Ottoman *Guerre de Course* and the Indian Ocean Spice Trade

The Career of Sefer Reis

GIANCARLO CASALE*

**Introduction**

The middle decades of the sixteenth century witnessed one of the most dramatic and unexpected transformations in the history of long-distance intercontinental commerce: the revival of the transit spice trade through the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, following a period of nearly fifty years during which it had been redirected almost in its entirety through the Portuguese-controlled route around the Cape of Good Hope. And yet, while modern scholars have been aware of this sea change in global commerce for generations, the reasons behind it still remain a subject of debate. Numerous explanations have been proposed, ranging from changes in the international demand for spices to corruption within the Portuguese administration.¹ Until now, however, none has taken into account what may be the most important factor of all: the rising power of Ottoman corsairs, whose predatory raids against Portuguese targets were instrumental in subverting the *Estado da Índia*’s system for controlling trade in the western Indian Ocean.

This article examines the life of one such Ottoman seafarer, a man by the name of Sefer Reis (or “Captain Sefer”), whose career at sea from the early 1540s until the mid 1560s corresponds almost exactly with the most intense period of rising Ottoman commercial ascendancy along the Indian Ocean spice route. Technically speaking, Sefer was not a “corsair” in the European sense of the term, since he remained throughout his professional life a regular member of the Ottoman navy, rather than a privateer carrying a letter of marque. Even so, because the Ottoman government in the sixteenth century did not regularly issue letters of marque as European powers did, and because Sefer engaged in attacks against Portuguese merchant shipping that can only be defined as *guerre de course*, the term “corsair” is nevertheless appropriate. In this respect, Sefer occupied a position roughly analogous to that of the so-called “Barbary Corsairs” of North Africa, many of whom also held official posts in the Ottoman navy even as they conducted their own raids against merchant shipping in the western Mediterranean.²

One major difference between Sefer and these Barbary corsairs, however, relates to the historical record. For there are few major figures from the sixteenth-century “golden age” of Ottoman seafaring whose careers are nearly as obscure as Sefer’s. Virtually unknown to modern scholarship, even during his own lifetime Sefer was

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consistently overlooked by the chroniclers and historians of the Ottoman Empire. So comprehensive is this oversight that not a single reference to Sefer has yet to be uncovered in any of the main Turkish-language narrative sources from the sixteenth century, almost as if he never existed at all.

On the other hand, and rather incongruously, Sefer’s life is extensively documented in contemporary Portuguese sources. Numerous surviving references to him in spy reports and government dispatches from the *Estado da Índia* leave no doubt that Portuguese officials considered Sefer to be a formidable threat. And even the chronicler Diogo do Couto, who did not compose his famous *Décadas* until more than a generation after Sefer’s death, still devoted numerous passages to Sefer and his many accomplishments at sea. Indeed, when reading his and many similar Portuguese texts, one is left with the decided impression that it was Sefer whom the Portuguese thought of as the most capable and fearsome Ottoman seaman of the Indian Ocean—not Piri Reis, Seydi Ali Reis, or any of the other major figures who dominate the pages of contemporary Ottoman narrative histories.

Such a marked discrepancy between the available Ottoman and Portuguese sources obviously raises questions about the reliability of our historical record. Might the lack of interest among Ottoman chroniclers be a sign that Sefer was someone other than the man whom the Portuguese described? Was he perhaps an independent Muslim freebooter, with only informal ties to the Ottoman state? Was he a simple pirate, with no loyalty to any state at all? Or was Sefer merely a figment of the Portuguese imagination, a phantom of the seas upon whom any unexplained tragedy or unexpected defeat could conveniently be pinned, and promptly forgotten?

The answer to all of these questions is, quite simply, no. For despite Sefer’s noticeable absence from the pages of contemporary Ottoman narrative sources, his name does appear quite visibly in Ottoman archival records of his day. Admittedly, the administrative documents bearing his name are few in number; at least in part because the main collections of these documents, the *mǖhimmé defterleri* or “Registries of Important Affairs”, are fragmentary before the 1560s. The references that do exist, however, are more than adequate to confirm that Sefer was essentially who the Portuguese said he was: an Ottoman sea captain who patrolled the waters of the Red Sea, Arabian Sea and western Indian Ocean from the early 1540s until his death in 1565. Moreover, these basic facts are further confirmed by contemporary Arabic-language chronicles from the Arabian Peninsula, which also make occasional but unequivocal reference to Sefer.

Confident, then, of Sefer’s historical existence, we can leave aside for a moment the question of why Ottoman authors consciously chose to ignore him. Instead, let us attempt in the next few pages to reconstruct a summary of Sefer’s career based on the sources that are available, and from there move on to a consideration of his significance for the larger story of Ottoman expansion in the world of the sixteenth-century Indian Ocean.

**The Making of a Corsair: Sefer’s Early Career**

The earliest known reference to Sefer of any kind, predating the first mention of him in Portuguese sources by nearly a decade, is an Ottoman *mǖhimmé* document from the year 1544. It states matter-of-factly that Sefer had in that year been appointed commander of a fleet of five galleys stationed in the Ottoman arsenal at Suez, and was charged with the responsibility of conducting patrols of the Red Sea as far as the Yemen and the East African port of Massawa.

This brief reference, while short on details, reveals quite a bit about the early years of Sefer’s career when placed in a broader context. First of all, the dating of the document to 1544 is itself significant, as the Ottomans had established a permanent military presence in the southern Red Sea region only a few years previously, as a result of Hadim Süleyman Pasha’s conquest of the Yemen while returning from his expedition to India in 1538. Thereafter, nearly all of the senior military and administrative positions in the Red Sea and the Yemen were distributed to veterans of this campaign, so the fact that Sefer was by 1544 already in command of a fairly sizeable naval squadron indicates that he too had almost certainly been a participant in the expedition to India. In all likelihood, it was thanks to this experience that Sefer was first introduced to world of the Indian Ocean, since Hadim Süleyman’s massive fleet was manned almost entirely by conscripts and volunteers originally from the Ottoman Mediterranean.

Unfortunately, there are no other surviving *mǖhimmé* registers from the 1540s to help us fill in the blanks of this story (the next extant volume dates from only 1552), meaning that a considerable level of uncertainty surrounds Sefer’s activities during the rest of the decade. However, we do know that in 1546 a squadron of four Ottoman galleys conducted a daring and successful raid of the Arabian coast as far as Portuguese-held Muscat. Available Portuguese accounts of this affair make no explicit mention of Sefer, but the fact that the raid was carried out with four galleys—less than two years after Sefer was appointed commander of a fleet of roughly this size—strongly suggests that he was involved in some capacity. Indeed, 1546 may well have been the first time that Sefer ventured beyond the confines of the Red Sea as a commanding officer in his own right. If so, the success of this early expedition was a portent of things to come.

