
ARTICLES

The Carreira da India, 1668-1682: Maritime Enterprise and the Quest for Stability in Portugal's Asian Empire

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The XVIIth century decline of the Portuguese Asian empire or *Estado da India* is generally considered to be one of the great historical "facts" of the early modern period. Erected over the course of the late XVth and early XVIth centuries by soldier-adventurers like Vasco da Gama and Afonso de Albuquerque, the *Estado* was based on a series of fortified trading cities along the rim of the Indian Ocean basin. By 1580, the strategic *fortalezas* of the "State of India" included Mozambique, Mombassa, Muscat, Ormuz, Diu, Goa, Cochin, Ceylon, Malacca, Timor, and Macao to name but a few. These fortified settlements were usually entrepôts at the cross-roads of local trading routes as well as multi-cultural enclaves that witnessed a mixture of European and Asian peoples, laws, customs, and traditions. The *fortalezas*, moreover, served important economic and military functions: they acted as vital collection points for the highly prized products of the Asian trade in preparation for their eventual shipment to Europe, and were utilized as bases for the fleets that were sent out each year to scour the eastern seas for interlopers in the Crown monopoly trade in pepper and other products that the Portuguese had boldly declared upon their arrival

in Asia, and at least nominally strove to achieve and protect during the course of the XVIth century.¹

A historiographical debate has raged for some time over the question of how effective the Portuguese were in their quest to establish and enforce a monopoly in the Asian spice trade. Portugal's relatively meagre demographic, maritime, and economic resources along with Albuquerque's failure to capture the strategic port of Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea have traditionally been viewed as fatal flaws in the system.² There is little doubt, however, that at least during the first decades of the XVIth century the Portuguese succeeded in largely shutting off the flow of spices to Europe via the traditional caravan routes through the Levant. As a result, profits sometimes exceeding 250% were made on the sale of spices by the Portuguese Crown during these years.³ Although F.C. Lane, V. Magalhães-Godinho, C.H.H. Wake, and Niels Steensgaard vary significantly in their estimates on annual traffic in spices via the Cape route for the XVIth century, a figure of 40,000 *quintals* (hundredweights) for 1550 seems to be a reasonable compromise.⁴

¹ Surveys of the *Estado* include F.C. DANVERS, *The Portuguese in India* (2 vols., London, 1894), R.S. WHITEWAY, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India, 1497-1550* (London, 1899), BAILEY DIFFIE and GEORGE WINIUS, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580* (Minneapolis, 1977), V.M. GODINHO, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial* (4 vols., Lisbon, 1981-83), MALYN NEWITT ed., *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire* (Exeter, 1986), M.N. PEARSON, *The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge, 1988), and C.R. BOXER, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (New York, 1969). For Boxer's vast scholarly contribution to the field, cf. S. George West, *A Complete Bibliography of the Works of C.R. Boxer, 1926-83* (London, 1984).

² For example, cf. Boxer *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 46-61, 114-27, and Pearson, *The Portuguese in India* pp. 40-48-67-68.

³ Pearson *The Portuguese in India* p. 41. Cf. also K.S. MATHEW, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi, 1983) pp. 197-98, and GODINHO, *Os Descobrimentos* III, 10-22.

⁴ For the various estimates on the level of spice imports for this period, cf. F.C. LANE in «The Mediterranean Spice Trade: Its Revival in the Sixteenth Century» in *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore, 1966), V.M. GODINHO *L'Economie de l'Empire portugais aux XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1969) pp. 674-704, C.H.H. WAKE «The Changing Pattern of Europe's Pepper and Spice Imports, ca. 1400-1700» *The Journal of European Economic History* (1979), and BAL KRISHNA *Commercial Relations between India and England, 1601-1757* (London,

This new-found mercantile wealth thrust a largely unprepared and still essentially feudal Portuguese society and state into the forefront of European geo-political power struggles. The impressive Manueline architecture of the monastery of Jerónimos on the banks of the Tagus at Belem built with money from the spice trade stands as a fitting testament to that golden age in Portugal's history.

By the mid-XVIIth century, of course, all this had changed. The glimmering patina of wealth of Belem and "Golden Goa" had been definitively tarnished. As Lane has shown, the Levant trade began to revive as early as the 1570's. Thirty years later, the Portuguese Crown managed to import "little more than 12,000 *quintals*, most of which was relatively low priced pepper" via the Cape.⁵ While pepper prices generally rose in India, the prices that the Crown could command for this commodity in Lisbon fell from 45-55 cruzados per quintal in the 1580's to 20-25 cruzados in the 1620's.⁶ These commercial difficulties were exacerbated by military setbacks in Asia. Ormuz, the key to the Persian Gulf trade, was lost to an English-Persian attack in 1622. Malacca, a major entrepot for the Indonesian trade, fell to the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1641. Ceylon, locus of the lucrative cinnamon trade, was captured by the VOC in 1658. In 1663, the Portuguese also lost their holdings on the pepper rich Malabar coast of India to the Dutch.⁷

1924) p. 45 ff. For a critical evaluation of these estimates, cf. NIELS STEENSGAARD, «The Return Cargoes of the *Carreira* in the 16th and Early 17th Century» in T.R. de Souza ed., *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions* (New Delhi, 1985) pp. 13-31.

⁵ JAMES C. BOYAJIAN, *Portuguese Bankers at the Court of Spain, 1626-1650* (New Brunswick NJ, 1983) p. 7.

⁶ GODINHO *L'Economie de l'empire portugais* pp. 100-107, cited in Boyajian *Portuguese Bankers* p. 7.

⁷ For details, cf. ALFREDO BOTELHO DE SOUSA *Subsidios para a historia militar maritima da India, 1585-1650* (4 vols., Lisbon, 1930-56) and N. MACLEOD *De Oost-Indische Compagnie ale zeemongenhed in Azie, 1602-1652*, both based on the relevant archival materials, and Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* Chapter 5 «The Global Struggle with the Dutch» pp. 106-127.

