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Decay or defeat ? : an inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia 1580-1645

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Citation

Veen, E. van. (2000, December 6). *Decay or defeat ? : an inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia 1580-1645*. Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies (CNWS), Leiden University. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/15783>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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CHAPTER V

THE PORTUGUESE IN ASIA

Demography

Demographic change is, almost by definition, the finally deciding endogenous factor in the expansion or decline of an empire. As shown in chapter 1, this was true for Brazil, but it was also true for the Portuguese empire in Asia.

During the years 1580-1630 an average of 2,300 Portuguese arrived annually in Goa, whereas the number returning to Portugal amounted to almost 1,600 per year.¹ In the long run the average positive balance of 700 was not sufficient to compensate for the high death rate: in the years 1604-1634 about 25,000 soldiers died in the royal hospital of Goa, from diseases like malaria and cholera.² To maintain a Portuguese presence in Asia, the bachelors had to marry locally, baptize the off spring and make them learn the Portuguese language. As a result, the old social stratifications of their home country became interwoven with criteria like marital status and the colour of the skin. The definition of who was Portuguese and who not became more and more diffuse and this is one of the reasons why the head counts of those times do not always fit together, as one may readily conclude from following summary.

As mentioned in chapter 1, around 1580 the total number of Portuguese and Portuguese speaking *mestiços* in Asia amounted to about 16,000, of which maybe 10,000 were male adults. These male adults were divided in those who were single and therefore could be obliged to serve as soldiers (*soldados*) and those who were married (*casados*). The latter category were considered as permanent residents (*moradores*) and were originally exempted from military service, no doubt to give them a chance to maintain the Portuguese presence in the way just described. Boyajian has estimated that there were a few thousand of each of the categories *soldados* and *casados* in the areas of the *Estado* in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, whereas the number of *lançados*, the Portuguese who escaped the authority of the *Estado* and were spread over the whole of Asia as mercenary, merchant or otherwise, would have been at least 5,000.³ By the end of the seventeenth century there were not much more than 12,000 Portuguese left in the Orient.⁴

The population of Goa consisted of Hindus, native Christians, African slaves and Portuguese. Numerically and economically the Hindus were by far the most important group in Goa. They controlled the supplies of food, the availability of labour and the collection

¹T. Bentley Duncan, 'Navigation between Portugal and Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in E.J. Kley and C.K. Pullapilly (eds.) *Asia and the West. Encounters and exchanges from the age of explorations* (Notre Dame, Indiana 1986) 3-25, see table 3.1 a, b and c.

²M.N. Pearson, 'The Portuguese in India' in *The New Cambridge History of India* Vol.I-1 (Cambridge 1987) 93.

³James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese trade in Asia under the Habsburgs 1580-1640* (Baltimore/London 1993) 32-33.

⁴Vitório Magalhães Godinho, 'Sociedade Portuguesa' in Joel Serrão (ed.) *Dicionário de História de Portugal* Vol. VI (Porto 1981) 29.

of taxes.⁵ The next important group were the *Canarins*, natives of the lower castes, converted to Christianity and despised by everybody else.⁶ Lowest on the ladder were the African slaves, imported by the Portuguese to do the hard work and to add to the status of their masters.

According to Souza, the earliest information of the seventeenth century leads to an estimated population of Goa of 75,000 on the basis of 5,000 families, with fifteen persons per family, including ten slaves.⁷ However, of the total population not more than 1,500 would have been Portuguese.⁸ An estimate of twenty years later gives only 3,000 households in Goa,⁹ so that the population in that time must have decreased considerably and parts of the town must have been practically uninhabited. In 1658 the number of Hindus would have been reduced to only 2,000.¹⁰

According to Disney, from the middle of the sixteenth century until the first two decades of the seventeenth century there were about 2,000 *casados* in Goa. By the 1630s their number would have dwindled to only 800, a number that is confirmed by Pearson.¹¹ For the number of *soldados* Disney quotes estimates by contemporary sources which suggest a reduction over the same period from 4,000 to 1,000, with the somewhat superfluous remark that these numbers also depended on the arrivals and departures of the ships from and to Portugal.¹² Also Oliveira Marques has suggested a halving of the population of Goa after 1630.¹³

The numbers produced by Pearson appear to be a mixture of the estimates of De Souza and Disney. In 1625 there were in larger Goa

⁵Teotonio R. de Souza, *Medieval Goa, a socio-economic history* (New Delhi 1979) 116-117, M.N. Pearson, 'Indigenous dominance in a colonial economy. The Goa *rendas*, 1600-1700' in *Mare Luso-Indicum* 2 (1973 Geneva/Paris) 61-73.

⁶De Souza 1979: 119.

