

INTRODUCTION

The Inquisition trial which is reproduced in this volume is certainly one of the most important documents that exists for understanding the Upper Guinea Coast and the “Rivers of Guinea” - which included the area within the current day borders of Guinea-Bissau - in the seventeenth century. Comprising almost four hundred folios of densely annotated script, the trial contains information on an enormous variety of material, referring to events which took place between 1646 and 1668. The nature of African Atlantic trading communities in the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is revealed in these pages in a manner more detailed than that which can be found in almost any comparable document of the era.

It is hard to compile a summary list of the types of material to be encountered in the trial, since the themes covered are so varied. A relatively abbreviated list would include at least the following: the hybrid nature of religious life in the African Atlantic trading communities; the practice and understanding of healing in West Africa, and the use of African intellectual systems in this field; the question of political power in African Atlantic trade, and the political power over Atlantic traders held by West African rulers; the nature of slavery in the pre-colonial Guinea-Bissau region, and its relationship to the Atlantic system; the geopolitical connections between the Portuguese colonial settlement on the Cabo Verde islands and their trading positions in West Africa, as also between traders based in West Africa and those in the Americas; and the evolution of discourse related to power, trade, and slavery, through the framework of the conceptual linkages between, for instance, cannibalism and witchcraft, or between power and the consumption of human lives.

With such a vast range of themes covered in this document, its significance goes beyond the records of an Inquisitorial trial, assuming a wider import on account of its multiple social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. Yet there are many aspects that will need clarification before an informed consultation of the trial can begin, and it is the purpose of this Introduction to fill in some of these gaps. The societies of the Upper Guinea Coast and

the Guinea Bissau region out of which this trial emerged, were themselves extremely complex and had already gone through many changes in the two centuries since the arrival of Portuguese traders in the region in the 1450s, as they had prior to the Portuguese arrival since the expansion of the Mali empire from the early fourteenth century – changes which will require elucidation. Moreover, many readers may be surprised that, at this time, the Portuguese Inquisition had any role to play in West Africa at all. Hence, this element also requires clarification – as does the reason why the historical role of the Inquisition in West Africa is so much less well-known than the role of its counterparts in Iberia and the Americas.

Another question which some readers will seek to understand, is how far this Inquisition trial can offer an African perspective on this history. This is after all a document produced by a European institution (the Inquisition), compiled in Portuguese on a case involving an African woman from an outpost of empire. The scribes, who annotated the folios reproduced here, did so to fulfil the orders of their superiors in the Cabo Verde Islands and Lisbon. Given that the trial records are not verbatim, they filtered the answers of their interlocutors, and so the question of how far what follows can represent African or Afro-Atlantic history is an important one.

Any answer to this question needs to be carefully contextualised. As Mudimbe pointed out three decades ago, the very idea of Africa was an invention of the eighteenth century, emerging from the interconnected histories of trade, slavery and the construction of European Enlightenment “knowledge” about Africa; hence the question of how “African” the witnesses are is to a certain extent an anachronism.¹ Certainly, almost every witness whose evidence is annotated in this trial was born in Africa, and was intimately familiar with the daily lives and practices both of the residents of the trading port of Cacheu (where most of the “action” in this trial took place) and of the African peoples who were their ‘neighbours’. They were also multilingual, like most people in this part of Africa. Witnesses in this trial such as Ambrósio Gomes and Gaspar Vogado, who were government officials and prominent traders, would give their evidence in Portuguese, but were also conversant with one or more African or Creole languages. Many other witnesses probably gave their evidence in Kriol (Guinean Creole) which was then “translated” by the scribe. Indeed, the accused, Crispina Peres, made her statements to the Court in Lisbon in Guinean Creole, aided by an interpreter. Kriol was already a *lingua franca* for trading residents in settlements such as Cacheu by the seventeenth century²; another variant, Kriolu

¹ Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

² Wilson Trajano Filho, *Uma Experiência Singular de Crioulização*, Working Paper 343, Departamento de Antropologia, Universidade de Brasília, 2003; Jean-Louis Rougé, ‘Uma Hipótese

or Cabo Verdean Creole, was also spoken by traders and officials on the coast who originated from the archipelago. The remaining witnesses who were generally born in Portugal were also multilingual, usually speaking Creole vernacular as well as ethnic languages. Although we have to take into account the process of ideological filtering carried out by the scribes, the testimonies recounted here are unique renderings as close to the points of view of people – freemen and slaves - born on the Upper Guinea Coast between the 1620s to the 1650s as one is likely to find in archival collections. At the same time, they are interspersed with statements by witnesses originating from the Iberian Peninsula, who lived and worked in the region while travelling on Atlantic shipping routes of the triangular trade.

We are left, therefore, with a document of incomparable significance when it comes to trying to reconstruct the nature of daily life in an African Atlantic trading settlement in the middle of the seventeenth century. What follows in the Introduction is an attempt to contextualise first the African and then the Inquisitorial context in which this trial took place. The Introduction is divided into three parts: in the first, the history and historiography of the Inquisition is discussed, as it relates to the creation of this trial and the way it has been received by historians; in the second, the context of the cultural, political, and social formation of Cacheu is set out; finally, an outline of the trial itself, its significance and outcome is presented.

Of course, this Introduction is not an exhaustive work of contextualisation. Our interpretations (like any historical interpretations) are fundamentally provisional, albeit the result of prolonged engagement with Inquisitorial and Bissau-Guinean history. The editors are well aware of just how many interpretations and ideas related to the case discussed below will surely emerge with time, far beyond those which we suggest here.

The process of reading and translating a seventeenth century document tends to generate issues and problems that require careful cross-cultural examination, in order to move from ‘thin’ to ‘thick’ translation, from a mere description of a record to its contextualised interpretation embedded in the social and cultural relations and meanings it emerged out of.³

Sobre a Formação do Crioulo da Guiné-Bissau e da Casamansa’, in: *Soronda*, 2 (1986): 28-49; Philip J. Havik, ‘Kriol without Creoles: Rethinking Guinea’s Afro-Atlantic Connections (16th-20th centuries)’, in: Nancy Naro, Roger Sansi-Roca and David Treece (eds.), *Cultures of the Lusophone Black Atlantic* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2007): 41-73. On Luso-Creole communities, see Gerhard Seibert, ‘Creolization and Creole Communities in the Portuguese Atlantic: São Tomé, Cabo Verde, and the Rivers of Guinea and Central Africa in Comparison’, in: Toby Green (ed.) *Brokers of Change: Atlantic commerce and cultures in pre-colonial Western Africa* (Oxford: The British Academy/ Oxford University Press, 2012): 29-52.

³ Clifford Geertz, ‘Thick Description: Towards an Interpretative Theory of Culture, in: C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973): 3-30.

The key question which needs to be addressed from the outset is how it was that a West African woman such as Crispina Peres might be deported from West Africa to stand trial in Lisbon in the 1660s. Such an outcome may come as a surprise to many people, and is testament to the complex realities of daily life in the Upper Guinea Coast at the time: the competition, enmities, (internecine) rivalries and power struggles, and interaction and blending of ideas and worldviews which went into the formation of the modern world, both in the aforesaid region and the wider Afro-Atlantic space.

I: THE INQUISITION IN CONTEXT: HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Structure and Operation of the Portuguese Inquisition in the bishopric of Cabo Verde and the “Rivers of Guinea”

Before considering the trial itself, it is important to gain a greater grasp of the Inquisition itself as an institution, and the way in which its institutional structure and culture shaped its presence in the Atlantic port of Cacheu – as well as a better understanding of the place of its historiography in the ongoing discussions on the institution today.

The extension of the jurisdiction of the Portuguese Inquisition to its global empire from the sixteenth century onwards was a gradual process. It took place in the decades following the issuing of the Bull *Cum ad nihil*, in 1536, by Pope Paul III, which authorised the establishment of the Inquisition in the Kingdom of Portugal and the territories under its control (*Senhorios de Portugal*).⁴ To operate in the Kingdom, several district courts were established in the following years. Those in Lisbon, Coimbra, and Évora were the three most important and the ones that remained active throughout the whole period of existence of this institution between 1536 and 1821.

The plan to extend the jurisdiction of the Inquisition overseas only began to materialise roughly a decade later when, in 1548, the Inquisitor-general granted the district court of Lisbon permission (*comissão*) to collect denunciations of deviant religious behaviour, examine suspects and put on trial those found guilty in the whole of the kingdom (except in the Archbishopric of Évora) and in the Atlantic islands.⁵ The wording of the permission was rather general, in all

⁴ Luiz Augusto Rebello da Silva, *Corpo Diplomático Português contendo os Actos e Relações Políticas de Portugal com as diversas Potências do Mundo desde o século XVI até aos nossos dias* (Lisbon: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, vol. III, 1868): 302-307; A. Fortunato de Almeida, *História da Igreja em Portugal* (Lisbon-Porto: Livraria Civilização Editora, vol. II, 1967-1974): 402-403.

⁵ Francisco Bethencourt, ‘Inquisição e controle social’, in: *História & Crítica*, 14, 1987: 5-7,

likelihood with the aim of extending this authority not only to Madeira and the Azores, but also to the archipelagos of Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe. In fact, the first denunciations referring to people living in these two territories date from the same decade. Nevertheless, it was only after 1565, five years after the establishment of the Tribunal of Goa in India, that the bishoprics of Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe were officially brought under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, and this included the region of the “Rivers of Guinea”, which was part of the former’s bishopric, and under whose jurisdiction the initial phase of the trial of Crispina Peres took place.⁶

From then on, the Court of Lisbon had official authority to receive and collect accusations against baptised people living, either on a permanent or temporary basis, in the aforementioned territories, who were suspected of committing any crimes that fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.⁷ Among these crimes were not only the practice of Judaism, but also the adoption of religious beliefs deemed heretical by the Inquisitors, such as Lutheranism and Calvinism.⁸ In addition, it also persecuted those accused of using of charms and spells, sorcery, and witchcraft, as well as African rites, of which Crispina Peres was eventually accused.⁹

10; António Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil: Subsídios para a sua História*. (Lisbon: 1906): 70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-7, 10.

⁷ In the course of the sixteenth century, this authority was also extended to Angola and Brazil. In the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* the Inquisitor-general and the General Council of the Holy Office would opt for the establishment of a district court in Goa (India), with jurisdiction over the whole territory under the jurisdiction of the *Estado*, stretching from the southern coast of Mozambique to Japan. See, Ana Cannas da Cunha, *A Inquisição no Estado da Índia. Origens (1539-1560)* (Lisbon: Arquivos Nacionais / Torre do Tombo, col. Estudos & Documentos, 1, 1995); Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes, *A Inquisição de Goa na 1ª Metade de Setecentos: uma Visita pelo seu Interior* (Lisbon, 1993), and by the same author, ‘A Inquisição de Goa na Segunda Metade do Século XVIII. Contributo para a sua História’, in: *Studia*, 48, 1989: 237-262; Patrícia Souza de Faria, *A Conversão das Almas do Oriente: Franciscanos, Poder e Catolicismo em Goa: séculos XVI e XVII* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora 7Letras, 2013).

⁸ The set of crimes falling under the scrutiny of the Inquisition would be widened with the following three bylaws (*regimentos*) of the Holy Office issued in 1613, 1640, and 1774. See, António Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil*: 1-3; *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inqvisiçam dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título IV, capítulo LIII; Título V, capítulo VIII, VIII, XXVI, XXXII (Lisbon: Imp. de Pedro Crasbeck, 1613); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inqvisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título III, capítulo XI; Livro II, título XXIII. Livro III, títulos VII, VIII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV (Lisbon: Imp. de Manoel da Sylva, 1640); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inqvisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título I, capítulo XX; Livro II, título VII, capítulo XVI. Livro III, título X, XI, XII, XV, XVI (Lisbon: Oficina de Miguel Manescal da Costa, 1774).

⁹ On the question of the Inquisition’s persecution of healers and witches and its African dimensions, see Didier Lahon, ‘Inquisição, Pacto com o Demônio e “Magia” Africana em Lisboa no século XVIII’, in: *TOPOI*, 5, 8 (2004): 9-70; Daniela Buono Calainho, ‘Africanos Penitenciados pela Inquisição Portuguesa’, in: *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, III, 4/5, (2004): 47-63; José Pedro Paiva, *Bruxaria e Superstição num País “sem caça as bruxas”, 1600-1774* (Lisboa: Editorial Notícias, 1997).

It must be noted, however, that the district court of Lisbon was not the only entity with power to receive denunciations from these territories. The *regimento* of the General Council of the Holy Office, dating from 1570, also provided for the appointment of one Inquisitor in the General Council to receive and proceed upon denunciations made before this body regardless of the district court the suspect accused belonged to. The inquiries and the court-cases would thereafter be sent to the respective district court.¹⁰ Therefore, this body (the General Council) could also receive denunciations from the Atlantic islands, the African territories, Brazil, as well as from the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*.

These denunciations could be made in person before the district court and/or the General Council, both located in Lisbon. In many cases, however, especially in the overseas territories, these accusations arrived in Lisbon in written form, often entrusted to a ship's captain or other passenger on board, with several copies being sent with different vessels to reduce the risk of loss due to the perils of the sea. These written denunciations could take the form of a simple letter denouncing the deviant behaviour of a given person or persons, or the form of an inquiry carried out by authorities representing the Portuguese Crown and/or the Catholic Church locally. These could be royal officials, clergymen and/or officials of the Inquisition, such as *Comissários* or commissioners, and *familiares* or lay agents of the Inquisition.¹¹ The first accusations against Crispina Peres based upon local denunciations arrived in Lisbon in a similar fashion.

In some cases, however, copies of part of an inquiry carried out for other purposes, such as for example visitations to bishoprics, could also be sent to the court of the Inquisition in Lisbon because in these inquiries denunciations of crimes that fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition were filed. The

¹⁰ "Regimento do Conselho Geral do Santo Officio da Inquisição destes Reinos e senhorios de Portugal, 1570", in Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil*, doc. X, capítulo III.

¹¹ The candidates to these posts were subjected to an inquiry into their 'purity of blood' and their moral conduct. This investigation was extended to their relatives in the direct line, parents and grandparents, on both the maternal and the paternal sides of the family, and, in case they were married, also to their spouses and respective family. Over time applicants were also required to be born in Portugal, never to have been involved in public scandals (*infâmia pública*) or prosecuted by the Inquisition, to prove to be fit for office, and able to cope with the responsibility and the secrecy it entailed. To obtain information, the Inquisitors started by inquiring if there were any charges against the applicants in the district courts. If not, this would be followed by an inquiry into the '*limpeza de sangue*' or 'purity of blood' of the candidate and their closest relatives. If all these requirements would be met the candidate received a letter of appointment issued by the General Council. *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título I, capítulos II, III. Título IV, capítulo VIII (1613); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Livro I, título I, capítulo II, IV, V, VI-VIII, LIII; título X, capítulo I; título XI, capítulo I. Livro II, título IV, capítulos II, V, XXIII; Livro II, título XXIII, (1640); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro I, título I, capítulo II, III, IV, V Livro I, título VIII, capítulo I, (1774).

majority of the known visits to the bishopric of Cabo Verde were carried out mainly during the seventeenth century. The main geographical areas targeted by these visits were the Island of Fogo and the “Rivers of Guinea”.¹² The arrival and assessment of copies of these denunciations gathered during visits to the bishoprics led in several cases to Inquisition court cases. This happened, for example, in the case of the Dias family, resident in Cabo Verde in the 1550s and 1560s, and accused of practising Judaism.¹³ A similar situation led to the trial of Dinis de França, *morador* in the island of Príncipe (adjacent to São Tomé), in the 1580s, accused of disrespecting religious images and of blasphemies.¹⁴ It was the visits carried out by Gaspar Vogado in the “Rivers of Guinea” on behalf of the Bishop of Cabo Verde in the 1660s, which would also be the point of departure for the Inquisitors to start building a case against Crispina Peres and which would eventually lead to her trial. Extracts of these visits are, in fact, reproduced in the trial of Crispina Peres.¹⁵

The practice adopted by the Inquisition to receive denunciations illustrates the dependency of the institution on individual informants and on the local representatives of the Portuguese Crown and the Catholic Church. The Crown and Church would act as unofficial agents of this court throughout the early modern period in most of the Atlantic territories – here the “Rivers of Guinea” were no exception, as the constant reference to these historical actors in the trial of Crispina Peres makes clear.¹⁶ This practice certainly widened the range of people who could inform the Inquisition. But it would also affect the content of those denunciations, as personal interests might inform the accounts and testimonies they would give before the Inquisition courts or their lawful representatives locally. Personal interests also influenced the ways in which

¹² During the sixteenth century, information contained in Inquisition sources mentions at least three visits ordered by the bishop of Cabo Verde Francisco da Cruz: one to the island of Fogo and two to the island of Santiago. However, the majority of the known visits to the bishopric of Cabo Verde were carried out by the Canons of the See of Ribeira Grande, upon appointment by the bishop. Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo (hereafter: IAN/TT), *Inquisição de Lisboa*, processos 1485, 6580, 13107, 7312, 8626, 3199, 3570, 2079, 16034; Livro 30, fl. 92; Livro 205, fls. 237-240v; 294-297; 337-344; 382-383; 467-493, 599-611; Livro 208, fls. 500-504v; Livro 23, fl. 136v; Livro 254, fls. 403-403v. Livro 210, fls. 453-459; Livro 261, fls. 402v-412.