In any case, by the year 1550, when his name finally begins to appear in Portuguese as well as Ottoman sources, Sefer seems to have established a rather formidable reputation on the high seas, indicating that he must have been active long before this date. Diogo do Couto, for instance, records in that the early fall of that year a large Portuguese squadron under the command of Luiz Figueira spotted off the coast of Ormán “four large and handsomely built galleots [or downsized versions of Ottoman war galleys],...and with them was sailing a great Muslim corsair named Sefer, who had come from Mecca with the intention of sacking Muscat, and raiding the ships which normally leave from Hormuz for Goa and the other ports along the coast of India”. As we shall see, the unfolding of this early encounter between Sefer and the Portuguese, the first described by contemporaries in any detail, reveals a great deal about his experimentation with a new and very successful strategy, one which he would employ repeatedly throughout the rest of his career.

As Couto tells us, the corsair’s stalling grounds were the rich shipping lanes of the north Arabian Sea, where he could hope to run down some of the numerous Portuguese merchant vessels which every year crossed from Hormuz to India with the monsoon. At the same time, by sailing so far north and so close to the
Portuguese base in Hormuz, Sefer must have also known that he ran the risk of encountering an armed Portuguese patrol squadron, which is in fact exactly what happened. Rather than holding his position and trying to face Luiz Figueira and his fleet directly, however, Sefer turned his galleys around and headed back in the direction from which he had come, moving quickly down the coast and avoiding a confrontation on the open sea with the more heavily armed Portuguese force. Figueira in turn did his best to give chase, managing to keep his adversary in sight as far as the cape of Ras al-Hadd. But he eventually realised that Sefer’s galleys were simply too fast and enjoyed too great a head start, so rather than continue his pursuit he decided to set a course for India and report the matter to his superiors.9

As soon as Figueira arrived in Goa and reported what he had seen, the Portuguese Viceroy Afonso de Noronha rearmmed his fleet and ordered Figueira to sail directly to the mouth of the Red Sea, where he was to make a punitive counter-attack and destroy Sefer’s galleys in their home waters. To do so, however, required waiting until the winter monsoon, when the prevailing winds of the western Indian Ocean would begin to blow from the northeast. Thus, Figueira did not set sail from India with his new force of four sailing ships and one oared fusta until almost the end of the year, meaning that by the time he reached the Bab al-Mandab and entered the Red Sea in January of 1551, Sefer had long been expecting his arrival, and was lying in wait in a carefully chosen location.

Soon enough, the Portuguese squadron caught sight of the corsair’s four galleys, and Figueira, who seems to have mistaken his opponent’s previous withdrawal as a sign of weakness, recklessly engaged all four enemy vessels with his own solitary oared fusta, only to find himself quickly surrounded. His escort of sailing ships moved in to help, but realised too late that because of the shallowness of the water they could not approach. As they watched their commander’s vessel being overwhelmed, the crews of the Portuguese sailing ships could do nothing more than fire an ineffectual barrage of artillery from a distance. Before their eyes Figueira’s fusta was overrun, Figueira himself was killed, and all of his men were taken captive, forcing the remaining four Portuguese ships to flee in disgrace. Of these, one crew was so ashamed that it resolved never to return to India, heading instead for the African coast and seeking refuge at the court of the Emperor of Ethiopia. The remaining three ships headed east, adding to the disgrace of defeat during their return journey by pillaging a merchant vessel from Diu that carried a valid Portuguese license to trade.10

Sefer’s Strategy as a Departure from Ottoman Seafaring Traditions

What exactly had Sefer accomplished in this encounter? By almost any measure, this first documented victory was to prove a relatively minor affair compared with his numerous exploits in later years, yet it was significant nonetheless because of the way in which it was accomplished. As stated above, Sefer knew that there were rich opportunities for plunder in the waters between Hormuz and Gujarat, probably the most trafficked sea lane anywhere in the Portuguese Indies. He had therefore calculated that by using a small force of very light and fast galleys—which, unlike sail-powered merchant ships, could row close to shore and travel when necessary against the wind—he had a good chance of being able to run down and capture individual merchant vessels of the Estado da India. Furthermore, while he was aware of being vulnerable against heavily armed Portuguese sailing ships in any encounter on the open sea, he knew that since the monsoon winds blew consistently from the southwest during the late summer and early fall, he would always be able to evade such a force by rowing into the wind, down the Arabian coast and back towards his base in Mocha where the Portuguese sailing ships would be unable to follow. Finally, Sefer knew that even if he failed to capture any merchant vessels, the mere appearance of his galleys around Hormuz would inevitably provoke a Portuguese counterattack on the Red Sea—where fickle winds, shallows, dangerous coral reefs and a hostile local population would give his own galleys a deadly advantage.

It bears considerable emphasis that this kind of carefully planned hit-and-run tactic, which Sefer would continue to employ with steady increasing refinement and effectiveness throughout the following decade, was significantly at odds with the approach adopted by the commanders of the Ottomans’ main Indian Ocean fleet stationed in Suez. This much larger naval force, commanded by the Kapudan-i Hind or “Admiral of the Indies”, typically an appointee from Istanbul, was used not to launch attacks against Portuguese shipping, but rather to transport large numbers of troops and artillery and, when necessary, to launch amphibious assaults against Portuguese strongholds on land. As such, it followed the same style of galleys familiar to contemporary Ottoman naval commanders on the Mediterranean, which has been described so masterfully by John Guilmartin.11

For reasons discussed in greater detail below, however, this more familiar style of amphibious galleys warfare proved far less effective in the Indian Ocean than it had in the Mediterranean. In 1538, for example, the first Ottoman Kapudan-i Hind Hadim Suleyman Pasha had led a massive expedition (in which, as already noted, Sefer himself was probably a participant) against the Portuguese fortress of Diu in north-western India. On that occasion, the Ottomans had marshalled a fleet comprising nearly seventy vessels and perhaps 10,000 men in all, almost certainly the largest naval force seen in the Indian Ocean since the early fifteenth-century Ming fleets of Zheng He. And yet, despite a protracted six-week siege, this expedition failed in its mission to conquer Diu, and ultimately withdrew ignominiously to the Yemen.12