⁷The wealth of the Portuguese in India was measured by the number of slaves they kept. António Bocarro reported in *Década XIII* that per Portuguese family there were about 10 slaves (De Souza 1979: 124-125). According to Van Linschoten some *casados* had twenty to thirty male and female slaves 'because their maintenance costs very little'. They earned money for their master selling water, conserved fruits, needlework and knitting, as prostitutes, and last but not least in the money exchange: 'They buy the reals of eight when the ships from Portugal arrive and get them for 12 per hundred, they keep them until the month of April, which is the time that the ships leave for China. There is then a demand for reals of eight to take them there and generally their price is then 25 to 30 per hundred. Instead they take in their place a money that at that time comes from Hormuz, called *Larrijns*, that comes from Persia, and which they get for 8 to 10 per hundred, and which they keep again until the ships from Portugal arrive in September which pay 20 to 25 per hundred in exchange for reals of eight, as said before' [Jan Huygen van Linschoten, H. Kern (ed.), *Itinerario. Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer oost ofte Portugaels Indien 1579-1592* (The Hague 1910) I, 129].

⁸De Souza 1979: 115.

⁹Magalhães Godinho 1981: 29 quotes a maximum of 50,000 inhabitants in Goa after the Restoration, with only a small number of Portuguese.

¹⁰De Souza 1979: 115-116.

¹¹A.R. Disney, *Twilight of the pepper empire. Portuguese trade in Southwest India in the early seventeenth century* (Cambridge, Mass. 1978) 19, Pearson 1973: 69, see also next paragraph.

¹²Disney 1978: 19-20.

¹³A.H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal* (New York 1972) I, 340-42.

about 60,000 native Christians and over 100,000 Hindus. In 1635 Goa town counted 3,500 hearths, of which 800 belonged to Portuguese born in the home country. He adds the note, that all people living in one of the non-Portuguese hearths would have been non-Portuguese, whereas in the so-called Portuguese hearths most of the members were non-Portuguese.¹⁴ By the end of the seventeenth century Goa would have counted about 20,000 inhabitants.¹⁵

The numbers in other Portuguese settlements in Asia are still more difficult to assess. Following Engerman and Das Neves and Godinho again (see chapter 1), by the end of the sixteenth century there would have been 1,000 Portuguese in Cochin. In the North, Hormuz would have counted 150-200 *casados* and Diu 350 *soldados* and 60 *casados*.

On the East coast of India and further beyond, where the control by the *Estado* was limited, the number of *lançados* in São Tomé de Meliapur amounted to 1,000 and in Bengal to 900. In Malacca lived not more than 100 Portuguese families, but in Macao there were about 1,000 Portuguese. By the end of the seventeenth century Macao was still in full swing with 6,000 non-Christians and a few hundred converted Chinese living together with 1,000 Portuguese.¹⁶ For 1601 Russell-Wood quotes 600 males and for 1669 some 300-320 *casados*.¹⁷

Oliveira Marques¹⁸ gives us 50,000 people in Hormuz at the beginning of the seventeenth century, with less than 1,000 Portuguese; Diu would have reduced from 10,000 to 3,000 inhabitants, with only sixty Portuguese households,¹⁹ São Tomé would have counted 1,000 and Malacca 600 Portuguese households and finally Macao would have had 10,000 inhabitants of whom half were Christian, but where, according to Boxer, the number of *casados* was not more than 400.²⁰

To put the finishing touch, António Bocarro indicated in 1635 the following numbers of 'white' *casados*: Goa 800, Damão and Bassein each 400, Chaul 200, Cochin 300, Colombo 350, Malacca 250 and Macao 850.²¹

The data thus presented look, to say the least, ridiculously messy, but they agree at least on one thing: a drastic reduction of the total population and the number of Portuguese settled in Goa and Diu in the early seventeenth century.

The main cause, no doubt, was the cholera epidemic of 1618-1619,

¹⁴ Pearson 1973: 69. His note illustrates the confusion than can arise by the lack of proper definition. With the latter, described as 'non-Portuguese' he probably meant Christians, with Portuguese names, but of Indian origin.

¹⁵ Pearson 1987: 134-135.

¹⁶ Magalhães Godinho: 1981: 29.

¹⁷ A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808. A world on the move* (Baltimore/London 1998) 61. For Macao see also George Bryan Souza, *The survival of empire. Portuguese trade and society in China and the South China Sea, 1630-1754* (Cambridge 1986) table 3.1, 32.

¹⁸ Oliveira Marques 1972: I, 340-342.

¹⁹ At the end of the 17th century not more than a quarter of Diu would have been inhabited. [Pearson 1987: 134-135].

²⁰ C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese society in the tropics. The municipal councils of Goa, Macao, Bahia and Luanda 1510-1800* (Madison, Wisc. 1965) 46-47.

²¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, 'Evolution of empire: The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean during the sixteenth century' in James D. Tracy (ed.) *The political economy of merchant empires. State power and world trade 1350-1750* (Cambridge 1991) 322.

which reduced the number of Hindus in Goa by 50 per cent and killed about 2,000 Portuguese.²² In a later stage, the severe famine of 1630 and that of June-August 1648 had a further dramatic impact on the numbers in Gujarat and Goa.²³

Other explanations are the wars with Kanara in the early 17th century (see chapter 9) and the departure of the Hindu merchants from Goa and Diu, after 1612, when the English (later followed by the Dutch), had established a factory in Surat. In Diu the Portuguese captains had a reputation for collecting their taxes rather arbitrarily and another reason to leave the settlements of the *Estado* would have been the religious intolerance of the Portuguese clergy.²⁴

The losses on the Portuguese side were not compensated by new arrivals: on the contrary, the 1620s showed a considerable drop in the number of Portuguese leaving for India. (see chapter 3). However, when the officials of the *Estado da Índia* spoke or wrote about a shortage of people, one should take into account on the one hand the relatively small scale of the operations²⁵ and on the other hand the desire of the Portuguese officials to surround themselves with numerous subordinates, servants, clerks and guards in order to maintain *reputação*.²⁶

Portuguese society in Asia

The Portuguese arriving in Goa were a mixed bag of the three estates: aristocracy, clergy and a large majority of *povo*, all in the service of the king, having made the trip, food and beverage included, on the king's account.

The aristocracy, the king's *vassalos*²⁷ and a few other *fidalgos*, who filled the higher and more lucrative jobs in the *Estado da Índia*, were originally chosen because of their earlier services and proven fidelity towards the king. This included positions such as that

²²According to Boxer 1965: 31 Goa was already an unhealthy place in the last quarter of the 16th century, because the porous soil allowed the waste water to penetrate the fresh water sources.

²³De Souza 1979: 115-116.

²⁴Magalhães Godinho 1982: 77.

²⁵A striking example is the expedition of Manuel Mascarenhas who left in 1614 with 70 *soldados*, amongst whom two *fidalgos* and another two who wanted to accompany him without pay, for Ceylon to wage war for the sake of religion and the conversion of the Singhalese. This group was described as a 'big regiment' and their expedition, which would take three years, as a '*conquista*'. [*Década XIII*, 272-278, 405-411, 480, 495, 499, 506, 702-714].

²⁶The costs of these people were charged, directly or indirectly, against the revenues, as shown by the budgets of the fortifications [Vitório Magalhães Godinho, *Les finances de l'état Portugais des Indes Orientales (1517-1635) (Matériaux pour une étude structurale et conjoncturelle)* (Paris 1982) 160, 174-175, etc.]. E.g. the captain of Hormuz had the right to have, besides his extended family, 50 men on his personal pay roll to accompany him and to be with him in the fort, besides his own guard of 30 men. His colleague in Diu had 25 servants, 30 guards and another 40 men (*criados e parentes*) to accompany him. The actual 'men of arms' were directly paid and fed by the *Estado*.

²⁷In the course of the 13th to the 15th century the term *vassalos* had become a general term for the nobility that was directly dependent on the king [Oliveira Marques 1983: 101].

of viceroy, governor, captain, controller, factor, judge at the high court or first secretary. Between 1550 and 1671 five families accounted for half of all viceroys and governors.²⁸ As from the 1610s the captaincies and the positions of factor and inspector of duties and excise were auctioned in public. From there on, it was no longer birth but money that settled the matter.²⁹

The position of the clergy and the religious orders was still the legacy of what Charles Boxer once called 'the ecclesiastic mould in which the Portuguese military and maritime enterprise was cast'.³⁰ Their privileges were based on the so-called *padroado real* (patronage of the crown) which Rome had delegated to the Portuguese crown, to promote Christianity in the expanding empire. They were allowed to communicate directly with the king and kept him informed of many of the things happening within the communities of the *Estado*.³¹ In the Portuguese settlements considerable parts of the public expenditure consisted of payments and gifts to the churches, the clergy and the religious orders: in Hormuz and Diu only 3 per cent, but in Goa (the location with the highest budget) 10 per cent and in Bassein even 36 per cent.³² Around 1630 there were about 1,700 clergymen spread over Asia, amongst whom the Jesuits, directly followed by the Franciscans, were the most numerous.³³ However, by that time the religious orders had grown from evangelistic poverty to worldly riches.³⁴ In 1603 inhabitants of Goa sent a complaint to the king about the Jesuits who invested their large capital in land and appeared to occupy all the houses and land that were available.³⁵ In 1615 the foundation of new cloisters was made subject

²⁸ Subrahmanyam 1991: 325.

