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ARTICLE

Factories, capitulations, and the dilemmas of Ottoman–Portuguese detente in Basra, 1622–1722

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Abstract

This article examines Ottoman–Portuguese commercial agreements in Basra during the century after 1622 and the legal ambiguities that they engendered. On two separate occasions, the Portuguese established a factory in Basra: first in 1624 during the reign of the Afrāsiāb pasha (who governed in the name of the Ottomans from 1612 to 1667) and once again in 1690 when the city was ruled again by Ottoman governors (Ottoman direct rule was restored in 1667). Yet there were myriad issues that supplied cause for disputation between the two parties, not least the legal status of the factory itself. On the face of it, both the Portuguese and the Ottoman functionaries in Basra operated according to divergent models of extraterritorial trading privileges. After a century of expansion on the coasts of Africa and the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese had grown accustomed to the model of the factory (*feitoria*), in both those places in which the Portuguese governed in their own name and those in which they traded at the sufferance of African and Asian rulers. On the other hand, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottomans had granted so-called capitulations to European powers in the Mediterranean, which were governed by norms that were distinct from the factory model of Africa and Asia. Basra brought these two models into interaction and disrupted the straightforward implementation of either model. Frequent moments of misunderstanding and manoeuvring between the two sides were the result.

Keywords: early modern capitulations; factories; Indian Ocean; Ottoman; Portuguese

In 1721, a memorandum was prepared by an officer of the Estado da Índia in Goa that highlighted the string of victories that had been gained by the Portuguese in the western Indian Ocean over the previous four years.[1] In a strange turn, the author warned that certain details of Portuguese victories in Asia should not be promulgated so that 'the Great Turk does not take measures (*não faça as prevenções*) that could destroy this grand endeavor'.[2] Why the Portuguese considered the Ottomans a special threat is puzzling. Admittedly, four years earlier in 1717, the Portuguese monarchy had sent a sizable contingent of ships to battle the Ottomans off Cape Matapan in the Morea. Puffed up by what was essentially a draw, King João V thereafter nurtured an image of himself as a crusading

[1] Biblioteca Pública de Évora (BPE-RES) cod. CIII/2-16, no. 15, 'Aditamento á relação que se imprimiu das vitórias que alcançaram as armas Portuguesas na Ásia desde o ano de 1717 até ao de 1720', 58v. at 64fl., 21 October 1721.
[2] *Ibid*, 59r. The archival excerpt for this source omits the '*não*' that is present in this sentence.

Christian king.[3] But, despite the string of Portuguese texts about the battle, the Ottomans scarcely seem to have registered Portuguese participation at Matapan: Ottoman instructions to the *kapudan pasha* in the lead-up to the battle only record the presence of ships from the Papal States and Spain (*İspanya*).[4]

At any rate, direct relations between Istanbul and Lisbon were practically non-existent during this period. By contrast, in the century that led up to the 1721 letter, the nominal Ottoman authorities in Basra and the Estado da Índia maintained more regular ties, albeit with substantial periods of interruption and typically via merchant intermediaries. There were two phases of direct relations between the *pashalık* of Basra and Goa: from roughly 1623 to 1650, and again from 1690 to 1705. Private, even clandestine, contacts marked the periods before 1623, between 1650 and 1690, and after 1705. The political and economic conditions that underpinned the Ottoman–Portuguese relationship were quite dissimilar in these three periods. In 1624, the Portuguese became close to the pasha of the Āl-i Afrāsiāb—a family who ruled Basra from 1612 until 1667 under the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan.[5] This was on account of the support rendered by a Portuguese armada to the pasha during the course of the Safavid siege of Basra that began on 23 November 1623. While both the Afrāsiāb pasha and his Ottoman overlords attempted to reward the Portuguese with robes of honour, there was no formal treaty that allowed the Portuguese to set up a factory (trading post) in the city. Nonetheless, this is what the Portuguese proceeded to do. The factory made a strong showing from 1624 until roughly 1650, after which it went into a hiatus. Four decades later, the Portuguese factory was suddenly revived in 1690 through a formal agreement between the Estado and the Ottoman governor Halil Pasha. (After more than half a century of indirect rule by proxies, the Ottomans directly appointed a governor in Basra only from 1667.)

However, this restored Portuguese presence was cut short by a series of dramatic events: the rebellion of the Muntafiq shaykhs in 1694, the flight of the Ottoman governor Halil Pasha during the course of their seizure of the city, and the Safavid conquest of Basra in 1697.[6] A new agreement was attempted yet again between the Ottoman administration and the Estado in 1701 but, for reasons explained below, it came to grief. For the next three decades, the Portuguese presence in Basra persisted in muted form, with marauding Portuguese fleets attempting to collect customs and tribute from Basra when they were not distracted by their protracted struggles with the Omanis. By the 1730s, the Portuguese presence in Basra had disappeared more or less for good, overshadowed by the re-entry of other European players into the city, namely the English, the Dutch, and the French.

Understandably, given the high drama of the rivalry of the Ottoman and Portuguese in the sixteenth-century Indian Ocean, the relationship between the Ottomans and the Estado da Índia after 1600 has been of scarce interest to historians.[7] Scholars of the

[3] I. R. Castro, 'The "new Lepanto"? John V of Portugal and the battle of Matapan (1717)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 24.1 (2018), pp. 93–106.

[4] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office) DVNSMHM.d… 120 - 829 (H-20-08-1126); for the Portuguese texts, see J. da Matta Oliveira (ed.), *Alguns manuscritos sobre a Batalha do Cabo Matapan* (Lisbon, 1950).

[5] W. M. Floor and F. Hakimzadeh, 'Historical context', in *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*, (eds.) W. M. Floor and F. Hakimzadeh (Lovanii, 2007), p. xviii.

[6] For an excellent survey of Basra's history in this period, see T. A. J. Abdullah, *Merchants, Mamluks, and Murder: The Political Economy of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Basra* (Albany, 2001); R. Matthee, 'Boom and bust: the port of Basra in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in *The Persian Gulf in History*, (ed.) L.G. Potter (New York, 2009), pp. 105–127.

[7] G. Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford and New York, 2010); S. Soucek, 'The Portuguese and the Turks in the Persian Gulf', in *Revisiting Hormuz: Portuguese Interactions in the Persian Gulf Region in the Early Modern Period*, (eds.) D. Couto and R. M. Loureiro (Wiesbaden, 2008), pp. 29–56.

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Portuguese empire and Ottoman Iraq have made passing references to the Portuguese at Basra in the seventeenth century, but have undertaken no systematic study of their activities there.[8] The recent spate of first-rate scholarship on Portuguese relations with the Mughals and Safavids in the seventeenth century more than warrants a closer look at the Estado's relationship with the Ottomans. Even if the Portuguese association with the Ottomans was considerably more irregular than that which they maintained with the Mughals and Safavids, from time to time, Basra impinged upon the Estado's relationship with all three Islamicate empires.[9] In addition to these themes, Ottoman–Portuguese connections during the period covered here likewise speak to recent attempts to re-evaluate the Estado's post-1640 institutional history[10] and efforts to appreciate the extent of Ottoman connections to the Indian Ocean from the seventeenth century onward.[11]

The history of Ottoman–Portuguese detente in Basra raises three questions. First, to what extent did Ottoman authorities understand the Portuguese settlement in Basra according to the standard regime of capitulations that they granted to European powers in the ports of the Ottoman Mediterranean? Second, did the Portuguese perceive their presence in Basra according to the model of *feitoria e fortaleza* (factory and fortress)—which was familiar to them after their experience in littoral Africa and the Indian Ocean—or as a different arrangement altogether? Finally, what misunderstandings arose from the intersection of these two typologies of early modern extraterritorial trading rights (that of the Ottoman Mediterranean, on the one hand, and that of the Portuguese Indo-Atlantic, on the other) in Basra?

Answering these questions is complicated by the fact that the Ottoman sources that detail the relationship are patchy. After all, direct Ottoman rule in Basra between 1622 and 1722 was intermittent and Portuguese connections to Basra often took the form of the voyages of private traders. Unfortunately, there is scarcely any documentation on seventeenth-century Basra in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, in contrast to that available for the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. That means that the sources consulted here are largely Portuguese in origin and these cannot be balanced out by Ottoman perspectives. Whereas the circumstances surrounding the Portuguese installation in Basra in 1623–1624 are comprehensively documented, there is no document from the Ottoman or Portuguese side that green-lighted the foundation of a factory. By contrast, official Portuguese material survives for the period 1690–1705 that includes formal covenants, although not all of it is particularly well preserved. The ambitious source collections on early modern Omani and Portuguese relations that were compiled in the past decade or so—which include a 16-volume text of sources—have also been utilised here.[12] The

[8] A. R. Disney, 'The Gulf route from India to Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: couriers, traders and image-makers', in *The Portuguese in India and Other Studies, 1500-1700*, (ed.) A. R. Disney (Abingdon, 2016), p. 538; C. R. Boxer, 'Anglo-Portuguese rivalry in the Persian Gulf, 1615-1635', in *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750*, (ed.) C. R. Boxer (London, 1985), pp. 125–126; J. Teles e Cunha, 'The Portuguese presence in the Persian Gulf', in *Persian Gulf in History*, (ed.) Potter, p. 217; S. Hemsley Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford, 1925), p. 106; H. al-Bazi, *al-Baṣra fi-l-fatra al-muẓlima* (Basra, 1970), p. 116; W. Floor, *The Persian Gulf: A Political and Economic History of Five Port Cities 1500-1720* (Washington, DC, 2006), ch. 5.

[9] J. Flores, *Unwanted Neighbours: The Mughals, the Portuguese, and Their Frontier Zones* (New Delhi, 2018); R. Matthee and J. Flores (eds.), *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia* (Leuven, 2011).

[10] S. Subrahmanyam, 'Looking out from Goa, 1648: perspectives on a crisis of the Estado da Índia', *Modern Asian Studies* 55.6 (2021), pp. 1755–1794.

[11] R. Mantran, 'L'Empire Ottoman et le commerce asiatique aux 16e et 17e siècles', in *Islam and the Trade of Asia: A Colloquium*, (ed.) D.S. Richards (Philadelphia, 1970).

