



On the margins of the Indian Ocean: Early goan photographers in Goa, Bombay and The East African Coast (1859–1900)

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Abstract

This article analyses the practice and presence of photography in Goa, and by Goan photographers outside of Goa, from the 1850s to the 1900s. One of the aims of this text is to draw a preliminary mapping of Goan photographic histories beyond its most well-known chronologies and geographies – beyond Souza & Paul's photographic studio dominating visuality of Goa from the 1890s onwards and beyond Goa itself.

To write a history of Goan photographers in this period – and not only of photographers in Goa – means necessarily to leave Goa's borders and address questions of transnational and transimperial mobilities and diasporic identities. Therefore, after an introduction where I map what I consider to be the main lenses of analysis when approaching the subject, the article is divided into three parts which correspond to three geographical spaces: the first one concentrates on Goa, on the early traces of photographic practices before the 1890s, the date when the photographic studio Souza & Paul publishes a catalogue of images for sale and starts leading the local visual culture; the second and third parts analyse the references to Goan photographers away from Goa, in two significant geographies of the Goan diaspora – in Bombay (now Mumbai), a major city of neighbouring British India, and in the East African coastline, across the Indian ocean.

My approach will entail crossing those physical and colonial borders that were also crossed by photography and photographers, while also placing Goan photographic practices within the wider history of photography in India and in the coastal port cities of the Indian ocean. By doing so, it argues that the history of photographic studios can also be analysed through the lenses of an Indian Ocean history, one with thriving ports with cosmopolitan communities, and individual and collective histories of mobility and migration. Mobility itself is a major characteristic of 19th and 20th century professional photographers. This explains the enormous quantity of photographers who make images of places that are very far from their original places of birth. Goan early photographers are exemplary of this need to go beyond national histories of photography and acknowledge the diasporic characteristics of photography.



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Introduction

Earlier images of Goa, as a material presence in present public and private archives, tend to be synonymous with the work produced by the photographic studio of Souza & Paul, the main Goan studio from the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century (Vicente, 2026; Derenthal 2012).¹ In 1889, Souza & Paul published the first major photographic catalogue of Goa – *Photographic Views of the State of Portuguese India by D'Souza and Paul. Photographers in Nova Goa. 1889*.² Within this written description of more than 200 views of Goa, the photographic studio framed a visual canon of the place, while transforming what had been a fragmented, undated, and dispersed experience made of multiple agents, sellers of photography and photographers, into a dominant control of image-making in Goa and of Goa (Vicente: 2025). There is, thus, a before 1889 and an after 1889: before, in the first decades of the existence of photography in Goa, there are written traces referring to the existence of photography but not necessarily an archive of photographs directly associating them with specific images. After 1889, and with their printed catalogue with more than 200 written descriptions of images of Goa, Souza & Paul created a corpus of photographs of Goa ready to be printed on demand.

One of the aims of this article is, thus, to search for Goan photographic histories that Souza & Paul's dominating visuality of Goa did not allow us to see.³ I propose here two main ways of doing so: first, to search for evidence of photographic practices and photography in all kinds of written sources. Secondly, to “leave” Goa, in the sense of searching for Goa photographers away from Goa. Indeed, it was far from their birthplace, in the main geographies of the Goan diaspora, that many Goans became photographers, and where images appeared abundantly next to words, and much before 1889.

I looked at references to photographs as actual material objects for sale, in commercial spaces that sell many other goods; at the practice of photography as a paid service that can be ordered by any individual, as when someone enters a studio to have their portrait made; as a consumer good for sale on ships crossing

1 I was recently informed by Nuno Borges de Araújo, a scholar of 19th century photographic history, that the late José Luis Madeira had done wide research on Photography in Goa but never came to publish the result of his work. It would be very relevant if those in charge of his legacy would be willing to edit and publish his work.

2 I have never been able to find this catalogue, but it is mentioned and partly reproduced in: Ferracuti, Giovanni (ed.) (1991) *Goa: memoria e imagine. Architettura e città dell'India portoghese*, Milan: Edizioni Lybra Immagine. I have written a text on this 1889 catalogue for a bilingual, Portuguese-English exhibition catalogue: Rosa Maria Perez, (ed.) (2025) *Foto Arte Ganesh: Goa, Fotografia e Memória*, Lisboa: Fundação Oriente.

3 On Souza & Paul photographic studio see my upcoming chapter: Filipa Lowndes Vicente, “Goa in black and white: Souza & Paul's photographs in catalogues, albums, exhibitions and archives, in and out of India”, in Maria do Carmo Piçarra (ed.) (2026) *Luso-Orientalism(s) – on imagined projections and ruins. Visual representations of former “Portuguese Asia”*, London: Palgrave, in press.

the Indian ocean or those ports where they stop, or as an idea or word that starts to be part of the language itself, of everyday life, of poetry or of historical consciousness (Edwards 2021). As we shall see, the first traces of the public presence of photography in Goa, are those printed mainly in exhibition catalogues and newspaper advertisements or references, mostly from the 1860s onwards – announcing the services of specific photographers in specific places or advertising the selling of photographic prints or *appareils* as part of a market of commercially available goods. What becomes clear is that the ways in which photography evolves and changes throughout the second half of the 19th century are inseparable from the technological transformations in contemporary printing cultures, the ones that enabled newspapers, postcards and all kinds of reproductive possibilities for using words and images.

By focusing mainly on photography as a professional or commercial activity – in the sense of implying a profit-making transaction for public consumption – I am leaving out other fundamental dimensions of photographic practice but ones that would demand access to private archives in family homes in Goa and of Goans elsewhere, and the recourse to oral history.⁴ One limit to my research is the fact that it relies mostly on sources available in print. For the case of photography in Goa, I rely both on newspapers and other printed primary sources, and on secondary sources; for the case of Goan photographers in Bombay and in the East African Coast, I rely mostly on secondary sources – books and articles published in the last decades on photography in India and in the eastern coast of Africa.⁵ The fact that I have no images in this article is both practical and theoretical. First, I see this article as a proposal, a mapping, for further research, to be pursued by me or by others, one where images themselves would become more central; and secondly, because

4 This individual, non-professional practices of photography that became common by the end of the 19th century, especially when Kodak invented the instant camera, small, cheaper, and easier to use, allowed many more people, significantly more women, to photograph without becoming photographers.