¹³ IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, processo 8626, fls. 3-7v; Livro 205, fls. 599-611.

¹⁴ IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, processos 6580, 13107, 7312, 3199.

¹⁵ IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, processo 3570.

¹⁶ In fact, the first bylaws of the Inquisition did not foresee the creation and establishment of agents of the Holy Office to serve locally. As a result, the representatives of the Portuguese Crown and the Catholic Church in the various territories brought under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition became their first prime agents. These were, therefore, unofficial agents as they were not appointed by the Inquisition, but rather requested to act on behalf of the court on specific occasions and circumstances. Their number was obviously higher in the centres of power of the Portuguese Crown in Atlantic Africa – Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Angola – rather than in the territories where Portuguese presence was more restricted, as in the case of the “Rivers of Guinea”.

civilian and religious authorities conducted inquiries locally, as the trial of Crispina Peres clearly demonstrates.

Upon arrival in Lisbon, the written accusations were filed in the books of the Inquisition's Attorney (*Cadernos do Promotor da Inquisição*) and if the accusations were deemed trustworthy, serious and to fall within the court's jurisdiction, the Attorney would request the Inquisitors of the district to authorise further inquiries to be carried out locally following the judicial procedure of the Inquisition. These procedures are also in evidence in the trial against Crispina Peres.

Whenever the Inquisition had official agents in the location in question or within the respective bishopric, these requests would be directed to one of these agents, usually a *Comissário*.¹⁷ In the case of Cabo Verde, the first *Comissário* – the Canon of the See António Furtado de Afonseca – was appointed only in 1691.¹⁸ In the “Rivers of Guinea” the single known official agent of the Inquisition appointed during the entire early modern period was the *familiar* Paulo Barradas da Silva, during his term as Captain of the fort of Cacheu in the early 1640s.¹⁹ By the time that Crispina Peres' case came to trial, he had already passed away. Therefore, to handle her case, the Inquisitors resorted to an alternative solution.

For locations where no official agents of the Inquisition were to be found or travelling to such places would be too difficult, time-consuming and risky – as was the case in the “Rivers of Guinea” – a temporary *comissário* would be appointed to carry out this type of enquiry. These temporary appointments often took the form of *Cartas de Comissão* – letters granting inquisitorial authority to a given person or persons to carry out an inquiry for a specific purpose as well as to appoint a clerk to assist on this matter. These letters indicate the reason for the inquiry, the name of the suspect, accusations made against him/her, together with a list of questions to be put to the witnesses. In some cases, a list of names of people to be interrogated was also provided. Additionally, these

¹⁷ The establishment of ministers of the Holy Office in the bishopric of Cabo Verde was foreseen for the first time in the Inquisition bylaw of 1613. This code stipulated the appointment of one *comissário* (commissioner of the Inquisition) and a *visitador das náus estrangeiras* (visitor of foreign ships) and their respective clerks, in addition to a variable number of *familiares* (civilian agents of the Inquisition). *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisiçam dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título I, capitulos II, III. Título IV, capítulo VIII (1613). *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Livro I, título I, capítulo II, IV, V, VI-VIII, LIII; título X, capítulo I; título XI, capítulo I. Livro II, título IV, capitulos II, V, XXIII; Livro II, título XXIII, (1640); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro I, título I, capítulo II, III, IV, V Livro I, título VIII, capítulo I (1774).

¹⁸ IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, Livro 107, fl. 182. *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*, António, maço 34, doc. n.º 860, fl. 1.

¹⁹ IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, Livro 105, fls. 75v-76v; *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*, Paulo, maço 1, doc. n.º 19, fl. 1.

letters specified the form that the text of the inquiry should take and how the witnesses should be called before these representatives of the court, how they should swear on the Holy Gospel to state only the truth, and how the reliability of their declarations should be assessed by two other religious persons who should be present throughout their hearings.

These types of commissions were usually assigned to the best qualified person in the vicinity. In the case of Cabo Verde and the “Rivers of Guinea”, at the time these agents were recruited mainly from among the Capuchins. In the case of Crispina Peres, such *Cartas* were sent to the Capuchin Friar Paulo de Lordello, who was thereupon requested to carry out an inquiry on the “Rivers of Guinea” to obtain further information on the accusations against Crispina Peres. Entire versions of these *Cartas* are reproduced in her trial.

In fact, members of religious orders formed the third largest group of unofficial agents collaborating with the Inquisition in Atlantic Africa, as becomes clear in the trial against Crispina Peres. In other African territories unofficial agents were also recruited to serve the Inquisition for a specific period of time from among the Italian Franciscans, the Order of Discalced Augustinians, and the Jesuits.²⁰

In brief, the reliance of the Inquisition on unofficial agents was a constant throughout the whole period of activity of the court in the African territories, although it was in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries that this dependence was most evident. These agents were recruited mainly among members of the ordinary clergy, religious orders, and civilians serving the Portuguese Crown. These individuals usually occupied the highest posts in the local administration of the Crown and the Catholic Church. This increased dependence on unofficial agents in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is due to three key factors.

Firstly, there was a clear effort on the part of the local authorities to resort to the Inquisition court to denounce types of behaviour in these colonial societies that were deemed by them as not conforming to Catholic standards. The key examples that stand out were the practice of Judaism by New Christians, and the adoption of local African beliefs by people of Portuguese descent and baptised Christians, as was the case with Crispina Peres and her husband Jorge Gonçalves Francês. Secondly, for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Inquisition could not count on the presence of official agents in these territories, as the appointment of Inquisition officials was only authorised by the *regimento* of 1613, and moreover lack of funds meant that the

²⁰ In other Portuguese territories, especially in Brazil, the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* and the Atlantic islands of Azores and Madeira, these tasks would be often performed by members of the Society of Jesus and the Dominican Order.

appointment of officials was always irregular in the further reaches of the empire. Thirdly, it should also be noted here that despite having jurisdiction to visit the Atlantic islands, the African territories and Brazil to collect denunciations and confessions of deviant religious behaviour that fell under its jurisdiction from as early as the 1550s²¹, the plans to visit these territories were rather limited.²² In the case of Cabo Verde and the “district” of Guinea, the court of Lisbon had entertained the idea of carrying out visits to this bishopric on three different occasions, in 1581, 1586 and 1591; however, no evidence can be found of the outcome of these inquisitorial visits, thus emphasising the dependence of the Inquisition authorities on their unofficial and official agents.²³ In our view, the limited number of official agents of the court in the region, in combination with the consecutive plans to visit the African territories which never materialised, clearly illustrates the low priority given by this institution to the monitoring of religious behaviour in Afro-Portuguese societies in Atlantic Africa.

If the inquiries carried out under the authority of the aforementioned *cartas de comissão* gathered further evidence of the suspect’s involvement in a specific practice deemed as deviant and punishable— as was the case of Crispina Peres – the same Attorney would request the Inquisitors of the district court to issue an arrest warrant.²⁴ This would be sent to an official of

²¹ To carry out these visits, the court of Lisbon needed permission from the General Council of the Holy Office – the umbrella body that supervised the activities of the district courts together with the Inquisitor-general. The General Council also controlled the appointment of the Inquisitors responsible for carrying out visits in areas which fell under the jurisdiction of the district courts as well as the power to issue their letters of appointment. See, Regimento da Santa Inquisição, 1552, in António Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil*: 31-64, doc. XXXI, capítulos V, XXXIV; “Regimento do Conselho Geral do Santo Officio da Inquisição destes Reinos e senhorios de Portugal, 1570”, in *Ibidem*, pp. 9-14, doc. X, capítulos XI, XIII; *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título II, capítulo I. (1613); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Livro I, título IV, capítulo I; Livro II, título I, capítulo I. (1640); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título XIV, capítulo I (1774).

²² For example, see the studies by José da Silva Horta, ‘A Inquisição em Angola e Congo: o Inquérito de 1596-98 e o papel mediador das justiças locais’, in: *Arqueologia do Estado*., 1^{as} Jornadas sobre Formas de Organização e Exercício dos Poderes na Europa do Sul, Séculos XIII-XVIII (Lisbon: História & Crítica, vol. I, 1988): 388, 406-407; Maria do Carmo Dias Farinha, ‘A Madeira nos Arquivos da Inquisição’, in: *Actas do I Colóquio Internacional de História da Madeira* (Funchal: Governo Regional da Madeira, vol. I, 1989): 713; Elvira Mea, *A Inquisição de Coimbra no século XVI. A Instituição, os Homens e a Sociedade* (Porto: PhD thesis, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto (policopiada): vol. I, 1989, 239-244; IAN/TT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, Livro 779, fls. 1-3v; José Lúcio de Azevedo, *História dos Cristãos-Novos Portugueses* (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1975): 225; Bethencourt, *Inquisição e controle social*: 10; Fernanda Olival, ‘A Inquisição e a Madeira: a visita de 1618’, in: *Actas do I Colóquio Internacional de História da Madeira*: 765, 791.

²³ IAN/TT, *Conselho Geral do Santo Officio*, Livro 442, fls. 126-127; *Inquisição de Lisboa*, Livro 779, fls. 1-3v. Elvira Mea, *A Inquisição de Coimbra*: 239-244.

²⁴ The Lisbon Inquisition was also dependent on the General Council to issue arrest warrants. *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisicama dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Título

the Inquisition on the spot or in his absence to the highest religious authority in a bishopric. Additionally, all other civilian and religious authorities were requested to assist in the arrest of the suspect and in no way to obstruct this task. This usually involved the governor of a territory and/or the commander or *capitão-mor* (see Glossary) of a fort as well as the highest representative of the royal judicial system – usually an *ouvidor-mor*, an *ouvidor* (judge; see Glossary) or a bailiff (*meirinho*; see Glossary), depending on the importance of the location within the administrative and judicial apparatus of the Portuguese Crown in the region in question. In the case of Crispina Peres, her arrest was carried out by the *capitão-mor* of Cacheu at the time and the judicial official on the spot, as clearly illustrated in the trial. Thus, civilians holding posts in the local administration of the Portuguese Crown also served the Inquisition as unofficial agents, although not as often as did their religious counterparts.

Prisoners of the Inquisition were, in principle, ‘responsible for looking after their own needs’ and covering any expenses they would incur during transport to the district court as well as during their incarceration in the Inquisition’s dungeons – which could last several years, as in the case of Crispina Peres. For this purpose, upon arrest they would be required to carry clothes, linen and enough money to pay for foodstuffs and other expenses. Exceptions were only made for those proven to be poor. In Crispina Peres’s case, her upkeep during her incarceration was probably funded by her husband and other traders. At the moment of arrest, suspects would also see all their property confiscated by the Inquisition as happened to the accused in this trial.

The arrest of the suspect and his/her transport to Lisbon, and incarceration in the Inquisition jail marked the beginning of the court case *per se*. At that moment, all documents pertaining to the case would be moved and/or copied from the *Cadernos do Promotor* (Attorney’s files) and appended to the court case. The trial of Crispina Peres translated and transcribed in the following sections of this book illustrates these procedures, although no evidence has been found of her trial in the *Cadernos do Promotor*.

In general, Inquisition trials were divided into several key moments, and organised in a more or less identical way. Immediately after admission to the Inquisition jail, a first hearing would be scheduled to assess the purity of blood and reputation of the defendant and his/her family. During this part of the trial, named in the Inquisition judicial procedure as *genealogia* (i.e. genealogy), the defendant would be asked about his/her family background, including the names of parents, and grandparents, places of birth and residence of their closest relatives, as well as about their religious practices and their moral

IV, Capítulo VIII (1613); *Regimento do sSnto Officio da Inquisicam dos Reinos de Portugal [...]*, livro II, título IV, capítulos II, V, XXIII; Livro II, título XXIII (1640).

conduct. This would be followed by another hearing to assess the defendant's knowledge of the Catholic Faith – a procedure which was named by the Inquisitors as *exame* (i.e. examination). The third key moment of the trial was what the Inquisitors designated by *confissão* (i.e. confession). Here, the defendants would be confronted with a set of questions posed by the Inquisitors to lead him/her to confess, but without ever disclosing the reason why the defendant had been arrested, and the content and authors of the charges against him/her. The number of hearings a defendant would be subjected to, until the Inquisitors obtained a confession which they would deem satisfactory, varied dramatically. These hearings would also be spread out in time, as a mechanism to put the suspect under psychological strain and, thereby, to coerce him/her to confess. In some cases, if the Inquisitors were not content with the partial confession made by the defendant after a couple of hearings, as in the case of Crispina Peres, they would continue their interrogation in order to elicit a complete confession. The fact that they failed to do so in Crispina Peres' case, shows that they were sensitive to the arguments put forward by her husband that she was someone lacking “the true Roman [Catholic] religious and civil discipline” (see below) and thus required additional instructions in the faith. In other cases, however, the failure of the defendant in aligning his/her declarations with the content of the accusations could lead to multiple hearings and even to subjection to several sessions of torture to force the defendant to confess and in this way meet the expectations of the Inquisitors.

Once the Inquisitors were satisfied with the defendant's confession, he/she would be asked to ratify and sign its written version (*ratificação da confissão*), and two high officials of the Inquisition present during the hearings would attest to the authenticity of the statements made by the defendant. In the case of Crispina Peres this attestation would be made by the eldest Inquisitor presiding over the hearing and the Notary of the Inquisition. The trial would then move into the following phase, i.e. *admoestação*, *accusação* and *sentença* (admonishment, accusation and sentence). This phase of the trial was divided into two main parts. Firstly, the Inquisitors would summon the defendant once more to ask if he/she had any additional confessions or declarations to make. Once this requirement was met, in a following hearing, the Inquisitors would then present their formal accusation against the defendant. After deliberation of the three Inquisitors that presided over the *Mesa* (i.e. board; see Glossary) of each district court, a sentence would be issued and read to the defendant in a formal ceremony. This General Council also controlled the dispatch of appeals, the granting of bails in cases of crimes of heresy, as well as in cases of appeals for suspension of execution of the sentence, commutation and or pardon and penalties of all defendants from the various district courts.²⁵

²⁵ After the 1774 *regimento* of the Inquisition, this body gained the power to scrutinise

The trial would then be concluded with the *termo de adjuração* (i.e. oath of adjuration of the defendant), the *termo de segredo* (oath of secrecy), the *termo de saída e penitências* (i.e. oath of departure and penances). In the former, the defendant would recognise his/her mistakes and would promise not to commit similar faults in the future. In the second, the defendant would promise not to disclose any information about the trial and his/her stay in the Inquisition dungeons. In the third, the defendant would declare that he/she had fulfilled all obligations towards the court and would commit himself/herself to serve the penances imposed by the court, including the payment of the legal costs of the court case. The trial of Crispina Peres did not diverge from the standard procedure and format described briefly above. The main difference from other trials and court cases was the constant presence in the court room during the hearings of an interpreter, given the defendant's limited command of Portuguese. Manuel de Almeida, Chief-sergeant in Cacheu and responsible for the transport of Crispina Peres to Lisbon, was appointed by the court as her interpreter, given his knowledge and understanding of her spoken language, i.e. Kriol.

