The trade of this port and the characters of the settlers there and of the heathen who surround them

As there is no other (official) trading station in this (part of) Ethiopia, it is patent how important its trade is. It was first located three leagues up-river from Cacheu, at a place called Porto de S. Domingos or Río de S. Domingos. Here there used to be the best trade of these parts, on account of the abundance of staple foodstuffs and of various other commodities, this abundance bringing about its growth and expansion. The trade in the various goods brought there by the Portuguese was considerable. The extent of its prosperity cannot be exactly assessed (now) but a fruit which is no longer available seems more tasty. In this prosperity lay the origin and the occasion of its great ills, as commonly happens when prosperity is possessed by those who lack understanding, in which case prosperity only serves to bring to great ruin a nobler state, that of being in grace and fellowship with the Good Jesus. With prosperity the heathen grew stronger, they became more confident and began to kick out, they lost all sense of respect and showed none to their guests. Malice affected the majority, malice which always plunges its roots deep when once tolerated and when once it finds itself feared. The ignorant heathen turned into malicious lascarsims, thieves who robbed almost every night. Not only in secret but even in public they showed little courtesy in deeds and words. Vice had never flourished to such an extent. Yet no vice can be so strong that another more powerful one cannot be found to overtake it. Vice, wretchedly sombre, makes all melancholy and without joy. But even with savages, God raises lilies among the thorns. Such was Massatamba, whom we have mentioned. He helped by first giving the Banhus advice and warning about the necessity of providing good treatment for those foreign guests to whom he recognised a great obligation. And to punish the Banhus for not complying when they heard what he asked them, he marched against them with a large army and burned Bugungo, this being the name of the place where our factory was sited, otherwise Río de S. Domingos, the name given it by the Portuguese; /f.18v/ and he killed and captured many of them. In response to this dire event, the factory was transferred from there to Cacheu.

The river is about one mile wide and forms Porto das Maus, a port for ships and other vessels trading in Guinea, such as sloops and launches, both those belonging to this port and those coming from Santiago Island. Between six and eight vessels come here in order to buy slaves for the
Indies. On average, 1,800 slaves are exported annually, either to the Indies, or to Santiago Island and other parts. This port is the most suitable centre in our part of Ethiopia for this trade, and hence it draws to itself trade-goods from overseas and from the whole of Guinea. These are then divided among trading ports and exchanged for that commodity for which these provinces are best known, slaves. This trade is the most substantial and the best one (we have), according to the experts. But I am not sure they have examined the matter other than its more superficial aspects. Those who maintain this have, as well as the necessary capacity, the equally necessary and fortunate circumstances of their own experience; and can convince us. Yet in terms of general considerations, it may be that one important factor in producing this view has been that acknowledged daughter of avarice, greed, which regularly corrupts everyone, and by removing scruple where property is concerned, makes things seem beneficial which often are not and things seem clear which are markedly shady. As experience has taught me, I do not wish to be too positive in this matter without full consideration, and will only say, as the royal prophet said of the water gathered up in the clouds before they spread it over the land: "Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris" "Dark waters in the clouds of the air", Psalm 17 v.12

Unjust critics are never in short supply. Since I already hear such people attributing the literature on the subject to Jesuit scruples, I wish to reply to them thus. Slavery can only be justified under four heads. First, when anyone sells himself, taking a share of the price and being of age, the law setting the age at 20. This derives from the emperor Justinian's Institutes. Second head, when poor people sell their children: Leviticus 25, L.2, "De patribus qui filios distraixerunt" "Concerning fathers who offer their children for sale". Third head, just war: L., "Libertas", ff. And the fourth and last head is /f.19/ a criminal offence. This is the common opinion of scholarly authorities.

I pass over the recommendation of Mercado and Brother Luis Lopes, to the effect that the trading agents should examine into the justice or injustice (of enslavement) in individual cases. This is not my view. Repetition (of inquiry) is useless where there is a lack (of information). My approach is better in that, in relation to the traders, it raises the dust in the streets of the great city of conscience. I entirely agree with all that Mercado says about the four heads, when these apply, according to his understanding of justice, to the acquisition of slaves
in these parts, carried out in good faith and in conformity with the principles and rules of canon and civil law. But what can be said when a conspiracy of silence - the poor heathen gagged so that he cannot speak - is the only response to inquiry? Under cover of this silence, this new head for enslavement, this head of the Gagged Mouth, those gentlemen, the contractors for these regions, buy slaves who have been stolen, sometimes in large numbers. And they have been brought, by night, to their buildings and sometimes to their vessels, by the Biafar and Banhu criminals who were responsible. Again, what about the head of Slaves in Disguise, whereby they obtain other slaves and have them conveyed like this in order not to be recognised - what excuse can be given for such acts? Where is the justice and good faith in these proceedings? I do not repent my singing a different tune about 'the most substantial trade' of Guinea.