²⁹ Dutch reports confirm that the Portuguese officialdom of the 17th century was probably less feudal than it would appear. After the Dutch conquest of Malacca in 1641 Justus Schouten described the organization of the municipal administration. It was headed by a noble captain-general, who at the same time was head of the criminal and civil judicature, *viador da fazenda* and commander-in-chief of war on land and at sea, against a salary of 4,000 *cruzados* per year and many other emoluments. The *ovidor* (head judge) was *licenciado in juris*, not noble, and earned a salary of 200 *milréis* (more than 500 *cruzados*) per annum plus the profits from penalties. The *feitor*, the controller of the royal revenues and means, who was not noble either, would have received 300 *milréis* (750 *cruzados*) per annum as a salary and another 20,000 *cruzados* in the form of extra profits. [P.A. Leupe, 'Stukken betrekkelijk het beleg en de verovering van Malakka op de Portugezen in 1640-41. Benevens het rapport van de kommissaris Schouten over den verleden en tegenwoordigen toestand dier stad. Uit de papieren der voormalige Oost-Indische compagnie' in *Berigten van het Historisch Genootschap te Utrecht* 7 (1859) 174-177].

³⁰ C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese seaborne empire, 1415-1825* (London 1969) 75.

³¹ A large part of the correspondence from Philip III in *Documentos Remettidos* is a reaction on the information he received in this way.

³² Magalhães Godinho 1982: 165-167, 179-180, 191-193, 213-216, 221-223, 227-233, 271-272, 276-282, 308-313, 327-330.

³³ Subrahmanyam 1993: 222-224.

³⁴ De Souza 1979: 122 and Boxer 1965: 36-38.

³⁵ De Souza 1979: 72-73. Van Linschoten 1910: I, 121, already reported the fact that the land of Bardes and Salcete near Goa was leased on behalf of the king of Portugal, 'from where the archbishops and monasteries, with the clergy, but also the viceroy and other officers of the king draw their salary, annual rents and maintenance, using the king's patents and privileges'. See also Magalhães Godinho 1982:216, note 231.

to limitations,³⁶ but in the 1630's there were new complaints, this time about the monastery of Santa Monica, where the money of rich nuns was used in direct competition with the merchants of Goa.³⁷ Nevertheless, the clergy also played an active part in the welfare and government of the municipalities and in their armed defence.

The majority of the Portuguese arriving in Goa were the *soldados*. In the chronicles they played an important role, because their courage and number reflected back on the *reputação* of their noble commanders. This has created the impression that the word *soldado* could be directly translated into the notion 'soldier'. As will be shown below, as a point of fact the *Estado* did not have a standing army at its disposal, which was trained and disciplined regularly, let alone daily.³⁸

A *soldado* was expected to serve when he was called upon, unless he was injured or married. In the latter case the *soldado* would become *morador casado*, a married citizen. Most merchants were called *casados*. In the seventeenth century, in particular from 1620, when there was a chronic shortage of men, work on the galleys and in the manufacture of gunpowder were introduced as a penalty for criminals and vagabonds. In times of crisis, *casados* and natives often had to do compulsory service.

When a *soldado* had served on the fleet for at least eight years he could try to be appointed in a public function. To obtain a position in the *Estado*, good relations, nobility and 'purity of the blood' were of paramount importance. The chances of making a career in officialdom from the bottom upwards were therefore practically nil and trade was a good alternative.

The future of the people in the middle and lower ranks, once they had decided to return to Portugal, largely depended on their *certidão*,³⁹ the written confirmation of their performance, which after their return to Europe could open the way to promotion in the official ranks.

The Portuguese monopoly

The influence which the Spanish crown could have in the *Estado da Índia* was of course largely determined by the choice of people appointed as viceroy, *capitão*, factor or auditor, but they were always Portuguese. The behaviour of these gentlemen was kept in sight by regular correspondence with the clergy and the *Camaras*, the elected municipal councils. The reactions on the information

³⁶DR: III, 102.

³⁷Boxer 1965: 38.

³⁸Linschoten 1910: I, 128-129. 'because all the single men who are not married are called soldiers, which is the most honest name one could have; but these soldiers have no obligation whatsoever, nor are they under the power or command of any standard or regiment, something which is not the custom in the whole of the Indies: because as soon as the Portuguese arrive in India from Portugal, they all go their own way, just as they like'.

³⁹George Davison Winius, *The black legend of Portuguese India. Diogo do Couto, his contemporaries and the Soldado Prático. A contribution to the study of political corruption in the empires of early modern Europe* (New Delhi 1985) xxi-xxii. These certificates were very important for the *soldados* and the officials to obtain prestigious positions in the *Estado da Índia* or after return to Portugal. Losing it was just as bad as the loss of one's savings or diamonds.

and complaints received, together with new decrees, regulations and advice, were written down in an endless series of letters. These *cartas régias* were formally written and signed by the king or his councillors, but they needed the approval of the Council of India and the viceroy in Lisbon⁴⁰ and their resultant, sometimes rather woolly contents had only a limited effect.

