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Relations between Spain and Persia in the Early Modern Period are often presented as the story of two bookends—one formed by the mission of Ruy González de Clavijo to the court of Tamerlane at the turn of the fifteenth century; the other represented by the embassy Don García de Silva y Figueroa undertook to the court of the Safavid Shah `Abbas I on behalf of King Philip III between 1614 and 1624. The Iberian involvement with Persia in the two centuries between these two events is mostly told as a Portuguese, maritime-oriented one.

This book is the first to break out of that mould. It addresses the various ways in which the Spanish crown sought and maintained contact with Persia, either independently or, after the creation of the Iberian Union in 1580, in consort with the Portuguese, in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. We learn about the motley crew of men who sailed the Mediterranean or rounded the Cape on their way to the Safavid state, the diplomats who sought to lure the shah into a joint anti-Ottoman front, the missionaries who hoped to convert him and his subjects to the 'True Faith', the adventurers and spies who dreamed of strategic advantage and commercial control. The essays assembled here also examine the various initiatives launched by Persia's rulers towards the Spanish court, their proposals for military cooperation or the sale of silk. Originating as a conference held in 2013 at the Instituto de Historia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas in Madrid, this volume thus sheds light on many little known aspects of the complex and multifaceted relationship between these two empires in the Early Modern Period.

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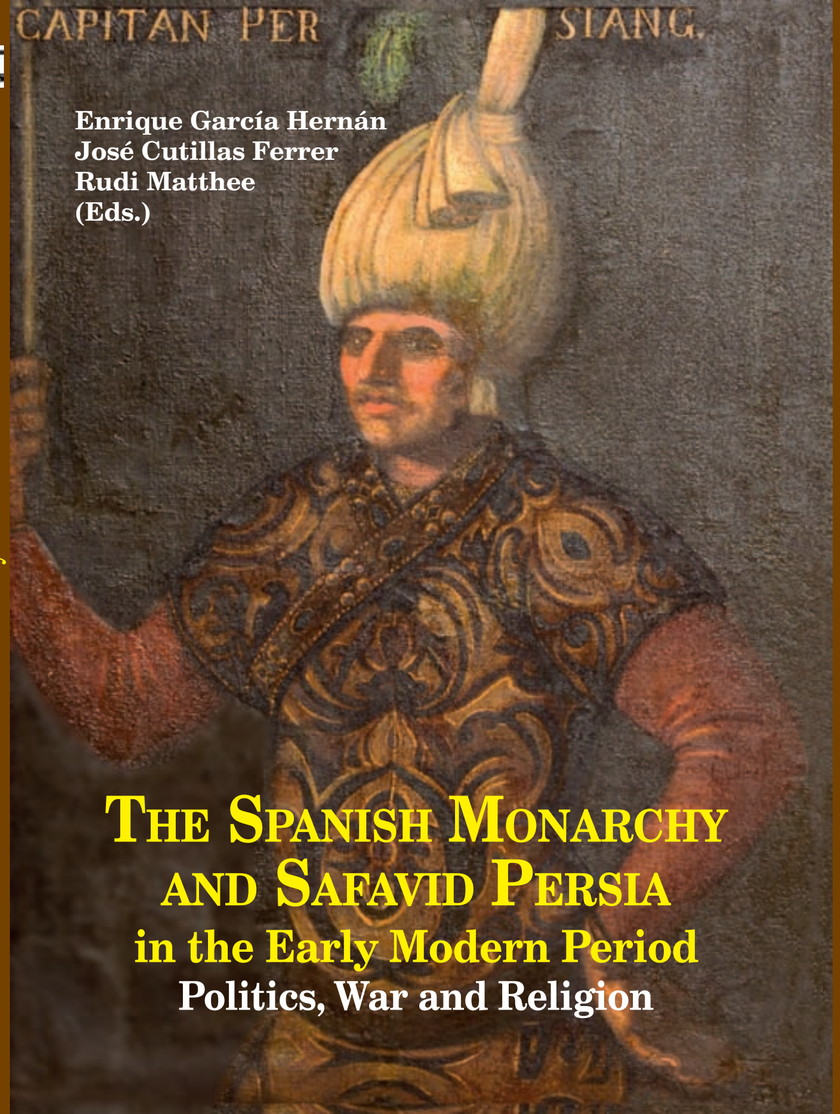

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THE SPANISH MONARCHY AND SAFAVID PERSIA
in the Early Modern Period
Politics, War and Religion

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THE SPANISH MONARCHY AND SAFAVID PERSIA IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD
POLITICS, WAR AND RELIGION

COLECCIÓN HISTORIA DE ESPAÑA Y SU PROYECCIÓN INTERNACIONAL

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Historia de España y su proyección internacional

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To the Reverend Father Carlos Alonso OSA
In gratitude for his contribution to Safavid Studies

Father Carlos Alonso with Rudi Matthee (1) and José Cutillas (r) in the cloister of the Estudio Teológico de los Agustinos, Valladolid, March 2013.

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FOREWORD

Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian

THE fact that large parts of the Iberian Peninsula were for long centuries under Moorish rule has resulted in perceiving historical interaction with the 'Orient' and its cultural influence primarily in 'Arabo-Islamic' terms maritime connections and political rivalry with the Ottoman Empire, due to the assumption of the role of caliph by the Sultan added a 'Turkish' element, though still under the banner of Islam. Consequently the Persian input, as distinct from Arabic or strictly 'Islamic', has tended to be subsumed under this all-encompassing heading and a long history of intensive interaction with a more distant world was overshadowed by relations with 'Moriscos' or 'Turcos'. On my many trips to Spain, and even to Hispanic Latin American, I would find this amalgamation or even outright neglect of what Richard Eaton has aptly referred to as the 'Persianate Cosmopolis' frustrating and exasperating. Occasionally one would hear snippets of cultured wisdom that pointed to a more complex picture, for example that the head gardener of the Alhambra was Persian. True or false, this assertion at least gave recognition to an older and more layered culture beyond what was regarded as 'Islamic.' Or one might hear that the first foreign traveller to identify the ruins of Persepolis correctly as those of the Achaemenid Persian Empire was Don García da Silva Figueroa who was sent on a return embassy by Philip III of Spain to the court of Shah `Abbas I.

