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## **The Persian-Portuguese Encounter in Hormuz: Orientalism Reconsidered**

‘If the world were a golden ring, Hormuz would be the jewel in it’<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

In 2015, the quincentennial commemoration of the Portuguese arrival on the island of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf (1515-1622) revealed the underlying presupposition among Iranians that the Portuguese presence on the island was the harbinger of a long-term pattern of Western imperialism. This analysis questions the accuracy of this narrative by advancing a new interpretative framework that does not reduce the holding of Hormuz to simply another dark episode of European colonial history. Circumscribed and limited in aim and reach, Lusitanian activities on Hormuz cannot be brought under the generic rubric of “Orientalism”, which is embedded in European colonial tradition, and which by extension, buttresses Iranian nationalist sentiment about the Persian-Portuguese entanglement. My research demonstrates that Portuguese objectives diverged from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century rationalist scientific traditions of the British, French and Germans professing a civilising mission as a rationale for colonial policies. Whereas the Portuguese operated from a worldview that combined profit, dynastic pride, and religious rhetoric the Portuguese mission to Hormuz was not guided by a grand discourse of civilising the “other”. While there was a complex interplay of commercial interests and brutal methods on this strategic entrepot, Portuguese ambitions in Hormuz were confined and elusive, and at best a matter of tribute-taking. The present paper charts some of these complex interactions.

**Keywords:** Hormuz, Persian Gulf, Portuguese Empire, Safavid Dynasty, Orientalism

### **Introduction**

In 2015, in Lisbon, Portuguese and Iranian officials commemorated 500 years of bilateral relations, with reference to the arrival of the Portuguese on the island of Hormuz in 1515 – a presence that would last over 100 years.<sup>2</sup> To mark the quincentenary, several Memoranda of Understanding were signed between various Iranian and Portuguese diplomats and cultural organisations. In such bilateral encounter, during the official visit of Iranian foreign minister, Javad Zarif to Portugal in April 2015, his Portuguese counterpart, Rui Machete, hailed, ‘500 years since the beginning of diplomatic relations’.<sup>3</sup>

In the same vein, the Portuguese National Library in Lisbon organised a two-month exhibition entitled, 'Portugal-Iran: 500 Years', marking in their words, '500 years of commercial, political and diplomatic relations, and 500 years since the takeover of Hormuz by Afonso de Albuquerque'.<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing this paper, the same library is also editing a book of the same title.<sup>5</sup> While the Iranian ambassador to Portugal made an appearance at the inauguration of the exhibition in January 2016, there was a lot of tiptoeing around the question: was this an encounter to be commemorated, or did it represent a dark episode of classical European imperialism or colonialism predicated upon the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism?<sup>6</sup>

These theoretical concepts would ideally have to be fleshed out before assessing the nature of the Portuguese presence in Hormuz. However, for the purpose of this analysis, it is more useful to broach these questions by whittling down the line of inquiry to less theoretical terms. Specifically, by asking the question: Did the Portuguese come as traders or as conquerors in 1515?

The history of the Portuguese engagement of Hormuz is burdened by excess baggage. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a more accurate qualification of the Portuguese-Persian encounter – without cultural bias, or what Rudi Matthee refers to as 'staples of modern Iranian nationalism.'<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the objective is to navigate through the obfuscations of romanticised myth and legend produced by various nationalist Portuguese writers who, in glorifying a bygone past, have created analytical misunderstandings.

Furthermore, I shall engage this theme not as an historian but as a political scientist. My aim is not to rewrite history or to provide a historiographical survey but to provide a contemporary analytical study of perceptions relating to an episode in Iranian and Portuguese history. To that end, I distill critical features of the Luso-Persian entanglement in order to challenge some of the established conclusions and perceptions. By acknowledging nuances, and proposing a more integrative analysis, this paper aims to build a more empathetic narrative of the Portuguese-Persian encounter in Hormuz in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It should be added in parenthesis that the theme is a sensitive one for Iranians whose scholarship would be enriched by acknowledging, as will be argued below, that the Portuguese presence in their backyard was in fact, confined. It was not determined by the colonial vision or the 'Christocentric', theological mission that guided the Portuguese for example, in Goa where Portuguese colonial policies shaped and moulded the development of villages and settlements.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, in relation to Hormuz and mainland Savafid Iran, Portuguese objectives diverged from the eighteenth and nineteenth century rationalist scientific traditions of the British, French and Germans professing a civilising mission as a rationale for colonial policies.

### **Portuguese Orientalism in Hormuz?**

Orientalism, as an ideological, symbolical and aesthetic apparatus accompanying the process of European colonial expansion cannot be easily applied to the case of the Portuguese holding of Hormuz. A few words on the discursive field of Orientalism are pertinent here. Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* expounded on the relationship between power and knowledge, and between imperialism and scholarship. Said described 'Orientalism' as a Western discourse that essentialised the Muslim and Arab world in a pejorative manner. He argued that representations of the 'Orient' invariably carried implications about Western superiority or even flat statements of that superiority. Orientalism as a 'disciplinary regime' or a 'regime of truth' was characteristically racist and patronising.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, it was ideologically-motivated and intimately intertwined with the imposition of imperial power by offering ideological justification for it.<sup>10</sup> As such, Orientalism was not restricted to scholars – explorers, administrators and missionaries also participated in the discourse. Said articulated the symbiotic connection between Orientalism (as an epistemological model) and European expansion – a dialectic that legitimised Western penetration of the Arab lands and their appropriation.<sup>11</sup>

Though Said is not consistent about the beginning of Orientalism, he argued that it originated in the work of French and British scholars in the later eighteenth century. Said's theories did not deal with the Portuguese empire and its pioneering status in representing Asiatic societies in the sixteenth century onwards. With almost two centuries of colonial experience in Asia before British expansion, the Portuguese developed their own framework for interpreting other cultures they encountered. While there are many parallels with, for example, the British, in the essentialism and objectification of their subjects, particularly in the nineteenth century, the content of their findings is quite different – a product of variations in the intellectual traditions, colonial goals, and cultural currents of the colonial powers.<sup>12</sup>

Acutely understudied, Portuguese Orientalism is distinct from other European forms arguably, owing to the fact that Portuguese adventures in Asia were not uniform. Portuguese expeditions were not consistently guided by a grand discourse of civilising the 'other'.<sup>13</sup> As discussed below, in the case of the takeover of Hormuz, an all-encompassing colonial narrative cannot be applied – the Persian-Portuguese entanglement on the island has its own peculiarities. Thus, this study departs from the historical homogeneity inscribed in Said's discourse of Orientalism, and shifts towards the reflections of Lisa Lowe who argues that 'Orientalism consist[s] of an uneven matrix of Orientalist situations across different cultural and historical sites'.<sup>14</sup> Lowe cautions that Orientalism is an 'irregular and heterogeneous discourse that cannot be applied 'in a consistent manner throughout all cultural and historical moments'.<sup>15</sup>

For instance, Said proposed that from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the British Empire shaped the map of knowledge about South Asia by purposively tempering knowledge production to suit a material enterprise justified by a discourse of cultural and intellectual superiority.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, in the case of the early modern Portuguese Empire in South Asia, the process of knowledge production was theology-based, and geared to perpetuate the political and cultural ambitions of Catholic protagonists and their communities in South Asia and beyond.<sup>17</sup>

As Lowe has argued, 'each of these Orientalisms is internally complex and unstable'.<sup>18</sup> Rahul Sapra supports this notion by comparing Portuguese, British and Dutch trade in India to demonstrate that the approach of each of these nations to the Mughal empire was so distinct, 'that it would be misleading to posit a general *European* view of India in the seventeenth century'.

