

## Portuguese Inscriptions from Roads and Bridges from Portuguese Estado Da Índia At Goa

**Swapna Samel**

Birla College, Kalyan (Maharashtra)

Email: [drswapnasamel@gmail.com](mailto:drswapnasamel@gmail.com)

On the eve of the Indian invasion of the Portuguese Estado da Índia, or Portuguese India, a commission led by Ismail Gracias, created an idealized plan for the reintegration of Old Goa, the former capital of the Portuguese Eastern Empire. For the Portuguese dictatorial regime, the ambient of crisis caused by threats of an imminent Indian invasion generated a need to justify the Portuguese permanence in India. This would be accomplished by showing the world the secular history of the Portuguese presence in India, visible symbolically in the great architectural monuments of Old Goa. The Goan monuments of Portuguese influence thus became a powerful and ideological instrument of propaganda, validating the heritage activity on them.

The Portuguese were no longer masters of the sea as they could claim till the early sixteen century, and by the seventeenth century the Dutch made fun of the Portuguese calling them ‘chicken of the sea’ [Teotonio R De Souza,[ed]‘Goa Through Ages : An economic history’, Vol, 2, p. 229].

Colonial policies had their influence in the field of transport and communications. Railways, navigation, roads, the press, telephones, telegraphs, telegrams, postal services and roads, each engaged the attention of Portuguese government during last century of its stay in Goa. While innovations brought about some change in the lives of the people, the government used them to guide and order the activities of the Goan according to its own colonial designs and policies. Goa had been the scene of much trading activity from early times. The old trade routes passed through Kelghat, Sanquelim, Bicholim, and mapusa, through Kepen, Usgao.,Kenderpar, Mardol and Ponda and through Sanguem, Kepem, Paroda, margoa and Bali to Digui. The river of Caisua and Betul helped towards the trade at the markets of mapusa and of Margao town respectively.

Due to increased transportation during the course of the centuries, the physical mobility barriers between rural and urban people were less, and the tempo of human activity and efficiency of administration increased. It helped towards the mingling of people and improvement of commerce and industry.[Teotónio R De Souza, op.cit. p.230 ]

In this paper researcher is going to discuss Portuguese inscriptions at two sites one on the Pilar de Tonca [Tonca Pillar] at the entrance of the road and other on the Ponte Linhares, a bridge. It was a need of Portuguese rulers to construct good roads and bridges for easy transportation in beautiful Goa.

Hence before the Public Works Department was created, the “Senado da Cidade de Goa” or “Camara Municipal de Goa”, carried out all the public works in addition to its own duties, as per the rules governed under the “Codigo Administrativo” approved by the Decree of 31.12.1836.

On 20.8.1892 a Decree was promulgated, whereby a common cadre of Public Works Department of overseas territories known as “Plano de Organizacao dos Servicos de Obras Publicas, Comercio e Industria” was established. Later by a Decree dated 11th November, 1911, this was substituted by the “Regulamento Geral das Direccoes e Inspeccoes das Obras Publicas das Colonias” (general bye-laws). However, a Decree of 25.8.1913 made the legislation regarding the “Regulamento Organico de Direccao das Obras Publicas do Estado de India” applicable to Goa.

By Portaria No. 654 of 7th August 1920, all the three engineering services of Goa viz. (i) Direccao das Obras Publicas (ii) Direcçao Fiscal de Caminho de Ferro e Porto de Mormugao and (iii) Commissao de Melhoramento de Mormugao were incorporated into a single cadre, under one Directorate to unify all the services of technical nature under a single authority. By Portaria No. 1058 of 28th October, 1922, a sub-division within the Directorate of Public Works Department was created. Till the liberation of Goa PWD wonderful job in developing roads and bridges in their most favored colony.

### **Pillar De Tonca**

During the 100 months of governance of Antonio Cesar de Vasconcellos *Correa, conde Torres Novas*, beginning from 1855, the following main roads were constructed in Goa. Raibandar to Pelourinho, Santa Ighes to Dona Paula, Pernem, Torres Novas, Pelourinho Velho to S. Braz etc.

