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With

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Dale Luis Menezes: Hello and welcome to this special 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 guests will give you a glimpse of the research as well as the resource that has taken place over the last half-century. 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 phenomenon.

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Our guest today is Professor Bruno Feitler. Professor Feitler has a PhD in history from the School of Advanced Studies and Social Sciences, Paris. He teaches Early Modern History at the Universidade Federal de São Paulo in Brazil. He's a specialist in the history of the Portuguese 'conversos' or New Christians, and the history of the Catholic Church, and particularly the Inquisition in the Portuguese Empire. He has authored many scholarly articles as well as books such as *Nas malhas da consciência: Igreja e Inquisição no Brasil*, which was published in 2007 and *The Imaginary Synagogue: Anti-Jewish Literature in the Portuguese Early Modern World* which was published in 2015.

Professor Feitler. Welcome!



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Bruno Feitler: Thank you. Thank you, Dale. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. Religious Violence

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Dale Luis Menezes: Let me begin with the first question pertaining to the fact that you are a Brazilian scholar interested in or doing work on the history of the Goan Inquisition. Towards the end of the last decade, some of us in Goa who were interested in good scholarly writings on the Inquisition started hearing that some scholars in Brazil were writing about the Inquisition, the Goan Inquisition.

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I actually have been hearing your name for quite some time now, so it's a double pleasure for me to talk to you here. To us, it seemed a bit strange that scholars in distant Brazil were interested in the topic. Could you let us know why scholars in Brazil got interested in writing about the Goa Inquisition?

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Bruno Feitler: Oh, it's a very interesting question. When you start studying some topics, we don't always meditate a lot about this. But, well, there is one...[way of] thinking about this. I think we can separate this into [two] different levels. One thing is that Brazil and Goa, were both colonies of Portugal and after studying the activity of the Portuguese Inquisition in Brazil it would be interesting to have a comparative paradigm [model] with another territory. Another colonial Portuguese territory.

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And, of course, there are dozens of huge differences between Brazil and Goa regarding the culture, regarding the local population, etc. But it would have been maybe this maybe possibility of comparing maybe not so [much] the repression and the people that were persecuted, but how the Inquisition acted.

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How the Inquisition acted in Brazil and Goa, or in Estado da Índia in Portuguese Asia could be compared in certain ways. So, this is one of the reasons why Brazilian [scholars] specializing in the Inquisition would get interested in studying Inquisition in Goa. And the other thing is that... it's more curious maybe, is the fact that in the National Library in Rio de Janeiro, the main National National Library in Brazil, we have a very important set of documents relating to the Goa Inquisition.

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In fact, they are the only surviving documents of the original archives of the Goa Inquisition. Episode 1 | The Goa Inquisition: New Scholarship on the State and Religious Violence
They are kept in the Brazilian national library in Rio de Janeiro. So, nowadays we can access that online, but this has been possible only since two years ago, more or less. So beforehand [earlier], like them maybe 10, 15 years ago, going to the National Library [in Rio de Janeiro], if I wanted to research the 'Inquisition', the main thing that would appear would be the Goa Inquisition. So, of course, I would go and start looking at that, and that would also be one of the reasons why people would start studying the Goa Inquisition in Brazil.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, what we have here is one, the connect with the former Empire and the other was that the sources the surviving document in Rio de Janeiro. So that brings me to my second question. You wrote about these archives that survived and are now lodged in Rio de Janeiro. Could you tell our viewers, what were the causes for the loss of most of these documents?

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Bruno Feitler: Well, the Goa Inquisition was first abolished in 1774. At that moment, all the archives that were in Goa, were sent to Lisbon in 1774. Four years later, the Tribunal was restored and the archives were sent back to Goa.

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Because as it was recreated, the Inquisitor needed all the archives back, they needed the information again. So, the archives were sent back to Goa. Then, more or less 30 years later, a bit less, in 1812, [at the] beginning of the 19th century, it was finally abolished.

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[It was] of Goa, not yet of the Portuguese Inquisition. The Portuguese Inquisition was still working in Portugal, but in Goa in 1812 because of an agreement with the British. The Regent Dom João decided to abolish the Inquisition of Goa. So, the Viceroy of the time together with the Regent who was at that time in Rio de Janeiro, had to decide what to do with the archives.

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People were worried that if the archives were kept maybe the Inquisition could be recreated once more. It would be too much of a trouble to have it [the archives] transported completely back to Portugal. It was also impossible because it was occupied by the French. And so, the Viceroy proposed to have it [the archives] burnt down.

