

Concord and cooperation: Juan de Albuquerque, Bishop of Goa, and the first Jesuits in Asia (1542-1553)

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Abstract: Historiography has already shown that the relationship between the Society of Jesus and other institutions and agents in the religious field has given way to various controversies. This article analyses the atmosphere created between the first Jesuits who reached Asia and the Franciscan bishop Juan de Albuquerque, who ruled the diocese when they settled there in 1542, headed by Francis Xavier. What was the pattern of their relationship? How did they cooperate? Why did they keep a climate of concord and cooperation? This is the context and the problematic here discussed. Different scales of analysis will be adopted, and this combinatory perspective will reveal the structural reasons, but also the specific behavior of the agents who are entangled in this relationship, showing how this type of contingency is crucial to understand the climate created between the Jesuits and the bishop who, in India, structured the first Portuguese diocese in Asia.

Keywords: Jesuits; Diocese of Goa; Catholic missions.

Concórdia e cooperação: Juan de Albuquerque, bispo de Goa, e os primeiros jesuítas na Ásia (1542-1553)

Resumo: A historiografia já demonstrou que a relação entre a Companhia de Jesus e outras instituições e agentes do campo religioso suscitou variadas controvérsias. Este artigo analisa o ambiente criado entre os primeiros jesuítas que estiveram na Ásia e o bispo franciscano D. Juan de Albuquerque, que governava a diocese quando eles ali arribaram em 1542, comandados por Francisco Xavier. Como se caracterizou a relação que mantiveram? Como cooperaram? Por que razão mantiveram um clima de concórdia e cooperação? É este o cenário e o quadro problematizante aqui dissecado. Adotar-se-ão diferentes escalas de aproximação, sendo esta perspectiva combinatória que consentirá captar razões estruturais, mas também atentar na ação humana concreta dos agentes que se entrelaçaram nesta relação, mostrando como a sua contingência é crucial para entender o clima criado entre os jesuítas e o bispo que, na Índia, estruturava a primeira diocese portuguesa na Ásia.

Palavras-chave: Jesuítas; Diocese de Goa; Missionação.

Introduction¹

It is a common idea that the Society of Jesus became a very powerful organisation from an early stage. It had an international dimension, created a remarkable educational network, accumulated a very rich material heritage, became very actively involved in missions, both in Europe and the rest of the world, and benefited from multiple privileges. No less relevant was the enormous influence it acquired in various power centres, from Rome to the European courts. From the beginning, this has provoked many rivalries and conflicts, even within the Church. Thus, when, in 1773, the Society of Jesus was finally extinguished with the promulgation of the *Dominus ac Redemptor* brief, by Pope Clement XIV (following actions initially triggered by its expulsion from Portuguese territories in 1759), this ballast of enmities, strife, malice and envy was still very much alive (Alden, 1996, p. 3-24, especially p. 21-22; Hsia, 2018; Alberts, 2013 and Burson and Wright, 2015).

In the case of the Iberian overseas empires, on the other hand, the Jesuits acquired enormous importance in the dynamics of Catholicism's expansion in the world. First in the Portuguese Empire, settling in Asia (from 1542) and Brazil (from 1549), then in Spanish America, where they were present from the 1560s onwards. In this process, they accumulated extensive privileges which often provoked disputes over jurisdiction with the episcopal power, especially with regard to the territories of their missions or villages (Birely, 1999, p. 159; Ditchfield, 2016, p. 29; Lopes, 1992, p. 46 and Leite, 1938-1950, especially v. 2, p. 509-521).

This panorama was amplified by the very memory that the Ignatians built of themselves. On this level, the image that they constituted a superior order, distinct from the others, was dominant and nourished by themselves. They considered themselves a bastion of the Tridentine Church, whose members, holders of superior wisdom, were even compared to angels sent by God, as Simon Ditchfield pointed out in a recent conference before the Royal Historical Society.²

The pattern that has been briefly stated does not apply to all times nor all geographies. There were exceptions. That is what happened in the first decade of the Jesuit presence in Asia, the part of the world where they began a missionary action that would take them to China and Japan, covering scattered areas where they were sometimes the first Europeans

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² "Baroque around the clock: Daniello Bartoli, SJ (1608-1685) and the uses of Global History". This conference, delivered on 19 September 2020, can be accessed at <https://royalhistsoc.org/events/rhs-programme-2020/professor-simon-ditchfield-rhs-virtual-lecture-18-september-2020/> and Ditchfield (2021).

to arrive.³ In this continent, between 1542 and 1553, there was a climate of profound cooperation with the first Bishop of Goa to have lived in the territory, the Franciscan friar Juan de Albuquerque (r. 1538-1553). Juan de Albuquerque had arrived in 1538 and shortly afterwards, in May 1542, Francis Xavier and the first Jesuits disembarked in India.

