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**Power Struggles and Trade in the Gulf  
1620-1820**

**Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi**

**Volume 1**

**(Volume 2 is a supplementary Atlas of Maps)**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Geography  
University of Durham**



**June 1999**

**24 AUG 1999**

## ABSTRACT

### Power struggles and trade in the Gulf 1620-1820

Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi

Between the death of Nādir Shāh, in 1747, and the establishment of the Qājār dynasty in 1795 there were 48 years of Zand rule in Persia, during which time Gulf trade declined and European factories closed down in several ports. Historians have offered varied and insubstantial reasons for this decline. In this thesis an attempt has been made, through the detailed use of primary sources, to offer a more logical and more reasoned interpretation of these developments in place of the older, ill-founded arguments.

In our view, the prime cause of the decline in trade and the withdrawal of the trading settlement from Bandar Abbas was the 'commotions', or power struggles in the region. On one hand was the struggle for overall control of Persia whose consequence was the ruin of trade. On the other, the commotion in the area of Bandar Abbas, brought about by Mullā 'Alī Shāh, the Banū Ma'in Shaikh, Shaikh Rāshid and the Charak Arabs, which was the main cause of the withdrawal from that port.

The cessation of trading at Bandar Rīq and Khark island was caused by disturbances fomented by Mīr Muhannā. According to the English, the main cause of the withdrawal of their settlement from Bandar Rīq was the conflict between Mīr Muhannā and Karīm Khān about Bandar Rīq. But it was Mīr Muhannā's suspicion that the English were his enemies and that they were the allies of Karīm Khān which caused their expulsion. The Dutch, for their part, were expelled from Khark island after they had joined forces with Bushire in attacking Mīr Muhannā on the orders of Karīm Khān.

In Bushire the case was different. Although the English acted neutrally in the conflicts they could not evade the dangers. They had suffered losses at Mīr Muhannā's hands but Karīm Khān believed that the English were refusing to help him against the Mīr. The anger of Karīm Khān, his determination not to receive the English in audience, and the fear that his brother, Zakī Khān, would detain the English Agent in Bushire all motivated the withdrawal of the English settlement from there.

At last, when the Qājār dynasty took control of all the Persian provinces at the beginning of the 19th century, the value of English trade with Persia increased enormously.

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Received 17 May 1772

**APPENDIX 66**

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, pp.354-7)

Report of the capture of the *Tyger*

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**APPENDIX 67**

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, pp.375-6)

Governor of Bombay's letter to Karīm Khān requesting the return  
of the *Britannia* and the *Tyger*, and the release  
of Beaumont and Green

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.12-14)

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.105-6)

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.282-3)

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.282-3)

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(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.244)

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(Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries*, vol.13, pp.44-5)

Faramān granted by Ja'far Khān  
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(East India Company, *Three reports of the Select Committee, appointed by the Court of Directors to take into consideration the export trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, China, Japan, and Persia; laid before the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council*, London: printed for J.S. Jordan, 1793, Appendix no. 3, p.102)

Profit and loss on sales of woollens  
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(East India Company, *Three reports of the Select Committee, appointed by the Court of Directors to take into consideration the export trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, China, Japan, and Persia; laid before the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council*, London: printed for J.S. Jordan, 1793, Appendix no. 2, p.101)

Profit and loss on sales of woollens  
at Basrah 1780/1 to 1789/90

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(Bombay Archives, Commercial Department Diary no. 7/1792, pp.409-10)

Sales of woollens at Basrah, September 1792

**APPENDIX 92**

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(IOR, Bombay Commerce, Internal and External Reports, Range 419, vols. 39-57, 1801-21)

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(IOR, Bombay Commerce, Internal and  
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Value of exports from Bombay to  
Persian Gulf and Red Sea, 1822-1858

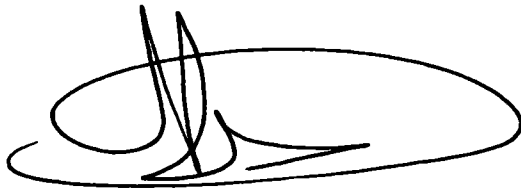
## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

A conventional, simplified but consistent system of transliteration has been used in this study for Arabic and Persian words or proper names. The *'ain* is represented by ['] and the *hamzah* by [']: the *hamzah* is omitted at the beginning of words. The *tā'* *marbūṭah* appears as [h] except in *idāfah*, when it is [t]. The usual exceptions have been made where authors use a preferred spelling for their names, and for words which are well known to non-specialist readers: thus, Afghanistan but Dashtistān; Bandar Abbas but Shāh 'Abbās. The mainly primary sources used in the study used wildly inaccurate ways of writing Arab or Persian names: for the sake of other researchers it therefore seemed particularly necessary to be precise about the names of the main actors and places. Reference is made in Chapter 1 to the variations of English language and spelling found in the original documents, and foreign names were obviously the most distorted elements, especially after two or three cycles of copying. Some names still defy absolute certainty about their spelling and these have been left as found.

## **Declaration**

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university. This thesis is the result of my own work and contains nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

This thesis does not exceed 100,000 words in length.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, enclosed within a large, irregular oval shape.

Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi

Sharjah

June 1999

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent, and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation to Professor Gerald Blake, who supervised my research and guided me throughout the writing of this thesis. My thanks are due to the staff of the Cartographic Department of the University of Durham for redrawing the figures in the main text (see page vii). Jasprint Limited of Durham printed the maps in the Atlas, and thanks are due to Mr John Rowell for supervising this work.

My thanks go also to Mr Mike Pinder for all his help in obtaining copies of the mass of documents my research demanded from the British Library. I am indebted similarly to Ben Slot for his help in collecting documents from the General State Archives in The Hague, and Dr S.D. Karnik, who assisted me in gathering material from the Bombay Archives. I am particularly grateful to Mr Brian Pridham for typing this volume with such skill and ability.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research objectives

It is now several centuries since the phenomenon of the rise and fall of European trade in the Persian Gulf, and the withdrawal of Dutch and English trading settlements which spanned the period 1620 to 1820. In all that time no scholars have offered a detailed account or a logical and reasoned interpretation of those events. The basic aim of this thesis is to provide such an explanation and correct the erroneous accounts in the *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia*, compiled by Lorimer between 1908 and 1914, and so to guard later writers from continuing to repeat the same mistakes by over-reliance on that very important source of history and geography of the Persian Gulf.<sup>1</sup> For example, Lorimer recounts certain events which occurred between 1716 and 1763 and described them as leading up to the withdrawal of the English factory from Bandar Abbas in 1763, but he establishes no connection between the events and the withdrawal. He mentions the 'commotion' at Bandar Abbas without saying that it caused the withdrawal, noting only that the English Agency was 'suddenly' withdrawn at that juncture. This thesis will show that the 'commotions', which were essentially struggles for power among peoples of the Gulf, were the main cause of the withdrawal from Bandar Abbas.

As for Bandar Rīq, Lorimer records the English expulsion in 1756 and accepts the views of Wood, the English Agent, that it was engineered by the Dutch, who were keen to take over Bandar Rīq for themselves. The Dutch expulsion from Khark island in 1766 was incorrectly attributed by Lorimer to the unprofitability of the Khark factory and the dangers it faced. The responsibility for the withdrawal of the English factory from Bushire in 1769 was placed by Lorimer on Morley, the Resident there.

In reality, the main cause was the hostility of Karīm Khān and the imminent threat from Zakī Khān.

John Perry, the author of *Karim Khan Zand*,<sup>2</sup> used Lorimer's *Gazetteer* as one of his main sources and regards the English withdrawal from Bandar Abbas as merely a repercussion of the Anglo-French Seven-Years-War, and this is totally incorrect. As regards Bandar Rīq, Perry accepts the contemporary English blame of Dutch 'machinations' but thinks also that Mīr Muhannā's opposition may have been a cause. He offers no reason for the Dutch expulsion from Khark island, but is again mistaken in attributing the English withdrawal from Bushire to the 'jealousy' of Moore, the English Agent in Basrah, of the supposedly greater commercial importance of Bushire, and the personal antipathy he apparently nursed towards both the Persians and the English Ambassador, Skipp.

Although John Kelly follows Lorimer in recounting the history of what was broadly called piracy in the Gulf, he argues that 'piracy is generally thought to have a depressing effect upon trade.'<sup>3</sup> But this thesis will show that trade began to flourish precisely during the period (1804 to 1820) when piracy was said to be active (see page 6 for further thoughts on this issue). An earlier thesis focusing on trade in the Gulf was Jila Sajadi's 'The East India Company's Trade with an Iranian Port at the End of the 18th and Beginning of the 19th Century: a Geographical Study' (1985). In it the author examines the trade being carried on through Bushire and reviews the various factors which seemed to have determined its character. Unfortunately, the thesis says no more about the withdrawal of the factory from Bushire than:<sup>4</sup>

After six years of operations at Bushehr, the Company abandoned its residency there in 1769. This was due to the deterioration in trade, as well as to a dispute between Karim Khan and the Company. Among the reasons for this was that it is obvious that the Khan was neither satisfied commercially nor politically with the Company's activities within his dominions.

A further thesis on the same broad issues equally strangely stops short in the critical year of 1747: this is Khalid Khalifa Al Khalifa's 'Commerce and Conflict: the



English East India Company Factories in the Gulf 1700-47'.<sup>5</sup> What follows in this thesis is therefore ground-breaking work.

## **1.2 Research methods**

By far the most important documentary sources for this study are to be found in:

- a) The Gombroon Diaries and Bushire Residency Records in the India Office Library and Records, London.
- b) The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Aanwinsten 1e Afdeling in the General State Archives, The Hague.
- c) The Basrah Diaries, the Commercial Department Diaries, and the Political and Secret Department Diaries in the Bombay Archives (now the Maharashtra State Archives).

In any research into the affairs of the English East India Company one is forced to focus on a starting date for the research, since many of the records and accounts of the factories established by the Company at Gombroon, Isfahan and in the interior of Persia during the reigns of the Safavi Shāhs are lost. Even if it were thought worth investigating the earliest years of English trading with Persia from purely British sources, the attempt would fail for want of enough authoritative material, either on this subject or on any other aspects of trade in the Persian Gulf from 1620 to 1746. On the other hand, research in the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the General State Archives in The Hague provides us with a mass of authentic primary source material for the same period.

It is worth noting that the Gombroon Diaries offer no information about the annual quantities of imports and exports made on the English East India Company's account during the period when the port was at its most flourishing. For the few months before the arrival of orders from Bombay to withdraw the factory, however, there is

no lack of material on the trading position, which makes it clear that English trade in Persia was declining.

The Basrah Diaries (1763-1811) are an important source of information about trade in the Persian Gulf. These documents, contained in 12 volumes, are in a very bad condition and can be found only in the Bombay Archives: there is no copy in the India Office Library in London. This primary source is extensively used in this thesis. Other primary source materials from the Bombay Archives used in this study are the East India Company's Commercial Department Diaries, Public Department Diaries, and a manuscript selection containing the 'Report on the Commerce of Arabia and Persia'. The Bushire Residency records in the India Office Library were also among the valuable primary sources used: they have been used before by researchers, mainly for historical studies, but in a less detailed manner than here, and not in conjunction with other primary materials.

The reader will notice that where quotations are used there is more than one system of transliteration of proper names in this thesis, if indeed there is any system at all. In the early 19th century and before, transliterations varied from one person to another and sometimes the same writer would even spell the same name differently in the same letter. In all cases of quotation no attempt has been made to correct even the most obvious mistakes and the style of the original author has been followed exactly. For the rest of the work an attempt has been made to apply a correct and uniform system of transliteration (see page xxvi). Attention should also be drawn to the fact that the English language, both grammar and spelling, were very different in the 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, the standard of literacy, especially among the naval officers of the British Empire does not seem to have been particularly high, and, perhaps because of the volume of work, secretaries making the copies of documents etc were bound to compound the mistakes made in the originals. These literary oddities have been left as they were in order to avoid yet more errors.

The many errors by the historians are revealed in this thesis, and a brief review of the previous literature shows a general shortage of specific attention to the study of Gulf trade in the period of its greatest challenges. The problem is epitomised in Philips' careful history *The East India Company 1784-1834* which (in 374 pages) mentions Persia eight times, and the Gulf not at all: all references focus on the political or military problems for India posed by Persia.<sup>6</sup> Other works bring the Persian trade into their ambit, but only from the viewpoint of the Muscovy and Levant Companies, or discussing the East India Company's trade from the interior of Persia to the north (Russia).<sup>7</sup> Some other studies provide useful insights, without having trade in the Gulf as a major consideration. Among these, Israel's *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* attributes the Dutch primacy (referred to again in Chapter 3) to the structure of the Dutch East India Company and the interventionist policy of the Dutch state. Disney's *Twilight of the Pepper Empire* covers only the very beginning of our period, but offers the interesting thought that the English were helped in the Gulf area by the conclusion of the 1635 Anglo-Portuguese treaty.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the Portuguese had been broken by then, and this is well brought out in the excellent works by Sanjay Subrahmanyam. In an intriguing reflection of the findings of this thesis, Subrahmanyam attributes the Portuguese decline mainly to the locally disturbed or hostile political context in India: secondary factors, he believes, were the power of the Dutch, the need felt by Shāh 'Abbās to control and tax the silk route, and the establishment of the English in India and the Gulf.<sup>9</sup> Subrahmanyam also stresses the prevalence of force being a tool of European trading in the area.<sup>10</sup>

That the tool was not only for European use is brought out by Calvin Allen, who attributes greater Muscat activity in the Gulf in the late 18th century to its new commercial policy - designed to increase Muscat trade by dominating neighbours and eliminating competitors.<sup>11</sup> The interlinkage of trade and political factors is well established in the literature. Only one author has given much space to the East India Company's presence in the Persian Gulf and that is Laurence Lockhart. His books on the career of Nādir Shāh<sup>12</sup>, and the fall of the Safavi dynasty at the hands of the

Afghans,<sup>13</sup> touch on the fortunes of the East India Company during troubled times and provide an excellent wider background. It is not their purpose, however, to look at the detail and draw conclusions accordingly. The detail, in any event, was not used by him: as he notes in the bibliography on Nādir Shāh, 'There is doubtless a vast amount to be gleaned from the archives of the Dutch East India Company; I very much regret that I have been unable to examine these Dutch records.'<sup>14</sup> By the time of his later book he had looked at the Dutch records relating to Isfahan only (and covering just six months) and still regretted 'that I have been unable to make a thorough exploration of the material that has been preserved at The Hague'.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.3 Choice of subject**

During earlier historical studies I noticed that the withdrawal of Dutch and English settlements from the Persian ports was recorded, but without adequate and convincing attention to the main reasons or causes of the withdrawal. The reasons adduced by Kelly, for example, for the decline in English trade with the Persian Gulf are dubious:<sup>16</sup>

The Company was not wholly to blame for the decline in its trade with the Gulf. A general fall took place throughout the region in the last forty years of the century, brought about by a variety of causes: piracy, especially by the Ka'ab and later the Qawasim, the extinction of the Dutch settlement on Kharaq, the ravages of plague in Turkish Arabia in 1775, the siege and capture of Basra, the dearth of specie in 'Iraq and Persia, and the civil wars that raged in Persia from 1779 onwards.

The causes cited were short-lived, except for the accusation of piracy. In the case of the Ka'b piracy charge Lorimer remarked 'There is nothing to show whether the motives of the Ka'ab in this case were merely piratical, or whether the tribe had come, in consequence of the Khargu operations, to regard the British as the allies of the oppressor Karīm Khān.'<sup>17</sup> In the case of the Qawāsīm the accusation is fallacious. The charge of piracy by the British against the Qawāsīm was first made in December 1804, and continued up to 1820.<sup>18</sup> But in the period from 1801 to 1821, imports from the Persian Gulf to Bombay more than doubled and exports from Bombay to the Gulf almost trebled.<sup>19</sup>

The various reasons cited by Kelly were not the main causes of the phenomenon of declining trade and the withdrawal of English trading settlements in the Persian Gulf. Therefore, a study seemed to be called for to clarify uncertain issues and to correct outright fallacies. The period chosen for the study is a long one (1620-1820). This covers the period of 53 years (1747-1800) comprising the decline and withdrawals; the period from 1620 to 1746 covers the establishment of both the Dutch and the English settlements, and the relative flourishing of trade before the decline; and the period of 1800 to 1820 illustrates the increase attainable by trade in peaceful times.

#### **1.4 Research context**

At the beginning of the 17th century Persian silk was being exported overland to Turkey, and the centre for the trade was Aleppo, in Syria: it was estimated that 6,000 bales (each of 280 lbs) entered Europe by this route annually. The English East India Company tried to divert the silk trade to the Persian Gulf, and thence to London via India, but lacked sufficient funds to buy such a quantity of silk, estimated to be worth £540,000 per annum.<sup>20</sup> The Dutch followed the English in trying to get their share of Persian silk, and both East India Companies were exporting Asian products to Persia, receiving in return cash and silk.<sup>21</sup> The Dutch and English attempt to divert the Persian silk trade from its Gulf/Mediterranean route (after the eviction of the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622) was a longer-term failure. The silk trade down the Gulf was a temporary phenomenon: by the second half of the 17th century most Persian silk was again going to Europe through Aleppo, and this situation remained the same in the 18th century.<sup>22</sup>

### **1.4.1      *The establishment of the English and Dutch settlements in the Persian Gulf***

#### **I.      Bandar Abbas**

In 1622 the English and Dutch tried to establish their Companies on Hormuz island but the Persians refused permission: instead, they allowed the Europeans to establish their settlements at the port of Gombroon (Bandar Abbas).<sup>23</sup>

#### **II.     Khark island**

In October 1753, Mīr Nāṣir of Bandar Rīq offered Khark island to the Dutch Resident at Basrah, Kniphausen, for the establishment of a factory there. The Dutch Governor-General in Batavia approved Kniphausen's initiative and sent him back to Khark to found the settlement.<sup>24</sup>

#### **III.    Bandar Rīq**

The Court of Directors of the East India Company in London gave discretion to the Governor of Bombay in April 1754 to settle any of their employees in Bandar Rīq, and he decided to send Francis Wood there in order to open a factory.<sup>25</sup>

#### **IV.    Bushire**

Alexander Douglas, the English Agent at Bandar Abbas, was directed to visit Bushire in April 1761 in order to give his opinion on a suitable place between Bandar Abbas and Basrah for trade.<sup>26</sup> Douglas recommended that the only suitable place in that stretch of coast was Bushire.

