
ARTICLES

*Port Wine Merchants: Sandeman in Porto, 1813-1831**

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In the rich literature devoted to wine history, foreign resident merchants, despite the significance of their labours, have received minimal scholarly treatment. «Not a great deal is known about wine merchants or the organization of their commerce», explains historian Leo Loubère, «perhaps because their activities have lacked drama, have continued in war and peace over centuries of time, and because historians have been more concerned with the quantities and values of

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Abbreviations used in the footnotes:

- CA Cockburn Archives, Vila Nova de Gaia
- CB Copy Book
- LB Letter Book
- OA Offley Forrester Archives, Vila Nova de Gaia
- OBF Offley Brothers Forrester
- OL Outgoing Letters
- PJ Porto Journal
- PRO Public Record Office, London
- RC R. Cockburn
- SA Sandeman Archives, Vila Nova de Gaia
- SF Sandeman, Forster
- SGF Sandeman, Gooden & Forster
- WB Waste Book

Since most of the copies of the letters in the Vila Nova de Gaia collections are unsigned, the writers in SA, OA, and CA are designated respectively as S, O, and C.

wine cargoes than the lives of shippers¹». In studies of the world's major wine-producing regions, the principal focus of scholarship has been upon the changing techniques of wine growers and their role in national economies². The wine-exporting companies, however, were important participants in a commerce with a rich tradition extending back into antiquity. Modern patterns for purchasing and shipping wine began to develop around the fifteenth century when Venetian merchants worked to produce wines of differing constant qualities and tastes. Continuing European demand allowed successful participants to amass great fortunes. The Dutch, by the seventeenth century the era's principal maritime commercial nation, continued and expanded the process. West European wine growers, responding to the profitable opportunity brought by Dutch purchasers, strove to meet their wine and brandy requirements.³ The European market for alcoholic and other beverages, especially in vineyard-poor Great Britain, «truly the holy land of wine», by then was entering an era of radical change in drinking choices. Traditional European products met steady competition from new beverages, from both Europe and regions beyond, brought into public knowledge through the course of contemporary commercial expansion and refinements of production techniques⁴. The revolution in drinking choices brought an era of opportunity for the producers of high quality wine. Great Britain's wine drinkers, some of them the «intelligent consumers» Marcel Lachiver characterizes as vital for the creation of great wine, profited from their nation's expanding economy and avidly sought new products. They tolerated high production and import duty costs⁵.

¹ L. A. Loubère, *The Red and White: A History of Wine in France and Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, 1978), 242.

² M. Lachiver's excellent *Vins, Vignes et Vignerons: Histoire du Vignoble Français* (Paris, 1988), is a good example.

³ R. Dion, *Histoire de la Vigne et du Vin en France des Origines au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 1959), 359-60, 423f.; for a specific example, J. Beauroy, *Vin et Société à Bergerac du Moyen Age aux Temps Modernes* (Saratoga, 1976), 173, 204f.

⁴ F. Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800* (New York, 1973), 158f.; H. Pirenne, «Un Grand Commerce d'Exportation au Moyen Age: Les Vins de France», *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 5 (1933), 239; R. Pijassou, *Un Grand Vignoble de Qualité: Le Médoc* (Paris, 1980), I, 360f.; Loubère, *Red and White*, 49.

During the eighteenth century European producers responded by revolutionising wine-perfecting knowledge, with discoveries relatively quickly passing to competing vineyards. Each wine region was compelled to battle a formidable host of rivals to gain success in the international marketplace. Wine quality was essential. Foreign merchants had a vital role to fill, to secure the best possible product, and then establish a desire for it in their homelands⁶. Their presence was a fundamental catalyst for successful commerce from a wine producing region. They provided indispensable direction in assisting growers to prepare products suited to the particular drinking tastes of the importing nation. The persisting fierce competition among different national regions, bringing better wine to consumers, markedly contributed to the merchant's local guiding influence. The Dutch had pioneered the system in French and Iberian vineyards, and the British with their long Bordeaux experience were not far behind. In Bordeaux, for example, a twentieth-century wine specialist, commenting on its commerce with Great Britain, has suggested that French merchants did not «understand the intricacies of blending wines for the English taste», making necessary the presence of British specialists «to be the agents of our customers, to understand what they need and to supply it». Or, as a French scholar wryly concluded, the visitors were necessary to secure the strong wines «pleasing to the vigorous stomachs of the English». The foreign merchants additionally possessed the capital necessary for purchasing, working, and holding the product prior to shipping. Indigenous merchants, lacking knowledge of the complex British market, only slowly emerged as significant competitors⁷.

⁵ P. Butel et J.-P. Poussou, *La Vie Quotidienne à Bordeaux au XVIII^e Siècle* (Paris, 1980), 17, 169; H. Enjalbert, *Histoire de la Vigne et du Vin: l'Avènement de la Qualité* (Paris, 1975), 96 and «La Naissance des Grands Vins et la Formation du Vignoble Moderne de Bordeaux», in A. Huetz de Lempis, et al., *Géographique Historique des Vignobles* (Paris, 1978), I, 12; H. Pijassou, «Les Grands Régisseurs et la Naissance dans des Vins Fins de Bordeaux», *Etudes Géographiques Offertes à Louis Papy* (Bordeaux, 1978), 48, and *Un Grande Vignoble*, I, 360f; Lachiver, *Vins*, 12.

⁶ Enjalbert, *Histoire de la Vigne*, 81f.

⁷ S. Loftus, *Anatomy of the Wine Trade: Abe's Sardines and Other Stories* (London, 1985),

The organization of the British wine market by the turn of the nineteenth century can be envisaged as a chain of functions performed by growers and merchants to prepare, collect, treat, and move a product satisfactory to its drinking class. The foreign resident merchants, purchasing wine from Portuguese growers, and transforming the raw product into port, linked their homeland to the local production system. Firms did not ship wine for sale under their own names. In Great Britain port passed into the hands of a limited number of dealers. They received wine directly from abroad or from a few British wholesale suppliers, then further preparing, including bottling, it for consumption. «The final product», concluded Loubère, «was as much... [the merchant's] creation as the vigneron's.»⁸

Wine-firm activity in exporting centres has not yet received significant scholarly attention⁹. The study of the first years in Portugal of an important British firm, Sandeman, the dominant port wine exporter from the 1830s into the twentieth century, can be a significant first step in understanding the neglected role of wine shipping firms in their industry's development. Sandeman entered an established wine market, where a finite amount of wine was produced within a legally demarcated zone, with already established purchasers. The firm's Portuguese headquarters were in Porto [called Oporto by the British], at the beginning of the nineteenth century a flourishing hub of commercial and industrial activity known to the outside world mostly for the preparation and export of the wine bearing its name. We can establish the sound knowledge base necessary for understanding the relations between foreign merchants and local wine

61, 76 (quoting Peter Sichel); F. Malvezin, *Bordeaux: Histoire de la Vigne et du Vin en Aquitaine depuis les Origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Bordeaux, 1919), 80.

⁸ A. L. Simon, *Wine and the Wine Trade* (London, 1921), 37; L. A. Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France: The Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1990), 180. For a detailed look at contemporary practices, T. Smeed, *The Wine Merchant's Manual* (London, 1845).

⁹ For Bordeaux, see, Ph. Roudié, «Les Origines de la Maison de Commerce de Vin Louis Eschenauer à Bordeaux», in *Etudes Géographiques offertes à Papy*, 403; for port, Conceição Andrade Martins [direção e prefácio de A. Barreto], *Memória do Vinho do Porto* (Porto, 1990), 19.

economies in both Porto and other important wine-exporting centres by examining Sandeman's labours. Sandeman followed processes previously developed in the wine trade, a series of interconnected tasks for securing and preparing wine for export.¹⁰ Sandeman's rich local archives, plus those of two contemporary competitors, Offley Brothers, Forrester, and Cockburn, Wauchope and Greig, provide the basic resources for the analysis. The surviving records of Porto's many wine firms have yet not been intensely explored by scholars. The Sandeman and Offley collections contain copies of correspondence, in English, Portuguese, and other languages, to their London offices, to merchants in British and European markets, and to agents and growers in the Douro wine-producing region. The archives additionally possess accounts of the amounts of wine purchased and exported. British consular records for Porto, supplemented by other contemporary sources, including visitors' memoirs and the local press, provide useful supplements to merchant activity. The years of the study cover the eighteen seasons from Sandeman's 1813 arrival in Porto through 1831. In 1832 civil war cut the city from its wine source and interrupted commerce — «every description of business is at a stand», reported a merchant¹¹. When peace came in 1834 new economic and political conditions considerably altered wine-trading relationships¹².

