

Demolition notice issued to Parsi agiary

Civic Body Move Sparks Off Anger Among Heritage Activists, Residents

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The Hill Road widening drive is threatening to snowball into a major issue with the BMC serving a demolition notice on the Parsi Tata Agiary in Bandra. The notice which calls for a setback for road-widening has sparked off anger among civic groups in the suburbs which have been campaigning for an alternate plan in order to preserve the three main heritage structures on Hill Road—the agiary, St Peter's Church with St Stanislaus High School and St Andrew's Church.

Secretary of the Bandra Parsi Association, Sam Choksi said the notice served on Thursday had caused great animosity within the Parsi community and all other secular-minded citizens in the suburb.

A visibly upset Choksi said, "The corporation's move threatens to destroy the sanctity of our agiary. It will be difficult to conduct prayers and other services in a proper manner." The notice said the corporation would start the demolition of the agiary portico on Saturday at 11 am.

Assistant municipal commissioner in charge of H West Ward, G Rathod, when contacted, said he had not yet seen the notice. He said it had been served by someone else in the office and he would get the details on Friday.

Mani Patel, an activist with the H West Ward Civic Trust was indignant, "Illegal religious structures are allowed to come up in the city but legal religious structures which are part of the city's heritage are being destroyed," she lamented.

Patel, who is a member of the Bandra Parsi Association, said all secular-minded citizens of Bandra were against the move to break down the agiary walls. "I was told about the notice by the dastur (priest) of the agiary and was shocked. Surely some consideration should be shown to community institutions," she said.

Bandra residents are also agitated over the fact that planning for the road is not being done in a rational manner. They point out that the real bottlenecks on the road are at the beginning of S V Road and Hill Road, near the station, and not in the middle. They charge that the BMC is turning a blind eye to commercial structures even as hawkers continue to do roaring business on the road.

Principal of St Stanislaus High School, Fr Lawrie Ferrao, said the heritage value of all three structures on the road must be maintained. He demanded to know why the BMC had allowed commercial structures to come up opposite the heritage structures if it was serious about road-widening. If the present alignment was carried out in full then the St Peter's church building might jut out five feet on the road, he pointed out.

"The notice to the agiary comes as a rude shock to us because we had explained our position to municipal commissioner Johnny Joseph last week. He had agreed to study an alternate roadline proposed by heritage architect David Cardoz," said Earnst Fernandes of the H West Ward Civic Trust. Fernandes said when trust activists called up municipal officials they feigned ignorance about the notice.

Meanwhile, the St Stanislaus students association is sending letters and emails to MP of the area Priya Dutt and Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Secretary of the association Major Leon Fonseca said they had formed a core committee of eight members to tackle the threat to the area's heritage structures and would be contacting various groups including all political parties for help. Vice-chairman of the state minorities commission, Abraham Mathai, said the commission would take up the issue of religious institutions on Hill Road with the BMC. "The BMC has not drawn up a comprehensive road-widening plan for Hill Road. The proposed plan will only lead to a bottleneck on S V Road," he said.

Catholic Sabha upset

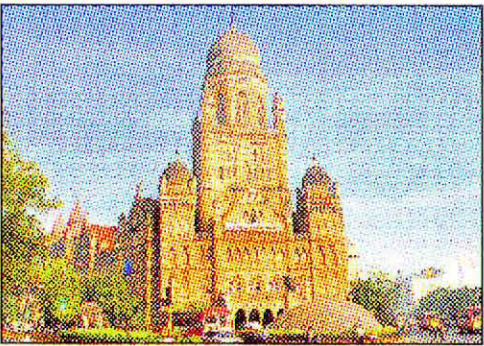
Mumbai: The Bombay Catholic Sabha (BCS) has protested against the municipal authorities' threat to take possession of open spaces in the St Andrew's Church, Bandra (west), for acquisition of setback land to widen Hill Road.

"The church has been threatened that the open space will be acquired by forcibly demolishing the compound wall, but in fact there is no open space available to be handed over to the BMC. The proposed 'road line' includes important heritage structures like family graves of parishioners, the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Holy Cross, all of which have been in existence for hundreds of years," said BCS president Dolphy D'Souza.

He pointed out that while the church was being asked to surrender its land, the building proposal department had issued permissions for construction of a four-storey commercial structure exactly opposite the church and touching the road.

"Why has the corporation chosen to demolish religious and heritage structures on the one hand and permitted construction of commercial structures across the road? It only implies that the civic authorities give precedence to commercial structures over religious and heritage structures," he said.