So when, as a trustee of the Soudavar Memorial Foundation, I received in July 2013, on the eve of our annual meeting, an application to support the first international seminar on 'The Spanish Monarchy and Safavid Persia in the early modern period: Politics, War and Religion', scheduled to be held in Madrid in November of the same year, it did not take much convincing to obtain the approval of the board for a hitherto sidelined subject which had begun to take off thanks to increasing scholarly interest and the discovery of neglected sources in Spanish and Portuguese archives.

In my capacity as fellow trustee on the board of a foundation dedicated to Persian history and culture in its broadest sense, I had already had the privilege of receiving notice of cultural events which pointed to a growing interest in Hispano-Portuguese relations with Iran. The exhibition and symposium held by the Sackler Museum in Washington D.C. in 2007 to commemorate the five-hundred years of Afonso de Albuquerque's conquests in the East had brought in its wake Rudi Matthee and Jorge Flores' special issue of *Acta Iranica* on *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Per-*

sia (2011) and John Flannery's *The Mission of the Portuguese Augustinians to Persia and Beyond* (2013) as well as another issue of *Acta Iranica* devoted to a much-needed list of bibliographical sources[1].

Going back earlier, as a researcher and writer, I had found the *Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour at Samarcand AD 1403-6* a useful trove of illuminating references on more than one subject. Relations with the Persian/Iranian world went back even further, to the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries CE when Pope Clement V 'proclaimed a 'canon' urging the universities of Bologna, Oxford, Paris and Salamanca to teach oriental languages' in the words of Professor Alberto Cantera, who was one of the main academic figures responsible for organizing a conference on *700 Years of Oriental Studies in Spain and Europe* at the University of Salamanca in 2011. He was especially keen to invite scholars of Iranian Studies to compensate for the hitherto scant representation of Iranian Studies in Spain with their participations. This was a welcome opportunity for our foundation to arouse interest in the subject by sending a speaker from Latin America to discuss Timurid painting. Six centuries earlier the reputation of Timur had spread to Europe and he was a well-known figure in Spain, as Professor Rui Loureiro's paper in this book demonstrates, so a revival was long overdue after centuries in the dark, all the more so since Salamanca was also the city where Don García da Silva Figueroa had completed his university studies.

Contact with Professor Cantera further led to the discovery that he is one of the foremost experts in the rarefied field of Avestan and Zoroastrian Studies who, I heard, at the time of this writing, has been appointed director of Iranian Studies at the Free University of Berlin. Alberto Cantera's expertise in the Avesta was not my first pleasant surprise with respect to the developing scene of Iranian Studies in Spain. It was actually the third. In May 2007 I had attended a conference on 'Scythians, Sarmatians, Alan: Iranian-speaking Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes,' organized by Professor Agusti Alemany in Barcelona. Then, in July 2010, at a conference on 'The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East', organized by Dr. Richard Stoneman at the University of Exeter and co-funded by our foundation, I met Haila Manteghi who, it turned out, was translating the Alexander romance from Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* into Spanish, a first for the great Persian epic in the language of Cervantes. I was not aware then that her husband was Dr. José Cutillas, the founder of the Iranian Studies Seminar at the University of Alicante. It was he who put me in touch with Professor Enrique García Hernán of Madrid and his request for funding the first conference in Spain on the most prolific era of Spanish-Iranian relations in the Safavid era. It also turned out that he and his wife collaborate with Professor Cantera on the long-term project of the Avestan Digital Archives, and together with Professor Alemany, all three are members of the Sociedad Española de Iranologia which, if the current trend continues, should see its membership increase considerably. With his excellent knowledge of Persian language and literature, Dr. Cutillas' collaboration with Profes-

[1] Willem Floor and Farahd Hakimzadeh (eds.), *The Hispano-Portuguese Empire and Its Contacts with Safavid Persia, the Kingdom of Hormuz and Yarubid Oman from 1489 to 1720. A Bibliography of Printed Publications 1508-2007*, Leuven, 2007.

sor García Hernán on seminars about Safavid-Spanish relations is an important addition to his already wide-ranging interest in Iran and his promotion of Persian culture in Spanish academia. Despondence has now given way to optimisim about what promises to be an exciting development in a country that had hitherto been absent from the field of Iranian Studies, from the migrations of Iranian peoples on the steppes to the cinema of contemporary Iran, and especially the many facets of Hispanic relations with Safavid Iran, which brings us to this book.

It is not the purpose of a foreword to introduce the papers and authors. That is best left to Professor Rudi Matthee's expertise on Safavid Iran, including its relations with Spain and Portugal. But a few words about the ambitious scope of the book are in order, as it embraces far more than what the title might indicate. One of the primary motivations for early European contacts with Persian dynasties from the Ilkhanids to the Safavids was to form an alliance against the 'Turks' who were seen as a threat to Christian Europe. Ironically, the first Spanish embassies were to the Turko-Mongolian conqueror, Timur, who was viewed as being 'anti-Turk' because of his defeat of the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid. Thus any history of Hispano-Persian relations is as much about the Ottoman Empire as about Safavid Iran. Spain's relations with Persia were given a considerable boost by the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580. This brought Spain to the Persian Gulf through the Portuguese occupation of the island of Hormuz (1515-1622) and thereby to the immediate vicinity of Safavid Iran which had already been considered, under Charles V, in terms of a right of conquest or of a possible Shi`ite-Christian alliance, as stated in this book.

