



Unique features of the Goa Inquisition

Ep 5 | The Goa Inquisition: New Scholarship on the State and Religious Violence

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With

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Dale Luis Menezes: Hello and welcome to this special web series on the Goa Inquisition. The series introduces you to the most recent research produced by internationally recognized scholars. I am Dale Luis Menezes.

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Our guest will give you a glimpse of their research as well as the resource that has taken place over the last 50 or more years. You will hear directly from the experts about the nature of state and religious violence as well as the challenges a historian faces in researching a difficult topic such as the history of the Inquisition. Our web series aims to educate the general public about the various aspects of this historical phenomena.

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The web series is supported by the Al-Zulajj Collective in Goa. Additionally, the series is also supported by the History of the Inquisitions group, it is a group of scholars spread across the world and they have institutional support from the Center for Religious History Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal and of the Chair of Sephardic Studies Alberto Benveniste at the University of Lisbon. We thank them all for their generous moral support.

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Our guest today is Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço. He is a researcher based at CHAM or Centro de Humanidades at the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa in Lisbon. The Center for Religious History Studies, Catholic University of Portugal and also at the Chair of Sephardic Studies Alberto Benveniste at the University of Lisbon. He is the author of 'A Articulação da Periferia: Macau e a Inquisição de Goa', which was published in 2016. He has edited the trial record of Catarina da Orta (with Carla Costa Viera and Susana Mateus) under the 'Serie Goana' series and has authored numerous papers on the topic. Welcome!

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Thank you.

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Dale Luis Menezes: To begin with, I wanted to get a general sense of the scholarly perspectives in the last 50 odd years. Could you tell us, in brief, how scholars have studied the history of the Inquisition in Europe and overseas. Over here, I'm curious to know what you think are the major development in the scholarship.

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: The scholarship on the Portuguese Inquisition, maybe in the same sense as scholarships on the other Inquisitions for a moment they thrived on notorious cases tried by the Inquisition. There is even a book by António Baião, which has that specific title 'Episódios Dramáticos da Inquisição Portuguesa'—so dramatic episodes from the Portuguese Inquisition.

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Over the course of the 20th century another issue focused by scholarship was the relationship or the activities, the trials conducted by the Portuguese inquisition against New Christians, so those people from Jewish heritage that had been converted to Christianity in the last years of the 15th century.

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Also, as the 20th century draws to its close, there was also an important contribution on the part of Brazilian historiography, which conducted studies on other kinds of offenses. I'm thinking sorcery and I am thinking sodomy, so from there the Brazilian historiography also played a very important contribution in this regard.

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Interestingly, it was also a sort of 'institutional turn' that the scholarship on the Portuguese Inquisition had at the end of the 20th century. So, you saw gradually as the attention of scholars transitioned not only from its (Inquisition's) victims—transitioned to those agents that represented the tribunals in the farthest reaches of their inquisitorial districts. I am talking about the 'Commissarios', I'm talking about the 'familiares'.

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So, you can see how the historiography of offenses gradually, without ever losing that side, became also a historiography very much focused on the workings of the institution itself, something that had been—I would not say a trend, but that had an initial moment of development in the beginning of the 20th century, with the works of António Baião—but that

sadly was discontinued, if you will, by later historiography.



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Dale Luis Menezes: Thank you. Yeah, so we have touched upon many topics. And I just want to explore a little bit. So, as I understand, the shift has been from a study of the people who were tried and executed by the Inquisition to the inner workings of the administrative machinery, if I may, over the course of some decades. Is that right?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: That is correct. And this dual development, if you will, has not changed as there is very much a vested interest in furthering the study on the victims themselves, especially on this, if you consider also the Brazilian historiography, as I've mentioned before, which is considering not only, let's say the defendants from European extraction but also natives from Brazil or natives from Angola.

