CONTENTS

Frontispiece: The frontispiece of Fr. Miguel da Purificação, O.F.M., Relação Defensiva (Barcelona 1640), pleading the cause of Creole friars in India.

I. MOROCCO AND WEST AFRICA 1
II. MOÇAMBIQUE AND INDIA 41
III. BRAZIL AND THE MARANHÃO 86
INDEX 131
I: MOROCCO AND WEST AFRICA

As most of you probably know, it is an article of faith with many Portuguese that their country has never tolerated a colour-bar in its overseas possessions and that their compatriots have always had a natural affinity for contacts with coloured peoples. In a recent interview with Life Magazine, Dr. Salazar affirmed: ‘These contacts have never involved the slightest idea of superiority or racial discrimination . . . I think I can say that the distinguishing feature of Portuguese Africa—notwithstanding the congregated efforts made in many quarters to attack it by word as well as by action—is the primacy which we have always attached and will continue to attach to the enhancement of the value and the dignity of man without distinction of colour or creed, in the light of the principles of the civilization we carried to the populations who were in every way distant from ourselves.’

Similarly, the preamble of a recent governmental decree abolishing the former ‘Statute of Portuguese Natives of the Provinces of Guiné, Angola, and Moçambique’, claims that ‘The heterogeneous composition of the Portuguese People, their traditional community and patriarchal structure, and the Christian ideal of brotherhood which was always at the base of our overseas

expansion early defined our reaction to other societies and cultures, and stamped it, from the beginning, with a marked respect for the manners and customs of the peoples we encountered.' These beliefs are very sincerely and very deeply held, but it does not follow that they are always well grounded on historical fact. It is the object of these lectures to show that the truth was more complex, and that race relations in the old Portuguese colonial empire did not invariably present such a picture of harmonious integration as the foregoing quotations would imply.

The old Portuguese colonial empire was essentially a thalassocracy, a maritime and commercial empire, whether mainly concerned with the spices of the East, the slaves of West Africa, or the sugar, tobacco and gold of Brazil. It was, however, a seaborne empire cast in a military and ecclesiastical mould. For centuries the most common official term for the Portuguese overseas possessions was As Conquistas, 'The Conquests', irrespective of whether they had been acquired by warlike or by peaceful means. When in 1501 King Manuel assumed the style and title of 'Lord of the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, India, Arabia and Persia,' the Portuguese had conquered none of these countries; but their right to do so, in whole or in part, was held to be implicit in a series of Papal bulls, briefs, and donations which had been granted to successive Kings of Portugal.

2 Decreto-Lei No. 43893, dated 6 September 1961, in Boletim de Mocambique (Lourenço Marques, 1961), 1 série num. 36, pp. 1098–9. The decree was signed by Dr. Salazar and all the members of his government.
during the preceding eighty-three years. The sixteenth-century Portuguese chronicler, João de Barros, in justifying King Manuel’s assumption of his grandiloquent title, explains that the Popes ‘are universal lords, empowered to distribute among the faithful of the Catholic Church, the lands which are in the power of those who are not subjected to the yoke thereof’. Whatever the theological validity of this assertion, it certainly reflects the Portuguese conviction that they were primarily crusading conquistadores who were entitled to conquer or to dominate the lands of the Muslim and the Heathen from Morocco to Mindanao. The successor of João de Barros, the soldier-chronicler Diogo do Couto, who spent most of his long life in the East, emphasized from personal experience the close connection between the Cross and the Crown when he wrote: ‘The kings of Portugal always aimed in their conquest of the East, at so uniting the two powers spiritual and temporal, that the one should never be exercised without the other.’

Since Portuguese expansion overseas began with the capture of the Moorish stronghold at Ceuta in 1415, and since its further development was powerfully influenced by the ensuing struggle with the Moors, we can begin our survey with a brief consideration of Portuguese activities in Morocco. Whatever the motives which induced the Portuguese to undertake the conquest of Ceuta in 1415, and subsequently to occupy a chain of

---

3 João de Barros, Decada Primeira da Asia, Livro VI, cap. i., first published in 1552; Diogo do Couto, Decada VI, Livro IV, cap. 7, first published in 1612. For the relevant fifteenth-century Papal documents see Ch.-Martel de Witte, Les Bulles Pontifciales et l'expansion portugaise au XVe siècle (Louvain, 1958).
fortresses down the Moroccan Atlantic Coast, their human and economic resources were far too limited for them to conquer that most fanatical of Muslim lands. Their last offensive effort ended in total disaster on the field of Alcacer-Kebir (4 August 1578), when their King Sebastian was slain and virtually all of his army who were not killed were taken prisoners. By the end of the sixteenth century only Ceuta, Tangier, and Mazagão remained in Portuguese hands. Of these, Ceuta stayed loyal to Spain in 1640, Tangier was surrendered to the English in 1662, and Mazagão was evacuated in 1769.

