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In 1972 Philip Curtin edited a multidisciplinary collection of essays which broadly addressed African expressions of the colonial experience in terms of their intellectual responses to European culture.[1] The essays in the volume were particularly concerned with the tensions around adopting, sustaining, tolerating, and rejecting foreign and indigenous values and customs.[2] Twenty years of research along the lines drawn by Curtin and his contributors have deepened and enriched the texture of the historical record of African/ European encounters, explored the process of recording and ordering such encounters and emphasized African perspectives on that process, yet key questions of power and decisions regarding change, conservation and adaptation remain at the core of the challenge to interpret the colonial era.

The Boston University African Studies Center interpretive research project on "African Expressions of the Colonial Experience" was designed to identify, collect, categorize, and analyze African texts that express experience with colonial rule from about 1910 to 1940. The translations component of the project is particularly concerned with the identification, translation, and interpretation of written and oral texts. Issues of power and decisions regarding images and key words emerge and shed light on African perceptions of power and ranges of strategies forged to mediate tensions at the interface of colonial rule. This essay addresses questions of power, imagery, expressions of community identification, and strategies to appropriately locate, articulate and promote African views and welfare in the developing colonial context.

Such questions emerge from an analysis of the published legacy of João dos Santos Albasini (1876-1922), southern Mozambique's leading African intellectual and political spokesman of the early twentieth century. As editor and leading contributor to the colony's principal African owned and run newspapers from 1908 until his death in 1922, Albasini

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1. Philip D. Curtin, *Africa and the West; Intellectual Responses to European Culture* (Madison, 1972).

2. *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

produced a large collection of texts. This essay has three goals. The first is simply to describe, briefly, the overall legacy available for translation, annotation, and interpretation. How can the texts be categorized, and why are they important? As discussed below, only one general category of texts will be followed through the rest of the essay.

The second task is to establish the importance of the changing context in shaping the language, imagery and emphasis of those texts. Why did Albasini and his colleagues emerge in leadership roles; why did they developed newspapers as a forum for their struggle, and why did they select the Portuguese language as their medium? A detailed examination of the contradictions of Albasini's political and personal situation and his complex intellectual development over the fourteen years he published the papers is beyond this scope. However, the section on context seeks to locate Albasini and his texts within the much more familiar history of the emergence of mission-educated, supra-lineage political leadership in southern Africa. To date the literature regarding turn of-the-century African politics and journalism in the region has ignored Mozambique, and the limited literature on the Mozambican case has developed in isolation from the regional context.[3]

Finally, specific texts are explored to reveal Albasini's technique of wielding core Portuguese culture symbols to evoke situations quite the opposite of those usually associated with them. He developed the technique to put forward an African perspective which might shape colonial practice and policy without inviting unnecessary censorship, fruitless confrontation and potential loss of funding for programs which fitted his developing agenda. Regardless of the actual impact of Albasini's essays on the daily practice of colonial overrule, however, they surely enrich our record of African experience of the colonial era. The tension in Albasini's texts speak to the challenge experienced by Africans living at the interface of colonial rule.

Texts and Audience

Albasini's written legacy consists largely of editorials, serial columns, travelogues, and miscellaneous short essays published in the newspapers he edited, *O Africano* (1908-1918) and *O Brado Africano* (1919 - 1974). The great majority of his newspaper essays were written in Portuguese, but dozens were published in Ronga, the African vernacular of the capital city of Lourenço Marques (today Maputo).[4] He contributed to several Lourenço

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3. As illustrated below, the usual pattern is to limit comparison to African groups in individual countries or in the Portuguese held areas as a group. Jill Dias's study of political developments among Lusophone African groups takes things a step further by linking them to both Pan Africanist and Garvey inspired initiaties throughout the region. Jill R. Dias,"Portuguese African Associations in Lisbon and International Pan Africanism, 1912-1931," unpublished paper presented at Conference Group on Modern Portugal Meeting (Durham, N.H., 1989) and her essays on Garvey's influence forthcoming with the Garvey Papers Project issue on Africa.

4. Patrick Harries's masterful analysis of the construction of the so-called Tsonga language and its Ronga dialect contains the essential cautions regarding Africa's linguistic morass, "Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism: The Emergence of Ethnicity Among Tsonga-speakers of South Africa," in Leroy Vail, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley, 1989), 82-117, esp. 85-

Marques newspapers before founding *O Africano* in 1908, but, without a byline, it is difficult to identify his earliest writing with any certainty.[5] His only other surviving work identified to date is a collection of love letters written in 1917 (but apparently never sent) to a woman identified only as M____.[6] The collection, edited and published posthumously by Albasini's friend Marciano Nicanor da Sylva, is identified by literature scholars as the first example of Mozambican prose literature.[7] Although da Sylva collected Albasini's work, and planned to write a book about his life, the task was apparently never completed.[8]

For purposes of this essay, Albasini's press legacy is most usefully categorized by intended audience, because each audience evoked a different pattern and strategy in the deployment of language and the management of power. Albasini clearly saw the Portuguese colonial leadership as his most important audience, and texts targeting them comprised the largest category. That category will be the principal concern here because it demonstrates his skill in manipulating and developing tolerated and charged spaces within the personal, cultural and political relationships of Portuguese colonialism.

A second category embraces Albasini's addresses to urban African colleagues — the internal discourse of the group called the Grêmio Africano [The African Association]. The group itself can be identified through the papers' routine coverage of weddings, baptisms, funerals, group outings, and the whole range of social gatherings. Beyond the predictable amount of cheerleading, the group's struggle toward self-definition, community and development of a common, effective political agenda can be followed through the news essays in this category.

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91 and "The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in Southeastern Africa," *African Affairs*, no. 346 (1988): 25-52.

5. According to obituaries, Albasini wrote for *Vida Nova* and *Diário de Notíciais*, but a survey of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa's holdings of those papers did not reveal any identifiable style. *Brado Africano*, 8 September 1922.

6. The unnamed woman Albasini wrote to was Micaela Loforte, of the Afro-Portuguese Loforte family of Inhambane. In 1919 she married one of Albasini's colleagues, Gustav Bruheim. Albasini's papers were apparently held by his nephew Luis Albasini, but interviews with members of his family have not yet identified other surviving material. Group interview with Rudolfo da Silva Albasini, Ambrosia Crisostomo Pacheco Albasini, Ana Paula Crisostomo Albasini Chande, Gulamo Chande and João Távares de Fonseca, 30 July and 4 Aug. 1989, Porto, Portugal. Joint interview with Lucas Francisco Albasini and Fernanda Emília Ochoa Avêz, 7 Aug. 1989, Lisbon Portugal. João Albasini, *O Livro da Dor*, edited by Marciano Nicanor da Sylva (Lourenço Marques, 1925). I am grateful to Directora Dra. Inês Nogueira da Costa for a photocopy of the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique's copy of this extremely rare publication. I have in turn passed a photocopy along to the African Studies Library, Boston University.

7. Gerald Moser and Manuel Ferreira, *Bibliografia das Literaturas Africanas de Expressão Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1983): 177-183.

8. Sylva advertised for Albasini memorabilia in 1927, but as late as 1950 he noted his frustration in compiling Albasini's work because a complete collection of the newspapers was not available anywhere in Lourenço Marques. *Brado Africano*, 26 Feb.1927 and 20 May 1950.

The final category contains essays aimed to shape attitudes and action among the city's majority African population. These editorials were addressed to people broadly considered, "the natives." Essays in this category were published both in Portuguese and the vernacular, and one can document the radicalization of Grêmio attitudes toward the Portuguese administration and the urban African population through the changing tenor of essays in this category. Before World War I most such essays were published in Portuguese and were frankly preachy — advising Africans to stay sober, married, and employed and to invest their money in land, tree crops, livestock and instruments of production.[9] As the political climate became more hostile to Africans in the wake of the war, essays revealing smouldering anger and tacit approval of the sharp rise in labor action were published in African languages. The British consul remarked that he thought the only reason *O Africano* had not been censored for its "serious criticism" was that the Portuguese couldn't read local languages! [10]

Essays aimed at the colonial administration can be subdivided into two genres. The first, perhaps building upon an earlier tradition of protest journalism spearheaded by Angolan journalist Alfredo d'Aguiar in the 1880s, is a strident editorial sculpted around the word enough (*basta* in Portuguese).[11] Those powerful editorials marked moments when the colonial authorities had pushed African people to the point were they stood their ground and spoke their mind - enough! The lead editorial in the premier edition of *O Africano* is one of many excellent examples of that genre.[12] Excerpts from that issue and several other examples of the *basta* editorial are included in Appendix A.

