

## *Arossim - My Story as Stone - 1648*

I know not my birthday, perhaps billions of years ago, buried at the foot of a mountain in Goa. Eons later I was hewn out, shaped and given a long name in some foreign language and baptized in the year **1648 A.D.**

Then, I was tied with a rope and carried by men to Arossim and buried again – this time at the foot of a beautiful palace near the beach. Stuck again! My bad luck or good luck, it is hard to tell.

Instead of a desolate mountain side, at least I could now enjoy the fresh sea breeze and see all kinds of white people in black clothes, and dignitaries like, Provincials and Archbishops and priests from all over Salcete.

They came with caps on their heads and rosaries. They sang and prayed and walked in the garden in front of me. I saw them all, heard it all, but they never saw me, except for a few interested in my name, as I was hidden behind the bushes.

The men in black robes lived in my house until 1759, when they suddenly disappeared. I do not know what happened to them. Later, new people - men and women and children appeared on the scene. The new owner hacked me out of the beautiful mansion. They beat me and robbed me of my name – but not the year of my baptism - **1648**. Now I lay neglected to the elements in the compound for a very long time. Until, one day the elderly boss<sup>1</sup> of the house came with some men and lifted me up once again and carried me away to some place east. On the way, another man<sup>2</sup> who lived nearby saw me, as well as other people going towards the Chapel. I thought I was going to the Chapel too, but that was not to be. The men stopped at the middle of the *bundh* (causeway), close to a very tall tree (*Sterculia foetida*), which produced foul smelling flowers, and placed me over an open-top culvert.

Now people stepped on me day and night! But they never noticed me as something special. Every monsoon, water rushed under my belly from one side to the other. Until....

... a man with a camera and a notebook took a closer look at me. I was photographed and duly recorded. For the first time someone really noticed me as something very special.

Soon after, I was lifted once again and carried to the Chapel grounds and laid in the garden, resting against a wall. Once again I was lifted and now a man in white clothes<sup>3</sup> ordered a mason to bury me at the foot of the front wall of the Chapel. Now, I could see the trains pass by very close to me, and the loud whistle, day and night. It did not bother me as I have stony ears, but it always stopped the sermonizing priest.

Years later, the same man with the notebook and a camera came to visit me and did not like what he saw. So he started taking pictures once again. I was yanked out from the wall and was given a clean bath, the first ever by the hands of a man. From now onwards the photographs will end my story.



*Removing the stone from wrongly inserted wall of the Chapel*



*Cleaning- witnessed by (l.to r.) Oliver D'Silva, Stuart Gonsalves Dias, José Paulo da Costa and Fr. Donato Rodrigues, (Acting Chaplain 1997-1998)*



*Baptismal Certificate dated 1648 (~36" x ~20" x ~4")*



*DE 1648 Inscription enlarged*

*But my ghost will surely rise again!*



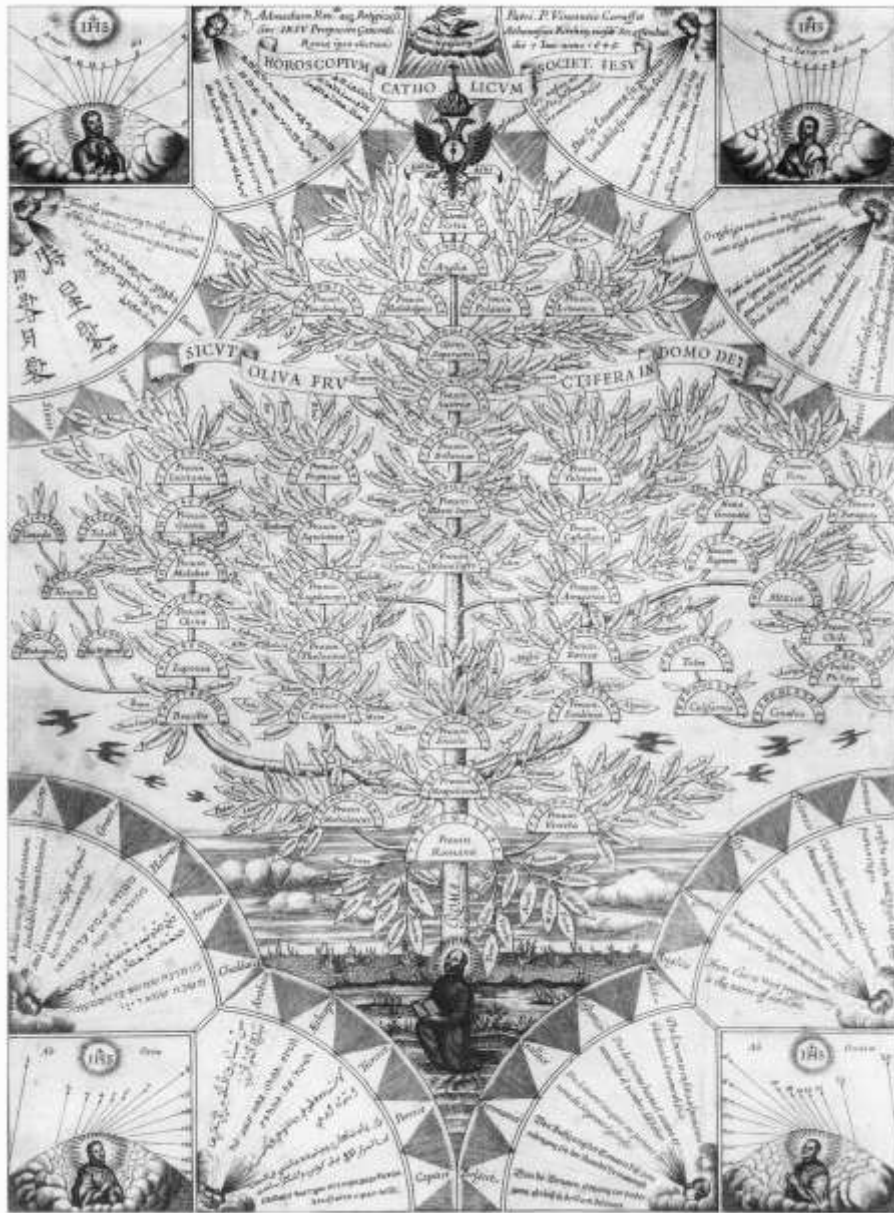
*Resting place on the grounds of St. Lawrence Chapel  
Later, another Chaplain<sup>4</sup> covered the stone with dirt and  
buried in this sacred space.*

*“The final resting place at the foot of a mango tree facing the trains again.”*

*My Life as 1648, for over 400 years in the civilized world  
was lived at  
the foot of the mountain, foot of a beautiful palace, over the culvert where  
I was stepped over, foot of the Chapel and finally foot of a tree!*

***“Sic Transit Gloria Mundi”  
Thus passes the worldly glories.***

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1. *Dr. Elvidio Pereira de Andrade*
  2. *Guilherme (Gilu) Luis,*
  3. *Fr. Joaquim Rui Jamin da Piedade e Figueiredo, (Chaplain, 1975-80)*
  4. *Fr. Mariano Silveira (2014-2019 )*



**Fig. Horoscopium Catholicum Societ. Iesu**

From Athanasius Kircher's *Ars Magnae Lucis et Umbrae*, **1648.**

showing the distribution of Jesuit houses throughout the world  
108 years after the Society's foundation.

(Reproduced from Tomas M. Lucas, S.J., *Landmarking –  
City, Church & Jesuit Urban Strategy*, Loyola Press, Chicago, 1997.)

(Note: Goa Province is well represented in this tree.)

*Themistocles D'Silva, 2023.*