AMBASSADORS, ADVENTURERS, TRAVELLERS AND THEIR WRITINGS: THE ROOTS OF ANGLO-PORTUGUESE RIVALRY IN PERSIA AND IN THE PERSIAN GULF (LATE 16TH-EARLY 17TH CENTURY)

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Other than telling the history of the Portuguese and English diplomatic contacts with the Safavid empire, this paper aims to shed light on the evolution of Anglo-Portuguese relations concerning Persia. It would take too much time to go through the chronological roll of embassies and missions to the Šāh, especially after the beginning of the seventeenth century when in western Europe rekindled the ancient flame of a probable military alliance with the Persian realm against the Ottomans. We merely propose to observe the conditions that conducted the English to penetrate Safavid lands and their growing conflicts with the Portuguese settlers in the area. We thus decided to focus our attention mainly on the travel litterature – accounts and letters – that introduced this chain of events to the wider British public in the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, namely through the publication of Hakluyt's and Purchas's path-breaking compilations.[1]

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[1] Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 16 vols., Edinburgh, E. & G. Goldsmid, 1885-1890 [original ed. 1598-1600]; Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes, contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells, by Englishmen and others*, Glasgow, James MacLehose and Sons, 1905-1907 [original ed. 1625-1626]. The best survey of the English travel enterprise in Asia is Sir William Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, London, Adam & Charles Black, rep. 1966.

Travel literature constitutes the most important group of sources concerning the early British establishment in Asia. The accounts seem diverse and heterogeneous, and though most of them were originally written as official reports addressed to the Companies' directors, they represent nevertheless different viewpoints and litterary frameworks. As Kenneth Andrews has already remarked, the Muscovy Company's writings provide only brief and superficial comments on Persia.[2] Overall these texts are quite different from the litterary tradition that inspired the Portuguese travel accounts of the same period, which beyond the expected chronological and geographical narrative added a certain number of episodes, anecdotes and descriptions. The merchants' reports abound with economic related information: products, prices, availability, markets, distances, routes – that is to say, mostly unsuited material for a wider audience.[3] Only Anthony Sherley's book seems to rise from this bulk to become something closer to the traditional conception of travel literature. Obviously, this can be easily explained when we realize British official writings, unlike Portuguese travel accounts of that period, were not intended to be read as a source of entertainment; they amount to a good deal of economic information and, as the outcome of professional activities in foreign lands, they were not expected to be published. Normally this would mean the data therein exposed is more likely to be relied upon than pure litterary texts, since the latter were produced in order to fulfill the expectations of a wide public and were thus more subject to editorial intervention. However, as we shall see, even the Companies' reports and letters have to be carefully interpreted for they reveal data gathered by authors with a very personal scope.

The Portuguese were the only European nation to obtain concrete diplomatic results with the Safavid realm in the 16th century.[4] During the years of Afonso de Albuquerque's government (1509-1515), the first missions to Šāh Ismā'īl revealed the Portuguese intentions of raising an allied front against the Ottoman empire in the near-eastern area.[5] But in reality the Portuguese policy mainly served one purpose: the guarantee of a stable political situation in the south Persian coast for commercial and logistical reasons. After the death of the

[2] Jenkinson is "essentially a personal narrative", Anthony Edwards offers "a great deal of commercial intelligence" but not much more, and only Anthony Ducket "attempted a set description, dwelling upon some of the more obvious features of the country" (Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement. Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 85).

[3] For a more detailed discussion of the nature of these texts and Richard Hakluyt's editing work, see George B. Parks, "Tudor travel literature: a brief history", in D. B. Quinn (ed.), *The Hakluyt Handbook*, London, Hakluyt Society, 1974, vol. I, pp. 97-132, especially pp. 106 ff.

[4] Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 111.

[5] See mainly Robert Bishop Smith, *The First Age of the Portuguese Embassies, Navigations and Peregrinations in Persia (1507-1524)*, Bethesda, Maryland, Decatur Press, 1970.

first Safavid emperor the contacts between the Portuguese from Ormuz and the Persian court became much less regular and only recovered some dynamics in the end of the century with the accession of Šāh 'Ạbbās to the throne. Later on, their situation inside the Safavid court gradually evolved into a somewhat volatile expression that ultimately provoked the fall of Ormuz and the gradual decay of Portuguese influence in the Gulf waters.

Unlike Portugal, whose contacts with the Safavid rulers were essentially political, the first British expeditions appear as the consequence of commercial projects. Besides the conquest of new markets and the exploitation of alternative routes, the English hoped to establish their rule in the East as a counterweight against the commercial growth of other European states. Initially the main obstacle was the Venetian-Ottoman trade network across the Middle East, but later – after the British establishment in India – it was the Portuguese presence that became their principal opposition.

This new situation in the East was completely different from the circumstances back in Europe where Portugal's place in British external commerce was determinant. When war broke out between Spain and England in 1585 the port of Lisbon became the main trading post for the textile business in the Iberian Peninsula, the chief market of all British exports. Therefore, when Philip II's troops occupied Portuguese territory, England's economy suffered a heavy blow, though not immediately. During the first years British merchants were allowed to continue their business in Portuguese lands. But In 1589 they were expelled from Lisbon and their consul arrested on conspiracy charges. However, that didn't mean that Anglo-Portuguese trade had completely disappeared; in fact, smuggling activities never ceased.[6]

The arrival of the first Englishmen in Persia was the result of the merchants' strife for establishing trade connections with Russia. Failing to cope with the Iberian powers' access to the spice lands and the Far East, some British merchants organized themselves in a company that looked for this distant and unknown country with some hopes of establishing a fruitful trade. The Muscovy or Russia Company was thus born to secure the road to Eastern commodities, and its members, persistent attraction to Persian trade shows how the Safavid empire was destined to perform an important role in the commercial flow of the Middle East and Central Asia networks. Between 1562 and 1581 the Company sent six merchant missions to Safavid lands but, despite the fact that most of the agents involved were prepared to swear for the country's many commercial

[6] V. M. Shillington & A. B. Wallis Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal*, London, 1907, pp. 157-159. Cf. Pauline Croft, *The Spanish Company*, London, London Record Society, 1973; Idem, "Englishmen and the Spanish Inquisition 1558-1625" in *English Historical Review* 87, (1972), pp. 249-268; Idem, "Trading with the Enemy, 1585-1604" in *The Historical Journal* 32-2 (1989), pp. 281-302.

