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The First Catholic Diocese in Asia and the Spread of Catholicism: Juan de Albuquerque, Bishop of Goa, 1538–1553

José Pedro Paiva

Center for the History of Society and Culture, University of Coimbra, Portugal
Email: lejpaiva@fl.uc.pt

Abstract

This article offers an interpretation of the actions of the Franciscan Juan de Albuquerque as bishop of the first Catholic diocese in Asia. The analysis considers the local impacts of the episcopal government and the connectivities of its action, particularly through comparison with similar processes adopted in Spanish America. Based on a wide range of historical sources and cross-referencing them, it investigates how Albuquerque governed in three stages: first, describing the enormous challenges he faced; second, outlining his profile; and third, proposing a reconstruction of his government and the implications it had on the dissemination of Catholicism. The hypothesis raised at the outset is that, in Asia, the Bishop of Goa built a structure that was inspired by the matrix and dynamics of the Portuguese dioceses, which were then adapted to the specificities of the local situation. Accordingly, it is necessary to review the thesis of Charles Boxer, for whom the dynamics of evangelization in the spaces overseen by the Iberian empires from the 16th century onwards were generated essentially by the missionaries from the regular clergy and by the monarchies. By shifting the focus to the actions of a single bishop, the article demonstrates that Albuquerque, the diocesan church he created from scratch, and the secular clergy should not be underestimated.

Keywords: Foundation of Goa Diocese; Juan the Albuquerque; Early Modern Catholicism; Connected History

I. Introduction

According to Robert Birely, “with European expansion came, for better and for worse, the most ambitious campaign of Christian evangelization since the days of the early church.”¹ This indisputable claim was glossed by Simon Ditchfield, for whom, in the sixteenth century, Catholicism was “the globe’s most kinetic religion.”²

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¹Robert Birely, *The Refashioning of Catholicism 1450–1700* (London: MacMillan, 1999), 147.

²Simon Ditchfield, “Catholic Reformation and Renewal,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Reformation*, ed. Peter Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 152.

Historiography is dominated by the idea that the expansion of Catholicism around the world was due above all to missionaries from the regular clergy, particularly the Jesuits. In one of the most systematic and shrewd analyses of the role played by Christianity in the formation and maintenance of the Iberian colonial empires, Boxer argues that the parish and diocesan network dominated by the monarchy because of the system of royal patronage was fragile, and that the missionaries were the mainstay of colonial domination.³ In line with Boxer, though focusing specifically on the Portuguese presence in Asia and the Indian Ocean, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has argued that, at least until the end of the seventeenth century, evangelization depended above all on the missionaries.⁴ Interpretations like these have devalued the role of the bishops and diocesan structures in the dissemination and consolidation of Catholicism in the extra-European world. This article aims to correct the notion that the episcopacy was largely irrelevant in this process, by means of an analysis of the actions of the first bishop who resided in and governed the diocese of Goa, or of “India,” as it was called, which, of all Christendom, was the farthest away from Rome when it was created in 1534.

Research into the actions of Juan de Albuquerque in the diocese of India is important for three reasons: first, because it was the first Catholic diocese in Asia; second, because the creation of a visible and stable Church was part of the construction of the Portuguese overseas empire in the region, particularly from the 1530s, when John III designed policies in which religion and empire advanced side by side, especially in Asia; and finally, because it enables scholars to relate the actions of this bishop to similar processes that were taking place in the dioceses of Spanish America.

Despite the scarcity of the documentary evidence and the almost complete disappearance of the records produced by Albuquerque and his administration (something that has hindered an accurate perception of the impact of his actions), a great deal of documentation nevertheless remains in other sources. When this is read attentively and cross-referenced using an analytical grid that considers what was going on in Portugal and Spanish America at the time, it provides enough data to answer the crucial question of how the first bishop to govern a Catholic diocese in Asia contributed to the construction of a visible church in that part of the world, where it had to be created from scratch.

I will argue that this was done through the transposition to Asia—a new world that was largely unknown—of a model of diocesan organization used in Portugal. This dynamic had inevitable connections and influences with what was going on in Spanish America where, from 1504 onwards, dioceses had begun to be created, some of them entrusted to Franciscan bishops, as in Goa. It impacted the lives of people and communities stretching from the coast of East Africa to Japan.

³C. R. Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion (1440–1770)* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁴Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Written on Water: Designs and Dynamics in the Portuguese Estado da Índia,” in *Empires. Perspectives from Archeology and History*, ed. Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D’Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 47; and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 110. The same perspective appears in the introduction of Alison Forrester and Sean Smith, “Re-thinking Missionary Catholicism for the Early Modern Era,” in *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism*, ed. Alison Forrester and Sean Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 5.

II. A New World Full of Challenges

When Juan de Albuquerque disembarked in Goa in September 1538, he was confronted with a colorful new world full of massive challenges. One might say, together with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, that, like the majority of the Portuguese, he had an “imperfect knowledge . . . of the context in which he will [would] be acting.”⁵ Albuquerque arrived sick after a seven-month trip in an armada that also transported the new viceroy of India, Garcia de Noronha, and around two thousand condemned men who were to serve sentences in Asia—they never arrived, as the ship they were sailing was wrecked.⁶ Other Portuguese criminals had already been sent to those parts and were another adversary to be faced.

The diocese covered a network of small territories around fortresses and trading posts (*feitorias*) connected to each other by sea, dispersed between the Eastern coast of Africa and Melaka, and taking in Hormuz (in present-day Iran), India, Ceylon, and some Maluku islands. In 1549, Ignatius Loyola, in a letter to Albuquerque, recognized the tremendous difficulties posed by this situation. In his words, Goa was a “spacious” diocese in “remote lands.”⁷ In addition, this was the first experiment at establishing a diocese in Asia, so it was effectively a testing ground where everything was in flux. Indeed, by 1550, plans were already being made to carve up the territory to create new dioceses in Cochin and Melaka—this actually occurred in 1558—on the grounds that the bishop of Goa could not manage to be everywhere at once.⁸

It should be added that the spaces occupied by the Portuguese were inhabited by peoples of various languages, cultures, and religions. Goa was a border diocese in an area where the territorial and spiritual landscape was marked by non-Christian religious practices, from Islam to those later called Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other ancestral, local religions, such as, for example, in Solor (in present-day Indonesia), and in several regions on the East African coast. This diversity led to problems of communication with the local peoples and raised unsurmountable challenges. For example, in 1544, the Jesuit, Francis Xavier, who was acting together with the bishop and trying to spread Christianity among the Parava in the southern tip of India, was asked by a Brahmin if God was white or black.⁹

On the other hand, there were many obstacles preventing the Asian locals from adopting the new religion that the bishop wanted to expand and impose: the enslavement of those who had converted, such as children;¹⁰ the refusal by the local authorities

⁵Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Empires between Islam and Christianity, 1500–1800* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2019), 23.

⁶*Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1962), 2:529–531.

⁷Joseph Wicki, ed. *Documenta Indica* (Lisbon: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1948), 1:728. All translations by Karen Bennett.

⁸Mateus Dias, a priest, to King John III, Cochin, 22 January 1550, in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Índia*, ed. António da Silva Rego (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias 1950), 4:480; and Tara Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion: Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 20.

⁹The episode was noted and commented on by Ananya Chakravarti, *The Empire of Apostles: Religion, Accomodatio, and the Imagination of Empire in Early Modern Brazil and India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 99.

¹⁰Miguel Vaz, vicar-general of Goa, in a letter to the king dated from 1545, mentioned that Portuguese traders went to the Coromandel Coast to buy young slaves that were then sold on to Muslims, see Wicki, ed., *Documenta*, 1:74–75. In Mexico, the enslavement of local populations was also practiced and criticized

to allow their people to follow Christianity, as this would remove them from their jurisdiction (in some cases, even as regards the payment of taxes);¹¹ and the fact that new converts were ostracized by their families and communities of origin, whose belief systems and social structures were very different from those of the Portuguese.¹² Even the very proximity of the temples and religious practices into which the converts had been born caused difficulties.¹³ There were even massacres, as in 1544, when the king of Jaffanapatam ordered six hundred recently baptized people to be killed on Manar island.¹⁴

Due to the right of royal patronage (*padroado real*) enjoyed by the kings of Portugal, who were allowed to suggest the creation of dioceses, appoint bishops, and found new churches, the bishop's powers were constrained.¹⁵ Royal patronage, in fact, restricted Juan de Albuquerque's room for action, particularly as regards the material resources at his disposal. Tithes were not collected by his officers, nor were they freely administered by him, as they were in the dioceses of Portugal. One of the consequences of this was that, in 1541, in Cochin (where the Portuguese had been established since 1501), the first Catholic church built in Asia had its roof covered with palm leaves, like a "thatched hut."¹⁶ The same scarcity impelled Albuquerque to write to John III in 1545, asking him if the money from the rents of the mosques of Bassein, which the monarch received, could revert to the "poor" cathedral.¹⁷ Another consequence of the *padroado* was the need to maintain close relations with different governors and viceroys, who were representatives of the King of Portugal in Asia. These usually occupied their posts for three years, and each governed in a different way, complicating the bishop's governance.

He also had to deal with communication difficulties with Portugal and Rome, where decisions that impacted the diocese of Goa originated with a variety of powers and people. Communication was slow, sometimes curtailed, and not always safe, further adversities that the bishop had to face. There were similar obstacles whenever Albuquerque wished to communicate with the vicars in the churches scattered throughout his extensive diocese.