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Also, because they were very sensitive documents, because they were related to heresy, to a lot of families that were still there. So, he thought it'd be a good idea to have the documents to be returned. So, the Viceroy proposed to the Regent Dom João who was in Rio de Janeiro, and he agreed to that. And he [Dom João] just said that the someone who should just choose some important documents to have them kept and sent them to the Court which was at that time in Rio de Janeiro.

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And that's why those documents were then sent to Rio, and that's why they are still now in the National Library in Rio. In fact, the documents that were chosen were not specifically very important documents. But in fact, only the correspondence that were sent from Lisbon by the Inquisitor General to the Inquisitors in Goa. So that's mainly the documents that are now in Rio de Janeiro that can be viewed online.

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Maybe, maybe someday we'll find some other documents. Surviving documents from the Inquisition of Goa. But as far as we know those [in Rio] are the only ones that are surviving today.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, the most important ones, let's say the trial records, were mostly burnt and destroyed. Right?

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Bruno Feitler: Yes. So, that's a good point. There are some copies [of the trials] that were sent during the whole history of the Court in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries that were sent to Lisbon because of legal matters. Some copies, not originals, were sent and are nowadays kept in the Torre do Tombo [in Lisbon].

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[They are] mixed up with the trials of the Court of Lisbon, some dozen [trials] maybe...But the original ones, the thousands were destroyed, were burned down. Some were burned down earlier, in the beginning of the 18th century, when there was a Maratha invasion of Goa and the Inquisitors were worried what would happen to the archives. And then they themselves, they decided to burn down some of the documents. So, some of the archive was already destroyed in the beginning of the 18th century, in that context.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Okay, we have various moments in which these documents were destroyed for various reasons. So, towards the end or in the early part of the 19th century,

when it was decided, that these documents should be destroyed, was there any logic in deciding which to keep and which to destroy?



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Bruno Feitler: No, the correspondence speaks about someone...a notary of the Inquisition to choose some important documents, that was more or less the sentence, the phrase that was that is in the document [correspondence]. But what we find nowadays in Rio is a whole series, seven volumes...originally seven volumes of the correspondence that was sent from Lisbon from the Central Organization [Body] of the Inquisition, the Inquisitor General or the Conselho Geral to the Inquisitors of Goa.

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It's very interesting documentation, but it depends on what we want to know, of course. So, in a certain sense, it's so interesting to work with that documentation, because it's a seriated [chronologically arranged] documentation.

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It's all the letters that were received by the Inquisitors at Goa [sent] by the central government of the Inquisition [at Lisbon]. But they speak about a whole multitude of subjects. Regarding specific cases, regarding money, regarding the necessity of redoing the Palace of the Inquisition, regarding the health of the Inquisitors. So, you have a lot of different information in this documents.

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Dale Luis Menezes: My next question is also about a source. And this is a very unique and valuable source for historians like you who study the Goa Inquisition and this is the Reportorio by the Dominican friar (sic) , João Delgado Figueira. Could you let us know what is the Reportorio and why is it an important source?

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Bruno Feitler: In fact, João Delgado Figueira was not Dominican. He was...a priest [SHARES HIS SCREEN]. And he was the prosecutor of the of the Inquisition.

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When he arrived in Goa, he was Portuguese and when he was sent to Goa as a prosecutor, he was responsible for the organization of the archive, among other things. When he arrived in Goa, he noticed that the archives were not well organized and there were some documents that were already in a very bad shape Missing pages or pieces and etc.

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So, he decided to reorganize the archive. So he [re]organized the archive, the whole processos [trial records]. The the acts [records] of the trials and he made a list of all these documents and this list is the Reportorio.

Religious Violence

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And what I did with some students some years ago, is to organize, as you can see in this site. On this side, it's English. If you need some more details here and here if you go in documents. You have here a little example of what was in the document itself. The list of all the cases that were tried by the Inquisition of Goa, not all the cases because already at that time in 1623 when he did it, there are already some trials, some processos, that had already disappeared. Because of the weather, because of bad maintenance, etc.

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So, but he listed more or less 3800 cases and that list is what he sent to Lisbon. [The abstract] of each one of them [cases] organized by year. So, you have the name of the person, what was his ethnic [belonging]: like Christão Velho [Old Christian] here.

