Public Rituals with the Intervention of Juan de Albuquerque, First Bishop of Goa Resident in Asia. Languages of Transference or Accommodation?[1]

Rituais públicos com intervenção de Juan de Albuquerque, primeiro bispo de Goa residente na Ásia. Linguagens de transferência ou de acomodação?

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Abstract

One of the strategies adopted by the Franciscan Juan de Albuquerque, the first bishop of India to live in Asia, when he landed in Goa in 1538, was to perform and intervene in public rituals, such as the sacredness of the cathedral, the baptisms of important local figures, the blessing of the Portuguese armies leaving for war, the enthronement of governors or viceroys and the practices of ecclesiastical justice. This article offers the mapping and reconstitution of these events based on a large array of primary and secondary sources. We argue that the models that conformed these ceremonies had a pattern that replicated in Asia the European rituals. In this study we will evaluate how those rituals conformed to the world that, for the Portuguese settled there, was new and different: Goa in the 40s-50s of the sixteenth century.
Keywords: Rituals; Goa Diocese; Juan de Albuquerque.

Resumo

Uma das estratégias adotadas pelo franciscano Juan de Albuquerque, primeiro bispo da Índia a residir na Ásia, ao desembarcar em Goa em 1538, foi a realização e a intervenção em rituais públicos, a exemplo da sagração da catedral, dos batismos de importantes personagens locais, das bênçãos de armadas portuguesas que partiam para a guerra, da entronização de governadores ou vice-reis e das práticas de exercício de justiça eclesiástica. Este artigo propõe o mapeamento e a reconstituição desses eventos a partir da cronística e de diversos relatos coevos de quem participou nesses rituais. Defendemos que os modelos que conformavam estas cerimônias tinham um padrão que replicava na Ásia os rituais europeus. Neste estudo avaliar-se-á de que modo se conformaram com o mundo que, para os portugueses ali instalados, era novo e diferente: Goa nos anos 40-50 do século XVI.
Palavras-chave: Rituais; Diocese de Goa; Juan de Albuquerque.

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Introduction

The Franciscan friar Juan de Albuquerque was the first Catholic bishop to reside in Asia[2]. He arrived there in September 1538 and died in February 1553, at the head of the diocese of Goa. For almost 15 years he was the main promoter of the construction of a diocesan church in that immense territory, with an effective presence in coastal areas from East Africa to Malacca. He created the conditions for the installation of a "visible church", in connection with what, at the same time, other Iberian bishops were designing in America. It had its own structures, agents, and procedures, as well as a functioning culture inspired by the model of organization of the Portuguese dioceses. In his government, he had to face a gigantic territory, the scarcity of human resources, the reduced financial autonomy caused by royal patronage and, above all, the colossal challenge of spreading a new religious creed among populations with very distinct languages, beliefs, and cultures (Xavier, 2008, pp. 105-117; Paiva, 2021a).

One of the mechanisms Albuquerque used was his own promotion or intervention in a varied set of public rituals[3]. These were among the instruments for the dissemination and imposition of Christianity, as well as having served as a strategy for the affirmation of episcopal power in the territory, both in relation to other Portuguese players and the local population.

Like Pierre Bourdieu (1982, pp. 56-59), we consider that rituals embody a crucial social dimension. More than a liminal function, i.e., to mark the passage between two states, according to the ideas of A. Van Gennep (1981), rituals serve to establish or consecrate a certain distinction by using eminently symbolic languages. They function thus as acts of institution or consecration, which aim at making a difference known and recognized. Through the rite, this differentness is established and recognized by the ascribed agent and by all others who participate in it or observe it.

On the other hand, it is also imperative to clarify that rituals do not have single/monolithic forms of reception or appropriation. They contain elements of multi-signification, depending on gestures, aesthetic codes, rhetorical elements, social references produced in them and, naturally, according to the interpretative logic and the cultural, social, religious, and political references of the individuals who absorbed them. The same ritual may give rise to different appropriations by the various institutions and individuals who would participate in it. As Victor Turner noted, a ritual, a ceremony, just like a text, a work of art or a film, is subject to a multiplicity of uses and meanings[4].

