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TURISMO E PATRIMÓNIO COLONIAL ENCONTRO DE CULTURAS

CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL

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Keynotes

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ORGANIZAÇÃO

CHAM - Centro de Humanidades: Universidade NOVA Lisboa e Universidade dos Açores

ARTIS - Instituto de História de Arte, Universidade Lisboa

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GOAN HINDU TEMPLES AND TOURISM: FROM EXOTIC UNIQUENESS TO DEVIANT FOREIGNNESS

55

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Abstract

Several Hindu temples in Goa have a distinct architecture that strongly distinguishes them from other Hindu temples in India (and around the world). The result of a long cultural fusion, they feature influences from Goan Catholic churches built under Portuguese rule, Maratha Hindu temples, and the architecture of the Bijapur Sultanate, giving them a unique character. In the final period of Portuguese administration in Goa, attempts were made to publicise this transcultural heritage through a number of tourist brochures, emphasizing its particular exoticism. However, after Goa's integration into India, although religious tourism - and specifically Hindu temple tourism - has grown manyfold, its effect on this unique temple architecture has, interestingly, not been positive at all. Many of these unusual temples have undergone profound changes that have distorted, or completely obliterated, their architectural essence, bringing them closer to the more traditional Hindu religious architecture in India. The aim of this essay is to analyse how evolving tourism practises in Goa has impacted these temples from the mid-20th century to the present day.

Keywords

Goan Hindu temples, Tourism, Identity, Cultural hybridization, Heritage threats

1. Preamble

In the centuries following the arrival of the Portuguese in South Asia in the early 16th century, Goa saw many visitors, including rulers, royal officials, diplomats, merchants, soldiers, missionaries, pilgrims, mercenaries, spies, and slaves. The rise of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, however, began to bring a different kind of traveller to Goa - mainly British, coming from the neighbouring British Raj - who, unlike their predecessors, came for pure personal enjoyment, especially the pleasure of discovering new cultures. This was a form of travel that had long existed in Europe, mainly through the Grand Tour - which would, in fact, give rise to the word “tourism”.

These visitors were mainly looking for what could be considered “exotic within the exotic”, that is, ancient European (Portuguese) heritage in an Eastern (Goan or Indian) context. This Portuguese heritage was considered a reminder of the golden age of a great empire that had since collapsed: a historical lesson exemplifying a failed colonial empire as opposed to the then-flourishing British colonial empire, as it was generally considered by 19th-century British historiography (Vicente, 2013, pp.275-278). This is why it attracted the Romantics with their passion for “ruinism”, a state of decay generated by the inexorable passage of time, which in turn generated contradictory feelings of admiration, attraction, impotence, and anguish.

Another phenomenon also began to emerge in Goa in the nineteenth century, which would be later termed religious tourism, viz. pilgrimages to the Basilica of Bom Jesus in the old Cidade de Goa (today’s Old Goa) to venerate the tomb of the “Apostle of the East”, St. Francis Xavier (Kandolkar, 2025; Gupta, 2014). This tourism would have been encouraged by the Portuguese colonial administration as a symbol of a Catholic Portuguese India, different from British India, creating a sense of common identity among Catholics from various Asian regions under a moribund Portuguese Padroado Real¹.

It was only in the mid-twentieth century that the Portuguese dictatorial regime of Estado Novo initiated a formal tourism policy for Portuguese India. This was largely due to the end of British rule over India, with the consequent claims by the Indian Union on the territories under Portuguese administration. Combining practices of ideological

¹ The focus on religious tourism could be seen in the numerous tourist itineraries that were published periodically as part of the Xaverian celebration, namely by Filipe Neri Xavier (1859), Viriato de Albuquerque (1878, 1890) and Francisco Xavier da Costa (1922, 1931, 1952). See also: Gupta, 2014. See also: Souza, 2008.

exploitation of Portuguese cultural heritage, with the promotion of domestic tourism² through the *Política do Espírito* (Policy of the Spirit) which had been in place in Portugal for about a decade and a half, the *Estado Novo* regime extended these practices to the territory of Goa, with the aim of promoting the expansion of domestic tourism to the Portuguese overseas provinces (Santos, 2025), as they were now called. The first non-religious cultural tourist guides relating to Goa date from this period, and it is in these that Goan Hindu temples appear explicitly for the first time.