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century the major European vineyards were joined by a new significant competitor located along the banks of Portugal's upper Douro River and its tributaries. Northern Portugal had long produced a wide variety of

¹⁰ For an account of late-eighteenth conditions, N. R. Bennett, «The Golden Age of the Port Wine System, 1781-1807», *The International History Review*, 12 (1990), 221-26. See also A. de Oliveira, «Vinhos de Cima-Douro na Primeira Metade do Séc. XVII: A Primeira Grande Questão Vinícola do Douro», *Gaya* [Vila Nova de Gaia], 2 (1984), 21-30 and S. Schneider, *O Marques de Pombal e o Vinho do Porto: Dependência e Subdesenvolvimento em Portugal no Século XVIII*. (Lisboa, 1980).

¹¹ S. to Rothschild, 14 Sept. 1832, LB, 1828-1832, SA.

¹² P. Duguid, «Speculations on Change: An Anglo-Portuguese Alliance», unpublished paper. Duguid's work in port wine archives is bringing new insights to nineteenth century developments.

excellent wines; Porto naturally received them for both local consumption and export. British merchants, trading woollens for wine, and later for products from Brazil and other Portuguese colonial possessions, had visited Portugal from at least the early fourteenth century. Their presence in the north resulted in the posting of a consul to Porto in 1659. The visitors initially sought wine made between Porto and the Spanish border, particularly the fine growth of Monsão, south of the Minho River. Most drinkers in Great Britain, the world's principal wine-importing nation, however, during these years imbibed French wine, especially clarets from Bordeaux, once a part of the British realm. At the end of the seventeenth century about 80% of wine consumed came from French vineyards. The commencement during the 1670s of persisting Franco-British hostilities prompted radical changes in wine-importing patterns. The island government's discouragement of trade with the enemy opened new opportunities for Portuguese growers. The ensuing search for wine led some Britons into the valley of the upper Douro; their growing purchases were despatched down river to Porto. The wine, made by Portuguese growers and then transformed into port by a merchant class drawn from Great Britain and other western European nations, steadily improved in quality over the course of the eighteenth century. The trade grew and prospered during that century, its flourishing continuing until the international disruptions brought by the French Revolution and its aftermath. During the century exports grew about 3.5% per annum. Port wine had established a pattern persisting into the twentieth century: it was exported overwhelmingly to one market, to Great Britain. By 1800 British wine preferences were very different than a century earlier. British drinkers, favouring high alcoholic content beverages, had turned in increasing numbers to the heady, deep coloured port wine. Portuguese wine supplied about 70% of British imports, Spanish, 20%, and French only 3-4%. The industry's prosperity, reported a contemporary participant, «entirely depends on the capricious whim of an opulent consumer.»¹³

The three French invasions of Portugal between 1807 and 1812

disrupted the efficient functioning of the port wine system. British exporters, the principal shippers of first-quality port, either temporarily or permanently evacuated their establishments near the mouth of the Douro River in Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia. As the combined British and Portuguese army expelled the invaders, even though limited military movement continued along the Douro, venturesome British merchants began returning to rebuild their former prosperous commerce¹⁴. The Porto community was joined in 1813 by the agents of Sandeman, Gooden & Forster, the successors to a firm established in London in 1790 by a young Scot, George Sandeman (1765-1841). The firm initially acted as agents in Great Britain for firms in Porto; during the first decade of the nineteenth century it received regular shipments from Tomas da Rocha Pinto & Sons. Sandeman, from about 1796, followed a different tack from most British-based merchants, beginning regular visits to northern Portugal. Little information has survived concerning Sandeman's early activities, apart from a brief reference to a meeting in Portugal, about 1809, with the Duke of Wellington¹⁵. The business apparently prospered, motivating Sandeman to make the important decision to open an agency in Porto.

Sandeman's men, in addition to the general political and economic uncertainties influencing Portuguese business life, encountered on their arrival in Porto the commencement of one of the less favourable periods for port wine exports. The industry over the centuries has been marked by broad oscillations in amounts exported. The market had sharply declined during the 1811-1814 war years, and the merchants naturally hoped that peace would bring a return to prosperity. They were disappointed. After 1815 European wine

¹³ Martins, *Memória*, 44, 63-4; *The Wine Question Considered...* (By a Portuguese) (London, 1824), 65.

¹⁴ J. Martins Ribeiro, *A Comunidade Britânica do Porto Durante as Invasões Francesas, 1807-1811* (Porto, 1990); N. R. Bennett, «The Vignerons of the Douro and the Peninsular War», *The Journal of European Economic History*, 21 (1992), 7-29.

¹⁵ N. Halley, *Sandeman: Two Hundred Years of Port and Sherry* (Cambridge, 1990), 32-5, 39-46. J.K. Fowler, *Recollections of Old Country Life* (London, 1894), 153-54. The London firm changed its name in 1828 to Sandeman, Forster & Co.

patterns underwent significant alterations. For port wine the era between 1811 and 1864 has been described as one of the most difficult in its history. Dependence upon a single market became dangerous. During the period of Sandeman's beginning Porto operations the British economy endured irregular business cycles. The depression of the war years was followed by uncertain market conditions persisting until the early 1830s. Commerce between Great Britain and Portugal declined; the opening of Brazil to British traders through the treaty of 1810 caused a fall in British arrivals in Portuguese ports. The value of goods going from Portugal to Great Britain dropped over 50% between 1800 and 1843; British imports to Portugal fell 35%¹⁶.

With the uncertain economic atmosphere, and despite the continuing growth of both Great Britain's population and economy, demand for wine did not increase. Wine retained essentially the same market base it possessed during the preceding century. It was a luxury item consumed by the aristocracy and some bourgeoisie. Beer, continually improving in quality, and despite individual consumption totals lower than during the eighteenth century, retained primary allegiance among drinkers. Spirits also maintained a strong constituency¹⁷. Among wine drinkers fundamental changes in taste and a dawning awareness of the dangers resulting from excessive alcohol intake changed attitudes toward private and social imbibing. Some drinkers followed the admonitions of the rising temperance movement¹⁸. Others decreased consumption or replaced port wine with lighter, less alcoholic competitors. The drinking of cheaper Spanish wines steadily increased. Individuals who persisted in loyalty to higher alcohol content wine increasingly turned to another fortified

¹⁶ A. D. Gayer, et al. *The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790-1850* (Hassocks, 1975), I, 111, 118-21, 146-47, 171f; Martins, *Memória*, 101.

¹⁷ O. Macdonagh, «The Origins of Porter», *Economic History Review*, 16 (1964), 530-35; P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London, 1983), 292.

¹⁸ G. A. Austin, *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800* (Santa Barbara, 1985), xxi-iv; B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (Pittsburg, (1991), 310, illustration opposite 336; J.-Ch. Sournia, *A History of Alcoholism* (Oxford, 1990), 22-5.

beverage, sherry. From 1814 to 1824 sherry captured 20% of imports; during 1826 to 1840 its share rose to 38%. In the century's first decade port wine held 60% of the British market; three decades later its share had fallen to 30%¹⁹. A related reason for port's troubles was the heavy influence of government export and import taxes. Portugal's export duties were low in comparison to British import charges, which were rising to a peak during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but they did place an excessive burden on wine made for the British market. Wines heading for other markets paid much less. The Portuguese government resisted, until the 1850s, all merchant efforts for duty alteration. As wine shipper James J. Forrester explained to a parliamentary committee, the Portuguese officials knew the esteem for the product among Great Britain's prosperous drinkers, and concluded that «British subjects cannot possibly live without port wine». A British merchant agreed, informing the committee that the nation's «monied class» bought the wine it desired without undue regard for duty-related costs. British duties did begin to fall in 1826, but the trend meant an end of the preferred status awarded by the Methuen Treaty of 1703 to Portuguese at the expense of French produce²⁰. As a harassed Portuguese agent in London in 1817 succinctly explained to his principals: «wine has against itself the fact of being not only a superfluous commodity, but also of being overburdened with duties, and consumed alone among the upper classes²¹». Because of these many factors, port wine exports during the first quarter of the nineteenth century fell 27% in relation to those of the last decade of the preceding century; in the next quarter they fell 16%. Wine by this period, postulated economic historian J.H. Clapham, was no longer in

¹⁹ Martins, *Memória*, 66, 76, 91, 94; F. Quiros, «El Comercio de los Vinos de Jerez», *Estudios Geográficos* [Madrid], 86, (1962), 35.

