New Jesuit Sources on the Iconography of the Good Shepherd Rockery from Portuguese India: the *Garden of Shepherds* of Miguel de Almeida (1658)

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Abstract

The Good Shepherd Rockery is the only original iconography developed in the ivory carving tradition of Portuguese India. Despite the large production of these statuettes, the scarcity of written sources and the untracked diffusion of such artworks did not allow the clear understanding of the original purposes of this iconography. The present essay wishes to establish a comparison between the artworks' iconography and the prologue of the *Onvalleancho Mallo* (Garden of Shepherds) by the Jesuit Miguel de Almeida (1607–83), published in Goa in 1658. This doctrinal work presents a detailed interpretation of pastoral images which perfectly overlaps with the artworks' iconography. Almeida's work represents the best documentation for the interpretation of the iconography as it was circulating in the missionary discourse of Portuguese India. It suggests that the statuettes symbolized the eschatological role of the missionary clergy and the Catholic Church through the didactic use of pastoral allegories.

Keywords

ivory Good Shepherd – Indo-Portuguese ivories – Miguel de Almeida – Konkani literature – Jesuit art

Art historians have mostly focused on the relevance of engraving in conveying iconographical models between Europe and Portuguese South Asia.¹ Thanks

1 For a general approach see, Rafael Moreira and Alexandra Curvelo, "A circulação das formas: Artes portáteis, arquitectura e urbanismo," in *História da expansão portuguesa*, ed. Francisco

to this approach, all the iconographical components of the Good Shepherd Rockery have been identified as copies of preexisting European models. Nevertheless, the artworks show an original elaboration of such models, which does not correlate with any preexisting examples in the European repertoire. This original and composite iconography suggests a focus on the peculiar discourse developed by the missionaries in the local context of the colonies. Within this cultural frontier, the doctrinal literature produced by the missionary orders in local languages still represents a neglected source for the study of art history.

As F. Bouza has pointed out, the development of printed literature did not replace the role of orality and visuality in the political and religious propaganda of the early Modern Age.² In this period, oral speeches, printed texts, and images interacted through several communication strategies. This is particularly true for the peculiar context of the overseas missions, where the lack of a common language between missionaries and native populations required the use of hybrid methods of persuasion.

The affinities between the iconography under investigation and the allegorical contents of the *Onvalleancho Mallo* (Garden of Shepherds),³ a doctrinal compendium in Konkani language written by the Jesuit Miguel de Almeida (1607–83) in mid-seventeenth century, reveal the interactive nature of orality, visuality, and textuality in the missionary practices of evangelization. The relevance of the *Garden of Shepherds* lies in its capacity of providing an interpretative framework for the study of the iconography, coherent with Jesuit

Bettencourt and Kirti N. Chaudhuri (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1998), 2:1570–697. For recent studies regarding the devotional ivories: Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa, *Vita Christi: Marfins luso-orientais* (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, 2013); Nuno Vassallo e Silva, “A Missionary Industry: Ivories in Goa,” in *Marfins no império português: Ivories in the Portuguese Empire*, ed. Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Jean Michel Massing, and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (London: Scribe, 2013), 143–78.

2 Fernando Alvarez J. Bouza, “Comunicação, conhecimento e memória na Espanha dos séculos XVI e XVII,” *Cultura: Revista de história e teoria das ideias* 19 (2002): 105–71.

3 I use the transliteration of the title as it appears in the article of Henry Hosten included in the study of V. B. Prabhudesai that I have consulted. The article and the translation of Hosten represent the only sources for the study of the first volume of the book, which nowadays has been lost. According to Hosten, the page containing the title was not the cover-page (even though it was placed at the beginning of the volume) but originally part of the prologue. This page contains also the name of the author, the year, and the place of publication: Henry Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s *Jardim de Pastores*,” in *Vanvālyāncā Malā, kartā Pādri Migel de Almeida*, ed. Vinay B. Prabhudesai (Nagpur: Nagpur Viddhyapit, 1974), 90–110, here 96.

doctrine as it was circulating in the Portuguese colonies of South Asia. These resemblances allow us to explain the meaning of the iconography in relation to the original addresses, which still represents the main unsolved issue concerning the production of such artworks. Nuno Vassallo e Silva has interpreted the Christian devotional ivories produced in Portuguese South Asia as patronized gifts circulating in the ecclesiastical and political network of the empire.⁴ C. Alferes Pinto has recently underlined the didactic nature of the Good Shepherd Rockery as a tool for the evangelization among indigenous communities of the colonies.⁵ In line with the studies of C. Borges de Sousa,⁶ this research follows an alternative path of investigation by supporting the reading of Almeida's text with the historical sources analyzed by R. Oliveira Lopes in one of his works.⁷ Both examples converge on the pedagogic nature of the iconography representing the eschatological role of the missionary clergy. According to this perspective, the Good Shepherd Rockery turns into a moral representation of the priesthood and the Catholic Church legitimizing the evangelization.

1 The Artistic Context of Production: at the Origins of the Iconography

The Good Shepherd Rockery was one of the most widespread subjects within the devotional ivory repertoire produced in the Portuguese colonies of South Asia. The statuettes are composed by a base symbolizing an allegorical rock garden. Child Jesus, depicted as a young shepherd, sits in a pensive posture on a heart-shaped support inserted into the top of the base. The statuettes are surrounded by the finely carved branches of the Tree of Life inserted on the sides and the back of the base. On the top of the central branch, we find a small bas-relief plaque depicting God the Father in a blessing pose and the white dove of the Holy Spirit (figure 1). These statuettes were produced by local carvers

4 Silva, "Missionary Industry," 147–51.

5 Carla Alferes Pinto, "Some Notes on the Production of Christian Sculpted Ivories in the Estado da Índia," in *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, ed. Annamarie Jordan and Kate J. P. Lowe (London: Paul Holberton, 2015), 226–33.