5 Haney (2010): *Photography and Africa*; Christopher Pinney (2008): *The Coming of Photography in India*; Gerda Theuns-de Boer (2008): *A Vision of Splendour. Indian Heritage in the Photographs of Jean Philippe Vogel, 1901-1913*. Exhibition Catalogue; Malavika Karlekar (2005): *Re-Visioning the Past. Early Photography in Bengal 1875-1915*; Maria Antonella Pelizzari (ed.) (2003): *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900*; Vidya Dehejia (ed.) (2000): *India Through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911*, Exhibition Catalogue; Christopher Pinney (1997): *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*; John Falconer (1992): "Early British Photography in India", *History of Photography*, 16, no 4 (1992); John Falconer (2001): *India: Pioneering Photographers 1850-1900*. Exhibition Catalogue; Judith Mara Gutman (1982): *Through Indian Eyes: 19th and 20th Century Photography From India*; Ray Desmond (1982): *Victorian India in Focus: A Selection of Early Photographs From the Collection in the India Office Library and Records*; Ray Desmond (1977): *Nineteenth Century Indian Photographers in India*; John Falconer (1990): "Photography in Nineteenth-Century India," C.A. Bayly (ed.): *The Raj. India and the British 1600-1947*; G. Thomas (1981): *History of Photography. India 1840-1980*. See also the auction of over 2000 Indian photographs collected by Sven Gahlin, an Indian art historian: "Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art", Sotheby's, London, 3-7 October 2014.

my research has been based in printed sources, both primary and secondary, and I have not pursued research in Indian or East African archives.

Therefore, a more comprehensive and holistic history of photography related to Goa, before or after 1890, would require further research: on the one hand, a closer analysis of the images themselves, their subjects, contexts and meanings and, on the other hand, deeper research into other archival spaces. First, in public archives in India and in the East African port cities mentioned; secondly, in the intimacy of Goan families' homes, in Goa, or in its vast diaspora; and, thirdly, in the private archives of Portuguese families who passed through Goa and then went to other parts of the empire, such as Angola or Mozambique, or returned to the colonising centre, Portugal. The country was a monarchy until 1910, a republic until 1926 and, afterwards and for more than 40 years, a right-wing dictatorship under António de Oliveira Salazar. Democratic Portugal, from the carnation revolution of 1974, still had to wait another year to cease being a colonizing nation, something that only happened fully in 1975 with the independence of the former African colonies. Goa had ceased to be "Portuguese" in 1961, when it became a part of India, and many Goans chose to leave India, with a significant number moving to the eastern coast of Africa. These historical events and movements determined the locations where many archival materials exist today. Photographic itself has a diasporic history. One of my arguments is that all histories of photography tend to transgress geographies and national or colonial frontiers, even if historiographies of photography have tended to organise them nationally.

Diasporic Goan photographers

This article analyses the practice and presence of photography in Goa, and by Goan photographers outside of Goa, from the 1850s to the 1900s, already a very significant period of photographic production across the world. To write a history of Goan photographers in the 19th century – and not only of photographers in Goa – means necessarily to leave Goa's borders, and address questions of transnational and transimperial mobilities and diasporic identities.

This article is thus divided in three parts, which correspond to three geographical spaces that are themselves imperial spaces: the first one concentrates on Goa; on the early written traces of photographic practices in Goa before the 1890s, when the photographic studio Souza & Paul starts dominating the local visual culture; the second and third parts analyse the references to Goan photographers away from Goa, in two significant geographies of the Goan diaspora – in Bombay, a major city in neighbouring British India, and in the East African coastline, across the Indian Ocean. My approach will entail crossing those geographical and colonial borders, that were also crossed by photography and photographers, while also

placing Goan photographic practices within the wider history of photography in India and in the coastal cosmopolitan port cities of the Indian ocean.

Photography's history is itself inseparable from the itinerancy of people and of images. Photographs were objects that travelled with or without people, through the growing postal networks developed precisely during this period, or through the developing printing processes that turned images into postcards and illustrated albums. The profession of photographer was, from very early on, associated with movement – travellers became photographers and photographers became travellers – but Goa's case seems to emphasize this. The 19th century Goan diaspora, mostly made up of young Catholic, but also Hindu, men in search of better work and study opportunities away from Goa, is inseparable from all aspects of Goa's history.⁶ This migration had three main destinations: Bombay, a major urban metropolis and a thriving port, especially from 1869 onwards, after the opening of the Suez Canal; the East African coast, from Mozambique within the Portuguese imperial space, to other port cities such as Mombasa or Zanzibar Stone Town, cosmopolitan hubs strategically placed at the intersection of Indian ocean's routes and under British hegemony; and finally, Portugal, mostly for the study of law and medicine.

Within this vast diaspora, I am interested in those men that took photography as a profession – I have only found men, even if it is probable that some of these were family enterprises that included the collaboration of women that were not acknowledged in written sources. In India and in Africa, in Bombay, Mombasa, and Zanzibar, Goan names appear as some of the earlier photographers with a commercial and public practice. In Portugal, I do not know of the practice of any Goan photographer for this period, but there can be a prosaic reason for this invisibility: the fact that Goans had Portuguese names means that other biographical marks must be identified to trace their origins.

This question of "names" is especially relevant in identifying diasporic Catholic Goans. Because the Portuguese strategy in India began as one of religious conversion – with name "conversion" as well – Indians who were forced to convert to Catholicism, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, took on Portuguese names. This has a double effect. Depending on the geographical context where they are found, names can hide as well as reveal their ethnic identity. In the Portuguese context – Portugal, Portuguese colonial India or Africa – Indians are invisibilised from written sources as their names are the same as white Portuguese citizens. On the contrary, when Indian Catholics lived or moved to British India or to the African port cities under British rule, their names stood out – they were either Goans or locals whose ancestors had been converted to Christianity. This is, therefore, a

6 The Goan global Diaspora in different historical periods and in multiple geographies (mainly in British colonial India, before 1947, in East Africa, UK, Australia, Portugal, Middle East, US, Canada), is a scholarly subject in itself – both historical and literary – with a wide bibliography.

research strategy for finding diasporic Goans.

Therefore, “individual names” – given names and surnames – differentiate Portuguese India from British India, where conversion was never a priority and where individual names tended to correspond to an ethnic and religious identity. In Goa, this subverted the possibility of distinguishing colonizing individuals from colonized ones, as opposed many other colonial contexts such as the British one, where Indian names stand out in written historical sources and enable an easier identification of their places and roles with the empire.

Historiography on photography in India: The British-Portuguese colonial divide

India’s case reveals how present photographic archives and histories depend on past photographic cultures. There is a contrast between the quantity of Goan photographs before 1889 that can be found today and the photographic production of Goan photographers away from Goa, in Bombay or in the East African coast. The latter constitute a visual corpus with more precise names and dates of production. This possibility of seeing, in the present, those early photographs, has a direct relation to the degree of consolidation of these photographic cultures of the past.

In Bombay (now Mumbai), with an early institutional culture of photography, photographers were encouraged to participate in collective printing projects or even temporary photographic exhibitions already in the 1850s and 1860s. Many photographs of unnamed groups of persons – united by religion, profession, caste or geography – were published in photographic albums favoured by a survey and ethnographic culture. This 19th century survey culture, that used words but also images as a way of uniting great quantities of knowledge on India, was inseparable from the colonial British project of getting to know and controlling the place it wanted to rule.

A developed printing culture associated with early photographic practices meant that images were reproduced in greater numbers and filled the public sphere where goods and images circulated. This use of photographs stands in clear opposition to a single photograph commissioned by a private person, which tended to remain hidden from a historian’s radar, unpublished in thematic albums, excluded from exhibitions, and necessarily more dependent on access to private archival spaces. The fact of photography being a more public or a more private practice in the past has a direct influence on the places where these photographs exist today. The more private and individual they were, the less probability of having persisted as a significant corpus of images until the present and available in public archives and collections. This connecting link between past and present reveals how histories of photography today also depend on past photographic histories. The valuing of photography in the past has a direct repercussion on the valorisation

of photography in present times – more valued in some places than in others.