In addition 5 jetties, 08 bridges, and several cemeteries were also constructed. In addition there were also Estrada de Nanuz [4 km], Estrada de Pavor [12 km] and Estrada de Chorlem [15.5 km] Around 1876, 128 miles of roads were in existence in Goa. Several Talukas were served by state roads. [ViscoPinho's , Snapshot of Indo-Portuguese History-IV. P. 146]

It is to be known that Panaji as an area was not inhabited, though it had sparse pockets of houses. The primary residential habitation was in the village of Taleigao and people walked down from there to carry out errands and employment to the port city of Panaji.

The area of Panaji now referred to as Miramar, Campal, Tonca and others were marshy areas interspersed by rivulets passing through the lands thereby giving it an impression that this area was made up of islets – hence the Taluka was called as ‘Tiswadi’ or a place made of 30 “wadis” or locales. Besides being uninhabited the area between St. Inez to Taleigao comprised of a thick jungle and was void of any decent access.

The construction of Panjim – Dona Paula Road was ordered by Antonio Cesar de Vasconcellos Correa, Visconde de Torres Novas. He was Governor between 1855 and 1864. The road was inaugurated on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1859, precisely on the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Torres Novas having assumed the high office of Governor of Estado da India. The works of building the roads was taken up from the present location of Don Bosco High School up to Dona Paula. Though much of the road was constructed by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, it nearly took 11 years in all for the entire road to be completed.

Located a hundred meters before the Tonca junction of Santa Ines, the one surviving pillar (of the possible two landmarks) contains the following on two of its four sides – the Northern & Western sides. The stone engravings read as follows:

That to the West:

ESTRADA DE

D. PAULA

MANDADA CONSTRUIR

E CONCLUDANO FELIZ

GOVERNO DO

ILLMO EXMO SOR

VISCONDE DE TORRES NOVAS

EM 1859

(Road to Dona Paula, ordered and completed during the fortuitous governance of Most Illustrious Excellency the Viscount of Torres Novas in 1859)

That to the North:

“ INAUGURADA EM 3 DE NOVEMBRO 1859

4 ANNIVERSARIO

DO DIA EM QUE S. XCIA TOMOU

AS REDEAS DO

GOVERNO

DESTE ESTADO”

(Inaugurated on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1859 – 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the day when his Excellency held the reigns of Governance of this State) Source: ‘Historicus’ Private Archives of Vasco Pinho

The state of roads in Goa seems to have been very primitive outside the city of Goa and its immediate suburbs, In Goa there were well laid down roads and Count of Linhares in 1630s built the long patto linking the city of Panjim. The potto was wide enough for two palanquins to cross at one time . We have records of the public works department of those times and the terms of contract instruct how the roads are to be constructed. It is recommended for instance that they should have borders of stones of a definite size namely 4 per cart. It is mentioned that these roads should be able to sustain movement of carts. The road facilities were largely for the comfort of the city dwellers.


To achieve this a tax of 1.5% on property incomes was imposed and village communities were compelled to send a definite number of workers.[Teotonio R De Souza, op.cit. p.230 ]

Some of the pre liberation bridges have been the Linhares, Siridao, Banastarim, Borim, Dramapur, Colem, Sanvordem, Rivona and Poinguinm. The count of Linhares, Viceroy Miguel de Noronha was responsible for the already mentioned 9542 feet long, 41 arch patto bridge linking panjim and Raibandar in 1633.

Goa has a very rich history and everything in Goa has some great story behind it. From big Portuguese houses to the roads and bridges build by the Portuguese are the legends of the Goan history. One such place is the famous “Raibandar Bridge” which is one of the oldest and said to be the longest bridges in the world then, very few knows that this bridge starts from the old patto

bridge, which is connecting the capital city of Panaji to Raibandar and the former capital city Goa “old Goa”.