[12] A. Al-Salimi and M. Jansen (eds.), *Portugal in the Sea of Oman: Religion and Politics: Research on Document, Part 2: Transcription, English and Arabic Translation. Corpus 1: Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (Hildesheim, 2015), vols 1–10; Abdulrahman Al-Salimi and M. Jansen (eds.), *Corpus 2: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal* (Hildesheim, 2018), vols 11–16.

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recollections of figures such as Pietro della Valle, Manuel Godinho, Filippo Sassetti, and others help to flesh out the larger picture. The odd document from the Dutch and English East India Companies also fill in the edges of the canvas.[13]

Capitulations and the factory model in Basra

Before examining the specifics of the Ottoman–Portuguese detente in Basra, it is wise to deal at greater length with the two institutions mentioned above: Ottoman capitulations and the Portuguese factory. From the strict perspective of Ottoman imperial law, capitulations were unilateral privileges that were granted by the sultan.[14] Both in theory and in practice, the system was undergirded by a range of Ottoman legal categories and documents.[15] The Ottoman Levant capitulations most often entailed the granting of an unfortified residence (or *khan*) to a foreign merchant community and the establishment of 'consuls' or 'vice consuls', who collected a fee from the merchants under their administration for their services (most frequently a 2% customs rate).[16] The European consul or vice-consul was complemented by the appointment of a resident ambassador in Istanbul. Both the consuls and ambassadors were authorised to 'register contracts, witness statements, bills of lading, wills, and other such documents'.[17] At a later date, the capitulations allowed the Europeans to sell tax-exempt (called *berat*) to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects who, as a result, became known as the *berath* (*berat*-holders) merchants.[18] They were widely employed by European commercial interests. None of these rights was granted to the Portuguese in Basra, in either 1624 or 1690.

The paradigm of Portuguese factories in the Indian Ocean—which were copied by later European arrivals in the Indian Ocean—differed from the Ottoman capitulations in several senses. The institution of the *feitoria* (factory) has its origins in the *feitor* (factor) of the Portuguese king in late medieval Flanders.[19] With the intensification of Portuguese trade with West Africa, the institution of the *feitoria* was exported to the region in the early 1440s.[20] Over the next half-century and more, additional *feitorias* were founded throughout Africa, the Persian Gulf, India, Ceylon, and Malacca. In a persuasive recent account, Louis Sicking has argued that, despite the institutional continuities, these Portuguese *feitorias* assumed unique characteristics over time. While some resembled the *funduqs* of the medieval Mediterranean, others anticipated subsequent early modern factories.[21]

The expansion of the factory system to Asia was a continuation of earlier policy that was adopted by the Portuguese in North and West Africa. It was also the by-product of

[13] For a useful overview of Basra's contemporary history, see R. Matthee, 'Iraq, iv. relations in the Safavid period,' *Encyclopedica Iranica*, online edition, 2012, https://iranicaonline.org/articles/iraq-iv-safavid-period; R. Matthee, 'Between Arabs, Turks and Iranians: the town of Basra, 1600-1700', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69.1 (2006), pp. 53–78.

[14] W. Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War: The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and International Law* (Oxford, 2018), p. 28.

[15] M. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlıs in the 18th Century* (Brill, 2005).

[16] I thank my anonymous reviewer for this wording.

[17] van den Boogert, *Capitulations*, p. 40.

[18] C. Artunç, 'The price of legal institutions: the Beratlı merchants in the eighteenth-century Ottoman empire', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.3 (2015), pp. 720–748.

[19] S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, 2nd edn (Hoboken, 2012), pp. 49–51.

[20] L. H. J. Sicking, 'Funduq, fondaco, feitoria: the Portuguese contribution to the globalisation of an institution of overseas trade', in *Maritime Networks as a Factor in European Integration*, (ed.) G. Nigro (Florence, 2019), p. 204.

[21] *Ibid*; Sicking has also expanded his ideas in 'The medieval origin of the factory or the institutional foundations of overseas trade: toward a model for global comparison', *Journal of World History* 31.2 (2020), pp. 295–326.

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the strong hand of the Portuguese royal family in Asian trade from the start of Portuguese conquests in the early sixteenth century. As Bailey W. Diffie usefully clarified:

> What distinguished the medieval Portuguese *feitoria* from all the other national operations, such as the *fondachi* of the Italians, was the active interest the crown had long possessed in its own trading. The Portuguese *feitor* was not only the referee among quarreling merchants of his nation and the impost collector for the crown. Important as these public functions were to the *feitoria*, he was, above all else, the king's own commercial agent.[22]

Factories were not only a locus of direct European rule in Asia. In several places, they were governed by the bundle of rights that were outlined in a *firman* (order, decree) that was issued by an Asian ruler. Though granting a degree of extraterritorial privileges, *firmans*—as far as can be surmised from our current understanding—did not recognise the appointment of a diplomatic representative from the recipient nation at the court or elsewhere. Unlike the capitulations, factories in territories that were ruled by African or Asian rulers paid custom duties directly to the sovereign authority. And, while the capitulations did not allow Europeans to erect defences, many Indian Ocean factories—even in territories that had Asian rulers—were fortified. Needless to say, this varied depending on local circumstance. Thus, at least in ideal terms, the capitulations of the Ottoman Mediterranean and the European factory of the Indian Ocean were distinguished from each other in several senses.

However, Basra was not a place where Ottoman capitulations and the Portuguese factory existed in their ideal form. If anything, Basra was where these two institutions became entangled as nowhere else. After all, Basra was situated at the geographical extremity of Ottoman and Portuguese imperium in the Persian Gulf. And, as a period of decentralisation for both the Ottomans and the Estado, the seventeenth century presented new challenges to arrangements of informal rule at the margins of each empire. Appropriately, when it came to the first granting of Portuguese commercial rights in Basra in the 1620s, the local initiative of the Afrāsiāb pasha—the 'Ottoman' governor who ruled largely autonomously of Ottoman central authority—took precedence over any directive from Istanbul. Nevertheless, did the Ottoman-appointed governor understand the rights that he granted as capitulations? It is hard to say definitively given the paucity of Ottoman documentation from this period. However, it is vital to stress that the Ottomans had some literacy in the legal categories that underpinned Portuguese commercial privileges in the Gulf and Western Indian Ocean. As Giancarlo Casale has shown, as early as 1567, the Ottomans used an Ottoman Turkish calque of the Portuguese word '*feitor*' (*faytūr*; factor) in a letter that invited the Portuguese governor of Hormuz to establish a factory in Basra. By contrast, the would-be Ottoman agent in Hormuz was accorded the title 'ambassador' (*elçi*).[23] The initiative never came to fruition, but it proves that the Ottoman authorities in Basra were not thinking merely in terms of the capitulations, which in any case were still in a process of evolution in this period.[24]

In the later seventeenth century, the Ottomans would become familiar with the term 'factory' thanks to the Levant Company's opening, in Aleppo, of an institution by that

[22] B. W. Diffie and G. D. Winius, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415–1580* (St. Paul, 1977), p. 313.

[23] G. Casale, 'Hormuz: a trading node between five empires', in *Nodes of Early Modern Capitalism*, (eds.) M. O'Sullivan, G. Riello, and T. Roy (forthcoming).

[24] The episode that is recounted here happened two years before the famous 1569 capitulations that the Ottomans granted to the French, which was itself a renewal and evolution of the previous 1536 Franco–Ottoman treaty.

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name.[25] Despite its name, this factory was not a transplantation of the Indian Ocean concept of a factory. Instead, its status in the political economy of Ottoman Aleppo was in conformity with the standard package of capitulations that were granted by the Ottomans to Europeans in the Mediterranean. Only between the 1720s and 1740s did the Ottomans extend the system of capitulations from the Mediterranean to Basra. The beneficiaries of this gesture were not the Portuguese, but the Dutch, English, and the French. Tellingly, the move generated some unease among Ottoman officials, who feared that it would exacerbate customs fraud by Europeans via their ready use of *beratlı* merchants as agents.[26]

In view of all this, the arrangement with the Portuguese in Basra encourages a rethink of how Ottoman capitulations worked at the provincial level. When the provinces are considered in the literature on capitulations in the Ottoman empire, problems of local implementation of imperial directives and the relative insecurity of the capitulatory regime are emphasised.[27] Rarely, if ever, is the inverse contemplated: namely, how capitulations were extended first in the periphery and only later gained acquiescence by the centre, or how provincial capitulations departed from the standard imperial formula. The de facto agreement that the pasha in Basra arrived at with the Portuguese never gave the latter the right to set up a diplomatic mission in Istanbul, as was customary with Ottoman imperial capitulations. Nevertheless, Portuguese merchants were permitted by the deal to engage in trade within the Ottoman lands—the second standard entitlement that was promised in capitulations.[28] It does not appear that the Portuguese took up the offer of trading north of Basra.

On their side, the Portuguese understood that their residence in Basra was more or less analogous to those they enjoyed in other parts of the Indian Ocean. The construction of a factory was sufficient proof of this. But the legal basis of their initial factory in Basra is unclear. While, in the 1690 treaty, the Portuguese understood their compact with the Ottoman governor as 'capitulations', no document can illuminate how they perceived the 1624 agreement with the Afrāsiāb pasha. Of course, in the 1690 case, the use of the term 'capitulation' was not meant to invoke the Ottoman system, but was a term that was used readily in the administrative discourse of the Estado. It is perhaps best to see the construction of the Portuguese factory in 1624 as an outgrowth of the Portuguese aim to integrate Basra into the wider circuits of exchange that were overseen by the Estado in the Western Indian Ocean. Basra supplied a crucial life raft amidst the loss of Hormuz in 1622 and efforts by the Estado to recover what was lost. The annual *cáfila*—an armed maritime convoy that was shepherded by a Portuguese armada, but mostly comprised Asian ships—that operated between the Shatt al-Arab and Sindh further guaranteed the arrival of regular Portuguese personnel in Basra. The building of a factory was therefore a natural progression given the prevailing infrastructure of Portuguese trade in Asia and was hardly an act that would cause offense to the Afrāsiāb pasha considering the revenue-generating and defensive potential of this factory within his own dominion.