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And their responses to conversion, to Catholicism, to hybridism. You can see how much the studies on the defendants are being pursued in this regard, whereas in Portugal, for example, we have nowadays a strong trend of studying, as you mentioned, the inner workings of the Inquisition and how the Inquisition was able to manifest its presence in territories beyond the proximity of its headquarters.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Right. So, before we move on to the next question. I just wanted to you to tell us in brief, you mentioned the 'commisarios', if that's how it's pronounced, or 'familiares', so what are these things? Could you give a sense very quickly to our viewers?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Yes, the Inquisition requires agents to act on its behalf on what I call in my research 'the peripheries' of its districts. Each tribunal had its own district. A geography that is under its jurisdiction. And it requires agents to act on its behalf in villages, cities, away from the headquarters.

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From the place where the tribunal has its seat. So those agents are either 'commissaries' or 'comissários', who is an ecclesiastical agent that has been specifically 'abilitado' is the word in Portuguese, the translation will be scrutinized in terms of the purity of his blood in order to ascertain if he had either Jewish or Moorish descent. And if he had [Jewish or Moorish blood], he was ruled as unable to serve the tribunal and the 'familiares' was a non-ecclesiastical agent. So, someone who would also request the 'abilitação' or the proof of purity of blood in

order to serve the tribunal in any way it (Inquisition) deems fit.



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Dale Luis Menezes: That was very helpful. What I wanted to ask you next was related to what we had talked about, about the development of the historiography. It seems to me that, as you describe it, the current state of research focuses on the institution as a trans-regional entity. Or is pushing research in recognizing the institution as a trans-regional one. Is that an accurate sense, or a fair sense, of the current historiography?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: I'd say it is a point of arrival in recent studies on the Inquisition. Studies on the Inquisition tended to be very much localized and received in terms of the inquisitorial action, that is to say, a paradigm in which the inquisitorial realities perceived as a movement that has its point of origin in the center, in the tribunal, that act upon the periphery, let's say, any sort of village or city under its jurisdiction.

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What we have today, and this is a reality of the 21st century that owes very much to the studies of scholars such as Giuseppe Marcocci and José Pedro Paiva, who presented the inquisitorial phenomenon in holistic terms. That is to say, they tried to answer the question, not so much as in what consisted of the inquisitorial action, but what makes the inquisitorial action possible (in the first place).

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How can the Inquisition exist in a specific society? What supports that existence? That gives you a broader picture, a picture of the workings of the Inquisition that is not so localized. So, that is what when you say 'trans-regional', that is the state that we [scholarship] are at right now. To look at the Inquisition not in terms of its activity in a specific place but to look at it as part of a society, and that society is, yes, I believe the term is correct, 'trans-regional', of course.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, I think that at this point it's good to talk about your research, in particular, your book. It focused on the institutional reach of the Goa Inquisition in Macau. What does the book focus on specifically and what are your findings? Could you tell us in brief?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Well, when I began my research on Macau, there was this notion, this ingrained notion, that the Inquisition had never reached Macau in any way. That is a

notion that had been supported by Charles Boxer, who is, maybe the most prominent figure of scholarship on Macau of the 20th century. It had been repeated in a novel, by Austin Coates, a British novelist who wrote on Macau.

Violence

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When I began my studies there was the notion that Macau was apart from that Inquisitorial reality. That somehow it would seem that the Inquisition had touched every Portuguese society in its expansion, except Macau. One day, as I was working on the Inquisition of Goa more broadly, I came across a bundle of documents, this big, purely on Macau!

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So, from there I tried to make sense of that documentation and what I came to realize is that Macau was not a society that was exempt in any way from the Inquisition. If we compared the inquisitorial cases regarding people of Macau tried by the Inquisition of Goa, if you compare them, for instance, with Mozambique, specifically the Portuguese settlement in Mozambique Island, well, we'd have triple of the cases or even more that we have there (Mozambique).

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So, it was not a society that was outside this inquisitorial reality that encompassed really every Portuguese society. It was very much a part of it. The Inquisition had its commissary in Macau, its representative there who was charged with sending accusations produced by Macau's inhabitants to the tribunal and act on the tribunal's orders.