Diverse explanations have been proffered over the years to explain this rather precipitous decline. Portuguese historians have long argued that this reversal of fortunes was occasioned by the 60 years of "Spanish Captivity" from 1580-1640. According to this view, Philip II's conquest of Portugal in the wake of Dom Sebastião's debacle at El-Ksar el-Kebir ushered in a protracted period when Madrid bled Portugal and her empire dry in an attempt to perpetuate Habsburg dominance in Europe, while exposing Portuguese possessions in Brazil, Africa, and the Indian Ocean to the onslaught of the Protestant powers.⁸ British historians like F.C. Danvers, R.S. Whiteway, Vincent Smith and W.W. Hunter, writing in the last century, argued that it was the corrupt nature of Portuguese administration in Asia, and by implication the moral shortcomings of Lisbon's servants, that undermined the work of da Gama and Albuquerque.⁹ For C.R. Boxer, the reasons for Portugal's imperial decline were simple: the "superior economic resources, superior manpower, [and] superior firepower" of the United Provinces.¹⁰ Niels Steensgaard has more recently maintained that the entrance of the more advanced proto-capitalist entrepreneurial trading companies of the English and Dutch into the Asian trade doomed the monarchical mercantilism of the Portuguese Crown to virtual extinction.¹¹

One constant in this century of historiography on Portugal's imperial decline is that the year 1663 has traditionally served as watershed in the history of *Estado da India*, for the loss of

⁸ For details on this tendency, cf. Boxer *Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 107-108, and PEARSON *The Portuguese in India* pp. 132-133.

⁹ Cf. DANVERS, *The Portuguese in India* I, xxxix, WHITEWAY, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 174, 324-25, W.W. HUNTER, *A History of British India* (2 vols., London, 1899-1900) I, 176-85, and VINCENT A. SMITH, *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford, 1919) p. 335. For the «Whiggish» tendencies reflected in these works, cf. M.N. PEARSON, *Coastal Western India* (New Delhi, 1981) pp. 19-20.

¹⁰ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* p. 114.

¹¹ *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago, 1974), originally published as *Carracks, Caravans and Companies: the Structural Crisis in the European-Asian Trade in the Early 17th Century* (Copenhagen, 1973).

Cochin in that year is generally considered to have constituted the death knell for Portuguese power in Asia. The loss of the Malabar coast possessions coming in the wake of earlier losses in the Moluccas, Ormuz, Malacca, and Ceylon was viewed as the concluding chapter in a century of rapid, if not inevitable, "decline." Boxer, quoting the words of the Jesuit Manoel Godinho who made the overland trip from India to Portugal in the fateful year of 1663, has offered what he believes to be a fitting epitaph for *India Portuguesa*: "The Luisitanian Indian Empire or State, which formerly dominated the whole of the East, and comprised eight thousand leagues of sovereignty, including twenty-nine provincial capital cities... amazing the whole world with its vast extent, stupendous victories, thriving trade and immense riches is now... reduced to so few lands and cities that one may well doubt whether that State was smaller at its very beginning than it is now at its end... If it was a tree, it is now a trunk; if it was a building, it is now a ruin; if it was a man, it is now a stump; if it was a giant, it is now a pigmy; if it was great it is now nothing".¹²

Godinho's overblown description along with a general acceptance of the dictum of "stagnation" and "decline" have stood until now as the definitive word on the post-1663 *Estado*.¹³ Consequently, while volume upon scholarly volume traces the rise of the empire and the exploits of da Gama, Albuquerque *et al.*, and a notable body of work details the setbacks of 1620-1663, not a single secondary work has yet appeared on the post-1663 *Estado*. I have previously argued that this dearth of literature is unfortunate. Although the *Estado* was reduced in

¹² Quoted in Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 128-29. Godinho's manuscript was originally published as *Relaçao do novo caminho que se fez por terra e mar, vindo da India para Portugal no anno de 1663* (Lisbon, 1665). This has been reprinted with an introduction and editorial notes by A. MACHADO GUERREIRO as *Relaçao do novo caminho da India para Portugal* (Lisbon, 1974).

¹³ Cf. BOXER, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 128-49 and PEARSON, *The Portuguese in India* 131-43. Pearson, however, notes [p. 3] that 'huge gaps' exist in our knowledge for the post-1640 period.

size and problems certainly continued, there is every indication that the two decades beginning in 1663 were crucial ones for the Portuguese Asian empire that witnessed a gradual stabilization after a half century of setbacks in Europe and the East. Commencing with the reign of Prince Regent Pedro (1668) and culminating with the Viceroyalty of Luis de Mendonça Furtado (1671-1677) a concerted reform effort was undertaken. This campaign was designed not only to salvage what remained of the Asian possessions, but to initiate measures that would revive the sagging economic fortunes of the *Estado*. These wide-ranging reforms emanated from the belief on the part of Pedro and his *Conselho Ultramarino* that the remaining Asian holdings, if properly exploited, in conjunction with the development of the rich *Rios de Cuama* region of Mozambique could serve as the basis for a profitable and viable *Estado*. By 1680, tangible results had been achieved. The *Orçamento* (Budget) of that year reveals a positive *saldo* (balance) of more than 271,000 *xerafins*, a figure that compares very favourably with a deficit of 158,180 *xerafins* in 1630 and a modest surplus of 69,809 recorded for 1634.¹⁴

One aspect of this stabilization process that has not hitherto been examined is the revival that took place during these years of the once virtually moribund *Carreira da Índia*, the term used by the Portuguese for the voyage made by their Indiamen between Lisbon and Goa. Although the voyages of the *Carreira* have been extensively studied for the period from 1500 to 1650, a dearth of detailed research has characterized the post-1663 sailings.¹⁵ The *Carreira* constituted an integral part of the Portuguese Asian empire. For more than three centuries, "from the

¹⁴ For details, cf. GLENN J. AMES, «The *Estado da Índia*, 1663-1677: Priorities and Strategies in Europe and the East» *Revista Portuguesa de História* XXII (1987) pp. 31-46.

