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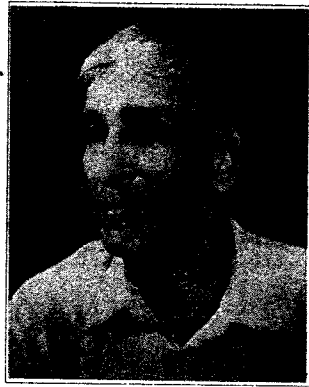
José Pereira

**LITERARY KONKANI**

*A BRIEF HISTORY*

**GOA KONKANI AKADEMI**

Panaji, Goa  
1992



Dr. José Pereira was born in Bombay in 1931. He received his doctorate from the University of Bombay in 1959. Subsequently he was Adjunct Professor at the Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos in Lisbon; Research Fellow in the History of Indian Art at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; and Research Associate in the History of Indian Art at the American Academy of Benaras. He is presently Professor of Theology at Fordham University in New York. He has published over 80 articles and 9 books on subjects including Konkani language, literature and music; India art and archaeology; Jain iconography; Hindu theology; and Baroque architecture. His 'Baroque India' is to be published shortly. Dr. Pereira is a member of the Executive Board of Goa Konkani Akademi established by the Government of Goa. 'Konkani Mandakini', a rare compilation of writings through the centuries, edited by Dr. Pereira, is to be published soon by the Akademi.

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*Literature conveys irrefutable condensed experience in yet another invaluable direction, namely from generation to generation. Thus it becomes the living memory of the nation. Thus it preserves and kindles within itself the flame of her spent history in a form which is safe from deformation and slander. In this way literature together with language protects the soul of the nation..*

*But woe to that nation whose literature is disturbed by the intervention of power. Because that is not just a violation against 'freedom of print', it is the closing down of the heart of the nation, a slashing to pieces of its memory. The nation ceases to be mindful of itself, it is deprived of its spiritual unity, and despite a supposedly common language, compatriots suddenly cease to understand one another.*

**Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn,**  
*Nobel Lecture, 1970*

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A quarter of a century has passed since work on this book was begun. Its aim was to describe, in a concise manner, the panorama of Konkani's literary history, in all its dialects; from its beginnings, through its few fortunes and many misfortunes, until its symbolic vindication on 2 January, 1966, by the naming of Manohar Sardessai as the "king of Konkani poets" (*Konknni Kaviraj*). Since that date, much literature has been produced in the language, but no effort has been made to incorporate information on it here. I have only added what facts were available to me of the period before 1966. I have also, in an Addendum, summarized the results of recent research which appear to support my plea for the restoration of the old *Pramann* as Konkani's standard form.

In preparing this book, I was greatly assisted by Senhor Aleixo Costa, former librarian of the Central Library at Panaji. He allowed me to use his extensive and rich compilation, the *Literatura goesa. Apontamentos bio-bibliográficos para a sua história*, only the first volume of which was then published. From this book I derived much of my information on Goan authors. Information on those of Kerala was given to me by N. Purushottama Mallaya, then secretary of the Konkani Prachar Sabha, Cochin. Monsignor Alexander D'Souza, former editor of *Rakno*, Mangalore, read through the section on Manglluri and suggested changes. To these friends and to many others who helped me in preparing this book, I am deeply grateful. The unfaltering devotion of my friend Uday Bhembro to Konkani has always been a source of inspiration to me. Shri D. N. Shanbag offered to print this book, and had it published by the Konkani Sahitya Prakashan in 1973.

The most outstanding events in this historical flux I take to be the following twenty-seven :

**(1) The entry of the Aryans into the Konkan**

This is perhaps the most significant background event in Konkani's history. Into a non-Aryan country came the Sarasvat Brahmins and the *Tsa-ddi* (the Punjabi Chaddas? Chardos) bearing with them a Northern Indian speech. In their trek southwards they took over some of the Nagari Prakrit of Western India and more of the Maharashtra of the Northern Deccan — ancient India's song-language. By the eighth century they were already in the Konkan. The amalgam of the Prakrits had, two centuries afterwards, given rise to Konkani.

**(2) The Establishment of Kannada and Marathi as the Konkan's Official and Religious Tongues**

But this oldest of modern Indo-Aryan tongues was not fated to reign in its own home; very early, official and religious status was accorded to the vernaculars of the more powerful adjacent territories, Karnatak and Maharashtra. At the time the northern emigrants arrived in the Konkan, the prestige and power of Kannada extended over the land between the Godavari and the Kaveri; the great rock temples of the Deccan and the Konkan have inscriptions in it. The latter region was for a long time afterwards under the sway of Kannada-speaking dynasties, and Konkani has felt the force of its Dravidian neighbour's dominion.

To the north, in Maharashtra, the rule of Kannada was overthrown by the Yadavas speaking the nascent Marathi. They, in turn, were subdued by the monarchs, like the Bahmanis and the Bijapur Sultans, who used Persian as their official tongue. The Yadavas ruled over portions of the Konkan for a time, and after them the



Bahmanis did so too; both gave Marathi official standing. This continued under the Sultans of Bijapur, whose enemies, the Vijayanagara emperors, offered high posts to Konkani Brahmins in their civil service. Their vacant places in the Konkani's temples were taken by the less qualified Maratha Brahmin priests, who raised their own vernacular to the position of Konkani Hinduism's sacred speech.

### **(3) The Evolution of Konkani Song**

While officialdom repudiated Konkani, the people cherished it. Their tongue, a true daughter of Maharashtra, had music in her blood; in this blood was lit the flame that still glows in Konkani Song.

### **(4) The Establishment of the Catholic Church in the Konkani (after 1510)**

In the history of religions, there often comes a moment when young and vital speeches assert themselves against rigid and hieratic ones. By the sixteenth century, the modern Indo-Aryan languages were assured of their victory against the powerful Sanskrit. Among them was Marathi, who made use of her emancipation also to clamp down a narrow tyranny of her own on her older sister Konkani. Only sheer vitality sustained the latter, so unprotected by the factors of a large number of speakers, extensive territory and official support – all of which, liberally gifted to Marathi, went to boost her arrogance. At this stage, on the soil of the Konkani, was established a religion whose founder had enjoined His followers to preach the gospel to every creature. Like the disciples of the Buddha and the Jina, those of Christ had made it a cardinal principle to teach the people religion in the people's own speech, and Christianity rendered Konkani the service that Buddhism and Jainism had done to many other now flourishing Indian tongues.

**(5) The founding of Konkani Schools for Missionaries (1565 and after)**

Unlike the first Buddhist and Jain missionaries, the first Christian ones in the Konkan were not native speakers of the tongues they preached in; hence schools had to be set up for them, and were – in Old Goa (1565), Tsodnnem (Chorao, 1565), Raitur (Rachol, 1576) and Mapxem (Mapuça). The missionaries' sacred language was Latin, which had a clearly articulated and defined grammar. In the sixteenth century, the inchoate grammars of the tongues of the Latin Europe were being patterned on those of their classical predecessor. The same model was followed in the analysis of Konkani.

**(6) The Setting up of the Printing Press in Goa (1556) and the Adoption of the Roman Script**

Besides bringing with them some of the West's dynamism, the missionaries brought some of its contrivances, such as the press, which gave Konkani the privilege of possessing the first texts printed in any Indian tongue. But the advantages of the press were offset by two handicaps: the smallness of the reading public (chiefly missionary clerics) and the adoption of the Roman script. This ultimately rendered Devanagari unfamiliar to its former adepts, and so put works in Sanskrit and the derived languages out of bounds to them, thus sequestering Konkani from its parent and sister tongues.

**(7) The Establishment of Portuguese as the Official Language in Goa.**

Portuguese was the tongue of the conquerors; hence in it was conducted the business of the state; hence the new script for Konkani, Roman (which is that of Portuguese), brought the literature of the latter tongue to the speakers of the Indian one. With this the Goan Konkani began to look more to Portuguese than to Sanskrit for learned

and complex terms, and hence the impoverishment of their speech in its native substance began.

**(8) The Inquisition (1560) and the First Southern Migration (from 1561)**

Though living in the age of the Renaissance, the conquerors of Konkani's heartland were mediaeval-minded; for them Church and State were one, with interests linked. Unbelievers and heretics were felt to be inimical not only to the ecclesiastical but also to the temporal power. Most Hindus, faced with the choice of conversion and the loss of their homes, opted for the latter. The personal misfortune of thousands was in some way beneficial to Konkani. It extended the language's domain southwards (probably at the expense of Tulu, thus beginning the two languages' speakers' communion of four centuries), and also helped to keep its standard form alive to this day. But the harm the Inquisition did overbalanced the good. The emotional cleavage between the two main Konkani communities today is to be owed to it alone.

**(9) The Suppression of Konkani (1684)**

The Church's ecumenical interests were increasingly absorbed by the State's more nationalistic ones. Keeping the Christians faithful to the Crown meant isolating them culturally from the surrounding unbelievers, and language is one of the principal factors of culture. Also, at the end of the seventeenth century, the level of Portuguese scholarship was falling, and with it learned interest in Konkani. The law banned the use of the mother-tongue, and commanded the Goans to speak Portuguese only. The order was disobeyed; but the one literary norm broke up, and from its ruins the seven literary dialects arose.