I could speak of other injustices for which I believe the merchants are not (to be held) responsible, since it would be difficult for them to learn the truth. But these injustices are often committed by the heathen when getting rid of their own people, and they run contrary not only to natural and divine law but to canon and civil law. One such is when they enslave large numbers on the grounds that they are witches, an offence which they can only prove by diabolic arts. But once the notion is in their heads they attack the homes of the witches and kill their families. Then there is the abominable abuse practised by the Biafars whereby uncles sell their nephews. Are there any to whom this does not appear to be beyond the bounds of reason? Only those deprived of this very reason, only those who are instead bound by closer ties to self-interest, only those least subject to the influence of noble blood and noble feeling which alone can censure base dealings. Reason in a generous spirit elevates all, aids all; and only those things appear good to it which are indeed so. Reason is so divorced from gold and silver that however much these rattle and tinkle, it judges as folly what is current in the world about these metals - how they can turn gross behaviour into polished manners, how they can represent what is low as being high, how they can exalt what is unworthy and give authority to ignorance, and worst of all, how they can make masters out of slaves - so aggravatedly that a man who owns money becomes increasingly its slave.

Let it not seem /f.19v/ that by dallying over this subject we too are enslaved. We only claim to be of use to those who are most curious about the true interests which are involved. After this digression we
now emerge from the labyrinth and speak of trade of a less morally
delicate sort, that in milho and rice. At Bichangor some 300 moios
of the two staples are bought annually, of which the greater part go
to Cacheu to sustain the population and victual the ships, together
with 400 moios from Buguendo and what comes from the three ports of
Songo, Jandem and Sara. According to those who make exact calculati-
this town of Cacheu accounts for 1000 moios of milho and rice, with
including what is grown within it. The quantity (in demand) is so great
that in no year when an alqueire is worth less than one white cloth,
exchange-currency employed here, which corresponds to a tostão in our
money in the Indies, this high price being because the land is an expen-
ive one. However this (supply of foodstuffs) does not exhaust the go-
works of the settlers, for in the use of their goods they act very
liberally towards all, reserving a large portion for the poor and sick.
In this category fall regularly many of the sailors and other men
employed on the ships arriving from Iberia: to these, if they do not
immediately leave again, the land offers the normal advantages and a
convalescence. The settlers take them into their homes, as if they were
their own sons, so the homes of our people here are alms-houses (casa
de misericordia), and if it had chanced otherwise the sick would have
little hope of escaping death. All the people here have been endowed
the Lord with deep sentiments of piety.\(^{(a)}\) The best proof of this
frequent losses have not sufficed to lead them to abandon their holy
rather it has so increased that the settlers are envious of each other
and have pious disputes over which of them will take a poor wretch home

\(^{(a)}\) A gentleman has told me that this charitable behaviour has been greatly
revived today. What has made me doubt, and still makes me doubt,
whether there is any charity at the moment among the laity is that it
was so lacking in the case of a Benedictine religious. He left Cacheu
because he saw there so much greed, in the clergy as well as in the
laity, since they gave him no welcome, and they failed to provide a habi-
or full vestments when he once went there from here at short notice? He
found charity only from a poor woman. When the Saints are so
poorly served, rarely met is praise of the charity which Your Majesty
gives to those in need, as in this case. A Benedictine religious, a
holy and solemn man.
and lodge him. Once the sickness is over, they provide him with a livelihood, as often is necessary when seamen employed on these ships arrive here with (only) their wages. I will not discuss further the characteristics of the strictly foreign part of the population because this has been sufficiently done in chapter 4, where it can be examined.

As for the heathen who surround this town, they are all Papels. Those in closest contact with us are of a worse character than those in the interior. When the latter see a Portuguese /f.20/ they greatly respect and admire him, as do those from Baxarel, from the whole of Putamo and from Timis. All of them are employed in agriculture and they are excellent farmers. The countryside varies in appearance, having both flat areas, and hills and valleys. The latter are very refreshing on account of the plentiful water, so that these districts are the ones mainly used for crops and cultivation, and on account of the abundance of trees. The Papels raise stock, but not to the extent of the heathen previously mentioned. Two kings are the rulers of this town of Cacheu. The first, with the best claim to the land, is Jampeasão, king of Mata. Today he is the more powerful king and the one more well-disposed.

Mampatas used not to be a territory belonging to Horcajem, (but) so clever and shrewd is he that by his generosity and largesse towards the heathen he brought them to his side, with such success that, by their

(b) In exitu Israel de Aegyto.

(c) Jampeasão is the principal king of Cacheu, with subordinates under him.