[25] Concerning which see D. Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Levant Company in the Middle East* (London, 2014).

[26] R. J. Barendse, *Arabian Seas, 1700–1763, Vol. I: The Western Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 224–225.

[27] E. Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western trade: Western trade in the Ottoman empire: questions, issues and sources', in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, (ed.) S. N. Faroqhi (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 310–311.

[28] Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War*, p. 22. The Ottomans had offered a Portuguese envoy in Istanbul a wide range of capitulations as early as 1563, but the latter rejected the proposal; Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, p. 115.

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Nonetheless, the Portuguese were not content to simply trade with Basra. Periodically, they demanded privileges that would never have been on the table had they been a part of the capitulations system. In fact, on numerous occasions, the Portuguese evinced a desire to make vassals out of the Ottoman governors in Basra. Recent work on vassalage in the Portuguese empire in Asia has stressed how the subordination of indigenous rulers of territories such as Ceylon into Portuguese vassals constituted innate aspects of the Estado's drive for a non-contiguous empire.[29] Vassalage, in the context of Basra, was similar to that in the Safavid port of Kong, where the Portuguese tried to extract annual tribute from the governor from the later seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries. However, the procedures for exacting tribute from Basra's functionaries were far more complex in comparison with those in Kong.

Even if they occasionally abided by this arrangement, Ottoman functionaries in Basra were hardly willing to admit that they were vassals of the Portuguese. Though we lack the Ottoman documentation, enough reportage on the actions of Ottoman actors survives to conclude that they also tried to subordinate the Portuguese to their own designs. The Ottomans' attempt to bestow robes of honour on the Portuguese was, in line with the *hil'at* ceremony throughout the Islamicate world, 'centrally about establishing a political relationship between giver and receiver. At its simplest, this relationship was one of fealty, that is, a generalized and largely unspoken loyalty'.[30] Indeed, the exchange of such diplomatic gifts was integral to rituals of vassalage throughout the early modern world.[31]

While the capitulations and the factory supplied two contradictory institutional paradigms for extraterritorial trade, the ambiguities that ran through the epoch of Ottoman–Portuguese detente in Basra did not so much owe their peculiar character to discrepancies of formal legal categories or language. As with so many other early modern conflicts over treaties, it was due to 'a problem of the larger apparatus, which includes a mix of values, notions of admissible and inadmissible conduct, and so on'.[32] Besides being a place where competing repertoires of empire were exercised, Basra's particular political economy also was of lasting relevance. In truth, the question of whether the Portuguese presence in Basra conformed more to the pattern of Ottoman capitulations or the *feitoria e fortaleza* paradigm has to sufficiently account for Basra's nature as a port that was caught between two worlds. In reality, the two models were interpolated with one another to such a degree because Basra was a point of intersection between both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean trades, while it never remained integrated into either for long stretches at a time.

Turning defeat into victory, 1622–1624

The initial enabling conditions for Ottoman–Portuguese detente in Basra were twofold. The first was the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622 by an Anglo-Safavid force. The second was the subsequent Safavid threat to seize Basra.[33] In

[29] Z. Biedermann, *(Dis)connected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia* (Oxford, 2018). For a relevant eighteenth-century discussion, see also J. V. Melo, 'In search of a shared language: the Goan diplomatic protocol', *Journal of Early Modern History* 20.4 (2016), pp. 390–407.

[30] S. Gordon, 'Conclusion', in *Robes of Honour: Khil'at in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India*, (ed.) S. Gordon (New Delhi, 2003), p. 140.

[31] For more on how gift exchange played into such rituals, see the essays in Z. Biedermann, A. Gerritsen, and G. Riello (eds.), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2018).

[32] S. Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), p. 22.

[33] For more on the broader context, see Floor, *Persian Gulf*, ch. 8.

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the wars with the Safavids that broke out only a decade into his reign, the Afrāsiāb pasha in Basra was highly exposed. Assistance certainly could not be expected from Istanbul, at least not in the immediate future. Forces from the Ottoman centre and the provincial levies were preoccupied with the protracted campaigns against the Safavids in the Caucasus, eastern Anatolia, and Mosul. And, as the Roman traveller Pietro della Valle correctly stated at the time, it typically took an Ottoman force over a year to reach Baghdad from Istanbul.[34] The Ottoman army's march from Baghdad to Basra added still more weeks to this timetable. But even the territory between Baghdad and Basra was far from pacified thanks to the insurrectionary power that was exercised by local tribes. And, in early 1624, the Safavids seized Baghdad, which the Ottomans did not reconquer until 1638. The gambit, later retracted, of the city's Ottoman governor to put himself under Safavid protection a year previously smoothed their path.[35]

The Safavids made two attempts on Basra during these years. According to della Valle, who had not yet arrived in the town during the first campaign, the Safavids did not get close to Basra itself on their initial attempt. But, during the second campaign, in late 1623, the Safavid force succeeded in reaching the outskirts of the city.[36] During the Safavid campaigns, the Afrāsiāb pasha encountered a recurring problem that was faced by Ottoman governors in Basra: their inability to mobilise maritime defences against landward enemies, from either within the province or without. Although an Ottoman riverine force eventually developed in the following century, until the late 1770s, Basra's governors were dependent on outside powers to repel threats from Arab tribes and Iranian invaders.[37] When the Safavids began their march towards Basra proper in 1623, the Portuguese armada at Muscat, spoiling for a fight, supplied that lifeline.

The Portuguese factors in Muscat were led by Rui Freire de Andrade—a man whose reputation for spectacular violence in the Gulf endured in the European imagination well into the eighteenth century.[38] Smarting from the loss of Hormuz and eager to exact vengeance against the Safavids, Andrade regularly sent out convoys to harass shipping in the Gulf and 'to ravage with fire and sword those of the inhabitants who refused to yield'.[39] Though pillaging came naturally to Andrade, the Portuguese were desperate to establish a permanent haven to safeguard their Gulf trade, especially in the period before the privileges were granted by the Safavids to the Portuguese at Kong. None other than Sir Thomas Roe was quick to understand the Portuguese motive when he wrote from Istanbul to Sir Thomas Smythe of the East India Company in 1624: 'The Portugals having left Ormuz, "settle their mark" at Balsora [Basra], to spite the Persian, and are well received of the Turks,' adding in a footnote 'which news approves of the necessary use of pinnaces to be sent, to aid the Persian King'.[40]

[34] For ease of reference, I cite from the English version, P. della Valle, *The Travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle, a Noble Roman, into East-India and Arabia Deserta* (London, 1665), p. 254, as corroborated in R. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London, 1999), p. xviii.

[35] S. Faroqhi, 'The principal political events', in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, (ed.) S. Faroqhi (Cambridge, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 421–422.

[36] della Valle, *Travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle*, p. 250.

[37] For more details, see my 'Ottoman shipping in the Indian Ocean, 1700-1900', forthcoming.

[38] See the image of de Andrade throwing a child into a cauldron from the 1727 edition of J. de Thevenot's *Suite du Voyage*, https://eng.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=56894; for more on Andrade in the context of rivalry with the English, see Boxer, 'Anglo-Portuguese rivalry'.

[39] C. R. Boxer (ed.), *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada in which Are Related His Exploits from the Year 1619, in which He Left His Kingdom of Portugal as General of the Sea of Ormug, and Coast of Persia and Arabia, until His Death* (Abingdon, 2005), p. 192.

[40] 'Nov. 27. Constantinople 694. Sir Thos. Roe to Sir Thos. Smythe. East Indies: November 1624, 22-29', in *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, East Indies, China and Japan, Volume 4, 1622-1624*, (ed.) W. N. Sainsbury (London, 1878), pp. 448–457; British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/east-indies-china-japan/vol4/pp448-457 (accessed 10 August 2023).

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When Basra presented itself as an option to the Portuguese, the town was by no means an unknown entity to them. Amidst the rivalry with the Ottomans in the mid-sixteenth century, the administration of the Estado had continued to regard Basra as coveted real estate for the construction of a fortress.[41] But the Ottoman conquest in 1546 ensured that a sustained Portuguese presence in Basra was kept at arm's length for the next half-century. To be sure, it is likely that illicit trade carried on extensively between Basra and Hormuz throughout this period.[42] Moreover, as already mentioned, an abortive attempt to reach a commercial agreement with the Portuguese in Hormuz was made by Ottoman officials in Basra in the 1560s. Even though this overture came to naught, by the first decade of the seventeenth century, if not earlier, the Portuguese community on Hormuz had instituted direct trading links with Basra. The volume of trade during these years was evidently not very high: on his way to the Safavid court, the Spanish ambassador García de Silva Figueroa was not impressed by the profits to be had for those involved in Hormuz's trade with Basra and Sindh.[43]

All the same, in the decade before 1623, Basra increasingly became party to the Estado's political machinations in the Gulf. For example, in 1606–1607, a Jesuit mysteriously referred to the fact that the Portuguese had been offered Basra by the Persian king in a bid to recruit their help against the authorities there.[44] This was likely an inaccurate reference to the attempt of the ruler of Hoveyzeh, Sayyid Mubarak (the ruler of the Mushaʿshaʿ, whom the Portuguese called Bomberca),[45] to encourage the Portuguese to conquer the city. The Ottoman centre's withdrawal of its forces from Basra in 1612 perhaps further expedited Portuguese inroads, for, now, the city was in the hands of an upstart pasha with little recourse to imperial resources and protection.

It was near the end of 1623 when the Afrāsiāb pasha made first contact with the Portuguese. The Portuguese *cáfila* from Sindh had just reached the vicinity of Basra during the course of its annual voyage when it was approached by the pasha's envoys. As recounted in the *Commentaries of Rui Freire de Andrade*:

> About this time a terranquim arrived from the Turkish Pasha of Bassorah, bearing letters and a rich present for the General; the Pasha wrote bidding him welcome, and saying that as he had heard of the ruthless war that his Lordship was waging against Persia, and since he feared that the Persians might cross the River Euphrates as they were Masters of Babylon, which they had taken from the Grand Turk in the same year that they had taken Ormuz from us, he asked him for a force of six Portuguese galliots, whose cost he would pay all the time they remained in his service; these galliots united with his Arabs would press the war as much as possible against the Persians in that part of the Euphrates.[46]

[41] A good survey of Basra's place in the strategy of the Estado is J. Teles e Cunha, 'Armenian merchants in Portuguese trade networks in the Western Indian Ocean in the early modern age', in *Les Arméniens dans le commerce international et intercontinental*, (eds.) S. Chaudhury and K. Kévonian (Paris, 2007), pp. 197–252.