A similar fate hangs over religious and heritage structures situated within the premises of St Peter's Church. The BCS said it was unfortunate that the municipal corporation had refused to consider the suggestions of the church whereby the road could be widened without damaging any of the structures.



At 175, Wilson revisits history

Snehal Rebello
Mumbai, January 23

IN 1832, 25 years before the University of Bombay was established, educationist Reverend Dr John Wilson opened up his house, Ambrose House, to 30 local children. His staff comprised two teachers. Then, students paid half a rupee per month, which went towards the teachers' salaries—the Indians got Rs 20 per month, the Anglo-Indian teachers got Rs 25.

Wilson's house is now the Girgaum post office. And the little school became Wilson College in 1889, when it shifted to the Gothic building that still houses it at Chowpatty.

As Wilson College turns 175 this year, the management has decided to revisit history through an exhibition captured in photo frame.

The exhibition will be formally launched on January 25 and will continue till February 17. "We started out with a torch light procession on January 16 from Wilson school to Wilson College to mark the symbolic shift of the college from one site to another," said Professor Shehnaaz Nalwala.

The college is also undertaking building preservation projects. As one walks through the exhibition, one cannot miss the role students played in the freedom struggle. For instance, there is a copy of the appeal from the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee to boycott the Simon Commission.

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The signature campaign that first year Arts students undertook to host the national flag in the college building. They had decided to host it on September 5, 1930, and celebrate it as Gandhi Day. The students took it up after Congress gave the call Purna Swaraj in December 1929.

Wilson College as it looks today. The present gothic structure came up in 1938.



Ratanbhai Ardeshir Vakil was the first woman college teacher in Bombay, after she passed out from Wilson College in 1891. It was in 1895 that Wilson College began enrolling women students.



Bombay residents presented Reverend Dr John Wilson with this sash on the occasion of 40th anniversary of his coming to the city, on February 15, 1869.

About the founder

Reverend Dr John Wilson came to Mumbai in 1829 with wife Margaret.

After learning Marathi, Sanskrit in 6 months, he made it compulsory for his students to learn their mother tongue before learning English.

He loved to work in India. In a letter to a friend in 1827, he wrote, "I rejoice when I think I shall live, labour and die in India."

Dr Wilson was recently named by the state's Department of Archives as 'one of the seven founders of modern Bombay.'

238-year-old fort wall uncovered behind demolished slums on P. D'Mello Road

Rajendra Aklekar
Mumbai, June 6

THE RECENT demolition of illegal shanties on P. D'Mello Road near Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus has uncovered a forgotten piece of Mumbai's history—a wall that belonged to St. George's Fort, which was built in 1769 by the British.

"The wall was part of an ammunition store in the fort," said B.V. Kulkarni, a senior official in the archaeological department. "Mumbai was fortified in the late 18th century, with Bombay Castle in the south (behind Town Hall) and St. George's Fort in the north, their walls forming a contiguous fortification."

London born historian Gillian Tindall's book *City of Gold*, which chronicles Mumbai's history, states: "The fortifications were serious military structures for a serious military power (the British) in India."

City historians are overjoyed at the unexpected benefit of the demolitions. "Thank God the encroachments were removed and the Grade I-listed heritage wall is in full public view. I hope the civic body now does something about the public toilet built right next to the structure," said urban historian Sharada Dwivedi. Urban researcher Deepak Rao said the wall is one of the last fort walls in public view and needs to be protected by fencing and documentation.

"The fortifications came down in the late 19th century as the walls were blocking air and drains on the rail terminus. In place of the fortifications, came St. George Hospital. That was the end of the fort and the rise of 'new Bombay,'" Kulkarni said.

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ST. GEORGE'S FORT: A BRIEF HISTORY

WAR CRY

The British strengthened the harbour defences of Bombay (as it was known then) in the 1750s due to fears of a French raid. A new fort, St. George's Fort, made of black granite was built in 1769. The wall (above) is part of that fort.

TO THE MANOR BORN

The other fort, Bombay Castle, now in a naval area, was where Manor House was located. Here, Garcia D'Orta, the first owner of Bombay, lived in the 16th century. He leased the island from the Portuguese in 1554 until his death in Goa in 1570.

TWO (and a few other) BOMBAY CHURCHES: Issues of architecture and identity.