advantages, travel restrictions and lack of safety conditions eventually forced the enterprise's abandonment by the end of the century.[7]

As is well known, Anthony Jenkinson's 1562 journey inaugurated the Anglo-Safavid relations period.[8] His mission was basically a commercial one. Despite carrying official letters from Elizabeth I to Šāh Ṭahmāsp, no other item in the available documentation denounce anything beyond the trading request, except a very ambiguous mention of a "friendship" offer in Jenkinson's narrative.[9] It must be said that the latter's arrival in the Persian court didn't occur in the best moment. An Ottoman ambassador was also staying in Qazwīn at the time and a new peace treaty had just been signed between the two states, an unexpected change of direction that didn't quite arrange British plans. In fact, the success of Elizabethan commercial enterprise in the East depended greatly on the continuation of Turkish hostilities around the Persian border, so that the Russian-Safavid commercial corridor might become an economically viable option. Jenkinson seemed to be aware of the difficulties of his task. According to his own written testimony, the Turkish merchants living in Persia were very well informed about his provenance and what his presence in the country was likely to provoke.[10] They even asked the Sultan's ambassador to warn Ṭahmāsp against

[7] Armand J. Gerson & Earnest V. Vaughn & Neva Ruth Deardorff, *Studies in the History of English Commerce in the Tudor Period*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1912; Inna Lubimenko, *Les relations commerciales et politiques de l'Angleterre avec la Russie avant Pierre le Grand*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1933; George Tolstoy (ed.), *The First Forty Years of Intercourse Between England and Russia, 1553-1593*, St. Petersburg, A. Tranchel, 1875; T. S. Willan, *The Early History of the Russia Company 1553-1603*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1956; Idem, *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1953.

[8] About Anthony Jenkinson's life (c. 1530-1611), see Margaret B. Graham Morton, *The Jenkinson Story*. Glasgow, William MacLellan, 1962; Foster Rhea Dulles, *Eastward Ho! The First English Adventurers to the Orient*, London, John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1931. For his writings, see E. Delmar Morgan and C. H. Coote (ed.), *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia, by Anthony Jenkinson and other Englishmen. With some account of the first intercourse of the English with Russia and Central Asia by way of the Caspian Sea*. London, Hakluyt Society, 1886. The first time Jenkinson's account was published was in *A History of Travayle in the West and East Indies* which was basically a new edition of Richard Eden's *Decades of the New World* – first published in 1555 – augmented of other travel accounts in Asia, and under the organization of Richard Willes since Eden had died before finishing his work. A definite version was afterwards included in the first (1589) and second (1598-1600) editions of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (John Parker, *Books to Build an Empire. A Bibliographical History of English Overseas Interests to 1620*, Amsterdam, N. Israel, 1965, pp. 77-80; D. B. Quinn (ed.), *The Hakluyt Handbook*, vol. II, pp. 355, 381).

[9] According to Jenkinson's text, this was the answer he gave to king 'Abd Allāh Ḫān of Šīrwān during his stay in Šamaḫī after being asked what his intentions were in the country (R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. III, p. 270; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. I, p. 134) But Queen Elisabeth's letter to the Safavid ruler makes no explicit reference to establishing any kind of political agreement.

[10] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. III, p. 277; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. I, p. 144.

the English group. If that be true, and we have no reasons to think otherwise, the šāh's reaction to the Englishman resembles an act of pure ill will. In fact, before crossing the royal palace's threshold, Anthony Jenkinson is offered a pair of "basmackes" (*bašmāq*, "shoe", "slipper"), for being an infidel he wouldn't otherwise be allowed to step into this sacred ground. Being drawn to the šāh's presence, the British adventurer answers a series of questions concerning the European political situation – "he questioned with me of the state of our Countreys, and of the power of the Emperour of Almaine, king Philip, and the great Turke". Although addressing Jenkinson as a "Franke" and interrogating him about western affairs, Ṭahmāsp ignores which religion Jenkinson professes. It's only after speaking to a Georgian prince that lives in his court that the Safavid sovereign acknowledges the Englishman as a "gower" (*gawr* – "pagan", "infidel") and dismisses him with an ambiguous sentence: "we haue no neede to haue friendship with vnbeleeuers".[11]

After such a rebuke the English traveller withdraws and leaves the royal palace, declaring himself content with the interview. Now, this assertion sounds somewhat curious since Jenkinson hadn't completed his objective of being granted trading privileges, and it reveals how unlikely the whole situation must have been. Naturally, the way Jenkinson tells the events – and assuming he is completely honest about that first interview – leads us to conclude that the Persian king didn't really care about establishing any kind of trade with Westerners. He further states that the šāh thought about giving him away to the Ottoman ambassador as a gift for the Sultan; but Ṭahmāsp eventually changed his mind thanks to the influence of the prince of Šīrwān in the court. The Englishman's narrative clearly outlines the special treatment he received for being an "infidel", and this detail is evidently destined to accentuate the civilizational opposition. But Sir John Malcolm in his *History of Persia* has rationalized the imposition of the clothen slippers as a very ancient habit in Iran, not exclusively pertaining to foreigners but as a general custom for anyone crossing a threshold and leaving the shoes outside.[12] He doesn't comment however the sprinkling of sand on his path while Jenkinson walked away.

During his residence in Persia, the Englishman is reported to have had dealings with "diuers gentlemen" from the šāh's court, who asked him if he expected to return to England by land, or by sea via Ormuz. Having been previously warned of a probable Safavid expedition against the Portuguese, he then

[11] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. III, p. 277; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. I, pp. 146-147.

[12] John Malcolm, *The History of Persia. From the most early period to the present time, containing an account of the religion, government, usages, and character of the inhabitants of that kingdom*, New ed. London, John Murray, 1829, vol. I, p. 334. See similar description by Geoffrey Ducket in R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. IV, pp. 56-57; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 433.

stated that the British and the "Portingals" were not in good terms so he wouldn't chance appearing at their fortress in Ormuz.[13] This short paragraph is one of the most interesting parts of Jenkinson's text. In fact, he evokes in the court of Šāh Ṭahmāsp a certain hostility towards the Portuguese and their settlements in the Gulf, which is a *leitmotiv* of the Luso-Safavid relations during the sixteenth century and beyond. This hostility is directly connected to the Lusitanian control of some areas in Iran's southern coast which became a subject of limited armed conflicts with the authorities of the kingdom of Lār. We have evidence of military movements in the 1540's and of some Safavid conquests in the region – the forts of Mīnāb, Šāmīl and Tizirg – in 1569.[14] The afore-mentioned reference might, therefore, be connected to that kind of event.