[42] Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, pp. 80, 114.

[43] M. Serrano y Sanz (ed.), *Comentarios de la embajada que de parte del rey de España don Felipe III hizo al rey Xa Abas de Persia* (Madrid, 1903), vol. 1, p. 264.

[44] F. Guerreiro, *Relaçam annal das cousas que fezeram os padres da Companhia de Iesus nas partes da India Oriental* (Lisbon, 1609), p. 124.

[45] J. M. de Almeida Teles e Cunha, 'The eye of the beholder: the creation of a Portuguese discourse on Safavid Iran', in *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia*, (eds.) R. Matthee and J. Flores (Leuven, 2011), pp. 11–50, at p. 21; see the relevant references to the correspondence in R. A. de Bulhão Pato (ed.), *Documentos Remettidos da India ou Livros das Monções* (Lisbon, 1880), vol. 1.

[46] Boxer (ed.), *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 192.

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Andrade accepted the pasha's request in short order, although whether he first received the assent of the council in Muscat, as he later claimed to have done, seems doubtful. Goa did not receive word of his intentions until February. On the twenty-third of that month, the viceroy's Council in Goa received letters from Andrade and the Portuguese factor in Basra that informed them of an exchange between 'the Khan of Shiraz' (the Safavid governor of Fars) and the pasha of Basra. As the summary read, the khan wrote to the pasha, demanding that 'he not give us (the Portuguese) this port, nor become our friend, and the pasha did not concede, saying that our friendship with him was ancient, and he always had trade and commerce with us and that he would not abandon it [the friendship] in such a manner'.[47] The members of the council went on to debate the merits of intervening in Basra, but Andrade and Portuguese captains had already stolen a march on them more than a month previously.

The instructions that Andrade sent on 2 January 1624 to Silveira, the head of the armada, were extensive. He spoke as someone who was deeply familiar with the geography of the Gulf, specifying the formation in which the fleet should travel and where it should halt for watering. After stopovers at the island of Lima, Corfação [Khor Fakkan], and Julfar, Silveira was to pause at Qish in order to inform himself 'first of the news there is of Persia and if there is any Turkish armada at sea'.[48] Evidently, Andrade did not hold the soldiers of the Portuguese fleet in high esteem, for he instructed his captains in the strongest of terms to not let any of them disembark from the ships.[49] This was done in order to mask the fleet's lacklustre appearance and in consideration of the ignominious track record of Portuguese soldiers 'in the lands of the Moors', which, in the past, had given 'cause to great disturbances'.[50] The ragtag quality of the force was also made worse by the straitened circumstances of Muscat's finances. Four years later, in 1628, Andrade had occasion to write a retrospective note on the 1624 action and specifically highlight the problem of the purse strings: 'Due to the high expenses, there was a lack of money to pay for supplies to the soldiers, which the said Silveira compensated for, and the galley on which he was[,] [he supported] four months at his [own] expense, as did most of the captains.'[51]

Even if the soldiers were compelled to stay aboard their ships, Portuguese boots on the ground were indispensable to Andrade's plan. Though the details are unclear, a Portuguese factor (*feitor*) was already resident in the city. Upon reaching the bar at Basra, Silveira was to dispatch a letter to the factor, 'requesting information of the condition in which the land finds itself'. Further on in his letter, Andrade stated:

> If you are to make contact with a portion of the enemy armada, you will gather the ten merchant ships in the best possible way, having strengthened them with the greatest force to contest whatever force that you discover. If at sea there shall be at hand some terradas [cargo ships] of Persia or Arabia without cartazes, send orders to them to cut off their heads, and burn the ships.[52]

The Portuguese factor in Basra with whom Silveira was to link up was Gonçalo Martins de Castelo-Branco (della Valle italicised his name as Consalvo Martino da Castelbranco), who

[47] 'Documento 62', in *Assentos do Conselho do Estado, Vol. 1 (1618-1633), Documentos coordenados e anotados*, (ed.) P. S. S. Pissurlencar (Bastorá [Goa], 1953), p. 193.

[48] L. Cordeiro (ed.), *Dois capitães da Índia: Documentos ineditos entre os quaes diversas certidões authographas de Diogo de Couto* (Lisbon, 1898), p. 71.

[49] *Ibid*, p. 72.

[50] *Ibid*, p. 72.

[51] *Ibid*, p. 78.

[52] *Ibid*, p. 72.

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had been the resident factor in Basra since 1623. Castelo-Branco was, as a 1625 letter from the Viceroy in Goa to Silveira put it, a practical person who knew the local language (Arabic or Ottoman Turkish?) well.[53] The Portuguese captain was also ordered in that same letter to 'treat [Castelo-Branco] in such a way that the Moors respect him and grant his needs and requirements as for the good of the said office'.[54] That Castelo-Branco was equally well versed in Basra's political scene is confirmed in della Valle's recollection of his conversation with the factor on the internal struggles both among the Afrāsiāb and between them and the Safavids. For the remainder of his tenure as factor, Castelo-Branco maintained close bonds with the pasha.

As Castelo-Branco played pals with the Afrāsiāb pasha, the Portuguese in Muscat mobilised their armada. At the end January 1624, Andrade wrote again to Silveira to inform the captain that he had received a letter from Afrāsiāb. He wrote:

> From the letter I received from the Basha of Basra […] I understood the oppression in which that land remains and the great damage that could be caused […] should Basra be lost and all the trade of this sea, making it impossible for us to sustain an armada in it and to make war over the conquest of Hormuz [and] the security of Muscat and all Arabia.[55]

In the same breath, Andrade expressed his fear that, should the Safavid ruler snatch Basra, then he would only amplify the damage done to the Portuguese since Hormuz's fall. For the sake of Portuguese honour, Andrade continued, he was compelled to propose to the council in Muscat a way of assisting the pasha of Basra. That meant employing all the customary methods that Andrade had used against Safavid ships since the attack on Hormuz: he ordered Silveira that, should any Safavid subjects cross paths with the armada, then the Portuguese were to kill them and burn their ships.[56]

On his arrival in Basra in February 1624, Silveira was greeted by the Portuguese factor Castelo-Branco and the pasha. Shortly thereafter, additional Portuguese vessels arrived under the command of António Pereira de Lacerda. Thus, at the point of contact with the enemy, the Portuguese flotilla amounted to five *fustas* and 13 merchantmen.[57] Unfortunately, the details of the actual engagement are murky but, in the eyes of Basra's political administration and European residents, Safavid defeat was unequivocal. Even after they had fled the field, the retreating Safavid forces were stalked by the Portuguese, though the armada was unsuccessful in capturing the enemy artillery. As the Safavids eluded their pursuers, the Portuguese turned their energies to terrorising private merchant shipping. Della Valle logged an episode in which the Portuguese enslaved a rich Muslim merchant whom they refused to ransom, while

> All the other Moors in the Vessels they killed, with two young children, lest, as they said, if they should have carry'd them into a Country of Moors, the Basha would have releas'd them: However, it seem'd to me a great Cruelty, although it be no new thing among the Portugals, who upon all occasions commit the like and greater in India.[58]

[53] *Ibid*, p. 80.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 80.
[55] *Ibid*, p. 74.
[56] *Ibid*, p. 76.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 76.
[58] della Valle, *Travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle*, p. 252.

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If the pasha of Basra knew anything of these atrocities, then he had turned a blind eye to them. The Portuguese were, in fact, becoming essential to his own designs. Not long after the Safavids were repulsed, and with the Portuguese armada still at his disposal, the Afrāsiāb pasha commissioned Silveira to sail up river to crush a rebellion.[59] In a long letter that was written by Castelo-Branco, the factor recounted how Silveira carried out this assignment and others against the pasha's enemies until as late as October 1625. The Portuguese captain undertook these campaigns in company with the pasha's son Ali, who succeeded his father at around this time.[60] With his succession, the alliance between the Afrāsiāb and the Portuguese became intergenerational.

When the bloodletting had momentarily died down, an environment of mutual congratulation took hold among the Afrāsiāb and the Portuguese. A solemn mass was even held at the Augustinian church in Basra. Though not present, della Valle later wrote:

> The next night, the Basha himself with all his Court went to see the Church and the Covent, where also at his departure he left an Alms; the Father receiv'd him with all due honour, and gave him a sumptuous Banquet; with which, both as to the manner and ceremonies according to the fashion of the Country, both the Basha and all the rest were much satisfi'd. The General of the Portugals, with all the Captains of Ships, and most principal Persons of the Fleet, and (in short) all the Europaeans then in Bassora, were present at this entertainment: only I, by reason of an indisposition, had the displeasure to be absent.[61]

Augustinian vestments soon gave way to Ottoman ones for, as coincidence would have it, an Ottoman palace doorkeeper (*kapıcı*) who was sent by the Grand Vizier as an envoy arrived from Istanbul on the same day as the mass was held. Della Valle maintained that the *kapıcı* bestowed a *hıl'at* upon the pasha on behalf of the vizier and brought news that Mosul and Kirkuk had been retaken and that an Ottoman army was approaching Baghdad. (The speed of this Ottoman relief force was dismissed as wholly unrealistic by della Valle.[62])

Portuguese correspondence, however, reveals that a *hıl'at* was also designated for the Portuguese *Capitão Mor*, Silveira. This is confirmed in a letter that was sent to the Portuguese by the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV (*O Rei Moroagan*). Unfortunately, only the Portuguese version, which was translated from Ottoman Turkish by a local Carmelite friar, survives. In the letter, the sultan emphasised the respect that the Ottomans had always shown towards Christianity and expressed his gratitude for the 'three thousand soldiers of the very best of Christendom' that were sent to defend Basra against the Safavid Qizilbash. The *hıl'at* (*Calaate/Callaate*) that was sent by the Grand Vizier was intended as proof of the sultan's affection and as confirmation of his friendship with the Portuguese.[63] The Portuguese factor in Basra, Castelo-Branco, also mentioned the *cabaya* (from the Arabic, *qabāya*) that the Grand Vizier's servant attempted to confer on Silveira. This too was rebuffed by the captain on the grounds that 'he could accept no other king other than His Majesty [the king of Portugal], whose vassal he was, by whose mandate he was serving and aiding the said pasha'.[64]

[59] Cordeiro (ed.), *Dois capitães da Índia*, p. 77.
[60] *Ibid*, p. 86.
[61] della Valle, *Travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle*, p. 253.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Cordeiro (ed.), *Dois capitães da Índia*, pp. 81–82.
[64] *Ibid*, p. 88.

