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African slave population of Portuguese India: Demographics and impact on Indo-Portuguese

Hugo C. Cardoso

Universidade de Macau

This article is primarily concerned with quantifying the African(-born) population in the early Portuguese settlements in India and defining its linguistic profile, as a means to understand the extent and limitations of its impact on the emerging Indo-Portuguese creoles. Apart from long-established commercial links (including the slave trade) between East Africa and India, which could have facilitated linguistic interchange between the two regions, Smith (1984) and Clements (2000) also consider that the long African sojourn of all those travelling the Cape Route may have transported an African-developed pidgin to Asia. In this article, I concentrate on population displacement brought about by the slave trade.

Published sources and data uncovered during archival research allow a characterisation of the African population in terms of a) their numbers (relative to the overall population), b) their origin, and c) their position within the colonial social scale. The scenario that emerges for most territories of Portuguese India is that of a significant slave population distributed over the colonial households in small numbers, in what is best described as a 'homestead society' (Chaudenson 1992, 2001). It is also made evident that there was a steady influx of slave imports well into the 19th century, and also that the Bantu-speaking regions of modern-day Mozambique were the primary sources of slaves for the trade with Portuguese India.

Keywords: Indo-Portuguese, Norteiro varieties, Goa, African slave population, East African languages, sociodemographics

1. Introduction[*]

Paying heed to several authors' warnings (e.g. Baker 1982, Arends 1995, 2008, Singler 1995), I assume that no attempt to explain the formation of a contact language is complete without accurate research into the territories' social and demographic history. With respect to the Iberian-lexified creoles, Jacques Arends voiced a common concern that 'very little

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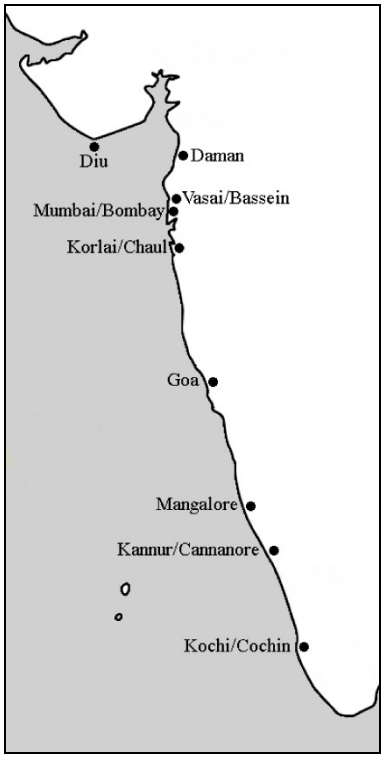
historical-linguistic work has been done, an unfortunate situation in view of the historical primacy of, especially, the Portuguese-lexicon creoles' (Arends 2002:50). In order to address this shortcoming, the present paper intends to contribute towards reconstructing the population make-up of the Portuguese-controlled territories in India at the beginning of colonisation (early 16th century) and thereafter, by assessing the size and distribution of both the African-born population and their offspring. The data analysed in this study concerns primarily the northern territories of Portuguese India, in particular Daman and Diu, as well as Goa (see Map 1). Goa, Daman, and Diu were the territories under Portuguese rule for the longest period, from the early 16th century until 1961. Other regions were Portuguese strongholds for shorter periods (e.g. Cochin, Cannanore, Nagappattinam, Meliapor, etc.) and, due to the present scarcity of early documents, their demographic profile is considerably more difficult to reconstruct.



Map 1: Main Portuguese settlements in Western India; 16th century.

The presence of significant numbers of Africans in the South Asian Portuguese settlements is well attested, not only in historical sources but also in the lyrics of Indo-Portuguese songs, which contain numerous references to Africans (see Schuchardt 1883, Dalgado 1921, Moniz 1925). The cultural import of the African population is also clearly visible in a number of performing arts associated with communities from the former Portuguese-controlled areas of South Asia, particularly music and dance styles such as the Goan *mandó*, the Sri Lankan and Mangalorean *baila*, and Sri Lankan *cafrinha* or *kaffrinha* (Jackson 1990, Jayasuriya 1996), known in the Moluccas as *kafrínu* and in Timor as *kafrinia* (Dalgado 1919). As far as language is concerned, however, it is a matter of some controversy how much the Indo-Portuguese and other Asian creoles owe to Africa. In addressing this issue, it is important to distinguish two main logical strands: a) the possibility that Indo-Portuguese was influenced by Portuguese-lexified pidgin(s) or creole(s) transported from

Africa; b) the possibility that, through the trade of African slaves into India, certain African languages entered the pool of early linguistic contributors to the Indo-Portuguese creoles. The first hypothesis interacts with the topic of this article only to the extent that African-developed pidgins and/or creoles may have been transported to India by displaced Africans, but I will survey some related proposals before turning to the discussion of the second hypothesis.

1.1. The relationship between the Asian and African creoles

Ferraz (1987) addressed the possibility that the Portuguese-lexified creoles of West Africa played a role in the development of their Asian counterparts, as he set out to assess the monogenetic hypothesis by comparing salient features in the Portuguese creoles of both continents. The author identified a set of similarities among the Asian creoles (e.g. the typical structure of the possessive construction, noun-modifier word order, the future marker *lo*/*logo* and certain lexical items such as *ada*/*ade*[*m*]/*adi* 'duck'), which are absent from those of Africa, therefore concluding that 'there is indeed a degree of interrelatedness between the Portuguese Eastern Creoles, but that they are unrelated to those of West Africa' (Ferraz 1987:337). To justify the relative unity of the Asian creoles, Ferraz appealed to Dalgado's (1917) notion of 'partial reciprocal transfusion': this hypothesis maintains that the Asian creoles were able to develop and maintain significant similarities because the economical and political links between the territories facilitated strong cultural and population interchange.