Some other problems he faced were a scarcity of human resources, particularly the secular clergy, and the indecorous behavior of various priests. In the 1530s, for example, the vicar-general, Sebastião Pires, was accused of making and breaking marriages,

by some bishops as an obstacle to the diffusion of Christianity, see Ryan Dominic Crew, "Bautizando el colonialismo: Las políticas de conversión em México después de la conquista," *Historia Mexicana* 58, no. 3 (2019): 983.

¹¹Topic discussed by Alan Strathern, *Kingship and Conversion in Sixteenth-century Sri Lanka: Portuguese Imperialism in a Buddhist land* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89.

¹²Strathern, *Kingship*, 89.

¹³In some cases, the former deities were moved a few miles away to escape Portuguese surveillance and "this proximity facilitated cultural contacts between the new temples and the Goan Catholic villages." Paul Axelrod and Michelle Fuerch, "Flight of Deities: Hindu Resistance in Portuguese Goa," *Modern Asian Studies* 30 (1996): 391.

¹⁴Strathern, *Kingship*, 104.

¹⁵On the royal patronage, see Fernanda Olival, *The Military Orders and the Portuguese Expansion (15th–17th centuries)* (Petersborough: Baywolf, 2018).

¹⁶Some Cochin residents to King John III, 3 January 1541, in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Índia*, ed. António da Silva Rego (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias 1949), 2:291–292.

¹⁷Juan de Albuquerque to King John III, Goa, 5 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:109.

owning slaves while forbidding other priests to have them, living in concubinage with women, and not complying with the provisions left in wills.¹⁸

There were also some practical matters affecting the regular functioning of the church and the celebration of its liturgies. In Asia, for example, there were no wine or wheat, which were essential for the celebration of Mass, not to mention the olive oil for the preparation of holy oils. Hence, it was necessary to ensure the regular supply of these products from Portugal.¹⁹

In short, despite the ideas, models, and projects emanating from Europe, the reality on the ground made improvisation and adaptation necessary. Albuquerque, the first bishop who resided in and governed a Catholic diocese in Asia, did not escape these constraints, and it was in this context that he sought to raise a visible church, based on the traditional diocesan structure whose archetype existed in Portugal.

III. Sketching the Profile of Juan de Albuquerque

The bishop entrusted with the mission of governing the first Catholic diocese in Asia was a Franciscan Recollect (*Capucho*) born in Albuquerque in Castile who had lived in Portugal since the early sixteenth century.²⁰ An old man of around sixty when he arrived in India, he had been provincial of the Province of Piedade, confessor to Duke Jaime de Bragança (the main noble family in Portugal), and, from 1535, confessor to King John III.²¹ The bishop recalled being the son of a poor man, who owed everything to the king and queen. Hence, he wanted to reciprocate these favors in Goa through obedience, which he also affirmed in relation to the viceroy of India.²² Even for a poor Franciscan friar, serving the king was a good reason to engage in the government of a diocese.

The branch of the Franciscans to which he belonged was marked by a particularly austere form of spirituality. It was the same branch as that of the twelve friars who, in 1524, left for Mexico, led by Martin de Valencia, in order to disseminate Christianity among the Aztecs.²³ This group's religious fervor, habit of proclaiming the end times, and millenarian beliefs of medieval origin caused them to see in the encounter with an unknown continent "heavenly signs of the imminent arrival of the last millennium, when there would begin an era of peace and concord that would be followed by the Final Judgement."²⁴ These men were committed to poverty and pilgrimage in imitation of their founder, Saint Francis, a model of a humble life and pilgrimage, and a desire for martyrdom.²⁵ They were also inspired by the example of Christ and his

¹⁸Rego, *Documentação*, 2:364.

¹⁹The bishop received wine and olive oil from Portugal, as in 1542, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (hereafter ANTT), *Corpo Cronológico*, II parte, m. 237, doc. 134.

²⁰Alan Strathern, "Os Piedosos and the Mission in India and Sri Lanka," in *D. João III e o império: Actas do Congresso Internacional comemorativo do seu nascimento* (Lisbon: Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2004), 857–858.

²¹Manoel de Monforte, *Chronica da Provincia da Piedade primeira capucha de toda a Ordem e Regular Observancia de Nosso Serafico Padre S. Francisco* (Lisbon: Miguel Manescal da Costa, 1751), 398–399.

²²Juan de Albuquerque to Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, 10 January 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:437–441.

²³Robert Ricard, *La conquista espiritual de Mexico: Ensayo sobre el apostolado y los métodos misioneros de las órdenes mendicantes em la Nueva España de 1523–1524 a 1572* (1947; Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2014), 66; and Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524–1599: Conflict beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1–10)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 29–56.

²⁴Giuseppe Marcocci, *Indios, cinesi, falsari: Le storie del mondo nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Laterza, 2016), 34.

²⁵Julia McClure, *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 8, 51.

apostles.²⁶ The bishop of Goa had this same background and, like his coreligionists who went to Spanish America, he was also engaged in the task of converting the world.

He also had an obsessive fascination with the brevity of life and the drama of death, for which he prepared himself through prayer and an exemplary life. According to Albuquerque, the most important thing in the eyes of God was to “win souls,” principally “through the conversion of infidelity to the true living faith in Jesus Christ.”²⁷ In the same letter in which he proffers these words, he also stresses that this was his main mission, acknowledging the difficulty of the task, since there was a huge number of souls to instruct with a minimal number of clergy. As the bishop himself acknowledged, it was tremendously challenging to live “among so many barbarous nations,” who worshipped “idols and sticks and stones,”²⁸ comments which reveal not only his amazement at such diversity, but also his clear lack of preparation to deal with this new world of multiple exotic creeds.

Among these various “barbarous nations” were the Muslims. For Albuquerque, these were the main enemy and they deserved the war and death they were suffering. In a missive addressed to the viceroy, João de Castro, in December 1547, after he had just vanquished forces of the sultan of Gujarat in a battle waged at Diu, the bishop calls them “moors” and stresses that this was a holy war and that the “soul [of João de Castro] was joined with God” when he fought “those infidels.”²⁹ On this point, he showed himself to be the heir of the Iberian tradition, which had seen endless bloody conflicts between Christians and Muslims since the eighth century. In the sixteenth century, these conflicts were transferred to Asian soil. It is not surprising that, after Vasco da Gama’s first voyage to India (1498), Muslim elites from the region denounced the violence perpetrated by the Portuguese. One such voice was that of Sheikh Zainuddin Ma’abari (1467–1521), who encouraged Muslims to fight the Christians, since the Lusitanians in Malabar tyrannized, seized, and enslaved Islamic believers.³⁰

The first bishop of India, who was bound to forms of piety with medieval roots, was a fan of a disciplinarian brand of piety, which was also usual among the Franciscan branch of Guadalupan friars to which he belonged.³¹ Describing a procession that took place in Goa, he notes that he was moved by the sight of children who, with candles in their hands, flagellated themselves on their backs “with all their innocence,” a scene that he could never describe without “tears [coursing] down his face.”³² He too practiced bodily mortifications out of personal conviction and in order to set an example that he hoped to see replicated among the faithful he was supposed to guide. In 1547, in a nocturnal procession held in Cochin, he paraded barefoot.³³

²⁶Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality*, 31.

²⁷Juan de Albuquerque to Álvaro de Castro, son of Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, January 22, 1547, in ANTT, *Coleção de São Lourenço*, vol. 3, fol. 503r.

²⁸Juan de Albuquerque to the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues, whom he thanks for the help received by the Jesuit priests, Goa, 28 November 1550, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:46.

²⁹ANTT, *Coleção de São Lourenço*, vol. 2, fol. 419r-420v.

³⁰Chakravarti, *Empire of Apostles*, 28.

³¹Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality*, 33.

³²Juan de Albuquerque to Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, 18 November 1546, in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Índia*, ed. António da Silva Rego (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias 1950), 3:382–383.

³³Juan de Albuquerque to Viceroy João de Castro, Cochin, 26 November 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:523.

There is abundant testimony concerning the prelate's charitable nature. Despite having little income, he would give alms to the poor, sometimes using his personal property.³⁴ Others emphasized the offers he made to the local people he was baptizing.³⁵ It is indisputable that he complied with the vows of poverty to which Franciscans were bound, as, near the end of his life, he continued living "as poor as when he was a friar."³⁶ Nevertheless, he did not live a life of radical poverty, since he owned two houses in Goa, which he donated shortly before his death in exchange for having two Goan canons celebrate masses for his soul.³⁷ This material poverty contrasted with Albuquerque's robust knowledge of the Bible, the patristic tradition, and the Greek and Latin classics, as can be seen from his correspondence. He clearly took great delight in using passages from the Bible to support and explain the behaviors he wanted Christians to adopt in their lives, including in war.³⁸

As regards his decision-making capacity, he was described as "slack" and "meek," or, alternatively, as rather devious at confronting setbacks or the power of governors and viceroys.³⁹ One of these, João de Castro, in 1546 (eight years after Albuquerque arrived in Goa), confided to the king that he was "discreet, stern and virtuous," and that there had never been a "man of better life and doctrine" in India.⁴⁰

IV. Governing the Diocese of Goa

Juan de Albuquerque was not the first Catholic ecclesiastical authority to walk on Indian soil since Gama reached Calicut in 1498, much less the first cleric to do so. Others had preceded him, so he did not start from zero. His mission was not to sow the first seeds of Catholicism or to assemble its basic structures. There had been other experiments before he arrived, though, given the lack of a resident leader with episcopal powers exclusive to the region, they tended to be sparse and inconsistent. The local ecclesiastical organization was fragile, and there were few secular and regular clerics to minister to the Portuguese and to those natives that had been baptized in a number that is impossible to determine.⁴¹

As in Spanish America, the Franciscan friars were the pioneers. One group of three had remained in Malabar right away in 1500. Others went out to join them (perhaps no more than two per year), producing some sparse activity among the Portuguese and natives of the land. But only after 1517, with the arrival from Portugal of a group of twelve friars led by Friar António Louro, were the first Franciscan monasteries

³⁴Vicente de Lagos, a Franciscan, to King John III, Cranganore, 1 January 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:208.