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This was Esperança, a Christão da terra, so she was a native Christian. Who were the parents, like in the case of this lady, Esperança? She was the daughter of gentile parents, baptized [as] adults, native of the island of Diu, of the city of Diu, and married and also, of course, it always would have the person who are married are or not [or the civil status], the name of the husband or wife, the reason why the person was arrested. She [Esperança] was arrested for bigamy; and what the what happened with her. She had to pay a levy [fine], that's what happened with person usually arrested for bigamy.

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Who was the Inquisitor who signed the sentence, and then we have the date here and the number of the trial of that said year. She was arrested in 1622 because here we have 1623. So, this is the kind of document [the Reportorio]. He [João Delgado Figueira] listed the 3800 documents that he found when he arrived in Goa, [the cases] that were tried between 1561 until 1623 when he arrived in Goa. So, it's a very important document because we don't have the processos [trial records] anymore.

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And here in this site that I organized with some students, we organized them in an Excel database, so anyone can consult now. You don't need to read that handwriting! They can be consulted directly on Excel.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Yeah, that's, that's very interesting now that you've shown us the document but then also have the transcription. The handwriting can be pretty tricky, especially the early modern handwriting and I can personally vouch for that knowing how difficult even [early modern] English handwriting is sometimes.

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So, so thanks for the glimpse of the Reportorio. Could you tell us how we can search for these documents in the Rio library?

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Bruno Feitler: I will share the web page of the Brazilian National Library [SHARES HIS SCREEN].

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Dale Luis Menezes: I can see, thank you.

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Bruno Feitler: So, this is the webpage for the Brazilian National Library. So here if you go to the acervo digital and then it opens and then you have your collections. And then if you go here in collections, you have very different collections and there is a collection Inquisição de Goa.

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And the thing, the problem is that it's all mixed up. It's all completely out of order. But anyway, if you just go to buscar, which means search then it will all show up here. You have 1819 registers, as I said, there are nine volumes, they are separated in nine volumes, but those nine volumes are here separated in the document itself. So then when you click in it. The document opens and you can read the document. So that's how...

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Dale Luis Menezes: Yeah, thank you. Some of some of these catalogs are not always the easiest to navigate. But I think, I think, more focused study would need someone to go page by page.

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Bruno Feitler: Yeah, you can go by a year. Anno is year. Right, so you can choose the year if you are, or it's not very well done. But anyway, at least it's a way of going there. It's easier than taking the plane nowadays to Rio de Janeiro.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Yeah.



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Bruno Feitler: And you can search by title issue. If you are searching for something specific. But as I said, some of those documents are letters and they are very detailed that speaks of tons of different things. So, it's...

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Dale Luis Menezes: Like the everyday issues that come up in the functioning of the Tribunal.

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Bruno Feitler: Yeah. Yeah, so it's very general but you can search by names or dates or something, so that's the way to do it.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So having, having given a sense of what the document looks like what it is, how it is structured, how should one use it again. In what way can a historian use it?

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We know that it is not the whole data. It's just a fragment. It's a summary, an abstract, or whatever you might call it. So, what's the larger picture? How can we draw a larger picture out of this [fragmentary] source, from such a very important source, as you say?

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Bruno Feitler: Well, until now, it was very difficult to use it because, as I said, it was, it is organized by year and by gender, first man. And then completely separated from women. So you have all the men that were [tried and] sentenced. Tried in 1561, then 1562 etc. etc. So it's not [organized] by the kind of crime, or by region, or by year, because you have in different places all those years.

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So putting out together in a database, it's possible to try to recompose the Autos da Fé, for instance. How many people were sentenced together in an Autos da Fé in Goa. Strangely, they seem to have been very small.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, the Autos da Fé is the burning at the stake, right?

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Bruno Feitler: No, no, no, no. The Autos da Fé is the reading of the sentences...Of the verdicts.

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Autos da Fé, in fact, mainly is the reading of the verdict and not the penances of all the people. Nowadays, we use Autos da Fé as a synonym of bonfire. But at that time, it was not the case. Autos da Fé was a very long ceremony that started with a procession, and after the procession, there was a reading of a sermon or a preaching of a sermon and then there was a reading of the whole verdict and penances of every person that was involved at this ceremony. And after that those [convicted] people suffered their penances [sentences].