Overall, the trial of Crispina Peres gives us a clear glimpse of the main concerns and priorities of the Inquisition for Atlantic Africa. In the eyes of the Inquisitors in Lisbon it was essential to curtail and punish any baptised individuals of either European, African or Afro-Portuguese descent who had engaged in religious and moral practices that did not conform with the standards dictated by the Catholic Church. In this respect, priority would be given to those who had significant political, social and economic standing in these Afro-Portuguese societies and could set a bad example to other members of the same communities, as well as to the African 'heathens' living in the vicinity.

Historiography of the Inquisition in Africa

With this understanding of the procedural contexts of the Inquisition both in the metropole and West Africa, it is also useful to perceive how and why the historiographical reception and analysis of the Inquisition in Africa has been relatively slow to emerge. The Portuguese tribunal of the Inquisition was instituted in 1536, 62 years after its Spanish counterpart, which had been founded in 1478. In each case, the initial targets were alleged false

all sentences before they were read to the defendants and appended to the court-cases, and to deliberate on its final version. "Regimento da Santa Inquisição, 1552": in António Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil*: 31-64, doc. XXXI, capítulos LV, LXI; "Regimento do Conselho Geral do Santo Officio da Inquisição destes Reinos e senhorios de Portugal, 1570", in *ibid.*, doc. X, capítulos XIII, XXII; *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título IV, capítulos LVI, LXVIII, LXVIII (1613). *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título XV, capítulos I, V. (1774).

Jewish converts to Christianity, the New Christians (*conversos* in Spain, *cristãos novos* in Portugal, also known as *marranos*). Though originally concerned only with the Spanish and Portuguese peninsular territories, the tribunals soon spread to develop a colonial dimension. Trials from Portugal's African settlements in Cabo Verde, Elmina (called São Jorge da Mina at the time) and the Guinea coast began to be held in the 1540s, and a tribunal was established in Goa in 1560. Spain followed with overseas tribunals in Lima (1570), Mexico City (1571) and Cartagena (1609). All overseas tribunals remained in operation until the abolition of the Iberian Inquisitions in the nineteenth century, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars.

The history of the Inquisition therefore deals with over three centuries of Iberian domestic and colonial history spread over four continents. Locating the place of this particular trial within the historiography of the Inquisition is thus a difficult task owing to the enormous complexity and politically charged framework of that vast literature. One can identify several core phases of that literature up to the late twentieth century, and then seek to identify where this trial figures among them, as follows: (1), the era of the sixteenth and seventeenth century construction in northern Europe of the "Black Legend" of Spanish barbarism and cruelty, in which the Inquisition was the symbolic centrepiece; (2), the nineteenth-century aftermath of the abolition of the Inquisition, in which the last Inquisitor-General of the Spanish Inquisition, Antonio de Llorente, produced a tendentious and accusatory history of the tribunal in 1818²⁶ which prompted a vituperative conservative backlash, the most prolix of which was Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's 8 volume *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles* (1880-1882)²⁷; (3), the rise of anti-Semitic ideologies in much of Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century which saw reappraisals of New Christian histories in Iberia, such as João Lúcio de Azevedo's *Historia dos Christãos Novos Portugueses* (1922)²⁸; (4), the emergence in the era of the twentieth century Iberian dictatorships of waves of pro-tribunal historiography drawing a historical subtext of equivalence between censorship during the Franco era and that in the era of the Inquisition, such as Antonio Sierra Corella's 1947 *La Censura de Libros y Papeles en España...*²⁹.

²⁶ Juan Antonio Llorente, *Histoire Critique de l'Inquisition: depuis l' époque de son établissement par Fernando V, jusqu' au règne de Fernando VII: tirée des pièces originales des archives du Conseil de la Suprême et de celles des tribunaux subalternes du Saint-office* (Paris: Treutel et Wurtz, 1818, , 4 vols.).

²⁷ Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, , *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*. (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores S.A., 1945, 8 vols.).

²⁸ Lúcio de Azevedo, *Historia dos Christãos Novos Portugueses*.

²⁹ Antonio Sierra Corella, *La Censura de Libros y Papeles en España y Los Índices y Catálogos Españoles de los Prohibidos y Expurgados* (Madrid: Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros, Bibliotecários y Arqueólogos, 1947).

The aftermath of the Second World War, however, saw new directions in the historiography of the Inquisition. The foundation of the state of Israel gave rise to a generation of Jewish and Israeli historians who sought to find parallels in Spanish and Portuguese history for the condition of the Jews during the Holocaust, and then in Israel. Perhaps the most influential of these was Benzion Netanyahu, who sought in a series of seminal works to undermine the official *raison d'être* of the establishment of the Spanish Tribunal of the Inquisition in the first place. His *The Marranos of Spain* argued, on the basis of new Hebrew sources, that the New Christians had been faithful converts to Christianity persecuted as a witch hunt by the Catholic authorities.³⁰ Thirty years on, Netanyahu's *The Origins of the Inquisition in 15th Century Spain* continued the argument through pointing to the racialised dimension of the persecution of New Christians in late medieval Spain³¹. Both publications sought to demonstrate the impossibility of assimilation of the Jewish minority; given that Netanyahu was one of the founders of the neo-conservative movement in the United States, whose son would go on to become Prime Minister of Israel, these historical positions on the Inquisition were clearly a proxy for the position of Jews in pre-Nazi Germany and the necessity of the foundation of Israel.

Another important strand of this Israeli scholarship was a study of the persecution of the New Christian communities during the early decades of the Inquisition. Haim Beinart's works on the New Christians of Ciudad Real is an important example of this sort of work, which fitted within the narrative of Jewish persecution and the subtext of comparison between Nazi Germany and late medieval Spain.³² Others such as Yosef Kaplan focused on the emergence of the Jewish "nation" in the aftermath of persecution in centres such as Amsterdam, where New Christian communities were known by their Portuguese categorisation as "men of the nation" (*homens de nação*).³³

In sum, one can conclude that the politicised nature of the historiography of the Inquisition continued after World War Two, albeit with a new direction provided by the complexities and tensions arising from the foundation of the state of Israel on the one hand, and the traumas that followed the Jewish experience during World War Two; and from the rise of the Franco and Salazar dictatorships in Spain and Portugal on the other hand.

³⁰ Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: from the late XIVth to the early XVth century, according to contemporary Hebrew sources* (New York: American Academy of Jewish Research, 1966).

³¹ Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995).

³² Haim Beinart (ed.) , *Records of the Trials of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (Jerusalem: The Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-1985; 4 vols.).

³³ Yosef Kaplan, *Judíos Nuevos en Amsterdam: Estudio Sobre la Historia Social y Intelectual del Judaísmo Sefardi en el Siglo XVII* (Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa S.A., 1996).

It is important to note that a major consequence of this was that for a long time the emphasis of the inquisitorial historiography lay largely on the New Christian experience, in spite of the fact that the Inquisition rapidly diversified from these original targets to develop other concerns: *moriscos* (converted Muslims), Protestants, Hindus (in Goa), witchcraft (until the later seventeenth century), bigamy, blasphemy, and enlightenment thought.³⁴ A necessary corollary of this was that the history of the Inquisition in Iberian colonial areas – and especially Africa – remained neglected for a number of decades. As a result, little attention was paid to interactions between different religious groups (Christians, New Christians, Muslims and African ‘animist’ beliefs) in African spaces following the Afro-Atlantic encounter that came under the Lisbon Inquisition’s jurisdiction.

Changes to this dynamic were slow to develop. However, in recent years the focus of approaches to inquisitorial history has tended to incorporate a more global element, in keeping with the “global turn” in historical studies in general. Bethencourt’s landmark global history of the Inquisition, and Green’s general history – both published in 2007 – sought to place the Inquisition precisely in a more global perspective.³⁵ Thus with both general histories and

³⁴ In the case of the Portuguese Inquisition, after 1613, crimes such as soliciting sexual acts during confession (*solicitação*), sodomy, bigamy, and cases of people suspected of travelling to territories controlled by Muslims to supply them with weapons, foodstuffs and merchandises also fell under its jurisdiction. After 1640, the Inquisition Courts also gained authority to try foreigners who followed and practised their religious beliefs in the Kingdom and the empire. Eating meat on holy days, discussing issues of the faith forbidden by the Church, making heretical statements and disrespecting religious images and the Holy Sacrament (including receiving it without fasting), were also crimes that came under the jurisdiction of these courts. The Inquisition was also authorised to investigate and start trials based upon accusations of false testimony in matters of faith, cases of fortune-telling (*adivinhação*), of invocation of and/or pact with the Devil, as well as astrological practices. In addition, cases of married people who pertained to religious orders, of Catholics who married heretics and infidels were also brought under the authority of the aforementioned courts. The power of the Inquisition was even extended to those suspected of celebrating the Mass and receive confessions without being ordained priests. People who prayed to saints without beatification and/or canonisation by the Holy Church, and who possessed books about their miracles and revelations could also be put on trial by these courts. All behaviour that prevented and disturbed the activities of the Holy Office was also prosecuted by them. The last bylaw of the Inquisition, dating from 1774, also brought before her courts those suspected of following and promoting Jacobin ideals and becoming members of the Freemasonry (*jacobinismo*), and those accused of breaching confession secrecy (*sigilismo*). See António Baião, *A Inquisição em Portugal e no Brasil*: 1-3; *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inqvisiçam dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Título IV, capítulo LIIII; Título V, capítulo VIII, VIII, XXVI, XXXII (1613); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inqvisição dos Reynos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título III, capítulo XI; Livro II, título XXIII. Livro III, títulos VII, VIII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV (1640); *Regimento do Santo Officio da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal* [...], Livro II, título I, capítulo XX; Livro II, título VII, capítulo XVI. Livro III, título X, XI, XII, XV, XVI (1774).

³⁵ Francisco Bethencourt, *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Toby Green, *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear* (London: Macmillan, 2007).

national histories of the former Iberian colonies acknowledging the significance of the inquisitorial tribunals, a new pattern appears to have taken shape.

The interest in the global dynamics of the Inquisition in specific localities has tended to be driven by historians from the former Iberian colonies themselves. One of the earliest to note the significance of the subject was Alfonso Toro, whose 1944 history *La Familia Carvajal* brought to light the significance of a family now famous to students of Jewish and New Christian history³⁶: the Carvajal family, who escaped from Spain to Mexico via West Africa, only for many of them to perish in the Mexican Inquisition. Subsequent works followed by historians from Brazil – especially Novinsky³⁷ – Chile (Millar Carvacho³⁸), and Colombia (Splendiani)³⁹. In Peru, the significance of the Tribunal in national history is made clear by the Museum of the Inquisition which is located in the buildings of the former National Congress in downtown Lima.

For the former Latin American colonies of Portugal and Spain, therefore, this focus on inquisitorial history has become an important part of the long process of nation building. This was after all a major colonial institution which discriminated against minorities and thus stood as a symbol of the ideological brutality of Iberian colonialism. Moreover, the preponderant influence of the Inquisition in urban areas gave it a disproportionate role in the shaping of colonial lives which made it a key institution in the formation of national identities. Yet while this helps to explain the focus on the Inquisition by historians in Latin America, it can also help to understand the relative neglect of the topic in post-colonial African nations.

In Africa, the Portuguese Inquisition was most active in Angola, Cabo Verde and Guinea (current Guinea-Bissau). It is impossible to know whether or not Mozambique was badly affected, since this colony was part of the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Goa almost all of the records of which were lost in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁰ In these other cases from West and West-Central Africa, all three countries won their independence from Portugal in 1974, after protracted independence wars. The national reconstruction effort that followed

³⁶ Alfonso Toro, *La Familia Carvajal: Estudio Histórico Sobre los Judíos y la Inquisición de la Nueva España en el Siglo XVI, Basado en Documentos Originales y en Su Mayor Parte Inéditos, Que Se Conservan en el Archivo General de la Nación de la Ciudad de México*. (Mexico City: Editorial Patria, S.A., 1944, 2 vols.).

³⁷ Anita Novinsky, *Cristãos Novos na Bahia* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1972).

³⁸ René Millar Carvacho, *Inquisición y Sociedad en el Virreinato Peruano: Estudios Sobre el Tribunal de la Inquisición en Lima* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1997).

³⁹ Anna Maria Splendiani, *Cincuenta Años de Inquisición en el Tribunal de Cartagena de las Indias, 1610-60* (Santafé de Bogotá: Centro Editorial Javeriano CEJA, 1997, 4 vols.).

⁴⁰ Only a limited number of materials from the Goa Inquisition have survived to the present day. These are in part deposited in archival collections in Brazil, as well in the archive of the Portuguese Inquisition at the Portuguese National Archive in Lisbon – or Torre do Tombo – in the sub-collection of the Inquisition of Lisbon, and the General Council of the Holy Office.

was shaped by intellectual and ideological needs which were very different from those found in Latin America. While the Inquisition had had a presence in these countries, the colonial hold of Portugal in these spaces before the twentieth century was far more tenuous than it had been over Brazil at the same time, or than Spain commanded over its American possessions. The power of inquisitorial officials in Africa to requisition property and deport people for trial to Lisbon was always open to doubt, where it never was in Brazil or Spanish America. Moreover, the immediate need for historical reconstruction in postcolonial former Portuguese countries related more to the immediate past. For all these reasons, and others related to access to materials, historians from these African countries did not develop national historiographies of this topic.

Thus, when historians of Africa began to turn to the archives of the Tribunal of Lisbon towards the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s, they found that there was a good deal of material which allowed for new knowledge about pre-colonial West and West-Central Africa. It may be no coincidence that the three editors of this book have produced between them some of the earliest works on the topic. Early publications included Silva Horta's 1997 essay on inquisitorial documentation on Angola⁴¹, and Ribeiro da Silva's 2002 MA thesis⁴², which offered a compendious analysis of the available sources, on inquisitorial procedures, strategies, denunciations, trials and their outcomes in areas of Portuguese presence in Africa, including Guinea, Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe. This was followed by Bethencourt and Havik's edited collection on the Inquisition in Africa published in 2004⁴³, Green's 2007 PhD thesis on the New Christians of Cabo Verde and Mota's recent PhD thesis touching substantially on the Inquisition's persecution of African Muslims and its Atlantic dimensions.⁴⁴ Taken cumulatively, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a significant body of work was beginning to develop which showed the potential of the archives of the Inquisition for adding to the knowledge of precolonial African history.

⁴¹ José da Silva Horta, 'Africanos e Portugueses na documentação inquisitorial de Luanda e Mbanza Kongo', in: *Actas do Seminário: Encontro de Povos e Culturas em Angola*. (Lisbon, 1997): 301-321.

⁴² Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *A Inquisição na Guiné, nas Ilhas de Cabo Verde e São Tomé e Príncipe (1536-1821): contributo para o estudo da política do Santo Ofício nos Territórios Africanos*, (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisbon, unpublished MA Dissertation, 2002, 2 vols.).

⁴³ Francisco Bethencourt and Philip J. Havik, "A África e a Inquisição Portuguesa: Novas Perspectivas", in: *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, III, 5/6, 2004: 21-27 – also published at <http://cienciareligioes.ulusofona.pt>.

⁴⁴ Tobias Green, *Masters of Difference: Creolization and the Jewish Presence in Cabo Verde, 1497-1672* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, unpublished PhD thesis, 2007, 2 vols.); Thiago Henrique Mota, *História Atlântica da Islamização na África Ocidental: Senegâmbia, séculos XVI e XVII*, (Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, unpublished PhD thesis, 2018).