By dealing with three of the great empires of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in a transformative period, such a book inevitably covers much ground. The papers take us to the Maghreb, of course, and beyond, to England, France, Austria, Muscovy, Hungary and Poland, the Italian city-states and the Papacy, Mughal India, Goa and Muscat; it acquaints us with trade rivalries and the ascendance of the Dutch and English East India companies, with the mediating role of Christian minorities, among whom the most prominent were the cosmopolitan Armenians, and last but not least with the widespread activities of the Catholic orders – Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, Capuchins, Carmelites – and their curiosity about the rituals and relics of Eastern Christians whom they hoped to lead on the path of 'pure' faith (i.e Catholic). Through this book we are privy to the interrelations between all these groups as they shift from alliance to rivalry and enmity as circumstances demand.

This is history in the widest sense of the word, including religion and trade, with the latter revealed to have been as much of a motivation as the former, and it also deals with customs, protocol, money matters, and gift-giving which touches, albeit succinctly, on arts and crafts. The writing throughout is suffused with contagious energy and enthusiasm. One of the most interesting and best-documented subjects recorded is the conversion to Catholicism of Persian emissaries who chose to remain in Spain. It is interesting to note how easily they integrated as opposed to Don García's disdain for Persian customs, food and music. The tales of these 'Persian gentlemen' and several titillating anecdotes about the conduct of emissaries make for an engaging read, not only for experts but equally for the general public. Many are those who stand to gain a lesson on three centuries of inter-connected history from a single

book. Of special interest to me is the chapter on monetary matters, which seems to have been a late addition inspired by the publication of *The Monetary History of Iran* by Matthee, Floor and Clawson, since I have just finished a review of that book, upon the suggestion of Professor Matthee, to point out errors in its last part on the Qajar era. But this volume ventures into so many fields by dint of its complex subject matter that rare will be the reader who does not find something of special interest.

Amazingly, there is even a revelation about Persian historiography in the superb paper by Professor Rui Loureiro on the precedents for Don Garcia da Silva Figueroa's *La vida de Tamerlano*, which included translated extracts from the works of Persian historiographers, some of which had reached Portugal from the Persian Gulf or India. His solid grasp of European as well as Persian historiography leads him to the undoubtedly correct supposition of a lost biography of Timur by Mir `Ali Shir Nava'i, the famous vizir of the later Timurids of Herat and a poet of note in both Persian and Chaghatai Turkish. It so happens that Mir `Ali Shir was born and buried in Langar, Khorasan (and not in Herat, as is generally believed), one of the large estates of the Malek Endowments which, together with the Malek Library and Museum in Tehran, were bequeathed to the shrine organization in Mashhad (Astan-i Quds-i Razavi) by my maternal grandfather.

Not every scholar can equal Rui Loureiro who, having spent a lifetime on researching every aspect of Don Garcia's career, and cross-checking them with every known source, displays an impressive mastery of his subject and of all related matters. It is hoped that his example will inspire the budding scholars of Hispano-Safavid relations to acquaint themselves better with Persian history and culture through non-Spanish sources in order to correct the few inevitable errors found in Spanish and Italian sources. One flagrant example is the assertion that the mother of Shah `Abbas I was Christian, whereas in fact she was born to a Mar`ashi sayyid family in the Caspian province of Mazandaran (hence his deep attachment to those parts), a confusion probably due to the fact that some of his predecessors, including the founder of the dynasty, Isma`il, were sons or grandsons of converted Christians born to the Greek dynasty of Trebizond (Trabzon) or more often to Georgian royalty. Having been deprived of the full enjoyment of the talks given in Madrid due to my inadequate proficiency in Spanish, I have read the English versions with gusto and can confidently predict that many others will find similar delight in a volume that promises to be the first of many more.

On behalf of my fellow trustees, I congratulate and thank the organizers and the contributors for embarking on a road that holds great promise.

Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian
On behalf of the Soudavar Memorial Foundation
November 2015

INTRODUCTION

Rudi Matthee
University of Delaware

How to conceptualise the early modern Mediterranean Sea – whether to stress its physical and environmental unity or to focus on its diversity to the point of emphasising the religious antagonism and civilisational conflict it frequently witnessed – is an issue that has exercised historians of this storied body of water in ways that have no parallel with regard to any other globally significant sea or ocean. The Belgian historian Henri Pirenne in 1937 famously postulated that the seventh and eighth-century Muslim expansion into the Mediterranean basin disrupted its previously existing Christian unity and hastened its commercial stagnation and decline, leaving it divided between two hostile civilisations staring at each other from across the sea[1]. Twelve years later Fernand Braudel no less famously described a 'long' sixteenth-century pan-Mediterranean world of geographical and environmental unity, paying but scant attention to differences in culture and creed among the people who lived on its shores and sailed its waters[2]. In Braudel's Mediterranean of cultural neutrality, religious and political conflict was subordinated to a glacial, long-term evolution of age-old patterns of life.

Braudel's image of the early modern Mediterranean Sea as a unified basin where near-permanence prevailed and change was a matter of the *longue-durée* has exerted a powerful influence on subsequent research. But it has not remained uncontested. The unity of Braudel's Mediterranean was first and foremost physical in origin and nature, and to the extent that there was a human element to it, it was Latin in make-up and orientation – a reversal, in a way, to the conditions Pirenne had started out with. As yet unable to draw on research grounded in Ottoman archival sources, Braudel perforce emphasised the influence of 'Western Mediterranean civilization'[3]. By his own admission, Islam was largely absent from his work, and the human unity

[1] Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, Brussels, 1937; trans. by Bernard Miall, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, London 1939.

[2] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, 1949; trans. by Siyân Reynolds, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. paginated as one, Berkeley 1972, repr. 1995.

