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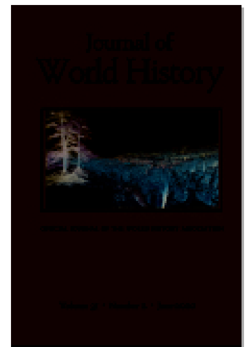

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Between the Red Sea Slave Trade and the Goa Inquisition: The Odyssey of Gabriel, a Sixteenth-Century Ethiopian Jew*

MATTEO SALVADORE

This article reconstructs the life of Gabriel, a Beta Israel child enslaved in mid-sixteenth-century Ethiopia. After two scarcely documented decades in the Arab world, Gabriel reached Western India, where he repeatedly tried to improve his lot through conversion and relocation, until he came to the attention of the Goa Inquisition as a relapsed Muslim, in 1595. This Afro-Indian story of mobility, persecution, and resistance offers rare vistas into the workings of the early modern western Indian Ocean World (IOW): enslavement in the Horn of Africa, slave trading in the Arab world, Habshi life on both sides of the Indo-Portuguese frontier, and religious persecution in Portuguese India. Introducing and analyzing what appears to be the earliest autobiographical text by an enslaved Ethiopian, the article discusses the relevance of Gabriel's multiple identities at different junctures of his mobile existence and explores the tension between agency and structure within his life history.

KEYWORDS: Beta Israel, inquisition, slave trade, Habshi, African diaspora, Ethiopia, Indian Ocean World (IOW).

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On April 17, 1595, an Ethiopian named Gabriel found himself in front of the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa, accused of "Muhammedanism." Like its metropolitan counterpart, this tribunal had been established with the primary function of policing *Cristão Novos* [New Christians], a euphemism for Christians of Sephardic ancestry who had migrated to Portuguese India, but it also persecuted local converts who had relapsed into Hinduism or Islam.[1] As a relapsed *mouro* [Muslim], Gabriel was facing a rather common accusation, but his ancestry was in fact quite unusual. Gabriel told the inquisitors that

> [h]e was now of forty years of age and [. . .] he is the son of Abyssinian parents, of the Judaic Falasha caste, who live in the highlands, far from the Prester [John]. [. . .] he had been stolen from his land, when he was very young, by certain Abyssinian Christians [. . .] who sold him to a Moorish man [. . .] in the city of Arabia, located by the seaside. And that this Moorish man sold him to another Arabian Moorish, [. . .], who took him to "Chaul de Cima" and, from there, took him to the city of Abdanaguer [Ahmadnagar].[2]

In this unique autobiographical statement, rich with references to the locales and enslavement practices of the early modern Indian Ocean World (IOW), Gabriel presents himself as a Beta Israel, or an Ethiopian Jew, who had been kidnapped in his youth and subsequently converted to Islam. After two decades of enslavement in the Arab world, he found himself in the Ahmadnagar Sultanate.[3] From there, he slipped into the Estado da Índia and reached Portuguese Chaul, where he converted to Christianity. He later returned to Ahmadnagar as a Muslim and eventually found his way back to Chaul, where he came to the attention of the Inquisition.[4]

Throughout his forty-odd years of life, Gabriel transited through interconnected African, Arab, and Indian worlds, as a Jew, a Muslim, and a Christian. His was a global life of oppression and resistance lived

1 This article uses "New Christian" in a restrictive sense, to refer only to Christians of Jewish ancestry. In the early modern Iberian world, Christians of Muslim heritage were mostly referred to as *Moriscos*. Francisco Bethencourt, *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 372.

2 "Processo de Gabriel casta abexim que veio de Chaul remetido a esta mesa" (Goa, 1595), Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 4937, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (hereafter "Processo"), 6r–v.

3 Since the term Falasha is an exonym used in Ethiopian Christian sources, I have employed the more precise term Beta Israel, which is the preferred ethnonym for Ethiopian Jews today. "Beta Israel" in Siegbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi, eds., *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, 5 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003–2014), 1:552–559.

4 "Processo," 6r–v.

on different local, regional, and global stages: as such, it can be read through a variety of historiographical lenses. On the one hand, Gabriel's story is one of enslavement in the periphery of the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia and on the African edge of the wider Islamic world. It is in this respect an rare glimpse into early modern practices of enslavement in the Horn of Africa. On the other hand, it is also an African diasporic story of the IOW, and in particular, a Habshi, or Afro-Indian, story of mobility and fluid identification along the Indo-Portuguese imperial frontier.

Gabriel's case is as an early modern global life history that offers a rare view on the exercise of individual agency in the face of instituzionalized exploitation and surveillance in disparate IOW locales. It argues that despite his condition of enslavement and his African origins, the porous colonial frontier of the Western Deccan afforded Gabriel a degree of autonomy. Although he ultimately succumbed to structural forces, for several years, Gabriel exploited the opportunities for mobility and conversion that the region offered to emancipate himself from multiple experiences of oppression in the IOW.

After a brief overview of the sources, Gabriel's story is told in four acts. The first one contextualizes Gabriel's upbringing and enslavement in the mid-sixteenth-century Ethiopian Highlands and speculates on his long sojourn in the Arab world. The second discusses his arrival and pre-trial experience in India. The third introduces the Goa Inquisition and details Gabriel's first trial. The fourth examines the second trial and the events intervening between Gabriel's two intercourses with the Inquisition.

Sources

Almost all that is known about Gabriel comes from file number 4937 of the Tribunal do Santo Ofício of the Inquisição de Lisboa, entitled "Processo de Gabriel casta abexim que veio de Chaul remetido a esta mesa" ["Trial of Gabriel from Chaul, of Abyssinian caste, referred to this court"; henceforth "Processo"].[5] The nineteen double-sided folios appear to be a single-hand contemporaneous copy of various proceedings produced by different Goa Inquisition officials, in the spring of 1595: the copyist is likely to be Belchior Brás, identified as a

[5] "Processo," 1r.

"friar notary."[6] The file includes Gabriel's notice of consignment to Brás Martins, *alcaide* [warden] of the tribunal's prison; the transcript of his first deposition in Chaul on 11 March; the proceedings of Gabriel's first trial in Goa, inclusive of his deposition, his sentence and record of its enforcement; and the lengthier proceedings of his second trial. The latter includes, in order, three incriminating testimonies, their ratifications, Gabriel's three interrogatories, depositions of his interpreters, the sentence, and the record of enforcement. While the "Processo" includes no explanation as to how Gabriel's record reached Lisbon, it has been persuasively argued that the transit occurred in the context of Gabriel's second sentencing.[7] Had it not been for the inquisitors' decision to refer Gabriel's case to Lisbon, his story would have been lost to posterity when the Goa Inquisition ceased to operate in 1812, and its archive was almost completely incinerated.[8]

Confirming the institutional authenticity of the "Processo" is Codex 203 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, known as the *Reportorio*: a 651-folio register of all individuals summoned by the Goa Inquisition in the first six decades of its operations (1561–1623).[9] Compiled by one of the tribunal's *deputados* [deputy], João Delgado Figueira, as an archival index, the *Reportorio* registers precious biographical details of the accused: ethnicity, place of residence, profession, name of spouse, crime, and, in case of a conviction, the sentence, along with additional notes. An entry dated April 22, 1595,

[6] "Processo," 1v.

[7] Giuseppe Marcocci, "Tra Cristianesimo e Islam: Le Vite Parallele Degli Schiavi Abissini in India (Secolo XVI)," *Società e Storia* 138 (2012): 807–822, 820. Gabriel is briefly mentioned also in Patricia Souza de Faria, "Entre a cruz o isla: escravos e forros diante da Inquisicao de Goa (sec. XVI-XVII)." In *Poderes do Sagrado*, ed. Jacqueline Hermann and William De Souza Martin (Rio de Janeiro: Multifoco, 2016), 383–406, 386. Recently, Gabriel was the subject of an excellent study, which however includes some imprecisions: Ananya Chakravarti, "Mapping 'Gabriel': Space, Identity and Slavery in the Late Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean," *Past & Present* 243, no. 1 (2019): 5–34. Gabriel was not the subject of two inquisitorial interrogations, one in Chaul and one in Goa (p. 6), but of a preliminary interrogation in Chaul (March 11, 1595), followed by two trials in Goa (April and May 1595). While Gabriel's fate is uncertain, it is unlikely that he was "condemned to the gales in Lisbon" (p. 8): the inquisitors sent his file to Lisbon because a lenient sentence for a second relapse required central approval. Only the file was sent to Lisbon, while Gabriel was ordered to serve on the "galleys of this city [Goa]" while awaiting final sentencing (*Processo*, 18r). On Gabriel's fate see Marcocci, 820.

[8] James C. Boyajian, "Goa Inquisition: A New Light on the First 100 Years, 1561–1660," *Purabhilekh-Puratatva* 4 (1986): 1–40, 2; and António José Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and Its New Christians 1536–1765* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 345–346.

[9] *Reportorio*.

identifies: "Gabriel Casta abexim que veio de Chaul por culpas de mouro, abjurou de apartado, eq servisse em hun convento à arbitrio da mesa. Inq.or Ruy [Rui Sodrinho da Mesquita]."[10] This brief entry is the only other existing source on Gabriel's life.