²⁰ Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers* (Reports from Committees, vol. 13, Import Duties on Wine), 1852, XVII, 6-7, 15, 45-8; R. Davis, «The English Wine Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries», *Annales Cisalpines d'Histoire Sociale*, 3 (1972), 87-8, 101.

²¹ G. Guimarães, *Um Português em Londres: Cartas de J. M. Virginiano, Correspondente dos Ferreiras da Régua, No Período Pós-Napoleónico* (Vila Nova de Gaia, 1988), 228.

any way the drink of the British people: «the curves of its consumption record little of interest except changes in the dinner-table habits of the well-to-do». «Wine», he concluded, «was a stagnant and a relatively unimportant trade»²².

Port wine, nonetheless, when Sandeman agents arrived in Porto, remained a main component of the Portuguese national export economy. In this primarily agricultural economy wine provided over one-third of agricultural produce.²³ The British demand for port wine, despite the less favourable circumstances of the first third of the nineteenth century, continued to provide profitable market opportunities for exporters. Almost 432,000 pipes went to Britain during the eighteen years from 1814 through 1831. Average annual shipments were 23,982 pipes, with a high total of 40,367 in 1825 and a low of 15,515 in 1816. Over 75% of port wine exports went to Great Britain, reaching a high point of 88.9% in 1831 and a low of 65.6% in 1816. Brazil followed as a distant second, with about 18%. Brazilian imports of Portuguese wine rose sharply from 1815 to 1830, thus partly compensating for the decline in exports to Great Britain. British firms, however, played a very minor role in the Brazilian wine trade²⁴.

The newcomers joined other merchants at the beginning of a significant transition period in Portugal's history. The turmoil brought by the French invasions had left the once prosperous country in economic shambles. The weakened political system, its inefficient ruler, João VI, residing in Brazil from 1807 until 1822, was unable to undertake the many reforms required to overcome the problems

²² Martins, *Memória*, 15, 91; G. Martins Pereira, *O Douro: A Vinha, O Vinho e a Região de Pombal a João Franco* (Porto, 1990), 73-4, 77; Gayer, *Growth and Fluctuation*, I, 301, II, 959-60; G.R. Porter, *The Progress of the Nation* (New York: 1970 rev. ed.), 461, 463-4, 454; J. H. Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain: The Early Railway Age 1820-1850* (Cambridge, 1939), 246-47; M. Halpern Pereira, *Livre Câmbio e Desenvolvimento Económico: Portugal na Segunda Metade do Século XIX* (Lisboa, 1971), 150, 248-49.

²³ D. Justino, *A Formação do Espaço Económico Nacional: Portugal, 1810-1913* (Lisboa, 1988-89), I, 44.

²⁴ Figures from data in Martins, *Memória*, 42-3, 48, 101, 220.

besetting Portuguese society. The country's economic malaise was exacerbated by an extended period of political turmoil beginning in 1820. Portuguese revolutionary reformers, sharing the aspirations of other members of the contemporary European bourgeoisie, struggled to replace the restrictive legacy of their weakened absolutist regime with a state guaranteeing social, economic, and political liberties for individual citizens²⁵. The degenerating Portuguese economy, even more weakened by the post-war independence of the prosperous Brazilian territory, and facing the full force of an expanding industrial Britain, greatly complicated their task²⁶. The nation did not quieten down until the early 1850s when a generally accepted system of representative government, under a constitutional monarch, inaugurated a period of relative political calm lasting until the 1890s. Wine exporters, during these formative years, despite the oscillating Portuguese and British markets, had the opportunity to compete for their share of exports, with some hope of success for the most efficient firms. The important decay in British conditions was offset in part by a general fall in prices, including wine, in Portugal. The drop began in 1811 and continued at low levels until 1848. Port-region wine producers after 1820 faced prices for their product well below those received at the end of the eighteenth century²⁷.

Sandeman's nephew, George Glas Sandeman (1793-1868), arrived in Porto in December 1813, the business taking the local name of George Sandeman Co²⁸. Later, his brother, Thomas Glas Sandeman, and Albert and John Forster, arrived, one or more of them carrying on the business at any one time. Thomas Sandeman became the principal manager when George Glas Sandeman succeeded his

²⁵ V. Magalhães Godinho, *Prix et Monnaies au Portugal, 1750-1850* (Paris, 1955), 292f, offers a still useful summary of the period.

²⁶ Justino, *A Formação do Espaço Económico Nacional*, I, 50f. Justino's thought stimulating study sharply places Porto in the national economy of its era.

²⁷ A. Guerra Tenreiro, «Douro: Esboços para a sua História Económica», *Anais do Instituto do Vinho do Porto*, 2 (1942), 61; F. Williams, *Observations on the State of the Wine Trade...* (London, 1924), 5; Th. G. Shaw, *Wine, the Vine, and the Cellar* (London, 1863), 120.

²⁸ Martins, *Memória*, 315-16, misses Sandeman's arrival.

uncle in London. The London-based members periodically visited Portugal at important moments, particularly at vintage time²⁹. They joined in Porto a competing group of over ninety port-wine exporters, including eighteen to twenty-five British firms³⁰. The newcomers followed patterns for wine purchasing established during the eighteenth century. They worked within a strictly-defined system — a demarcated zone, fixed-production amounts and prices — controlled by a government-chartered organization, the *Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro* [hereafter the Wine Company]³¹. Because its charter awarded it a favoured place in the wine market, and its resources guaranteed government support, almost all Britons opposed the company. A Sandeman man in 1821 typically protested against its «monstrous abuses», but, despite frequent endeavours to forge a united, effective counteraction, the Porto merchants in practice merely managed to petition, without result, their government for redress. The Portuguese administration, when pressed, temporized; then, without notice in 1815, it bowed to pressure from influential court personages and extended the Company's charter for another twenty years. The merchants, until the 1830s, had to labour within the system presided over by the Wine Company³².

Wine merchants usually spent most of their time in Porto and Vila Nova da Gaia, there receiving information about the development of each year's crop, and assessing samples sent down river by growers³³. Visits to the Douro wine country were made only for important decisions concerning evaluation and purchase of wine. The wretched

²⁹ For a G. Sandeman visit, S to Sealy, 16 Sept. 1817, LB, 1828-1834, SA. For some family information, including marriage ties between firm members, D. Peat, *The Sandeman Genealogy: Compiled by John Glas Sandeman from Family Notes, Memoranda, and the Original Manuscript* (Edinburgh: 1895), 31, 33.

³⁰ Crispin to Jeffrey, 14 Dec. 1816, F.O.63/198, with enclosure; Crispin to Clanwilliam, 7 May 1822, enclosing the 1821 Porto trade report, F.O.63/253.

³¹ Bennett, «Port Wine System», 227-28, for details.

³² S to Hassal & Foulkes, 6 March 1821, LB, 1818-1822. The Wine Company role can be followed in N. R. Bennett, «Port Wine in Anglo-Portuguese Diplomacy during the Nineteenth Century», unpublished paper.

³³ For example, S to Silva, 21 Jan. 1821, LB, 1818-1822, SA.