[3] *Ibid*., 826-27.

he identified was mostly the unity of Latin Christendom dominating its northern shores, at the expense of the southern and eastern rim.

Andrew Hess was one of the first to take up this challenge. In *The Forgotten Frontier*, Hess reinserted conflict springing from deeply held faith as a fundamental motivating force behind the endemic conflict of the early modern Mediterranean. He introduced the idea of an Ibero-African frontier, the western end of the Mediterranean, where 'Latin Christendom and Islam had commingled since the eighth century'. He spoke of this frontier as an arena of 'cultural collision', and argued that the early modern era was a period 'when the divisions between Mediterranean civilizations became more important'[4].

In the nearly seven decades since the publication of Braudel's seminal study, Ottomanists especially have filled more than a few gaps in our knowledge about the role and activity of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, and the centre of gravity has consequently swung somewhat to the eastern half of the sea. Molly Greene took note of this shift and further contributed to it with her 2000 book on Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean. She modified Braudel's and Hess's ways of looking at the Mediterranean by proposing a 'third model', suggesting the idea of a three-way struggle in the eastern quarter, the centre of her research. This part of the sea, she argued, was 'a point of intersection for not two, but three, enduring civilizations – namely, Latin Christianity, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam'[5].

Braudel's Mediterranean was not just overwhelmingly a Latin and Christian affair; it was also a fading proposition: In the late sixteenth century, Braudel argued, as the Mediterranean was sliding 'slowly and unconsciously' to dependency on Western European nations, Holland and England in first place, the center of gravity of world history inexorably moved westward, towards the New World across the Atlantic and towards Asia via the Cape Route. All this left the old sea a picturesque décor largely irrelevant to the currents of global interaction. The first major event that marked the 'withdrawal of the Mediterranean from the centre of the stage' was the Battle of Lepanto of 1571[6]. Three years later, the Christian Holy League that had been formed to withstand the Ottomans broke up and in the 1580s, as Spain and Portugal united and the Spanish engaged in peace talks with the Sublime Porte, war was taken 'outside Mediterranean confines', carrying 'Spain towards Portugal and the Atlantic into maritime adventures incomparably greater than those she had known in the Mediterranean', while flinging 'Turkey toward Persia and the depth of Asia, the Caucasus, the Caspian, Armenia and, later, the Indian Ocean itself'[7]. Hess shared with the French master the verdict that, with the oceanic explorations, history had moved on, leaving the Mediterranean behind as yesterday's global fulcrum. As Hess put it: '...while the European navigators sailed beyond the sight of Andalusian and Moroccan shores, contrasting Mediterranean civilizations separated themselves at the Strait of

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[4] Andrew Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier. A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier*, Chicago 1978, repr. 2010, 3, 4.

[5] Molly Greene, *A Shared World, Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Princeton 2000, 2, 4.

[6] Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 891.

[7] *Ibid*., 1165.

Gibraltar, ending their history of integration in a little-known exchange of ambassadors and border populations'[8]. After the Battle of Lepanto and the seizure of Tunis by the Ottoman admiral Kiliç Ali Pasha three years later, the Mediterranean, in the words of Bunes Ibarra, becomes enveloped in silence, the great fascination historians had shown in its sixteenth-century vicissitudes turning to disinterest[9].

There is no question that, after 1574, Spain ceased to play an active naval role in the struggle against the Ottomans. It is also clear that, with the unification between Spain and Portugal in 1580, its interests and objectives pulled the Iberian Crown away from the Mediterranean. And there is no doubt that after the death of Philip II in 1598 Spain, now ruled by a less panoptic ruler and struggling with systemic bankruptcy, entered a period of diminished foreign policy ambitions. As Noel Malcolm puts it in his magisterial *Agents of Empire*, the main purpose of the sixteenth-century Spanish fleet was to 'pursue anti-Ottoman and anti-corsair policies in North Africa and the western Mediterranean', and it had no interest in going to the defence of the distant island of Cyprus'[10].

Yet the notion that Spain's involvement in the Mediterranean *ended* in 1574 or 1580 or even with the death of Philip II in 1598 is a false one. Tunis was indeed more important than Cyprus to the Spanish king, yet such priority does not mean that, 'the Spanish authorities had no interest in any part of the Ottomans' European domains'[11]. Nor did the eastern Mediterranean and the lands beyond disappear from the purview of the Spanish at the turn of the seventeenth century.

The impression that the Spanish Crown grew less interested in the affairs of the Levant, the Ottoman Empire and the world of Islam at large is attributable to various historical and historiographical factors. One is inarguably the fact that Spain's domestic preoccupation with Islam abated with the conclusion of the Reconquista, marked by the final expulsion of its Muslim inhabitants and the fading of their language and culture from the Peninsula in the early 1600s. Secondly, and related, seventeenth-century Spain as empire generally receives far less scholarly attention than it does in its sixteenth-century 'heyday', the focus of attention in this period shifting to the up-and-coming northern European powers, the newly energetic maritime nations of Holland England, and an increasingly assertive France[12]. Thirdly, studies of Iberian foreign involvement after 1580 tend to concentrate on Portugal and especially on Portugal as an exploratory Atlantic power located on Europe's southwestern promontory and keen to circumvent the Ottoman-dominated Mediterranean and Levant by reaching Asia via the oceanic route. Fourthly, finally, and most importantly, historians – including Ottoman historians – have rarely looked beyond the western

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[8] Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 7.

[9] Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra, 'El norte de África, el Mediterráneo oriental y la política con respecto a Persia 1560-1640', in J. J. Ruiz Ibáñez (ed.), *Las vecindades de las monarquías ibéricas*, Madrid 2013, 215.

[10] Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire. Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-century Mediterranean World*, Oxford 2015, 106.

[11] *Ibid.*, 189.

[12] Molly Greene, 'Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century', in *Past & Present* 174 (2002), 42-71.