Beside confirming the authenticity of the "Processo," the *Reportorio* situates Gabriel's experience in the context of the over 8,000 cases brought before the tribunal throughout its first four decades of operations.[11] Of all the entries, only fourteen identify the accused as "Abexims" [Abyssinians][12]: although no ethnic details are provided, it is reasonable to assume that Gabriel was the only Beta Israel among them. At any rate, because of the fate of the tribunal's archive, Gabriel's can be regarded as the only surviving record of a Beta Israel tried by the tribunal. More importantly, the "Processo" represents, to the best of this author's knowledge, the only extant autobiographical statement of an enslaved Ethiopian or Beta Israel before the nineteenth century.

Given that Gabriel did not leave behind other documents, to fill in the blanks of his story one has to infer from other sources. The most important is by the Goa Inquisition's most famous survivor: Charles Dellon (1649–early 1700). A French physician, Dellon first reached India in 1668 in the employment of the French East India Company.[13] Dellon crossed paths with the Inquisition in 1674, when shortly after moving to Portuguese India, he came to the tribunal's attention. Detained, tried and sentenced, a decade after regaining his freedom in 1677, Dellon authored an account of his ordeal. Anonymously issued, the *Relation de l'Inquisition de Goa* (1687) offers a vivid and detailed

[10] *Reportorio*, 367.

[11] On Figueira, see António Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa. Tentativa de história da sua origem, estabelicimento evolução e extinção. Intródução à correspondencia dos Inquisidores da Índia, 1569–1630*, 2 vols. (Coimbra: Academia das Ciências, 1945), 1:164. On the *Reportorio*, see Bruno Feitler, "João Delgado Figueira e o Reportorio da Inquisição de Goa: uma base de dados. Problemas metodológicos," *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 13 (2012): 531–537. As important as the original source was the creation of a malleable dataset by Prof. Bruno Feitler of the Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo: "Reportorio uma base de dados dos processos da Inquisição de Goa (1561–1623)," accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.i-m.co/reportorio/reportorio/base.html.

[12] João Delgado Figueira, *Reportorio geral de tres mil oito centos processos, que sam todos os despachados neste sancto Officio de Goa & mais partes da India, do anno de Mil & quinhentos & secenta & huum* (Goa, 1623), Códice 203, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (hereafter *Reportorio*).

[13] Charles Amiel and Charles Dellon, *L'Inquisition de Goa: la relation de Charles Dellon (1687)* (Paris: Chandeigne, 2003).

account of the institution's heinous practices. Albeit not devoid of rhetorical flourishes and possibly a few exaggerations, the *Relation* has long been accepted as a reliable source.[14] As such, it has been used to contextualize Gabriel's experience with the tribunal.

Gabriel's Youth

Gabriel's early life can only be sketched, as his deposition offers no more than a paragraph on his youth. To the inquisitors, he was a Christian convert from Islam slipping back into heresy, whose pre-baptismal life mattered little. Gabriel claimed to be about forty, hence to have been born around 1555, "the son of Abyssinian parents, of the Falasha caste, who live in the highlands, far from the Prester."[15] As a Beta Israel, Gabriel belonged to a distinctive ethnoreligious community whose members, since the 15th century, had been referred to by Christian Ethiopians as Falasha, which translates from Ge'ez as "exiled, stranger, banished."[16]

Unfortunately for historians, the Ethiopian chroniclers were generally unconcerned with the lives and experiences of non-Christian or subaltern peoples. As such, the origins and premodern history of the Beta Israel community remains poorly documented and quite controversial. The first recorded cases of encroachment with communities practicing Judaism date back to the so-called Solomonic Restoration at the hands of Yekunno Amlak (1270–1285), who laid the foundation of the monarchy's expansionism. References to Beta Israel in Ethiopian sources became more frequent in the fifteenth century when engagements became more common, and a growing number of Beta Israels were forced to choose between conversion, exile, or subordination. Some negotiated their survival by accepting a subaltern condition as landless tenants in the kingdom, and eventually became a professional caste. Many migrated to the relatively unattractive

[14] *Relation de l'Inquisition de Goa* (1687) was a sensation and was quickly translated and reprinted across Europe. Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 380. On Dellon's reliability see the persuasive Anant Kakba Priolkar, *The Goa Inquisition: Being a Quatercentenary Commemoration Study of the Inquisition in India* (Bombay: Bombay University Press, 1961), 35–49.

[15] "Processo," 6r–v.

[16] Wolf Leslau, *Comparative dictionary of Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006); Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 160.

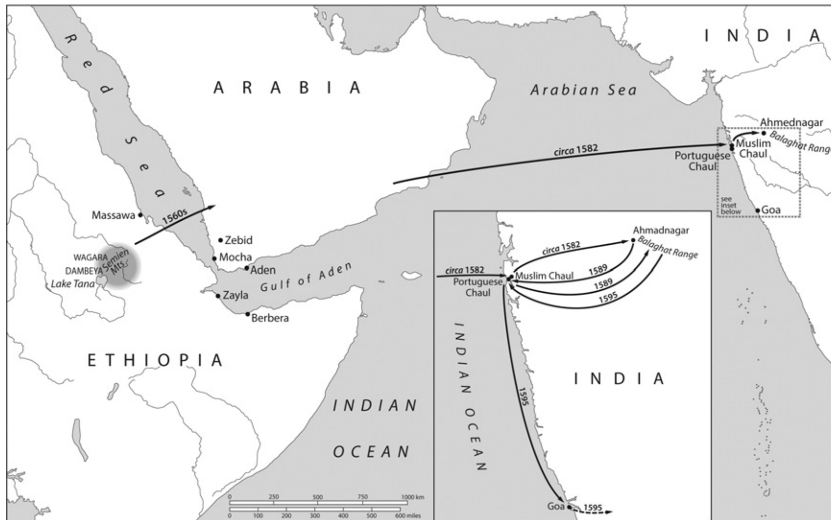

FIGURE 1. Gabriel's journeys.

lowlands surrounding Lake Tana and on the cold and impervious Semien Mountains.[17]

Between the late 15th and the mid-16th century, the Beta Israels were afforded some respite, as the Ethiopian monarchy found itself mired in periodic confrontations with the Sultanate of Adal. By the late 1520s, this engagement escalated into a full-blown conflict with global ramifications. While the Kingdom of Ethiopia had been pursuing an anti-Muslim alliance with the Portuguese monarchy since the start of the century, the Sultanate could count on Ottoman support. As part of its expansionist bid in the Red Sea and as a way to contrast Portuguese aspirations in the region, the Ottomans supplied Adal with soldiers and weaponry. In 1529, shortly after declaring *jihad,* the Adali defeated the Ethiopian army in a momentous battle that opened the way to their occupation and pillaging of the highlands, bringing the monarchy to the brink of annihilation.

In this context of instability, the Beta Israels were presented with new options: some communities began supporting Adal, hoping to

[17] On the emergence of the Beta Israel see Steven B. Kaplan, *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia: From Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 54–68, James Quirin, *The Evolution of the Ethiopian Jews: A History of the Beta Israel (Falasha) to 1920* (Hollywood: Tsehai, 2010), 40–87, and David F. Kessler, *The Falashas: A Short History of the Ethiopian Jews* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

negotiate a better existence. However, Muslim Adali proved as oppressive as their Christian foes, and by the time the Portuguese intervened in support of Ethiopia in 1541, the Beta Israels had thrown their support behind the newly crowned Emperor Galawdewos (1540–1559), who in fact found refuge, along with his meager following, on the Semien Mountains when, shortly after his ascension, Ethiopian power was at a nadir.[18] As the Christian monarchy regained its footing and ultimately prevailed against the Sultanate, relations with the Beta Israels remained rather amicable, first and foremost for practical reasons. Ethiopian monarchs had to rebuild their strongholds and replenish their armies to ward off both new Adali incursions in the east and mounting Oromo migration from the south: accessing Beta Israel support and labor offset, at least temporarily, Christian distaste for this community.[19] For this reason, at the time of Gabriel's birth, Beta Israel relations with the Ethiopian monarchy were relatively benign. Most Beta Israels lived on the Semien Mountains and, to a lesser degree, in Wagara and Dambeya between the mountain range and the northern shore of Lake Tana. Gabriel, who characterized his homeland as "far from Prester John," was probably from this region as, by the time of his birth, Emperor Galawdewos had established himself further to the south, in Dawaro.[20]

However, in the 1560s relations deteriorated again: first Emperor Minas (1559–1563) and later Sarsa Dengel (1563–1597) resumed the practice of targeting the Beta Israels with multiple military campaigns, which in turn produced a fertile milieu for the slave trade.[21] The Horn of Africa had provided captives for the slave markets of the IOW since antiquity, but the dislocation resulting from the Adali-Ethiopian conflict turned a mostly local market into a hideous burgeoning international commerce. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire's takeover of Mamluk Egypt in 1517 and the ensuing expansion in the Red Sea

[18] Charles Fraser Beckingham, "A Note on the Topography of Ahmad Gran's Campaigns in 1542," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4, no. 4 (1959): 362–373, 372. The key sources on Beta Israel involvement in the war are Richard Stephen Whiteway, ed., *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541–1543 as Narrated by Castanhoso* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1902), 56–65; and Sihab ad-Din Ahmad bin Abd al-Qader bin Salem bin Utman, *Futuh Al-Habasha: The Conquest of Abyssinia* (Hollywood: Tsehai, 2003), 378–380. See also Quirin, *The Evolution of the Ethiopian Jews*, 72–77; and Kaplan, *The Beta Israel*, 79–84. For primary sources on the relentless persecution of the Beta Israel see J. Halévy, *La guerre de Sarsa-Dengel contre les Falachas* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1907); Taamrat Emmanuel, "Episodi Della Storia Dei Falascià: Dalle Cronache Del Negusé-Neghèst Seltan-Seghèd," *La Rassegna Mensile Di Israel* 11, no. 3 (1936): 83–92.