The second genre is the serial column under a single heading. That genre follows an important issue through time. Although there are many examples of this genre among Albasini's work, two stand out and are referenced and briefly quoted in Appendix B; "Vozes de Burro" (The Braying of an Ass) and "A Tal Portaria" (That Law). Although these were not the first or only serial columns during Albasini's tenure they were the most important. The first challenged state and municipal efforts to classify and control the majority African urban labor force in the early Republican period, and the second addressed the state's parallel effort which targeted skilled, educated and propertied Africans like the

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9. Serial column, "The Future and Those Who Work," 12, 19, 28 September 1912 and editorials 6 July 1912, 24 August 1912, *O Africano*.

10. The British Consul noted the papers were edited by a "very highly educated Negro." Foreign Office 371, 4123, Confidential 28, 28 May 1919, London, Public Record Office.

11. Thomas Hendriksen has suggested a direct link between Albasini's style and Aguiar's, but I can not document it on the basis of research to date. Hendriksen, *Mozambique; A History* (London, 1978), 155-68.

12. "Anno Novo — Era Nova," *O Africano*, 25 December 1908. English language scholars are familiar with this tradition as developed by Mozambican writers of the thirties because the editorials were noted in James Duffy's classic study. Portuguese Africa (Cambridge, 1959); Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900—1982* (Boulder, 1983), 73-77; Penvenne, "A Luta Continua," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18,1 (1985), 123-25.

membership of the Gremio.[13] Whereas the *basta* editorials employed some sarcasm and humor, they were more often serious and revealed an anger which was carefully measured out and strategically deployed. The "A Tal Portaria" serial column, in particular, exhudes mockery, ridicule and irony.

The contrasting tone of these texts reflected the author's judgments regarding audience, issue and most of all context. The changing context strongly influenced the form, language, emphasis and authorship of these texts, so we begin by asking why and how?

Conquest and New Leadership

Albasini's short life spanned two critical periods which together strongly influenced changes in African leadership and strategies for resisting and mediating domination: the military conquest of southern Mozambique and the Portuguese First Republic. One can not overemphasize the fact that the emergence of a political challenge by mission-educated Africans such as Albasini became much more important with the sound military defeat of lineage leadership. Military defeat encouraged those who were already familiar with the political tools of the ascendent colonial system, such as the opposition press and petitions to political parties, to develop them more seriously. Defeat also removed many who were committed to and involved in military resistance from their leadership positions, and obviously convinced many to take a greater interest in potential alternatives to armed force.

With the defeat of African military power in southern Africa during the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Africans faced the challenge of ascendent European colonial power on an unprecedented scale. Military conquest, in many cases, was facilitated by European technological and scientific innovations which were tragically appropriated to legitimate and promote growing claims of European social and biological superiority.[14] The foundation of European colonies in Africa was clearly grounded in the defeat, coersion, dispersal or co-option of African lineage or prior conquest based military powers. During and subsequent to the conquest period, European land alienation, labor mobilization, and claims on African controlled resources through taxation were all rapidly and vastly extended through the imposition of colonial law backed by coerced or co-opted African police power.[15]

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13. The first group of legislation comprised the so-called *indigenato* and the second defined qualifications and procedures for African "assimilation" to the status of Portuguese citizen. Such status had to be confirmed through the purchase and carrying of an *álvara de assimilação*. Penvenne, "'We are all Portuguese!' Challenging the Political Economy of Assimilation, Lourenço Marques, 1870 to 1933," in Vail, *The Creation of Tribalism*, 255-88.

14. The basic technological and intellectual currents are covered in Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire* (New York, 1981) and Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa* (Madison, 1964).

15. This era in Mozambique is covered in René Pélissier, *La Naissance du Mozambique; Résistance et Révoltes Anticoloniales (1854-1919)* (Orgeval, 1984); Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The Last Hundred Years* (London, 1981); Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Capitalism and Colonialism; A Study of Quelimane District in Mozambique* (Minneappolis, 1980); José Capela, *A Imposta de Palhota; e a Introdução do Modo*

Despite its obvious foundation in armed force and expropriation, however, European propaganda legitimated colonization in terms of the promotion of peace, prosperity, and civilization. The contradiction between what colonial rule claimed for the colonized and the usual African colonial experience was understood most keenly by Africans who were in touch with both the glowing claims and the tawdry reality -- men and women who often supported the political, social and economic ideals of the emerging dominant power, but who quickly found themselves marginalized within the new context because of their African heritage. It is clear that throughout the continent Africans who learned colonial languages and laws in mission schools, and who lived and worked within the colonially dominated economy daily faced contrasting ideology and reality. People who experienced the contrast personally because of their European and African family heritage sometimes had a particularly sensitive perspective regarding the contradictions.[16] Although some mission-educated Africans promoted their narrow interests by identifying and allying with the ascendent ideology and polity, others were outraged both by the brutal treatment of African people and the betrayal of their understanding of the colonial power's promise of civic equality, peace and prosperity.

Mission-educated women and men were usually not subject to the same degree of forced labor, land alienation, heavy taxation and the whole host of arbitrary abuses suffered by the majority population. Their aspirations for political participation and economic prosperity were nonetheless eclipsed by the consolidation of racist exclusion promoted by contemporary Western intellectual currents and settler demands for preferential treatment in employment, business and the assignment of state contracts.

All Africans understood colonial domination in its clearest form - armed force. The majority also recognized the power of written documents, instructions and legal papers, but the actual working and execution of colonial legal and administrative domination seemed mysterious and distant to them. Mission-educated Africans were not only more likely to have a better understanding of the colonial administrative, ideological and legal systems but also were empowered by their ability to manipulate aspects of those systems through reading and writing. For these reasons among others, mission-educated Africans in southern Africa emerged as important advocates and defenders of African security and wellbeing in the wake of conquest and in so doing they judged that the tools of power most

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de Produção Capitalista nas Colónias (Porto, 1977), 29-94; Allen and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique*; "História de Moçambique" serialized in *Cadernos de História.*

16. The literature on so-called creoles is vast, but the great diversity of historical experience it embraces cautions any temptation to treat them as a group. The Sierra Leone, Sierra Leonian in Yorubaland, and Senegalese cases raised in Curtin, *Africa and the West*, suggest the differences See also George E. Brooks, "Perspectives on Luso-African Commerce and Settlement in the Gambia and Guinea Bissau Region, 16th -19th Centuries," *Boston University, Working Papers in African Studies*, 24 (1980); Jill R. Dias, "Uma Questão de Identidade: Respostas Intellectuais as Transformações Económicas no Seio da Elite Crioula da Angola Portuguesa, Entre 1870 á 1930," *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos*, 1 (Lisbon, 1984), 61-94.

familiar to the colonizers might also prove their most effective weapon.[17] The changing economic context shaped the class nature of their strategy and the developing racist barriers shaped their nationalist and cross-class strategies.[18]

Throughout southern Africa, African journalists were an important component of organized opposition in the first decade of the twentieth century. From at least the 1880s African ministers, teachers, civil servants, and other leaders founded and supported newspapers to articulate and promote their social and political agenda. Leaders and newspaper men like John Dube, John Tengo Jabavu, and Solomon Plaatje are familiar figures in southern African political history.[19] The South African Native Press Association of 1903-1904 and the Native Convention (Bloemfontein) of 1909 brought together leadership from Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Those gatherings were direct precedents to the formation of the South African Native National Congress [later the African National Congress] in 1912.[20]

In the South African context, these leaders focused on the non-racial franchise of Cape Colony. Despite the fact that its literacy and property requirements clearly discriminated against Africans, the so-called Cape franchise was not determined on the basis of race. It was therefore both a tool and a symbol for the small group of Africans who qualified under the franchise. They placed great hope on the extention of the non-racial franchise as a vehicle to eventually achieve full political rights for Africans in the emerging polity of South Africa. They seemed confident that if Africans were simply held to the same standards as whites, and not disqualified or placed in special categories based on race, they could eventually compete successfully and build an effective political voice from their admittedly narrow base. Between 1900 and 1935 that prospect diminished rapidly in

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17. Penvenne, "We are all Portuguese!" and Leroy Vail, "Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History," in Vail, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism*, 255-88 and 1-19 respectively.