In 2004, Havik's book on gendered histories of the Upper Guinea Coast was one of the first publications to assess in any depth the significance of the particular inquisitorial trial reproduced in this book, and what it reveals about Atlantic trade settlements, African societies and the larger course of inquisitorial and gendered histories in this region.⁴⁵ It showed the significance of the trial as revealing the agency and power of free African women in seventeenth century Cacheu, and also encouraged other historians to consider this subject in more depth. In subsequent publications, the importance of the Crispina Peres trial for West African history and anthropology has been further explored in a number of contributions, from religious, social, cultural and health related perspectives.⁴⁶

Since these initial publications on the topic, historians of the presence of Africans in the Atlantic world have looked increasingly at inquisitorial archives as a way of reading against the grain and reformulating ideas related to this subject. Green's 2012 book on the early trans-Atlantic slave trade used an inquisitorial trial from the 1540s to argue that New Christians were already borrowing West African traditions of masking and performance in their satires of the Catholic faith.⁴⁷ Kananoja used an inquisitorial trial from mid-eighteenth century Angola to look at the creolization of religious practice among colonial officials and the Mbundu peoples among whom they lived.⁴⁸

However, perhaps the most significant interventions in the use of inquisitorial trials for reconceptualising the history of Africa and the Diaspora have come from the Americas. In particular, James Sweet's 2011 book on the healer from Dahomey, Domingos Álvares, draws largely from Álvares' inquisitorial trial to provide a novel biography of an enslaved African in the eighteenth century, at the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It is worth discussing Sweet's work in some detail, as it opens a path to some of the benefits that can come from a sustained and detailed analysis of one particular inquisitorial trial, such as is proposed in this edition of the trial of Crispina Peres.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Philip J. Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes: The Gendered Dynamics of Trade and Brokerage in the Pre-Colonial Guinea-Bissau Region* (Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2004).

⁴⁶ See for example, Philip J. Havik, 'La Sorcellerie, l'Acculturation, et le Genre: la Persécution Religieuse de l'Inquisition Portugaise contre les Femmes Africaines Converties en Haute Guinée (XVII^e siècle)'; in: *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, III, 5-6, 2004: 99-116, and also by the same author, 'Walking the Tightrope: Female Agency, Religious Practice and the Portuguese Inquisition on the Upper Guinea Coast', in: Caroline Williams (ed.) *Bridging the Early Modern Atlantic World: people, products and practices on the move* (London: Ashgate, 2009): 173-202, and 'Hybridising Medicine: Illness, Health and the Dynamics of Reciprocal Exchange on the Upper Guinea Coast (West Africa)', in: *Medical History*, 60 (2016): 181-205.

⁴⁷ Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴⁸ Kalle Kananoja, 'Healers, Idolaters and Good Christians: A Case Study of Popular religion in Mid-Eighteenth Century Angola', in: *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43/3 (2010): 443-465.

⁴⁹ James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares: African Healing and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic*

Sweet tells the story of Álvares, who may well have been a member of the Sakpata religious movement purged from Dahomey by King Agaja, shortly after he swept to power in the mid-1720s. Deported in captivity to Brazil around 1730, Álvares worked first on a sugar plantation in Pernambuco, in north-eastern Brazil, before gaining a reputation as a religious healer with great powers. Transferred first to Recife, Álvares made his way to Rio de Janeiro, still in enslavement. Here the reputation he held as a healer and diviner grew, and he was able to buy his own freedom and establish himself in business, as a popular destination for both African and Portuguese-born residents of the city. As his reputation spread, he was arrested by the Inquisition, and deported for trial to Lisbon in 1747. The careful reading of an inquisitorial trial such as Álvares's, in juxtaposition with the numerous other sources on which Sweet draws (oral, written, and ethnographic), allow him to come to some remarkable conclusions as to the potential and limitations of African agency in the era of the peak of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Incursions into the historiography of the Inquisition, for example by Brazilian authors such as Laura de Mello e Souza, Daniela Buono Calainho and Vanicléia Silva Santos have also engaged with the syncretic and magico-religious practices persecuted by the institution in Brazil, Africa and Portugal. They share an interest in the circulation of the *bolsas de mandinga* which first appeared in Brazil in the course of the 1600s. They were brought there by Portuguese *degradados*, banned for witchcraft related crimes committed in the metropole, and African slaves, often moved forcibly between different locations in the triangular trade, who were branded *mandigueiros* by the Portuguese Inquisition.⁵⁰ The intense cultural exchanges between Africa and Portugal had by the sixteenth century resulted in the assimilation of different magico-religious cultural strands which were shared by metropolitan and African actors alike.

These contributions are associated with a focus that emerged on the 'Black Atlantic' in the early 1990s which has subsequently projected Lusophone dimensions onto the debate regarding trans-Atlantic social and cultural interactions related to healing, divination and sorcery.⁵¹ In terms of medical contexts, the question of folk healing and the Portuguese Inquisition's attitudes towards it in the wider global context of empire, has attracted increasing attention

World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

⁵⁰ See Laura de Mello e Souza, *Inferno Atlântico: demonologia e colonização, século XVI-XVIII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993); Daniela Buono Calainho, *Metrópole das mandingas: Religiosidade africana e Inquisição portuguesa no antigo regime* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond/FAPERJ, 2008) and Vanicléia Silva Santos, *As Bolsas de Mandinga no Espaço Atlântico no Século XVIII* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2008).

⁵¹ See for example, Nancy Naro, Roger Sansi-Roca and David Treece (eds.) *Cultures of the Lusophone Black Atlantic* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2007) and Luis Nicolau Parés and Roger Sansi (eds.) *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

over the last decades.⁵² The fact that the Inquisition aligned itself with the medical profession in persecuting those competing with them for a growing clientele, and that almost half of persons with African roots accused of ‘witchcraft’ in Portugal were women, is indicative of the importance of gender, genealogical and power relations in these historical processes.⁵³ The presence of the *bolsas de mandinga* and related ‘superstitions’ which were gaining wider appeal in Portugal by the 1600s, had alerted the Inquisition to these practices. The fact that they originated from the amulets and charms produced and disseminated by West Africa’s Muslim clerics was an aspect that would gain greater significance during the trial against Crispina Peres reproduced in this book.⁵⁴

In sum, the historiography of the Inquisition bestows a wider significance on the Crispina Peres trial which is reproduced in this book, upon studies regarding cross cultural interactions and intra-imperial exchanges. There are clearly defined reasons why a trial such as this – although relatively well known to specialists – has not received the sort of detailed analysis and study which is proposed here. At the same time, a comparison with other trials which have been drawn on in detail over the past few years reveals grounds for optimism as to the sort of material which might emerge. When triangulated carefully with a thorough knowledge and awareness of the historical contexts of the Guinea-Bissau region itself, this trial can offer new perspectives on African women’s agency, and on the relationship between West African political and economic structures and the Atlantic world.

II: CACHEU: AN AFRO-ATLANTIC PORT AND TRADE SETTLEMENT

The Formation of Cacheu and its Mixed Community

To understand fully the local contexts of the Crispina Peres trial, it is necessary to first address the complexities of Cacheu’s emergence and its affirmation as a key Afro-Atlantic port from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. By the time this trial took place, in the 1660s, Cacheu had become an important centre of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Since its foundation in the sixteenth century, and its subsequent fortification by private traders in 1588, Cacheu had taken over from a series of more informal settlements which had sprung up in

⁵² See Timothy D. Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine and the Inquisition. The Repression of Magical Healing in Portugal during the Enlightenment* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005).

⁵³ Daniela Buono Calainho, ‘Jambacouses e Gangazambas: Feiticeiros Negros em Portugal’, in: *Afro-Ásia*, 25-26 (2001): 141-176.

⁵⁴ On the use of these amulets in West Africa, see Robert Handloff, ‘Prayers, Amulets, and Charms: Health and Social Control’, in: *African Studies Review*, 25, 2/3 (1982): 185-194.

the area since the middle of the fifteenth century. Locations such as Buguendo, Bichangor or Guinguim, on what was then called the São Domingos River and currently called the Cacheu River, Geregia and Bintang and later Ziguinchor in the Lower Casamance region and Porto d'Ale or Portudal and Joal on the Petite Côte, would all form part of a web of riverine ports that were frequented by Portuguese and Cabo Verdean traders, Christianised workers of the trade and African suppliers⁵⁵.

The inclusion of the 'Rivers of Guinea' in the Portuguese sphere of Atlantic influence was essentially a mediated process. On the one hand, from 1468 onwards, the Portuguese monarchy acted through contractors and factors or *feitores*, who were appointed for a limited period of time with the responsibility to conduct and oversee trade with African suppliers in a particular area. On the other, private traders of various origins would roam and settle in coastal areas in search of trading opportunities with African societies. The two processes overlapped and were interwoven on account of the fact that Portuguese authorities were unable to exercise effective control over extensive areas along the African coast.

Once Portuguese royal and ecclesiastical authorities established themselves in the Cabo Verde archipelago, 300 miles off the West African coast, this parallel dynamic had already intensified with the rapid expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave and commodity trade. The occupation of the Cabo Verde islands by Portuguese and Italians from the 1460s would eventually turn the islands into a hub for the trans-Atlantic slave trade, serving as a base for the affirmation of Portuguese regional aspirations. By the early 1500s, interlopers moving from the Cabo Verde Islands to trade and settle on the coast – the so called *lançados* and *tangomãos* – were trading with African dignitaries along the 'Rivers of Guinea and Cabo Verde', a long stretch of coastline that Boubacar Barry called the "Greater Senegambia" region.⁵⁶ Their trading activities stretched from the Petite Côte in Senegal to what is now Sierra Leone, and many of these Portuguese traders settled, married into African lineages and entered into commercial arrangements. Thus, West African dignitaries obtained access to Atlantic goods such as iron bars, gunpowder, alcoholic spirits, cloth and trinkets in return for slaves, beeswax, ivory, salt and hides.

At the time, this region was in the process of transformation. Mandé expansion from the Mali Empire since the early fourteenth century had resulted in the formation of the Kaabu federation. Gaining autonomy from Mali in the 1500s, Kaabu occupied an area encompassing what is now south-eastern

⁵⁵ George E. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993): 79-96.

⁵⁶ Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Senegal, eastern Guinea-Bissau and northern Guinea-Conakry.⁵⁷ Thus the rivers of the Lower Casamance and Guinea-Bissau region (Casamance, Cacheu, Geba and Corubal), became important access routes for traders operating the riverine relay trade, conducting exchanges in slaves and gold, exploring the connections between Kaabu and the upper Niger River. As the sixteenth century unwound, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English and French traders all competed for the spoils of West African trade.⁵⁸

A number of travel accounts provide insights into the forays of these traders along the Upper Guinea Coast, documenting the gradual shift from the acculturation of individual private traders into African societies to the establishment of Afro-Atlantic settlements.⁵⁹ These developments were to leave their indelible mark on the first 150 years of cross-cultural trade.⁶⁰ During this period, the twin dynamics of creolisation and conversion would extend not only to the Cabo Verde Islands, principally Santiago and Fogo islands, but also to West African coastal areas such as the Petite Côte, Casamance and the Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone regions.⁶¹ A very rare and detailed portrait of the complex cultural world which grew out of commercial, social and cosmological relations between Africans and non-Africans spanning the West African coast and the Cabo Verde archipelago, is to be found in the pages of this trial.

The gradual formation of a Creole society in the Cabo Verde islands was accompanied by a process of inter-ethnic settlement in coastal and riverine ports in the Greater Senegambian region. Many Cabo Verde trading families

⁵⁷ For a history of Kaabú, see Djibril Tamsir Niané, *Histoire des Mandingues de l'Ouest. Le Royaume de Gabou* (Paris: Karthala-Arsan, 1989).

⁵⁸ See Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*; and also Cátia Antunes and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, 'Cross cultural entrepreneurship in the Atlantic: Africans, Dutch and Sephardi Jews in Western Africa, 1580-1674', in: *Itinerario*, XXXV, 1 (2011): 49-76.

⁵⁹ André Álvares de Almada, *Tratado Breve dos Rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde (1594)*, in: António Brásio (ed.), (Lisbon: LIAM, 1964); A. Donelha, *Descrição da Serra Leoa e dos Rios da Guiné do Cabo Verde (1625)*, in: Avelino Teixeira da Mota and P.E.H. Hair (eds. & trans.), (Lisbon, CECA/JICU, 1977); Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade (1623)* (Amsterdam/New York: Da Capo Press/Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd, 1968); Francisco de Lemos Coelho, *Duas Descrições Seiscentistas da Guiné (1669/1684)*, in: Damião Peres (ed.) (Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da História, [1669/1684] 1990).

⁶⁰ Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*; Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth century* (Athens/Oxford: Ohio University Press/James Currey, 2003); Jean Boulègue, *Les Luso-Africains de Sénégambie, XVIe -XIXe siècles* (Lisbon: ICT/CRA, 1989); A. Carreira, *Os Portugueses nos Rios de Guiné (1500-1900)* (Lisbon: Author's edition, 1984); Peter Mark, *A Cultural, Economic and Religious History of the Basse Casamance since 1500* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1985); Avelino Teixeira da Mota, *Alguns Aspectos da Colonização e do Comércio Marítimo dos Portugueses na África Ocidental nos Séculos XV e XVI* (Lisbon: CECA/JICU, 1976); Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970). Also, see J. da Silva Horta, 'A Representação do Africano na Literatura de Viagens do Senegal à Serra Leoa', in: *Mare Liberum*, 2, 1991: 209-339.

⁶¹ See Green, *Masters of Difference*.

had agents in the West African ports who would live there for a time before returning to the archipelago or setting up in the Americas as trading agents. The expulsion of Sephardic communities from the Iberian Peninsula from the late 1400s led them to fan out across the Atlantic world, as Iberian expansion created novel opportunities for commercial ventures in the Atlantic region. Following the arrival in the late 1500s of Franciscan missionaries, the Jesuit Mission based on Santiago Island (1604-1647) would imprint a novel momentum of Christianisation in the region, as well as increasing the contacts between Portuguese settler-traders, creolised insular groups and African societies on the continent.⁶² The presence of Sephardi or ‘New Christian’ traders was seen as a stumbling block to Portugal’s political, commercial and religious aspirations in the region.

The Afro-Atlantic settlement of Cacheu established during the first half of the sixteenth century is located in low lying floodplains in the mouth of the Cacheu River. After its fortification by private traders in 1588, it would become the lynchpin of Portuguese interests in the region and an important gateway for the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which until the mid-1600s used the Cabo Verdean archipelago as a hub. Strategically located at the mouth of the river, Cacheu was an outlet for a riverine relay trade which relied on supplies from its hinterland. Conceded town rights by Portuguese royal decree in 1605, it would soon constitute the residence of the *capitães-mores* or chief-captains appointed by Lisbon, the first of whom took office in 1615. By the early 1600s, the capital of the *capitania* or captaincy harboured approximately 1500 residents, including the military garrison, mainly recruited from the Cabo Verde Islands, not counting slaves living in slave houses or *funku* beyond the perimeter, which would have resulted in a total of well over 3000 individuals. The port exported over 3000 slaves annually in the mid-1600s, not counting the transactions of private traders who circumvented the royal monopoly.⁶³

Located in Manjaco (called Pepel at the time) territory on the left bank of the homonymous river, its name is derived from the Bañun language, *Caticheu* (B: where we rest) indicating long standing linkages with the Bañun on the right bank.⁶⁴ One of the earliest references to the Afro-Atlantic settlement in 1548 records the close relations between Portuguese traders in Cacheu and Buguendo, the latter located in Bañun territory on the right bank of the São

⁶² Frei André de Faro, ‘Relação de Frei André de Faro sobre as Missões da Guiné (1663–4)’, in: António. Brásio (ed.), *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da Historia, 2nd series, vol. 6, 1991): 178–257.

⁶³ Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, governor, Cacheu, 29-6-1647; Arquivo Historico Ultramarino (hereafter: AHU), *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, doc. 58.

⁶⁴ Mário Cissoko, oral communication at IV Centenário da Fundação da Cidade de Cacheu, 1588-1988, Cacheu 1988. The Manjaco were called “Brame” at the time in European sources, grouping them together with their neighbours the Mancanha. Currently they are regarded as distinct ethnic groups.