[19] For this argument, see Quirin, *The Evolution of the Ethiopian Jews*, 72–73.

[20] Kaplan, *The Beta Israel*, 79.

[21] See "Gälawdewos," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 2:656–657.

basin provided slave traders in the region direct access to the empire's vast slave market. The slave trade out of Ethiopia was a prerogative of Ethiopian Muslims, the *jabarti*, who controlled the lion share of the caravan trade connecting the African interior, through the Highlands, with the coastal cities.[22] The role of Muslims in the slave trade was not only a function of the Horn's location, but also the region's religious traditions. Christian and Islamic injunctions defined the evolution of the trade: the Ethiopian book of laws, the Fetha Nagast (Law of Kings), forbade the enslavement of Christians, whereas Islamic Law forbade Muslims from enslaving coreligionists.

Taken together, these limitations, while often disregarded, defined the evolution of the slave trade in the region.[23] With the vast majority of slaves bound for the Islamic world, enslaving Muslims was hardly an option. On the other hand, with *jabarti* success predicated on the cooperation of the Christian elites who presided over caravan transit, the enslavement of Christians was equally unviable. All in all, these religious limitations turned followers of other religions into ideal victims. Throughout the early modern and modern era, the Ethiopian slave trade consistently targeted borderland populations that had not converted to either Christianity or Islam. In this context, the enslavement of Beta Israels and their commercialization in the Arab world appears to have been common: despite the limited size of this population, already in the late-fifteenth-century references to "Jews from the land of Prester John" sold in the Arab slave markets became common in Arabic and Hebrew documents.[24] Other targeted populations were the non-Abrahamic peoples of western and southern Ethiopia, who were often termed *barya*, or slave, by Christian highlanders.[25]

Gabriel claimed to have been kidnapped "by certain Abyssinian Christians, whose names he did not remember, and who sold him to a

[22] Mordechai Abir, "The Ethiopian Slave Trade and Its Relation to the Islamic World," in *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, vol. 2: *The Servile Estate*, ed. John Ralph Willis (Totowa: Frank Cass, 1985), 123–136, here 124–127.

[23] On the Fetha Nagast see Rudolph T. Ware, "Slavery in Islamic Africa, 1400–1800," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 3, AD 1420–AD 1804*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47–80, here 73; Richard Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Slave Trade in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A Statistical Inquiry," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 9, no. 1 (1964): 220–228, 220–221. On the slave trade and Islamic law see Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 6–9; W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 22–48.

[24] Quoted in Kaplan, *The Beta Israel*, 82.

[25] "Barya," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, 1:489–490.

Moorish man, whose name he currently does not remember, in the city of Arabia, located by the seaside."[26] This characterization would suggest that Gabriel was the victim not of enslavement through military conquest but of small-scale kidnapping facilitated by the instability associated with the ongoing hostilities. In the same deposition, Gabriel claimed to have "been stolen from his land, when he was very young."[27] If one takes that to mean that he was kidnapped as a prepubescent child, the kidnapping's *terminus ante quem* would fall in the mid-1560s, but it could date to the late 1550s.

The Horn of Africa was one of three main African frontier regions that fed slaves to the Islamic world, the other two being East Africa and the southern borderland of the Sahara Desert.[28] Most of the slaves hailing from the Horn were traded across the Red Sea, one of the key regional trading systems connecting "Indian Ocean Africa," which is to say "eastern Africa from the Cape to Cairo," with the rest of the IOW.[29] While the limited sources, along with the diversity and multi-directionality of the slave trade in the IOW, make estimation difficult, it has been calculated that between 1500 and 1700 some 900,000 Africans were traded across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.[30] An alternative estimate puts the number of slaves traded annually between 800 and 1600 at 2,000 per year.[31] The key outlets on the Ethiopian coast were the ports of Massawa, Zayla, and Berbera: hailing from the Eastern Highlands, Gabriel probably transited through Ottoman-controlled Massawa which was by then the capital of the *Habesh Eyaleti* province.[32]

What makes his transit somewhat atypical is that his Christian captors appear to have taken him to and sold him in a "city of Arabia."[33] If so, they operated not only as local kidnappers but also as international traders, which appears to have been rare for Christians in the region. An alternative explanation would be that young Gabriel

[26] "Processo," 6v.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 24.

[29] Gwyn Campbell, "Islam in Indian Ocean Africa Prior to the Scramble," in *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*, ed. Kai Kresse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 43–44.

[30] Ralph Austen, "The Islamic Red Sea Slave Trade: An Effort at Quantification," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Robert L. Hess (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1978), 161.

[31] Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 25.

[32] "Habes," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, 2:950–952.

[33] "Processo," 6v.

mistook the African port where he was sold for an Arab port because of its Islamic atmosphere and the language he heard spoken. Either way, Gabriel's account is consistent with the characterization of the Red Sea's as a "small lot" type of slave trade operated by visiting merchants who gathered small groups of captives and then crossed to Arabia.[34] After the transit, Gabriel must have found himself in one of many slave markets that dotted the region: such as Zebid, Aden, or Mocha.[35]

The "Processo" is mostly silent on Gabriel's first years of enslavement: all that his interrogators recorded is that he converted to Islam and took the name Alihan.[36] As for his twenty odd years in the Arab world, the contours of his experience can only be speculated upon by the available historiography on early modern Arab-Ottoman slave trade and slavery. In contrast with the Atlantic slave trade, whose victims were primarily young but adult males destined to toil in mines and plantations, male slaves accounted for a minority of the traffic into the Arab world, and many of them were of a prepubescent age.[37] As for employment, male slavery in the Arab world contemplated an array of possibilities of both elite and non-elite nature. For a non-castrated youth such as Gabriel, the former would entail primarily military service, whereas the latter would usually entail domestic service; agricultural slavery was relatively rare in the Arab-Ottoman world until the nineteenth century.[38]

Considering that in India Gabriel toiled as a domestic slave, it can be assumed he did the same in the Arab world, where his condition

[34] Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 17.

[35] Campbell, "Islam in Indian Ocean Africa," 24.

[36] "Processo," 5v. He appears to have been known later by a second Muslim name, "Reme" [Rami] "Processo," 1r.

[37] Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 56–75; Ehud R. Toledano, *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 10–24; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 62–67. Comparable, but more recent stories of child kidnapping can be found in Matthew S. Hopper, *Slaves of One Master: Globalization and Slavery in Arabia in the Age of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 30–32, 88–89, 117–118; and Toledano, *As If Silent and Absent*, 65, 117; George Michael La Rue, "'My Ninth Mater Was a European': Enslaved Blacks in European Households in Egypt, 1798–1848," in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, ed. Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 104–110.

[38] Gwyn Campbell, "Slave Trades and the Indian Ocean World," in *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms*, ed. John C. Hawley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 25–26; Ehud R. Toledano, "Enslavement in the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 3, AD 1420–AD 1804*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25–28.

would have been defined by location and origin. Given that the unnamed master who acquired him from his Christian captors later sold him to a trader directed to India, one could postulate that these transactions occurred in a relatively cosmopolitan urban setting. If so, the literature suggests that Gabriel's experience could have been less oppressive than it would have been in a remote rural location. On the other hand, his African identity made his service harsher: *ceteris paribus*, African slaves in the Arab-Ottoman world fetched lower prices and suffered harsher treatments than other slaves. In light of his life trajectory, and the lack of any evidence to the contrary, it can be postulated that Gabriel's experience in the Arab world was that of a typical African youth employed as domestic help.[39] As such, he continued to toil until he followed his new owner to India.

Slave in India

When in 1582 Gabriel reached Muslim Chaul, located on the left bank of the Kundalika River in the vicinity of its estuary, the town was the biggest port of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate. The Portuguese called it Chaul de Cima or Chaul de Riba [Upper Chaul], to distinguish it from their own settlement about two miles downriver. Portuguese Chaul, together with Goa, Damão, and Bassein, was one of the most significant outposts of the Estado da Índia.[40] It had come into existence in the early sixteenth century, when, after being defeated by a vast Muslim coalition, the Portuguese partnered with the rulers of Ahmadnagar, the Nizam Shas, who saw them as valuable allies against neighbouring sultanates. The Nizam Shahs first welcomed a factor in Upper Chaul and later allowed the Portuguese to build their own fortified settlement at the mouth of the Kundalika River.[41]

[39] Toledano, "Enslavement in the Ottoman Empire," 29; Toledano, *As If Silent and Absent*, 14–15; Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 13.

[40] A. R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire: From Beginnings to 1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 119–157.

[41] Sidh Losa Mendiratta, "Two Towns and a Villa, Baçaim, Chaul and Taná: The Defensive Structures of Three Indo-Portuguese Settlements in the Northern Province of the Estado Da Índia," in *Cities in Medieval India*, ed. Yogesh Sharma and Pius Malekandathil (Delhi: Primus Books, 2014), 129–136, 130–132; Pushkar Sohoni, "Medieval Chaul under the Nizam Shahs," in *The Visual World of Muslim India: The Art, Culture and Society of the Deccan in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Laura Emilia Parodi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 55–56.

