Despite much recent research some important themes such as demography and health have been left out.

When writing a volume as large as this with the explicit objective of correcting the inadequacies of similar earlier attempts, a more detailed critique of the latest contributions to Indian economic history should have been included in the introduction. This is taken up, though only for the growth versus decline debate for eighteenth-century India. Some of the individual contributions such as Saugata Mukherji’s have done this, but it would have been helpful to have a detailed critical historical survey in the introduction. A critical evaluation of some of the recent attempts at applying explicitly economic theories to understand modern Indian economic history would have been most helpful for the larger community of Indian history students.

This volume of essays on the whole promises to be most useful to students and teachers of Indian history. The size and weight of this tome may, however, be too intimidating for all but the most determined non-specialist reader.

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Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes, Tradition and Modernity in Eighteenth Century Goa, Manohar, Delhi, 2006, pp. 468, Rs 995.

The book, as the title suggests, is an attempt to portray life in Goa in the eighteenth century. The Portuguese thallasocracy, as C.R. Boxer had once called the Portuguese enterprise, had been reduced to a few settlements on India’s west coast, Mozambique, Timor and Macao in the Indian Ocean region. Notwithstanding this successive decline since the early seventeenth century in terms of trading monopoly and territorial defeats, the eighteenth century, especially the second half, according to Mártires Lopes, was characterized by a renewed interest in the affairs of the Estado da Índia. Goa, thus, became the focus of the central government in Portugal once again, albeit second to Brazil. A new conception of empire came to take root so that the earlier conception, which had made the Portuguese empire a series of networks across the Indian Ocean, was abandoned for one that was more landed. The various colonies now came to be seen as entities—economically, politically and administratively viable in themselves, rather than being mere parts of a larger network. The main reason for this change in attitude, according to the author was the taking over of the premiership of the Portuguese kingdom by Marquis of Pombal (1750–77). Portugal, under the Marquis, also preferred to move away from Iberian influences, and aligned itself culturally and politically with England, France,
Italy and Germany such that the influences of the Enlightenment greatly made its mark on the Marquis’ policies in Portugal as well as in the colonies. In actual terms this meant the attempt to separate church and state, or at least the influence of the deeply entrenched religious orders like the Jesuits. Second, the Pombaline reforms also encouraged a spirit of openness to the ‘natives’ (especially Christian converts) at the expense of the old established order, which included the older religious orders as well as administrators and other personnel from the kingdom as well as Luso descendants.

The Pombaline reforms are thus seen by the author as the impetus behind the changing dynamics of the eighteenth century in Goa. In so doing the author also assumes society as constituting various discrete elements. And it is in the changes in these various elements that she sees the shift from tradition to modernity. Thus, five chapters entitled ‘Institutional and Economic Aspects’, ‘Society, Religion’, ‘Education and Culture’ and ‘Aspects of Daily Living’ describe in great empirical detail this transformation.

The first chapter discusses attempts at reviving trading networks in the Indian Ocean and also the trade with Lisbon. While the crown did not favour the establishment of ‘companies under the State name’ (p. 68), it certainly encouraged voyages being undertaken by private trading companies as long as they paid their dues at the respective ports. The issue of cartazes was also eventually abandoned in the course of the eighteenth century, a system that had anyway become redundant. Moreover, the state also introduced protectionist measures to encourage residents of Goa, Daman and Diu to trade freely. Thus, for example, businessmen of Goa were allowed to lade Europe bound ships on a priority basis. Articles shipped from Goa, however, were more or less the same as in earlier periods. An increasingly significant import was Brazilian leaf tobacco, and gold and silver also from Brazil, which were illegally smuggled.