Both imperial experiences, Portuguese and British, had very different histories and chronologies, but for at least one hundred years, between the mid-19th century and the mid-20th century, it is not possible to think of Portuguese Goa without its British neighbour. Yet, historiography on India in general has been divided in a way that has separated both histories: on one side a historiography on British India, written in English, by Indian or British historians and, on the other side, a historiography on Portuguese India, written mostly in Portuguese, but also in English, by Portuguese and Goan historians, and a few other scattered nationalities. These two historiographies on the two colonial “Indias” – the Portuguese and the British – hardly ever crossed each other. Even now, it could be argued that the historiography on Goa is increasingly attentive to the “other India” in ways that have no parallel on the opposite side.

The making of the history of photography in India repeats the dichotomous pattern – British India versus Portuguese India – even if it is not possible to compare the bibliographical production on both geographies. The abundance of books, articles and exhibitions that have been published and organized about photography in British India from the 1970s onwards, contrasts with its scarcity on Goa, Daman or Diu.⁷ The first example I could find for Portuguese India was published in 1991 by Italo Zannier, Maria Teresa Gaivão Veloso and Giovanni Ferracuti. However, in *Goa. Memoria e Immagine*, the focus was more on architecture than on photography itself, even if Zannier was conscious of the lack of studies or references to photographers in Goa and Daman. Souza & Paul are the authors of most photographs reproduced.

In his text, Zannier also notes how Goa was missing from those books containing reproductions of photographs of places from all over the world, which began to become popular at the end of the nineteenth century (Zannier 1991: 35-44). Travel books of this kind, dominated by images with short captions, gave readers/viewers a *tour du monde*, a visual journey around various parts of the world that was determinant to the creation of geographical identities. Zannier, was, therefore, noting Goa’s absence from both history and historiography, from the visual canons that developed when image making technologies became widespread, and from the contemporary historiographical privileged lines of research where the “India” that has a place in them, does not include Goa.

Goa’s invisibility in an increasingly visible world is inseparable from its invisibility in touristic maps from the mid-19th century onwards. The great majority of visitors to India did not visit Goa (nor did foreigners who lived in India and

7 A very good exhibition which, unfortunately, had no catalogue: *Illuminating India: Photography 1857-2017*, Science Museum, London, UK, 4 October 2017-31 March 2018.

travelled to other regions) and this obviously influenced its visual projection within the canon of “pictures of the world” or even “pictures of India”. This also explains Goa’s almost complete absence from written accounts of journeys to India or within India. Visual sources and written ones influenced each other, while both also determined the success of certain touristic routes – what sites and sights should not be missed by a proper traveller. In a historical period where individual and organized tourism was in full growth, the most visited places naturally tended to be more photographed, in a vicious circle where the most photographed and reproduced places also attracted more travellers.

An interesting exercise is that of comparing the corpus of images made in Goa during the second half of the 19th century to those produced in British India. If in British India there was a photographic search for what was “Indian”, the opposite tendency can be found in Portuguese India where cameras – as drawing and painting tools – tended to fix, reproduce, and circulate what was “Portuguese” – mainly 16th and 17th century Catholic churches and state edifices or monuments built by the Portuguese colonial government. This happened when the photographic studio of Souza & Paul came to dominate Goan visual culture from 1890 onwards and contributed to the visual imaginary of Portuguese colonial India, while also becoming indissociable from the consolidation of Goa’s identity as an independent and specific territory, a different place from the rest of India. This is something I have observed informally after many years of looking at photographs, from both sides of the colonial frontier, but still lacks a systematic and encompassing comparative study.

In a visual economy where British India dominated the images of India consumed worldwide, Portuguese India, with its ruined or still erected Catholic churches or European style architecture, did not fit into a dominant idea of what India looked like. Portuguese India was a very different India from the one reproduced in ‘views’ of British India, which were dominated by Hindu monuments (and some Muslim and Buddhist ones) and by the affirmation of an otherness, quite distinct from that of the British colonizer. Even if the imposing buildings of the British Empire, like museums and railway stations, were also transformed into commercialised photographs or postcards, the images of “British India” tended to be much more “Indian” than “British” as opposed to those of “Portuguese India” where what was visually perceived as “Portuguese” – mainly Catholic churches photographed from the outside and the inside – became synonymous with “Goan”.

After 1991, there was a long gap in published references to Goan photography. More recently, the Goans Savia Viegas and Vivek Menezes and, more recently, Lina Vincent and Akshay Mahajan have contributed to this still limited field. It was Viegas who, in 2015, curated a small and short-term exhibition in Pangim, Goa’s capital, titled “Moments, Memory, Memorabilia. An exhibition of old Goan photographs”

(Xavier Centre of Historical Research, 12-21 December 2015). The exhibition produced a small, homonymous booklet with a text written by the curator herself. The short duration of the exhibition and the lack of a more ambitious catalogue somehow reveal the lack of institutional investment on the subject, still relegated to a “curiosity” that does not receive enough funds and scholarly attention. This could be said both for Goa and for present day Portugal where, despite the growing valorisation of photography, translated into major exhibitions in art museums, it is still far from the valorisation it deserves as an historical artifact.

The project *Goa Família*, created in 2019, in Panaji, as part of the Serendipity Arts Festival, a periodical cultural festival that includes art exhibitions, performances, film, literature and fashion events also paid attention to the more private experiences of photography. Its “objective was to help initiate an archive of people’s memories and stories, as reflected in photographic remnants and other memorabilia”, writes the curator Lina Vincent (Vincent s.d., Das 2019, Duwarah 2022). The exhibition *Families Are Like Rivers* was one of the results of the *Família* project and was curated by Lina Vincent and Akshay Mahajan (with research assistance by Divesh Gadekar and Nishant Saldanha), as part of the 2022 Arts Festival. Also, in the context of that edition, the freelance photographer and curator Prashant Panjiar curated an exhibition on Goa’s photographic history which he had already rehearsed in the 2016 edition of the Serendipity Festival. *The Way We Were – Goa through the lens of Souza & Paul*, opened at the recently renovated Fort Aguada Jail and Museum in Candolim at the end of 2022. However, the lack of a catalogue prevents us from knowing about its curatorial choices and approaches. In these different publications, Souza & Paul are the main photographers. With outdoor architectural images of the main monuments or studio portraits of unknown families, Goa became a visual entity through their encompassing camera.