¹⁵ Brief exceptions to this rule are Boxer's, «The *Carreira da Índia*, 1650-1750» *The Mariner's Mirror* XLVI (1960) pp. 35-54, and the printed version of his Heras Memorial Lectures of 1978, *A Índia Portuguesa em Meados do Século XVII* (Lisbon, 1980).

time of Vasco da Gama until the substitution of sail by steam," the *Naos* or Great Ships of the *Carreira* served as an economic, religious and administrative lifeline between Portugal and her possessions in the East.¹⁶ Highly prized spices from India, Ceylon, and Indonesia, precious metals and stones, saltpetre, cotton cloth from the villages of Gujarat, European armaments much in demand in Asia, Chinese porcelains, high-ranking grandees anxious to take up lucrative imperial postings, female orphans with Crown dowries in the quest for husbands in Golden Goa, a plethora of Jesuit, Franciscan, Augustinian, and Dominican priests, ambitious younger sons of noble houses of Portugal, as well as the dregs of Lisbon's prisons sent out as cannonfodder all had at least one thing in common: the necessity of making the Cape passage. The empire of the Portuguese in Monsoon Asia was primarily a seaborne empire. As such, the *Carreira da India* was a quintessential fact of life: regular sailings and successful voyages usually portended stability if not prosperity, while intermittent departures and shipwreck almost always signaled hard times for the *Estado*.

Harsh lessons on the stormy Cape route quickly taught Portuguese pilots that successful sailings were largely dependent on the alternating monsoons of the Indian Ocean. The southwest monsoon virtually closed all of the ports on the western coast of India from early June until September. Ideally, outward-bound ships from Lisbon therefore left between the end of January and late March in order to round the Cape of Good Hope in July and reach Goa in late September or October. Ships returning to Europe were obliged to leave in late December or January in order to profit from the favourable winds of the northeast monsoon and to avoid the "stormy May and June 'winter' season in the latitude of the Cape".¹⁷ Over time, a series of meticulous

¹⁶ For details on the *Carreira*, cf. Boxer *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 205-27 and his collected essays and articles on the subject *From Lisbon to Goa, 1500-1750: Studies in Portuguese Maritime Enterprise* (London, 1984).

¹⁷ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* p. 206.

sailing instructions or *roteiros* were compiled. Among the most notable of these rutters was the 1666 *Roteiro da India Oriental com as emmendas que novamente se fizerao a elle*, compiled by the Royal Cosmographer Antonio de Mariz Cameiro. The valued knowledge contained in such *roteiros* was supplemented by official orders or *regimentos* given to the captain-general of each fleet which prescribed conduct for every aspect of the voyage.¹⁸ The size of the ships utilized in the *Carreira* changed markedly during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries. In the first half of the XVIth century carracks or galleons, both called *Naos* in the extant documentation, of approximately 400 tons burden were the general rule. By 1550 Indiamen of 600 to 1,000 tons were common. In the 1590's, despite attempts by the Crown to curb this alarming trend, unwieldy monsters of up to 2,000 tons were being constructed in the shipyards of Lisbon and Goa. As will be noted below, the XVIIth century witnessed a return to smaller, more seaworthy, frigate-type vessels along English and Dutch lines.¹⁹

Since the archives of the *Casa da India* were tragically lost in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, it is extremely difficult to arrive at precise figures for the sailings of the *Carrera* before that year.

¹⁸ For details on the *roteiros* of the late XVIth and early XVIIth centuries, cf. Boxer «The *Carreira da India*, 1650-1750» pp. 42-54. *Alvaras* (royal decrees), *regimentos*, and Crown letters governing the sailings for the *Carreira* for this period are found in the Historical Archive of Goa (hereafter HAG) *Livros das monções do Reino* 28A fos. 95, 193, 33 fos. 113-14, 34 fo. 214, 36 fo. 309, 37 fos. 22-25, and 38B fos. 463, 474, the *Arquivo Historico Ultramarino*, Lisbon (hereafter AHU), *Documentos avulsos relativo á India* Box 27, Document 151, and Box 28 Document 97, and the British Museum (hereafter BM) Add. MSS. 20879 fos. 31, 53-54.

¹⁹ The stimulus for this significant *volte-face* was most probably João Pereira Corte-Real's *Discur/sos sobre la Na/vigacion de las naos de la India/de Portugal, Por Iuan Peyeyra/Corte Real, Cavallero Portu/gues, para que V. Maggestad/sea servido de mandar/ver* (Madrid, 1622?). Corte-Real's distinguished naval career (Captain and Captain-Major of at least four successful *Carreira* voyages, Admiral of the Portuguese Fleet, Mestre do Campo of the *Terco da Armada*) and his pivotal importance in design reforms for Portuguese Indiamen have been detailed by Boxer in his «Admiral João Pereira Corte-Real and the Construction of Portuguese East-Indiamen in the Early Seventeenth Century» *The Mariner's Mirror* XXVI (1940) pp. 388-406.

Based on the extensive work of V. Magalhães Godinho with the remaining sources, it appears that from 1500-1635, some 912 ship (c. 6.78 per year) sailed for Goa with 768 or 84% completing the voyage. Of the 550 ships (c. 4.2 per year) that left India for the return voyage 470 or 85% reached Portugal. These figures dropped dramatically from 1635-1663.²⁰ As Boxer notes, the size of the annual outward bound fleets also fluctuated over the history of the *Carreira*. The average from 1500-1530 was from 7-14 ships, by 1550 this figure had dropped to 5, and by 1640 the average was closer to 2-3 ships a year. Meanwhile, the size of the return fleets from Goa was probably half that of the ships leaving Lisbon.²¹ Moreover, sailing instructions and the departure dates specified in the *roteiros* and *regimentos* were only intermittently attained, with dire consequences. As James Duffy and others have shown, shipwrecks were common during the late XVIth and early XVIIth centuries, while mortality rates approaching 50% were far from unusual.²² One reason for these problems was that outward bound ships were usually overcrowded and departed late from Lisbon. This delay made many fleets miss the season for sailing on to India and forced the captain-major to "winter" (*invernar*) in the unhealthy climate of Mozambique where disease took a heavy toll on crews already weakened by months living aboard unsanitary ships with far

²⁰ Cited in Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* p. 219.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 207.