How can this relationship be characterised? How did they cooperate? Why, contrary to what was common, did they maintain a climate of harmony and cooperation?

This is the scenario and the problematic framework that this research is about. The argument that will be supported is that it is necessary to find the explanations for this panorama using different scales of analysis.⁴ According to François Revel, regardless of the search for alternative spatial and temporal units, one of the biggest challenges that a historian faces is that of articulating different analytical scales. This exercise makes it possible to overcome the dichotomy between the structure, which is determined by the context, and the space of autonomy of individuals as actors of history. Large scales of observation favour the understanding of the structure, but tend to hide the complexity of individuals' dynamics. On the other hand, micro views highlight the power of the agency of subjects, but hardly capture the structural contexts in which they move and condition themselves (Revel, 1996, especially p. 15-36). Even in the context of the global turn, certain historians underline the importance of valuing a solid knowledge of the local and the factual, whilst recognising that it is on this scale and in this type of context that crucial dynamics often occur in order to understand change, rupture or continuity. Consequently, without a detailed and rigorous grasp of events at the local level, without the knowledge of people and their agency, good history can never be made, whether it has global perspectives or not (Ghobrial, 2019, especially p. 15-16).

It is this combinatory perspective that will allow us to observe what I will designate as contextual or structural reasons, but also to pay attention to the agency of those who have intervened in this relationship, that is, the Franciscan Bishop and the Jesuits who have established a relationship with him for about a decade. The contingency of this agency will be the most privileged dimension in this article, a dynamic that will be then used to reconstitute this framework of relationships and its impacts.

³ There is a huge bibliography on this subject. A general overview in Hsia (2018). More specifically for the universe of Portuguese presence, see Alden (1996). For China, Brockey (2007), is unavoidable, concerning Japan a very good overview is Ucerler (ed.) (2009).

⁴ On this topic, see Revel (1996), especially p. 15-36 and Ghobrial (2019), especially p. 15-16.

Observing through a macro lens: the reasons of context

We will start, on a more distant scale of observation, with contextual reasons. In this macro level, it is immediately apparent that both the creation of the first Catholic diocese in Asia, in 1534, and the subsequent sending of the first Jesuit missionaries to that continent, in 1542, were part of an articulated project of the Portuguese Crown. As Ângela Barreto Xavier explained very well, especially from the 1540s onwards, and more specifically since the sending to India of D. João de Castro as governor (curiously in the fleet where Francis Xavier and his companions also travelled), the aim was to guarantee the conservation of imperial power in Asia through the evangelization of the Indians (Xavier, 2008, p. 84-85 and Faria, 2013, p. 16). A systematic policy of “imperialism of the faith”, as it has already been called, began (Thomaz, 1994, p. 252). Thus, the Bishop and the Jesuits were committed to strategic dynamics and to a monarch on whom they were dependent, not only for his choosing them for those functions, but also in the support they needed to consummate their actions of evangelization and the construction of a diocesan church in Asia.

Secondly, the Bishop and the Jesuit pioneers shared similar views on evangelization policies and strategies for Asia. As already well remembered, shortly after arriving in Goa, Xavier recognized that both the secular elites, (i.e., vice-kings and governors) and the ecclesiastics (i.e., the bishop) were committed to the policies of evangelization of the “Gentiles”, as the Europeans then called those who did not know the word of Christ (Chakravarti, 2018, p. 59).

The model then followed in Portuguese Asia was the one adopted in the Iberian Peninsula, both in Portugal and, before that, in Castile, *vis-à-vis* the descendants of Jews and Muslims. It was a strategy of rapid and mass inclusion, with baptisms celebrated with little or no instruction, aiming at the construction, also in Asia, of religious monolithic societies (Marcocci, 2012, p. 378). Basically, the application of the principle which, years later, in 1555, would be defined in Augsburg under the motto *cuius regio, eius religio*, and which gave rise to the creation of confessional monarchies.⁵ Thus, also in the State of India (*Estado da Índia*), as it was then called by the Portuguese, everyone had to be Catholic, with the exception to Diu, just like the Portuguese king. And Xavier and Albuquerque were active in driving these processes.