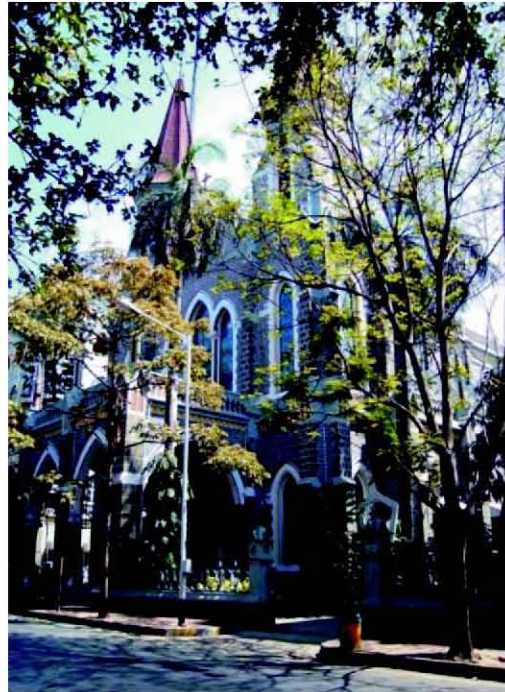
Paulo Varela Gomes

In the early years of the 20th century the Catholics of what is today Mumbai's metropolitan area, were spiritually guided by two rival bishops: the bishop of Bombay and the bishop of Daman. The first was a German. His name was Theodore Dalhoff and he presided over the diocese between 1891 and 1906¹. The second was a Portuguese, Dom Sebastião José Pereira, and he occupied the episcopal see of Daman between 1902 and 1925, the year in which he died at the diocese's premises in Colaba, Bombay.²

These clergymen were responsible for the commission of two churches that were built at the same time, were immediately famous and still stand out in Mumbai's architectural landscape: bishop Dalhoff ordered the building of the Holy Cross church in Woodehouse Rd, Colaba (ill. 1); the bishop of Daman blessed the construction of the church of Our Lady of the Mount in Bandra (ill. 2) (where he was to be buried in 1925).

This article looks at these churches and a few other of the same period, in order to discuss some ways in which the architecture of the Bombay Catholics, at the early 20th century engaged the very problematic issue of their Catholic identity in British Bombay.

The division of the Bombay Catholics between two rival bishoprics dates from the 1720s and it is too complicated and controversial a story to be dealt with here in any detail³. It will suffice to recall that the Catholics of Bombay Island were under the guidance of the archbishop of Goa, before the Portuguese gave the British this island in 1661. The same



Holy Cross Co-cathedral, Woodehouse Rd, Mumbai
(photo PVG).

happened to the Catholics outside Bombay, along the stretch of land from Daman to Chaul, before the Maratha expelled the Portuguese from these regions in 1740.

The fall of the Portuguese power introduced another Catholic bishop in Bombay, supported by the British and by a powerful Roman congregation charged with matters of evangelization, the Propaganda Fide. However the new bishop was not welcomed by all the

Catholics. Far from it. Many - the majority according to most sources - continued to follow the archbishop of Goa, a fact that did cause bitter confrontation among Catholics and had political consequences of some gravity. The problem was the following: Goa was a Portuguese territory. Could a Bombay Catholic owe religious allegiance to a Portuguese prelate and still be a faithful political subject of the Raj? On the other hand: could a Catholic from Kalbadevi or Lower Mahim who in the 18th and the first half of the 19th century still spoke some Portuguese at home, claim to be British and, in matters of faith, obey the bishop of Bombay, not the archbishop of Goa?



Our Lady of the Mount, Bandra (photo PVG).

In an attempt to negotiate this and other problems the Portuguese government and the Holy See reached an agreement in 1886 through which the diocese of Daman was created in order to congregate the Catholics of Bombay's region who did not want to be under the authority of the bishop of Bombay. However the new bishop resided, most of the time, not in Daman but in Colaba. He was, most of the time, a second bishop of Bombay. This situation could not last and in 1928 the diocese of Daman was extinguished, all Catholics falling under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Bombay. But between 1886 and 1928, for 42 years, both

bishops disputed Bombay Catholics' allegiance. The churches I discuss here were conceived precisely during these years. I believe they reflect that circumstance, at least partially.