He compares the 'bonding' of the English with the Mughals as opposed to the Portuguese who, according to him, denigrated the Mughal population. Sapra explains that this not only undermines the idea of a homogenous 'West' but also of a homogenous 'East'. For instance, he explains that the Mughals sided with the British in their low regard of the Hindus, who Mughal historians perceived as inferior, by portraying them as 'barbaric' in their own writings.<sup>19</sup>

In order to free this investigation from the reductionism endemic in the treatment of the Portuguese-Persian past, this study's analytical point of departure is the premise that the European Orientalist project was not homogenous. With a conceptual blank canvass, it becomes easier to propose the boundaries of the Portuguese 'imperial' experience in Hormuz. However, this is not to suggest that the Portuguese did not subject Hormuz and its inhabitants to Orientalist depictions,

typical of the French and British. As indicated, I am attempting to carve out the nuances by a close re-reading of existing analyses about my subject matter.

Hormuz was repeatedly portrayed in Portuguese discourse as the bastion of extravagance. For example, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese writer and Portuguese India officer wrote, ‘The merchants of this isle and city are Persians and Arabs. The Persians are tall and well-looking, and a fine and up-standing folk, both men and women; they are stout and comfortable. They hold the creed of Mafamede in great honour’. He added, ‘they indulge themselves greatly, so much so that they keep among them youths for the purpose of abominable wickedness. They are musicians, and have instruments of diverse kinds. The Arabs are blacker and swarthier than they’.<sup>20</sup>

This Orientalist streak is evident in the account of the life of Navarrese Catholic missionary, St. Francis de Xavier (1506-1552) who visited Hormuz on his way to Japan. His musings were documented by scrivener and religious preacher, Henry James Coleridge:

Its moral state was enormously and infamously bad. It was the home of the foulest sensuality, and all the most corrupted forms of every religion in the East ... Mahometism was in great power, and possessed a very magnificent mosque ... the Arabs and the Persians had introduced and made common the most detestable forms of vice. Ormuz was said to be a Babel for its confusion of tongues, and for its moral abominations to match the cities of the Plain. A lawful marriage was a rare exception. Foreigners, soldiers and merchants, threw off all restraint in the indulgence of their passions ... Avarice was made a science: it was studied and practiced, not for gain, but for its own sake, and for the pleasure of cheating. Evil had become good, and it was thought good trade to break promises and to think nothing of engagements.<sup>21</sup>

At the core of their depictions of the island, the Portuguese bore similar perceptions imposed by the European colonial powers that Said critiques. Nevertheless, it is simplistic to read the occasional denigration of locals as evidence of a coherent colonial ideology, or such stereotypical representations as the product of a systematic colonialism. As such, it is essential to broach this theme without theoretical preconceptions or a blanket one-size-fits-all theory of European colonial adventures, which distorts the historical reality in the case of Hormuz. In this manner, I will extract the Portuguese experience in Hormuz from the epistemological toolbox of Orientalism, in order to advance following argument: whilst there was a complex interplay of commercial interests and brutal methods, on this strategic *entrepot*, Portuguese ambitions in Hormuz were confined and not holistically “colonial” or “imperial”.<sup>22</sup>

### **Crown, Christianity, Commerce, Conquest**

Sanjay Subrahmanyam explains that in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the Portuguese empire had a distinctly religious and messianic feature.<sup>23</sup> He argues that the Portuguese perceived both Hindus and Muslims as inferior ‘others’ that had to be converted to Christianity. This religious narrative is pervasive in the writings of the principle Portuguese court chronicler João de Barros who covered the events of the voyage of Vasco Da Gama to India in 1497. He begins his first volume, *Da Ásia* with the statement:

There having risen in the land of Arabia that great anti-Christ Muhammad, more or less in the year 593 of our Redemption, he so worked the fury of his steel, and the fire of his infernal sect by means of his captains and caliphs, that in the space of a hundred years, they conquered all of Arabia and parts of Syria, and Persia, in Asia, and in Africa all of Egypt beyond and before the Nile.<sup>24</sup>

Evidence of Portuguese religious objectives can be found in the letters of King Manuel I (1495-1521) during whose reign the first seaborne expedition to the Indian Ocean was mounted. After Vasco da Gama's successful voyage, he asserted that 'the people we found there are not as yet strong in the faith and when they shall have thus been fortified in the faith there will be an opportunity for destroying the Moors of those parts'.<sup>25</sup> Manuel I clearly stated his mission in his letters to the king and queen of Castile: 'the principal motive of this enterprise has been the service of God our Lord, and our own advantage'.<sup>26</sup>

The commercial side of Portuguese expeditions is underscored in Subrahmanyam's chapter tellingly entitled, 'Mercantilism and Messianism'.<sup>27</sup> He posits that 'the careful reader of [João de] Barros (Portuguese fifteenth century chronicler) and of other contemporary writings and documents soon discovers that those who were so religiously motivated could often be equally the persons in whose breasts the most fervently mercantilist spirit resided'.<sup>28</sup> Subrahmanyam gives the example of Infante Dom Henrique, Master of the Order of Christ, and creator of the Portuguese Crown patronage of missions, who was also a trader of sugar and slaves.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, the Portuguese idea of trade differed from that of other European nations as commerce was directly under the control of the crown. Bailey Diffie and George Winius observe: 'what distinguished the medieval Portuguese *feitoria* from all other national operations ... was the active interest the crown had long possessed in its own trading ... the king found it natural to be both father and competitor to his merchants'.<sup>30</sup> This seems to indicate further that the Portuguese model in India was very different from the constitution of the English East India Company. According to Sapra: 'The Portuguese system had been created by a dynasty; it was worked by, and for the benefit of, the crown'.<sup>31</sup> Sapra makes an important distinction: for the Portuguese, the idea of a dynasty and religious conversion went hand in hand with the idea of trade, whereas for the British and the Dutch, the primary consideration was commercial, and questions of cultural or religious difference were secondary.<sup>32</sup> In addition, an extension of the religion-trade dynamic was the idea of conquest. Sapra points out that the fleets were smaller in the earlier years before the Portuguese fully realised that in order to trade, they must first conquer:

... after Cabral's return and his report that opposition to the Portuguese in India was growing, the fleets increased in number; the voyages of 1502, 1504, and 1505, were each composed of upward of twenty vessels, some of them intended not to carry spices home to Portugal on the return monsoon but to remain in India as warships.<sup>33</sup>

This ambition behind the conquest of Goa was spelled out in the literary narratives of Luís Vaz de Camões'. In *Os Lusíads*, Camões brings in the twin notions of crusade and conquest: 'Goa seized from the Muslims will come in the fullness of time to be Queen of the Orient, raised up by the triumphs of her conquerors. From that proud noble eminence, [the Portuguese] will rule with an iron fist idol-worshipping Hindus, and everyone throughout the land with thoughts of rebellion'.<sup>34</sup> Of note is that such pronouncements were entirely absent in the case of the takeover and holding of Hormuz. The bravado, spirit and drive of Camões' narratives was reserved for the

East and not the Persian Gulf. From this perspective, Hormuz amounted to little more than a strategic commercial chokepoint. Portuguese territorial encroachment was limited to a case of economic exploitation, without a systematic blueprint for the *longue durée*. As we will discuss below, for example, in the case of the takeover of the custom's house, central in controlling trade transactions, the procedure was entirely ad hoc. Nothing in the nature of a financial or administrative system was developed by the Portuguese in Hormuz or elsewhere in the Persian Gulf.

