Captains and landlords regarding exploitation. Those opposed to them would frame charges against them, one of them being that they did not know Konkani. This would be brought to the notice of the authorities who without much investigation would order the Friars to apply themselves to its study. The documents containing these orders have in turn been used to prove that indeed the Friars neglected this study. To give a single instance, in 1654 on complaints against them the authorities ordered them to found language-schools (HAG, MR, Vol 23 A, f. 100), whereas courses in Indian languages had been introduced long before this. In another place the present writer has given further information regarding the Franciscans and Indian languages. A. MEERSMAN, *Notes on the study of Indian Languages by the Franciscans*: NZM, 16 (1960) 40—54; Idem, *The Ancient Franciscan Provinces in India, 1500—1835*, Part II, Chapters 4, 10. This volume is being published.

²⁹ CLEMENTE DE S. IRIA, 465, 468, 478.

emanating from the Viceroy he is described as a man of "known virtue and with a very good reputation"³⁰.

But why did the Provincial and a number of Friars in 1732, when the decrees had been disregarded to such an extent that not even certain officials were aware of their real contents, petition the authorities for a re-confirmation of their validity. It cannot be ignorance of or opposition to Konkani, as at the time Domingos de S. Bernardino was Provincial (1730—3), the same who had taught Konkani and had written a booklet on the Creed in the same language. But chiefly as Commissary of the Holy Office he had become acquainted with conditions in Bardez. Cases of superstition were on the increase. Participation in certain rites was commonplace not only in Bardez, but in other parts of Goa as well. Thus we find a number of documents dating back to around 1725, from which it appears that the authorities were concerned about the ceremonies accompanying Hindu marriages in which, especially in the singing of certain hymns, Christians took part³¹. And from a letter of 1731 we know that in two Pastorals the Archbishop of Goa excommunicated "Christian men serving the Hindus in their ceremonies by carrying portable stands and umbrellas"³². Certain villages were very much affected as will appear further down. Besides there was always the threat on the part of the Mahrattas and others to seize Goa. And many inhabitants, also from among the Christians, were abetting them. It must be to these disorders the Provincial refers where he says that were due to the non-observance of the decrees of 1684—7.

That there were others who thought in the same way as the Provincial and wanted the decrees maintained is clear from what an Inquisitor wrote in 1731. Since it also discloses the reasons why certain sections considered the measure important and continued to support it, it might be well to include the following rather extensive quotation:

"The first and foremost reason for this so lamentable a decline (refers to a loss of souls) is that they no longer observe the law of Dom Sebastião³³ of glorious memory and the Goan Councils³⁴ which forbid the natives of the

³⁰ Goa, 24 Jan. 1688, *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*, Lisboa (AHU), DOcs Avulsos, India, Caixa 34; Goa, 28 Oct. 1688, HAG, MR, Vol. 53, f. 360.

³¹ HAG, MR, Vol 99A, f. 93 ff.

³² "... os homens Christãos que servem aos gentios nos ministérios delles levarem andor e sombreiros." King to Viceroy, 5 March 1731, HAG, MR, Vol. 99, f. 41. An *andor* was a kind of portable stand used by the Hindus to carry the images of their deities in procession. The Christians too used them to carry their statues in procession.

³³ Dom Sebastião, King of Portugal, 1568—78. I do not know of any such legislation promulgated by this King. By a law of 4 Dec. 1567 he did make it compulsory for the non-Catholics of the city of Goa to attend lectures on Christian Doctrine. This was later extended.