2. The Rise of a Unique Hindu Temple Architecture Parallels the Rise and (Slow) Development of Tourism in Colonial Goa

In the second half of the 18th century, Portugal acquired new territories in Goa, known as the New Conquests - as opposed to the Old Conquests acquired during the first half of the 16th century. Unlike the Old Conquests, which were mostly Catholic, these new territories, which tripled the area of Goa, were predominantly non-Catholic or Gentile areas, in which Portugal accepted freedom of worship and the continuation of traditional “customs and usages”. The nineteenth century that followed turned out to be a transforming time for the Hindu castes of Goa, especially the dominant castes among them, thanks to these new liberal policies of the Goa government. The Brahmin Hindu castes of the Old Conquests had actually played a prominent role in the Goan establishment, as political collaborators, traders, interpreters, and scribes, right from the conquest of Goa by Albuquerque. Now, with the expansion of Goa, and the need for bureaucrats, scribes, and other administrative categories to deal with the vast new territories and their peoples, there were new opportunities for both these Old Conquest communities and the dominant Hindu castes of the New Conquests. The result was a rise of wealth and power, which was reflected in the expansion and rebuilding of Hindu temples in the New Conquests, and also the building of new Hindu temples in the Old.

Following increasing complaints, over the nineteenth century, about irregularities in the functioning of these religious institutions, the government began to intervene, introducing various regulations and policies, which culminated in the *Regulamento das Mazanias* in 1886 (revised in 1933, 1949, and 1951)³. Under this law, every temple was required to

² On tourism during the *Estado Novo* regime, see: Cadavez, 2011; Aguiar, 2008; Ferro, 1949.

³ On the complaints, disputes, and government interventions in Goan temples over the nineteenth century, see: Parobo, 2024 and 2020.

register all information about it with the government, including ownership, properties, religious practises, employees, and so on. It was at this time that the *mazan*, a term which earlier meant persons prominently associated with the temple, was registered as the owners; and it was found that these registered *mazan* were almost always the dominant castes of the village or even the region. The most striking example of this dominance is the wide prevalence of the various Brahmin castes - who united at the end of the 19th century under the name Gaud Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) - not only in the *mazania* list of many temples, but also monopolising the list of the biggest temples. It is surely no coincidence that these were the same communities who played a central role in preparing the temple documents. And also that this same period of the end of the nineteenth century sees the renovation and rebuilding of a great number of temples across Goa (Kanekar 2022).

In his work *A Índia Portuguesa* (1886), António Lopes Mendes published, for the first time, images of Goan Hindu temples having an unusual architectural character and form, compared to Hindu religious architecture in British India. He described this strangeness mostly as smallness, simplicity, and less and different ornamentation, without identifying what he saw, as later scholars would: a basilican (or Latin Cross) floor plan; a dome (European or Bijapuri in origin) over the sanctum sanctorum; the prevalence of typically European pilasters, balustrades, and other ornamental elements; Bijapuri-style arches, domes, finials, and other forms; Mughal gatehouses; lamptowers that resembled Bijapuri minarets; the use of ceramic tiles and lime plaster; and so on⁴. This typical Goan architectural style applied to Hindu temples seems to have developed mainly during this period of the second half of the 19th century, although the process of hybridisation probably began much earlier (Kanekar, 2022).

A few years later, the Goan photography studio Souza & Paul began a series of photographs of Goa, which included architecture (churches, temples, fortifications, houses), landscapes, engineering works, festivities, etc. It is interesting to find many more Hindu temples displaying the typical Goan architecture in these postcards than in Lopes Mendes, proving that the new architecture was spreading at the time (Kanekar, 2022). Many of these photographs were later used in photo albums and illustrated tourist postcards (Figure 1). This is probably the first entry of these temples into the world of tourism.

⁴ For detailed descriptions of the architecture of the Goan temple, including the sources of the forms and elements, see: Pereira, 2005 and 1995; Kowal, 2001; Michell, 2015.