³⁵António Gomes, a Jesuit, to King John III, Goa, 25 October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:345.

³⁶João Noé, a Franciscan, to King John III, Cochin, 28 January 1552, in *Documenta Indica*, ed. Joseph Wicki (Lisbon: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1950), 2:316.

³⁷Francisco Xavier Gomes Catão, "Sé catedral de Goa: Alguns documentos do século XVI," *Stvdia* 13/14 (1964): 527.

³⁸Juan de Albuquerque to Álvaro de Castro, son of Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, 6 September 1546, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:523.

³⁹Cosme Anes to King John III, Bassein, 30 November 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:534.

⁴⁰*Obras Completas de D. João de Castro*, ed. Armando Cortesão and Luís de Albuquerque (Coimbra: Academia Internacional da Cultura Portuguesa, 1968), 4:319.

⁴¹The best synopsis about the religious dynamics in Goa before 1540 is Ângela Barreto Xavier, *A invenção de Goa* (Lisbon: ICS, 2008), 89–104.

established in Goa and Cochin.⁴² Until 1542, when the first Jesuits arrived, the friars of Saint Francis were the only ones with an organic and institutional presence.⁴³

Since 1514, the Portuguese territories in Asia had been part of the diocese of Funchal, based in the archipelago of Madeira. Its bishop appointed vicars-general for various lands, including India, in order to work zealously for Catholicism. However, as a rule, these agents were not very active or effective, with the exception of the last one, Miguel Vaz, who left for Goa in 1533, after having been appointed vicar-general by the first, short-lived bishop of Goa, Francisco de Melo.⁴⁴

From 1520 onward, ring bishops with limited powers (in that they could not try clerics, for example) were also sent by the king to India. The first was Duarte Nunes, a Dominican, appointed bishop of Dume, who resided there until around 1524. He sent back reports to Lisbon, recounting the difficulties that he faced: the scarcity of clerics, the bad state of the existing churches, the ineffectiveness of the action of the vicar-general, and the somewhat unchristian behavior of the Portuguese in Asia. The second was the Franciscan Fernando Vaqueiro (1532–1535).⁴⁵ He established himself in the monastery of Saint Francis of Goa and, in addition to fulfilling functions reserved for bishops, such as performing confirmations and ordinations, undertook a pastoral visit, in which were denounced various cases of concubinage and bigamy.⁴⁶

Until the end of the 1530s, there were no coherent, articulated, and effective methods of Christianizing the native populations of Asia, who were allowed to practice their religions and follow their customs, despite the fact that the violent persecution of non-Christians had already begun. In 1522, for example, the bishop of Dume suggested to the king that they should not only destroy Hindu temples and raise churches “with saints” in their place but also remove anyone that was not baptized from the island of Goa.⁴⁷ In fact, Catholic violence against Hindus and Muslims was felt to such an extent in Goa that, between 1510 (the year the city was conquered by Afonso de Albuquerque) and 1530, non-Christian temples and mosques were destroyed in Tiswadi (Goa) and the regions of Bardez and Salsete.⁴⁸

Concerning the Portuguese, their religious life was gradually structured with the founding of churches and brotherhoods and even the establishment of modest mechanisms to oversee their conduct. From 1519 onward, for example, the inhabitants of Goa

⁴²Patrícia Souza de Faria, “Os franciscanos no Malabar: Experiências missionárias e mediações culturais no sul da Índia (século XVI),” *SÉMATA: Ciências Sociais e Humanidades* 26 (2014): 452–455; and António da Silva Rego, *História das missões do padroado português do Oriente: Índia (1500–1542)* (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1949), 157–158.

⁴³The first Dominican convent dated back from 1548 and the Augustinians arrived later, by 1575. Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa under Portugal, 1510–1610* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2002), 80–81.

⁴⁴Charles Martial De Witte, ed., *Les lettres papales concernant l’expansion portugaise au XVI^e siècle* ([s.l.]: Nouvelle Revue de Science Missionnaire, 1986), 124.

⁴⁵Achilles Meersman, “The First Latin bishops in the Portuguese Period in India,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft - Nouvelle Revue de Science Missionnaire* 40 (1964): 179–183.

⁴⁶Fernando Vaqueiro to the viceroy, Goa, 12 December 1532, in Rego, *Documentação*, 2:235–237.

⁴⁷Paolo Aranha, *Il cristianesimo latino in India nel XVI secolo* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2006), 118–120; and Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 106–109.

⁴⁸Ines G. Zupanov, “The Pulpit Trap: Possession and Personhood in Colonial Goa,” *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 65/66 (2014/2015): 299.

were obliged to present the captain of the city with a certificate from the vicar proving that they had confessed their sins at Lent.⁴⁹

In any event, the situation that Juan de Albuquerque found when he arrived was different from what was experienced in Spanish America. There, for one thing, the creation of dioceses had begun earlier and there were resident bishops in various territories. In 1538, when Albuquerque disembarked in Goa to govern a broad space that stretched from the Cape of Good Hope to China (as described in the bishopric's foundational bull), there were already almost twenty dioceses extending between the present-day territories of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, Mexico, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Peru.⁵⁰ Moreover, nowhere else in the Portuguese overseas empire, much less in Goa, had there ever been a papal provision like the *Exponi nobis fecisti* bull of May 9, 1522, commonly known as the *Omnimoda*, which granted extensive privileges to the regular orders before the creation of most of the dioceses. In practice, this enabled the regulars (Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians) to exercise the powers reserved for bishops, with the exception of ordaining new priests.⁵¹ A similar framework generated so many problems in Spanish America that, in 1537, the bishops of Mexico, the one of Antequera and the other of Guatemala, wrote to the king of Castile bewailing their jurisdictional weakness in relation to the regular clergy and asking him to limit the powers of the orders, which were threatening the episcopal dignity and authority.⁵²

What happened in the so-called New World was not unknown and could have served as a source of inspiration and point of comparison for experiences in Portuguese Asia. Indeed, those bishops that most distinguished themselves in America in the 1520s and 1530s were, like Albuquerque, Franciscan friars, with Juan de Zumárraga of Mexico (1533–1548) especially outstanding.

Albuquerque was committed to exercising his episcopal functions, affirming his authority, and controlling the religious behavior of the Christians. He knew that he had the support of the king, as evidenced by a letter the monarch wrote to him in March 1541.⁵³ One of his first measures was to prohibit shops from opening on Sundays during the hour of Mass so that there would be no distractions to lure Christians away. "The municipal powers resisted, but the prelate renewed the order annually. He charged two "Christians of the land" (the name given to locals that had received baptism) to go to the shops and order them to close."⁵⁴ In 1538, he participated in two high-profile ceremonies which also affirmed his symbolic place in the community. The first was the reception that the council gave to the viceroy, Garcia de Noronha, in which the bishop appeared in the church with pontifical garments.⁵⁵ In the second, he confirmed Tabarija, king of Ternate (one of the Maluku

⁴⁹*Regimento* of the governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira for the Goa captain, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, ed. Joaquim H. da Cunha Rivara (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1865), 5.1:21.

⁵⁰Bula *Aequum reputamus IV*, the original in ANTT, *Bulas*, m. 23, n. 28.

⁵¹Jorge E. Traslosheros, *Iglesia, justicia y sociedad en la Nueva España* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2004), 14.

⁵²Leticia Pérez Puente, "El Obispo: Politico de institucion divina," in *La Iglesia en Nueva España: Problemas e perspectivas de investigación* (Mexico City: Universidade Nacional Autonoma de México, 2010), 167.

⁵³Copy of letter from John III to Albuquerque made in 1691 from a *Register Book* that existed at the Archbishopric Archive, in Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon (hereafter AHU), Conselho Ultramarino (CU), Índia, caixa 70, doc. 15.

⁵⁴Rego, *Documentação*, 4:137.

⁵⁵Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia* (Lisbon: Academia Real das Sciencias, 1864), 4.1:11.

islands), who had been baptized shortly before in Goa on the instigation of the governor, Nuno da Cunha.⁵⁶

In March 1539, Albuquerque, affirming his authority and fulfilling royal orders and papal provisions issued in the diocese's foundational bull, established the cathedral see of Goa ("with great ceremony"), appointing canons and chaplains of the chapter.⁵⁷ This was a decisive step in the construction of a visible diocesan church in Asia. The cathedral had an income of 500 *cruzados* per year and the bishop received from the king a salary of 1,000 *cruzados*. In the same year and month, the bishop's authority was recognized in the city. When Nuno da Cunha wanted to establish a chapel in the cathedral, for which he would make a donation to the chapter, the canons did not want to accept before the bishop was informed and could authorize and confirm everything.⁵⁸

Demonstrating that he was not as "slack" as some had described him, Albuquerque did not follow the royal order from Lisbon to appoint a particular vicar as dean of the cathedral. The bishop had made a pastoral visit to the city in 1539 and noted that the priest chosen by the monarch, Diogo de Morais, "was incapable and inadequate," as well as being a man "of little peace and disconsolation." Moreover, the visitational document clarified that less than a year after his arrival in India, Albuquerque had a clerk of the chamber (*escrivão da câmara*) and had imposed a culture of organization on his chancery characteristic of diocesan administration in Portugal,⁵⁹ just as he had ordered a register (*tombo*) for the chapter in which he could record the cathedral's property.⁶⁰ He had also drawn up rules for the cathedral choir and for the bailiff. In doing these things, he followed the model of the kingdom, as recommended by the monarch in 1541, when he ordered Albuquerque to follow the regulations of the Portuguese archbishoprics and bishoprics that the bishop had taken with him to India to guide him.

