

Valentino Viegas, *As Políticas Portuguesas na Índia e o Foral de Goa* [=The Portuguese Policies in India and the Charter of Goa], Lisboa, Livros Horizonte, 2005, pp.125

The book was released at Casa de Goa, Lisbon, by Dr. Nuno Gonçalves, a grandson of the last Portuguese governor-general of Goa till 1961. After two initial chapters covering the story of the Portuguese arrival in India and their use of force whenever cultural and economic conflicts did not permit a more peaceful control of the trade in the Indian Ocean, from page 45 onwards the author takes up the study of the *Foral* or the Charter of Rights and Obligations granted by the Portuguese administration to native Goans in 1526. The author states that some earlier historians like Filipe Nery Xavier Cunha Rivara and Teotónio de Souza utilised the versions available in Goa and did not care to consult the "original". He comes however to the conclusion that the version available at the National Archives of Lisbon is not the "original" either, but only a "registo", which he decided to transcribe in Chapter IV (pp. 85-93), modernizing the text in a way that hardly helps anyone to read it better or more usefully. A facsimile reproduction alongside the transcription would have been more useful for an informed and critical reader.

Unfortunately this unhelpful transcription is accompanied by a less helpful genealogy and analysis of this manuscript version of the *Foral* available at the National Archives of Lisbon in *Gavetas 20-10-13*. The author does not mention, and obviously does not correct the reference to it in 1964 as "original" by another writer of Goan origin, Carlos Renato Gonçalves Pereira, *História da Administração da Justiça no Estado da Índia - Séc. XVI*, Vol. I, Lisboa, 1964, p. 89, n. 6 with reference to *Gavetas 20-10-30*). He also published photocopies of the 10 fols of the "registo" in the Lisbon National Archives in Vol.II of the above work, between pp. 224-5. It is the same manuscript utilized by Valentino Viegas now without any reference to this earlier publication, either in his text or in his bibliography. Gonçalves Pereira published it 10 years before the publication in *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, Lisboa, Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1975, Vol. XI, pp. 19-28. The same version was transcribed somewhat freely more than a century earlier by Manuel José Gomes Loureiro, *Memórias dos Estabelecimentos Portuguezes a l'este do Cabo de Boa Esperança*, Lisboa, 1835. Valentino Viegas has a reference to the book of Manuel José Gomes Loureiro in his bibliography but without any critical comments in the text to its contribution to the study of the *Foral*. One of the clauses missing in his transcription is curiously the same that is missing in the presently edited version of Valentino Viegas! The language style and the missing parts suggest it to be an early draft, rather than a developed or final version critically edited by Cunha Rivara by comparing three different texts that he could find in Goa. He published it in *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, Fasc. V, doc. 58. Baden-Powell translated from there and was used by me in *Medieval Goa*, Delhi, 1979.

We find also no reference by Valentino Viegas to A. Lopes Mendes, *A India Portuguesa*, II, Lisboa, 1886, pp. 180-198, based on Cunha Rivara's APO version. Lopes Mendes comments about the bad transcription of *Foral* by Manuel José Gomes Loureiro. What appears more grave is the lack of methodological rigour in the selective use of the Portuguese edition of my *Goa Medieval* (1993) and for uncritically citing on p. 119 (n.154) a truncated (printing error) footnote to score a point, without caring to check the correct information in the corresponding main text (p. 57) or the correct version of the same footnote in the English original (p. 67, n. 21). While referring to the fact that *Medieval Goa* (1979) used the English translation of B.H. Baden-Powell, fails to note that Baden-Powell translated it from the version of Cunha-Rivara which the author ends up admitting as the best and most useful surviving version (p. 46). He even resorts to it to complete the missing words in his own damaged manuscript version of the Lisbon archives.

At the end of all this effort one is left wondering about what new contribution this book has made to our knowledge of Goa's history. The last Chapter has the key. What appears to be original in this book is the politicisation of history in Chapter V (pp. 95-105), the concluding chapter of the book. The author, a Goan, belongs to the wave of Goans who opted to leave Goa and settle in Portugal soon after 1961, rather than accept the integration into India. Possibly now, in the wake of developments in Timor, the author may have developed fresh ideas and some courage (from the safe distance from the struggles faced by the Goans in Goa during the past several decades) to defend the right of Goans for independence. He claims that Goa had been completely independent sometime between 1367 and 1440, and has its right to recover it. The source cited by this author, a Portuguese medievalist historian, who worked as archivist for many years in the National Archives of Lisbon, is the Portuguese chronicler Gaspar Correia. It would be advisable that he takes a new critical look at his source after what we have come to know about the "gossipy" accounts of Gaspar Correia (much trusted by the Portuguese chronicler Francisco de Andrada) in the recent critical studies of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, particularly in his *Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama*; Aubrey Bell, *Gaspar Correia*, Oxford, 1924, pp. 34-6; Jean Aubin, "Préface", in Paul Teyssier and Paul Valentin, *Voyages de Vasco da Gama: Relations des expéditions de 1497-1499 & 1502-1503*, Paris, Ed. Chandeigne, 1005, p. 32, where he tells us that the account of Gaspar Correia "is not just different, it is unacceptable."

Aware of his background as a respected historian and archivist, I would expect Valentino Viegas to go beyond pointing to just a few superficial textual differences between the text of the Foral he chose to reproduce and some of the other existing and published versions. It is not clear why some published versions of the past two centuries were ignored. But there is a curiosity not to miss: it is the concern displayed by the author in emphasizing the role of the kshatrya (referred as chastrias rather than

chardós) as compared to brahmins. My Medieval Goa has been skilfully manipulated to make this point on p. 53. Fortunately, on p. 61 the author relies on his own conviction which could be paraphrased as follows: "We could present as a working hypothesis that the *chastrias* (sic), constituting the warrior caste of king-makers, were better placed to launch the adventure of founding (independent?) Goa". Perhaps in support of such a hypothesis, the author draws some other conclusions without caring to read his Foral in the context of the information that is plentifully available in the records of the village communities of Goa, preserved in the Goa Historical Archives. Such a contextual reading would not leave the author with any doubts about the caste-composition of the village ganvkars. He presumes that they were predominantly kshatrya (p. 60). A reading of the quasi-contemporary village council records would show that ganvkars of the 8 main villages of Tiswadi had equal representation of the Brahmin and Chardó controlled villages.

Perhaps the best way for me to conclude is to say *Caveant Consules* and raise a toast: Long live *chastrias* [not to be mistaken for brahmin *shastris*] and may Goa be admitted to the community of nations before some other nations cease to exist!

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