During his initial deposition in Portuguese Chaul, Gabriel claimed to have "been brought [to India] by a Moorish [man] named Jame, who sold him in Chaul de Riba to another Moorish [man] named Mulá Mamede."[42] As part of his trial deposition in Goa, however, Gabriel related that an unnamed trader who had bought him from his Ethiopian enslavers in Arabia sold him "to another Arabian Moorish, named *sodagar*, who took him to Chaul de Cima and, from there, took him to the city of Abdanaguer [Ahmadnagar]."[43] The two statements refer to the same two individuals. Jamal ought to be one and the same with the unnamed trader who had bought him in Arabia. As for the identity of the buyer, the rest of Gabriel's depositions, which dwell considerably on his years in Chaul and Ahmadnagar, Mulá Mamede is referred to as *sodagar* in the second deposition, which is to say a trader.[44]

Once in Chaul, Gabriel became a Habshi. In the history of South Asia, terms such as Sidi and Habshi have identified Africans forcefully relocated to the region through the slave trade, and their descendants.[45] Sidi appears to have originated as a term of respect of Arabic derivation, possibly to refer to African Muslims serving Muslim rulers in India, although by the early 1600s it had acquired a derogatory meaning.[46] Habshi derives from the Arabic *Habash*, which identifies Abyssinia or historical Ethiopia, but should not be accepted as a precise origin-specific designation. It was mostly, though not exclusively, used to refer to Africans hailing from the Horn. Furthermore, given the dynamics of the slave trade in the Horn, many if not most of the slaves from the region hailed from the Christian kingdom's borderland and were hardly Ethiopian. Some scholars have argued that Habshi was used predominantly in Eastern India to identify slaves from the Horn, whereas Sidi was primarily used in Western India to refer to Africans in general. However, sources from Gujarat and the western Deccan document the presence of Habshis in the region

[42] "Processo," 2v.

[43] "Processo," 6v.

[44] Faria, *Entre a cruz o isla*, 386.

[45] Campbell, "Slave Trades and the Indian Ocean World," 20.

[46] The term is spelled in many ways, most commonly as *Sidi*, *Siddi*, or *Sidhi*. For a comprehensive list see Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, "Identifying Africans in Asia: What's in a Name?" *African & Asian Studies* 5, no. 3/4 (2006): 275–303, 289–291. Richard Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Diaspora to India: The Role of Habshis and Sidis from Medieval Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century," in *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*, ed. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001), 190.

already in 1300s. Likewise, recent fieldwork on communities of African ancestries in India and Pakistan suggest a variety of denotations and no clear correspondence between the identifier and the identified.[47] Overall, Habshi seems to have been the most common term in the early modern period with Sidi becoming the label of choice under British Rule in the nineteenth century.[48] This transition appears reflected in the denotations of the slave oligarchy that ruled the island of Janjira from the seventeenth to the twentieth century: usually referred to as the Sidis of Janjira in recent history, sources identify its founders as Habshis.[49]

By the time of Gabriel's arrival in Muslim Chaul, multiple communities of Habshi slave-soldiers had imposed themselves as powerbrokers in the Deccan sultanates and on India's western coast. The most exemplary case is without a doubt that of Chapu, an Oromo slave hailing from the Horn, who after being in the service of the Sultan of Bijapur for two decades, in early 1595 arrived in the Ahmadnagar Sultanate, just as Gabriel was leaving it. In the ensuing tumultuous years, which saw the Sultanate defend its independence against the expanding Mughal Empire, Chapu, left his mark in Deccani history as Malik Ambar, regent of Ahmadnagar between 1607 and 1626.[50] His rags-to-riches story is one of the most remarkable of the IOW, but by no means unique.[51] However, the abundant historical record showcasing Habshi success stories should not overshadow what was a much harsher reality for many more Habshis, who like Gabriel, toiled as domestic servants or in other capacities, and lived a life of subjection and deprivation.

Once arrived in Upper Chaul, Gabriel appears to have been quickly taken to Ahmadnagar, where he served his master as a "stable boy" for

[47] Helene Basu, "Slave, Soldier, Trader, Faqir: Fragments of African Histories in Western India (Gujarat)," in *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*, ed. Shihan de S Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001), 223.

[48] Omar H. Ali, *Malik Ambar: Power and Slavery across the Indian Ocean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8–9; Jayasuriya, Shihan de Silva, *African Identity in Asia* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2009), 22.

[49] Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Diaspora to India," 192–198, 210.

[50] Richard Maxwell Eaton, "Malik Ambar (1548–1626): The Rise and Fall of Military Slavery," in *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Ali, *Malik Ambar*. For a remarkable juxtaposition of Gabriel and Malik Ambar's lives see Marcocci, *Tra Cristianesimo e Islam*, 814–819.

[51] See Rahul C. Oka and Chapurukha M. Kusimba, "Siddi as Mercenary or as African Success Story on the West Coast of India," in *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms*, ed. John C. Hawley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 203–229; and Kenneth X. Robbins and John McLeod, eds., *African Elites in India: Habshi Amarat* (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2006).

"many years," until about 1589, when he left for Portuguese India.[52] His decision appears to have been motivated by the souring of his relationship with his master and his involvement with a "Mourish woman" named "Mixa Cobar."[53] In the Chaul deposition, Gabriel stated that he "ran away from said Lord [Mulá Mamede]" who "beat him up" because of his opposition to his love interest.[54] During his first trial, in contrast, Gabriel explained that he left because his master was giving him a "poor quality of life," although in the same deposition he also claimed to have left with Mixa Cobar after having been manumitted.[55]

Like other conflicting statements, these inconsistencies could be Gabriel's contriving, or the result of a poor understanding on part of the Inquisition personnel. Alternatively, they could speak to the distinctive specificities of slavery in the IOW, where individuals were not categorized according to the free vs. slave dichotomy that typified Atlantic slavery, but instead on the basis of multiple "hierarchies of dependency" involving slaves and non-slaves alike in complex relations of patronage and dependence.[56] Likewise, manumission was often not formalized, or only formalized after its de facto occurrence, as slaves would slowly emancipate themselves from their masters after years of service, and become their clients for life.[57] Moreover, the freedom of former slaves could be limited in a variety of ways: for example, ex-slaves could have to seek their patron's approval to marry.[58] This appears to have been the case for Gabriel, whose ex-master stood in the way of his marriage with Mixa Cobar.

To circumvent this limitation, Gabriel and his companion opted to flee the sultanate and left for Portuguese India. Upon reaching Chaul, they found refuge with "the priests of São Domingos,"[59] which is to say in the Dominican complex of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the largest missionary structure in Chaul, whose erection dated back to 1549.[60]

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52 "Processo," 4v–6v.

53 "Processo," 4v.

54 "Processo," 14r.

55 "Processo," 4v–6v.

56 Gwyn Campbell, "Introduction: Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World," in *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (London: Frank Cass, 2004), xxi–xxiv.

57 Richard Maxwell Eaton, "The Rise and Fall of Military Slavery in the Deccan, 1450–1650," in *Slavery & South Asian History*, ed. Indrani Chatterjee and Richard Maxwell Eaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 129–130.

58 Suzanne Miers, "Slavery: A Question of Definition," in *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 4.

59 "Processo," 5r.

60 J. Gerson da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker, 1876), 101–102.

Gabriel and his companion were hosted, baptized within days of their arrival, and quickly assigned for domestic employment to the "house of a Christian woman, of Abyssinian caste."[61] When reading the testimony, one has the impression that the priests processed them as they had already done with many other runaway Habshis hailing from neighbouring sultanates, who accounted for part of the growing African presence in the Estado. Among them were also the descendants of slaves freed by the Portuguese at the time of conquest, slaves acquired by settlers and missionaries in the Horn, as well as free and forced migrants from Portuguese outposts on the Swahili Coast.[62] As a whole, this composite African population represented a Christian counterpart to the Muslim Habshis of the Deccan.[63]

Within this community organized according to complex dynamics of dependence and patronage, Gabriel appears to have become a client of fellow Ethiopians. According to the record, Gabriel was a free individual, and as such he was provided employment as a domestic servant in an Ethiopian household. However, he appears to have also depended on the approval of another Ethiopian, one "known in the Moorish language as Side [Sid] Acrodo."[64] The latter, possible a notable within the Ethiopian community in Chaul, appears to have exercised considerable power over Gabriel, and to have ultimately led him to flee. Reportedly, he opposed Gabriel's marriage and suggested that he find another "more honourable" woman.[65] Unfortunately, the record does not allow for more than speculation as to why Gabriel ultimately opted to leave the stability of Chaul and return to the uncertainty of Ahmadnagar, within two months of his arrival.[66] Certainly, the testimony points at one more experience of oppression, which Gabriel once again confronted by fleeing and reinventing himself, again, as a Muslim.

Gabriel's second sojourn in the sultanate is somewhat better documented because of its relevance for the inquisitors, who interrogated him thoroughly to determine the extent of his

[61] "Processo," 4v.

[62] Portuguese slave traders imported an average of 125–250 slaves per year into the Estado: Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean*, 1500–1850 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015), 8–19.