Based on reports from the chronicles and records of those who took part

in these rituals, including letters from Juan de Albuquerque himself, this article puts forward a mapping and a reconstruction of that universe.

Our hypothesis is that the models that shaped these ceremonies had a pattern that, in general, replicated European rituals in Asia. But how did they conform to a world that, for the prelate and the clerics who assisted them, was new, poorly known and insufficiently understood? What was prioritized in this kind of rituals involving the prelate? Were they languages of simple transference and imposition of European Catholic standards, or languages of adjustment to the diversity and specificities of the teeming universe it encountered?

Mapping out rituals

There are few accounts, generally concise and descriptive, of rituals performed in Goa or elsewhere in the diocese in which Juan de Albuquerque intervened. In this mapping exercise, two groups can be distinguished: on the one hand, those promoted by the prelate, and which assume a prominent place in his governance; on the other hand, the ceremonies in which he took part but that were not instituted by him.

To begin with the rituals of episcopal initiative, five of them we have found records of:

1. Institution and consecration of the cathedral;
2. Processions;
3. Baptism and confirmation (chrismation) of prominent holders of local power;
4. Destruction of temples and icons of non-Christian religions;
5. Execution of episcopal justice and subsequent punishment of the convicted.

The absence of references to the bishop's solemn entry into the diocese should be noted. This customary ritual was probably performed in a manner which we are now unable to analyze[5]. There is no documentation either to reconstruct how the pastoral visits were carried out, although there is evidence of the bishop's visits and of visitors appointed by him, which may have been striking pieces in the dissemination of the prelate's power and pastoral action.

A few months after Albuquerque's arrival in Goa, on 25 March 1539, day of Our Lady of the Annunciation, a choice of date surely well thought out, the bishop prepared the cathedral consecration ceremony, a pivotal element in the

building of a diocesan church in Asia. The ritual was performed in the pre-existing small church of Santa Catarina in the presence of the viceroy Garcia de Noronha. On the occasion, the prelate showed the viceroy the list of the beneficiaries who would serve in the cathedral chapter, from the chanter to the chaplains, a list that Noronha sanctioned with the authority given to him by the king of Portugal, John III, patron of the clerics and holder of their right of appointment. After this approbation, the bishop headed to the main altar, said some prayers, and made blessings that are not explained in the available source. Then, accompanied by a procession consisting of the members of the chapter, he went around into the temple, censing it, after which he returned to the main altar "and made the church a cathedral" (Correia, 1864, part I, p. 88).

The chronicler reports nothing else, and it is unknown who was present, apart from the elements mentioned, how the participants were dressed, what diffusion and impact this act had on local life, or the exact formula of the blessings and the prayers recited. The chronicle does not mention an exuberance of means, or an extraordinary impact of the ritual among the inhabitants of Goa.

Let us now consider the processions promoted by the bishop. The processions held in the Portuguese territories in Asia were important events, with significant symbolic and doctrinal value, which contributed to reinforce local solidarities and, through their ostentation, sought to attract new members to the Christian community (Županov, 2006, p. 357). In the Regulations of the College of Faith or of Saint Paul (1546), then a key institution to the Christianization of the natives of Goa and other parts of India, it was determined, by order of Juan de Albuquerque, that great festivities would be held on Corpus Christi Day. These included a procession in which the prelate solemnly carried a consecrated host, symbolizing the flesh of God[6]. Similar processions were regularly held in Catholic Europe and, in the brief passage alluding to the Corpus Christi procession in the Regulations, there is no note to suggest that in Goa the procession was in anyway distinctive.

