

Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History

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Africa and South America (1500-1600)

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Pedro de Arboleda

DATE OF BIRTH	Possibly the late 1530s
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	1565
PLACE OF DEATH	S. Tomé de Meliapor (Costa do Coromandel), India

BIOGRAPHY

Not much is known about the Jesuit missionary Pedro de Arboleda. He was born in Spain, and it is known that he departed from Lisbon aboard the *Castelo* on 20 April 1560 for India, arriving in Cochin on 19 November 1560. News about him focuses on the period 1560-62, and comes from his own annual report letters and those of the Jesuits Luís Fróis, Belchior Dias, Francisco Lopes and Manuel Álvares, among others. According to these letters, he can be located in Cochin (1560 and 1561), Coulão (1560), Tana (1560), Damão (1561), and Baçaim (1560/1). At the end of 1561, there is a reference to his planned departure for Japan, but this journey did not take place due to bad weather, leaving Arboleda stranded in India for an additional five or six months. It is known that he visited the island of Manar in 1562.

His correspondence is missionary in nature, focusing on his evangelistic work, the work of his colleagues, and his gifts as a preacher. It portrays a person committed to work in the East and restless for the conversion of souls, with a particular abhorrence of Hinduism and Islam.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

- 'Carta ânua dirigida aos padres e irmãos da Companhia, data de Cochim, 13 de Janeiro de 1561', in A. da Silva Rego (ed.), *Documentação para história das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente, Índia*, vol. 8, Lisbon, 1952, 271-97 (also in J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, Rome, 1948-88, vol. 5, 271-94)
- 'Carta ânua dirigida ao Colégio de Évora, Goa, 27 Outubro', in A. da Silva Rego (ed.), *Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Moçambique e na África Central (1497-1840)*, Lisbon, 1975, vol. 8, 101-3 (an extract is also included in Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol. 5, 547-8)

Secondary

Da Silva Rego, *Documentação para história das Missões*, vol. 8, pp. 190, 202, 303, 327, 329 (references in letters written at the time from India)

Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol. 5, pp. 73, 259, 268, 289, 477, 619, 631 (references in letters and other documents written at the time in India)

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Cartas ânuas de Pedro de Arboleda, 'Annual letters of Pedro de Arboleda'

DATE 13 January 1561 and 27 October 1562

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Portuguese

DESCRIPTION

Pedro de Arboleda's attitude towards the 'other' can best be seen in two of his annual letters, dated 13 January 1561 and 27 October 1562. In *Documenta Indica* they are 780 and 25 lines long, respectively. Like others sent by Jesuits from India to Europe, these letters were a means of disseminating news of the wider missionary work of the Church; parts of them were translated and published.

The first letter focuses mainly on the reasons for Arboleda's departure for the East, descriptions of his journey and life on board ship, and first impressions of the 'other'. The second refers to the killing of Dom Gonçalo Silveira by Muslims on the East African coast.

Arboleda arrived in India in 1560, during the vice-regency of Dom Constantino de Bragança (1558-61), a committed Catholic who directed his efforts at subordinating Hindu and Muslim powers to the Church. Dom Constantino had led a campaign to Jaffna (in present-day Sri Lanka) with the aim of bringing the Palk Strait under control and of helping the small community of local Christians there. Arboleda's general attitude is shown in his comments in the first letter about Dom Constantino's exploits: 'Because our Lord has determined for us to bring salvation to India, he arranged and provided for so many wonders and profitable things: given that this land we came to find was under the rule of a cruel and tyrant king who did nothing but rob the ships that passed by there etc., the Viceroy Dom Constantino was determined to take that land and place it under the Christians who were on the coast of Pesquaria' (ed. Wicki, p. 55). He also relates with approval that the Viceroy had had a tooth of the Buddha taken to Goa, where the bishop had ground it to powder.

In his second letter Arboleda comments on the death of the Jesuit Gonçalo Silveira, who had been killed by Muslims in East Africa in 1561: 'He went to the land of the negroes, which is called Kaffraria, the way thither being through Mozambique; whence the above-mentioned fathers, together with the Count Viceroy, brought us the report that he had been slain by the people of the land, the Devil not suffering so utterly devoted a servant of Our Lord as Father Dom Gonçalo was; and so the leaders and preachers of Mohammed's devilish and loathsome sect strove to kill him and indeed did so' (ed. Wicki, pp. 547-8).

SIGNIFICANCE

These comments and views are typical reflections of Catholic teaching and Jesuit ideals, which insisted that salvation was to be found within the Church alone. Arbodela was part of the endeavour to propagate the faith led by the Church and the Portuguese crown together.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu – Goa 8 I, fols 219r-227v
(letter of 13 January 1561)

MS Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda – Ulyssip. 2, fols 286r-294v (letter of
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(letter of 13 January 1561)

MS Lisbon, Academia das Ciências de Lisbon – Azul no. 12, fol. 347r-v
(letter of 27 October 1562)

MS Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Evora – Ebor. 2,
fol. 347r-v (letter of 27 October 1562)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

'Carta ânua dirigida aos padres e irmãos da Companhia, data de
Cochim, 13 de Janeiro de 1561'

'Carta ânua dirigida ao Colégio de Évora, Goa, 27 Outubro'

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M. Lobato, 'Entre cafres e muzungos. Missionação, islamização e
mudança de paradigma religioso no norte de Moçambique nos
séculos XV a XIX', in *Atas do congresso internacional saber tropical
em Moçambique. História, memória e ciência*, Lisbon, 2013, 1-14

M. de Deus Manso, *A Companhia de Jesus na Índia (1542-1622). Activi-
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Maria de Deus Manso