³⁴ As far as I am aware, none of the Councils held in Goa ever imposed Portuguese. Quite the contrary, they prescribed a knowledge of Konkani on

country to speak the language and oblige them to make use of the Portuguese idiom only^{34a}. Because they do not oblige them to observe the prohibition, it results in so great and in so grievous evils and irreparable harm to their souls and even to the Treasury of His Majesty. Thus since I, though unworthy, have become the Inquisitor of this State, the (following) villages have come to ruin: Nadora, Revora, Pirna, Assonora and Aldona in the Province of Bardez; in Salsette (the villages) Conculim, Assolna, Dicarpalli, Consua and Aquem and on the Island of Goa Bambolim, Curca and Siridião and at present the village of Bastora the Gancars³⁵ of which all find themselves prisoners and others accused and in the same manner their wives and children, since because they only speak the language of the country the Botos³⁶ and Grous³⁷ of the temples (from across the border) secretly come to these villages and (discuss) the doctrines of their sect with the men and women and persuade them to give alms for the said *pagodes* (temples) and for the decorations, reminding them of the good fortune all their forefathers enjoyed in supporting them and telling them that because they failed in the said obligation, the misfortunes they experience have overcome them. Convincing them in this manner, they move them to give the said alms and to go to the *pagodes* and there make offerings and perform sacrifices and other diabolical ceremonies, abandoning the Law of Jesus Christ which at Baptism they professed. This would not happen if they only knew the Portuguese language, because not knowing the local (idiom) they would not be able to communicate with the *Botos*, *Grous* and other servants of the *pagodes*, who only know the same native language of the country. And thus would cease the great harm which is inflicted on the Christian community who being but feebly rooted in the Faith, are easily inclined towards that which they teach..."³⁸

The above reveals the basic motives why certain sections, whose good faith we must presume, supported such a radical measure as suppressing the mother-tongue of a people. To be sure it was shortsighted and unrealistic and highly unjust, but was not considered such in those days. They felt justified especially when what they envisaged was the elimination of superstition, something which had to be achieved at all costs.

That the Franciscans during this particular period insisted on the observance of the decrees of 1684—7 was also due to an issue of a

the part of the Parish-priests. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, I, 123. Re communication with non-Catholics, the Council of 1585 has several decrees. Ibidem, 68.

^{34a} Remarkable that the Inquisitor was unacquainted with the decrees of 1684—7, a proof that they had fallen into disuse.

³⁵ A Gancar is a member of the agricultural community which exists in each Goan village. They share in the income of the communal lands. S. R. Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático*, Vol. I, Coimbra, 1919, 416.

³⁶ Boto (Bodhisatvas), a Hindu priest or educated Brahmin. Though all Brahmins are of the priestly caste, not all are trained to exercise their priesthood. Dalgado, I, 141.

³⁷ A Grou (Guru), though the term is frequently used to denote a sacred teacher who himself is an ascetic, was an individual of the Sudra Caste who served in the temples and was a devotee of Shiva. Dalgado, I, 444.

³⁸ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. C.

different nature. In 1721 Dom Ignacio de S. Theresa became the Archbishop of Goa. He functioned as such for many years up to 1739. Twice he was a member of a *Junta* which governed Portuguese India in the absence of a Viceroy, from July 1723 to September 1735 and again from January to October 1732. In the course of his career he met with a good deal of opposition either because he invited it or because the times were such. He was involved in a number of controversies, one of which concerned the Franciscans. The conflict with them revolved on the provision of churches, a right inherent in the episcopal office and on the prior right of the Secular Clergy to the parishes. But the Holy See had granted permission to the Religious to fill the office of Parish-priest and in Missions entrusted to them, for all practical purpose their Provincials did the appointing. Besides this there is another point to be considered. As a matter of fact in India neither the Bishop nor the Provincials could provide the Parishes with Pastors. These rights had been granted to the Portuguese Kings. By virtue of the so called *Padroado* rights and the privileges they enjoyed as Grandmasters of the Order of Christ the disposal of Parishes and the bestowal of benefices was exclusively in their hands. As later the Marquis of Alorna drawing on his own experience as Viceroy (1748—50) informed and warned his successor that during his time the Archbishop and others wanted the churches to depend solely on the Ordinary and not on the Order of Christ to which they by right belong³⁹.