The factories in all of the above four locations were abandoned as a result of political disturbances or 'commotions'. Although there was also maladministration by Kniphausen on Khark, and by Jervis in Bushire, this was in no way responsible for the failures. In times of peace and tranquillity there was a realistic prospect of profitable trade in the Persian Gulf, as shown by the figures cited on page 6.<sup>27</sup>

### **1.4.2      *Anglo-Dutch rivalry***

European trading was conducted in a general atmosphere of calumny: wherever possible the Dutch and the English were ready to tell the Persian authorities damaging

stories about the other party in order to obtain favours and hinder the trade of competitors. The first important date in the perennial conflict was as early as 1625, when the Governor of Farsistān, Imām Qulī Khān, decreed that the Dutch should pay customs duties to the English only for trade with Hormuz (the English had been given the right to half of all customs duties in recognition of their part in chasing the Portuguese from Hormuz). Since the Dutch did no trade with Hormuz they were able to avoid paying anything to the English.<sup>28</sup>

The Dutch came into direct rivalry with the English in 1636 when they changed their trading methods from selling their goods in Isfahan to selling in Bandar Abbas. In 1645 the Dutch sent a fleet of eight laden merchant ships to Bandar Abbas and almost ruined the English trade there by reducing their prices, and making an arrangement with the harbourmaster which enabled them, again, to avoid paying customs duties.<sup>29</sup> The Shāh wrote, in 1649, that he had received accusations from the English against the Dutch the previous year but that, after investigation, he had found them to be untrue. The accusations related to fraud over the payment of customs duties and the handling of goods for local merchants, contrary to the terms of the Dutch privileges.<sup>30</sup>

In 1653, during the Anglo-Dutch war, the Dutch brought a fleet of 15 laden merchant ships to the Gulf, and at the same time captured three English ships before they could enter the Gulf. In the next year, 1654, before news of the conclusion of peace between the two countries had reached the area, the Dutch fleet blocked off navigation in the Gulf, and English trade almost ceased: by 1656 the entire Persian trade of the English East India Company was nearly ruined.<sup>31</sup> The second and third Anglo-Dutch wars of 1665-1667 and 1672-1674 followed, but a more serious turn (in trading terms) occurred in 1685 when the English arrested local vessels being used to ferry cargo to the larger Dutch ships. The Dutch replied in kind by arresting the Indian ships used by the English: the English thereupon promised the Persians help to expel Dutch troops from the fortress of Qishm. The Dutch advanced matters by complaining to the Persians about English piracy in the Gulf. Some English pirates had cap-

tured a Portuguese ship and killed part of its crew, using the ship to pursue their piracies until 1687 when they brought a captured ship from Sind to Bandar Abbas. Here they found themselves paying a heavy fine imposed by the Governor.

There were local repercussions when William of Orange, Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch armed forces, landed in England in 1688, deposed his father-in-law James II and accepted the British throne for himself as William III. English representatives in the Middle East repeatedly claimed that the Dutch were now subjects of the English King, but the reality was that William, although the sovereign of Britain, was formally only an appointed official of the Dutch state. In 1693, the English started trying to bribe Dutch sailors to enter their service: these attempts ceased only after an agreement was reached in 1730. The Dutch also complained, in 1723, that the English were following the practice of the Portuguese by trying to oblige local shipping to carry English passports (which would impair the freedom of the Dutch to use local craft).<sup>32</sup>

Between 1728 and 1729 the Dutch and English competed for control of the islands near Bandar Abbas: when the Dutch gained control over Hormuz the English intrigued with the invading Afghans against them. In 1737 the two rivals were vying with each other in offering help and concessions to the Persians to assist their military operations in Oman, and circulating slanderous stories about each other.<sup>33</sup> From 1753-1754 the English were involved in problems with Kniphausen on Khark island, and it seems that the English were very much behind Kniphausen's difficulties with the Mutesellim (Governor) of Basrah.<sup>34</sup>

There were some differences between the English and the Dutch in terms of policies and practices in their Gulf trade, although both of them were constrained by the Persian *faramāns* which gave them their trading privileges. At the time of the Afghan occupation of Persia (1722-29), the Dutch remained close to the Safavi dynasty while the English recognised the Afghan occupiers. The Dutch maintained friendship with



the Arab tribes, but the English were antagonistic towards them, owing to Arab competition with the 'country' trade carried in Indian-owned ships under the English flag.<sup>35</sup> Strategic decisions for the Dutch were taken in Batavia, whereas the English received theirs variously from Bombay, Madras and Bengal.

## **1.5 Organisation of the thesis**

The thesis is arranged in seven chapters, with the present chapter covering the context of the research; research methods; the choice of subject; research context; organisation of the thesis; and the currencies in use during the study period. Chapter 2 outlines the historical geography of the Persian Gulf and Chapters 3-6 examine the power struggles and trading results in the Gulf as they relate to four factories: Bandar Abbas, Bandar Rīq, Khark island and Bushire. The final Chapter 7 offers an overview and conclusions to the whole study. Many appendices and maps supplement the thesis: the appendices are included partly for their rarity value (being hitherto mostly unpublished), their relevance to the text, and their usefulness to other researchers in this field. Most of the maps form part of the writer's private collection, while others are rare maps in various archives which are difficult to access.

## **1.6 Currency**

### **1.6.1 *Local currencies***

The values of currencies (and also of weights - see the Glossary, pages ???-???) varied widely during the period of this study, and their inter-relationships were correspondingly intricate. In the Persian trade the most commonly used unit of account, rather than a currency, was the *Toman*. Its value declined from about £3 7s to less than £1 (only about 10 shillings according to one report in 1817-20) but, for accounting purposes, it was still regarded during most of the period as worth about £3 or 30 *Rupees*. Its value fell outside of Persia: at a time when it was worth about 20 Rupees in Gombroon it fetched only 15 Rupees in Basrah, and 13 Rupees in Ras al-Khaimah.

The Toman remained fairly constant against the favourite gold coin of the Ottoman territories, the Venetian *ducat*, which rated at about half a Toman. Against the Maria Theresa Dollar (German Crown or *Rial*) the Toman was worth about eight.

The division of the Toman was usually into 200 *Shāhīs*, or 100 *Maḥmūdīs*. Where they existed as coinage the *Maḥmūdī* was silver and the Toman gold, but the *Maḥmūdī*, like the Toman, was usually given a conventional value in the East India Company's accounts, normally about 8d. The *Shāhī*, in consequence, entered the accounts as 4d. The entry for *Maḥmūdī* in the Glossary shows how its real value, like the Toman's, declined over a period.

After the Toman, the most commonly used unit of accounting was the Rupee, but its varieties were numerous. Where the primary sources show cross-rates which make no apparent sense (and the same applies to weights) we can be sure that a local Rupee, or other unit, is being used. The Bombay Rupee evolved out of the Surat Rupee from about 1800, but there were still many other local Rupees in usage. The Rupee was more constant against the £ sterling than was the Toman: it was customary in the East India Company to regard the Bombay Rupee as worth a florin (the old 2s coin, not the Dutch guilder). The Rupee and the Maria Theresa Dollar were still the coins used in the Gulf in living memory, with the £ sterling fetching about 13 Rupees or 3 to 4 Maria Theresa Dollars. Towards the end of the period under study, however, the MTD was worth about 2½ Rupees.

### 1.6.2 *European coinage*

Actual European coins were brought into the Gulf by both the English and the Dutch in the first half of the 17th century to pay for silk. The commonest coins used for this purpose at that time were gold ducats, silver rixdollars (Dutch *Rijksdaaler* = 2½ Guilders), and silver pieces of eight (the Spanish Real) with the same value. Trade accounts were always kept in guilders by the Dutch, and pounds by the English; in both cases these were merely units of accounting. After 1650 the Dutch and the

English no longer brought cash to the Gulf; instead, they took cash in payment for merchandise (mostly local coins and Venetian ducats). Over the centuries the rate of exchange between the guilder and the pound changed only slightly: £1 = 10 Guilders in 1621 and 11.5 Guilders at the end of the 18th century.

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE PERSIAN GULF

#### 2.0 Introduction

Geography has played a significant, and at times determinant, role in shaping the nature of trade in the Gulf. This chapter summarises the nature of the wind regime, the currents and the coastal geography, all of which dictated the rhythms of trade and the location of the main trading centres. The Persian coast was much better favoured in this respect than the Arabian coast. The global location of the Gulf has ensured that trade exchanges flourished there. It was a meeting-point for European, Asian, and Far Eastern trade. Relative ease of communication by land (in times of peace) brought goods to the coast, and away from the coast to the interior. The age-old exploitation of pearls in the Gulf created a trading and seagoing tradition, and brought revenues to local people. Local trade flourished because the Gulf was small enough to encourage short-distance commerce in locally-made vessels. The Gulf's seagoing tradition and the system of monsoon winds also combined to enable these local craft to trade as far west as the Red Sea and the East African coast, and as far as India and China in the east.

This chapter cannot include a comprehensive geography of the Gulf but it highlights certain key features. There are, however, several geographical texts available which are suitable for background information. There are useful appendices on geographical topics in Cottrell's *The Persian Gulf States*.<sup>1</sup> For authoritative information on winds, currents and tides, and brief notes on all the islands, *The Persian Gulf Pilot* remains unequalled<sup>2</sup> except, perhaps, for the United States Hydrographic Center's equivalent *Sailing Directions for the Red Sea and Persian Gulf*.<sup>3</sup> Much of the geographical literature on the Persian Gulf draws on the classic Admiralty Handbook which, in its day,

was the best geographical text by far and remains well worth consultation today.<sup>4</sup> For more general marine geography, *The Times Atlas of the Oceans* covers aspects of environment, security, and maritime trade in a series of excellent maps and illustrations with concise text.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.1 Naming the Gulf

The actual naming of the Gulf has become a problem for researchers in the field of Gulf studies in recent years. We can attribute this difficulty to the disagreements from 1958 onwards between the Persians and the Arabs on either side of the Gulf about nomenclature. If asked why they were changing the name from Persian Gulf to Arabian Gulf, Arabs would reply that they had always called it the Persian Gulf until the Persians began citing the usage of the term 'Persian' as a justification for Iranian power politics in the region in the 1950s.

The name 'Persian Gulf' goes back beyond the year 150 AD when Claudius Ptolemaeus (Ptolemy) wrote his *Guide to Geography*. His knowledge of the Gulf was based on *Indika* by Flavus Arrianus (died about 180 AD), a contemporary of his who was a high Roman official, and Strabo's *Geography* (Book 16). Strabo lived ca 63 BC to 25 AD.<sup>6</sup> The *Indika* contains an account of the travel from India to the Euphrates of Nearchos, the admiral of Alexander the Great, in about 324 BC.<sup>7</sup> These Greek and Roman geographers commonly applied the term 'Erythraean Sea' (which means literally Red Sea) to the whole of the Indian Ocean, the modern Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They used the term 'Arabian Gulf' for the modern Red Sea, and 'Persian Gulf' for the modern Persian/Arab Gulf.<sup>8</sup> But because 'Erythraean Sea' meant all of the sea area between Africa and India there are sometimes very confusing references to the Persian Gulf as the Erythraean Sea: some early translators then made the mistake of translating these references as 'Red Sea'!<sup>9</sup>

It is not certain that the maps we attribute to Ptolemy were really made by him or whether later scholars added them to the text of his book. His first map dates from 1477<sup>10</sup> (see the Atlas, Map no. 1) and it seems that the map's creators were influenced by the earlier Arab historians, who called the Persian Gulf *baḥr fāris*, meaning 'Sea of Persia' or 'Sinus Persicus' (see the Atlas, Map nos. 1-2).<sup>11</sup> Although some Arab historians of the 10th century called the Persian Gulf *al-baḥr al-akhḍar* (the Green Sea)<sup>12</sup> or *al-khalīj al-akhḍar* (the Green Gulf)<sup>13</sup> these terms were not commonly adopted (see the Atlas, Map no. 3).

In 1546, the Ottoman Turks, who had occupied Baghdad a few years earlier, attacked Basrah and captured it. In the same year they invaded the Arabian coast as far as Qaṭīf, which they occupied after expelling the Portuguese, and cleared a passage for themselves through the Gulf to the Indian Ocean.<sup>14</sup> From that time (1546) onwards, and up to 1712, the Ottomans started to call the Gulf the 'Gulf of Basrah', the 'Gulf of Qaṭīf', or the 'Gulf of Arabia'. This was confusing for the cartographers, who were accustomed to using the terms 'Sinus Persicus' or 'Gulf of Persia', and they began to employ Ottoman as well as earlier titles in the same maps (see the Atlas, Map nos. 4-16 and *The Gulf in Historic Maps* by this writer).<sup>15</sup> These terms, 'Gulf of Persia' and 'Sinus Persicus', were adopted by the European cartographers as a result of their contacts with the Portuguese. The most important 16th century Italian cartographer, Giacomo Gastaldi, owed the names used in his map 'Arabia Felix' to the early Portuguese traveller, Duarte Barbosa (see the Atlas, Map no. 4).<sup>16</sup> He used the name 'Golpho de Persia' but in 1572, after the spread of Turkish influence in this region he added 'Mare Elcatif', making 'Mare Elcatif Golfo di Persia' (see the Atlas, Map no. 5). The other cartographers did the same and produced a collection of different combinations designed to please the two enemies, Persians and Turks.<sup>17</sup> The various combinations were:

- i) Mare Elcatif / Sinus Persicus
- ii) Mare Elcatif / Sinus Arabicus
- iii) Mare Elcatif



- iv) Sinus Arabicus
  - v) The Sea Elcatif / Arabian Gulfe
  - vi) Golfe De Balsera / Mer D'Elcatif
  - vii) Golfe de Balsera D'Elcatif / Golfe De Persia
  - viii) Gulph of Balsera / Sea of Elcatif or the Gulf of Persia
  - ix) Golfo Di Bassora ó D'Elcatif ó Sinus Persicus
  - x) Sino Persico ó Golfo di Bassora ó d'Elcatif
  - xi) Golfo di Bassora
  - xii) Persian Gulf
- (see the Atlas, Map nos. 4-16)

The English cartographers, Christopher Brown and Samuel Thornton, started using the name 'Persian Gulf' in 1712 and 1716 respectively, and from then on the other names began to disappear.<sup>18</sup> As most of the documents to be used in this study call the Gulf the Persian Gulf, and sometimes refer to the Red Sea as the Arabian Gulf, it becomes necessary to use the term Persian Gulf henceforward to avoid confusion.

Our immediate object here is to describe those geographical aspects of the Persian Gulf which help explain some of the patterns of trade and communications, and the location of towns and ports in the following pages.

## **2.2 Surveys of the Persian Gulf**

In the eighteenth century no adequate chart of the Persian Gulf existed, until the map published by Carsten Niebuhr appeared in 1772 (see the Atlas, Map no. 17).<sup>19</sup> In 1785 a brief survey of the Persian coast was made by Lieutenant John McCluer of the Bombay Marine and his materials were published in 1786 by Alexander Dalrymple.<sup>20</sup> Dalrymple augmented that publication with extracts on the topography of the Persian Gulf from the works of Niebuhr, Thornton and others (see the Atlas, Map nos. 18-38).<sup>21</sup> The most generalised topographical knowledge of the Persian Gulf came from

the drawings and observations of Captain Wainwright, of the East India Company's Marine, in 1809 and 1810. The chart constructed from his work was the most detailed one of the Persian coast: the Arabian coast was unknown to the Captains of the Bombay Marine at that time, except for Bahrain and Ras al-Khaimah (see the Atlas, Map no. 39). Following on from this chart, Arrowsmith's chart was made in 1813 from materials collected by Captain Ritchie, and Lieutenant Bartholomew's chart relied heavily on McCluer's work (see the Atlas, Map no. 40).<sup>22</sup>

From 1821 to 1829 a complete survey of the Gulf was carried out by four Captains of the Bombay Marine: Captain Guy in the *Discovery*, Captain Cogan in the *Psyche*, Captain Brucks in the *Teignmouth* and Lieutenant Haines in the *Benares* (see the Atlas, Map no. 41).<sup>23</sup> From these surveys, Captain Brucks in 1830 constructed a chart of the Persian Gulf, in English and Arabic (see the Atlas, Map no. 42). The Berghaus, a German cartographic firm, published a more detailed chart of the Persian Gulf in 1832: the original surveys for that chart are not known, but there is a note on the map that they were carried out in the years 1821-1825, and that the data had come from the offices of the Bombay Marine. This is a rare map: only two copies are in existence, one in the British Library and the other in this writer's collection (see the Atlas, Map no. 43). One of the last of the important works of the officers of the Indian Navy (as it now was) came in 1860 when Commander Constable and Lieutenant A.W. Stiffe carefully revised the older surveys and compiled two charts of the Persian Gulf. The positions of the principal points, islands and landmarks had been determined by the two officers between September 1857 and March 1860: the intervening coasts and soundings came from the surveys by Captains Guy and Brucks (see the Atlas, Map nos. 44-45).<sup>24</sup>

## **2.3 Surrounding topography, coasts, depths, islands and shoals**

The area of the Persian Gulf is nearly 70,000 square miles. Its length, in a straight line from Sharjah on the United Arab Emirates coast to the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab, is about 450 miles, whilst its breadth varies from 100 to 180 miles between the two coasts.<sup>25</sup>

### **2.3.1 *The Arabian coast***

The Arabian coast is low, with reefs and shoals fronting it to a great distance offshore and forming the pearl banks, with the exception only of the Arabian shore on the left hand of the Gulf’s entrance, where the mountains of Ras Musandam are found.<sup>26</sup> This coast can be divided into three sections, according to the perceptions of eighteenth century navigators.

#### **a) The coast from Ras Musandam to Abu Dhabi**

At the very entrance to the Gulf are the great Quoins, three rocks near one another, and so named by European navigators: the Arabs call them Salāmah wa Banātuha (Salamah and her daughters). The water around them is 40 fathoms deep. From the Gulf entrance towards Abu Dhabi, a course keeping 2½ miles off shore passes over seabed from 25-35 fathoms to only 5 fathoms. Off Umm al-Qaiwain ships are recommended to keep in 7 fathoms until clear of Umm al-Qaiwain reef. From there to Abu Dhabi the rest of the course is in 5 fathoms. The beginning of the Musandam coast, from Ras Musandam to Sha‘m, is a succession of coves and inlets in front of high mountains. From Sha‘m onwards the mountains begin to turn inland, and the coast becomes low and flat with sandy soil as it runs southward (see the Atlas, Map no. 44). Date groves grew near townships as far as Abu Dhabi.<sup>27</sup>

#### **b) The coast from Abu Dhabi to Ras Rakkān (Qatar)**

From Abu Dhabi the coast runs for 250 miles to Wakrah, about 60 miles south of Ras Rakkān, and in the seventeenth century was uninhabited. The whole of that stretch is low and sandy, and the coast has shoals with great reefs extending for miles where the pearl banks are. The depth averages 10 to 15 fathoms offshore except over the pearl banks, where it reduces to 3 to 9 fathoms. Many islands lie off this part of the coast,

some high and some low, but all of them barren and lacking water. Europeans never visited this part of the coast before 1864 except for Ras Rakkān itself (see the Atlas, Map nos. 44-45).<sup>28</sup>

**c) The coast from Ras Rakkān to Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab**

The coast now runs southwards into Dawḥat Salwah and then to the north-west towards Kuwait. It continues low and sandy with just a few small hills and some vegetation near Qaṭīf. Except for Qaṭīf this part of the coast, again, was not visited by Europeans before 1864. The entire coast is fronted by extensive reefs until within 70 miles of Kuwait and then meets the islands of Failaka and Bubiyan before the entrance to Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab. The inlet of Khor Abdullah lies on the left of the entrance (see the Atlas, Map no. 45).<sup>29</sup>

The island of Bahrain, formerly called Awal, is situated in Dawḥat Salwah, between the west coast of Qatar and the coast of mainland Arabia. It is 27 miles long, from north to south, and just 10 miles across. Its shores are low but, in the centre of the island, there are volcanic hills rising to about 400 ft. It was fertile at the time of our study, with abundant fresh water springs and covered with date groves. Bahrain’s capital was already the large town called Manamah. Most of Bahrain’s trade was in pearls exported to India, which were valued in 1824 at 1,200,000 German crowns.<sup>30</sup>

**2.3.2 The Persian coast**

The Persian coast, being mostly mountainous, had deep water close in and was safe to approach.<sup>31</sup> Like the Arab side, it too can be divided into three parts.