**(10) Famines and Maratha Raids and the  
Second Southern Migration**

The end of the sixteenth century saw Tisvarh, Saxty and Barhdes depopulated and Christian. But Konkani philoprogenitiveness soon augmented the number of the faithful, who were forced to expiate the injustice done to their Hindu ancestors, by famines (1553, 1570, 1682), epidemics (1635) and frequent Maratha marauding incursions (1683, 1729, etc.). To escape these disasters, large numbers fled south, especially in the eighteenth century (1710, 1712, 1729), taking with them Konkani as it had then evolved from the standard speech of the sixteenth. The chief city on which this exodus impinged was Mangalore.

**(11) Tippu and the Seringapatam Captivity (1784-1799)**

As in Goa, the Christians multiplied and flourished in the Kanaras, which had by then come under the Muslim sultans of Karnatak – the first of whom was Hyder Ali. The Christians, who secretly sided with Hyder's English enemies, were suspect, and his son, Tippu, resolved either to Islamize or to destroy them. In 1784, he had them herded into captivity in his capital, Seringapatam, where they remained till 1799. This trauma, while it shattered the Kanara Christians' older tradition, toughened their nerve for the creative response they achieved on their liberation.

**(12) The Protestant Missions and the Programme of  
Bible Translation**

While the Christians of the apostolic church were undergoing their ordeal, the missionaries of the newer reformist bodies were busy making converts. An important sect were the Baptists, and their greatest missionary in India, William Carey (1761-1834) – one of the most outstanding of British Orientalists – undertook to translate the Bible into Indian tongues. To prepare himself for this task, he learnt many of them himself, and published

grammars and dictionaries of a few. But the work was too vast for any one man; so Carey first rendered the scriptures from the originals into Sanskrit, Hindustani and Bengali; he then engaged pandits from India's various linguistic provinces to turn any of these versions into their own tongues. As Carey had learnt enough of the languages to be able to judge of their written style, he revised the pandits' drafts and gave their prose its final shape, basing its language, not on the refined and complex speech of the Sanskrit scriptures, but on that current in his day.

### (13) The Italian Carmelites

Protestant missionary enterprise in India coincided with a change in the Catholic Church's proselytizing policy. From the advent of the Portuguese, the Catholic missions had been under the patronage (*Padroado*) of the Portuguese State. But close linkage to a particular, and now declining, European power, began to harm the Christian cause; so the Church decided to promote her own missions, and to this end founded the *De Propaganda Fide* (1622) — which came into inevitable conflict with the *Padroado*. Some of the Propaganda's most ardent defenders were the Italian Carmelites, who, from the seventeenth century (and especially after 1717), were established in places like Bombay, Karwar and Kerala.

### (14) Church Quarrels (1837-1886)

The Propaganda-*Padroado* conflict erupted savagely after Tippu's death over matters of jurisdiction, especially in Bombay and to the South of Goa; in the latter area, it divided villages and families from each other, and finally antagonized the Christians of Goa (Goans) and those of the Kanaras (Mangaloreans).

**(15) Elections in Goa (from 1822)**

One reason why the Church wished to dissociate herself from Portugal was the rise of anti-clerical ideas there; these caused an upheaval in both the mother country and its Indian colonies. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, French revolutionary notions, which had earlier filtered through, now gained a definite foothold, fomenting the rise of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy in 1820. This led to the acceptance of elections of parliamentary candidates and the voicing of more outspoken opinion against the Government. An important province of the Portuguese monarchy, Goa, was given the right to choose its own candidates. Its people, who had hitherto been discouraged from saying what they thought of their government, now often did so in a manner which the authorities considered rebellious. The Goans also learned to compose political songs.

**(16) The Konkani-Marathi Controversy (from 1807)**

Lusitanization was for Konkani a force at once destructive and liberative; destructive, because as a channel of an intolerant westernisation, it aimed at absorbing Konkani culture into itself; liberative because it freed Konkani from the oppression of another intolerant and corrosive, but far less sophisticated, culture — the Maratha. Marathi had long claimed to be the sole literary tongue of the Konkan (event 2); bowing before its claims many Konkanis had offered to Marathi (as also to Kannada) the literary talent they had denied to their mother-tongue. But in arrogating to itself the privilege of being the Konkan's sole literary medium, Marathi had not denied, but only ignored, Konkani's right to be considered a distinct language and to autonomous literary development — until a dilettantish literateur and scholar, the Scot John Leyden (1775-1811), voiced the opinion that Konkani was but a Marathi dialect. This theory, which the Marathas were later to exploit for political ends, was born of Leyden's inadequate

of Marathi, the Konkans had made a beginning to writing in their own tongue. The literature so far produced could not be vast considering the scantiness of the numbers of the Konkans in those days, but it would doubtless have evolved and grown in size had the Portuguese not arrived. The conversions that were made (event 4) split the Konkans into two groups, whose differences in belief would, at least for the moment, be a bar to a common literary endeavour. The Inquisition sowed bitterness (event 8), which artfulness could turn rancorous, making cooperation not seem worthwhile. With numbers diminished and collective energy enfeebled by division, the two Konkani bodies could less and less be expected to cultivate their own tongue and more and more to look to foreign literatures for cultural nourishment, unless of course a vital bond of unity could be found.

### **(3) Grammars, Vocabularies and Linguistics**

Konkani Song's development (event 3) was then going on, being also noticed by Namdev, but it was not yet to have any effect on the language's literary growth. But the establishment of the Catholic Church (event 4), the founding of Konkani schools (event 5), the setting up of the printing press (event 6) and the establishment of Portuguese (event 7) were to be of crucial importance.

Of the agents of Catholicism's diffusion the Jesuits were the most important, and the powerhouse of their activities was characteristically called the Seminary of the Holy Faith, later St. Paul's, and was founded in 1542. By 1563, a Goan laybrother, whose name may have been André Vaz, had already prepared the language's first grammar, which was preceded by a like work in Portuguese not more than by 27 years. In the south, the linguistic genius Henrique Henriques (1520-1600), who had done pioneering work in Tamil, wrote a Konkani grammar, largely ready by 1567, only by conversing with two Konkani natives in the Dravidian South. The language's standard

form was fixed by Thomas Stephens (1549-1617) between 1568 and 1617. After this work the grammar's elaboration commenced; earlier researches were improved and augmented by Joao de S. Matias and consummated in Gaspar de S. Miguel's (alive between 1595 and 1647) monumental *Arte de Lingoa Canarim*, ready by 1635, the second part of which exhaustively treats of, and definitively formulates, Standard Konkani's syntax. In the latter year, the Franciscan Cristóvão de Jesus wrote a grammar that seems to be based on the great work of Gaspar who is perhaps Konkani's greatest scholar.

A whole host of minor Konkani grammars was produced at this time, but no Marathi ones were, though the missionaries knew the latter language and wrote their verses in it. However, Konkani's grammar can be better understood by comparing it with that of Marathi and vice-versa; this is precisely what the Italian Jesuit Ignazio Arcamone (1615-1683) did in his *Janua Indica*. At the end of the century, a grammar, now lost, was composed by the Tsodnnem (Chorao) Brahmin Simão Alvares. Over half a century afterwards, when the Standard Konkani norm was disintegrating, the Czech Jesuit Karel Prikryl (1718-1785) wrote a resumé in Latin of Stephen's authoritative work and named it the *Principia Linguae Brahmanicae*.

Vocabulary was studied alongside grammar. The first person to make a list of Konkani words appears to have been Garcia de Orta (1530-1572), who mentioned Konkani botanical terms in his *Coloquios dos Simples e Drogas*. But the first scholars to catalogue Konkani words systematically were a number of Jesuits living in the province of Saxty (Salcete) in the last years of the sixteenth century, who noted their findings in two volumes, which we may call the *Lexicon Racholense*. Stephen's pupil, Diogo Ribeiro (1560-1633), who had amplified his master's grammar, also augmented the *Lexicon Racholense* with a vast number of idiomatic expressions in his two-tomed *Vocabulario*



*da Lingoa Canarym* (1626). The Jesuit Antonio de Saldanha (1598-1683) continued the organization of Konkani vocabulary, which was probably brought to perfection by his co-religious, Miguel de Almeida (1604-1683), who based his own colossal work on Benedito Pereira, S.J.'s vast Portuguese dictionary, the *Prosodia in Vocabularium Trilingue* (1634), of 50000 words. There are, in addition, five other anonymous vocabularies, which may be those of the authors already mentioned, and of those indicated below. They may be identified by the following titles: *Lexicon Bracarense* (Braga, Public Library), *Lexicon Lisbonense 3044* (Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, Codex 3044), *Lexicon Lisbonense 3195* (same library, Codex 3195), *Lexicon Lisbonense Junta* (Lisbon, Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, published by the Junta de Investigações do Ultramar in 1973), and *Lexicon Romanum* (Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu). The Franciscans also contributed to Konkani lexicography, some of their outstanding scholars being Manuel Banha and the great Gaspar, whose work, characteristically copious, was in two volumes, but not now traced.

A brief resumé of these researches seems to have been the vocabulary of Simao Alvares aided by his father Lourenço, completed in 1695. In the eighteenth century, Prikryl's colleague Diogo de Amaral (1699- after 1762) wrote the last Standard Konkani dictionary, the *Prosodia della Lingua Canarina*. None of these works can be traced.