But this passage of Jenkinson's account also deserves our attention for another reason. In fact the British traveller mentions bad political relations between Portugal and England. By acknowledging a conflict between the two countries he unconsciously foresees the problems concerning the Anglo-British rivalry in Persia. At this moment nothing could be farther away from truth. Surely, English trading fleets sailed through Portuguese-controlled areas in the Atlantic Ocean, sometimes attacking ports and plundering vessels. But even if the risk of piracy was a frequent source of preoccupation, the Portuguese never engaged in an open war against England. West Africa was one of the most common destinations of European trading fleets in the Atlantic Ocean, and Portuguese diplomatic efforts tended to restrict foreign navigation there. The British frequently visited the Guinea coast since the 1530's, and as a consequence Portuguese complaints in London were likewise numerous. In the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign the English crown tried to bypass this problem, claiming British ships would only venture in areas where the Portuguese were not settled – a strategy that was later applied to the Indian Ocean. Conflicts inevitably exploded and by 1568 the two countries were close to war.[15] But this happened well after Jenkinson's mission to Persia.

Other documents of agents operating for the Russia Company and someway or another linked to the Portuguese presence in Persia deserve our attention.

[13] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. III, p. 277; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. I, pp. 147-148.

[14] See Willem Floor, *The Persian Gulf. A Political and Economic History of Five Port Cities 1500-1730*, Washington DC, Mage Publishers, 2006, pp. 137-138, 137-138. Cf. Hasan Rumlu, *Aḥsanu't Tawārīkh*, Ed. C. N. Seddon, Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1931-1934, vol. II, p. 192.

[15] A definite treaty was signed in 1576. Cf. V. Shillington & A. Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal*..., pp. 137-145. For a brief development of British presence in West Africa, see P. E. H. Hair & Robin Law, "The English in Western Africa to 1700" in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Origins of Empire. British Overseas Entreprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001 ("The Oxford History of the British Empire", I), pp. 241-263.

In a letter written by Arthur Edwards on April 1566, among other usefull information, he strongly advises the Company on the employment of at least one servant knowing the "Portingall tongue" on future missions to Persia[16], although he doesn't really explain why this language in particular. But it was surely connected to a possible journey to Ormuz that he later regretted not having been able to perform. In the Company's fourth expedition to Persia in 1568, Laurence Chapman complains about the quality of the spices bought in Tabrīz reporting the "hot newes, that Ormuz way was shut up by occasion that the Indians do warre against them, which is true in deed".[17] He would like to visit Ormuz as soon as the blockade is risen in order to compare the prices of spices. In the next mission, Geoffrey Ducket outlines the important role of the island of Ormuz in the Portuguese maritime network, placing it as the main outlet for the export of spices in Persia. He also mentions that pepper comes in very small quantities and therefore the prices tend to be high.[18]

The Muscovy Company believed that trade through Russia would become more important than the Cape route because the former could be achieved every year while the latter needed one or two years time. Furthermore, the northern inland route was considered safer than the overseas trip.[19] Of course, History proved otherwise. In fact, the success of British establishment in Persia depended of the šāh's authorisation and of the political circumstances of the time, such as the Safavid-Ottoman war, which regularly blockaded the Levant caravans. But it also relied heavily on the Tsar's good will on letting these Westerners use his territory has a corridor for their commercial activities in Persia. And it seems that by the end of the sixteenth century all these conditions played against the English.[20] But by that time other options were being developed by the Elizabethan merchants.

The Levant Company was very similar to its northern forerunner, not only regarding structure and organization but also concerning objectives and ulti-

[16] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. III, p. 294; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 389.

[17] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. IV, p. 40; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 409.

[18] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. IV, p. 58; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 435. In the seventeenth century, due to the affluence of other merchants to the area (Dutch, English, Indian), pepper prices were very unstable and the quantities arriving in Persia were sometimes so costly that the market couldn't absorbe them completely (Willem Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia*, Wiesbaden, Reichert Verlag, 2000, pp. 136-139).

[19] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. IV, p. 47; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 419.

[20] The climate of constant war in the northwestern Persian border has often been suggested to be the main reason for this state of affairs. But according to Inna Lubimenko, the English never completely deserted the Caspian Sea route. It was the Russian ruler Boris Godunov (r. 1598-1605) that rapidly understood the importance of direct relations with Persia and no longer authorized

mate intentions. They were both heading to acquire alternative trade routes for importing spices and other oriental goods, and simultaneously looking for new markets for the English traditional export staple, woollen clothes.[21] This meant that it was essential for the Company's purposes to get the easiest and most direct access to "spicery", which implied the presence of agents not only in the biggest towns of the Syrian coast but also in the Eastern regions of the Ottoman empire, and eventually beyond.

The records concerning John Newbery's and Ralph Fitch's experience are most rewarding.[22] These two Englishmen were part of a wider group working for the Levant Company and engaged in an overland mission to establish commer-

British merchants to travel to Safavid lands through his territories. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the English traders in Russia were still asking permission to pass into Persia but their requests were repeatedly denied (I. Lubimenko, *Les relations commerciales et politiques de l'Angleterre avec la Russie*..., p. 126).

[21] In fact other reasons played a decisive role in the Levant Company's creation. There was the absence of Venetian trading vessels in Channel waters, and the subsequent British market's need for spices. So it is not surprising to find English ships heading to the Aegean islands during the first half of the sixteenth century and even establishing trade posts there. Despite several obstacles (namely Mediterranean piracy), this mercantile endeavour was still considered highly profitable, much more than simply relying upon the Venetian commercial agents whose fleet was known as "Flanders galleys". Furthermore, during the 1560's the Dutch revolt blocked considerably British access to Antwerp and its emporium, and so they had to turn themselves to the eastern Mediterranean in order to procure the oriental products they needed. Naturally, the presence of English merchants in the Levant depended on the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Porte, since all the principal eastern ports were under its domination. So what originally had been a mere commercial issue became an international politics' affair. In 1578, William Harborne was sent to Istanbul to convince Murād III to agree on opening the Turkish dominions to the Elizabethan mercantile enterprise on the same bases than the other European nations established in Ottoman land. To cut a long story short, this patent of privileges was the fruit of hardsome negotiations due to the French and Venetian representatives' influence over the ruler, and it was only in 1583 that Harborne – in the meanwhile appointed English ambassador in Istanbul – managed to guarantee a definite treaty authorizing a British trading presence in the Levant (M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, London, Routledge, 1908; Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1935; T. S. Willan, " Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century" in *English Historical Review* LXX (1955), pp. 399-410; K. R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*..., p. 93. For more information concerning anglo-turkish relations, *vide* S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578-1582. A documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977).