18. I address the specific class aspects of this struggle in Lourenço Marques for the period 1870 to 1933 in "'We are all Portuguese!'" The nationalist aspect is explored by Mário Pinto de Andrade in "As Ordens do Discurso do "Clamor Africano": Continuidade e Ruptura na Ideologia do Nacionalismo Unitário," *Estudos Moçambicanos*, No. 7 (Maputo, 1990), 7-28, and "Proto-Nationalismo em Moçambique, Um Estudo de Caso: Kamba Simango (c. 1890 - 1967)" in *Arquivo*, No. 6 (Maputo, 1989).

19. Les Switzer has published extensively on the history of South African mission papers and journalists. See for example his "The African Christian Community and Its Press in Victorian South Africa," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 96, XXIV, 4 (1984), 455-476. See also Brian Willan, *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist, 1876-1932* (Berkeley, 1984), and essays throughout Vail, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism.*

20. Willan, *Sol Plaatje*, 150-51. See also Philip Bonner, "The Transvaal Native Congress, 1917-1920: The Radicalisation of the Black Petty Bourgeoisie on the Rand," in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds. *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870 - 1930* (New York, 1982), 270-313.

both legal and economic terms, but for the turn of the century generation the promise of the non-racial franchise was a powerful force and a central political goal.[21]

The historical experience of Mozambicans during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial period remains obscure in comparison with their South African neighbors, but some marked differences and parallels can be distinguished.[22] The Luso-Gaza wars of the mid to late 1890s ended with the death, capture, flight and deportation of southern Mozambique's African military and political leadership, much as the conquest wars of the last quarter of the century had in South Africa.[23] The prospect of a reinvigorated military challenge was, therefore, extremely dim in both areas.

At one level, the promise of political challenge through education was much brighter in South Africa than in Mozambique because Mozambicans had many fewer opportunities for mission education than their South African neighbors. The Portuguese were suspicious and hostile toward any non-Portuguese mission initiatives (whether Catholic or Protestant). They typically discouraged and harrassed what they considered to be "foreign" mission activity. Extensive Portuguese Catholic mission education in Mozambique, however, was well beyond Portugal's capacity until at least the late 1930s.[24] In contrast to the large and diverse mission-educated population in the neighboring areas, southern Mozambique's mission-educated elite was quite small; restricted to the Catholics of the Lourenço Marques vicinity and a handful of Protestant mission stations clustered around that port and Inhambane.[25] As discussed below, early African involvement in the Mozambican printing industry and some familiarity with a tradition of militant African journalism compensated somewhat for the relatively narrow literate African population. Although in terms of mission education Mozambicans were greatly disadvantaged in comparison with their South African counterparts, in 1910 the the relative political balance was vice versa.

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21. Willan, *Sol Plaatje*, 34,46,52-54.

22. Malyn Newitt and Jill Dias provide overviews for Lusophone Africa. Dias, Dot Keet and Penvenne provide more detailed case studies for Angola (Dias and Keet) and southern Mozambique (Penvenne). Newitt, *Portugal in Africa*, Ch. 5; Dias, "Portuguese African Associations"; Dias, "Uma Questão de Identidade"; Keet, "An Overview of Portuguese Colonialist Native Policies with Special Reference to the 'Civilised' Population of Angola to the Middle of the Twentieth Century," unpublished seminar paper, School of Oriental and African Studies (12 May 1982); Penvenne, "We are all Portuguese!"

23. Pélissier, *Le Naissance de Mozambique, 589-649*; Douglas Wheeler,"Gungunhana," in N.R. Bennett, ed. *Leadership in Eastern Africa* (Boston, 1968).

24. Jan van Butselaar, *Missionnaires et Colonialistes; Les Origines de l'Eglise Presbytérienne du Mozambique (Mission Suisse) 1880-1896* (Leiden, 1984); Daniel de Cruz, *Em Terras de Gaza* (Porto, 1910); Duffy, *Portuguese Africa*, 128; Alf Helgesson, "Catholics and Protestants in a Clash of Interests in Southern Mozambique," in Carl Frederik Hallencreutz and Mai Palmberg, eds. *Religion and Politics in Southern Africa* (Uppsala, 1991), 194-206.

25. Mission school populations were recorded annually in the *Delagoa Directory* [later called *Anuário de Lourenço Marques*] (Lourenço Marques, 1899 -).

The Republican Space

In 1910 political developments in South Africa and Mozambique signalled sharply divergent opportunities for Africans. Declaration of the First Portuguese Republic (1910-1926), along with slogans promising "liberty, equality and fraternity," pried open some political space in Mozambique, whereas the formation of the Union of South Africa (the polity joining the former Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State) had quite the opposite effect. The political climates encouraged by each change were very different.

Albasini and his narrow cohort of mission-educated colleagues in Lourenço Marques came together in 1906 to form the Grêmio Africano.26 By 1908 the Grêmio Africano took advantage of early Republican rumblings to organize an African political, economic and social agenda in opposition to that of the dominant Portuguese settlers, bureaucrats and South African business groups active in Lourenço Marques. They promoted that agenda through their newspapers, *O Africano* (1908-1918) and *O Brado Africano* (1918-1974).[27] The group, and particularly Albasini as the paper's director and a committed Republican for much of his lifetime, capitalized upon the space.

Although African resources and physical wellbeing were irresponsibly exploited in rural areas during this period, African urban intellectuals were freer to challenge and mediate the terms of their political domination than at any other time during the colonial era. The Grêmio journalists of the Republican era challenged Portuguese policies and promoted an alternative vision which spoke to their class based interests and the welfare of Africans across still developing class lines. They proclaimed openly that African lands and political rights were being stripped through the colonial legal system, and strongly urged Africans to block the process by empowering themselves with the tools of the colonial system. They should know their rights and stand up for them to the extent that their recent conquest status allowed. During this period the paper faced routine censorship only during World War I, although the editors exercised a measure of self-censorship as part of their strategy to mix courting and cajoling with confrontation and challenge. While never free of abuses, the Republican period certainly stood out in the colonial era for its burgeoning free press.[28]

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26. The initial membership of Grêmio Africano was listed in the 25 December 1908 issue. About half (68) had local or southern African clan names and half had Portuguese (57) or other European (6) derived surnames. Although the core leadership of the group had Portuguese or European surnames throughout this period, the support clearly went beyond the group with closest ties to Europeans.

27. The first issue of *O Africano* was published 25 December 1908. Microfilm of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa's collection of these papers, the most complete existing collection, is held by the Cooperative Africana Microform Project, Center for Research Libraries in Chicago, and Arquívo Histórico de Moçambique, Maputo.

28. The flourishing of the Mozambican press during the First Republic is amply documented in the following: Raul Neves Dias, *Quatro Centenários em Moçambique. . .* (Lourenço Marques, 1954); Raul Neves Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica em Moçambique 1854-1954. . .* (Lourenço Marques, 1956); Ilídio Rocha, *Catálogo dos Periódicos e Principais Seriados de Moçambique da Introdução da Tipografia a Independência*

Language, Education and the Press in Mozambique

Everywhere language is power, and empowerment entails learning the most skillful and appropriate use of language as established by the dominant group. South Africa and Mozambique were barely different from the rest of Africa in that regard. *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the leading African newspaper in Cape Colony, editorialized in 1895: "The key of knowledge is the English language.... One can never obtain a position in life of any importance without a command of English."[29] Sol Plaatje's biographer, Brian Willan, confirmed; "It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance that mission-educated Africans in Cape Colony in the late nineteenth century attached to a command of the English language."30

Manipulation of the written and spoken word was enormously important in struggles about power. The first issue of the Grêmio Africano's newspaper, *O Africano,* was subtitled "Inaugural Issue in Pursuit of Education." The editorial demanded the state provide more and higher quality Portuguese language schools for Africans so that they could further develop Portuguese language skills:

> we know very well that Landim [the Portuguese generic term for African languages] is not what we need to know. We want to speak and write Portuguese as well as possible.[31]

Access to Portuguese language education remained a key demand in Grêmio formal statements of overall goals, but emphasis on Portuguese as the dominant language also sustained an aura of political loyalty which effectively tempered the quite harsh criticism articulated in their press.[32] The group's decision to embrace the colonial language (like that of their counterparts elsewhere in Africa) reflected their political commitment to the boundaries claimed by the Portuguese — the Mozambican colonial state — rather than the narrower lineage or conquest states. It signalled that the practice, not the fact or boundaries, of colonial rule was being challenged.

(1854-1975) (São Paulo, 1986); José Capela, *O Movimento Operário em Lourenço Marques, 1898-1927* (Porto, 1981).