²² Cf. BERNADO GOMES DE BRITO, *Historia tragico-maritima, em que se escrevem chronologicamente os naufragios que tiverao as naos de Portugal, depois que se poz em exercicio a navegação da India* (2 vols., Lisbon, 1735-36 and later editions), and *Relacion de las grandes perdidas de naos y galeones, que han tenido los Portugueses en la India Oriental* (Madrid, 1651). Works like these have traditionally set the tone for modern treatises on the subject like Duffy's *Shipwreck and Empire: Being an Account of Portuguese Maritime Disasters in a Century of Decline* (Cambridge MA, 1955). Cf. also Boxer's introductions to the Hakluyt Society's editions of *The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589-1622* (Cambridge, 1959), and *Further Selections from the Tragic History of the Sea, 1559-1565* (London, 1968), his «The Naval and Colonial Papers of Dom Antonio de Ataíde» *Havard Library Bulletin* V (1951) pp. 24-50, «The *Carreira da India, 1650-1750*» pp. 36-41, and *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* p. 219 ff.

from adequate diets. On the return voyage, a late departure meant that the *naos* would encounter adverse weather conditions off the coast of South East Africa, in the notoriously dangerous "roaring forties". Many a Portuguese Indiaman was lost during these years on the so-called "Wild Coast" of Natal.²³

Exacerbating these problems for the swift and successful completion of *Carreira* voyages was the increasing allure of stopping at ports on the Brazilian coast like Bahia either on the outward or homeward bound voyage. Such stops lengthened voyages, thus delaying the arrival of Crown spice cargoes that in many cases had already been utilized as collateral for loans. They also facilitated illegal trading on products like cinnamon that were ideally a Crown monopoly and the exchange of Asian goods for Brazilian gold. This private entrepreneurship was inevitable given the fact that, despite several attempts, a satisfactory system of wages was never established. Instead the crews (from the captain-major to cabin-boy) were compensated with the right to carry home *caixas de liberdade* (liberty chests) loaded with spices and other products that could be imported into Portugal wholly or partially duty free.²⁴ Various Crown decrees were promulgated in an attempt to stop these destructive stopovers. On both 14 November 1660 and 30 March 1662 firm orders were issued forbidding homeward bound ships from calling at either Angola or Brazil, except in dire emergencies.²⁵ Following complaints from the Viceroy Antonio de Mello de Castro, this stance was modified in January 1666 to allow smaller vessels like pinnaces or *pataxos* to make such stops but reiterating the ban on *Naos*.²⁶ Although these restrictions were

²³ For examples, cf. Boxer *The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589-1622* pp. 25-26, 55, 114-17, and 191.

²⁴ Boxer «*The Carreira da Índia, 1650-1750*» pp. 37-40.

²⁵ HAG *Monções do Reino* 28A fo. 193, Queen Regent (Dona Luisa de Gusmão) to Governor of India, 14/XI/1660, 28A fo. 94, Queen-Regent to Antonio de Mello de Castro, 30/III/1662. Cf. also BM Add. MSS. 20879 fos. 31, 53-54.

²⁶ HAG *Monções do Reino* 33 fo. 113, Afonso VI to Conde de São Vicente, 8/I/1666. Cf. also BM Add. MSS. 20879 fo. 105.

sometimes disregarded on the pretence of weather or the lack of provisions, the Crown was serious in its commitment to check such abuses, and a level of success was achieved beginning in 1668.

The nadir for the *Carreira da Índia* undoubtedly occurred from 1640-1663, when a renascent Portuguese Crown was obliged to fight a protracted struggle on the continent against Habsburg Spain and a generally disastrous campaign in Brazil, Africa and Asia against the United Provinces of the Netherlands. The years 1647-1649 alone witnessed the loss of the *Atalaia e Sacramento* off southeast Africa, a fierce storm in April 1648 that sank scores of vessels anchored in the Mandovi killing more than 1200 men, the loss of two *naos* destined for India in 1647, and the loss of the richly laden *São Lourenço* off Mozambique in September 1649. Of the five ships that left Lisbon in April 1650 in the *frota* of the Viceroy Count of Aveiras, none reached India that year. The *São Francisco Xavier* was forced to return to Lisbon where she was intercepted by the English Commonwealth fleet under Blake then blockading the Tagus. Aveiras perished "wintering" in Mozambique, while the *Santo Andre* was captured by the Spanish on the return voyage to Portugal in 1652. After a brief revival orchestrated by Luis de Mendonça Furtado from 1651-1653, such setbacks continued.²⁷ Between 1658 and 1663 an average of one ship a year arrived in Goa, while not even that number made the return voyage successfully. In only slightly exaggerated terms, the Queen-Regent Dona Luisa de Guzmão told the French ambassador in 1659 that no news had been received from India in three years. In 1660, the *Sacramento da Esperance*, the *Nossa Senhora da Estrella*, and the *Conceição* left Lisbon. Of these, the first made it to Goa in such a state that it was beached and stripped, while the last two were lost off Madagascar. The final debacle took

²⁷ For details on these generally dismal years, cf. Boxer *A Índia Portuguesa em meados do século XVII* pp. 39-49.

place in 1662, when Antonio de Mello de Castro was forced to sail to Goa as Viceroy in an English fleet.²⁸

Several problems complicate the process of documenting the recovery and stabilization of the *Carreira da India* that began in 1668 with the assumption to power, in a palace coup, of Prince Regent Pedro. The extant manuscript sources are sparse and widely scattered throughout Portugal, the rest of Europe, and India. It is therefore difficult to obtain sufficient data to construct a complete record for the post-1663 period. Not surprisingly, conflicting evidence on sailing dates, stopovers, arrival dates, type of vessel, and cargoes is commonplace in the available sources. The Portuguese also had the rather disconcerting habit of giving long and sometimes virtually identical names to the *Naos* of the *Carreira*. Reflecting the continuing power of the Catholic church in Portuguese society, most of these names had religious connotations or connections. Thus, we have *Nossa Senhora de Ajuda* and *Nossa Senhora de Ajuda e Santo Antonio* or *Bom Jesus de Trindade* and *Bom Jesus de Trindade e Nossa Senhora de Boa Memoria*. In the documents, of course, these would be shortened to merely *Nossa Senhora de Ajuda* or *Bom Jesus de Trindade* complicating the process of sorting out the seaborne traffic between Lisbon and Goa.