[63] Ann M. Pescatello, "The African Presence in Portuguese India," *Journal of Asian History* 11, no. 1 (1977): 26–48; Jeanette Pinto, *Slavery in Portuguese India, 1510–1842* (Goa: Himalaya Pub., 1992).

[64] "Processo," 3r.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

wrongdoing. Gabriel admitted to have done "in the mosques, the things that the Moorish do [. . .] in observance of the cursed sect of Muhammad."[67] He explained that he was accepted as a Muslim by virtue of his earlier conversion. His hosts did not

> [c]ut him, because they saw that the accused was circumcised, nor did they perform any other ceremonies [. . .] They simply requested that he called himself by his first Moorish name, which was Haliande [Alihan], and they did not request him to raise the index finger towards the skies, nor did they request him to pray to Muhammad, saying that it was enough for him to be called by the first name that had been given to him, so that he would be known and regarded as a Moorish among the Moorish.[68]

In other words, he was not expected to perform the *shahada* because he had been Muslim since childhood, and he was only recovering from a lapse of faith. In fact, it is possible that he simply presented himself as a Muslim who had escaped from some form of captivity in Portuguese India.

No other information is available about Gabriel's six years in the sultanate, other than a reference to what seems to have been a rather dejected condition: he claimed he did "not dare sustain a woman, because he was poor."[69] Likewise, the reason for his eventual return to Chaul is also left unexplained, other than for his claimed epiphany:

> about two or three months ago, the accused came to his senses and remembered that he was a Christian. He fled from the city of Abdanaguer [Ahmadnagar] to the city of Chaul, with the intention to observe the law of our Lord Jesus Christ once again, [. . .] because he committed these faults for being weak and a miserable sinner, who was deceived by the Devil.[70]

While one can only speculate, the most likely explanation for his return would appear to be his dejected status. As he crossed back into the Estado in the vicinity of Portuguese Chaul, he ran into a Portuguese soldier who escorted him to the local representative of the Goa Inquisition.[71]

67 "Processo," 5r.
68 "Processo," 5v.
69 Ibid.
70 "Processo," 6r.
71 "Processo," 3v.

The First Trial

Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241) established the *inquisitio hereticae pravitatis* [inquisition against heresy] to eradicate Cathar heresy in the south of France. In 1478, with the bull *Exigit Sincerae devotionis affectus*, Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484) founded the Spanish Inquisition, with the primary purpose of policing New Christians. The bull *Cum ad nihil magis* (1536) established the Portuguese equivalent, which initially operated three metropolitan tribunals, Lisbon, Coimbra, and Evora, and later stretched its tentacles to the Estado da Índia, where Goa's became its only permanent overseas tribunal.[72]

In the first decades of existence, the Goa tribunal, like its Iberian counterparts, focused on crypto-Judaism.[73] As a result of substantial migration from Portugal, the Estado da Índia was home to a sizable community of New Christians, a presence that Portuguese authorities found particularly problematic for both religious and socio-economic reasons. In part, Portuguese anxieties stemmed from the belief that by interacting with Jewish communities in the Indian Ocean, New Christians would be exposed to their ancestral practices and eventually relapse into Judaism and grow into a community of recalcitrant Jews that could hamper religious progress in the Estado. In part, the Portuguese elites were also concerned about this minority's growing economic power. By exploiting their connections to the Indian Ocean's Jewish diaspora, New Christians in the *Estado* were emerging as a

[72] Patricia Aufderheide, "True Confessions: The Inquisition and Social Attitudes in Brazil at the Turn of the XVII Century," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 10, no. 2 (1973): 208–240, 211; Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 37. For a global introduction to the Inquisition see Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*.

[73] On the Goa tribunal see, Ana Cannas da Cunha, *A inquisição no estado da India: origens (1539–1560)* (Lisboa: Arquivos Nacionais, 1995); Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa*; Priolkar, *The Goa Inquisition*; Ana Paula Sena Gomide, "A serviço do santo ofício: a inquisição de Goa através das cartas do inquisidor Jorge Ferreira (1603–1612)," in *Simpósio Internacional de Estudos Inquisitoriais-Salvador* (Salvador, 2011); Feitler, "João Delgado Figueira e o Reportorio da Inquisição de Goa"; Célia Cristina da Silva Tavares, "Inquisição Ao Avesso: A Trajetória de Um Inquisidor a Partir Dos Registros Da Visitação Ao Tribunal de Goa," *Topoi* 10, no. 19 (2009): 17–30; Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço, "Uma Inquisição diferente. Para uma leitura institucional do Santo Ofício de Goa e do seu distrito (séculos XVI e XVII)," *Lusitania Sacra* 31 (2015): 129–64; Alisa Meyuhas Ginio, "The Inquisition and the New Christians: The Case of the Portuguese Inquisition of Goa," *The Medieval History Journal* 2, no. 1 (1999): 1–18; Maria de Deus Beites Manso and Lúcio de Sousa, "Fundamentos para o estabelecimento da inquisição em Goa," *Revista Politeia* 2, no. 13 (2013); Giuseppe Marcocci, "Jesuit Missionaries and the Portuguese Inquisition in South Asia: A Controversial History (16th–18th Centuries)," in *Intercultural Encounter and the Jesuit Mission in South Asia (16th–18th Centuries)*, ed. Anand Amaladass and Ines G. Zupanov (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2014), 232–257; Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 342–353; Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 406–435.

burgeoning commercial community, one whose power Portuguese authorities desired to curtail and whose wealth they wished to confiscate. Accordingly, the tribunal prosecuted and sentenced wealthy New Christians in disproportionately high numbers, while secular authorities issued legislation to limit their socio-economic progress.[74]

The tribunal operated almost uninterruptedly for two and a half centuries, until its abolition in 1812.[75] Portugal's inquisitor general was responsible for appointing one or more inquisitors at the helm of each tribunal, which consisted of a complex bureaucracy responsible not only for the trials and detention but also for a capillary network of surveillance outposts throughout its jurisdiction.[76] Like their metropolitan counterparts, the Goa inquisitors oversaw district delegates who assisted the court by engaging in investigations, receiving denunciations, and in general by presiding over the territory of the Estado, as Gabriel's experience in Chaul confirms.[77]

On March 11, 1595, a soldier took Gabriel in front of Manuel Fernandes, vicar of the Goa tribunal in Chaul. The circumstances of the apprehension are unknown, but the unidentified soldier would appear to have been part of the Estado's system of surveillance. Returnees who had sojourned in the Deccan sultanates were expected to make a declaration about their activities in front of the Inquisition.[78] The soldier seems to have encountered Gabriel by chance somewhere along the Estado's border in the vicinity of Chaul. If so, he could have decided to apprehend Gabriel out of a personal sense of duty, in an official capacity while monitoring the border, or as an Inquisition *familiar*. Lay officers of the Inquisition, the *familiars* provided a service to the tribunal in exchange for status and power.[79]

At any rate, once in front of the vicar, Gabriel was interrogated through an interpreter, Bastião de Brito, and in the presence of a witness, one Lucas Cardoso. The trial unfolded according to the *Regimento*, the code of procedure that regulated the workings of the Portuguese Inquisition: it included rules detailing each tribunal's structure and operations as well as guidelines regarding imprisonment,

[74] Boyajian, "Goa Inquisition," 4–7.

[75] When it was abolished as a result of British pressure on the Portuguese crown: Ginio, "The Inquisition and the New Christians," 9.

[76] Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 81.

[77] Boyajian, "Goa Inquisition," 4.

[78] Ginio, "The Inquisition and the New Christians," 13.

[79] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 49.

interrogation, and torture. As such, this code helps shed light on the content and structure of Gabriel's reticent trial records.[80]

While the line of interrogation is unknown, the *Regimento* called upon the inquisitor to ask the defendant to identify himself and his heritage and to "discharge his conscience,"[81] which is to say admit to his wrongdoing. Accordingly, Gabriel cursorily related the circumstances of his Beta Israel youth, his diasporic Muslim life, and confirmed that he had been a Christian since his baptism in Chaul in 1589.[82] He denied having reverted to Islam but admitted to having gone to the mosque while in the sultanate.[83] He justified his actions as the result of necessity rather than conviction, claiming that his Christian faith had guided him back to the Estado, and he asked "for mercy for the sins he committed against God and promised to live and die in the law of Christ."[84] The purpose of this first deposition was to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to warrant a trial. The vicar found against Gabriel, since he had admitted to some wrongdoing while also appearing less than forthcoming, and he was dispatched to Goa.

Three weeks later, on 1 April, Gabriel reached Goa, presumably by sea, after having left Chaul in the days following his deposition. If so, he sailed southward along the coast for about 500 kilometres, until the estuary of the Mandovi River, on whose left bank Portuguese Goa was located. From Goa's docks, Gabriel would have been escorted on foot, for no more than a few hundred meters, to the site of the tribunal, the Sabaio Palace, which lay on the south side of Goa's main square, next to the city's cathedral, at the time under construction.

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[80] The *Regimento* was first issued in 1552. New editions were issued in 1613, 1640, and 1774: Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 43–44; Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 46–47, 64–65.

[81] Quoted in Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 50.