29. Willan, quoting *Imvo Zabantsundu* of 19 August 1895, in Sol Plaatje, 36, note 27.

30. Willan, *Sol Plaatje*, 36.

31. *O Africano*, 25 December 1908.

32. Although the Grêmio's agenda was articulated implicitly and explicitly through editorials and articles issue by issue, at least three times during Albasini's lifetime the group published explicit statements of principles in petition form. Each statement included expanded Portuguese language education as a prominent item. *O Africano*, 25 December 1908; *Brado Africano*, 27 September 1919 and 11 August 1922. Joaquim Swart, a mulatto with strong ties to the Grêmio leadership and extensive experience in Portuguese colonial service, recalled that Albasini also emphasized education in Portuguese rather than the vernacular to play off Portuguese jealousies and ensure government funding for schools.

Skillful manipulation of language and culture symbols was of great concern to these African leaders because it greatly shaped their relationship to those holding power. The written and oral records both suggest strong parallels between Albasini and Plaatje with regard to etiquette and eloquence — both were "holier than the Pope." Albasini wrote and spoke Portuguese better than the great majority of white Portuguese living and working in Lourenço Marques. Africans often noted with delight that those whom Albasini had offended in his biting press columns were reluctant to reply to his critique because their skill with words would appear so shabby in comparison with his.[33] Albasini's ability to say things very well facilitated his ability to be heard and to be heard with a measure of impunity, such power was not unappreciated by ordinary Africans.[34] Albasini and Plaatje enjoyed great prestige and earned a hearing among both Africans and Europeans because they were powerful, creative and eloquent spokesmen and writers.[35]

Whereas South African experience with printing and journalism developed out of mission stations, Mozambican experience with the Portuguese printed word and the manipulation of words in political struggles was linked to the history of printing, the national press and independent journalism in Mozambique.[36] A national printing press was established in Mozambique City in 1854 as one of the first tangible signs of Portuguese presence beyond the fortress and trading post. The laws, appointments, transactions and reports which were the essence of colonial bureaucratic production were all included in the national press publication, the *Boletim Oficial de Moçambique*.[37]

When the colonial capital was moved from Mozambique City to Lourenço Marques in 1898, the publishing hub of the colony moved south as well. All kinds of publications, private and public, were then produced at the national press in Lourenço Marques. Before the transfer of the national press in the 1890s, several private presses had already been

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33. The antagonism between Prof. Cardoso and Albasini in 1919 was explained in such terms. *O Africano*, 16 April 1919.

34. A tiny handful of Africans emerged as generally respected, and viewed as "important" or "powerful" in interviews among elderly ordinary workers in Maputo in 1978 — although the majority stated that Africans were simply not important or powerful in the colonial era. Each of those so identified was an educated man who won respect because he could speak his mind frankly to the Portuguese authorities, be heard, and not be punished.

35. Willan, *Sol Plaatje*, 381; Raul Bernardo Honwana, *The Life History of Raul Honwana* (Boulder, 1988), 91-94; Interviews with Roberto Tembe and Joaquim da Costa, 15 and 16 June 1977, Port, Maputo; *Brado Africano*, 16 August and 8 September 1922, 28 Nov. 1925, 5 June 1926, 22 August 1932, 26 August 1933; *Correio de Moçambique*, 24 August 1922.

36. Switzer, "The African Christian Community."

37. Extensive coverage of the press and journalism in Mozambique is provided in Dias, *Quatro Centenários*; Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica*; Rocha, *Catálogo dos Periódicos e Principais Seriados*; João Júlio Gonçalves, *A Informação em Moçambique; Contribuição para o seu Estudo* (Lisbon, 1965), esp 501-506; Newitt, *Portugal in Africa*, 144-148; Capela, *O Movimento Operário*.

founded in Lourenço Marques.[38] With the growth and increasing importance of Lourenço Marques as the principal port for the booming Transvaal, Portuguese-language newspapers, trade papers, English language newspapers and tourist journals joined the growing list of local publications. By 1910 Lourenço Marques boasted at least six regular newspapers (published in English, Portuguese and local African languages), many irregular publications and an annual directory.[39] The greatly enhanced level of political discourse which accompanied the Republican era further encouraged the proliferation of newspapers.

The skilled labor force necessary to sustain the printing industry seems to have benefitted from the prestige and centrality of the national press as well as the parallel organization of press labor in the Metropole. The state founded the Escola de Artes e Ofícios in the late 1870s, to train Mozambicans in printing skills. Graduates were hired at the national press and were eventually included in the Associação de Artes Gráficas [AAG], the printing industry's trade union.[40]

African membership in the AAG stands as a remarkable exception to African exclusion by Portuguese organized labor throughout the colonial era. In 1904 fully one quarter of the national press labor force was African, a percentage which held through the post World War II era.[41] By 1952 the number of Africans protected by membership in an organized labor force was just under seventy for the entire colony. More than half that number were members of the AAG.[42] In short, the number of skilled Africans working in the colonial printing industry may have been small, but in the context of African organized labor in Mozambique it was disproportionately important, indeed remarkable.

AAG members were exceptional because of their ability to hold skilled jobs and enjoy union benefits in the face of growing racist exclusion, but individual AAG members also stood out because they fostered a spirit of worker solidarity, outreach and organization which was equally unusual. In 1911 a small group of Africans attempted to harness the

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38. Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica* and *Quatro Centenários.*

39. Regular publications were listed annually in the *Delagoa Directory.* See also Rocha, *Catálogo*, Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica*, 16ff.

40. Approved by Ministerial Álvara, 10 Jan. 1914. Dias, *Quatro Centenários*, 42-53; Capela, O *Movimento Operário em Lourenço Marques*, 123-128.

41. Lourenço Marques census by race and profession for 1904 logged in document entitled "Mappa Estatística," Administração do Conselho de Lourenço Marques [ACLM], doc. 15/16, now archived at the Arquívo Histórico de Moçambique [AHM] in Maputo, Mozambique. According to Dias, *Quatro Centenários*, in 1904, 5 to 7 of the 20 national press workers were Mozambicans (5 clearly and 2 whose place of birth was listed as unknown), 42-43.

42. *Anuário Estatístico*, 1953; *Quatro Centenários* notes 132 employees of whom 25 were mulattoes, 9 [assimilated] and 22 [native or indigenous Africans]. If one only counts mulattoes and assimilated Africans, around one-quarter of the membership was African. If one only counts the so-called natives and assimilated Africans it's about the same, but if one considers all those of African heritage it is over a third.

current of radical Republicanism to forge a general union for African workers in Lourenço Marques — the União Africana.[43] For reasons which remain unclear, the attempt received only limited support either from African workers. After nearly two years of attempts to generate interest and support for the union, the leaders decided to drop the idea, but it stands as the single documented effort by Africans during the colonial era to organize Lourenço Marques's African labor force, whether trade based or not. Both AAG and Grêmio members were prominent among the leadership which undertook to organize the União Africana.[44]

As Africans who were skilled and educated in techniques, langages and customs linked to the colonial presence and who worked in an industry with officially recognized labor protection, AAG and Grêmio members were obviously not ordinary African workers in Lourenço Marques. They were among the relatively select group of urban Africans who had extensive and intimate knowledge of the language and cultural symbols of the group which had recently conquored the area. If one takes the group of Africans qualifying for full citizenship through the original assimilation legislation of 1917 as a benchmark, skilled printing industry workers made up seventeen percent of the total, and were the largest single category of workers qualifying for assimilation.[45]

Gremio Africano members and AAG members shared many characteristics, at least during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although both groups were quite diverse, some overlap can be documented between them, particularly during Albasini's lifetime.[46] Although sources disagree regarding the original membership in the Grêmio Africano, and occupational identification is not available for all, at least five national press workers were among the group of 142 men who were listed as members in the first issue of *O Africano*.[47] Francisco Pedro Bemfica, for example, was a founding member of the

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43. To date information on this attempt at unionization is quite thin, but the most complete analysis is Capela, *O Movimento Operário*, 123-28. See also *O Simples*, 24 June 1911; *O Proletário*, 2 November 1913.

44. The commission to organize the "União dos Trabalhadores Africanos" included Francisco Campos of the national press, Alfredo de Oliveira Guimarães, Constantino de Conceição, Francisco Eduardo dos Santos (all Grêmio Africano members) and Agostinho J. Mathias. See, *O Simples*, 24 June 1911; *O Proletário*, 2 November 1913; Dias, *Quatro Centenários*; Capela, *O Movimento Operário*, 122.