6 Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa, "Ivory Catechisms: Christian Sculpture from Goa and Sri Lanka," in *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendor*, ed. Alan Chong (Singapore: Asian Civilizations Museum, 2016), 104–11.

7 Rui Oliveira Lopes, "Arte e alteridade: Confluências da arte cristã na Índia, na China e no Japão, séc. XVI a XVIII" (PhD diss., University of Lisbon, 2011), 198–209.

FIGURE 1

Carving of Child Jesus as the Good Shepherd, seventeenth century, ivory, 41 cm

SOURCE: COLLECTION OF THE ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM, SINGAPORE

under the patronage of the missionary orders and the Portuguese colonial elite between the late sixteenth and the eighteenth century. We can situate the earliest production in the royal workshops of Kotte, in Sri Lanka, during the second half of the sixteenth century, as proved by some prototypes on ivory and crystal rock.⁸ Here, the Singhalese artists created the first model of the Child Jesus as Good Shepherd in its peculiar posture seated on the Holy Heart. The statuettes were inspired by Flemish and Italian engraved models circulating within the coeval missionary literature.

An engraving of Jerome Wierix (1553–1619) possibly created in 1580s, provided the model at the beginning of the iconography.⁹ The Wierix's version was in turn a copy of an engraving of Diana Scultori Ghisi (1547–1612) dated

8 For the crystal rock samples, see Hugo Miguel Crespo, "Rock-Crystal Carving in Portuguese Asia," in Jordan and Lowe, *Global City*, 186–211. For the ivory one: Ana Gracia Sanz and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, "Via Orientalis: Objetos del lejano Oriente en el Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales," *Reales sitios: Revista del patrimonio nacional* 35, no. 138 (1998): 25–39, here 35–39.

9 Jerome Wierix, *Origo casti cordis*, before 1619, engraving, 6.9 cm, British Museum, London.

FIGURE 2 *Sleeping Child Jesus*, seventeenth century, ivory, 14.5 cm
SOURCE: MUSEU HISTÓRICO NACIONAL, RIO DE JANEIRO

1577. Here, Child Jesus sits in a meditative pose on the flaming Holy Heart while holding a cross-topped globe with the right hand. The engraving shows two inscriptions at the bottom of the page, one from the Song of Solomon referring to the allegorical meaning of the heart (5:2) and the other from the Revelation (3:20). The version of Jerome Wierix (and the copies engraved by Anton III Wierix, 1596–1624) appeared in the *Evangelicae historiae imagines* (1593) of the Jesuit Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80), and in the engraving series *Cor Iesu Amanti Sacrum* and *Iesu Christi Dei Domini Salvatoris NRI Infantia*, both published in Antwerp between 1591 and 1619. The subject gained wide popularity in the Portuguese colonial network, as attested by several copies in ivory (figure 2).¹⁰ The attributes of Child Jesus depicted in these engravings recall the iconography of Child Jesus as the Savior of the World. This subject already appeared in the Singhalese ivory repertoire of the mid-sixteenth century by following wood models from the Flemish city of Malines.¹¹ Indeed, the Flemish wood statuettes were popular items in Portugal between the fifteenth and

10 For Chinese samples, see Francisco Hipólito Raposo, *A expansão portuguesa e a arte do marfim* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1991), 116, figs. 290 and 291.

11 Bernardo Ferrão de Tavares e Távora, “Meninos Jesus cingalo-portugueses e seus prováveis protótipos flamengos,” *Revista universitas* 25 (1979): 85–124.

the early sixteenth century. The Singhalese workshops combined the iconography of the Child Jesus as the Savior of the World with those of the Good Shepherd according to a process already experimented in Catholic Europe.¹² The best sample is represented by the engraving *Exemplar virtutum* of Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) created around 1580s and belonging to a series of six allegorical engravings based on the life of Christ (figure 3).¹³ Here, Christ shows to a female painter a half heart containing the infant Jesus as shepherd, in all resembling the ivory statuettes under investigation. The painter carefully copies the subject in the interior of the other half heart placed over an easel. Jesus points at a lamb resting below, an allegorical reference to his sacrifice. The engraving aims to signify the unity of the divine essence and the individual through the moral emulation of Christ, as additionally explained by the inscription over the right hand of the painter: “Imitatio Christi” (Imitation of Christ). The engraving bears another quote from Ephesians 5:1 that clarifies the artwork’s intent: “Estote ergo imitatores Dei, sicut filii charissimi” (Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children).¹⁴

The iconography of the Jesus as the Good Shepherd had a revival in German-speaking countries during the second half of the fifteenth century after a long time of absence. The humble and exemplar depiction of Christ owed a critical potential towards the ecclesiastical institutions later embodied by the Reformation movement.¹⁵ The Catholic artistic reaction was to “mitigate” the Good Shepherd iconography by combining the subject with the infant version.¹⁶