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Not one to be outdone by Istanbul, Ali Pasha, the son of Afrāsiāb, wrote a letter to the king of Portugal that recognised the services of Silveira and expressed hope that the affection between the two powers would never be abrogated.[65] By several accounts, Ali Pasha's wish was fulfilled. Later, in the 1620s, Portuguese factors continued to emphasise the need to maintain good relations with the Afrāsiābs, not least because Ali Pasha helped to fund the Portuguese armadas that were operating in the straits. These acted as a deterrent to further Safavid aggression. In a letter dated 12 September 1627, Rui Freire de Andrade wrote again to Silveira, directing him to offer friendship to Ali Pasha, adding

> I do not have to instruct Your Grace how important it is to preserve this pasha, who for nothing more than the expense he wants to make with these ships, was very grateful for what is gained by bringing them armed into the Strait, and having paid, without the [Portuguese] king [*El-Rei*] spending his revenues, took advantage of them in war, damaging Persia, preventing navigation of the straits, in which those Kingdoms receive great loss.[66]

Ali Pasha's rule was far from secure, however. A year after Andrade had composed the aforementioned letter, the Safavids struck again under the leadership of Imam Quli Khan, the governor of Fars.[67] This time, it was the flooding of the area around Basra by local tribes that deterred the invaders, not the Portuguese.[68] Three years later, in 1631, Ali Pasha received a demand from Imam Quli Khan to hand over 25 Portuguese ships that were lying at anchor in exchange for peace. The pretext for this was the flight to Basra of a Portuguese youth called Bartolomeu Correia, who had been captured as a slave at Hormuz, was converted to Islam, and became a page of Imam Quli Khan.[69] While on an errand for his master, Correia and two companions fled to Basra, where he became a Christian again. Imam Quli Khan then sent a deputation to the pasha of Basra, demanding that Correia be sent back, dead or alive. Initially, the ruler of Basra acceded to Imam Quli Khan's demands and imprisoned Correia. But, when Basra's resident Carmelite fathers protested, bringing along a Portuguese merchant to bolster their case, Ali Pasha relented and released Correia.[70] Correia then warned the Portuguese merchants about Imam Quli Khan's ultimatum that concerned their 25 ships, leading the Portuguese to rush aboard their vessels and sail away.[71] Meanwhile, in Goa, the council debated in October 1631 how many ships to allocate to Andrade for the protection of Basra, or whether all available ships should be reserved for the reconquest of Mombasa, which had been seized from the Portuguese the year previously and its Christian inhabitants massacred.[72]

Although such external threats to Basra were an episodic aspect of the political economy of the city for the next century, the Portuguese settled down quite comfortably into the life of the town. For the next two decades, they remained the improbable boon companions of the Āl-i Afrāsiāb until Ali Pasha was succeeded by his son Hassan in 1650. Whether they were to remain just boon companions or something more akin to liege

[65] *Ibid*, pp. 82–84.
[66] *Ibid*, p. 120.
[67] R. Matthee, 'The Safavid-Ottoman frontier: Iraq-i Arab as seen by the Safavids', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9.1–2 (2003), pp. 169–170.
[68] H. Chick (ed.), *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (London, 1939), vol. 1, p. 284.
[69] F. Sassetti, *Viaggi orientali* (Venice, 1667), pp. 55–56.
[70] *Ibid*, p. 56.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] 'Documento 125', in Pissurlencar (ed.), *Assentos do Conselho do Estado, Vol. 1*, pp. 385–387.

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lords was an open question in the subsequent decades, at least according to European accounts. Part of what made the relationship so rich in ambiguity was, as we have stressed, the uncertainty of the legal underpinnings of the Portuguese residence. No formal capitulation treaty was offered to the Portuguese by either the Afrāsiāb or the Ottoman centre. But the Portuguese built their factory nonetheless—a move that signalled how they planned to throw their weight around in Basra.

The Portuguese and the *Pashalik*, *circa* 1630–1690

In the generation after the Portuguese first made inroads into Basra, their factory experienced its fair share of twists and turns. From the outset, there was an ambition within select quarters of the Estado to make Basra a pillar of a new Persian Gulf policy—a westernmost link in a chain that stretched to Qatif, Kong, Muscat, Thatta, and Goa. Nevertheless, the legal basis for the Portuguese factory in Basra remained uncertain. Notwithstanding the privileges that had been extended to the Portuguese by the pasha and the Ottoman *kapıcı*, no *firman* or capitulations appear to have been granted from Istanbul for the foundation of a factory, as was customary in other Islamicate settings in the Indian Ocean. In fact, as discussed in the next section, when the Portuguese reopened trade with Basra in 1690, Portuguese correspondence pinpointed the indeterminate legal status of the privileges that were conferred in the 1620s as a primary reason for the failure of the operation.

Even if the legal status of their factory was never clear-cut, the Portuguese operation in Basra had enjoyed some success in its first two decades. There are several contemporary descriptions by Portuguese authors. An anonymous seventeenth-century Portuguese account that details the holdings of the Estado da India supplies a short summary of the factory and customs house at Basra.[73] 'The customs house (*alfandega*) of Basra is most favorable to the Portuguese, we have in Basra two churches, one of the Carmelites, another of the Augustinians, which dispense the sacraments to the Portuguese who are there,' the source relays. Tellingly, the same writer was even more complementary towards Qatif, south of Basra in the Gulf: 'What enters are dark cloth from Sindh and Cambay, what goes out of there are the best horses of the Orient, and seed pearls (*aljofar meudo*).' He had still more to say about the Portuguese settlement at Kong, which is discussed in detail below. In this triangle of western Gulf ports that were frequented by the Portuguese, Basra was clearly the subsidiary concern. Unfortunately, this source and others say almost nothing about the Portuguese factor. The silence that surrounds Castelo-Branco's successors suggests that no Portuguese factors in Basra were capable of matching the stature of its inaugural holder.

António Bocarro's famous *Livro das Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas* from 1635 also contains extensive remarks on Basra (the anonymous source that was just discussed seems to have borrowed from Bocarro's description).[74] Bocarro mentioned the close relationships that the Portuguese had maintained with the pasha, 'who we helped against Persia', and the substantial revenues that had been accrued by the venture in Basra. Cryptically, Bocarro could not resist adding that, because of Portuguese missteps, they had caused the pasha a good deal of trouble.[75] He said more than he knew.

[73] 'Dezcripção da Cidade de Baçorá', in *Relação das plantas e dezcripsões de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoações que os portuguezes têm no Estado da India Oriental*, (ed.) A. B. da Costa Viega (Lisbon, 1936), pp. 16–17.

[74] Boxer, 'Anglo-Portuguese rivalry', pp. 125–126. A transcription of the text, also consulted by Boxer, can be found in 'Description of Basra', *The Commentaries of Afonso Dalboquerque*, (ed.) W. de Gray Birch (London, 1884), vol. 4, pp. 232–238. I also quote from this edition.

[75] *Ibid*, p. 234.

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In contrast to other parts of the Gulf and Western Indian Ocean, the Portuguese had not faced competition from other Europeans in Basra before 1640. An additional boost came from the pervasiveness of unlicenced private shipping—in many cases the preserve of New Christians—that was given free rein in the Gulf after the fall of Hormuz.[76] That, in 1633, the Portuguese offered to transport the Mughal embassy that was heading to Ottoman Istanbul as far as Basra bespoke a certain Portuguese confidence in their influence in the town.[77] The arrival of the English and Dutch shortly thereafter was understandably a cause of alarm.

They were not impressed by what they saw. In 1640, two English East India Company (EIC) merchants in Basra reported that most of the goods that were brought by the Portuguese *cafila* from Muscat were freight goods that belonged to 'Moores and Banians', adding:

> As for what the Portugalls bringe for their particulars, it will scarce afford them (in our esteemed) the tittle of merchants; by which they feare (nay, themselves divine) theire soddayne downfall, in reportinge that, in respect wee have this yeare found the way hither (beinge the chief port of profitt they have now left), the Hollanders doubtless the next. Soe that where he comes the Portugalls must give place, the rather because two arrogant dunghill spirritts one residence cannot contayne; and besides the Portugalls have not shipinge for defence. By meanes whereof they have at present onely left an insolent disposision to support theire intollerable pride.[78]

Five years later, in 1645, the Dutch captain Cornelis Cornelisz Roobacker compiled a detailed summary of the waterways that surrounded Basra and noticed two defunct Portuguese cannon that were lying in the grass outside the fort that was south of the city.[79]

Notwithstanding this fact, throughout the 1640s, Basra was still a place where the Portuguese were wont to throw their weight around. Other reports that were penned by the EIC factors in Basra during this same period complained about how the arrival of Portuguese junks from Sindh and Cambay singlehandedly drove down prices for goods.[80] Other merchant networks cashed in on the Portuguese connections to Basra, especially Armenians with trade interests in Sindh, who, from 1623, took advantage of a joint Mughal–Portuguese accord to travel freely on Portuguese vessels on the condition that they stopped at Portuguese ports and carried a *cartaz*.[81]

The 1640s also witnessed the occurrence of several bizarre episodes that involved the Portuguese in Basra, enabled by the close relations that they had maintained with Ali Pasha. Two anecdotes from the pen of the French traveller François de La Boullaye-Le Gouz, who was passing through Basra at this time, captured this best.[82] His account of his time in the town began by noting the presence of a Portuguese factor and two lodges

[76] J. C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640* (Baltimore, 1993), pp. 229–230.