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Those who would be whipped, would be whipped of course not in the church or in the ceremony but afterwards. Or go to the bonfire but that would be only a very small percentage usually. Most part of them would have spiritual penances and monetary penances. Or, sometimes banishment also, [as well as] forced labor.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Okay. So, earlier, you said there were surprisingly fewer Autos da Fé. What, what does that mean, could you just quickly explain?

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Bruno Feitler: Less [fewer] people in Autos da Fé than in Portugal. In Lisbon, the Autos da Fé in 16th and 17th centuries, and the beginning of the 17th century. So, I don't know if that's because a part of the documentation had already disappeared once João Delgado de Figueira arrived in Goa in 1623.

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Or another possibility is that they [the Inquisitors] decided to do small numbers of Autos da Fé, not to shock people in Goa. Because they didn't want to [shock the people of Goa]. In Lisbon Autos da Fé were grandiose.

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In Lisbon, Autos da Fé in the 16th century, were a grandiose ceremony. Well in Goa also, they wanted to show how the Inquisition was capable of bringing back to Catholicism, into orthodoxy, those heretics.

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So, it was really a joyous ceremony, to be a joyous ceremony, of course, to the community as a whole because they were bringing back, I mean theoretically, heretics back to the fold those people that were going to Hell. So that was the sense of Autos da Fé.

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It was an act of faith. So that was a ceremony, but everybody in Lisbon, or Portugal, most of the people I mean of course we know high percentage is impossible, but were for...or would take part in that [Autos da Fé].

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In Goa, a big part of the population, most in the 16th century, were still not Catholic. If they would see—and there are letters from Inquisitors from Lisbon to the Inquisitors in Goa worried about this question. What would all these people that they wanted to convert think if they would see those people being punished in that way [Autos da Fé]. So, a small [number of] Autos da Fé could be maybe a way of being in a certain way discreet regarding the population around.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Right. I think these two possibilities, need to be considered further when we think about the Inquisition.

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I want to ask you about your work on the Inquisition in Brazil and Latin America. Could you give us a sense of the main developments in the historiography of the Inquisition in Brazil? What are the dominant models scholars today use to understand the history of the Inquisition in Brazil?

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Bruno Feitler: As for Portugal, here in Brazil, the studies on the Inquisition, from the mid-20th century, were more centered on the history of New Christians. Meaning the descendants of the Jews that were converted at the end of the 15th century in Portugal.

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That was the main [scholarly] production regarding Inquisition in Brazil in the mid-20th century was related to the New Christians and so. By the end of the 20th century, the last quarter maybe of the 20th century, social history had a very important part. [The historians writing social history] discovered, I would say, the Inquisition sources.

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But if we arrive more to the end of the 20th century, the last quarter of the 20th century, and with the influence of social history, we can see that people were interested in the inquisitorial sources, or the inquisitorial trials for social history.

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And so, we started to have very important studies regarding sorcery, for instance, witchcraft

or European witchcraft, but also what was called witchcraft was in fact African ceremonies and religion that were identified by the Inquisitors or by the church as witchcraft. Also sexual transgressions.

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And so, by the 1980s and 1990s, we have very important works on social history that are based on inquisitorial sources. They are not specifically about the Inquisition, but they are based on inquisitorial sources. More recently, we have the interest on the structure and on the functioning on the operation of the Inquisition. How it works.

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The interaction of the Inquisition with other institutions, mainly the secular church, the bishops and the bishop's tribunals and the officers of the bishop's tribunals. Also, of course, relations of the Inquisition with the regular orders. So that's more or less the kind of studies that we're having more recently. And another thing that's being also very important already since the end of the last century, is to study the Inquisition not only as a repressive institution, meaning, the influence of the Inquisition on the society, [which is to say] that it [the influence] goes beyond repression.

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The influence of the Inquisition in society went beyond repression. Because the Inquisition had as officers, not only Inquisitors but also lay people that worked for them called familiares, the familiares de Inquisição. It was a way for the inquisition to have a very important support, very generally, in the society and in exchange, they would give to these people [the familiares], more or less a certificate of purity of blood.

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So, for those people, it would be a way of showing that they were better in a certain way, then those people who were descendants of the Jews, or of the Muslims, or the Moors or the Mouriscos, or of the black people, or of the Indians and or of the Hindus in India also. So, it was a very important way in which the Inquisition had influence over the society, not only with repression, but also with this...the regulation of the attribution of the certificate of blood purity. The familiares, or the certificate of familiares.