Domingos River.⁶⁵ Cacheu's genesis thus well illustrates the cross-cultural nature of these locations, where mobility between trading settlements and the cosmopolitan presence of different polygots was always the starting point. The alliances forged by private traders with different coastal ethnic groups – such as the Bañun, Felupe, Pepel, Bijagó and Biafada – would result in the first Afro-Atlantic settlements on African soil from the mid-1500s onwards.

Cacheu served as a coastal port and entrepot for royal factors and private traders operating their West African networks. It was linked with ports on the Petite Côte (just south of modern Dakar) such as Portudal and Joal, with the Bintang branch of the Gambia River, with Bichangor on the Casamance river, and with neighbouring ports such as Buguendo, Geba, and São Filipe. These coastal trading communities maintained a clientele in the Senegambian and Guinea-Bissau regions with areas further south along the Rice Coast, including the Rivières du Sud (Pongo and Nunez Rivers) and the Sherbro River in the Sierra Leone region. Cacheu was also simultaneously a seat of government and royal authority, the *capitania* as well as housing a guest house (*hospício*) for travellers and clergy run by missionaries. The close ties between clerics - some of whom were also known to trade in slaves – and the trading community were illustrated by the Jesuit mission receiving part of the customs tariffs paid by ships visiting Cacheu.⁶⁶

However, the Portuguese hold on the port was fragile owing to its inability to control local trade strata and their dealings with a variety of competing imperial agents and interests. Early written accounts show to what extent governors appointed to the *capitania* - who engaged in private commerce themselves - encountered resistance from private traders established there.⁶⁷ Among the latter, the so-called New Christians (*Cristãos Novos*) of Sephardi origin, who had been (forcibly) converted at the behest of royal decrees in Portugal from the early 1500s, stood out.⁶⁸ “New” Christians were distinguished in Iberian cultures from “Old” Christians, who had no Jewish antecedents (see above). Many had

⁶⁵ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801, contra António Fernandes (1548).

⁶⁶ Letter Baltasar de Castelo Branco, Capitão-Mor Cacheu, Cacheu, 18-4-1616 to King Philip II, Lisbon; AHU, Guiné, Cx.1, doc 2. On the relations between private traders and Jesuit missionaries, see Philip J. Havik, ‘Missionários e Moradores na Costa da Guiné: os Padres da Companhia de Jesus e os ‘Portugueses’ no Princípio do Século XVII’, in: *Revista Studia*, 56, 2001: 223-253.

⁶⁷ Baltasar de Castelo Branco, Capitão-Mor Cacheu, 18-4-1616; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx.1, doc 2.

⁶⁸ Francisco de Távora, governor, Cacheu, 12-6-1622; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné* Cx. 1, doc 5. The first official enquiry, or *devassa*, was carried out in Cacheu in 1622, accusing the then governor of illicit trade, by trafficking free Africans, including a relative of the Pepel ruler or *djagra*; see testimony of Diogo de Lima, Cacheu, 14-6-1622; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx.1, doc 5. See António de Almeida Mendes, ‘Le Rôle de l’Inquisition en Guinée: vicissitudes des presence juives sur la Petite Côte (XVe–XVIIe siècles)’, in: *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, 5-6 (2004): 137-55.

left Portugal in search of business opportunities and religious freedom overseas following repressive measures.⁶⁹ Crispina Peres's husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês, himself originated from such a family.⁷⁰ The forging of close relations by private traders with African dignitaries, building privileged trade and prebendial (gift-based) networks while intermarrying with their descendants and employing slaves, resulted in the rise to the *gan* or trade lineages, which would play a key role in the development of Afro-Atlantic networks. They formed the core of Cacheu's commerce and society, using Kriol as a *lingua franca* in interactions with local African societies, mediated by the Kriston, the African 'workers of the trade' (see below), disseminating Creole vernacular throughout the region.⁷¹ The presence of rival Spanish, Dutch, French and English traders in the region and their dealings with Cacheu's trading community, which would regularly surface in seventeenth century documents, suggest a cosmopolitan environment, in which free African women such as Crispina Peres, a speaker of Kriol and African languages with an extensive trade network, were able to play a major role.⁷²

However, locations such as Cacheu were by no means secure footholds. A raid led by John Hawkins in the 1560s, destroyed part of the town and caused many residents to flee to the interior.⁷³ Lacking fortifications until 1588, it was open to (regular) attacks from the neighbouring Pepel, who on several occasions set fire to the wooden houses. In retaliation, residents with their slave armies would raid and burn down nearby villages (Guinean Creole: *tabankas*). Wholly dependent for its food and water supplies on imports via river and land – the only source of potable water was located in Pepel territory – famines provoked high death tolls, especially among the slave population, while endemic diseases such as malaria and yellow fever also ravaged settler and indigenous populations.⁷⁴ One of the first Portuguese physicians – a convicted criminal condemned into forced exile (*degreδο*) – settled in Cacheu in 1644, but it is not clear whether he

⁶⁹ From the establishment of the first Inquisitorial Court in Seville in 1480, and their expulsion in 1492, many Sephardim fled Castile, settling across the border in Portugal, in the Beira, Alentejo and Algarve regions. On the presence and activities of New Christians in West Africa, see Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷⁰ See Toby Green, 'Pluralism, Violence and Empire: The Portuguese New Christians in the Atlantic World', in Francisco Bethencourt (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in the Portuguese-Speaking World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 40-58.

⁷¹ Wilson Trajano Filho, *Uma experiência singular de criouliização*; and Philip J. Havik, 'Kriol without Creoles'.

⁷² Philip J. Havik, 'Cosmopolitan Bravado: Gendered Agency and the Afro-Atlantic Encounter', in: Francisco Bethencourt (ed.) *Cosmopolitanism in the Portuguese-speaking World*, Leiden: Brill, 2017): 59-81.

⁷³ National Archives, London, State Papers, Foreign Office, SP70/99.

⁷⁴ Petition to the Portuguese King by Cacheu residents, Cacheu, 9-12-1641; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné* Cx. 1, doc 23.

exercised his profession.⁷⁵ Besides the Catholic *hospício* or hospital in Cacheu which provided limited care, residents generally relied upon a mixture of Galenic humoral medicine and African healing traditions. The importance of the latter is very much in evidence in the Inquisition trial contained in this book, showing to what extent local *gan* had incorporated local healing traditions into daily life in an outpost of empire.⁷⁶

Religious proselytism and persecution: Cacheu's social and cultural contexts

The presence of secular authorities, Catholic missionaries from different orders and of religious inspectors or *visitadores* and informers or *familiares* of the Portuguese Inquisition, would herald a period of high tension in the Cacheu community during the 1600s. Rivalries between 'Old' and 'New' Christians, between governors and private traders, and among Cacheu's residents as well as between the latter and African societies would serve to heighten these underlying conflicts. In the late 1640s, one such *Visitador*, João de Almeida, informs the Royal Court in Lisbon that he considered the presence of some of the principal residents of Cacheu unwanted, and that it would be necessary to "remove" them from the town because they showed "a lack of affection for the King" and "behaved badly".⁷⁷ Successive commanders of Cacheu had warned the Royal Court in Lisbon that many were Sephardic Jews, were powerful and lived and traded "free of conscience", and that as long as they dominated Cacheu, the port would not pertain to the King.⁷⁸ Another *Visitador*, Gaspar Vogado, would repeatedly request the sending of missionaries to the Guinea Coast, who eventually arrived there in 1660, when Capuchin priests led by Friar Paulo Lordello settled in the town. The latter would visit areas of Bañun settlement on the right bank of the Cacheu River, forming part of a group of Capuchin missionaries such as André de Faro and Sebastião de São Vicente, all of whom played a role in the hearing of witnesses *in loco* prior to Crispina Peres's trial.

Besides the presence of European (mainly Portuguese and Spanish) private traders who took residence in Cacheu, three social groups emerged in trade settlements which would play a key role in events leading up to the arrest and trial of Crispina Peres in the 1660s. The first were the so-called *filhos da terra* - literally translated as 'children of the land' - born of the '*marriages à la mode du pays*' between Atlantic traders and women from different coastal

⁷⁵ Simão Alves de Coimbra, a practicing surgeon, was condemned to six years of *degredo* in Cacheu; see AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, doc 35.

⁷⁶ For further information, see Philip J. Havik, 'Hybridising Medicine'.

⁷⁷ João de Almeida, Memorial, Lisbon, 5-2-1647; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, Doc. 51.

⁷⁸ Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, Letter to the Portuguese King, Cacheu, 29-6-1647; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, Doc. 58.

ethnic groups. Crispina Peres pertained to this stratum, members of which intermarried with Portuguese officials and traders and enjoyed a privileged status in the Cacheu community. Acculturated private traders and their descendants, the *filhos da terra*, were generally demonised in royal edicts and by Catholic missionaries from the late 1500s. Nevertheless, they were well entrenched in trade settlements, including those under Portuguese or African control, using them as bases for their commercial exploits in the region. Besides challenging the royal trade monopoly, they were seen to operate in what was regarded as a cultural limbo (or free-for-all) by governors⁷⁹ and more zealous Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries⁸⁰. However, missionaries did recognise that despite their – sometimes failed – attempts at vertical conversion, African dignitaries were not prepared to denounce their clients, while noting that private traders tended to protect each other.⁸¹ Some Jesuit missionaries however rejected this kind of stereotyping, recruiting private traders and members of Kriston communities as intermediaries to access African rulers and elders, while taking the confessions of private interlopers, so as to bring them back into a Christian orbit.⁸² Portuguese authorities also cultivated these ties by trying to gain the support of African chiefs and elders through ‘gifts’ (Guinean Creole: *daxa*) in the form of commodities (e.g. alcoholic spirits, iron bars, gunpowder and swords).⁸³

The second group were the Kriston – also called *grumetes* - closely associated with private traders, who were the key operators in the riverine relay trade. Originating from different ethnic groups (such as the Pepel, Biafada, Bañun, Felupe, Bijagó and Mandinga), they were assimilated into trade settlements through a system of wardship and in-lawship, with the heads of *gan* acting as their wards and patrons, becoming Christianised in the process. Some examples of this Afro-Atlantic dynamic are given in the trial, involving amongst others the accused’s husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês. This non-homogenous social stratum formed the backbone of these riverine settlements, developing their own autonomous institutions and hybrid traditions in ports under Portuguese jurisdiction such as Cacheu, as well as Farim, Geba, Bissau, St^a. Cruz (Guinala) and Ziguinchor. The Kriston *grumetes* who served as pilots, salesclerks, mercenaries, artisans, petty traders, healers and interpreters, were regarded

⁷⁹ For an overview of these groups in empire and the role of Roman Catholic missionaries, see Charles Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

⁸⁰ Manuel Álvares, *Etiópia Menor e Descrição Geográfica da Provinça de Serra Leoa* (Lisbon: Convento of São Francisco, 1616).

⁸¹ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *A Inquisição na Guiné, nas Ilhas de Cabo Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe*: 192. Havik, ‘Missionários e Moradores na Costa da Guiné’, 62.

⁸³ Letter Conselho Ultramarino, Lisbon to Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, Lisbon, 6-10-1644; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné* Cx. 1, doc 31; also see Mark and Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora*: 103-34.

by the Portuguese authorities as unreliable and unruly, people who, despite a veneer of Christianity, essentially followed ‘deviant’ African customs. Not surprisingly, officials and missionaries called them ‘*Cristãos por cerimonia*’ (ceremonial Christians) or ‘*Cristãos da terra*’ (Christians of the land). Kriston women, the *tungumá*, who were also involved in local trade networks and served trader households, were above all vilified for their proximity to African societies, practicing their ‘superstitious’ rites and customs and dabbling in witchcraft.

The third group were the New Christians. The fact that royal decrees called upon African dignitaries to expel New Christians from their lands, while the bishop of Cabo Verde threatened residents of Cacheu with excommunication if they refused to denounce any people of the “Jewish Nation” with whom they traded, well demonstrated authorities’ concerns.⁸⁴ Indeed, the arrival of the Portuguese Inquisition in the region and Cabo Verde in the mid-1500s, soon after the establishment of the Lisbon Inquisition in 1536, was to have implications for these burgeoning communities. It would give rise to a series of denunciations with respect to the activities of Portuguese traders with Sephardi roots, their adoption of local customs and their close relations with African societies.

Even without official Portuguese jurisdiction in the region or a seat of imperial power on the coast, the Lisbon Inquisition gathered information on secular and religious crimes committed by Portuguese private traders. The accumulated body of evidence shows that Cacheu was a site of conflict and tensions between factors, officials and private traders, of deep-seated animosities between rival trade lineages, between them and African dignitaries, and between masters and slaves.

In all, only five trials were held with regard to alleged crimes committed on the Upper Guinea Coast within the jurisdiction of the Lisbon court between 1536 and 1800, one of which ended without sentence. A total of 640 denunciations were submitted to the said court from residents in trade settlements in the ‘Rivers of Guinea’ during the same period. Of these, 328 referred to accusations of Judaism, and interactions with New Christians, 110 to blasphemy, and 47 to the performance of ‘African rites’, while witchcraft accounted for 19 cases.⁸⁵ In terms of location, 157 refer to the trade settlement of Cacheu where Crispina Peres resided at the time of her arrest in 1665. Almost all the denunciations referring to Cacheu were made in the seventeenth century.⁸⁶

Significantly, the first Inquisition trial that took place in the Cacheu area in the mid-1560s, involved ‘New Christians’ accused of Judaism and blasphemy.

⁸⁴ Regimento de João Tavares de Sousa, Lisbon, 29-12-1614; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. I, doc.1.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*: 159.

⁸⁶ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *A Inquisição na Guiné, nas Ilhas de Cabo Verde e São Tomé e Príncipe*: 156.

It documented the activities of *lançados* (see Glossary) operating on the São Domingos River from ports such as Cacheu and Buguendo.⁸⁷ The first denunciations of crimes relating to superstitious practices performed by baptised Christians also emerged in the 1560s, and involved a free woman pertaining to the Kriston stratum living in the Bañun port of Buguendo (Bañun: *Begundo*), across the river from Cacheu, who had allegedly cured patients by means of amulets.⁸⁸ These amulets called *guarda di kurpu* in the local *língua franca*, Guinean Creole (literally: body protectors), generally took the form of leather pouches which included citations from the Koran as well as religious symbols, and circulated widely in the region (see Glossary). Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as *filhos da terra* and *Kriston*, wore these *nóminas* - as they were called in ecclesiastical sources - or *mezinhas* round their necks or tied to their bodies by cotton straps, to protect themselves against disease, violence and the evil eye (Guinean Creole: *mau odjadu*). These *nóminas* were manufactured and disseminated by traveling Islamised Manding priests (Manding: *karamoko*, also called *muru* in Guinean Creole, or marabouts, derived from the Arabic *murābī*).⁸⁹ From the early 1600s, a syncretic version of these pouches circulated in the Atlantic world as *bolsas de mandinga* (or Manding pouches; see Glossary), containing a variety of (non-Muslim) symbols and materials. Besides Western Africa, Portugal and Brazil were sites of intense activity of healers and diviners of the most diverse origins, where these *bolsas* had become much sought after spiritual charms.⁹⁰

Accusations of witchcraft and African rites were to gain a sharper edge as Catholic missionaries, collaborating with the Lisbon Inquisition, denounced deviant religious practice of baptised Christians from the 1640s onwards.⁹¹ These denunciations largely coincided with the arrival of Portuguese Capuchin clergy - as well as their Spanish counterparts - on the coast, replacing their Jesuit predecessors, many of whom had died in the region as a result of illness, above all malaria. The presence of Spanish Capuchins in the 1640s had raised eyebrows in Cacheu, suspecting political aims.⁹² This repositioning of

⁸⁷ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo 233, 1563/4, Mestre Diogo. The said pardon was revoked by a provisional royal decree in 1610.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, denunciation against Maria Dias, for performing African rites.