- 12 Maria Cristina Osswald, “O Bom Pastor na imaginária indo-portuguesa em marfim” (MA thesis, University of Porto, 1996), 2:xiv; Maria Helena Mendes Pinto and Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa, *De Goa à Lisboa: L’art indo-portugais, xvie–xviiie siècles* (Brussels: Fondation Europalia International, 1991), 74–75.
- 13 Alberto Saviello, “Transzendenz in transkultureller Perspektive: Die indo-portugiesischen Elfenbeinfiguren des ‘Guten Hirten,’” *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 16 (2012): 59–73, here 65.
- 14 The central figure is framed by eight emblems and eight scenes from the Bible symbolizing Jesus’s moral virtues. Among the emblems, we find the *Fons aquae vitae* (Rev. 21). The fountain follows the Flemish late medieval model identified by C. R. Morey as the prototype of the iconography under investigation: Charles Rufus Morey, *Gli oggetti di avorio e di osso del Museo Sacro Vaticano* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1936), 92–93.
- 15 Eva L. E. Janssens, “World of Wickedness: A Remarkable Sixteenth-Century Print of the Parable of the Good Shepherd,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 37, no. 4 (2014): 170–86.
- 16 Theo Clemens, “Searching for the Good Shepherd,” in *The Pastor Bonus: Papers Read at the British-Dutch Colloquium at Utrecht*, ed. Theo Clemens and Wim Janse (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 26–30.

FIGURE 3 Hendrick Goltzius, *Exemplar Virtutum*, n.d., engraving, 26.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
SOURCE: IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The iconography developed in Portuguese South Asia, reached its definitive formulation during the seventeenth century. The exact location of the workshops is still debated even though stylistic affinities with wood devotional sculpture confirm the provenance from the Portuguese settlements on the Western coast of India. Goa was the main meeting point of the artists circulating within the colonial network, both from Europe and the Asian settlements.¹⁷ While carpenter guilds are well documented, the Goan archives provide no evidence concerning an ivory carver community established on the Konkani coast. At the same time, the affinity of wood and ivory carving techniques perhaps lays on the ground of this omission.¹⁸ Other studies point at coastal Gujarat as alternative location. Here the presence of ivory carvers is attested since the early stage of the colonial expansion.¹⁹ Cambay, Diu, Chaul, Surat, as well as Thane in Maharashtra, were all flourishing centers of ivory inlay particularly appreciated by the Portuguese for the production of furniture.²⁰ Interesting evidence investigated by M. C. Osswald reports the shipping of Good Shepherd statuettes from Diu to Goa in 1688.²¹ According to these sources, Goa is turned into a large stock market of specialized artistic productions before the international diffusion of such objects.

Before getting into the study of the sources, it would be useful to present the artistic subject to be later compared with the contents of the *Garden of Shepherds* by Miguel de Almeida.

2 Iconographic Analysis

We have seen how the statuettes resulted from the composition of different elements assembled together, such as: the allegorical rockery, the Tree of Life, the plaque depicting God the Father, the Holy Heart and, finally, Child Jesus

¹⁷ Silva, "Missionary Industry," 146.

¹⁸ Ivory was commonly used in the local production of inlaid furniture, see: Pedro Dias, *Mobiliário indo-português* (Coimbra: Moreira de Cónegos, 2013).

¹⁹ Duarte Barbosa, *Livro em que dá relação do que viu o ouviu no Oriente*, ed. Augusto Reis Machado (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1944), 78.

²⁰ Amin Jaffer, *Luxury Goods from India: The Art of the Indian Cabinet-Maker* (London: Harry N. Abrams, 2002).

²¹ Maria Cristina Osswald, "God Bless Port Cities!: The Ivory Sculpture of the Good Shepherd between East and West," in *Seaports in the First Global Age: Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500–1800)*, ed. Cátia A. P. Antunes and Amélia Polónia (Porto: University of Porto, 2017), 351–68, here 354.

as the Good Shepherd. The most complex component is the rock garden base, usually divided into three sections.

The bottom section stands for the worldly realm (a desert, a wild forest) and the efforts in expiating the sin. Here we find Saint Mary Magdalen in the central niche, Saint Jerome and Saint Peter in the side grottos. All these saints are represented according to their penitent versions as suggested by the attributes and the scenes in which they are depicted. The worldly connotation is also suggested by the presence of two lions in the side grottos. The lions represent allegories of the sin as confirmed by their terrifying quality in some rare specimens. Here they hunt and devour sheep and deer symbolizing the soul of the believers.²² In other statuettes, the Nativity appears in the central grotto.²³ In these cases, the iconography aims to mark the beginning of the new era through the advent of Jesus.

The middle section always presents an emblematic motif in a central position. It seems likely that the central motifs work as “signatures” influencing the arrangement and the iconographical contents of the statuettes. Most of the emblems hold a Christological reference seen as a transit point between the worldly realm of the bottom section and the heavenly realm of the third. Christ (commonly depicted as shepherd, lamb, shepherd dog, or breastfeeding sheep) is the door through which the believer can pass from sin to salvation.²⁴

The upper section always presents the Fountain of the Eternal Life. Here, peacocks and lambs drink from a fountain adorned with flowers and plants. Since the early Christian tradition, pairs of these animals drinking from a water source symbolized the participation of the Christian community to the eternal salvation.²⁵ Sometimes we can find different pairs of characters framing the scene, such as the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, John the Baptist and the Pelican, the Apostles, or the missionary patrons. The third section represents the eternal nourishment of the souls and their salvation. The meaningful presence

22 For the artwork showing the devouring lions see Sousa, *Vita Christi*, 80, fig. 4. For samples with hunting scenes, see Anna Germano and Marco Nocca, eds., *La collezione Borgia: Curiosità e tesori da ogni parte del mondo* (Naples: Electa, 2001), 213–14, fig. 25; Osswald, “Bom Pastor,” 2:37.