These philological investigations suggested ideas which were to become basic in the latter science of Comparative Linguistics. Filippo Sassetti (1540-1588) had shown how alike some Sanskrit and Italian words are. In 1583, Stephens intuited the fundamental notion of the science when he declared that Konkani and Marathi were related to Latin and Greek. Some decades afterwards, Arcamone remarked on the similarity of Konkani and Latin syntax. The methodology of a comparative study of languages was worked out by the French Jesuit Gaston Laurent Coeurdoux

(1691-1779) in 1767, several years before William Jones (1746-1794) stumbled upon it independently (around 1786) and got the sole credit of the discovery for himself. Two years before the latter date, also independently, the Spanish Jesuit Lorenzo Hervas y Panduro (1735-1809) elaborated a theory of comparative linguistics, making large use of Konkani material, in his *Idea dell 'Universo* (1784). We must not despise the small comparative vocabularies, like J. F. Fritz's *Sprachmeister* (1748) and the Danish scholar Ivar Abel's (1720-1788) *Symphona Symphonum* (1782). These works contain lists of Konkani words which may have been of assistance to Panduro. We must also remember what comparative linguistics owes to Prikryl's grammar; reading it (in 1791) made the Czech philologist Josef Dubrovsky (1753-1829) aware of Sanskrit, and inspired the study of linguistics in Czechoslovakia, bringing about the revival of the country's decaying tongue.

#### (4) Prose Works

The very first works in Christian Konkani prose were a few catechisms, of which no trace remains. Many translations of religious texts followed, for the translation of more cultivated languages' classics suggested itself as the obvious means for developing less evolved tongues in vocabulary, variety of phrase and subtlety of expression. As in many other things, Stephens was an important pioneer, and prepared a version of Marcos Jorge's catechism, producing what is surely Standard Konkani prose sourcebook. Diogo Ribeiro felicitously rendered Bellarmine's catechism into Konkani, so did the Franciscan João de S. Matias. A co-friar, Amador de Santana, turned Ribadeneyra's *Flos Sanctorum* into Konkani in 1612. The Jesuit João de Pedrosa (1615-1672) is the author of a superb rendition of Bernardino de Villegas's *Soliloquios Divinos* – the *Devachim Yecangra Bolanim* (1660). In Arcamone's *Sagallea Varussache Vangel* (1667), the Konkani "Gospels for the Whole Year" we have the first version in an Indian tongue of any portions of the

Bible.

The subjects of the above works were, as will be seen, saints' lives, meditations, and catechisms. The latter was the most popular sort of book and other men who contributed to it were the friars Manuel Baptista and Manuel do Lado. Catechisms in Standard Konkani continued to be written up to the eighteenth century; the last of their writer was the Jesuit Teotónio José (1701-1760). Still other literary types in vogue (whether translations or originals) were polemical tracts refuting "Gentile" errors (among the writers on which was Manuel de S. Matias), handbooks for parish priests and on how to bring up children as well as confessionaries and sermons – the last being the most fully literary in scope. The author who tried his hand at all the types, literary and philological, was Gaspar de S. Miguel.

The original works were as a rule larger than the translations. Chief among the original writers are Antonio de Saldanha, who excelled in saints' lives, meditations and pastoral handbooks; and Gaspar de S. Miguel, who was held to be master of everything, but of whose work all but the grammatical portion is lost. But by far the most monumental creation of the age was Miguel de Almeida's prose poem, the *Onvalleancho Mallo* a sort of *Summa Theologica* in Konkani, where abstract theological concepts are expressed in vivid poetic language; hence the work is aptly titled the *Garden of Shepherds*. In it scholastic precision, an opulent philosophical vocabulary, Ciceronian periods and the flamboyant imagery of Iberian Baroque rhetoric are acclimatised in the Konkani's musical tongue.

### **(5) The Beginnings of Poetry**

In 1604, some musicians from Morhgoum went to Naveli to sing Konkani hymns at the dedication of the church there. This is the first mention I have traced of

such hymns on the Standard Konkani epoch. Gaspar de S. Miguel is also supposed to have written a long Konkani poem on the passion, but as the work is lost, it is impossible to be sure about the identity of the language of the original.

Two centuries of analytical and creative endeavour: only a fraction of it managed to get into print. Most of it was set down in MS. Of both printed and MS. material much has perished or is still not traced. Not a little of what has survived is in European libraries and thus beyond the reach of the normal student of Konkani. Even in libraries in the Konkan, few of the printed classics are to be found – which situation promises to improve through the devoted efforts of men like Mario Saldanha and Anant Kakba Priolkar. One still cannot get even vaguely consistent picture of the language's literary growth in this epoch, as indeed in any other, unless one is an impassioned scholar with leisure and the means to travel. We must very patiently await the day when the Konkani classics will be found on every Goan public library's shelves.

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### III. THE ERA OF THE SEVEN DIALECTS

In 1684, a year after Arcamone and Miguel de Almeida were dead, the language they had devotedly cultivated was suppressed (event 9). For, as long as the Jesuits were in Goa (up to 1761), they ignored the law, which nonetheless proved fatal to Konkani's unity. By 1725, as Bishop Inacio de Santa Teresa tells us, speakers of various provinces in the Konkani could not understand each other easily. Of the many dialects prevalent in that region, seven were to become literary media, in order of evolution: Saxtti, Kerali, Koddialli, Karwari (the Hindu speeches respectively of the South and North Kanaras), Barhdexi, Manglluri (Christian Southern Konkani) and Antruzi.

Standard Konkani excels these later forms in wealth of word and phrase and preserves unblemished the old spirit of Konkanness. It has a propensity for the lyric and the mystical, which was not fully brought to fruition; at the same time, it is marvellously amenable to the discipline of prose and linguistic formulation, which capacities were amply exploited. The seven dialects are not more than its partial avatars. They bring out what is implicit in it and continue production along the lines of their forerunner's accomplishment. In doing this they are at their best; they are sometimes not equally so when

trying to add new dimensions to the old achievement, as in critical, historical and scientific writings.

The breaking up of the language's literary unity was obviously a disaster, but the division of the standard tongue's gifts among its seven descendants led to a fruitful specialization. We may, in the long run, find that this was beneficial to the language's growth. To assess the peculiar contribution of each to Konkani's common heritage: Saxtti first evolved the old standard tongue's flair for poetry and for lyrically evoked devotional feeling, especially as suffused with pathos; it also first explored the emotions of love and courtship, again, as coloured by sadness. Karwari, Koddialli and Kerali, more than others, preserve the integral spirit of the old Konkani. Barhdexi continued its ancestor's subtle and detailed linguistic analysis, and brought in journalism, the novel and the theatre. Manglluri made further advances in lyrical poetry, and created poetic drama. Antruzi extended the frontiers of Konkani poetry to their widest so far, fashioned the speech into an instrument of critical writing and gave intellectual form and justification to the sense of Konkanness.

### (1) Saxtti

In the last decades of the seventeenth century, in the days of the Jesuit Francisco de Sousa (1649-1712), the missionaries, who had learned their Konkani from books, found it hard to understand the Saxttikars. The bookish Konkani was the old Standard, and the speech of Saxtty was probably on the way to making the wholesale use of elision that it does today. Still, the Jesuits continued writing grammars and dictionaries of the older speeches; witness the work of Prikryl and Amaral.

The fathers did not teach Konkani as a subject to the Goans, but they did teach things like music. And their pupils learnt to sing so well that the renditions by some of them of Carissimi's oratories in the church of

Bom Jesus made a friar from one of the world's stateliest courts, that of Pope Alexander VII, feel he was in Rome. Thus was the polyphonic music of Italy grafted on to the Indian trunk of Konkani folk music, which had then been evolving for six centuries (event 3). Konkani Song's opportunities for conceiving and bearing art forms were supplied by the need for hymns in the mother tongue, and by the nineteenth century there was a large corpus in existence. The characteristics of traditional Goan poetry appear in them for the first time: melancholy and a simultaneous obsession with heavenly bodies. I know the names of not more than five hymnographers: Father Joaquim de Miranda of Santana (died 1783), author of the largest Konkani hymn, the *Riglo Jesu Molleantum*; Dona Barreto of Morhgoum (Margao; flourished in the 1820s), authoress of the *Papianchi Xeratinni*, considered by some to be the masterpiece of Konkani hymnology; Father Pascoal Baylon Dias, of Kormonnem (Carmona; flourished in the early nineteenth century), probable author of *S. Francisco Xaviera*, one of the most popular Goan hymns (possibly set to music by Raimundo Barreto of Lotlli [Loutulim] who flourished in the second half of the same century); and the Mando writer Carlos Trindade Dias (c. 1854-1890) of Dovol-li (Davorlim), author of *S. José Bogta Bagivonta*.

In the 1840s, as the era of the hymns was passing its peak, the Goans began to take avidly to social dancing (event 17), the rhythm of whose foot movements compelled a change in their music, indeed in some of the hymns themselves. Before this tremendous event, the *ovi* verse form (three-and-a-half-lines) was in general use in religious and profane songs. The elections (event 15) made the people politics-conscious; the urge to have songs to dance with, impelled the Goans to create a song-dance-form of their own, the Mando, which truly is India's *ballo nobile*; one of its earliest samples is a political song, *Luizinh* (1854). When the Mando first came into existence (1840), it was a stanza of four lines, but, probably around 1880, it settled for four lines and a chorus as its standard.



In this form the Mando's most outstanding composers wrote their best work. By the 1920s the classical period was nearly over; decline fast set in, deepened by the shock of the northward emigration (event 19), whose effects were felt late in Saxtti, the home of the Mando.