Ribandar is an unincorporated town in Goa, India, in the district (conselho) of Tiswadi (Ilhas), lying in between the cities of Panaji (Nova Goa) and Old Goa. Raibandar was anciently called Raibandar or the royal landing palce. It was first corrupted into Rabandar, then Rebandar and finally into Ribondar. The name Ribandar originates from "Rayachem Bandar" meaning the wharves, docks or portage of the Rayas or Kings. It is unclear which kings are meant here.

Ribandar is located at  WikiMiniAtlas  $15^{\circ}30'N73^{\circ}51'E$   $15.50^{\circ}N 73.85^{\circ}E$  /  $15.50; 73.85$  It has an average elevation of 3 metres (10 feet). It is separated from Panjim by the Rio de Ourem, River of Gold, whose junction with the Mandovi here forms a large, wide marshy estuary.

Raibandar has been the residence of many Portuguese noble-men. Ribandar is associated with the later life of Fr. Antonio Francisco Xavier Alvares (1837–1923), the Goan Catholic priest who defected to Monophysitism or the Malankara Orthodox Church based in Kerala or the Malabar Coast, and was made by it a bishop as Mar Julious I, "Archbishop-Metropolitan for the Archdiocese of Ceylon, Goa." Alvarez consecrated Joseph René Vilatte (1854–1929) and thus is the person from whom most Old Catholic bishops in the West claim apostolic succession. Fr. Alvares or Bishop Mar Julious died and is buried here, St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Ribandar.

Tiswadi Island faces the Arabian Sea from Miramar Beach; it is bounded on the north by the Mandovi River and on the south by the Zuari River and separated from the mainland by the Cambarjua canal. It also has two large marsh basins now transformed into rice fields, one to the south between Siridao and Old Goa, another to the north between Ribandar and Panaji. The former is linked to the Zuari by a water channel, while the latter opens to the Mandovi via a flooded outlet over 3 km long; this is a natural obstacle to connection between the city of Goa and the Mandovi bar, and to the settlement that controlled the latter from the earliest times, Panaji. A fortress already existed in Panaji when Goa was conquered (1510). It was later converted into the quarters/palace of the viceroys, a building subject to major changes in the 1610s. In 1759 it became the residence of the viceroys and seat of the permanent government of the Estado da Índia. Goa and Panaji were connected by boat, as the land route was via a winding detour that doubled the distance. This was so until construction began in 1633 on the Count of Linhares

Causeway, or simply Ponte de Linhares [Linhares Bridge], as it is often called nowadays. Since the territory was integrated into the Indian Union (1961) its west end has also been known as the Patto Bridge, after the name of the islet through which it enters Panaji. This mixed causeway-bridge structure is built on jambo (*xiliadolia briformis*) pilings. The causeway proper stretches in almost a straight line nearly 2,600 metres from Ribandar to that islet, whence a bridge about a hundred metres long not only enables accesses over a pier to Panaji, but also allows small vessels to pass between the Mandovi and the interior basin. Curiously, two parallel bridges also depart from this islet, crossing the Mandovi to Bardez. The Patto crossing corresponds to a length of about 450 metres, meaning the causeway-bridge as a whole measures around 3,150 metres. The causeway has the typical structure of the type, with arcades keeping the roadbed above river level, even during the rainy season. Some of the archway ducts have devices to regulate the flow of water in and out of rice paddies. The bridge was built starting with ramps from both sides, with a view to ensuring maximum clearance for navigation in the central arch. Hence the arches are wider and with more expressive support pillars than those in the causeway. Unfortunately, the bridge was thoroughly disfigured when it was widened several years ago. This is especially visible in the proportion and appearance, in the pillars (where the laterite structure is lost behind the concrete) and also by replacement of the stone ashlar protective barriers by a balustrade. The ennobling stone monument midway along its length is also gone. The structural and building quality was revealed over centuries of heavy use, almost without upkeep, even during extremely adverse situations such as intense flooding during the rainy season. Also, it was located in an aquatic environment with a continuous flow of waterborne sediments and debris. Note that beyond the originally envisaged loads it has carried all kinds of road traffic, including cargo vehicles with no weight limits whatsoever, as it is the only link between the state capital, Panaji, and the station on the recent Konkan Railway about ten kilometres away. For these reasons it is an exceptional construction, also because of the indelible yet subtle line it traces on the landscape, and for fulfilling its original purpose vis-à-vis territorial planning and infrastructure.