Special attention to local contexts is noticeable in the reference in which Juan de Albuquerque mentions a procession celebrated in Cochin, at the end of 1547. Addressing the governor João de Castro, the bishop related that no similar procession had ever been celebrated in Cochin, explaining that the ceremony had served to "praise God and exalt the Catholic faith". This would be the common motivation for any similar act carried out in the European world. However, Albuquerque added that it also "terrorizes and scares these Moors, who walk about with their mouths open, amazed at the things of Your

Lordship". In speaking of "the things of Your Lordship", the bishop invoked the governor's military triumphs, which in his eyes were also a sign that the Christian's God protected them and was superior to those of the followers of Islam (Sanceau, 1975, pp. 395-396). That is, these processions would also be understood as a tool aiming, through the number of people they would bring together, the atmosphere of devotion they would generate, the festive spirit they created, the richness and color of the objects carried in them, to frighten the Muslim inhabitants of Cochin, to combat their beliefs and, at the same time, to exhort the Christians. In fact, such rituals were another part of the process of transference to Asia of the struggles which had characterized the centuries-old clashes between Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula (Schwartz, 2020). In this same letter, Albuquerque confessed to his interlocutor that the "Moors" were the main enemies among the "barbarian nations" living in Asia, and therefore deserved, in the prelate's view, war and death.

One of the most relevant rituals in the context of the strategies for the spread of Christianity was the sacrament of baptism. The celebration of mass baptisms with large numbers of local populations (Mendonça, 2002, pp. 233-238; Faria, 2013, pp. 81-83) is known, as well as the baptism and confirmation of some local leaders. The former refers to rituals also performed in Portugal, as occurred in 1497 when, by determination of King Manuel I, thousands of Jews were baptized in collective ceremonies held in various locations across the kingdom (Marcocci, 2006, pp. 339-423). The latter was also a policy adopted by Christian evangelizers in Europe since the Early Middle Ages, since it was soon realized that the baptism of the heads of non-Christianized communities would serve as a gateway for the acceptance of the new religion by the populations governed by these leaders.

This model also applied in Asia. In 1548, writing to King John III, Juan de Albuquerque narrated the baptism ritual of the Goan Brahmin Loku, in a ceremony celebrated in the church of the College of Faith, during which were also baptized the wife, a nephew and two *gancares* who, in the words of the bishop, were "*omrados*", i.e., people of a certain social prominence in their respective communities (Rego, 1950, vol. IV, pp. 131-133). All had been previously instructed in the new faith – the bishop takes some of the credit for this conversion –, and then baptized in a public rite which included a "great celebration". The "whole town", "the noblemen and the governor" took part in this event. As was customary in great urban public celebrations, there was music played with different instruments, and the bells rang in the city's churches. The bishop himself officiated the ceremony, in recognition of the social relevance of the bap-

tized and the symbolic importance that this act assumed, and many of the Portuguese present would have wept "abundant tears" of contentment.

Nothing suggests that, to adapt the Roman liturgy to the context, the celebrant would have translated the baptismal formulae, which meant that the new Christian did not understand the officiant's Latin words[7]. Governor Garcia de Sá was the godfather of the neophyte, who was given the Christian name Lucas de Sá, and the ceremony also included a sermon delivered by a preacher, an act rarely performed at baptisms in Portugal. The purpose of the sermon was to praise the Christian faith and the many "Christians of the land" who received baptism, noting the suffering Christ had endured to redeem so many souls in the world. Although from the liturgical point of view the ritual of baptism must have followed the European canons of the time, it was appropriated and used as an act of propaganda and a means of attracting other Hindus to Christendom.

After the baptism of Loku, the rajah of the small territory of Tanor (present-day Tanur), on the Malabar coast, went to Goa, where he arrived on October 2, 1549, to receive the sacrament of confirmation or chrismation. His baptism had already been celebrated and had aroused controversy among the diocese's clergymen, such as the vicar-general Pedro Fernandes, and other members of the Portuguese community (Paiva, 2021b, pp. 23-26).

The confirmation of the leader of Tanor was also used for exaltation of Christianity and propaganda for the new religion. In a letter to Queen Catherine, Juan de Albuquerque explained that the leader of Tanor arrived in Goa by river, "dressed in Portuguese style", to the sound of trumpets and shawms and the bells in the cathedral. The streets were carpeted with reeds and washed with scented water, as was common in similar urban celebrations, such as solemn entrances of kings or bishops. On the route of this procession, rich cloths decorated the windows while the clergy of various religious orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits), as well as the cathedral chapter, paraded orderly in a "procession with their crosses raised". The bishop was awaiting in front of the cathedral of Santa Catarina, wearing a pontifical vestment, that is, his costume for the most solemn occasions, and had "a crucifix on his back, very devout, large of size, made of wood". In his words, "seeing the procession and the way we were was enough to break hearts, even if they were made of stone". When the rajah of Tanor arrived at the cathedral, he embraced the crucifix, kissed the prelate's feet, and then everyone entered in procession singing the usual hymn of praise to God, *Te deum laudamus* (Rego, 1950, vol. IV, p. 353).