Notwithstanding, Dom Ignacio sought to gain control of the Parishes. At the same time he wanted Goan Seculars of whom there was a sufficiently large number, to be appointed and who had a prior claim on their occupancy. The Religious would then be relieved of their posts. As a matter of fact around 1600, Dom Aleixo de Menezes had substituted the Religious in the Parishes around Old Goa. In the course of the 17th century various attempts were made to do the same in Salsette and Bardez. As far as the Franciscans in the Parishes of Bardez are concerned, they clung to them and refused to surrender them. This is understandable as they had founded them and moreover needed the income to support those working there and if possible to contribute towards the upkeep of their study-houses and missions elsewhere. The problem would become more acute as the Dutch and English monopolized the Eastern trade and impoverished Goa. Notwithstanding it would have been wiser and more appropriate had they retired from the Parishes of their own accord. They would then have been able to dedicate themselves to more specialized forms of the apostolate and to have dispatched more men to the missions. But even though they did not follow this course, it would be unjust to accuse them and make them bear all the blame.

³⁹ *Instrução do ... Marquez de Alorna ao seu successor*. Annotated and published by F. N. XAVIER (Nova Goa 1856, 1903) 96.

In the end the Padroado authorities were responsible and it was up to them to remove them when the time came to do so. But chiefly for political reasons they maintained them.

A few years after he had taken possession of his See, Archbishop Ignacio sought and obtained permission to dispose of the Parishes in Bardez. According to a decision of the Department of Overseas affairs, dated 7th April, 1728, he was allowed to provide these Parishes with Secular Priests who knew the language of the country and were otherwise qualified and in case such were not available with Regulars. He was also empowered to remove any Franciscan who did not come up to the above mentioned standard ⁴⁰. Is it mere coincidence that about the same time the King perhaps anticipating such a move issued a decree, dated 5 July 1728, forbidding the Religious or anybody else under severe penalties to seek Bulls or favours from the Holy See, something which was later repeated by a royal order of 4 August 1760 ⁴¹? Whatever it may be, when the Archbishop began implementing the provisions of the decree he was opposed not only by the Franciscans, but also by others who had grievances against him. The Archbishop himself and the Franciscan Provincial were appalled at the lack of restraint on the part of the opponents ⁴². Hence the Viceroy decided to suspend the execution of the decision and refer matters to Lisbon. Thereupon the King, on 12 April 1731, instructed the Archbishop, until the whole affair was reviewed and a final decision taken, to nominate for the Parishes of Bardez those Friars who were qualified and in case of a vacancy to grant jurisdiction to the Friars the Provincial proposed ⁴³.

But all along the Archbishop had his supporters who favoured his policy of removing the Franciscans from Bardez. Thus on 4 Jan. 1730 the *Procuradores* of the *Câmara Geral* of Bardez requested the confirmation of the decree, obviously the one of 7 April 1728, excluding them ⁴⁴. A number of months later on 16 December 1730 the King refused to grant this request and asked the Viceroy for information ⁴⁵. A group of *Gançares* forwarded a similar petition as the *Procuradores*, for in a letter of the Viceroy to the King, dated 16 January 1732, we read the following:

⁴⁰ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. LXXIX. ⁴¹ HAG, MR, Vol. 118A, f. 20.

⁴² CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. LXXX.

⁴³ "Por carta de 12 de Abril 1731 fuy servido recomendar ao Arcebispo Primas desse Estado que emquanto eu não tomava a última resolução sobre as controversias que havia entre elle e os Relligiosos da Prouincia de S. Thomé da Ordem de S. Francisco desse mesmo Estado sobre parrochiar as Igrejas de Bardes era servido interinamente ordenar que aos Relligiosos que estão parrochiar ... as ditas Igrejas 1^{he} desse jurisdição pa. o fazer e vagando alguma desse tambem jurisdição ao que o Prelade regular lhe propuzesse..." Copia da Carta de S. Magde. de 27 de Março de 1744, HAG, Cartas Ordens Portarias, No 17, Vol. 795 f. 38.

⁴⁴ HAG, MR, Vol. 99 f. 36.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, f. 35.