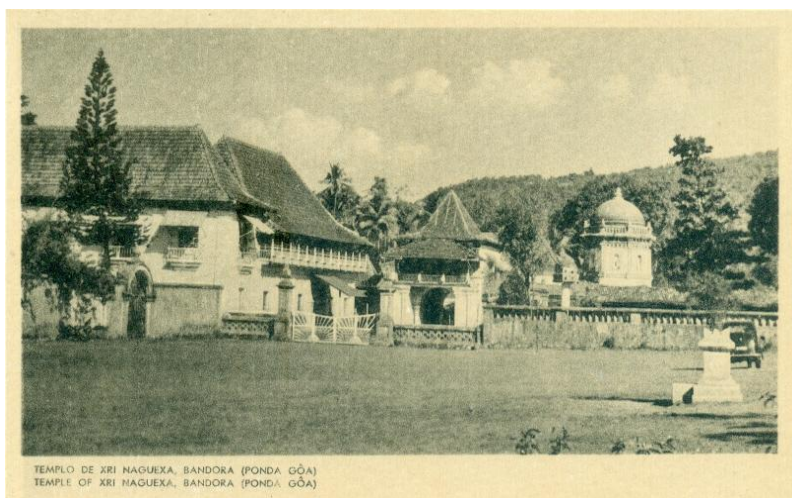


Figure 1. Nagesh temple at Bandora, postcard with a photograph taken by Souza & Paul studio
Source: Collection of Mário and Alice Chicó, held at the Archives of Macao - Cultural Affairs Bureau

3. Tourism and Temples under the Estado Novo Regime, and the Ideological Instrumentalization of Cultural Heritage

The independence of the Indian Union in 1947 triggered a series of actions by the Portuguese dictatorial regime, with a view to justifying the continued Portuguese presence in the territories of the Estado da Índia (Goa, Damão and Diu). These actions aimed to show that these territories were culturally and religiously closer to Portugal than to the Indian Union, and that they therefore constituted overseas provinces rather than colonies; their inhabitants were therefore Portuguese citizens – something that had not happened with the British Raj or the *Établissements Français dans l'Inde*. The adoption by the Estado Novo of the concept of “Lusotropicalism”, developed by Gilberto Freyre, stimulated the sending of missions to India during the 1950s, with the aim of studying the culture and art of the Estado da Índia, as well as restoring the main monuments of Old Goa, the original Portuguese imperial capital in the East (Santos, 2020).

The “discovery” of the Goan Hindu temple coincided precisely with the beginning of Carlos de Azevedo's artistic studies in 1951, during the study mission to Portuguese India led by Mário Chicó (Figure 2). For the first time, the Hindu temples of Goa were studied somewhat systematically; the study was presented in a short chapter of the book *A Arte de Goa, Damão e Diu* (The Art of Goa, Damão and Diu), entitled “Arte Indiana” (Indian Art). Carlos de Azevedo notes that these temples, built in the 18th and 19th centuries, displayed a range of different influences that were assimilated, thus deserving a special status in the history of artistic relations between the West and Eastern cultures. This architectural

syncretism was, moreover, described quite consistently by Carlos Azevedo, who thus reinforced the unique character of Goan Hindu temples (Azevedo, 1970).

The year after Mário Chicó's mission, a celebration of the “4th Centenary of the Death of Saint Francis Xavier” took place in Goa in 1952, which the regime immediately took advantage of for an international ideological campaign, with a view to showing the Lusitanian nature of Portuguese India, as opposed to the “other India”. It was also in this year that Goa's first large and modern hotel, the Hotel Mandovi, located in Panjim, the new capital of the Estado da Índia, was inaugurated. While the Portuguese dictatorial regime's commitment to the development of religious tourism to sites of Catholic importance was already abundantly clear, the launch of a strategy to develop a wider cultural tourism to this territory was something unprecedented. This strategy sought to attract Portuguese tourists who could learn about the “glorious Portuguese history in the East” and, at the same time, bring new sources of income to the territory, which at that time had its land borders blocked by the Indian Union.

1952 was therefore the year in which the first cultural tourist guidebook on Portuguese India - *India Portuguesa* - was published, containing useful information on history, transport, hotels, monuments to visit, cultural traditions, cuisine, climate, etc., accompanied by some photographs. Although the ideological intention to focus mainly on monuments clearly linked to the Portuguese presence in the territory (churches and fortifications) is clear, some Goan Hindu temples that could be visited are nevertheless mentioned briefly. Three years later, in 1955, a special issue of *Panorama* magazine was published, dedicated precisely to the Estado da Índia. This magazine, published by the National Secretariat for Information, Popular Culture and Tourism, was dedicated to Portuguese cultural tourism, contributing to the increase of tourism in accordance with the Política do Espírito. The focus of this *Panorama*'s special issue was once again on heritage directly related to the Portuguese, with Hindu temples receiving only a very brief mention.