Photography in 19th century Goa

It is not clear when Souza & Paul started to photograph. In the aforementioned exhibition in Goa, *The Way We Were – Goa through the lens of Souza & Paul*, 1884 is considered the date of their studio’s opening.⁸ But in a later source, a 1952 publication, 1864 appears as its date of birth (*Reportagem fotográfica* 1952). Independently of when it was born, the studio’s coming of age coincides with a remarkable double public event that took place in Goa in 1890, where they were chosen by the organizing State Committee as the official photographers. The first

8 The exhibition, which took place at the Fort Aguada Jail and Museum, Candolim, until 9 January 2023, was curated by photographer, Prashant Panjiar. The curatorial note was written by Vivek Menezes. The exhibition was first shown at the Serendipity Arts Festival, in 2016, and was supported by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Regional Centre, Goa.

event was the Exposition of St Francis Xavier's relic-body, the main symbol of Catholic Asia, inside the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa, and the second one, the exhibition of Goan products and objects that took place simultaneously and concurrent to the religious event. It is not by chance that just before this double exhibition took place, an event that was religious as well as political and cultural, Souza & Paul published the catalogue *Photographic Views of the State of Portuguese India by D'Souza and Paul. Photographers in Nova Goa. 1889*, an example of the entangled stories of photography and history (Edwards 2022).

Souza & Paul's constitute a striking example of the persistence of the global model of the photographic studio, which united the practice of photography with the high street commercial space, rehearsing all possibilities available to the practice of photography. Some examples of the different functions of professional photographers that they also pursued were: official state commissions of public and historical events held, such as exhibitions, royal visits, railway inaugurations or even detained political insurgents after a revolt⁹; commercial selling of "views" of Goa, available to be chosen by catalogue; commercial selling of individual postcards or postcard booklets; portrait making in their studio; or the making of special luxurious albums – of those considered to be the main Goan sights – to be displayed in universal exhibitions abroad.

The rich print and periodical culture in Goa, especially from the second half of the 19th century (a chronology coinciding with the maturing and dissemination of photographic technologies) has been one of the subjects of a contemporary historiography on Goa (Lobo et al, 2023; Faria et al, 2022; Machado et al, 2022; Lobo, 2013; Pinto 2007). Reading this print culture is one way of mapping the practice and presence of photography in Goa. Here I will refer to the examples I found in different contemporary sources, the first one being from 1860, and this is part of research I published for the first time in 2014 (Vicente, 2014). It is very probable that photographs and photographers were circulating in the region before 1860, but it is from this moment that written references to their presence became more common. A name mentioned as one of the earliest Goan practitioners of photography, though with no reference to coeval sources, is that of Manuel Xavier de Noronha (1828-1888). Born in Aldona, in the Goan province of Bardez, he had supposedly learned photography from the Portuguese and, as early as 1854, was in the Princely States of Rajputana (a state that had a local ruler but was under the supervision of the British crown) photographing the more distinct local families (Duwarah 2022).

Photography was one of the categories in the all-encompassing catalogue of

9 See the photographs "Estado da India – Revolta dos Marathas e dos Ranes de Satary, iniciada em setembro e outubro de 1895" and "Estado da India – Tentativa de revolta dos Ranes de Satary em Novembro de 1901" at the Arquivo Histórico Militar in Lisbon.

the 1860 *Industrial Exhibition of Portuguese India*, an event with 4000 objects on display that took place in Old Goa (*Relatório* 1860; Vicente, 2018). Announced between ‘oil paintings’ and ‘lithography’, photography was number 21 of the 99 ‘classes’ of products on display at the industrial exhibition (*Relatório* 1860: V, 10). Its place in the catalogue – between “art” and “technology” – seems like a metaphor for one of the major discussions surrounding the nature of 19th century photography. Ultimately, there were only two photographs mentioned in the catalogue, and both were sent by individual men who probably were not the photographers: the Bombay Parsi Hormosgy Cangy Bengaly sent a “book of photographic plates” (while also sending two chairs in sandalwood marquetry that won him a gold medal and were bought by the local government to be sent to the metropolis and offered to the Portuguese king, D. Pedro V), while Thomaz de Aquino Mourão [Garcez Palha], author of the *Almanach de Lembranças para 1858*, and a grandson of a former Portuguese Governor of India, sent a “portrait in glass”, almost certainly referring to a daguerreotype.

In 1865, few years after the Industrial Exhibition took place, the local newspaper *Ilustração Goana* announced the arrival in the Goan capital of a portrait photographer:

A portraitist arrived in Nova Goa with a photograph [sic], and he lives in *Rua da Alegria*. A friend of mine has written to me from there, saying that the pictures are magnificent. But the money spent on each one is also magnificent. It is six rupees, and this for a picture taken on a *carte de visite*” (Oliveira 1865: 20).

In 1872, on the first page of the *Gazeta de Goa*, there was an advertisement entitled *Vistas Photographicas* [Photographic Views], signed by A.M. Gomes e Filhos. Two short paragraphs announced both the sale of photographs and the sale of chintz fabrics:

“For sale [views] of the convents of Bom Jesus, Caetano, Cathedral of Goa [Sé Principal], entrance of the viceroys, palace of the general administration, praça de flores, rua de boa vista, the municipal council of the islands, and others.

An assortment of superior chintzes and beautiful patterns has just been dispatched from London.”

The announcement of the ‘photographic views’ appeared between two other advertisements, also signed by the same Gomes family. One declared the arrival of a ship to the Mandovi River, and the other was from the *Agência Geral* in Nova Goa, a company in charge of sending “every kind of merchandise from London, Paris, Lisbon”, and from other “trading cities.”

The “Views” for sale – another consumer good amongst others – identified the three main churches and convents of Old Goa, the former capital of the Portuguese empire, and other public monuments, also from the late 16th century, such as the Arch of the Viceroys. Beyond these representations of Goa’s past and

Portuguese architectural opulence, for sale were also urban views of Nova-Goa, the contemporary capital of Portuguese India, later named Pangim, now Panaji. Portuguese material presence – Catholic and state – was dominant, while Hindu architecture was not yet part of the list of local sights on sale. This was clearly a visual Portuguese and Catholic Goa, where the most distinctive monuments were churches, and the architectural style and names of the buildings referred to the Portuguese political and religious hegemony in the territory.

In 1877, a Mr. Schulz paid for a newspaper advertisement announcing his new services to a wider public (*Ilustração Goana* 18 Jan 1877: 2). Apart from the “scientific and recreational show” he had organized with his wife, Mrs. Schulz, the daughter of a “celebrated magician”, he would soon open a photographic studio “in the courtyard of the house where he lives” to “portray all who wish so using the system of the most recent and refined invention.” The new “system” of photography here appears as a continuity of the entanglement of science and magic that was already the *métier* of the Schulz couple, probably of German origin as suggested by their surname, and one more example of a characteristic of the history of 19th century photography – the global mobility of the photographic profession.

Ten years after, in 1887, a short text in the weekly magazine *A Discussão* mentions how very “sophisticated had become the photographic atelier of Mr. José Pereira, which was in the Fontainhas [neighbourhood], next to Mr. Domingos’s pharmacy”. Mr. Pereira “in addition to giving the cardboards the glossy look that is given in Europe, takes oil portraits, on glass, on a larger scale.” Apart from listing some of the different services made possible by almost four decades of technological development since the invention of photography in 1839, the text makes a point of stressing how the outcome was at a European level. By doing so, it reinforces the idea of faraway Europe as the place of technological superiority, the reference to be emulated and reproduced. This is probably the same Joseph – the name becoming anglicised – J. Pereira that appears as the author of some of the non-dated photographic portraits of the family Silveira e Lorena, one of the so called “lusso-descendant” families who originated from Portugal but lived in Goa for many generations¹⁰.