While Ferraz's typological dichotomy remains valid, Clements (2000) argues that he overstated the case by denying the possibility of *any* transfusion from Africa, since a number of similarities - though perhaps marginal - do suggest a degree of continuity between the African and Asian creoles. The most striking example, for its apparent arbitrariness, is the fact that, in many creoles of both Africa and Asia, the base form of the verb 'to go' (typically *vai*/*vay*) is derived from an inflected form in Portuguese while most other verbs draw on etymological non-finite forms. Holm (1989) also draws attention to certain functional correspondences between grammatical items in Asian and African creoles, such as the completive use of the marker *kaba*. Clements (2000:185-186) builds on this evidence to propose that:

> para além dum pidgin Português geral, que se formou em África [...] se formou, a partir do século XVI, outro pidgin português na Ásia. Este pidgin tinha características em comum com o pidgin português geral mas, além destas, adoptou outros traços dos crioulos que se formaram na Ásia na primeira metade do século XVI.
>
> [beside a general Portuguese pidgin formed in Africa [...] another Portuguese pidgin was formed in Asia after the 16th century. This pidgin had certain characteristics in common with the general Portuguese pidgin but, besides those, adopted other traits from the creoles that formed in Asia in the first half of the 16th century.]

The crews of Portuguese ships sailing the Cape Route (sailors, settlers, soldiers, merchants) were the most likely vehicle for the transmission of African-developed pidgins/creoles. Smith (1984) voices a similar opinion, proposing that the Portuguese made

use of structures encountered in African pidgins/creoles for communication in Asia. For the purpose of this paper, however, it is important to assess whether this process was accompanied by the displacement of Africans who could have transmitted a Portuguese-lexified pidgin or creole (see Section 4).

1.2. The relationship between the Asian creoles and African languages

Given the influx of African slaves to the Portuguese territories of India, it is also worth considering whether any African languages other than the Portuguese-lexified creoles may have contributed to the initial pool of linguistic features available to the creators of Indo-Portuguese. Their influence, if any, would have been particularly relevant at the historical moment of the creoles' formation, which Clements (2000:195) locates in the first half of the 16th century.

The linguistic evidence for such a scenario is not particularly solid. The most readily observable traces of African linguistic influence in Portuguese Asia are lexical. In his study of lexemes which were current among the 'Portuguese' (not necessarily Creole-speakers) in Asia, Dalgado (1919) identified various words he traced back to African etyma,[1] including:

a. *batuque* 'a type of drum' (referentially equivalent to the Indic-derived term *gumata*): probably not derived from the Portuguese verb *bater* 'to hit', according to Dalgado (1919), but from similar terms used in East and West Africa to refer to a particular dance and the drum used to accompany it;
b. *cacimba* 'dew, fog': from Kimbundu *kixima* (*ki'sima* in other sources) 'well';
c. *calumba* 'a medicinal plant [*Jateorhiza palmata*]': this plant is particularly associated with Southeast Africa, and the term derives from its name in local languages; e.g. Zulu *–kalumuzi* (Doke & Vilakazi 1964:369);
d. *machila*, *machira* 'palanquin': the object is known by cognate terms in various East African languages; e.g. Makua *machila*, *machira* 'palanquin' (Prata 1990:109);
e. *mandó* 'a type of folk song and dance': nowadays used mostly to refer to traditional Konkani or Indo-Portuguese songs, Dalgado (1919) related the term to the word *mandoa*, found in Mozambican languages to refer to a local dance;
f. *matomba*, *matomo* 'a tree [*Parinarium excelsum*]': commonly believed to have been imported into the region of Goa from East Africa, where Dalgado (1919) recorded its name to be *mutumbira*;
g. *pangaio* 'a type of boat': cognate terms are widespread among both Indian and East African languages, but Dalgado (1919) placed its origin in Africa; e.g. Makua *pangayo*, *pangaya* 'a type of boat' (Prata 1990:416);
h. *pingo* 'grain of gold, gold bead': unrelated to Portuguese *pingo* 'drop'. Dalgado (1919) reported that the term *píngu* had a similar semantic value in (unidentified) languages of the Tete region of Mozambique.

[1] Words derived from Arabic etyma were excluded from this study because, due to the wide geographical extension and influence of the language in the 16th century, it is often difficult to ascertain whether they entered the Portuguese lexicon in Africa or elsewhere. As far as Eastern Bantu languages are concerned, in some cases many of them make use of cognate lexemes. The examples provided here – from representative Southeast African languages (Makua, Swahili, Tsonga, and Zulu) – are simply meant to show their currency in the region, and should not be interpreted as definite etymologies for the words recorded by Dalgado (1919).

Tomás (1992b) added another word to the list which, significantly, occurs in an Indo-Portuguese song from Daman recorded by Moniz (1925:570, 571), a song specifically attributed to the 'black' section of the Catholic population:

i. *muzungo* 'white man': particularly common in East Africa, where cognates include Swahili *mzunzu* 'white man, European', Tsonga *mulungu* 'white man, European',[2] or Makua *musuku* 'white man, European, Portuguese' (Prata 1990:109).

Such lexical items could have been transported from the shores of Africa through various channels, including the trade contacts between dwellers of Portuguese-controlled India and dwellers of Portuguese-controlled Africa, population movements, as loans in Portuguese or through the languages of the displaced African slaves.

Scholars have long hypothesised that the creole spoken by Africans in Portuguese India may have differed from that of the remainder of the creolophone population. Spurred by an Indo-Portuguese song recorded in Goa, Dalgado (1921) proposed that a particular *cafreal* creole (from Ptg. *cafre* 'black person', cf. Note 4) was at some point spoken in the region by African slaves, a restructured variety which would have differed from the putative creole of the local Indo-Portuguese (see Section 4). The hypothesis is unfortunately not well supported in Dalgado's writings, nor is it clear whether his proposed *cafreal* creole was exclusive to Goa. One must be cautious not to over-interpret the fact that several Indo-Portuguese songs (viz. from Diu and Daman) are ascribed by their collectors exclusively to the African population; in fact, apart from some lexical peculiarities (see the discussion of *muzungo* above), such songs display no structural traits which cannot be observed in the available non-*cafreal* data or modern-day varieties of Indo-Portuguese.