For the application of this model, especially with regard to the monitoring of the faith and the behaviour of the newly converted, the “Christians of the land” (*cristãos da terra*), as they were usually called, a district tribunal of the Inquisition in Goa was established in 1560. The first proceedings in this regard had already begun before, and both Bishop Juan

⁵ On the meaning of confessionalization, Rodrigues (2017), proposed very useful and updated reflections.

de Albuquerque and Francis Xavier were involved in the process. The Bishop had already supported the Inquisition, having published the founding bull in the See of Goa, in 1543, after convicting a new-Christian physician accused of heresy in the episcopal court. In 1545-1546, Xavier had even written to the king and to his brother and General-Inquisitor, Cardinal Henry, requesting the creation of a Holy Office tribunal in Goa (Paiva, 2017 and Silva, 2018). From this point of view, there would also be harmony of perspectives between the Franciscan bishop and the Jesuit, who would later become a saint.

The relative weakness and lack of human resources felt by both the prelate and the Jesuits also united them. In the first decade of their presence in Asia, the Jesuits still formed a very small contingent, took their initial steps, did not yet have immense power, and therefore needed support. Similarly, the prelate began the attempt to establish a diocesan church in Asia. It was the first experience of this magnitude and importance that the Portuguese made, and it struggled with an enormous lack of resources. The similar situations in which they found themselves brought them together and demanded mutual support that would help both.

Finally, the great ignorance of the lands where they lived also bound them. They were placed in exotic worlds that they hardly understood. The Bishop recognized that they were placed “amongst so many barbarous nations”, who worshipped “idols and sticks and stones” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 546).⁶ This showed his astonishment towards such diversity and, at the same time, evident unpreparedness to understand these landscapes of varied and exotic beliefs that opened before their eyes. He was facing a climate, cultures, eating habits, men, animals, and plants very different from the European universe. On his side, Xavier, was astonished that, for instance, in 1544, a Brahmin asked him if the God of Christians was white or black (Chakravarti, 2018, p. 99). In short, both had an imperfect knowledge of the context in which they found themselves, as was common with the Portuguese who came to Asia (Subrahmanyam, 2019, p. 23). This lack of experience in dealing with this different world too, strange as it may seem, brought them together.

Contingencies: personal experiences and intertwined lives

A different lens will now be used. We will move from a macro to a micro perspective. One that is more focused on the agency of the protagonists of the relationship and the shortest time in which they have contacted each other, to capture the contingent data

⁶ Letter from Juan de Albuquerque to the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues, written in Goa on 28 November 1550.

arising from the personal experiences and intertwined lives that connected the Franciscan Bishop of Goa Juan de Albuquerque and the Jesuits, headed by Francis Xavier.

In May 1542, Xavier landed in Goa, where the Bishop, with a considerable shortage of human resources, had been working for about 5 years (Documentação, v. I, 1960-1967, p. 557). The Jesuit soon went to visit Juan de Albuquerque and, in an attitude of respect, told him that he would not use his powers as apostolic nuncio without the prelate's consent. The memories kept of this meeting, written in the first half of the seventeenth century by the Jesuit Sebastião Gonçalves and later by Manuel de Monforte, a Franciscan friar of the Province of Piedade, the same order as that of the Bishop, underlined that a personal relationship of great esteem, respect, cordiality and even friendship would soon have been created between them (Gonçalves, 1957-1960, v. I; Monforte, 1751, p. 105-107 and p. 400a). This way of proceeding was kept during the following decade, which can be confirmed by the most exhaustive biography of Xavier so far published (Schurhammer, 1973-1982, especially, v. III, p. 285). On the one hand, whenever Xavier returned to Goa after long journeys which took him, for example to Japan, he courteously went to visit the prelate, as he did on his return from this country in February 1542. He even confessed to a companion that he was doing so "in order to console me with him [Bishop], because I have such a great obligation to him that I think I am unworthy to pay him the much that I owe His Lordship" (Rego, 1947-1957, v. V, p. 112).⁷ This type of behaviour was replicated by many other Jesuits when they arrived in India from Portugal, as happened with the Dutchman Gaspar Berzé (Barzeus) in 1548. He and his companions visited the governor, the Bishop, and the Franciscan friars, considering that "they all love us very much" (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 395).⁸