The successive kings of Castile were, as king of Portugal, fully aware of their monopolies on the navigation and trade in the Eastern hemisphere. In 1591 Philip II issued a law against the passage of foreign ships to India and in 1605 the navigation to India, Brazil, Guinea and the islands, with the exception of the Azores and Madeira, was again prohibited to foreigners, unless they had royal permission. Portuguese ships were no longer allowed to carry foreigners and foreigners were no longer allowed to live in the *conquistas*.⁴¹

Until at least 1600 the non-Portuguese amongst the Europeans in Asia were quite numerous. Amongst them Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, who departed from Lisbon in April 1583 and returned there in January 1592, is probably the best known because he put everything he heard or saw in writing as precisely as he could. The same Van Linschoten reported in the years 1584 and 1585 the arrival in Goa of *busschieters* (gunners) of 'Duytsche' background, coming from the Netherlands.⁴²

It is highly probable that the publication of his *Itinerario* gave cause to the laws of 1605, which led to expulsion of Pyrard de Laval⁴³ and Jacques de Coutre and his brother.⁴⁴ However, in 1611 the request of the 'Do Coutos' to obtain permission to stay in Goa was still under discussion.⁴⁵

During the 'Twelve Years' Truce the King of Spain, Philip III, continued to insist on his monopoly. In his letter of 22 March 1609 to the viceroy he had stressed the point that the freedom of navigation and trade of 'the islands of Holland and Zealand' would remain limited to their possessions in Europe and to the territories where the subjects of Portuguese-friendly princes were allowed to maintain

⁴⁰Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, caravans and companies: the structural crisis in the European-Asian trade in the early 17th century* (Copenhagen 1973) 13.

⁴¹J.F.J. Biker, *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 de Asia e Africa oriental desde o princípio da conquista até fim do século XVIII* (Lisbon 1881-1887) Vol. IV, 73-77.

⁴²Van Linschoten 1910: II, 92, 94.

⁴³François Pyrard, Albert Gray, H.C.P. Bell (eds./transl.), *The voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil* (London 1887-1890) 2 vols.

⁴⁴J. Verberckmoes, E. Stols, *Aziatische omzwervingen. Het levensverhaal van Jacques de Coutre, een Brugs diamanthandelaar 1591-1627* (Berchem 1988). After his return to Portugal Jacques de Coutre revealed himself as an *arbitrista* with a lot of good advice how to continue the war against the Northern Netherlands. As most of them he disregarded the fact that the Spanish treasury was empty and that from there no support could be expected for the *Estado*. [B.N. Teensma (ed.), *Jacques de Coutre (1575-1640), Como remediar o Estado da India? Being the appendices of the Vida de Jacques de Coutre* (Bibliotheca Nacional, Madrid, ms.2780) (Leiden 1989)].

⁴⁵DR: II, 16-17.

a free trade.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Philip was conscious of the fact that maintaining his monopoly had become a difficult matter: in a letter of 21 February 1610 he insisted again that the viceroy would take steps, in the most effective and discrete manner, so that the '*reys visinhos*' would not allow Dutch or other foreign ships in their harbours without a licence from the king.⁴⁷

In 1614 a prohibition was issued once again, not only against the presence of foreigners but also to that of the 'Hebrew nation' in India.⁴⁸ That the prohibitions did not work was easily demonstrated by the fact that in 1625 eight Genoese merchants, living in Goa, offered a loan to the *Estado* of 50,000 *cruzados* for the purchase of the cargo for a ship departing for Lisbon.⁴⁹ Clearly, some merchants were too important to the economy to be chased away.

The Portuguese merchants themselves were equally prepared to defend their unique right of navigation and trade in Asia. The murder of some of the members of the crew of Van Neck in Macao in 1601 was clearly an initiative of the Portuguese citizens in order to prevent the Dutch from establishing commercial contacts with the Chinese.⁵⁰ Also François Pyrard was attacked in 1608, near Cochin, by a group of Portuguese who, under command of a priest, wanted to murder him and his companions because they suspected that they had come to trade. He was only saved by the fact that he spoke Portuguese.⁵¹ During the Dutch attacks on Macao in 1622 and the blockades and siege of Malacca in the years 1636 to 1641, it was that same ideology, together with a good sense of economic and physical self-preservation, which brought the *fidalgos*, *soldados*, *casados* and clergy together in a warlike spirit, one severely underestimated by the Dutch, time and time again.

The Portuguese defence

To defend the maritime empire it was an absolute necessity to maintain the monopoly of power on the Asian waters and the arrival of the English and Dutch made this a first priority. From 1574 an extra 1 per cent *ad valorem* duty was levied on imports and exports for the maintenance of the galleys and the fortifications,⁵² but this was not adequate to replace the artillery. The *capitães* of some of the towns did not hesitate therefore to bring the guns from their fortresses on board the ships. In 1602 the viceroy was reminded that taking away any artillery from the forts in India for the ships or any other purpose had already been prohibited in 1590. He was told that any *capitão* who pretended that his predecessor was responsible for the act had to prove this and that if he was

⁴⁶ DR: I, 252-253. These were the territories, such as e.g. Calicut, Amboina, Johore, Patani, Masulipatam, Paliacata, where the Dutch had concluded contracts, but with which the king was still pretending to maintain friendly relations, as long as the contracts with the Portuguese had not been terminated.