[22] See Ram Chandra Prasad, *Early English Travellers in India. A Study in the Travel Literature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods with Particular Reference to India.* Second ed, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1980; Sir William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, Humphrey Milford, 1921; J. Courtenay Locke (ed.), *The First Englishmen in India. Letters and narratives of sundry Elizabethans written by themselves [...]*, London, Routledge, 1930; J. Horton Ryley, *Ralph Fitch. England's Pioneer to India and Burma. His Companions and Contemporaries. With His Remarkable Narrative Told in His Own Words*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1899; Michael Edwardes, *Ralph Fitch, Elizabethan in the Indies*, London, Faber & Faber, 1972.

cial contacts all the way through Iraq, Persia and India. They left from Aleppo in the end of May 1583 and by August they had reached Baṣra. Their initial plan was to move directly to Būshihr in the Persian coast and then crossing the Iranian mainland *en route* to India. But here we learn from Newbery himself that he had to change his course due to the fact that he needed the services of an interpreter. In his own words:

> "[...] my going to Ormus is more of necessitie, then for any good will I have to the place: for I want a man to goe with me that hath the Indian tongue, the which is the onely cause of my going thither for to take one there: I was minded to have gone from Balsara by Sea, to a place called Abowsher, and from thence by Land into the Indies; but the Want of one to speake for mee forceth me to leave that way".[23]

Newbery knew fairly well Ormuz for having spent several weeks there some time before; but unfortunately we ignore almost everything about that first experience, besides the fact that he crossed Persia on his way back to Europe. Nonetheless, his words show he felt no pleasure in returning there. In fact, a few days after arriving in the Portuguese-controlled island the English group – which included William Leedes, jeweller, and James (or John) Storie, painter – was put to jail. According to Newbery's and Fitch's words, the captain of the fortress charged them with being spies working for D. António do Crato's cause, Philip II's Portuguese contester.[24] Newbery also refers to Francis Drake's navigation to the Moluccas in 1579 and his attempt to engage combat with a Portuguese ship, with the effect these news had in Portugal.[25] But he blames mostly Michiel Stropeni,

[23] S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*..., vol. IX, p. 493; J. Locke (ed.), *The First Englishmen in India*..., p. 50. Cf. his letter written in Baġdād on the 20th of July 1583 (R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. X, p. 14; J. Locke, *The First Englishmen in India*..., p. 53).

[24] For more information concerning Philip's accession to the Portuguese throne and struggle against D. António, see Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Portugal no Tempo dos Filipes. Política, Cultura, Representações (1580-1668)*. Lisboa, Cosmos, 2000; Geoffrey Parker, "David or Goliath? Philip II and His World in the 1580s" in *Empire War and Faith in Early Modern Europe*, London, Penguin, 2003, pp. 16-38.

[25] Cf. Julian S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy. With a History of the Rise of England as a Maritime Power*, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1899, vol. I, p. 297. Without being altogether sure about the ship's identity we can definitely say it was an Iberian vessel. For more details see John Cummins, *Francis Drake. The Lives of a Hero*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1997, p. 120, and Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake. The Queen's Pirate*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 196. In fact the two appointed explanations are correlated: Francis Drake supported D. António's claim to the Portuguese throne, and jointly with the Elizabethan "war party" – mainly Leicester and Walsingham – urged the Queen to venture on an armed expedition against the Azores islands in 1581. Elizabeth clearly hesitated to enforce hostilities with Spain, but in 1589 she decided to allow the project and preparations to attack Lisbon were made. Eventually things didn't work out according to plan and the Portugal expedition was an utter failure. See Gordon K. Mcbride,

one important character of the Venetian merchant colony of Ormuz, a man whose influence with the Portuguese must have been significant.[26] Stropeni is said to have delivered the English travellers to the local authorities for fear of British influence in the overland trade between Syria and the Persian Gulf.

Newbery and Fitch were probably right. As we have already said, at that time the main adversary to the English penetration in the Middle East was the Venetian trade network, a system that Laurence Chapman, a Russia Company's agent in the fourth expedition to Persia, had already qualified as almost impossible to break.[27] In their letters we don't really perceive any strong objection against the Portuguese. Furthermore, during their confinement Newbery and Fitch seem to have been well taken cared of. The Englishmen were eventually handed over to the Viceroy's justice in Goa, and before Christmas they were released from prison thanks to the intervention of two foreign Catholic priests, one of them being Thomas Stephens, an English Jesuit who had settled there in 1579.[28] Later on, still feeling under threat, the two travellers and their companion Leedes[29] broke the interdiction of leaving Goa, escaped to the Indian mainland and eventually joined the Mughal Emperor's court.

Besides Newbery's letters and Fitch's account, published in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* and in Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus,* we have another source concerning this affair. Linschoten's *Itinerario* reports the misadventures of the English party with some noteworthy differences, such as saying the captain of Ormuz was a friend of Newbery's. But according to the Dutch author, the Englishmen not only were arrested as spies but also for being heretics and ennemies of the Catholic church, an accusation nowhere to be found in Newbery's

"Elizabethan Foreign Policy in Microcosm: The Portuguese Pretender, 1580-89" in *Albion* 5-3 (1973), pp. 193-210; R. B. Wernham, "Queen Elizabeth and the Portugal Expedition of 1589" in *English Historical Review* 66 (1951), pp. 1-26 and 194-218; Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars. War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 111, 155-161.

[26] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations...*, vol. X, p. 15-17; J. Locke (ed.), *The First Englishmen in India...*, pp. 84. Cf. Ugo Tucci, "Mercanti veneziani in India alla fine del secolo XVI" in *Studi in Onore di Armando Sapori*, Milan, Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, imp. 1957, vol. II, pp. 1091-1111.