The behaviour of reverence towards the Bishop and the vicars of the parishes scattered throughout the churches of Asia became part of the memory which the Jesuits built up of the life of the "apostle of the Indians", as Francis Xavier began to be known from early on. After his death, in a letter from António de Quadros to Diego Mirón, the Provincial of the Jesuits in Portugal, it was made clear that Xavier had always been "of very full obedience", a praise that was well suited to one of the vows that distinguished the Jesuits. For this, he ordered all the Society of Jesus members to always obey the Bishop and that as soon as they reached the Portuguese fortresses spread throughout Asia, they would immediately kiss the hand of their vicars (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. III, p. 335).

This appreciation was not confined to courtesy expressed during these visits. There are various known praises which Xavier and his companions addressed to the Bishop and to the diligence with which he governed his diocese are known. These lasted for ten years,

⁷ Letter from Francisco Xavier to Fr. Paulo do Vale, written in Cochin on 4 February 1552.

⁸ Letter from Kaspar Berzé to the Jesuits of Coimbra, written in Goa on 13 December 1548.

until the death of the prelate. As soon as Xavier arrived in Goa in 1542, in a letter to Ignatius of Loyola, he acknowledged that the Bishop had already appointed vicars for all the fortresses that the Portuguese controlled in various places in India, Hurmuz, Ceylon and Melaka, but that, due to the distances, Albuquerque was unable to visit them all or administer the sacrament of confirmation to the Portuguese and the native converts living in the huge diocese of Goa (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 44-45). Two years later, Xavier himself expressed his joy with the fact that the Bishop conferred the priesthood to two Jesuits, even without them having any assets or church positions that would ensure their future sustenance (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 128).⁹ In 1546, writing from Ambon, on the Maluku Islands, he praised the vicars he had met at Cape Comorin (in the far south of India), in Ceylon, and at Maluku, for residing in the fortresses, baptising and teaching catechism to the local people (Sá, 1944-1988, v. I, p. 491). One of the most explicit manifestations of these praises can be found in a letter from Xavier to King John III, dated January 1548. Writing from Cochin, he says he met Juan de Albuquerque, who had gone there for the pastoral visit, “and with him I was very comforted to see that, with so much charity, he took so many physical works, visiting the fortresses of his bishopric [...] performing as a true shepherd. [...] I was very eager to see his patience, so holy” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 20).

Echoes of this good relationship were passed on to the Society’s superiors, in Lisbon. At the end of 1548, for example, the Jesuit António Gomes revealed to the provincial of the Jesuits, Simão Rodrigues (one of Ignatius de Loyola’s companions in Paris) that he and Xavier had written to the King, saying that he could not have a better servant in Goa than the Bishop. They extolled his goodness, humility, an example of life, and said he was “a saint” and “a great friend of the Society”. They also asked that the provincial write to the Bishop to thank him for his support, further recommending that in “the letter, the king reiterates his appreciation, because there [in Goa] the Bishop is the Pope, and the governor is king”. This detail, alluding to the superior power of the bishop in Asia, shows how this kind of praises were equally aimed as a return of favours (*mercês*). Definitely, they were a strategy for the Bishop to continue to be a friend of the Jesuits and to favour them. In exchange, in this same letter, the Jesuit interceded in favour of a domestic of the Bishop who had been serving him for 12 years, asking Simão Rodrigues to request the king to give him a clerical office in Goa (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 422).

The following year, the same António Gomes blandished other qualities of the Bishop in a letter to John III: “The Bishop, with his favour and alms, helps those who have been converted. He keeps the clergy very well accustomed and with his life and example teaches us to live well and to those who deserve punishment, he gives it to them, looking more

⁹ Letter from Francisco Xavier to the Jesuit Francisco Mansilhas, written in Cochin on 18 December 1544.

to justice than to human favour. [...] He has the church very well ordered and served. He is a great friend of this house [the College of Faith] which he visits and favours” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 345). There are multiple examples of this kind. In 1549, the Jesuit Baltasar Gago wrote from Hurmuz to commend the Bishop’s vicars who were all “very reformed” (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 506). In 1551, another Jesuit, Fr. Manuel de Morais, told his companions in Coimbra about a Bishop’s trip to Ceylon (today Sry Lanka), and said that the prelate was the best preacher among a group that also included Jesuits and Franciscans (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 431).