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It (the agent in Macau) was perceived as a locus of power in such a way that the commissary of the Holy Office was actually employed as a means of power in social struggles between different factions in Macau over the course of the 17th century. There is actually a reference to the three schisms of Macau, which were events in which ecclesiastical factions faced each other. And the commissaries of the Holy Office reclaimed their jurisdiction from the Holy Office to have some sort of advantage in that social and ecclesiastical struggle.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, the way you study the Inquisition in Macau is to also look at these internal power struggles?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Well, there is sometimes the tendency to consider the inquisitorial phenomenon only from the point of view of, or by only using, case trials. And the thing is that the Inquisition existed in society. And the only way that the Inquisition can act

upon a certain society is if it has the validation, if it has the support of society itself.



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But specifically of the agents, their interests, its business too. Macau being a society where ^{Violence} there were so many interests regarding the commerce between China and Japan, and also the access of religious orders to those locations and access to those missions. Religious orders who dependent on these subventions of the Crown to support those missions, but whose subventions were insufficient to that support.

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They also participated in trading between China and Japan. Macau was a very competitive society. Owing to the lack of sympathy that existed between Jesuits on the one side, and other mendicant orders on the other side, for instance such as Franciscans or Dominicans or Augustinians in Macau, this led to an attempt to secure places of power, such as the government of the bishopric or the bishopric itself or the Commission of the Holy Office which was the patent that the Holy Office conferred to the person who would be their commissary.

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And when conflicts between those orders occurred in Macau, the Commission of the Holy Office would be evoked (invoked) to supposedly grant its possessor with an ecclesiastical jurisdiction that would turn the balance of the struggle towards one side or the other side.

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Dale Luis Menezes: That's a great illustration and perhaps we could that we could shift our attention to Goa from Macau. You speak about the spatial and administrative limits or the everyday needs of the Inquisition in Goa and Macau, but you also speak about local demands in the functioning of the inquisitorial tribunals. Could you elaborate that for the Goa case?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Well, I think the most common notion associated with the Inquisition, be at Goa or at any other Tribunal, is the notion of an omnipotent institution. And rarely do we ask ourselves, something that we already spoke about, and that is how can a tribunal exist? How can a tribunal act on a given society?

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And in the case of Goa, we have to take into consideration that the Inquisition of Goa existed in the Estado da Índia, and the Estado da Índia is the administrative and governing structure that the Portuguese had from East Africa to Japan. So, there is the need to cover all that territory. Of course, that coverage, if you will, it's always unequal. It is impossible to act in the same way in the entirety of that geography.

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And so, what do we have here? We have an institution that in order to work, it requires at least notaries or secretaries. On a geography that always had insufficient human resources to support the functions of the government of the Estado da Índia.

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So, the Inquisition of Goa also had those same problems, a lack of human personnel to conduct the affairs that it needs to conduct. It also requires deputies, that is to say, officials from the Inquisition that are required to assist the Inquisitors in the trials they conduct and to provide their vote on any given sentence.

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Dale Luis Menezes: I just wanted to say that this is an important intervention that we need to consider the practical or the logistical requirements of the institution and not imagine it as an omnipotent one, especially given the fact that the geography of the Portuguese Empire was really vast and they had to sail the seas, and it took months on end for any command from say Europe or Goa to reach any other part of the Empire.

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So, I think that's a good point that you made. I wanted to ask you, what is the state of the research on the Goa Inquisition more specifically? I know you've talked about in general terms about the European historiography, or the overseas historiography, you mentioned Brazil in particular. Are there any major developments you see in the historiography of the Goa Inquisition?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Well, when I look at the historiography of the Goa Inquisition, its trajectory from the 19th century, I see it, if you will, as a 'historiography of hiccups'! That is to say, you have these moments where a specific work is produced on the Goa Inquisition that provides a significant amount of new results, let's say the narrative of Charles Dellon, published in Portuguese by the Goan scholar Miguel Vicente D'Abreu in 1866. It was profusely annotated.

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He inserted so many documents in support of the comprehension of this account by Charles Dellon, an account of the 17th century of his experience, the experience of this Frenchman as a defendant in the Goa Inquisition.