[27] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations...*, vol. IV, p. 41; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia...*, vol. II, pp. 410-411.

[28] He died in Goa in 1619. He was the first European to write a grammar of the Konkaṇī language, published posthumously in 1640 under the title *Arte da lingoa canarim*. Cf. Georg Schurhammer, "Thomas Stephens (1549-1619)", *Orientalia*, Rome & Lisbon, Istitutum Historicum Societatis Iesu & Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1963 ("Gesalmmete Studien", II), pp. 367-376; R. C. Prasad, *Early English Travellers in India*, pp. 1-22; John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India 1542-1773*, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1997, pp. 149-151.

[29] Storie chose to join the Jesuits in Goa.

statements. He also outlines the role of the Jesuits' cupidity and psychological pressure during their stay in Goa.[30]

We also possess four letters from Philip II to the Viceroy in Goa, from 1585 to 1591, concerning the Newbery's and Fitch's imprisonment that help to understand the extent of the affair.[31] There are at least two observations to be made about this correspondence. First, the Iberian monarch repeatedly asked for informations about the reason why the Englishmen travelled to Ormuz. The suspicion of them carrying correspondence from D. António turned out to be false – as no letters proving this were found –, and it was clear that they showed up as merchants; but the king still demanded to be fully informed of their intentions. On the other hand, through Philip II's correspondence we learn the death of the three Englishmen that had escaped, and the destiny of the fourth one that decided to stay in Goa and worked there as a painter. In fact, the Portuguese were misinformed: Newbery had died somewhere in the Punjab on his overland trip back to Europe, and we don't know anything about Leedes after his arrival at the Mughal court. But Ralph Fitch did return to England in 1591 after a very long journey that took him to the distant lands of Southeast Asia.

We can also find other examples of British travellers caught by the Portuguese authorities of the *Estado da Índia*. One of them concerns a certain Joseph Salbancke, an adventurer who travelled in the beginning of the seventeenth century from Agra to Iṣfahān and henceforth to Baġdād and Baṣra, where he took place on a boat heading to the Omani coast. His story presents many similarities with Newbery's affair. At Ṣuḥār, some Portuguese people warned the governor against him, saying he was a spy and causing him to be sent in chains to Masqaṭ. There, in the small Portuguese community lived Father Drurie, another English Jesuit, which helped the unfortunate traveller, and saved him from everlasting incarceration in the fortress. He was then conveied to Ormuz and ultimately to Goa, where his narrative suddenly stops right after the town's description.[32]

[30] *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, Arthur Coke Burnell & P. A. Tiele (eds.), London, Hakluyt Society, 1935, vol. II, pp. 159-164.

[31] The first was written on the 25th of February 1585 (British Library, London, *Add. MS.* 20 861, n.° 5, § 64, fl. 66, translated to English in *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira; with his "Kings of Harmuz", and extracts from his "Kings of Persia"*. Trans. & notes William F. Sinclair; Introd. & notes Donald Ferguson, London, Hakluyt Society, 1902, p. xxviii), the second on the 13th of February 1587, the third on the 2nd of February 1589, and the fourth on the 2nd of January 1591. These three last documents were all published in J. H. da Cunha Rivara (ed.), *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental*, Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1857-1877, Fasc. 3, pp. 95, 175, and 277 respectively, and translated in *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. xxviii-xxx.

[32] S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus...*, III, pp. 82-89. This account's resemblance to Newbery's and Fitch's experience rouses some suspicion. We know very little of the Portuguese settlement on the coast of Oman, so we can hardly assert the veracity of this story with proper documentation. But the presence of an English Jesuit in the narrative is very intriguing. We don't have any evidence of British catholic priests in the Persian Gulf area and we cannot possibly iden-

Another interesting case is the one of Humphrey Greensell, an English renegado who is reported by a Russia Company's agent to having been on Šāh Ṭahmāsp's services, and "afterwords being at Ormus in the East Indies, was there cruelly burnt in the Inquisition by the Portingals".[33] Needless to say, we have considerable doubts about the authenticity of these two episodes.

The most evident case of anti-Portuguese wilful news intoxication is Anthony Sherley's travel account.[34] His biased narrative could most probably be derived from his own life experience. But since his book was published more than a decade after the events it describes (1613),[35] we may naturally ask ourselves if the final printed version is not the result of some abusive editing activity.

Anthony Sherley was an English adventurer who after some military experience in Europe and in the West Indies under the patronage of Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, decided to embark upon a trip to Persia and to present himself to Šāh 'Abbās as the head of a diplomatic mission. Travelling with his brother Robert and a group of several of his countrymen, he mentions a certain Hugo de Potso, a Portuguese factor on his way to Ormuz, whose instigation in Zante (Zachyntos) prevented him from continuing the sea crossing on the ship that was taking his party from Venice to Syria. In Cyprus the same Portuguese is said to have tried a second time to bar the way to the English by accusing Sherley of being a pirate to the local governor. Anthony Sherley further speaks of the eminent danger he would be in if the Portuguese merchant would have managed to arrive in Aleppo, but the plotter perished before accomplishing his project.[36] The truth is that no other source reports this devilish Portuguese man with such a doubtful name. The other contemporary accounts[37] don't get into so many

tify Father Drurie. But we might nevertheless ask ourselves if this character is not pure invention. There was indeed a Jesuit father called Robert Drury contemporary of the described events, but he never went to the East and lived mainly in England until his sudden death in 1623 when the ceiling of the French consul's house in London fell during a Mass (Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, London, Burns & Oates, 1877, vol. I, pp. 76-98).

[33] R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*..., vol. IV, p. 52; *Early voyages and travels to Russia and Persia*..., vol. II, p. 428.

[34] Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose. Islam and England during the Renaissance*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1937, pp. 239-297; D. W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant. The Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and His Three Sons*, Ythaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1967; Boies Penrose, *The Sherleian Odyssey. Being a Record of the Travels and Adventures of Three Famous Brothers During the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I*, Taunton, Barnicotts Limited, the Wessex Press, 1938; E. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure*, London, Routledge, 1933; Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers. An Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Shirley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley Knights*, London, Roxburghe Club, 1848.

[35] *Sir Anthony Sherley, His Relation of His Travels into Persia [...]*, London, Nathaniell Butter and Ioseph Bagset, 1613.