Ottoman horizon, to Safavid Persia and the lands in the orbit of the Safavids. In Malcolm's words, '[Historians] often forget the involvement of a fifth great power in what was, in reality, a Eurasian dynamic: power-relations in Europe could at times be decisively influenced by Ottoman concerns about Persia'[13].

The result of this perspective is fragmented and bifurcated scholarship. With exceptions, studies of Europe's, including Spain's, anti-Ottoman struggle and its most conspicuous manifestation, persistent attempts to create alliances, focus on the sixteenth century and peter out after the Battle of Lepanto. Modern scholarship has also tended to examine this conflict in a rather binary fashion, as a confrontation between (bitterly divided) European nations and an undifferentiated Islamic opponent usually represented by the Sublime Porte. The important, indeed crucial role the Safavids and, by way of an interlocking set of geostrategic conditions and concerns, the Mughals and the Uzbeks, played in the never-ending search for alliances, is rarely fully acknowledged and addressed. Even studies that pursue what the Germans call the Türkenfrage, the 'Turkish question', into the seventeenth century tend to pay but marginal attention to Safavid Persia[14].

It is not as if historians have neglected the continuing ties between the Iberian Peninsula and Safavid Persia following the death of Philip II. There is, first of all, Niels Steensgaard's classic study of the Portuguese ouster from Hormuz of 1622 and the intricate diplomatic exchange between Shah `Abbas and his Christian counterparts that preceded the event[15]. We also have a series of fine studies on multiple aspects of the relationship, important work by first-rate, pioneering Iberian scholars such as Father Carlos Alonso OSA, Roberto Gulbenkian, and Luis Gil Fernández. Father Alonso spent half a century unearthing documents from mostly ecclesiastical archives in Spain and Italy, and published these in the form of dozens of articles as well as several valuable monographs on missionary operations in and around Persia in the Safavid period[16]. The late Gulbenkian meanwhile authored a number of outstanding studies on the role of Christians – European missionaries and Persian Armenians – in the interaction between Persia and the Iberian world[17]. Gil Fernández re-

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[13] Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire* 257.

[14] See, for example, Klaus-Peter Matschke, *Das Kreuz und der Halbmond. Die Geschichte der Türkenkriege*, Düsseldorf and Zurich 2004; Géraud Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade. Mythes et realités de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVI^e^ et XVII^e^ siècles*, Paris 2004; Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate. Habsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe*, New York 2008; and Barnaby Rogerson, *The Last Crusaders. The Hundred-year Battle for the Center of the World*, New York 2009. For exceptions, see Bunes Ibarra, 'El norte de África'; and Graça Almeida Borges, 'The Iberian Union and the Portuguese Overseas Empire, 1600-1625: Ormuz and the Persian Gulf in the Global Politics of the Hispanic Monarchy', in *e-journal of Portuguese History* 12, 2 (2014).

[15] Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century. The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*, Chicago and London 1974.

[16] See Carlos Alonso, *Ángel María Cittadino, OP, arzobispo de Naxiwan (†1629)*, Rome 1979; and Idem., *Antonio de Gouvea, O.S.A., diplomático y visitador apostólico en Persia (†1628)*, Valladolid 2000. A full list of Father Alonso's works can be found at the end of this volume, 219-223.

[17] Roberto Gulbenkian, *Estudios Históricos. Relações entre Portugal Arménia e Médio Oriente*, 3 vols., Lisbon 1995.

cently enriched the field with a comprehensive two-volume study on Spanish-Safavid relations between 1582 and 1622.[18]

Valuable as this work is, it remains poorly integrated into current debates. This is in part because almost all of it is written in Spanish or Portuguese, making it somewhat marginal to the hegemonic world of Anglophone scholarship. The Iberian perspective of this research, reflected in its often rather narrow ecclesiastical and traditional diplomatic-historical approach, only reinforces this insularity. Especially the writings of Alonso, while providing excellent raw material for further research, also evince little analytical depth.

Most importantly, existing studies of Iberian-Persian relations generally adhere to a double historiographical divergence by focusing on Portuguese maritime initiatives and exploits and by treating the Ottoman and Safavid polities as separate entities rather than as players in a complex, multipolar geopolitical arena. Western scholars have tended to view the ties between Portugal and Persia as derivative of the activities of the empire launched by the former, the *Estado da Índia* – and thus as essentially a maritime affair. Scholarship on this relationship is often framed by Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque's naval foray into the Persian Gulf in 1507 and the subsequent Portuguese seizure of the isle of Hormuz, and follows developments up to its loss to the Safavids by way of a joint Anglo-Persian naval operation a century later. The result has been a great deal of attention to Portuguese diplomats and missionaries travelling to the Persian Gulf via the oceanic route, typically by way of the Lusitanian Indian stronghold of Goa, coupled with a failure to turn even those who got off the boat and entered the Persian interior into something more than the heroes of the story[19]. Even Steensgaard, for all the attention he pays to Persian concerns and strategies, never frees himself from this maritime perspective.

The 'Spanish' contribution to the story, by contrast, tends to become one of bookends – two diplomatic forays separated by two centuries of inactivity: At one end one finds the two embassies King Henry III of Castile sent to the court of Timur Lang (Tamerlane) at Samarqand in 1403, following the crushing defeat this Central Asian warlord had dealt to the Ottomans a year earlier – with a particular focus on the most consequential of the two, the one led by Ruy González de Clavijo, which became famous for leaving behind an important travel account. And at the other end we have the mission King Philip III in 1614 dispatched to the court of Shah `Abbas to gauge the latter's willingness to become allies with Christendom in its anti-Ottoman struggle. The mission failed yet left its own enduring legacy in the form of the no less important account of the journey penned by its leader, Don García de Silva y Figueroa[20].