Similarly, in 1552—just two years after Sefer’s successful encounter with Luiz Figueira described above—another large Ottoman fleet under the command of Piri Reis had fared even worse in its attempt to capture the Portuguese-held stronghold of Hormuz. In fact, Piri Reis’s campaign ended not only in a costly military reverse, but eventually in the execution of its commanding officer, who was charged with treason after abandoning the bulk of his fleet in Basra and returning stealthily to Suez with only a handful of his fastest vessels.13

Then, in 1554, the Ottoman fleet would be lured into still another encounter at sea that would end in the single greatest defeat in the history of Ottoman naval operations in the Indian Ocean. Another appointee from Istanbul, Seydi Ali Reis, was nominated to replace Piri Reis as Kapudan-i Hind and ordered to escort the Ottoman vessels marooned in Basra back around the Arabian Peninsula to the relative safety of Suez. But Seydi Ali, who had never previously served in the Indian
Ocean, soon showed his lack of experience by being led into a Portuguese trap. In an ambush near Muscat, where his heavy galleys made the fatal mistake of being caught downwind of a large Portuguese squadron, Seydi Ali was simultaneously attacked by both land and sea. Of the fifteen vessels under his command, six were captured by the Portuguese and the remaining nine were damaged and buffeted helplessly out to sea. After several weeks adrift, they eventually reached the coast of India and were abandoned, and Seydi Ali and the surviving members of his crew were forced to return to Ottoman territory by a circuitous overland route through Afghanistan and Persia. Of the great fleet sent under Piri Reis to conquer Hormuz two years before, nothing remained.

Why had the Ottoman navy performed so badly? In the final analysis, a combination of several factors can be pointed to as reasons for the Ottomans’ dismal record against the Portuguese during these years. These included an inability to maintain adequate lines of supply across the vast expanses of the Indian Ocean, the unsuitability of large and lumbering fleets of heavy oared vessels on the open sea, and a poor understanding of both local environmental conditions and of Portuguese tactics. But in a more general sense, all of these technical inadequacies were merely symptomatic of a deeper problem: the Ottoman naval commanders’ basic unfamiliarity with the Indian Ocean itself.

This unfamiliarity was in turn a consequence of the centralised and rigidly hierarchical bureaucracy of the Ottoman navy, which made its decisions with little regard for the special conditions prevalent in the Indian Ocean. Indeed, until the 1550s almost every Kapudan-ı Hind was a nominee appointed directly by the central administration in Istanbul, and although all could boast long records of distinguished service in the Mediterranean, none had any experience in the Indian Ocean prior to his appointment as “Admiral of the Indies”. As a result, for a dangerously long time following the establishment of an independent admiralty in Suez, the Ottoman leadership continued to treat the Indian Ocean as if it were simply an extension of the Mediterranean. And this meant that lower-ranking captains like Sefer Reis, despite their valuable local experience, were perennially marginalised because of their distance from the imperial centre.

Yet for precisely this reason, the ultimate destruction of the main Ottoman fleet in 1554 presented a great opportunity for Sefer Reis. In practical terms, Seydi Ali’s defeat at Muscat—coming on the heels of the execution of his predecessor just two years before—suddenly and unexpectedly left Sefer as the most prominent Ottoman sea captain in the entire Indian Ocean region. Sooner than anyone could have imagined, Sefer was able to turn the debacle of Seydi Ali’s campaign into a vindication of his own strategy, and the occasion to launch the most stunningly successful expedition of his career.

Sefer to the Rescue

In August of 1554, at the same time that Seydi Ali was leaving Basra at the head of the main Ottoman fleet, Sefer set out from the small Ottoman naval base at Mocha with orders to rendezvous with Seydi Ali and escort him safely back to the Red Sea. He had with him, as usual, only four light galleys, and was still off the south Arabian coast many leagues from Muscat when he received news of the destruction of Seydi Ali’s forces and the triumphant departure of the Portuguese for India with six captured Ottoman galleys.

This moment would prove the most decisive of Sefer’s professional life. Stunned by news of the calamitous defeat and now alone and vastly outnumbered, both common sense and the council of his crew must have urged a hasty retreat to Mocha to await further orders. But Sefer, who had developed tremendous confidence in his ability to outwit the Portuguese, thought otherwise. As the chronicler Diogo do Couto explained:

Since he was by nature a corsair, and very practiced in the ways of those seas, he determined to follow in the wake of the Portuguese armada in the hopes of finding some prey to seize upon. He proceeded in this way until just before arriving to the peninsula of Diu, where he came to a halt and set up a blockade, lying in wait for any vessels that might have to pass through those waters.

It was by any measure an audacious decision. In substance, Sefer resolved to shadow an enemy fleet that had just routed a force four times larger than his own—and then to blockade Portuguese shipping off of Diu in precisely the same way that the Portuguese themselves were accustomed to prevent Muslim vessels from heading for the Red Sea. But daring as it was, the plan worked. Within only a few weeks Sefer had captured four heavily loaded Portuguese merchant vessels and seized, in addition to prisoners and cargo, over 160,000 cruzados of gold currency. Loaded down by this booty, but still hoping to catch another particularly wealthy galleon rumoured to be in the vicinity, Sefer had the Portuguese crews bound in irons, placed small contingents of his own men in each of the captured ships, and ordered them to return on their own to Mocha and wait for him there.

As luck would have it, an armed Portuguese vessel under the command of Balthazar Lobato soon came across the four captured ships while on a routine patrol. When the immobilised Portuguese crew of one of the ships saw him, they staged a revolt, and with Lobato’s help managed to take back not only their own vessel but the other three as well, capturing in turn their former captors and setting sail on a course for India. Meanwhile Sefer, who had by this time given up hope of catching any more ships and had himself set sail for Arabia with his four galleys, by chance caught sight once again of the very same Portuguese ships and, realising what had happened, captured them back for a second time. He then gave chase to Balthazar Lobato’s fleeing vessel, which eventually surrendered without a fight. Now with all nine ships safely in his possession, Sefer once more set a course for Mocha, where he arrived triumphantly a few weeks later.