"The letter the Gancares of Bardez wrote to Your Majesty does not seem to me to be genuine, but was made at the request of and due to persuasion on the part of the Archbishop. I do not doubt that many of the *Gancares* want native Clergymen as their Parish-priests on account of the liberty which will result from this and also I do not doubt that Your Majesty granting this, the harm will be caused concerning which I gave an account to Your Majesty which Your Majesty approved..."⁴⁶

From the above it is clear that the Archbishop was bent on obtaining full control of the Parishes in Bardez and that the manner in which he went about it to gain supporters for his policy was in the eyes of the Viceroy suspect. Moreover in another letter, also of 16 January 1732, the Viceroy wrote to the King that the Archbishop was acting against the *privilégios da Ordem de Christo* which would result in the *ruína do Estado*⁴⁷.

At the time the Archbishop was agitating to be allowed to remove the Franciscans from their Parishes in Bardez, one of the arguments he used to justify his demand was that they were not conversant with the language of the country. He even wrote to the King who on 3 April 1732 replied that in case there were Friars deficient on this point, he should remove them and send them to their Superior⁴⁸. But the Friars in India countered by asserting that Konkani was no longer required and referred to the Conde de Alvor. Moreover they accused the Archbishop, as we have seen, that he had forbidden the teaching of Portuguese, especially to the Brahmins, something which was equally unjust. However, there seems to

⁴⁶ "A Carta que escreuerão a V. Magde. os gancares de Bardes não me parece affectada mas feita a requerimento ou por persuações do Arcebispo Primas, não duuido que muitos dos Gancares queirão clérigos naturaes por seus Párochos pella Liberdade que disso lhes resulta e tãobem não duuido que concedêndolhe V. Magde. esta graça se seguirão os prejuizos de que ja dei conta a V. Magde. a qual V. Magde. aprovou e me comprometo no q. ella contem, alem do q. se me offerece dizer a V. Magde. que esta materia esta cometida a meza de Consciencia e que V. Magde. foi seruido declarar que aquelle Tribunal tocava." Goa, 16 Jan. 1732. Viceroy." HAG, MR, Vol. 99, f. 40. A refutation of the allegations of the Gancares was written by one of the Friars: Discurso apolo-gético em que se mostra a falsidade da queixa que os Canarins com informe do Bispo de Goa, D. Ignacio de S. Teresa, remeterão ao Conselho do Ultramar contra os Religiosos Franciscanos, Párocos da Provincia de Bardes. É nell' Archivio della Torre del Tombo de Lisbona. Marcellino da Civezza, *Saggio*, No. 148. CUNHA RIVARA who seems to have been rather fond of collecting scandals regarding the clergy gives the following description of Archbishop Ignacio de S. Teresa. He refers to the Instruction of the Marquis de Pombal, a very suspect source, and a letter of the Viceroy, dd. 27 January 1729: "No Arcebispo, alem da hypocrisia e fanatismo prevalecia o orgulho, a arrogancia e a ambição de metter debaixo de sua jurisdição não so a todos os Regulares, mas o Estado temporal da India". *Ensaio Histórico*, p. LXXIX.

⁴⁷ HAG, MR, Vol. 99 f. 211.

⁴⁸ HAG, MR, Vol. 101 B, f. 1141.

have been some doubt as to the veracity of this accusation. The only place where it is found is in the letter of the Department of Overseas Affairs, dated 19 January 1732. But a later hand, after 19 January 1734—5, had added a remark that the authenticity of the copy had been questioned as it contained a false allegation⁴⁹. Though it is not said which statement was considered false, it seems that it concerned the Archbishop's prohibition to teach Portuguese.

Subsequently in Goa both the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil (1732—41), and the *Mesa da Consciencia* sided with the Archbishop as far as his insistence on the Vicars knowing Konkani is concerned⁵⁰. They found that what the Archbishop demanded was not against the decrees of 1684—7. Obviously they were hardly acquainted with them. But even though the Archbishop had won a point, he was bent on obtaining full rights over the Parishes in Bardez. Hence the language-dispute with which this problem was bound up, continued. The Franciscans too refused to surrender and appealed to Lisbon. The King reacted to this appeal and sent the following instruction to the Viceroy:

"I make known to you, Conde de Sandomil, Viceroy and Captain General of India, that on considering the representation which the Procurator General of the Province of St. Thomas of this State made, that the *Alvará* which orders that the natives of the country speak the Portuguese language and be catechized and instructed in it, it seems to me (good) to order that you see to it that the *Alvará* of 1687 be strictly observed and chiefly that in the schools the Portuguese language be taught and you will take special care that the Parish-priests and others are acquainted with the language of the country and that they be examined according to what my orders dispose. El Rey, Lisboa, 16 April 1739⁵¹".