23 Osswald, “Bom Pastor,” 2:57.

24 In rare statuettes, the penitent Saint Peter embodies the central motif replacing the Christological reference with a sacramental one. See for example Figure 1.

25 Dragana Rogic et al., “Peacock as a Sign in the Late Antique and Early Christian Art”, *Archaeology and Science* 6 (2010): 231–48.

of the Baptist in one class of statuettes leads us to interpret the fountain as an allegory of baptism.²⁶

The artworks insinuate a reading from the bottom to the top of the statuette, from sin to salvation by following the exemplar model of Jesus the Shepherd. The iconography stresses two sacramental passages within this redemptive path: penitence (in the bottom section) and baptism (in the upper one). The subject shows a strong reference to the texts of John the Evangelist. In the homonymous pericope of his gospel, Jesus declares himself the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11), the gate that will lead the sheep to the pasture of the eternal salvation (Jn 10:7–9).²⁷ The passage explains the messianic prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice that we find in the iconography, such as the meditative posture of Jesus, the presence of lambs on his shoulder and knees, and the red pigmentation preserved on some examples. The pericope contains also a meaningful invitation to the universal evangelization (Jn 10:16). For what concerns the other components, we find the Tree of Life in the Revelation (2:7, 22:2, 22:14, 22:19), as well as the Lamb leading the multitude of martyrs up to the Fountain of the Eternal Life (Rev. 7:17, 21:6, 22:1).

3 The Jesuit Involvement: Sources and Theories

These interpretations are based on the analysis of the diverse components that the artists assembled into an original iconographical system. Until now, no written evidence confirms these interpretations and the purposes behind the formulation of the iconography.

Scholars have frequently pointed the Jesuits as the most probable agents behind the creation of this artistic subject. The Jesuit massive involvement in the artistic patronage of the colonies, their economic and political role, as well as their eclectic cultural strategy, represent a strong framework of

26 Compare the statuettes: Sousa, *Vita Christi*, 80, fig. 4; Osswald, "Bom Pastor," 2:11–16; Germano and Nocca, *La collezione Borgia*, 213–14, fig. 25; Natália Correia Guedes, *Encontro de culturas: Oito séculos de missão* (Lisbon: Printer Portuguesa, 1994), 237, fig. 232; Antonio Herrera Casado, Juan José Asenjo Pelegrina, and Felipe Peces Rata, *La catedral y el museo diocesano de Sigüenza* (Zaragoza: Ibercaja, 1992), 106, fig. 133; Pedro Dias, *A arte do marfim* (Porto: V.O.C. Antiguidades, 2004), 70–71.

27 The reference to the gospel of John is confirmed by a statuette investigated by Távora that presents the inscription "EGO SVM P/ASTOR BONVS" (I am the Good Shepherd) on the pastoral carried by Child Jesus: Bernardo Ferrão de Tavares e Távora, *Imaginaria luso-oriental* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1983), 85, fig. 113.

references.²⁸ Historical sources confirm the Jesuit involvement in the devotional ivory production and circulation. See for example the above-mentioned shipping of Good Shepherd statuettes from Diu to Goa in 1688 by the members of the Society.²⁹ The document reports the remarkable quantity of twenty-four “big child shepherds” and eighteen “small child shepherds.” “Fourteen children in ivory with their golden throne” appear in another Jesuit inventory of 1693.³⁰ And again, the acquisition of “six child Jesus with their trees” by the Society of Jesus in Goa between 1702 and 1706.³¹ The inventories of the boxes belonging to Goa and stored at the Hospital of Saint Francis Borgia in Lisbon during the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1759, report a wide range of ivory statuettes. Among these we find two specimens of the Good Shepherd Rockery.³²

Most of the statuettes nowadays preserved in museums and other institutions rarely offer information regarding their original location. Among these, two samples of Jesuit belonging are the Good Shepherd Rockery at the Museum of Christian Art in Goa, previously belonging to the Church of Saint Philip and James in Cortalim,³³ and the statuette nowadays belonging to the Secular Franciscan Order of Évora,³⁴ but formerly included in the inventory of the Jesuit college of Saint James in 1694.³⁵ Rare specimens, even when lacking written sources, present iconographic features connected with the Jesuit patronage. This is the case of the outstanding Good Shepherd Rockery of the Foundation Casa de Bragança in Vila Viçosa, Portugal. Here, Jesuit saints appear on the upper sections of the base. The honorific location of the saints needs to be considered as a tribute to the patrons.³⁶

Within this fragmentary scenario, the archival sources investigated by R. Oliveira Lopes hold a special relevance. While diving the Jesuit administrative registers preserved at the Historical Archives of Goa, Lopes encountered the recurrent reference to “figuras em marfim para os prémios de Santo Inácio

28 Maria Cristina Osswald, “Jesuit Art in Goa: From ‘*Modo Nostro*’ to ‘*Modo Goano*’ (1542–1655)” (PhD diss., European University Institute of Florence, 2003).

29 Osswald, “God Bless the Port Cities,” 354.

30 Osswald, “God Bless the Port Cities,” 352.

31 Lopes, “Arte e alteridade,” 198–99.

32 Raul Lino and Luis Silveira, eds., *Documentos para a história da arte em Portugal* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1969), 4:56 and 66.