Greasing Arabian Palms

His coffers overflowing with these newly won spoils, and with the strategy of his superiors now thoroughly discredited, Sefer’s star was in the ascendant. And although he was still just as physically distant from the centres of power in Istanbul, he now appears to have decided to use his newfound wealth to buy his way into a more prestigious position within the hierarchy of the Ottoman imperial fleet. We know of these efforts thanks to a secret espionage report sent to the king of
Portugal from João de Lisboa, a captive of the Ottomans in Cairo who had previously served as the garrison commander of Muscat. From his account we learn that in 1555 Sefer sent a courier with 20,000 cruzados of the gold he had recently seized from the Portuguese as a gift to the sultan in Istanbul, hoping in return to secure a promotion to Kapudan-ı Hind, a post still technically held by the now absent Seydi Ali. In addition, Sefer sent a second gift to the new governor of Egypt, Mehmed Pasha, asking for permission to add five more galleys to his fleet in Mocha. And with these, he declared an intention to launch a more ambitious anti-Portuguese raid than any yet attempted by the Ottomans, vowing to sail as far as the island of Ceylon in order to plunder Portuguese merchant ships on their way west from Malacca and Bengal. From there, he would then head with the winter monsoon for the coast of East Africa and attack Portuguese shipping off the Swahili Coast, before finally completing the circuit and returning to the Red Sea in the spring.19

Unfortunately for the corsair, bureaucratic inertia at the Ottoman imperial centre remained as formidable an obstacle as any Portuguese fleet, especially for an individual like Sefer who, for all his recent success and newfound wealth, was still a marginal figure operating on the distant fringe of the Ottoman world. Moreover, with the memory of Piri Reis and Seydi Ali’s costly and embarrassing misadventures still fresh in the minds of most Ottoman policy makers, any proposal to redouble the Empire’s investment in the Indian Ocean was bound to appear a foolhardy venture. In consequence, Sefer Reis’s petition for a promotion was denied, and his request for additional galleys and men was scaled back to a bare minimum: in the end, he received no more than two light vessels from the arsenal in Suez.20

The Hunt for Sefer

If Sefer continued to be unappreciated by his superiors in Istanbul, he would at least no longer be underestimated by the Portuguese, who seem by this point to have come to consider him the single most dangerous threat to their continued prosperity in the western Indian Ocean. In fact, as early as January of 1555 a small fleet under Manuel de Vasconcelos had been dispatched from Goa with orders to hunt down the corsair, although after finding no sign of him off the coast of the Yemen Vasconcelos eventually returned to India empty-handed.11 In the following year, still another squadron under João Peixoto was sent out from Goa in search of Sefer, but after finding his small fleet safely ensconced in Mocha, which the Portuguese dared not approach, Peixoto was forced to abandon the hunt.21 Then, in a brazen display of self-confidence, Sefer responded to these provocations with another raid of his own off the coast of India, seizing two Portuguese merchant vessels near the port of Chaul in the summer of 1556.22

The letter of João de Lisboa, writing from captivity in Cairo, gives us a taste of the extreme frustration experienced by the Portuguese as a result of this ongoing series of humiliations. “For what reason do you allow such thievery to continue?” he wrote to the viceroy. “[Sefer’s] strength increases day by day, and Cairo grows constantly richer with spoils taken from the Portuguese. Every day his armada swells, and considering how much he has been able to accomplish with just three vessels in his charge...how much more trouble will he give the Portuguese, and how many more riches will he send to Cairo, when one day he has thirty?”23 Lisboa then went on to recommend a major strike against Sefer’s base in Mocha as the only possible remedy for his attacks, reporting that, for the moment, he had no more than 400 men in his fleet, and that Mocha itself had no walls or fortress and was defended only by 400 local Arab tribesmen.

By 1557, as the Portuguese faced the prospect of a permanent disruption of their merchant shipping should Sefer’s raids be allowed to continue, the authorities in Goa were left with no other option but to adopt João de Lisboa’s advice and plan a direct attack on Sefer’s home base in the Red Sea. But having been finally convinced of the inability of their sailing ships to ever force an engagement with Sefer’s oar-powered galleys on the open sea, the Portuguese now took the drastic decision of arming a huge force of twenty oared vessels that were more suited for combat in shallow waters. With intelligence that the corsair intended once more to winter with his fleet in Mocha, these vessels were dispatched under Alvaro de Silveira late in the fall of 1557, with orders to surprise and burn Sefer’s squadron before he had a chance either to escape or to return fire.24

Ironically, by using a fleet composed predominantly of oar-powered vessels to attempt an amphibious assault on an enemy base, the Portuguese were essentially adopting the same failed tactics of Mediterranean-style galley warfare that had proven so disastrous for earlier Ottoman commanders such as Hadim Suleyman and Piri Reis. Precisely because of the prevalence of oared vessels in his fleet, in fact, Silveira made uncharacteristically slow and uneven progress on his journey, with only his vanguard having reached the Red Sea by February of 1558. Once there, Silveira’s advisors urged him to wait and regroup before launching his attack, since the Portuguese forces had been partially dispersed by heavy winds during the crossing from India. But after learning that Sefer was preparing to set sail any day Silveira concluded that there was simply no time to lose, and he hastily charged into Mocha’s narrow harbour without his fleet at full strength.

As might have been expected, Silveira’s forces failed to take Sefer by surprise, and immediately fell under a heavy artillery bombardment from both land and sea. This fire was so intense that it damaged several of Silveira’s ships and killed a dozen of his sailors almost instantly, forcing his men into a hasty and inglorious retreat. Thereafter, his fleet lingered for several more weeks just off the Yemeni coast in the hopes of capturing some merchant ships headed for Jeddah. But the Portuguese found nothing, and eventually set sail for Hormuz with only losses to show for their efforts. Sefer had sustained a direct attack from the Portuguese fleet against his home base, and had emerged virtually unscathed.25

A Ruse in the Red Sea

We have little information about Sefer’s activities during the rest of 1558 and 1559, but in early 1560 he managed to score yet another victory against his Portuguese adversaries, this time thanks to an elaborate and masterfully executed deception planned in conjunction with authorities in Habesh, the Ottoman province on the African coast of the Red Sea. In this encounter, Sefer’s unfortunate dupe was Cristovão Pereira Homem, who had been sent from India with a small squadron of three sailing ships and one oared vessel to escort the Jesuit missionary Fulgencio Freire, bound for the court of the Emperor of Ethiopia, to a safe place on the
A Long Overdue Promotion

Following this victory, Sefer finally began to receive the recognition he deserved from his own superiors, despite one last attempt by the remaining grand vizier, Rustem Pasha, to deny him his rightful place at the head of the Ottomans’ Indian Ocean fleet. According to surviving Ottoman archival records, in the summer of 1560 the grand vizier tried to have the defeated admiral Seydî Ali, a personal client who had returned from India in 1557, reinstated in his old position as Kapudan-ı Hind—a position that had technically remained vacant since the destruction of Seydî Ali’s fleet in 1555. This time, however, Seydî Ali’s appointment was blocked by the new governor of Egypt, Sufi Ali Pasha. And in his place, Sefer Reis was finally appointed “Admiral of the Indies.”