45. According to the "Livro de registo, álvaras concedidos ãos assimilados nos termos de PP 317, 9 Jan. 1917," press workers comprised 17 of the 93 people granted assimilation status, ACLM doc. 3-141, AHM. By the period 1932-1954, the number of assimilado press workers increased to 29, but by that era they comprised a much smaller percentage of the total, just over four and a half percent.

46. AAG members are identified, for 1901 and 1904, in Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica* and *Quatro Centenários*. Grêmio membership was periodically listed in *O Africano*, *Brado Africano*, and *Delagoa Directory*.

47. Four variants of Grêmio Africano history are printed in the Christmas holiday issues of *Brado Africano* for 1932, 1939, 1946 and 1948. Tito Rosário Fernandes, Luis Augusto Guimarães, Luis António Frechaut, Francisco Domingos Campos, and Francisco Pedro Bemfica were African workers at the national

Gremio Africano and also a prominent member of the AAG, serving as its treasurer during 1918-1919.[48] Bemfica's father Feoderico and son Candido were also AAG members and participated in Grêmio social functions, although they were not always active members. In short, press workers were an influential minority within the developing mission-educated leadership of Lourenço Marques and together they had at least tried to develop experience with the majority working population.

Grêmio members, whether they worked in the printing industry or not, were quite familiar with the tenor of protest journalism which had its roots in the 1880s in Mozambique, in part because of the career of Alfredo d'Aguiar, an Angolan mulatto who arrived in Mozambique for military service in 1879. He quickly became a fiery opponent of Portuguese colonial practice, leveling his criticism as publisher and writer of his papers, O *Imparcial* (1885), *Gazeta do Sul* (1885-1891), and *Clamor Africano* (1891). Although very little has been published regarding Aguiar, his reputation was apparently one of a "tireless and irreverent" editor in a tradition of protest journalism which emerged even more forcefully with the Republican rumblings in the first decade of the century.[49]

In short, by the time the Republican revolution provided an opportunity, the Portuguese language, the press and provocative journalism were familiar symbols and tools of opposition to Lourenço Marques's skilled press workers and to the African urban intellectual elite as a whole.[50] The fact that an influential component of the city's literate African community had its roots in technical education and the publishing workplace rather than the liberal arts classrooms of mission stations may also have contributed to the group's sensitivity to the struggles of ordinary African workers.

Within this general context, however, Africans wielded the printed and spoken work in specific ways to achieve individual and group goals. João Albasini's choices and strategies reflected his ideas and his education, but they also reflected the specific privileges he could cultivate and enjoy because of the niche he occupied in the patronage system. The

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press in 1904 and are named as Grêmio Africano members in *O Africano* in the period 1908-1911, see Dias, *Quatro Centenários*, 42-45; *O Africano*, 25 December 1908.

48. Bemfica was listed as a Grêmio member into the 1920s. Secretaria de Negócios Indígenas [SNI] file 3-141 of 1917 at AHM; *Brado Africano*, 10 December 1932, 24 December 1939, 12 December 1946, 24 December 1948.

49. Alfredo d'Aguiar is clearly an historical figure in search of an historian. Mario Pinto de Andrade also notes his importance. See note 18. The surveys of Mozambican press and periodical literature mention the combative nature of newspaper exchanges, but José Capela's study of Portuguese labor movements at the turn of the century and Malyn Newitt's survey present the most useful analysis of the topic. Capela, *O Movimento Operário*, passim; Newitt, *Portugal in Africa*, 144-46; Rocha, *Catálogo*, 22-23; Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica* and Júlio de Castro Lopo, *Jornalismo de Angola; Subsídios para a sua História* (Luanda, 1964), esp. 75-83; Gonçalves, *A Informação em Moçambique*, 501, 506.

50. Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica*, 56-63; Newitt, *Portugal in Africa*, 144-46.

patronage system was the final important element in the context which shaped and was shaped by Albasini's texts.

Patronage, Intellectual and Political Space

Albasini was an official forwarding agent at the customs section and later the director of services for the core contingent of conscripted African contract workers at the port in Lourenço Marques.[51] His work as a journalist and publisher were always a sideline.[52] Both positions at the port were important and inaccessible without political patronage. Albasini was politically important because he chose his ancestors well.

His grandfather was an important trader, labor broker, and Portuguese agent in the trade triangle between Lourenço Marques, the Transvaal, and Inhambane during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1888, the elder Albasini died impoverished, but his political legacy remained of symbolic importance for the Portuguese. He was counted among their most revered pioneers.[53] Albasini's mother was the grandaughter of the reigning leader of the Lourenço Marques-area Maxaquene clan.[54] The Albasini family's social standing in the African community, and to a lesser extent their material status derived from their links to Maxaquene leadership.

Although Albasini gained his position as customs forwarding agent through his important Portuguese patronage networks, the post enabled him to cultivate clients among two other important groups in town. African traders and craftsmen clearing their goods for sale in the city and foreign and Portuguese private businesspeople acquiring goods both

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51. Penvenne, "Forced Labor," 18-20.

52. *Brado Africano*, 8 September 1922.

53. Biographical information on João Albasini (1813-1888) is available in General Ferreira Martins, *João Albasini e a Colónia de S. Luis* (Lisbon, 1957) 14-17; Ilídio Rocha, ed., *Das terras do Império Vátua as Praças da República Boer* (Lisbon, 1987), 195-208; Alfredo Pereira de Lima, *História dos Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique* (Lourenço Marques, 1971), I, 25-28; J.J. Machado,"Lourenço Marques á Pretoria," 11/12, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* (1885), 663-65; H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (London, 1912) 27; Julião Quintinha and Francisco Toscano, *A Derrocado do Império Vátua e Mouzinho d'Albuquerque*, 3d ed., I (Lisbon, 1935), 98-100, 112-113; Virgilio Delemos, "Lourenço Marques," *Review Francaise d'Etudes Politiques Africaines*, 8 (September 1972), 58-91.

54. Biographical information on João dos Santos Albasini (1876-1922) and his family was culled from many sources. *Brado Africano*, all issues, 16 August through September 1922, 16 August 1923, 28 November 1925, 25 June 1926, 26 February 1927, 26 August 1933, 9 June 1934, 20 August 1932, 27 August 1932, 1 December 1936; *Correio de Mozambique* 24 August 1922; Interviews with Roberto Tembe and Joaquim da Costa, 24 August 1977, Port zone, J.F. Kuamba, 7 July 1977, Mussongueia S. Mussona, 4 July and 3 October 1977, both Camara Municipal de Maputo [CMM], Salamão Nhaca, 11 October 1977, AHM, all Maputo Mozambique, Group Interview with Albasini extended family in Portugal listed in note 6 above. Carlos Santos Reis, *A População de Lourenço Marques em 1894; Censo Inédito* (Lisbon, 1973); Quintinha and Toscano, *A Derrocado*, I, 79-100.

worked through official forwarding agents. In short, Albasini was well placed as both a patron and a client.[55]

Albasini wrote and spoke local languages and Portuguese. He frequently confirmed the beauty and importance of Maxaquene cultural expression and ritual practice, but nonetheless urged Africans to empower themselves through mastery of the Portuguese language and a thorough knowledge of colonial law. He argued that such knowledge was the essential tool for political participation and prosperity in the changing colonial atmosphere.[56] In tones reminiscent of contradictions in nation-building campaigns a half-century later, Albasini argued for literacy and competence in Portuguese rather than other national languages, in part, because it united Africans across ethnic lines into the newly demarcated nation state called Mozambique — from the Rovuma to the Maputo. It does not follow that acceptance of European-demarcated national boundaries, liberal democracy, and language meant acceptance of European domination in an African land.[57]

In retrospect it seems absurdly naive for Albasini, Plaatje, or any other African to have aspired to full political participation on the basis of education and property qualifications. In Mozambique, however, by 1908 race was only just beginning to supercede patronage and blood relationship as the essential characteristic defining communities and dividing the colonizers from the colonized. The time lag was even greater for people with Albasini's strong political and patronage links. Despite Albasini's dark skin and his African physical features, he was so well endowed in the still very important patronage system that he would be among the last to be personally challenged by ascendant racism, and Europeans who deigned to challenge him usually regretted their decision.[58]

Certainly not all Grêmio members were politically well connected, but until the first World War, the tone of *O Africano* suggested that most members were more hopeful that Republican initiatives would bring about beneficial change through the colonial system than they were fearful of the racist exclusion which build up insidiously over the same period. Although a well grounded fear of racist discrimination dated back to the contact era, it only began to overtake hope and optimism among this generation of the Lourenço Marques

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55. Interview with Bandi Albasini Chibindji whose father had always cleared his cargo through Albasini, and eventually named his son Bandi in honor of Albasini, June 1977, Port, Maputo.