[82] "Processo," 2r. According to the Chaul deposition, Gabriel was baptized twelve or thirteen years earlier (2v), whereas the sentence issued in Goa claims that he was baptized "six or seven" years earlier and that he had escaped "six years ago" (8r). The discrepancy was duly noted in Marcocci, "Tra Cristianesimo e Islam," 817. Overall, the evidence strongly suggests that Goa's records are the correct ones: Gabriel only lived as a Christian in Portuguese Chaul "for two months," after which he lived again as a Muslim in Ahmadnager for six or seven years (5r) or seven years (7r). Most likely Chaul's vicar confused the time of Gabriel's baptism with that of his arrival in India, which also occurred thirteen years earlier (3r). Gabriel recollected events that had long passed and the words he uttered were relayed by interpreters to notaries, and then transcribed, eventually to the extant copy of the "Processo." Mistakes and omissions could have occurred at any point in this chain of transmission. This article prioritizes Goa's record over Chaul's because it was produced in a more formal and controlled setting.

[83] "Processo," 2v–3v.

[84] "Processo," 3v.

The tribunal had been housed, since its foundation, in what had been the first local residence of Sultan Yusuf Adil Shah (1489–1511), known as Sabaio and founder of the Bijapur Sultanate, to which Goa belonged before Portuguese conquest. The imposing three-floor structure housed not only the tribunal's offices and its personnel's residential quarters but also the 200-odd cells that made up its prison.[85] Gabriel was escorted inside and handed over to Brás Martins, *alcaide*, under whose custody he would remain until his trial on 17 April.[86]

After more than two weeks in the Sabaio prison, Gabriel was interrogated again, according to the procedure laid out in the *Regimento*. In his first and only trial deposition, Gabriel provided what was called a "genealogy," which is to say a general overview of his heritage and upbringing, as well as the events leading to his apprehension.[87] In front of Marcos da Graça,[88] *deputado* of Inquisitor Rui Sodrinho da Mesquita,[89] the *promotor* [prosecutor] Jerónimo de Brito,[90] and an interpreter, Antonio da Cunha, Gabriel reiterated the account of his Chaul deposition, but added important details and a more complete admission of wrongdoing.

He was more specific about the circumstances leading to his conversion: he explained that he had been baptized in the previously mentioned "convento de São Domingos' in Chaul;"[91] and he admitted that he left for Ahmadnagar "with the intention of following the sect of Muhammad."[92] His words were very different from those he had uttered in Chaul, where he had characterized his flight as the result of both absentmindedness and necessity and had sworn that "he did not make himself a Moorish."[93] He now was admitting that "for a period of six or seven years, [he had] follow[ed] and often do[ne], in the mosques, the things that the Moorish do, during all those years, on the outside as well as on the inside; in observance of the cursed sect of Muhammad."[94] In

[85] Helder Carita and Nicolas Sapieha, *Palaces of Goa: Models and Types of Indo-Portuguese Civil Architecture* (Wappingers Falls: Scala Books, 1999), 39–41; José Nicolau da Fonseca, *An Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa* (Bombay: Thacker, 1878), 136.

[86] "Processo," 1v.

[87] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 50–51.

[88] Da Graça had been *deputado* since 1591: Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa*, 1:169.

[89] Mesquita had been *inquisitor* since 1584: Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa*, 1:164.

[90] Brito had been *promotor* since 1587: Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa*, 1:169.

[91] "Processo," 4v.

[92] "Processo," 5r.

[93] "Processo," 2v.

[94] "Processo," 5r.

other words, Gabriel admitted his regression to Islam, including his reversal to his old Muslim name "Haliande" [Alihan].[95] As for the reasons of his return to the Estado, he reiterated a more elaborate version of the account offered in Chaul. He had come to his senses and

> converted himself again to our holy Catholic faith, [. . .] and he hopes he can save his soul, because [he says that] in essence, his soul is fully good and true, and he disowns the cursed sect of Muhammad, as the devious, false and wrong sect it is. [. . .] He committed these faults for being weak and a miserable sinner, who was deceived by the Devil, and because he was poorly educated in the principles of salvation. But henceforth, he promises to be a very good Catholic and a faithful Christian, and not to incur in such sins and weaknesses again.[96]

The harshness of Gabriel's imprisonment is hard to gauge, but there is little doubt that his sojourn in the Sabaio dungeon had persuaded him to recant.

Conditions in the prison seem to have depended on the race of the prisoner. According to Dellon, who had the misfortune to sojourn in the Sabaio about half a century after Gabriel, "black prisoners" were treated more severely than "white prisoners."[97] Given that Africans represented a small minority of the Inquisition's victims, the distinction should be read primarily as one between Indian and European prisoners. Nevertheless, as an African, Gabriel was probably among the poorly treated. Conversely, as a first offender willing to come clean in a matter of days, one can assume that his experience was benign when compared with pre-trial detentions lasting months or even years. What can be categorically excluded is the use of the tribunal's persuasive strategies to extract confessions from reticent defendants: the *tormento*.

The tribunal administered and recorded the use of torture methodically: any confession under torture would have been duly documented, notarized, and presented for signature to the prisoner within twenty-four hours of the torture session; if the prisoner denied the extorted confession, torture would resume.[98] In Gabriel's case, the lack of any mention of torture in both the "Processo," and his *Reportorio* entry confirm that his confession had been voluntary. Arrest, detention, counselling, trial, and, in some cases, torture were stages

[95] "Processo," 5v.
[96] "Processo," 6r.
[97] Amiel and Dellon, *L'Inquisition de Goa*, 155.
[98] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 54.

of a process whose ultimate goal was obtaining a confession. Detention and counseling alone must have persuaded Gabriel that a candid confession accompanied by contrition would be his best wager for a lenient sentence. All in all, the brevity of his imprisonment and of the trial, which otherwise would have included multiple sessions, depositions, and witnesses, speak to the likely mildness of Gabriel's first encounter with the tribunal.

The deposition concluded, da Graça referred the matter to the *mesa*, literally "table" but better rendered as "court," which is to say the tribunal's sentencing assembly. In every tribunal, the court was composed of at least five members. Among them were the inquisitors, their deputies, and other qualified clerics, who together would issue a sentence by majority vote.[99] According to the *Reportorio*, Inquisitor Rui Sodrinho da Mesquita was responsible for all the trials held on April 17, 1595.[100] The "Judgment of Gabriel, of Abyssinian caste, native of [the Kingdom of] Prester John"[101] was issued the following day, April 18, 1595. The tribunal had no doubt that Gabriel was a "heretic and apostate and an enemy of our holy Catholic faith and thus, he should be brought to secular justice," but it showed the defendant clemency because

> [h]e came back again, of his own free will, to the Christian land [. . .], and claimed he was deeply repented of all of the abovementioned sins, [. . .] and because he asked for Our Lord God's forgiveness and for the mercy of this court, and promised never to repeat these, or similar sins, again, [. . .], the accused Gabriel will be accepted by the holy Mother Church, as he requests, and he will make his abjuration in this city's See, as a sentence and penance for these sins, on a Sunday or Holy Day, with his penitential robe, with a lighted candle in his hands, barefoot and uncapped, where he will be standing, while this sentence is read, and he shall serve in the works of new monastery of Santo Tomás, of the priests of São Domingos, *ad arbitrio* of the court, where he will be well instructed on the principles of his salvation. And he is dismissed of further penalties, which he deserves, but he is warned not to commit such sins again, otherwise he will be strictly punished.[102]

[99] Ibid., 174.
[100] *Reportorio*, 124f, 249v, 367f, 503v.
[101] "Processo," 7v.
[102] "Processo," 8r–v.

It was Gabriel's first offense, and the panel acknowledged his voluntary return to the Estado. All in all, his contrite confession must have appeared sufficiently candid to sentence him to reconciliation through a semi-private abjuration and a light penance.

The *auto-da-fé* [act of faith] was the culmination and the final stage of the inquisitorial process. Like any other tribunal, Goa's could sentence offenders to different types of *auto-da-fé*, characterized by varying degrees of pomp, publicity, and humiliation. At one end of the spectrum was the public *auto-da-fé*, held outdoors, usually in a main city square, in the presence of religious and secular authorities and a vast audience. The Inquisition was first and foremost a spectacle, meant to instil fear and obedience, but it also aimed to project paternalistic forgiveness and magnanimity in the minds of the public. At the opposite end was the private *auto-da-fé*, to be completed behind closed doors, in front of the *mesa* alone.[103]

Gabriel's experience fell somewhere in-between. He was sentenced to abjure in front of Goa's episcopal see, in what would appear to have been the most common outcome for sentences issued in the two decades surrounding the trial. Of the more than 1,000 sentences listed in the *Reportorio* for the period 1585–1605, the abjure at the episcopal see was by far the most common, with 373 instances, followed by the abjure in front of the *mesa* (289), in church (124), and in public (128).[104] According to the record of enforcement included in the "Processo," Gabriel

> [w]as taken to the [episcopal] See where his sentence was read and he made his abjuration before the canons and António Pinto Homem, bailiff of the Holy Office, and Gonçalo Afonso, guard of the prison, and many other persons, after the mass of Our Lady on Saturday [April 22, 1595].[105]

As specified in his sentence, and in line with the Inquisition's standards, Gabriel must have walked in front of the ecclesiastical authorities barefoot, holding a candle in his hands and sporting a penitential robe, the *sanbenito*. Because of his status as a *reconciliado*, a sinner welcomed back to the Christian community, his *sanbenito* would have showed a diagonal red cross on yellow, and he would be uncapped, because of his spontaneous confession.

[103] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 100–101.
[104] *Reportorio*.
[105] "Enforcement of the Proceedings," "Processo," 9r.