Sefer’s promotion was accompanied by increased activity at the arsenal in Suez, where preparations began for the construction of several new warships for the first time in nearly a decade. And although the power and prestige of his new rank had little immediate effect on Sefer’s operations, as he seems to have continued to operate out of Mocha rather than the main Ottoman arsenal in Suez, there could be no doubt among contemporary Portuguese observers that a serious escalation of both the scale and geographic range of his attacks was only a matter of time.

The reaction to the news of his promotion from Lourenço Pires de Tavora, the Portuguese ambassador in Rome, gives some indication of the sense of foreboding with which Lisbon now looked to the future:

Considering the experience which that captain has of the entire Swahili coast down to Mozambique, and in the other direction from Aden to Hormuz, it seems certain that [the Ottomans] will attempt some major undertaking along one of these two coasts, and that they have great hopes for the plan which [the new captain] has conceived and for which he has promised them great success. The Viceroy of India must stay on guard, and be prepared for every eventuality.32

Thus, even without an immediate change in Sefer’s operations, presentiments of this kind were enough to have a tangible effect on their own balance of power, by provoking a continuously escalating but always ineffective reaction from Goa to Sefer’s ongoing small-scale raids. In the fall of 1561, for example, the captain of Hormuz received intelligence that Sefer was planning once again to set up a blockade between Hormuz and India, as he had done several times in the previous decade. In response, an armada of unprecedented size was sent against him: twenty-three oared vessels, two galleons, and “six hundred and fifty of the best soldiers of India, among them many honourable knights and gentlemen” under Dom Francisco Mascarenhas, himself a former viceroy.33 This fleet sailed from Goa in November of 1561 and very nearly met Sefer’s tiny squadron of three light galleys off the south Arabian coast. But the corsair was apparently tipped off by local Arab sailors and managed to avoid the Portuguese dragnet.34 Mascarenhas sailed on to Hormuz and then returned empty-handed to Goa—while Sefer captured a Portuguese merchant vessel and returned safely to the Red Sea.35

A few months later, the Portuguese sent out yet another fleet of three galleons and several oared ships under Jorge de Moura, with instructions both to search for the corsair and to patrol for Muslim ships bound for the Red Sea from Aceh, Malabar and Cambay.36 During this operation, one of the vessels under Moura’s command did engage a very large ship from Aceh, although after a two-day battle both the Portuguese and the Muslim ship burned and sank.37 The rest of Moura’s fleet cruised up and down the coast of Arabia for more than a month without detaining any other ships or receiving any news of Sefer, and the Portuguese eventually retired to Hormuz at the end of the season, once more frustrated by their lack of success. Regardless of the scale, the timing, or the tactics used against him, Sefer was unstoppable.

Sefer’s Last Campaign

By 1564, after more than a decade of successful small-scale raids, Sefer was finally ready to ramp up his operations and relocate from Mocha to the main Ottoman arsenal in Suez. Before long, it became clear from the heightened pace of activity there that the corsair was preparing a major new offensive, although exactly where and when he planned to strike remained a subject of intense debate among contemporary Portuguese observers. Towards the end of the year, he set out from Suez with a fleet of ten galleys, by far the largest he had ever commanded. But contrary
to all expectations he sailed only as far as his advance base in Mocha, where he bided his time through the summer sailing season and into the fall. Finally, in a surprise move, he set sail suddenly in November of 1565 towards the southwest—not the northeast as he had in years past—in what was intended to be the greatest and most daring campaign the corsair had ever undertaken. According to a report sent by Mattias Bicudo Furtado, a Portuguese informant then in Cairo, Sefer’s revamped fleet was to be used in an entirely novel kind of attack, in which Sefer “set out with the intention of pillaging the entire Swahili coast and proceeding all the way to Mozambique, where he had great hopes of catching ships from the Royal fleet”. This fleet, the Carreira da India, was sent annually around the Cape of Good Hope and counted as the richest prize in all of Portuguese Asia. Such an attack thus promised to yield unprecedented quantities of captured cargo and slaves. Perhaps more important, it also had potentially wide ranging geopolitical implications, since by severing the only sea route connecting Lisbon to its overseas possessions in the east, it threatened to cut off the Estado da India from its European capital. As a result, it would appear that Sefer’s promotion to Kapudan-i Hinds was a truly pivotal moment in his career, not only because it afforded him more resources, but also because it introduced a new element in his strategic thinking. Now fully embraced by the Ottoman imperial establishment, he had begun to move beyond the objectives of a simple sea raider and to align his activities more closely with the larger foreign policy interests of the Ottoman state as a whole.

Indeed, in many respects the grand strategy behind what would prove to be Sefer’s last campaign bore the unmistakable imprint of one of the great Ottoman statesmen of Sefer’s generation, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who among Sefer’s contemporaries was perhaps the only high-ranking Ottoman official prepared to understand, and to support, the truly global implications of what Sefer had already accomplished in the Indian Ocean. Sokollu Mehmed’s uniqueness in this regard was a product of his own long years of experience in matters related to the sea, for he had himself served as grand admiral of the Ottomans’ Mediterranean fleet early in his career, had subsequently overseen the construction of a new arsenal in Basra while governor of the province of Deyrulak, and had also been intimately involved in efforts to develop the state-controlled spice trade through the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. After this in mind, it appears significant that Sefer’s appointment as Kapudan-i Hinds, after more than a decade in which his activities seem to have been all but ignored in Istanbul, came almost immediately after Sokollu Mehmed’s promotion to the rank of third vizier, when he became an ex-officio member of the Ottoman Imperial Council for the first time. Subsequently, Sokollu’s promotion to the grand vizierate in 1565 also coincided almost exactly with the launching of Sefer’s last and most ambitious expedition.

All of this suggests a very close link between Sokollu’s rise to power and Sefer’s recognition by the Ottoman central administration. Moreover, given what we know of Sokollu Mehmed’s active record of diplomacy during these years, particularly with France, it is even possible that the Grand Vizier intentionally timed Sefer’s last mission to coincide with a French corsair attack against the Portuguese Atlantic base in Madeira, another important way station for the annual convoy of ships sent from Lisbon to India. A Venetian dispatch from Madrid describing this attack, which came in the middle of 1566, cryptically reported: “It is believed by some that these [French corsairs] have proceeded towards the Cape of Good Hope, to collaborate with a ruler in those parts who is constantly at war with the king of Portugal.”