⁴⁷ DR: I, 360.

⁴⁸ DR: III, 7.

⁴⁹ De Souza 1979:123-124.

⁵⁰ Leonard Blussé, 'Brief encounter at Macao' in *Modern Asian Studies* 22 (1988) 647-664.

⁵¹ Pyrard I 1887:424.

⁵² Magalhães Godinho 1982: 81, 46, 43.

responsible himself, he would be dismissed from all royal service.⁵³ But all these efforts were in vain: in 1611 a number of *cartas regias* drew again the viceroy's attention to the bad condition of the forts of the *Estado* in Goa, Bassein, Damão, Chaul and Cochin, due to insufficient maintenance and because the *capitães* had taken away the guns without returning them.⁵⁴

With respect to the manning of the fortifications, the budgets over the years 1574-1635 always assumed a certain number of armed men to be available and the amount of money allocated for the purpose was spent in one way or another. But the accountants of those years always found that there were more *soldados* on the payroll than there actually were.⁵⁵

After arrival in Goa a ship could normally not return immediately and the municipality would look after the sailors during their stay, but the *soldados* were left on their own. Francisco Rodrigues Silveira, himself a real *soldado prático*, described in 1598 how they, having escaped the diseases of the long voyage, were received in Goa and had to sell the little they had to buy something to eat until they could find another source of income.⁵⁶ In the summer season the *fidalgos* were appointed who would serve as captains on the ships and they themselves recruited the soldiers who were going to serve in their suite. From September till March, the five summer months that they were serving on the coastal fleet, the *Estado* provided the *soldados* with food and pay.⁵⁷ For the rest of the year they had the choice between staying with family or a girlfriend from the lower castes, beginning their own business or offering their services as a personal guard for a Portuguese nobleman or as a mercenary for a native prince. Others found a safer destination in the church or a monastery.⁵⁸ In seventeenth century Goa there were never more than one hundred *soldados* that could be called

⁵³DR: III, 512-513.

⁵⁴The camera of Chaul asked for a voyage to China so that with the profits they would be able to pay for the maintenance of their fort. Chaul had already received such a voyage in 1609 for the same purpose, but this had been sold again for 27,800 *xerafins*, of which the town only received 8,000. The governor/bishop had also received 8,000 *xerafins*, the viceroy had taken 8,000 and some other high official had helped himself to another 3,000 [DR: II, 21, 53 and 72].

⁵⁵Artur Teodoro de Matos, 'The financial situation of the State of India during the Philippine period (1581-1635)' in Teotonio R. de Souza, *Indo-Portuguese history, old issues, new questions* (New Delhi 1985) 90-101. A more extensive discussion by the same author can be found in 'A situação financeira do Estado da Índia no período Filipino (1581-1635)' in Artur Teodoro de Matos, *Na Rota da Índia. Estudos de história da expansão Portuguesa* (Macao 1994) 61-81.

⁵⁶Francisco Rodrigues Silveira, Benjamin N. Teensma (trans.) *Reformação da milícia e governo do Estado da Índia oriental* (Lisbon 1996) 21-23.

⁵⁷*Van Linschoten* 1910: 136-138. The pay system of Diu deviated considerably from that in Goa. According to the 1574 budget the soldiers, which included *casados* and *moradores*, received 3,000 *réis* per man and per month in June, 1,500 in September and all the remaining months 600 *réis*, to support themselves also in case of sickness, but without any food allowances. [Magalhães Godinho 1982:184-185]. Silveira 1996: 25-27 suggests that the *soldados* received a quart as a prepayment, the captains keeping the rest in their pocket.

⁵⁸Well known is the complaint on this matter by Linhares in 1630, but even in 1672 the viceroy wrote that more than 200 men had disappeared in a monastery. The situation had still not changed in 1714 (*Biker* 1885: 298).

together for an alert and to take up the arms, so that in case of emergency one had to rely on fully untrained *casados*.⁵⁹

Van Linschoten and Silveira have described, each in their own way, how the manning of the fleets or expeditions took place⁶⁰ and their picture is confirmed by Diogo do Couto's story on the reaction in Goa to the appearance of the first English ships in the Indian Ocean⁶¹ and by António Bocarro's report of a Portuguese attack on

⁵⁹De Souza 1979: 120-121. The situation in other Portuguese settlements was not much different. In Mozambique, in 1611, there were 25 men available (DR: II, 112), during the long siege of Malacca in 1640 the garrison counted 260 soldiers (Leupe 1859: 161). Of gunners in particular there was a shortage. The Dutchman whom François Pyrard met near Cochin in 1608 thanked his life to the fact that he was a gunner. (Pyrard 1887: I, 424) and the Portuguese lost a sea battle near Johore against the Dutch and the Atjehnese in 1613, due to shortage of sailors and gunners. Many recruited soldiers ran away. Dom João da Silveira took from Goa on his galley 100 men 'por soldados', near the bar of Goa he had already lost 30, whereas in Malacca another 40 ran away. Finally, when the battle against the Atjehnese began there were only 30 left (Década XIII: 422).