Fortunately, it has been possible to locate three major sources for the post-1663 period that allow for the compilation of relatively complete statistics on the *Carreira*. From the Historical Archive of Goa, we have a hitherto neglected document titled "Cartas das Cabedais das Naus de S.A. q'vierão desde o anno 667 the' de 681".²⁹ This document of 11 folios and *versos* was put together in October 1681 by João Cabral de Mello *Contador* of the *Estado*, and it contains a list of receipts compiled by the *feitores* (Crown factors) in Goa, listing the composi-

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 22, 39-49.

²⁹ Cf. HAG Codex 2316 *Livro de Registro dos alvaras etc. de diferentes feitorias* fos. 28-39v.

tion and value of the outward and homeward bound cargoes from 1667-1681. Valuable for its information on products and prices, this document also yields data on arrival, stopover, and departure dates. From the *Arquivo Geral de Alfandega* (Customs House Archive) in Lisbon we have the "Registro das Cartas gerais que vão para a Índia, 1666-1784".³⁰ Running to 15 folios and *versos* for the period 1666-1677, this codex contains the letters from the *feitores* (although not bills of lading) of the *Casa da Índia* in Lisbon and their counter-parts in Goa, listing the *Carreira* cargoes. Arrival dates are sometimes provided, and the dating of these letters offer clues to departure dates from Lisbon. Unfortunately, there is an incomplete run of letters. From Lisbon, we only have the yearly letters from 1666-1670, while the letters from Goa are from 1666-1669, 1673-1677, with a dearth until 1708. Finally, from the *Biblioteca Pública de Évora* we have Francisco Luis Ameno's "Noticia Chronologica dos descobrimentos que fizeram os Portugueses até a Índia Oriental, e das Armadas que os Reis de Portugal tem mandado aquelle Estado até o presente anno de 1762".³¹ Ameno's work gives a yearly breakdown of the Captains and ships of the *Carreira*, as well as relatively complete and accurate arrival and departure dates. This data can be complemented by information available in the *Livros das Monções do Reino* (Monsoon Books) and *Assentos do Conselho da Fazenda* (Decision of the Royal Treasury Council) series at the HAG, as well as details found in the *State Papers, Foreign* series of the Public Records Office in London.³²

³⁰ AGA Codex 47. For the years 1668-1682, cf. fos. 2v.-14v. For a printed version of this codex, cf. *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* ed. by SILVA REGO (5 vols., Lisbon, 1960-67) IV: 3 ff.

³¹ BPE Codex CXV/1-21. The author wishes to thank Professor C.R. Boxer for allowing him to consult photocopies of this document in England.

³² HAG *Monções do Reino* vols. 33-44 (1668-1680). The Monsoon Books contain the official correspondence between the Crown in Lisbon and the Viceroyalty in Goa. Not surprisingly, there are frequent references to ships of the *Carreira*, including arrival and departure dates, details on delays and mishaps, and even some information

As Table 1 reflects there were 31 sailings from Lisbon to Goa for the years 1668-1681 or an average of 2.2 per year. Of that number, 30 made the voyage successfully, an impressive 96.8%. Only the *Nossa Senhora dos Remedios* of Luis de Mendonça Furtado's 1670 fleet was lost on the passage, constituting a meagre 3.2% of the total. Rather surprisingly, there were no abortive voyages (*arribadas*). 10 ships, or 32%, either made stopovers at Brazil, or "wintered" at Mozambique or Socotra. Five of these ten were part of Mendonça Furtado's fleet. The breakdown on the duration of voyages is the following: 20 ships or 64% made the passage in 6 months, 1 ship (3.2%) took 7 months, 1 ship (3.2%) took 11 months, 7 ships or 22.4% completed the voyage in 13 months, and 1 ship (3.2%), the *Bom Jesus de Trindade* (1670-71), took 17 months to reach Goa. The average voyage for the 30 successful sailing was therefore a relatively swift 8.2 months. As for the average month of departure: 7 ships departed in March (22.6%) and the remaining 24 ships (77.4%) in April. Of these, 21 arrived in Goa in September (67.7%), 7 in May (22.6%), 1 in March (3.2%), and 1 in October (3.2%).

Table 2 shows that there were 28 sailings from Goa to Lisbon from 1668-1682 or an average of 1.87 per year. 23 ships completed the return passage successfully or 82.8% of the total.

on cargoes. The *Assentos do Conselho da Fazenda* vols. 11-14 (1666-1686) also found in the HAG (Codices 1168-1172) are valuable for arrival and departure dates since the Council approved expenditures for pilots to conduct arriving ships to the anchorage at Mormugão and homeward bound ships to take on water at Fort Aguada before departing. The *State Papers, Foreign series* at the PRO for Portugal (SPF 89) is also useful since it contains the correspondence between English diplomats in Lisbon and London. SPF 89 vols. 9-14 cover the years 1668-82. Given the keen interest of the English in the Asian trade, it is not surprising that such reports almost invariably contained references to the arrival and departures of the *Carreira* ships. Perhaps the best example of this was Francis Parry's letter of 20/30 August 1672 (SPF 89/12 fos. 134-34v.) describing the great joy in Lisbon at the arrival of three 'richly laden' ships from India 'which is soe good a fortune as hath not been knowne here since Portugall hath been a kingdome of itselfe.' He was referring of course to the *Sao Joao da Ribeira*, the *Bom Jesus de São Domingos* and the *Nossa Senhora dos Cardaes* which arrived in the Tagus on 8 August 1672.

Four ships, the *Santa Teresa de Jesus* (1668), the *Nossa Senhora da Ajuda* (1673), the *Bom Jesus de São Domingos* (1677) and the *Nossa Senhora dos Millagres* (1681) were lost. This constituted 14.3% of the total. The ill-fated *Bom Jesus de São Domingos* also had the sole abortive voyage (3.6%) during this period.