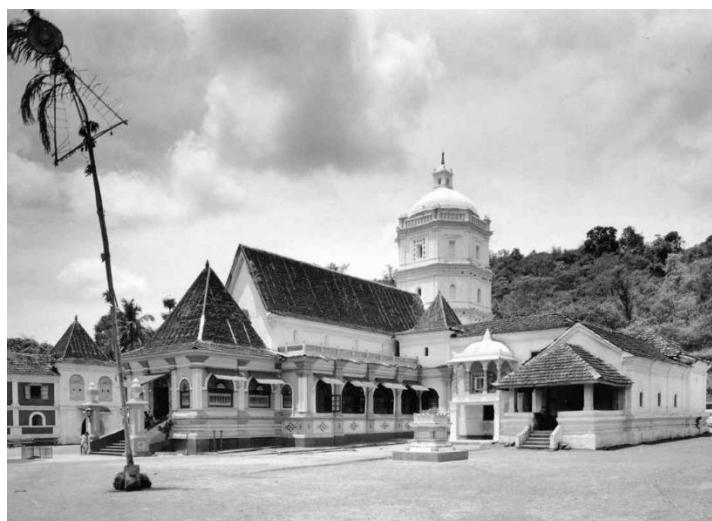


Figure 2. Shantadurga temple at Queula, photograph taken by the study mission led by Mário Chicó
Source: Collection of Mário and Alice Chicó, held at the Mário Soares and Maria Barroso Foundation

Goan Hindu temples were more substantially represented in 1956 by Swiss journalist Emile Marini who, at the invitation of the Portuguese regime, visited Goa and published the book *Goa, tal como a vi* (Goa as I saw it). This book, published in several languages, was essentially propaganda in favour of the intentions of the Estado Novo, although it could reach a more international tourist audience. The presence of many Goan Hindu temples in Emile Marini's work, and presented in more detail, points to a greater willingness on the part of the Portuguese administration to include non-Catholic elements as part of Goan identity, something that would become even more pronounced a few years later.

The arrival of Governor-General Manuel Vassalo e Silva in the Estado da Índia in 1958 undoubtedly marked a turning point in Portuguese administration, albeit a brief one thanks to the events of 1961. Manuel Vassalo e Silva took a series of measures to develop the Goan economy, improve local living conditions, and promote Portuguese-origin heritage, with particular emphasis on the plan to turn Old Goa into a kind of city-museum, which, in addition to illustrating the former greatness of the Portuguese presence in the East, would attract crowds of (religious and cultural) tourists who would thus help to develop the local economy. The governor-general seems to have also sought to integrate the Hindu heritage as part of Goan cultural identity, noting the Portuguese influence that had shaped it over time.

This Goan Hindu heritage was, moreover, the focus of special attention from entities seeking to develop the tourism industry in the Estado da Índia. In the first year of Manuel Vassalo e Silva's government, a tourist guide to Goa's Hindu heritage was published,

entitled *Arte Indu em Goa - Sri Manguexa e outros templos de Pondá* (Hindu Art in Goa - Sri Manguexa and other temples of Ponda) and published by the Information Section of the Central Department of Statistics and Information (Secção de Informação da Repartição Central de Estatística e Informação), in Goa – and not in Lisbon, as previous publications had been. The tourist booklet, entirely dedicated to the Hindu temples of Goa, was probably written by a Goan employee of the Portuguese local administration with some knowledge of Goa's Hindu community, as it succinctly but rigorously addresses aspects of the architecture, history, worship, traditions and Hindu communities of Goa (Figure 3).

The fact that this guidebook is bilingual (Portuguese and English) seems to demonstrate that, rather than only attracting Portuguese tourists – by, for example, likening the Goan town of Ponda to Sintra in Portugal – the intention was broader, to promote tourism within Goa itself and possibly within the Indian Union, in the event of a cessation of hostilities with Portugal. The descriptions and photographs of Goa's Hindu temples clearly show the differences between them and Hindu temples in other parts of India, many of which are truly magnificent. The tourist guidebook therefore seems to reinforce the focus on a potential local and regional audience rather than an international one: tourists from other parts of the world would certainly want to visit and discover the great Hindu religious complexes of South Asia, heritage sites considered exotic and non-existent in their own countries; however, for local visitors and those from neighbouring India, the relatively much smaller Hindu temples of Goa would be considered exotic precisely due to their difference from the former, including the uniqueness of their cultural hybridisation and, in particular, their accommodation of European forms and aesthetics.