⁸⁹ Havik, 'Walking the Tightrope': 178, and by the same author, 'La Sorcellerie, l'Acculturation, et le Genre': 109.

⁹⁰ On their circulation in the Atlantic, see Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*; Laura de Mello Souza, *O Diabo e a Terra de Santa Cruz* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1986); Calainho, *Metrópole das Mandingas*; and Silva Santos, *As Bolsas de Mandinga no espaço Atlântico*; also see Mota, 'História Atlântica da Islamização na África Ocidental': 195-206.

⁹¹ One of these denunciations made by Farim residents in 1657 referred to acts of witchcraft performed by a Kriston woman, Antónia Dias, IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro de Denúncias 266, (1697): 231-236.

⁹² Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, Cacheu, 25-2-1647; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1,

ecclesiastical authorities came at a time when the question of the Islamisation of the (Southern) Atlantic had become cause for growing concern among ecclesiastical and civil authorities in Portugal and Spain.⁹³ The formation of a Muslim diaspora composed of persons of Wolof, Serer, Manding and Fulbe origin fanning out via the slave trade from West Africa to Portugal, Spain, Brazil and the Spanish West Indies, would soon catch the attention of the Iberian Inquisitions.⁹⁴ The first cases to be brought before the Lisbon court in the 1550s, were related to West Africans persecuted for their heretical beliefs and healing practices derived from Muslim customs, despite being converted Christians.

Given the geo-political, economic and religious relevance of the 'Rivers of Guinea', the establishment of a Jesuit Mission in Cabo Verde and Guinea in 1604, was meant to counter the progressive Islamisation of the mainland under Manding (and Wolof and Fulbe) influence by means of conversion, above all of ethnic chiefs, elders and community leaders.⁹⁵ The 'Moors', a long standing presence from North Africa in Portugal where they were defeated in the twelfth century to make way for the Kingdoms of Portugal and the Algarve, were now joined by West African Muslims from the fifteenth century onwards when the first slaves were brought to the Algarve and Lisbon.

By the mid-1600s, the power of private traders operating trans-Atlantic routes from the Upper Guinea Coast had been reinforced to the disadvantage of Cabo Verdean merchants. As a result, private traders operating on the Guinea coast were granted direct access by royal decree to the lucrative Portuguese (and Spanish) American trades, thereby dispensing with the hitherto obligatory stopover in Cabo Verde to pay customs tariffs.⁹⁶ This powerful group of traders, including Sephardim/'New Christians' and their descendants, was well entrenched in Cacheu and essentially controlled commercial exchanges with Africans and

Doc. 48. On the presence of Spanish Capuchin missionaries in the region, see Matteo de Anguiano, *Misiones Franciscanas en África: II Misiones al Reino de la Zinga, Benin, Abda, Guinea y Sierra Leona* (Madrid: Mogoroviejo, 1957).

⁹³ See the case of Francisco Jalofo, a Muslim Wolof slave brought to Lisbon, see Mota, *História Atlântica da Islamização na África Ocidental*, and also by the same author, *Portugueses e Muçulmanos na Senegâmbia: história e representações do Islã na África, c.1570-1625* (Curitiba: Editora Prismas, 2016).

⁹⁴ On the Atlantic slave trade and political and religious change in West Africa, see Boubacar Barry, *La Sénégambie du XV^e au XIX^e siècle: traite négrière, Islam et conquête colonial* (Paris: Karthala, 1988).

⁹⁵ See Nuno da Silva Gonçalves, *Os Jesuítas e a Missão de Cabo Verde (1604-1642)* (Coimbra: Brotéria, 1996); Philip J. Havik, 'Missionários e Moradores na Costa da Guiné: os padres da Companhia de Jesus e os 'Portugueses' no princípio do século XVII', in: *Revista Studia*, 56 (2001): 223-53; Vanicléia Silva Santos, 'Bexerins e Jesuítas: Religião e Comércio na Costa da Guiné (Século XVII)', in: *MÉTIS*, 10, 19 (2011): 187-213; and Thiago Henrique Mota, 'A Missão Jesuíta de Cabo Verde e o Islamismo na Guiné (1607-1616)', in: *Temporalidades*, 5, 2 (2013): 137-160.

⁹⁶ Deliberation by the Conselho Ultramarino, Lisbon, 24-11-1644; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, doc 34.

Europeans of all nations. This trading class was regarded as a major stumbling block for Portuguese secular and ecclesiastical interests in the region.⁹⁷

With the arrival of Capuchin missionaries, the three above mentioned groups, i.e. the *filhos da terra*, *Kriston* and New Christians, thus came into the spotlight. Their hybrid customs and practices provoked the condemnation by these and other clerics who saw them as a threat to Roman Catholic religious observance.⁹⁸ Despite the lack of organisation, certainly when compared to the Jesuit Mission, and being small in number (only five Capuchin missionaries worked in the region at the time), they made great play of their apparent success with the vertical conversion of local African dignitaries.⁹⁹ Their accounts evoke a tendency of direct confrontation with ‘kings’, elders and ‘witches’, trying to force them into shedding their *chinas* (Guinean Creole: idols or shrines), and thereby potentially compromising the success of their proselytism as well as relations with trade settlements.

The interactions between Catholic clergy (including the *visitador* Gaspar Vogado) and Cacheu’s society led to denunciations to the Lisbon Inquisition. Eventually, the Inquisition charged a Caboverdean cleric, Luís Rodrigues, with maintaining illegitimate relations with *Kriston* women during confession, when based in Farim 100 miles upriver from Cacheu.¹⁰⁰ Rodrigues’s trial shed light on the important role these free women or *tungumá* played in the settlements of Cacheu and Farim, and the diverse amalgam of Christianised customs and ‘superstitious’ African beliefs associated with them.¹⁰¹ The evidence given in the trial illustrates the intensity of cross-cultural exchanges and acculturation which was occurring in these locations which was a thorn in the eyes of these clerics. Thus, in the run up to the Crispina Peres inquiry and trial, ecclesiastical authorities in Cabo Verde and Lisbon were well aware of the widespread nature of religious syncretism in Cacheu and environs which had developed over two centuries of Afro-Atlantic exchanges.

⁹⁷ Leading members of the said group led by a female trader, Bibiana Vaz, would eventually rebel against the Portuguese governor in the 1680s, accusing him of trying to monopolise local trade while demanding the right to free trade with all nations; see Philip J. Havik, *Silences and Soundbites*: 162-172.

⁹⁸ António Joaquim Dias, *Crenças e Costumes dos indígenas da Ilha de Bissau no séc. XVIII*, in: *Portugal em África*, vol. II, 9 (1945): 159-165; 10 (1945): 223-229.

⁹⁹ Carlene Recheado, ‘A viagem de Frei André de Faro a Guiné (1663 e 1664)’, in: *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, X, 18-19 (2013): 105-114.

¹⁰⁰ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 8626, Luís Rodrigues (1662). A complete transcription of this trial has been made to accompany this volume and is stored with permission of the Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo at www.fonteshistoriaeafricanas.co.uk/additional-material.

¹⁰¹ The term *tungumá*, is a Creole derivative of *tangomão*, commonly used in a derogatory fashion by ecclesiastical and royal officials. Referring only to free women living in Afro-Atlantic trade settlements, it was commonly used in the region from the sixteenth century onwards until the early 1900s; see Havik, *Silences and Soundbites*, 54-5.

Cacheu: a labyrinth of cross-cultural relatedness and local rivalries

Understanding the complex forces which drove forward the trial of Crispina Peres is made easier through following individual stories. The aforesaid trial of Luís Rodrigues is very useful in this context, since in it Crispina Peres appears as a local historical actor for the first time. Moreover, the Rodrigues trial reveals many of the complex forces which would shape the canvas against which Crispina Peres's own Inquisition trial would later unfold.

The Luís Rodrigues trial took place against a backdrop of growing commercial, political, and household rivalries. During the seventeenth century successive governors of Cacheu denounced the activities of Cacheu's main trading families, including those of Portuguese Sephardi origin and their *filhos da terra* descendants, which was seen to undermine Portuguese sovereignty. Most governors, who themselves engaged in the slave and commodity trade, ended up repeatedly quarrelling openly with them. They accused these private interlopers of arriving poverty-stricken in Cacheu, only to rapidly become wealthy by taking possession of deceased traders' wills and assets, while trading with Portugal's enemies. Governors complained to Lisbon about the port's lack of defences, while resident traders protected their own residences employing Kriston mercenaries and slave armies to defend them. They repeatedly called upon Lisbon to send reinforcements, including ships and cannons.

However, local trade lineages did not sit idly by, in turn denouncing *capitães-mores* for their unfair practices and exigencies, seeking to thwart their projects. Governors of Cabo Verde and local commanders acting as informers or *familiares* of the Lisbon Inquisition with deep-seated enmities towards Cacheu's trading families, named Cacheu's private traders in their dispatches, including Crispina Peres' husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês.¹⁰² Some officials warned the Crown that it was obliged to act in order to remove these 'New Christians' from the region: as long as these "principal residents (...) remained in this land [Guinea], it would never belong to his Majesty, nor would there be any trade, because they essentially rule and live without conscience in their trade and way of life (...)." ¹⁰³ They accused a small number of powerful merchants traders, pertaining to local trade lineages with New Christian roots such as the *gan Vaz*, Gomes, Gonçalves Francês, Barraza Francês, Mesquita, Duarte, Costa etc., of forming a *de facto* ruling committee (*junta*), controlling the slave and commodity trade in Cacheu and Farim.

In these narratives a number of threads emerge, of which 'trafficking with the enemy' and deviant religious practices were the most obvious. However, these

¹⁰² Paulo Barradas da Silva, *capitão-mor*, Cacheu, 20-9-1646, 12-10-1646; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 1, doc. 48. Besides the aforesaid Paulo Barradas da Silva, the governor of Cabo Verde in the 1650s, Pedro Ferraz Barreto, was also a *familiar* or informant of the Lisbon Inquisition.

¹⁰³ Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, Cacheu, 29-6-1647; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 1, doc 58.

strands were entangled with other highly personalised motives which played a role in shaping the tense environment. Successive calls by governors to Lisbon for intervention centered on strengthening and rearming Cacheu's fragile stockades, while appealing to the Church and Crown to take action against the 'New Christians'. With the arrival of Capuchin missionaries, new opportunities arose to pursue strategies of containment and coercion to counter and curb the influence of local New Christian traders and deviant religious practice. The resulting spike in Inquisitorial activity was evidenced by two trials in short succession – this first one against Luís Rodrigues, and soon after against Crispina Peres.

Hence, the conditions were created for the active persecution of 'New Christians' and baptised Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast. This shift also coincided with the regaining of control by the Portuguese Crown over continental Portugal and its empire in 1640. Determined to recover its overseas assets and interests, the Crown was concerned about official reports that denounced the ongoing trafficking by Spanish vessels in the region. Hence, requests for improving Cacheu's stockade and garrison were frequent, but their implementation proved cumbersome.¹⁰⁴

One of the figures who was to play a key role in affairs leading up to Crispina Peres's arrest and trial was the aforementioned Gaspar Vogado, a cleric and wealthy trader who kept a *fazenda* on the Island of Santiago in the Cabo Verde Islands and who was charged with the task of fortifying the port by Royal Order.¹⁰⁵ Despite his stated willingness to do so, successive governors or Cacheu reported a lack of visible results and that Vogado had spent the funds on other commercial ventures.¹⁰⁶ This led the Overseas Council, an advisory body to the Crown, to conclude that more could have been done to improve Cacheu's defenses. Described as "highly ambitious in terms of honour rather than assets", Vogado clearly wished to ingratiate himself in the eyes of the Church and Crown. He skillfully used his royal assent for fortifying the port and his role as *visitador-geral* of the Bishopric of Cabo Verde in the region, to bolster his reputation and rid himself of opponents. It is therefore by no means surprising that he was directly involved in the trials against Luís Rodrigues and Crispina Peres while actively engaging in political exchanges with Lisbon.

In the eye of Cabo Verdean officials and traders, the trade lineages on the mainland were thorns in their side, for (openly) trading with 'foreigners', i.e.

¹⁰⁴ Carta do novo capitão-mor e feitor de Cacheu, Manuel de Paços Figueira, Cacheu, 22-5-1655; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, doc. 72.

¹⁰⁵ Provisão Régia a Gaspar Vogado, Lisbon, 5-12-1648, in: António Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana, África Ocidental*, vol. V, 1623-1650 (Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da História, 1979): 535-6.

¹⁰⁶ Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala, 25-2-1647 to Portuguese King, AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné*, Cx. 1, doc 48 and Manuel de Paços Figueira, Cacheu, 22-5-1655; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Cx. 1, doc. 76.

French, English and Dutch merchants, while cutting their costs by by-passing Cabo Verde and directly trading with Portuguese Brazil and the Spanish Indies. Other local figures who were instrumental in bringing the defendant to trial were the former commander of Cacheu, António da Fonseca de Ornellas¹⁰⁷ and also Ambrósio Gomes, a wealthy and ambitious trader, both of whom were to testify against her during the trial. As her husband and Crispina Peres herself stated during the trial, the testimonies of her three key accusers and of others who denounced the defendant's alleged misdeeds, were discredited by the fact that they were implacable enemies of the couple.

As the trial shows, Cacheu's trading community was by no means socially uniform or politically united. Official reports show that quarrels were common between the principal resident traders – most of whom were related by kinship and marriage, intermarrying amongst themselves – and between them and governors and royal factors. Quarrels were also rife with traders from Cabo Verde – including clergymen like Vogado – who exchanged *bandas* or cotton cloth produced in the archipelago with coastal populations for slaves.¹⁰⁸ Personal tensions would be fundamental in pitting residents against each other – often caused or exacerbated by ruthless competition, unpaid debts and failed enterprises – in such an “inhospitable and disease-ridden” region.¹⁰⁹

The presence of Catholic clerics in Cacheu also had symbolic value. They were well entrenched in the hospice run by Catholic missionaries, which lay on the frontier between the ‘Cold’ and the ‘Hot town’, the areas occupied by the Cacheu trading elite and the Kriston respectively. The arrival of Portuguese Capuchin missionaries in 1660, including Frei Paulo de Lordello, a senior cleric in the Cabo Verde Islands, and their taking up residence in the new *casa forte* or safehouse located close to the river in the ‘Cold Town’ was a symbolic move with practical consequences. Indeed, Lordello would act as the leading figure in organising the trial against Crispina Peres, while Friar Sebastião de São Vicente served as scribe. Their knowledge of the *habitus* of residents of the port, including the local slave traders and the Kriston, as well as of the customs of African societies in the vicinity (such as the Pepel and Bañun), would prove to be key assets in terms of directing the questioning and using the evidence gathered against the accused.

Some of Cacheu's notable residents informed the Crown that these Capuchin missionaries had arrived, thanking the King for the gesture, and sharing their

¹⁰⁷ Following his appointment as *capitão-mor* of Cacheu (1662-1664), he would be the subject of an official inquiry or *devassa* owing to embezzlement and his business dealings with foreign traders when in office; see Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino, Lisbon, 24-11-1664; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Cabo Verde, Cx. 5, Doc. 394.