**a) The coast from the entrance to Ras Bustānah (near Lingah)**

From the Gulf entrance the coast of Mināb runs north-west 26 miles to Bandar Abbas. This coast is low and swampy, and the depth when 2 miles offshore is only 3 fathoms. Behind the coast there are two remarkable peaks in the mountain range which rise to about 3,000 ft. Towards Bandar Abbas, Hormuz island stands in the way. This is about 4 miles long and wide: it has 7 fathoms close to the edge of its reefs, while at 2 to 3 miles it has 12 fathoms. The island has no water except what was

stored in cisterns in the hills. In approaching Bandar Abbas, ships had to navigate between Hormuz and the mainland, where they could find 6 fathoms along the coast. Bandar Abbas itself was a large settlement at the bottom of a bay in the northernmost part of the Gulf's eastern end.

Then came, on the left for ships following the coast, the largest island in the Gulf, Jazīrat al-Ṭawīlah (Long Island) as the Arabs called it, or Qishm. This is 60 miles long and 19 miles across, and it lies parallel to the coast, separated from it by a passage named by Captain Brucks as Clarence Strait (see the Atlas, Map nos. 21, 44). This strait was navigable for ships. Off the southern flank of Qishm are the islands of Larak and Henjam (see the Atlas, Map nos. 46-47). Behind the opposite coast there is a great chain of mountains where Khamīr, with its hills of sulphur, lay. At the end of the strait Basidu lies on the tip of the island. From Khamīr to Ras Bustānah the mountain range continues westward, with the towns of Kung and Lingah on the coast and inhabited by Arabs. The anchorages in front of these towns were in 5 fathoms (see the Atlas, Map no. 44).<sup>32</sup>

**b) The coast from Ras Bustānah to Bushire**

Ranges of mountains continue along this part of the coast, rising up close to the sea in parts and providing deep water of 40-50 fathoms close to. In this stretch there were many townships of Arab inhabitants. Offshore lay the islands of Sirrī, the two Tunbs, Furūr, Sīr Abū Nu'air and Abū Mūsā. Further along come the islands of Qays, Hindurabi and Bushaib. The inhabitants of these islands and the facing coast were the Huwalah Arabs (see the Atlas, Map nos. 44-45).<sup>33</sup>

**c) The coast from Bushire to Shaṭṭ al-'Arab**

The mountain ranges here are at some distance from the coast, with only the 1,000 ft Mount Bang close to the shore. Bushire was the principal seaport of Persia at that time but had only 3 fathoms a mile offshore, and ships drawing more than 20 ft had to anchor 4½ miles out (see the Atlas, Map no. 48 and Chapter 5.1). The shore is low, except for Bang, and this part of the coast contained Bandar Rīq with its small creek, and Ganawah with a few date-palms and other trees. Opposite them lie the

islands of Khark and Kharku. The inhabitants of Bushire, Bandar Rīq, Ganawah and Khark island were Arabs. From Bang to Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab the anchorage was in 2¾ fathoms, or in soft mud 2½ miles off Dailam. Dailam’s inhabitants were Persian mainly, although some were Arab. Before finally reaching Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab there is the great salt water inlet of Khor Musa (see the Atlas, Map no. 45).<sup>34</sup> Leaving Khor Musa on the right, ships sailed west until they reached the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab. On the right bank of the Shaṭṭ, a hundred miles inland, was Basrah; on the left bank was Muhammarah, dominated by the Banū Ka‘b (see the Atlas, Map no. 49).<sup>35</sup>

## 2.4 Climate

On the map, the Persian Gulf region for our purposes is bounded for convenience by latitudes 26° and 32° north, and longitudes 46° and 58° east (see Figure 2.1). Climatologically, this region is conditioned by geographical factors. The Gulf’s global location can be defined by its latitude, and thus its distance from the equator; in this case beginning at only 26° north. The whole of the Gulf area is therefore situated in a very hot and dry region of the earth. In the context of sea-borne trade, the winds, tides and currents are obviously of paramount importance and these are considered in the next section. The other climatic factors which weigh more heavily than any other are heat, humidity and rainfall. These may be explained briefly as follows.

### 2.4.1 *Temperature*

The highest temperatures in the Gulf rise to a range of 52-67°C, and the lowest reach 15°C. This has affected every aspect of life in the Gulf from architecture to public health. From our point of view it partly explains the trade in woollen goods as well as cottons and silks. The summer conditions of heat and humidity (see the next section) were so trying that most activities diminished or ceased at that time: on the Arab side of the Gulf, however, pearl diving took place during the hot season.



Figure 2.1 The Persian Gulf and chief maritime trade routes to Europe and India

Within such a hot area the important feature is the lowering of temperature caused by a rise in altitude. The Persian coast provides a very clear example of that effect: the east coast from Mināb to Lingah, and the north-west coast from Kangun to Dailam, have a coastal plain at sea level where the temperatures are very hot. The central coastal area, however, between Lingah and Kangun is elevated along most of its length, reaching a height of 10,000 ft towards the interior, and temperatures are therefore lower than those of the other stretches.

The areas adjacent to the sea experience little fluctuation in temperatures between day and night, as also between winter and summer, whereas the interiors can experience considerable ranges in temperature.

#### **2.4.2      *Humidity***

Discomfort caused by high temperatures is compounded by humidity, which is very high in the Persian Gulf throughout the year. The average humidity reading in winter rises to about 70-80% and exceeds 90% in summer. A notable phenomenon is that the north-west of the Gulf, surrounded by dry, hot deserts, will sometimes register humidity of 50% while, at the same time, the south-east will have 80%, being near the Indian Ocean. Similarly, coastal locations tend to be more humid than inland.

#### **2.4.3      *Rainfall***

In the eight hot months of the year there is no rain. In winter, however, the rainfall on the Arabian coast reaches nearly 10 cm, while the Persian coast with its higher relief receives up to 20 cm.<sup>36</sup> The most important rain-bearing wind is the south-easterly, caused by the effect of the sun on the Persian mountains which produces a heated layer of air above the sea to the south-east or north-west (the north-westerly is colder and is the more prevalent). It often happens in southern Persia and the Gulf that the two currents meet (see page 27, under **Seasonal winds**), with the result that a north-westerly gale may be raging at Bushire, while a south-easter is shaking Bandar Abbas. This latter wind is the rain-bearer throughout the greater part of Persia.<sup>37</sup>



## **2.5 Winds, currents and tides**

### **2.5.1 *Wind***

This was the factor of greatest importance in the Persian Gulf to the sailing ships which carried large quantities of goods, with the wind either facilitating the passage of the ships or causing losses to both men and vessels. The winds of the Gulf can be divided into three kinds:

**Seasonal winds**, which blow from the north and south towards the centre of the Gulf, where the temperatures rise higher than those of the Persian mountains or the Arabian desert, and continue on to blow parallel to the coasts from north-west to south-east.

**The local winds**, including the sea and land breezes on all coasts of the Gulf, flowing from the land to the sea during the night and turning onshore again during the day.

Significant local winds are:

- i) The *shamāl* (meaning north in Arabic) which begins to blow in winter for nine months from the north-west to all Gulf coasts, bringing dangerous conditions.
- ii) The north-easterly wind which blows to the Persian coast in winter, especially towards Hormuz, bringing clouds and rain.
- iii) The *kaws* (Persian for east), a summer wind from the east, which brings high humidity as it crosses the sea.

**The *suhailī***, which is more of an occasional whirlwind, bringing dust storms as it erupts from the south-east and causes great damage.

### **2.5.2 *Currents***

At the entrance to the Gulf the prevailing currents run inwards, from May to September; and outwards during the rest of the year. Within the Persian Gulf itself, between the entrance and the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab, the current sets down the middle of the Gulf. It is often very weak and, at times, may set towards the north.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.5.3 *Tides*

Tidal range in the Gulf is negligible, thus removing one of the uncertainties experienced by navigators in many other parts of the world.

## 2.6 The effects of geography and meteorology on navigation in the Gulf, Persian coast and Arabian coast

There are many factors which make navigation along the Persian coast faster and safer, beyond the points already made above.

- a) **Distance:** The Persian coast is shorter than the Arabian shore, with fewer capes and indentations.
- b) **Depth:** The Persian coast is deep enough for navigation whereas the Arabian coast is shallow, and treacherous in places.
- c) **Sea bed:** Close to the Persian shore the sea bed has a muddy bottom with good anchor holding, while the Arabian side presents many dangers from the reefs.
- d) **Current and wind:** When sailing along the Persian coast vessels could take advantage of the north-west setting currents, as well as the land breezes; further out, vessels became becalmed and drifted with the currents.
- e) **Shelter:** In every part of the Persian coast ships could find anchorages in the different bays, or in the lee of several islands lying offshore which gave shelter from direct assault by the gales. The bays on the Arabian side were shallow, and strong winds blew directly onshore.
- f) **Landmarks:** The Persian coast being mountainous, its peaks and capes were used by navigators as reference points, but the Arabian coast is mostly flat and featureless.
- g) **Settlement:** Along the Persian coast there were many towns and villages where water and wood could be obtained: on the Arabian side there were no easily accessible settlements nor fresh water.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 2.2 Location map of the Persian Gulf

In short, the British view was that the Arabian coast was 'little known and considered unsafe',<sup>40</sup> and they were attracted to the Persian shore, as were other European merchants and navigators.

## **2.7 The preference for the Persian Gulf route over the Red Sea**

Navigation up the Red Sea was not practicable for vessels of European construction from May until October, the season of the south-west monsoon. It was claimed that the small craft of the natives of both coasts kept up a constant communication between Mocha and Suez, but the English could get no confirmation of this and thought that the voyage 'must be very precarious and at best very tedious'.<sup>41</sup> Because of the natural forces opposed to navigation up the Red Sea for six months of the year, it could not be relied upon as a general channel of communication between India and Britain.<sup>42</sup> Over the long distance from India to Mocha and Suez, vessels had to carry water and wood at the expense of goods.

From every point of view, the British held that the Persian Gulf presented the most permanent and safe channel of communication between Britain and India.<sup>43</sup> Vessels navigating through the Persian Gulf did not have to carry large quantities of water and wood because there were so many ports along the Sind coast and the Persian coast within the Gulf (see Figure 2.2). Given the easier navigation by the Gulf route, compared with the Red Sea, it would appear to have long preceded the Red Sea as the preferred route for communication.<sup>44</sup>

## **2.8 Ports and harbours in the Gulf**

The commercial situation in the Gulf during the pre-Islamic period differed totally from its character in early Islamic times. In the pre-Islamic period (i.e. until the 7th century) the Chinese and other Far Eastern people used to carry their goods to Ceylon, where they were picked up by Persian ships and carried to ports in the Per-

sian Gulf. Trade within the Gulf was in the hands of the Persians, and they were the intermediaries for the silk trade between China and the West. After the Islamic conquests, however, the Arabs occupied all the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Islamic empire was homogeneous. Trade was now in the hands of the Arabs and it flourished between the Persian Gulf, India and China.<sup>45</sup>

### 2.8.1 *Pre-Islamic settlements*

Only a very general view of the earliest trade can be given through a brief description of its settlements.

- a) **Bahrain:** The centre of the pearl fishery, under its old name of Awal. The inhabitants were described in 420 AD as idolators, but the Persians occupied the islands in 615 and remained there until the Islamic era.
- b) **Rishahr (Reshire):** Just south of Bushire, and founded about 500 BC. Its trade later transferred to Bushire but there is no record of the nature of its trading history.
- c) **Gerrha:** An ancient port on the Arabian coast, the site of which was probably near the modern port of Qaṭīf. It flourished from very early times until after the Christian era. The main trade of Gerrha was with the land of incense (South Arabia) by sea and with Seleucia, on the Tigris, by land.
- d) **Obollah (Apologus):** On a delta of the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab, it was the great centre of Persian commerce. It superseded the older, great Babylonian port of Teredon. Before Islam, Persian ships sailed from Obollah to China and India.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.8.2 *Islamic settlements*

- a) **Basrah:** The first Islamic port on the Persian Gulf, on the west bank of the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab. It superseded Obollah after its foundation, in about 636 AD, by order of the Caliph ‘Umar.<sup>47</sup>
- b) **Sīrāf:** In the tenth century Sīrāf was the main port in the Gulf - its chief emporium for India and the Far East. The ruins of the old city of Sīrāf lie to the west of the village of Bandar Ṭāhirī on the Persian coast.<sup>48</sup>

c) **Qays:** At the beginning of the twelfth century the island of Qays succeeded Sīrāf as the emporium for trade with the Far East and India. Qays lies off the Persian coast, separated from the mainland by a navigable channel 9 miles wide. In the fourteenth century Qays was replaced in turn by Hormuz as the market for trade between the East and the West.<sup>49</sup>

d) **Hormuz:** This was originally a city on the coast of Makrān. In Marco Polo's book (the story of the travels of the Polo family begins in 1260) he mentions Hormuz:

When you have ridden these two days, you come to the Ocean Sea, and on the shore you find a city with a harbour which is called Hormos. Merchants come thither from India, with ships loaded with spicery and precious stones, pearls, cloths of silk and gold, elephants' teeth, and many other wares, which they sell to the merchants of Hormos, and which these in turn carry all over the world to dispose of again. In fact, 'tis a city of immense trade. There are plenty of towns and villages under it, but it is the capital.<sup>50</sup>

In the first third of the fourteenth century the merchants of Hormuz occupied Jarūn, the island opposite their capital, and supplanted the kingdom of Qays, which had controlled the Gulf for 200 years. The name of Hormuz was then given to the island.<sup>51</sup> The island of Hormuz lies at latitude 27°N, ten miles or so from the Persian mainland and about 34 miles from the Arabian coast (see the Atlas, Map no. 44). Its circumference is barely more than 9 miles and it is so sterile that it possesses no naturally occurring green plants. Its sole products were from the salt and sulphur mines. The city itself was situated on a point of the island, with two very good harbours within bays, one on the east and the other on the west. At one time the city of Hormuz was the most celebrated entrepôt and sea port in the world: there were more merchants and more trade there than in all the markets of the East. It was a particularly large port for the many horses taken from Arabia and Persia to all parts of India (see the Atlas, Map no. 50).<sup>52</sup>

## **2.9 Trade in the Persian Gulf**

### **2.9.1 *General trade***

Within the Gulf there had long been an internal trade in dates and dried fish, also exported to some extent but mainly from Muscat, outside the Persian Gulf. These

commodities, however, were essentially for consumption by the inhabitants of the Gulf itself and were traded by them. Trade to and from India, and through India to Europe, is detailed in Chapter 6 as far as Bushire is concerned, although the importations to the Gulf mentioned in that chapter hold good for the Gulf as a whole. The main exports from the Gulf in general during the period of this study were recorded as:

*alum, arrack, articles of clothing, arsenic, asafoetida, bezoar, bdellium, bitter apples, brimstone, brass-leaf, canvas, carpets, cassia, cloves, chinaware, coir rope, cardamom, copper (and old copper), copper nails, copperware, camphire, cotton, cotton thread and yarn, dates, red earth, ghee, ginger, grain, garlic, galbanum gum, galls, gogul, jujube, gum ammoniac, gum arabic, gold work, horses, hyacinth, iron, kishmish, leather, mats, labdanum, myrrh, medicines, mother-of-pearl shells, naphtha, lapis lazuli, lapis tulle or tutty, onions, otto (attar) of roses, rose-water, raw silk, olibanum, scammony, saffron, shark-fins and fish maws, shell beads and coral, soap, sweetmeats, tortoise shell, vermeil, wine, and wormseed.*<sup>53</sup>

### 2.9.2 *Pearl fishing*

Notwithstanding the long listing of general trade, by far the most important element of trade was pearl fishing. A description of the Gulf pearl fisheries is appropriate at this point. It is well enough known that the main pearl fishery stretched from Cape Musandam to the island of Bahrain and Qaṭīf, and included also several islands on the Persian side of the Gulf, among them Shuaib and Khark.

The pearl oysters were of three kinds. The first were called *mahḥār* by the Arabs. These were small, hollow and had thin shells. Few of them did not contain one or more pearls but most were seed pearls or a little larger. This kind was found on the Bahrain banks and they were the most sought after by the Arabs because they were almost sure to cover their expenses when diving for this variety.

The second kind of pearl oyster was known as *ṣadaf*. It was large, flat and had a thick shell providing beautiful mother-of-pearl; some of them had a diameter of seven to eight inches. From a hundred of this variety hardly five or six would contain anything: but its pearls were the largest and the most perfect.

The best kind of oyster was the *zennī*. Divers brought it up from water as deep as 15 to 18 fathoms (1 fathom = 6ft) where it was attached, like fruit, to small tree- or bush-like growths resembling coral. When this oyster was freshly fished from the sea it had a beautiful carmine colour, but after dying and drying the colour was lost. Its contents were similar to those of the *ṣadaf* and both of these latter two types were found near Khark and Kharku islands in some quantity, the former to a lesser extent.

The pearl divers throughout the Gulf were the Arabs who lived on the coasts and who could dive from three to eight fathoms. Only very few among them dared go down to a depth of 12 to 18 fathoms and, when they did, it was an act of daring to be done only once and against a good reward. The fishery took place between mid-May and the end of September. With the Dutch in Khark (see Chapter 4), a diver received his food and Rs 50 to 60 while the men who rowed the boats, and pulled the divers up when the sign was given, received *Rupees* (Rs) 25 to 30 each.

The common, and more usual, form of agreement in use elsewhere in the Gulf ran as follows: the owner of the boat would take on six to eight divers and a number of sailors, and equip himself with ropes and provisions for the whole season before setting off for the fishery. The oysters which were fished during the day were opened in the evening in the presence of all the men (unlike the Dutch practice), and everything found in them was kept in a piece of linen and tied up until the end of the season. Then the entire catch was sold in the presence of all the participants on board at the pearl banks, or at Bahrain, Qaṭīf and certain other towns on the Arabian coast.<sup>54</sup> From the proceeds 10% was levied by the Government. At the time of Nādir Shāh, Ruler of Persia from 1736 to 1747, the annual revenue from Bahrain and its pearl



banks was Rs 240,000, making the value of the Bahrain pearl fishery some Rs 2,400,000.<sup>55</sup> Thereafter, the cost of the equipment was first deducted and the remainder was divided into five shares, of which the boat's owner took one, and the rest was split between the divers and the sailors - the divers taking double the sailors' portion.