Albuquerque also opposed the creation of all the cathedral benefices prescribed in the papal bull, noting that there was not enough income for that. Instead, in keeping with the royal orders, he ordered the four cathedral benefices to be merged with the positions of cantor, archdeacon, treasurer, and schoolmaster, and commanded that the respective income would go toward cathedral expenses, whose maintenance was a royal obligation. With this adjustment, the chapter was made up of thirteen canons, six chaplains, a priest, four choirboys, and a sub-treasurer.⁶¹ In a similar vein, the bishop also ordered them not to follow the rituals and customs of the see of Funchal while in the cathedral, generating opposition from the chapter, as can be seen from the canons' complaint to the king in 1547.⁶²

The construction of the diocese required an organic structure with a network of agents. There was an Ecclesiastical Chamber (*Câmara Eclesiástica*) to deal with various matters relating to the governance of the diocese. The vicar-general and the clerk of the chamber were the main officials. During Albuquerque's time in office, there were three vicars-general, who were paid by the king a salary of 300 *cruzados*

⁵⁶Last will of Tabarija, in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português no Oriente: Insulíndia*, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 2:22.

⁵⁷Correia, *Lendas*, 4.1:88.

⁵⁸Transcription of the original register in Catão, "Sé catedral de Goa," 511.

⁵⁹Rego, *Documentação*, 2:265–290.

⁶⁰The *Tombo* is mentioned in original registers published by Catão, "Sé catedral de Goa," 528.

⁶¹The choirmaster of Goa cathedral to King John III, Rome, 31 October 1542, in Rego, *Documentação*, 2:322–323.

⁶²Rego, *Documentação*, 3:322–323.

per year.⁶³ Miguel Vaz held the post from 1533 until he died in 1547. He was replaced by Pedro Fernandes, who held the position from February of 1547 until the end of 1549.⁶⁴ In July of 1550, this former student of theology in Paris was chosen by the king to become the first bishop of Brazil.⁶⁵ We do not know the name of the third vicar-general.⁶⁶

Albuquerque had other officials in an apparently small structure, including a bailiff who carried out his orders and accompanied him on pastoral visits to arrest people when necessary, as well as various servants.⁶⁷ One of them, Marçal Fernandes, served him for more than ten years, and the bishop tried to ensure his future by intervening with influential people, as was usual in that patronage culture.⁶⁸

An episcopal tribunal (*auditório eclesiástico*) was also established, presided over by the bishop or vicar-general. Ecclesiastical justice was applied in function of the person, that is, if one of the parties was a cleric (excluding major crimes such as *lèse-majesté*), or when it concerned the behavior of laymen that infringed upon norms prescribed by the Church. The tribunal had two sessions per week and included clerks that recorded the procedures.⁶⁹

The tribunal records have disappeared, but it can be proved that it tried laymen and clerics, some of whom were punished very severely. The first case identified occurred in 1539, when a New Christian of Jewish origin was sentenced to death for heresy.⁷⁰ In 1543, a New Christian named Jerónimo Dias was condemned for Judaizing in a trial in which the bishop intervened.⁷¹ In February 1547, Albuquerque ordered the vicar of Diu to be seized and held in a secular prison, and he was convicted, following an inquiry by the secular judge Simão Rodrigues into the behavior of the clerics of that fortress, by order of the viceroy, D. João de Castro. It was proved that the vicar and other clerics had concubines and were involved in trade, including with “moors” and “pagans,” and did not bury the dead without money to pay for tombs and Masses.⁷² In the same year, the bishop ordered the vicar-general, Pedro Fernandes, to go to Chaul and Bassein to visit and inquire into the behavior of three clerics. Albuquerque ordered him to arrest the vicar of Ternate and bring him back to Goa

⁶³The reference to the salaries can be found in the *Tombo da Índia* done by Simão Botelho and finished in 1554, published in Rodrigo José de Lima Felner, ed., *Subsídios para a História da Índia Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Academia Real das Ciências, 1868), 69.

⁶⁴Pedro Fernandes to Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, 14 February 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:490; and Cosme Anes to King John III, Goa, 30 December 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:471–72. About Pedro Fernandes, see José Pedro Paiva, “Trabalho mais para que não se pervertam os brancos do que para a conversão dos negros”: Pedro Fernandes, bispo de Salvador da Bahia (1551–1556), entre Paris, Lisboa, Goa, Cabo Verde e o Brasil,” *Varia Historia* 37/73 (2021): 17–52.

⁶⁵Draft of the letter the king wrote to the pope appointing Pedro Fernandes, in ANTT, *Coleção de São Vicente*, livro 6, fol. 65r.

⁶⁶He is mentioned without being explicitly named in a letter from the Jesuit Melchior Nunes Barreto, Goa, 9 December 1551, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:239.

⁶⁷In 1539, for example, the bailiff was João Afonso, in Rego, *Documentação*, 2:269.

⁶⁸António Gomes, a Jesuit, to Simão Rodrigues, Goa, 20 December 1548, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:424.

⁶⁹*Constituições do arcebispado de Goa* (Goa: João de Endem, 1568), fol. 92.

⁷⁰Jerónimo Dias to King John III of Portugal, Goa, 2 December 1539, in ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, parte I, doc. 66, m. 47.

⁷¹Correia, *Lendas*, 4.1: 292–294.

⁷²Rego, *Documentação*, 3:455–489; and Luís de Albuquerque, “O inquérito aos clérigos de Diu,” in *Alguns casos da Índia Portuguesa no tempo de D. João de Castro* (Lisbon: Alfa, 1989), 105–149.

“in irons” and also ordered the arrest of the vicar of Ceylon.⁷³ Finally, in 1552, the Jesuit Melchior Barreto sent the bishop some captive Lutherans that he had found in Bassein to be judged in his tribunal.⁷⁴

In addition to the tribunal in Goa, there existed a network of vicars who applied justice on behalf of the bishop in Portuguese fortresses. They could try any crimes except heresy, sodomy, usury, adultery, homicide, and those in which the defendant was a cleric and deserved to be removed from orders or stripped of his benefice.⁷⁵ As the power of the bishop and his vicars did not cover all areas where Christians resided, the Jesuits, whom the prelate trusted, also applied justice without any sign that this was prevented by him. In 1547, in Cape Comorin and on the Coromandel coast, where there were no vicars, the missionaries of the Company of Jesus went as far as to arrest and flog recently baptized locals that were living in concubinage. In other cases that were under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, Jesuits might have sent them to the chiefs of the villages to be judged.⁷⁶

The application of justice by the bishop and his delegates had its limits. It is therefore not surprising that, in 1549, the vicar-general recognized that when he “tightened his grip on Portuguese bigamists,” they fled to the Coromandel coast. There was also a case of a priest who said Mass without being ordained, and who escaped when the bishop tried to arrest him and deport him to Portugal.⁷⁷

The exercise of justice and functioning of the diocese also implied a normative framework, and Albuquerque required that, in Goa, the Constitutions of the diocese of Funchal must be adopted.⁷⁸

The government of the diocese implied the establishment of a network of churches and vicariates in the fortresses. In 1540, shortly after Albuquerque’s arrival in Goa, there were fourteen churches and chapels in the city and indications that the number would grow.⁷⁹ In around 1543, the bishop reorganized the parish geography, creating four parishes instead of one (Santa Catarina, Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Nossa Senhora da Luz, and Santa Luzia), each with its own priest and a school where children could learn the rudiments of Christianity. This helped improve the ratio of clerics and religious to the total population of the area, which was already the center of the so-called State of India.⁸⁰

⁷³João de Vila do Conde, a Franciscan, to Viceroy João de Castro, Goa, 16 March 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:498–499.

⁷⁴Antônio da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Índia*, (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias 1951), 5:261–262.

⁷⁵*Constituições do arcebispado de Goa*, fol. 96v. In New Spain, for example in the diocese of Oaxaca, there was also a network of local vicars with similar powers, see Ana de Zaballa Beascochea, “Jurisdicción de los tribunales eclesiásticos novohispanos sobre la heterodoxia indígena: Una aproximación a su estudio,” *Nuevas perspectivas sobre el castigo de la heterodoxia indígena en la Nueva España: siglos XVI–XVIII*, ed. Ana de Zaballa Beascochea (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2005), 62.

⁷⁶Henrique Henriques, a Jesuit, to the Jesuit College in Coimbra, Punical, 6 December 1547, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:225–226; and Henrique Manuel de Moraes, a Jesuit, to Simão Rodrigues, Periya Talai, 11 December 1547, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:236.

⁷⁷Rego, *Documentação*, 4:561–562.

⁷⁸Albuquerque to King John III of Portugal, Goa, 28 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:137–138. The original of the Funchal Constitutions is unknown today.

⁷⁹Catarina Madeira Santos, ‘Goa é a chave de toda a Índia’: *Perfil político da capital do Estado da Índia (1505–1570)* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, 1999), 209.