Table 1

Sandeman Purchasing Patterns, 1814-1831 [1]

	Growers			Pipes										total
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-60	61-100	101-								
no.	a	b [2]	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b		
1814	33	17	116	12	170	4	102.5						389.5	
1815	35	21	113	3	46	8	204.5	2	84	1	66		513.5	
1816	17	5	30	8	123	2	50	2	66				269	
1818	32	14	96	7	102	4	100	6	217	1	66		581	
1819	34	12	92	11	174	3	79	6	284	2	174		803	
1820	8	3	22	1	14			4	190				226	
1821	30	34	164	9	149	5	126	2	87				526	
1822	48	23	149	17	291	2	55	4	163	1	92	1	102	852
1823	24	4	33	9	121	4	106	6	236	1	75		571	
1824	33	5	47	11	154	5	126.5	10	384.5	2	134		846	
1825	29	6	52	11	165	5	119	7	229.5	2	159		724.5	
1826	19	2	10.5	4	59	4	112	5	204.5	4	290.5		676.5	
1827	24	4	26.5	11	166.5	3	72	6	227				492	
1828	29	4	30.5	11	167	2	45	9	415	3	251		908.5	
1829	25	5	38.25	4	50	3	85	11	526.5	2	135.75		835	
1830	31	3	19	9	136	7	167.5	9	414	3	210.5		947	
1831	34	4	32.5	8	124.5	11	265.5	10	418.25	2	132		972.75	
	505	166	1071.25	146	2212	72	1815.5	99	4146.25	24	1785.75	11	1131.25	

¹ Data for all tables drawn from WB, 1813-1822, PJ, 1814-1823, PJ, 1824-37, SA. Non significant purchases were made in 1817. Paul Duguir also has analysed Sandeman's records. We often slightly vary in totals because of our differing approaches to the diverse materials.

² a = no. of growers; b = no. of pipes.

road conditions — it required two days of hard travel to reach Régua, the principal centre of the wine country — were made more unpleasant by a general lack of security and poor private or public accomodation. Once in residence the excessive heat and unfavourable health conditions made visits even more difficult. «Only the hope of extravagant profits could stimulate a man to live in the midst of the mountains of the Upper Douro,» confessed a prominent Portuguese wine dealer³⁴.

During their trying initial years the inexperienced Sandeman agents received assistance from a seasoned compatriot, James Forrester, representative of the prominent firm of Offley Brothers, Forrester. They frequently sought Forrester's advice on pricing, bought his wine, and accompanied him to Régua for the annual Wine Company regulated purchase of new wine. The two firms for a time jointly purchased wine and despatched supplies up the Douro³⁵. Sandeman also began a long association with Carlos António Pereira da Silva of Régua, their *comissário* [broker], who functioned as the firm's manager of wine-region operations³⁶. Other arrangements had to be negotiated with the owners of the vessels which carried barrels and supplies up the Douro and later brought purchased wine down river to the firm's lodge³⁷. Once in the midst of the Douro's vineyards, particularly for what they called their «annual campaign,» the merchants visited growers and regional buyers to taste and reserve wine for later purchase³⁸. The wine sales, scheduled during the first few months of the year, normally set all merchants into full competition for their share of the season's produce. Sandeman's agents residing in a house rented from a grower, remained in the wine country from two to four weeks.

³⁴ For a good account of travel conditions, A.D., «A Jornada ao Douro e a Camara de Vallongo — Novidade de 1843», *Periodico dos Pobres no Porto*, 243 (14 Outubro 1843), 1183; *A Crise Commercial no Porto: Carta do Barão de Massarelllos* (Porto, 1859), 5.

³⁵ S to SGF, 15 March 1814, 3 May 1814, LB, 1814-1817, SA; O to OFB, 10 Jan. 1815, O to Pereira, 10 Jan. 1815, 26 April 1815, LB, 1805-1819, OA.

³⁶ Bennett, «Port Wine System», 226-27.

³⁷ S to Silva, 10 Dec. 1814, S to Costa, 12 Jan. 1815, LB, 1814-1817, SA.

³⁸ S to Parker, 23 Jan. 1819, LB, 1818-1822, SA; W. H.G. Kingston, *Lusitanian Sketches of the Pen and Pencil* (London, 1845), II, 316f.

Inefficient Wine Company proceedings frequently resulted in late-opening fairs, making the agent's tasks even more onerous. We «hope the business will soon be over, as it is a most disagreeable one», typically complained one agent³⁹.

The Sandeman firm initiated its Portuguese career by purchasing in Porto twenty-six pipes of wine from a British firm⁴⁰. Soon after the agents entered the competition for the abundant vintage of 1813. At the Régua sales they proudly judged their purchases «very superior covering wines equal to any in the Douro». They learned that securing such wine meant paying high prices because growers, when the market was in their favour, sought amounts exceeding Wine Company established figures. Since it was not possible to gain enough wine during the fair, *comissário* Silva was given the task of finding additional supplies. The firm's final total purchase was a moderate amount, 389.5 pipes of new wine, plus 230 pipes of older produce⁴¹. The newcomers quickly discovered that intense care was necessary for triumphing in the fierce competition for the limited amounts of superior quality wine. The vintage of 1813 soon was judged inferior to the two previous years, while the agents learned that their post-fair purchases were of poor quality. And, even with guards stationed on the boats carrying the vintage down the Douro, some wine arrived mixed with water. «It shows how little confidence we can place in others», an agent bemoaned⁴².

But Sandeman's men persevered, striving to overcome other obstacles hindering business operations. The Wine Company possessed a monopoly over the production and distribution of brandy, a necessary component for preparing port wine. Its inability to meet merchant requirements often delayed shipments to Britain. To guarantee quality exports, the firm secured additional wine from

³⁹ S to SGF, 21 Feb. 1815, S to Silva, 23 Dec. 1815, LB, 1814-1817, SA. For a colorful description of the 1822 opening of the fair, «Feira dos Vinhos no Douro», *A Borboleta Constitucional* [Porto], 45 (21 Fevereiro. 1822), 3.

⁴⁰ WB, 1813-1822, SA.

⁴¹ S to SGF, 15 March 1814, 29 March 1814, 5 April 1814, LB, 1814-1817, SA. For pipes and other measures, see Table 2, fn. 1; for wine prices, see below and Table 4.

⁴² S to SGF, 26 April 1814, 10 May 1814, S to Silva, 11 April 1814, S to Sealy, 15 Oct. 1814, 5 Sept. 1815, LB, 1814-1817, SA.

Table 2
Sandeman Exports

	pipes	hogsheads ¹	value	
			pounds sterling	milreis
1814	434	35		89,557,636
1815	943	53	46,060	156,400,590
1816	343	8	15,406.16	58,684,952
1817	465	49	20,954	83,832,500
1818	785[2]	76	38,829.10	157,772,500
1819	529[3]	31	26,564	109,920,500
1820	588[4]	51	25,211	121,012,500
1821	623[5]	60	22,803	106,266,447
1822	700[6]	64	27,122.6.4	123,987,713
1823	754[7]	97	30,983.10	140,967,552
1824	819.5 [8]			
1825	1316			
1826	1059.75			
1827	1022.5			
1828	1227.25			
	pipes	almudes	canadas	
1829	832	2	3	
1830	1434	15	9	
1831	1565			

¹ In nineteenth-century Portugal the amounts included in a pipe and other measurements varied by locality. In Porto a pipe contained 534 litres, a hogshead 268, and a quarter cask 134. Robertson Brothers to Raub, 18 Oct. 1887, LB, 1887-1888, Robertson Papers, SA. A Douro pipe held 550 litres; Fonseca et al., *Vimbo do Porto* 9. The Porto pipe held 21 almudes and 6 canadas; in the Douro the amounts were 21 and 9; J.J. Forrester, *Portugal and its capabilities* (London, 3d ed., 1856), 97.

² In S to SGF, 1 Jan. 1819, LBF 1818-1822, and elsewhere in the WB, SA, the amount was given as 870.25 pipes.

³ The WB also gave 589 pipes.

⁴ One quarter cask has not been recorded in the table. In S to SGF, 2 Ja. 1821, LB, 1818-1822, the total was given as 676.75 pipes. The WB also recorded 676 pipes and 5 canadas.

⁵ The WB also gave 703.5 pipes.

⁶ The PJ also gave 767.25 pipes.

⁷ The PJ also gave 854 pipes.