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And then we have to wait until the 1930s and the 1940s for yet another significant study to

emerge on the Goan Inquisition, which is the study by António Baião who does a comprehensive study on the Goan Inquisition, and who also publishes the letters sent from Goa to Lisbon by the Inquisitors of Goa between 1569 and 1630. And then we have to wait some decades for the new study, famous and infamous, by Anant Kakba Priolkar in 1961.

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And then yet again, we need to wait until 1995 for another study by Ana Cannas da Cunha, on the beginnings of the Goa Inquisition. So, what is interesting to consider is that while there are some articles being produced here and there, from the 19th century to the late 20th century, these studies do not result in systematic analysis on the activities of the Goa Inquisition.

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Actually today, it is the Brazilian historiography [scholars], which is just now starting to conduct more systematic analysis on the Goa Inquisition, specifically on one of its sources. The famous 'Reportório' or an index or the list, if you will, of defendants between 1561 and 1623.

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So, people are looking at the 'Reportorio' to draw information on what was the activity of the Goa Inquisition, considering that, well, we do not have the case trials anymore. The archive of the Goa Inquisition was destroyed at the beginning of the 19th century, so this source has been the focus of much analysis lately.

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Also, as a new trend on the studies of the Goa Inquisition is the higher attention that scholars are paying not to the traditional enemy, if you will, of the Inquisition, which were people accused of Judaism, these New Christians that I've mentioned earlier, but to the native populations under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition of Goa.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, you use the word 'hiccups', which I thought was very interesting way to put it. So, would you be able to say something about why we only have these hiccups? So, for instance, what I mean is that, why Miguel Vicente D'Abreu in 1866 did the work, and then António Baião and so on. Or, do we need more research about these 'historiographical moments'? What, what can you say about why those particular moments?

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One of the things that we've discussed early in this talk of ours was how much of the scholarship on the Inquisition depended on notorious cases. Well, those notorious cases are

very much absent in the case of the Inquisition of Goa because, well, we lack the trial



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For instance, another Goan scholar in the beginning of the 20th century published a paper on one of the notorious cases of the Inquisition of Goa over this Capuchin friar, French Capuchin friar, Ephraim de Navarre, which another scholar recently also worked on, Paolo Aranha.

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But Ismael Gracias, for instance, worked from secondhand accounts because, of course, his case trial is absent. It does not exist anymore. And there is a reason why, for instance, Miguel Vicente D'Abreu began by reading Dellon, because Dellon produced the narrative on the Inquisition of Goa in the second half of the 17th century.

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So, you have their comprehensive account of its workings that compensates, in a way, the fact that you do not have the object, the documental objects that people mostly use to write a history of the Inquisition, which is the trial records. And it is not by chance that so many articles of scholars of the 20th century, such as Glenn Ames, Célia Tavares have focused on Dellon, because it provides what you would otherwise have if you had the trial records.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So in that case would you be able to—I understand that there is difficulty because there is very little archive or no archive at all regarding the Inquisition. So would you be able to characterize and describe the Goa Inquisition, in a way, you say in your work, from what I've read, that there is something unique about the Tribunal in Goa. What makes you come to such a conclusion?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: So the uniqueness of the Goa Inquisition, I think, it is even far more unique than what I initially expected. That uniqueness I realized only after I completed my dissertation. And that comes from looking at the Goa Inquisition from a geographical perspective.

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I've mentioned that its jurisdiction was a response to the Estado da Índia. But geographically what does that mean? If you think of an archipelago, in terms of effective jurisdiction, that is to say, the locations where the Inquisition of Goa can actually represent itself.

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Fortresses, cities, settlements with some sort of royal authority. That's the jurisdiction of the Inquisition of Goa, scattered across the east coast of Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.

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In order for you to say that the Inquisition of Goa effectively exists in those locations, you need to coordinate monsoons in order to establish communications between the center that is to say, the tribunal and its diverse peripheries, that is to say the commissaries that the Inquisition has in locations such as Malacca, such as Macau, such as Nagasaki such as Cochin, etc, etc.