This admiration for Juan de Albuquerque reached the top of the government of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius of Loyola himself wrote him at least two letters, one in December 1549 and the other in February 1552, greeting and thanking the Bishop for the protection and favours he granted to the Jesuits in Asia (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 728 and v. II, p. 342).

This kind of praise was reciprocal on the side of the Bishop and of the canons of the Goa cathedral. From early on, they enthusiastically applauded the actions of the Jesuits. One of the most avid expressions of this can be found in a letter sent by Juan de Albuquerque to King John III of Portugal in November 1548. There, he assured that he often accompanied the Jesuits when they preached and that there were “no better religious man to preach faith” than them, so he himself ordered them to preach in the cathedral. He praised the visits they made to the hospital in Goa to confess and support the sick, as well as the care they provided to those in prison. For this reason, he said that he would very much appreciate to have Goa “full of apostles”, that is to say, of members of the Society of Jesus: “in each street I wanted to find one throughout the whole of this India, and two, because the devotion that the people have to them and the honesty of their garb and the despising of the world moves the hearts of men” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 135-136).

The prelate also sent news to the superiors of the Society of Jesus in Portugal and in Rome concerning his admiration for the work of the Jesuits who were missioning in his diocese. In 1550, at a time when the relationship was already lasting, he sent similar messages to Simão Rodrigues and Ignatius of Loyola, thanking them for the support received. He assured both that the fathers of the Society of Jesus “faithfully helped him in the salvation of the souls that we, the prelates, have behind our backs” and that, thanks to the action “of these priests, a lot of these barbarous nations know one and only one God, alive by faith, the three people of the Holy Trinity and the Catholic faith”. He rejoiced that the Pope had granted them special faculties and did not see this as a constraint to his power, “because I consider myself as a member of this holy Society. I favour and love” the Jesuits “in a sincere and clean charity, without bending”. Finally, the Bishop also requested that more Jesuits were sent to India Índia (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 546-548 and Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 121).

It was a profound and sincere recognition, which flowed from the effective cooperation,

which the Jesuits always provided him with, responding positively to various requests from the prelate. As early as September 1542, Xavier revealed that Albuquerque had asked him to confess and catechise in the churches of Goa to the “*mochachos*” (boys), which he did, teaching numerous groups of children the prayers, the creed, and the commandments (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 26-34).

The activities of the Jesuits were not confined to Goa. In fact, they were responsible for a significant extension of the geographical area of expansion of Christianity and for the adherence of local populations to the new religion, and this not only in India.¹⁰ In 1545, Xavier informed about his presence in Melaka, and of the care he had into putting into the language of the land, that is, to translate, the commandments and some prayers like Our Father and the Hail Mary (Sá, 1944-1988, v. I, p. 450). From there he planned to travel to Makassar, on the Maluku islands, hoping that it would be easier for the native populations to join Christianity, because, he said, “they have no house of idols, nor people to move them towards gentility. They love the sun when they see it and there is no other religion of gentility among them” (Sá, 1944-1988, v. I, p. 461).

Xavier would later reach Japan, creating the conditions for the Bishop in Goa to know this faraway island and people. In May 1548, in the cathedral of Goa, Albuquerque baptized the Japanese Anjiro, later called Paulo de Santa Fé, and a servant who had come with him from Japan, after both had received religious instruction at the College of Faith, following Xavier’s recommendation, as Anjiro himself reported (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 336-338). In the same year, Gaspar Berzé asked for more human resources, since there was already dispersed activity in Goa, Cape Comorim, Kollam, Hurmuz, Melaka, Maluku and in Japan (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 405). In several cases, it is known, the decision to move Jesuits to certain areas was previously agreed between Xavier and Albuquerque, as was the case with Fr. Afonso Cipriano, who was sent to the region of Mylapore (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. III, p. 681).

Besides praising the work of the prelate in building a diocesan church, the Jesuits well understood the limitations of the human means which he had for spreading Christianity over such vast territories, inhabited by populations who did not even know Christianity and had systems of beliefs and cultural references which greatly hindered any coherent process of conversion to the Catholic religion.¹¹ The Jesuits took advantage of this environment and offered to assist the Bishop by keeping him regularly informed of the campaigns they were undertaking in various parts of Asia. For example, in 1545, Fr. Francisco

¹⁰ A general view of this Jesuit “diaspora” across Asia can be seen, for example, in several of the contributions gathered in Hsia (2018), and in Ucerler (ed.) (2009).