⁸ Monetary values were not given in PJ, 1824-1837.

companies based in Vila Nova de Gaia. The year's labours, producing exports of 434 pipes and 70 hogsheads, were a satisfactory result for a new firm⁴³. At the 1815 Régua sales Sandeman purchased over 500 pipes of wine. «You may be confident», boasted an agent, «that no house will be able to ship wines this year superior to ours in quality». At the close of the year the firm had exported 943 pipes and 105 hogsheads; it held over 550 pipes in its lodge. While the numbers of pipes bought, exported, and held in stock, were limited, Sandeman relatively quickly had elevated itself well above the middle ranks of British firms. Offley Brothers, Forrester, for example, during the 1815 fair, bought 569 pipes⁴⁴.

Sandeman competed avidly for the superior vintage of 1815; its exceptional «richness & body» made it a lasting standard for evaluating future vintages. Less favourable seasons often did not limit merchant striving. Rains harming the vintage, for example, fell during 1818, making it «a most deplorable one», but adequate wine came from growers waiting until a later date to commence picking. As an agent recognized, «we suppose no year ever passes without producing good wines in greater or smaller proportion»⁴⁵. The Sandeman representatives also learned that they had to assume responsibility for making decisions since «positive & particular orders from England» often became irrelevant because of local conditions. «The plainest way [to act]», it was decided, «is when wines are good, & moderate in price, to lay in a fair quantity for the probable demand»⁴⁶. Sandeman had become a permanent participant in the ever-recurring seasonal quest for quality wine, endeavouring to outdistance competitors by concluding purchase arrangements for the best product with the «crack adegas» of the Douro.⁴⁷

⁴³ S to SGF, 3 May 1814, 17 May 1814, 13 Sept. 1814, LB, 1814-1817, SA. For export figures, see Table 2.

⁴⁴ S to SGF, 2 Jan. 1816, LB, 1814-1817, SA; O to OBF, 21 March 1815, CB, 1814-1817, OA. For lodge holdings, see Table 3.

⁴⁵ S to SGF, 13 May 1817, LB, 1814-1817, SA.

⁴⁶ S to SGF, 29 Nov. 1821, LB, 1818-1821, SA. Other agents acted similarly: C to RC, 19 Sept. 1815, OL, 1815-1816, CA.

⁴⁷ S to Sealy, 7 Jan. 1817, LB, 1814-1817, SA.

During numerous vintages Sandeman felt the weight of Wine Company interference in the marketplace. Each year the company certified the size of the vintage, dividing the produce into different qualities with regulated prices. In 1817, for instance, the company certified only about 10,000 pipes of wine as suitable for export to Britain, in 1819 a similar decision was made for a limited vintage. The decision, plus the size of company purchases, meant increased prices for first-quality wine, the only beverage eligible for shipment to Great Britain. Since the designation of qualities normally was an arbitrary procedure, unsuitable wine usually was included in the first quality total, thus additionally limiting merchants' purchasing options. It was vital to gain the best product, Offley's agent explained, since «we are well aware that inferior wines will not suit the English market». The Wine Company rulings sent merchants into frenzied competition to secure desired goals. In 1818 the Cockburn buyer found the fair «most extraordinary...It was over the very first day»; in 1822 he described the process as «amazingly hurried», with sales concluded before he had finished tasting samples. During the 1819 sales almost all good wine was sold during the first morning of the fair with prices, exclaimed Offley's agent, «going beyond all precedent» to 140\$000 and more. At other times, when demand was strong, farmers with superior wine, reacting to the Wine Company limitation of first-quality wine, «refused to sell a third part alone of their wine», forcing the harassed buyers to take all their stock ⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ S to Surtees & Croser, 21 April 1817, LB, 1814-1817, SA; O to OBF, 1 March 1819, 18 March 1819, 23 March 1819, CB, 1817-1820, O to OBF, 10 April 1821, CB, 1820-1824, O to OBF, 13 May 1827, CB, 1824-1827, O to OBF, 22 March 1829, CB, 1827-1829, OA; C to RC, 5 March 1816, 18 March 1817, 24 March 1818, OL, 1817-1819, C to RC, 5 March 1822, OL, 1819-1822, CA; *Golpe de Vista Sobre a Pertença de Alguns Negociantes Inglezes, Acerca da Companhia Geral d'Agicultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro* (Londres, 1826), xii-xiii; A. Girão, in a Cortes debate, given in *O Analysta Portuense*, 311 (13 Março 1822), 1-2.

The exchange rate for Portuguese currency in Porto from Sandeman's arrival until 1820 roughly varied between a little under 60 pence into the 70s for 1\$ 000; after 1820 the rate ranged from the mid-40s into the 50s.

Table 3
Sandeman Wine Holdings [1]

	pipes	total value	value per pipe
31 Dec. 1814	460 [2]		
1815	553.5	63,652\$000	115\$000
1816	611.5	67,265\$000	110\$000
1817	561	67,642\$000	112\$000 (191 pipes) 125\$000 (370 pipes)
1818	489	63,330\$000	140\$000 (147 pipes) 125\$000 (342 pipes)
1819	690	96,600\$000	140\$000
1820	245	24,500\$000	100\$000
1821	402.5	60,375\$000	150\$000
1822	921	101,310\$000	110\$000
1823	860	94,600\$000	110\$000
1824	1478	155,190\$000	105\$000
1825	1024 [2]		
1826	1555.75 [2]		
1827	1052	131,500\$000	125\$000
1828	1238	139,635\$000	120\$000 (983 pipes) 85\$000 (255 pipes)
1829	1443	159,755\$000	120\$000 (1060 pipes) 85\$000 (383 pipes)
1830	2442 [2]		
1831	2606.5	261,452\$500	120\$000 (1140 pipes) 85\$000 (1466.5 pipes)

¹ Pipe and value totals have been rounded off; value totals from my calculations. Value totals, except for 1829 and 1831 when minor brandy amounts are included, are for wine only.

² Value not given.

Only the best prepared merchants, willing to meet growers' price demands, succeeded, even when they had to inform the London office, as in 1822, that the fair had been «a very embarrassing one» because of intense competition. Sometimes the rush to gain wine drove agents to purchase beyond the limits set by their London headquarters. «It was necessary to decide on the instant», one confessed to a questioning principal. By 1834 one British merchant estimated that the Wine Company-dominated process forced them to pay an average price one-third higher than their Portuguese competitors⁴⁹.

Corrupt and inefficient Wine Company officials added to the hazards of business life⁵⁰. So did a few unreliable growers. In 1816 a frustrated agent received the news that a farmer had decided to sell elsewhere wines promised to Sandeman. «There is no remedy in such cases,» he lamented. Other growers at times did not send down river wine matching the quality of samples earlier accepted⁵¹. In all seasons, especially during limited vintages, demarcation rules openly were ignored by growers and officials⁵². Still, if agents wanted wine, they had to accept Portuguese conditions. Only when British wine demand slumped, particularly when matched by a poor quality vintage, as the wine of 1816 — «the only thing in favour is colour but they have neither body or flavour» judged an agent — did merchants avoid the annual Régua sales. Wine might later be purchased by *comissários*, if demand revived, when «the [wine] country cools», or if growers, despairing of finding buyers, lowered prices⁵³.

⁴⁹ C to RC, 19 Sept. 1815, OL 1815-1816, CA; letter by Um Negociante Estrangeiro Estabelecido no Porto, in *Periodico dos Pobres no Porto*, 166 (29 July 1834), 4.

⁵⁰ A letter from «João de Verdade», in *Patriota Portuense*. [Porto], 218 (14 Setembro 1821), 3-4, offers useful examples.

⁵¹ S to Silva, 27 March 1816, 15 May 1816, LB, 1814-1817, S to Clarke, 3 Feb. 1818, LB, 1818-1822, SA; C to RC, 9 April 1816, OL, 1815-1816, CA. For farmer strategies, N. R. Bennett, «The Wine Growers of the Upper Douro, 1780-1800», *Portuguese Studies Review*, 2 (1992-93), 28-45.