¹⁰⁸ João Homem de Menezes, governor of Cabo Verde Islands, Santiago, 23-4-1656; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Manuel de Paços Figueroa, Cacheu, 22-5-1655; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 1, doc 76.

great expectations for the long awaited Christianisation of Cacheu. An altar was built especially for them with the aid of the governor and Vogado, in full view of the neighbouring Pepel, with a special entrance for the people, where sacraments could be administered.¹¹⁰ A visit by the governor of Cabo Verde, while lamenting the poor state of the port's defenses, offering his services and implicitly criticising Vogado, did detect encouraging signs on account of the building of a church, underlining the need for joint action by secular and clerical powers.¹¹¹

Significantly, in the meantime, Capuchin clerics would, amongst others, visit Bañun *djagra* (Guinean Creole: head of ruling lineage) living on the right bank of the river. Spanish Capuchins had preceded them, baptising Bañun ruling lineages in the process.¹¹² They also included trade settlements such as the port of Guinguim in their itinerary, where "Portuguese traders live and trade" and where Crispina Peres's grandparents had been baptised and raised. Preparing an altar in one of the Christian traders' houses where they baptised a number of local residents, they paid a visit to a Christianised Bañun *djagra*, employing a (Kriston) *xalona* (Guinean Creole: interpreter). Requesting the removal of a *china* (Guinean Creole: shrine or idol) located next to the chapel that was being built, the Capuchins described the rituals performed by the Bañun around the shrine. Using earthenware pots, containing the blood of chicken and other animals and covered with rice flour and palm wine, the Bañun performed "ceremonies and diabolical rites" at the site, during which they would lie down prostrated next to the idol.¹¹³

The conflicts which arose from the attempt to remove the shrine illustrate the complex bargaining within the Bañun community in which the Bañun *djagra* eventually prevailed over internal opposition, whilst also involving local traders in the process. The information that the clerics gathered on Bañun customs during the visit later served Inquisitors in Lisbon when interrogating Crispina Peres, incarcerated in its dungeons during the trial. In the early 1600s, Jesuit missionaries had already collected considerable information on Bañun traditions, referring to ritual animal sacrifices and other 'heathen' customs. These sources

¹¹⁰ Carta do Povo a El Rei, Cacheu, 2-2-1661, in: Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana, África Ocidental*, vol. VI, 1651-1684 (Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da História, 1991): 151-2.

¹¹¹ António da Fonseca de Ornellas, governor of the Cabo Verde Islands, Cacheu, 6-3-1662, in: Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana, África Ocidental*, vol. VI: 157-8. In a letter to the Crown, Vogado apologising for the situation, excused himself on account of the lack of funds, labourers, materials, and illness; Gaspar Vogado, Cacheu, 14-10-1663, in: Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana, África Ocidental*, vol. VI: 171-2.

¹¹² Matteo de Anguiano, *Missiones Franciscanas en África*: 118.

¹¹³ André de Faro, 'Relação de Frei André de Faro sobre as missões na Guiné', in: *Monumenta Missionária Africana, África Ocidental*, vol. VI: 178-257, op. cit., 194. For more information on Bañun traditions, see Jean Girard, *Genese du pouvoir charismatique en Basse Casamance* (Dakar: Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, 1969), and also Mark, *A Cultural, Economic and Religious History of the Basse Casamance since 1500*.

also refer to religious processions, in which Kriston of Bañun extraction took part, in ports controlled by the latter, where Portuguese and local traders kept their residence.¹¹⁴

In a broader context, the relations these clerics established with Bañun ruling lineages and traders operating in the region were to facilitate the mapping of commercial and prebendial networks between the latter and the Cacheu trading community. Importantly, these connections would be invoked by Inquisitors to arrest the accused who had fled to Bañun territory, north of the river, albeit with considerable difficulty. The ultimatum made by Pepel ruling lineages following her arrest, would necessitate urgent appeals by the Cacheu trading community, led by Crispina's husband Jorge Gonçalves Francês, to pacify them. After all, Cacheu's survival depended on supplies of food, water and firewood from the neighbouring Pepel, Bañun and Felupe. The case against Crispina Peres would therefore destabilise long standing bonds of kinship, cultural relatedness and reciprocal exchanges between these groups and Cacheu's trade lineages.

It is through following the strands of the complex networks in which Crispina Peres herself was inserted that many of these forces can best be grasped. As noted above, Crispina Peres de Baltasar first appears as a historical actor in her own right in the aforementioned trial of Luís Rodrigues. She was born in Cacheu around 1615, and in 1655 married her second husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês a former governor of Cacheu, himself (as we have seen) of Sephardi/New Christian descent. Her father, Rodrigo Peres de Baltasar, born in the Azores, known by his nickname '*Prego Velho*' (Port: rusty old nail), operated as a trader throughout the region, first based in the port of Geba and thereafter in Cacheu and Farim. Moving from Geba to become a *vizinho* or resident of Cacheu in the early 1640s, he signed a petition to the Crown requesting the right to trade directly with Brazil, together with fourteen traders, including his future son-in-law, Jorge Gonçalves Francês.¹¹⁵ In her trial, Crispina Peres states that her mother, Domingas Pessoa, of Kriston-Bañun extraction, was born along the Nunez River (in the north of modern-day Guinea-Conakry), and raised in the Bañun port of Guinguim (Bañun: *Beguingue*), some way up a creek on the right bank of the São Domingos river (although in the trial Gaspar Vogado falsely claimed that Crispina's mother was called Isabel and came from Cabo Verde). At some point, she then took up residence in the port of Geba where she met her husband, Rodrigo Peres de Baltasar, who ran a trading house in the port. In the late 1640s, he and his family later moved to the port of Cacheu while keeping a trade depot in Farim.

¹¹⁴ Álvares, *Ethiopia Menor*, Ch. 4., 23ff.

¹¹⁵ Petition to the Portuguese King by the residents of Cacheu, Cacheu, 9-12-1641; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Guiné, Cx. 1, doc 22.

Crispina Peres's maternal grandparents were of Bañun descent and had been baptised and raised in the port of Guinguim. The defendant was baptised in the presence of her godparents, Matheus Soares, a 'white' trader and Domingas Basinha, a 'black [Kriston] woman' from the port of Geba¹¹⁶, thereby demonstrating the importance of her father's position in Cacheu and among the Kriston. The fact that her father had ensured her religious education and that she had not been confirmed, marked her out as a typical representative of the local 'creolised' Cacheu trading community. She grew up learning the tricks of the riverine trade with her father visiting locations between the Cabo Verde Peninsula in Senegambia (site of modern Dakar) and Sierra Leone, before later establishing herself as a trader in her own right in Cacheu.¹¹⁷ Her extensive clientele was a mixture of "gentiles and Christians", above all the former, including Bañun and Pepel *djagra*, as well as Bijagó, Biafada and Mandinga dignitaries. Her second husband Jorge Gonçalves Francês with his Sephardim roots maintained close relations with European merchants, as well as with Cabo Verdean traders, and *filho da terra* traders operating in the region.

It is possible that the accused could have spoken Manding, given that she resided with her parents in the port of Geba 150 kms upstream from Bissau, and had access to the trade originating from Kaabu. Being a *lingua franca* together with Kriol in the riverine relay trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, some local traders and many Kriston were well versed in Manding, which was an asset in palavers with local dignitaries on the Gambia, Casamance, Cacheu, Geba and Corubal rivers. The move of trader households like the Peres's and their businesses to Cacheu and Farim in the late 1640s, together with their respective slaves, implied the greater influx of Manding and Biafada related customs to these ports. The accused's second marriage to an important figure such as Gonçalves Francês, would have presented Manding healers with an opportunity to access wealthy *gan* households in Cacheu.

Jorge's father and Crispina's father-in-law, Álvaro Gonçalves Francês, was a New Christian trader who had also occupied the office of governor and factor of the captaincy of Cacheu, had been pursued by the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisition for 'being a very rebellious person of the [Jewish] nation'.¹¹⁸ Born in Cabeça de Vide in Portugal in 1571, he was soon the focus of denunciations, leading to accusations of 'judaising' which resulted in a public *auto da fé* (act of faith) in Évora in 1596.¹¹⁹ His close ties with French – besides Dutch and English - merchants had given him the nickname 'O Francês' which ended up

¹¹⁶ IANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 2079, contra Crispina Peres, p.135.

¹¹⁷ Ibid..

¹¹⁸ Diniz Eanes de Fonseca, governor, Cacheu, 19-12-1635; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino, Guiné Cx.* 1, doc 17. Also, see, Green, 'Pluralism, Violence and Empire'.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 44.

as a surname, a common practice in the Alentejo region. While his daughter, Ana would marry another Portuguese Sephardi trader who moved to Cartagena, his son Jorge, would settle with him in West Africa once he fled Portugal for Cacheu in the mid-1610s, maintaining close ties with the Sephardi trading community in Joal on the Petite Côte which traded on the Gambia River. Eventually pardoned, Jorge's father would build an extensive trans-Atlantic trade network by trafficking slaves from the West African coast to Brazil and the Spanish Indies.

Thus, Crispina Peres's personal trajectory prior to her trial embodies the multiple intersections of Cacheu's history. She had Portuguese, New Christian, African and pan-Atlantic roots to her identity. The Inquisition had already become tangled up in her husband's own family history, and her religious background offered a mixture of traditions, Bañun, Christian and Jewish. Given the strong linkages in Geba to Manding and Biafada traditions, she would no doubt have had great familiarity with them. Meanwhile, her many connections and trading activities and her success made her a ready target in the incessant strife which pitted Portuguese officialdom against private traders. All of these factors would come to a head in the Inquisition trial itself.

III: THE CRISPINA PERES TRIAL

The Crispina Peres's trial and its local context

The actual trial of Crispina Peres took place in Lisbon from 1665 to 1668 and was preceded by extensive hearings in Cacheu which involved a large number of the town's residents, including resident Portuguese traders, members of local trade lineages, the Kriston community and slaves. The sheer number of witnesses provides some idea of the extent of the Inquisition's probe into the lives and attitudes of the port's inhabitants. Their testimonies would be crucial for the gathering of incriminating material originally involving 18 women, of Caboverdean and Kriston descent, which was later narrowed down to accusations against one person, i.e. Crispina Peres de Baltasar.

The evidence gathered, composed of a summary of evidence from other trials and denunciations, witness statements made in Cacheu, and the interrogation of the accused when imprisoned in Lisbon, provides a great amount of information on the town, its trader-residents, freepersons and slaves, their relations with African societies and above all on daily life in this outpost of empire. The formal accusations of engaging in African rites and witchcraft which were eventually enumerated in the warrant for her arrest, emitted in 1664, summarised incriminating data collected on Crispina Peres and her husband, their households, trading ventures, assets and possessions, relations

with co-residents of the port, relatives, friends and clients, and syncretic beliefs and religious practice. The motivations of witnesses revealed that some were kin or maintained close relations with the couple, even living in their houses for a while, whilst many others were competitors or rivals, or sworn enemies. Depending on their relations with the accused and/or her husband, the evidence given often provides circumstantial evidence from *bokasiñu*, rumours and hearsay.¹²⁰ As Gaspar Vogado, the priest who acts as the main instigator of the accusation and trial against Crispina Peres, stated “it is true that [in this land] from a fly people can make an elephant” (fl. 101v/102), or as the defendant’s husband said “such a perverse land where small things are turned into enormous fantasies” (fl. 199v). The evidence regarded as most relevant by Inquisitors was provided by a number of prominent local male representatives of Cacheu’s principal *gan* or trade lineages, as well as by female residents – mostly petty traders – and one of the accused’s house slaves. The testimony of the latter, Sebastião Barazza, a Muslim slave who served the Peres-Gonçalves household - although later retracted by the witness - would play a significant role in the accusations against the defendant. The importance attributed to his testimony, elucidates an interesting facet of inquisitorial strategies, centering on the Peres-Gonçalves household, revealing details of intra-domestic relations and the accused’s treatment of slaves and her own beliefs, motivations and actions.

These statements provide unique insights into the inner workings of Cacheu’s multicultural port society, touching upon issues that were normally less obvious, hidden or silenced in official sources. The question of the witness’s social, economic or religious status (governors, factors, traders, soldiers, clerics, Old or New Christians, etc.) played a fundamental role in their personal perspectives and the Inquisition’s assessments of their credibility. A number of overriding themes emerges from these pages written and annotated by scribes in Cacheu and Lisbon, among which figure prominently the deeply rooted enmities and rivalries among the trader-settlers in Cacheu and other trading towns in the region; the remarkable level of acculturation of trader-settlers and the close relations they maintained with African societies; the mutual support networks operating in the town and their metropolitan and regional ramifications; the syncretic religious beliefs held and rituals practiced by local residents; the cardinal importance of health, illness and healing embedded in local coping and survival strategies; the marked presence of African healers from different ethnic groups in the town; the relations between masters and slaves at household level; and the personal challenges and traumas experienced by many of Cacheu’s residents.

¹²⁰ On the issue of rumours in the Guinea Bissau region, see Wilson Trajano Filho, *Outros Rumores de Identidade na Guiné Bissau*, Working Paper (Brasília: Departamento de Antropologia, Universidade de Brasília, 2000).

Although some of these questions were occasionally touched upon in government dispatches, official inquiries, petitions of Cacheu's residents and in missionary accounts, they were rarely explored in any depth, except for the Sephardi/New Christian angle. Thus, as noted at the outset to this introduction, the trial of Crispina Peres is without question one of the most important documents that has survived for scholars, providing a unique window on Cacheu and the region in the 1600s. It fills a number of important gaps, by providing impressions of daily life - and death - in this largely forgotten outpost of empire.

One aspect which should be emphasised here is the place of local women in trade and networks of patronage in seventeenth century Upper Guinea. As the accused was a woman, witness statements and her testimony not only centred on her position in Cacheu, but also bring into focus the role of African women in Portugal's main trade settlement on the Upper Guinea Coast. Records of their presence in Cacheu had until then at the most been peripheral in official reports, although references to women in African societies along the Upper Guinea Coast were by no means uncommon in travel accounts of traders and missionaries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹²¹ The denunciations to the Lisbon Inquisition against baptised African women resident in trade settlements in the Guinea Bissau region constitute an important indicator of their local importance and the particular discourse associated with the deviant practices baptised women allegedly engaged in. The fact that these documents were secret and did not circulate beyond a very restricted ecclesiastical circle, did not however imply that these accusations were not known in Cacheu itself. During the hearings in Cacheu, it becomes clear that witnesses were very much aware of their origin, nature and the topic of enquiries, having already being alerted to them by Gaspar Vogado's investigations in Cacheu into the case of António Vaz da Ponte and of Luís Rodrigues, in the 1650s and early 1660s respectively.

In fact, the 1650s witnessed a 'gender turn', as free women became the centre of attention in denunciations of witchcraft and African rites directed at them.¹²² The accusations levelled in the 1650s against a baptised freewoman called Antónia Dias, and her alleged use of diabolical spells which allegedly caused the deaths of a number of children in the trade settlement of Farim, 100 miles upriver from Cacheu, were recorded by the above-mentioned cleric and trader, Gaspar Vogado.¹²³ No trial took place, as the accused's confession and the witness statements never reached Lisbon. The same Vogado was also responsible for forwarding denunciations on the promiscuous behaviour of the

¹²¹ Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes*, 148-199.

¹²² On the issue of witchcraft and local customs among the different ethnic groups in the region, see ntónio Carreira, 'Símbolos, Ritualistas e Ritualismos na Guiné Portuguesa', in: *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa*, XVI, 63 (1961): 505-39.

¹²³ IAN/TT, Inquirição de Lisboa, Livro de Denúncias n.º. 266 (1657).

vicar of Farim, Luís Rodrigues. It would result in a formal denunciation by the then governor of Cabo Verde, himself a minister and *familiar* or informer of the Portuguese Inquisition, and eventually in an Inquisition trial against him in the early 1660s.

The port of Farim was a strategic trade outpost. It maintained strong ties with its hinterland, the Kaabu federation, and formed the main source for the slave and commodity trade on the Cacheu River. It provided access to slave and commodity networks in Guinea's hinterland where Cacheu's traders kept residence and employed Kriston men and women as their agents. The trial against Rodrigues conducted by the Capuchin missionary, Paulo de Lordello who would also lead Crispina Peres' trial, gathered witness statements from amongst others Crispina's father, Rodrigo Peres; a son of Crispina's husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês, but also from house slaves as well as large number of free women from the port.