Table 1:
SAILINGS FROM LISBON TO GOA, 1668-1682

Ship	Type ¹	Departs	Arrives	Duration	Other ²
1. São Gonçalo	[G]	22/IV/68	30/III/69	11 mos.	Socotra
2. Nossa Senhora da Ajuda	[N]	5/IV/69	IX/69	6 mos.	
3. Nossa Senhora dos Cardaes	[N]	10/IV/70	20/V/71	13 mos.	Moss. ⁴
4. Santa Catarina	[N]	10/IV/70	20/V/71	13 mos.	Moss. ⁴
5. Nossa Senhora de Guia	[G]	10/IV/70	20/V/71	13 mos.	Moss. ⁴
6. Nossa Senhora dos Remedios	[P]	10/IV/70	Lost ³		Moss. ⁴
7. Bom Jesus da Trindade	[P]	11/IV/70	20/IX/71	17 mos.	Moss. ⁴
8. Bom Jesus de São Domingos	[G]	2/IV/71	25/IX/71	6 mos.	
9. BJT/N Senhora de Nazareth ⁴	[P]	2/IV/71	25/IX/71	6 mos.	
10. Nossa Senhora da Ajuda	[N]	12/III/72	15/IX/72	6 mos.	
11. NS de Nazareth e S. Antonio ⁵	[P]	12/III/72	V/73	13 mos.	Bahia
12. São Pedro de Rates	[N]	12/III/72	V/73	13 mos.	Bahia
13. NS da Ajuda e Santo Antonio	[P]	3/III/72	V/73	13 mos.	Bahia
14. Bom Jesus de S. Domingos	[N]	15/III/73	IX/73	6 mos.	
15. Nossa Senhora dos Cardaes	[N]	15/III/73	IX/73	6 mos.	
16. BJT/N Senhora de Nazareth	[P]	IV/73	IX/73?	6 mos.	
17. Nossa Senhora do Rozario	[N]	2/IV/74	V/75	13 mos.	Bahia
18. BJT/NS de Boa Memoria	[P]	2/IV/74	1/IX/74	6 mos.	
19. São Pedro de Rates	[N]	6/IV/75	IX/75	6 mos.	
20. Nossa Senhora dos Remedios	[N]	1/IV/76	IX/76	6 mos.	
21. BJT/N Senhora de Boa Memoria	[P]	1/IV/76	IX/76	6 mos.	
22. São Pedro da Ribeira	[N]	19/IV/77	27/X/77	7 mos.	
23. Nossa Senhora do Pillar	[P]	6/IV/78	IX/78	6 mos.	
24. Nossa Senhora dos Millagres	[P]	6/IV/78	IX/78	6 mos.	
25. NS do Rozairo e Santo Antonio	[P]	1/IV/79	IX/79	6 mos.	
26. Santa Maria Izabel de Saboya	[N]	1/IV/79	IX/79?	6 mos.	
27. Santo Antonio	[F]	3/IV/80	IX/80	6 mos.	
28. Nossa Senhora da Vizitação	[P]	IV/80	IX/80	6 mos.	
29. Santa Maria Izabel de Saboya	[N]	25/III/81	IX/81	6 mos.	
30. Nossa Senhora dos Millagres	[N]	IV/81	IX/81	6 mos.	
31. S. Antonio e S. Francisco Xavier	[N]	IV/81	IX/81	6 mos.	

¹ N = *Nao* or Great Ship, Carrack

G = *Galeão* or Galleon

P = *Pataço* or Pinnace

F = *Frigate* or Frigate

² Location of Stopover on Voyage

³ Ran aground and lost off Mozambique 26/IV/1671

⁴ *Bom Jesus de Trindade e Nossa Senhora de Nazareth.*

⁵ *Nossa Senhora de Nazareth e Santo Antonio.*

Table 2:
SAILINGS FROM GOA TO LISBON, 1668-1682

Ship	Type	Departs	Arrives	Duration	Other
1. Santa Teresa de Jesus	[N]	10/II/68	Lost ⁶		
2. Nossa Senhora dos Remedios	[N]	15/I/69	4/XI/69	10 mos.	Bahia
3. Nossa Senhora da Ajuda	[N]	30/I/70	25/IX/70	8 mos.	
4. São Joao da Ribeira	[F]	15/X/71	7/VIII/72	10 mos.	Bahia
5. Bom Jesus de São Domingos	[N]	25/I/72	7/VIII/72	6 mos.	
6. Nossa Senhora dos Cardaes	[N]	25/I/72	7/VIII/72	6 mos.	
7. Bom Jesus de Nazereth	[P]	22/IX/72	22/VIII/73?	11 mos.	Bahia
8. Nossa Senhora de Ajuda	[N]	24/I/73	Lost ⁷		
9. NS da Ajuda e Santo Antonio	[P]	11/X/73	18/IX/74	11 mos.	Bahia
10. Bom Jesus de Trindade	[C]	11/X/73	22/VIII/74	10 mos.	Bahia
11. São Pedro de Rates	[N]	21/I/74	19/VII/74	6 mos.	
12. Bom Jesus de São Domingos	[N]	26/I/74	Arribada		Goa
13. São Miguel	[G]	10/XII/74	7/IX/75	9 mos.	
14. B N/N Senhora de Boa Memoria	[P]	10/XII/74	10/IX/75	9 mos.	
15. Nossa Senhora de Oliveira	[F]	25/I/75	14/IX/75	8 mos.	
16. São Pedro de Rates	[N]	28/I/76	18/XII/76	11 mos.	Bahia
17. Bom Jesus de São Domingos	[N]	30/I/77	Lost ⁸		Bahia
18. B N/N Senhora de Boa Memoria	[P]	15/XII/77	IX/78	9 mos.	
19. Nossa Senhora dos Millagres	[N]	20/I/79	5/VII/79	6 mos.	
20. Nossa Senhora da Vizitação	[P]	20/I/79	14/VII/79	6 mos.	
21. Nossa Senhora da Conceição	[N]	I/80	6/X/80	9 mos.	
22. Nossa Senhora do Pillar	[P]	I/80	15/VII/80	6 mos.	
23. Santa Maria Izabel de Saboya	[N]	I/80	2/IX/80	8 mos.	Sofala
24. Santo Antonio	[F]	IX/80	26/IX/81	12 mos.	Bahia
25. Santo Antonio de Lisboa	[N]	I/81	26/IX/81	8 mos.	Sofala
26. Nossa Senhora da Vizitação	[P]	I/81	26/IX/81	8 mos.	Sofala
27. Nossa Senhora dos Millagres	[N]	IX/81	Lost ⁹		
28. São Pedro da Ribeira	[N]	I/82	27/IX/82	8 mos.	