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And so, there are lots of studies being done in Brazil regarding how it worked, not only in Brazil and Portugal. In fact, the main studies started in Portugal already in the 1980s and now also in Brazil.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Right. And thanks for the sense [of the historiography]. I wanted to know how you view the development of the scholarship on the Goa Inquisition, could you give our viewers a sense of the important developments, the same way as you talked about it for Brazil?

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Bruno Feitler: Well, the studies on the Goa Inquisition, of course you have very important studies, done by António Baião in the beginning of the 20th century. But the main developments are much more recent.

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Because of the sources, because it's very different. The sources that we have regarding Brazil, regarding Portugal provide a very different portrait than those regarding Goa. Or the Estado da Índia in general. So, because of those sources, maybe because of the Reportorio, many of the studies done on the Goa Inquisition in the 20th century, or in the mid and in the second half of the 20th century, were done using the Reportorio, and the Reportorio relates only to the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century.

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And so, most of the studies relate to this period and to the history of the New Christians, or the descendants of the Jews, because that period in the 16th and beginning of the 17th century, the main target of the Goa Inquisition was still the people that were tried for Judaism.

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But nowadays, because of the availability of the documents in Rio de Janeiro, but also because of some documents that that are also available in Portugal, there are some other studies that are also done regarding the 18th century, and the late 17th century.

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And those studies shows a completely different situation. And so, it's much more recently that studies are being done regarding the action of the Goa Inquisition. Or more thoroughly regarding the local population, the local population of Indian Hindu and Muslim origin, mostly. And so those studies are more recent regarding the persecution of 'crypto Hindus', I would say that way, at the persecution of local ceremonies.

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Also, there are some studies that are being done, studying the situation of slaves and the slave trade in East Africa and in South Asia. Not just through the Reportorio, but also some other documents [are used]. And so those are more or less the kind of [studies], and also of

course in parallel of what's being done in Brazil and also in Portugal to study and understand the structure and the functioning of the Goa Inquisition. Because one thing that is very important to understand, and that's something that I stress all the time is that, the documentation of the Inquisition is a very important documentation to understand the institution itself.

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So, the easiest thing that we can do with this documentation is to understand how it [the Inquisition] worked. After we understand how it worked, we can understand more easily and more thoroughly and with more knowledge, more knowledgeably, its influence and its impact.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Right. So, what you're saying is that we need to understand the institution as such. It's structures first thoroughly, so that we have a solid base to understand how it functioned in society. Right?

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Bruno Feitler: Yes, because of documents that it created, the processos, the trials, were done, were created for a specific end—that was to judge someone. Those trials were not written as a sociological document.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, I think this is a good point to turn to my next question. In your writings, you stress the importance of local conditions in Goa, in which the Inquisition operated. The Inquisition had to adapt to the Portuguese Empire, and the fact that the Portuguese Empire was spread out right across Asia as well as the local Goan conditions in the villages, which made it hard to impose its rules that were made in Europe. What are these local conditions that you can shed light on? And what is the importance of these local conditions when we talk about the history of the Inquisition?

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Bruno Feitler: Well, there are many different specialists who have shown how the Inquisition adapted to local conditions. Giuseppe Marcocci described, for instance, the Inquisition of Goa as 'border Inquisition,' or as a 'Borderland Inquisition.'

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And I think it's a very interesting concept to be used to understand the Goan Inquisition as it is to understand the Inquisition when it acted the North Africa, for instance. It's completely different than the Inquisition in Portugal, or even maybe even the Inquisition in Brazil.

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How can we understand this idea of 'borderland Inquisition' that Marcocci uses? The thing is that, [as opposed] to the Inquisition in Portugal or in Spain, the Inquisition in Goa had to take into account that there were very powerful neighbors just across the river. I mean, the territory was very small.

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And there were people who could come and go [easily] between the Catholic territory, there the territory in which the Inquisition had jurisdiction and territories in which they had no jurisdiction at all.

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So, in many moments, mainly in the beginning of the action of the Inquisition in Goa, and as I mentioned already, they were advised by Lisbon not to use all the legal acts that they could, or that could be used against the indicted. They had to take into account the image that they would pass to the people that were there.

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And so they had to take those conditions into account. There were very specific things that happened in Goa that did not happen anywhere else. Something that shows this adaptation, for the good, I would say, and some others that were for the bad. But anyway, for instance, regarding canon law, someone that would commit a crime, a crime of heresy twice, the second time there would be no possibility of reintegration in the church. The person had to be directly sent to the bonfire.