Of the early composers, born in the 1830s through 1850s, the most important are Frederico de Melo (1843-1888) of Rai (Raia), Ligório Costa (1851-1919) of Kurhtori (Curtorim), Carlos Trindade Dias of Dovol-li, Milagres Silva (1855-1931) of Lotlli (Loutulim), and Roque Correia Afonso (1859-1937) of Bannali (Benaulim). Their younger contemporaries were the Great Three of Goan Song, Arnaldo de Menezes (1863-1917) of Kurhtori, Gizelino Rebelo (1875-1931) of Vernnem (Verna), and Torquato de Figueiredo of Lotlli (1876-1948). Arnaldo is the most catholic and versatile of them all, Gizelino usually the deepest, and Torquato, not infrequently, the most sublime. Other important composers were Azavedo Diniz of Kurhtori (1860-1907), Eduardo de Menezes of Lotlli (1862-1922), Luis Manuel Menezes of Divarhi (Divar, 1866-1936), Inácio Fernandes of Kurhtori, (1872-1927), Pascual Noronha of Morhgoum (1872-1936), Aleixo Antonio de Costa (1874-1936) and Sebastião Costa-Fernandes (1875-1937) of Kurhtori, Utilica Rebelo (1886-1960) of Vernnem, Antonio Rosario Dias of Dovol-li (1894-1922), Francisco Sardinha of Bannali (1897-1958) and Mariano Costa of Kurhtori (1878-1930). An important Saxttikar poet, though he wrote mostly in Portuguese and only one poem in Konkani is Adeodato Barreto of Lotlli (1905-1937).

Saxtti is in some ways nearest to Standard Konkani; it is the only dialect whose evolution is linked unbrokenly with that of its predecessor, and it retains some of its forms and preserves the old Konkanness alongside the Latinity of the new civilization. But in many more ways it is the remotest from the standard speech. Grammatically it has in several respects innovated more than its co-dialects;

it has no penchant for prose; it is not easily capable of grammatical definition, that is, it demands more linguistic expertise than those who have set themselves to be its codifiers have had at their command.

As to prose, it has little besides the slender production of Pascoal Dias, who also deformed Konkani's syntax, patterning it after that of Portuguese. Grammatical work on it is more considerable. Inspired by Cunha Rivara's rhetoric, five grammarians set out to chart Saxtti's linguistic contours – Miguel Filipe de Quadros (1794-1871), Francisco Luis Gomes (1829-1869), Bernardo Santana Pacheco (mid-nineteenth century), Jose Maria Dias (flourished around 1869) and Francisco Xavier Araujo (1878-1949). By the time the latter grammarian wrote, Saxtti had been superseded by Barhdexi, and Araujo's language is impregnated with the latter dialect's forms.

#### **(2-4) Kerali, Koddialli, Karwari**

Old Standard Konkani can very well be called the speech of the *xennais* of Kut-tthall (Cortalim) in Saxtty. Some of them and others of the same province, under pressure from the Inquisition (event 8), migrated to the Kanaras and Kerala. The speech of the stay-at-home *xennais* of Saxtty, as, we saw, changed a great deal from the Inquisition (event 8), migrated to the Kanaras and Kerala. The speech of the stay-at-home *xennais* of Saxtty, as we saw, changed a great deal from the Standard, but not so that of the emigrant *xennais*, which is still substantially what the one literary tongue of the old Konkani was.

By the third quarter of the seventeenth century some of the Konkanis had settled in Kerala; among them were three medical men – Apu Bhatta, Ranga Bhatta and Vinayaka Pandita – who helped the Dutch botanist Henricus Van Rheede (1637-1691) to write the first monumental work on Indian plants. They gave him a testimonial in Konkani attesting the authenticity of his book's contents. It is the

first Southern Konkani document known to us; William Jones himself mistook its language for a corrupt Sanskrit.

Most of the emigrants, however, remained in the Kanaras. While their kinsmen in Kerala seemed to have mostly forgotten Marathi, the Konkanis of the Kanaras had not, or at least not their devotional poets, whose hymns were mainly in the Deccani hillmen's speech. There is also a belief that they wrote a few *bhakti* songs in Konkani, but I have yet been unable to trace any. Some of the famous *bhakti* poets and poetesses were Santa Appaya, Raghavadasa, Shantibai, Jogavva and Avaddi. They were all originally from Kutthall and flourished in the last decades of the seventeenth century under the Ikkeri princelings, chief of whom was Basappa Nayaka I, ruler from 1696 to 1714. A number of old songs of uncertain date, some showing considerable imaginative power, have survived in Kerala; they may well belong to the corpus of the Konkani *santa* poetry. Whatever the exiguity of this corpus, there seems to have been a fair amount of Konkani prose in the shape of translations of the *Bhagavata* and *Linga puranas*, and of the Epics (all of which are surely contemporaneous with the work of Krishnadas Shama), as well as original works like the *Virabhadra-cheritra* and the *Parasarama-cheritra*. Temples appear to have had their own Konkani *sthala puranas*, and even the pirates had their Konkani histories. These books are probably in the temple libraries in Kerala; we know of them from the testimony of the scholar John Leyden, the man who started the Marathi-Konkani controversy (event 16). One of these libraries actually possesses a MS. of the *God-dde Ramayana*, with verses in fughri style: it was recently published.

The time when Leyden came to know of these works was that of a great ferment in modern Indian prose; fomented by William Carey's programme of Bible translation (event 12). Two Konkani pandits of the Kanaras, whose names I cannot find, prepared the draft of the *Dharmalem*

*Pustak* (or, the *Devalim Sagallim Utram*), comprising the New Testament and the Pentateuch. Their style was examined and finalized by Carey himself, who is said to have spent nearly a decade on the work – the most monumental prose text in the speech of the Kanaras.

Carey's Christian zeal was paralleled by the devotional fervour of the Hindu *bhaktas* of the Southern Konkan, who revived the old *santas'* tradition of composing mystical songs. Chief among the new devotees were Santa Nayakasvami Narayana Tirtha (1820-1900), the two *swamis* of Chitrapur – Pandurangashrama (1847-1915) and Anandashrama (1902-1966); and the three great *bhaktas* – Sahajananda (1850-1911), Naddghar Shantibhai (1850-1902) and Shivaramashramasvami (mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century). While the Chitrapur *svamis* wrote prose, these devotees composed poems, in Konkani. Others who did so were Amula (or Amulakka) Shennai (1851-1902), perhaps the greatest among the Konkani poets and poetesses of Kerala, Narayana Narsingha Pai (1878-1959) of Ernaculam, R. C. Sharma (1896- ) of Pallipuram, G. Kamalammal (1900- ) of Alleppy, authoress of an *ovi* Ramayana, V. Ganesh Prabhu (1902- ) of Cannanore, C. Narayana Malo (or Mallaya, (1912-1966) of Cochin, Vedavati Shennai of Alleppey, Narahari Kavi, Bhavanibai Padukone, and the prolific Narahari Vitthal Prabhu of Gokarn. But a corpus of Hindu devout songs in any modern Indian tongue is incomplete without a translation of the Hindu Song of Songs, the *Gita*; this classic (in whole or in part) was rendered into Konkani by Bande Narayannu Kamti (1872-1918), Mangesh Ramkrishna Teling or Telang (1859-1949), Bollantur Krishna Prabhu (1882-1965), Upendra Pai (1905- ) of Ernakulam, Sheshgiri Keshav Prabhu and Svami Prabhavananda. A *samashloki* has been prepared by the versatile journalist and writer of devotional songs, B. V. Ballo (Balliga, 1918- ).

While the Hindu revival was taking root, the Jesuits arrived in Mangalore (event 22), and founded St. Aloysius's.

The work on Konkani of one of them, Maffei, inspired speakers of Koddiali to take up the study of their language seriously, and to try and make it a vehicle of instruction. Narayan Achari of Udyavar wrote the first Koddiali primer, and his linguistic researches were followed up by Hatyangadi Narayan Rao (1863-1921), compiler of a Konkani etymological dictionary (1917); R. Ranganatha Prabhu (1898-1965) of Alleppy, author of a dictionary and a self-teacher of Kerala Konkani; A. Anantasarma Sastri (1910- ) of Cochin, author of a primary Konkani grammar, and Ranganatha Seshagiri Prabhu (1919-1965), compiler of a dictionary of Kerala Konkani. M. M. Shanbhag, founder of the Konkani State (in idea) and the Konkani Bhasha Mandal (in reality), himself wrote two primers. But all these investigations were cast into shade by Sumitra Mangesh Katre's stupendous *The Formation of Konkani* (1942), which was inspired by Jules Bloch's classic treatise on Marathi, and is the most scientific analysis of Konkani to date. Recently, the Konkani Sahitya Samiti has been at the task of standardizing the language.