33 Maria Helena Mendes Pinto, ed., *Museu de arte sacra indo-portuguesa de Rachol* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003), 208–9, fig. 82.

34 Guedes, *Encontro de culturas*, 237.

35 Lino and Silveira, *Documentos*, 12:120.

36 Silva, “Missionary Industry,” 164–67, fig. 8.

de Loyola" (images in ivory for Saint Ignatius of Loyola's prizes).³⁷ These prizes were given to the seminarians who achieved special merits in the classes held at the Jesuit College of Saint Paul in Goa. The statuettes were purchased by local patrons who supported the Society of Jesus, and their names were honored during the prize-giving ceremony. The college represented the basic unit of evangelical formation within the Jesuit hierarchy. The didactic practices were made uniform in 1599 through the publication of the *Ratio studiorum*.³⁸ Among the didactic norms we find the distribution of prizes to the most deserving seminarians. This practice was aimed at stimulating the "holy emulation" of virtues. According to Lopes, even though the sources do not explicitly mention the iconographical subject, we must assume that these "figuras em marfim" were Good Shepherd statuettes because the iconography is the closest to the pedagogic purposes of the prizes. The artworks represented a moral model for the seminarians according to the popular concept of *imitatio Christi*.

In fact, the allegory of the shepherd as representation of the clergy was widely used in the didactic religious literature circulating in Portuguese India. Among the authors writing in Konkani on pastoral themes the Franciscan Gaspar de São Miguel (1595–1647) and the Jesuit António de Saldanha (1598–1663) are particularly worth mentioning.³⁹ Their pastoral works were aimed at training the local clergy, that in turn could thus spread the Christian doctrine among the newly converted. The central decades of the seventeenth century witnessed the rise of Jesuit and Franciscan literature in South Asian languages, especially in Goa where the missions were deeply rooted. The main areas of interest were linguistic studies, such as grammars and lexicon, which paved the way for missionaries to produce their own texts, mostly doctrinal compendia.⁴⁰ This literary trend was bound to the political guidelines issued

37 Lopes, "Arte e alteridade," 199.

38 Margarida Miranda, ed., *Código pedagógico dos jesuitas: Ratio studiorum da Companhia de Jesus* (Coimbra: Esfera do Caos, 2009).

39 For Gaspar de São Miguel see: "Das estações que os parochos devem fazer as suas ovelhas, em que se ensinam os Mystérios da Nossa Santa Fé e se explicam os sete Sacramentos e preceitos do Decálogo" and "Baculus pastoralis." For António de Saldanha: "Prasse Pastoral, modo breve de catechizar os catecumenos adultos que se hão de bautizar e outra varia doutrina sobre os sacramentos de Santa Madre Igreja" and "Baculo pastoral." Both references to the authors are in: Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *Old Konkani Language and Literature: The Portuguese Role* (Chandor: Konkani Sorospot Prakashan, 1999), 110–11.

40 Maria do Céu Fonseca, *Historiografia linguística portuguesa e missionária: Proposições e posposições no século XVII* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2006); Otto Zwartjes, *Portuguese Missionary Grammars in Asia, Africa and Brazil, 1550–1800* (Amsterdam: Benjamins Publisher, 2011); Ines G. Županov and Ângela Barreto Xavier, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge, 16th–18th Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

by the Council of Trent (1545–63) and the archdiocesan councils of Goa.⁴¹ Interestingly, the index of the first volume of the *Garden of Shepherds* reports the decree of the Council of Trent concerning the priest's teaching their parishioners in their own language.⁴²

4 The Prologue of the *Garden of Shepherd* and Its Pertinences with the Artworks' Iconography

The *Garden of Shepherds* of Miguel de Almeida represents the best systematization of the pastoral discourse within the Jesuit literature developed in South Asian languages.⁴³ The book, written in Konkani through Roman script, was published at the College of Saint Paul in 1658–59. It was meant to be a doctrinal compendium particularly useful among local missionaries to convey their didactic speeches. The work is structured in sermons following the celebrations of the Catholic calendar, one for each Sunday of the year.

The *Garden of Shepherds* was originally composed in five volumes. Only one copy of the third and one of the fifth have been identified, the former in the Goa State National Library of Panaji in India, and the latter in the SOAS Library of London. The first volume was still recorded in 1916 when the canon priest of Anjuna, Francisco Xavier Vaz, lent the only identified copy to the Belgian historian Henry Hosten who published an English translation of selected parts of the volume in the 73rd issue of the *Bombay Examiner* of 1922.⁴⁴ The translation of Hosten represents the only source at our disposal for the study of the first

41 Gomes, *Old Konkani*, 65–69; Teotonio de Souza, "The Council of Trent (1545–1563): Its Reception in Portuguese India," in *Transcontinental Links in the History of Not Western Christianity*, ed. Konstanz Koschorke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), 189–201.

42 Hosten, "Father Miguel de Almeida's," 102.

43 Miguel de Almeida was born in the Portuguese village of Gueva (province of Beira) in 1607. In 1624, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Goa. He learned Konkani at the College of Saint Paul where he became rector, and finally provincial of the Society of Jesus, 1659–62. Apart for the *Garden of Shepherds*, Miguel de Almeida possibly co-authored a grammar of Konkani language together with António de Saldanha. The Jesuit Ignazio Archamone (1615–83) informs us of the elegant and clear style of Almeida's works in the local language of Goa. He died in Raichur in 1683. See: Manohar Raja Saradesaya, *History of Konkani Literature, 1500–1992* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002), 58–60; Ignazio Archamone, *Uma descrição e relação de Sasatana península, 1664*, ed. Lagrange Romeo Fernandes (Rome: Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1981), 34.