The same would have been true of the four penitents who abjured along with Gabriel. Three of them were also guilty of practicing Islam and one of *gentilidade*, which in Goa meant Hinduism. Of the five, Gabriel was the only one sentenced to serve in a monastery after the abjuration. Two of the three accused of being *mouros*, that is, of practicing Islam, were sentenced to *açoites* [lashes], and the one accused of Hinduism was sentenced both to lashes and the wearing of a penitential robe as he returned to freedom.[106]

While abjurations and penances came in all flavours, one fundamental distinction, reflected in the attire of Gabriel and the other penitents, was between those expected to abjure and be forgiven, the *reconciliados*, and those to be executed, euphemistically referred to as *relaxados*, "those to be handed over." As canon law did not allow sentencing to death, those whose crimes warranted execution were transferred to secular justice to be issued a death sentence by state authorities.[107] At the end of the *auto-da-fé*, they would be walked towards the site of execution, which in Goa was the Campo de São Lazaro, on the city's riverside.[108] The *relaxados* donned a different outfit: a *sanbenito* and a *carocha*, or mitre, decorated with flames and demons, and on the robe's front would be the convict's effigy.[109]

Fortunately for Gabriel, the *mesa* had accepted his story and issued a rather mild sentence, compared not only to the fate of the many sentenced to death by the tribunal over the centuries but also to the corporal punishments inflicted on the other *reconciliados* sentenced on the same day. However, Gabriel was also to "serve in the works of the new monastery of Santo Tomás, of the priests of São Domingos, *ad arbitrio* of the court, where he will be well-instructed on the principles of his salvation."[110] The penance turned Gabriel again into a captive as he was forced to join the ranks of the hundreds of servants toiling in the city's monasteries.[111] Unfortunately for him, the interment in the Dominican institution proved challenging and led him to neglect the court's dire warning "not to commit such sins again, otherwise he will be strictly punished."[112]

106 *Reportorio*, 124f, 249v, 367f, 503v.
107 Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 281.
108 Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 350.
109 Bethencourt, *The Inquisition*, 266–273.
110 "Processo," 9r.
111 Jeanette Pinto, "The African Native in Indiaspora," *African & Asian Studies* 5, no. 3/4 (2006): 383–397.
112 "Processo," 9r.

The Second Trial

On 15 August, Gabriel fled the monastery and was arrested in the outskirts of Goa "by infantrymen of the captain, who knew that he belonged to the priests of São Domingos and took him back."[113] Gabriel was traveling east, trying to cross into the Ahmadnagar Sultanate: it is unclear whether he was spotted by chance while fleeing or if the Estado officials pursued him after the tribunal issued a warrant for his arrest.[114] At any rate, on the same day of his escape from the convent, Gabriel found himself again in the hands of Brás Martins, *alcaide* at the Sabaio, where he would be jailed until his second trial at the end of the same month.[115]

At this point, Gabriel was a *relapso* or backslider, someone who had reverted to heresy after having been reconciled, for which the *Regimento* prescribed a particularly harsh treatment.

> The accused is made to swear he will tell the truth and keep the proceedings secret; he will then be asked if he had reflected on his offenses and whether he wished to confess them to discharge his conscience and to obtain speedy release; if he is a relapse or on trial for homosexual practices, to discharge his conscience and secure salvation for his soul.[116]

In other words, homosexuals and *relapsos* could still confess and save their soul, but not their lives. However, luckily for Gabriel, long before his trial, canon law and inquisitorial practices had been adapted to local conditions in the Estado.

To avoid both being inundated with cases and facing unmanageable social resentment, Inquisition authorities in Goa had developed somewhat more lenient practices than their metropolitan counterparts, in particular towards relapsos who had been baptized in adulthood. Since the tribunal's early days of operation in the 1560s, the inquisitors had been applying regularly to their superior in Lisbon to seek dispensations from execution and they even lobbied the Portuguese inquisitor general to seek a blanket dispensation in the form of a papal bull, recognizing the counterproductive effects of harsh inquisitorial practices on the conversion efforts. The papal bull authorizing a general policy of reconciliation for *relapsos* would not be produced until 1599,

[113] "Processo," 15r.
[114] On warrants, see Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 49.
[115] "Processo," 9v.
[116] As quoted in Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 50.

but in 1595 Gabriel could already benefit from a certain degree of leniency sanctioned by metropolitan authorities.[117]

Still, Gabriel was in a much more difficult position than he had been at the time of his first appearance in front of the tribunal: in this regard the difference between the proceedings are revealing. In the first trial, he had been a first-time offender who had returned under the tribunal's jurisdiction voluntarily to confess and face the consequences of his actions, and he had been sentenced after a speedy trial on the sole basis of his deposition. This time, Gabriel had been apprehended on his way to Ahmadnagar, after fleeing the monastery where he was serving his penance. Not only was the escape an implicit admission of guilt sufficient to prove the relapse but also the tribunal this time could count on multiple testimonies.

The proceedings started on 19 August, when *deputado* Marcos da Graça questioned three eyewitnesses. The first was one "Joane of Corumbin caste," which is to say an Indian peasant, described as a "captive" employed in the monastery.[118] The "Processo" offers no additional information on the witness, but the *Reportorio* lists one Joane, also identified as a Corumbin, who was tried for practicing Islam and sentenced to imprisonment in 1580.[119] Although Joane was a common name in the fifteenth-century Estado, as were Corumbins, it is possible that the two are the same person, who, fifteen years after having been tried, was still serving his penance, no longer in prison but in the monastery of Santo Tomás.

At any rate, Joane testified to Gabriel's unwillingness to learn "the Christian doctrine" from his assigned tutor, one Paulo. More damning, Joane claimed to have seen

> Gabriel perform certain ceremonies, which didn't seem right to him, because he never saw any Christian performing them; specifically, Gabriel would squat and touch the floor with his hands and, while lifting them up towards the skies, he whispered certain words that the witness did not understand; and when he asked him about those ceremonies, Gabriel answered that they were Moorish, because he was also Moorish.[120]

[117] Bruno Feitler, "Inquisitions," in *Judging Faith, Punishing Sin: Inquisitions and Consistories in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Gretchen D. Starr-LeBeau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 292–305, 293–297.

[118] "Processo," 9v.

[119] *Reportorio*, 396f.

[120] "Processo," 10r.

What Joane described was obviously the *salah*, and the accusation could hardly be more damning for Gabriel, all the more so considering that Joane claimed three additional witnesses, all from the monastery, would be able to corroborate his testimony.[121]

The inquisitors proceeded to hear only two of them, on the same day. "Joao Franco of Joao [Jao] caste" confirmed that Gabriel "didn't want to learn it [the doctrine], because he was Moorish," and that he had told him "he would flee to the land of the Moorish." One Domingos, who appears to have been the one who first reported Gabriel to the monastery's authorities, confirmed the account along the same lines.[122] On 30 August, Gabriel once again faced *Promotor* Jerónimo de Brito and Inquisitor Sodrinho, who this time presided over a court inclusive of three deputies, Francisco Cabral, Marcos da Graça, and Friar Gaspar de São Vicente, one Friar António Arcediano, and no less than Archbishop Aleixo de Menezes (1559–1617), later viceroy of the Estado, who had reached Goa the previous summer.[123]

This time, Gabriel was interrogated through an Ethiopian interpreter by the name of António Jorge.[124] As he had already provided a "genealogy" at his first trial, the tribunal focused exclusively on the events after his *auto-da-fé*. Asked to "confess his sins," Gabriel initially claimed to have escaped because

> [t]hey [the monastery's authorities] didn't provide him with the necessary means of subsistence, and because the boys of the priests often beat him up, and mistreated him, calling him Moorish and other ignominious names, and that his intention was to find an Abyssinian in this city [Goa] who would give him shelter.[125]

Unfortunately for Gabriel, contradicting the account were not only the three testimonies but also the location of his arrest: he had been apprehended east of Goa, presumably as he was on his way to Ahmadnagar. As a *negativo*, which is to say a defendant denying wrongdoing, he was pressed to recant and quickly did so, admitting to have attempted to escape into the sultanate, where he planned to live as a Muslim. However, as he did not admit to having performed the *salah*, in the eyes of the court, his confession was only a partial one,

[121] "Processo," 10v.
[122] "Processo," 11v.
[123] Baião, *A Inquisição de Goa*, 2:285; 1:169.
[124] "Processo," 14r.
[125] "Processo," 14r–v.

making him a *diminuto*, a defendant providing only a partial confession.[126]

On the following day, because of the discrepancies between Gabriel's account and the incriminating depositions, the court summoned the witnesses again to ratify their statements in the presence of the inquisitor, and, predictably, they did not retract.[127] At this point Gabriel remained imprisoned until the trial's second session on 5 September: during his additional days of imprisonment, he must have been advised to admit to the full extent of his wrongdoing. According to the *Regimento*, the second session, labelled "in genere," would normally detail the heresy committed.[128] To the likely annoyance of the court, Gabriel elaborated on his previous deposition but did so in ways that must have sounded rather confusing. Gabriel claimed that one day at Santo Tomás:

> [u]pon listening to the bells ringing three times for the Hail Mary prayers, instead of praying them, like the faithful Christians often do, he kneeled, leaning his face towards the ground, with his hands crossed, and he said the following prayer, that is *ha lá ha lá Mahomet Rusulula* [*lā 'ilāha 'illā llāh muḥammadun rasūlu llāh*] in praise of Muhammad.[129]

In other words, Gabriel admitted to performing the *shahada*, the Islamic profession of faith, but he attempted to exculpate himself by presenting the event as the result of a compulsion. He suggested, it would seem, that the monastery's bells triggered him to perform the prayer, as if his subconscious perceived them as an *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer. He also characterized the event as an exception, claiming to have not engaged in any other Islamic act. All in all, the inquisitors must have been quite confused and hardly impressed: the defendant was still a *diminuto*; he had yet to come clean.