[77] J. Flores, *Nas margens do Hindustão: o Estado da Índia e a expansão mogol ca. 1570-1640* (Coimbra, 2015), p. 395.

[78] 'William Thurston and Edward Pearce at Basra to the Company, August 28, 1640 (*O.C.* 1761)', W. Foster (ed.), *The English Factories in India, 1637-1641: A Calendar of Documents in the India Office, British Museum, and Public Record Office* (Oxford, 1912), pp. 252–253.

[79] A. Hotz (ed.), *Cornelis Cornelisz Roobacker's scheepsjournaal Gamron-Basra (1645); de eerste reis der Nederlanders door de Perzische Golf* (Leiden, 1907), p. 84; Floor, *Persian Gulf*, p. 492.

[80] M. A. Khan (ed.), *English Factory in Sind* (Lahore, 2005), p. 64.

[81] Cunha, 'Armenian merchants in Portuguese trade', p. 229. As Cunha points out, the accord was partially the handiwork of Andrade, but it was resented by others in Goa.

[82] S. Subrahmanyam, *Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), pp. 130–131.

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for the Dutch and English East India Companies.[83] Being the polemicist that he was, Boullaye skewered the Portuguese in Basra at every turn. In a strange anecdote—most probably an apocryphal one—Boullaye discussed an incident that involved a mufti from Istanbul who purchased two children of Russian origin (vassals of the King of Poland) from Crimean Tatars and forced them to become Muslims. Taking the two on Hajj, the mufti and his slaves made their way from Mecca to Mocha and thence to Aden and Muscat. At Muscat, the mufti was forced by the Portuguese to disembark on account of the fact that 'his ship was bound for Basra, which is in the Persian Gulf, and in consequence is obliged to pay the customs and the ordinary tribute to the fortress of Muscat'.[84] While there, the two slaves declared themselves to be Christians, which prompted the Portuguese to free them from the grasp of the mufti. In turn, the mufti demanded compensation from the Portuguese but, when the Portuguese in Muscat threatened him with interrogation for forcing the slaves to abandon Christianity, he was said to have fled swiftly to Basra.[85]

The Basra to which the mufti travelled was, as Boullaye commented, 'a city dominated by Hali Pasha [Ali Pasha], King of the Arabs, where the Portuguese do great business'.[86] No doubt ignorant of this, the mufti was adamant that the local Portuguese in Basra should be held liable for the property that he was forced to abandon in Muscat. Confirming Boullaye's remark about his proximity to the Portuguese, Ali Pasha instructed the mufti that 'the Portuguese who are on my land are not the ones who stole your slaves from you' and assured the scholar that he would write to the Portuguese general at Muscat.[87] When he asked the Portuguese authorities in Muscat to forward the slaves to Basra or compensate the mufti, the Portuguese reportedly sent an armada of 21 ships to Basra with intentions to bombard the town. In turn, the Portuguese said to Ali Pasha that they had tied the slaves to the mouth (*bouche*) of the cannons, and even had the audacity to express their shock that the pasha, who had until now considered the Portuguese as friends, had made such an unjust request.

Dumbfounded by the Portuguese escalation, Ali Pasha forthwith ordered the mufti to depart from Basra. He attempted to make good with the Portuguese by sending them provisions and apologising for his actions, even stressing 'that he considered it a great advantage to be amicable with them'.[88] As for the mufti, he refused to let the matter die in Basra. In Baghdad, he paid a visit to the house of the Capuchin friars, demanding that the pasha should redress the injuries to which the Capuchins' fellow Franks had subjected him. Through the help of an Ottoman intermediary, with whom the Capuchins were friendly, the friars told the pasha that they were of a different nationality than the Portuguese—an act that Boullaye maintains saved their mission.[89] If Boullaye's account can be credited, then the Portuguese were a force to be reckoned with in Basra that was well out of proportion to their small numbers. It would be wrong to assume that the Portuguese triumphed in all their Basran endeavours, however. Elsewhere in his work, Boullaye mocked the attempts of the Portuguese, in connivance with the pasha, to forcibly convert the local 'Sabeans' (*Sabis*; the Mandeans) and bring them to their

[83] F. de La Boullaye-Le-Gouz, *Les Voyages et observations du sieur de La Boullaye-Le-Gouz gentil-homme angevin* (Paris, 1657), pp. 292–293.
[84] *Ibid*, p. 172.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 172.
[86] *Ibid*, p. 167.
[87] *Ibid*, p. 173.
[88] *Ibid*, p. 174.
[89] *Ibid*, p. 174.

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church in Basra.[90] He even records that the viceroy in Goa, Filipe Mascarenhas, attempted to establish a colony for the community on the island of *Zeilan* (Ceylon)—an offer that they refused.[91]

As this comedy of errors carried on within Basra, there were forces in the Gulf that were determining the Portuguese future there. The parallel rise of Kong to the east and the loss of Muscat guaranteed that Basra was eventually downgraded in the broader Gulf strategy of the Estado, even if it remained vital in the maintenance of broader Portuguese designs in the region. The acquisition of customs rights at Kong was a by-product of restored ties with the Safavids. Shah Safi (1629–1642) granted the Portuguese rights to half the customs of the port in 1630–1631.[92] The warming of relations did not guarantee that it was always smooth sailing with the Safavids at Kong. In 1654, the Safavids ordered the Portuguese out of Kong and, in response, the Portuguese blockaded the port and forced Basra-bound vessels into Bandar-i Abbas.[93] This was soon forgotten and, particularly after 1670, Kong became a dependable mainstay of the Estado's Gulf policy mainstay of the Estado's policy, of greater utility to the Portuguese than anything that Basra had to offer.

Predictably, the Portuguese forfeiture of Muscat in 1649 was a substantial blow to the factory at Basra, as Portuguese ships that were sailing to the Ottoman port typically paused at Muscat.[94] Henceforward, Portuguese vessels that were travelling into the Gulf had to endure attacks from Omani ships, with whom the Estado would wage an intermittent war for the next 75 years as far west as Mombasa and as far east as Surat and Bombay. (In the later eighteenth century, the Omanis would play the same role in Basra vis-a-vis the Ottoman pasha—fighting Iranian invaders and collecting tribute—as the Portuguese had done from the 1620s to the 1640s.) Even if developments in Kong and Muscat made Basra a low priority for the Estado, it is nonetheless difficult to pinpoint the moment at which the death knell of Portuguese trading sounded at Basra. Even single reports contain contradictory information on the relationship between political events and trading conditions. Take the following report from an English merchant, Thomas Cogan, in Basra in 1646:

> and now of late another hinderance to this ports trade by a mutany raised twixt the Bashaw of Bagdatt and this Bashawes people, where divers of eyther side have bine slaine, which feares the merchants from coming downe to port and hinders these of transporteing theire commodetyes up. So that trade now in this place is at a stand ; but hope ere long these Bashawes people will bee reconciled, and merchants freely pass as formerly. […] By our last advice wee gave you notice of the greate quanteties of Scinda goods was then arrived hither; and since by other trankaes neere as many more from Congoo &c. ; and yett the caphila from Muscatt not arrived, wherein by report are eight Scinda and other junckes, which are dayly expected. What will bee the issue of the marketts when they arrive wee cannot yett advize you.[95]

[90] *Ibid*, p. 297; R. Gulbenkian, 'Relações politico-económicas entre os portugueses e os mandeus da Baixa Mesopotâmia e do Cuzistão na primeira metade do século XVII', in *Relações entre Portugal, Irão e Médio-Oriente*, (ed.) E. Históricos (Lisbon, 1995), vol. II, pp. 325–420.

[91] La Boullaye-Le-Gouz, *Les Voyages et observations*, pp. 297–298.

[92] Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, p. 166; Boxer, 'Anglo-Portuguese rivalry'.

[93] R. Klein, 'Trade in the Safavid Port City Bandar Abbas and the Persian Gulf Area (ca. 1600-1680): A Study of Selected Aspects' (unpublished PhD dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993/1994), pp. 111–112.

[94] 'Description of the Island of Goa, from Pedro Barreto de Resende's "Livro do Estado da Índia Oriental"', in *Commentaries of Afonso Dalboquerque*, (ed.) W. de Gray Birch (London, 1880), vol. III, p. 296.

[95] W. Foster (ed.), *The English Factories in India, 1646-1650: A Calendar of Documents in the India Office, Westminster* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 44–45.

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To be fair, in time, factional struggles in Basra probably did push any vestige of Portuguese trade out of the city, barring the occasional arrival of a ship. These ships typically came to collect the customs due to the Portuguese, concerning which frustratingly little is said in the records. Yet, even without a physical factory, the Portuguese ships continued to enjoy low customs dues. In 1663, the Portuguese Jesuit Manuel Godinho travelled through Basra but made no special mention of a Portuguese settlement, staying with the Augustinians during his time there.[96] Godinho did emphasise, however, that Basra's grandees were 'friends of the Portuguese more than any other nation, and they render a good fare for them in the customs, when [the Portuguese] go there with their ships, it seems in gratitude for the aid that [the Portuguese] formerly gave to its rulers against the Gizaira and Turks'.[97]

That affinity did not survive for long. In 1666–1667, Basra was engulfed by a serious conflict between the last Afrāsiāb ruler Hussain Pasha and the governor of Baghdad. When the Ottomans dismissed him from his post, Hussain Pasha fled from Basra to Safavid Iran, burning the town on his way out.[98] With Basra's fall, Hussain Pasha fled to Mughal India, where he entered the emperor's service under the name of Islam Khan Rumi.[99] The role, if any, that the Portuguese may have played—in the pasha's transfer to India, for example—is unclear. With his exit went the dynasty that had made the Portuguese tenancy in Basra possible in the first place.