The appreciation of Goan Hindu temples by the Portuguese administration under the governance of Manuel Vassalo e Silva does not seem to have sparked the same interest in Lisbon. In 1960, the year in which the “5th Centenary of the Death of Prince Henry the Navigator” was celebrated, together with the 450th anniversary of the Portuguese conquest of Goa by Afonso de Albuquerque, the regime took advantage of these celebrations to once again exploit them ideologically. The festivities continued to be opportunities to invest in the tourism industry, so it is not surprising that a new tourist guide entitled *Goa* was published in Lisbon that same year. The contents of this booklet were very similar to those published eight years earlier; however, in the more recent guidebook, in addition to guesthouses, there were now two hotels (the aforementioned Hotel Mandovi and the Hotel Zuari located in Vasco da Gama) - evidence of a continued commitment to the development

of the tourism industry. However, although the booklet's cover depicts a Hindu *khambo* (lamptower), it does not contain any further references to Goan Hindu heritage.

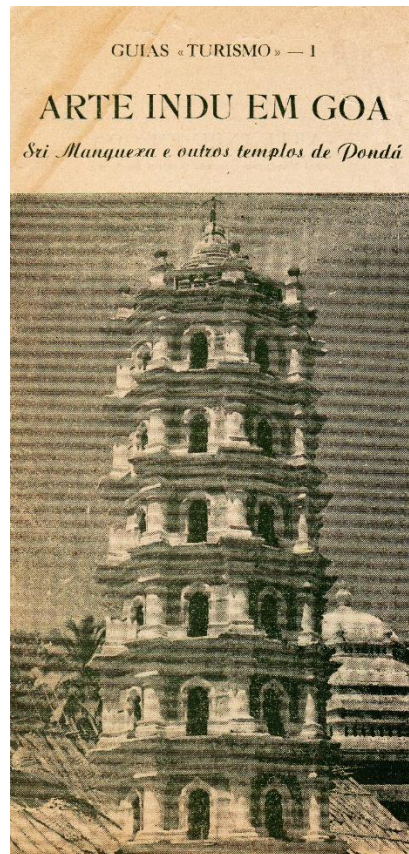


Figure 3. Front cover of the tourist guide *Arte Indu em Goa - Sri Manguexa e outros templos de Pondá*, 1958

Source: Author's private collection

4. The Post-Colonial Period and the Indianisation of Goan Hindu Temples

In December 1961, Goa, Damão, and Diu were annexed by India following Operation Vijay, thus ending more than four and a half centuries of Portuguese presence in Goa. The decades since then have seen a strange contradiction in the situation of Goa's Hindu temples. Most of the old foundations still stand today and attract increasing numbers of visitors and devotees - and also funds - thanks not least to their inclusion in government-organised tourism circuits especially under recent governments of the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and to the resultant growth in overt Hindu religiosity. But this very enthusiasm has become a threat to their original architecture, which is fast disappearing and being replaced by forms from various parts of India.

This replacement actually began even before 1961, but in small and hardly noticeable steps. The process has been aided by the fact that most Goan temples are legally held to be private property, owned by their respective *mazan* groups. Another problem is that very few of the temples are protected under heritage laws, even today, though most are over a century old. There are cases where such protection was enacted in the 1960s, but the temple trusts were able to get it removed, as at the prominent Mangueshi temple at Priol. Although the shrines saw renovation all through the 20th century, distinct differences can be seen in intensity, ambition, and inspiration at different times. For example, in the period around the 1950s, reinforced cement concrete (RCC) construction starts to be seen, especially for new halls and dormitories, and also for renovations of old temple buildings, like the additions of RCC window eaves.

Just before this, however, the first small moves away from the Goan temple vocabulary can also be seen, in the reconstruction of the Vithal temple at Sanquelim⁵ (Figure 4) and the building of a new hall for the Ramnath temple in Bandora. In both cases the new architecture - inspired by Mughal forms - seems to be looking at India for inspiration, and deliberately leaving out any touch of Europe. Ideas of Indian nationalism had entered Goa by then, and the dominant castes were increasingly swayed, both Hindu and Catholic. It thus may be no coincidence that these two temples that first reject Goan temple forms for Indian ones are both owned by dominant castes. They chose Indian forms, but Indian in the Indo-Saracenic sense, i.e. belonging to the South Asian Islamicate, an architecture embraced as “native” by the British Raj for about a century. There is a third temple, the new Maruti of Panjim, founded in the 1950s by a Bahujan community (and since reconstructed), which seems also to have opted for similar forms at the time. Although we only have these three examples of this trend for now, this is still significant given the post-1961 developments. Thus, where the Goan temple incorporated ideas from both the Islamicate (like the Bijapur Sultanate and the Mughals) and the European Baroque, the latter is now erased. Following the integration of Goa with India in 1961, Islamic inspiration also disappears; the enthusiasm for all things Indian (or rather, South Asian) is replaced by that for only Hindu India (Kanekar 2018).