⁸⁰Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon), Henrique Bravo de Moraes, *Notícia de como e quando se erigiu a cathedral de Goa e dos bispos e arcebispos que nella houve*, códice 176, fol. 100r; and Francisco Xavier Vaz, “Confrarias na Sé de Goa,” *O Oriente Portuguez* 9, no. 7–8 (1912): 162.

However, the main problem was not in Goa but rather in the scattered nature of the territories between the east coast of Africa and Melaka. The bishop improved the territorialization of conversion.⁸¹ In May 1542, Francis Xavier (the leader of the first Jesuits to disembark in Asia) arrived in Goa and went to visit Albuquerque, initiating a personal relationship that would prove to be one of great mutual esteem, as demonstrated by multiple episodes in which they praised each other.⁸² In September of that year, when the Jesuit already had a clearer understanding of the diocese of Goa, he mentioned in a letter to Loyola that the bishop was committed to evangelization and that he had vicars in all the fortresses.⁸³ At the end of the 1540s, there were vicariates in 17 fortresses: Sofala, Mozambique, Quilon, Socotra, Hormuz, Colombo, Melaka, Makassar, and Ternate, as well as, on the Indian coast, Diu, Bassein, Chaul, Cannanore, Chale, Cranganore, Cochin, Kollam, and Mylapore. Six of these (Socotra, Colombo, Makassar, Bassein, Chale, and Mylapore) only appear in the sources from the 1540s onward, which suggests that they may have been created and endowed with vicars by Albuquerque. In many fortresses, there were priests assisting the vicars. In Cochin, for example, there were six, while in Bassein there were four.⁸⁴ By 1554, including vicars and other secular priests, the Crown supported a total of forty-nine clerics, not including those in Goa).⁸⁵ According to the report of a pastoral visitation carried out in 1539, some parish vicars levied taxes for “confession penances” and for the tombs of the dead, amounts that reverted to the church, which indicates some ability to intervene in the lives of the faithful.⁸⁶

As was usual for posts appointed by the king, some of the vicars of the fortresses were appointed in three-year cycles.⁸⁷ On an uncertain date, the king authorized Albuquerque to present the vicars in the name of the monarch and then confirm them, as the confirmation of a benefice in a church could only be done by the bishop.⁸⁸ In addition, since at least 1541, the prelate endowed the chaplains of the chapels in villages near Goa, who, as well as saying Mass, also taught doctrine and heard confession. When there were native priests, these were the chaplains, and they reported about the state of their chapels to the bishop or vicar-general.⁸⁹ It is impossible to assess how many priests “of the land” were ordained on this mission. Until 1554, there were some, like Mateus Dias, who received 125 *cruzados* per year, and Jorge de S. Pedro, both “Malabar clerics,” the first working in Cochin, and the second in Cranganore.⁹⁰

The bishop of Goa and the vicars-general corresponded with the vicars and, in this way, oversaw their activity, as well as transmitting instructions and receiving information that enabled them to better understand the different places that they governed. In 1543, for example, the vicar-general, Miguel Vaz, received news from the vicar of

⁸¹Xavier, *A invenção*, 113.

⁸²Monforte, *Chronica*, 400.

⁸³Rego, *Documentação*, 3:44–45.

⁸⁴Felner, *Subsídios*, 21, 208.

⁸⁵Felner, *Subsídios*, 12–241.

⁸⁶Rego, *Documentação*, 2:271.

⁸⁷De Witte, *Les lettres*, 121.

⁸⁸Sebastião Gonçalves, *História dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus e do que fizeram com a divina graça na conversão dos infieis a nossa santa fee catholica nos reinos e provincias da India Oriental* (Coimbra: Atlântida, 1960), 2:425.

⁸⁹Order of the *Estado da Índia* treasurer Fernando Rodrigues Castelo Branco, dated from Goa on 30 June 1541, in Rego, *Documentação*, 2:299–300.

⁹⁰Felner, *Subsídios*, 23, 27.

Ternate;⁹¹ in 1546, the bishop sent instructions to the vicar of Bassein;⁹² in 1548, he sent a vicar to Chale, advising him to visit frequently the raja of Tanur, and received feedback the following year.⁹³

The network of vicars and its agents were insufficient. In addition to the fact that the total of vicars was short and that they generally occupied their posts for only three years, having to face resistance from secular and military powers, there were also other problems.⁹⁴ One of them was the low salaries that the king paid the vicars. In the 1550s, they did not all receive the same. The best paid was the vicar of Melaka, who made 110 *cruzados* per year. Those with the lowest income were the vicars of Cannanore, Kollam, Chaul, Chale, and Ceylon, with stipends of only 50 *cruzados* each.⁹⁵ It is revealing to compare these amounts with the salaries paid to other officers of the Crown or to priests of Portugal. While the vicar of Hormuz received 85 *cruzados*, the captain of the fortress made 1,500, and the judge (*ouvidor*) 250.⁹⁶ The parish priest with the best income in the diocese of Viseu, the priest of Santa Maria de Trancoso, in the north of Portugal, received 900 *cruzados*.⁹⁷

Another big problem was the vicars' behavior. In 1550, the vicar-general claimed that during pastoral visits he had found many very ill-prepared, recommending that others who were more zealous, virtuous, and able to teach doctrine be appointed for Melaka, Ceylon, Hormuz, Diu, Bassein, Chaul, and Sofala. He also suggested that no priest should leave Portugal for India without having been examined beforehand.⁹⁸

The scarcity of secular clerics was worrying, as is revealed by the case of Cosme de Torres. Born in Barcelona, he was in present-day Haiti for three years before setting sail for the Maluku islands in 1542. In Ambon, he met Francis Xavier, who impressed him, but he left for Goa in order to "introduce himself to the bishop of India." When he met Albuquerque, he was given a vicariate. He served there for five months, though, in his own words, "without finding rest in my spirit." He ended up becoming a Jesuit and, in 1549, was ready to leave with Xavier for Japan.⁹⁹

These deficiencies demonstrate how important it was at that time to prepare young men for the priesthood in Asia. Albuquerque set sail for Goa with resources to confront the scarcity of clerics. The brief *Sedis Apostolicae Indefensa*, of April 24, 1537, allowed him to confer holy orders on any baptized person that was a recent convert to the faith or the son of Christians in his diocese or in another, provided he was well educated. The minimum ages required were sixteen for the subdeaconate, eighteen for deacon, and twenty-three for the priesthood.¹⁰⁰ To overcome the problem of distances, he obtained

⁹¹Miguel Vaz to the king, Cochin, 6 January 1543, in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português no Oriente: Insulíndia*, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 1:381.

⁹²Juan de Albuquerque to Queen Catherine, Goa, October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:349.

⁹³Order of Juan de Albuquerque, dated from Goa on 29 March 1546, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:331–332.

⁹⁴Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion*, 20.

⁹⁵Felner, *Subsídios*, 30, 39, 110, 128, 132, 241.

⁹⁶Felner, *Subsídios*, 95–96.

⁹⁷João Nunes, "O clero secular," in *História da Diocese de Viseu*, ed. José Pedro Paiva (Viseu: Diocese de Viseu, 2016), 2:273.

⁹⁸Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:744–745.

⁹⁹Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:471–476.

¹⁰⁰Carlos Mercês de Melo, *The Recruitment and Formation of the Native Clergy in India (16th–19th Centuries): A Historical-Canonical Study* (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 68.

the brief *Cum sicut carissimus* on October 28, 1546, which, among other privileges, permitted the vicars of Ternate, Melaka, Makassar, Coromandel, Socotra, Ceylon, Hormuz, Sofala, and Mozambique to confer the first tonsure and minor orders in their regions.¹⁰¹ Albuquerque conferred orders. In 1545, for example, Francisco Mansilha was ordained a priest in the cathedral, and, in 1549, the bishop ordained three locals previously educated in the college that existed in Cranganore.¹⁰² This will not have been a unique case, since the Jesuit Baltasar Gago managed in the same year to persuade the bishop to ordain boys born in Goa and Malabar who had attended the College of Saint Paul since 1541 or had converted to the faith.¹⁰³ He even ordained priests without a benefice, which was uncommon.¹⁰⁴

The ordination of natives was controversial. In Spanish America, in 1539, a committee of clerics decreed that the Indians could receive minor orders.¹⁰⁵ However, in 1555, during the first provincial council of Mexico, the ordination of mestizos, Indians, and blacks was forbidden.¹⁰⁶ In India, some criticized the bishop's policies, including the ordination of natives. In 1549, the vicar-general, Pedro Fernandes, remembering scandals caused by some of these priests ordained in Cape Comorin and Cranganore, argued that the "pagans" that converted took time to forget the "vices and bad habits" of the "idolatries and ceremonies." He argued that they should only be ordained at the age of 30, after having been "very well approved in matters of faith."¹⁰⁷ In 1550, the Jesuit António Gomes, who headed the College of the Faith, expelled young Indians because he was against their becoming priests, a measure strongly criticized by the bishop.¹⁰⁸

Albuquerque, complying with procedures to which he was canonically bound, oversaw the conduct of the priests, the state of the churches, and the behavior of Christians through pastoral visits. We do not know the regularity with which he made them or the concrete results of this activity, but there is scattered news that confirms that they occurred. One of the visitors was his vicar-general, Pedro Fernandes, and the bishop also made them personally.¹⁰⁹ In 1548, Francis Xavier met him in Cochin and recorded that he visited the fortresses of the diocese, praising him for exercising his office with "charity" and "as a true pastor."¹¹⁰ In 1547, Albuquerque had been in Cannanore and Chale, and, in 1551, almost at the end of his life, he visited Ceylon.¹¹¹ In Colombo, according to the Jesuit Manuel de Morais—surprised that some natives did not kill or eat any animals and had "pagodas that were richer than the churches of

¹⁰¹ *Corpo Diplomático Portuguez contendo os actos e relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potencias do mundo desde o século XVI até aos nossos dias* (Lisbon: Academia Real das Sciencias, 1898), 11:522–524.