Then, in the cathedral, the bishop celebrated mass before the rajah. The latter was seated on a high-backed chair in a carpeted raised platform, a place of honor given only to seculars of great distinction and intended to honor the benevolence of the principal of Tanor and, possibly, make the local populations aware of how the Portuguese benefited those who adhered to Christianity. This dimension may rank among the multiple soft strategies of attraction of the local populations to Christianity, or "pitfalls" as Ângela Barreto Xavier called them (2008, pp. 81-134). The rajah would have adored the Blessed Sacrament but, in the words of Gaspar Correia, showing little devotion. After the mass, everybody went to the governor's house and, on that afternoon, in a moment of entertainment aimed at the general population, which was another way of attracting their interest, there were bullfights and "*canas*" (a game/exercise in which groups of riders fought each other through their skill in handling lances or reed canes), which were usual amusements in different public festivities held in the kingdom of Portugal. About twenty days after the arrival of the ruler of Tanor in Goa, and after some conversations he engaged in with the prelate through a "*língua*", that is, an interpreter, the bishop confirmed him with "great sumptuousness" at Saint Paul College, considering that he was firm in his faith[8]. The choice of the mentioned College for this ritual was neither innocent nor casual. It was an acknowledgement and a way of affirming the central and symbolic place that, for almost a decade, that institution occupied in the conquering of new souls for Christ.

Juan de Albuquerque also appears as celebrant of other relevant sacraments. On the one hand, in 1549, in the matrimonial ceremony of two daughters of the governor Garcia de Sá, who were fruit of his relationship with a "woman of the land", who married Portuguese men. After the "inhabitants of Goa", probably the "reinóis" (Portuguese that were born in the kingdom) and "casados" (Portuguese married to Asian women), had celebrated with "bulls and reeds", they went in procession to the Cathedral, at the door of which the bishop was waiting to perform the wedding ceremony (Correia, 1864, part II, p. 673). By intervening in this celebration, he not only added dignity to the act, but also valued the bond between Portuguese and native women of Goa, a policy established since the government of Afonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515) aimed mainly at Portuguese men.

On the other hand, mirroring what would happen at the royal court in Lisbon on the occasion of the passing away of kings, the governor João de Castro was accompanied in his final moments by the bishop, who gave him confession and comforted him and bestowed the last rites, in this case in a private ceremo-

ny on the night of June 1st, 1548 (Correia, 1864, part II, p. 658)[9]. The alliance, support and harmony of interests between the Crown and the Church[10], as in the kingdom, was replicated in the State of India, in another sign of the intention that Goa should be another Lisbon, to borrow an expression already coined in a late twentieth century research paper (Santos, 1999, p. 271).

The paths of Christianity's consolidation in Asia included the implementation of fiercely violent policies. The 1540s were especially marked by vigorous offensives to destroy the noticeable signs of other religions[11]. These rituals of violence, moreover, intensified in the course of the sixteenth century[12]. If the iconoclastic acts carried out by Protestants generated heartfelt laments among Catholics in Europe, once in Asia, they replicated them towards the religious constructions of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and others. These harsh actions against other religions had their origins in previous policies already implemented in the kingdom[13].

In 1540, in Cranganor, a Hindu temple was devastated on the arrival of the Franciscan Vicente de Lagos, who had been sent by Juan de Albuquerque (Xavier, 2008, p. 107; Monforte, 1751, p. 403). In a letter to the king, in 1543, the vicar-general of the diocese, Miguel Vaz, claimed that a baptized native supported him in these acts of violence and that "by his hand all the temples and idolatrous houses in Goa were destroyed" (Rego, 1949, vol. II, p. 333).