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So you require coordinating the monsoons but you need vessels to do that. If you do not have vessels, you have no way to communicate with those locations. If you cannot communicate with those locations, the district doesn't really exist as such. So when I began my studies that's what I saw.

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It is something that is maybe similar to the Inquisition of Lisbon, which also had a non-European territory under its jurisdiction. It had Brazil, Angola, and the Atlantic islands. So it also needs vessels to ensure communication and articulating those peripheries to the center. But those communications were generally not imperiled in the way that communications in the Estado da Índia were, well after other European powers came to the scene, it did not have to suffer the same kind of disruption that some locations in the Estado da Índia suffered when the Dutch or English came to the scene.

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What I realized afterwards, well, if you think a little bit further on the matter—we are talking about the only tribunal you know that exists in a full colonial setting. There was no tribunal in Brazil. The Atlantic possessions of the Portuguese Crown were always under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition of Goa.

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And the Inquisition of Goa is the only one that does not have any sort of jurisdiction over a European territory. It furthermore exists on an island, close to two other provinces, the Velhas Conquistas that are separated from the, what the Portuguese sources call 'terras dos mouros', lands of Moors or, if you will, the universe of 'gentilidade', which is to say, the realm of those who are Gentiles, who are neither Moors nor Christians.

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So we are talking about basically a territory that is very close to a non-Christianized environment, that has jurisdiction over majority of populations that is not directly from European extraction and that's due to the shortcomings or limits of evangelization or the process of conversion itself.

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And to the easiness with which (one could) cross rivers (around Goa) and go into these 'lands of the Moors' or the 'Realm of gentilidade'. One could easily go back to their local practices that ecclesiastical authorities in Goa had prohibited. So, it is a very unique environment for a tribunal that focuses on religious offenses to act on.

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And in fact, you have a kind of a specific type of religious offense, that to my knowledge is unique in the context of the Portuguese inquisitorial system, which is an offense called precisely 'gentilidade' which makes up most of the offenses tried by the Inquisition of Goa in the duration of its existence.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, its uniqueness results out of the fact that it was the only overseas tribunal in a colonial setting. So that's one. Secondly, it had its limits right? Geographical limits, political limits, administrative limits and that limit itself creates this new legal or religio-legal category of 'gentilidade' that gives the tribunal a certain uniqueness.

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The other question that I wanted to ask you is about the 'processo', the trial record of Catharina da Orta that you edited and recently published. You made a primary source available. And this is also something that is related to the Inquisition in Goa because Catharina da Orta, the sister of Garcia da Orta, was resident in Goa for some time. Tell us a bit about the 'processo'.

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Of course, we are talking about trial record that was originally produced and conducted between 1568 and 1569. And to my knowledge, it is the oldest case held against a New Christian woman by the Inquisition of Goa that still exists today. We—meaning myself, and with the other two researchers who are Carla Vieira and Susana Bastos Mateus—we published that trial under the 'Serie Goana', which is a collection that is being published by the Chair of Sephardic Studies Alberto Benveniste.

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It is trying to make available trial records and other sorts of documents pertaining to New

Christians that were produced by the Inquisition of Goa. This aims to respond to a basic need that every scholar that studies the Inquisition of Goa feels, that is the lack of documents available on that tribunal's activity.



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And we had the fortune that this particular trial record was sent to Lisbon in the early 1580s, well not so much after the actual trial. Because the congregation of the Holy Office in Rome was conducting at the time of trial against her daughter, so it requested the Inquisition in Portugal, for information on her (the daughter's) parents and the Inquisition in Portugal requested the Inquisition of Goa for a copy of the trial of Catharina da Orta, which is the only reason why that trial still exists today.

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And well, we tried in that book to more or less accompany the journey of Catharina da Orta from her native town of Castelo de Verde in Alentejo to Lisbon where she had suffered a first trial by the Inquisition of Lisbon, and then to Goa. We tried to focus on Catharina da Orta herself because while—evidently, Garcia da Orta and his work is much more interesting to scholars than the life of his sister. So that particular trial, which we did not discover—that trial is known for a very long time since the first half of the 20th century.