Dom Sebastião José Pereira was recognized by his followers and admirers as a builder, having "repaired or rebuilt most of the chapels and churches of the diocese and founded several new churches"⁴. The list of buildings is indeed long⁵, but two newly built churches

¹ See VELINKAR, Joseph, SJ, *German Jesuits on the West Coast of India, 1854-2004*, Pune, fr. Stanislaw Fernandes SJ, n.d. [2006], pp. n.n., chapter 13.

² The history of Catholic architecture from the 16th to the 20th centuries in the region of Bombay and the former Portuguese possessions along the coasts of Maharashtra and Gujarat has yet to be written. Therefore the contents of this article should be understood as a very preliminary approach to a chapter of that history.

³ About this see SÁ, M. de, *The history of the diocese of Damaun*, n. 1, [Bombay], 1924; and HULL, Ernest R., *Bombay Mission-History*, with a special study of the Padroado question, Bombay, Examiner Press, 1927.

⁴ This is how the parish priest of the Glory Church in Byculla described the Bishop's architectural action in a sumptuous book that celebrates the achievements of the Diocese of Daman in the Holy Year of 1925: *In the mission field: the diocese of Damaun*, S. R. Santos (ed.), Bombay, 1925. See p. 57 (the book is published in English).

⁵ According to *In The Mission Field* eleven churches were newly built: Nossa Senhora do Monte, Bandra; Nossa Senhora da Glória, Byculla; Holy Cross at Parel; Our Lady of Dolours at Sonapur; St. Joseph at Vikroli; St. Anthony at Vakola; St. Francis Xavier at Guiriz; St. Peter at Koliwada (Bassein); Holy Cross at Matheran; St. Peter at Arnalla; Nossa Senhora do Mar at Aldea-Mar. Repairs were conducted at: St. John the Baptist, Tanah; N.S. da Salvação, Dadar; St. Michael, Mahim; N. S. do Mar, Utan; N. S. de Belem, Dongrim; St. Thomas, Bassein; Holy Ghost, Nandakal; N.S. do Egypto, Koly-Kalian; N. S. de Saude, Sar [In *The Mission Field*, pp. 57-58]. In loco checking by colleagues and me leads me to suspect that some of the churches said to be new are in fact the result of profound modern works carried out on indo-portuguese buildings.



Our Lady of the Mount, Bandra, in 1718. Adaptation by Msgr. F. Correa of an original Portuguese drawing published by Braz Fernandes in 1927.

deserved special praise: Nossa Senhora do Monte (Our Lady of the Mount) in Bandra built between 1900-1904 and a church then famous, Nossa Senhora da Glória (Our Lady of Glory) in Byculla, built between 1911 and 1913, a building that deserves reappraisal in my view.

The church - or chapel as it was also known - of Our Lady of the Mount in Bandra was (and still is) a very popular worship place for Catholics and non-Catholics. The first remarkable thing about the building process that took place there after 1900 was the decision taken by the priests of the parish of St. Andrew, Bandra, who were in charge of the

Mount, to tear down the existing building, a church in the style we would nowadays call indo-portuguese, in order to have a completely new church built on the site. This decision was controversial⁶ but to my knowledge nothing has been published about the controversy - which is a pity because it would help to clarify some of the issues at stake in this article.

We know what the old church looked like a thorough Portuguese drawing of 1718 (ill. 3) and a photograph taken prior to the demolition, both published by the Bandra historian Braz Fernandes in 1927⁷.

From the drawing we gather that Our Lady of the Mount was a characteristic northern indo-portuguese church⁸, probably with a single nave covered by a tiled timber roof. The façade was flanked by two steeples (rather than towers) and crowned by an undulating wall. The single lateral tower located on the southern flank of the church, that we see in the drawing is less common but not unusual.

The photograph, taken from the north, no longer shows this tower but



Our Lady of the Mount, Bandra, interior (photo PVG).

Braz Fernandes thinks that the building was damaged after 1740 in the Maratha period.

The new church, a single nave rectangular box covered by a wooden ceiling and a tiled roof (ill. 4), probably occupies the exact same area of the old church. Its frontal and northern façades (those that face public gathering places) are in the gothic style. The frontal façade is flanked by two towers crowned with spires. In spite of this, the church cannot be simply described as gothic. The architect hired by the priests of St. Andrew, a certain Chandabhoy⁹, designed an elaborate building. The church is labelled as "semi-gothic" or "quasi-gothic" by a recent local booklet¹⁰. This is due to the fact that it does not have a ribbed vault in the gothic style but a wooden ceiling (quite beautiful in my view, incidentally), looked at with contempt since practically the beginning by Braz Fernandes: "it reminds us of a hull of a ship placed upside down", he wrote, blaming it on the fact that the architect was not a Christian...