Juan de Albuquerque committed himself to these ways of using force in acts that also had a ritual dimension and which aimed to affirm the triumph of Catholicism over other religions and belief systems coexisting with it in the territories where the Portuguese had settled. In a provision dated 1546, he explained that he was fulfilling royal orders, recognizing that, as bishop, he had the obligation to "destroy this terrible idolatry" and to banish from the diocese all "the sect of Muhamad and everything that is contrary to the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ". Therefore, he ordered the secular clergy and the Franciscans and Jesuits of Bassein that "wherever you find temples [...] destroy and demolish them, for which I give you power and authority" (Rego, 1950, vol. III, pp. 330-332; Rivara, 1865, fasciculus 5, part I, pp. 223-225).

At times, they sought to replace rituals rooted in Hindu communities by Christian flavored ceremonies, in order to ban manifestations that contradicted the social order and the cultural standards of the Portuguese. In 1545, the vicar-general Miguel Vaz reported that, in Cochin, whenever the first load of pepper was weighed to be shipped, this was done "with great pomp by the sorcerers of the King of Cochin", in order to protect this precious good. To put an

end to this local tradition, he proposed the replacement of this ceremony by church blessings (Wicki, 1948, vol. 1, p. 77).

Rituals of violence over the religions of the vanquished rooted in the European world and were replicated in various places of the globe[14]. At that moment, in the diocese of Goa, the new religion was imposed, and an attempt was made to construct a new social and religious order that also involved the eradication of sites and rituals associated with the religious beliefs of the non-Portuguese populations.

The ritualization of some acts of applying episcopal justice was part of a strategy for affirming the bishop's jurisdiction and for the attempt to install an orthodox and religiously monolithic Catholic landscape in Asia.

In 1543, the New Christian physician Jerónimo Dias was tried and convicted by a court presided by Juan de Albuquerque. The prelate suspected Dias of having "wrong beliefs", had him spied on by a cleric he trusted and collected what he considered sufficient to prove the heresy committed, to which, in fact, the defendant Dias would confess. The account available of this case describes a practice of which there is no record for similar situations in Portugal.

The decision of the bishop's court was publicly staged in a ceremony held in the house of the governor of India, Martim Afonso de Sousa. A table was set up at the top of the stairs of the house, where sat a panel of judges composed of the bishop himself, the vicar-general Miguel Vaz, Father Miguel Borba, who had come from Portugal with the prelate and was a person of his confidence, and also the superiors of the Franciscans and the Dominicans of Goa. Having decided the sentence, the judges sent for the accused, who was incarcerated in the "tronco", that is, in the secular jail, a sign that, at the time, there was not yet an ecclesiastic prison to keep those incarcerated by ecclesiastical justice. The collective of judges, before "a lot of people", ordered the defendant to stand in the middle of the stairs, i.e., at a lower level than where they were seated, in a symbolic representation of their supremacy. Then there was a public court session, during which the defendant was questioned about whether he advocated certain ideas, to which he publicly confessed. The vicar-general immediately took the case file and read the sentence, standing on the top of the stairs, in a ritual very similar to the inquisitorial "autos da fé", the first of which had already taken place in Lisbon in September 1540. The decision of the tribunal, read aloud in Portuguese, which many of those present would not understand, explained that "our Holy Mother Church" considered the new-Christian "wrong for being against the faith of the Savior of the world, who is Jesus

Christ, God and man, son of Our Lady the Virgin Mary" and, as a heretic, handed him over to secular justice "so that he would be punished accordingly".

As in the case of the inquisitorial "autos da fé", in the course of this ceremony the vicar-general handed the prisoner over to the bailiff of the secular justice, and the records containing the sentence were passed to another clerk of the king's judge, who was also present. The clerk took the sentence to a room where the latter awaited together with other judges from the Crown's court, as well as "many Portuguese noblemen". One of them read the sentence from the bishop's court and straight away, below it, issued his final decision, which read as follows: "In view of the sentence of the Holy Mother Church, the justice of our lord the King condemns you, so that your body may be burnt alive, turned into dust, for having committed heresies against our holy catholic faith". He stressed, as was usual in these circumstances, that if the accused repented of his errors and wished to die a Christian, he would be hanged before being burned so that he "would not feel the thrill of fire". Shortly afterwards, the condemned man, accompanied by Father Diogo de Borba and the priests of the Holy House of Mercy of Goa, the brotherhood that was responsible for accompanying those condemned to capital punishment, was led in procession to the pillory to be executed. When he arrived there, he was garroted, burnt and "left in dust" (Correia, 1864, part I, pp. 292-294).