⁶⁰Van Linschoten 1910: I, 130. 'When in India the summer sets in and it is necessary to send an armada or expedition, or to guard the coast for the protection of the merchants and traders (who come and go), in September (when the summer begins) the drum will be beaten, for whom wants to serve the king on the armada, so that he will come to the matriculation, receive the normal money...whereafter the viceroy will appoint a captain major and the other captains... whereafter the captains pray and plead and give something extra above the normal pay and the king's salary, from their own purse, because everybody wants to have the best soldiers, and they buy victuals at their own cost, to make friendship with the soldiers and to treat them well and they eat in the ships and galleys together at one table and the captain treats his soldiers always with great politeness and courtesy, because otherwise they would not care about him, nor be submissive...'. According to Silveira 1996: 25-27 the *armadas* were organized as soon as there were rumors of piracy along the Malabar coast. The *soldados* would get one quarter of their 'wage' as an advanced payment (i.e. ten *xerafins*) for which they would buy a gun and some clothes and at the appointed day and time they would board their ship, armed and dressed as they liked or could afford.

⁶¹Do Couto Década XII 1788: 49-58. On 15th August 1597 Goa received a message from Mozambique that two 'Dutch' ships had been seen on their way to Sunda. The viceroy was alarmed because this had never happened before and called the archbishop and the elder captains together to show the letter. He expressed his fear that the intruders would damage the fort in Malacca, incite the *vizinhos* against the Portuguese, harm the trade there, which was the biggest of the Indies and capture the ships from China and Japan, which always had more than two million in gold on board, owned by the inhabitants of the Indian cities. He proposed that everybody would give his opinion in writing on the use of sufficient money, ships, artillery and everything else that was required, such as 'muito animo, zelo, e vontade' to do everything possible to serve the king, adding that he had not come to India to take it easy, but to defend and expand it, just as his predecessors had done. After the majority of the council had given a positive answer, the preparations began for an expedition to Malacca, with Lourenço de Brito being chosen as *capitão mór*. To get the fleet before Goa ready he had to pay the soldiers three quarters of their wage and to increase the pay of the sailors. They left on 24 September. William F.Sinclair, Donald Ferguson (trans./eds.), in their *The travels of Pedro Teixeira* (London 1902) xliii-lxi have translated De Couto's complete story and demonstrated that the ships were not Dutch but two of the three English ships that had left England in 1596, after Linschoten's *Itinerario* had been published and after the departure

four English ships near Surat.⁶² Silveira, an *arbitrista*, whose manuscript, like most of them at that time, was laid aside, gave pages of examples, sometimes hilarious, of undisciplined and orderless behaviour of the *soldados* and their leaders. In particular when they had to engage in an attack ashore, his descriptions are very reminiscent of medieval warfare, where for the nobility one's place in the ranking order of *fidalgúia* and the own private success, which would bring still more honour and reputation, was far more important than the overall end result. Silveira himself saw as one of the causes the fact that Portugal for a very long time had not been confronted with the mentality, techniques and tactics of warfare as they had developed elsewhere in Europe and he was probably right.⁶³

Corruption

Diogo do Couto, Francisco Rodrigues Silveira and many other Portuguese chroniclers, *arbitristas* and historians have seen the corruption within the *Estado da Índia*, as observed in the 1590s, as the main cause of its collapse.

By its nature, the centres of administrative control of the *Estado da Índia* were widely spread and this offered plenty of opportunity to misdirect public revenues. As an example, the *soldados* that every year again appeared in the budgets of the Portuguese settlements and did not exist, were the 'dead souls' of the *capitanias*. No doubt, the practice created the impression of a military strength which was beyond reality and gave the officials of the *Estado* a chance to cash in, but as will be shown later, it would take until 1640 before the weakness of the Portuguese fortifications became an open invitation for Dutch attack from the sea.⁶⁴

The donations of the concession voyages to the governors and captains of the Portuguese settlements were still a reminder of the mediaeval practice to reward services and to reinforce the bond between the monarch and his vassals and, according to medieval

of Houtman's expedition, with approval of queen Elisabeth and under command of captain Benjamin Wood. The third ship went down near Madagascar before it had been noticed by the Portuguese.

⁶²Under pressure of the king, to leave Goa and to give *acte de présence* with his fleet, the viceroy left for Surat in December 1614 with a big fleet, full of *fidalgos* and noblemen, artillery and ammunition, to take revenge for the offense given by the Dutch and English by establishing themselves in that location, without any respect for the friendly relationships and the trade of the *Estado*. The galleon of the viceroy carried two hundred whites and thirty *fidalgos*, most of whom were *casados*, with their sons and the people they had recruited. In total there were 1,400 Portuguese. They did not want to use any other 'nation', to avoid creating the impression that there was a shortage of manpower. The attack ended badly for the Portuguese: not because of a lack of enthusiasm or caution, but due to a lack of order and unanimity (*Década XIII*: 338-352).