⁵² C to RC, 5 Oct. 1819, C to Barton & Guestier, 11 April 1820, OL, 1819-1822, CA; M.J.M., *Suplemento a Memória Primeiros Ensaios para o Exame Imparcial* (Lisboa, 1821), 15, 26-7.

⁵³ S to Silva, 26 Jan. 1817, S to SGF, 18 Feb. 1817, LB, 1814-1817, SA; O. to. OBF, 13

When the Revolution of 24 August 1820, the first significant action in the struggle for ending the absolutist regime, occurred, the British residents generally favoured the liberal cause. Still, the reality of doing business in a country where civil disorders increasingly disrupted normal life naturally made them very cautious in their public actions. The 1820 events initially worried the Sandeman men. «We have determined on reducing our stake in this country, in the event of commotions», explained an agent in early September. Soon, however, he calmly reported that «we enjoy perfect tranquility»⁵⁴. Hopes soared when the vintage of 1820 appeared «most excellent», and when the British residents contemplated significant changes in Wine Company management. Its powers appeared to Sandeman's representative «utterly inconsistent with the notions of liberty the Revolution has given rise to». The new regime, Cockburn's resident thought, «is certainly likely to be in every way beneficial»⁵⁵. But the liberal reformers included individuals, some with company ties, favouring policies cautiously balancing the interests of the company, growers, and merchants. The government soon appeared to the British «at a loss what to do with regard to the purchases», and finally decided to continue with a reformed company⁵⁶. At the delayed Régua fair the Sandeman men, unsure of conditions because of the changed Wine Company role, nevertheless gained «a good proportion of rich covering wines», in all securing over 500 pipes⁵⁷. In subsequent seasons political uncertainties and civil unrest often delayed the Régua salés. The 1824 fair was postponed indefinitely, forcing Sandeman's men to return empty handed to Porto to wait out the troubles. By the end of the

May 1817, CB 1814-1817, OA.

⁵⁴ S to SGF, 2 Sept. 1820, S to Vouse & Son, 6 Oct. 1820, S to Cresswell, 23 Jan. 1821, LB, 1818-1822, SA; P. A. Dias, *Subsídios para a História Política do Porto (1823-1829)* (Porto, 1896), 99f.

⁵⁵ O to OBF, 25 Aug. 1820, CB, 1817-1820, OA; C to RC, 25 Aug. 1820, OL, 1819-1822, CA.

⁵⁶ S to Parker, 27 Jan. 1821, S to SGF, 6 Feb. 1821, 13 Feb. 1821, 10 March 1821, LB, 1818-1822, SA; J.H. Rodrigues Dias, *José Ferreira Borges: Política e Economia* (Lisboa, 1988), 95f.

⁵⁷ S to SGF, 21 March 1821, 10 April 1821, LB, 1818-1822, SA.

turbulent decade of the 1820s most Porto merchants probably shared the attitude of a contemporary British merchant in Madeira: «Reign who may we only wish for repose»⁵⁸.

Sandeman's agents naturally sought wine in the most renowned districts of the Douro wine country. During the early nineteenth century merchants divided the upper Douro into two general regions marked by the course of the Corgo River. The river, joining the Douro near Régua, separated the Lower and Upper Corgo, each producing a different quality wine. The Upper Corgo product, by Sandeman's entry into the market, was described as «the most wanted», with the lands around the Pinhão River possessing the highest reputation.⁵⁹ Despite the existing ties between Sandeman's rivals and growers, the new firm quickly secured a share of the best wine. A rough account is possible of Sandeman's regional purchasing patterns⁶⁰. Between 1814 and 1831 annual wine-sale acquisitions totaling 9315.25 pipes were made in about seventy-eight locations. Seven places, each selling more than 300 pipes, furnished 49% of Sandeman's wine: Covas, Pezo da Régua, Bateiras, Castedo, Cheiro, Castanheiro, and Valbom. Covas, one of the most desired producing areas, with 1537.5 pipes, 17% of Sandeman's total, was the leading supplier. Pezo da Régua, «the heart of the Douro», with 1024 pipes, contributed 11%. All other locations provided 5% or less of purchases⁶¹.

⁵⁸ S to SGF, 13 April 1824, LB, 1822-1827, SA; *Borboleta*, [Porto] 4 (18 Janeiro 1827), 49-50, & 54 (29 Março 1827), 332, has some account of difficulties in the wine country; D. Gregory, *The Benificent Usurpers: A History of the British in Madeira* (Rutherford, 1988), 71.

⁵⁹ Pereira, *O Douro*, 18-21; report of the Comissão do Comercio da Cidade do Porto, in *A Borboleta Constitucional*, 22 (25 Janeiro 1822), 2; Joseph J. Forrester letter in *O Lidador* [Porto], 61 (11 Outubro 1854), 2.

⁶⁰ Data drawn from WB, 1813-1822, PJ, 1814-1823, PJ, 1824-1837, SA. The figures presented are approximate since transactions did not always include a place of purchase. Compare with Table 1 totals.

⁶¹ Visconde de Villa Maior, «Memoria sobre os Processos de Vinificação Empregados nos Principaes Centros Vinhateiros do Continente do Reino», *O Archivo Rural*, 9 (1866-67), 548; M. Mendes, *Roteiro Sentimental: Douro* (Lisboa: 2a. ed. 1967), 63-6 j. Taveira de Carvalho Pinto de Menezes, «Relatorio dos Serviços a Cargo da Commissão Central Anti-Phylloxerica», *Boletim de Ampelografia e Oenologia* [Porto], 1 (1885), 237. For a useful map, A. Moreira da Fonseca, et al., *O Vinho do Porto* (Porto, 1981), between pp. 68-9.

Table 4

Annual Sales Prices

Gov. Price	Pipes	Excess Price Range(2)	Excess Price Total	Wine Total	Wine & Excess Total	Average Pipe Price
[1]						
1814	40	389.5 [3]	2,688\$400	15,580\$000	18,268\$400	59\$030
1815	40	538 3\$000 - 70\$000	17,026\$400	20,566\$400	37,628\$800	69\$940
1816	50	269 4\$800 - 25\$000	3,480\$400	11,422\$000	16,902\$400	62\$830
1818	60	581 6\$400 - 60\$000	14,740\$600	14,860\$000	49,600\$600	85\$370
1819	60	763 5\$000 - 64\$400	24,441\$000	45,780\$000	70,221\$000	92\$030
1820	36	226 9\$000 - 29\$000	3,445\$000	8,136\$000	11,581\$000	51\$240
1821	45	526 1\$000 - 30\$000	4,324\$000	17,950\$000	22,274\$000	42\$350
1822	45	852 5\$000 - 55\$000	10,574\$000	33,890\$000	44,464\$000	52\$190
1823	45	571 5\$500 - 50\$000	12,605\$500	20,375\$000	32,980\$500	57\$760
1824	40	825.5 5\$000 - 75\$000	4,688\$900	29,808\$500	34,497\$400	41\$790
1825	40	724.5 5\$000 - 66\$000	17,761\$500	25,869\$400	42,830\$900	59\$120
1826	40	676.5 5\$000 - 60\$000	12,233\$000	21,725\$000	33,958\$000	50\$200
1827	45	492 3\$000 - 42\$400	7,932\$300	16,635\$000	24,567\$300	49\$930
1828	45	908.5 3\$000 - 56\$130	5,743\$750	38,747\$900	44,491\$650	48\$970
1829	45	835 2\$500 - 25\$000	5,283\$250	34,605\$250	39,888\$500	47\$770
1830	45	947 3\$000 - 15\$000	5,757\$000	38,796\$350	44,553\$350	47\$050
1831	45	972.75 3\$000 - 35\$000	6,817\$500	42,680\$750	49,498\$000	50\$880

av. *						56\$96

¹ First-quality wine price. At time, some sales of lesser qualities were made, and some wine was sold at under the list price.

² Some wine was purchased at every sale without excess payments.