These short advertisements quoted here reveal Goa as a place where objects and merchandise were circulated. A point of arrival rather than a starting point, somewhere distant from, and peripheral to, the major trading centres. A place,

10 This Silveira e Lorena family photographic collection formed by 166 photographs has been bought, more than a decade ago, by Pedro do Carmo Costa, a Portuguese of Goan origin who is not only a specialist in Goan genealogy but also a collector of books, objects and photographs related to Goa’s history. It was on sale in a commercial secondhand postcard seller in Lisbon and there is no knowledge on how it arrived there. I thank Carmo Costa for sharing this information with me as well as the reference to Gonçalo Jorge Tomás Paulino’s MA thesis on this photographic collection.

however, where through intermediary agents like Gomes & Filhos, it was also possible to enjoy what came from abroad. Photography itself favoured, and benefited from, this culture of flow and commercial mobility, which included not only the materials needed for photography, but also the photographers themselves, a profession characterized by its mobility.

If newspapers can be a rich source to grasp the diverse spectrum of photographic practices, other kinds of publications also started, timidly, to include photography in different ways. By the end of the century, in 1897, the Goan Paulino Dias, a doctor, professor at various Goan institutions and a poet, included “photography” alongside ‘steam’, ‘museums’, ‘wagon’, ‘telegraph’, and ‘phonograph’ in his poem *Lyra da Sciencia*, all contemporary symbols of progress that could also be sung by poets (Dias 1897: 19, Braga 2020). Photography had already entered the vocabulary of nineteenth-century modernity and progress, and language itself, all languages, were now infused with the metaphoric possibilities of photography. Anyone who wanted to describe a realistic drawing, one person resembling another, or a detailed description, often used the word ‘photography’ and its derivatives to reinforce their idea. For example, while on board a ship between Bombay and Europe in 1873, an anonymous Goan describes his journey to the readers of the *A Gazeta de Goa* and recounts how he met an Englishman who was “the absolute photographic likeness” of a friend of his, back in Goa (*A Gazeta de Goa* 26 June 1873: 4).

The written press in Goa in the second half of the nineteenth century was especially rich and diverse, and revealed how photography became an acknowledged and banal practice, idea and object, subject to the imagination of poets or the metaphorical creativity of travel writers. These written sources also reveal how photography became another asset available in Goa’s urban and commercial fabric. Through these dispersed examples – exhibition catalogues, short articles and advertisements in newspapers, or texts published in print and signed by members of the local elites – one comes across actual references to photographers and to photographs being made, being exhibited and being sold. This approach to Goa’s case could be used in studies of the early history of photography in many other spaces, particularly those where, for different reasons, it is more difficult to identify substantial corpus of early photographic images. Written traces of photography can be a part of all histories of photography but become even more poignant when photographic archives are scarce or fragmented.

Institutions, exhibitions, publications: the public practice of photography by Bombay Goans

If we think of Goan photographers away from Goa or more generally as part of a Goan diaspora, we must acknowledge the city of Bombay, one of the main

metropolis of British India, and an early centre of photography. The Bombay Photographic Society was created in October 1854, two years before its counterparts in Madras and Calcutta, and one of its founders was a Goan man, Narayan Daji, or Narayen Dajee, as sometimes appears in sources (c.1828-1875) (Worswick and Embree 1976: 4-5, Tankha 2010: 30). The Bombay Society also started a monthly journal named *Indian Amateurs' Photographic Album*, which published 24 issues between 1856 and 1858 (Dehejia 2000: 15). But as Christopher Pinney has stated, the first references to photography arrived in Bombay much earlier: already in December 1839, the official year of the invention of photography, *The Bombay Times* published a few articles on Daguerre's discovery (Pinney 2008: 9).

Indians were active participants not only in the practice of photography in India, but also in the making of its institutions of knowledge. The Calcutta branch of the Photographic Society, according to Pinney, had 30 Indians out of its 100 members (Pinney 1997: 72, Mitter 2010: 9). John Falconer also underlined the early Indian involvement in different photographic societies from Bombay and Calcutta to Madras (Falconer 2001, Hapgood 2015).

The pioneering character of the city of Bombay, by then a flourishing and increasingly cosmopolitan port city, can be grasped in the booming of photographic studios in some areas of the city, from Grant Road and Kalbadevi Road to Rampart Row, where the Hindu Goan Narayan Daji ran his studio between 1858 and 1868. His active involvement in the creation of the Bombay Photographic Society as well as his (failed) application to the post of Instructor of Photography at Bombay's Elphinstone Institute in 1855, reveal how he saw his role as photographer beyond a mere practical and commercial enterprise (Tankha 2010: 30, Falconer 1995: 16).

Narayan Daji as well as his brother Bhau Daji Lad, also a member of the Photographic Society, exemplified the many young Goan men, not only Catholic but also Hindu, who went to Bombay in search of better opportunities to study or work. The fact that the brothers were Hindu meant that they would mingle with the Bombay Hindu community and be perceived as "Indians" in the British context, and not immediately as Goans. Both studied at Elphinstone College first and then medicine at the Grant Medical School. Bhau Daji Lad became a prominent Indologist and doctor, and today, a major museum, is named after him: Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum (Gutman 1982: 89). Judith Mara Gutman states that Bhau Daji must have been one of the authors of the 1856 *Indian Amateurs' Photographic Album*, "the first publication to use a series of such photographs to depict the 'Costume and Characters of Western India'", where "individuals were shown in costumes or with objects identifying their caste or trade group. This group of photographs was probably part of a set of 'forty-five photographs of native heads', which was displayed at the London International Exhibition in 1871." Gutman refers that many of his photographs were chosen to be on display at this

London exhibition, because his work “satisfied British sensibilities so completely”.

Already in 1855, Narayan Daji was exhibiting two ethnographic works at the Photographic Society of Bombay and receiving praise for the technical and aesthetic qualities of his photographs of the Bohra cultivators of Gujarat and of “A Rajpoot Grassia native of Kattiawar (now Gujarat) with a hookah or smoking apparatus in his hand” (Desmond 1977: 314, Mitter 2010: 11). Two years later, in 1857, his name appeared as the author of the 31 ethnographic portraits that were exhibited in Calcutta, at the Photographic Society of Bengal exhibition (Falconer 1995: 16). The organizers of the 1857 Calcutta exhibition noted how “the castes and costumes of the natives of the country have not yet received (...) that attention which they deserve, and which they will no doubt in time obtain” (Falconer 2001: 22).