¹⁰² Niccolò Lancillotti, a Jesuit, to Loyola, Goa, 5 November 1546, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:138; and Juan de Albuquerque to Queen Catherine, Goa, October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:357.

¹⁰³ Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:568.

¹⁰⁴ Francis Xavier to Francisco Mansilha, Cochin, 18 December 1544, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:128.

¹⁰⁵ Magnus Lundberg, *Unification and Conflict: The Church Politics of Alonso de Montúfar OP, Archbishop of Mexico, 1554–1572* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 2002), 73.

¹⁰⁶ Bireley, *Refashioning of Catholicism*, 154.

¹⁰⁷ Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:745–746.

¹⁰⁸ Viceroy Afonso de Noronha to the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues, Cochin, 5 January 1551, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:139–141.

¹⁰⁹ Pedro Fernandes to the king, Goa, 1550, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:745.

¹¹⁰ Francis Xavier to the king, Cochin, 20 January 1551, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:20.

¹¹¹ Juan de Albuquerque to Viceroy João de Castro, Cochin, 26 November 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:525–527.

Lisbon”—the bishop preached sermons, using a translator because he did not speak the language of the land.¹¹² In this respect, Albuquerque behaved like his contemporary Juan de Zumárraga, who also made regular visits in Mexico.¹¹³

The prelate of Goa was responsible for applying in Asia all the norms and guidelines issued by the authority of the pope, such as briefs, bulls, or jubilees. In 1546, he seems to have taken special care when he received the brief that authorized the vicars of fortresses to confer the first tonsure and bless churches, altars, and objects designed for worship, as well as prepare the confirmation oil and confer confirmation. Albuquerque, realizing that few understood Latin in those parts of the world, ordered the brief to be translated from Latin into Portuguese before sending it to the fortresses.¹¹⁴ In 1552, he disseminated the papal jubilee that granted indulgences to anyone who went to church and confessed. The Jesuits were also bearers of this episcopal order in the territories where they operated. The priest Manuel de Morais, for example, applied it in Ceylon, as the bishop had asked him to publish the jubilee in the churches of Colombo and Kotte.¹¹⁵

Albuquerque also performed confirmations, for instance, in the main church of Cochin in 1547.¹¹⁶ We don't know what ceremonies he performed, though it is unlikely that he would interrogate neophytes to find out if they knew their doctrine before applying this sacrament, as the Dominican Alonso de Montúfar, archbishop of Mexico did from 1554 onward.¹¹⁷

Albuquerque defended his authority and jurisdiction. There is evidence that he protested by complaining to the king when the governors of India tried to limit this.¹¹⁸ However, the bishop authorized the governor, Martim Afonso de Sousa (1542–1545), to arrest a Dominican and hold him in the public jail, which was usually not allowed due to the privileges of the clergymen.¹¹⁹ Similarly, Albuquerque often let Jesuits grant absolution to penitents in cases normally reserved for himself because of his trust in them and authorized Dominicans to preach, as he did with some sent to Chaul.¹²⁰ To protect his jurisdiction, he also asked the king to forbid the sending of apostolic notaries to India, since these were immune to the bishop's action because of their papal protection.¹²¹

Some of the initiatives already mentioned sought to regulate and fortify the worship of those Europeans living in Asia who were already Christians. Other initiatives

¹¹²Manuel de Morais to the Jesuit College of Coimbra, Colombo, 28 November 1552, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:431–435. See also *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1960), 1:612.

¹¹³Gil González Davila, *Teatro eclesiastico de la primitiva Iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, vidas de sus arzobispos, obispos y cosas memorables de sus sedes* (Madrid: Diego Diaz de la Carrera, 1649), 1:22.

¹¹⁴Juan de Albuquerque to the king, Goa, 5 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:111.

¹¹⁵Manuel de Morais to the Jesuit College in Coimbra, Colombo, 28 November 1552, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:429.

¹¹⁶Juan de Albuquerque to Viceroy João de Castro, Cochin, 28 November 1547, in ANTT, *Coleção de São Lourenço*, vol. 2, fol. 405v–406r.

¹¹⁷Lundberg, *Unification and Conflict*, 97.

¹¹⁸Monforte, *Chronica*, 402.

¹¹⁹Correia, *Lendas*, 4.1:406.

¹²⁰Respectively, Juan de Albuquerque to the king, Goa, 5 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:108–109; and Charles Martial De Witte, “Aux origines de la congrégation indienne de l'ordre des frères Prêcheurs (1546–1580),” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 36 (1966): 470.

¹²¹Juan de Albuquerque to the king, Goa, 28 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:138.

replicated European models. For instance, he ordered that the canonical hours be prayed in the churches of Goa,¹²² celebrated Corpus Christi with the usual processions,¹²³ and established brotherhoods, such as that of Our Lady of the Rosary.¹²⁴ However, the greatest challenge the bishop faced in India was the diffusion of Christianity among the local populations, who did not receive it without some resistance, like that shown in other contexts. It was a dynamic which impacted strongly not only on the beliefs and behaviors of populations but also on the religious landscape of the territories where it was applied. The first Catholic diocese in Asia acquired a special meaning in the configuration of religious geography of the world, and the effects of Albuquerque's action, combined with various other initiatives and protagonists, were connected to similar phenomena developing in Spanish America, Brazil, and Africa.

From the 1540s onward, there was an intensification in Asia of a policy dynamized by the monarchy and Church and designed to build monolithic, religious cities. This was done through a dynamic of rapid assimilation of populations into Catholicism, mostly without them receiving careful instruction, similar to models that had been applied in the Iberian Peninsula for Jews and Muslims since the end of the fifteenth century.¹²⁵ This transformation, marked by greater openness to the acceptance of other religions, implied (as has been explained in exemplary fashion by Ângela Xavier) a process of "colonization of the imaginary" or "colonization of conscience," principally among those born in Goa, instilling in them forms of thinking, feeling, and living that were identical to those of the Portuguese. The aim was to enable their transformation simultaneously into Christian faithful and vassals of the Portuguese crown, thereby achieving the effective domination of territories very far away from Lisbon.¹²⁶

The bishop's policy combined violent strategies—for example, the expulsion of non-Christians from the territories of Goa, book burning, and the destruction of temples—with much gentler and more attractive methods (such as instruction through catechesis, promises of eternal salvation, offers of food and clothing, the practice of charity with regard to the sick and poor, and promises of jobs).¹²⁷ These dynamics were not restricted to Goa and the fortresses on the Malabar coast; they also reached other regions, though with less intensity and efficacy. From 1543 onward, a group of six Franciscans led by João de Vila do Conde advanced the spread of Christianity in Ceylon. They were of the same Franciscan current as Albuquerque and had habits that brought them close to the local populations (fasting, vegetarianism, and walking barefoot). Through mass baptisms, Christianity spread beyond the regions of Colombo and Kotte. By 1552, there were five new churches in coastal areas of

¹²²Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon), Henrique Bravo de Morais, *Notícia de como e quando se erigiu a cathedral de Goa e dos bispos e arcebispos que nella houve*, códice 176, fol. 125r.

¹²³Rego, *Documentação*, 3:354.

¹²⁴The Brotherhood of the Rosary to the King, Goa, 25 October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:359.

¹²⁵Ângela Barreto Xavier, "Conversos and Novamente Convertidos: Law, Religion, and Identity in the Portuguese Kingdom and Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 255–287; and Giuseppe Marcocci, *A consciência de um império: Portugal e o seu mundo (sécs. XV–XVII)* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2012), 380–382.

¹²⁶Xavier, *A invenção*, 27, 81–144.

¹²⁷On jobs for the converted natives, see the interesting insights of Giuseppe Marcocci, "Catholic Missions and Native Subaltern Workers: Connected Micro-Histories of Labour from India and Brazil, ca. 1545–1560," in *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour*, ed. Christian G. de Vito and Anne Gerritsen (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 69–93.