Holy Cross Co-cathedral and school, Woodehouse Rd, Mumbai (photo PVG).



Holy Cross Co-cathedral, Woodehouse Rd, Mumbai, interior (photo PVG).

Braz Fernandes was also unhappy with the Roman arch of the sanctuary, and he could have added to his list of grievances the fluted shafts of the Corinthian columns, that support the gallery that runs around the nave and, from the gallery, support the ceiling, the plinths on which those columns stand and other another un-gothic elements. If the main and the lateral façades, and also the main chapel and altar, are clearly gothic, the nave of the church shows that gothic was not the only design option in 1900¹¹. Chandabhoy (whoever he was), the priests of St. Andrew and maybe the bishop Dom Sebastião Pereira had a more eclectic taste - indulged also, no doubt, by the fact that funding was scarce and a stone vault could not be contemplated.

In 1901, at exactly the same time as the work began at the church of the Mount, bishop Dalhoff acquired a plot of land at the Woodehouse Road in Colaba to build a church, a convent school and an episcopal house for himself in Bombay because the old diocese chapel

⁶ In *The Mission Field*, 1925, p. 305. Also see, CORREA, Msgr. Francis, *Heritage of Mount Mary, Bandra*, Bandra, Mount Mary's Basilica, 2004, p. 48, although the author often repeats what he read in *In the Mission Field*.

⁷ See FERNANDES, Braz A., *Bandra: its Religious and Secular History*, Bombay, The Fine Art Press, 1927. About Our Lady of the Mount, see pp. 40-51. Fernandes copied the drawing of the church and another one representing the Jesuit church and seminary of Santa Ana, also in Bandra, from a 1718 manuscript written and drawn by a Portuguese captain. He never mentioned where that manuscript was and its whereabouts are unknown to me.

⁸ The Portuguese named Northern Province (Provincia do Norte) their territories from Daman to Chaul. I believe that this region has a common type of church different from other indo-portuguese influenced areas. I am currently working on this subject in the context of a wider research project about the District of Bassein of the former Northern Province. See ROSSA, Walter, *Bombay Before the British: the indo-portuguese layer*, Mumbai Reader, Mumbai, Urban Design Research Institute, 2006, pp. 262-269. There is no specific literature about indo-portuguese religious architecture in this region although there are of course several titles about the more monumental churches of Bassein, Chaul, Daman or Diu. All of these publications are in Portuguese however. For a visual and historical introduction - in English - to some of the less monumental churches see ALBUQUERQUE, Teresa, *Bacaim to Vasai*, Mumbai, Wenden Offset Private Ltd., 2006; and for some photographs, visit www.east-indians.net/

⁹ Dates unknown. He had already died in 1927 according to Braz Fernandes (op. cit, p. 44). His first names are also uncertain. Braz Fernandes identified him as S. N. Chandabhoy, maybe Shaporjee N. Chandabhoy as suggested by DWIVEDI, Sharada, "Christian churches", in Rohatgi, Godrej, Mehrotra (eds.), *Bombay to Mumbai, changing perspectives*, Mumbai, Marg publications, 1997, pp 186-191. But there was also one Munchershaw N. Chandabhoy, an architect responsible for some of Bombay's mills. See www.indianexpress.com/res/web/ple/ie/daily/19980121/02150914.html

¹⁰ Msgr Francis Correa, op. cit, pp. 48 and 58.

¹¹ Braz Fernandes, op. cit, pp. 44 and 45.

in the Fort area, located at Meadows Road, had long ceased to serve and to be worthy.

The struggle for influence and prestige between the two bishops was at its peak. A few years back, in 1893-94, Dalhoff had promoted the first council of Bombay's ecclesiastical province inviting the bishops of Mangalore, Trichinopoly and Poona to St. Xavier's College at the Carnac Road to meet him, their metropolitan, for the first time. This represented a clear challenge to the bishop of Daman (and the archbishop of Goa) and a reaffirmation of the vitality of Bombay's diocese, and of its influence throughout Catholic India¹².

The building at the Woodehouse Road did state this with a more lasting eloquence (ill. 5). It is a gothic basilica built in stone with a high central nave, and two lower aisles all covered with ribbed vaults. The façade is flanked by two towers crowned with spired conical roofs. The church stands in between the bishop's house and the conventual school, both built to the same style and with partially, the same stone facing as the church. All three buildings are slightly withdrawn from the sidewalk but linked to it through porches composing a very fine street front (ill. 6).