The fighting in Morocco, which lasted with few intermissions from 1415 to 1769, partook of the character of a holy war—a jihad on the one side and a crusade on the other. For most of the time it was a war of petty raids and skirmishes, with cavalry detachments from the Portuguese garrisons making frequent forays into the surrounding countryside, and the Moors trying to lure them into ambushes. Mutual religious intolerance exacerbated the bitterness on both sides. Muslims who became converts to Christianity, whether freely or under duress, and who were subsequently recaptured by their former corregligionists, were martyred under the most excruciating circumstances by the Moors. The Portuguese on the other hand, often made no distinction between combatants and non-combatants when they got the upper hand. For instance, the captain of Safim, reporting to the Crown on the result of a surprise attack made by the garrison on two Moorish encampments in July 1541, wrote: ‘We took them completely by surprise and killed about 400 persons, most of them women and children.'
The common soldiers gave quarter to nobody, and only after they were tired of killing, did we capture some eighty souls. The lot of the ‘Mouros de pazes’, or Moors who submitted to the Portuguese, was usually a hard one. Their mosques and holy places were desecrated, their prayers were interrupted by cat­calls, jeering, and the throwing of stones, and sometimes their women were violated as well. Some of their complaints were no doubt exaggerated, but there is ample evidence to prove that, with very few exceptions, the Portuguese made no serious efforts to understand or to conciliate their Moorish subjects and regarded them as Camões regarded the torpe Ismaelita. When the Portuguese strongholds in Morocco were reduced to Ceuta, Tangier, and Mazagão, Moors were no longer allowed to live in these places, which were populated exclusively by Christians.

The intermittent warfare of raids, sieges, and reprisals in Morocco was punctuated by occasional truces, during which a barter-trade was carried out with Moorish and Jewish merchants. On such occasions, large caravans from up-country would enter the Portuguese strongholds under safe-conduct, or camp in the vicinity of the walls, while Christian, Muslim and Jews traded in relative amity. There were also instances when the leaders on both sides exchanged courtesies and hospitality in the best traditions of mediaeval chivalry, but such instances were the

4 D. Rodrigo de Castro to King John III, Safim, 8 July 1541, apud Gulbenkian, As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo, I (Lisboa, 1960), p. 771. For the martyrdom of a Muslim Renegade turned Christian and Almocadem of Arzila in 1516, see D. Lopes, História de Arzila durante o domínio português (Coimbra, 1924), pp. 197–204.
exception rather than the rule. Moorish influence was discernible in the Arabic titles of Adail, Almocadem, Anadel, etc., which the Portuguese used for their cavalry commanders, and the tactics in the way of tip-and-run raids were very similar on both sides. But if there was a sort of love-hate relationship between Portuguese and Moors, the hate certainly predominated. Three hundred and fifty-four years of virtually continuous frontier warfare on the Moroccan Atlantic seaboard kept alive the traditional Portuguese hatred of the Muslim. It also predisposed them to regard all the followers of the Prophet as mortal enemies, whether they were Moors, Arabs, Swahili, Persians, Indians, or Malays.

As has invariably been the case wherever Christianity and Islam have confronted each other in Africa and Asia, Portuguese efforts at proselytism among the Moors met with virtually no success in Morocco. Converts were confined to individuals who had been captured or enslaved as children, or to adults who sought refuge in the Portuguese fortresses for personal reasons and who had no hope of returning to their kith and kin. When the Portuguese voyages of discovery and trade brought them into contact with the Negro peoples of Senegambia and Guinea their missionary efforts had more success with

those who had not yet been influenced by Islam, though the long-term results did not come up to the original optimistic expectations. Manuel Severim de Faria, the scholarly canon of Evora Cathedral, who was a zealous supporter of the overseas missions, wrote of the situation as it was in 1655 as follows: ‘The first place that the Portuguese colonized on the coast of Guinea was the Mine [São Jorge da Mina, Elmina] in the year 1482 and the first preaching was made then, as João de Barros implies in his Decada I, Book 3, chapter ii. And although more than a hundred and fifty years passed until that stronghold was lost [in 1637] there were never more native Christians than those in three or four villages adjoining the forts of St. George and Axim, although its jurisdiction was so large that it extended for over 200 leagues.’

Portuguese proselytism in the Congo and Angola had also lost its impetus by this time, despite a very promising start in the old kingdom of Congo in the early sixteenth century. This failure in West Africa, whether relative or complete was ascribed by Severim de Faria to three principal causes. First there was the lack or unsuitability of missionary personnel. Bishops were usually reluctant to go to such unhealthy dioceses as Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Congo, and when they did go they usually died of some tropical fever before they could do much good. The white clergy who could be induced to serve in West Africa were mostly of poor quality, and those few who survived the deadly tropical diseases were more

---

6 Manuel Severim de Faria, Noticias de Portugal (Lisboa, 1655), pp. 224-40, ‘Sobre a propagação do Evangelho nas Provincias de Guiné’.