Ethnography became the focus of Daji’s work, an aim that implied travelling throughout India searching for persons that could represent “types”, ethnicities, professions or activities. That means that we know the names of the photographer, but not of the people photographed. In this kind of portable studio photography – a tent could work as a travelling chamber – it was the photographer who searched for the photographed, and not the other way round (as it happened when a person entered a studio to commission her or his own portrait). Determinant to the meaning of these photographs, which would be printed for sale, were the words that classified what was seen in the image. Thus, the albumen silver prints have inscribed in them manuscript words identifying who was to be seen on the image – “Kolis, Hindoo Fishermen Caste, Bombay”, “A Bhandaree or Toddeewalla, A Hindoo” or “Jain Priest, Bombay”, not individual names, but references to occupations, castes, and ethnic and religious groups (Tankha 2010: 26, 29-30).

Daji’s ethnographic interests became more institutionalized when later, c.1863, he participated as one of the contributing photographers to an ambitious project of visual classification, *The Oriental Races and Tribes, Residents and Visitors to Bombay* (2 vols., London, 1863-1866). This publication has been considered one of the earliest examples of ethnographic albums to be produced in a colonial context, the first in India. It has also been noted for its heterogeneity – reflecting the individuality of each participating photographer – in contrast to a more “conventional inventory of types” as was the subsequent case of *The People of India*, an ambitious 8-volume work published slightly later between 1868 and 1875 (Falconer 2001: 20-26, Tankha 2010: 33).

This ethnographic photographic and textual project – each “type” shown was accompanied by an explanatory text – revealed Bombay’s cosmopolitanism, a multi-religious and multi-ethnic port city that seemed to congregate all parts of India. It should also be seen as part of the British endeavours to know the territory they were occupying and administering, where ethnography was put at

the service of the imperial project in India as well as in all those contemporary colonial contexts. In one of his books on photography in India, the anthropologist Christopher Pinney discusses the camera's presence in India as being an extension of the census and the telegraph, other encompassing instruments of knowledge, communication and control that were used by the colonial governments to collect and aggregate knowledge on India (Pinney 1997: *Camera Indica*).

It is, however, pertinent to note how *The Oriental Races and Tribes* included the work of Indian photographers, even if the project was led by the British William Johnson, who also wrote its introduction and many of the specific texts accompanying each photograph. Johnson, a civil services officer, along with Thomas Biggs of the Bombay Artillery, and Dr. W.H. Pigou of the Bombay Medical Service exemplify those members of the colonial administration who became interested in photography and often made use of their professional circumstances to practice it. On the other hand, Narayan Daji, of Goan origin, or Hurrichund Chintamon, an Elphinstone College alumni, exemplified how some Indians, of different ethnic backgrounds and religions, made photography a practice and profession and authored the kinds of images that are associated with colonial projects – knowing in order to rule. It is not by chance that they had the studies – medicine in the Goan brother's case – and financial possibilities to pursue the expensive and technically demanding practice of photography. Chintamon also participated with his photographs at the Archaeological Survey of India and showed some of his work on Indian castes and tribes at the Parisian Universal Exhibition of 1867.

How can we apprehend these examples of local colonised subjects actively participating in “colonising” projects, such as ethnographic photographic albums or colonial displays at European universal exhibitions? Their case-studies can contribute to the already rich scholarship that came to question a plain association between early photography in India, or in Africa, with those European colonising missions which placed cameras next to arms, surveys, and all kinds of scholarly studies. What they show us is how there were privileged Indians using the camera and directing it towards other Indians that could fit contemporary ethnographic classifications, based on profession, ethnic or regional origin, but mostly unnamed women and men. The people photographed belonged to very diverse castes and origins, but within these photographic albums their differences and specificities become flattened by the homogenized language of “types”.

The brothers Narayan and Bhau Daji Lad, born in Pernem, the closest Goan town to Bombay, were the first generation of Indians to participate in leading and visible positions in an intellectual, civil and political British India. Vivek Menezes has an interesting argument on their case: “The Lad brothers avowedly embodied a newly emerged Indian cosmopolitanism and urbanity, an unprecedented “native” democratic engagement with the public sphere” (Menezes 2015). He claims

that their successful itineraries in Bombay can only be understood through the acknowledgment of their place of origin. By that period, Goan elites in Goa, mostly Catholic but also Hindu, already occupied positions of administrative, intellectual, and professional visibility and authority, many being part of the colonial governmental apparatus and of the most distinguished professions in medicine or education. This was not necessarily due to a conscious delegation of power on the part of the Portuguese colonisers, but due to a complex set of explanations that could be simplified into two main reasons. The long span of Portuguese presence in the region, from the early 16th century, meant that local Brahmin elites, especially those converted to Catholicism, occupied prominent positions in different spheres – caste, from India, combined with religion from Portugal. Secondly, Portugal's incapacity to invest – financially and humanly – in its faraway Asian colony, meant an absence of Portuguese elites in Goa. This created literal and symbolical space for the local elites to occupy positions of agency and decision, both in Goa and away from Goa.

Beyond Narayan Daji and Bhau Daji, I could not find any study or reference to the presence of Goan photographers in Bombay for such an earlier stage. Some Portuguese names appeared in Bombay's later photographic landscape, but these names can refer to men who were of Goan origin, of recent migration, or who belonged to the long-established Christian communities of Bombay. Here I will mention those names that appear associated with the business of photography, in the British historiography on photography, merely as a map for further inquiry. Gomes & Co. announced their photographic services – “in an artistic manner” – for “Wedding Picnics” and “family groups” around 1900s Bombay (Chitnis 2019). Gomes & De Lair appear as a popular commercial photographic studio, at Kalbadevi Road, in the 1940s (Paulino 2013: 62). “Gomes and Lair. Photographic Artists” and “Fred and Lair. Photographic Artists” also appear as one of the photographic studios where members of the Goan based Silveira e Lorena family sat for their portraits.

In the early 1890s, António Xavier Trindade was the first Goan to study painting at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art (Sir JJ School of Art, 1857), now the oldest art institution in Mumbai. After graduating, he worked at the Photographic Studio of Raja Deen Dayal (1884-1905), the well-known Indian photographer, where his job was to tint black and white photographs giving them the “painted” and coloured finish that was so popular in India (Menezes 2020; Dewan 2013, Allana, 2008). Later he became a well-known Bombay painter and so did his daughter, Ângela Trindade. The fact that his first job as an artist was that of painter of photographs must be understood in an Indian context where, for many decades in the 20th century, there was a thriving market for painted photographs (Pinney 1998, Dewan 2012).

The book published in Bombay in 1876 by Goan historian Gerson da Cunha *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein*, is another example of how photography was being used by the new scholarly knowledge consolidated in this period (Cunha 1876: v-ix; Vicente, 2013). Under the title of the book, on the cover page, were written the words “Illustrated with seventeen photographs, nine lithographic plates and a map”. In 1876, the technology did not yet allow photography to be printed directly on published documents. Therefore, the 17 photographs that “illustrated” the historian’s book had to be individually glued on its pages, a gesture only justified by the relevance that photography was increasingly being given by the discipline of history – as tool, trace, and proof. Would this inclusion of pasted photographs in a book have been possible at the Goan official printer, “Imprensa Nacional”? Is there any book published in Goa with pasted photographs before 1876? I could not find any example.