On 9 September, Gabriel was summoned again, for what was meant to be the third and final session of the trial, the *Regimento*'s "in specie," in which the defendant would be asked to address the specific accusations brought forth by the witnesses. Gabriel was asked to explain why "he claimed in the College of São Tomás, *in the presence of certain people* [emphasis added], that he was Moorish and that he intended to flee to the land of the Moorish, and also about his

[126] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 53.
[127] "Processo," 12r–13v.
[128] Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 51.
[129] "Processo," 15v.

intentions when he did the Salah twice, and when he prayed the prayers in observance of the sect of Muhammad."[130] Faced with this specific confrontation, and aware of the existence of unidentified but easy to guess witnesses from the convent, Gabriel could not but come clean about his behaviour, admitting not only to the escape but also to the prayers and his change of heart:

> After he had been absolved by this court and sent to serve in the College of Santo Tomás, after some days, he began to believe in the cursed sect of Muhammad again, in the same way that he had before being absolved by this court, and that because of this he told a priest of the said College that he was Moorish and that he would flee to the land of the Moorish, and that he willingly kept the sect of Muhammad once again, and that he performed the ceremonies and prayed the prayers of which he is accused, in observance of that sect.[131]

After this, Gabriel was no longer a *diminuto*, as his confession was in line with the accusers' depositions. He must have also known that after admitting to his relapse, he could be sentenced to death. For this reason he rushed to qualify his admission of guilt, claiming to believe once again in

> [t]he Catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he promises to persevere until his death, and to disown the cursed sect of Muhammad [. . . and to have . . .] committed those sins in great anger, after the boys of the priests of said College often called him Moorish and treated him very badly, and because he is as a simple man, void of judgment and poorly educated in our Holy Catholic faith.[132]

On the basis of these mitigating circumstances and his renewed commitment to be a good Christian, he begged the tribunal for a merciful penance.

Immediately after the third session, the tribunal opted to question the two interpreters on the "sensibility and understanding of the accused."[133] The "Processo" does not provide any reason for this additional step, but it can be surmised that the court was seeking ways to spare Gabriel capital punishment. The interpreters characterized

[130] "Processo," 16v.
[131] Ibid.
[132] "Processo," 16r.
[133] "Processo," 17v.

him as "an uneducated man with a great lack of sensibility" as well as "a very senseless man, who does not know what he says."[134]

On the basis of these findings, the court ordered that

> [t]he accused, Gabriel, shall be taken to the galleys of this city and remain tethered to the bench until His Highness is consulted with regards to his sentence, since he was accepted again in the church by this court and he is a Christian of this land, and since he is poorly educated in the principles of our holy faith, and has a great lack of sensibility and understanding.[135]

The sentence indicates that Gabriel's assignation to forced labor in Goa was a temporary measure "until His Highness is consulted:" the inquisitors had no authority to reconcile a *relapso*, they could only refer his case to their metropolitan superiors.[136] The following day, Gabriel was transferred to the authority of the Estado, specifically to "Captain Vicêncio de Birne, intendant of His Majesty's estate and of the galleys,"[137] who enforced the sentence. The final folio of the "Processo" is a receipt penned by one Afonso Pais, "registrar of the galleys," who certified that the Inquisition's bailiff, António Pinto, had handed Gabriel to João Correira da Fonseca, *almoxarife* of the galleys.[138] From here, Gabriel faded away from the historical record.

Conclusion

The second trial and the sentencing to galley labor were only the latest in a long list of oppressive experiences that Gabriel faced during the course of his life across the IOW, which he strove to overcome through mobility and conversion. Taken individually, the ordeals he faced appear rather unexceptional and mostly in line with the historiography. What makes his story remarkable, however, is the coexistence, in a single life, of so many diverse experiences of oppression and resistance. Even more remarkable is the fact that his life was recorded: Gabriel went through the same journeys, deprivations and persecutions as countless other early modern Africans, but unlike most of theirs, his adversities were logged. As a result, the exceptional

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] On this point see Marcocci, *Tra cristianesimo e Islam*, 820.
[137] "Processo," 18v.
[138] "Processo," 18v–19r.

survival of Gabriel's Inquisition file allows us to reconstruct a rare life history of a non-elite Habshi slave, as told by himself. Which of Gabriel's many identities defined his life the most? Was his trajectory most determined by structure or agency?

Gabriel's life was defined by the evolving interplay of his Beta Israel ancestry, his stated religious affiliation, and his perceived African-ness. The precise nature of this interplay was specific to the locales he inhabited. In the Horn of Africa, Gabriel was a member of a despised and vulnerable religious minority, and therefore an ideal target for slave traders: as such he was enslaved by Christians and shipped off into the Arab world. In this respect, Gabriel's story exemplifies many of the challenges that Beta Israels faced in the mid-sixteenth century: they were local ethno-religious subalterns caught up in larger region-wide trends. However, once outside of the Horn, this original and Horn-specific ethnic identity appears to have become increasingly inconsequential. In Arabia, as a Muslim convert among Muslims, Gabriel's inscrutable life was defined, it seems, first and foremost by his enslaved status and his African-ness, as black slaves tended to experience harsher conditions. Once in India, it was again his African origin, and his claimed faith that defined his condition in both the sultanate and Chaul. Gabriel attempted to improve his condition by crossing over the Christian-Muslim divide repeatedly, and by refashioning himself accordingly. Unfortunately, his strategy ultimately backfired and he found himself in front of the Inquisition one too many times: the court was uninterested in his ethnicity, but determined to sanction him for his acquired and never quite shed Muslim identity.

Nowhere in Gabriel's account is there any indication that his Beta Israel origin was of any consequence once he found himself outside of the Horn. This is striking given the Judeo-phobic environments in which he lived. Between 1562 and 1623, Goa heard 3,800 cases: 44% for heathenism, 18% for crypto-Islamism, and 9% for crypto-Judaism, but the latter accounted for 71% of the death sentences.[139] The Goa tribunal was exceedingly harsh with converts from Judaism: luckily for him, Gabriel's Beta Israel ancestry was inconsequential to the Inquisitors, who treated him as a convert from Islam.

As such, Gabriel was first sentenced to an *auto* as a *reconciliado* and was assigned a relatively benign penance. Later, as a *relapso*, he was spared execution and assigned to galley labor pending a final sentencing. Overall, while Gabriel's ethnic ancestry, colour and

[139] On the ratios, see also Saraiva, *The Marrano Factory*, 346–347.

religious affiliation all played a role in his life at specific junctures, it would appear that his Africaness and ultimately his religious persuasion defined his life the most. His Beta Israel Jewish identity, in contrast, appears to have been inconsequential once removed from Ethiopia.

Was Gabriel's life defined by agency or the structures of the worlds he inhabited? The penury of sources, especially previous to his landing in Chaul, precludes a definitive answer. However, his peregrinations in Western India, his zigzagging of the Portuguese colonial frontier and his repeated refashioning as a Muslim and a Christian, speak to his autonomy. Gabriel crossed into the Estado to shed his slave status and left behind what was probably an abusive master, but he did so at a price, as he confronted other forms of oppression. He found himself wearing a new skin, that of an alien in Portuguese India, a religious other, but one without the resources available to a much more famous Muslim resident of the Estado. Unlike Sanjay Subrahmanyam's Meale, the Muslim nobleman who walked the streets of Goa, the "Rome of the East," in the mid-sixteenth century, Gabriel had no socio-political capital to leverage.[140] Likewise, in real Rome, a few decades earlier, another famous Muslim captive, al-Hasan al-Wazzan, refashioned himself into Leo Africanus and capitalized on his travels and knowledge to navigate the stormy waters of the Muslim-Christian frontier.[141] However, unlike Meale and al-Wazzan, Gabriel had little to trade with his many interlocutors: he was a rather resourceless and, it would appear, unpersuasive trickster.

Once he found himself at the mercy of Portuguese authorities, the two options available to him were refashioning himself through conversion, real or simulated, or escaping. Gabriel opted for the former, but once living conditions in Chaul disappointed him, he crossed the border one more time. Once again, he gained little for his efforts: his admission to have been suffered deprivation during his second stay in Ahmadnagar speaks to the difficulty of applying a simplistic free-slave dichotomy to slavery in the Deccan plateau, and more in general in the IOW. He was free, but dejected: his condition persuaded him to cross again, probably knowing all too well that consequences were awaiting him in the Estado. He still crossed, probably hoping to be once again accepted as a Christian and become someone's client. Ultimately, his clumsy and half-hearted attempts to refashion himself as a Christian

[140] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 23–72.

[141] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

once again did not convince the Inquisition. While contemplating Gabriel's unsuccessful refashioning, one is left pondering Stephen Greenblatt's consideration that "if there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force."[142]

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[142] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 256.