This instruction of the King contains a contradiction. On the one hand he orders the *Alvará* of 1687 to be observed and on the other that the Parish-priests be conversant with Konkani and be examined in the same language. Had the King himself or another interpreted the suppression of Konkani in this manner or had the Franciscan Procurator in his application suggested it? In that case the Franciscans had modified their stand.

But even then, though Dom Ignacio de S. Theresa had died in 1739, the controversy did not abate, for by a writing of 27 March 1744, the King ordered that what he had determined in his letter of 12 April 1731, should be observed⁵². The Friars were maintained in the Parishes of Bardez.

But that same year, a new Archbishop, Dom Lourenço de S. Maria O.F.M. (1744—50) arrived from Portugal. Had he together with other instructions received any regarding the implementation of the decrees of 1684—7. At any rate on 21 November 1745 he ordered them to be strictly

⁴⁹ Note 27.

⁵⁰ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. LXXXI. ⁵¹ HAG, MR, Vol. 109, f. 126.

⁵² Note 43.

observed. But like all other such orders hardly any attention was paid to them⁵³.

During the period the controversy regarding the observance of the suppression-decrees raged, there were always among the Missionaries a number who studied Konkani and made use of it. There were some who did so because the Archbishop insisted on its use in the Parishes. Others cultivated it for its own sake and because they considered the measure unjust. Thus we find that Karel Prikryl S.J. in the years 1748—61 studied Konkani and wrote a Grammar which has recently been published by JOSÉ PEREIRA⁵⁴. And in 1758 THEOTONIO JOSEPH S.J. published a *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* in three parts, the first of which was in Konkani⁵⁵. As far as the Franciscans are concerned we do not hear of any Konkani writings they produced. But though our sources are scanty, there is evidence that throughout there were at least some who knew the language. We have seen that in 1722 they still had a goodly number who were acquainted with Konkani, some of whom were still alive during the period they clashed with the Archbishop. Then in the years 1766—7 we find that a large percentage of the Friars knew Konkani, some of whom had studied it before the last of the 1722 group had died.

The years 1766—7 were crucial for the Franciscans in Bardez, for it was in those years they were expelled from their Parishes there. Here too the language issue served as a reason to bring about their removal.

According to COUTINHO their expulsion was chiefly due to agitation on the part of a political organization, the *Câmara de Bardez*. The members of this body assembled a dossier of complaints and forwarded it to the authorities in Goa⁵⁶. The correctness of this statement is borne out by documents which are still extant. In a letter, dated Lisbon, 23 April 1766, the Secretary of State writes to the Viceroy that he is forwarding an undated petition of the *Câmara de Bardez* asking the King to order the removal of the Franciscans from their Province. They supply the King with a number of reasons why they are making the request, among them "that they (the Franciscans) are completely ignorant of the language of the country, that they cannot know it as up to the present they have never known it"⁵⁷, quite a comprehensive accusation and on this account quite innocent and eminently refutable.

The move to expell the Friars however, did not receive unanimous support. When the people in Bardez were informed about it, many protested and in petitions addressed to the King defended the Friars and urged their retention. They emanated from the following villages and

⁵³ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, pp. CV—CVI.

⁵⁴ Note 28.

⁵⁵ CUNHA RIVARA, *Ensaio Histórico*, p. CLXV.

⁵⁶ COUTINHO, *Le régime paroissial*, 74.