Could this be a shadowy reference to Sefer? There is no way to be sure. But in addition to his close ties with the French, Sokollu Mehmed is also known to have forged an alliance during these years with the sultan of Aceh, another rival of the Portuguese in the eastern Indian Ocean. All of this raises the possibility that Sefer’s attack was in essence part of a comprehensive and unprecedented strategy to put pressure on the Estado da India from the four corners of the globe. Unfortunately, if any such grandiose plans did exist they were tragically cut short by Sefer’s sudden and unexpected demise, as reported by the Portuguese Informant, Mattias Bicudo Furtado, on 18 January 1566. According to Furtado, Sefer had set out late in the previous year, and was a day-and-a-half out of Mocha en route for the island of Socotra when, without warning, he fell deathly ill. His poor health forced him to alter course for Aden, where he died just three days after his arrival. Furtado’s report added as an epigraph: “He was a daring thief and most practiced in [the combat] of those regions, knowing exactly how and when to strike. There is no other man such as he in all the lands of the East who we need so greatly fear.”

A Jewish Corsair?

Who was Sefer Reis? With regard to his origins and family background we are left almost totally in the dark, except for one tantalising clue from a cluster of very early Portuguese sources. These make repeated references to another Ottoman corsair, a predecessor of Sefer, who was based in Jeddah from the late 1530s until his death in 1546. This individual, whom the Portuguese referred to as “Sinan the Jew” (Sinão o Judeu), was almost certainly the famous corsair by the same name who had previously served with the Barbarossa brothers in North Africa, and had then transferred his activities to the Red Sea. Much like Sefer two decades later, he is said to have fallen ill and died just days before a planned departure for a raiding mission to the coast of India. He was apparently succeeded by his son, a sea captain based in Egypt, who was confirmed in his position by the sultan himself.

Is there a connection between Sinan and Sefer? Conclusive evidence is lacking due to the absence of surviving Ottoman archival documents from these years. But the date of 1546 is significant, for as we have seen it was in this same year that a fleet of four Ottoman galleys first sailed from Mocha on a raid against Portuguese shipping in the Arabian Sea. These two men of the sea, Sinan and Sefer, may therefore have been nothing less than father and son, a hereditary family of Ottoman corsairs.

This possible link between Sinan and Sefer is even more interesting given what we know about the operation of the Ottoman tax regime along the Red Sea spice route during this period—especially in light of the suggestion that Sinan was a convert from Judaism. As both Western and Ottoman sources attest, during the mid-sixteenth century the imperial customs houses in Suez and Alexandria came under the control of a group of Jewish tax farmers with ties to the Iberian world. This fact, combined with the possibility that the most prominent Ottoman corsairs in the region also came from a family of Jewish converts, suggests that members of the
Iberian Jewish diaspora may have been able to establish themselves as agents of the Ottoman state in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean not only as tax collectors, but also as officers in the imperial navy. And this, in turn, appears to have facilitated the growth of even more wide-ranging ties between the Ottoman administration of Egypt, the indigenous Jewish merchants of the Indian Ocean, and the swelling ranks of converted Portuguese “New Christians” in the Estadio da India itself.68

Ultimately, such merchants and tax farmers formed one link in a larger chain of both Ottoman officials and private individuals who shared a vested interest in undermining Portuguese control of trade, and in pursuing a policy of continued Ottoman commercial expansion at Portuguese expense. Before the 1560s, the interests of this coalition were not always shared by the administration in Istanbul, which seems to have been concerned primarily with maintaining control over the command structure of the Indian Ocean fleet, regardless of the military consequences. But following the disastrous naval campaigns of Piri Reis and Seydi Ali between 1552 and 1554, this earlier policy was largely discredited, and by the time Sokollu Mehmed Pasha rose to power in the 1560s, the Ottoman state was finally ready to embrace Sefer Reis and his winning strategy as fully its own.

Sefer Reis and the Indian Ocean Spice Trade

Given the scale of the Ottoman defeats at sea in the early 1550s—defeats that continue to dominate the pages of modern studies of Ottoman naval history in the sixteenth-century Indian Ocean—it is easy to forget that the following decade was a period of unprecedented Ottoman ascendancy in the Indian Ocean region. At the same time that Sefer and his men were scoring success after success against Portuguese shipping, freelance Ottoman corsairs were offering their services in Gujarat and on the Malabar coast of India,69 Ottoman military advisors, expert craftsmen and artillery crews were sent as far as the Sultanate of Aceh on Sumatra,70 and Ottoman merchants were developing a vast network of commercial relations that stretched from the Swahili Coast, to Sri Lanka, to Siam.71 Meanwhile, the volume of traffic in pepper and luxury goods passing through the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf soared to new heights, far outstripping the Portuguese trade around the Cape of Good Hope. In fact, officials of the Estadio da India, whose hostility towards the Ottomans and blockade of the Red Sea had been pillars of Portuguese policy since their arrival in the Indian Ocean, now began to see peace with the Ottomans as their only hope for reversing the declining fortunes of their trading empire. A letter written to the king in December 1560 from Lourenço Pires de Tavora, the Portuguese ambassador in Rome and the Crown’s main conduit of information about Sefer Reis and the preparations of his fleet in Egypt, summed up the contemporary mood:

The prospect [of an agreement with the Ottomans] is worthy of serious consideration, because the volume of spices which passes through the Red Sea to Cairo and from Hormuz to Basra is enormous, and there is every reason to believe that it will continue to grow even larger before levelling off. [At the same time,] Your Majesty’s expenses in India are very great, and will grow even greater if some solution is not found. It is precisely because of this, as no reasonable man would dispute, that an agreement with the Turk would be most profitable [to Your Majesty’s interests].72

No such agreement was ever reached.73 But even without Portuguese acquiescence, the flow of spices through Ottoman ports would continue unabated throughout the rest of the sixteenth century. What could be the reason for this remarkable transformation in the fortunes of the Ottoman spice trade?

As mentioned above, scholars attempting to answer this question have until now shown a consistent reluctance to consider the activities of the Ottomans themselves as a possible factor in the revival of the Red Sea spice route, arguing instead that this revival came about as a result of transformations within the Portuguese administration, or because of the irresistible pull of “market forces” which in the long run naturally preferred the shorter route through the Middle East.74 Yet if nothing else, the career of Sefer Reis demonstrates that the Ottomans played a significant and deliberate role in weakening the Portuguese position through the judicious use of predatory corsair attacks.

