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## REMEDIES OF THE SOUL, REMEDIES OF THE BODY IN PORTUGUESE INDIA (16<sup>TH</sup>–18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

### Project Description

European encounter with the tropical world of South Asia opened formerly unthinkable possibilities to acquire wealth, women, territory, and knowledge. The costs of this enterprise, especially in terms of its human investment, were high. Tropical climate combined with seasonal epidemics that ravaged Portuguese commercial enclaves were held responsible for the disastrous mortality rate of the soldiers, merchants, and administrators exported to the colonies. Keeping Portuguese bodies healthy and virile in the tropics soon became more than a simple medical concern. The equation between illness and sin was at the back of every Christian mind. Idolatry, paganism, as well as crypto-Judaism and heresy completed the equation, while a growing number of ecclesiastical personnel and missionaries imported to Goa and to other Portuguese Asian colonies made it their primary goal to administer the “medicine of the soul”.

During my stay in Berlin, I plan to work on and bring to discussion various views and solutions proposed by Portuguese physicians, officials, and religious specialists on how to preserve a healthy individual and a healthy social body: ranging from those that celebrated medical indigenization and diversity to those based on hospitalization, disciplining, and uniformity. I am interested to explore, in particular, the boundary between madness and

holiness, between “authentic” affects and dissembling, as well as the baroque mis-en-scène of the healing process.

#### Recommended Reading:

Zupanov Ines G. *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in seventeenth-century South India*. New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

—. “Drugs, health, bodies and souls in the tropics: Medical experiments in sixteenth-century Portuguese India.” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 39, 1 (2002).

—. “Esperimenti linguistici dei gesuiti: le grammatiche e i catechismi tamil (sec. XVI-XVII).” *Etnosistemi: Processi e dinamiche culturali*, Anno IX, no. 9, Gennaio 2002.