The chapter on society focuses on the heterogeneity of Goan society, compounded by the conversion to Christianity and the persistence of caste groups among Christians, with the added element of Luso descendants as well as the reinois, Portuguese who were from the kingdom and whose stay in these parts was not permanent. The eighteenth century also sees the coming into prominence of a caste group distinct to Goa, namely the Chardos. They were Christian converts, ‘highly Westernized’ and, according to Pissurlencar, having their origins in more than one Hindu caste group, but perhaps were mainly Kshatriya in origin. They were also acknowledged as a ‘high caste’ when, for instance, entry into the ecclesiastical orders was permitted to them. It is interesting to note that the Portuguese had initiated census operations in the eighteenth century. While they were not as systematic as their colonial successors, yet from 1753 they maintained records of their populations in Goa. In terms of categories the charts for three years (1753, 1797 and 1799) mention in great detail the ethno-religious backgrounds of the
inhabitants, including Negroes, Chinese, Bengalis, etc. Other years, however, only distinguish between the Christian and non-Christian populations.

The sphere of religion for Mártires Lopes necessarily includes all that is institutional; thus, the financial, moral and numeric condition of the religious orders and the secular clergy, and the relationship between the two is brought out in great detail. However, the issues in themselves do not differ much from preceding centuries. Thus, the moral standing of the secular and regular clergies, the relationship between them, the place of local languages, as well as natives in the clergy, the conflict between padroado and propaganda, the moral condition of the laity and institutional measures to perpetuate a particular kind of Christianity are some of the issues that are looked into. The other concern, of course, is whether the adoption of Christianity affected society at large and if so to what extent. Thus, the move from Hinduism to Christianity is assumed as a continuum and adherence/non-adherence to pre-Christian beliefs in the context of that transfer, the extent and effectiveness of Christian teaching are considered crucial to the issue. The eighteenth-century manifestations of these issues are conditioned mainly by the conquest of new territories in adjoining regions (called New Conquests quadrupling Goan territory), which changes the balance of the number of Christians and Hindus in the Portuguese territories of Goa (in favour of the latter), the Pombaline reforms, which democratizes the organization of the church in favour of the local populace, and finally the decrees of the Council of Trent, which attempts at bringing about clerical reform as well as redefines Catholic belief.

In actual terms all this meant that ‘an attitude of religious tolerance was adopted with regard to idols and Hindu practices and the preservation of local habits and customs was guaranteed’ (p. 169). Moreover, the ‘Inquisition was secularized and changed into a State tribunal’ (p. 169) the Jesuits were expelled in 1759, policies all contributing to a certain liberalizing of outlook vis-à-vis the non-Christian populace. A royal charter issued in 1761 assured equality to local Christians such that they were given unrestricted access to all administrative posts, ecclesiastical boards and institutions, as well as in the armed forces. The expulsion of the Jesuits led to a dearth of ecclesiastics; this and the general belief that locals should be incorporated led to a high intake of locals into the ecclesiastical rankings as well as the formation of a new religious order strictly for Indians. However, even here it was only from those considered high castes, namely Brahmins and Chardos who were eligible.

The author also attempts to show the discrepancies between the letter regarding the attempt to ‘purify’ Christian practice from Hindu influences and lived reality. This analysis is made through the denouncements made during pastoral visits, the Inquisition records, etc. According to the author, there was an attempt at the homogenization of religious and cultural practices, what she refers to as ‘mechanisms of social normalization’ (p. 225). And the deviance from this, according to her, can be located at the various accusations/sentences that are passed in the course
of the pastoral visits that were usually held every two years. In this context, Mártires Lopes brings out data such as the ‘most common deviance’ in the Old Conquests, the regions that had the most number of cases of deviance (which is interpreted by her as the region that was ‘least conforming’), etc. Thus, according to her, there were more Christians in Salsette and Bardez, but more religious conformity in the Ilhas. Interestingly, 12.3 per cent of those denounced in the pastoral visits between 1750 and 1800 were priests. While there were more women denounced in the pastoral visits, those condemned by the Inquisition had more men and there were more lower castes than upper. While the pastoral visits adjudicated on cases such as thefts, non-performance of clerical duties, absenteeism from religious duties, etc., the Inquisition handled cases such as heresy, blasphemy, idolatry, bigamy, sodomy, etc.