In fact, even at the height of its economic turnover, the Portuguese failed to capitalise fully on the commercial possibilities Hormuz had to offer. Instead, they compromised the financial security previously offered to merchants, squandering the island's wealth, owing to what Edmund Herzig refers to as 'maladministration'.<sup>35</sup> Corruption and profiteering were rife at all levels, from the selling of offices by the viceroys and governors to piracy and private trading in royal ships by captains, and desertion, theft and murder by the soldiery.<sup>36</sup> It is a case in point that during the crisis of 1622 when the Portuguese were finally expelled from the island, the captain of Hormuz used only part of the money in the treasury for the defence of the island, keeping the remainder for himself. The Hormuz expedition, in the words of Malyn Newitt, 'performed no function in any grand strategy but merely repeated the cycle of raid, plunder and tribute'.<sup>37</sup> The Portuguese historian, João Teles e Cunha provides a rationale for this by explaining that for over two hundred years, spanning 1515 to 1750, the Persian Gulf was one of Estado de India's 'keys', but not 'the key'. Its role was limited to serving as a peripheral *outpost* in a border zone that served as India's first line of defence, while serving as a 'tap' to control the traffic of goods monopolised by the Portuguese crown.<sup>38</sup> Hence, the region remained on the periphery of Portugal's Asian empire 'whose centre was in India's west coast, and the [Persian] Gulf only mattered if Indian security was menaced by a naval power emerging from the Strait of Hormuz, or if the economic viability of the Cape route was threatened'.<sup>39</sup> Hormuz was only a detail on the much larger Portuguese imperial canvass.

The first to make use of ships as platforms to fire artillery and to project naval power, the Portuguese never resorted to military might to penetrate the land-based principalities and states of the Middle East – either because they were too powerful or, in the case of the Persian Gulf, there was not enough potential gain to justify the enormous expense in manpower and treasure. Also telling is the fact that the fact the Portuguese did not attempt to establish a permanent commercial presence on mainland Iran as did for example, the English and the Dutch who acquired trading posts in the Safavid capital. This supports Matthee's assertion that the idea that the Portuguese were engaged in imperialism is historically inaccurate and anachronistic.<sup>40</sup> In this manner, the Hormuz episode does not fit neatly under the rubric of a totalising Orientalism. The Portuguese holding of Hormuz supports Lowe's assertion that Orientalism is not a single developmental tradition but is profoundly heterogeneous.<sup>41</sup>

### **'If all the world were a golden ring, Hormuz would be the jewel in it'<sup>42</sup>**

'A barren rock, inhabited by some two hundred souls, who eke out a precarious existence by the sale of salt which forms the main staple of commerce and by mining red oxide for export to Europe'.<sup>43</sup> The island of Hormuz was bereft of vegetation or natural resources. Lacking even drinking water, islanders dug underground cisterns to store rain water and even snow brought over from the mainland.<sup>44</sup> I have argued that what made Hormuz so attractive was its strategic position

(and not its resources), commanding the passageway of all shipping entering and leaving the Persian Gulf. A vast emporium, all shipping movements were controlled by the Hormuz kingdom. Over the years, Hormuz developed into the main distribution centre supplying the routes via Basra and Baghdad, Isfahan and the Iranian plateau, with most of the products that came from the East. Intercontinental trade included, *inter alia*, food, drugs, incense, spices, ivory, metals and minerals, fabrics, jewels, perfumes and any luxury item. As Herzig notes, in recognition of the splendour of Hormuz, in Europe there was a fabric known as Ormezone, and Venice has a street of the same name.<sup>45</sup> Such was its luxury and wealth that Hormuz was described as the 'Jewel of the world's ring' (*pedra do anel do mundo*) by European travellers and writers. According to Mohammad Vosoughi, Tomé Pires, one of the first Portuguese to visit Hormuz at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century on his way to China, described the kingdom as 'rich and noble' and that it was 'the key to Persia'. He added that the 'the people of Hormuz are civilised and domestic men; they are warlike and have good arms and horses'.<sup>46</sup>

Vosoughi explains that Hormuz was the only city in the East that in which economic activity was accompanied by political independence.<sup>47</sup> With a population of about 50,000 at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Hormuz was governed by Arab and Sunni princes. The administrative system, the kingship, and the merchants all worked together to facilitate trade and commerce.<sup>48</sup> The island was characterised by religious tolerance, which in turn, fostered diversity and attracted capital. In a letter to his Jesuit brothers, Father Gaspar Barzeus reported in 1549 that in Hormuz, 'God was celebrated four times a week: the Hindus on Monday, the Moors on Friday, the Jews on Saturday and the Christians on Sunday'. Hormuz princes did not have any prejudice in favour of their own religion and participated in the religious ceremonies of other religions. Besides Persian and Arab merchants, there were Christians from Spain, Russia, Georgia and Germany, and some Jews who came via Venice. This cosmopolitan mixture of residents also included pagans and Banyans from India, and a significant community of Armenians who assimilated with the local Muslims through their dress and language.

Thus, it is not surprising that when the Portuguese set to dominate Asian trade, Hormuz was singled out as one of the keys to success. From 1509, explorer Albuquerque laid the foundations of the *Estado da India* by identifying the three strategic nodes of Goa, Hormuz and Malacca that would ensure Portuguese control of the major spice routes in the Indian Ocean.<sup>49</sup> Control of shipping was aimed at ensuring Portuguese superiority in maritime trade by circumventing the Ottoman Empire and at capturing the Asian spice trade by going around the Cape of Good Hope. Hormuz became an outpost for the Portuguese while simultaneously serving as a vast seaport that controlled all Persian Gulf shipping movements and trade coming from the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia.<sup>50</sup> Hence, their occupation of Hormuz at the entrance of the Persian Gulf had given them not only a strategically-situated base but also access to the most important commercial outpost.<sup>51</sup>

However, while Hormuz was a nodal point for the Portuguese, their presence on the island and the wider Persian Gulf area was not a part of a systematic colonial enterprise driven by a coherently antagonistic imperial discourse (or Orientalism). The rationale behind capturing Hormuz was not to create a new Portuguese city in the Persian Gulf, as the Portuguese did in Malacca, Macao and Goa, the formal centre of the Portuguese empire. The Persian Gulf saw merely conquest and domination, and not colonisation. The Portuguese objective was simply to acquire an urban base from which to wrest control of the sea routes and the trade which passed along them from their Asian competitors.

## Intricacies of engagement

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Hormuz had a distinctive feature: it had a king who was a vassal and a tributary to the king of Lusitania, Manuel I. Paradoxically this was a time when Safavid chronicles evoked a universe with Persia at its centre and presented a realm ruled by monarchs who were seen as God's viceregent. The Safavid *Weltanschauung* was instilled with a Irano-centric worldview, underpinned by unquestioned assumptions of cultural and religious superiority. Given this grandiose self-identification and Europe's marginal status in the Safavid mind, how was it that Persia, a continental power, tolerated an arrangement with the Portuguese that lasted over 100 years?

Let us begin with an outline of the events leading up to the occupation of Hormuz, which would last over one hundred years. In 1507, a Portuguese fleet under the command of Viceroy Albuquerque arrived off the island of Hormuz situated between the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Albuquerque immediately perceived the immense strategic importance of the island, which commanded the entrance of the Persian Gulf and from which Portuguese communication with India could be protected. After a bloody battle, Albuquerque demanded that its adolescent king, Shah Saif al-Din Abu Nadar, surrender to the Portuguese. After the king refused, Albuquerque destroyed Hormuzian trade ships in the harbour and landed his men. With little hope, Saif al-Din was obliged to allow the Portuguese to build a garrison and fort at one end of the island. The shah also agreed to pay an annual tribute, and granted the Portuguese certain customs concessions.<sup>52</sup>

The king was obliged to pay 5,000 *ashrafi* towards the expenses of the fleet, and an annual tribute of 15,000 *ashrafi* to the Portuguese crown. In addition, a treaty was signed in 1507 that set the tone of the relationship between the Portuguese administration and the kings of Hormuz for the remainder of the occupation. The most significant clause was that imports coming into Hormuz from Portugal would be free of duty, while merchandise bought by the Portuguese in Hormuz and its vassal ports should be liable to the same rates paid by natives. The Portuguese further asserted their supremacy by forbidding native vessels to trade without a pass (*cartaz*). Thus were laid the foundations for their naval and commercial domination of the Persian Gulf. These concessions from the king of Hormuz were later revised until complete control of customs passed into the hands of the Portuguese.