[36] *Sir Anthony Sherley, His Relation of His Travels into Persia*..., pp. 5-8, 18.

[37] Cf. E. Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure*...

particulars. One only – William Parry's – points out the difficulties which an Italian party on board the ship created for Sherley, without many more details, and certainly not identifying any person in particular.[38] Without having entire certainty on this, we firmly believe that originally the obstacle to Sherley's trip might have been that Italian group heading to the Syrian coast. Later, the character of a Portuguese factor was eventually introduced into the text so that the public of the 1613 edition could clearly identify the enemy of the British in the Indian Ocean with the evil character in Sherley's adventure.[39] Besides, we know that when the Sherley brothers and their party arrived in Persia they presented themselves as friends of the Spanish king, something that apparently had a certain positive impact on the šāh.[40] Now this is something that Sherley's account doesn't mention. Thus we are led to believe that this socalled Hugo de Potso didn't really exist, no more than a Florentine merchant called Victorio Speciero, who is supposed to have saved Sherley from being arrested by the Turkish authorities near Baġdād,[41] and whose existence is not acknowledged by any other Sherleian author.

In fact things had considerably changed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and a great deal of this change was due to the foundation of the British East India Company in 1600. Kirti Chaudhuri pointed out four main reasons for the creation of this new overseas enterprise: the everlasting quest for the oriental spice market; the development of British maritime capacities; the threat of Dutch commercial activities in the East; and the need to export English woollen

[38] E. Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure*, pp. 102 ff.

[39] There is only one surviving manuscript version of Sherley's account in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, *Ashmole MS.*, n° 829. Unfortunately we were not able to consult it in time for the writing of this article, but we know from Denison Ross that it presents some differences with the 1613 printed edition (cf. E. Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure*..., p. xix). We cannot therefore be absolutely sure about any possible interference connected to this affair in particular after its final redaction by Sherley. But we think it very unlikely to be a feature introduced by Anthony Sherley himself; after all, he knew fairly well the Portuguese to come out with such an unlikely name, "de Potso".

[40] For more details, see Vasco Resende, "«Un homme d'inventions et inconstant»: les fidélités politiques d'Anthony Sherley, entre l'ambassade safavide et la diplomacie européenne", in Dejanirah Couto & Rui Manuel Loureiro (eds.), *Revisiting Hormuz. Portuguese Interactions in the Persian Gulf Region in the Early Modern Period*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2008, pp. 235-260. This is what Viceroy D. Francisco da Gama writes in a letter to the Iberian King on the 24th of December 1599 (publ. *ibidem*, pp. 259-260). For Philip III's answer, see British Library, *Add. MS.*, n.° 59, § 11, fl. 141v-142v. This way of dealing with oriental rulers that were somehow acquainted with the Iberian powers resembles another British case. When in 1579 Francis Drake arrived in the island of Ternate in the Mollucas, he says to the local sultan that the English king – he probably didn't think wise to point out the fact that his country was ruled by a woman – was brother to the Spanish sovereign, a fact that seems to have impressed his interlocutor in a positive way (H. Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*..., p. 198).

[41] *Sir Anthony Sherley, His Relation of His Travels into Persia*..., pp. 22-25.

cloth.[42] Now, we already saw how the Venetian influence throughout the Middle East was considered the real danger for English interests, not the Portuguese settlements. John Mildenhall (or Midnall), another English traveller who crossed Persia, twice issued complaints about two Italian merchants in Agra, whom he suspected would do him some harm in Baġdād or somewhere else along the way, "they alwayes being enemies to our Nation".[43] Besides, the British agents were no longer interested in establishing trade with the Portuguese *emporia* of the Persian Gulf and even avoided them. After the first attempts at securing a solid base of operations in the Indonesian islands, the arrival of the East India Company in Gujarat was the outcome of a carefully observed inter-regional Asian practice. The English rapidly understood that the best way to guarantee a sure acquisition of spices was to offer the product that the Indonesian market most looked for – the Gujarati tissues and clothing. That being so, they only had to venture a settlement in the bay of Cambay, at the time already under the Great Mughal's control. But ever since the arrival of the Company's ships in Surat (1613), the Portuguese agents in Gujarat and in the Mughal court rapidly understood the delicate situation they were being drawn into. So they resorted to slandering the newcomers, who were thus accused of being pirates and unreliable allies. This dispute only strengthened the armed conflict that was already taking place in the waters of the Indian Ocean.[44]

[42] K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company. The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600-1640*, London, Frank Cass, 1965, p. 10. For more details, see Brian Gardner, *The East India Company. A History*, New York, Dorset Press, 1971; John Keay, *The Honourable Company. A History of the English East India Company*, London, Harper Collins, 1993; Philip Lawson, *The East India Company. A History, 1600-1857*, London, Longman, 1993; Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies: The structural crisis in the European-Asian trade in the early 17th century*, Copenhagen, Studentlitteratur, 1973 («Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series», 17).

[43] S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*..., vol. II, p. 304. John Mildenhall left Aleppo on the 7th of July 1600 in the company of John Cartwright, and after crossing the Persian border through the Armenian territories, they continued together until Kāšān. Here they parted their ways and Cartwright, after travelling to Iṣfahān, decided to return to Aleppo. He then left the Safavid capital "accompanied with one Signior Belchior Dios d'Croce, an Armenian Portugall, or Portugall Armenian, and one Christophero a Greeke, who were sent with Letters from the Governour of Goa, to the king of Spaine, but lost afterwords their lives and Letters by shipwracke in the Venetian Gulfe" (John Cartwright, *The Preachers Trauels. Wherein is set downe a true iournall to the confines of the East Indies, through the great countreyes of Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Hircania and Parthia [...].* London, T. Thorppe, 1611; S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*..., vol. VIII, pp. 516-7).

[44] For more details, see G. V. Scammell, "England, Portugal and the *Estado da Índia*, c. 1500-1635" in *Modern Asian Studies* 16 (1982), pp. 177-192 (rep. Idem, *Seafaring, Sailors and Trade, 1450-1750. Studies in British and European Maritime and Imperial History*. Aldershot, Ashgate – Variorum, 2003. This article was also published in Luís de Albuquerque & Inácio Guerreiro (eds.), *II Seminário de História Indo-Portuguesa: Actas*, Lisboa, Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga, 1985, pp. 443-458).