The pupils of the Jesuits were infected by the new enthusiasm, and began to urge their writers to make use of Konkani. Ammembal Subbarao Pai seems to have been one of these pupils; the first to answer his call for a Konkani revival was the devotional writer and dramatist Bollantur Krishna Prabhu, who wrote the *Chandrasahana-nattaka* (1912), the *Prahlada-charitra-nattaka* and several *bhakti* poems. His example was followed by the ill-starred Kumbhle Narsium Nayaku (1873-1945), author of the *Savitri-nattaka* (1912). The bug of emigration bit the Kanara Konkani only in the early years of this century (event 19), but by the twenties their flourishing Chitrapur Sarasvat community was already sufficiently well settled in Bombay to want a common cultural life. Its best expression was felt to be drama; after an unsuccessful start with English and Marathi, their playwrights settled for Konkani. The "doyen of Konkani dramatists" in that city, Dongerkeri Umanath Rao (1898-1967), had started writing plays quite

early in life; among them was the *Vajrakuttkam* (1914), staged in Gamdevi, Bombay, in 1934. He was the author of several dramas for the stage and plays for the radio, but serious work on Konkani drama was not taken up before Baindur Devrayu (1910- ) appeared on the scene. To lend sophistication to the Konkani theatre he drew upon the resources of more evolved literatures, and borrowed his plots from Moliere, Goldsmith and Wilde, though the characters and dialogue were Baindur's own. Other dramatists are Surkund Annaji Rao (1916- ), composer of the first Konkani *yakshaganas* and the chief, if not the only, poetic dramatist in Koddiali; Kalyanpur Narahari Bhatt (1912- ), Mudur Prabhakar (1918- ), the inventive and vivacious Mitrabai Kabad (1898- ), Talgeri Venkatrao, V. B. Shanbhag (or "Vembaxa") and R. D. Kamat (1923- ). The Konkanis of Kerala also wrote plays; among the dramatists are Narayana Narasingha Pai, V. Ganesh Prabhu and Purushottama Mallaya, mentioned earlier.

Of poetry Karwari and Koddiali have far less. The first "profane" poet known to me is Shrinivas Prabhu, a cousin of Narayana Tirtha and author of a marriage song (*Xobhane*). In modern times we have the famous Kannada poet laureate, "Rashtrakavi" Manjeshvar Govind Pai (1882-1963), who occasionally wrote in Konkani, Shantaram Kamat (1891- ) and the humourous and imaginative Dinkar Desai (1909- ), also an important writer in Kannada.

These poets, like most modern Konkani ones as a rule, published their poems in periodicals, and some of them were and are journalists. Karwari and Koddiali journalism began with the *Sarasvat*, founded about 1923 in Mangalore by V. S. Kuddva, and revived around 1941, its most illustrious contributor being Manjeshwar Govind Pai. Some other journals were *Navyug* (Karwar 1949), *Uzvarh* (Karwar 1947), *Konkan Kinara* (Kumta 1950), and *Sarvodaya* (Karwar). Some Kerala Konkani journals

the *Sarasvatabodhini* (1923), which had a Konkani section, and the *Sarasvatavani* (1965- ). But most of these journals were not very popular, and Karwari and Koddialli writers often had to make use of Goan and Manglluri papers. The *Panchkadayi* (founded 1966) seems to be the most successful Koddialli magazine yet. Rarely, collections of choice prose pieces published in journals were printed in book form, such as the *Vounllam*, comprising selected contributions to the important MS. magazine *Avai*.

### (3) Barhdexi

Saxtti, Kerali, Koddialli and Karwari form the southern group of Konkani literary dialects. The three remaining ones, which belong to the northern group, owe their rise to Cunha Rivara's crusade (event 18), and Barhdexi derived added nourishment from the great northward migration (event 20). In 1858, the year of the publication of Rivara's epoch-making essay on Konkani, the grammarian Bernardino Santana Pacheco had no knowledge of Barhdexi. Eleven years afterwards, Aniceto Maria de Sousa brought out a small dictionary using Konkani forms "common in Barhdes" (1869).

Early written Barhdexi has the impress of the still dominant Saxtti, as in Inácio Xavier de Sousa Rodrigues's (died 1907) *Diccionario Concanim-Portuguez* (1888). Gradually, more authentic Barhdexi forms began to predominate. It was José Gerson da Cunha (1844-1900) who set out to give the rising dialect a grammar around 1881, but his work remained unfinished. Not until 1892 was the first Barhdexi grammar published, in serial form and incomplete, by the great Eduardo de Sousa (1837?-1905) in his journal *Udentechem Sallok*. The raising of Barhdexi to the status of a standard speech, its lack of tradition and literature notwithstanding, was achieved by the greatest Konkani scholar on Konkani, Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado (1855-1922), who used its forms in his *Diccionario Komkani-Portuguez* (1893) and

*Diccionario Portuguez-Konkani* (1905) and in a detailed grammar which remains unpublished because of Goan dilatoriness and intrigue.

Momentum in the elaboration of grammar was gained by Dalgado's efforts, and was intensified by D. F. Dantas, author of one of the first Konkani grammars on Konkani (1910), Canon José de Santa Rita e Sousa (1863-1940), Vicente João Janin Rangel (1858-1949), Mariano Saldanha (1878-1975), Father Graciano Morais (1904- ), Father Crescêncio Francisco Monteiro (1902-1969) and Joaquim Antonio Fernandes (1889-1975). As to lexicology, the contributions of Alex Dias were ready in 1889, of Aleixo Caetano José Francisco (died 1916) in 1892, and of Casimiro Cristóvão de Nazaré (1830-1928) before 1917. Dalgado's dictionaries were found to be too learned and his vocabulary too Sanskritized; so popular ones like those of the pre-Dalgado era continued to be printed, as for example the dictionaries of J.C.F. de Sousa and A. D. Lobo (1929), and some by the firm B. X. Furtado of Bombay (1930 and 1931). The most popular of these vocabularies was undoubtedly the *Manual de Tres Mil Vocabularios*, in a sort of Barhdexified Saxtti, of Sebastião Salvador de Jesus Dias (1863? 1900).

Linked with the endeavours of studying Konkani were those of teaching it; hence, with the drive for Konkani schools (event 27). Primers and text-books in Barhdexi are great in number, and important among their writers were the Barão de Combarjua, Sebastião Teotonio de Sousa (flourished 1892-1896), F. X. Fernandes-Liberal (flourished 1899-1905), J. M. Pinto (flourished 1905-1923), Michael A. Fernandes (flourished 1930-1933), Aleixo Martinho Julio de Melo (1876-1942), Antonio Vicente da Cruz (1885-1959), Assunção da Silva (1922- ) and Joaquim Antonio Fernandes.

More important than its linguistic contribution to Konkani is Barhdexi's journalism (the language's first paper, the



*Udentechem Sallok* being in that dialect), which has three main phases. The first was initiated by Eduardo de Sousa's periodical (1889-1894). Of this time none of the papers survive, though at least twelve were started. The second phase was inaugurated by the *Rotti* (1914- ), perhaps the most influential and harmful of Konkani journals. It provided brightly written essays on a large variety of subjects, was in fact a kind of *Readers' Digest*; it was insidious, as it popularized the deformed ecclesiastical syntax created by Pascoal Dias. The man who founded this journal was Father Ludovico Pereira (1881-1936), and his example inspired many editors to launch new ventures. The number of the periodicals of the *Rotti* era is legion, the most important of the surviving ones being the *Ave Maria* (1919), *The Goa Mail* (1919), *The Vauraddeancho Ixtt* (1933) and *The Udentechem Neket* (1946). Konkani writing cannot be said to be the better for their existence. The third phase, in which the standard speech of the Goan Christians veers towards Antruzi, and tries to be more authentically Konkani, was begun by the daring Felicio Cardoso in his *Sot* (1963).

I turn next to poetry, which is not Barhdexi's forte, though the dialect made a remarkably successful start with Eduardo de Sousa's epic, *Eva ani Mori* (1899), inspired by Dante, Camões and the Goan hymns. Most Barhdexi verse after Sousa is jingles published in newspapers; but some of the writers with genuine poetic talent are João Caetano Francisco de Sousa (died 1930), who also wrote copious prose, João Luis Carvalho (flourished 1909-1939) and Bernardo Evaristo Mendes (1920- ).

Another branch of literature where Barhdexi made a promising beginning is drama. The Konkani teatr was founded in 1892 by Lucas Ribeiro – who gained experience in his job working with the Italian Opera Company (1890) in Bombay – with the help of Caetano Fernandes and João Agostinho Fernandes (1871-1947) of Rai. The latter writer was prolific, being the author of at least 30 plays,

remarkable rather for fertility of ideas than for artistry of workmanship. Though after him the *Teatr* gained popularity, Fernandes's style and ideas were not bettered.

Equally popular and aesthetically unsuccessful was that most extensively read portion of Konkani writing, the Barhdexi novel. Here again there was a not insignificant start, in the novels of F. X. Fernandes Liberal (flourished 1889-1928), Sebastião Salvador de Jesus Dias, Aleixo Caetano Jose Francisco (flourished 1892-1908), J.C.F. Sousa, Eduardo de Sousa, Francisco Pascoal Fernandes (1863-1927), Lourencinho Dantas e Sousa, (flourished 1902-1913), and J. J. A. B. Britto (flourished 1903-1915). A new impetus was given by António Vicente da Cruz; with him the Barhdexi novel became sentimental and melodramatic to a degree, and, if anything, less carefully written. Cruz is perhaps the most famous of Barhdexi writers, and symbolizes most of the dialect's faults. Novelists of the post-Cruz phase are P. A. Colaço, J. M. Pinto (flourished 1904-1931), J. J. Campos (flourished 1905-1931), F. F. Cabral (flourished 1905-1938), F. X. Fernandes Douglas (flourished after 1915), the self-made and talented Jose Lamartine Lobo (1889-1927), the productive hack Caridade Damasceno Fernandes (flourished 1931-1948), C. S. Guerreiro Dias (flourished 1932-1936), Taumaturgo Sousa (1911- ) and Elliott de Elly (1931- ). Felicio Cardoso (1932- ) began as a writer of novelettes in Barhdexi fashion, but went over to journalism, colouring his language with Antruzi forms and turns of phrase. While some of the above writers, like grammarian D. F. Dantas, wrote historical tales, their most popular themes were love, adventure, saints' lives, the war between the classes – nearly all tinged with an all too obvious desire to sermonise and edify.