¹¹ From this perspective, and in particular with regard to cultural interactions between Jesuit Catholics and Hindu Brahmins, as well as the responses of Hindu populations to the challenges posed by the Jesuits, are relevant the perspectives of Županov (2005).

Mansilhas wrote to Albuquerque from Cape Comorin, reporting on the visits and baptisms he had undertaken in various communities of “gentiles” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 69). In 1552, Xavier himself ordered all the Jesuits who were circulating in India to write the Bishop reporting on their actions and the good deeds that the vicars of the fortresses (appointed by the Bishop) were performing. In the same letter he recommended that they all seek good relations with the vicars, as well as with the Franciscans and Dominicans (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 169).

In fact, Francisco de Albuquerque was regularly informed of the Jesuits missions scattered throughout different parts of Asia, showing that, at this level, there was great harmony and coordination of strategies. In June 1549, for example, he regretted the news he received from southern India, reporting the martyrdom of Fr. Antonio Criminali. In a letter to Queen Catherine the following year, the Bishop told her what he knew of this episode, in addition to demonstrating that he was very well informed of the Jesuits’ performance in Maluku, Japan, Melaka, Mylapore, Koulam, Cochin, Goa, Bassein, and Hurmuz, rejoicing with “the fruits” of these activities (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 482 and Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 347-358).

Another area in which the prelate had the support of the Jesuits was in the teaching in the College of the Faith, or St. Paul’s College, in Goa. This was an institution created in 1540 for the indoctrination and learning of young natives from various parts of Asia and which Albuquerque had always supported. In 1545, Diogo de Borba, who was very close to the Bishop and had gone to Goa with him, wrote to Simão Rodrigues asking him for providing members of the Society for the College, to teach the native children, who could later evangelize others in various parts of India (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 52).

When violent campaigns of destruction of Hindu and Muslim temples began in various parts of India in 1546, the prelate also enlisted the help of the Jesuits.¹² This was the case, at least in Bassein, in 1546, and later in Cochin. There, in 1551, the Jesuit Melchior Gonçalves, who had baptised about 400 people, informed about his personal engagement in the destruction of many temples (“pagodes”) with paintings of Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu, and then placed a Christian cross on the wreckage (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 331-332 and Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 184).

The knowledge that some Jesuits had of local languages was also used by the Bishop. In 1549, to give an example, when the baptism of the raja of Tanur, who headed a small region south of Cochin, was being prepared, Juan de Albuquerque asked the Jesuit Henrique

¹² It is informative and enlightening on this subject Mendonça (2002, p. 255-257).

Henriques, because he knew Malayal, to go to that territory to talk with the raja (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 587).¹³

The Jesuits also gave support to the vicars whom the Bishop had appointed to the fortresses, which were built according to a model much in vogue in Europe and which originated and protected a microcosm within them (Doré, 2009, p. 171-173). There are several records to prove this, such as the letter that Albuquerque wrote to Gaspar Berzé in March 1550. There, he thanked the activities of the Jesuit in Hurmuz, namely the interventions he had made to reconcile the local vicar with the Jesuits. He called Berzé a “sincere friend of the heart” and confided that Xavier had left Melake for Japan and that he had sent Xavier two long letters, which, unfortunately, are unknown (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 502-504).

The shortage of secular clergy and Albuquerque’s confidence in the Jesuits explains why he asked them to collaborate in confessions and the preaching of a papal jubilee. In 1552, in Kotte, Ceylon, as elsewhere in Asia, it was Jesuits who, at the express request of the Bishop, announce this papal grace among the local populations (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 522-524). As for the absolution in confession of cases reserved to the Bishop, Gaspar Berzé informed that Hurmuz was “a Babylon”, where one could see all the bestiality and lust, and that there “the Christians were so deeply mixed with the Moors, Turks, Jews and Gentiles who could not even be distinguished between them”. In his words, it was a land of “great sins and evil people”, and what was worth to him was “all the power that I have from the Bishop”, both to absolve reserved sins contained in the Bull of the Supper (*Bula da Ceia*) and those which absolution was reserved to the Bishop (Rego, 1947-1957, v. IV, p. 398).