This ritual staged the exercise of justice and punishment, with a language of rigor intended to dissuade similar behavior and, through the terror of the spectacle of public death, intended to frighten those who attended it. This ritualized public execution of those condemned by justice, which marked these years in Portuguese Goa, was not an isolated case. In 1546, a Goan woman punished by ecclesiastical justice for adultery and the murder of her husband, who was Portuguese, was tortured. She was put inside a wooden box, together with a snake, a monkey, a cockerel, a dog, and a cat, and thus was thrown into the sea, where she perished after atrocious torment, confirmed by her screams of pain (Marcocci, 2007, pp. 189-194). There are no records that allow us to evaluate how rituals of this nature were interpreted by populations who only recently had been baptized or who had non-Christian religious beliefs.

The last type of rituals we wish to point out are ceremonies not promoted by the prelate, but in which he assumes a prominent role. In this set are the acts of blessing of the Portuguese navy fleets when they departed or arrived in Goa on occasions of war.

In 1541, the governor of India Estêvão da Gama left for Mecca with a fleet. A ceremony was held when he left Goa, in which Juan de Albuquerque

assumed a central role. On a Sunday, the governor, the captains, and the noblemen who comprised the armada went to the cathedral to hear a mass solemnly celebrated by the bishop. During the preaching, the prelate praised the mission against the Muslims, stating that the Portuguese were protected by the "hand of Our Lord". After the mass, a procession was formed in which the bishop paraded in his pontifical garments, with the whole clergy dressed in rich capes, and so they accompanied the governor and the remaining crew to the seaport, "in a festive atmosphere". At the seaport, the ships were embellished with "flags, banners and canopies" and, when the governor arrived, he showed his devotion by kissing an altarpiece with a representation of Our Lady, patron of the expedition. Before the departure, the bishop gave blessings and prayed to encourage the fleet and to assure them of God's protection. Artillery salutes followed and only then did the armada set sail (Correia, 1864, part I, p. 162). The protection and justification of the sacred in the face of profane practices, in rituals that sought to involve the whole community in what was also a festive moment, were not inventions constructed in Asia. Rather, they were models imported from Europe.

In April 1547, Juan de Albuquerque and the cathedral were crucial elements of the Roman-style triumphal entry of Governor João de Castro into Goa, after his military successes in Diu. The ceremony was spectacular and followed a model originating in the Roman Empire. One part of the festivities, with many similarities to the blessing of the armada, took place in the cathedral, where the governor of India was received by the bishop, wearing his pontifical vestment, who then celebrated a thanksgiving mass and blessed the triumphant governor (Correia, 1864, part II, pp. 591-592). This "triumph" of João de Castro has been abundantly referenced by historiography. Nuno Martins has already pointed out how it denotes the mutual acknowledgement between the spiritual and secular powers, with the displacement to the sacred center of Christian Goa, that is, the cathedral, in a gesture that symbolized "a kind of sacralization of the temporal power" (Martins, 2013, pp. 245-246).

This same dimension of sacralization and, simultaneously, of legitimation and divine protection of the secular authorities, is found in the rituals of reception and investiture of new viceroys and governors[15]. While Juan de Albuquerque was bishop of Goa, several governors or viceroys took office, people who, representing the king of Portugal, were entrusted with the task of governing the State of India. In the brief descriptions of at least four of these occasions, in 1538, 1540, 1542 and 1545, the new holder of power went to the cathedral where two very important acts took place (Correia, 1864, part I, pp.