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If someone committed a heresy, if he did penance, then he was reintegrated. In a second episode [time], he would be directly sent to the bonfire. The Portuguese Inquisition obtained from the Pope in 1599, so more or less 40 years after the foundation [of the Inquisition at Goa], after a long negotiation, that the converted people from India, the 'Gentiles and infidels' that I'd say both, could be reconciled to the church, more than once.

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So, they wouldn't be sent directly to the bonfire after a second indictment or heresy, I would say. If they were arrested for the second time for the same heresy, they wouldn't be sent directly to the bonfire. They could reconcile a second time and maybe, maybe even a third time. Yeah, that's a very specific thing—adaptation to the Indian condition. It was already used in North Africa in the case of people that had Muslim origins.

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Dale Luis Menezes: So, I think that there are two issues that strike me over here. One is the issue of politics, politics in the sense that there are neighboring powers, as you said, just across the river. But also the politics of empire, of the Portuguese Empire spread across the whole world.

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So, the first question that I want you to think about is, what's the importance of empire in the study of the Inquisition? And secondly, when you talk about adaptability, what then is the nature of violence in the Goan case?

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Bruno Feitler: But regarding that, there is another adaptation that I think it's important to show because...this seems to show the Inquisition very concerned with the life of those people. For instance, there is another specific characteristic of the Goa Tribunal, regarding this 'borderlands nature' is that, usually, the Inquisition only had jurisdiction over baptized persons.

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The Inquisition tried Christians. That was the jurisdiction of Inquisition. And so in Europe, they would very, very, very rarely judge or arrest people that were not baptized. If there was a Jew that was trying to convert people those Jews that had converted to Catholicism, they would maybe arrest that person. Right. But that was very, very rare.

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In India, after not very long, that [jurisdiction over the non-baptized] became very frequent. These trials against non-Christians were one of the most unique characteristics of the Indian Tribunal. The primary objective of trials was to punish Hindus and Muslims that tried to impede the conversion of other Hindus and Muslims to Catholicism, right, or tried to bring them back to their religion of origin, right.

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Or also because after a while the Inquisition also had a power of policing, I would say to forbids rituals, Hindu rituals and cults in Portuguese lands. And if they caught people celebrating like a marriage, for instance, they could arrest those people.

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So those are something that was completely different than what happened in Portugal. Of course, those people wouldn't be tortured for that [performing ceremonies]. They would have to pay a fine and things like that. And what would have happened was that they would choose maybe to convert instead of paying this fine, or have been deported maybe. But

those are things that still have to be studied more in detail because that thing happened more frequently in the eighteenth century and in the late seventeenth century.



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But that's also the things that that regarding your, your last question is that what we have information that we get through the documents of the Inquisition are, how would you say, a partial view of the situation, right, it shows what was considered the anomalies.

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So, it's not the majority. It's difficult to know the proportion of things, of course, but we would think that was not, it was just a part of the situation of what happened in Goa. And what we see regarding violence right.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Yeah, what I wanted to know...You talked about punishment, you talked about fines. And so what's the historian [have to say], given the present the limitations of sources and everything. What's the generalization that you as a historian would make about the nature of violence in the Goa case?

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Bruno Feitler: Well, it depends on what you mean by 'nature'? What kind of violence that you're talking about, right? Of course, it was religious violence, cultural violence, economic violence because they were fines.

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But of course the Inquisition was a repressive institution, that meant to take deviants legally back to the fold. Or to maintain those that were not Catholic completely separated from the Catholics.

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That was something that historiography [or, historians] have sometimes some difficulty to understand in the situation Goa because sometimes historiography, a Portuguese historiography I think, has the tendency to have an image of Goa as a completely Catholic territory, I mean the Portuguese territories as completed Catholic, but when we see English [language] historiography, or when you see documents, you see that at least in [until] 18th century, it was not the case.

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You have a lot of our non-Catholic important merchants and families living in those territories and having an important role, in the Estado da Índia, in a certain way. So, it's difficult to

understand how the Inquisition could really keep separated Catholics from non-Catholics and that was in the late 17th century, and during the whole 18th century, it was a huge fight between the Viceroy, or some Viceroy, the Archbishop, and the Inquisitors over the the weight that the religion and the economy should have in politics. And the King in Portugal would try to maintain some balance from time to time.