#### (4) Manglluri

Though many Saxttikars settled in North Kanara, the main Christian speech of the Southern Konkani is principally

eighteenth-century Barhdexi, which was successful where its Goan sister failed. Its links with Standard Konkani are slender, and its rise, after the captivity of 1784-1799 (event 11), was due chiefly to the encouragement of foreigners. Like Barhdexi Manglluri entered Konkani's literary salon chaperoned by grammar. The first study of the speech of the Kanara Christians is due to the Italian Carmelite Rafaele Pescetti, or Francesco Saverio di Santa Anna (1771-1844), who took the Saxtti-originated speech of North Kanara as his model, and also compiled the most meticulous of Konkani dictionaries. In 1838, Pescetti ordained a few priests, among them Pio Noronha (1810-1883), the first grammarian of what is now standard Manglluri. He was inspired to do this when he saw Cunha Rivara's edition of Stephens's grammar, and wrote his own elaborate work first in Portuguese (1858) for Rivara to publish (which he did not); and later in English (1875) – an extensive tract of 553 folios – for the Sanskritist Arthur Coke Burnell (who also did not have it printed).

When the Jesuits arrived in Mangalore (event 20), Noronha presided at the meeting which welcomed them; there he met Angelo Francesco Saverio Maffei, and must have communicated some of his enthusiasm for Konkani to the young Italian scholar. It was really from Maffei, who wrote the first published grammars and dictionary of Manglluri, that the impetus for the literary movement in that dialect came. So well did the Jesuit do his linguistic work that the Mangllurkars, unlike their Barhdexi brethren, felt no need for fresh grammars, but the desired elaboration of the vocabulary was undertaken by Manglluri's most productive writer, Father Francis Silvester Menezes (1894-1968).

As in the other dialects of the Northern group, Manglluri's mainstay was journalism, the dialect's first periodical (1912) being started 23 years after the Barhdexi pioneer by Manglluri's greatest writer Luis Mascarenhas (1887-1961) – who significantly called it the *Konkani*

*Dirvem* or 'Konkani Wealth'. For a variety of reasons, the paper stopped publication, but its work was continued by the more successful *Raknno* (1938), formerly edited by Monsignor Alexander Faustino D'Souza (1926- ). In the 1940's, the centre of Manglluri writing shifted to Bombay; the journals founded there, like the *Poinnari*, gave a great fillip to competent writing in the dialect. But attempts at setting up more sophisticated magazines like the *Konkann Daiz* (1958, now extinct) met with little response. The *Mitr* (1953) of Mangalore also helped to make several writers. Its editor, J. S. Alvares, was so successful in his editing that he was led to found another paper, the *Jhelo* (1956).

These journals offered their pages to emerging Manglluri poets. Luis (or Aloysius) Mascarenhas – who influenced the poets of his dialect more than did any poet of the other dialects his own fellow-speakers – published most of his poetry in the *Dirvem*; but in 1948, he printed his masterpiece, *Abraunchem Yajnanadan* in book form; this work is considered by most Manglluri critics to be the masterpiece of Konkani writing. The poets Mascarenhas inspired are Father Louis P. Botelho (1892- ), Felix Paul Noronha (1916- ), the master poet and craftsman Father Anthony John D'Souza or "Moridas" (1922- ), a scholar in the Latin classics and one of the most sophisticated of Konkani poets, Charles Francis D'Costa (1931- ), fecund in ideas, the prolific Leo John D'Souza or "Kavyadas" (1934- ), and John Baptist Moraes (1933- ), imaginative artist, expert versifier, dramatist and historian of Manglluri – disciples of which any poet could be proud.

More popular, but less successful as literature, is Manglluri fiction, which contains some of Konkani's bulkiest novels. Important authors are Eulalia Alvares (1916- ), Joachim Santan Alvares, Vincent John Peter Saldanha and Apollinaris Thomas Lobo. Of equal bulk is the devotional literature, with little more than piety to command it. Most

Manglluri authors are deeply religious; however, when they professedly set out to edify, their writing begins to lose quality. Some of the more important devotional writers are the Italian Jesuit Polese, translator of the *Imitatio Christi* (1894), Silvester Menezes, Monsignor Raymond Mascarenhas (1875-1960), Father Gregory Coelho (died 1918), Basil Rosario (died 1945), Miguel Colaço and Ligorio Vaz. Many of these men wrote with no literary pretensions, but only with the idea of supplying good reading to those devout people who could not read English.

#### (5) Antruzi

We now come to the youngest of Konkani's literary dialects, which, like others of the Northern group, has tenuous links with Standard Konkani. Like Saxtti, Antruzi entered Konkani's literary history not through a grammarian's efforts – though Ramchandra Bhikaji Gunjekar had taken notice of its linguistic structure in his *Sarasvati Mandala* (1884) before anything of importance had been written in it – but because of a poet's happy spontaneity. Kruvnnabhatt Bandkar (1876-1945), like any pious Konkani Hindu with literary pretensions, wrote a lot of dull devotional verse in Marathi (published), but, unlike many, a fair amount of sprightly and exuberant poetry in Konkani (unpublished); Bandkar had the uncanny facility of putting sentences in the simplest conversational Konkani into the most complex of Sanskrit metres, like the *Sardulavikridita*, without the least trace of artificiality. But it was with his junior by a year that the high flood of Antruzi writing rose. This was Varde Valaulikar, who, converted to Konkani at the turn of century by one of Cunha Rivara's followers, the Barão de Combarjua, set himself to vindicate Konkani's wrongs. At the outset of his career, when he had not heard of its literature, he wrote poems and plays to compensate for this supposed lack. But his real mission, he felt, was to re-awaken the common Konkani consciousness of both Hindus and Christians, which transcended the religious and cultural modes both groups

had acquired since the days when their ancestors had formed one community. This made him give particular attention to history, religion, grammar and linguistic controversy. In history, he showed how much Konkani culture had retained of the Vedic heritage, how Goa had been a centre of Maurya administration, how the Rashtrakutas, one of India's illustrious dynasties, were of Konkani origin, and how the Goan emigrants' predicament in Bombay could only be solved by their faithfulness to Konkani values.

Dealing with religion, he demonstrated how Konkani Hinduism was of a separate cast from the Maratha, and how because of its Konkanness, it shared emotional attitudes with the equally unmistakable Konkani Christianity. He also created the *mystique* of Konkani language, on whose honour he could tolerate not the slightest stain. To him, the Konkani and Maharashtra were distinct; and their languages were equally so. This he established, to the discomfiture of his Marathist opponents, with methods sometimes as unscrupulous as those which the latter had grown accustomed to using. He also studied his beloved speech's linguistic structure, writing the first complete Antruzi grammar in Konkani. No one was more conscious than he of the need for primary instruction in the mother-tongue; so he left some elementary textbooks too.

This campaign, which in a lifetime freed Konkani from the disabilities that might have taken some generations of scholars to remove, he conducted for two decades almost single-handed. After that period, he was fortunate enough to acquire two brilliant disciples, both Naiks – Kaxinath Xridhar, "Bayabhau" (1899- ), and "Acharya" Ramchondr Xenkor (1893-1960). Brought up to believe that Konkani could not be written in, Bayabhau was astounded to find that it had long been, when he came across a catechism with samples of old prose and a few Goan hymns. In his youth he had a job as a printer; this later helped him to set up his own press, which

made the diffusion of Valaulikar's works possible; he also founded a journal, the *Navem Goim*, where young Konkani authors could prove their talent; but above all, he was the first Antruzi poet of the new Konkani writing liberated by Valaulikar's militant efforts from its old sense of thralldom. Bayabhau's lyrical gifts were complemented by the Acharya's, the "Konkani Moliere's", more dramatic ones. Very impressive was the latter's work on a Konkani dictionary, which he hoped would become the tongue's standard lexicon, but he died before his task was accomplished.

By the forties Valaulikar and the Naiks began to find support from the younger writers, like Vasant Karo, but what hitherto had been not more than the light breath of inspiration became a gust after Lohia's entry into Goa in 1946 (event 23). One of the young men who participated in the agitation was Ravindra Kelekar (1925- ), who continued the *Navem Goim*'s work in his *Mirg*, as did Ballkruxnna or Baki Borkar (1910-1984) in his *Prajetso Avaz* (both 1953). Kelekar was a convert to Gandhism, and produced a body of Konkani literature on that philosophy; he was also an educationist and an ardent worker in the cause of Konkani schools.

Standard Konkani had been a language of superb prose, but this quality was rarely excelled by the new dialects. Saxtti was mainly poetical; Karwari and Koddialli had not much prose after the Serampore Bible; Barhdexi had an abundance of it, but nearly all bad; Manglluri had been more successful, but it was left to Antruzi to fill the lacuna satisfactorily. Valaulikar's prose was rich in vocabulary, if not carefully worked in its style; his contemporary Ramchondr Panddurong Vaidya (1859-1947) contributed to some excellent Konkani prose pieces to his Marathi journal *Prachi Prabha* (1905-1915); but prose writing became really accomplished with the work of Ramchondr Narayan Naik (1901- ). Equally competent was the prose of the short stories of Laxmanrao Sardessai

(1904-1986), the well-known writer of the genre in Marathi (but more at home in Portuguese), who took to writing in Konkani seriously only after the Konkani Section of the All Indian Radio had been started (event 26). In addition to the journals of Kelekar and Borkar, the *Trivenni* (1962) of Chandrakant Kenni (1934- ), the *Konknni*, the *Vidya*, the revived *Navem Goim*, the *Sallik* and the *Parmall* helped to exercise the long atrophied muscles of good Konkani prose.