⁵ This fact was mentioned by Carlos de Azevedo during his participation in the study mission of the monuments of Goa, Damão and Diu in 1951, led by Mário Chicó: in his private diary, Carlos de Azevedo notes that the temple of Sanquelim was visited but was overlooked, as it had recently been rebuilt in reinforced concrete.



Figure 4. Rebuilt Vithal temple of Sanquelim

Source: Photograph by the author

There were two distinct phases in the renovation and rebuilding of old temples after 1961: the first from the mid-1960s to the 1980s, and the second beginning from the 1990s (Kaneekar, 2018). The first period saw the partial or complete rebuilding of some temples, and the introduction of ancient Indian forms like the Latina⁶ tower - the curved tower over the temple sanctum, commonly found in north and central India - and the tiered Tamil Dravida tower of south India, both perhaps for the first time in Goa, and in RCC. This stylistic transformation was mainly seen in the rebuilding (and expansion) of smaller temples, and in new temples, big and small. Examples of prominent old temples being so transformed are few; they include the Damodar temple of Zamboulim which was completely rebuilt in 1970, and Panjim's Mahalaxmi temple, similarly rebuilt in 1983 (Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 5. Mahalaxmi temple in Panaji, before renovation, photograph taken by Emile Marini (1957)

Source: Collection of Emile Marini, held at the Overseas Historical Archive, Lisbon



Figure 6. Mahalaxmi temple in Panaji, after rebuilding in 1983

Source: Photograph by the author

⁶ One of the Nagara types of temple architecture.

Things had changed dramatically by the late 1990s, with renovation and rebuilding now almost all-prevalent, and expansive in both quality and quantity. It is no coincidence that this is the period of the rise of the BJP to power, and also the rise of mass Indian tourism in Goa. In a recent survey of pre-1961 temples across Goa⁷, out of a total of 248 old foundations, nearly half were found to be completely rebuilt - many in the last two decades - while another one-third are substantially altered. And many of the relatively unchanged ones have plans for rebuilding⁸. This is because, under the BJP, Hindu tourism is being aggressively encouraged - in a clear attempt to counter the image of Goa as a land of Catholic pilgrimage. Although the BJP claims that it is trying to encourage all spiritual tourism, and develop a new image of Goa as a religious site, their actual efforts belie these statements. An example is the new title Dakshin Kashi - “southern Kashi”, a reference to Kashi (Varanasi) city on the river Ganga, a very sacred location for Hindus -, bestowed by them on Goa 2-3 years ago. Another is the very recent inauguration, in November 2025, of a colossal statue of the Hindu deity Ram at the Partali Matha in Canacona, Goa, by the Prime Minister of the Indian union.

The biggest effort, however, can be seen in the “beautification” - including enlargement, renovation, and rebuilding - of temple complexes for the benefit of tourist visitors. The result is not just widespread destruction of the old architecture, but also a greater consciousness of image-creation. Now, it is temple as spectacle, or “Indianisation” along with monumentality and showiness. Expansion is on a gigantic scale, along with the use of expensive contemporary materials, the application of copper sheeting to roofs, and silver and gold leaf to pinnacles and internal walls, besides expensive granites and marbles. The look is varied, from Malabar-style pitched roof compositions to Nagara⁹ and Karnata Dravida¹⁰ ones. However, the rise of mass Indian tourism in Goa in the same period, and the successful packaging of Goa as a European holiday paradise for Indians, has seen a new popularity for so-called “Indo-Portuguese” architecture. The result is the development of the Goan temple into an Indian extravaganza but with a recovery of some typical Goan architectural elements like tiled roofs, *balcões*¹¹, and the grand manorial composition, along with the introduction of new faux-Goan ones like exposed laterite (Figures 7 and 8). Domes are often included, but usually not Goan ones.

⁷ The survey was based on the temples listed in the inventory of main village temples across Goa by Rui Gomes Pereira (1978).

⁸ Work in progress, developed by one of the authors.

⁹ The typical South Asian temple architecture that developed mostly in the north, west, central, and east.

¹⁰ The typical South Asian temple architecture that developed in and around the Karnataka region of the south.

¹¹ The *balcão* is a typical entrance porch of large Goan houses.