Other Indian geographies can be explored with the preliminary strategy of finding “Portuguese names” related to photography that may reveal people of a Goan origin. But this can also be a misleading and unreliable criterion because the Christian presence in India – with Portuguese names – dated back many centuries and was a diasporic community. Savia Viegas, for example, mentions a photographer of Goan origin who worked for the Maharaja of Travancore, in South India but does not include footnote or bibliographical sources to back this affirmation (Viegas 2015: 13).

There is, therefore, in Bombay an early photographic culture that implied the existence of institutions, exhibitions, and collective photographic printed albums and therefore, many more material documents to foster, and facilitate, an early history of photography. As we have seen, even in this period there are Indians as protagonists, two of the earliest ones being of Goan origin. On the other hand, there is a consolidated secondary bibliography on the history of photography in India, published in India as well as Great Britain, that enables us to see the reproduction of photographs that had already been printed in 1860s Bombay. The vibrant photographic culture of the past, in Bombay, has facilitated historical research in the present, while the fact that British historiography has valued the history of photography for many decades has also contributed to the richness of the photographic bibliography in India. But this is an India that only includes “British India” and where Goa is absent. Further archival and primary source research needs to be done on the Goan photographic presence in Bombay, but here, my aim was to draw an initial map for further investigation.

Across the Indian ocean: Goan photographic studios in East Africa

On the sea voyage that took the Portuguese Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara back to Europe in 1877, after more than twenty years in Goa as secretary of the Governor of Portuguese India, the ship moored at the port of Aden (now Yemen) (BPE 1863-1877: 55). In the stops on the route between Asia and Europe, since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, he described how “the usual merchants” came onto the vessels to offer their articles for sale. Photographs were amongst them. In his manuscript travel diary, Cunha Rivara described how he bought some photographs from “a Goan man” from Mapusa, by the name of “Bragança”. We do not know if he was also a photographer or if he only sold photographs, as one of the goods available for consumption for those travellers in transit. The common practice of travellers buying photographs of the most memorable monuments and sights of the places they visited, was also performed by the passengers of those ships that docked in a port for only a few hours (Picard 2009; Schwartz 2003). Photography thus became the souvenir of the place that was touched, by the means of transport, but not really known – a passenger could say “I have been there” even if only having seen the port city from on board, and its main sights in the acquired images.

This case-study illustrates a much wider phenomenon – the significant number of Goan merchants working in various parts of the African coast in the second half of the nineteenth century (Monti 1987: 53, 145-146, Haney 2010: 68). Aden, where Cunha Rivara stopped, but also Zanzibar’s Stone city, and other port cities, such as Mombasa or Dar-es-Salaam, became the destination for a small but visible community of Goans who were, mostly, merchants, shop owners, cooks, artisans, musicians and photographers. Pamila Gupta writes how photographing and tailoring became activities that were specifically associated with Goans (Gupta 2019b, Gupta 2019a, Roque 2020: 1125-1126). As she points out, the work of Liam Buckley already links both professions – photographers and tailors – within “the same category of adornment work”. Their origin in Goa’s Catholic community contributed to their specificity amongst other migrant groups, as well as explaining the existence, for example, of the Catholic church and school of Zanzibar Stone Town. Goan Zanzibaris, as Gupta argues, put “Zanzibar’s cosmopolitanism on display” (Gupta 2020: 191-211).

The Omani Sultans ruled the region until the Zanzibar revolution of 1964, but it became part of the British Protectorate by 1895, after some years of the East Africa Company’s hegemonic presence. Zanzibar’s in-betweenness and hybridity – an island, port and city that was a passage between Asia, Europe, Arabia and Africa – was visible in its diverse ethnic and religious communities and in its material culture, both of which can be observed in its thriving photographic production.

Some of the first photographic studios in the main port cities on the East African coast were, in fact, originally owned by Goans (Haney 2010: 49)¹¹. Associated with the East African coast in general, and Zanzibar in particular, and with extensive output in the 1880s, the A. C. Gomes firm, for example, was founded in 1868 in Mombasa and carried on by P. F. Gomes¹². In the 1930s they also had a branch in Dar-es-Salaam and, probably much earlier than that, one in Aden¹³. Is there a relationship between the Bombay “Gomes”, the “Gomes” of Goa and the “Gomes” photographic studio that was to be found in the African Eastern coast shortly after? Further research is needed but it would not be surprising that a photographic commercial name or family crossed the Indian ocean. This idea of the ocean as a connecting space between Asia and Africa is, of course, a major trope of Indian Ocean scholarship, one that concentrates on the early modern period or the more contemporary one, attentive to the diasporic movements of the 19th and 20th centuries (Metcalf 2007).¹⁴

Other Goans set up their photographic studios in Zanzibar Stone City in the 1890s: for example, E.C. Dias, J. B. Coutinho (Paulino 2013: 33, 62) and Felix Coutinho (Geary 20148: 81), A. [Andrew] Pereira de Lord and A. C. Gomes and Son, as already mentioned. The Coutinho brothers, commercial photographers who, for a short time, were associated with the Gomes, had a studio in Zanzibar and Dar-es-Salaam at least since the 1890s. Some of these photographers also extended their commercial operations to other places such as the port of Mombasa, further north. Through many decades, the Goan studios of Coutinho and Gomes dominated the region’s imagery, made even more accessible through photographic postcards. The fact that most postcards were printed in Germany reveals a relevant aspect of the global networks of image production, and not only image circulation (Gupta 2023). As Lidia Payne states in her book, postcards were the “world’s first social network”, and their history is indissociable from the history of photography, because most of them were actually photographic postcards, where views of places

11 Manuela Palmeirim organized an exhibition with no catalogue, on the subject, in Zanzibar: The Portuguese Studio Photographers of Zanzibar, Exhibition at the Old Dispensary, Stone Town, 21 December 2020-5 January 2021.

12 In her blog on photography, *Grand Monde*, Ângela Camila Castelo-Branco has several articles about photography in Africa, one being on Goan photographers on the East African coast, which is titled “O ‘Sultanato’ dos fotógrafos portugueses no Zanzibar”, 2 January 2007; see also the blog *Zanzibar Unveiled*, created by the collector Torrence Royer.

13 I thank Nuno Borges de Araújo for sending me the reproduction of a photograph from his collection that links A. C. Gomes to Aden. In the back of the portrait of a woman in local attire one can read the printed words “A. C. Gomes. Photographer. Steamer Point, Aden”. In black ink, the word “Aden” is also written by hand.

14 In the context of Portuguese colonialism and the Indian Ocean a few scholars should be mentioned: the work of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, for an earlier period and, for a later period, that of Margret Frenz and Pamila Gupta for an historical approach and Joana Passos, Paul Melo e Castro and Selma Carvalho, amongst others, for their literary lenses.

were a dominant typology (Payne 2021, Staff 1979).