As a whole, the Indo-Portuguese creoles appear to have preserved no grammatical traits clearly or solely attributable to (East) African languages (see Tomás 1992b). Conversely, the typological link between these creoles and their immediate South Asian adstrates is well attested (see e.g. Smith 1984, Clements 1996, Cardoso 2009). The remainder of this article will explore documentary evidence concerning the sociodemographic characteristics and linguistic profile of the (early) African slave population in Portuguese India, which may shed light on the extent and limitations of their ethnolinguistic contribution to the Indo-Portuguese communities.

The delineation of precise figures must of necessity rely on archival sources, but there are several obstacles for this type of research. To begin with, a great deal of the earliest sources and records kept by the Portuguese has been lost, notably in the destruction of Lisbon by the 1755 earthquake but also on account of their antiquity. Moreover, not enough archival work has been done concerning the specific issue of the African slave trade to India. Despite these shortcomings, a number of references have so far been unearthed that provide direct demographic data concerning African slaves. However, other sources also clarify that the presence of Africans in India predates the arrival of the Portuguese. It is therefore crucial to distinguish between African migration to India brought about by Portuguese colonial activities in the region, and migration prior and/or unrelated to it.

2. Africans in India prior to European colonial presence

[2] Cf. the 2003 edition of *Dicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa*, entry *muzúngu*.

At present, the term *Siddhi* is used overarchingly to refer to all sections of the Indian population who, though considered native to India by virtue of their long history in the subcontinent, ultimately have their origins in Africa. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to trace the presence of all Siddhis back to just one historical period or channel of migration. The institution of slavery in South Asia predates the arrival of Vasco da Gama (see Chauhan 1995:228), as does the trade in African slaves. The transport of African slaves to the Indian subcontinent is probably as old as any other sort of trade between the two regions, with Pankhurst (2003) providing evidence that slaves were being carried from the territory of modern-day Ethiopia to Western India as early as the 1st century AD. The documentary evidence is much more robust after the 13th century. At the time, slaves were imported from Abyssinia via Arabia, most eventually converting to Islam and ending up particularly in Gujarat and the Gulf of Cambay or further south on the Malabar coast and Ceylon. In the period preceding the European colonial expansion, this type of trade across the Indian Ocean seems to have been firmly dominated by Arab traders. No estimate of the numbers involved in this trade is available, but the presence of Africans in India and their roles are very well attested. In early documents, a number of different terms are used to refer to African people, some of which are quite revealing as to their (perceived) provenance. The term *Habshi* has traditionally been related to *Habash*, the Arabic name of Abyssinia, modern Ethiopia (cf. Jayasuriya & Pankhurst 2003b:8). The term *Siddhi* or *Siddi*, also attested in old documents, is less revealing than *Habshi* in that it carries no geographical connotation; it has instead been traced back to Arabic *Saiyid* 'lord'. Finally, another common term found in archival texts is *Kaffir*[3], from the Arabic (*kaffir*) 'infidel'.

The import of African slaves through these channels did not halt after the Portuguese, French, and British made their presence felt in India. According to Pankhurst (2003:200-201), the slave trade from Ethiopia even briefly intensified after 1527 as a result of military expeditions taking place in Ethiopia itself. With respect to its longevity, precious information can be retrieved from an 1853 document in which the consul of Britain in Muscat referred to active slave trade links between the Sultanate of Zanzibar and the Indian states of Kutch and Katiawar.[4]

Even though many Africans were taken to India in a condition of servitude, it is important not to underestimate their historical role as seafarers and traders in the Indian Ocean. Ethiopians were particularly active in this activity up to the 7th century. Baker (1996) observes that, even after the demise of their maritime power, Ethiopians were particularly prized as slaves, in particular in the Islamic societies surrounding the Indian Ocean, and often granted positions of great responsibility. One needs to concede that, in these societies, 'the status of slaves […] was clearly very different from that of Africans subsequently enslaved by Christian nations in the Caribbean and elsewhere' (Baker 1996:645). Mediaeval India was no exception in this respect. As a matter of fact, historical records narrate striking instances of the social ascension of Africans in Muslim and Hindu India. In his 16th century tour of India, Ibn Batutta related the case of Badr, an Abyssinian who rose to become the governor of Alapur (North India). A lineage of 14th century governors of Jaunpur (North India) is also said to have been initiated by a Habshi slave. 15th century annals contain several examples of African intervention in Indian politics, such as a Habshi-led coup in Bengal (Northeast India), their hold on governor positions in the Deccan (West India), involvement in a Bijapuri (South

[3] Among the Portuguese, the term was *cafre*. It is interesting that, according to Lodhi (1992), the Siddhis of Diu are still known as *Kafaras*.

[4] Both Kutch (or *Kachchh*) and Katiawar (or *Kathiawad*) integrate modern-day Gujarat. The Katiawar region is presently known as *Saurashtra* and refers to the area immediately surrounding Diu. Not surprisingly, the Saurashtra region is home to an important Siddhi population, as is Diu itself (see Lodhi 1992).

India) strife for the throne, military leadership in Goa, etc. (see Chauhan 1995, Pankhurst 2003). The most impressive example of Siddhi ascension is perhaps the unique history of the island-fort of Janjira and nearby Danda-Rajpuri, on the Konkan coast south of Bombay and very close to the ancient Chaul - where modern Korlai Indo-Portuguese originated (see Clements 1996). From the late 15th or early 16th century onwards, the Siddhis effectively held control of the island and territory for approximately two centuries.[5]

In most of these cases, the notoriety of people of African ancestry was a product of their military performance. As early as 1333-1334, Ibn Batutta reported having come across a corps of fifty Abyssinian soldiers on a ship in Gandhar, in Gujarat (quoted in Pankhurst 2003:192). In the early 16th century, Tomé Pires' *Suma Oriental* described how the rulers of the Cambay region employed large numbers of Abyssinian soldiers (Pires 1978:136, 163). According to a contemporary observer, the Gujarati scholar Haji ad-Dabir, the Moghul force which occupied Gujarat in 1572 included some 700 Habshi horsemen.