The *Patto Bridge*, a marvel of civil engineering and architecture, was designed along the bridges of the ancient Roman period, by the Portuguese, thus creating an everlasting monument which stands till date, unfettered by time's ravages, while the bridges built in the post liberation period have gone down a number of times. The classic examples are the Mandovi&Zuari Bridges.

Without sounding eulogistic of the colonial rule, one cannot fail to admire the strong foundations and structures the Portuguese created in Goa, which have withstood a number of rough weathers.

The Patta Bridge, known as “*Ponte de Linhares*” (‘*Ponte*’ in Portuguese means Bridge) is a continuation of the long causeway again known as Ponte de Linhares, that links Panjim to Ribandar.

Three Portuguese inscriptions respectively of the year 1634, 1699 and 1771 on the bridge will reveal the details of its construction and maintenance. Reinando a Magestade do Catholico Rei D. Phillippe 3<sup>o</sup> N S. Governando este Estado o V. R. D. Miguel de Noronha, Conde de Linhares, mandou a cidade fazer esta Ponte de dinheiro de hum por cento, e se comecou o anno de 633 e se acabou o anno 634

#### Translation

During the reign of His Majesty the Catholic King Dom Phillip III, Our Lord, and the government of the Viceroy Dom Miguel de Noronha, Count of Linhares, the city ordered this bridge to be erected out of money of one percent, and it was begun in the year 633, and finished in the year 634.

By the 22nd June 1634 all the ground adjoining the causeway was granted by the Governemnt to the Senate or municipal chamber of the city, which took upon itself the responsibility of keeping it in proper repair for the benefit of the responsibility of keeping it in proper repair for the benefit of the public. That the Senate actually fulfilled this engagement at its own expense, can be seen from the two of the following inscriptions, the first of which is on the large arch at its eastern portion, and the second in its middle portion on a cross—

‘No anno da 1699 sendo Joao Rodrigues da Costa Vereador do Senado da Camara da Cidade de Goa, mandou edificar este arco’

#### Translation-

In the Year 1699, Joao Rodrigues da Costa being Vereador of the Senate of the Chamber of the City of Goa, this arch was ordered to rebuild.

‘Sendo Governador a Capitao General destollmoaErmo, Sr. D. Joao Jose de Mello, se renovouestaponte a custa do nobreSenado do Camara no anno de 1771.

#### Translation

In the time of the Governor and Captain General D. Joao Jose de Mello, this bridge was repaired at the expense of the noble Senate of the Chamber in the year 1771.

The causeway was also repaired in 1859, during the administration of the Viscount of Torres Novas.

Prominent scholar and historian, *Percival Noronha* gives an interesting historical account of the bridge. He elucidates that it was the Viceroy, Count of Linhares, Dom Miguel de Noronha, who linked Panjim with Ribandar village by a 3.2 Km long causeway, known as “*Ponte de Linhares*” (*LinharesBridge*).

The expertise of the *Jesuits of the College of St. Paul (Collegio de Sao Paulo) in Old Goa* was availed of in 1632 and the massive bridge, the longest and oldest in the whole East, was built on alluvial soil after stabilizing it with solid trunks of local timber known as “*zambo*” or “*jambo*” (*benth*). The super structure of the bridge was constructed exclusively in laterite stone.

Percival Noronha further states that it is indeed surprising that this bridge originally designed for light traffic of horse driven carriages, coming from Old Goa, today defies heavy vehicular traffic, concludes Noronha.