⁶ No information.⁷ Lost off Mozambique.⁸ Beached and stripped at Bahia.⁹ No information.

Although the data is incomplete, it appears that at least 8 vessels or 28.8% made stopovers in Brazil. Only 2 of these, the *Nossa Senhora dos Remedios* and *São Pedro de Rates* were *Naos* and thus ideally prevented from doing so. At least another 4 ships (14.3%) made short stopovers in Sofala. The voyage duration breakdown is as follows: 6 ships (21.6%) took 6 months to reach Lisbon, another 6 (21.6%) vessels made the passage in 8 months, 4 ships (14.3%) took 9 months, 3 ships (10.7%) took 10 months, and another 3 ships (10.7%) took 11 months to

reach the Portuguese capital. The average voyage was therefore 8.2 months. 3 of the returning ships (10.7%) departed from Goa in late December, 18, a majority (64.3%), left in January, 1 sailed in February (3.6%), while 3 ships (10.7%) departed in September and another 3 (10.7%) in October. Of these, 4 (14.3%) reached Lisbon in July, 5 (17.9%) in August and 11 (39.3%) in September: 1 ship (3.6%) reached the Tagus in October, another (3.6%) in November, and yet another (3.6%) in December.

What do these statistics tell us? First and foremost they reveal that as opposed to the dismal period from 1640-1663, when the *Carreira* was virtually moribund and contact between Lisbon and Goa was interrupted for years at a time, a regular seaborne trade between the metropolis and India was definitively re-established. Swift successful passages from Lisbon to Goa became the rule after 1674 with 14 consecutive vessels making the passage in approximately 6 months. This is a record that even the more "advanced" proto-capitalist companies of the Dutch and English and Colbert's *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* were no doubt hard-pressed to equal.³³ On the more problematic return passage relatively swift voyages were also the rule, with only 2 of 15 vessels taking more than 9 months between 1674-1682. The reasons for this startling turnaround are not hard to find. In general, this transformation was the result of a fundamental shift in priorities on the part of the Portuguese Crown with respect to the "tri-dimensional empire" of Brazil, Africa, and Asia. There are clear indications that with his ascension to power in 1668, Prince Regent Pedro abandoned the primacy that his father John IV had shown to Brazil and instead decided to shift Crown patronage and resources in an attempt to salvage

³³ For example, 56 French ships (both royal and Company) made the passage from Europe to *les Indes Orientales* between 1665-1682. Of these only 26 or 37.4% made it back to France. Cf. PAUL KAEPPELIN, *La Compagnie des Indes Orientales et François Martin* (Paris, 1908) pp. 653-55.

and resuscitate the *Estado da India*: "the most important and glorious of all of the [Crown's] conquests".³⁴

On a more practical level, these impressive numbers for the post-1668 *Carreira* resulted from increased royal supervision over the voyages and stricter controls and punishment for captains who neglected their sailing orders. As C.R. Boxer pointed out long ago, the key for successful sailings on the Cape route was prompt departures from Lisbon and Goa.³⁵ This meant that vessels had to leave the Tagus sometime between late January and early April to reach Goa by September or October, and to depart from the Mandovi in January in order to reach Lisbon by the following summer. We have a plethora of royal decrees from 1668 on exhorting prompt departures and forbidding harmful stopovers in Brazil and Africa. While this was nothing new, it appears that Pedro and his Viceroy, unlike their immediate predecessors, strove to enforce such orders. Offending captains were punished and the number of late departures and *invernos* dropped. The Crown and Viceroyalty were also diligent about ensuring prompt departures.³⁶ All 31 of the *Carreira* ships from

³⁴ From an analysis by the Marquis de Fronteira of Colbert's proposed anti-Dutch triple alliance in Asia with the English and Portuguese. Cf. *Biblioteca Nacional Lisbon Codex 748* fos. 130-65 for the «Instrucção da Secretaria de Estado e pareceres sobre a liga de Franca e Inglaterra». For Fronteira's views, cf. fos. 153v.-56v. Cf. also Ames «The *Estado da India*, 1663-1677: Priorities and Strategies in Europe and the East».

³⁵ Cf. Boxer «The *Carreira da India*, 1650-1750» pp. 36-37, and *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire* pp. 206-07.

³⁶ For details on the Crown's attempt to enforce such orders and ensure prompt departures, cf. HAG *Monções do Reino* vol. 34 fos. 213-13v., Pedro to Count of São Vicente, 29/III/1669; fo. 214, Governors to Pedro, 26/I/1670; vol. 35 fo. 1, Governors to Pedro, 13/I/1669; vol. 36 fo. 309, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 1/IV/1671; vol. 37 fo. 22, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 2/III/1672; fo. 23, Mendonça Furtado to Pedro, 12/IX/1672, fos. 24-25, Instructions for Ships Returning to Lisbon (1672?); fos. 236-36v., Mendonça Furtado to Pedro, 2/I/1673; fos. 239-39v., Mendonça Furtado to Pedro, 14/I/1673; vol. 38A fo. 144, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 28/XI/1672; vol. 38B fo. 463, Mendonça Furtado to Pedro, 26/I/1674, fo. 474, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 13/III/1673, vol. 39 fo. 86, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 20/III/1674, vol. 40 fo. 141, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 26/III/1675, and vol. 42 fo. 84, Pedro to Mendonça Furtado, 22/III/1677.

1668-1682 left Lisbon in either March or April; the earliest departed on 3 March (the *Nossa Senhora da Ajuda e Santo Antonio* in 1672), while only ships 2 sailed after the 11th of April. Of these, only Luis Mendonça de Furtado's large 1670 fleet, the three ships that sailed in March 1672 and the *Nossa Senhora do Rozario* in 1674 did not make the passage in 6 month's time. On the return passage, 21 ships (75%) left Goa in either December or January; 18 made it to Lisbon the following summer or fall. Six of the remaining seven departures were small packet ships that were dispatched in either September or October. Only the *Santa Teresa de Jesus* failed to make a prompt departure from Goa, sailing on 10 February 1668, and this galleon never reached Lisbon.