On this occasion, the Portuguese presence in Hormuz was short-lived. A quarrel arose between Albuquerque and some of his captains over the distribution of plunder, bearing in mind that most of the Portuguese captains and seamen had come into the Indian Ocean hoping to find wealth. Taking advantage of the dispute, Hormuz vizier Khwaja Attar refused to ratify the recently negotiated treaty; and when Albuquerque bombarded the town and attempted to blockade it, his captains opened direct negotiations with Hormuz and retired to India, despite his offer to refer the dispute to the viceroy. Albuquerque was forced to end the blockade.

In 1515, Albuquerque returned to the Persian Gulf for the third and final time to settle the question of Hormuz. Rather than thinking in terms of grand strategy, Albuquerque's immediate concern was financial: the treasury in Goa was exhausted. In order to pay his men, he needed the king of Hormuz's annual tribute, and, perhaps, an injection of portable wealth from the conquest of the city. A second, broader objective was to ensure that Hormuz did not fall into the hands of the Persian Shah, which was a possibility under the new vizier, Reis Hameed, who took over the administration of Hormuz in the chaotic family feud that followed Attar's death in 1514. Albuquerque dealt with this particular problem by killing Hameed, by a trick according to Gaspar Correia.<sup>53</sup> A new settlement was then negotiated with Turan Shah IV (1515-1522), the successor



of Saif al-Din, under which the island was handed over to the Portuguese and their garrison was installed in the fortress.

Turan Shah had to pay 20,000 *ashrafi* in reparation for goods that Albuquerque claimed had been stolen from the Portuguese factory in Hormuz. In addition, the king continued paying the tribute of 15,000 *ashrafi* each year to meet the expenses of the Portuguese fortress and garrison which were entrusted to a Governador.<sup>54</sup>

The Persians made certain preliminary demands concerning trading rights, free passage to the Bahrain islands and to Qatif, and the surrender of the trade dues of Hormuz. Albuquerque refused the package as a whole but allowed free passage to Bahrain and Qatif. Though driving a hard bargain, Albuquerque was still keen on signing a treaty with the shah. For that purpose, he sent Fernão Gomez de Lemos to offer Portuguese support against the Ottomans. In the end, negotiations broke down with the sudden death of Albuquerque in 1515. The project was dropped by his successor, Lopo Soares. One Arab writer notes that the agreement between Albuquerque and Ismail, even though it was not carried out, opened the way for the Persians to stay in Basra from 1508 until 1546, when it was conquered by the Ottomans. He does not, however, give any evidence for his belief that the Safavid regime in Basra was in alliance with the Portuguese.<sup>55</sup>

Shah Ismail reluctantly accepted the Portuguese occupation of Hormuz for two reasons: his lack of military power, especially a navy; and the hope of bringing the Portuguese into the Mediterranean conflict against the Ottomans. It is significant to note that there was no Iranian navy until the reign of Nader Shah in the eighteenth century, making it impossible for the Safavids to wield control over the waters of the Persian Gulf.

The death of Ismail in 1524 brought a temporary halt to the negotiations. Nonetheless, the Portuguese did not cease their efforts to draw the Safavids into an alliance against other Muslim powers. Several clashes with Persia were avoided, especially in matters where the two powers' commercial interests overlapped. Portugal generally accommodated Persian claims for commercial facilities in the Persian Gulf, but there remained matters of dispute. For example, both were aware of the importance of the Safavid port of Rayshahr, which played a significant role in the regional economy. Its wealth and importance were rooted in the horse trade. Concerned about competition with Hormuz, the Portuguese encouraged Persian merchants to deal with Hormuz and Goa to reduce Rayshahr's traffic.

The Portuguese were unwilling to allow any commercial dispute to jeopardise their alliance with the Persians, especially after the Ottomans reached the head of the Persian Gulf in 1546 and Qatif in 1550 from where Portuguese control could be challenged. However, Portuguese concerns over Rayshahr were not completely allayed until 1568 when the port lost its importance with the disappearance of its ruling family. The lesson of Rayshahr was that trade within the Persian Gulf could prove divisive; and the presence of external threats to both Portuguese and Persian interests reinforced the importance of cooperation between the two powers. The Ottoman occupation of Basra in 1546 not only made the "Portuguese captain of Hormuz" aware of further Ottoman plans in the Persian Gulf, but also prompted the Safavids to remain closely involved with the Portuguese until the beginning of seventeenth century. This wider historical and geopolitical context sheds light on the nature of the encounter between the Portuguese and Safavid Iran. Relations were distinctive: to the Safavids, Portugal was a 'friend-enemy'. Well aware of both their abilities and military limitations, the Safavids were guided by a strong sense of geopolitical realism, in particular, the shared fear of Ottoman aggression and ambitions.

## The nature of interactions on Hormuz

At the same time there is evidence in primary material that Portuguese methods on the island of Hormuz were repeatedly crude. The various volumes of the *Commentaries of the Great Afonso D'Albuquerque* translated and edited from the Portuguese edition of 1774 by Walter Birch – though oddly not Iranian or Arabic accounts – describe Albuquerque's bombardment of the rich and prosperous ports from south Oman to Hormuz.<sup>56</sup> The first volume depicts the heavy firing of houses, the brutal plundering of warehouses, the indiscriminate slaughter of inhabitants, and the mutilation of men, women and children. As indicated earlier, Albuquerque had used equally barbaric methods earlier in Indian cities like Goa in 1512.<sup>57</sup> The veracity of general accounts of ruthless methods is corroborated by the Chinese image of the Portuguese in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In Ming China, the Portuguese were repeatedly depicted as violent and unruly, and were seen as cannibals, kidnappers, slave traders, smugglers and marauders<sup>58</sup>.

A further testament of Portuguese methods is supplied by John Ovington, who in his seventeenth century travelogues, compares Portuguese behaviour to that of the Muslims and Arabs in Muscat. The Portuguese 'were received by Arabians at Muscat, with abundance of civility and candour, and allowed not only the freedom and exercise of their religion, but encouraged to build a stately church, and erect a college, and were no way stunted in the profession of their faith, and ostentation of the pompous worship'.<sup>59</sup> He adds that over time, the Portuguese amassed wealth and 'at length began to be so insolent and unruly, that they openly abused that civility which had entertained them'. The Arabs, 'who are naturally civil and obliging bore the repeated insolencies with great patience, and were loath to be drawn into any quarrels or debates with them, notwithstanding all this turbulent carriage of the Portuguese'.<sup>60</sup> What is also notable is the fact that even as prisoners of war (provoked by the Portuguese), the Portuguese were treated kindly: 'They neither correct them like Slaves, nor impose upon them any servile work, but maintain them in ease and idleness, with a certain allowance of provisions every day'.<sup>61</sup>

Later interactions on Hormuz were less barbaric but equally merciless, and largely dictated by self-interest and political intrigue. Let us look at an episode that took place under the governorship of Nuno da Cunha – one of the first Portuguese commanders during the so-called 'Discoveries'. In May 1529 da Cunha was in Muscat on his way to India to take up his office. From Muscat he was accompanied to Hormuz by Shaikh Rashid al-Muscati, a loyal friend of the Portuguese. Al-Muscati had complained to da Cunha that the vizier of Hormuz, Reis Sharaf al-Din al-Fali, had demanded 20,000 *ashrafi* as an outstanding tax on goods that he had exported to him from Hormuz. He added that the vizier had encouraged his brother, Delawar Shah, to revolt against the Portuguese in 1521 on the coast of Oman. The viceroy, not doubting al-Muscati's loyalty, accepted this story. Da Cunha used the opportunity to inflame the chronic struggle between the Arabs and the Persians. Da Cunha arrested Sharaf al-Din accusing him of acting as a tyrant over the king of Hormuz, Mohammed Shah. He did not offer any proof to support of this accusation – the reality being that Sharaf al-Din was acting against Portuguese authority in Hormuz by seeking to pursue a more independent policy and for standing against the captain of Hormuz, Diogo de Melo (1524-1528). Sharaf al-Din stirred further hostility by accusing de Melo of shipping goods in royal vessels for his own benefit. When Sharaf al-Din complained about de Melo's attitude the captain responded in kind, and, as a result, in 1529 da Cunha sent the vizier out to Goa and then to Lisbon as a prisoner.