It is precisely in a military context that the first encounters between Siddhis/Habshis and the incoming Portuguese seem to have happened: the Portuguese had to fight Habshi forces in order to occupy some of their territories, notably those belonging to the Sultan of Cambay. Daman is described as a stronghold of the Habshis, who continued to challenge Portuguese rule even after their conquest of the city in 1559, and their presence has also been reported in Diu when the city was occupied, in 1535 (Chauhan 1995). Crucially for our present topic, both Daman and Diu were to become *loci* of Indo-Portuguese creoles. The presence of a previous African population in these regions calls for constraint in taking modern Siddhi demographics as indicators of the number of slaves imported during the Portuguese period. Given that the Portuguese had the habit of baptizing their slaves, it is quite telling that the Gujarati Siddhis, including those of Daman and Diu, are presently Muslim and not Christian (but see Section 3.3.2, and Note 14). By contrast, 41.9% of the Siddhis in Karnataka are Catholic (1980s data, in Lobo 1984:40), while others are Muslim and Hindu (Lodhi 1992:83). The history of the Karnatakan Siddhis is probably somewhat different from that of the Gujarati Siddhis; Chauhan (1995:231) suggests that forced conversion to Christianity in Goa drove many slaves to escape into the neighbouring territories, where they would have been integrated into older Siddhi communities. And yet, this type of escape is also documented for the northern territories, chiefly in Daman: a 1695 treaty between the Portuguese Viceroy and the neighbouring Chauthia Raja made provisions for the return of runaway slaves to the city's authorities (Chauhan 1995:233). This issue brings us to the topic of the Portuguese importation of slaves, which is dealt with in the following section.

3. Africans in India as a result of European colonial activities

[5] Various 16th century Portuguese sources contain references to *mjilic dastur* (Malik Dastur), ruler of Janjira who 'he abixij es˜cpauo DellRey tam homrrado casy como cada huũ destes' [is an Abyssinian slave of the King, as honored as any of these (other lords)] (Pires 1978:209). While Pankhurst (2003) identifies the 17th and 18th century as periods of decline in overall Siddhi influence in India, their presence in Janjira was still going strong despite the Maratha campaign of 1659 under Shivaji (against whom they sought allegiance with the Portuguese). They remained key players in the area, entering treaties with the British in Bombay, and also with the Portuguese against Shivaji in 1670 (Chauhan 1995:58).

Africans were employed in Portuguese India in a number of functions, the most obvious of which was domestic service. Mandelslo, a traveller in Goa, reported in 1638-1639 (quoted in Chauhan 1995:230):

> Most of the Portuguese have many slaves of both sexes whom they employ not only about their persons but also upon any other business they are capable of, for what they get, comes into the master. Whence it comes that handsome wenches are sought after, to be employed in the selling of fruits and such commodities as the Portuguese send to market, to the end their beauty might draw in customers. Their keeping as to diet stands them in very little. The children born between slaves belong to the master, unless the father will redeem them within eight or ten days after they are born.

There were also African soldiers among the Portuguese military forces. Although the *Estado da Índia*'s[6] armies included Portuguese, Indians, and *mestiço* soldiers as well, Pinto (1992:82) noticed that '[t]he Estado's military establishment depended on African slaves as soldiers in all its territories', more so 'than did any other European colonising nation'.

Africans were also essential to crew sea-going vessels, to such an extent that Linschoten (1598) reported maritime work to be one of the main occupations of the 'free' Habshi:

> These Abexiins and Arabians as are frée doe serve in al India for saylers and sea faring mẽ, with such marchants as saile from Goa to China, Iapon, Bengala, Mallaca, Ormus, and all the Oriental coast.

It is unclear whether the *Abexiins* mentioned by Linschoten were manumitted Africans brought by the Portuguese as slaves, given that this term was not the most current among the Portuguese to refer to their African slaves. The following sub-section will explore in more detail the referential value of various terms employed in Portuguese sources.

3.1. Terminology in Portuguese documents

In old Portuguese texts, various terms are used to refer to Africans, but in some cases there is overlap with the words the same authors use to refer to the local Indians. The terms *preto* 'black' and *negro* 'black' are particularly ambiguous. In official documents such as censuses, the ambiguity was resolved by employing the terms *nativo* and *natural* 'native' for Indians, while *cafre* was reserved for Africans. Notice, for instance, the following entry from the Inquisition records of 1651, in which a Mozambican-born (from the *Rios de Cuama* region, see 3.2.) was classified as a *cafre*:

[6] *Estado da Índia* was initially the generic designation for the whole of the Portuguese-controlled territories in Asia as well as East Africa (see Morais 1997:9).

> Jorge, em gentio Hiamata cafre natural dos rios de Cuama, e morador nesta cidade por arrenegar da nossa santa fée, e blasfemar contra a pureza de nossa senhora, passandose a seita de Calvino e a de Mafamede em terra de mouros. (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo; *Conselho Geral do Santo Ofício [Inquisição de Goa]*, nº 33 nº 1)
>
> [Jorge, Hiamata in gentile, *cafre* born at the rivers of Cuama, and dwelling in this city [Goa] for denying our holy faith and saying blasphemy against the purity of our lady, adopting the sect of Calvin and that of Mohamed in a moorish land.]

To complicate matters further, one cannot immediately interpret the term *escravo* 'slave' as referring to an African – though in the vast majority of cases it did – because there were other sources of slaves for the Portuguese, including certain regions of East Asia and even India. While in Goa, Linschoten (1598) witnessed a specific type of bondage involving Indian individuals:

> Also in time of povertie or dearth the fathers may sell their children, as it happened in my time, that there was such a dearth, and scarcitie of victualls in the firme lande, and countries bordering uppon Goa, that the men of India came to Goa (and other places where the Portingales are resident) to sell their children, in great numbers, and for small prices, to buy them victuals. [...] and some came with their wives and children to offer themselves to bee slaves, so that they might have meate and drinke to nourish their bodies. And because the Portingales have traffique in all places, (as we have béene in many) it is the cause why so many are brought out of all countries to be solde, for the Portingales doe make a living by buying and selling of them, as they doe with other wares.