Apart from these more common names associated with the region's visual production, I found the name of Souza & Paul on a single image, a paradox when one thinks of how studio photographs are characterized by their multiplicity and endless reproductive qualities. In fact, "Souza & Paul, Zanzibar" appears printed on the lower right-hand corner of a photograph reproduced in Prita Meier's article, "Objects on the edge: Swahili Coast Logics of Display" (Meier 2009: 11)¹⁵. The photograph analysed by Meier was itself reproduced in a British newspaper (a non-identified cutting in the private collection of Torrence Royer, while an original print of the photograph is in the Zanzibar Archives). The image depicts a man sitting in a rich domestic interior. His name is not identified but, as Meier argues, he must have belonged to the local elite surrounding the Sultan court. In the well-ornamented room, typical of the "Bombay style" that attested the "oceanic transculturation" linking the African eastern coast with the Indian coast, there was also an Indo-Portuguese cabinet displaying framed photographs (Meier 2009). This is the sole reference I could find to the presence of Souza & Paul beyond Goa, in contrast to the hundreds (or thousands) of photographs printed with their names and related to Goa, which can be found today in several private and public archives.

The Goans I refer to in this section, with Portuguese names, and thus from Catholic families, should also be considered in the context of a much larger Indian community – Hindu and Muslim, but also Parsi – who came from British India before and after 1900. One was the photographer Ranchod T. Oza, who started working for the Goan Gomes and Sons when he arrived from Gujarat, before opening his own practice, Capital Art Studio, in 1930 (Samuelson 2018: 75-91, Gupta 2020: 191-211). The other two professional photographers identified in the region were Karim Essa Allibhai and Ali Pira Harji, who founded the Harji Photo Gallery, but little is known about them. Of all these photographic studios, Ranchod T. Oza's was the only one that survived the Zanzibar revolution of 1964, even if forced to destroy many of its prints and negatives. The new government impelled the departure of most of the Goans and, in general, the Indian community, who became, somehow, a diaspora of a diaspora, having to move elsewhere.

The new rulers actively destroyed most symbols of the sultanate past – photographs, of course, becoming major victims of this image obliteration. However, and because during this period most photographers were also photographic postcards makers, their work survived. Photographic postcards were

15 The photograph belongs to the collection of Torrence Royer, Qatar. The caption under the photograph reads: "Interior view of a large mansion in Zanzibar. Such white-washed and coral rock multistory mansions were associated with the Zanzibari Omani Arab elite during the Sultanate years, and their interior display logics were an amalgamation of diverse cultural strands. This photograph was taken by Souza and Paul, a photo studio located in Zanzibar Stone Town".

a very popular means of global communication as well as a collectable object, from its 19th century invention, until the recent digital turn. This means that the images produced by these photographic studios endured thanks to the multiple prints that had already travelled elsewhere or that travelled in the 1960s, in the luggage of those that abruptly left Zanzibar for other places in the world (Gupta 2023). The political revolution which prompted the sudden closing of photographic studios, the hasty departure of whole communities and the material erasures of the past, was somehow resisted by the travelling dissemination of photographic postcards. Images of urban streets, landscapes and views, as well as weddings – which Pamila Gupta analyses in her inspiring work on photography in Zanzibar – survived in postcards elsewhere.

Concluding remarks

In 2001, on the occasion of an exhibition of Indian pioneering photographers at SOAS's Brunei Gallery, John Falconer wrote that "the story of photography in nineteenth-century India has inevitably been dominated by Europeans" (Falconer 2001: 29). Later, however, Falconer himself, as well as other scholars, such as Deborah Poole or Christopher Pinney, recognized the enthusiasm for photography in India, not only by Europeans but also by Indians, particularly in the regions which had been under British colonial rule. Presently, the early history of photography is no longer seen as a mere technological transference from Europe to "beyond", but as a global phenomenon that had many lives and travelled continuously.

India, in fact, is an excellent example of a vast territory where photography was widely explored as soon as it appeared, not only by colonial authorities interested in promoting and learning about India's landscapes, monuments and peoples, but also by the involvement of many Indian men, in a range of different positions and locations. Its uses tended, though, to be socially divided: photography in the private sphere, as a sophisticated hobby, was still something practiced by the elite, while its professionalisation, in the person of the photographer, whether Indian or Italian (think of Felice Beato photographing India in the 1850s), was practiced by men of diverse geographical, social, ethnic and religious identities. But beyond the photographers themselves, the consumption of photography, the possibility of paying to be photographed or of buying photographs, spread and became democratised throughout India during the second half of the 19th century, as it did elsewhere (Pinney 1997).

This article tried to demonstrate how enriching a transnational and transimperial approach is to understand the early association between Goa and photography, in Goa and beyond Goa. First, in Goa itself. The traces of photography's presence were scattered and fragmented: photographs came from

Bombay to be exhibited in an industrial exhibition in Goa; a German named itinerant photographer announced his services in a local newspaper; photographs of local views were on sale next to products which arrived by ship from faraway places. We then looked away from Goa, towards a wider India and a wider Indian Ocean, the east African coast and islands, where different generations of Goans settled in search of lives they could not find in Goa itself. Photographers were one of the identified professions of the male Goan diaspora on the eastern coast of Africa, when photography became part of a market of goods and experiences. Some opened studios – under their personal names – in ports such as Bombay, Zanzibar, Mombasa or Aden.

I will end by questioning the historiographical approach I chose to take in this article – that of focusing on the origin of photographers as the dominant lens of analysis. Photography was a diasporic and migrant 19th century practice, a profession that suited mobility and foreignness, and where those who produced images of a place were not necessarily native to that place. Not only in India, but all over the world, many of the “first” photographs of a place were done by men, mostly, who were not originally from that place. An example is that of Portugal, where some of its earliest photographs, in the 1850s and 1860s, were produced by foreign men that came to Portugal and remained – the Czech Wenceslau Cifka, the German Emilio Biel, the Swiss Eduard Knopfli and Jacques Wunderli.

Not by chance, “itinerant photographer” was the denomination of a specific profession. But itinerant foreign photographers often stayed and ceased being travellers. Photographers were not yet wandering tourists with (light) cameras, but the other way round – somehow cameras and the photographic apparatus grounded travellers-migrants into settled diasporic communities who contributed to the making of images of the places that they were also getting to know and appropriate as theirs (Campt 2012). That explains the role of diasporic Goan men in the making of some of the earlier images of East Africa, Bombay or other places in British India, one that requires further research. This also happened because these were cities with ports, and ports were synonymous with sea travel, great movements of people, and a growing visual consumption of images of the places they were passing through. This is especially exemplary of the global possibilities of reproducibility and circulation of photography that recently have been privileged by histories of photography (Batchen 2019).

Is it pertinent, therefore, to use the “nationality” or “origin” of photographers as the point of departure to analyse early photographic practices around the Indian ocean? Wouldn't it be more pertinent to take a geographical approach? To depart from the place that is photographed and not the place of origin of those who photographed? To analyse photography in Goa, photography in Bombay, photography in the east African coast instead of “Goan photographers”? As we

have seen, a common characteristic of the three geographies – Goa, Bombay and East Africa – was that they were home to photographers of different origins, nationalities or religions. Independently of the angle – more centred on people or on places, on images or on words – histories of early photography necessary need to cross borders and become global.

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