44 Henry Hosten, "Father Miguel de Almeida's Jardim de Pastores," *The Bombay Examiner* 73, no. 29 (1922): 288–98; I will refer to the study of Hosten as included in Prabhudesai, *Vanvāyāncā Malā*.

volume since the original text has been lost. It encompasses the dedication, the *imprimatur*, the prologue, and the index of the first book. In the prologue, Almeida gives a detailed description of the entire work and the main topics treated within the five volumes.⁴⁵ The book is divided into four thematic parts. The first part deals with the doctrine of the indulgences for those who teach and those who learn the Christian catechism. It also provides an account of the moral duties of the priesthood and the Christian community who must recognize and respect the role of the priest. The second part is dedicated to the Catholic celebrations during the entire year, with special regards to the virtues conveyed. The third and fourth parts deal with the celebrations of the Jesuit province of Salcette in Goa. The prologue represents the interpretative framework of the entire work. It is the most interesting part for the purposes of the iconographic investigation.

The text says that there exist four gardens and within each of them there are shepherds, pastures, and flocks. The first is the Heavenly Garden: “creavit Deus coelum” (God created the heavens, Gen. 1:1).⁴⁶ The angels and the spirits of the paradise are the delightful plants and flowers of the orchard. Among the infinite lights of this garden, the Divine Torch of the Sacred Heart is the one which shines the most: “lucerna eius est agnus” (its lamp is the lamb, Rev. 21:23).⁴⁷ The pasture is represented by the divine essence of God. The nine choirs of angels are the shepherds of this garden.⁴⁸ God, the great shepherd, leads them: “pastorem magnum ovium, in sanguine testamenti aeterni” (the great shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the eternal covenant, Heb. 13:20).⁴⁹

The second garden is the Eden, the Earthly Garden: “plantaverat Dominus Deus paradisum voluptatis a principio” (at the beginning Lord God planted a garden, Gen 2:8).⁵⁰ It is full of pleasant flowers and plants; among these, the Tree of Life and of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stands at the center. Here, Adam was the gardener and shepherd of all the creatures representing the flock. The nourishment was endless and freely given to the Man. Almeida corroborates these passages by quoting the Genesis (2:10, 2: 16–17, 2:21).⁵¹

45 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 99–100.

46 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 97.

47 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

48 Here Miguel de Almeida explains that the angels as missionaries are ambassadors of God by quoting the Latin etymology “missi” (sent): Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

49 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

50 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 97.

51 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

The third garden, planted by God himself and watered with his own blood, is the Catholic Church: “quem acquisivit sanguine suo” (that he obtained with the blood of his own [Son], Acts 20:28).⁵² The garden is seemingly in everything of the celestial heaven, as Saint Augustine wrote in his commentary to the fourth canticle of the Song of Solomon: “emissiones tuae Paradisus” (your shoots are an orchard, Song 4:13).⁵³ The Shepherd of the third garden is Jesus, as he declared in John 10:11: “ego sum pastor bonus,” and as seen by Mary Magdalen in the day of the resurrection: “existimans quia hortelanus esset” (supposing him to be the gardener, Jn 20:15).⁵⁴ The nourishment of the garden is “the most blessed sacrament,” a probable reference to the baptism.⁵⁵ Almeida quotes Isaiah who prophetically described the garden: “erit sicut ortus irriguus et sicut fons quem non deseruit aqua” (you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not, Isa. 58:11).⁵⁶ The garden of the church will last in eternity and will restore the original beauty of the lost paradise and the fall of the angels. The saints represent the plants and flowers of this delightful garden. Here, Almeida adds a series of metaphors where he compares the height of the Lebanese cedar to the Apostles, the red clove to the martyrs, the white rose to the Virgin Mary, the flower to the Confessor.⁵⁷

The fourth garden is the *Garden of Shepherds* itself. The sermons of the book dealing with hagiographies and celebrations represent the plants, the roses, and the trees of the fourth garden. For this reason, the pasture of the forth garden is the knowledge of the Christian doctrine represented through the allegory of the Tree of Life. Almeida quotes Tertullian and Procopius that used the same allegory to represent the knowledge of the doctrine as spiritual nourishment.⁵⁸ Like the twelve fruits of the tree in the Genesis, the tree of the Christian doctrine provides the twelve celebrations related to Jesus, the Virgin, and

52 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 97.

53 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

54 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 99.

55 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 98.

56 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 99.

57 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 99.

58 I was not able to identify the quotes from the patristic authors. Here, I report the quotes as they appear in the translation of Hosten: “qui nutriti fuerint gratia, et doctrina in aeternum vivent” (Tertullian) and “hortus consitus sancti spiritus plantis uberrimus fructibus, onustus” (Procopius) in Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 101.

the Apostles. The allegory of the tree is explained by the fact that each celebration corresponds to a different season of the year.