Figure 7. Kapileshwar of Queula, Ponda, original architecture

Source: “Goa An Encounter”, in MARG (1983)

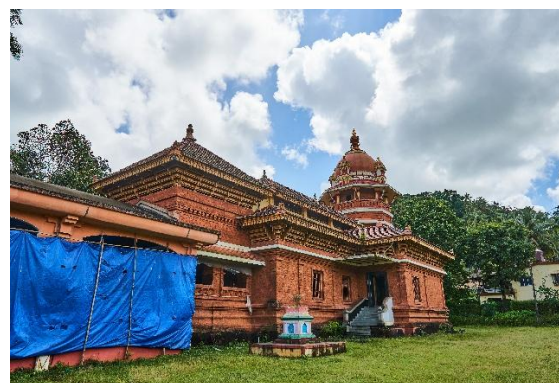


Figure 8. Kapileshwar after rebuilding

Source: Photograph by the author

For example, the rebuilding of the Shantadurga Ballikarin in Balli saw a relatively simple and semi-vernacular Goan temple, with a timber pitched roof, being replaced by a monumental and domed mix of the Buddhist chaitya and the Tamil Dravida¹² temple, with railings apparently inspired by the Sanchi stupa, and a barrel vault over the hall, along with horseshoe arches and Tamil cornices. The aim, as explained by a member of the temple committee, was to be “different” and thus attract more tourists. Another example, of even more dramatic change, is the Saptakoteswar in Fatorpa, formerly a tiny hut-like shrine and now a huge one built in exposed granite, reminiscent of the archaic Karnata Dravida tradition. The Shantadurga Cuncolcarin of Fatorpa, formerly a typical domed Goan temple of medium size, is meanwhile now a sprawling, multi-domed, and monumental extravaganza, which seems to draw inspiration from Hindu temples everywhere on the subcontinent but Goa (Figures 9, 10 and 11).



Figure 9. Shantadurga Cuncolcarin at Fatorpa, before rebuilding, photo in an outdoor

Source: Photograph by the author



Figure 10. New temple of Shantadurga Cuncolcarin at Fatorpa

Source: Photograph by the author

¹² The typical South Asian temple architecture that developed in the Tamil region of the south.



Figure 11. Kapileshwar after rebuilding
Source: Photograph by the author

5. The Contemporary Brahminical Discourse against the Deviant Foreignness of the Goan Temple

The fact that Goan Brahmanical temples are being rebuilt since 1961, and in a recognizably Indian avatar, is not really surprising, given the deep connection between Indian nationalism and Brahmanical Hinduism. As G. Aloysius has pointed out, Indian nationalism is not political nationalism but cultural nationalism, i.e. less about political rights than the celebration of culture and traditions, and specifically the culture and traditions of the dominant castes, i.e. Brahmins (Aloysius, 1997). Another relevant aspect of Indian nationalism is that it always harks to a mythical Hindu “golden age” before the arrivals of Islam and the Europeans. What this means is that to be a true Indian nationalist is to be Hindu and Brahmanical, while Islam, Christianity and Europeanness are all correspondingly un-Indian.

In this situation, Brahmanical temples become symbols of nationalism, especially in Goa where the stories of temple-breaking and “flight of the deities” under Portuguese have been repeated ad nauseum ever since Goa joined India, and are now a vital part of tourism

information packages, even though historical proof of such events does not always exist. But for Hindu temples to be celebrated as nationalist symbols, these have to be temples that “look Hindu”, not “like churches” and certainly not displaying “Muslim domes”, as some visitors and even locals now complain. Enlarging and rebuilding them to look like ancient Hindu shrines from the subcontinent is a political and nationalist statement about Goa being Indian. And erasing the proof of Goa’s heterogenous past, like its multi-referenced architecture which is reminiscent of both churches and the Islamic world, is thus nothing less than an effort to Indianise Goa and the Goan Hindu as well. This deliberate erasure of historical architecture is nothing less than a rewriting of Goan Hindu history, to create a new Hindu identity that fits better into India. There are various theories of how Goa – whose people were famously called “ajeeb” (strange) by Nehru in 1963 - could and did integrate with India. Some say it was through the highlighting of a common culture (Newman, 1999), others that it was only via mass tourism (Trichur, 2013). One could argue, however, that it was also through the reinvention of the Goan Hindus, in an image and identity acceptable to the post-1961 Indian context, a reinvention which necessarily involves their temples as well (Kanekar, 2022).