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[18] Luis Gil Fernández, *El imperio luso-español y la Persia safávida*, vol. 1 (1582-1605), Madrid 2006, and vol. 2 (1606-1622), Madrid 2009.

[19] See, for example, most of the contributions in Dejanirah Couto and Rui Manuel Loureiro (eds.), *Revisiting Hormuz: Portuguese Interactions in the Persian Gulf Region in the Early Modern Period*, Wiesbaden 2008; as well as those in Rudi Matthee and Jorge Flores (eds.), *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia*, Leuven 2011.

[20] See Rui Manuel Loureiro, Ana Cristina Costa Gomes and Vasco Resende (eds.), *Don García de Silva y Figueroa. Comentarios de la Embaxada al Rey Xa Abbas de Persia (1624-1624)*, 2 vols., and Anotações e Estudos sobre *Don García de Silva y Figueroa. Comentarios de la Embaxada al Rey Xa Abbas de Persia (1624-1624)*, 2 vols., Lisbon 2011.

Modern scholarship also tends to present the interaction between the early modern European powers and the empires of Islam as a series of bilateral relations between various Christian rulers and the Ottoman sultan or the Safavid shah respectively, in which the two parties faced each other in confrontation or (potential) collaboration but in which the stakes invariably centered on Europe, its divisions and its anxieties. Spain and its participation in the early modern Eurasian arena invites us to look at all this differently. It forces us to treat the Mediterranean again as a unit, connecting the western 'Ibero-African' frontier to the shores of the eastern Mediterranean. But we need to extend the ambit even farther, beyond the Ottoman dominions, to the empires of West, Central and South Asia, and as far north as Muscovite Russia, another barely acknowledged player in the early modern European efforts to isolate the Ottomans by creating a cordon sanitaire around them. What results from this expanded vision is a field of study encompassing the totality of nations and empires lying within the triangle formed by Lisbon, Moscow and Hyderabad, India. Working on such a canvass precludes examining Iberian-Ottoman relations in a context separate from Iberian-Safavid relations, as a series of discrete, bilateral exchanges. It should rather invite us to analyse their interaction as an entangled web of overlapping and interlocking concerns, considerations and interests.

Viewing the Iberian participation in these exchanges not just through a Portuguese lens also enables one to find a proper balance between money and mission as motivating factors and objectives. Early modern Iberian rulers especially were inspired, perhaps more than by commercial concerns, by 'actions and organisations that had been prevalent in the Middle Ages and which have generally been dismissed as relics and anachronisms in the era of the 'renaissance state' and 'sea power'"[21]. In other words, what animated their overseas policies even in the seventeenth century was surely a desire for commercial profit and worldly glory, but all this was underpinned by a worldview blending imperialism and messianism – a Weltanschauung inherited from the actual Crusades, kept alive during the Reconquista and resuscitated by the Counter Reformation. Philip II, like the Portuguese King Manuel I (r. 1495-1521) before him, was a champion of such messianic imperialism. With the papacy, the kings of Spain and Portugal routinely saw Safavid Persia as a potential ally in the struggle against the encroaching Turks, and their conviction that the conversion of the 'Sophy' to Christianity was but a matter of time suffuses their dealings with the Muslim world.

The Counter Reformation certainly did not come to an end when the Holy League broke up in 1574; in fact, it had only barely started and its missionary element would only gain in momentum with the Papacy of Clement VIII (1592-1605). The expectation that the Persian shah was about to convert to the 'True Faith' and that his subjects would soon follow him in fact was rekindled with the appearance of Shah `Abbas and his inviting stance vis-à-vis the representatives of Christendom, including missionaries. All this turns 1574, 1580 and 1598 into artificial boundaries.

Shah `Abbas's larger than life persona reminds one of another weakness in the existing scholarship: the lack of agency it generally accords to the rulers and decision-

[21] Phillip Williams, *Empire and Holy War in the Mediterranean. The Galleys and Maritime Conflict between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires*, London and New York, 2014, xiv.

makers of Asia. This neglect is, in the case of Persia, surely attributable in part to the relative paucity of Persian-language sources on the topic of Safavid relations with the West. Inasmuch as research is source-driven, it is also understandable and perhaps legitimate. But such bias arguably reflects an abiding Euro-centric approach to the entire interaction as well. Such an approach is entirely unwarranted in the case of Safavid Persia's most prominent ruler, who was far less driven by messianic zeal than his Iberian colleagues in his expansionist policies. As José Cutillas has recently suggested, Shah `Abbas may have had a conscious Mediterranean policy[22]. The wide-ranging interests and concerns of this forward-looking monarch covered Christian Europe as far as London and Lisbon, and the many foreign contacts the shah maintained certainly suggest that he saw the Mediterranean as part of his strategic ambit. After all, five Persian embassies visited Spain between 1599 and 1622.

What we need, in sum, is a longitudinal perspective connecting the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, as well as a capacious canvass, one that does not privilege the European vantage point but gives equal weight to the complex concerns, motives and objectives of Muslim rulers, in full recognition of the multipolar universe in which they operated. Just as the Spanish dealt with the Ottomans while keeping an eye on the schemes of the pope, the Venetians, and the French, so the Safavids conducted a balancing act involving the European powers as much as the adjacent Ottoman and Mughal states so as to optimise their position or at least to avoid the spectre of a two-front war[23]. It will be the task of the next generation of scholars to further develop the work done by the aforementioned scholars by expanding on it while moving in these directions, by integrating their own work into larger discourses and debates encompassing the entire Mediterranean basin as well as the Islamic empires of West, South and Central Asia.