As we can see, the doctrinal framework built by Almeida in his work provides an explanation to the diverse iconographical components of the statuettes, which until now remained unrelated in many aspects. The partition of shepherds, pastures, and flocks into several allegorical dimensions perfectly overlaps with the iconography of the artworks. In each garden of the book, we find a central focused element that stands over the others; the Holy Heart in the first, the Tree of Life in the second, Jesus the Good Shepherd in the third, that correspond to the various components of the iconography. The quote from Revelation 21:23 helps us in identifying the Holy Heart with the Lamb. The pericope of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) provides the doctrinal reference used to depict Jesus. The vision of Magdalen (John 20:15) explains the peculiar position of the saint in the iconography of the statuettes, which seems to blossom as in a mystical vision from the very bottom where Magdalen is placed. In this evangelical passage, Magdalen mistakes Jesus for the guardian of the garden during the day of the resurrection. The book speaks about the "most blessed sacrament" as a metaphor of the nourishment of the third garden, the Catholic Church. The interesting quote from Isaiah provides a strong reference to the sacramental interpretation of the Fountain of Life in the upper section of the base. And finally, the Tree of Life is interpreted by Almeida as an allegory of Christian doctrine, the tree of the true knowledge that will restore the harmony lost due to the original sin.

Finally, we can assemble the different components of the iconography into a coherent system of symbols. Here, each component refers to the other in a specular way. Almeida postulates a rhetorical progression of images, proceeding from the Celestial Garden to the Catholic Church, the historical garden that will restore the spiritual garden of the origins. Seen from this perspective, the statuettes turn into a didactic representation of the eschatological role of the church through the figure of Jesus the Shepherd. Jesus stands as the messianic model embodied by priesthood. Indeed, in each garden of the book, the shepherds are allegories of the clergy; for instance, in the etymological explanation of the angels in the first garden, or the quote from Acts 20:28 in the third. In this meaningful passage, Paul exhorts the elders of the Christian community of Ephesus to look after the flock and be shepherds of the Church of God. The mission of the clergy is evangelization through baptism and the spread of the Christian doctrine, each representing the eternal nourishment of souls. The doctrine is symbolized through the Tree of Life and the various delightful flowers of the garden. The reference to Saint Augustine recalls the patristic debate concerning the interpretation of the fourth canticle from the Song of Solomon symbolizing the saints and their

virtues.⁵⁹ The patristic literature often used the allegory of the fruiting tree to represent the church in contrast with the barren tree, representing the synagogue.

Apart from the allegorical contents, the literary work and the iconography share the same anthological intent by depicting a doctrinal compendium through a framework of pastoral allegories. In the iconography under investigation, the hagiographic themes blossom like rich vegetation on the surfaces of the rockery base. The penitent saints, the Nativity, Saint Joseph and Mary, the Apostles, and the missionary patrons, compose the carved depiction of a doctrinal compendium.

Floral allegories to represent the Christian doctrine had already been used in the missionary literature in the local languages of South Asia. See for instance the popular genre of the *Flores sanctorum*, hagiographic compendia which used the allegory of flower to represent the virtues of saints.⁶⁰ Previous doctrinal works of António de Saldanha demonstrates that the allegorical use of the tree already appeared in the local literary tradition of the Jesuit mission.⁶¹ Saldanha used the allegories of tree and garden to structure the doctrinal contents of his books with Marian subject. These works remind us the *Fifteenth Mysteries of the Rosary*, a series of three engravings with Marian subject of Jerome and Anton Wierix, published in Antwerp before 1604 (figure 4). The engravings depict a tree framing a series of medallions with scenes from the life of the Virgin and Christ. The central medallion is framed by the branched trunk, the other medallions by the roses of the trees. The rosary connects the narrative scenes. The tree is depicted in three variations (joyful, sorrowful, glorious) according to the narrative repertoire. Indeed, the tree was an attribute of the Virgin Mary, who in turn was also used as allegory of the Catholic Church. We know from the Virtues Altarpiece of the Cathedral of Goa that these engravings were employed in Portuguese India.⁶²

59 Marco Gallo, "Pseudorinascimento senese: La predella della pala del Maestro dell'Osservanza," in *Studi di storia dell'arte, iconografia e iconologia: La biblioteca del curioso*, ed. Marco Gallo (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2007), 25–72, here 47.

60 Jonathan E. Greenwood, "Readable Flowers: Global Circulation and Translation of Collected Saints' Lives," *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (2018): 22–45.

61 See for example: "Frutos da Arvore da Vida e Nossa Almas e Corpos Salutiferos" and "Rosas e Boninhas Deleitozas do Ameno Rozal de Maria e Rozaito," in Saradesaya, *History of Konkani*, 53–55.

62 Mónica Esteves Reis, "O retábulo indo-português e a miscigenação iconográfica," in *Iconografia e fontes de inspiração: Imagem e memória da gravura europeia; Actas do 3.º colóquio de artes decorativas* (Lisbon: New University of Lisbon and Fundação Ricardo do Espírito Santo Silva, 2012), 236–74, here 263–69.

FIGURE 4 Jerome and Anton Wierix, *Glorious Rosary from the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary*, before 1604, engraving, 14 cm, British Museum, London

SOURCE: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

5 Notes on the Ideological Scenario and Chronological Issues

These elements prove that the ivory statuettes share several common features with the doctrinal literature developed by the Jesuits in India. We can finally situate the visual models of Wierix and Goltzius into the doctrinal discourse circulating among the Indian missions. The detailed similarities between text and iconography help us fill most of the interpretative gaps in the analysis of the statuettes; on the other hand, they also open new paths of investigation.