11, 121, 229 and 432). On one hand, the newly sworn-in member received the episcopal blessings; on the other hand, it was in that sacred place and before the ecclesiastical authorities that he took the oath to serve well in his office. Everything was wrapped in an atmosphere of celebration that sought to excite the whole community. This was the case, for example, in the enthronement ceremony of Estêvão da Gama, in April 1540. The governor went to the cathedral to meet the bishop and other clerics and was immediately sprinkled with holy water by the prelate. They then headed to the main chapel, the central and most prominent part of the church, where the bishop "made the solemnity of the blessings". Shortly afterwards, the governor took his oath, assuring that "well and faithfully, with his conscience, he would serve the said governance, keeping the service of God and the King". In this oath he also explained that he would govern with justice, considering all the "people, Moors, locals and foreigners". It was an act of rhetoric which, at least as concerns the observance of Muslim and Hindu beliefs, had no practical correspondence, as mentioned above. On this occasion, other holders of secular power were present, such as the royal treasurer. After the ceremony in the cathedral, music was performed and, "with much celebration", the new governor then returned to his palace, enthroned and vested with this sacred dimension and accompanied by the inhabitants of Goa (Correia, 1864, part I, p. 121).

Languages of transference or accommodation?

The rituals here presented occurred in territories occupied by the Portuguese for less than half a century, and which were inhabited by populations with very diverse languages, cultures, and religions. Goa was a frontier diocese where Hinduism, Islamism and Buddhism, including animist beliefs, marked the territorial, cultural and spiritual landscapes. This resulted in difficulties of communication that posed insurmountable challenges. Was this also true within the affirmation of rituals and ceremonies in which the bishop Juan de Albuquerque was engaged?

The brief testimonies available give very little or no attention to the reactions of the local population, i.e., to the processes of reception of the abovementioned rituals, and do not make explicit the intentions of the promoters of these initiatives. Thus, based on the sources analyzed here it is not feasible to provide an unequivocal answer to the crucial question enunciated at the beginning: did these rituals adopt languages of simple transference and imposition of Catholic European standards, or were there mechanisms of adjustment

to the diversity and specificities of the teeming universe to which they became connected?

In general, in the brief and specific conjuncture analyzed here, it seems possible to conclude that the types of rituals, their performance structures and their adopted languages and references had their roots in pre-existing models from Portugal[16]. In the 1540s/1550s Goa it was not the forms of negotiation with the surrounding worlds that were at issue, but the imposition of a new order leaving no margin for significant concessions. The existing accounts do not indicate the formulae of the benedictions that were performed, the exact gestures and clothing of the officiants, or the prayers recited. But the reading of the synodal constitutions of Goa or the decrees of the first Provincial Councils held there from 1567 onward (although subsequent to this period), together with what is known of the Church's culture of action in this sphere, lead us to deduce that some of the languages adopted in these religious rituals, as is the case with liturgies, do not allow much room for adaptation to the new environments.

The bishop and other ecclesiastical agents might have realized, in their stereotyped interpretation, that the local populations used different, exotic rituals. Perhaps at this stage they were still ignorant or at least not clearly aware of the difference between social habits and local religious beliefs and traditions (Xavier; Županov, 2015, p. 153). However, they could easily observe that non-Christian rituals included elements such as music, chants, dances, festive staging, grand ephemeral constructions, symbols, large gatherings, as well as power-affirming languages that would suggest that Christian rituals, which likewise incorporated all these dimensions, could be understood by the local populations[17]. In essence, all rituals dealt with visual and sonic languages and festive atmospheres that could constitute powerful forms of communication.

There are of course some signs of more explicit accommodation of the rituals established by the bishop when practiced in India. For example, the association between sermons containing speeches addressed to specific audiences and the baptizing of socially and religiously prestigious figures; or the choice of the College of Faith as the venue for certain ceremonies; or the uncommon way in which episcopal justice and the ensuing public punishment were presented. Yet, in general, the rituals, their discourses and the intentions that animated them were not constructed in Asia. In fact, they do not show much creativity and there are no traces of any adaptation arising from the local communities' non-Christian rituals. Rather, they were more the result of models translocated from Europe to these landscapes, seeking to impose a new religious and social order

derived from Portugal, apparently without features of noticeable originality or permeability to the Asian context where they took place.

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NOTES

[1] This article was written within the project PTDC/HAR-HIS/28719/2017, entitled Religion, Ecclesiastical Administration and Justice in the Portuguese Seaborne Empire – ReligionAJE –, approved under the call for proposals for funding of scientific research and technological development projects in all scientific fields (2017), co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through COMPETE, Competitiveness and Internationalization Operational Programme (POCI), and by national funds through FCT, Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal).