In the end, the true cost of these attacks for the Estadio da India would be measured not in the actual number of ships captured or destroyed by Sefer and his men, but rather in the enormously expensive and ultimately futile response that they provoked on the Portuguese side. Year after year, for as long as Sefer lived, the authorities in Goa were forced to send out ever larger and more costly fleets in a fruitless attempt to hunt him down. Meanwhile, Portuguese efforts to stop the flow of ships through the Red Sea became increasingly ineffective, and this too was a direct result of Sefer’s strategy. Diogo do Couto, the main chronicler of this period of the history of Portuguese Asia, says as much while describing the particular unsuccessful blockade of Jorge de Moura in 1562:

While they remained there [outside the Bab al Mandab], which was for more than a month, they saw more than sixty different [Muslim] vessels without ever being able to reach even one of them. This was because [the Portuguese ships] were near the shore, and [the merchant ships] came in from the sea with the wind fully at their backs. It was therefore impossible either to catch them or to follow them inside [the mouth of the Red Sea], for [the Portuguese] dared not enter the straits for fear of risking the loss of their own ships.75

In other words, the main reason for the failure of the blockade was that the Portuguese were afraid to follow Muslim ships into the Red Sea, something that in earlier decades they had done regularly and with impunity. Now however, they hesitated, and the reason could only be one: they were afraid of Sefer Reis.

Conclusion: Sefer Reis, a Prophet in his Own Country

In the traditional historiography of Ottoman expansion in the Indian Ocean, the destruction by the Portuguese of the Ottoman fleet under Seydi Ali Reis in 1554 is commonly understood as a definitive endpoint, the embarrassing but inevitable conclusion to a futile half century of attempts by the Ottomans to establish a legitimate naval presence in the Indian Ocean.76 In much of this scholarship, in fact,
these Ottoman efforts are portrayed as doomed to failure even before they began, since the Ottomans’ reliance on supposedly outmoded oar-powered galleys left them hopelessly outrun by the Portuguese and their “superior” sail-based naval technology. In this way, as far as modern scholarship is concerned, the history of the Ottoman Indian Ocean fleet essentially comes to a halt in 1554: not one scholarly article in any language has been written on Ottoman naval operations beyond the Red Sea and Persian Gulf after this date.

But as we have seen in the preceding pages, the events of 1554 were not the end, but rather the beginning of Ottoman efforts to confront Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean. Before then, the Ottomans had attempted—rather stubbornly—to export to this new area of the world the same techniques of Mediterranean-style galley warfare that had been so successful in the Ottomans’ many western campaigns against powers like Venice and Spain. In this type of warfare, “control of the seas” in the modern sense was never really an objective, since the most important naval campaigns were essentially amphibious assaults, designed to capture enemy strongholds or to control strategic centres of supply that were in any case based on land. Campaigns such as Hadim Suleyman Pasha’s expedition to Diu in 1538, or Piri Reis’s siege of Hormuz in 1552, clearly stuck quite closely to this model. The colossal failure of both of these attempts, which contrasted so sharply with Ottoman success at sea elsewhere, demonstrated in rather dramatic fashion that the tried-and-true methods of Mediterranean galley warfare were simply ineffective in the very different environment of the Indian Ocean.

Sefer Reis was the first Ottoman naval strategist to both recognise this problem and to find a solution. Realising that the basis of Portuguese sea power was fundamentally different from anything found in the Mediterranean, he understood that the Ottoman response to the Portuguese challenge must also come in an entirely different form. So unlike his predecessors, Sefer never tried to storm a fortress, transport troops, or land siege equipment. Instead, he knew that the Portuguese strength lay at sea, and that their weakness lay there too. The targets of his campaigns, therefore, were not Portuguese strongholds but Portuguese ships, and he measured victory not in hectares of conquered territory, but in the increased customs revenues of Mocha, Jeddah and Suez.

For a swashbuckling corsair of the sixteenth century, this was an astonishingly sophisticated innovation in the concept of sea power—too sophisticated, in fact, to be readily understood by all of his contemporaries. Given enough time, and enough evidence of the success of his tactics, Sefer’s superiors in the Ottoman fleet eventually did realise—however belatedly—the fundamental importance of his contribution to the development of Ottoman sea power in the Indian Ocean. But unfortunately for Sefer, the armchair admirals of Istanbul’s learned elite were much less generous in their judgments. Unfamiliar with the Indian Ocean and committed to a Mediterranean concept of naval warfare that made his campaigns seem insignificant, they quite literally wrote Sefer out of the history books. Scholars of our own day must be careful not to make the same mistake.

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Notes

1. Giancarlo Casale, a specialist in Ottoman history, is an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of several scholarly articles on the history of Ottoman expansion in the Indian Ocean, and is currently putting the finishing touches on his first book-length monograph, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2009. Email: casale@umn.edu


3. For an overview of this literature and a consideration of its implications for Ottoman history, see Casale, "Ottoman Administration of the Spice Trade," 170-98; also Brunnert, *Ottoman Seapower*, 1-24.