Jayasuriya & Pankhurst (2003:11) further observe that the Portuguese obtained slaves from the Muscat Arab forces they vanquished off Diu in 1670, and Pinto (1992) mentions that at times they would trade supplies for slaves when famine struck the Coromandel coast (southeast India). According to official slave liberation registries, the *Cartas de Alforria aos Escravos*, most of the 753 slaves manumitted in Goa between 1682 and 1759 were Indian, and only 6 (all female) were African. There is also documentary evidence of slave trade being carried out from emporia in Java, Makassar on the island of Sulawesi, Japan and China (see Pinto 1992:18). It is clear, however, that the volume of trade in all these areas never approached that from Africa. Therefore, the next section will be dedicated to assessing the ethnogeographical origin of African slaves.

3.2. Origins of the slaves

The slave trade to India involved various routes at different periods of time, and these relied on different areas of Africa for the supply of slaves. Whereas the mostly Arab-controlled trade seems to have sought slaves in Northeast Africa, there is solid evidence that the Portuguese conducted their activities further south, in the Bantu-speaking area that nowadays roughly corresponds to Mozambique. Notice, for instance, the inscription on the map of the

Island of Mozambique in Linschoten's English-language edition (Linschoten 1598:8-9), which reads 'The discription of the Islandes, and Castle of Mozambique, lyeinge uppon the borders of Melinde, rich in Ebanwood, fine Goulde, and Ambergrize, frõ whence many Slaues are caried into India'. Even more explicitly, Linschoten stated that 'From Mosambique great numbers of these Caffares are caried into India'.

In the 17th century, observers such as Pyrard de Laval and Crooke were also very specific in their observations that, by then, most of the Africans in Goa were from Mozambique or Mombasa (Pankhurst 2003:215). Later, in 1738, the Portuguese viceroy complained of the lack of manpower in the following terms: 'por não terem vindo cafres de Mossambique, e haver falta delles na terra, faltará o serviço, que no trabalho do conves costuma fazer esta gente' [since no blacks came from Mozambique, and there is a lack of them in the land, the service these people usually do on the deck will be lacking] (quoted in Boxer 1984).

In several instances, the Portuguese merchants would not capture the slaves themselves. Consider the following observations of Linschoten (1598) concerning the *Caffares* of Mozambique:

> they doe commonly make warre one against the other, and some of them eate mens flesh, and some there are also that eate it not, but such as deale with the Portingals. When they take any man prisoner in the warres, they sell him to the Portingales, or exchange and barter him for Cotton linnen, and other Indian wares.

Trade with African slavers was carried out in specific emporia, with implication that even if a certain place of origin is documented, the bulk of the slaves may have originally come from further afield. Nonetheless, it is possible to pinpoint with some accuracy the general area of the African coast in which slaving activities were carried out by the Portuguese. A decree issued by the Portuguese authorities in 1816, although relatively late, is rather explicit in that respect: it rules that the only slaver vessels allowed should be those 'que se destinarem a fazer o Commercio de Escravos nos pórtos da Cósta Oriental de Africa, comprehendidos entre o 10.mo e 25.o graus de Latitude Austral' [destined to trade slaves in the ports of the Eastern Coast of Africa between the 10th and 25th degrees of latitude south].[7] These latitudes limited the Portuguese possessions on the East coast of Africa and correspond quite closely to the northern and southern borders of present-day Mozambique.

Several documents record the *Rios de Cuama*, which refers to the Zambezi river delta in Mozambique, as the native place of slaves (cf. Inquisition record transcribed above). The 1855 registry of slaves in Daman (see 3.3.2. below) is particularly revealing in that all of those who had not been born in India were registered as natives of the *Rios de Cuama*.[8] An Indo-Portuguese song from Daman also provides some ethnogeographical information concerning the provenance of the African population. Notice that all references (Sofala, Inhambane, Sena, Macua) refer back to the Mozambican territory. The relevant words are emphasised in the following transcription, but not in the original:[9]

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[7] Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo; *Junta do Comércio*, Maço 62, Caixa 204.

[8] This region was believed to be rich in mineral resources, and as such saw a thrust of interest from the Portuguese Crown and settlement efforts in the 1660s and 1670s (see Ames 1998). The Senas nowadays form the majority in this coastal area, with Nyungwe being spoken upriver into the Tete province.

[9] The version transcribed here was published by an anonymous author (1982) in the *Revista da Academia da Língua e Cultura Portugesa* as provided by the Mendonça family of Daman. In Moniz (1925), we find the

1º

Cabelos torcidos
Cafarinho despido
Toda gente fala
Tem cafre de **Sofala**

CORO

Huê, huê, huê, balha com igual huê
Huê, huê, huê, cabelos torcidos huê
Huê, huê, huê, festa de Natal huê

2º

Cafarinho tem pireito
Torcido e bem feito
Balhando na rua
Como cafre de **macua**

3º

Seus beiços compridos
Seus olhos torcidos
Rosto de rabana
Tem cafre de **Inhambane**

4º

Beicinhos furados
Seus dentes limados
Cafarinho pangaio
Pinchando na praia

5º

Todos assim dizem
Chapado nariz
Cabeça pequena
Tem cafarinho de **Sena**

Medeiros (2003) provides ample evidence that the Portuguese slavers provided slaves to the French possessions on the Mascarenes. From the 18th century onwards, this trade proceeded as an act of smuggling, given that slave trading with the French was prohibited at that time so as to concentrate the slave 'resources' in the exploitation of the colonies of Brazil. An ethnographic study of the African population of the Mascarenes, carried out in the 1840s by Eugène de Froberville (reported in Medeiros 2003:73), identified various ethnicities, including the Makua and natives of Inhambane in Mozambique. Medeiros expands on the issue and observes that the slaves transported to the Mascarenes from Mozambique 'came mainly from the ethnic groups, Marave (Cheua-Nianja), Senas, Maconde, Macua, Machona and Yemvane (Inhambanes)' (Medeiros 2003:71).[10]

Although one must also admit the presence of slaves from other parts of Africa, all documentary evidence is unanimous in locating the primary source of slaves transported to Portuguese India (and Portuguese Asia) within the Mozambican territory. The following sub-section will analyse the records available to quantify the African slave population in the territory, with particular reference to Goa and the northern territories of Western India (see Map 1).