By the beginning of the 19th century the value of the pearl fishery for one season throughout the Persian Gulf was calculated at Rs 4 million. Table 2.1 shows the estimated numbers of boats and men employed during a pearling season at that time.

**Table 2.1: Employment of men and boats in pearling,  
early 19th century<sup>56</sup>**

<b>Home Ports</b>	<b>Number of boats</b>	<b>Number of men*</b>
Bahrain and dependencies	2,430	21,870
Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah and dependencies	350	3,150
Abu Dhabi and other towns of the coast	350	3,150
Persian coast	<u>100</u>	<u>900</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>3,230</u></b>	<b><u>29,070</u></b>

\*The average number of men per boat was estimated at 9.

## **2.10 The arrival of the Europeans in the Gulf**

From the time of Alexander the Great's appearance in the Gulf area (327 BC) until the arrival of Vasco da Gama (1498 AD), Europeans had no direct trade with the East. Commerce was carried on through Egypt, via the Red Sea, or across the Persian Gulf and Syria to the Italian city-states on the Mediterranean.<sup>57</sup>

### **2.10.1      *The Portuguese***

In 1497, the King of Portugal, Dom Manuel I, sent Vasco da Gama with men and ships to sail from Portugal to India via the Cape of Good Hope, finally reaching India in August 1498 and returning to end his expedition at Lisbon in September 1499.<sup>58</sup> The early Portuguese ship-masters were not traders but their function was to open up a direct commerce with Asia. In 1505 the King of Portugal decided to overthrow the monopoly held by the Arabian merchants by occupying the ports which controlled the trade routes of that time; Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea, as well as capturing Malacca, an important trading centre.<sup>59</sup>

An expedition of 16 ships was sent from Lisbon in 1506 under the leadership of Afonso de Albuquerque and Tristão da Cunha. Albuquerque occupied Hormuz in 1507 and Malacca in 1510, but his last objective, the capture of Aden, was frustrated after a failed attempt in 1512.<sup>60</sup> From Hormuz the Portuguese controlled most of the Gulf: they carried on their trade through Bahrain and Qaṭīf within the Gulf and through Muscat outside it - all of them under their domination. At Hormuz there was a very considerable trade in drugs, silk, silk cloth, Persian carpets and all kinds of spices. Pearls came in great numbers from Bahrain, and horses from both Persia and Arabia for use in India. The weight of the Indo-Hormuz trade was estimated at 10,000 tons annually. The Portuguese allowed merchants from other nations to trade at Hormuz, since the trade was directed at Turkey and Europe, as it had been previously, when passing through the hands of the Venetians.<sup>61</sup> The Venetians had been given a free hand in trading with the Byzantine empire, in return for their assistance to Byzantium in its wars with various enemies. At the same time, the Venetians had been on good terms with the Arabs and had been granted the freedom to trade by the French as a result of paying high taxes to Charlemagne.<sup>62</sup> Throughout their tenure in Hormuz the Portuguese faced revolts from the subjugated natives and hostilities between themselves and the Turks or Persians, a pattern which would become familiar to other European traders in the Gulf.<sup>63</sup>

### 2.10.2 *The English*

In 1599 Sir Anthony Sherley, an English adventurer, came to Persia via Baghdad and secured a *faramān* from Shāh ‘Abbās I facilitating trade between Persia and other nations. Following his departure on a mission for the Shāh, Sir Anthony’s brother, Robert, remained at the Shāh’s Court and either established or re-affirmed friendly relations between Persia and European countries during a period of nearly 14 years of travels. Between 1600 and 1612 twelve English trading voyages reached India. The first English ship to arrive at Surat came in 1608 under the command of William Hawkins, who brought a letter of recommendation from King James I to the Great Mogul. He was followed by the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India in 1615-18. During a mission to Persia in 1615-16, Richard Steel, with the help of Robert Sherley, obtained a *faramān* from Shāh ‘Abbas addressed to the governors of seaports in Persia, instructing them to receive and assist English vessels. Arrangements were made for trading at the port of Jask (see the Atlas, Map no. 22): King James sent a letter to Shāh ‘Abbās thanking him for the favour shown to the English merchants and for granting them a factory at Jask (see Appendix 1). The first shipment to Jask arrived in the *James* in November 1616, carrying a large cargo of goods and the English staff of the Company factory. A year later, the Company established a factory at Isfahan.<sup>64</sup>

### 2.10.3 *The Dutch*

The Dutch United East India Company was brought into being in 1602 by Dutch statesmen amalgamating those small trading companies which had penetrated as far as the Far East by 1595, when the work of amalgamation began. At first the Dutch were pre-occupied in building up their strongholds in Java and the Spice Islands (Molucca), and the first Dutch ships in the Persian Gulf arrived only after the English and Persians had occupied Hormuz (see pages 38-9).<sup>65</sup>

## **2.11 The decline of Hormuz**

### **2.11.1 *The conflict between the Portuguese and English***

The English traded successfully through the port of Jask and thus seriously affected the Portuguese trade at Hormuz. When five English merchant ships arrived at Jask in 1620 the Portuguese decided to stop this trade, with the result that when the *Hart* and the *Eagle*, two of the English Company's ships, arrived at Jask in November 1620 they found it blockaded by the Portuguese fleet. The English ships returned to Surat to seek reinforcements, and sailed again for Jask in the company of the *London* and the *Roebuck*. They met the Portuguese fleet in front of the port of Jask and fought an action which ended favourably for the English, albeit with the loss of their Commander, Captain Shilling.<sup>66</sup>

### **2.11.2 *The occupation of Hormuz by the English and the Persians***

Shāh 'Abbās, unable finally to tolerate the attacks and provocations of the Portuguese, asked the English to assist him in expelling the Portuguese from Hormuz. Alexander Hamilton records that Sir Thomas Roe, the Ambassador of King James I at the Persian Court, asked for certain arrangements to be agreed between the two parties:

- a) The Shāh would pay the costs of the ships which would be sent to assist him.
- b) Free trade would be established for the English throughout all Persian dominions.
- c) The English would be exempted from customs duties and would be granted half of all customs collected on merchandise in the Gulf.

The two parties agreed the terms described, Hamilton writes, under the seal and signature of the King of Persia.<sup>67</sup> But, in reality, Sir Thomas never was the Ambassador in Persia, and he had, in any case, left the area in 1618. What really happened was that the Company's senior representative in Persia, Edward Monnox, negotiated locally with the Governor of Shiraz and agreed less favourable terms: the Persians would pay for half the cost of the ships; the customs duties of Hormuz (only) would be shared between the parties; and English trade at Hormuz (only) would be forever

duty-free.<sup>68</sup> The Persians later agreed to apply the customs privileges at Gombroon (Bandar Abbas) in lieu of Hormuz.<sup>69</sup>

An expedition comprising five English ships and 40-50,000 Persian soldiers was then sent against Hormuz in February 1622. The English destroyed the Portuguese ships, after which Hormuz was occupied. The Portuguese officers were sent prisoner to Surat and the English received half of the plunder. In April 1625 Hormuz was again besieged by the Portuguese fleet, but the combined Dutch and English fleet repulsed the Portuguese in a battle which cost the English 29 men, and the Dutch as many again, including their Commander. But the Portuguese lost 800 men and were completely defeated. From that time, European commercial rivalry in the Gulf was primarily between the Dutch and the English.

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- <sup>60</sup> Bruce, *Annals*, vol.1, pp.13-17; Thomas Herbert, *Some years travels into divers parts of Africa, and Asia the Great*, 3rd ed., 4th impression (London: R. Scot, T. Basset, J. Wright and R. Chiswell, 1677), pp.105-6; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India, 1500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.118-21.
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## CHAPTER 3

### BANDAR ABBAS

(1623 - 1763)

#### 3.0 Introduction

After the destruction of Hormuz, the representatives of the East India Company were given permission to settle at Bandar Abbas in 1623.<sup>1</sup> Bandar Abbas was not a complete replacement for Hormuz, however: Hormuz, as can be seen in the reports of the Venetian Consuls in Syria, was an important link in the trade between the Ottoman empire, Persia, the Mediterranean countries and Asia. The turnover of Venetian spice and silk trade with Aleppo by caravan route from Persia and the Gulf was 1 million gold *ducats* in 1593 and 2 million in 1594 (6-8 million Dutch Guilders).<sup>2</sup> Immediately after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz, Bandar Abbas was not much more than an anchorage where merchant ships and caravans met. The caravans carrying silk were sent from the European representatives in Isfahan, where deals were negotiated between the European merchants offering merchandise, and the Shāh's agents. The early English and Dutch trade in the Gulf in the 1620s and 1630s was for the most part contract trade with agents of the Shāh in Isfahan for the buying of silk.<sup>3</sup>

The only importance of Bandar Abbas was that it was the residence of the deputy of the provincial Governor (or Khān) in Shiraz: he was the military and general authority, as well as the *Shāhbandar* of the port. Practically all trading operations were conducted with the agents of the Shāh in Isfahan, or even directly at the Shāh's court (which often resided at Kazvin). It should be noted that contract trade with the Persian government was not subject to customs duties. At first, trade in Bandar Abbas is rarely mentioned. It seems that Bandar Abbas started as an Arab mart because,

already in 1623, a Dutch report mentions that the Dutch had plans to keep merchandise which was not good enough for Isfahan in Bandar Abbas, to be sold to the Arab traders there.<sup>4</sup>

The English had opened Persia up for the European trading companies by virtue of the help they had given to the Persians at Hormuz. After the arrival of the Dutch in 1623, however, they immediately supplanted the English as the most important power. In that year they bought 600,000 Guilders worth of silk<sup>5</sup>, whereas English silk exports had fallen to 120,000 Guilders in 1625. The Dutch East India Company could offer a larger quantity of spices and had more cash available: this made it more attractive for the Persians to make contracts with the Dutch, who had the buying power which the much smaller English East India Company lacked. As the English Company had little capital, most English trade took the form of small private ventures by ships' captains and the Company's own servants, exporting tin and woollen cloth from England, while the Dutch did not trade much in European products.<sup>6</sup>

The first suggestions were made in European circles in 1628, and again in 1633, that the contract trade in Isfahan, whereby large lots of merchandise were sold to the Shāh's agents in return for silk in the winter, should be replaced by selling to *Banian* merchants in Bandar Abbas in the autumn. In this way the huge caravan costs could be avoided.<sup>7</sup>

Relations between the representatives of both Companies became tense: the English maintained that the Dutch had to pay customs duties to them while the Dutch refused utterly.<sup>8</sup> A serious problem was that the Persian market was itself relatively small, and most spices sold by the Europeans had to go through Persia to the Ottoman Middle East. The wars between Persia and the Turks closed that route and therefore diminished the demand for spices in Bandar Abbas.<sup>9</sup>

Within the Persian economy the European traders had become very important. Persia's most important export commodity was raw silk and by far the biggest proportion of that was exported by the Dutch and English. In 1637, the total production of good silk was 2,500 packs: of these 1,000 were for internal use, 1,000 went to the Dutch, 373 to the English and 100 through the Isfahan Armenians to Aleppo.<sup>10</sup> This means that the main export item and source of hard cash for Persia was valued at no more than about 3 million Guilders (the price of one pack was 50 *Tomans* or 2,000 Guilders).

Round about 1640 it appears that contracts made with the Shāh became less important for the Dutch, as problems in the silk-producing region (close to the embattled borders with the Ottoman empire) made it difficult for the Shāh's agents to deliver enough silk to match the money and merchandise offered. It seems that, for the Persians, the Dutch were the wealthier and therefore more important trading partners: already in the 1630s there were lengthy interruptions in the English contracts. The Europeans tried increasingly to sell their products on the open market and to buy silk in the same way. The Persian authorities reacted by increasing the contract price for silk and, at the same time, penalised open market trading with extremely heavy taxes.<sup>11</sup> The Europeans retaliated by opening up a trading link with Basrah from 1638 and began exporting cotton cloth there.<sup>12</sup> New Asian products replaced cash in the cargoes sent by the Europeans, and cotton cloth also appeared on the Bandar Abbas market. In the same year the Dutch started to bring in large quantities of sugar from their newly-acquired colony of Taiwan.<sup>13</sup>

The Persian trade was now completely changing its character. The Europeans were exporting Asian products to Persia and receiving in return cash and silk. But a change was under way from the early 1640s: in 1644 the value of silk exported from Persia was less than the value of the cash exported clandestinely.<sup>14</sup> Trade in Bandar Abbas became as important as trade in Isfahan. The English trade almost dis-

appeared, but their establishment in Bandar Abbas survived on the share of customs revenue accorded the English in 1622.<sup>15</sup>

Two other minor introductory notes remain to be made:

i) The carrying trade

This activity began to appear in the late 1630s as a way of earning money by Europeans for buying silk. Both the Dutch and the English offered relatively safe passage for goods belonging to Banian or Muslim merchants in Surat or their agents in Bandar Abbas. The advantage in this system was that the Europeans could transport goods which would spoil in Bandar Abbas, in return for the products they brought in on their own account. The non-European port activity of Bandar Abbas also seems to have started in the 1630s, with seven ships from various Indian ports arriving in 1638.<sup>16</sup>

ii) The continuing activities of the Portuguese

Soon after their loss of Hormuz, Portuguese smugglers of pepper from southern India were causing problems for the spice trade in Bandar Abbas in 1624. In 1630 the Portuguese made a treaty with Persia allowing them to establish themselves in Bandar Kung, but the Shāh did not ratify the treaty and the Portuguese continued to look elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Later in 1630 they established a post at Julfār (Ras al-Khaimah) on the Arabian coast.<sup>18</sup>

The English factory at Bandar Abbas (Gombroon) existed over a long period of nearly 140 years, for most of it (1624-1747) in a reasonable state. The rest of the period, which primarily concerns us in this study, is the last 16 years, 1747-1763, which saw the struggle for power sparked by the assassination of Nādir Shāh and ends with the establishment of Karīm Khān. During these years Persia was plunged into a deeper state of confusion and distress than it had ever experienced before.<sup>19</sup> In his *Gazetteer*, Lorimer describes southern Persia at this time as 'a pandemonium of indecisive warfare among petty chiefs who had little real power'.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 3.1 Entrance to the Persian Gulf

### 3.1 Geographical background

The fishing town of Gombroon, later to be called Bandar Abbas, lay on the Persian coast at latitude 27° 10' 29", longitude 56° 15'. It was situated on level ground on a bay about 12 miles to the north of the eastern end of the island of Qishm, and 9 miles from Hormuz. It was the port for Lār and Kirmān<sup>21</sup> (see Figure 3.1). The Portuguese traveller, Gaspar de Sao Bernadino, visited the town in 1606 and described it as a small village called Gombroon. Christians, Hindus and Muslims lived there; about 200 inhabitants in all, in houses made of mud bricks - as was the Portuguese fort, situated on the sea and the only Portuguese fort in all mainland Persia. He reported that in 1602 it was besieged by 5,000 Persians, and defended against them for two months by just 30 Portuguese soldiers. Three quarters of the Persians died in the field, mostly from sickness, before the siege was lifted.<sup>22</sup> The town was named Bandar Abbas after Shāh 'Abbās I who built its reputation and it was, in his time, a reasonably well-built town with a long line of mud houses, backed by barren hills. The Italian traveller, Pietro della Valle, visited in 1622 and described the streets and bazaar as narrow and small, and the shops badly supplied. There was no drinkable water within three miles of the town, apart from a few cisterns, and nothing to support life except fish and mutton.<sup>23</sup> The climate of Bandar Abbas was so hot that foreigners could not live there except in the months from December to March: after that the natives of the area would retire to the cooler mountains, about two or three days journey away, where they would spend the summer.<sup>24</sup>

In his account of the Persian ports in 1615, Robert Sherley - the head of an English mission to Persia - called Bandar Abbas the 'best and strongest among the Persian King's dominions',<sup>25</sup> and Thomas Herbert, who visited in 1627, echoed him in reporting that Gombroon was more valuable than all the rest of the King of Persia's possessions.<sup>26</sup> Captain Child, of the English ship *James* which visited Bandar Abbas in December 1616, said that the port was secure beneath a castle to guard against threats from Portuguese frigates but that the Portuguese had blocked access to the

port.<sup>27</sup> Another early visitor was Corneille Le Brun (Cornelis de Bruyn) in September 1705, who described the town as having very poor buildings and the four forts as falling into ruin. The only good houses belonged to the Dutch and English Companies.<sup>28</sup>

Bandar Abbas was a safe harbour, guarded by the mainland of Persia to the north, the island of Hormuz to the south and the island of Larak to the south-west. It was the most secure landing-place along the whole coast. Its anchorage was between two and three miles from the land and was too difficult for ships drawing more than about 13 feet.<sup>29</sup> Trade was established at Bandar Abbas rather than at Bandar Kung (where the air was good and the water excellent) because of several islands between Hormuz and Kung, which made the passage for ships hazardous<sup>30</sup> (see the Atlas, Map nos. 46-47, 51 and Figure 3.1). Altogether, its geographical site and location made Bandar Abbas extremely attractive to traders, and European merchants were quick to see the opportunities there.

### **3.2 The establishment of European Factories at Bandar Abbas**

#### ***3.2.1 The establishment of the English Factory at Bandar Abbas***

At the beginning of 1623 The East India Company directed the attention of its officers to supporting commercial endeavours to establish the Persian trade in Hormuz (newly captured from the Portuguese), and to obtain permission from the King of Persia, Shāh ‘Abbās I, to have full rights to the silk trade. In October 1623, Shāh ‘Abbās received a letter from King James by the hand of two of the Company’s commercial agents, and the Khān of Shiraz went to Isfahan to assist the Company’s representatives in their petition for additional privileges from the King. The Company’s Agents obtained an order to allow the English to trade freely, exempt from all duties in perpetuity, and to enjoy free passage through Lāristān. At the meeting with the Shāh, the Company’s representatives countered the Persian refusal to allow a settlement at Hormuz by asking for permission to establish the Company’s factory at the port of Gombroon/Bandar Abbas. The Shāh agreed, and two houses in Gombroon were



given to the Company to be used as a factory.<sup>31</sup> Lorimer records that the Persians agreed to the English having half of the customs revenues of Bandar Abbas in lieu of those of Hormuz. The Persian trade was declining in 1624 and no business was done by the English until the beginning of 1625, when Thomas Kerridge (the Surat Factor) arrived at Bandar Abbas to act as an agent for the East India Company in 're-settling or dissolving' its Persian trade. On his advice, trade was continued in Bandar Abbas.<sup>32</sup>

### ***3.2.2 The establishment of the Dutch Factory at Bandar Abbas***

The first Dutch ships, *Weesp* and *Heusden* arrived in Bandar Abbas in June 1623. On 23 October of the same year the Dutch Agent, Hubert Visnich, reached an agreement with the Shāh which granted the Dutch free trade in Persia and exemption from customs duties in perpetuity. Visnich was able to make a contract with the Persian government to buy silk at 45 *Tomans* (697.5 Maria Theresa Dollars) per *corge*, while the English had to buy silk privately at 55 Tomans per *corge*. But the Dutch soon began to suffer from the unreliability of Persian promises and finally took the silk at 55 Tomans.<sup>33</sup>

### ***3.2.3 The establishment of the French Factory at Bandar Abbas***

An East India Company was formed in France in 1664 and in the following year a French Mission composed of three Commissioners arrived in Persia. They were Lalain, Mariage and Beber; of these it should be noted that Beber was a Dutchman. Their purpose was to ask for free trade on the same basis that the Dutch enjoyed, but they were able to obtain no more than a *faramān* from the Shāh allowing them free trade for a term of three years: after that, they would have to pay the same customs duties as other merchants in Persia. They tried hard to gain perpetual freedom from customs duties but failed: they perforce continued on the same footing and, in co-operation with the English, did everything possible against the interests of the Dutch East India Company. They helped the Indian and other merchants to smuggle merchandise out under the French aegis (which meant that for three years it was tax-free)

to Surat; when the Dutch protested the French denied everything. This was a period of history, until 1686, when England and France were allies: Kings Charles II and James II of England were friends of the French King Louis XIV.