The entire bridge on the Panjim side and the Ribandar side was formerly 3,026 metres long, supported by 40 Roman style arches built of locally available laterite stone. Great historian – writer *Antonio Menezes* in his article ‘*ExploringPanajiCity*’ says “in the course of time, these arches, except those on the Panjim side of the bridge were closed on the right side as rice fields emerged. The two arches of the Patto Bridge were broken when Rua de Ourem was enlarged. The *Rua de Ourem creek* lies below the Patto Bridge.

*After Liberation of Goa, the Ponte de Linhares Bridge, on the Panjim side, was known as the “PattoBridge” and the area around this bridge came to be known as Patto, after the bridge. On the Ribandar side too, it is known as Patto.*



As you move from Panjim to Ribandar, the Roman style laterite stone arches are still visible, and when the Mandovi waves dash against these historic arches, the scene appears very romantic and beautiful.

The Panjim side Patto Bridge is also a beautiful piece of architecture. A curved balustraded structure, which is paved on both sides supported by massive thick Roman style arches from the vicinity of the Rua de Ourem creek, looks extremely beautiful. The Patto Bridge is painted in white, which again adds to its beauty.

Miguel de Noronha, fourth Count of Linhares (1585-1647), was one of the India viceroys most noted for promoting an extensive public works programme. This was largely because his governorship (1629-35) witnessed a significant rise in Dutch power in Asia and the consequent threat to Portuguese interests. Indeed, the building activities of this viceroy are especially notable in anything that has to do with the repair or renovation of various defence systems. The origin of the Linhares Causeway should be interpreted in this context. The request the Goa Council Senate councillors put before the viceroy and king explicitly mentioned the importance of its construction, meant to ensure speedy transit between the city and the Mandovi bar during crisis situations. The fact that it clearly mentions the need for it to be large enough to allow simultaneous passage of four galloping horses is also not innocent. But it also refers to the alternative of three palanquins, which leads us to another aspect: how this work played a decisive role in the capital's transfer from Goa to Panaji. The movements of those who sought to leave the capital and move somewhere else were then quite open, namely to Panelim and Ribandar, villages located between Old Goa and the Linhares Causeway. The Count of Linhares himself built a new vice-regal palace in Panelim, which served as effective government seat until the move to Panaji in 1759. In other words, the causeway made the latter more feasible, thus encouraging the spontaneous movement to abandon Goa for places closer to the river mouth, those that nowadays comprise Panaji. It was not likely by chance that the first neighbourhood with urban characteristics in the future state capital, Fontainhas, grew up at the western end of that structure. By way of the above and what can hence be deduced, the Count of Linhares Causeway is simultaneously and paradoxically the most muted (because it is utilitarian and thus practically invisible) and territorially and technologically the most significant structure of all those built by the Portuguese in Asia.

Thus we can conclude by saying that, Indian inscriptions, more so even than those of any country- are the real archives of the annals of its ancient history, the contemporaneous witness of the events and of the men whose deeds they hand down and their authenticity renders them most valuable for the historians and deserving of careful record. They supply important data daring on the chronology geography, religious system, affiliation of families and dynasties, taxes, land tenures, magistrates, customs, manners, organization for societies, ;language, and systems of writing of ancient times. Hence great need of restoring, compiling and decipher in the Portuguese inscription from Goa. The present study will bring into focus many more hidden facts about the Portuguese rule at Goa.

Goa has in the last few years seen unprecedented urbanization of her towns and villages. This unplanned urbanization has taken a toll on her resources and is turning out to be a ‘disaster’.

As Portuguese language had its natural death at Goa so does the Portuguese inscriptions. Goa being one of the most preferred tourist destination, rapid industrialization, unplanned urbanization, lack of concern from people and Government, to some extent fanaticism, the symbol of Portuguese Inscription in Goa are going to be rare.

We cannot stop the urbanization then the only solution to preserve the memories of Indo-Portuguese culture is through digitalization of Portuguese inscriptions. It will not only preserve the inscriptions but also the language too. Researchers and People all over the world will be able to know about the rich treasure of Inscriptions and this can lead to more sustainable management of cultural heritage and then Each inscription will tell its own story.

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