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transcription of the same song with some minor differences. The most relevant difference for this study is that the last verse of the song *apud* Moniz is *Tem cafarinho de **Somaliz*** instead of ***Sena***.

[10] Madagascar also provided slaves for the trade, but for the most part it remained peripheral to the Portuguese: Newitt (2003:84) recognised that the practice of acquiring slaves in Madagascar for India was sporadic and of minor significance. From the 17th century onwards, Madagascar itself began requiring slaves from the mainland, not only for domestic use but also for re-export, and therefore turned into a slaving platform onto which converged slaves captured in Mozambique; this fact certainly ties in with the observation that certain communities known as *Makoi* have preserved a distinct identity in Madagascar and are reported to have spoken Makua until the 1920s (Medeiros 2003:65).

3.3. Demography

One of the challenges to defining the demography of African slaves in the *Estado da Índia* results from the scattered and long-standing nature of this political unit, which means the scarce documentary sources available refer to different territories and different historical periods. Rather than being able to fully reconstruct the demographic make-up of specific settlements throughout their history, one is mostly left with information on transregional trends. One of the most interesting conclusions we can draw from early 17th century descriptions of the Portuguese settlements, notably those by Bocarro (1635), is that slaves were present even in the smallest among them. With reference to Agaçaim (in the vicinity of Bassein, modern-day Vasai), Bocarro wrote the following:

> a um quarto de légua dela, está uma povoação de uma rua somente, lançada de norte a sul, que tem trinta moradores portugueses, [...] com poucos escravos
>
> [a quarter of a league away from it, there is a village with one street only, drawn from north to south, which has thirty portuguese dwellers, [...] with few slaves]

However, different territories hosted different numbers of slaves, with Goa taking the lead as the great slaving emporium of Portuguese India. I have therefore opted for a separate discussion of Goa and the northern territories (the *Província do Norte*).

3.3.1. Goa

The figures concerning the slave population of Goa, reconstructed from documents as diverse as travel accounts, business records, and censuses, are truly impressive. Consider the description of Goa in Linschoten's travel rotary, based on his visit to the territory in the 1580s:

> likewise they have running about them, many sorts of captives and slaves, both men and women, young and old, who are daylie sould there, as beasts are sold with us, where everie one may chuse which liketh him best, everie one at a certaine price.
>
> There are some married Portingales, that get their livings by their slaves, both men and women, whereof some have 12, some 20 and some 30, for it costeth them but little to kéepe them. These slaves for money doe labour for such as have néede of their helpe, some fetch fresh water, and sell it for money about the stréetes: the women slaves make all sorts of confectures and conserves of Indian fruites, much fyne néedle worke, both cut and wrought workes, and thẽ their master send the fairest and the youngest of them well drest up with their wares about the stréetes to sell the same, that by the neatnes & bewtie of the said women slaves, men might be moved to buy, which happeneth more for the affection they have to the slaves & to fulfill their pleasure with them, then for any desire to the conserves or néedle workes: for these slaves never refuse them, but make their daylie living thereby, and with the gaines they by that meanes bring home, their masters may well maintaine them.

> The Portingales and Mesticos in India never worke, if they doe, it is but very little, and that not often [...]: but most of them have their slaves to worke in their shops, and the masters when they walke up and downe the stréetes, goe as proudlie as the best.

While Linschoten claimed the number of slaves possessed by single owners to range between 12 and 30, Bocarro (1635) proposed a Goan average of 10. Pinto (1992:26) quotes Gemelli-Careri's report of his visit to Goa in 1695, in which he stated '[t]here are also an abundance of Cafres and Blacks; for there are Portuguese that keep thirty or forty, and the least six or twelve'. It would probably be a mistake to believe that all Portuguese settlers possessed as many slaves or any slaves at all (but notice Linschoten's claims concerning the Portuguese craftspeople). It is not unlikely that such concentrations of slaves were the prerogative of the wealthiest. Equally high figures feature in records pertaining to the religious orders in Goa. The most striking of these concerns a complaint by the residents of the Convent of Santa Mónica in Old Goa (unknown date) that their 120 slaves were insufficient; the document added that even single individuals in the community could have 'fifteen or twenty female slaves, or 26 women and girls, while a *juiz ordinario* or a *desembargador* held 85 female slaves... and some rich ladies over three hundred' (Pinto 1992:27).

In addition to being the wealthiest Portuguese city in India, Goa functioned as the main platform for the diaspora of slaves throughout the *Estado da Índia* and, as such, high import figures should not come as a surprise.[11] The territory's abundance of African slaves deeply impressed most of its visitors in the 16th century, who never failed to comment on the issue. One point to be remembered is that large concentrations of slaves in single households or institutions, such as those described above, appear to have been exclusive to Goa. The evidence from most of the northern territories, as we shall see in the following sub-section, suggests a starkly different social embedding.

3.3.2. The Província do Norte

At its peak, in the 16th/17th century, the *Província do Norte* 'Northern Province' comprised the stretch of land between Daman and Korlai (including Bassein and Bombay, see Map 1) and also Diu across the Gulf of Cambay. Bassein was the leading settlement of the entire area, a city of considerable extension and magnificence with the epithet *Cidade dos Fidalgos* 'City of the Noblemen'. With regard to Bassein, Bocarro advanced a tentative average of slaves per Portuguese settler:

> [o]s casados que haverá nesta cidade, brancos serão quatrocentos os mais deles fidalgos, com pretos cristãos virão fazer seiscentos e todos terão uns pelos outros três escravos cada um. (Bocarro 1635)

[11] The slaves purchased in Goa were not only meant for the *Estado* but for a variety of buyers. The 1777 correspondence between a Frenchman and a Goan agent reveals that, within two months, two ships from Mauritius had purchased 160 and 140 slaves respectively, and also that in September that year a ship from Mozambique arrived in Goa transporting some 700 slaves (Pinto 1992:38).