As Ottoman–Portuguese ties fell into disrepair with the exodus of the last of the Afrāsiāb, the Portuguese seem to have declared open season on Ottoman vessels that were travelling without *cartazes*. This is alluded to in a 1670 agreement that was signed by Portuguese representatives with Mughal authorities in Surat, in which all parties assented to a system of new *cartazes*.[100] One of the articles in the agreement stressed that Surat's merchants were not permitted to transport 'Rumes, Turks, and Abexins'. This was standard language in Portuguese treaties with the Mughals, but it is noteworthy that the Omanis were not mentioned in this instance.[101] Purportedly, the ship captains of Surat were accustomed to sailing to Kong, Basra, and Mecca, and 'charter[ing] their ships to the aforesaid merchants, and other spiteful people'.[102] The precise motivations for this, however, demand additional research because it is not clear whether it was the representatives of Surat or the Portuguese alone who demanded the inclusion of this clause.

For all the discriminatory legislation and tough talk against the Ottomans, Basra remained more or less of no importance to the Portuguese. During the same year as the new *cartaz* was introduced, a wide-ranging source on the naval battle around Kong was printed. Covering naval actions as far as Surat, the source made no mention of Basra, suggesting that it factored nowhere in Portuguese calculations of their power in the Gulf.[103] In the 1670s and 1680s, the Portuguese showed up on the Ottoman radar

[96] M. Godinho, *Relação do novo caminho que fez por terra e mar, vindo da India para Portugal no anno de 1663, o padre Manoel Godinho da Companhia de Iesu* (Lisbon, 1665), p. 92. He noted that the Dutch do not come to the port because the profits were not large; *ibid*, pp. 92–93.

[97] *Ibid*, p. 95.

[98] N. R. Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations: A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748* (Delhi, 1989), p. 63.

[99] Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*, p. 89.

[100] 'Rasões que offerece o Nababo e Governador de Surrate, Xabandar, e mais mercadores do dito porto ao Padre Fr. Gaspar Baptista…', in *Collecção de tratados e concertos de pazes que o estado da India portugueza fez com os reis e senhores com quem teve relações nas partes da Asia e Africa Oriental desde o principio da conquista até ao fim do seculo XVIII*, (ed.) J. F. J. Biker (Lisbon, 1884), vol. 4, p. 176.

[101] I am grateful to my anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] A. Craesbeeck de Mello, *Relação da viagem e successos da armada do estreito de Ormus, e batalha do Congo* (Lisbon, 1670).

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only as a nuisance to their subject's trade. One instance from 1675 featured the Carmelite mission in Basra, which was locked in a dispute with a local janissary who refused to board up the windows of his house that looked down into their monastery. (The Carmelites in Basra, who were of Italian background, fell under the umbrella of the Propaganda Fide, in contrast to Basra's Augustinians, who were Portuguese and belonged to the Padroado.[104]) Numerous attempts by the Carmelites to convince the local *shahbandar* to intervene on their behalf were ignored. Unknowing support came in the form of a letter from Portuguese factors in Kong, who wrote to the Carmelites to inform them that they had released two Basran ships that they had impounded in the Safavid port.[105] This was enough to convince Basra's *shahbandar* to apply pressure on the janissary and order him to plaster his windows. Precise Portuguese intentions in this episode are not clear.

In fact, future Portuguese seizures of Ottoman vessels at Kong had the effect of bringing the Carmelites and the pasha still closer. By illustration, in August 1682, the Carmelite Vicar of Basra recorded:

> We are expecting today or tomorrow a French vessel. We have two Turkish in port, which came from India under the English flag, and thus escaped the Portuguese who detained eleven other Turkish vessels at Kung. The Pasha, or governor, of this place asked me to send one of my companions to Kung to arrange the dispute between him and the Portuguese.[106]

With the Portuguese up to their customary tricks, one can speculate that Ottoman authorities in Basra were in no mood to extend special privileges to them. Be that as it may, that position changed abruptly in 1690 thanks again to initiatives from Ottoman and Portuguese factors in the Gulf. The legal basis for the Portuguese return to Basra was more formalised than the compact of 1624 but deep-seated divisions remained concerning how actors from both sides conceived of the Portuguese presence.

New agreements and oblivion, 1690–1722

On 26 June 1690, António Machado de Brito, commander of the Portuguese fleets in the Gulf and Red Sea, signed an agreement with Halil Pasha, the governor of Basra.[107] Unlike in 1624, the agreement was shaped by the direct hand of the Ottoman centre and even of Lisbon. The prologue to a document that the Portuguese side called capitulations (*capitulações*) mentioned both the Portuguese King Dom Pedro II and the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman II by name. The conditions that goaded Brito and Halil Pasha into a compact are not clear. References to the assent of their respective sovereigns suggest that the compact was long in the making, as the go-ahead from Istanbul and Goa would have taken months, if not a full year, to arrive.

The Portuguese were granted a variety of privileges and exemptions, including freedom from arbitrary confiscation of property, an ability to carry weapons, and a 3 per cent custom rate. Nonetheless, Portuguese behaviour betrayed that they saw their rights as encompassing more than this. For one, they demanded a large plot of land for the establishment of their factory and also stipulated that 'for the assistance of the said Factor, the Turks shall give him one Venesiano a day, another half to the Priest, and

[104] Once again, I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for clarifying this.

[105] H. Gollancz (ed.), *Chronicle of Events between the Years of 1623 and 1733 Relating to the Settlement of the Order of Carmelites in Mesopotamia (Bassora)* (London, 1927), p. 344.

[106] Chick, *Chronicle of the Carmelites*, p. 426.

[107] 'Capitulações que o General do Estreito do Ormuz e Mar Roxo, António Machado de Brito, assentou com Calil Baxa de Bassora', in Biker (ed.), *Collecção de tratados*, vol. 4, pp. 234–236.

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half to the Clerk; that the City of Basra will contribute 5:500 patacas per year, and a thoroughbred horse'.[108] To this, they added the rider: 'That we will be able to buy fifteen horses each year for the stables, and take [them] without paying duties.' The Ottomans probably acquiesced to this because of their inability to protect their subjects' ships in the Gulf.

Some of the statutes in the agreement resembled those in Ottoman imperial capitulations. For one, the Ottomans were not allowed to intervene in crimes that involved Christians and in those cases in which a Muslim and a Christian were at loggerheads, then the pasha and Portuguese factor must preside in concert over the case. The former would be responsible for levying punishment on the Muslim and the latter would take charge of the Christian. The Portuguese were also emphatic that their subjects were not permitted to become Moors, but later there were several cases in which Portuguese sailors did just that while in Basra. It was also promised

> [t]hat the Turks may licitly come to our ports and lands in India in the same way as the vassals of our friendly Kings do, and they will be like the best treated by us. For our part, we undertake to give aid and favor to the residents of Turkey so that they may move freely and safely with their profits (*fazenda*), and to open trade on both sides for the common good.[109]

One matter remained exempt from the rules of capitulation: the money that the Portuguese took 'forcibly (*violentamente*) in Basra, which […] we require from the pasha and which we will collect for being our vassals (*nossos vassallos*), this statute always [remains] in effect'.[110]

Notwithstanding the bilateral Ottoman–Portuguese character of the proceedings, the Portuguese delegation in Basra also had their share of interlopers. Among the members of Brito's entourage in these years was Jacob Loestel—one of the many Frenchmen in the Estado's service and 'an interpreter of Indian languages'. He accompanied Brito on his voyages to Kong and Basra to collect customs and, in due course, was appointed clerk and interpreter (*escrivão e lingua*) at the Basra factory.[111] To all appearances, the signing of the capitulations and the appointment of personnel such as Loestel marked an auspicious start to the 1690 agreement, but misgivings soon wormed their way into the minds of many on the Portuguese end.

An ominous tone was already sounded in 1691 when Brito seized a carrack from Surat that was carrying 'Armenians, Persians, and Turks'. While he used the Armenians and Persians to extract concessions from the Safavids at Kong, Brito refused to release the Ottoman subjects on board 'because they [Basra] had not satisfied the agreement to pay the tributes it was obliged to pay to our crown'.[112] After a long back-and-forth with representatives of Basra's *shahbandar*, Brito received word that the pasha of Basra had been killed by local Arabs (Brito himself would be assassinated in 1694). Perhaps realising that the jig was up, Brito sent one of the captured Ottoman merchants to the Arabs in Basra. The merchant was greeted by a Carmelite friar, who, in the words of the Portuguese account, 'told the governor of the Arabs not to send the money, that he would take it to the carrack'.[113] The Carmelite then absconded to Kharg, a small island

[108] *Ibid*, pp. 234–235.
[109] *Ibid*, p. 235.
[110] *Ibid*, p. 236.
[111] A. C. G. da Silva Correia, *Os Frances na colonização portuguesa da Índia* (Lisbon, 1959), pp. 39–40.
[112] 'Account of a journey by General António Machado de Brito to the Strait of Hormuz', *Portugal in the Sea of Oman: Research on Documents, Corpus 2, Part 2, Vol. 14, Documents from 1640-1698* (Hildesheim, 2018), p. 218.
[113] *Ibid*, p. 220.

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in the Gulf, where he met Brito who was dressed in Turkish clothing, asserting he had done so out of fear for his life for siding with the Portuguese against the Ottomans. Reportedly, Brito was not convinced: 'the general was well aware of the cunningness of the Carmelites of the Propaganda Fide and the hatred they nurture towards us, reflected in the great discord they have aroused against us in Basra and throughout those lands of Persia, Turkey and India.'[114] Apprised of the Carmelite's duplicity by the Arabs who had accompanied the friar from Basra, and deciding that the merchants were not returning to his ship, Brito drew back to Kong. Not long after he arrived, the Ottoman merchants from Basra who had remained imprisoned aboard Brito's ship 'paid an amount equivalent to two years of revenues to secure their freedom'.[115] This was not likely to have fostered goodwill among the Ottomans.

Amidst these events, the Portuguese authorities expressed their doubts about the 1690 capitulations. In February 1692, the king of Portugal inquired with the viceroy in Goa whether they intended to abide by the capitulations to which Brito had agreed in 1690.[116] To this, the viceroy replied in December 1693:

> I considered them very useful in the service of Your Majesty, since in addition to not harming the port of Congo [Kong], according to what I have grasped thus far, it was in a certain way the Grand Turk rendering vassalage (*rendendo vassalagem*) to the Crown of Your Majesty; moreover, in a factory that, during the time of the Governors of my predecessors, had been erected there in advance, without this arrangement (*negociação*) receiving that necessary foundation through confirmation, which was expected from the same Great Turk, this business (*negocio*) came to ruin; and notwithstanding that last year the place in question paid the tribute of 5:500 *patacas* along with a horse, in the form adjusted by his capitulations.[117]

Nevertheless, for all his optimism, the viceroy added that the Basran factor had recently withdrawn to Kong because of a violation of the capitulations and that Goa was considering dispatching an armada.