The ministry of Hormuz was given to al-Muscati in 1530. Of note is that his was the first time ministerial authority in Hormuz passed into Arab hands: al-Muscati was the first Arab vizier

in the political history of the kingdom. The intervention in local politics provoked a rebellion in Bahrain in 1529. Da Cunha sent his brother to put down the revolt, but he was unsuccessful. The governor then retired to India, leaving the political situation in Hormuz at best unresolved and arguably more awkward.

This debacle highlights the use of ‘hostages’ in the Persian Gulf. Following his deposition as vizier, Sharaf al-Din was sent to Portugal as a political prisoner. He was kept away from Hormuz for about fifteen years from 1530 to 1545. The Portuguese also seized all of his assets, leaving his family in great hardship, as is clear from letters between him and his son. Nevertheless, as I have argued: while the Portuguese occupation of Hormuz was characterised by political manipulation and economic exploitation, it was in the end an unsystematic and ad-hoc form of economic domination. Let me explore this argument even further below.

### **The parameters of occupation**

As indicated above, there were practical reasons why the Portuguese did not settle down in the Persian Gulf and create trading settlements as they did elsewhere in Asia. The countries adjacent to the Persian Gulf were neither major markets for Portuguese imports, nor were they major producers of export goods. This combined with the unpleasant, arid and dry climate and the inaccessibility of the countries concerned and a population hostile to Christian proselytism were all conditions inimical to the establishment of Portuguese settlements.<sup>62</sup> Further differences can be identified between Hormuz and other Portuguese settlements. Whereas the official ‘mixed marriage policy’ in Goa committed the Portuguese to the city and helped to ensure their presence there for centuries, it was difficult to carry out a similar policy in the Persian Gulf region. Albuquerque encouraged soldiers to settle in India by marrying and creating families.<sup>63</sup> In Hormuz he found this policy impossible, since most of the inhabitants were Muslims in contrast to for example, Goa’s largely Hindu population.<sup>64</sup> As Matthee puts it: the Persian Gulf was ‘religiously and sexually impenetrable’.<sup>65</sup> Thus, single Portuguese soldiers could not stay for a long time in Hormuz or Bahrain or any part of the Persian Gulf, simply because they could not marry native Muslim women. In contrast, in Goa and Malacca Portuguese *casados* (married men) with the native women increased to hundreds by 1580.

Another feature of Portuguese conquests elsewhere was the process by which they tried to Europeanise and transform the areas into replicas of the places they knew back home. Hormuz was an exception. The Portuguese did not dispossess its rulers, and they demonstrated no intention of extending its size and power. In this manner, Hormuz was dissimilar to Goa and Malacca. The latter two cities were directly ruled by Portuguese colonialists after they had driven out the local rulers and replaced them by force with military governors.<sup>66</sup> In Hormuz, while most of the commercial activities belonging to the local ruler were placed in the hands of the king of Portugal (and from 1507 the Portuguese required the king of Hormuz to recognise the authority of the Portuguese throne), the Portuguese did not substantially alter the kingdom’s political system, or even its economic organisation. While the direction of foreign policy in Hormuz and command of its military forces remained in the hands of the Portuguese captains, no attempt was made to reorganise the society and economy.

The Portuguese takeover of the customs house, the *alfandega*, casts further light on the nature of Portuguese interactions with the Persians. In 1521, there was a revolt against the first Portuguese attempt to take over the customs house. The Portuguese swiftly suppressed the revolt

and pacified the backlash through monetary means. What is interesting to note is that the same leaders that had led the revolt remained in power in exchange for assurances and other financial payments to interested parties. Thus, the Persians operated out pragmatism as well as with an eye to profit, by making the best out of a bad situation.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, there was never any evidence of Portuguese intent to penetrate mainland Persia. Like all European merchants, the Portuguese operated on Iran's mainland at the mercy of the Safavid shahs as foreigners soliciting commercial rights, diplomatic concessions and permission to operate mission posts.<sup>68</sup> According to William Floor, nothing exemplifies the limits of Portuguese territorial ambitions as the fact that very few of the fortresses in the Persian Gulf ascribed to the Portuguese were actually built from scratch: they were mostly rebuilt or renovated.<sup>69</sup> Of the 250 Portuguese posts built around the world, the Portuguese did not build forts on the Safavid Persian coast aside from Hormuz, Queshm and Bandar Abbas.<sup>70</sup>

Portuguese control of Hormuz did not mean a change in trading patterns. Merchandise continued to be shipped to Basra to be sent to Baghdad and beyond. Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese and the establishment of their control over shipping between the Persian Gulf and India, maritime trade had been in the hands of the coastal population: Persians, Arabs, Baluchis, and in particular, Indians. This did not mean that after the Portuguese takeover these merchants could no longer engage in shipping. These merchants were no longer legally permitted to engage in carrying 'prohibited' goods such as horses outside Portuguese-controlled ports by the 1580s. Prior to that time, this type of trade was permitted as long as the shippers deposited a sum of money in Hormuz before they exported the horses to India. The same applied to other strategic or 'dual-use' commodities like iron, arms, timber, coir and mercenaries that could be used by Portugal's enemies.<sup>71</sup>

### **Did the Portuguese come as traders or as conquerors in 1515?**

Let us return to the thesis question in the introduction: Did the Portuguese come as traders or conquerors in 1515? The Portuguese adventure in Hormuz was all about markets – the command and supremacy of maritime routes. The nature of the Portuguese occupation can be best defined as economic domination characterised by quasi-imperialist forms of behaviour: relations were exploitative and tributary in nature, buttressed by a system of divide and rule.