6. According to Couto, the sultan "sent to that coast a Janissary, named Sefes, a great corsair, courageous and crafty...and he gave him orders that wherever he might find Ali Chelebi [Safer Reis], he should take control of his galleys and bring them safely to the port of Mecca [Luddah]." (despedio nas suas costas hum Janissaro, chamado Cafan grande Cossario, esforçado e de bom conselheiro...lhe deo por regimento que onde quer que achasse Ale Chelebi he tornasse as galês e as lavasse ao porto de Mecca:) Couto, Da Ásia, dec. 7, book 1, chap. 5. See also Faria and Sousa: "As for [Safer] Ali Chelebi, it seems that the Grand Turk had anticipated [that he would run into difficulties] for he sent after him Sefer, a corsair of the Janissaries who had better judgement than he, so that he might take the galleys over and accomplish the mission that the other had originally been charged with." ("A que agradava a Ale Chelebi parece a este antevendo o Grão Turco, porque logo enlutou atrás o Zafar, corsair Janissary, (mais ajudado em seu conceito) para receber dele as galeras e fazer com elas o que primeiro tinha pensado do outro." Faria e Sousa, *Ásia Portugueza* (201-25).
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capitão tem de toda a costa de Melinde ate Moçambique e assim da outra de Adem até Ozmuz querião por alguma dasqueles tan- tar aris e efectorar que elle deve ter imaginadas e por ellas oferecido grandes e proveitosos sucessos. A tudo se deve prevenir e de tudo deve estar advertido o Visorrel da India". Da Silva, Corpo Diplomático Portuguez, vol. 9.134.
33 "...seleccoes e sinceridade soldados dos melhores dohares da India, em que entravam muitos fidalgos e cavaleiros muito honrados". Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 7, chap. 2.
34 Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 10, chapter 2.
35 This encounter is recorded in the Tarikh-i Shih, although Sefer is confused in the text with the long-dead Pir Reis. See Serjeant, Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast, 110.
36 Couto, Portugal, Asia, dec. 7, book 10, chap. 2.
37 This is mentioned in both Portuguese and Arabic sources. See Serjeant, Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast; also Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 10, chap. 3.
38 For Ottoman documents on Sefer's movements, see B.A. Mühimme Defter #4, docs. 156-158.
39 "Afirmo me levava em proposito meter a sacco toda a costa de Melinde e chegar ainda a Moçambique com speranças muito grandes de enconrar alguma nao do Regno". Rego and Baxter, Documentos sobre os portuguezes, vol. 8.154.
40 Nasale, "Ottoman Administration of the Spice Trade", 179-94.
41 For a description of this attack, see Antonio Tepolto's letter to Madrid, 4 Nov. 1566, in Oliveira, Documentos da Venezia, 21.
42 "Si crede da alcuni che essi siano andati verso il Capo di Buona Speranza per accorrere forse con un Re in quel paese, il quale ha guera continua con il Re di Portogallo". Antonio Tepolto to the Venetian Senate, 1 Dec. 1566, in Oliveira, Documentos da Venezia, 22.
43 On Sokoliu's efforts to develop relations with Aceh, see Casale, "His Majesty's Servant Lutfi", 56-61.
44 Rego and Baxter, Documentos sobre os portuguezes, vol. 8.152; see also Serjeant, Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast, 110-11; for a corroborating report of Sefer's death from the Ottoman archives, see B.A. Mühimme Defter #3, doc. 350.
45 "Era o ladrão ouvido e pratico naquellas partes sabia bem como e quando acha de armarr suas redes. Não há homem destes que naquellas nossas partes possamos temer". Rego and Baxter, Documentos sobre os portuguezes, vol. 8.152.
46 See the three letters from Manuel de Vasconcelos to Cannanor to João de Castro, Sanceu, São Lourenço, vols. 3.341, 353 and 373.
47 Ottoman archival documents on the Jews of the customs house in Suez include B.A. Mühimme Defter #33, docs. 323 and 633; More generally, see Arbel, Trading Nations.
48 On relations between New Christians and the Jews of Cochin with the Ottoman Empire, see Tavm, "Outras gentes em outras rotas", 309-42 and by the same author, "Os Judeus e a expansao portuguesa", 215-40.
49 For example, Couto, Da Asia, dec. 6, book 10, chap. 9; and de Couto, dec. 7, chap. 2.
50 On Ottoman contacts with Aceh, see Reid, "Sixteenth-Century Turkish Influence", 395-414.
51 For evidence of Ottoman influence in Siam, see Wick, Documenta Indica, 3.152.
52 "O negocio he graue e de muita consideração e de ser muita a somma de speculación que vem pelo mar Roxo ao Cayro e pollo de Ozmuz a Baçora e bem se podem creer segundo as causas procedem que antes este trato hia em crescimento que em diminuílação. As despesas de Vossa Alteza no negocio da India são muito grandes e não se achando a ella algum remedio, sempre serão maiores. Em as pazes com o Turco para isto [sic] serem proveitosas, e não
53 For a contemporary Portuguese perspective on why the peace negotiations failed, see the newly edited volume of Diogo do Couto's 8th decade by Maria Augusto Lima Cruz, Diogo do Couto e a década 8a da Asia, 1.210-11.
54 See, for example, the arguments of Subrahmanyan in "Trading World of the Western Indian Ocean", 218.
55 "Em quanto alto estiverem, que fui mais de um mes, houveram vista de mais de cinco centsa moes de vezas, sem lhes poderem chegar, porque como elles estavam á terra, e ellas vinhem de mar em fina enfundadas, não fai possivel chegar-lhes nem seguirem-nas pela dentro, por se não meterm com ellas no Estraito a risco de se perderem". Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 10, chap. 3.
56 For examples of this view, see Hess, "The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt", 55-76; and Soucek, "Piri Reis and the Ottoman Discovery", 121-42.
57 Scholarship of this kind is based on the larg-er arguments about the superiority of Western naval technology represented by classic works such as Cipolla's Guns, Sails and Empire and Parker's Military Revolu-
58 For a discussion of the meaning of "control of the seas" in the sixteenth-century Medi-
terranean, see the introductory section of Guilmarin's Gunpowder and Galleys.

que eu haveria de estar naquele lugar". Da Silva, Corpo Diplomático Portuguez, vol. 9.136.
17 "E como era cassório, e muito pratico nas cousas daquelle mar, determinou de se ir na esteira da armada, porque sempre lhe fiscoría por ella cousa que preissê. É seguindo e a sua derrota, antes que chegasse a ponta de Dóia, desemmassaiou e deixou-se fiscor ao mar para esperar pelas nãos que haveriam ir demandar aquella paragem". Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 1, chap. 5.
18 This account is from Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 1, chap. 5. See also Farla e Sousa, Asia Portuguesa, vol. 9.135.
19 A.N.T.T., Corpo Cronológico, part 1, maço 86, doc. 120, fol. 1b.
20 A.N.T.T., Corpo Cronológico, part 1, maço 86, doc. 120, fol. 1a.
21 Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 1, chap. 7.
22 Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 3, chap. 3.
23 A.N.T.T., Corpo Cronológico, part 1, maço 100, doc. 28, fol. 2b.
24 "para que era deixar aquella ladroeeira tanto tempo em Moqua...que cada dia em crescentamento e aquele Cairo se faz cada dia com as presas dos Portuguezes mais rico e cada dia ha de acrecer armada quando aui tres justas somente...quanto mais trabalho lhe auria de dar aquela Cairo com trinta e um N.T.T., Corpo Crono-
obatico, part 1, maço 86, doc. 120, fol. 1b.
25 Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 6, chap. 7.
26 Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 6, chap. 7.
27 "...que elle era amigo dos Portuguezes: que se queria agua, ou mantimentos, que tudo lhe mandaria dar: e de muito boa vontade e assim tudo o mais de que tivesse necessidade". Couto, Da Asia, dec. 6, book 8, chap. 8.
28 "Por não ser conhecida a sua galé lhe tinha alenviadas grandes arrombadas de estesjava e sobre a masto feito huma guea pera parecer não, e as outras tres galés tinha mandada affistar de si". Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 8, chap. 8.
29 This account is in both Couto, Da Asia, dec. 7, book 8, chap. 8; Farla e Sousa, Asia Portuguesa, vol. 3.300-1.
30 On Sefer's appointment in place of Seydi Ali, see B.A. Mühimme Defter #4, doc. 540.
31 See for example Da Silva, Corpo Diplomático Portuguezes, vol. 8.152; and for a corroborat-}
32 "Pela pratica e experiencia que aquelle