As for the sources analyzed by Oliveira Lopes, a comparison of the statuettes with the text demonstrates the self-referential character of the iconography, aimed at legitimizing the role of the missionary clergy. Furthermore, it is plausible that the iconography, as well as the book, was also used for training the indigenous clergy and conveying the didactic speech of the missionaries among and the newly converted. The belief in the redemptive power of the indulgences provided the soteriological purpose behind the composition of the book.⁶³ The index of the first volume explicitly marks the papal bull regarding the indulgences “gained by those who hear or teach, or cause to hear or teach the Holy Doctrine.”⁶⁴ The indulgences granted the partial remission of original sin as well as of sins committed by the supplicants. By establishing an interpretative link between the book and the iconography, we can imagine that the same temporal remission of sin was granted by the fruition of the statuettes. It has been stated that the peculiar iconography of the Good Shepherd Rockery represented a visual tool which supported meditation over the doctrinal topics of the Catholic faith.⁶⁵ The devotional fruition is also suggested by the mobile oratories that originally contained the statuettes.⁶⁶ We have seen how the artworks trace a redeeming path that begins in the eremitic caves of the desert (symbolizing sin, the temptations) and lands in the gurgling water of the fountain of life (the eternal salvation). The virtues of the saints and the sacraments convey this eschatological itinerary inaugurated by the advent of Jesus the Good Shepherd. The ideology of indulgences could have played a role in formulating this iconography of expiation.

63 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 99–100.

64 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 102.

65 Marsha Gail Olson, “Jesus, Mary and All the Saints: Indo-Portuguese Ivory Statuettes and their Role as Mission Art in Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century Goa” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2007), 104–34.

66 Bailey, Massing and Silva, *Marfins no império português*, 135; Raposo, *Expansão portuguesa*, 113–14.

In the final part of the prologue, Almeida concludes that the book does not claim to satisfy everyone in the same way. The fourth garden offers a variety of flowers that everyone can choose according to his/her own natural inclination. The text says that many people who are “well planted” love weapons more than literature; someone prefers the pleasures of the house rather than those provided by the garden; others like the purple more than the white; for others the gunpowder smells sweeter than the roses.⁶⁷ We could interpret this digression as an attempt of including the *ethos* of the aristocracy and the military groups within the doctrinal purposes of the book. The juxtaposition of secular and religious attributes shows that spiritual and military ethics were considered as specular values in the militant rhetoric of the missionary orders, especially among the Jesuits.

Certainly, the most complex issue arising from the study of the *Garden of Shepherds* concerns the chronological mismatch between the text and the iconography. By stating that the iconography predates the book, the *Garden of Shepherds* turns into a doctrinal systemization of preexisting elements already developed in the ivory carving tradition. Viewed from this perspective, the *Garden of Shepherds* rather appears as a compendium of pastoral images that were already circulating within the Indian missions. Conversely, the second hypothesis considers the artworks as products of the recognition achieved by the book. Art historians have conventionally dated the production of the Good Shepherd Rockery within the seventeenth century. The antecedence of the *Garden of Shepherds* would lead to a reconsideration of this dating by shifting the beginning of production to a point after 1658. Interestingly, most sources do not mention the subject before the second half of the seventeenth century. The few texts dated before 1658 mention the artworks as “child shepherd”⁶⁸ and “a child Jesus of ivory over an heart.”⁶⁹ The first document that explicitly mentions the Child Jesus as Good Shepherd together with the Tree of Life appears only in 1680.⁷⁰ This allows us to hypothesize that the iconography of the sole Child Jesus Shepherd seated above the Sacred Heart was already fixed in Sri Lanka at the end of the sixteenth century, but only after the publication of the *Garden of Shepherds* it integrated other elements, such

67 Hosten, “Father Miguel de Almeida’s,” 101.

68 Antonio da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado português no Oriente*, (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 1996), 12:233.

69 Silva, “Missionary Industry,” 148.

70 “Hum bom pastor de marfim pequeno obra da India com sua Arvore da Vida” (a little Good Shepherd in ivory, with its Tree of Life, created in India) quoted in Osswald, “God Bless the Port Cities,” 355.

as the rockery base and the tree. Such hypothesis would confirm the presence of pastoral images in the artistic and doctrinal scenario of Portuguese India before the composition of the book; but it was the Jesuit scholar who provided the doctrinal model for the statuettes' iconography.

This hypothesis requires further archival researches not limited to the Jesuit sources. It is important to underline that the iconography of the Good Shepherd Rockery shows the significant presence of Franciscan and Dominican subjects.⁷¹ This iconographic evidence testifies to the interactive nature of the missionary orders within the artistic patronage and the evangelization in the colonies.

In conclusion, as L. Clossey has pointed out, soteriology was the main field of doctrinal systematization within the Catholic Reformation movement.⁷² The Jesuits (and the other missionary orders working in the colonies) were the main cultural agents engaged in shaping the universalistic identity of the Catholic Church in relation to the newly converted. The missions provided a coherent doctrinal framework in which individual soteriology and collective eschatology could coexist. Arts and literature were strategic components of the missionary practices, which contributed to articulate the pastoral reformulation of the Catholic Church stated by the Council of Trent. In this sense, the original iconography of the Good Shepherd Rockery, and its affinities with the work of Miguel de Almeida, show a clear pedagogic intent aimed at legitimating the messianic role of the missions, and so, the new global identity of the Catholic Church.

71 For examples of Dominican subjects: Osswald, "Bom Pastor," 212; Raposo, *Expansão portuguesa*, 99. For Franciscan subjects: Guedes, *Encontro de culturas*, 238, fig. 233.

72 Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 238–58.