Let us go back to the case of the takeover of the custom's house, which is emblematic of Portuguese tactics. In 1523 Persian resentment over Portuguese profiteering resurfaced and the previous arrangement, discussed above, fell apart. On this occasion, the Portuguese removed the Persian administrators that managed the kingdom, and replaced them with an Omani clan from Muscat. They also increased the tribute – an amount that led to the bankruptcy of the king of Hormuz. The kingdom, under the management of Omani viziers between 1528 and 1540, was still allowed to manage its own internal affairs, but the Portuguese administration actively worked to weaken Hormuzi institutions. Ultimately, they undercut the king's position by supporting the vizier against him, who in return, favoured Portuguese interests over Hormuzi interests. This finally led to the wholesale transfer of the customs house to the Portuguese in 1543. The king of Hormuz was left with nothing but his annual stipend and some influence in the appointment of a decreasing number of officials. Consequently, allegiance to the king by regional chiefs in the outlying parts of the kingdom diminished. The Portuguese diluted the king's influence further by making

succession subject to their approval, as well as uncertain, by ensuring that there were several candidates competing for the throne.<sup>72</sup>

Increasingly, Portuguese methods became more crude, leading to the island's decline. Herzig refers to the comments of sixteenth century English traveller, Ralph Fitch who noted that while Hormuz continued to prosper into the seventeenth century, there were already signs that something was beginning to go seriously wrong. He wrote that there were frequent complaints about the corruption and extortion of the Portuguese officials, especially the captains of the island who used the ships and soldiers of the garrison for their private trade instead of for protection of merchants and the suppression of piracy. Later in century, the Portuguese proved entirely unwilling or unable to suppress piracy and give merchant shipping the protection paid for in *cartazes* and customs charges.<sup>73</sup> So for the most part, Portuguese captains involved themselves in the political game for their personal benefit. They deposed kings and elected the sons of other kings and placed them on the throne. The first king appointed by the Portuguese was Salgur Shah II, the son of Mohammed Shah II after the latter's death in 1534. The captain of Hormuz, Antonio da Silveira, elected his son in his place. Pedro de Sousa, captain from 1562, appointed Ferrug Shah to the throne, in the years 1563-64.

Gradually, non-Portuguese merchants began to leave the island to look for more hospitable ports. According to Vosoughi, 'by applying their overly militaristic policies the Portuguese disrupted trade of the region and created conditions under which merchants and traders of Hormuz were not able to continue their activities and gradually left the economic scene'.<sup>74</sup> Note that before Portuguese control of the island, one of the reasons Hormuz was such an attractive commercial hub was the security it provided traders; customs authorities are reported to have collected their dues honestly. Apparently, when Albuquerque took Hormuz in 1515, he recovered in tact goods he had left in 1507.<sup>75</sup> In sum: The Portuguese can only loosely be considered 'conquerors' in the sense that they ended up controlling the internal administration of Hormuz for the purpose of consolidating economic domination of the island. But I would maintain that this conquest was not a part of a grand colonial enterprise or even a systematic imperial strategy. If that would be the case the Portuguese would have had a heavier military presence on the island – the number of Portuguese soldiers and sailors in Hormuz never exceeded 500.

What is more, as we have highlighted above, the Portuguese never conquered or controlled the Persian Gulf aside from holding Hormuz and monitoring access of the waterway. They did little to establish a permanent territorial presence or to establish communities of Portuguese settlers as they did elsewhere in Asia and the East Indies. Hormuz just happened to lie on a constellation of a wider commercial maritime map (the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean), which would allow the Portuguese to achieve commercial dominance of trade between Western Europe and the East. This assessment of the Portuguese-Persian encounter on the island, contrasts sharply with the narrative provided by author, urbanist and architect João Campos. The context of Campos' report is significant here. In 2002 the Iranian diplomatic mission in Lisbon asked the Gulbenkian Foundation to conduct a study on restoring the Portuguese Fortresses on Hormuz, Qehsm and Larak. The mission hoped that it could foster cultural and touristic relations with Portugal. At the time, reformist Iranian president, Seyed Mohammad Khatami was in power, and he was actively encouraging local missions to open up diplomatic channels with Europe as part of his 'Dialogue of Civilisations' initiative.<sup>76</sup> As part of the Gulbenkian Foundation's 'Strategies for the World's Cultural Heritage; Preservation in a Globalised World: Principles, Practices and Perspectives' series, Campos' report was published, entitled, *Iranian Heritage from Portuguese Origin – Meaning and Practice of Safeguarding*. The

report was a contemporary Orientalist exercise, showcasing the patronising language symptomatic of the civilising discourse now consigned to history.

In the report Campos represents the Hormuz and Qeshm fortresses as Portuguese patrimony and ‘legitimate’ expressions of civilisation, ‘supporting the evolution of mankind’. Furthermore, Campos depicts Albuquerque as a ‘visionary’. He speaks of the Portuguese maritime empire as having ‘civilisational significance’, and as having created ‘cultural and linguistic links across the globe by mapping and charting the world’.<sup>77</sup> Such a narrative distorts historical reality: the Portuguese did not go into Hormuz with a ‘civilising mission’ as Campos suggests. While they were interested in economic domination, their project in Hormuz was not carried by a wider civilising mission. Despite repeated hegemonic pronouncements that I have sampled in this article, the Portuguese crown, captains and merchants were not guided by a systematic discourse of superiority. Thus, the Portuguese experience in Hormuz does not fit neatly under the collective rubric of Said’s descriptions of the nineteenth century colonial European powers as I have argued at the beginning of this article.<sup>78</sup>

There must be nuance if we are to provide a balanced account of what happened in Hormuz. While several Portuguese friars and missionaries did indulge in non-European, non-Christian stereotypes, ultimately, the Portuguese crown, explorer Albuquerque and his successors, regarded the city and kingdom as an opportunity to support the *Estado da India*. Opportunistic and driven by profit, they used any means to reap the fruits of their conquest. They did not, however, set out on a mission to ‘civilise’ the subaltern local, but simply to hold Hormuz and to exploit it as a strategic goldmine for as long as possible. Therefore, it is more accurate to qualify Portuguese interactions with Persia as quasi-imperialistic, and more so a form of economic territorial exploitation, rather than a sophisticated colonial mission predicated on racial or cultural superiority. The Portuguese expedition lacked the long-term design or coherent ideological framework that was typical of European colonisers. This is why Campos’ language is dangerous: it breeds a false impression of actual historical events.

Equally problematic are retroactive representations of the Portuguese patrimonial heritage in Hormuz. In 2007, a program on a Portuguese new channel (RTP 1) covered a story of the Portuguese fortresses in Hormuz with the caption: Portugal’s ‘Seven Wonders’. Certainly, such depictions partially explain why the Iranians chose to abandon the initiative of restoring the Portuguese relics. The fortresses are in urgent need of cosmetic and superficial refurbishment and there is a strong interest in developing Hormuz as a tourist attraction. However, there is a profound sense of ambivalence, which is the product of Iranian perceptions of the Portuguese occupation.

One can identify Iranian perceptions about the Portuguese presence on the entrepot in manifestations such as the ‘National Persian Gulf Day’, observed annually on 29 April since 2004. In 2004, the High Council of the Cultural Revolution, then presided over by former President Khatami, officially designated 29 April as ‘National Persian Gulf Day’. While the Council acknowledged that the campaign led by the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council states to rename the Persian Gulf as one of the key considerations behind the initiative, the date coincides with the anniversary of Shah Abbas’ successful military campaign against the Portuguese navy from the Strait of Hormuz in 1622.<sup>79</sup> The fact that the anniversary commemorates the expulsion of the Portuguese from the island supports the notion that the Luso-Persian historical past is treated with resentment.<sup>80</sup> This is corroborated by João Teles e Cunha who, in reference to Portugal’s first official state visit to Tehran in January 2015 in forty years, explained that the five centuries of relations between Portugal and Iran have been marked by mutual distrust. Teles e Cunha explains that the Portuguese were ‘the first Europeans with whom the Iranians had a trauma owing to

occupation of part of their territory' and that bilateral relations developed on the basis of force resulting in suspicion and mistrust.<sup>81</sup>

With regard to Iranian perceptions, there is a widespread instinctive supposition among Iranians that the Portuguese presence in the Persian Gulf in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the harbinger of a long-term pattern of Western interference that continued in a broken, almost teleological line, with the arrival of the Dutch, the English, who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century morphed into the British, and who were followed by the Russians and, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by the Americans. In order to mitigate this narrative, it is important to recognise that the presumed centrality of the Persian Gulf to Iran in Safavid times is inaccurate, anachronistic, reflecting 20<sup>th</sup>-century nationalism rather than historical reality. This uncritical understanding of history serves to buttress nationalist thinking about Western imperialism that does not correspond entirely with the Persian-Portuguese past. Rudi Matthee explains that in order to accurately historicize the Portuguese presence in the Persian Gulf, it is important to dispel two myths. The first is the notion that Safavid Iran was a Persian Gulf power with both the ambition and the capacity to control the region; and the second is the idea that the Portuguese controlled the Persian Gulf in the sixteenth century with 'imperialist and protocolonialist designs'.<sup>82</sup>