In the field of education, the Pombaline reforms saw to it that Jesuit methods of education were abandoned and the Oratorians came to be the upholders of education in Goa. While there was an attempt at secularizing education, it was possible only in the lower levels. At the higher levels studies could not but have philosophical and theological basis. With the general environment of the need to revitalize the state, naval and artillery classes were also introduced.

The last chapter entitled ‘Aspects of Daily Life’ narrates yet again the various customs of the people like births, deaths, marriages, food habits, feasts, etc. The dividing line in this chapter is between those customs practised by the Christians and non-Christians, to go on to say that a large number of Hindu customs continued to be practised despite calls to ban them by the church. According to the author, persistence of Hindu customs was visibly more apparent among the lower castes, though she does not give any reasons for the same.

There is a chapter in the book, which Mártires Lopes calls the Pinto controversy, considered by her as the first Indian revolt against colonialism. She goes into great detail about the background of those involved; they were priests from Brahmin backgrounds who had received their education in Rome and Lisbon, and who were also thus influenced by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Irked by the fact that important positions were not given to Indians, they rose in revolt sometime in 1787. Unfortunately, the author does not tell us the form this struggle took; nor does she tell us how it was suppressed.

While the aim of the book is to highlight the change from tradition to modernity, Mártires Lopes sees change in the kinds of institutional transformations that were initiated as a result of Pombaline governance. The book, thus, does not offer us anything with regard to the sociological processes that are involved in the change between tradition and modernity, nor are these concepts defined. Pombaline reforms, situated as they were in the eighteenth century, are perhaps considered modernizing attempts, though whether society became modernized or whether the reforms were modernistic in themselves is anybody’s guess. Moreover, while the empirical details that are given are useful and insightful, there are certain
assumptions that are taken for granted in the course of analysis. Thus, for example, according to her, ‘Goan people were mostly pious and zealous in promoting the divine cult. This was especially true of the women who are better inclined to devotion’ (p. 305). At another place she explains that the most number of cases registered amongst behaviour that was considered illicit was that of theft. The explanation that is given is ‘perhaps in this society theft was considered a very minor offence than what it was in contemporaneous European society’ (p. 143). Having said that I would also like to state that Mártires Lopes’ investigation is about a period that in the past has lacked research, and, therefore, her work is extremely significant in making known the events and dynamics of that period.

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JANAKI NAIR, The Promise of the Metropolis: Bangalore’s Twentieth Century, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 454, Rs 750.

Here is a book we have been waiting for, a fascinating and richly documented book which traces the history of Bangalore. Rather, the histories of two distinct urban settlements, namely, the old town of Bengaluru that dates back to the sixteenth century, as well as the more recent nineteenth century British cantonment town that was developed to serve colonial needs. But the book’s focus is clearly on the twentieth century, on the emergence of one of modern India’s most dynamic cities, sometimes referred to as ‘Science City’, or ‘IT Capital’. Except to the antiquarian and the specialist, the urban evolution of Bangalore is little known. Janaki Nair’s work addresses this lacuna and provides us with a work of great scholarship that highlights events and complex processes admirably and offers acutely perceptive analyses; but her post-modernist position is problematic.

The introduction to the book serves as a useful ready-reckoner for those keen to take stock of urban studies in India. Among the seminal works that have influenced the way we see and understand cities, Nair accords special place to the writings of Charles Baudelaire, Henri Lefebvre and Richard Sennett. They invite us to see city space as produced by much more than the plans and drawings of technocrats, which extends beyond the physical-material world to its mental-imaginative aspects. Henri Lefebvre’s three levels of analysis that distinguish between ‘the conceived city’, ‘the perceived city’ and ‘spatial practice’, and Nair seeks to apply them to her investigations on Bangalore. Her aim is to chart: (a) ‘the styles and forms of contemporary urban democracy’; (b) to locate in the city ‘the continuous redefinition of Indian citizenship’; and (c) ‘to decipher the connections...