



ALBUQUERQUE, ALFONSO DE

ALBUQUERQUE, ALFONSO DE (ca. 1460-1515), admiral in the Indian Ocean (1504, 1506-08), second governor of Portuguese India (1509-15), a great conqueror, and the real founder of the Portuguese empire in the Orient. Appointed head of the “fleet of the Arabian and Persian sea” in 1506, Albuquerque resolved to conquer the island of Hormoz, a great international market; the conquest would permit control of an important commercial route, while Hormoz’s treasure would provide the sums necessary to maintain Portuguese forces in the Indian Ocean. Arriving in front of Jarūn at the end of September, 1507, Albuquerque, thanks to his artillery, conquered the superior forces of *Ḳvāja ‘Aṭā’*, the Bengali eunuch who governed the kingdom. By the treaty of 10 October 1507, the inhabitants of Hormoz recognized the sovereignty of Manuel I, undertook to pay an annual tribute of 15,000 *ašraftī*, and contributed to the construction of a Portuguese fort adjacent to the royal palace. While the fort was being constructed lively disagreement broke out between Albuquerque and four of his captains, who finally abandoned him (early February, 1508). He then left for Socotra, but reappeared in front of Hormoz in September, 1508. In the meantime *Ḳvāja ‘Aṭā’* had received the aid of the viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, a supporter of commercial relations and friendship. Repudiated, Albuquerque proceeded to Malabar, where Almeida refused to transfer to him the governorship of Portuguese India. He was only able to take office at the end of 1509.

Albuquerque continued to dream of subduing Hormoz, but he also hoped to foster relations with Shah Esmā’īl I (r. 907-30/1501-24); he was authorized to



extend to the latter offers of an alliance for a combined Iranian-Portuguese offensive against the Mamlūk state and for a division of the Near East. The ambassador whom he sent to Iran in 1510 was poisoned in Hormoz by Ẕvāĵa ‘Aṭā’, who feared the consequences of an agreement between the two great soldiers for his small kingdom. Shah Esmā’īl, not impressed by Albuquerque’s unsuccessful attacks on Hormoz in 1507 and 1508, showed no favor for such an alliance, but instead sought Venice’s participation in his projects in the Mediterranean area. Nevertheless, a second ambassador went to Persia in 1513.

In the Deccan, where Persian mercenaries and merchants played an important part, Albuquerque became more and more aware of the necessity of settling the question of Hormoz; but he was detained by other campaigns until the spring of 921/1515. With Ẕvāĵa ‘Aṭā’ dead and the old vizier, Nūr-al-dīn Fālī, outflanked, the establishment of Portuguese rule, which was to last 107 years, was simplified. Remaining in Hormoz until November, Albuquerque sent a third ambassador, Fernão Gomes de Lemos, to Shah Esmā’īl. The Shah’s dreams had been shattered at Čālderān in Raĵab 920/August, 1514, by the cannons of the Ottoman sultan, Selim I. The shah hoped to obtain firearms from the Portuguese, who could not furnish them, and the proclamation of Manuel’s rule over Hormoz and the Persian Gulf islands associated with it (including Bahrain) was unacceptable to him. Albuquerque, however, did not learn of the collapse of his plans. Before the ambassador could return, he had been forced to depart for India. With his health ruined by the summer in Hormoz, he died before reaching Goa.

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On relations between Hormoz and Iran, see J. Aubin, "Cojeatar et Albuquerque," *Mare Luso-indicum* 1, 1971, pp. 99-134 (to be continued in the same journal).

See also J. Qā'em-maqāmī, "Mohrhā, tawšīḥhā va ṭogrāhā-ye molūk-e Hormūz," *Barrasīhā-ye tārikī* 8/3, 1352 Š./1973, pp. 43-58.

Idem, "Mas'ala-ye Hormūz dar rawābeṭ-e Īrān va Portoḡāl," *ibid.*, 9/3, 1353 Š./1974, pp. 211-80.