First, in the early modern period, Iran's power was not projected from the Persian Gulf – this only came later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Iranian rulers were concerned about rival powers in the Persian Gulf but the core of their power was concentrated in the interior. Matthee explains that until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Safavid relations with the Persian Gulf littoral were mostly tributary in nature and that this only changed when the visionary Shah Abbas I (r. 1587-1629) established full control over the coastal area.<sup>83</sup> However, as Farrokh explains, despite Shah Abbas making strides in military development, especially in firearms production, the Iranians did little to address the fact that they had no navy of their own.<sup>84</sup> They did not build the powerful warships in the Persian Gulf, as they did in the Caspian Sea and thus lacked any mechanism to control the waters of the Persian Gulf until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> It is important to disentangle Iran as a powerful Safavid state from the Persian Gulf in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Second, as I have explained above, the Portuguese never resorted to military might to penetrate the land-based principalities and states of the Middle East. Nor did they attempt to establish a permanent commercial presence on mainland Iran as did for example, the English and the Dutch. The territorial dimension of the Portuguese adventure in the Persian Gulf was limited to: holding Hormuz until 1622 and Bahrain until 1602; and after losing Hormuz, moving to Muscat until 1650 and Mombassa until 1698 from which they were expelled by the Arabs of Oman<sup>86</sup>; and holding a trade factory in Kong on the Iranian littoral from 1630 onward.<sup>87</sup> As Matthee underscores, it is more accurate to view the Portuguese Empire an empire "written on water" to use Subrahmanyam's words.<sup>88</sup> These two important caveats support the argument that the Hormuz episode does not fit neatly under the rubric of a totalising and heterogeneous Orientalist narrative, which is embedded in European colonial tradition (and which by extension, buttresses Iranian nationalist sentiment about the subject).<sup>89</sup>

With this in mind, the new interpretative framework advanced in this analysis has aimed to shed a more balanced light on the Persian-Portuguese past. It has looked at concrete facts – not intentions, or hypotheticals, what would have or could have happened – but actual historical events in order to qualify the nature of the 107-year Portuguese presence on the island. The evidence supports the fact that an all-encompassing colonial or Orientalist narrative cannot be applied to the holding of Hormuz. Thus, the aim of the study has been to develop a more integrative and balanced

narrative: one that does not reduce the holding of Hormuz to simply another dark episode of European colonial history.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Padfield (1979) *Tide of Empires: Decisive Naval Campaigns in the Rise of the West* (London: Routledge), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Albuquerque first attempted to conquer the island in 1507 when he arrived with a small Portuguese fleet of 7 ships and 500 men. In 1515, the Portuguese succeeded in establishing control of the island.

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<sup>3</sup> *Portugal e Irão assinalam 'nova fase' no relacionamento e sublinham 'desafios comuns'* (Portugal and Iran signal a new phase in their relationship and underscore common challenges). April 15, 2015. Available at: [http://www.sapo.pt/noticias/portugal-e-irao-assinalam-nova-fase-no\\_552e98876cfd6b654a2821d2](http://www.sapo.pt/noticias/portugal-e-irao-assinalam-nova-fase-no_552e98876cfd6b654a2821d2), accessed February 10, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Biblioteca Nacional Apresenta Exposição Portugal-Irão: 500 anos. Available at: <http://canelaehortela.com/biblioteca-nacional-apresenta-exposicao-portugal-irao-500-anos1946/>, accessed February 10, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> This author has also contributed to this forthcoming volume.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said distinguishes between imperialism and colonialism by explaining that imperialism entailed 'the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory', while colonialism refers to 'implanting of settlements on a distant territory.' In Gilmartin, M. (2009) *Key Concepts in Human Geography* (London: Sage), p. 116. See further, E. Said (1994) *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books).

<sup>7</sup> R. Matthee (2011) Distant Allies: Diplomatic Contacts between Portugal and Iran in the Reign of Shah Tahmasb, 1524-1576, in: Matthee, R. & J. Flores (eds) *Portugal the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia* (New York: Peeters), p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> There are of course, civilisational aspects to religious conversions.

<sup>9</sup> A. Adib-Moghaddam (2013) *On the Arab Revolts and the Iranian Revolution: Power and Resistance Today* (London: Bloomsbury), p. 99. See further A. Adib-Moghaddam (2008) 'A (Short) History of the Clash of Civilisations.' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21 (2), pp. 217-234.

<sup>10</sup> See further I. R. Netton (ed.) (2013) *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land, Voyage* (London: Routledge).

<sup>11</sup> E. Said (1978) *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon).

<sup>12</sup> P. Axelrod & M. A. Fuerch (1998) Portuguese Orientalism and the Making of the Village Communities, *Ethnohistory*, 45 (3), pp. 439-440.

<sup>13</sup> See further, A. Adib-Moghaddam (2013) Can the (Sub) Altern Resist?: a Dialogue between Foucault and Said, in: Netton, I. (ed.) *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land, Voyage* (London: Routledge).

<sup>14</sup> R. Sapro (2011) *The Limits of Orientalism: Seventeenth Century Representations of India* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), p. 15. He quotes L. Lowe (1994) *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (NY: Cornell University), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> R. Sapro (2011) *The Limits of Orientalism*, p. 15. He quotes L. Lowe (1994) *Critical Terrains*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> R. Sapro (2011) *The Limits of Orientalism*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> See further A. B. Xavier & I. G. Zupanov (2015) *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford UP).

<sup>18</sup> R. Sapro (2011) *The Limits of Orientalism*, p. 15. He quotes L. Lowe (1994) *Critical Terrains*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> R. Sapro, *The Limits of Orientalism*, p. 34. Although, it can be argued that this was a case of 'self-Orientalisation.'

<sup>20</sup> D. Barbosa (1918) *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants* (London: Hakluyt Society). Written by Duarte Barbosa and completed about the year 1518 AD.