⁶³Silveira 1996: 11.

⁶⁴As will be discussed in chapter 9, Hormuz was taken from the landside. The Dutch dared to attack Macao because 'it was a small open town', as Coen described it. As will be shown in chapter 8, the Dutch marines did not like to fight on land and rightly so, if it were only because of the climatological conditions and the many chances of incurring a disease.

standards, there was nothing against allowing somebody else to use those privileges or letting them, as long as one did not sell them.

Private business on the side, or rather on the back of an official position, again seen against medieval norms, is probably something a nobleman should not have engaged in, but could one expect anything else from people who bought their position at an auction? No doubt, it must have been the first category that caused the indignation of a Diogo do Couto, who saw his social climb into nobility thwarted or a Francisco Rodrigues Silveira, who still believed in the defence of Christianity as the purpose of the Portuguese expansion and who despised trade.⁶⁵

That private business, or the private use of shipping capacity or the wrong use of the pepper money would have undermined the *Estado da India* will be difficult to maintain. Since the mid-1570s the *Carreira da India* was in private hands and the pepper money was private money. If anything, its increasing private business should have enhanced the public revenues of the *Estado*, were it not for the fact that because of the farming contracts, the public revenues from business remained almost level.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that most of the *vassallos*, who, before their departure from Lisbon, were sworn in as good servants of the king, came to India with the idea, as a reward for their good services or their investment, to become rich, and if possible, within their tenure of three years.⁶⁶ Obviously, in this respect the VOC officials did not differ very much from the Portuguese, although it may have taken them quite a few more years. The important difference was however, that the higher positions in the Portuguese hierarchy were mainly filled from outside and with newcomers, thus putting a rather low ceiling on upward mobility through the ranks. Loyalty to the *Estado*, even out of well understood self interest, was therefore rarely rewarded and a scarce phenomenon. There was very little ambition to change practices which had been passed on by the predecessor. In this respect the Portuguese officials of the *Estado da India* could have learned a lot from their 'colleagues' of the VOC. It goes too far to say that in the VOC the sky was the limit, but it was certainly true that in the VOC many of ship's captains, governors, head merchants and other high ranking officials had many years of service in Asia behind them and had grown through the ranks from very modest jobs.

Summary

The Portuguese societies in Asia were relatively small, with as a maximum, about 1,000 to 1,500 baptized and Portuguese speaking people of mixed and unmixed descent. Their social structure was not exactly feudal, but certainly not modern either; those who

⁶⁵Silveira 1996: Introduction by B.N. Teensma, LI-LVIII.

⁶⁶Van Linschoten 1910: 138. '...but nowadays they are all keen on profits, the viceroy, governors and all the others, even including the clergy, and they pay little attention to the welfare of the country or the service to the king, but only to their private interests. Reckoning that they will only be three years in office they say openly that they do not want to improve on what others before them have not done, leaving the people after them to take care, because the king has given them such offices, to pay for their services and not to promote the country's welfare. That is why nowadays in the Indies no more profits or discoveries are made...'

emigrated to escape the stagnant society of their home country, once they were successful, readily assumed the values of that same society and transplanted them into Asia.

For many, their rank in society was determined by the degree to which they could maintain honour and reputation, which led them to surround themselves with a numerous entourage and to engage in courageous but not very effective military actions.

The higher ranking positions were normally filled from Portugal with *vassallos* of the king or by auction. Upward mobility was thereby blocked and the reward for loyalty was small. Of course, those who had bought their position were in the first place interested in making a profit on their investment.

In the second decade of the seventeenth century the demographic position of the Portuguese in India was considerably weakened by epidemics and, almost at the same time, by a continuing lack of interest amongst the Portuguese in Europe for an Asian adventure: the emigrants preferred Brazil. As a result, the formal organization of the *Estado da Índia* became a kind of empty cover, which was not able to produce the action demanded in its incoming correspondence.

Maintaining power at sea was, to ensure income for the *Estado*, a first priority but due to the monsoons, the business and its 'protection' were seasonal. The military organization of the *Estado* was therefore still medieval: the mobilization of 'soldiers' to man the fleets and the expeditions were haphazard and according to seasonal needs. During the off-season, they were left on their own and without training. For the same reason of priority, guns were dismantled from the forts to be placed on the ships. Settlements like Goa, Bassein, Damão, Chaul, Cochin and even Malacca, were therefore almost without formal defence.

Nevertheless, many of the 'Portuguese' were, by their long residence or by descent, embedded in the local economy and networks. For others the stakes were high because of the efforts or money they had put in. Therefore, as will be shown hereafter, wherever the Portuguese had to defend themselves, they offered strong resistance and demonstrated great resilience: not out of loyalty to the *Estado*, but out of well understood self interest.