The present book represents a first effort in that direction. It grew out of an initiative undertaken by Enrique García Hernán and his Spanish colleagues with the aim of uniting Safavid Persia and the early modern Iberian Peninsula in an overarching, connective discourse. This resulted in 2013 in the creation of the Consejo Ibero-Safavid de Estudios Historicos, Council of Ibero-Safavid Studies. The first concrete step taken by the Council was to organise a two-day conference held at the Instituto de Historia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas in Madrid with the assistance of the Spanish Comisión Española de Historia Militar, the Commission for Military History. I had the honour of being invited to attend that meeting and subsequently happily agreed to write the introduction to this volume, the first ever to deal with Spanish-Safavid relations. Most of the essays included here originated as papers delivered at that forum.

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[22] José Cutillas, 'Did Shah `Abbas Have a Mediterranean Policy', in *Journal of Persianate Studies* 8, 2 (2015), 254-75.

[23] Paul Cobb's recent study of the Crusades as seen from the world of Islam might serve as a model here. His study does not end, as most histories of the Crusades do, its narrative after the Fourth Crusade but covers the subsequent confrontation far into the fifteenth century, and sees the Reconquista as integral to the grand, millennial struggle between Christianity and Islam. Paul M. Cobb, *The Race for Paradise, An Islamic History of the Crusades*, Oxford 2014.

José Cutillas opens the volume by presenting us with a hitherto unknown description of the second Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524-76) composed by an anonymous author. Although the document in question only offers a description of the ruler's characteristics, not his physical features, this is a precious source in light of the fact that it dates from before the time that Western travellers went to Persia in relatively large numbers, making it a rare eyewitness account by someone who saw the rather reclusive Safavid ruler in person. Cutillas, analysing this document in the context of the other contemporary descriptions we have of Tahmasb, speculates that it may have been written for the Venetian Senate. On the basis of internal evidence, he concludes that it was composed between 1559 and 1561.

Óscar Alfredo Ruiz Fernández next offers an essay on Hormuz, the strategically located isle at the choke point of the Persian Gulf, across from Bandar `Abbas, that served as a Portuguese-held commercial entrepôt between 1515 and 1622. He looks at Hormuz from the unusual vantage point of the Spanish, who acquired a stake in the affairs of the Persian Gulf by incorporating Portugal in 1580. King Philip III, Ruiz Fernández argues, was fully aware of the importance of the isle for the Iberian trade with Asia, and warned about the possibility of losing it to the Persians. The author discusses the manner in which Madrid received the fall of Hormuz to a combined Anglo-Iranian naval expedition in 1622, and how it interpreted this loss as an example of English disloyalty. He further shows how the Spaniards made the idea of returning Hormuz to Iberian control part of the negotiations about the marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Spanish Infanta in 1623, proposing to grant concessions to the English in Asian commerce in return. Despite the strenuous efforts a Spanish embassy in London made to that effect, nothing came of this, however, and in 1624, with the accession of King Charles I and the outbreak of a new war between France and Spain, the issue faded from the agenda.

The career of the well-known English envoy Anthony Sherley brings Persia and Spain together in the next essay, in which Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra uses a new cache of documents from the Spanish and Italian archives, many of them consisting of letters written by the prolific Sherley himself, to chart the peregrinations of this quintessential trickster-adventurer. Sherley exemplifies the integrated nature of diplomatic and commercial exchange in the Mediterranean basin, a fluid world in which diplomats routinely doubled up as merchants who were often indistinguishable from spies. Moving from court to court while cruising around the Mediterranean, he relentlessly promoted his causes, but above all himself, while seeking to entice any ruler willing to listen to him with bizarre, mostly unworkable schemes. In the Christian world he thus proposed the idea of retaking Constantinople, restoring it to its former status as the capital of Christianity, an idea that would be taken up by Louis XIV a century later. An inveterate enemy of the Dutch and the Venetians, he threw in his lot with the Spanish, but never relinquished his loyalty to the English crown, seeking to facilitate their trade with the Indies and thwart other participants.

Enrique García Hernán further elaborates on the awareness in Spanish governmental circles of Persia's importance in any effort at anti-Ottoman coalition building. In a well-researched essay filled with new information he offers a broad yet detailed overview of the welter of rumours and fragmented stories that began to circulate in the

eastern Mediterranean once the semi-mythical Shah Isma`il, the founder of the Safavid state, had come to power in 1501. He reveals how the entanglement of Spain and Persia with intra-European affairs reached an unprecedented level of intensity in the early sixteenth century, and shows how various English envoys to Persia preceded Anthony Sherley's mission to the court of Shah `Abbas. The author's discussion culminates in a detailed analysis of the story of the so-called Persian gentlemen, Uruch Beg in first place, who in 1602-03 came to Spain, chose to stay and converted to Christianity. García Hernán convincingly shows how the welcome these Persian envoys enjoyed in Spain was part of a political strategy designed to exploit foreign expertise but also to invite other non-Christians to follow suit so as to add to the lustre of the Spanish court as well as enhance the prestige of the Christian faith in its triumph over Islam.

The vicissitudes of the 'Persian gentlemen' in Spain is the theme of Beatriz Alonso Acero's essays as well. Her focus is on their actual conversion, its ceremonial element, as well as its meaning for the converts in terms of adopting a new identity. She, too, points to the significance for the Spanish Crown of Muslim conversions, the symbolism of the Christian names they adopted at baptism serving as propaganda for the superiority of the 'True Faith'. She also traces the careers of the 'Persian gentlemen' following their conversion, comparing their careers into the higher ranks of the Spanish hierarchy through loyal service to the Crown with those of various contemporary Muslim renegades from North Africa who similarly achieved high (military) office after their baptism.

Luis Gil Fernández next presents us with an anonymous report from 1606 held in the Archive of Loyola. The main purpose of this document, which was addressed to Philip III, was to awaken an interest in the Spanish King in encouraging the Christians of the Caucasus to return to papal authority. Gil attributes its authorship to the Augustinian friar Sebastián de San Pedro, the bishop of Mylapore in southern India. In the introduction preceding the integral publication of the document, he points out that the particular value of this document lies in the information it provides on the living conditions of Christians in Armenia and Georgia at the time. In addition, the report offers some information on the war that Shah `Abbas launched against the Ottomans in 1603-04, confirming and complementing data about logistics and engineering works found in Fr. Antonio de Gouvea's writings.