[the casados who dwell in this city must be four hundred whites, most of them noblemen, and with the christian blacks it should make six hundred, and all of them would have in average three slaves each]

Bocarro's calculations would result in a slave population approaching 1800, in 1635. However, it is important to realise that the figures for Bassein may not be automatically extended to the rest of the *Província*. Comparable data has fortunately been unearthed for other northern settlements, in particular for Daman. According to Moniz (1923), the number of slaves in Daman, in 1660, was estimated at around 600, although the overall population of the territory is not given. On the other hand, customs registries indicate that Daman was an entrepôt for the import and distribution of slaves at least until 1828 (despite the 1773 decree which had formally abolished slavery in Portugal). Pinto (1992:29,30) quotes one such registry from the year 1828, according to which '48 male and female African slaves landed in Daman port in a week from 27th September to the 4th of October'. The author further quotes numbers retrievable for the period between 1837-1839, which turn out much lower than this (10-15 in 1837; 8-10 in 1838; 5-7 in 1839). Nonetheless, an 1855 census of slaves[12] still reported 43 slaves in Daman. The data contained in the registry is presented in Table 1.

	Male	*Female*	*Birthplace*	*Age*
1	X		Africa	13
2	X		Daman	8
3	X		Daman	6
4	X		Daman	4
5		X	Africa	35
6		X	Daman	1
7		X	Daman	14
8		X	Africa	68
9		X	Africa	35
10		X	Africa	48
11	X		Daman	20
12		X	Daman	14
13		X	Daman	16
14	X		Daman	8
15	X		Africa	75
16		X	Africa	60
17	X		Daman	13
18	X		Africa	14
19		X	Africa	30
20	X		Daman	14
21	X		Daman	5
22	X		Daman	3

[12] Goa Historical Archives; *Registo dos Escravos da cidade de Damão*, doc. 2979.

23	X		Daman	5 months
24	X		Africa	60
25		X	Africa	35
26	X		Daman	3
27	X		Africa	28
28		X	Africa	60
29		X	Daman	20
30		X	Daman	18
31		X	Daman	38
32		X	Africa	25
33		X	Daman	15
34	X		Daman	8

Table 1: Registry of slaves in Daman, 1855.

The owner of each slave is also given in the registry, revealing that they were distributed over just 12 households in groups never larger than 6; half of the households had only 1 or 2 slaves. The distribution of slaves per household is given in Table 2.

	Master nr.	*Nr. of slaves*
	1	1
	2	6
	3	5
	4	2
	5	3
	6	1
	7	5
	8	1
	9	2
	10	1
	11	3
	12	4
TOTAL	12	34

Table 2: Distribution of slaves per household, 1855.

The census further indicates that the African-born slaves were originally from the *Rios de Cuama* region (see Section 3.2.). It is also interesting to notice that 46.5% of the slaves were locally-born, all of them under the age of 38; these were probably the children of the African-born slaves registered. One implication, not without consequence, is that children born to slave parents were considered slaves themselves; this ties in with previous accounts which make it clear that this was a long-standing practice in the Portuguese-controlled territories:

recall Mandelslo's 17th century account quoted above, and consider Thevenot's late 18th century description of Daman, which stated that 'the Portuguese have slaves there of both sexes, which work and procreate only for their Masters, to whom the Children belong, to be disposed of at pleasure' (quoted in Pinto 1992:28).

Another of the territories constituting the *Província do Norte* was Diu, for which detailed but scattered demographic information can be found. The earliest available reference to the slave population is found in Bocarro's (1634) description, which reads:

> os casados portuguezes, que vivem oje nesta cidade de fora da fortaleza, são cincoenta e nove, avendo já sido muitos mais: são pobres, pelas ditas causas, mas ainda assim tem huns por outros cincoenta e nove escravos que possão tomar armas, as quaes tem alguns de cabides de lanças muy bastantes pera brigarem.
>
> [the Portuguese casados living in this city today outside the fortress are fifty-nine, although they used to be more numerous: they are poor, for the previously mentioned reasons, but among them still have some fifty-nine slaves capable of taking up arms, some having enough spears to wage war.]

The 1792 census of the Christian population counted 104 slaves without an age break-up, all but 7 of whom in the parishes within the city walls. Table 3 provides the census data.

Parishes	*Prior of cathedral*	*Vicars*	*Beneficiaries*	*Men > 14*	*Men < 14*	*Women > 12*	*Women < 12*	*Slave men*	*Slave women*	
Sé Matrix	1		2	64	27	114	16	27	43	294
S. Thomé		1		103	23	67	17	15	12	238
St. André Extramuros		1		15	12	25	6	3	4	66
TOTAL	1	2	2	182	62	206	39	45	59	598

Table 3: Census of the Diuese Christians, 1792 (adapted from Pinto 1992:31).

According to this census, the 104 slaves made up 17.4% of the Catholic population. This means at least part of the slaves in late 18th-century Diu were baptised and possibly integrated to some extent into the Catholic community.[13] A later census, in 1842,[14] surveyed the entire population of the territory, which totalled 9373 people. While this figure was distributed according to religious groups (*cristãos* 'christians', *gentios* 'gentiles [i.e. hindus]' and *mouros* 'moors [i.e. muslims]'), there was a 274-strong 'racial' category - *negros (também chamados escravos)* 'blacks (also called slaves)' - representing nearly 3% of the whole. It is striking that the 1842 'slave' population was more than twice that of fifty years earlier. The discrepancy, however, is probably due to criterial variation. In 1792, only the

[13] Certain members of the Catholic community in modern-day Diu still have some typically African physical traits. Upon inquiry, this fact was easily recognised and confirmed by their peers.
[14] Goa Historical Archives; *População de Dio*, doc. 2997.

Christians had been surveyed; in 1842, it is not clear whether the resident (Muslim) Siddhis were included in the *negros* category or the *mouros* section, but the former seems most likely. Otherwise, one would have to assume a slave population much larger than anything glimpsed from previous records and also that only a minority of the slaves employed in Diu were Catholic – which is unlikely given the habit of the Portuguese to baptise their slaves (cf. Pinto 1992). Mass import of slaves in this period is also highly unlikely, given that, by then, Diu was already in deep commercial decline (Cardoso 2009). It is therefore warranted to postulate that the slave population of Diu in 1842 would have composed 1-2% of the population and comprise mostly Christians. In 1855, a slave registry sheet, similar to the one carried out in Daman (see Table 1), was also prepared for Diu[15] but never filled in. Nonetheless, it constitutes the latest known record of slavery in the territory.