In 1677 the Shāh told the French frankly that because their trade was of insufficient importance, and could not be compared with the Dutch or English, they would in future be treated as private traders, enjoying no privileges.<sup>34</sup> By that time, the French were in possession of a factory at Bandar Abbas.<sup>35</sup> By 1682 the Persians were claiming 13 years arrears of customs duties from the French because they had traded for 16 years without paying duty, and their privileges had been valid for three years only. The French resisted energetically and gave many presents, but to no avail; the 'little Persian', as they called the Shāh, wanted to be paid and he put both their Agents and merchandise under arrest. As well as this, the Persians had made them pay heavily from time to time for their smuggling activities, and this caused them so many problems that they finally lost heart. In 1689 they brought a small ship from Surat and, from the sale of its cargo, paid the customs debt on which they had made an agreement with the Shāhbandar for 5%; they then closed their establishment and were not seen again until 1696, when they once more brought a merchant ship from Surat and, on the orders of the Persian Court, were treated as ordinary private merchants - which much displeased them.<sup>36</sup>

In 1698 the English made the accusation that any French ships attempting to approach the Gulf were 'privateers',<sup>37</sup> while John Bruce, historian of the East India Company, went further, saying '... the event of the capture, of the English and Dutch Turkey fleet [i.e. trading to Turkey], by the French, in 1693, became a new incentive to the encouragement of the Persian trade, and to the reliance of the Court on this market being rendered profitable.'<sup>38</sup> In the same year as the English accusation (1698) the French Court sent Jean Billon de Cancerille, a Marseilles merchant, to Persia as secretary to a religious mission, but working to a commercial brief.<sup>39</sup> He stayed there

until returning to France in 1705 to present his interim report on trading affairs in Persia, and visited Persia for a second time in 1707 to complete his report.<sup>40</sup>

From 1720 the French were out of favour with the Persians and their trade in Bandar Abbas was of little consequence. When a French *brigantine* arrived at Bandar Abbas on 3 July 1727, it could not sell its cargo and had to sail for Basrah, with the intention of touching first at Basidu to see if it could dispose of its cargo there.<sup>41</sup> Not surprisingly, the French factory at Bandar Abbas was eventually closed down. Lorimer gives no date for this, leaving it unclear by saying only that it was early in the period he was at that time writing about:<sup>42</sup> al-Qasimi records that the French factory first closed in the 1720s.<sup>43</sup> In December 1735 a French ship arrived at Bandar Abbas and sold part of her cargo after paying customs duty of 4½%. The French received an invitation from Nādir Shāh to resettle at Bandar Abbas, and another of their ships, the *Herene*, Captain Beaumont, arrived from Bengal in 1736 to complain of the treatment to which a French subject, Boisroll, had been subjected in the previous year and to enquire about his situation. The Governor of Fars, who was in the town at that time, made many promises to refund what was due to Boisroll out of the customs duty payable by Beaumont, but the cargo which was sold was very small and there was little advantage to the French out of it.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, there was again a French Agent in Bandar Abbas in 1740, named Beauchamp.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.3 Bandar Abbas at peace

After the opening of factories at Bandar Abbas by the English and Dutch East India Companies in 1623, Bandar Abbas became the centre of English enterprise in the Gulf until 1743. English and Dutch fortunes can be considered in six periods of time, divided by decisive events.

### **3.3.1 Period I, (1623-1630)**

In this period the English started to establish themselves firmly at Bandar Abbas by obtaining successive *faramāns* from the King of Persia and the Khān of Shiraz, chiefly after 1627. For example:

- i. The Shāh's undated *faramān* to the Shāh's *Wakīl* at Bandar Abbas fixing the rates at which he was to receive goods in exchange for silk.
- ii. June 1627 - The Shāh's *faramān* confirming all former grants.
- iii. June 1627 - The Shāh's *faramān* to the *Wakīl* ordering the implementation of the commercial contract with Mr Burte, the English Resident at Bandar Abbas.
- iv. June 1627 - The Shāh's *faramān* to the Khān of Shiraz directing that the English should have their full share of customs duties.
- v. June 1627 - The Shāh's *faramān* to the Khān of Shiraz that he should protect the East India Company's goods and debts.
- vi. July 1627 - The Khān's *faramān* to the customs officers at Bandar Abbas ordering that all customs dues should be received in the presence of the English, that the latter should have their full share of them, and that no bribes should be given without permission.
- vii. July 1627 - The Khān's *faramān* permitting Mr Burte to build a house.
- viii. July 1627 - The Khān's *faramān* to his officers for the security of the Company's employees and effects; an escort to be given to them if necessary.

- ix. July 1627 - The Khān's *faramān* to all Governors that they assist the Company in recovering goods, debts etc.
  
- x. January 1628 - The Shāh's *faramān* confirming all former trade privileges to the English and Dutch.
  
- xi. August 1629 - The Shāh's *faramān* to his *Wakīl* at Bandar Abbas that the Persians deliver silk in exchange for three-quarters of the money due, as per contract.
  
- xii. October 1629 - The Khān's *faramān* to the Sultān of Bandar Abbas for a just division of customs duties with the English.
  
- xiii. June 1630 - The Shāh's *faramān* to establish the East India Company's factory house at Bandar Abbas.<sup>46</sup>

After only one year, in 1624 English trade with Persia had been at a low ebb (see page 51), and it was reported later that the trade had been wrongly planned - since broadcloth could be better sold at Surat than Bandar Abbas. In 1628, the Company sent a fleet of five ships to the Gulf to confront the Portuguese and enhance trade with Persia, but the trade was constrained by two-thirds of the goods being presents for the Shāh, with customs thus being evaded.<sup>47</sup>

The Dutch, on the other hand, became immediately involved in the Persian trade, meeting with rather more success than the English. For example:

- i. In 1623 the Dutch exported goods to Bandar Abbas to a value of 210,000 Guilders, on which they made a profit of 170,000.
  
- ii. In 1624 they exported to a value of 169,000 Guilders and returned a profit of 234,000.

iii. The Dutch brought goods valued at 103,000 Guilders to Bandar Abbas in 1625, made a profit of 235,000 Guilders on the merchandise, and bought silk at a local price of 515,000 Guilders.

iv. In 1626 the Dutch office in Bandar Abbas, hitherto subordinate to the Director in Surat, was made directly subordinate to Batavia.<sup>48</sup>

v. In 1626 there was a conflict with the Governor of Bandar Abbas, whom the English had incited to claim 11% customs duties from the Dutch. When the Dutch refused he confiscated two boxes of cash from the Dutch caravan and took from them the amount of 800 *Riyals* which he was claiming. The Dutch managed to obtain satisfaction from the Shāh, who later also decreased the price of silk to them by 2 Tomans.<sup>49</sup>

vi. In January 1628 the Dutch obtained the *faramān* given also to the English, confirming all former trade privileges.

The main products being exported from Bandar Abbas at this time were silk, turquoise, carpets, gold cloth, *alum*, *gallnuts*, copper, *dyeing roots*, wine, rosewater, almonds and horses.<sup>50</sup> The chief imports were cloth, kerseys and tin.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.3.2 *Period II, (1630-1657)*

During this period the English East India Company's affairs suffered a good deal from Dutch intrigues and their competitive trading. In order to protect their trade from the Dutch, the English established a factory at Basrah (see pages 57-8), but from 1643 to 1657 the Dutch became the dominant power in the Gulf and the English were obliged to carry on a desperate power struggle with them.<sup>52</sup> The rivalry took many turns:

i. In 1630 the English Company's representatives in Surat consulted the Bandar Abbas factory about improving the Company's trade in competition with the Dutch, and decided to make Persia, rather than Surat, the last port of call for ships departing for England.<sup>53</sup>

ii. In 1631 a new treaty was concluded in The Hague between Persia and Holland which gave Persia free trade in Holland and freedom of religion, and remarkably gave the Dutch the same in Persia. The English had no such freedom.

iii. It was found in 1636 that it was almost impossible to get the Persians to pay for merchandise they bought from Dutch traders in Isfahan so the Dutch changed their trading methods. Up to then the goods were brought by caravan to Isfahan and sold there; now the goods had to be sold in Bandar Abbas, where they were in direct rivalry with the English.

iv. From 1637 the Persians began asking for large sums in customs duties from the Dutch (160,000 Guilders in 1637), contrary to their treaty.

v. The Persian Prime Minister alleged in 1638 that the Shāh had suffered a reduction in customs income because the Dutch had bought 593.5 corges of silk from private traders; he claimed 140,000 Guilders from them, while forcing them to accept a large quantity of silk at 50 Tomans per corge.<sup>54</sup> The English were spared this pressure.

vi. With a view to protecting its trade from the Dutch, the English East India Company sent two of its staff to Basrah in 1640, where some counter-influence could be exerted (Lorimer's belief that a preliminary visit was made in 1635 was mistaken)<sup>55</sup>. They obtained a licence from the Pasha to land

goods but the establishment of a factory was difficult because of the civil war in Iraq.<sup>56</sup>

vii. In 1644, the Batavia High Government sent Carel Constant as Director to Persia in order to restore the balance. Instead, he was beaten ignominiously with sticks at Court and forced to pay 31,500 Guilders which the Persians claimed, on the grounds that the Dutch had allegedly carried goods belonging to private merchants in their caravan, which was covered by tax-exemption. Batavia sent a small squadron of warships to Persia and attacked Qishm, but the attack was stopped on receipt of a conciliatory letter from the Shāh. In the following years Dutch envoys were unable to reach a final agreement with the Persians, although they made no further trouble for Dutch trade.<sup>57</sup>

viii. In 1645, the Shāh gave a licence to the Dutch to buy silk anywhere in Persia and export it free of customs. In the same year, the Dutch sent a fleet of eight laden merchant ships to Bandar Abbas and thereby almost ruined the English business there. At about the same time the English removed the Company's property from Bandar Abbas to Basrah to avoid any attack from the Dutch. Dutch trade was now increasing and English trade decreasing.<sup>58</sup>

ix. The two Companies obtained *faramāns* from the Shāh in 1646, the Dutch by force but the English by perseverance. The *faramāns* from the Shāh provided for a) rebuilding the factories at Bandar Abbas which had been destroyed by earthquakes (the event is not recorded); b) releasing the Companies from payment of 4% on goods sold at Isfahan; c) regulating the payment of customs at Bandar Abbas. Trade at Bandar Abbas had revived, but only for that year because Dutch ships had unloaded their cargoes without payment of customs by arrangement with the harbour-master: trade for the English thereupon became precarious again in view of the cheaper Dutch goods.<sup>59</sup>



x. Dutch trade became more precarious in 1647 than at any former time as the supply of pepper and spice imports from Surat, so necessary to fund the purchase of Persian produce, had become the monopoly of the English. The Dutch were anxious to secure exemption from customs duties and found that the Persians were ready to make concessions. A new treaty was concluded in 1647 and ratified in 1652. From that time on, a convention existed that the Dutch could trade with Persia without paying customs, subject to the obligation of making a substantial annual purchase of silk from the Persian government. In 1655, 108 corges of two bales each were accordingly bought; in 1656, 83½; 1657, 100½; 1658, 15; 1659, 115; and in 1660, 191.<sup>60</sup>

xi. In 1649, the Dutch obtained additional *faramāns*. As for the English, their customs revenue at Bandar Abbas remained deficient, thanks to the Dutch exemption from paying the duties. The Agent attributed the decline also to the rumours of civil war in England and the execution of King Charles, which had disgusted the Persians. The Persian government tried to abrogate relations based upon treaties made with the King of England.<sup>61</sup>

Dutch reports on the English trade in the year 1649, however, appeared rather more favourable:

a) 15 May 1649: There had been considerable English trade; over 1,200 bales of cotton cloth, a large quantity of spices and indigo - which they sold at an acceptable profit and which would help their 'ailing' Company.<sup>62</sup>

b) 1 July 1649: There was a serious quarrel between the English and the Persians over the sharing out of customs duties at Bandar Abbas. The English received only 700 Tomans from a revenue of 2,200 Tomans, but in the previous year they had received only 600 Tomans. The slight increase indicated that the English, although weakened, were still feared by the Persians. The English sold the remainder of their goods (300 bales of cotton and 15,000 pounds of pepper) in Isfahan.<sup>63</sup>

- c) 16 October 1649: The English ship *Loyalty* arrived, carrying goods valued at 40,000 Spanish *Reals*.<sup>64</sup>
- d) 16 October 1649: A small English ship *Lenoreth* arrived with a private cargo of 500 bales of coffee from Mocha: the English derived little profit from the sale of their cotton cloth on this occasion.<sup>65</sup>
- e) 28 October 1649: The English ship *Eagle* brought secret cargo, said to be worth 500,000 *Reals*. The Dutch found this unbelievable and thought the English were trying to gain some credit with the story.<sup>66</sup>
- f) 1 December 1649: The *Lenoreth* sailed for Surat with a cargo of coins for the English Company valued at 20,000 *Guilders* (*guilders* and *pounds* were merely units of accounting at that time; they were not used as currency), 66 bales of raw silk, 140 bales of dye roots, 2 boxes of silk carpets and 2 boxes of rhubarb; all on private account. Its other cargo was coins valued at 130,000 *Guilders*, 8 bales of leather, 20 bales of raw silk for local merchants, 192 packages of coins each of about 3,200 *Guilders* in value, 30 bales of dye roots, 7 boxes of gold cloth, 4 bales of woollen carpets and 60 passengers.<sup>67</sup>

The Dutch factory received large trading stocks in 1650 while, for the English, customs revenues at Bandar Abbas remained inadequate for the same reasons as before.<sup>68</sup> A Dutch report of 15 January 1650 claimed that English trade was now going badly and they were being forced to sell their merchandise in Isfahan at very low prices. The English said they were expecting six ships from Coromandel, Java and Surat, but that these would be small ships, unable to carry much trade for the Company but rather for the local merchants in Coromandel and Surat.<sup>69</sup> In 1651 the Dutch sent eleven ships to Bandar Abbas where their trade increased. English trade, on the other hand, remained in decline through a shortage of imports. The Agent recommended that the Dutch example of sending numerous ships should be followed.<sup>70</sup>

In 1652, the Persians forced the Dutch envoy into a deal by which the Dutch would be able to import goods to the value of 20,000 Tomans duty-free, under certain conditions. These were that a Persian claim to old customs duties and a Dutch demand for restitution of money extorted from them by the Persians would both be dropped, and the Company would be obliged to buy 300 corges of silk at 48 Tomans per corge. The Dutch were unhappy but the Persians were, in practice, occasionally flexible, allowing additional duty-free trade and offering less silk for enforced purchase. Thereafter, relations improved, with the Persians not checking the quantity of duty-free goods imported by the Dutch. Later, the Dutch tried to buy off the obligation of purchasing silk because this commodity gave little profit in Holland.<sup>71</sup>

In 1653, during the war between England and Holland, the Dutch brought a fleet of 15 ships and goods worth 40,750 Tomans to the Gulf and bought a large quantity of Persian products. A Dutch fleet also captured three English ships off Jask; these events damaged English prestige in Persia. In 1654, before news of the conclusion of peace between England and Holland had arrived, the Dutch fleet blocked off navigation in the Gulf and English trade nearly ceased, and by 1656 the Persian trade of the English East India Company was almost ruined.<sup>72</sup>

### **3.3.3 *Period III, (1657-1698)***

During this period the English sent armed ships to serve in the Gulf to protect their trade, and that of their Persian partners. They insisted that the charge made to the Persians for the ships should be paid separately from the half share of customs duties due to the English: otherwise the protection of Bandar Abbas would be withdrawn and any Persian refusal of the demand for payment would be considered equivalent to a declaration of war. Some other features of this period were:

- i. Trade in Bandar Abbas was at a standstill in 1657, thanks to the invasion of Mogul territory by the Persian King.<sup>73</sup>

ii. In 1660, the Court of Directors in England noted a decline in the Bandar Abbas trade and recommended a blockade of the port, or the Persian coast. The Surat Council replied that there was a shortage of ships: at least eight ships were required to carry the Bandar Abbas trade whereas only two were available.

iii. The Court of Directors in England advised the Surat Council in 1663 to leave two or three 'honest and able servants' at Bandar Abbas to trade and collect the half share of customs revenue: the rest of the establishment should be removed. The President at Surat, however, thought that such a measure would be both useless and expensive and the advice was ignored.<sup>74</sup>

iv. A conflict arose in 1669 between the Governor of Bandar Abbas and the Dutch. The Dutch broker, called Kimsi, had died and left many debts. The Shāh agreed that the Dutch could take Kimsi's house in compensation for the debts, but the Governor of Bandar Abbas wanted the house for himself and took it by force.

v. Given their increasing problems with the Persians, in 1670 the Dutch made their first priority to get rid of the obligation to buy silk from the Shāh. They were unable to reach agreement and in the meantime there were several new incidents.<sup>75</sup>

In 1674 the English at Surat began discussing sending armed merchant ships to the Gulf to assist the Persian Government, and in 1675 two armed ships were duly sent.<sup>76</sup> John Fryer, a Fellow of the Royal Society who visited Bandar Abbas in 1676, said that the ships were sent to stimulate trade in Persia, not to guard the Gulf.<sup>77</sup> During a period of declining trade in 1678, the Governor of Bandar Abbas tried to force the Dutch to pay him 37,200 Guilders. The Dutch refused, their factory prepared for a siege and the cargoes were taken back to their ships. The Dutch protested in Isfahan

where a writ by the Shāh was issued ordering the Governor of Bandar Abbas to leave the Dutch alone. Meanwhile, there was a persistent loss of 3-6% on the silk the Dutch were forced to buy (see page 57): they were having to buy 300 corges yearly at 48 Tomans in a period of low silk prices in Holland.<sup>78</sup>

Sales and purchases for the English in Persia were depressed in 1680-81 while Table 3.1 shows improving figures for the Dutch during the same period.