56. When Roberto Tembe was a young student sitting for his fourth class exams, Albasini personally congratulated him on his progress and encouraged him with his schoolwork. Sixty years later Tembe recalled the thrill of that encounter, and emphasized Albasini's pride in his African heritage. Raul Honwana portrays Albasini in a similar light, *The Life History of Raul Honwana*, 91-94; Interview with Tembe, 16 and 17 June 1977, joint with Joaquim da Costa, 24 August 1977, Port, Maputo.

57. In the excellent documentary film "Generations of Resistance" (United Nations: 1980), Selby Msimang recalls that the greatest challenge faced by the young African National Congress was to overcome "tribal divisions" and promote identification as a single South African people.

58. Honwana recounts several amusing incidents when a European mistook Albasini for a "common African." Honwana, *The Life of Raul Honwana*, 91-94.

mission-educated leaders in the wake of the First World War. By the early 1920s, just before Albasini's death, racial tension was so widespread that it penetrated the urban African community, reflecting itself in growing divisions between Africans and mulattoes.[59]

Typically, the limited benefits which accrued to mulattoes through their European parent tended to undermine their relationship with Africans. The changing mix of benefit and compromise was neither unidirectional nor uniform throughout the continent. Trade relations among Africans and "Luso-Africans" on the Guinea Coast revealed several reversals of position between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.[60] In Senegal and Sierra Leone mulattoes became increasingly isolated from Africans by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In southern Mozambique, distance between mulattoes and Africans was much less pronounced at the turn of the century, but it developed rapidly, and with encouragement by colonial laws, through the subsequent generation.[61]

Albasini's Legacy : Principle and Passion

Albasini used his position as editor of *O Africano* to speak for the entire African population of southern Mozambique. From its first gathering, the Gremio Africano included Africans and mulattoes and raised issues of concern to both groups.[62] Albasini's editorials regularly challenged the colonial state's policies of forced labor, corporal punishment, and land alienation which predominantly affected rural, poorer and less educated Africans.[63] Although issues close to the experience of Grêmio membership were featured in their paper, they never eclipsed issues of concern to the African majority.[64] The papers were published by an African elite, but it would be a mistake to dismiss them as elitist, merely reflecting the agenda of a narrow elite. Albasini's personal history gave him

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59. Racial and religious tensions apparently erupted amidst the members of the Grêmio Africano in the early 1920s, resulting in the withdrawal of many Protestant African members and the publication of a competing newspaper *Dambu da Africa*. Dias, *A Imprensa Periódica* and *Quatro Centenários*; Interview with Costa and Tembe, 24 August 1977, Port, Maputo; Interview with João Távares de Fonseca, 30 July 1989, Porto, Portugal; Honwana, *The Life History of Raul Honwana*; Penvenne, "We are all Portuguese!".

60. Brooks, "Luso-African Commerce."

61. Leo Spitzer, "The Sierra Leone Creoles, 1870-1900," and G. Wesley Johnson, Jr. "The Senegalese Urban Elite, 1900-1945," in Curtin, *Africa and the West*, 99-188.

62. Although the original membership roster listed over half the members with African surnames and just under half with European surnames, as per note 26 above, many Africans who had no European family connections had adopted European names by this date.

63. A survey of editorial issues for the period 1908-1913, for example, revealed the following sustained concerns: fair treatment of Africans, availability of educational opportunities, labor conditions, alcoholism as a medical and social problem for Africans, services and treatment for Mozambicans contracted for labor in the Transvaal mines and government relief for famine or drought victims in southern Mozambique.

64. That balance is clear in the statements of Grêmio principles in *O Africano*, 25 December 1908; *Brado Africano*, 27 September 1919, 11 August 1922.

advantages that were certainly not enjoyed by the majority population, but those advantages contributed to his ability to express his views and be heard by people in positions of power. Even a brief sampling of the issues he raised in his editorial demonstrates his vision went well beyond concern for his personal welfare or that of the developing middle class.

Dismissing Albasini's challenge and strategy of chiding and coaxing the Portuguese while claiming the moral high ground as hopeless and naive from the outset misreads history. It fails to acknowledge the extent to which Albasini and other Grêmio members sincerely and hopefully embraced Republican principles and developed their considerable intellectual skills to exploit press debates and formal petitions as appropriate weapons in what was essentially a passionate political struggle to uphold basic principles. It also fails to appreciate the power and respect their struggle commanded during that era due to the member's relative education, material wealth and local influence. Albasini's efforts retained funds for African education, and in 1923 a special school for African women was opened, named to honor his memory. The school still operates in 1991.

It is also essential to recognize that the disillusionment of this generation of southern African political leadership was a battle by battle process. The South African Native National Congress's efforts to sustain and extend the non-racial franchise and Albasini's efforts to confirm and realize the promise of education, brotherhood among races, and equality before the law may have been more a downhill slide than an uphill struggle, but the outcome was by no means self-evident at the outset. In both struggles some African leadership compromised principles in order to secure special privileges proffered by the government. Those very privileges were an indication that the dominant group felt their efforts were threatening.[65]

Although Albasini and a handful of others within the leadership groups refused to be coopted, the incentives to cling to narrow privilege rather than stand on a point of principle were considerable — particularly as prospects for a successful struggle became increasingly dim. Increased immigration of whites and differential expenditure for white education eroded the relative advantage well educated Africans had in the overall context. Within that changing context Albasini's passionate commitment to principle was increasingly isolated. By 1918 even Albasini became disheartened. His final editorial, before selling *O Africano* to a Portuguese missionary, revealed anger and bitterness. Albasini acknowledged his efforts had been sterile. "Nine inglorious years of struggle" had yielded no gains for Africans.[66]

Albasini subsequently rallied to inaugurate the paper *O Brado Africano*, but from the outset the tone had shifted. Albasini's first editorial in *Brado* assumed a siege posture:

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65. Access to first-class train passage, improved housing, payment in hard currency, and admission to specific schools were all strong incentives for middle-class Africans to cooperate. For example, Penvenne, "We are all Portuguese!"; Bonner,"The Transvaal Native Congress."

66. *O Africano*, 30 November 1918.

"Anyone who does not struggle for his rights will merely become sombody else's doormat."[67] Within six months of the founding of *O Brado Africano*, however, Albasini also began to lose his struggle with tuberculosis. That struggle increasingly sapped his energy, and his publications diminished rapidly between 1918 and his death in 1922.

Images and Struggle

Albasini typically identified Portuguese images close to the idealized colonial mission. Portugal counts the so-called era of the discoveries (late fifteenth and early sixteenth century) as her golden age. Camões' epic poem *The Lusiads* is as close to a core cultural symbol of Portugal as one is likely to get. Albasini developed the aura of Camões and the turn of the twentieth-century ideology of the West's civilizing mission in colonial areas as foils for his cutting critique of Portuguese colonial rule in southern Mozambique. The newspapers contain literally hundreds of examples, but two examples of the *basta* tradition in Appendix A illustrate his effective justaposition of the barbarous and the civilized. Albasini's use of sarcasm and ridicule were most effectively developed around the assimilation controversy, and are included here in selected quotes from the "A Tal Portaria" series in Appendix B.

Although temperance was a typical concern for mission-educated African leadership throughout southern Africa, the key position of Portugal's wine producers and sellers in the nation's economy throughout this period made it difficult for Portugal's leadership to resist the pressure of the latter group. During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, sales of Portuguese "colonial wine," specifically developed for the African market, increased four hundred fold.[68]

The contradiction between the wine lobby and the civilizing mission inspired one of Albasini's memorable essays, and inaugurated his "*basta*" tradition. In the premier issue of *O Africano* Albasini proclaimed he had enough! What did the African community have to show for its cooperation with Portuguese colonial leadership:

> No roads, no fountains, no workshops, no schools! We have [instead] . . . white wine for blacks and full, the fullest and unquestioned liberty to become siblings of insanity in abominable drunken sprees with this infamous concoction [colonial wine] spewed out by every steamship over this wretched, God-forsaken land.[69]

The editorial highlighted the pillars of late nineteenth-century civilizing mission ideology: roads, transportation, clean water supplies, schools and technical training, and

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67. *Brado Africano*, 24 December 1918.