Southern Ceylon—Colombo, Gale, Negombo, Beruwela, and Weligama—each with a friar to baptize children and teach doctrine.¹²⁸

In Melaka there were also campaigns of “spiritual conquest.” In 1545, Xavier was preparing to leave for this fortress, where “Christians were being newly made,” promising that he would translate the Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary, and general confession into their language and hoping that in future there would be more priests able to speak the local languages.¹²⁹ Five years later, this impulse continued, and the local vicar baptized a powerful native and four Japanese who had docked there.¹³⁰

Some of the Moluku islands also received Jesuit missionaries. Albuquerque was informed of these events, as is indicated by the letter written to him by the Jesuit Manuel Pinto in 1548, describing his passage via Makassar and the need for the bishop to send a vicar there.¹³¹

The Franciscan António do Porto told the king that, in 1548, he worked in Bassein, in northern India, with a Dominican, founding a college attended by young natives. He explained that Albuquerque would do everything “necessary and there would be nothing required for this work that he would not undertake,” and that “if he could do more, he would.”¹³² A few years later, this same Franciscan instigated the violent destruction of various local temples, much as his co-religionists were doing in Mexico.¹³³

The bishop of Goa also followed and supported the action of the Dutch Jesuit Gaspar Berzé (Gaspar Barzaeus) in Hormuz, granting him permission to confess certain reserved cases, pleased at the understanding that existed between him and the local vicar, and even authorized him to reprehend local secular priests who were behaving badly.¹³⁴

Most of these actions involved regular clergy, particularly the Jesuits. However, the bishop had to be informed, and he supported them and did not see them as competitors but rather, given the scarcity of clerics, as allies who were indispensable to his mission. The support of the regulars, especially the Jesuits, was essential, particularly in zones where there were no vicars. Within around seven years of their arrival in 1542, they had already spread out around the Maluku islands, Japan, Melaka, Mylapore, Kollam, Cochin, Goa, Bassein, and Hormuz, receiving ardent praise from Albuquerque.¹³⁵ Of course, the bishop did not have jurisdiction over them, and there were even tensions between some vicars and Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans, as was usual in other contexts. Yet, in general, during Albuquerque’s episcopacy, there were close relations and mutual support between these agents. In 1548, for example, the bishop told the king that he would like to see Goa “full of apostles,” as the Jesuits were known: “in each street, I wanted to find one throughout the whole of this India, and two, because of the devotion that the people have for them and the honesty of their garb and the despising of the world moves the hearts of men.” In 1550,

¹²⁸Strathern, *Kingship*, 86, 95, 100. See also L. Bourdon, *Les débuts de l’Évangélisation de Ceylan vers le milieu du XVIème siècle d’après des documents récemment publiés* (Lisbon: Institut Français au Portugal, 1936), 11–12, 14.

¹²⁹Sá, *Documentação*, 1:450.

¹³⁰Francisco Perez, a Jesuit, to the Jesuits of Goa Melaka, 24 November 1550, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:110.

¹³¹Sá, *Documentação*, 1:589–592.

¹³²Rego, *Documentação*, 4:59–65.

¹³³Monforte, *Chronica*, 410–412; and Strathern, “Os Piedosos,” 860.

¹³⁴Juan de Albuquerque to Gaspar Berzé, Goa, 25 March 1550, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:502–504.

¹³⁵Juan de Albuquerque to the Queen, Goa, 20 October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:347.

alleging that he should seek “all modes and manners through which the Catholic faith might be planted in these lands,” he gave the Jesuits a chapel in Cochin where they could establish a college.¹³⁶ This trust was reciprocal. The previous year, Loyola himself thanked the bishop for help received,¹³⁷ and a Jesuit assured him that Xavier, absent from Goa, had entrusted Albuquerque with the governance of the priests of the Society.¹³⁸ Only after 1548, with the arrival of a few Dominicans, when the competition for the “salvation market” intensified, were there the first signs of slight friction between the bishop and the regulars.¹³⁹ At the end of 1551, the Dominican Diego Bermudes accused the bishop of being a “terrible pastor,” holding him responsible for the deplorable state of Christianity in India because of the way baptisms were performed.¹⁴⁰

In fact, particularly in Goa, there had been an intensification in the solemn and collective baptisms of the population, particularly of people of lower status in the local social hierarchy. In 1543, for example, 243 inhabitants of different villages were baptized, as well as around one thousand five hundred Brahmins on the island of Divar.¹⁴¹ These rituals were done using holy water but without oils and with little or no catechesis of the neophytes, some of them in the cathedral (which was “rich and magnificent”).¹⁴² Similar routes were followed in Mexico by the bishop Juan de Zumárraga and Franciscan monks, who baptized very large numbers of Amerindians.¹⁴³

There was also an increase in the number of baptisms of local chiefs and Brahmins.¹⁴⁴ In this regard, Albuquerque’s action was notable, as he got involved in the doctrinal preparation of future Christians, celebrating these baptisms with solemnity. During his episcopate, the geographic amplitude of this process was impressive. In 1544, the king of Makassar was baptized.¹⁴⁵ Two years later, it was the turn of the king of Kandy in Ceylon. The Franciscan António Padrão informed the bishop of this fact, explaining that the king had been baptized at night and “thus still in the darkness of night . . . without having or believing our doctrine, nor knowing how to make the sign of the cross.” He added that if the viceroy went to Kande, the monarch would permit his people to be baptized, explaining that this king wanted from the Portuguese “honor, security of his kingdom, vengeance over his enemies.”¹⁴⁶

With the direct intervention of the bishop, the Brahmin Loku, his wife, and the Japanese Anjirō (who was given the Christian name of Paul of the Holy Faith) were baptized in 1548 in the Goa cathedral.¹⁴⁷ In 1551, it was the turn of the king of the

¹³⁶Rego, *Documentação*, 4:551–453. This translation is intended to reflect the fact that the Portuguese original is not very clear.

¹³⁷Rego, *Documentação*, 4:446–447.

¹³⁸Gaspar Berzé to the Jesuit College in Coimbra, Hormuz, 24 November 1550, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:83.

¹³⁹De Witte, “Aux origines,” 470.

¹⁴⁰Rego, *Documentação*, 5:80.

¹⁴¹Viriato A. C. B. de Albuquerque, “Baptismos solennes em Goa,” *O Oriente Portuguez* 2, no. 9 (1905): 446.

¹⁴²Niccolò Lancilotti, a Jesuit, to the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues, Goa, 22 October 1545, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:31–32.

¹⁴³González Davila, *Teatro eclesiastico*, 1:26; and Ricard, *La conquista*, 142.

¹⁴⁴The same strategy was adopted in Mexico, see Crew, “Bautizando,” 951.

¹⁴⁵António de Paiva, a Jesuit, to the Queen, Goa, 30 November 1545, in Sá, *Documentação*, 1:463.

¹⁴⁶ANTT, *Coleção de São Lourenço*, vol. 3, fol. 54–58.

¹⁴⁷For the conversion of Loku, the best source is the letter from Juan de Albuquerque to the king, written from Goa on 28 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:131–133. For the baptism of Anjirō, see the

Maldives.¹⁴⁸ The most significant cases—in part because of the prelate’s involvement in the process—were those of Loku and the raja of Tanur in 1549. Albuquerque explained that he exchanged letters with the latter and even conversed with him for around four hours using an interpreter. The ruler of Tanur wore the traditional Brahmin turban on his head after the bishop deigned to allow it, provided he had “his heart firm in the faith and believing in Jesus Christ,” a position that could be also interpreted as a form of accommodation, a strategy usually said to be utilized only later by the Jesuits. The day after the baptism, celebrating with great exuberance in Goa, the raja was confirmed.¹⁴⁹

These baptisms of rulers and Brahmins were very important because they facilitated the adhesion of the people. In 1548, a Portuguese resident in Goa claimed that there were around five thousand Christians there, with another two thousand in Bardez and Salsete, and predicted that this contingent would grow after Loku’s baptism.¹⁵⁰ Albuquerque, for his part, could not contain his enthusiasm after baptizing Loku and said that if he were given license to reward the new Christians with positions and to “slaughter some pagans honored with discretion,” he and the Jesuits, in a year or two, would make the whole island of Goa Christian, praying to God that he might see that day.¹⁵¹ This wish, however, was never fulfilled.

The bishop did not contest mass baptisms of people with fair Christian instruction but dedicated himself to teaching doctrine to children and recently baptized “Christians of the land,” as well as preaching and hearing confession from “negros and negresses.”¹⁵² In 1547, when Albuquerque was in Cochin, he was unequivocal in the information he gave the king: “I go around these churches teaching doctrine to the children and Christians of the land . . . and preaching on Sundays.”¹⁵³ Concerns about the teaching of doctrine led him to determine in 1544 that the vicars should teach catechism in their churches and administer confession.¹⁵⁴

There is no proof that Albuquerque corresponded with his counterpart in Mexico, Zumárraga, or that he received frequent news from Spanish America about the experiments that were being conducted there. But the similarities between their practices was a facet that linked these two Franciscan bishops, creating affinities between physically very distant places.¹⁵⁵ Zumárraga also taught doctrine and prayers

letter from Paulo de Santa Fé to Loyola, written from Goa on 29 November 1548, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:339.

¹⁴⁸*Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, 1:618.

¹⁴⁹Juan de Albuquerque to the Queen, Goa, 29 October 1549, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:348–357. For the analysis of king of Tanur’s conversion, see also Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontiers in India (16th–17th Centuries)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 133–138.

¹⁵⁰Rodrigo Barbudo to the king, Goa, 28 December 1548, in Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:408.

¹⁵¹Juan de Albuquerque to the king, Goa, 28 November 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:133.

¹⁵²João de Vila do Conde, a Franciscan, to the viceroy, João de Castro, Goa, 16 March 1547, in Rego, *Documentação*, 3:498–499. According to some authors, these “negros and negresses” were slaves, see Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times* (Rome: The Jesuit Historical Institute, 1982), 3:299.

¹⁵³ANTT, *Coleção de São Lourenço*, vol. 2, fol. 419r–20v.

¹⁵⁴Patrícia Souza de Faria, *A conquista das almas do Oriente: Franciscanos, catolicismo e poder colonial em Goa (1540–1750)* (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2013), 71; and Amaro Pinto Lobo, *Memória histórico-eclesiástica da arquidiocese de Goa* (Nova Goa: Voz de S. Francisco Xavier, 1933), 105.