An analysis of Sandeman's individual wine purchases in these locations illuminates the manner in which agents conducted their business⁶². From 1814 through 1831 the firm, in about 505 separate transactions, purchased 11,133.25 pipes. Growers producing from one to ten pipes made 33% of the contracts and supplied 10% of total purchases. Farmers with from eleven to twenty pipes concluded 29% of the contracts for 20% of the total. The twenty-one to thirty pipe producers provided, respectively, 14% and 16%; the thirty-one to sixty pipe growers 20% and 37%; and the sixty-one to 100 pipe group 5% and 16%. Only one grower once supplied over 100 pipes. The continuing variation among producers was due to the nature of the Douro agricultural structure. Vineyards came in all sizes, and good quality wine was likely to come from any one of them. Although successful conclusion of contracts with larger growers obviously made any one season's labours easier, the persisting competition for their product meant that most farmers could not be taken for granted. Continuous effort among all potential suppliers was required to ensure a regular supply of superior wine. No single firm ever was able to neglect arranging relationships with a broad range of producers⁶³.

Sandeman, lacking links to reputable major growers, had to insert itself into the established purchasing system. In their beginning years the agents, perhaps inevitably, had most success in closing deals with smaller farmers. In 1814 the largest single purchase of the wine of 1813 was twenty-nine pipes; 88% of the total of 389.5 came from growers producing from one to twenty pipes. In succeeding years, as Sandeman established a sound marketplace reputation, its share ranged from 32% in 1826 to 86% in 1821, attaining 50% or more in eleven of seventeen seasons. Within the one to twenty pipe grouping, however, the number of growers selling to Sandeman declined sharply from 1823; their portion of the total only once, in 1825, reached as high as 7%. The eleven to twenty group varied in share from 9% in

⁶² See Table 1.

⁶³ Compare the similar patterns for Offley between 1781 and 1807: Bennett, «Port Wine System», 231, 245.

1815 to 47% in 1816, with their total falling under 20% in only four seasons. The twenty-one to thirty pipe producers, never reaching over eight individuals until Sandeman dealt with eleven in 1831, supplied 40% of 1815's purchases, in other years ranging from 27% in 1831 to zero in 1820. In ten seasons they provided from 10 to 19% of pipes. The thirty-one to sixty group from 1815 included from two to eleven growers, reaching ten or more in three years. They clearly became the most important segment of suppliers, providing 84% of the total in 1820. In only four seasons did their share fall below 30%; from 1827 their share ranged from 44% to 63%. There were few contracts concluded with buyers for sixty-one or more pipes; the high number was four, in 1826, during the twelve years when such deals were made. In 1826 they supplied 43% of total purchases; in other years the amounts ranged between 11% and 28%.

Some growers become regular suppliers for Sandeman. One, Braz Gonçalves Pereira, of Covas and other locations, sold his wine to the firm during fourteen of the seventeen seasons of this study. The agents praised his 1819 vintage and in 1821 reported that «there are no better wines of that year». During eleven years purchases ranged between thirty-two and forty-four pipes, with a high of 135 in 1820. Gonçalves' wine, 713 pipes in total, comprised 6% of Sandeman's purchases. Some growers, as Lopo Vaz de Sampaio e Mello of Goivinhas, had reputations for operating «crack lodges», and thus were regularly sought out by agents. Others, as Manuel António da Costa Seixas of Soutelo, avidly sought firmer connections with Sandeman, hoping through close business arrangements to receive cash advances necessary for preparing their crop. Only one grower besides Gonçalves appears to have dealt with the company for ten seasons or more, although several were in the five to ten range⁶⁴.

At the annual sales firms seeking the best wine had to pay growers prices higher than Wine Company established limits. The regulations

⁶⁴ S to SGF, 9 Jan. 1821, 12 March 1819, LB, 1818-1822, S to Mello, 29 Março 1815, S to Seixas, c. Maio-Junho 1815, 14 Oct. 1815, LB, 1814-1817, SA; information from Paul Duguid.

openly were manipulated to provide advantage to company members and associates. The Wine Company was able to secure its wine by forcing growers to sell at the legal price. Private buyers had to compete for the remainder of the vintage, paying growers, many of them with Company connections, prices well beyond the official limit. Legal prices between 1814 and 1831 ranged between 36\$000 and 60\$000 per pipe for designated first-quality wine. Market competition at times caused Sandeman to pay excess prices as high as 75\$000 (1824) over the official figure. The firm's purchase prices, including both official and excess charges, ranged between 51\$240 (1820) and 92\$030 (1819) per pipe, averaging for the seventeen years 59\$970. Prices were higher between 1814 and 1819, with legal totals between 40\$000 and 60\$000; Sandeman during these years paid an average price of 73\$840. In the often economically troubled seasons between 1820 and 1831 legal prices ranged between 36\$000 and 45\$000; Sandemans purchases averaged 54\$190⁶⁵.

Sandeman's export totals indicate steady progress in winning a share of the British wine market⁶⁶. Apparent success came very early: in 1815 the firm exported 943 pipes and 105 hogsheads. But that outstanding result was not matched again for many years. Unfavourable market conditions in Great Britain caused shipments to fall in 1816 to 343 pipes and sixteen hogsheads, the lowest total for the years under study. When wine-country information indicated a poor vintage in 1816, an agent, contemplating his overabundant existing stock, exclaimed: «God knows we could do without any for some time». Even with a good quality vintage, «a great stagnation of trade» marked the British market. Total cost for wine purchased and treated in 1816 when delivered on board a departing vessel was 136\$700, or £ 36.9. Wine then sold in Britain for about £ 30. The Porto men often judged that their London principals were overly cautious in pricing decisions, but they complied with them⁶⁷. The

⁶⁵ Forrester letter cited in fn. 43. See Table 4. At the 1816 sales other agents reported excess payments reaching 96\$000 per pipe: C to RC, 26 March 1816, OL, 1815-1816. O to Sealy, 5 March 1816, CB, 1814-1817.

⁶⁶ See Table 2.

continuing poor market led Sandeman to avoid participation in the 1817 Régua sales⁶⁸.

Prices already were too high for the British merchants when a Wine Company 1818 decision limited the amount of wine available for export⁶⁹. In a desperate effort to stimulate sales during this unprofitable period, the firm actively sought to gain new orders, even sending, unasked, good quality pipes to customers. Some of the receivers were very aroused at receiving the unexpected wine⁷⁰. During 1818 and 1819 the export market temporarily improved, but in 1820 Sandeman's London office, reacting to the «extraordinary decrease» in the port business since 1818, recommended that their Porto agents purchase a mere 120 pipes at the annual sales. Their representative exceeded the advice, but still bought only 226 pipes⁷¹. In following seasons amounts fluctuated, but Sandeman steadily advanced into the ranks of the leading port-exporting firms. In 1822, when the Wine Company headed the export list with 2232 pipes, it ranked eleventh, with 766 pipes, trailing Quarles Harris & Sons (1614), Offley, Forrester, Webber (1028), and other British and Portuguese firms. In 1825 Sandeman's 1316 pipes were eighth in the listing, behind the Wine Company (8848), Offley, Forrester, Webber (2408), Quarles Harris (2279), Lambert, Kingston & Egan (1814), Dixon, Allen, Figueiredo (1784), Croft (1580), and Bernardo Clamouse Brown (1382). In the years until 1832 their total, except for 1829, remained over 1000 pipes. The highest total, 1565 pipes, came in 1831. In rough figures, from 1814 through 1831, Sandeman had provided about 3% of Porto's total port-wine exports, and 4% of exports flowing to Great Britain⁷².

⁶⁷ S to Sealy, 3 Sept. 1816, 22 Oct. 1826, S to SGF, 5 March 1816, LB, 1814-1817, S to SGF, 12 Jan. 1822, LB, 1818-1822, SA. Other firms had similar reports: O to OBF, 21 Nov 1818, CB, 1817-1820, OA. For some account of London market conditions during 1815-1818, Guimarães, *Um Português em Londres*, 183f.

⁶⁸ See above for the 1817 vintage decision.

⁶⁹ S to Surtees & Croser, 4 April 1818, LB, 1818-1822, SA.

⁷⁰ S to Hassel & Foulkes, 29 Oct. 1817, S to Preston, 30 Oct. 1817, LB, 1814-1817, S to SF, 21 Oct. 1828, LB 1828-1834, SA.

⁷¹ S to Parker, 3 Oct. 1818, S to SGF, 18 Jan. 1820, LB, 1818-1822, SA.