The following stage was Persian trade, and particularly silk.[45] The English merchants being confronted with a circumstantial surplus of woollen cloth decided to test the Safavid market, where travellers on their way to the Mughal court had reported exceptional commercial advantages. Richard Steele had recently crossed Safavid country in pursuit of Mildenhall – who had run away with some goods and money belonging to Levant Company's merchants[46] – and arriving in Surat told the East India Company agents that the Persian people needed winter clothing badly, for the inland winter was very severe. And he also stated that raw silk was there 50% cheaper than in Aleppo.[47] That information perfectly suited the English agents in Surat who already knew of a port that could serve as an outlet in the Persian coast, far enough from Ormuz and from eventual Portuguese intervention – Ğāsk. "So that hereafter, if we find ourselves to be overlaid with cloth, then have we no remedy but to go thither, the king of Persia being one that much favoureth our nation, by the report of all that come therehence, and is of late fallen out with the Portingals, insomuch we shall never have a better occasion than now".[48]

We must now direct our attentions to Robert Sherley, Anthony's brother who had stayed on the service of Šāh 'Abbās, and had been sent in 1608 in an embassy to Spain to renew the military projects against the Turk and attempt to settle a direct market for his raw silk production. After an unsuccessful European tour – that eventually took him to England, which much angered the Iberian authorities –, Robert Sherley returned to the East in 1613, and on his way to the Safavid court he landed in Ṣind, more precisely in the port known as Diul-Sinde or Lahribandar. It was there that the Englishman survived a murder attempt on his life orchestrated by both the local governor and a group of Portuguese that had been sent from Ormuz to stop Sherley from continuing his journey.[49] After

[45] For more details about Persian silk and its commerce, see mainly Rudolph Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran. Silk for Silver, 1600-1730*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999. For the Luso-Spanish side, see Francisco Paulo Mendes da Luz, *O Conselho da Índia. Contributo ao estudo da história da administração e do comércio do Ultramar Português nos inícios do século XVII*. Lisboa, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952.

[46] Mildenhall died in Āğmīr in June 1614. Cf. W. Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India*..., p. 51.

[47] William Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company, from its servants in the East, transcribed from the "original correspondence" series of the India Office records*, London, Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1896-1902, vol. II, pp. 98, 153, 170.

[48] W. Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company*..., vol. II, p. 99.

[49] W. Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company*..., vol. II, pp. 106-107; S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*..., vol. IV, pp. 296-297; D. W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*..., pp. 246-247. The Portuguese sources present a different version and don't mention any attack on Sherley; but the orders to stop him from reaching Persia are clearly stated. In fact, Sherley was suspected of having achieved a trade agreement between Šāh 'Abbās and the English Crown, which would inevitably mean the arrival of competitors in the Persian Gulf. See António Bocarro,

the surprise attack he ended up leaving the country and going to Āǧmīr, where the Mughal court was at the time. There, he menaces the East India Company agents that if they don't accept the silk trade that 'Abbās proposed, he would divert the same proposal to the Dutch merchants who eagerly wanted it.[50]

The time had come for the British merchants to profit from the situation, and the first Company expedition to Persia, led by Steele himself with another factor named Crowther, left for Persia in March 1615. When reaching Iṣfahān they encountered Robert Sherley, just before he departed for his second Safavid embassy to Spain, who helped them to procure the šāh's farmāns allowing British merchants to trade in Persia.[51] Notwithstanding some opposition to the development of the Persian silk business by Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador to the Mughal court, the East India Company encouraged the continuation of commercial missions to Safavid lands. And in November 1616, Edward Connock was entrusted with a large ammount of English broadcloth highly unsuited for the Indian market but that had chances of being sold in Persia. He was likewise supposed to meet the Safavid ruler and request a grant for regular trade. In his instructions we perceive once again the fear of open conflict with the Portuguese, and he is advised to unload and take their goods to the "next good town of defence where they may remain secure from robbers and Portingalls, who in their frigates coasting along those parts may haply attempt the surprising of a small maritime village".[52] Later on, when he finally reaches Šāh 'Abbās's camp near the Ottoman border, Connock discovers that a Portuguese Augustine friar, Belchior dos Santos,[53] attempted to defame the Company's mission stating it had not been sent by the British king but by merchants, and that Connock himself had forged the royal letter addressed to 'Abbās. Eventually these accusations didn't attain their purpose, and the Safavid ruler granted the English agent freedom of commerce and the use of the port of Ǧāsk, much to the displeasure of the Augustine

Década 13 da História da India, Lisboa, Academia Real das Sciencias, 1876, vol. I, pp. 201-202; Charles R. Boxer, "Anglo-Portuguese Rivalry in the Persian Gulf, 1615-1635" in Edgar Prestage (ed.), *Chapters in Anglo-Portuguese Relations*, Watford, Voss & Michael, 1938, pp. 46-129 especially p. 54 (rep. in C. R. Boxer, *Conquest and Commerce in South Asia, 1500-1750*, Aldershot, Variorum, 1990); F. M. Luz, *O Conselho da Índia*..., p. 334.

[50] W. Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company*..., vol. II, p. 99. See Willem Floor, "The Dutch and the Persian Silk Trade", in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia. The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*. London: Tauris, 1996, pp. 323-368.

[51] S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*..., vol. IV, p. 277.

[52] W. Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company*..., vol. IV, p. 221.

[53] For more informations about this character, see Roberto Gulbenkian, *L'ambassade en Perse de Luís Pereira de Lacerda et des Pères Portugais de l'Ordre de Saint-Augustin, Belchior dos Anjos et Guilherme de Santo Agostinho 1604-1605*, Lisbonne, Fundation Calouste Gulbenkian, Comité National Portugais pour la Célébration du 2500e Anniversaire de la Fondation de la Monarchie en Iran, 1972.

friar who predicted the downfall of Ormuz if this policy was to be adopted. But his protests were in vain.[54]