Although Luis Rodrigues was released for lack of sufficient evidence, the trial provided information on the close ties between the inhabitants of the two ports, on religious practice in these settlements, and above all on the role of "free black women" in this respect.¹²⁴ While these accusations were not typical of those circulating during the 1600s, which mostly referred to Judaism and blasphemy¹²⁵, they did nevertheless correspond to a pattern, i.e. parallel shift in focus towards syncretic beliefs and practices associated with African born Christians, including women. The build-up to Crispina Peres's trial reveals that clerics including Vogado, the *visitador-geral*, and the senior Capuchin minister, Lordello, took the view that these women constituted a threat to Catholic religious observance in one of Portugal's main footholds on the West African coast, and that an example needed to be made. Vogado's formal denunciation of three free black women from Cacheu, including Crispina Peres, provided the Inquisition with an opportunity to persecute and punish them in a location long known for the practice of 'African rites'.¹²⁶

The initial hearings against Peres began in 1661, one year after the arrival of Capuchin clerics and during the above-mentioned trial proceedings against the vicar of Farim. They reveal a highly charged gender specific context in which local freewomen are depicted as wayward heretics holding superstitious beliefs, while engaging in 'gentile' ceremonies using shrines in Cacheu itself and with

¹²⁴ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 8626, Luis Rodrigues de Almeida (1662). The vicar was accused of soliciting sexual favours from free and slave women during and after confession, organising licentious festivities in his home with gentile and Christian women, assuming papal powers, and living in concubinage with local women.

¹²⁵ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, 'A Inquisição em Guiné, nas Ilhas de Cabo Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe', Vol. I: 159.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*.

African ‘heathen’. However, the trial minutes show that these beliefs and practices were also deeply intertwined with people’s everyday lives, having penetrated the domestic sphere. Indeed, the accusations state that “most of the black and some of the white women of this settlement keep these idols and other wrongs in their houses, in which they have more faith than in god. And they worship them in the company of heathen who are called in for that purpose, pouring palm wine and animals’ blood over them.” It becomes clear that these ‘gentile’ practices such as the slaughter of animals for ritual purposes and libations of all sorts at these shrines were common, above all in the ‘Hot Town’ where “a mixture of gentiles and Christians” resided, and where black Christian women from Cacheu had “Blacks and black gentile women pour [...] palm wine and the blood of chicken on one of these shrines [...] which lies only a gunshot away from this settlement.”¹²⁷

These practices were thus not exclusive to neighbouring African societies, such as the Bañun or the Pepel, but had become part of daily life in an Afro-Atlantic context. Christian women kept personal shrines in their houses, while also visiting collective shrines in Cacheu or in neighbouring ports and villages: “Many Christian and free women live (there) who visit such shrines in their houses and outside the settlement, offering palm wine and blood to them almost every day.”¹²⁸ The motivations for these rituals or *roñas* (Guinean Creole: derived from Port. *errôneas*, or wrongdoings) varied, ranging from personal grief, such as illness and the loss of loved ones – especially children – to invoking protection against spells or the evil eye. But similar rituals also extended to the libation of palm wine and blood to bless local trader’s vessels in order to ensure a fortuitous voyage. The presence of Manding healers in traders’ houses in Cacheu also illustrated the importance of Manding religious and healing traditions and practice in the town, which are repeatedly referred by local witnesses and the accused herself in the trial.

These deeply ingrained customs demonstrated the importance attached to the protection of and prevention against natural and supra-natural forces. They also illustrated the fluidity of cross-cultural exchanges between African societies and Afro-Atlantic trade settlements, in which free Christianised women acted as key agents of diffusion and acculturation. For Inquisitors, this was the crux of the matter, namely that these women’s superstitious beliefs and ‘deviant’ modes of behaviour were undermining efforts to convert the populations of these ports into ‘good’ Catholics and ‘loyal’ Portuguese subjects.

The fact that Crispina Peres had married into a prominent trading lineage with ‘New Christian’ roots, further amplified the trial’s local significance and pretended impact. Her Bañun and Kriston roots also focused attentions on

¹²⁷ IANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 2079: fol. 20.

¹²⁸ Ibid, fol. 9.

the close relations between African societies and Cacheu, which formed the cornerstone of the port's existence and survival. These relations were threatened by the inquisition trial against Peres. Successive warnings were given to the Inquisitors about the dire consequences of moves to proceed against her, a "*filha da terra*" who "appears to be very close to the Bañun gentiles who live only half a tide away from this port and is very well known amongst all the gentile negroes there, our neighbours, as well as among all the surrounding kingdoms."¹²⁹ Thus, her arrest could provoke "an even greater hatred of the 'whites' among the gentiles who (already) steal from us, and treat us badly every day without any reason at all." Indeed, Crispina's husband was one of the subscribers to a petition to the Portuguese king which lamented the traders' privations at the hands of their African neighbours as long as Cacheu lacked proper defences.¹³⁰ The attribution of the *Hábito de Cavaleiro da Cristo* for his "patriotic services" coincided with the beginning of the hearings in Cacheu, reinforcing Crispina Peres's husband's standing and vassalage to the Portuguese Crown.¹³¹ Once she was arrested in 1665, her husband felt obliged to send a letter to the Pepel king of Matta who exercised jurisdiction over the settlement of Cacheu, in order to placate him and other African dignitaries and avert an attack on the settlement.¹³²

The Inquisition trial in Lisbon: Crispina Peres's defence

The trial minutes reveal the accused's extensive clientele which included Africans pertaining to different ethnic groups such as the Pepel [named Manjaco in the Cacheu region in the 1800s] from the islands or Ilhetas such as Jeta and Pecixe, the Felupe [Djola in Senegal], Bañun, Bijagó and "all the *gurrumetes* [or Kriston] of Farim".¹³³ The Bañun had a long tradition of women travelling from fair to fair in the region, which was transmitted to their Kriston relatives and descendants who were recruited by settler traders and commanded ethnic languages including Guinean Creole.¹³⁴ In the course of the protracted interrogations she was subjected to after being transported via Cabo Verde to Lisbon, the questioning attempted to force her into confessing her involvement in African rites and witchcraft as a baptised Christian. In the Inquisitors' view her alleged collusion with and consultations of African healers – 'heathens' and Muslims - whom she invited

¹²⁹ Ibid., fol. 70.

¹³⁰ 'Petição dos moradores de Cacheu a el Rei', 19-5-1655, in: Brásio, *Monumenta Missionária Africana*, vol. IV, p. 53-4.

¹³¹ Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino, Cacheu 5-5-1664; AHU, Conselho Ultramarino Guiné, Cx. 2, Doc. 30.

¹³² IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 2079, fol. f115.

¹³³ Ibid., fol. 84.

¹³⁴ Almada, *Tratado Breve*, 84 and Álvares, *Etiopia Menor*, 25.

into her house to perform ‘diabolical gentile ceremonies’, directly contradicted the Holy Catholic Faith and her Christian obligations.

In the appeal made by her husband, Jorge Gonçalves Francês, for her pardon and release soon after her arrest, he emphasised the fact that she was a Christian woman born in these parts, “daughter and grand-daughter of people who were gentiles, and since she lacks the true Roman [Catholic] religious and civil discipline.”¹³⁵ His letter invoked her “fragile” female condition and “that in this settlement of Guinea it is scarcely possible to find four subjects who live with Catholic and Roman perfection without any mixture of gentile Rites.” In addition, he said that “even the very Clerics and other people of the Church experiment with and suffer their [the gentiles’] suggestions and come and try out their sorcerous tricks and other superstitions.” He and his wife’s position as “the leading figures not only of this town, but also the tamers [i.e. those persons who restrain the chiefs and elders from attacking the settlement] [...] of all these countless gentile Kingdoms”, had caused those envious of them to wrongly accuse her, mentioning them by name. He added that “[...] believing that I would make them rich, and being themselves impeded by my wife, they argued with her, and put about a rumour that she dealt with *feiticeiros* [‘witchdoctors’; see Glossary] and went to *chinas* [shrines; see Glossary], called *Jabacouserias* [Guinean Creole: *djambakós*, healers and diviners; see Glossary] in the language of this land, with all this being as false as it was hateful [...]” Thus, he called for “an inquiry into them, and of the connections, hatreds and further enmities of the aforementioned individuals; so that in this way the innocence of my consort should be proven, and the insufficiency of these others in impugning her, demonstrating the due and great humility which we practised at her imprisonment. [...]”¹³⁶

The former governor’s appeal – and his wife’s testimony – document the greatly diverse populations they interacted with on a personal and professional basis, in an Afro-Atlantic port such as Cacheu, ranging from wealthy traders to slaves. In the process, Cacheu emerges as a multi-cultural mosaic with a fluid continuum of beliefs and practices that underpinned the daily lives of its residents in this little-known outpost of empire.

The accused’s statements underlined the legitimate reasons for her recourse to local customs and healing rituals, placing them in the sphere of her household, her kin and siblings, and her person. Like her husband had done in his appeal, she presented herself as a victim, thereby countering the negative image created by witness statements of co-residents, usually based upon hearsay, of a ‘powerful woman’, ‘witch’, ‘cruel master’, and a ‘friend of the gentiles’. Accusations made

¹³⁵ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 2079, fol. /5.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 115. His own consultation of healers to treat his condition had in fact been authorised by visitor-generals, including the reverend Gaspar Vogado, who according to Crispina Peres’s testimony had treated a leg injury with indigenous medicine.

by local residents of her ordering ‘gentile rituals’ to be performed for a variety of purposes, libations of ships to guarantee a safe and successful voyage, keeping and worshipping shrines in gentile territory and at home, keeping a snake in order to become wealthy, bewitching her husband to marry him, and calling upon indigenous healers to carry out consultations in her house, all contributed to creating an image of a person deeply compromised by her adherence to ‘pagan’ African rites and beliefs.

However, her strong and consistent defence put her status as responsible and caring mother and wife at the heart of her argument. Her consultations of local healers – the issue which remained uppermost in Inquisitors’ minds throughout the interrogations she was subjected during the trial in Lisbon – were anchored in her motherly concerns regarding the health of her daughters, Leonor and Cassilha, both of whom fell ill, the chronic and debilitating illness of her husband, and her own survival when she herself fell seriously ill or experienced problems in labour. Following the death of her daughter Leonor, whom local healers had promised but failed to cure, she told inquisitors that she reneged on the use of local healing methods, expressing her deep disappointment at having been deceived by them.¹³⁷

Therefore, she also placed her own actions in the wider context of the town of Cacheu and other trade settlements in the region. After all, she insisted that all the persons including clerics and the “masters of Cacheu cure themselves with local African healers and with the pots that are called *chinas*.”¹³⁸ Indeed, “all the people in Cacheu, whether religious or secular, went to them [jabacousse, *GC: djambakós*; see Glossary] for cures, with the pots which they call *Chinas*.”¹³⁹ She added, that while she wore “the [Mandinga] strings [See Glossary, under *cordas*], because everyone wore them” [...], “as soon as she had heard that she could not wear them [informed by Capuchin missionaries], she had never put them on again, and that then she had renounced them.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, she placed the issue neatly in cultural terms: “she did not understand these things to be a fault in her land, but that if she had been in Portugal she would have held them to be such.”¹⁴¹

During the three years she was incarcerated in the Inquisition’s dungeons in Lisbon, she largely maintained her initial statement that “she did not understand, and had never understood that this [soliciting the assistance of local healers] might be a sin, since she had permission from the parish priests to make these said cures.”¹⁴² Only when “bearded Capuchin Missionaries from Rome had told

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 166v.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 164.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 157v.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 160v.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 163.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, fol. 139.

her that it was not good to do them” did she realise that she should distance herself from them.¹⁴³ Up to her final confession she maintained that “she did not believe in the idols, nor in the Laws of the gentiles; and she only believed in Christ our Lord, and through his holy Law she hoped to save her soul.”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, her admission that she “had only believed in the said Things with respect to illnesses”¹⁴⁵, and only for the time during which her daughter was ill, and that when she died “her heart grew small and she realised that the said strings had no effect whatever. And then she had gone to make confession and had never believed again in the said things”,¹⁴⁶ are crucial statements illustrating her deeply held responsibilities as a mother and a compassionate person in her own right. Upon the insistence of Inquisitors to confess her sins, she responded repeatedly that she only used these methods as remedies, that “she had been tricked” into using them and that “it was not a disgraceful thing to use these things as a Remedy”.¹⁴⁷ This was all despite the attempts of Inquisitors to force her to confess for having “turned to the errors of the gentiles” and the use of local fetishes, consultations of ‘witchdoctors’ and engaging in pagan ceremonies for treating her daughters, her husband and herself, which was “contrary to the Common usage of loyal Catholic Christians.”¹⁴⁸

What emerges from her statements are moving accounts and insights into the cardinal importance she attached to health, the endemic nature of life-threatening illnesses in these tropical locations, and the reliance upon West African techniques commonly used in these settlements to prevent and cure them. Her testimony under great duress narrates the main events in her life and the coping strategies she developed to protect herself, her partner and children against endemic life-threatening conditions in Cacheu and other settlements in the region. Two interwoven threads stand out in her testimony, i.e. her simultaneous recourse to indigenous and Christian traditions when it came to health and illness-related issues. On the one hand, she stated that “it is true that the Gentiles hold the said Idols to be gods, and that she had believed in them in the same manner as did the Gentiles, as she had confessed. And that the reason she had for this was that she had been told that this was good and also to be healthy.” On the other, she maintained that “at the said time she had believed in the Sacraments of the Church, and had held them to be good and necessary for salvation; and that she had not held them in low esteem, or impeded anyone

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, fol. 175.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 175v.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 182v.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 166v.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 164v, 165, 165v, 171.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 175.

else from receiving them.”¹⁴⁹ This position was not acceptable to Inquisitors, who proclaimed that “it is not credible that she should believe at the same time in the idols of the Gentiles and not distance herself from the Law of Christ, Our Lord”.¹⁵⁰ However, these convictions were not mutually exclusive in a town like Cacheu, where the reliance on both was common among all strata as her husband had eloquently stated in his appeal; and in an African context where religious syncretism was the norm rather than the exception.

In their final ratification of her confession, the Inquisitors admonished the accused for only partially confessing, while rejecting the idea of having committed “pagan abuses, sacrifices, superstitions and ceremonies.” Condemning her as a “heretic apostate” and to ex-communication from the Church, and the forfeit of all her worldly goods, she was sentenced to a public *auto da fé* (act of faith) celebrated in Lisbon on 11th March 1668, “with a lighted candle in her hand, so as to hear her sentence and make an abjuration of *Levi*”.¹⁵¹

After having returned to Cacheu in June of the same year, reports confirmed that she was complying with the order for ‘spiritual penitence’ and confessing during Christian festivities, including “Christmas, Easter Resurrection, the feasts of the Holy Spirit and the Assumption of Our Lady the Virgin”, as well as receiving instructions in the Roman Catholic faith.¹⁵² She also performed weekly prayers dedicated “to the said [Virgin] with a third part of the Rosary, and said five Our fathers and five Ave Marias every Friday.” In a petition she filed to the Inquisitors with the aid of the local vicar in Cacheu, she presents a surgeon’s certificate which confirms she “is very ill, suffering from a high fever, with swellings in her mouth and bleedings, and is bedridden” and therefore unable to fulfil her obligations.¹⁵³ Called upon by her husband to visit Crispina Peres, the surgeon describes her serious medical condition while confirming “she had taken confession and received the sacraments during the days of her penance, so as to show that she had met her obligations.”¹⁵⁴

Beyond that point, no more information is forthcoming about Crispina Peres, who vanishes from the documentary record. Judging by the information provided in these documents sent to the Lisbon Inquisition from Cacheu, it is likely that she could have succumbed to her malarial fevers, already severely weakened by her protracted incarceration in Lisbon. Certainly, the daily struggle with illness and misfortune which emerges from this trial underline that life could be short

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., fol. 174v.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., fol. 176.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., fol. 185. The abjuration of *Levi*, was a public oath of adjuration by the defendant in view of a ‘slight’ Inquisitorial suspicion of heresy.

¹⁵² Ibid., fol. 195.

¹⁵³ Ibid., fol. 195/195v.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., fol. 195v.

in Cacheu in the seventeenth century. Despite undergoing religious conversion and persecution, the recourse to syncretic cosmologies and cultural borrowing to alleviate the sufferings and risks of daily life were common and practiced by all who lived there – free or enslaved, African or Creole, Christian ‘Old’ and ‘New’.