The fluctuation in sales in Great Britain influenced the firm's attitude regarding holding older wine in stock. If possible new wines were quickly sent to British wine sellers. The firm hoped, for instance, to begin export of the wine of 1820 by August or September 1821. When a customer, in 1818, sought the vintage of 1812, an agent answered that 1815s were the oldest in stock. Older wine, he explained, would be too costly for use. «Our business would indeed be bad», he continued, «if we kept wines six years in store». By 1819 he reported all pure 1815s gone, and by 1822 he thought it impossible to find any from that vintage in the market. Cockburn's agent similarly, in 1819, reported the firm no longer possessed any pure 1815s, although they did have mixed stock containing that year. In 1822, when another Sandeman customer inquired about the vintage of 1817, he was informed that «it is not often the practice to keep different vintages». He was sent a mixture «as nearly 1817 as we could». The general opinion on wine stock, affirmed another agent, was that about one third to one quarter of total holdings should be «real good wine [and that] is as much as any man ought to have at the commencement of a season. And if he has much more he cannot make money»⁷³.

To help counter adverse market conditions, British merchants, following eighteenth-century precedents, attempted to avoid profit damaging price competition. Agents bewailed the sums paid at the Régua sales, but had to accept local market conditions. Since British demand was the most important factor ruling prices, Porto merchants really had limited influence concerning decisions made in Britain. Even when they managed to lower the first cost of wine, as Cockburn did in 1820, sales did not increase. «We believe it is an axiom in every

⁷² My calculations, drawn from figures in Table 2 and Martins, *Memória*, 220. Export listings from Customs House figures, which do not always agree with Sandeman's accounts, given in *Borboleta Duriense*, 6 (9 Jan. 1823), 1 and *Correio do Porto*, 13 (16 Jan. 1826), 50 and 14 (17 Jan. 1826), 55. Wine Company exports went mostly to Brazil.

⁷³ S to Roughton, 22 Jan. 1822, S to White, 1 June 1822, LB, 1818-1822, SA; C to RC, 22 Oct. 1816, OL, 1815-1816, C to Wauchope & Moodie, 2 Feb. 1819, OL, 1817-1819, CA.

other branch of commerce except our own», mused an Offley man in 1787, «that the scarcity of a commodity enhances the price». Recognizing this reality, the agents left prices to be determined by their London associates' knowledge of the British market, and recognized that «we must as you say go with the stream or lose our connections». At times the agents sent different invoices with shipments, leaving the choice of a price to the London men. Efforts to establish general price arrangements among rival firms remained as unstable as they had been in pre-war years. Some competitors regularly resisted the agreements, outraging complying merchants by setting prices their rivals claimed were «doing a serious injury to the trade in general⁷⁴».

During the first part of the nineteenth century, most British firms did not limit their business affairs to exporting wine. Striving for additional earnings, they were, as Cockburn's agent noted, ready for «general business». Transactions mostly covered imports of cloth and fish, plus many other European and American products; exports usually were limited to smaller amounts of Portuguese agricultural commodities. Fluctuating demand, and unexpected vessel arrivals, especially with cargoes of fish, kept agents busily evaluating local market conditions. In 1816, for example, a serious drought halted inland agricultural labours so that sales of fish, a basic foodstuff, were «quite at a stand.» Firms charged a 3% commission on sales they arranged between foreign and local merchants, with all transactions at the risk of the shippers. The time and labour involved in these many arrangements often pushed wine concerns into the background⁷⁵. Only later in the century, did success in the wine trade cause Sandeman to abandon general commerce.

⁷⁴ C to RC, 18 March 1815, C to Read, Irving, 23 April 1816, OL, 1815-1816, C to Flemyng Innes, 9 May 1820, C to RC, 27 Feb. 1821, OL, 1819-1822, CA; O to W. Offley, 7 Nov. 1787, CB, 1782-1790, O to OBF, 29 May 1821, 20 July 1824, CB 1820-1824, O to Offley, Forrester, Webber, 27 March 1831, CB, 1830-1832, OA; S to SGF, 28 March 1818, LB, 1818-1822, S to SGF, 15 Jan. 1828, LB, 1828-1834, SA.

⁷⁵ For examples: S to St. Croix, 23 Aug. 1814, LB, 1814-1817, SA; C to Reid, Irving, 17 Jan. 1815, OL, 1815-1816, C to Row, 18 April 1817, OL, 1817-1819, CA; O to Burton & Son, 23 Oct. 1821, CB, 1820-1824, OA.

By the close of 1831 Sandeman had firmly established themselves as one of Porto's principal wine-exporting companies. The progression in the amount and value of wine holdings, measured annually at the year's close, demonstrates the growing capital worth of the firm. Lodge wine at the end of 1814 was 460 pipes. By the end of 1826 they ranked third among Porto merchants in wine holdings; at the close of 1827 they were fifth⁷⁶. In the years through 1823 the total, apart from a fall to about 250 (1820), fluctuated between slightly over 400 (1821) to over 900 (1822). From 1824 through 1831 the total rose to over 1000 pipes, in 1830 and 1831 climbing to about 2500. Sandeman's holdings can be compared with those of its friendly rival, the important Offley Brothers, Forrester. In its first accounting (1814) Sandeman possessed about one-half of the amount held by Offley. It remained behind Offley until 1825, from then to 1831 surging well ahead. In the latter year Sandeman's year end totals were over three times those of Offley⁷⁷. The firm had not yet reached the stage described to an 1863 customer — «we possess so large a stock of any age and vintage that we have no difficulty in executing orders to please the tastes of all your friends» — but they were well on the way to that end⁷⁸. An annual estimated valuation of Sandeman's holdings was made following an arbitrary price selection. At the end of 1815 115\$000 per pipe was the designated value for all wine, with the agent noting that they were «obliged from the state of the market to turn over our stock at less than it cost». In 1820 wine stock was given its lowest value (24,500\$000), while in 1819 and 1821 it was in the mid-40,000\$000s. For the other seasons, from 1815 to 1818, values rose to over 60,000\$000, climbing to 94,000\$000 in 1823, to a total between 130,000\$000 and the 150,000\$000s from 1827 to 1829, finally reaching 261,452\$500 for 1831⁷⁹.

When civil strife in 1832 temporarily interrupted exports from Porto, Sandeman's agents had elevated the firm to the forefront of the

⁷⁶ See Table 3; O to OBF, 7 Feb. 1827, 22 Jan. 1828, CB, 1827 -1829, OA.

⁷⁷ See Table 5.

⁷⁸ S to Block, 25 July 1863, LB, 1860-1866, SA.

⁷⁹ See Table 3; S to SGF, 9 Jan. 1816, 16 Jan. 1818, LB, 1814-1817, SA.

port wine trade. Its product, drawn from the Douro's best areas and leading growers, had won the firm a secure reputation among British wine distributors. Despite the constant competition for a share of the British market, Sandeman's men consistently laboured to maintain a standard of excellence for its product. When, for example, changing consumption tastes favouring «rich wines», caused some rivals to give their exports «artificial sweetness», Sandeman sent out only naturally prepared wines⁸⁰. The firm's successful labours in Porto since 1813 had given it a sound foundation for future advances in the port wine trade. For most of the remainder of the nineteenth century Sandeman held first rank among Porto's wine-shipping firms⁸¹.

Without the resident merchants, the vital key for the prosperity of Porto and the Douro wine country, the region would not have reached its full potential. Similar conclusions probably hold for Bordeaux and other principal wine regions. The archives of individual port wine exporters offer the opportunity to evaluate in a major centre the neglected exporting-firm role in the wine sector of the European economy.

⁸⁰ S to SGF, 9 Sept. 1828, LB, 1828-1834, SA. For praise of the firm's quality wine, George Saintsbury, *Notes on a Cellar-Book* (London, 2d ed., 1963), 37.

⁸¹ For the firm during the rest of the nineteenth century, consult Norman R. Bennett's unpublished papers: «Sandeman and Port Wine During the 19th Century: The Letters of F. J. Cobb, 1860-1887» and «Troubled Times: The Wine Trade and Porto during the 1890s».