Overall, it appears that the Portuguese had learned from past mistakes and were bent on fundamental reforms in their Asian empire. Niels Steensgaard has advanced the rather strict dichotomy of proto-capitalist *vis-à-vis* monarchical monopolism as the most fruitful model for analyzing the commercial struggle between the Atlantic economies (and Asian Companies) of the Dutch and English and the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* during the XVIIth century. This interpretation has proven to be both persuasive and attractive for Indo-Portuguese historians.³⁷ One problem with this schema, however, is that it assumes largely static and unchanging structures and priorities for these combatants over the course of the XVIIth century. This, I would argue, was far from the case. The VOC quickly lost its pristine "entrepreneurial" values and by the 1660's was squandering huge amounts of cash to defend and maintain clearly unprofitable holdings like Ceylon.³⁸ At the same time, the Portuguese

³⁷ Cf. *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century and «The Dutch East India Company as an institutional innovation»* in *Dutch Capitalism and World Capitalism* ed. MAURICE AYMARD (Cambridge, 1982).

³⁸ On the monetary drain of Ceylon for the VOC, cf. India Office Library, London *Original Correspondence* (E/3/33) 3749 «Extract of Letter from Governor-General and Council in Batavia to the Heeren XVII» fos. 1 ff. As Jan Maetzuijcker

learned to adapt to changing technologies and business practices. In much the same way as Absolutism in Eastern Europe developed largely as a response to the threat of the more "advanced" Absolutist States of the West, the Portuguese responded to the military, technological, and commercial threat of the merchant capitalist economies of the Dutch and English and initiated their own reforms.³⁹ The Asian trade revolution of the XVIIth century undoubtedly affected all the powers involved in that trade.

Among other things, Pedro was committed toward increasing direct private capital investment in the *Estado* and modifying the longstanding policy of a Crown monopoly on its most lucrative regions and products. The Prince Regent and his *Conselho Ultramarino* worked towards reconstituting a privately backed East India Company, this time funded by contributions from the *Christãos Novos* in return for protection against the Inquisition. The project, however, was undermined by "popular" pressure and the concerted lobbying of the Holy Office.⁴⁰ In 1672, Pedro, in a bold move, opened up the lucrative East Africa trade to private Portuguese merchants.⁴¹ As early as mid-century, the Portuguese Crown had begun to integrate the ship-building advances of Dutch and English into the construction of their own *naos*, and this promising trend was continued after 1668. As a result, the unwieldy 1200 ton carracks of late XVIth and early XVIIth centuries, the monsters which had fueled the

wrote 'What a fearfull charge doth Ceylon... draw after it, and how many years hath this continued in hopes of a profitable issue... yet I think the Company will never accomplish there [sic] proposed profit... God in mercy put an end to these bad times.'

³⁹ For details on this process in Europe, cf. PERRY ANDERSON *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (4th ed., London, 1987) pp. 195-235. The reforms implemented in the *Estado* after 1668 are outlined in Ames «The *Estado da India*, 1663-1677: Priorities and Strategies in Europe and the East» pp. 38-46.

⁴⁰ For details on this project, cf. PRO SPF 89/12 fos. 186-87, Parry to Arlington, 26/XI/1672, Parry to Williamson: fos. 248-49, 18/VII/1673, fos. 252-53, 15/VIII/1673, and fos. 279-79v., 5/XII/1673.

⁴¹ Cf. AMES «The *Estado da India*, 1663-1677» pp. 43-45.

stories of the *Histórico Tragico-Ultramarino*, were abandoned. In their place sleeker, more seaworthy galleons were built in the royal dockyards of Lisbon, Porto, and Goa.⁴² Such galleons helped to resuscitate the *Carreira* and allowed it to achieve the impressive 98% and 82% success rate on voyages attained between 1668-1682.⁴³ The Portuguese therefore made serious efforts to revive and stabilize their seaborne trade between Lisbon and Goa during the late XVIIth century. An analysis of the relevant manuscript documentation (as opposed perhaps to overwrought and exaggerated contemporary accounts) show that they largely succeeded in this quest. The black legend of rapid and inevitable decline regarding the XVIIth century *Estado* and the *Carreira da Índia* has been vastly overstated.

⁴² Cf. Boxer «Admiral João Pereira Corte-Real and the Construction of Portuguese East-Indiamen in the Early Seventeenth Century».

⁴³ The composition of *Carreira* cargoes remained fairly traditional during this period. On the outward passage munitions (and soldiers), specie, coral, and assorted European goods remained the staples. For example, the Crown cargo aboard the carrack *São Gonçalo* (1668) consisted of the following: 18 artillery pieces, 1000 cannonballs, 50 quintals of lead, 100 barrels of tar (§ 6 almudes each) and 24 quintals of sulphur. On the return voyage pepper, saltpetre, indigo, silks, and cotton piece-goods continued to dominate. The *Santa Teresa de Jesus* (1668) carried 202 quintals of Canara pepper (purchased for 6063 xerafins at an average price of 21 xerafins per quintal) and 264 quintals of saltpetre (obtained at a cost of 5016 xerafins or 16 xerafins per quintal). The *Nossa Senhora dos Cardaes* (1672) carried 523 quintals of Canara pepper (purchased for 10,983 xerafins at an average price of 21 xerafins per quintal) and 5 dozen teak planks (purchased for 440 xerafins at prices ranging from 81-96 xerafins per dozen). The largest pepper cargoes during these years were carried by the *Bom Jesus de São Domingos* in 1672 (902 quintals purchased for 18,942 xerafins § 21 xerafins per quintal) the *São Pedro de Rates* in 1674 (750 quintals purchased for 13,875 xerafins § c. 18 xerafins per quintal), and the *Nossa Senhora de Ajuda* in 1670 (712 quintals purchased at 16,874 xerafins § 22 and 27 xerafins per quintal).