Ideology, its projection and its cross-cultural perception, are the themes of Phillip Williams's essay. Drawing on Spanish reports from Istanbul known as the *avisos de Constantinopla*, he examines the Western understanding of early modern Islamic notions of statecraft. How did contemporary Spanish observers view the Safavid-Ottoman rivalry? Williams is careful to put the perceptions and opinions in the context of Spanish assumptions about kingship and royal sovereignty, allowing them to 'understand' Islamic traditions to the extent that these corresponded to their own. He concludes that Philip II had a very clear understanding of the basic features of Ottoman claims to universal sovereignty, to be the representatives of Islam, demanding deference and precedence. The early modern state, in the East as well as in the West, was constantly on the verge of financial crisis, but as it tottered on the precipice of ruin it reiterated its pretentions to a unique destiny guided by a universal ruler providentially mandated to maintain unity among the constituent parts of his realm.

Addressing the relationship between the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Persia, and Spain, Pablo Hernández Sau makes a case for the need to rethink Safavid-Iberian relations from a multilateral perspective and as a multipolar reality. He points out that, while the Europe-bound missions of the various Persian envoys took place at a time when the Safavid state was relatively 'centralised' and stable, the Ottomans engaged in their diplomatic exchange with the Iberian Empire in a state of instability, at a time when internal and external problems shook the power of the Sublime Porte. Hernández Sau also reminds us that the interaction between the various empires was not all (religiously inspired) strife and confrontation. Trade was an important component of their interaction as well. He submits a few other ideas. One is that we should not investigate the relationship between Spain and Persia or Spain and the Ottoman Empire simply as bilateral but as triangular in nature. He also reminds us that the economic factor always played a key role in diplomatic traffic, necessitating a deeper understanding of Persia's economic interests in the Iberian empires and an expanded knowledge of the commercial routes connecting Persia and Europe. The author finally calls for more study of Ottoman and Safavid communication networks and their agents, merchants and spies, etc., and the role of Christian minorities, in particular Armenians, played in these.

The next essay, by Rui Manuel Loureiro, discusses the well-known travel account of Don García de Silva y Figueroa, Spanish ambassador to Persia, the *Comentarios*, which covers his journeys between 1614 and 1624 and which was just reissued in a multivolume critical edition-cum scholarly investigation coedited by the same author[24]. Loureiro lays out the context in which Don García's work originated as a prelude to its publication history. He also engages in an intertextual discussion of the books that influenced the Spanish envoy, with a particular emphasis on the section in the *Comentarios* devoted to the life of Tamerlane or Timur Lang, the fourteenth-century Central Asian warlord whose fame resonated for centuries in the Persianate world. The author further addresses the question of when and how, prior to the publication of De Clavijo's travel account in 1582, the Portuguese first gained knowledge about Timur. He identifies the first mention in 1547, discusses the references to Timur made by the Portuguese chronicler João de Barros, who may have had access to a Portuguese translation of the Persian work titled *Rawzat al-safa*, and notes how the Portuguese active in India were particularly interested in Timur as the ancestor of the Mughals, the contemporary masters of the Subcontinent. Don Garcia, too, he speculates, may have had access to the *Rawzat al-safa*, as well as to the equally well-known *Habib al-siyar*, by Mirkhvand. He finally speculates on the actual person behind the enigmatic Califa Emir Alixir mentioned by Don García as one of the Persian-speaking sources he used for his information on Timur Lang, and plausibly surmises that this may have been Mir `Ali Shir Nava'i, the famous vizier of Sultan Bayqara of Herat.

In the penultimate contribution, Carlos Martínez Shaw discusses Don García's mission as well, though from a completely different angle and via a detour. Martínez

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[24] Loureiro, Costa Gomes and Resende (eds.), *Don García de Silva y Figueroa*; and *Anotações e Estudos* sobre *Don García de Silva y Figueroa*.

Shaw begins his paper by introducing *The Monetary History of Iran*, a newly published study cowritten by the present author, to a Spanish audience. He next draws attention to the voluminous information on monetary issues in Safavid Persia found in this volume, and points out how this information enables one to make sense of the data on expenditure found in Don García's writings, and in particular in the hitherto unedited *Libro Diario de Gastos*, *Ledger of Daily Expenses* which the Spanish diplomat kept.

The volume closes with an essay by Dolores Perpiñán Silla, who brings out various aspects of the many welcoming ceremonies held in honour of Don García de Silva y Figueroa in every town he passed through during his journey from Bandar `Abbas and Isfahan and that he describes in so much detail in his travelogue.

The contents of this volume reflect a new attention to Spanish-Persian relations that flows naturally from the exciting scholarship on the Mediterranean basin that has seen the light of day in the last decade or so. As well as offering a great deal of fresh information, the papers presented here point to the future of scholarship as an exercise in integrated, multifaceted and panoramic story-telling and analysis. If nothing else, they also remind one of the immense richness of the Spanish archives with regard to Spain's Persia policy, and of all the work that remains to be done in this field. The documents held in various, major and minor Spanish repositories gain even more in value and significance in light of the sparseness of the Persian-language material available for the same theme.

This volume will have met our hopes and expectations if it succeeds in bringing together Spanish scholars of Persian (and Ottoman) studies with their international colleagues, facilitating future collaboration in a sustained and productive manner. On behalf of my coeditors, I finally would like to thank the Soudavar Memorial Foundation as well as the Spanish Commission for Military History for making the 2013 conference as well as the present book possible with their generous support.

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