**Table 3.1: Dutch Trade with Persia,**

**1680-1682**<sup>79</sup>

(in Guilders)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Purchases</b>	<b>Sales</b>
1680	261,000	294,000
1681	306,000	347,000
1682	318,000	637,000

It must nevertheless be borne in mind that these figures were low in relation to other Dutch trading outposts.

In 1683, the English Court of Directors decided to send an armed force to the Gulf to recover arrears of the Bandar Abbas customs (estimated at 150,000 Tomans or £450,000), and to make the King of Persia observe the treaties between England and Persia. On its arrival off Bandar Abbas in 1684, the expedition found a powerful Dutch fleet blockading the port, and a strong Persian land-force defending it: being unable to carry out its instructions, the expedition returned to Bombay.<sup>80</sup>

Because of the decline in trade, the Dutch tried to secure a reduction of 50% in the amount of silk they had to buy, but without success. The Batavia High Government therefore decided to send Commissioner Casembroot with a squadron of four large

ships and a smaller vessel to force the Persians to agree to the Dutch demands. Casembroot blockaded Bandar Abbas, captured ten local ships and, when the Persians replied that they were not impressed by a few pieces of wood, he attacked the island of Qishm and captured the fortress. The Persians thereupon changed their tune and invited the Director of the Dutch factory at Bandar Abbas, van den Heuvel, for negotiations. The Dutch responded by evacuating Qishm and releasing the ships but, once in Isfahan, the Dutch negotiators were treated as hostages.

Finally, the Persians demanded that the Governor General in Batavia should send a special Ambassador to Isfahan or the Dutch would be forced to trade without privileges like private merchants. Subject to these conditions, trade that had been stopped in 1686 restarted in 1687, and the Ambassador, Jan van Leene, arrived in 1690. He obtained nothing but vague promises, and made the mistake of going home before he had firm confirmation. Batavia then had to send another Dutch official, Jacobus Hoogcamer, in 1692 to obtain the required confirmation. The Shāh died at this point but his successor, Shāh Sultān Ḥusain, made some concessions to the Dutch against a very considerable sum in presents: the price of silk was reduced to 45 Tomans per corge.<sup>81</sup> In his *Arabs of the Gulf*, Slot records that Hoogcamer had been sent by the Directors in Holland to Asia specifically to investigate the pearl trade and to organise trade in the most advantageous way.<sup>82</sup>

In 1695, the Persians were unable, because of an epidemic in the area, to deliver the silk and proposed exchanging the obligation for a yearly payment. The Dutch agreed.<sup>83</sup>

In 1697, the new Shāh conferred privileges on the English on the basis of the *faramāns* granted by previous Shāhs. Included with the 19 *faramāns* formerly conferred by the Shāh there were two additional ones: first, that they should not be compelled to give presents to Khāns or Governors, and that no customs duty was to be paid in future on sugar and *asafoetida*; second, that the arrears of customs duties due

to the English should immediately be assessed and paid by the Governor of Bandar Abbas.<sup>84</sup>

#### **3.3.4 Period IV, (1698-1708)**

In this period there were differences between the English in India and the East India Company in London, but it was a period of comparative progress for English trade in Persia and declining trade for the Dutch (see Appendix 2).

- i. In 1700, the Persian trade was on the whole good for the English.<sup>85</sup>
- ii. In 1701, the quantity and price of silk were reduced to 100 corges at 44 Tomans: if the Persians did not offer then the Dutch did not ask, because silk gave little profit.<sup>86</sup>

#### **3.3.5 Period V, (1708-1736)**

In this period the Afghans occupied Persia (1723) and trade suffered considerably.

- i. A new conflict arose in 1714. The Persians claimed 17,907 Tomans as compensation for the Dutch smuggling out hard cash and committing customs frauds. Batavia decided to send Ambassador Ketelaar, who gave presents to the value of 275,000 Guilders and obtained free trade (see Appendix 3), but the ban on exporting gold *ducats* remained until 1735 (see Appendices 4 and 5).
- ii. In 1722, the Persian government in its last days before the Afghan occupation had borrowed more than 800,000 Guilders from the Dutch. There were many problems caused by the Afghans, and Dutch trade declined: there was a long-standing loss of 16,000 Guilders on the short occupation of Hormuz many years before. The Persian state debt with the Dutch Company had now reached 1,850,000 Guilders.<sup>87</sup>
- iii. In 1727, Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī (one of the Qawāsīm of Kung who had migrated to Basidu about 1720) established a port at Basidu (a town on the

northern coast of Qishm island) in opposition to Bandar Abbas (see the Atlas, Map no. 60). The English Agent at Bandar Abbas sent an expedition in April 1727 under the command of Draper, consisting of the frigate *Britannia*, the galley *Bengal* and two *trankeys*, claiming that the Shaikh had affected the customs receipts at Bandar Abbas. The Commander of the English expedition captured one of Shaikh Rāshid's ships at Basidu, demanded from the Shaikh 4,000 Tomans as the English share of customs duties, and ordered all merchants there to return to other places. If they refused the English would burn Basidu down. A few merchants left Basidu and Shaikh Rāshid himself sent most of his possessions to Julfār. He concluded an agreement with the English to pay 700 Tomans and, after that had been paid, the English promised not to harry him further.

The very powerful Arab Shaikh, Raḥmah al-Qāsimī of Julfār, was said to have advised Shaikh Rāshid not to pay, preferring that Rāshid should fight and promising him for that purpose 300 armed men from his people. The money that Shaikh Rāshid had to pay comprised 700 Tomans to the English Company, 100 to Draper privately, 30 to their interpreter, 20 to their Mullā and 30 to their sailors: he paid 200 Tomans in sulphur, 700 in *Mahmudis*, and 200 in red copper coins.<sup>88</sup>

The principal products sold in Persia during this period were: cotton cloth from Bengal, Coromandel and Surat; Mocha coffee; Malacca tin; Japanese *camphor*, copper, brass, lacquer-ware and porcelain; Chinese porcelain; sugar from Batavia, Bengal and Taiwan; pepper from Vengurla (west coast of India) and Sumatra; cardamom, *zappan* wood, ginger, woollen cloth, sandalwood, amber, coral, *benzoin*, iron bars, steel, Vietnamese flowered cloth, *arak* from Ceylon, ivory, nutmeg, mace (the dried outer covering of nutmeg, used as spice) and cloves. All this merchandise was being sold in Persia by the Dutch at a total annual price of 7-800,000 Guilders, on which there was a profit of 60-70%.<sup>89</sup> This may seem to be high, but the only costs taken into account here were the local costs in Persia; other more important costs such as



ships, wages of sailors and interest were never brought to account and profits were therefore in reality a good deal lower.

### **3.3.6 *Period VI, (1736-1747)***

This was Nādir Shāh's reign, during which the English East India Company's affairs prospered on the whole, although Nādir Shāh himself was engaged in invasions of Turkey, Afghanistan, Tartary, Oman, and India as far as Delhi.<sup>90</sup> Some of the chief features of this period were:

- i. In 1736, Nādir Shāh renewed the East India Company's privileges and asked the Company to supply ships for his fleet.<sup>91</sup> Since most English shipping and trade was in the hands of private traders, the East India Company was not able to comply.
- ii. From 1736 to 1743, the situation in Kirmān was so favourable for political stability and economic prosperity that goods sent from there were increasing by the year; most of it being copper ingots and wool.<sup>92</sup>
- iii. From 1737-47 Persian forces occupied Oman and Julfār (Ras al-Khaimah).<sup>93</sup>

The fragility of the trade was illustrated in 1747 when the Company's affairs in Persia were so finely balanced, as a result of the very disturbed conditions in the north, that orders were sent to the Agent to withdraw the up-country factories and to send officers to Kirmān in order to take care of the Company's affairs and effects there.<sup>94</sup>

### **3.4 The Struggle for Power (1746-1763)**

The period of 17 years from 1746 to 1763 was one of turmoil and anarchy in Persia, beginning with a widespread revolt of the people against the tyranny of the King, Nādir Shāh, and the subsequent murder of this monarch in June 1747. Serious dis-

unity then set in, with a variety of contenders for ultimate power across the country, some from the line of the ancient Kings but most from among the Generals and provincial leaders. The armed conflicts and associated brutality which ensued ravaged the land and affected all forms of trade, to the point of Persia's ruination.

External threats from the Afghans were maintained throughout those years, and large areas of Khurāsān province in the north-east of Persia fell under their control. The Arabs, as well, took advantage of the internal strife in the country to throw off Persian authority and influence over their shores and, in turn, tried to gain influence for themselves over the coastal areas of mainland Persia and its off-shore islands. The Arabs of the Persian coast inevitably became involved in the inland politics and conflicts of the country, but their own disunity caused them to achieve less influence than they might have done in collaboration with each other.

The events of this period are here arranged into separate, though related topics, as follows:

### ***3.4.1 The beginning of the insurrection, 1746***

In its early stages, the widespread insurrection of the Persian peoples and subject Arab territories against the King, Nādir Shāh, came as a consequence of the extortionate demands for taxes, cash and property he made upon them. The King met the revolts with brutal force - employing mass murder, blinding, rape, severe beatings and increased financial burdens, both to enforce his authority and to fund his escalating campaigns against his people. The various revolts are listed below -

#### ***3.4.1.1 Revolt at Sīstān***

Sīstān is situated about 365 miles north-east of Bandar Abbas on the Afghan border. The revolt at Sīstān in September 1746 was led by Fath 'Alī Khān (the Chief of Sīstān), but the King's forces captured and blinded him. His followers then surrendered, but his brother continued a stout resistance from their

castle at Sīstān in the middle of a river, out of reach of cannon shot. In November the King executed his favourite General, Ṭahmāsp Wakīl, because he had no success against the rebels in Sīstān.<sup>95</sup> The brother of Fath 'Alī Khān came out from his fort in February 1747 and was joined by large numbers from all parts; a large tribe in Khurāsān also revolted. The King had sent 'Alī Qulī Khān, his nephew, with 50,000 men against the Sīstān rebels, but he and his men had rebelled and strengthened the revolt at Sīstān.<sup>96</sup>

#### 3.4.1.2 *Revolt in the 'hot countries'*

The 'hot country' is the area between Bandar Abbas and Lār. The initial success of Fath 'Alī Khān at Sīstān in September 1746 had encouraged numbers of disaffected people in the 'hot countries' to declare for him. Reis Shāh Wardī Balūch (Chief of a large Baluchi tribe at Mināb) had put 5,000 soldiers at his disposal and was appointed Governor of the 'hot countries' with 2,000 men to assist him in the take-over. This was clearly a direct challenge to the King's authority.<sup>97</sup>

In March 1747 the people of Lār revolted against a new Governor and an Admiral sent there to extract taxes: the people had gathered 3-4,000 men and marched against the King's forces, upon which the new Governor and his followers fled and the Admiral was turned back. The people in Bandar Abbas were reassured by the arrival of 2,000 soldiers led by Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān from Julfār. He gave assurances to the Company that they would not be molested, but on the same night the soldiers plundered Bandar Abbas and burnt many houses. The Agent at Bandar Abbas, fearing for the Company's security, sent for assistance to Mullā 'Alī Shāh, the *Wakīl* for the King's ships; after a few days, however, the soldiers headed off for Lār to help the King's army. This army was composed of 4,000 Tartar and Afghan soldiers, the latter being the favourites of the King and the backbone of his armies, who had killed over 500 of the Lār men in the first battle, which was nevertheless won by the

rebels. The second battle was won by the King's forces and the rebels retreated to a stronghold near Lār. In Bandar Abbas, meanwhile, Mullā 'Alī Shāh's men occupied Gombroon castle.<sup>98</sup>

#### **3.4.1.3 *Revolt at Kirmān***

The people of Kirmān revolted in November 1746 and captured a large village. A military commander from Bandar Abbas set out with mines and artillery and reduced them: as a result a report spread that the King was near Isfahan and was marching on Sīstān via Kirmān. This news made the rebels desist. In March 1747 the Company Resident in Kirmān, Danvers Graves, fled to Bandar Abbas after the arrival of the King. He brought first-hand information about the King's atrocities and reported the death of the Dutch Agent at Kirmān during a severe beating.<sup>99</sup>

#### **3.4.1.4 *Revolt on the Persian coast***

The people of Dashtistān (the area behind Bushire) rebelled in November 1746, and in May 1747 the King's fleet at Bushire mutinied, sinking some ships and sailing off with others. The mutineers split into two parties, one following an Admiral and the other a group of Arab Captains. Great confusion followed in the Gulf. Muḥammad Qulī Sulṭān, the leader of the Persian troops who landed at Kung from Julfār, made links with the Dashtistān rebels and sent a message to Mullā 'Alī Shāh, warning him to join the revolt under pain of reprisals against his family, property and business interests at Bushire if he refused. Mullā 'Alī Shāh forthwith sailed for Kung, joining Muḥammad Qulī Sulṭān - who was to assist the Dashtistānis in their attack on Bushire, where the King's forces could not resist for long. The rebels attacked in June 1747 and Bushire fell to them, the Europeans being carried off for ransom. Mullā 'Alī Shāh returned the valuables taken from Company trankeys captured at Bushire and sent a message to the rebels saying that he was no longer co-

operating with them. He returned to Bandar Abbas, thereby preventing any further landings from Julfār, but by mid-1747 the whole coastline was in revolt.<sup>100</sup>

#### **3.4.1.5 *Revolt in Oman***

The Arabs in and around Muscat refused payment of the Persian King's taxes in October 1746 and rebelled, inflicting a defeat on the King's considerable forces. People on the whole Arab shore rose in increasing strength. In Julfār, the Arabs joined together in great numbers at the beginning of 1747 and made a night attack on the Persians, killing their horses and a good many men, including one of the Persian Sultāns in Julfār. After hearing the news of the Persian defeat at Julfār, the Commander of the King's forces started transporting grain and soldiers from Bandar Abbas to the Arab shore. However, he made no other move towards going there himself and it was believed that he had no intention of doing so, unless a fresh contingent of soldiers was sent to him. The Khān of Lār, hearing of the hesitation of the Commander at Bandar Abbas, deposed him and replaced him with another, although the deposed Commander had already embarked for Julfār a week earlier. When news arrived at Julfār that he had been dismissed, the Commander himself joined the revolt, together with the military Captains there, and got in touch with the rebels in Lār.

Four or five ships arrived from Julfār in Bandar Abbas in April 1747 and disembarked soldiers who marched towards Lār under the command of the dismissed Commander. Julfār came under the control of Mīr 'Alī Sultān, who had led the first wave of troops to land there and sent a message to the King, assuring him that he was not in revolt.<sup>101</sup>

### **3.4.2 *The death of Nādir Shāh***

The people in and around Meshhed, the capital of Khurāsān, rose in revolt in April 1747. At the beginning of June Nādir Shāh arrived there and began repressive measures. While there he heard that the Governor of Kalāt, a city north of Meshhed, was refusing the King's forces entry to his city. Nādir Shāh thereupon marched on Kalāt with his whole army; once there he ordered his personal guard and the Afghan soldiers to jointly attack the fort; his own guard failed to attack and the Afghans, going in alone, were cut to pieces and lost half their number. The enraged King handed his personal guards over to the Afghans for punishment and replaced them as his bodyguard by the Afghans. His personal guards, equally enraged, entered his tent on the night of 10 June 1747, cut him to pieces and sent his head to Meshhed.<sup>102</sup>

### **3.4.3 *Struggles for the throne***

With the death of Nādir Shāh, there began a period in the history of Persia which proved to be most eventful and significant, as it signalled the beginning of extreme anarchy throughout the land. This anarchy, in turn, led to the most serious disruption of all forms of trade and a resultant famine. The seeds of the anarchy were the struggles for the throne involving:

‘Alī Qulī Khān, Nādir Shāh's nephew

Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān, the brother of ‘Alī Qulī Khān

Shāhrukh Mīrzā, the grandson of Nādir Shāh.

The most reliable information on this period comes from the Secretary of Nādir Shāh, Mahdī Khān, whose *Histoire de Nader Chah* is an eyewitness account.<sup>103</sup>

**3.4.3.1 ‘Alī Qulī Khān:** when the 17 Safavi Royal Princes were executed by soldiers of the garrison to prevent their accession to throne, ‘Alī Qulī Khān took the throne in Khurāsān under the title of ‘Alī Shāh on 25 June 1747, and coins were minted in his name. The treasures of Nādir Shāh were brought to Meshhed, where ‘Alī Shāh distributed them among great and small without

distinction, as if they had no value. He appointed his brother, Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān, as Governor of Isfahan.