¹⁵⁵There is evidence from other periods and places confirming that Franciscans also circulated accounts around their institutions, “producing a Franciscan global knowledge network.” McClure, *The Franciscan Invention*, 50–51.

himself to the Mexican Indians and seems to have written a small book designed for this purpose.¹⁵⁶

The creation of colleges for native children was another policy adopted in both Spanish America and Asia. Albuquerque supported, suggested, and was involved in the process. The experiments were not restricted to Goa. In Cranganore, at the beginning of the 1540s, the Franciscan Vicente de Lagos, who had come from Portugal in the bishop's entourage, established a school for Malabar children.¹⁵⁷ The most distinguished college was that of St. Paul, or of the Faith, founded in 1541 in Goa with the authorization of the bishop and strong support from the king.¹⁵⁸ The college owed much to the vicar-general, Miguel Vaz, and to Diogo de Borba, a secular priest who was its first rector. Borba had also arrived from Portugal with the bishop, who trusted him, particularly to pray in the cathedral. In accordance with the college statutes of 1549, when the running of the institution was taken over by Jesuits (a move that Albuquerque also supported), one of the school's main objectives was the instruction of boys between thirteen and fifteen years of age—Goans, Malabars, Malays, Gujaratis, Abyssinians, Chinese, boys from the Coromandel coast, Bengal, Pegu, Siam, the Maluku Islands, and even “kaffirs” from Sofala and Mozambique. All of them, after being instructed, were used to teach Christianity in their own language in their own lands.¹⁵⁹

The route to the establishment of Christianity included brutally violent methods. The 1540s were marked by vigorous offensives designed to destroy the visible signs of other religions. The acts of iconoclasm practiced by Protestants in Europe and bewailed by Catholics were now replicated by Roman Catholic agents in Asia. In 1540, in Cranganore, the local temple was destroyed and its divinities decimated,¹⁶⁰ coinciding with the arrival of the Franciscan Vicente de Lagos to the fortress, where he was sent by the bishop.¹⁶¹ The vicar-general, Miguel Vaz, was very active in this regard. In 1543, he mentioned that Fabião Gonçalves, a baptized native, had always helped him and that “with his hand were destroyed and removed all the pagodas and houses of idolatry that there were in Goa.”¹⁶² Albuquerque was involved in this use of force, as is proved by a provision that he issued in 1546, at least for Bassein. Recalling that he was obeying royal orders and recognizing that, as bishop, he had the obligation to “destroy this terrible idolatry” and uproot from the diocese the whole “sect of Mafamede and paganism and all that is contrary to faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ,” he ordered the local vicar, Jesuits, and Franciscans that “wherever they should find pagodas . . . they should destroy and raze them so they could have no power and authority.”¹⁶³ One vicar of Goa claimed to have taken many idols from the homes of inhabitants in his vicariate, in compliance with the bishop's orders.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁶González Davila, *Teatro eclesiastico*, 1:21; and Alberto Maria Carreño, “The Books of Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga,” *The Americas* 5, no. 3 (1949): 314. The first book he produced was Alberto Maria Carreño, *Breve y mas compendiosa doctrina en lengua mexicana y castellana que contiene las cosas más necesarias de nuestra sancta fe católica para aprovechamiento destes indios naturales y salvacion de sus ánimas* (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1539).

¹⁵⁷*Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, 1:529–530; and Monforte, *Chronica*, 404–405.

¹⁵⁸For the king's support, see Rivara, *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, 5.1:161–163.

¹⁵⁹Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:118.

¹⁶⁰ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, I parte, m. 68, doc. 91.

¹⁶¹Monforte, *Chronica*, 403.

¹⁶²Miguel Vaz to the king, Cochin, 6 January 1543, in Rego, *Documentação*, 2:343.

¹⁶³Rego, *Documentação*, 3:330–332.

¹⁶⁴António Ponce to the king, Goa, October 1548, in Rego, *Documentação*, 4:55.

Mass baptisms without catechesis, violent annihilation of other religions, and the persecution of their followers, as well as other strategies used in these campaigns, had limits and were not consensual. The first critical voices to be raised were those of the Jesuits, particularly Antonio Criminali and Niccolò Lancilotti.¹⁶⁵ In 1545, Criminali informed Loyola that most of the baptized had received the sacrament through a translator, without “understanding its meaning,” and that the rite was celebrated without “confirmation and catechumen oils,” so that it was of dubious validity. For him, those “new to the faith” should receive instruction for six months prior to baptism. Diogo de Borba argued that, in this case, no one would be baptized.¹⁶⁶ Five years later, Lancilotti mentioned that even soldiers performed baptisms and that many people returned afterwards to the old beliefs since they had not been properly instructed.¹⁶⁷ Among the seculars, criticism also circulated, such as from Manuel Nunes, who lamented that if clothes and food were given to attract to baptism and if the natives were obliged to cut their hair and eat beef, violating “their superstitions and rites of their idolatry” so that many people ran away, the Christians would have no one to work and the king would lose income.¹⁶⁸

Most scholars who have studied this question have not given enough attention to the bishop of Goa’s role in the process and devalue it.¹⁶⁹ However, Ângela Xavier has argued for the significance of the role played by Albuquerque in this process, despite arguing that certain more vigorous measures to combat non-Christians were led by the vicar-general, Miguel Vaz, with whom the prelate (in her view) had an adverse relationship.¹⁷⁰

The main source of these misunderstandings is the two long reports that Vaz sent to King John III, one from Cochin, in January 1543, and the other from Évora, before returning to Goa in 1545. In the second one, particularly, he admitted to being the mastermind and instigator of many measures that needed to be imposed with respect to conversion in India, especially the destruction of temples, prohibition of “heathenism,” and the removal from Goa of all Brahmins who made conversions difficult.¹⁷¹

Without reducing Vaz’s importance, given his long experience in India, the bishop’s role should not be minimized. It is sufficient to look carefully at the chronology of the processes mentioned above for agents implicated in them and their personal connections to Albuquerque, or to consider the culture of functioning in a diocese to understand that it is not correct to attribute to a vicar-general, no matter how ambitious he was, the leadership of what went on in the diocese. In the instructions that King John III gave to Vaz when he ordered him to return to India in 1545, the monarch underlined that he should respect the bishop. The first royal order determined that he should deliver some letters to the bishop and the governor, which authorized Albuquerque,

¹⁶⁵C. R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire 1415–1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 61–62; and Marccoci, *A consciência de um império*, 387.

¹⁶⁶Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:12–16.

¹⁶⁷Wicki, *Documenta*, 2:125–126.

¹⁶⁸Manuel Nunes to the Queen, Goa, 20 December 1552, in Rego, *Documentação*, 5:297.

¹⁶⁹For example Rego, *História das missões*, 203, 221; Melo, *Recruitment and Formation*, 17; Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry*, 7, 10, 20, 23, 109; Aranha, *Il cristianesimo*, 118–134; and Pius Malenkandathil, “Diocese do Funchal e estratégias missionárias na Índia: 1514–1550,” in *Diocese do Funchal: A primeira diocese global; História, cultura e espiritualidades*, ed. José Eduardo Franco and João Paulo Oliveira e Costa (Funchal: Diocese do Funchal, 2015), 184–185.

¹⁷⁰Xavier, *A invenção*, 99–109; and Xavier, “Conversos,” 277.

¹⁷¹Rego, *Documentação*, 2:324–344; and Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:63–89.

as he had requested, to return to Lisbon, as he was old and tired. Vaz would later receive from him a “commission to administer justice in the said bishopric.” He also explained that while Albuquerque was away, the vicar-general should behave himself, “obeying in everything and not doing anything without first communicating with him [the bishop]” because it would not be reasonable “to do anything except by him, since it is he who is responsible for the governing and administration” of the diocese.¹⁷² A vicar-general could do nothing against the authority of a bishop.

V. Conclusion

The facts and dynamics reconstructed above demonstrate that the construction of a diocesan church in Asia was under way. It was a visible church, with structures, agents, procedures, and a culture of action inspired on the model of organization and administrative culture of Portuguese dioceses, adapted to suit the gigantic size of the territory, the lack of human resources, scarce financial economy, and, above all, the great challenge of diffusing a new religious belief among populations with languages, beliefs, and cultures that were different from each other.

Alongside initiatives by the regular clergy and the support and directives from the monarchy, the first bishop of Goa resident in India impelled the expansion of a new religion in a world full of challenges for Europeans. Christianity was a faith that had been born in Judaea, which had its head in Rome, and which arrived in Asia as a result of dynamics originating from Portugal. The process, which was full of similarities to and entanglements with what was happening in various areas of Spanish America, also resulted in violent procedures, which included forms of segregation and bloodshed. This had dramatic impacts on the concrete lives of thousands of people and on the identity of communities, causing despair, flight, the destruction of local forms of life, and the survival of clandestine behaviors to preserve the old beliefs. However, despite the limits of all the strategies adopted—and there were many—Catholicism gradually spread to different parts of the globe, from the East African coast to Japan, with many natives from those regions adhering to it, even without inner conversion, creating connectivities of a world scale. The bishop Juan de Albuquerque, who died in Goa on the last day of February 1553, contributed to that process and to laying the foundations of a long-lasting, organic ecclesiastical structure: the first Catholic diocese in Asia.

José Pedro Paiva is Full Professor at the University of Coimbra and Scientific Head of the Center for History of Society and Culture. He was Visiting Professor at the University of São Paulo, Fellow of the John Carter Brown Library, and of the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek. His research focuses on Religious History, Inquisition, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, and Early Modern Witchcraft.

¹⁷²Wicki, *Documenta*, 1:92.

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