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- <sup>21</sup> H. J. Coleridge (1872) *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier 1505-1556* (London: Burns & Oates), pp. 104-105.
- <sup>22</sup> E. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 74.
- <sup>23</sup> S. Subrahmanyam (1993) *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700* (London: Longman), p. 45. For more on the Christian mission in Hormuz and later in Safavid Persia, see J. Flannery (2013) *The Mission of the Portuguese Augustinians to Persia and Beyond: 1602–1747* (Boston: Brill), p.45.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 49. He references J. De Barros (1973) *Da Ásia* (Lisbon: Livraria Sam Carlos), pp. 1-2.
- <sup>25</sup> E. G. Ravenstein (trans & ed.) (1995) *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-1499* (New Delhi: Madrs), p. 113-115.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> S. Subrahmanyam (1993) *The Portuguese Empire in Asia*, p. 45.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> B. Diffie & Winius G. (1977) *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire 1415-1580* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 313. The *feitor* was a representative of the Crown whose function was that of an ambassador and royal commercial agent.
- <sup>31</sup> R. Sapro (2011), p. 34. He quotes W. Hunter (1912) *A History of British India* (London: Longmans), 1:237.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 34-36.
- <sup>33</sup> R. Sapro (2011) *The Limits of Orientalism*, p. 35.
- <sup>34</sup> R. Sapro (2011), p 35. He quotes Luís Vaz de Camões, L. White (trans) (1997) *Os Lusíads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2.46, 2.51.
- <sup>35</sup> E. M. Herzig (1985), Hormuz Villes Sans Antecedents, de Durée Conscrite, *Bulletin* (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), 12 (1), p. 10. Funds were supposed to support the Estado de India or the crown. The funds were said to have been sent to Goa but official documents only showed a small fraction of what was purportedly sent.
- <sup>36</sup> A. Hower & R. A. Preto-Rodas (eds) (1985) *Empire in Transition: The Portuguese World in the Time of Camões*, (Florida: Duke University Press), p. 111.
- <sup>37</sup> M. Newitt (2005) *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion: 1400-1668* (London: Routledge), p. 106.
- <sup>38</sup> J. Teles e Cunha (2009) The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, in: L. Potter (ed.) (2009) *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave), pp. 220-224.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 208.
- <sup>40</sup> R. Mathee, The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, in: J. R. Macris, J. R. & Kelly, S. (eds) (2012) *Imperial Crossroads: the Great Powers and the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press), p. 4.
- <sup>41</sup> See further, L. Lowe (1994) *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*.
- <sup>42</sup> P. Padfield (1979) *Tide of Empires: Decisive Naval Campaigns in the Rise of the West* (London: Routledge), p. 65.
- <sup>43</sup> A. T. Wilson (1928) *The Persian Gulf in History* (Delhi: Gyan Books), p. 151.
- <sup>44</sup> H. A. R. Gibb (trans) (1962) *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP) Vol. H, p. 400.
- <sup>45</sup> E. M. Herzig (1985) Hormuz Ville Sans Antecedents, p. 6.

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- <sup>46</sup> T. Pires (1990) *The Suma Oriental* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services), p. 19-20. M. Vosoughi (2009) *The Kings of Hormuz: From the Beginning until the Arrival of the Portuguese*, in: Potter, L. (ed.) *The Persian Gulf in History*, p. 96.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- Detailed descriptions of Hormuz just before and during the Portuguese period can be found in *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*.
- <sup>47</sup> M. Vosoughi (2009) *The Kings of Hormuz: From the Beginning until the Arrival of the Portuguese*, p. 97.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> G. R. Crone (1972) *The Discovery of the East* (London: Hamish Hamilton), p. 58.
- <sup>50</sup> M. Vosoughi (2009) *The Kings of Hormuz: From the Beginning until the Arrival of the Portuguese*, p. 99.
- <sup>51</sup> M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs (2001) Northern Individuals in the Malay-Indonesian Area, in: Kratoska, P. H. (ed.) (2001) *South East Asia, Colonial History: Imperialism before 1800* (London: Routledge) vol. 1, p. 243
- <sup>52</sup> A. D. Farinha (1989) A Dupla Conquista de Ormuz por Afonso de Albuquerque. *Stvdia*, 48. p. 457.
- <sup>53</sup> G. Correia, *Lendas da India: 1495-1561*, Vol. II, (Lisbon: Academia Real das Ciências), pp. 409-410.
- <sup>54</sup> D. Barbosa (1918) *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants* (London: Hakluyt Society) written by Duarte Barbosa and completed about the year 1518 AD, p. 103.
- <sup>55</sup> A. Al-Anani (1993) The Portuguese in Bahrain and its Environs During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, in: Khalifa, A. K. & M. Rice (eds) *Bahrain through the Ages of History: the Archaeology* (London: Kegan Paul), p. 43.
- <sup>56</sup> W. Birch (trans & ed.) (2010) *Commentaries of the Great Afonso D'Albuquerque, Second Viceroy of India*. Translated from the Portuguese Edition of 1774, Volume 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- <sup>57</sup> M. N. Pearson (ed.) (1996) *Spices in the Indian Ocean World* (Surrey: Aldershot), p. 125.
- <sup>58</sup> K. C. Fok (1987) 'Early Ming Images of the Portuguese', in: Ptak, R. (ed.) *Aspects in History and Economic History, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag), pp. 143-155.
- <sup>59</sup> J. P. Guha (ed.) (1984) Ovington, J. *A Voyage to Suratt in the Year 1689. India in the Seventeenth Century* (Delhi: Associated Publishing House), pp. 193-194.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 195.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> W. Floor & F. Hakimzadeh (2007) *The Hispano-Portuguese Empire and its Contacts with Safavid Persia, the Kingdom of Hormuz and Yarubid Oman from 1489 to 1720: A Bibliography of Printed Publications 1508 – 2007* (NY: Peeters Publisher), p.xvi.
- <sup>63</sup> M. Newitt (2005) *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, p. 98.
- <sup>64</sup> R. P. Rao (1963) *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House), p. 31.
- <sup>65</sup> R. Mathee (2011), *Distant Allies*, p. 220.
- <sup>66</sup> R. P. Rao (1963), *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961*, p. 32.
- <sup>67</sup> N. Steensgaard (1973) *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 192-193.

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- <sup>68</sup> R. Matthee, The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, in: J. R. Macris, J. R. & Kelly, S. (eds) (2012) *Imperial Crossroads: the Great Powers and the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press), p. 4.
- <sup>69</sup> W. Floor & F. Hakimzadeh (2007) *The Hispano-Portuguese Empire*, p. 231.
- <sup>70</sup> J. Teles e Cunha (2009) The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, in: Potter, L. (ed.) *The Persian Gulf in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), 208.
- <sup>71</sup> W. Floor & F. Hakimzadeh (2007) *The Hispano-Portuguese Empire*, p. xiv.
- <sup>72</sup> W. Floor and F. Hakimzadeh (2007) *The Hispano-Portuguese Empire*, p. xvi
- <sup>73</sup> E. M. Herzig (1985), *Hormuz Ville Sans Antecedents*, pp. 6-10.
- <sup>74</sup> M. Vosoughi (2009) The Kings of Hormuz: From the Beginning until the Arrival of the Portuguese, pp. 89-90.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>76</sup> See further, G. Tazmini (2009) *Khatami's Iran: the Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform* (London: I. B. Tauris).
- <sup>77</sup> J. Campos (2002) Iranian Heritage from Portuguese Origin - Meaning and Practice of Safeguarding, in: *Relativas al Patrimonio Cultural Mundial* (Madrid: Comité Nacional Español), pp. 127-129.
- <sup>78</sup> Note, that I am not suggesting that it was not otherwise in other Portuguese settlements at the time – assessment of which is beyond the purview of this analysis.
- <sup>79</sup> K. Farrokh (2011) *Iran at War: 1500-1988* (Oxford: Osprey), p. 61-63.
- <sup>80</sup> F. Mirrazavi, *April 30: National Persian Gulf Day*, <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/April-30th-National-Persian-Gulf-Day.htm>. Accessed: 12 September 2016.
- <sup>81</sup> S. Branco, *Governo português visita Irão pela primeira vez em 40 anos*, <https://www.publico.pt/politica/noticia/governo-portugues-visita-irao-pela-primeira-vez-em-40-anos-1683319>. Accessed: 12 September 2016.
- <sup>82</sup> R. Matthee, The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, in: J. R. Macris, J. R. & Kelly, S. (eds) (2012) *Imperial Crossroads: the Great Powers and the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press), p. 3.
- <sup>83</sup> R. Matthee, The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, p.3.
- <sup>84</sup> K. Farrokh (2011) *Iran at War: 1500-1988* (Oxford: Osprey), p. 41.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>87</sup> R. Matthee, The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf, p. 4.
- <sup>88</sup> S. Subrahmanyam (2001) Written on Water: Designs and Dynamics of the Portuguese Estado de India, in: Alcock, S. A. et al. (eds) *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 42-69.
- <sup>89</sup> See further, L. Lowe (1994) *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*.