[2] We adopt the customary spelling of the bishop's name which has usually been followed and that, if one may say so, has been institutionally consecrated. It should be noted that the bishop's family name is taken from the toponym of his birthplace. This place, however, was Alburquerque, not Albuquerque.

[3] A broad notion of "ritual" applies, which does not restrict the concept to ceremonials of a strictly religious nature. Richard Trexler, in the opening of a remarkable study on urban rituality, thus defines it: "By ritual I shall mean formal behaviour, those verbal and bodily actions of humans that, in specific contexts of space and time, become relatively fixed into those recognizable social and cultural deposits we call behavioural forms" (Trexler, 1980, p. XXIV).

[4] According to the Scottish anthropologist, "a single symbol in fact, represents many things at the same time: it is multivocal, not univocal" (Turner, 1969, p. 48).

[5] On these entries, see Paiva (2006, pp. 138-161) and Nestola (2020).

[6] The Regulations are published in Rego (1950, vol. III, p. 354) and in Wicki (1948, vol. I, p. 118). Later, a "*Corpo de Deus*" (*Corpus Christi*) procession was instituted in Goa, with a regulation equal to that of the kingdom's cities (Santos, 1999, p. 271).

[7] In later years, some Jesuits advocated translating the formulae for administering baptism into Asian languages, which posed problems and debate (Alberts, 2013, p. 133).

[8] This reconstruction was almost entirely based on a letter from the bishop to Queen Catherine, published in Rego (1950, vol. IV, pp. 353-357).

[9] On the character, governance, and memory of this governor of India, the study of Jesus (2021) is indisputable today.

[10] Contrary to what was recently written by Manuel Bastias Saavedra (2022, p. 23), we do not believe that "the Portuguese imperial order had to balance the – sometimes aligned and sometimes divergent – interests of the Crown with those of the Church". The situation was much more complex than this simplistic and even anachronistic perspective suggested. During the Modern period, Crown and Church did not have clearly defined boundaries, nor did they have very different perspectives on what acting in the empire should be. Rather, both were deeply intertwined, in various ways, and often pursued similar goals.

[11] In a recent study, when characterizing these campaigns as "aggressive, militant" and massively destructive of Islamic mosques and Hindu temples, no mention is made to the role of the bishop in these dynamics (Walker, 2021, paragraphs 12-23).

[12] Paolo Aranha (2006, p. 167-168) recalls that, in the Provincial Synod of Goa of 1567, it was ordered "that all infidels who support their false religions should be banished from the lands of His Highness", as well as the destruction of mosques and Islamic books, of idols, temples and sacred trees, besides prohibiting several Hindu celebrations, such as the naming of unborn children or the use of the brahmanical cord (the punul), or even the passage of Hindu pilgrims through Portuguese lands.

[13] Giuseppe Marcocci (2012, p. 382) states that the general outlines of these policies were presented in a book published in 1543 by the Augustine João Soares, confessor to King John III, who would become bishop of Coimbra (1545-1572).

[14] An excellent example is the case referred to by Ryan Dominic Crewe (2019, p. 954). By the time the Spanish-Mexican armies of Jerónimo Cortez reached the region of present-day Honduras in 1525, the sacrifice of local deities, which the *conquistadores* called idols, had become routine. So, in a Mayan settlement on the way to Cortez, the local indigenous leaders welcomed him offering statues for him to destroy personally.

[15] Since the end of the fourteenth century in Portugal, this element of articulation between secular and religious power was introduced at least in the royal entries into cities, which implied that the royal personnel visited the city's principal church (Alves, 1986, pp. 20-21).

[16] Referring to the triumphal reception of D. João de Castro, the same conclusion may be reached (Martins, 2013, p. 229).

[17] A particularly useful source for grasping these notions is the set of drawings depicting ceremonies held in different locations in Asia dated from the mid-sixteenth century Codex Casanatense. Cf. Biblioteca Casanatense (Rome) – Codex 1889. On this codex, see Losty (2021).