109

Dale Luis Menezes: And I think that kind of negotiation is important to consider, right? And one can't simply assume that religion was the driving force in the Portuguese Empire that time. So, I want to talk to you a bit about Christianization as well, this is a topic that is linked to the Inquisition and you do talk about the Christianization of Goa briefly, and even Portuguese Asia in a more general sense in your studies.

110

But we know that the historiography of conversion is a vast one. So, my question to you is how important—or how can the study of surviving inquisitorial documents help in understanding the spread of Catholicism Goa, or in Portuguese Asia?

111

Bruno Feitler: Well, as I said, it's difficult to give a complete view using those documents. It's a partial view of the situation, as I said, that shows some anomalies. It also shows, as I was saying, that the church felt always threatened by the Hindus and their influence in the society around.

112

Because they're always trying to control what they were doing, and they were always concerned with the influence that they could have on the persons, on those that were converted recently or not so recently. So, it's more that kind of things that I think we can see.

113

The documents of the Inquisition don't give numbers. So, it's hard to use them to give some weight to how the Christianization was going and was working in Goa. So, as I was saying, I'm not a specialist on the matters of Christianization and more details on the numbers and all the different aldeias [villages] and the pace of the Christianization and conversion of those lands. And so, I cannot speak with a lot of prior knowledge of that.

114

Dale Luis Menezes: And I also wanted to ask you about A. K. Priolkar's work, because he also links Christianization with the Inquisition, but as you said, and I'm not going to press the issue because, you are not really in a position to talk about it. But still, you can feel free to

comment if you want.



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Bruno Feitler: Yeah, Priolkar's book is an important book for some points, but for some other points are some problems there. Regarding the question of Christianization of Goa, he speaks of...for convictions or for convenience or by force.

116

I think, I don't know if those are the right questions to be posed, for a situation of conversion in 16th century. Of situation of conversion of what was felt and used as religion in India. Or even Portugal, at that time.

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Of course, you have models of conversion of even 16th century, some models that even work nowadays and worked at the time of Priolkar. That someone will be illuminated, would have a revelation and would convert, that is the perfect model of conversion, right?

118

Dale Luis Menezes: Yeah, but it doesn't really work in practice right?

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Bruno Feitler: But, that is, in practice that does not always work. In reality, you could always put a little bit of convenience too. And that would work in any situation, not only to Catholicism, but to any other religion or situation, right. So, of course, there was, there were forced conversions in and around Goa, and in Portuguese India, that's for sure nobody could deny that.

120

There were unprepared conversions mainly in the beginning. If you can read any studying similar studies regarding conversions. You can see that, but also there were missions. There were missionaries that were worried to convert those people seriously to what would be considered Catholicism, at that time, right. So, I think he [Priolkar] made a very, very shallow understanding of what conversion was in his study.

121

Dale Luis Menezes: So, I wanted to talk to you more about the trial records. In your studies, you have you have looked at the procedure that was followed and you believe that—and I think you're right—about knowing about the institutional structure. So, you speak about the methods that Inquisitors used to establish proof. How rigorous were these methods and what problems did the Inquisitors encountered in this method?

122

Bruno Feitler: Well, those methods were very rigorous, you cannot say they weren't rigorous, but they were rigorous regarding specific rules. They are not our rules nowadays. They are not the rules that are followed by tribunals [courts] nowadays.

123

So of course, we cannot consider them rigorous regarding...justice. Are they just, are they following justice? You cannot say that of course because they are following their notion of justice. More than a notion of justice, you have to remember that those Inquisitors—in Goa it was a bit different—but you have to see, I think the Portuguese inquisition as a whole, and the early modern Inquisition of the early modern times as a whole. The Iberian Inquisition.

124

They studied law, most of the time. They were jurists, they studied canon law. So, they were prepared to follow a specific path and specific ways of judging. So, in this they followed specific rules and bylaws of the legal system of the time, there was the law of proof. There was a specific system.

125

And as they were judging heresy, and heresy was considered the most dangerous crime they could think of. It was the same thing as killing the king. They could use extra extraordinary methods to judge and to discover the heresy. So, they could use specific, very specific, methods that could not be used in a regular secular courts. Or even in the bishops' courts.

126

What were those methods? The procedure was completely under secrecy. They [the accused] didn't know who were denouncing them. What were they being denounced of. In the other procedures [secular courts, for instance], after a while, people would know what were they being denounced for, and who were denouncing them.

