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Sammlung De Nobili –
Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Indologie
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Der Verein

SAMMLUNG DE NOBILI –
ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT FÜR INDOLOGIE UND RELIGIONSFORSCHUNG

lädt herzlich ein

zum Jahresvortrag 2018 von

Professor Dr.
Ines G. Županov
(Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris)

**From Mogor
to Salsete:
Rodolfo Acquaviva's Error**

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Ort: Seminarraum 1 des Instituts für Südasien-, Tibet- und
Buddhismuskunde, Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde
(Campus der Universität Wien, Spitalgasse 2, Eingang 2.7),
1090 Wien

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**10. Jahresvortrag des Vereins
„Sammlung de Nobili – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Indologie und
Religionsforschung“ (2018)**

Professor Dr.

Ines G. Županov

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From Mogor to Salsete: Rodolfo Acquaviva's Error

In this talk I want to piece together the elements of the short missionary life of Rodolfo Acquaviva (b. 1550, Atri, Italy, d. 1583, Cuncolim, Goa), a Neapolitan nobleman and Jesuit who inhabited consecutively two very different but exemplary communicative settings. His first missionary experience at the age of thirty was at the Mughal court where he was part-time Portuguese ambassador and part-time learned religious specialist of the law of “Īsā”. His next assignment three years later lasted just for a few days and was in the rural and borderland Portuguese *Estado da Índia*’s territory of Goa, where resistance to Jesuits and Portuguese tax collectors was brewing. By looking into his life and “martyr’s” death and his afterlife in Jesuit historiography, I will address the question of how missionaries adapted (or rather, did not adapt) to the specific communicative settings of different missions.

As a first step, I will show how Acquaviva’s aristocratic habitus produced what he thought was a “positive” effect on emperor Akbar and a small group of nobles around him. The point of emotional convergence was, in Acquaviva’s opinion, his insistence on “love” and “friendship” in his relationship with them. The failure of the mission and the inadequacy of Acquaviva’s missionary persona come through quite clearly in the treatise *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius* written by his Catalan co-missionary Antoni de Monserrat who shared both the enthusiasm and the deception of the first Jesuit mission to the Mughal court.

As a second step, I will argue that Acquaviva may have mistakenly treated the situation in the village of Cuncolim in the Salsete region of Goa as identical to the courtly setting of encounter that he thought he knew so well. Acquaviva’s missionary life – if considered from outside of the narrative arc constructed around it – was filled with desperate gestures of a young and impatient noble Italian Jesuit and had a logical end in “martyrdom” and the failure to find a better verbal and performative solution. Most importantly, without knowledge of Konkani he was unable to build emotional ties with the “villagers.” He was also too closely associated with Portuguese soldiers and tax collectors. The next generation of Jesuit missionaries certainly learnt from this case of failed communication: they distanced themselves from the official Portuguese administration and made an effort to familiarize themselves with local vernacular and learned languages.

Ines G. Županov is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris, and the director of the Centre d'études de l'Inde / Asie du Sud (2014-2018). She is investigating the social and cultural history of Catholic missions in South Asia and has also worked on other topics related to the Portuguese empire. Her many publications include *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi 1999) and *Missionary Tropics, Jesuit Frontier in India (16th–17th centuries)* (Ann Arbor 2005). Her latest monograph, co-written with Ângela Barreto Xavier, is *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge (16th–18th centuries)* (New Delhi 2015). Prof. Županov has co-edited eight books; her articles in various languages are published as books chapters and in journals such as *Annales*, *Representations*, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, *Journal of Early Modern History*, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, and *RES: Anthropology and Esthetics*.