The first stone of the church, a Co-Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, was laid in 1902 and it was inaugurated in 1905. The architect was British, Walter Ashbridge Chambers, then associated with Gostling (a practitioner of some success in Bombay) and Fritchley. According to the church's presentation booklet published just before the consecration, the building's "general style is Gothic approximating to what is known as the Early Decorated in English architecture", although it also resulted from the "accommodation of Gothic architecture to the exigencies of an Indian climate"¹³, undoubtedly because of the bay-wide doors that can be opened all along and above the lateral naves (ill. 7).

The interior is covered with delicate gothic wall paintings and decorative stuccoes, and frankly illuminated by doors, windows and through colourful stain glass panels over the main altar.

To the left side as we enter a marble tombstone of older appearance draws our attention: it is dated 1793, it probably came from the old Fort chapel in Meadows Street, and it covered the remains of an Italian Discalced Carmelite who was the Pope's Apostolic Vicar, i.e., the representative of Rome in the territories of Bombay and around Bombay vacated by the Portuguese between 1661 and 1740: at the entrance of his new Cathedral the bishop of Bombay left a clear sign of his ascendancy.

Gothic, of course, was already famous in Bombay, since the building of the tower in the Anglican cathedral of St. Thomas after 1838 and of the Afghan church of St. John's in Colaba in the 1850s¹⁴. So famous that it



O Patriota n. 1, Bombay 1858
(Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon).

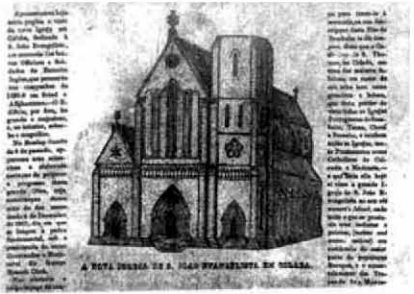
¹² Velinkar, op. cit., n.n. pp. chapter 13.

¹³ The New Church, House & School in Woodehouse Road, n.l. [Bombay], n.d. [end 1904], p. 9 and 7.

¹⁴ For the main dates, see DWIVEDI, Sharada, "Christian churches", op. cit.

made a lasting impression on the Catholic elite.

Let us go back half a century, to 1858, when the first issue of O Patriota (The Patriot) - a newspaper in Portuguese and English that for many years was the more important media of the native Catholics of Bombay - was printed in Kalbadevi Road¹⁵. This issue published two engravings representing a general view and the main window of a church. But not an indo-portuguese church, not even a Catholic church. The engravings show the Afghan church in Colaba ("the new church of St. John the Evangelist in Colaba" runs the caption in Portuguese), which had been consecrated that very same year, still without the spire that would be added only in 1865 (ill. 8)¹⁶. The Patriota's editorialist, writing in Portuguese, praised the church by suggesting that it outshone "all Portuguese churches in Bombay, Tanna, Chaul and Bassein".



Our Lady of Glory and Antonio de Souza High School, Byculla, Mumbai (photo FVG).



Church of Nossa Senhora da Glória, Mazgaon, Bombay, circa 1900 (In the Mission Field, 1925).

The gothic architecture of British Bombay was also admired by the Goan elite including some government officials: for example, after visiting the city in 1871, one of these officials, the Portuguese Luís Miguel de Abreu, singled out St. Thomas' cathedral for its "elegance"¹⁷.

This perception of things architectural was reaffirmed in the design and construction process of the largest building of the diocese of Daman to have been undertaken under Dom Sebastião José Pereira: the church of Our Lady of Glory in Byculla (ill. 9).

There was an original church of Nossa Senhora da Glória founded in the 16th century in the village of Mazagaon but contrary to what happened in Bandra it was not demolished by the parishioners themselves. As it was originally located in the lower part of Mazgaon, it disappeared in 1912 with the works of the Bombay harbour together with the whole village. I don't know why Byculla was chosen as the new location for the church (and the famous Antonio de Souza High

¹⁵ O Patriota was published in two series. The first series (1858) only comprised two numbers. The second began in 1863, was still running a decade later and I don't know when it ended. The name refers to "patriotism" in the pre-contemporary sense of the word, i.e. the sense of belonging to a place that does not necessarily need to be a nation: the subscribers and readers of O Patriota felt that their "fatherland" (Pátria in Portuguese) was Bombay. I discuss at some length the way the Catholics of Bombay dealt with the words and the concepts "Portugal" and "Portuguese" in the 19th century in a paper (in Portuguese) in Revista de História das Ideias of the University of Coimbra (forthcoming December 2007).