⁵⁷ HAG, MR, Vol. 139, f. 405, 409. That it was the *Câmara Geral de Bardez* that requested the removal of the Friars is clear from other testimonies as well. Ibidem, Vol. 143 B, ff. 847, 877.

parishes: Sirula, Siolim, Verula, Socorro, Colvalle, Nagoa, Parra, Pilerne, Connaca, Guirim, Tivim, Anjuna, Mapuça and Nelur. They are all dated between 18 January and 5 February 1767. Besides expressions in favour of the Friars they contended that the request was made by "persons without character who had never been commissioned to make such a request"⁵⁸.

But what concerns us here most is whether the contemporary Friars were unacquainted with Konkani as the members of the *Câmara de Bardez* contended. This has bearing on the veracity of their other accusations as well. Now we find that the Provincial, Mathias de S. Rita (1766—8), on 26 November 1766 gave orders to the Secretary of the Province to compose a list of those Friars who were then still manning the Parishes of Bardez and to append to each name a note whether he knew Konkani. From this list it is clear that the vast majority were acquainted with this language⁵⁹. Further on 9 February 1767 the same Provincial requested Christovão de S. Rita, a member of the Province and Konkani examiner of the Archdiocese by appointment of Archbishop António Taveira da Neiva Brum (1750—75), to examine the Friars and list those who were conversant with Konkani. His list contains the names of forty Friars, more than sufficient for the Bardez Parishes⁶⁰. This represents a very high percentage, as according to the statistics of 1 February 1770, there were only 122 Friars in the whole Province including Students, Lay brothers and those absent in Portugal or on the quest. Finally from the offices certain Friars, mentioned in the same statistics, occupied, it is evident that the Franciscans were to say the least interested in Konkani. Thus Manoel de S. Maria is given as *Mestre da lingoa da terra* at St. Francis Friary, Old Goa; José da Conceição as *Examinador de Moral e Lingoa da Terra pello Exmo. Snor Diocezano* at Reis Magos; Christovão de S. Rita as *Mestre da Lingoa da terra* at Reis Magos; Francisco de S. Thiago as *Examinador de Moral e Lingoa pello Excmo Snor Diocezano* at Oxel⁶¹.

As in the past the reason why certain sections agitated for the removal of the Franciscans from Bardez, was not that they were ignorant as far as Konkani is concerned. They were of another order, but this has already been described in another place.

⁵⁸ HAG, MR, Vol. 143 B, ff. 839—877. That the petitions from the *Gancares* of these places were sent to Portugal is certain. They can be found in the Biblioteca Nacional of Lisbon, MSS, Caixa I, 4^{bis}, doc. 18, as Fr. E. R. Hambye, S.J. of de Nobili College, Poona, kindly informed the present writer.

⁵⁹ Appendix I.

⁶⁰ Appendix II.

⁶¹ HAG, MR, 144 B, f. 632 pp.

Appendix I

List of Franciscan Parish-priests of the Bardez Parishes, composed by the Secretary of the St. Thomas Province, Manoel de S. Rita, 26 Nov. 1766.

Reis Magos, Alexandre da Piedade, 35, Sabe a lingua do Paiz ⁶².

Nerul, Manoel do Rosário, 36, Sabe a lingua.

Candolim, Bernardo de S. Rita, 64, Sabe a lingua.

Calangute, Faustino de S. Anna, 43, See Appendix II

Linhares, Estacio de Christo, 61, Sabe a lingua.

Pilerne, Antonio de Nossa Senhora, 60.

Guirim, Luiz da Madre de Deus, 58, Sabe a lingua.

Nagoa, Lucas de S. Diogo, 67.

Parra, António da Encarnação, 44, Sabe a lingua.

Anjuna, João da Madre de Deus, 44, Sabe a lingua.

Siolim, João do Espírito Santo, 56, See appendix II.

João da Trindade, 73, Sabe a lingua.

Oxel, Vicente da Madre de Deus, 47, Sabe a lingua.

Colvale, Manoel de S. Maria, 44, Sabe a lingua.

Revora, Henrique de S. Anna, 47, See appendix II.