An innovation of Antruzi in Konkani was a kind of critical and historical prose; the pioneer was of course Valaulikar. His historical work was continued by some of the above writers, but chiefly by Ramchondr Narayan Naik and Vasudev Kamti Vagh (1910-1965). Valaulikar had also written the first Antruzi plays, in which he was surpassed by "Acharya" Naik; the work of these forerunners was continued with uneven success by Krishna Moyo, Punddi (Punddalik) Daddo, Vasant Karo, Raghuvir Neurekar, Kisan kamat, Vixvanath Sanzgiri, Uday Bhembro (1939- ), Xenkor Bhanddari, Ramakruxnna Zuvarkar and Avdut Hegrho Desai.

Most of these *genres* had been first worked on by Valaulikar, but he did not excel in poetry – which is precisely Antruzi's chief adornment. Very little happened after Bandkar and Bayabhau, until that dramatic moment in Konkani's history, when Baki Borkar, to whom Konkani folklore had revealed its language's wealth, decided to write in his mother-tongue, and published his collected poems as the *Painzonnam* (1960). This was considered shocking behaviour in a man who was virtually Marathi's poet laureate. The unimpeachable respectability that Konkani poetry had now acquired was incentive for further creation, and some of the poets of the "new wave" were R. V. Pandit (1917-1990), rich in ideas and bold in expression, Vaman Sardessai, or "Abhijit" (1923- ), whose work often amalgamates sweetness and power, Suhas Dalal (1940- ), a creator of *stotras* in Konkani, Panddurang



Bhangi (1923- ), a cultured and sensitive artist, and Manohar Sardessai (1925- ), the poet of Konkanism, unrivalled for wealth of imagery, artless profundity of thought and vividness of expression, with whose crowning as the "prince of Konkani poets" (*Kaviraj*) on 2 January 1966 the new Konkani writing was regally vindicated. Konkani's long smouldering fire had now sprung into flame.

This in brief, is the history of a language not favoured by history, of its stubborn refusal to accept what to so many sophisticated people seems its obvious fate-extinction. As noticed earlier, there was never in Konkani, as in more favoured tongues, a consciousness of previous cumulative accomplishment, at least not in so far as concerns the literature of the language as a whole. I have sought to make it possible to remedy this in the present essay, and have tried to convey to the reader the wonder I felt at first viewing the panorama of Konkani's total creative endeavour.

#### **IV. THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIFIED TONGUE**

Konkani is one of the few pleasant-sounding modern Indian tongues; it is not far below most others in standards of literary excellence (considering especially the not very great moment of nearly all of them in world literature); it surpasses not a few of their number in phonetic, verbal and inflexional riches and nearly all in the ability to survive under duress. On the other hand, its small number of speakers, their financial poverty, the nearness of powerful neighbours not at all zealous for its survival, seriously imperil the language's existence. With the added disadvantage of a plurality of literary dialects, its chances of continuance in a world where media of expression grow increasingly uniform, are slim. But Konkani must not die. It therefore needs a common standard.

This cannot be any one dialect imposed on the speakers of the others (admitting that there is an authority with the power to do that), for the speakers of our dialects are attached to their own, or will become so subsequent to the imposition, as the near-enforcement of the not universally loved and admired Hindi has only led to a deepening patriotism for local tongues. It cannot be a standard set up by a body of scholars, for its very arbitrariness will make every self-respecting man feel bound to violate

it. It cannot be a norm gradually evolved by time, as we are pressed for time, and Konkani must survive.

What then is it to be? Severe indeed are the demands for a Standard Konkani; it must be intelligible to the language's speakers; it must be capable of exciting emotional attachment in the users of each dialect more than any other besides their own; it must finally possess antiquity and some literary prestige.

The only kind of Konkani to fulfil these prerequisites is the Old Standard (*Porni Pramann*), which is unique in that the modern forms of the language receive from it both filiation and substance. In other words, while they all originate from it, each also preserves portions of the Standard's linguistic structure which the others have lost. One can thus picture it as a mosaic, most of whose tesserae have been incorporated into the newer pattern of Konkani's modern varieties, but which can be disengaged and re-set into the old design.

In consequence, as regards its intelligibility, not only can the speakers of Konkani's other species follow it, but it is what they have in common, and is thus probably easier for each modern speaker to comprehend than any other dialect besides his own. This is especially true of the *Pramann's* written form, for its mode of notation in Devanagari is fixed, and not capable of the eccentric variation found, for instance, within and between Karwari, Kodialli, Kerali and Antruji. As to its power for creating attachment, a person is normally more partial to his own dialect than to any other, but can equally cherish a form of speech with which his own shares substance and filiation, and, through it, come to care for the sister dialects. The common parent of them all is the *Porni Pramann*, which is accordingly unapproachable in antiquity; and the younger dialects have not yet surpassed it in excellence. The former lapse of the memory of Standard Konkani's greatness can be ascribed to the disasters of history, but we have

now no excuse for failing to see that the language's capacities and wealth were first fathomed in the old unified tongue – which event will for ever remain unaltered.

The *Pramann's* splendid unity thus vindicates Konkani's right to flourish as a literary tongue. But not everything in it can be restored, as it possesses features which all Konkani dialects have together discarded. Our rule, then, will be to conserve what is living in it and cut out what has decayed. In more exact terms, the formation of a new Standard Konkani (*Navi Pramann*) will need (a) the avoidance of all that the modern dialects have *jointly* abandoned in the *Porni Pramann*, (b) the retention of all of it that they have *jointly* retained; and (c) discretion in those things that some have retained and others discarded.

This holds true of grammar; there is then the problem of the vocabulary. Konkani has lost many of the words which denote complex concepts and are found in the make-up of civilized tongues; and people seek to supply this deficiency by borrowing words from Sanskrit (without phonetic modification) or from English or Portuguese. But the way out seems to be there ready-made; to revive the vocabulary of old Standard Konkani, which seems to retain a larger percentage of phonetically assimilated Sanskrit words than do any of the hitherto officially recognized modern Indo-Aryan tongues. As for the terms expressing the ideas of the industrial world, we can watch what is happening to the more fortunate Indian languages, and make use of their solutions.

Restoring the old norm will not be easy; it is naive to assume that we can unify a language without encountering difficulties. I envisage two initial complementary ones – the need for money, and for concentrated effort. We shall require both money and effort to revise the old norm, publish a standard grammar in it and to reprint and render usable the old vocabularies and literary texts. Konkani's condition and character all seem to point to

the futurity of a rapid evolution, once the main hurdles are surmounted; and the most arduous of them is the acceptance and mastery of one script (Devanagari) in the Konkan. As most Devanagari texts are in Antruzi, we shall have to make use of this dialect as a provisional norm until the script is rendered familiar and the *Navi Pramann* texts have been got ready.

What is the condition and character of Konkani that make one sure of its future development? To begin with, its infrustrable will to live. Next, the fact that it possesses a standard form of speech (which awaits acceptance), rich, stable and flexible: this form increases the intelligibility of the dialects among themselves, and its unifying force prevents their drifting further apart. At the same time, the vitality of these dialects ensures that of the standard language; they put at the literary norm's disposal the living idioms coloured with the Konkan's rich diversity; they also turn over it to the modes of aesthetic expression that brought to fruition in a specialized manner the *Pramann's* own potential after its unity disintegrated. All this vitality will infuse new blood into the New Standard, and will be there to rejuvenate it each time its veins are about to harden through too much uniformity and stereotyping. We can thus, with vision and imagination, turn the harmful events of Konkani's history into factors for its good.

*Delhi-Benares-New York, 1966-1991.*

### ADDENDUM ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF KONKANI

The recent researches of Lourdino Rodrigues appear to reinforce the case for the re-establishment of the unified tongue (which I have called *Pramann Konkani*, or simply, the *Pramann*) as Konkani's standard form. These researches are embodied in his "Glimpses of the Konkani Language at the turn of the 16th Century", particularly in Section XII, "Standardization of the Konkani Language" (*Boletim do Instituto Menezes Braganca* no. 154, 1988, pp, 49-88). What follows is an adaptation of Rodrigues' analysis.

He distinguishes three types of Konkani, *Old Standard Konkani* (or the *Pramann*); the *northern dialects* of Konkani, found in north Goa and to the north of Goa, particularly in the Kudalli dialect of the Ratnagiri district; and the *southern dialects* of Konkani, found to the south of the river Zuari, in south Goa, and to the south of Goa, particularly in South Kanara.

Large number of dialects pullulate in the northern and southern areas. I myself have chosen to restrict analysis to the seven literary dialects – Barhdexi, Mangluri (or 18th century Barhdexi transplanted to Kanara) and Antruzi of the northern group; and Saxtti, Karwari (the dialect of North Kanara), Kodialli (the dialect of South Kanara,

in many ways the closest to the Pramann) and Kerali.