68. José Capela, *O Vinho para o Preto* (Porto, 1973); Penvenne, "The Cantina vs. the Compound: Labor Control and Colonial Wine in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, 1880 to World War I," unpublished paper presented at American Historical Association meeting, San Francisco, 1989.

69. *O Africano*, 25 December 1908.

contrasted them with the underside of colonial penetration. Coastal steamers encouraged the development of new ports and roads to the interior, but "colonial wine" rather than education, hygienic and technical improvements penetrated the countryside. That editorial further juxtaposed the lack of opportunity to learn the Portuguese language, adopt Western technical skills and benefit from improved transportation and health facilities with full liberty to become demented drunks.

The reference to a God-forsaken land also played on the historical link between the nation and the clergy. Although the close ties between the Catholic church and the Portuguese government were temporarily ruptured during the First Republic, Albasini and others continued to refer to colonial wine as "nectar from the Bishop's well."[70] It is significant that the Mozambican temperance movement was forged by Swiss Protestant missions rather than Portuguese Catholics.[71]

The heralded military glory of the conquest era was similarly targeted. Albasini pointed out that one large group of Africans worked in the South African mines, returning laden with loot, but often diseased and handicapped. A second group worked in Lourenço Marques, but soon succumbed to the effects of "nectar from the Bishop's well." The third group farmed the land and lived in family groups, but it was to that group that the government looked for men to "serve the country" as soldiers. The opportunity to serve the nation, however, brought only horror to African families:

> With my own eyes I saw three years ago in Manhica, two youths chosen for military service who cowardly evaded that service by means of a rope. Your Excellency, I saw two big powerful fellows, two strapping negroes hung by the neck, dead, without the least attention to propriety. They hung themselves to avoid [mîlitary service] in Mocambique.. They couldn't deal with all that glory."[72]

Portuguese abuse of military conscription was a chronic theme in Albasini's editorials. It was the focus of one of his most poignant essays in the *basta* tradition. The editorial "I have come from the countryside to serve the country" is quoted at length in Appendix A to illustrate Albasini's effective blend of Portuguese symbols of civilization and glory and European notions of African savagry, filth, and cruelty.[73] Albasini's protrait of African military recruits roped by the neck in pairs, being offloaded from the steamship named after the then governor of Mozambique, *Freire de Andrade*, clearly

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70. "O Poço do Bispo" was the common phrase. Periodically Albasini ran a serial column under that title. See for example, *O Africano*, 19 June 1909 in editorial "Serviço Militar!." Columns under "Shikhokiana" similarly attacked the sale and production of an alcoholic brew made from imported cane syrup. 22 May 1909, 5 June 1909.

71. *O Africano*, 6 October 1915, 1 June 1918; *Brado Africano*, 7 February 1919, 16 August 1919, 20 December 1919.

72. *O Africano*, 19 June 1909.

73. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1909.

evoked the very images of the slavery and cruelty the Portuguese civilizing mission claimed to displace. Although the editorial pointedly linked the terms cruel, savage, ferocious, dirty, and revolting with African village life, the image he paints using those words is one of the horror and sadness of an African father, a farmer, torn from his wife and children in confusion and forced to leave them unprovided for and unprotected. Albasini had the victim's eyes survey the vast sea and sky to suggest his helplessness. He showed him quietly weeping, perhaps resigned to his fate. Albasini's portrait of the tethered recruit "crying silently, with tears running in a ribbon down the large ebony colored face," is one of great dignity and strength. It contrasts sharply with the scurrying, bullying, and almost silly figures of the government soldiers rounding up the captives to march them off to the barracks in military formation. Albasini even has the sun turn its face from something so grotesque.

Such portraits are an important component of Albasini's legacy. The conscripts Albasini described did not directly express their experience with colonial rule in words to be kept in an historical archive. Their very existence is discounted by their entry as simply so many blacks, so many soldiers, without names or personal identity. Photographs from the era to some extent suggested their plight, but in this case, as in many others Albasini's compassion and his sharp eye urged him to convey their plight to the Portuguese leadership. He concluded that editorial saying simply, "Enough is enough!"[74]

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74. *Ibid.*

Appendix A

Excerpts from Albasini Editorials, 1908—1922

1. "Anno Novo — Era Nova," 25 December 1908

"A humble group — that sad humility reserved for men of color — wishes, anxiously wants to found a school of primary education in this city which will also provide, according to resources available, some useful knowledge for its students. Toward this end, the group appeals to the hearts of those who value instruction spread over this continent. With that as our purpose we publish this single issue [of *O Africano*].

Nothing surprising....

This group founded the Grêmio Africano, comprised only of African members — but men from any country who want to contribute toward an purpose as moralizing as a school can take part in the group as associates, protectors.

Why was this society founded?

The motivation is a bit of a long story, but we shall begin, summarizing it as follows:

For many hundreds of years now, we have accepted the yolk of those whom we judged to be the civilizers; and apart from a few spats, we have not thrown off that yoke without good reason you can be sure. We have responded to resist abuse, but no more. It is true that our response was at times a little violent, but we have always listened to reason.

The entire world is witness to the fact that it is completely reasonable for us now to dare to say in the face of this wave of corruption: ENOUGH!

What do we have to show for this submission, which foreigners so admired? Nothing!

Not roads, not water fountains, not workshops, not schools!

We have — so that the race can perish more quickly and become insolent only in the their forgotten tombs — white wine for blacks and full, the fullest most incontestable liberty to become siblings of insanity in abominable drunken sprees with this infamous concoction which all the steamships spew out over this wretched, God forsaken land!....

And now, at this very point, we invite the "civilizers" to review their accomplishments.... The subjects of His Majesty the King of Portugal do not speak Portuguese! And he has reigned in this area for 400 years!"

2. "Bem Vindo!" to Governor General [G.G.] Freire de Andrade, 24 April 1909.

Comment: This editorial addresses the government's failure to properly feed African prisoners taken for road labor. Albasini notes in the course of the editorial that families in Inhambane travel up to 150 kilometers to bring corn porridge to their kinfolk.

"A people so generous that they spent rivers of money for the generous reception of the Gallego who so crudly hosted the Prince of Portugal, can not and ought not starve these poor devils. It is not just. It is not Christian to punish those who err and not feed those who hunger. I, your Excellency, never thought that in a couintry which presumes itself civilized anyone could deny food to a prisoner. 'Pão e Pau,' [the stick is their bread] was the saying around the house of my slaveholding grandparents - unpaid work and hunger. Your Excellency it is the first time I confess that I've heard that since we now have so much humanitarianism and so much religion.... Given the state of things, Your Excellency, I think it only proper to shoot this pitiful bevy of blacks, since the state doesn't have the money to feed them."

3. Palavras Loucas... to Freire de Andrade, 13 May 1909.

Comment: This editorial demonstrates Albasini's technique of playing off Portuguese xenophobia with regard to foreign languages and missions, and his appeal to liberal government.

"I'm well aware that your Excellency's mission is not to open schools, to open workshops, to open the eyes of ignorant people of Africa. Your Excellency is well aware, as are many people, that the dominance of the white race is assured by the ignorance of the negro."

"The black purposely kept in ignorance by his own government, listens to foreign missions."

"The people of Africa deserve special attention. They are your charges. Those who have no political representation look to your Excellency and see in you the liberal government of Portugal, for them your Excellency is the messenger of the King of Portugal, the Portuguese nation whose history they do not know, and of the liberal nation which promotes liberty and equality."

4. "Colonisação - (Sursum Corda!)," 13 May 1909.

Comment: Albasini plays on themes from *The Lusiads*, the epic poem of Camões, which is closely linked to Portuguese identity and its overseas missions. The editorial describes the condition of common immigrants who become broken in health, weak in will and homesick. They end up in a pine box "pulled by patient mules" and enjoy only the peace of the tomb. Albasini argues that there are better ways to develop Africa. He uses the plight of immigrants to emphasize his theme of education and investment in local people in subsequent editorials under that theme.

"It was ten o'clock in the morning on the 15th of April. The steamship *Lusitania* of the National Navegation Company was tied up at the wharf getting ready to make the sea voyage to Portugal.

Luzitania! [sic] What a name! It vaguely recalls the old *Lusiads*, those heroic times when [the Portuguese] spread out like a giant rosary and a grand sword imposing themselves and their God on dominated people, conquoring empires and kingdoms...to the great pleasure of the English gentlemen!..."