Thus, the rebuilding of Goan temples, which begins even before 1961, coinciding with the spread of Indian nationalism in Goa, but really takes off with the adoption of archaic Indian forms after 1961. With the rise of Hindutva politics¹³ in India from the late 1980s, this celebration of Brahmanical-Hinduism-as-nationalism is more blatant. In the midst of all of this rampant architectural renovation, it is noteworthy that the control, social usage of, and access to, these temples remain unchanged, i.e. all of this continues to be Brahmanical, i.e. caste-based, patriarchal, hierarchical, and discriminatory. There is no contradiction here, though, for the renovations themselves are not just completely archaic in inspiration, but driven by Brahmanical goals (Kanekar, 2021).

6. Final Notes

Goan temples were perhaps the last area of built heritage to become a tourist attraction in Goa. As far as it is known, one owes António Lopes Mendes for the first known representations of the unique Hindu temple type that developed in Goa from the 18th

¹³ Hindutva is the word used by the BJP and its affiliated organisations to describe their Hindu-centric politics and policies.

century onwards. This detailed documentation - which was just a part of his huge documentation of the region - seemed, however, to have no cultural repercussions on Goa, Portugal or any other places. The sparse tourist focus at the time centred mainly on the Catholic religious issues linked to St. Francis Xavier, although interest in monuments of Portuguese origin in Portuguese India was gradually beginning to grow, especially those in Old Goa, symbolically associated with the mythical Golden Goa and the golden age of the Portuguese colonial empire in the East. The Souza & Paul photographic studio of Goa, which photographed several Goan temples at the end of the nineteenth century, saw some of these photos later sold as illustrated tourist postcards to Goan families or occasional foreign visitors – perhaps the first, albeit minor, tourist interest in these buildings.

Until the independence of the Indian Union, the tourism industry was almost non-existent in the Estado da Índia, with the exception of religious pilgrimages to the tomb of St. Francis Xavier. It was precisely India's demands to integrate the territories then under Portuguese administration that triggered a series of actions aimed at boosting the economy of the Estado da Índia, improving local living conditions, and stimulating a sense of belonging to a more global Lusitanised world. In the process, cultural tourism began to gain momentum, although it continued to focus mainly on Catholic heritage.

Nevertheless, on the eve of the end of the Estado da Índia, there was a revaluation and celebration of Goa's Hindu heritage, apparently aimed at a potential local and regional tourist audience. The sudden championing of this transcultural heritage – developed by neither the Portuguese authorities nor the Goan Catholics, but very aligned with the architectural production by them - certainly had political motives, as it showed that even Goa's eminently Hindu heritage was very different from that of the Indian Union, due to the accommodation of European forms and aesthetics influenced by the strong Portuguese presence. This unique cultural heritage was now seen as a source of exotic attraction for potential visitors, even though the cultural tourism industry had not really developed in Goa during the colonial period.

The unique character of Goan temple architecture continued to be recognized in the years after 1961, but no longer as something to be celebrated. Instead, with Indian nationalism aligned with Brahmanical Hindusim, this heterogeneously-influenced architecture seems to have become an embarrassment for the dominant Hindu castes who were trying to reinvent themselves as ideal Indian citizens. Their temples began to be rebuilt even before 1961, and more rapidly after 1961, adopting archaic Hindu temple

forms from outside Goa. This rebuilding accelerated with the rise of the BJP and their Hindu-revivalist agenda in the 1990s, which is the same time as the rise of Indian mass tourism in Goa. The old temples were now under enormous pressure to transform themselves into tourist magnets - becoming larger, grander, and extravagantly “Indian”, by incorporating ideas from all kinds of Brahmanical Hindu sources outside Goa. However, the selling of Goa to tourists as a Portuguese or European territory now also required the so-called Indo-Portuguese touch, hence the rise of faux-Goan architecture, with elements like domes, *balcões*, and pilasters as part of the mix.

Thus, the integration of Goans into India after 1961, and the development of tourism in the years following, including the transformation of the latter into an aggressive and dominant industry in the region (and the world) by the early 21st century, has not proved beneficial for the temple heritage of Goa. Although Goan temples today receive enormous numbers of visitors as compared to even a couple of decades ago, and are also generously funded, their distinctive and irreplaceable architectural heritage is being wiped out at a furious pace. What is further remarkable is that, while this unique built heritage is seen as dispensable in the cause of nationalistic identity-creation and jingoistic tourism, the truly outdated and deplorable casteist and patriarchal practices that mark the functioning of the temples show no signs of dying out.

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