(d) Horcajem, king of the Mampatos, of Buiate and Cacau.
support, he reached a position where he could gain the most benefit from Cachoe. So although the King of Mata retains the title, this only relates to absolute and supreme sovereignty over the land, while in practice Horcafm has greater sovereignty over the hearts of the heathen, who respect only those who give them gifts, for in all Ethiopia what you own counts for more than what you are. I said that he gained the most benefit from Cachoe because this enemy of our holy faith is the affliction of our people in this port, where he lords it over the dwellings, interfering with them and losing all respect for the Portuguese. Not that this signifies much in a man who has lost respect for God by demonstrating such heretical infidelity and loose-living. I said that he lords it over our dwellings because he carries out visitations of them, and for this reason he is feared by the more cowardly and the least generous, just as the corregeador de alcada (circuit judge) is by criminals when he visits a town where he is normally a guest (?). Horcafm is a lascarim. When a settler's slave, longing for the forest, runs away to Horcafm, if the slave is to be returned to his master the master must be someone from whom Horcafm has received generous gifts, since he has no respect for those who are tight (with their money) and will not hesitate to sell their slave to anyone he pleases. As well as the gift which boats and ships give to the King of Mata, to whom this is due as the chief king and lord of the land, they give another gift to Horcafm, to satisfy him. In this way they keep to the full an agreement which the settlers made with him after the last war he conducted against the port, in 1607.

Apart from the favours of Our Lady, which are and always have been the town's strongpoint and its tower most fully furnished with men of war, it owes a great deal to the Rev. Bartolomeu Rebelo Tavares, its Vicar, who as well as performing great services for His

(e) To those of little experience Horcafm has appeared to possess greater power in the land, but this was so and had been so only inasmuch as it was rendered him in virtue of his unjust claim. Today Horcafm is the leading ruler for the common people. (?)

(f) Sicut turris David collum tuum, qua- aedificata est in propugnaculis militum. Clipei pendent extra omnis armatura fortiwm. "Thy neck is like the tower of David built for an armoury, whereon hang, (a thousand) bucklers, all shields of mighty men" Song of Solomon, 4:4.
Majesty in the East Indies, performed no small ones in Cacheu at this period. For though a churchman, he hastened to the tabanca and mounted that frail stockade with such valour that once he had set his foot on the timber, this proved enough for Horcafémin's men, their courage began to die away, and they abandoned the struggle. Nor must I be silent about the good works of the Portuguese captains whose ships were anchored there at that date, for they lovingly rushed to help the Reverend Father to repel that disgrace to the faith and the Christian religion.

This is the right point to speak more specifically about the heathen who surround this town. All of them are Papels, otherwise known as Buramos, and they have a number of kings, as the Banhus do. Their land extends in length some 18 leagues, as far as Bissau, where it touches the Balantas on the East side. In width, on the South side it reaches what we call the Ilhetas or Little Islands, the Papel heathen's own (? home-)land, and a larger island called Bussis which we shall discuss shortly. The whole way round the land there are creeks which enter the sea, and this is the reason why it is so unhealthy for strangers. The people present a good appearance throughout, but are less hard-working than the Banhus. In the interior, the men usually wear goat-skins which have been tanned with mangrove bark. They draw the skin across their fronts by tying the corners, or by having one corner which passes (between their legs) from behind and is tied on the navel. The gentry wear dyed cotton cloths, called barafulas, which the whites sell them. Some of them make Moorish smocks from these cloths. To appear less immodest, poor people make from cibe straw a cover-piece which only covers their rear. But this form of dress is so ancient that all the kings of the Papels own such pieces. When they take possession of their kingdoms they wear one edged with many hems in red, yellow and other colours, and they dress this way at dances and feasts. This strange garment is considered an insignia of royalty, together with a red cap and a bow with arrows. As for their other rites and ceremonies, they are much the same as those of their Banhu neighbours. This is all that need be said about the Papel heathen in this chapter. If anything further occurs to us, we will mention it when discussing the Ilhetas or Bussis Island /f.21/. However there is so little information available about the islands we call Ilhetas that it seems to me best to insert it here in conclusion. According to the Lusitanian bard, these islands are the three sisters directed by one eye, for though there are three only one can be seen. In terms of natural characteristics, the inhabitants are Papel. Pirates come here to water and sometimes take valuable prizes,
since the islands lie at the mouth of Rio Grande and at the exit from
the S. Domingos estuary, to the East of Caravel Channel. Facing the
islands to the South-West are certain of the Bijagos Islands, the first
of these three or four leagues distant, which we shall discuss at the
correct point. In between lies the renowned Rio Grande, five leagues
on (from the Ilhetas). To the South-East of these islands is the
well-known Island of Bussis, the description of which, as it is more
extensive, we rightly reserve for another place. Moreover we cannot
deny priority (in treatment) to Bichangor, to which it is most properly
due on account of the authority of the Queen of Angels, Jesus’ Lady.
Her merits, since they exceed those of all creatures of superior being,
from the Saints to the seraphim burning most brightly in the highest
heaven, no less oblige us by their power to introduce into the subject-
matter and arrangement of this Relação, for this reason, the Banhu heathen
(of Bichangor) and their characteristics, before turning to deal with the
people who inhabit the well-known Island of Bussis.