Tivim, Luiz da Encarnação, 42, Sabe a lingua.

Moirá, António da Paixão, 76, Sabe a lingua.

Mapuça, Manoel de Jesus, 57, Sabe a lingua.

Aldona, João de S. Quiteria, 46.

Naxinola, Manoel de S. Clara, 46.

Ucassaim, José de Jesus, 33, Sabe a lingua.

Socorro, António de S. Rita, 38, Sabe a lingua

Pomburpa, Manoel Eusebio dos Martyres, 49.

Clemente da Ressurreição, 58, Sabe a lingua.

Penha de França, António de Padua, 46,

José de Egypto, 32, Sabe a lingua.

Sirula, José da Conceição, Sabe a lingua.

This list was signed by Manoel da Penha de França on 28 November 1766 and witnessed by Jacinto de Jesus Maria. Bears the seal of the Province and its authenticity testified by a Notary Public ⁶³.

Appendix II

O M.R.P. Examinador Diocezano da lingua deste Paiz Fr. Christovão de S. Ritta passe certidão jurado dos Religiosos observantes filhos desta sancta Provincia q. sabem a lingua desta terra q. falão os naturaes della. Manoel da Penha de França, 9 Fevro de 1767. Fr. Mathias de S. Ritta, Minro, Proval.

Em cumprimento da ordem do N.M.R.P. Mo. Provincial Fr. Mathias de S. Ritta eu Fr. Christovão de S. Ritta relligioso observante de N.P.S. Franco. fo. da Provincia do Appo. S. Thomé nesta India Oriental e nella ex-Deffor. e examinador da lingua do paiz pello Exmo. e Rmo. Snor. Arcebo. Diocesano, D. Anto. Taveira de Neiva Brum. Certifico em como sabem a lingua q. neste Paiz falam os naturaes delle os Relligiosos abaixo nomeados.

Mathias de S. Ritta, Provincial; João da Madre de Deus, Ex-Prov.; António de S. Ritta, Ex-Definidor; Clemente da Ressurreição, Ex-Definidor; Luis da

⁶² The number indicates the age of the Friar mentioned. "Sabe a lingua do paiz" means: He knows the language of the country i. e. Konkani.

⁶³ HAG, MR, Vol. 143 B, ff. 775—6.

Madre de Deus, Ex-Definidor; António da Paixão, Ex-Definidor; Luis da Encarnação, Ex-Definidor; Manoel de S. Maria, Ex-Definidor; Vicente da Madre de Deus, Ex-Definidor; João da Trindade, Ex-Definidor; António da Encarnação, Ex-Definidor; Bernardo de S. Ritta, Ex-Definidor; Estacio de Christo, Ex-Definidor; João do Espírito Santo, Ex-Definidor; Manoel de S. Francisco, Ex-Definidor; Thomas de S. Luzia, Ex-Definidor; Manoel da Conceição, Definidor; José da Conceição, Mestre; Manoel do Rosário, Mestre; Nicolao de S. Ritta, Guardiam; José de S. António, Guardiam; Caetano da Conceição, Guardiam; Caetano de S. Anna, Guardiam; José de Jesus Maria, Guardiam; Henrique de S. Anna, Guardiam; Alexandre da Piedade, Guardiam; José de S. Anna; José das Chagas; António da Penha de França; António de S. Thomas; Domingos de S. Francisco; Caetano de Jesus Maria; Estevão da Expectação; Bernardo de S. Anna; Felix de S. João; Faustino de S. Anna; Joaquim de S. Anna; Francisco de S. Quiteria; Philipe da Conceição; José de Egito.

Por exame q. tenho feito a huns e p. pleno conhecimento q. tenho de outros o juro in Verbo Sacerdotis, Collegio de S. Boaventura, 9 de Fbro. de 1769. Sd. Christovão de S. Ritta. Signed and sealed. Certified by Manoel da Penha de França, Secretary of the Province, Conv. de S. Frco. 12 de Fbro. de 1767. Counter signed: In testimonium veritatis, Fr. Ignacio de S. Theresa ⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, f. 787.