Albasini goes aboard to talk with the passengers leaving for "beloved Lisbon" and comments that the majority (94) are public servants travelling with state paid passages. He considered the number 94 "very modest, in light of the reluctance he faced trying to ascertain the number." He muses about the contradictions of sadness leaving Africa and the conviction that:

"Africa is only good for Negroes.... 'The Luzitania,' full of passengers, very gracefully casts off the wharf at 11 a.m. on its way to Lisbon, ready to face all the dangers of the uncertain sea. Boa Viagem, Luzitania!"

"I began to think about the whole process of trying to colonize Africa. I am not convinced that the present strategy is the best way to colonize Africa, to make the continent inhabitable. No, it isn't with travellers from the metropole who come only to fill their dreams. I ask, hopefully, men who understand what they read (and it's important to note that not all those in Africa who consider themselves civilized, white and important can do that), I ask those few who digest what they read, the special favor of thinking a bit about the luck reserved for Africa, of continuing with this very old system of sending people out for a stroll in the kingdom.

The common Portuguese, whom the natives call "Mumadji," always leaves Portugal with his time cherished idea of a short stroll in the land of the blacks, just enough to put together some savings and escape back to Portugal where he hopes to enjoy that wealth earned, God knows with what sacrifice, during some two, three four years.

And do they know [in the Metropole] the sacrifices these men make to save some 300 or 400$000 reis? It is a poem of pain and misery. A genuine insanity that they suffer in order to place a few pitiful silver pieces in their suitcases! Gold fever!

They live in pigsties without light, without air, four or five to a space in order to save money. They usually eat three people to one meal so that it's cheaper. [They eat...]

some stew or soup , which are more accurately puddles of water where five beans swim hopelessly in search of company, in a squalid cantina. Those beans, whose horney consistency breaks the teeth of an unsuspecting patriot, force the stomach which ingests them to turn deadly somersaults and cry out desperately...

There they know nothing of what the driven spirit, the mania for money, can drive a person to do!"

Albasini goes on to describe how such men become broken in health, weak in will and homesick. They end up in a pine box "pulled by patient mules" and will enjoy only the peace of the tomb. He argues that there are better ways to develop Africa. He uses the story to emphasize his theme of education and investment in local people in subsequent editorials under that theme.]

5. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all humanity," 22 May 1909.

Comment: Albasini complains about the Portuguese colonial administrators abuse of authority, specifically with regard to the cases of chiefs fined for not complying with the supply of forced labor, military service, road maintenance, etc. Albasini argues that the fines and imprisonment of these chiefs are excessive, and contrasts the treatment of Africans by the Portuguese with that of the African leadership which conquest displaced.

"Gungunhana's rule was a cruel tyranny, and to vanquish him your Excellency took up the your sword, your energy and put your life in service to the country and the country didn't spare any sacrifice to end the arrogance of that filthy beast.

It was a service to humanity, it was a civilization casting out the cruel "Vatua" [Nguni] tyrant at bayonette point, freeing those people of Gaza from that fierce human and substituting for him civilized, serious, throughtful men who truly possessed the scientific knowledge to govern and administer. That was fourteen years ago! And now the justice that the administration doles out in those faroff lands, Excellency, continues as cruel and iniquitous as that of Gungunhana."

6. "Para servir of paiz eu vim de Fanhoes," 5 June 1909. "Serviço Militar," 19 June 1909.

Comment: These are both editorials regarding conscription of Africans for military service. The first is one of Albasini's most beautiful pieces. He cleverly weaves images of Portuguese pride with the shame and brutality of military conscription, suggesting an aura of slavery. He reserves the words cruel, savage, ferocious, dirty, and revolting to describe African village life, in contrast to the modern waterfront of

images of Portuguese pride with the shame and brutality of military conscription, suggesting an aura of slavery. He reserves the words cruel, savage, ferocious, dirty, and revolting to describe African village life, in contrast to the modern waterfront of Lourenco Marques, the steamship bearing the governor general's name and the glory of serving one's country. The "savage" African's liberty is contrasted with the glorious soldier's slave-like status. But the image which emerges from the words is of a new kind of slavery serving the colonial power.

"One afternoon I happened to be on the wharves when the steamship *Freire de Andrade* [named after the governor general whom Albasini was clearly addressing] of the Limpopo Firm tied up. At the same moment a military force, headed by a sargent stopped in front of the steamer.

Afterwards twenty some men, very black and very sad, began to disembark, tied together at the neck, two by two. Who were these devils? What could be the reason for such a thing?...

On the wharf a sergeant and a captain, swearing and sickly forced that rabble to get into military formation and to assume a martial stance.... One of the sad prisoners looked up at the inclement sky and out to the vastness of the sea, perhaps remembering the liberty he had enjoyed as a savage, the loving company of ferocious, but much less cruel people...and who knows, perhap he was remembering some three very dirty little black children in the lap of a revolting black woman.... he was crying silently, the tears running in a ribbon down that large ebony colored face!

Then one of the soldiers, bent, crumpled and filthy with his low forehead always glancing fearfully behind him, ... one of the numbskulls of such a roundup, was pleased to catch a glimpse of this Negro crying.... He grabbed the man and was vigorously applauded by a round of gaffaws from his comrades: even beasts cry!

It was five o'clock in the evening. The sun was over the side of Matolla, envelopped in its ruby-eyed ray of light, it was about to set, to hide itself so as not to see, so many things in this grotesque world!

Later the blacks, still tied together by the neck two by two, surrounded by a square of bayonettes which gleamed in the sun of a just God, travelled along the roads of this city on their way to the Police headquarters — a kind of purgatory where they prepare souls for exhaulted bliss.

Days after this scene another contingent arrived in this same place with the same destiny, and in Inhambane another and another and at this hour other contingents are enroute to serve the country.

The country needs soldiers. Enough is enough."

Appendix B

Catalog and Examples from Albasini's Serial Columns

"Vozes de Burro" Serial Column

O Africano

Part I - 20 September 1913

Part II 11 October 1913

Part III 15 October 1913

Part IV not in microfilm collection

Part V 22 November 1913

Part VI 31 December 1913 (lead editorial)

"A Tal Portaria" Serial Column

O Africano

24 January 1917

27 January 1917

21 February 1917

19 September 1917

20 July 1918

7 August 1918

Brado Africano, some title variation

1 January 1919

1 March 1919

19 April 1919

19 July 1919

3 Jan 1920

28 February 1920

22 May 1920

7 May 1921

3 September 1921

Comments:

Albasini draws out the the assimilation legislation's racist assumption that "civilization" and skin color are directly related. Whites do not have to prove their status as "civilized people" in order to enjoy full civic privileges, it is taken for granted. Whereas Africans are assumed "uncivilized" until they can prove otherwise. Albasini considered the assimilation document a humiliating "collar" which the Portuguese required educated Africans to wear around their neck to remind them that, regardless of their education, they were still black. He refused the "collar of assimilation" because he felt it conveyed only a fettered, second class citizenship and because he opposed the principle that any bureaucratic process should stand between him and his citizenship. (19 April 1919, *Brado Africano*)

Examples:

27 January 1917

> "Portugal sends unclean and illiterate 'kubvanas' [ordinary immigrants] and criminals here [as deportees] to live off rural African women, must we assimilate to be equal to them?

20 January 1918

> "Are cattle assimilated tigers?"

7 August 1918

"When the King of Portugal gave Prazo titles to the Donas of Zambezia ,the famous mulattoes, he didn't demand an assimilation document.... But now, of course, we must be careful that African medical doctors don't revert to the customs and traditions of their forefathers!... But what about the black and non-black Muslims living in the city suburbs who regularly roast goats to Allah? Don't they need an assimilation document?... If color is the issue, what about those many Europeans in the city streets today who are darker than those considered Africans? ...What about the illustrious mulatto government officials of the turn of the century: the Pereiras, Correias, Leandros, and Gamas. They all died in the early 1890s with thirty to forty years of distinguished service to the state. If they were alive today they couldn't attend the ball held in their honor without an assimilation document!"

4 January 1919

"If Africans have to pay [for an assimilation document] to prove they are civilized and fit to mix with whites why not tax whites who are uncivilized and live in common law arrangements with Africans?

28 February 1920

"Portugal with its high illiteracy rate requires educated Africans to carry an assimilation document in order to buy white bread [periodically reserved for Europeans during flour shortages]. Literate, educated Africans are then required to show the document to the [Portuguese] baker who doesn't know how to read [the document]!