The delegation of these powers by the Bishop was not at all common, since it was one of his special prerogatives, which highlights the prelate’s confidence in the Jesuits. In the same line, it was absolutely unusual that the Jesuits, in places where there were no vicars appointed by the Bishop, exercised a kind of informal ecclesiastical justice in matters of episcopal jurisdiction, without there being news of any recrimination on the part of the prelate. In 1547, in Tuticorin, on the coast of Coromandel, and in other villages, the Jesuit Henrique Henriques said that the Jesuits followed “the trials of Christians, both those of the ecclesiastic and all others”. Moreover, one of his companions reinforced this idea by saying that when the Christians of the land were engaged with married women, thus committing adultery in the light of the rules of Catholicism, the Jesuits themselves had them flogged and arrested (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 226 and v. II, p. 379). There are even reports that the Jesuits arrested people whom they then sent to Goa for the Bishop to judge. In 1552, for example, being in Bassein, Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto says he met some “Lutheran

¹³ This episode is not mentioned in a good biography of Henrique Henriques, in which, however, the language skills and the long experience and knowledge of the Jesuit in India are well noted; see Tavares (2006), especially, p. 397-398.

heretics” who he immediately arrested and sent to the Bishop to be judged and condemned in the ecclesiastical tribunal (Rego, 1947-1957, v. V, p. 261-262).

This type of interference, which broke down barriers of the judicial power of the Bishop, had some reciprocity on the part of Francis Xavier. He also recommended recourse to episcopal authority in cases of Jesuits who behaved in a reprehensible manner. In 1549, in Melaka, he wrote to Fr. João da Beira asking for information on all the brothers of the Society and recommending him that “if any of them do what he should not, by the provision of the Bishop, you will dismiss him from the Society and oblige him by virtue of obedience, under penalty of excommunication, to appear before the Bishop” to be reprimanded (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 267). Moreover, according to some reports, when Xavier left Goa and went to Japan, he would have delegated the government of the affairs of the Society of Jesus to Juan de Albuquerque himself. This is what could be understood from a letter which Gaspar Berzé wrote by the end of 1550 to his Jesuit companions in Coimbra. In it he said that having decided to embark for China, he wrote to the Jesuit António Gomes, resident in Goa. Gomes replied that “the Bishop of Goa, to whom our Society was left to govern by Father Francis” asked him not to go and stay in Hurmuz, until more Jesuits arrived from Portugal, who could replace him on that island, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 83).

In addition to mutual praise and cooperation in various areas, there are signs that Juan de Albuquerque rewarded and favoured the Jesuits. This is how it was when, in 1549, the direction of St. Paul’s College, or College of the Faith, in Goa, was assumed by them (Aranha, 2006, p. 126 and Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 413). That same year, the Society of Jesus began the construction of another college in Bassein, an initiative that also received episcopal approval (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 414). It is also known that the Bishop offered some small churches and lodging to the Jesuits in some of the places where they were missioning. In December 1550, for example, he gave them the shrine of the Mother of God in Cochin. The Bishop justified this attitude with a passage in which he once again showed his esteem for the Jesuits and how he recognized their importance in supporting the spread of Christianity in Asia. It states that the King of Portugal, 7 years earlier, had sent to India “some religious priests whose invocation is called the Society of Jesus, who pilgrim all over India and its fortresses, confessing and preaching Christian doctrine, teaching works of mercy, visiting hospitals and prisoners, and reconciling people in enmity”. For this reason, he gave them the shrine to build a College there and “to teach the doctrine and make spiritual exercises so that Christians may amend their lives and infidels, by their preaching, may be reduced to our holy faith” (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 135-137).

As has been shown, the relationship between Juan de Albuquerque and the Jesuits in

Asia was of great concord and cooperation. Nevertheless, it was not free from occasional misalignments, some of which show differences of opinion among the Jesuits themselves.