4. Discussion

The data presented above suggests the various territories of Portuguese India differed substantially with respect to the demographics of African slaves and their social embedding. 16th century figures lead us to believe that Goa was an outlier in that it contained a larger than average slave population; two important facts are a) that the mobility of these slaves was rather high (with Goa serving as an import-export platform for the slave trade), but also b) that the average of slaves per colonial household in Goa was still much higher than those advanced by the same authors for e.g. Bassein. Goa never developed a plantation culture of the type that was to appear later in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Instead, most of the slaves were employed in domestic tasks, in variable concentrations ranging from small to rather high numbers but always in relative proximity to their masters. Slaves were not confined to the colonial houses, if one is to believe Linschoten's remarks that they were sent out to service others in the community and sell their masters' wares in the market.

This type of social organisation corresponds to what Chaudenson (1992:93) calls the *société d'habitation* 'homestead society', a phase (in certain cases preparatory of a *société de plantation* 'plantation society') characterised by some proximity between slaves and masters which, nevertheless, did not compromise the latter's social domination. On the other hand, some of Goa's institutions, such as convents and seminaries, were able to congregate vast numbers of African slaves. These cases are peculiar in that they conform less with the prototypical homestead phase described by Chaudenson, while not allowing for the type of social detachment between slaves and colonists typical of the Atlantic-type plantation settings. In this light, Dalgado's (1921) hypothesis of a *cafreal* creole, although not unequivocal, is interesting; he proposed to trace a presumably Goan song with Indo-Portuguese characteristics back to the Convent of Santa Mónica in Old Goa, partly on the intuition that the high concentration of slaves made it a likely locus for the use of a creole language among Africans. See Section 3.3.1. for a concurrent description of this convent as housing an unusual number of African slaves.

The situation concerning the *Província do Norte* is more straightforward than that of Goa. While 16th century documents identify the presence of slaves in most Portuguese settlements, they consistently mention lower numbers (though less so in Bassein). Here too, the picture

[15] Goa Historical Archives; *Registo dos Escravos de Diu*, doc. 2981.

that emerges is that of a homestead setting, in which a few households congregated a small number of slaves (see Table 2 above). Crucially, in Chaudenson's (1992) view, the homestead phase, when combined with a differential in linguistic prestige, favours the abandonment of the language(s) of the slaves in favour of the language(s) of the masters. In the case of the *Província*, one might postulate that this assimilation was towards Indo-Portuguese; one factor in support of this scenario is that the African slaves were mostly converted to Catholicism (before or upon arrival in India) and consequently entered a well-defined community whose bulk was not European but local and Eurasian: the speakers of Indo-Portuguese. While no data earlier than the 18th century is available to support this claim, the Diuese Catholic demographics of 1792 – in which slaves make up 17.4% of the total – and the general census of 1842 – in which the proportion of non-European to European Catholics is of more than 13 to 1 – are very revealing.

One of the questions raised in the introduction, in connection with Clements' (2000) suggestion of some continuity between the African creoles and their Asian counterparts, is whether African slaves could have been vehicles of (restructured) Portuguese into India, i.e. whether they spoke Portuguese (standard, pidgin, or creole) upon arrival in India. To introduce this issue, consider the 1778 letter from a French settler in Mahé to an agent in Goa in which he requested 'to buy a *kaffir* of the very best type. Age about nineteen or twenty, knowing a little Portuguese, intelligent and having already if possible, done some cooking for which work he is intended' (quoted in Pinto 1992:38).

This document can give a hint as to the knowledge of Portuguese on the part of African slaves. The request reveals that finding a slave in Goa with some knowledge of Portuguese was not impossible, but it also suggests this could not be taken for granted. It may not have been too common to come across a newly imported Mozambican slave who already possessed any knowledge of Portuguese. On the one hand, it has been shown that most of these slaves were war captives, from regions where Portuguese settlement was minimal. On the other hand, concerning Mozambique, Gonçalves (2004:230) points out that '[a]lthough the presence of Portuguese people in the country dates back to the end of the 15th century (1498), the diffusion of the language was practically nil during the first four centuries of colonisation' by virtue of the colony's peripheral position in face of India or Brazil. The *Rios de Cuama* region itself was not as deeply affected by the late 17th century settling thrusts as it was envisaged (see also Ames 1998). Linschoten (1598) also hinted at some lack of interest on the part of the Portuguese authorities when he discussed the spread of Christianity among locals in Mozambique:

> There are some of them that are become Christians since the Portingales came thether, but there is no great paines taken about it in those coũtries, because there is no profite to be had, as also that it is an infectious and unwholesome countrie.

Given this scenario, any eventual knowledge of Portuguese (pidgin) could only have been picked up during the journey to India, in which case one must see the ships' crew, not the slaves, as the main link to restructured Portuguese as spoken in Africa - if at all. This begs the question of the fate of the slaves' native Bantu languages after their settlement in India. Two sociohistorical factors seem to have contradictory implications for the linguistic assimilation of the slaves: on the one hand, it is clear that the influx of Mozambican slaves was constant until at least the early 19th century; on the other hand, it was also shown that a significant number of slaves were actually born in India of slave parents and possibly raised in an Indo-

Portuguese (Catholic) context. In the particular case of Portuguese India, linguistic assimilation appears to have taken the upper hand, though not without the retention of certain Bantu-derived terms which appear to have been a trademark of the population of African origin.[16] Therefore, even though it makes the social picture more complex, the recognition of an important population displaced from Africa does not compromise the classification of the Indo-Portuguese creoles as essentially endogenous.

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[16] There are scattered (unconfirmed) suggestions that some Siddhis retain, to this day, either some form of ritual language with African undertones or African influences in their speech. Lodhi (1992:83), for instance, claims that 'in Daman and Diu they speak Gujarati with many Swahili/Bantu words and phrases'.

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