For Rodrigues, the criteria for standardization are two: grammatical sophistication and number of speakers. He is of the considered opinion that the *number of the speakers* of the southern dialects exceeds that of the northern. As for *grammatical sophistication*, his analysis, given below, demonstrates that it exists to a greater extent in the southern dialects than in the northern. In other words, the southern dialects are richer and more nuanced, and the northern relatively impoverished. Now the southern dialects are closest in their characteristics to the Pramann (what they have in common being practically identical with it). It seems to follow, therefore, that the Pramann should be reinstated to its former position as Konkani's standard form. Two more criteria may be added: greater verbal richness and great literary prestige, both distinctive of the Pramann.

Where the modern dialects agree and differ, which of them conform to the pramann and which have the greater grammatical sophistication is shown by Rodrigues with a wealth of examples under the following eight headings. Here again, his analysis has been adapted rather than exactly reproduced.

### 1. SILENT VOWELS

The Pramann has the terminal vowels **u, i, a**, which respectively indicate masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns and adjectives; as in **dukaru** (boar), **dukari** (sow) and **dukara** (any pig). The northern dialects sometimes do not differentiate between the genders: all three kinds of porcine mammal, for instance, are indifferently **dukar**. These end vowels are helpful in adding the emphasis signifying exclusion ("only") or inclusion ("also")

### 2. PLURAL OF NOUNS

The Pramann and the southern dialects form their

noun plurals in generally the same manner, and show greater precision of meaning than their northern counterparts.

Examples:

*Masculine*. "carpenter" - **sutaru** (singular), **sutara** (plural).  
NORTHERN DIALECTS, **sutar** (singular and plural).

*Feminine* "night" - **rati** (singular), **rateo** (plural, distinctively Konkani)

NORTHERN DIALECTS: **rat** (singular), **rati** (plural, as in Marathi)

*Neuter*. "year" - **varusa** (singular), **varusam** (plural)

NORTHERN DIALECTS: **varas** (singular), **varsam** (plural)

As will be seen, the vowel endings of the Pramann and the Southern dialects evince greater precision in indicating genders. Conversely, the northern endings shown above are all in consonants, which do not reveal the gender of their words.

### 3. STEM OF NOUNS

Here standardization can cause no problems, as the oblique stem of the noun – which is the basis of its dative, genitive, instrumental and locative forms – is identical in all kinds of Konkani. Example: direct form, **sutaru**; oblique stem **sutara** (dative **sutara-ka**, genitive **sutara-chem**, instrumental **sutara-na**, locative **sutara-ntum**).

### 4. PRONOUNS

Here too, all the modern dialects inflect their pronouns in the same manner as the Pramann – except Kudalli, which has some changes. Examples: "I", "me". Pramann – **hanva**, **mim**, **myam**; Kudalli – (no **Hanva**), **mim**, **myam**.

### 5. ADJECTIVES

Konkani has two types of adjectives: *uniform*, which have the same termination for all the genders; and *triform*,



which have a specific termination for each of the genders. These two types are applied to *number* in three ways: triform in both singular and plural; triform in singular and uniform in plural; and uniform in both singular and plural. The Pramann and the southern dialects adopt all these three ways; the northern have only two – triform in both numbers, and uniform in both numbers.

Examples of the first kind: *triform singular, triform plural*

Singular: **baro, bari, barem**. Plural: bare, bareo, barim (“good”)

Examples of the second kind: *triform singular, uniform plural*

Singular: **dayallu, dayalli, dayalla**. Plural: **dayalla** (“merciful”)

NORTHERN DIALECTS: no examples of this kind; they have **dayall** in both singular and plural.

Examples of the third kind: *uniform singular; uniform plural*

Singular and plural: **allxi** (“lazy”)

## 6. NUMERALS

In the Pramann and the southern dialects “one” is triform: **eku, eki, eka**. So is “one-and-a-half”: **derhu, derhi, derha**. In the northern dialects, both words are uniform: **ek, derh**. In the Pramann and the southern dialects, the uniform cardinals have a vowel, long or silent, dropped in the northern dialects. Examples: Pramann: **doni, tini, cheari**. Northern dialects: **don, tin, chear**.

## 7. VERBS

Here the northern dialects, Barhdexi and Manglluri in particular, retain forms of the Pramann that the southern dialects have lost (Rodrigues does not remark on this). Examples from the indicative of “to be”.

PRAMANN: **asam, asasi, asa, asaum, asatha, asati**.

BARHDEXI: drops the *s* of **asasi** and has **asai**; it retains **asaum**, and modifies **asatha** into **asat**.

KODDIALLI: retains **asati**, changed by SAXTTI and KERALI into **asai**, by dropping the *t*.

The Pramann thus combines features distributed between north and south, though the south is more faithful to its forms.

*Active* and *Passive* are differentiated in the Pramann and the southern dialects, but not in the northern. Examples: **laxitam**, "I burn", **lasatam**, "I am burning". The northern dialects have **lastam** for both active and passive, with consequent loss of precision.

## 8. VOWEL BASE FOR EMPHATIC PARTICLES

As was noted under heading 1, the Pramann and the southern dialects, with their vowel ending of nouns and adjectives, facilitate the affixation of particles of emphasis, signifying exclusion (**chi**, "only") and inclusion (**i**, "also"). Examples: **doni**, "two", **donichi**, "only two", **donii**, "also two". When using these particles, the northern dialects, whose nouns and adjectives mostly end in consonants, and so cannot easily combine with those particles, have to interpose vowels, like **o** and **u**, which they do not otherwise employ with those words, as for instance: **don**, **donuch** (donuts), **donui**.

## 9. VOCABULARY

In consequence of the duress under which Konkani has evolved, its modern dialects have lost nearly half of the Pramann's vocabulary, but some of it has survived more in the southern than in the northern dialects. Examples: **kopu**, "anger"; **gomatto**, "beautiful"; **chandi**, "silver"; **bamonnu**, "husband"; **mandduka**, "frog"; **vasri**, "kitchen"; **xiallem**, "tender coconut", and so on. This vocabulary should be restored, not only because it is authentically Konkani, but also because of its propriety and elegance.

## APPENDIX : A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

### THE ROMANIZED SPELLING OF KONKANI

Of the many ways in which Konkani is romanized, I shall consider only four :

- (1) That adopted by the writers of Old Standard Konkani, or **Porni Pramann** (PM), based on the conventions of romanized Portuguese, Devanagari and Kannada.
- (2) That established by the Rachol Convention (RC) of April 1957, little different from PM and generally followed by Goan writers.
- (3) A modified variety of RC (MRC), adopted in this book, the modifications representing those sounds of Konkani that Devanagari does not symbolize.
- (4) The spelling of Indian words convention in what used to be British India (BI) which shares the eccentricities of its English model.

The outstanding features of MRC are as follows :

#### (A) VOWELS

<i>a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>
अ, आ	ए,	इ, ई	ओ,	उ, ऊ

## (B) CONSONANTS

- (a) Single consonants: *s, g, j, x* always represent स, ग, ज, श.
- (b) Compound consonants: The relatively small Roman alphabet can be made to express the more numerous Konkani sounds: by the use of diacritics; by a doubling of the same letters; and by combination of two different letters. PM, RC and MRC concur in rejecting the first option.

**Doubling of the same letters:** *d, l, n, t* represent, when single, dental sounds; when doubled, lingual:

<i>d</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>dd</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>nn</i>	<i>tt</i>
द	ल	न	त	ड	ळ	ण	ट

The further doubling of these sounds is thus represented

<i>d-d</i>	<i>l-l</i>	<i>n-n</i>	<i>t-t</i>	<i>d-dd</i>	<i>l-ll</i>	<i>n-nn</i>	<i>t-tt</i>
द	ल्ल	न्न	त्त	ड	ळळ	णण	ट्ट

**Combination of two different letters:** *c + h = ch* (च): *l + h* as in the Portuguese *olho* "eye"; *n + h = ञ* or as in the Portuguese *sonho*, "dream"; *r + h = ड* as in *tambrhem*, "red" (inaccurately represented in RC as *dd* or *ड* as in *tambddem* or तंबडे: however, the sound is not a lingual, but a "flapped" *ɽ*); *t + s* as in *tsoru*, "thief", inaccurately represented in RC by *ch* (=च) and written as *choru*.

## (C) NASALS

In the middle of a word, *m* before labials (as in *ambo*, अंबो "mango"); in all other cases *n* as in *sansar* (संसार) "world". At the end of the word, *m* in all cases, as in *pitam* (पितां) "I drink", *m* non-nansal, at the end

of a word is represented by a double *m*, as in *pitamm* (पिताम), “formerly”

#### (D) DIACRITICAL MARKS

The *apostrophe* indicates elision (especially prevalent in the Saxtti dialect) as in *mattvam* (माटवां) *mattvant* or *mattvantum* (माटवांतुं), “in the pavilion”. The dash joins, as in *burgim-ballam* (बुर्गी-बाळं) “children”; or separates, in three instances: where linking would otherwise have altered the meaning, as in *mal-lo* (माल्लो or मारिल्लो) “beaten”, as distinct from *mallo* (माळो) “floor”; where there would be a cluster of too many identical consonants, as in *kal-llo* (काळ्ळो or काडिल्लो) “taken”; to show that the intervocal *n* is not a nasal, as in *mun-xa* (मुनशा or मनुशा) “o man”, which without the dash would be pronounced मुंशा.

I have employed MRC for all Konkani words and for the names of Konkani writers who lived and acquired fame in Goa, and BI for the names of those who either lived or acquired fame in British India.