127

There were also a different accountability of the testimonies that were being used against them. It's a very complicated—it's not complicated, but it's a very detailed thing...annoying [aspect]. Of legal history that is not the case, I think of going into detail here, that the thing is that, that kind of thing, the secret and the way of accounting those testimonies would open the possibility vary wildly to false testimonies.

128

So, the false testimonies or false accusations was endemic in the Portuguese Inquisition. It was a real problem that Inquisitors had to face and that appears all the time in the

documentation, not of the Goa Inquisition, but in the Portuguese inquisition as a whole. Since the 16th century.



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Of course I'm saying that is a part of the problem for the Inquisitors but it was a problem, much harsher problem, for the person that were arrested because they could end at the bonfire because of that. Those indicted could face false proofs [accusations] against them and how they could relate to that they didn't know who were denouncing them. They would just know that someone was denouncing them for heresy.

130

You've been denounced of doing some heresies in a certain period. Somewhere that we cannot say. And the person [denounced] should examine his conscience and discover by himself what those denunciations were and confess them. And so that was the big problem of the way Inquisitors judged in Portugal. And that was one of the things for which the Portuguese inquisition as a whole was accused during very different moments of its history in the 17th century, and in the 18th century.

131

Dale Luis Menezes: And I believe that the circumstances in which that you just described the record is being created could itself also create a methodological problem for the historian, right. Like, how can a historian, be sure of what he or she is asserting on the basis of those documents. So, have you thought about this issue or have you dealt with this problem? Is there a way how you can solve it? Do you use some other kinds of sources? You know, how do you, how do you navigate then?

132

Bruno Feitler: Now, it's very difficult. But the sources are nevertheless reliable in a certain way because they are some processos where the person maintain that he was, he wasn't guilty. And that he could produce proof that he was a good Christian. And then he was released.

133

Not everybody that was arrested by the Inquisition was convicted to the bonfire. It happened also that the Inquisitors could have two testimonies against someone but not the seven testimonies that they needed to send someone to the bonfire. So, this person wouldn't get a very harsh punishment, but only some spiritual penances, for instance. The system worked in a...it was a very...how to say it?

134

Dale Luis Menezes: It had its own checks and balances in its own flawed ways. Is that what



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Bruno Feitler: Yeah, but not only that. It was very 'mean' is the word, but it's...Perverse was a word I would use. Of course, I'm using some strong words here, but I think we can we can categorize the system because it was a way of putting the people in a corner right. It's very difficult for them to...

136

Dale Luis Menezes: ...get out of there.

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Bruno Feitler: Get out here. Yeah. So, people would make other false confessions. And false denunciations. And so that would snowball in many cases.

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Dale Luis Menezes: Right and point well taken about all these issues that we need to consider. I have one final question and I wanted to know what you're working on currently and what we can expect to read from you in the near future.

139

So, if you could just give us a brief glimpse before, before I let you off. And it's been a quite a long interview and so, could you just give us a brief sense of what you are currently working on?

140

Bruno Feitler: I just told you about it. It's about how these problems regarding the way the legal system worked inside Inquisition got people inside the Inquisition itself. How the Inquisitors themselves got unsatisfied with it and that there were some reforms that were done under the Marquis of Pombal in 1774.

141

And the Inquisition, the Tribunal of Goa was abolished, but there was a whole new bylaw that was written for the, in 1773, for the Inquisition of Portugal. So, it transformed a little bit the way the trials were judged [conducted].

142

And usually, people say that was purely the influence of the Enlightenment. I wrote a book about this. What I say is that it was there was also influence of the dissatisfaction of the

Inquisitors themselves, because they knew that what they were doing was unjust too.



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Some of them. There were different, different factions inside the Inquisition by the 1730s or 1740s. Some of them wanted to follow those rules strictly as they were doing and some others were doing it in a certain way to make the judgment even more perverse because they were doing it more easily. Not to release the people, but to make the trial go more more easily.

144

Dale Luis Menezes: Right. That sounds fascinating, and I'll keep an eye out for when that gets published.

145

Bruno Feitler: I'll let you know!

146

Dale Luis Menezes: So, thank you Professor Feitler. For giving us a sense of why the Brazilian scholars got interested, how certain documents, for some reasons, reached Rio de Janeiro.

147

Thank you also for giving us a very nuanced view of the procedure of the Inquisition, of the trials, of how the victims were tried and prosecuted and also of the importance of looking at the local conditions. So, thank you once again for your time and we really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

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Bruno Feitler: Thank you.

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