¹⁶ Maybe to make amends, the second issue of the newspaper (March 1858) includes a long report from Goa illustrated with an engraving of the façade of the basilica of the Bom Jesus in Old Goa.

¹⁷ See ABREU, Luís Miguel de, Viagem de Goa a Bombaim, Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1875, pp. 16 and 19.

¹⁸ See DOSSAL, Mariam, "The Hall of Wonder within the Garden of Delight", in Bombay to Mumbai, changing perspectives, op. cit. pp. 208-219.



Our Lady of Glory, Byculla, interior (photo PVG).

School which is attached to it), but it was a prestigious area since the 1850s due to the presence of the Victoria & Albert Museum (now the Bhau Daji Lad Museum or Bombay City Museum) and the Botanical gardens¹⁸.

The old church, founded in the 16th century, had been rebuilt or extensively repaired in the early 19th century¹⁹. According to the only published visual document available, a photograph, the old Glory was an indo-portuguese church combining the northern type (the high pitched pediment) and the Goan (the horizontality of the volumes, the porticoed lateral gallery) (ill. 10).

The parishioners of Mazgaon led by the vicar Luis Claudino Pera chose Goan architects for the new church, Aloisio L. Colaço, of whom nothing else is known except that he was also the author of Bombay's Opera House, and his associate J. Lourenço²⁰. They designed a fully modern gothic church built in concrete, - which is quite remarkable for such early dates - with a stone exterior facing.

The type is a basilica with a central nave with two lower aisles and a chevet composed of transept and apse. The chevet is conspicuously higher than the body of the church for reasons that only a closer study of the building could clarify, maybe two different phases in the construction, maybe structural reasons. The façade has a single square tower over narthex with powerful corner buttresses crowned by pinnacles.

The exterior appearance of the building directly quotes both the famous tower of St. Thomas, also square and spireless, and the stone facing and white plastering of the Holy Name Co-Cathedral at the Woodehouse Road. The stain glass windows over the altar also recall the Colaba church.

The interior, however, has got nothing to do with the erudite paintings and stuccoes of the bishop of Bombay's Co-Cathedral. Probably because of the building material, concrete, Our Lady of Glory is immaculately whitewashed all over: pilasters, window and doors frames, vaults, ribs, columns, arches, everything is light and white (ill. 11).

This whiteness recalls not gothic but indo-portuguese churches. The perception of indo-portuguese buildings was at the time profoundly negative among the cultivated elites, and had been so since the beginning of the 19th century. British observers had always dismissed



St. Michael, Mahim, circa 1920
(In the Mission Field, 1925).

indo-portuguese architecture. To give but one example among many possible, bishop Heber and his niece wrote in 1824-27 that indo-portuguese churches were of "considerable size but all of mean architecture"²¹. This opinion was shared by Catholic intellectuals who wrote in Portuguese and English, including the more important of them all in the 19th century, Gerson da Cunha (b. Arpora, Goa, 1844, d. Bombay 1900). He too believed that, apart from the monumental buildings of Bassein and Chaul, the many churches scattered throughout the rest of the territory were of "common architecture"²².

The author of the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* thought no different: "the native Christian churches" are all alike²³. And a Parsi writer of 1920 referred to the old Glory church and to the churches of Worli, Mahim and Bandra in equally curt terms: "they are of no importance from the architectural point of view, and have generally a sameness about them so peculiar to early Portuguese churches"²⁴.

No wonder that it was easy for the contributors to *In the Mission Field* to find arguments in favour of the demolition of our Lady of the Mount in Bandra: "it was typical of this kind of building raised by the Portuguese everywhere: solid masonry walls but otherwise inartistic"²⁵.

However, the buildings repaired or rebuilt at the time of Dom Sebastião José Pereira prove that this negative perception did not hinder the Catholic clergy and its architects from using indo-portuguese stylistic features although under the modern garments provided by gothic.

St. Michael, Mahim, and Salvação, Dadar, were two of the more important churches under Dom Sebastião José Pereira in Bombay. These churches no longer exist in the form they had at the beginning of the 20th century: Salvação has been replaced by a modern building, popularly known today as "Portuguese church". St. Michael, on the other hand,



Salvação, Dadar, circa 1920 (In the Mission Field, 1925).