Since 1545, with the arrival in Goa of the Italian Jesuits Antonio Criminali and Niccolò Lancillotti, the first signs of dispute about the way in which the locals were baptised began to appear. Criminali, for example, criticised the fact that most Christians in the land accepted baptism only because they received social and material benefits, such as food and clothing offerings, without “understanding the meaning” of the holy sacrament. He also said that, although there was a Bishop, baptisms were performed without “chrism and oil of catechumens”, which made the rite have doubtful validity (Marcocci, 2012, p. 387-388). Lancillotti, on his side, condemned the procedures that were being adopted and noted that every day people were baptized who had not been instructed in the matters of faith “neither much nor little, nor do they know the Sunday prayers or the articles of faith”. Moreover, he said that “the way they are baptized is with catechism, holy water, but without confirmation, nor any oil, which I neither praise nor vituperate. Among ours [the Jesuits] there are those who do not want to baptize anyone like this [...]”. He also warned that in churches, during the Mass, “Turks, Moors and Gentiles attend it without any respect” (Rego, 1947-1957, v. III, p. 182 and Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 182-183). Although he denounced this situation, for which the prelate was co-responsible, Lancillotti praised the Bishop. In a letter to Loyola in 1550, he described Albuquerque as being of “great holiness and virtue”, and said that he always received the Jesuits well, acceding to their requests (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 183).

Another occasional dissent took place regarding the policies adopted by the Jesuit and rector of the College of the Faith, António Gomes. When he took over the management of the institution in 1549, he decided to remove from it the Indian children and transform the College into an exclusive institution for the sons of the Portuguese. The few Indians who remained there were even separated from the Portuguese, creating a clear segregation. It was a turning point in the policy that had been followed until then, which aimed to educate the natives, some of whom would then be ordained priests and served the Church in spreading Christianity and accompanying the new converts, benefiting from their cultural and linguistic proximity to the local people. The Bishop had always supported this approach and there are reports that he was opposed to the measures of Antonio Gomes. Albuquerque even spoke with the College rector on the subject, a matter in which he was, moreover, accompanied by other Jesuits, such as Father Lancillotti, who later confessed it to Loyola (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 10-11, 139). This was clearly a controversial issue. It is even likely that this move dictated the removal of António Gomes from the rectorate. In 1553, Gaspar Berzé had already replaced him, by Xavier’s order and reported to Loyola that, on assuming the office, the governor and the Bishop informed him that the College should have 100 young “men of the land” and “mestizos”, in addition to 72 orphans, who had to live there for 3 years

to be indoctrinated, to learn to read and write. The best pupils, if they were good theologians, would become priests and could then help the Society of Jesus in the conversion of the “*Gentiles*”. Berzé was confident that he had complied with these determinations (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. II, p. 589).

Finally, the greatest friction known in this relationship between Albuquerque and the Jesuits dates from the end of 1547, beginning of 1548. Then, the captain of Chaliyam, a fortress on the coast of Malabar (India), had given the Jesuits a place to build a College. However, the local vicar raised difficulties because he feared that the presence of the Ignatian priests would divert some of the alms he usually received. The Jesuit who was in charge of this matter, Francisco Henriques, went to speak to the Bishop, asking his permission to build such a College. However, the Bishop refused. In the opinion of the Jesuit, he acted this way because he was pressured by a Franciscan who feared the increase of the Jesuit influence in the region (Wicki, 1948-1988, v. I, p. 265).

Final considerations

This last episode was exceptional during the decade in which the first Jesuits who were in Asia entangled their paths with the government of the diocese of Goa by the Franciscan Bishop Juan de Albuquerque. The dominant pattern of the relationship, as was abundantly demonstrated in this article, was one of mutual praise, concord, and frank collaboration. From this activity, which was largely due to the personal friendship and convergence of points of view between the bishop and Xavier, resulted a greater capacity of human resources which helped the prelate to better govern the diocese, and had as a counterpoint the favouring of the Jesuits and the expansion of their privileges, influence and projection in Asia. In 1548, as the episode concerning the attempt to establish a new college in Chaliyam shows, the first signs of the fear that some Franciscans had of the very rapid growth of the Jesuits were already beginning to be felt.

After the death of Juan de Albuquerque and in the following decades, in fact, an atmosphere of such harmony between a Bishop and the members of the Society of Jesus was no longer found in the State of India. Jesuit power alerted their competitors and began to overshadow their relationship within the ecclesiastical field itself. This scenario was also felt in other areas. According to some authors, since early in the seventeenth century, the Jesuits could be seen as “a modern multinational corporation, with a more varied and extensive network of business operations than either the Dutch or the English East India Companies”. The Viceroy Miguel de Noronha, in 1629, even accused them of waiting to take over the royal jurisdiction in a time when the Jesuits disposed of “a massive investment not only in trade but in land and other forms of real estate” (Disney, 2009, p. III-93). This picture

was particularly different from the period during which Juan de Albuquerque was the Bishop of Goa and Xavier and his first companions lived in Asia.

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