**3.4.3.2 Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān:** finding that his brother was living in an effeminate manner and giving absolute authority to his ministers in all matters, Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān attacked 'Alī Shāh's army and defeated it. The Shāh was captured and lost his eyes. Like his brother before him, Ibrāhīm Shāh distributed gold and silver indiscriminately, reportedly worth millions of Tomans, and fostered an impression of generosity by giving presents and honours to various unworthy people.<sup>104</sup>

**3.4.3.3 Shāhrukh Mīrzā:** while Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān was attacking the fortress of Kalāt, north of Meshhed, many of his soldiers deserted, some to Shāhrukh Mīrzā and others simply to return to their families. The inhabitants of Kalāt managed to capture Ibrāhīm Mīrzā Khān and send him in chains to Shāhrukh Mīrzā, who ordered him and his brother, 'Alī Shāh, to be executed. Mīrzā Sa'īd Muḥammad, who had been appointed Governor of Khurāsān by Nādir Shāh - and been involved in state affairs under both 'Alī Shāh and Ibrāhīm Shāh - now intrigued to have Shāhrukh Mīrzā blinded, but was in turn taken and blinded by 'Alī Khān Gelair, one of Shāhrukh Mīrzā's Commanders. Shāhrukh Mīrzā was placed on the throne but became Shāh in name only, since blindness made him unfit to rule. In the following period, 1755-61, the chiefs of several provinces would proclaim their independence.<sup>105</sup>

#### **3.4.4 *The struggle for overall control of Persia***

Little is recorded of the internal disturbances in Persia which had worsened beyond hope of recovery by the last quarter of 1750, leaving Isfahan and Shiraz under the control of local war-lords. The province of Gīlān was in the hands of the Qājārs, Meshhed was held by the Kurds, Khurāsān was divided between the Persians, Kurds and Afghans, Yezd and Kirmān had declared their independence, and the Baluchis



Figure 3.2 Persia under Zand rule, 1751 - 1795



were making frequent incursions into the country for plunder (see Figure 3.2). The economic problems, fear and oppression caused many important people to emigrate, some using the pretext of visiting Mecca in order to make their escape.<sup>106</sup>

The struggle for overall control continued, centred primarily around the possession of Isfahan. The main contenders were Āzād Khān Afghān, the Chief of Azerbaijan; Karīm Khān, the Zand tribal leader; Ḥusain Khān Qājār, the Qājār tribal leader; with Aḥmad Shāh, the Afghan leader and reputed son of Sulaimān Shāh Ṣafawī, in the background. The struggle remained confused but some critical events can be identified, as follows:

i) *August 1755 to July 1756*

At the beginning of this period Āzād Khān controlled Isfahan but lost it to Karīm Khān, from whom it was wrested, in turn, by Ḥusain Khān Qājār.<sup>107</sup>

ii) *August 1756 to July 1757*

During this year the struggle for central authority in Persia centred on Ḥusain Khān Qājār and Āzād Khān, the activities of Karīm Khān and Aḥmad Shāh being a side-show. At the beginning of the period Ḥusain Khān Qājār was besieging Karīm Khān at Shiraz, but lifted the siege on hearing that Āzād Khān was marching on Isfahan (which Ḥusain Khān Qājār had seized earlier from Karīm Khān). In all probability, Āzād Khān entered Isfahan before Ḥusain Khān Qājār reached there since he did, for some time, actually occupy the city. Nevertheless, Ḥusain Khān Qājār was victorious in this encounter and Āzād Khān fled to Baghdad, where he sought the protection of the Pasha.<sup>108</sup>

iii) *August 1757 to July 1758*

Karīm Khān was reported to have taken the city of Behbahan, near Isfahan, and later repossessed Isfahan. His success at Isfahan was short-lived as this city was retaken by Ḥusain Khān Qājār, who later marched on Karīm Khān at Shiraz and besieged him.<sup>109</sup>

iv) *August 1758 to December 1759*

Karīm Khān was now in the ascendancy. Ḥusain Khān Qājār had met his death and, although Āzād Khān had re-appeared on the scene he was now of less importance than his General of previous times, Fath 'Alī Khān.<sup>110</sup>

v) *January 1760 to November 1761*

During this period there are few records of the inland struggle for power in Persia, but what there is confirms that confusion still reigned.<sup>111</sup> The situation was aptly described by the Agent in Bandar Abbas, Alexander Douglas, in a letter dated 28 February 1761 to the Presidency:

The Kingdom seems to be hastening very fast to its destruction, the men in power have little or no consideration for their subjects, they only think how to gratify the soldiers and those who immediately serve them, the consequence of which must be the ruin of trade.<sup>112</sup>

### **3.5 Capture by the French of the English Factory at Bandar Abbas**

As a result of the state of war between England and France from 18 May 1757, the number of French warships and privateers in the Gulf increased. On 14 January 1758 a French 24-gun ship crewed by 95 Europeans and 15 *lascars* anchored under Larak. Her orders were unknown to the English, but the English Agent sent the East India Company ship *Success* to Hormuz, fearing that she might be attacked if she remained at Larak. It was later learned that the Frenchman had been at sea for three months and had at first been accompanied by three other vessels from which she had parted company at the entrance to the Gulf. Later, she was bound for Basrah to escort a French merchant ship down the Gulf: the merchant ship had been afraid to leave Basrah, which was a neutral port. The Frenchman was seen under sail off the island of Henjam on its way up the Gulf and arrived at Lingah on 21 January, leaving on the next day and passing by Charak, bound for Basrah.<sup>113</sup>

In a letter from Shaw, the English Resident at Basrah, it was learned the French ship was called the *Bristol* and that it had arrived there on 20 February. She was to escort the French merchant ship *St Catherine*, which had been there since the war began, down the Gulf. On 5 April, Alexander Douglas, the Agent, and the Council at Bandar Abbas received Shaw's letter dated 14 March saying that the French ship would probably stay there for three months as she was reportedly awaiting a cargo of grain for Pondicherry, the chief French settlement in India, and the harvest would not be ready until the end of that period.<sup>114</sup> The Presidency gave orders on 11 May 1758 for the *Revenge*, together with the *Drake*, to attack the *Bristol*. The *Revenge* and *Drake* left Bandar Abbas on 23 June to cruise in the Gulf in the hunt for the *Bristol*, after which time they were to proceed to Bombay. The *Bristol*, however, did not load her grain and set sail until about 10 July; she therefore missed her appointment with the *Revenge* and *Drake*.<sup>115</sup>

In the evening of 12 October 1759, four ships flying Dutch flags arrived at Bandar Abbas: one carried 64 guns, another 22 guns. The other two vessels were the *Mahmoody* and *Mary*, belonging to the local merchants Shalabī and Muḥammad Ṣūfī. Early the next morning the vessels, which were in reality French privateers and their two prizes, landed two mortars and four cannon to the west of the English factory and started a bombardment. At high water, about 11 o'clock, the 22-gun ship hauled within about a quarter of a mile of the factory and, in conjunction with the mortars and cannon from the west, launched the attack. In the evening the English received a call to surrender from the French camp whereupon they signed a capitulation document (see Appendix 6). The French occupied the English factory while the English sheltered at first in the Dutch factory. The French sent the Europeans and *topasses* of the factory garrison (16 seamen) on board their ships and gave their *sepoys* liberty to go wherever they liked. Douglas, the Agent, and his staff remained in Bandar Abbas. After embarking a quantity of copper which was in the warehouse and setting fire to the factory the French left Bandar Abbas on 30 October, bound for Muscat. The two forces were by no means well matched since English strength consisted of a small

number of Europeans, topasses and sepoy, whereas the French numbered about 450 Europeans and 150 negroes.<sup>116</sup>

### **3.6 The 'Commotion' in the vicinity of Bandar Abbas**

After the death of Nādir Shāh in 1747 the whole area of Bandar Abbas (Figure 3.1) fell under the influence of various powers. To begin with, Ḥusain 'Alī Beg was sent by Reis Shāh Wardī Balūch, the Baluchi tribal leader from Mināb, to be Governor of Bandar Abbas but took fright on hearing of Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān's approach (see below) in August 1747. Being afraid to return to his master, Ḥusain 'Alī Beg sold his few possessions and headed for the islands or the Arab shore.<sup>117</sup> Next, Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān, the Commander of the troops at Julfār, received an order on 17 August 1747 that he was appointed Governor of Bandar Abbas by 'Alī Qulī Khān, and on 25 August he arrived in Bandar Abbas.<sup>118</sup>

Uze Bāshī Ḥājji was the Headman of Tārom (a town 70 miles north-west of Bandar Abbas) who claimed that he had been appointed by Shāhrukh Shāh as Governor of Lār. Uze Bāshī Ḥājji had little or no respect for the monarchy and during Nādir Shāh's time he had terrorised and plundered the area around Lār from his fort at Tārom. He arrived at Lār in mid-1747 but was unable to stay there and was forced to escape. He and his followers began attacking Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān's forces at the end of August; on hearing of Uze Bāshī Ḥājji's approach and fearing capture, Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān left for Aḥmadī, his own village about 60 miles north-east of Bandar Abbas, after plundering Assīn (a village near Bandar Abbas). In October 1747, Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān, his son Haidar Beg and 'Alī Beg, a General of Fars, moved from Aḥmadī with 4,000 men against Uze Bāshī Ḥājji. Whilst chasing Uze Bāshī Ḥājji in March 1748, Mīr 'Alī Sulṭān, his son Haidar Beg and 19 others of his family were murdered by his son-in-law, Coodan Beg.<sup>119</sup> In the following month, Uze Bāshī Ḥājji and 'Abdul Shaikh, the Governor of Qishm, headed for the Baluch region on the pretext of recruiting soldiers, returning to Bandar Abbas having recruited only 70 Baluchis.

Back in Bandar Abbas, Uze Bāshī Ḥājī told the head of the Dutch factory that he wanted the friendship of the Europeans and, as a sign of good faith, would attack Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib, the new Governor who had arrived in Bandar Abbas in March on appointment by the King. He would drive out the Governor and himself keep possession of the fort and protect the place until a new governor arrived. He was not believed, and was suspected of simply plotting to take the fort, which he was unable to do unilaterally as his only approach was within range of the Dutch cannon. The Dutch and English replied that Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib had been appointed by the King and, however bad he was, they would not intervene. If he, Uze Bāshī Ḥājī, however, attacked the Europeans they would assist each other. In the following month, May 1748, Uze Bāshī Ḥājī left for Tārom where his fort was under siege, and ‘Abdul Shaikh left for Qishm.<sup>120</sup>

Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib was appointed Governor of Bandar Abbas in January 1748 by Ṣāliḥ Khān, the Lord of Shiraz. He arrived in Bandar Abbas in March with 300 followers but in the following month he received orders to go to Shiraz from the King, who had discovered that Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib and the people of Lār were in revolt. In May he and his followers left Bandar Abbas for Lār in order to join the rebels there. However, when his followers heard that the King had ordered his seizure they deserted him, and he was captured near Lār.<sup>121</sup>

Mullā ‘Alī Shāh arrived in Bandar Abbas on 8 October 1747 with seven large topsail vessels and several smaller ships of the Persian fleet. He was said to have run away from Luft fearing that the Charak and other Arabs were combining and wanted to capture him. He later heard that Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib was plotting to kill him, seize the fleet, subdue the people of Bandar Abbas and attack the English and Dutch factories. He therefore remained on board ship.<sup>122</sup> The disorder in the Bandar Abbas vicinity provoked the Governor of Shiraz into planning to go to Bandar Abbas himself: the Arab tribes were fearful of his arrival and met Mullā ‘Alī Shāh on board ship on 17

May 1748 to make peace. At the same time, Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib left Bandar Abbas (see previous paragraph) and Mullā ‘Alī Shāh brought the remainder of the Persian fleet there, where he disembarked the families of his sailors.<sup>123</sup>

Although Mullā ‘Alī Shāh had designs on seizing the European factories in Bandar Abbas, he was obliged in August 1750 to make an accommodation with them when Bandar Abbas was in fear of the arrival of ‘Alī Mardān Khān, a Bakhtiari chieftain. The English East India Company at Bandar Abbas sent a letter to Şāliḥ Khān, Shāhrukh’s General at Shiraz, complaining about Mullā ‘Alī Shāh. The General replied with a letter to the Company enclosing an order to Mullā ‘Alī Shāh to treat the Company favourably.<sup>124</sup>

While he was controlling Bandar Abbas, Mullā ‘Alī Shāh was subject to twin pressures. First, from Nāṣir Khān of Lār whose objective was to gain at least half of the revenue which Mullā ‘Alī Shāh extracted from Bandar Abbas; and, second, from the Arabs who sought to capture the Persian fleet. He was, in addition, caught up in the enmity between the Charak Arabs, with whom he was friendly, and the other Arabs in the Gulf.<sup>125</sup>

### **3.6.1 *Mullā ‘Alī Shāh, Nāṣir Khān, the Arabs and the English, 1750-1763***

During a period of 13 years, Bandar Abbas passed through severe disturbances, or ‘commotions’, which centred in the enmities between the different Arab tribes, the bad relations between Nāṣir Khān and Mullā ‘Alī Shāh, and the threats or attacks coming from the English.

**3.6.1.1 1750:** In August of this year an English Board meeting at Bandar Abbas concluded that Mullā ‘Alī Shāh was not well disposed to the Company, and was in revolt. The Company expected an attack from him, and possibly also an attack by Nāṣir Khān from Lār: Mullā ‘Alī Shāh’s people actually attacked the Company’s camels carrying water and provisions to the factory, and the Company’s Linguist complained

that Mullā ‘Alī Shāh had threatened him with death if he continued to complain about matters, saying that his men could do as they wished. The Dutch, also, complained about Mullā ‘Alī Shāh and both European factories decided to keep a powerful ship of their own in the port for their protection. They decided to anchor their ships in the Strait of Hormuz if the Arabs arrived at Bandar Abbas.<sup>126</sup>

In September, Mullā ‘Alī Shāh said in public that he intended to attack the Europeans when their ships, with their great firepower, were leaving harbour, when they would be weaker. He threatened far-reaching measures against their trade which would yield him as great an advantage as if the English had paid customs. If he was later obliged to leave Bandar Abbas he would first loot both factories and then withdraw on board his ships.<sup>127</sup>

**3.6.1.2 1751:** In February Mullā ‘Alī Shāh voiced his great displeasure with the Company for not off-loading the *Shaftesbury*, which had arrived on 26 January from Bombay, since he thereby lost the customs dues and held that this action was contrary to the agreement and to the promises of friendship. He threatened that if the English were determined to quarrel with him he would have no difficulty in getting enough soldiers to make them repent of it (see also page 95).<sup>128</sup> In the next month he told the Agent that he expected Company assistance in the event of an Arab attack and the Agent replied that the English had no quarrel with the Arabs.<sup>129</sup> A relative of Nāṣir Khān, who had arrived in Bandar Abbas two months earlier and was seized and held prisoner by Mullā ‘Alī Shāh, managed to escape in June. He had come to Bandar Abbas on Nāṣir Khān’s behalf, to demand half of the port dues, and Mullā ‘Alī Shāh feared the arrival of Nāṣir Khān himself when he heard how his relative had been treated.<sup>130</sup>

The Arabs arrived at Bandar Abbas in September, on board 12 trankeys and numbering 3,000 men under the Shaikh of Julfār, Shaikh Qā’id al-Qāsimī. The Dutch Resident told the English Agent that the Arabs intended to seize the Persian fleet and to

ransack the town; he asked for English protection. The Agent threatened Mullā ‘Alī Shāh that, as the Company had authority from their Presidency in Bombay to do so, they would leave at the first sign of fresh trouble. Nāṣir Khān wrote to the Agent saying that he was coming to Bandar Abbas to confront Mullā ‘Alī Shāh, who had been the one to bring in the Arabs.<sup>131</sup>

**3.6.1.3 1752:** Nāṣir Khān threatened Mullā ‘Alī Shāh in January in again demanding half of the port dues, but Mullā ‘Alī Shāh refused to pay. Nāṣir Khān therefore threatened to plunder and burn Bandar Abbas the following morning: the next day he entered the port with a small retinue, and Mullā ‘Alī Shāh came out of the fort to receive him in a friendly manner. On the following day Nāṣir Khān removed all Mullā ‘Alī Shāh’s men from the fort and replaced them with his own garrison.<sup>132</sup> In February, Nāṣir Khān’s brother-in-law, Masīḥ Sulṭān, was appointed Governor of Bandar Abbas, and Nāṣir Khān visited Mullā ‘Alī Shāh in the Armenian church where he was being held in close custody to demand Rs (*Rupees*) 60,000, and threatened to use force if necessary. Mullā ‘Alī Shāh asked the Khān’s permission to collect the sum demanded from the brokers of Bandar Abbas.<sup>133</sup> In the next month Nāṣir Khān left Bandar Abbas and took Mullā ‘Alī Shāh with him. Masīḥ Sulṭān was left behind as Governor, with enough soldiers to control the town.<sup>134</sup> In July there were reports from trankeys passing to-and-fro between Bandar Abbas and Luft that the Arabs from the other side of the Gulf were again intending to invade Bandar Abbas.<sup>135</sup>

**3.6.1.4 1752 to 1754:** The Gombroon Diary records for this period have, unfortunately, been lost and events can be determined only with the help of deduction or conjecture, along the following lines.

Mullā ‘Alī Shāh apparently secured his release from Nāṣir Khān at Lār. What induced Nāṣir Khān to release him is unknown but a Diary entry of 29 May 1757 (Vol.10, p.132) gives the terms of his release and some indication of its timing. On that date Nāṣir Khān wrote to the Agent, Alexander Douglas, remarking that it was



five years since he had appointed Mullā 'Alī Shāh as Governor of Bandar Abbas and Hormuz. Since Mullā 'Alī Shāh was still in captivity in Lār in July 1752, it could be deduced that he was released shortly afterwards, thus confirming the rumours circulating in Bandar Abbas towards the end of June 1752. In the same letter of 29 May 1757 the terms of Mullā 'Alī Shāh's release and re-appointment as Governor of Bandar Abbas are clearly set out. Mullā 'Alī Shāh would retain all the import and export duties of Bandar Abbas, out of which he would meet the expenses of maintaining the Persian fleet. Nāṣir Khān would receive 1,000 Tomans annually from the revenues of Hormuz, together with the revenues of Assīn and Tauscun (both near Bandar Abbas), each estimated at 500 Tomans a year. He would also receive the *brimstone* mines, previously the property of Mullā 'Alī Shāh, and would hold the children of Mullā 'Alī Shāh as hostages to ensure compliance with the agreement (there is no mention of the wives). Following his release, Mullā 'Alī Shāh understandably retained his hostility to Nāṣir Khān and moved closer to some of the Arab tribes, to which he had become related by marriage. It is not known whether the Arabs from the opposite shore had attacked - as they had threatened - in 1752 or whether such action, or its threat, had played any part in the release of Mullā 'Alī Shāh from Lār.<sup>136</sup> The Arab Shaikhs overall gained more influence, especially in the coastal areas, and became involved in the internal struggle for power in Persia.

**3.6.1.5 1754:** Nāṣir Khān had been fighting against the Arabs but in September he made peace with them, after suffering a series of defeats at their hands, in order to save face with the Persian Government.<sup>137</sup>

**3.6.1.6 1755:** In May, Shaikh Raḥmah al-Qāsimī and his troops attacked 'Abdul Shaikh of Qishm and Luft; in June he was before Luft with 3,000 men. For two months Mullā 'Alī Shāh attacked the fort at Luft by sea and Shaikh Raḥmah besieged it by land, without success until 'Abdul Shaikh died on 10 October. Those in the fort then informed Mullā 'Alī Shāh that they would surrender to him if he undertook not to plunder them, and he took possession the same day. After his success at Luft,

Mullā ‘Alī Shāh demanded money from its people in order to pay the Arab Shaikhs who had assisted him.<sup>138</sup>

**3.6.1.7 1757:** Nāṣir Khān claimed in May (see page 83) that Mullā ‘Alī Shāh had paid him none of the revenues from Hormuz, Assīn and Tauscun since being appointed five years before and estimated the overdue amount at 7-8,000 Tomans.<sup>139</sup> Shaikh Raḥmah al-Qāsimī arrived at Bandar Abbas in September with 400 men. He visited the Agent and told him that Mullā ‘Alī Shāh had written to Nāṣir Khān agreeing to pay the 1,000 Tomans currently demanded. Shaikh Raḥmah apologised for Mullā ‘Alī Shāh’s past behaviour towards the English, and said that he personally would ensure that affairs would be settled to the satisfaction of the English.<sup>140</sup>

**3.6.1.8 1758:** Nāṣir Khān released Mullā ‘Alī Shāh’s children in November and they arrived in Bandar Abbas.

**3.6.1.9 1759:** During the Seven-Year War between Britain and France, the French attacked and seized the English factory in September (see page 77).