¹⁹ See SOUSA, Lygia d', "400 years of Gloria church" and "200 years of Antonio de Souza High School", Gloria Bridge Newsletter, vol. 3, n. 5(1996).

²⁰ This information is registered in a stone plaque in the church itself.

²¹ HEBBER, Reginald, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825, with notes upon Ceylon. An Account of a Journey to Madras and the Southern Provinces 1826, and letters written in India, third edition in three volumes, London, John Murray 1828, republished New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1995, see III, pp. 86 and 90.

²² CUNHA, Gerson da, Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein, Bombay, Thacker, Vining & Co. 1876, republished New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1993, pp. 163, 164, passim.

²³ Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Thana District, 1882, p. 22.

²⁴ WACHHA, Sir D. E., Shells from the sands of Bombay, being my recollections and reminiscences, 1860-1875, Bombay, K.T. Anklesaria, 1920, p. 323.

²⁵ Joseph Bocarro in In The Mission Field, 1925, p. 304.

has also been profoundly changed albeit maintaining the type it was founded with in the 16th century - a single nave rectangular box. In the Mission Field contains magnificent photographs of St. Michael (ill. 12) and Salvação (ill. 13) after the renovation works.



Mount Carmel, Bandra, circa 1920
(In the Mission Field, 1925).

We can see the modernizing features introduced: pointed arches in doors and windows, pinnacles set over cornices that prolong corner or side pilasters, gothic tracery in some windows, the new gothic bell towers at Salvação. In spite of this, it seems that the indo-portuguese style of both churches was deliberately maintained: see the unchanged galilee arches at St. Michael's or the baroque decoration of cornices, pediments and openings at both churches.

Also, perhaps the naive colouring and the golden capitels of the interior decoration of Our Lady of the Mount's nave and gallery could be explained as a conscious or semi-conscious attempt at establishing a link with indo-portuguese tradition.

Many other cases could be quoted but the new church of Mount Carmel in Bandra is very eloquent (ill. 14).

In the 1890s the parish of St. Andrew was divided, as was the case with many others in the region of Bombay. Some parishioners, belonging to the Koli caste, had decided to join the bishop of Bombay and create their own parish²⁶. They built a provisional chapel at the Koliwada. A few years later, part of the members of this new parish decided to reintegrate the bishop of Daman's flock. They did so in 1892 and built the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel between 1892 and 1894. The church (no longer standing) had gothic pointed arches, indo-saracenic tower cupolas and maybe also indo-saracenic decoration of the windows in the upper story. But it is also a traditionally indo-portuguese church with its single nave under a steep tiled roof, its towered façade with three doors to the nave, its plastered walls. All the documents of the parish are written in Portuguese.

To conclude: the churches of the two Bombay Catholic communities at the beginning of the 20th century, both wanted to "say" three things about these communities: that they were Catholic, that they were modern, that they were well integrated into British India.

Gothic seemed to be the style that "said" these things in one go: it was the style of modern ecclesiastical architecture since the beginning of the 19th century and it was associated with British religious architecture throughout the world. The writings of A.W.N. Pugin (1812-1852) had also made gothic a perfectly acceptable style for Catholic buildings in the English-speaking world.

The problem was that the diocese of Daman wanted its churches, maybe not to say but to

suggest a fourth thing about the community: that it was Portuguese in culture and tradition.

This was not an easy thing to say in architectural terms, much less to suggest. The churches of the diocese of Daman hold in their interior many inscriptions in Portuguese and wooden altars recovered from ruined churches in Bassein, Chaul and other old Portuguese settlements. Their architecture, however, is less univocal (as we have seen): is not in the indo-portuguese tradition but it does not break away with it either. It never integrates a full fledged national narrative like British indo-saracenic buildings²⁷. But neither does it wave the flag of the Raj, the way the faithful of both the bishops of Daman and Bombay did in their public gatherings (ill. 15).



The Catholic parade known as "Bandra Rally", 1924 (In the Mission Field, 1925).

²⁶ Braz A. Fernandes, op. cit. pp. 64 ff. Documents pp. 124 ff.

²⁷ About the architecture of the Raj and national identities see METCALF, Thomas R., *An Imperial Vision: Indian architecture and Britain's Raj*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1989; and METCALF, Thomas R., *Imperial Connections. India in the Indian Ocean arena, 1860-1920*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 2007.