In the end, Brito did send a fleet to Basra in 1693 as retaliation for a violation of the terms of the capitulations.[118] The Portuguese factor in the town had peremptorily departed earlier that year after a dispute over the raising of a royal standard at the Portuguese residence. Again, the Carmelite diary supplies the details:

> [The Portuguese] were given the house of a certain Delhi Benghi [Deli Bengi], where with great joy they raised the royal standard, but because it was seen from too great a distance on account of its unusual height, Hassan pasha ordered that its height should be reduced, which was done. For this reason, about the month of May, the resident representative of the Portuguese; nation, without taking leave of the head of the hospice, departed hence, taking all his belongings with him, to Congo.[119]

This incident seems small fry compared with the mid-century disputes involving the Portuguese that had occurred in Basra. Clearly, Portuguese sensitivities in the 1690s

[114] *Ibid*, p. 220.
[115] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[116] 'Carta de El-Rey ao Vice Rey da Índia sobre as capitulações de Bassorá', in Biker (ed.), *Collecção de tratados*, vol. 4, p. 238.
[117] 'Resposta do Vice Rey a El-Rey', in Biker (ed.), *Collecção de tratados*, vol. 4, pp. 238–239.
[118] J. A. Ismael Gracias, 'Uma Tragedia na Cidade de Goa em 1694', *O Oriente Portuguez* 7. 9/10 (1910), p. 267.
[119] Gollancz (ed.), *Chronicle of Events*, pp. 411–412.

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were more inclined to stand on ceremony than those from 50 years before, or, at the very least, were less able to bend the pasha to their will.

Two years later, in December 1695, the viceroy sent another letter to inform the Portuguese king that much had changed in Basra. In the time since his last letter about the city, Shaykh Mani, a leader of a local Arab tribe, had overrun Basra. The new incumbent of the town was supposedly keen to be friends with the Portuguese, but Arab attacks on Kong and rifts with the Safavids demanded greater attention.[120] Never ones to stay away for long, the Portuguese returned to Basra yet again in 1701—the same year as the Ottomans installed yet another Ali Pasha as governor. This followed an intermission of three years that were ushered in by the Safavid occupation. Soon after Ali Pasha's investiture, the Portuguese landed at Basra and demanded 15,000 scudos from its merchants, as well as three horses. This was the backlog of what they believed they were owed by the Ottomans in their three-year absence from the town.[121] Issues of protocol marked the proceedings from the beginning. When news reached the pasha of the Portuguese approach, he consulted with the Carmelites' representative about whether the ship merited a gun salute. While the Carmelite answered in the affirmative, the pasha's counsellors were adamant that Muslims 'ought not to salute dogs without law and religions, as are all the Franks'.[122] In turn, Ali Pasha castigated the counsellors and ordered that a salute should be fired in addition to '200 projective machines'. The salute was then reciprocated by the Portuguese, supposedly to the pasha's delight.[123]

Dialogue was simple as long as the guns did the talking, for, once the Portuguese put ashore, misunderstandings were rife. At a *divan* of merchants that was called by Ali Pasha to investigate the agreement that was ratified in 1690 between Halil Pasha and the Portuguese, Basra's new incumbent requested a copy of the old capitulations from his guests. As recounted in the Carmelite diary:

> To this [the Portuguese] replied that they were kept in the archives at Goa, and they had only brought a copy. The pasha read the copy and said: 'Whatever [Halil] pasha did, it is not lawful for us to confirm, for he rebelled against our Sultan ; you must therefore show me the capitulations approved by the Sultan, or at any rate subscribed by Kara Mustafa pasha, who had the Sultan's authority.' The Portuguese replied, 'Why then did those merchants give us so much money for so many years?' to which the merchants rejoined, 'We gave it indeed, but under compulsion.' The Portuguese; then asked: 'Will you not give us every day for our agent and for our church two sequins? They replied in the negative, saying, 'We have neither seen your church nor yourselves living in Bassora,' and they rashly denied this, because for so many years Portuguese; had lived in Bassora and in fact two sequins were daily paid to them.[124]

The friar and the pasha discussed the matter between themselves, each agreeing that the merchants of Basra were engaging in deliberate falsehoods. In a generous mood, the pasha later extended an olive branch to the Portuguese by offering them sweetmeats and coffee. But, the Carmelite chronicler concludes, the Portuguese knew that they would 'have to come away empty handed' and they departed in short order. Nevertheless, as a parting gift, the 'pasha sent a very beautiful robe for the senior captain Peter de Souza

[120] 'Resposta do Vice Rey', in Biker (ed.), *Collecção de tratados*, vol. 4, pp. 242–243.
[121] Gollancz (ed.), *Chronicle of Events*, p. 434.
[122] *Ibid*, p. 433.
[123] *Ibid*, p. 433.
[124] *Ibid*, p. 435.

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Attaiide [Pedro de Sousa de Ataíde], and another for the general residing in Congo'.[125] Unlike Silveira in 1625, this time, the Portuguese accepted the robes but, if anything, these were a parting gift rather than a housewarming present.

Notwithstanding the rebuff that the Portuguese had faced in 1701, for the next two decades, the Portuguese intermittently dropped in at Basra in order to collect the customs. It is unclear whether the Portuguese were ever successful in their object, but one does find a very occasional reference to the voyage in contemporary Portuguese documentation. António de Figueiredo e Utra—who eventually rose to the rank of general of the Estado's galleots and was renowned in later Portuguese nationalist historiography for his victories over the Omanis and the Angrias—earned his stripes on one of these missions. As he climbed the hierarchy of the Estado's navy, Utra's voyage to Basra was invariably mentioned in resumes of his service, although only in the most elliptical of phrases.[126] The majority of his career was consumed by expeditions against Omani fleets around Kong, Surat, and other ports besides. Other collections of Portuguese documentation from this time contain almost no references to Basra.[127]

The Estado and its fleets still tried to regulate trade between western India and Basra on occasion. In 1719, a *cartaz* was granted to the Maratha ruler Sambhaji Chhatrapati of Kolhapur to transport horses from Basra or Kong.[128] An additional, last-gasp agreement of unknown date was granted by Ottoman authorities under Süleyman Pasha. Because the Portuguese anthology that includes the treaty does not list a date, it is possible that this Süleyman Pasha was the late eighteenth-century Basran governor of that name. Joseph Cohen, a Portuguese merchant in Bombay, translated a Persian letter that was sent to the Portuguese authorities after the treaty was ratified. The Ottoman scribe informed the Portuguese that his master had granted a *firman* to the Portuguese that permitted them to sail to Basra. He went on to add, as the translation reads:

> You should informe the people of your caste and your dependants that they might annually go to the Bunder Busra for trade. When the vessels belonging to the Portuguese merchants and containing merchandise will arrive in this Bunder [port] nothing will be spared to extend to them protection, and due notice and care from here in the same way as is done in reference to the trading vessels from other European countries.[129]

Conclusion

The end of any discernible Portuguese connection to Basra in the 1730s was part and parcel of a larger shift in the Gulf's political economy in the wake of the fall of the Safavids and the onrush of Omani and European factors into the commercial life of the port. Over the previous century, the Portuguese relationship with the Ottomans in Basra had shared some broad similarities with their relations with the Mughals and the Safavids. Yet, the fact that the Portuguese had frontiers with these two latter powers and repeatedly encountered their subjects on the high seas ensured that diplomatic exchanges were more regular than anything in Ottoman–Portuguese relations. Still, the ability of the

[125] *Ibid*, p. 436.

[126] A. M. Esparteiro, *O general dos galeões do estado da Índia, António de Figueiredo e Utra (1678-1751)* (Lisbon, 1975).

[127] A. B. de Braganca Pereira, *Arquivo português oriental (Nova Edição): História política, diplomática e militar*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1709–1719 (Bastorá, 1936).

[128] A. Lobato (ed.), *Relações Luso-Maratas* (Lisbon, 1965), p. 55.

[129] 'Formão que existe na Secretaria do Governo, em letra arabica, e sua tradução parsia…', in Biker (ed.), *Collecção de tratados*, vol. 4, p. 244.

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Portuguese to forge commercial agreements with the Ottoman authorities in Basra was indicative of a flexible political and trade strategy in the Western Indian Ocean that was pursued by both parties.

Having arrived in Basra in the 1620s, the Portuguese had a head start on the English, Dutch, and French, whose seventeenth-century track record in Basra was mercurial. But, whereas the other Europeans also had recourse to the full remit of imperial capitulations in the Mediterranean ports of the Ottoman Empire—Istanbul, Aleppo, Izmir—the Portuguese between 1624 and 1650 had no such luxury. Another century would pass before capitulations were extended from the Levant to Basra. By constructing a factory and labouring to integrate the city into the maritime system of the *cáfila*, the Portuguese did their best to incorporate Basra into the commercial system that they had constructed throughout the Western Indian Ocean. Lacking a charter that clearly spelled out their rights may have given the Portuguese greater freedom of action in Basra in the short term but, in the long run, it probably undermined the longevity of their operations.

When the Portuguese returned to Basra in 1690 to re-establish their factory, they encountered a transformed political regime. The 'capitulations' of that year—as the Portuguese called them—promised numerous dividends, including the payment of tribute. But, when the Portuguese stood on their rights, the Ottomans did not follow the Portuguese script. No longer the beneficiaries of special privileges from the pasha, the Portuguese were now just another group of Europeans who all largely enjoyed the same privileges in Basra. As it had in the Mughal and Safavid contexts long before, the multiplication of Europeans in early eighteenth-century Basra diminished the ability of the Portuguese to browbeat state actors whose maritime resources were comparatively weak. By contrast, the subsequent history of the capitulations in the Levant would increase the capacity of Europeans to coerce the Ottoman state into doing their bidding.

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