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So we try to look at from the perspective, not of her brother's life but from the perspective of her life, her needs and her sufferings.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Now that we know that we have some documents and some of them are being made available, it also brings the question of how to read sources and something that we asked scholars on this series to give our viewers a glimpse of how the historian works.

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What are the difficulties that a historian faces. So, I want to know your experience as a researcher, as a trained historian working on the topic, on a topic whose archives are either lost or, fragmentary, are very minimal. What are the methodological challenges you face? By that, I want you to give our viewers a glimpse of how hard or easy, which I know it's not, but how hard or easy it is to work on this topic.

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Well, I have to tell you my experience is one of pure envy, envy towards those scholars that work on other tribunals, such as the Inquisition of Lisbon or the Inquisition of Évora or the Inquisition of Coimbra or even other tribunals whose archives are

so well preserved, such as in Mexico.



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Because they all have in a more or less complete way, complete is not the best way to put it, ^{Violence} but their holdings are very well preserved, even if you don't have all the cases, all the trial records that were produced. You have [still] thousands of them. And for the Inquisition of Goa you do not have that! You have some case trials that were sent to Lisbon to the General Council of the Holy Office for matters of procedural doubts, issues that had to deal with the way a case should be tried.

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So that allowed for specific trials to be preserved until today. But basically, I had to resort to the correspondence sent from Goa to Lisbon. I had to resort to what in Portuguese is called 'consultas' or questions regarding specific judicial issues. I had to resort to requirements and those are all documents that allows us to have a notion of what was the activity of the Inquisition of Goa, even if we do not benefit from the actual trial records.

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But at the same time, we also need to look outside the documentation that the tribunal itself produces. Every society has tensions and the Viceroys of Goa complained abundantly of how the Inquisition meddled in affairs that they considered had nothing to do with their own jurisdiction. So correspondence is sent from the Viceroy to Lisbon also has tremendous information on the 'Sitz im Leben', if you will, of the Inquisition in Goa.

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So one of the avenues that need to be pursued in the future in order to acquire a deeper understanding of the role that the Inquisition of Goa played, in that particular society, the Society of Goa and its immediate surroundings, we need to look beyond the documents produced by the Tribunal itself.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Thank you. So, before I let you go. I have one final question, and I just wanted to know what you're currently working on? Would you be able to give us a glimpse of what are the projects? What are the irons in the fire, so to speak, right now?

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: So, one of the topics that has been on my mind for quite some time is the 'Naique'. The Naique is mentioned in Portuguese inquisitorial documents as an official of the Inquisition, an agent of the Inquisition who comes from local extraction, who had functions in terms of interpretation of native languages, local languages and who was

instructed with conducting certain due diligences [duties] by the Inquisition of Goa in locations where Portuguese was not the predominantly spoken language. He was an agent that also served as an assistant to the commissaries of the Holy Office in Bardez, in Salcette, but also in Macau.

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So, I'm interested in studying how this person who is not a Portuguese from the kingdom but who has been evidently brought into Christianity or Catholicism, how is it that this person comes into the employ of the Inquisition of Goa and how that person viewed the Inquisition of Goa as a means to provide him with a different status in society.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Thank you, that that seems to be a very interesting topic. I think we will learn a lot. To me it seems very significant that this person who was in the employ of the Inquisition was also called as a 'Naique' or, you know, from the 'Nayaka' which was, especially in the past was kind of a military commander.

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On that note, I would like to thank you for your time, for sharing your knowledge with us. You've given us a lot to think about. You've expanded our sense of the institution geographically, in the sense of expanding to the whole of the globe, from Brazil to Macau. And, most importantly, I think, you've stressed that we need to think about the limits, about the context, the social, geographical, and economic contexts of how the institution existed in the past. So for all that I thank you again. Thank you.

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Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço: Thank you.



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