At this particular moment the Luso-Safavid relations had come to a standstill. After an initial diplomatic overflow, the Persian ruler started to express doubts about the advantages of keeping a close allegiance with the Iberian empire. He repeatedly received diplomatic missions coming from the Iberian Peninsula, the *Estado da Índia* and Rome without any sort of political coordination. The century-old anti-Ottoman military proposal was not getting anywhere and lately the ambassadors and diplomatic envoys were all infatuated with the perspective of the šāh's possible conversion to Christianity. Moreover the Safavid emperor was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to develop trading activities around his chosen national staple production – raw and wrought silk – and the Portuguese didn't seem too receptive. As we have seen, he twice decided to employ Robert Sherley in diplomatic missions to Spain and Portugal in order to propose an arrangement, but the outcome was highly compromised. It must be said that Šāh 'Abbās aspired to recover the Ormuzi crown and had already started to conquer some of its territories while still remaining open to Iberian diplomatic initiatives. The timely arrival of the English trading parties served the Safavid ruler's interests. He would at last be able to make some profit out of silk and at the same time create some new political ties with a European competitor of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. And the English East India Company's naval victories against the *Estado da Índia*'s fleets arose the šāh's most secret desire: to conquer back Ormuz and defeat the Portuguese forces. Since the Safavid navy was practically inexistent[55] – as all the European travellers of that period point out – the use of a very effective naval force would allow the Persian army to lay siege to the small island. Ormuz was finally conquered in 1622.

According to the British records, this was a political project that didn't quite receive their immediate support. After all, in spite of the maritime battling in the Indian Ocean, the official English policy, whom the East India Company answered to, was to strike back against the Portuguese forces solely after being directly threatened – a legitimate defence strategy that wouldn't justify the efforts of a full-scale siege. But 'Abbās menaced the English with withdrawing the trading privileges and they finally gave way. After all, they would't be able to continue their trading activities in the land and all their investment would be lost. On the other hand, Iskandar Beg Munšī, a Safavid chronicler, says the

[54] W. Foster (ed.), *Letters received by the East India Company*..., vol. VI, pp. 32-34; Noel Sainsbury (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, East Indies, China and Japan, 1617-1621*, London, Longman and Co., 1870, pp. 45-46.

[55] Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, Costa Mesa, California, Mazda Publishers, 2001, p. 199.

British offered themselves for the job and that the armed expedition was in fact their own idea.[56]

Did the Portuguese see this threat coming? That question is difficult to answer. As we have already seen, the Newbery and Fitch affair is essentially circumstantial; the *Estado da Índia*'s authorities feared political uproar after Philip II's accession to the throne, and some contradictory rumours circulated through the Persian Gulf at that time. But instead of diminishing, this climate of suspicion developped into a more open hostility, and by the time of the Sherley brothers' arrival in Persia the Portuguese viceroy was already frankly opposed to any English presence in the East. And what happened to Robert Sherley in Ṣind shows that the captain of Ormuz was prepared to erase any threat to the Portuguese monopoly in the Indian Ocean and in the area of the Persian Gulf in particular. Even if the naval defeats that they endured from the East India Company's fleets meant times were changing fast, the most determinant factor against the survival of the Portuguese settlements in the Strait of Ormuz was the breakdown of diplomatic negotiations with Šāh 'Abbās. In fact, after the utter failure of García de Silva y Figueroa's embassy in 1619,[57] the Safavid emperor definitely changed his strategy concerning the Iberian crown and the *Estado da Índia*. This lead to the military intervention of the British in the affair and accelerated the conquering plans that the Safavid emperor had already devised.

This paper was a short presentation of a crucial litterary ensemble that deserves to be studied from a new and more ample perspective, a perspective that aims to discover the real issues behind the formal evidence of the writing process. We only mentioned some aspects chosen as examples for their obvious relevance, but there is much more to be said about these accounts. And after the classical works of Sir William Foster some of these texts – especially the ones regarding the Russia and Levant Companies – have been more or less vowed by modern historiography to oblivion, though their interpretation is crucial for a reevaluation of the history of European expansion in the western Indian Ocean in early modern times.

[56] Eskandar Beg Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great (Tārīk-e 'Ālamārā-ye 'Abbāsī)*. Trans. Roger Savory, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1978, vol. II, p. 1202.

[57] See *Comentarios de D. García de Silva y Figueroa de la embajada que de parte del rey de España Don Felipe III hizo al rey Xa Abas de Persia*, Madrid, Sociedad de bibliófilos españoles, 1903; Carlos Alonso, *Don García de Silva y Figueroa. Embajador en Persia (1612-1624)*, Badajoz, Diputación Provincial de Badajoz, 1993; Luís Gil (ed.), *García de Silva y Figueroa. Epistolário diplomático*, Cáceres, Instituto "el Brocense", 1989.

A PAISAGEM URBANA DE NOVA GOA, ENTRE A "VELHA CIDADE" E OS TEMPOS MODERNOS

ALICE SANTIAGO FARIA *

A Construção da Nova Capital [1843-1882]

Em 1843 quando Nova Goa foi criada e elevada a capital, compreendia "*(...) todo o litoral da margem esquerda do rio Mandovi desde a foz do mesmo Rio até à ponta de Dangim (...)*".[1] A cidade era constituída por três bairros: Pangim, Ribandar e Goa. A nova e a velha cidade tornavam-se numa só, demonstrando desde logo, a influência que a última iria exercer na nova capital (Desenho 1). No entanto, o desenvolvimento urbano do primeiro bairro, onde se centraram as grandes obras de infra-estruturação feitas na sua maioria até 1882,[2] fez com que este se confundisse muitas vezes com a própria capital. Era chamado indiscriminadamente de Nova Goa ou Pangim, demonstrando que a cidade mais alargada, só existia no papel e num sonho que teimava em persistir.

Na realidade desde há muito que diversas partes da administração pública se tinham mudado para Pangim, instalando-se a maioria em edifícios particulares preexistentes.[3] Ao longo do século XIX, esses edifícios, foram sendo reconver-

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[1] *Boletim do Governo do Estado da Índia*, n.º 41, 22 de Março 1843.

[2] Embora desde 1738 se pensasse fazer em Pangim uma cidade, o único plano que se conhece até 1843 é o de 1776. As obras tiveram dois principais impulsionadores D. Manuel de Portugal e Castro (1826-1835) e Caetano de Almeida e Albuquerque (1878-82).

Sobre esta questão: Alice Santiago Faria, "Pangim entre o passado e a modernidade: a construção da cidade de Nova Goa, 1776-1921" in *Murphy* 2, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 2007, pp. 66-97.

[3] Cotinneau de Kloguen, *An Historical Sketch of Goa* (facsimile da edição de Madras de 1831), New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 2005, p. 96.