**3.6.1.10 1760:** Shaikh Raḥmah became dissatisfied with Mullā ‘Alī Shāh for marrying one of his daughters to Mullā Ḥasan (one of Nāṣir Khān’s military commanders) and seized Hormuz in December 1759, moving on to take the fort at Gombroon in January 1760 and staying there about two weeks. He captured Mullā ‘Alī Shāh and kept him prisoner at Hormuz. Raḥmah then took the ship *Rahmania*, sailed it to Luft and embarked his men from both Bandar Abbas and Hormuz, after they had looted Bandar Abbas. He set Mullā ‘Alī Shāh free in Hormuz<sup>141</sup> but some of the Hormuz garrison arrested Mullā ‘Alī Shāh again and crossed over to Bandar Abbas where they seized the Gombroon fort. The soldiers supporting Mullā ‘Alī Shāh fled to Qishm to seek assistance from Shaikh Raḥmah and the Āl Ḥaram tribe (a tribe on the Persian coast who had joined with the Shaikh in his raiding). The brother of Nāṣir Khān, Ja’far Khān, heard of the seizure of the fort and sent forces to Bandar Abbas to

demand its return from the Hormuz people in the name of Nāṣir Khān. He gave the Hormuz soldiers assurances of their safety to take their belongings from Bandar Abbas and return to Hormuz, and they handed the fort over to him.

Shaikh Raḥmah and the Āl Ḥaram had gone from Qishm to Hormuz to retake that fort, and came under its fire: they plundered everything outside its walls but had to return to Qishm without capturing it, fearing attack by the Charak Arabs, the Banū Ma'īn and the Hormuz soldiers who had allied themselves with Ja'far Khān.<sup>142</sup> The Banū Ma'īn and Charak Arabs pressed Ja'far Khān for support in March, reporting that there was a party of 500 Qawāsīm on Qishm and that they were afraid of being overpowered. The Banū Ma'īn's main cause for concern over Qishm was to protect many of their families there from being plundered by the Qawāsīm. Ja'far Khān replied that he could not help because he had too few troops to defend Bandar Abbas; the Qawāsīm also sent several threatening letters to Ja'far Khān warning him not to join in any attack on them.<sup>143</sup>

In April the Banū Ma'īn and the Charak Arabs returned to Charak after failing to raise sufficient strength to match the Qawāsīm on Qishm. Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī, the brother of the now-deceased Shaikh Raḥmah, proposed a peace between himself and Nāṣir Khān; his envoys returned from Lār in May saying that Nāṣir Khān had agreed to making peace on the strict condition that Mullā 'Alī Shāh should have no management of public or government affairs.<sup>144</sup> Mullā 'Alī Shāh, himself, escaped from Hormuz in May and reached Bandar Abbas; there he took a number of trankeys and went to join Shaikh Rāshid at Lingah. The following month (June) he sent a letter from Lingah to the English Agent at Bandar Abbas, telling him that in a few days he and Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī would attack Bandar Abbas: he advised the Company's people to stay near their houses and not to mix with Ja'far Khān's men.<sup>145</sup>

On 24 June, at 5 p.m., a great fleet of trankeys was seen between Qishm and Bandar Abbas, and at 2 in the morning of the 25th the Qawāsīm landed a little to the west of

the town, unopposed by Ja'far Khān's men. The two sides exchanged fire throughout the day, with the Qawāsīm about a quarter of a mile from the town and the defenders occupying the walls. In the evening the Khān ordered his men to withdraw from the walls to the fort and the Qawāsīm took possession of the western part of the town at about 9 p.m. About 100 of them took control of the east gate and a house on the shore 150 yards from the Dutch factory. The next day all was quiet until 4 p.m. when the Qawāsīm in the house by the shore opened fire on the Dutch factory and a house occupied by Ja'far Khān's men. The gun fight lasted all night.

On the 27th the Qawāsīm looted several houses and at about 9 a.m. they entered the English house but soon left; as they were getting over the town wall, Alexander Douglas and William Nash, with the sepoys, 'saluted' them with grape shot from a 9-pounder, just to let them know what to expect if they touched or entered any place belonging to the English. The Agent received an apology for the attack on their house from Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī and Mullā 'Alī Shāh. Ja'far Khān's men, meanwhile, plundered the town's inhabitants and stored their booty in the Dutch factory. At about 4 p.m. the Persians and Qawāsīm exchanged fire as usual from behind walls and this continued until sunrise.<sup>146</sup> On the 28th, also, nothing much happened and the Khān's soldiers continued to rob the inhabitants, while the Arabs left the town at about 10 p.m. unmolested by the plundering soldiers. When they arrived in Bandar Abbas the strength of the Qawāsīm was estimated between 800 and 1,000 men, with a fleet of 50 trankeys.<sup>147</sup>

A few days later, on 2 July, three *gallivats* and three trankeys from Muscat arrived at Hormuz, bringing back the Banū Ma'īn Arabs and the Hormuz people. The Imam of Muscat explained his inability to restrain the Banū Ma'īn, Charak and Hormuz people because he was at war with the Qawāsīm on the opposite shore.<sup>148</sup> On the following day the Imam asked Ja'far Khān for 2,000 troops to attack the Qawāsīm at Julfār, after which, victorious, he would make the whole of his fleet available to assist the

Khān.<sup>149</sup> The Imam had given the gallivats and trankeys to the Charak Arabs, and they landed the Banū Ma'īn at Charak on 6 July.<sup>150</sup>

Nāṣir Khān sent 5 cavalymen and 50 infantry to Bandar Abbas from Lār on 11 July when he heard about the attack<sup>151</sup> and then, on 18 July, left to join forces with the Shaikh of Charak, supported by the Imam of Muscat, for an attack on the Shaikh of Lingah, a member of the Qawāsim family who was supporting Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī.<sup>152</sup> On 21 July Nāṣir Khān arrived at Charak and Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī, who was at Luft, went to Lingah, where the two adversaries met in an engagement on the 23rd. News came from Qishm on the 26th that the Qawāsim had defeated Nāṣir Khān at Lingah and forced him twice into retreat with casualties.<sup>153</sup>

Nāṣir Khān sent a messenger to Ja'far Khān on 29 July ordering him to send all the cavalry he had at Bandar Abbas to his assistance; all except about 30 men left Bandar Abbas the next day.<sup>154</sup> The *Faidh Rabbani* and another vessel belonging to the Imam of Muscat arrived at Bandar Abbas on 2 October and anchored; they were there to help Nāṣir Khān, the Banū Ma'īn and the Charak Arabs against the Qawāsim.<sup>155</sup> The next day, Nāṣir Khān was encamped at Khamīr (a town on the coast between Lingah and Bandar Abbas) and from there had sent troops to lay waste to Qishm island: this they had done and only the two Arab forts had escaped. Nāṣir Khān was now keen to conclude a peace with Karīm Khān and wanted to leave the area for Lār, in accordance with an agreement between them. However, he wanted to leave the Bandar Abbas area secure by making peace with Mullā 'Alī Shāh and suggested that Ja'far Khān should marry one of Mullā 'Alī Shāh's daughters. They would live in Bandar Abbas and receive half the port's revenues for their maintenance, the other half being paid to Nāṣir Khān. Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Qishm would also control the fort at Luft and receive half of Qishm's revenues, the remainder going to Nāṣir Khān.

The Baluchi Chief at Mināb, Shariārī, had been very active in trying to bring about the release of Mullā 'Alī Shāh's family imprisoned at Hormuz. Several letters passed

between him and Hormuz on the subject and, when it was the season to gather dates, he tricked two senior officials of Hormuz to Mināb on that pretext. He imprisoned them and demanded the release of Mullā 'Alī Shāh's family in return for them but he was refused by the Hormuz people. Nāṣir Khān sent trankeys with Banū Ma'īn and Charak Arabs to help the Hormuzians, and kept the vessels there on permanent station. Forty of these Arabs were left to garrison the fort at Hormuz and this suggested a pact of some sort between the parties. Further trouble also broke out between the Banū Ma'īn and the Persians, who had been treating the Arabs badly.

Nāṣir Khān had to leave Bandar Abbas on 3 October without making any peace with Mullā 'Alī Shāh,<sup>156</sup> but the Imam of Muscat sent an ambassador on 4 December to Bandar Abbas, and from there to Qishm, with a view to making peace between Muscat and Julfār. The ambassador went to Hormuz on the 9th to make peace between the Banū Ma'īn and Charak Arabs on one side, and the Qawāsim: he returned, however, without succeeding. By December, Ja'far Khān was oppressing the people and merchants of Bandar Abbas, and the English were not exempt. He stopped provisions from reaching the English Residency, occupied their property and demanded money. Mullā 'Alī Shāh had agreed to live in Bandar Abbas but Ja'far Khān rejected his proposals, with the result that people went over to Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī at Julfār.<sup>157</sup>

**3.6.1.11 1760:** During the hot season of 1760, William Nash, Assistant Agent, and most of the European soldiers died; Ensign Nock was invalided. More staff were requested but only two Writers were sent, one of those dying a few months after his arrival.<sup>158</sup>

**3.6.1.12 1761:** Shaikh Rāshid agreed in January to make peace with Ja'far Khān on the basis that half the revenues of Qishm island went to Mullā 'Alī Shāh and the other half to Nāṣir Khān. When no reply to his proposals was received, Shaikh Rāshid decided to attack Hormuz and Charak first, and then move on to Bandar Abbas.<sup>159</sup>

The Qawāsīm fleet, consisting of 30 gallivats, *dhow*s and trankeys, with 2,000 men anchored off Qishm fort in October, before heading off for Hormuz with the intention of finishing the war with the Banū Ma‘īn. The Chief of the Banū Ma‘īn, Shaikh ‘Abdallāh, sailed out to meet the Qawāsīm with five gallivats and a three-hour battle ensued, after which Shaikh ‘Abdallāh retreated to the protection of the battery of Hormuz castle. The Qawāsīm fleet sailed off to an unknown destination and Shaikh ‘Abdallāh let it be known that he had defeated the Qawāsīm. The Qawāsīm’s fleet later appeared around Hormuz, however, and the Imam of Muscat came to help the Banū Ma‘īn with four ships. The Qawāsīm sailed out against them and a sharp engagement took place near Larak island in which the Imam’s ships disgraced themselves by leaving the battle. In this last sea battle Shaikh ‘Abdallāh had lost three Shaikhs but had seized a Qāsimī trankey.<sup>160</sup> The situation in December was that the Imam’s ships had returned to Muscat, Shaikh ‘Abdallāh arrived at Hormuz with several Banū Ma‘īn families from Charak, Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī was at Luft, Mullā ‘Alī Shāh was at Qishm fort, while the Shaikh of Charak and some Banū Ma‘īn were at Muscat trying to make an agreement with the Imam about their war with the Qawāsīm.<sup>161</sup>

**3.6.1.13 1762:** In February, and to everyone’s surprise, Ja‘far Khān entered Bandar Abbas to re-occupy the position of Governor. The Banū Ma‘īn, for their part, agreed to settle in Bandar Abbas provided that Ja‘far Khān was not the Governor: opposition to him extended to Bandar Abbas itself where there were fears of his severity.<sup>162</sup> The Banū Ma‘īn in March seized a trankey from Muscat on which there were several merchants from Kirmān; their justification for doing so was the state of war between Kirmān and Nāṣir Khān, to whom they owed allegiance. The trade between the Banū Ma‘īn and the Qawāsīm by boat had now ceased.<sup>163</sup>

### 3.7 The withdrawal of the Dutch Factory from Bandar Abbas

The first reference to the withdrawal of the Dutch factory from Bandar Abbas was in July 1747, when news came from Bushire that the Dutch Company's employees at Bushire had been robbed of everything, and that rebels had carried off the Europeans and senior employees, demanding a ransom of 6,000 Tomans from the Head (Mynheer) of the Dutch establishment and Council at Bandar Abbas. It was more than difficult for the Dutch at Bandar Abbas to raise that amount since they could scarcely buy enough to keep themselves alive. The Mynheer talked of leaving Bandar Abbas and going to Basrah, which could be made their main settlement, by the next ship from Batavia. However, the market would not be able to take the large quantity of woollen goods they already had in the warehouse at that time at Basrah. They had not been able to dispose of any woollen goods at Bandar Abbas.<sup>164</sup>

In 1749 the Dutch complained bitterly to Mullā 'Alī Shāh of ill treatment by him and decided to detain the ship which arrived from Batavia in August for their protection. In January 1751 they determined to remove to the island of Khark (see Chapter 4), where their Resident formerly at Bushire had retired.<sup>165</sup> This decision grew from the tripartite agreement with the English and Mullā 'Alī Shāh described on page 94. The Dutch assured the English on 5 February 1751 that the bad news they were getting from the interior had made them long since determined to leave the country: they were only waiting for one of their Europe-bound ships to arrive from Basrah to take whatever remained in the factory and go. They asked the English if the *Shaftesbury* and the *Drake* could take on the 25,000 *maunds* of pepper, freight and other things remaining which their ship could not manage; if so they would go immediately with it to Surat. On the basis of the good understanding between the two factories, the English agreed.<sup>166</sup>

The English were unwilling to join the Dutch in leaving Bandar Abbas without permission from their superiors<sup>167</sup> (see page 94), but the Dutch finished loading their



goods on 19 February 1751, leaving only a small quantity of sugar and pepper to cover the expenses of two Writers and their Linguist, who were to be left behind to take care of the factory and to recover some debts from up-country.<sup>168</sup> The two English ships sailed on 21 February, bound for Surat,<sup>169</sup> and the English Agent at Bandar Abbas wrote to the Presidency of the East India Company explaining: 'The reason of their leaving the place is the unsettled state of the country, in which they found it was impossible to remain with security unless they always kept a ship here, which the profits of their trade would not answer so took the opportunity while they had it in their power'<sup>170</sup> (see Appendix 7). The few remaining Dutch did some trading at Bandar Abbas, but in a small way<sup>171</sup> (see Appendix 8).

### **3.8 The withdrawal of the English Factory from Bandar Abbas**

Any discussion of the withdrawal of the English Factory from Bandar Abbas must include the many attempts to withdraw which preceded the final event.

#### ***3.8.1 Withdrawal to Bahrain, 1750***

In a letter dated 9 October 1750 to the Presidency in Bombay, the East India Company representatives in Bandar Abbas claimed that their situation on the mainland of Persia was so precarious that they should seize the Persian fleet and take possession of one of the islands in the Gulf. They suggested Bahrain, describing the island and saying that it seemed to them the best place for trade, being opposite Bushire and near Basrah. There was a very good fort, built by the Portuguese, the revenue of the island was at that time between 3-4,000 Tomans - very capable of improvement, and there was a fine harbour for ships. Bahrain formerly belonged to the King of Persia but at that time was in the hands of the Huwalah Arabs, who lived between Bandar Abbas and Bushire and were always quarrelling amongst themselves: they treated the inhabitants of Bahrain poorly.

The Arabs had no forces of any consequence there (about 400 men) and what strength they had at sea was in trankeys. There were only two places to land on the island: 100 sepoys and 150 soldiers with two small vessels would be necessary at the first landing, after which only a small vessel and a gallivat would be sufficient. If the English did not take that place, they said, the Dutch would.<sup>172</sup> In December 1750 the Company learnt from an Arab familiar with Bahrain that the fort was in good condition 'as to its outward walls and battery', though some of the warehouses needed minor repairs, for which the materials were both plentiful and inexpensive. The tax on date trees yielded Rs 30,000 a year and the Huwalah Arabs raised a further Rs 50,000 in various 'impositions'. In addition to the local people there were about 500 'strangers' who had settled there and would join with the English to drive out the Huwalah Arabs.<sup>173</sup>

In a further letter about Bahrain to the Presidency dated 5 February 1751, the Factory Board wrote that in their humble opinion the removal scheme appeared to be more feasible than previously thought. Bahrain now offered greater advantages than they had first realised, particularly as regards the abundant fresh water to be found in running streams in every part of the island. Clover was so plentiful that the natives derived a good income from raising cattle to supply other parts of the Gulf, and the best breed of horses to be found in the Gulf. Horse rearing could be done cheaply, since it was not necessary to give the animals barley when clover provided better nourishment.<sup>174</sup>

The Presidency replied in a letter dated 26 February 1751 that the Agent and Council at Bandar Abbas should not leave the port unless an immediate danger to life necessitated their departure. In such a case, they ordered the Agent to withdraw by ship with the most valuable of the Company's effects, and to despatch the Company ship, *Drake*, immediately to Bombay with their specie and news of what was happening. After that they were to try to come to some form of understanding with the dominant local faction to preserve the Company's privileges, and to resettle themselves at

Bandar Abbas when things became quiet again. If they should find it impracticable to come to any agreement or to return to their factory before the government became settled under one head, and if they had any encouragement to do so, they should settle on any island up the Gulf near Bushire or Bandar Rīq.<sup>175</sup>

Lorimer goes on to say that the attempted withdrawal from Bandar Abbas was due to the taking of Shiraz by the Afghans.<sup>176</sup> However, the English circumstances had no links with either the Afghans or Shiraz: the main factor in that attempt was fear of ‘Alī Mardān Khān, the Bakhtiari, whose tribesmen had treated the few remaining Europeans in Isfahan very badly. The Europeans in Bandar Abbas were in a panic over the possible arrival of ‘Alī Mardān Khān’s forces there.<sup>177</sup>

The Agent at Bandar Abbas again mentioned the advantages of seizing Bahrain from the Huwalah Arabs in a letter dated 18 January 1751 to the Presidency at Bombay. He mentioned that many Armenian merchants had said they would reside there with them: he again advocated seizing the Persian fleet - four large ships at Bandar Abbas, two more at Bushire and many smaller vessels<sup>178</sup> - but he had taken no steps either to seize the fleet on his departure or to withdraw the factory from Bandar Abbas.<sup>179</sup> Lorimer notes ‘The matter was then dropped for a time’,<sup>180</sup> without giving any reason for the attempt being abandoned. The main reasons were

- i) Mullā ‘Alī Shāh’s public threats described on page 81.
- ii) The Agent received orders on 26 January 1751 from the Presidency not to seize the Persian fleet on any account, nor to go to Bahrain until the Presidency was better acquainted with all the facts, since they had heard that Bahrain was a most inhospitable place. The Presidency nevertheless sent 27 men for the garrison of Bandar Abbas.<sup>181</sup>

### **3.8.2 *Withdrawal to Qishm, Hormuz or Bahrain, 1751***

A messenger from Bushire informed Mullā ‘Alī Shāh on 3 November 1750 that ‘Alī Mardān Khān, having taken Shiraz, would proceed to Bushire and then Bandar Abbas. Nāṣir Khān had been ordered by ‘Alī Mardān Khān to seize Mullā ‘Alī Shāh.<sup>182</sup> The English Agent, the Head of the Dutch factory, and Mullā ‘Alī Shāh met at the request of the last, who was in a panic over the arrival of Nāṣir Khān in Bandar Abbas. He now wanted to patch up his past differences and the three parties decided to send their goods, valuables and families, and those of the people of Bandar Abbas, to one of the off-shore islands. They hoped that when that news reached Shiraz it would deter ‘Alī Mardān Khān from going to Bandar Abbas as all the wealth would have been removed.<sup>183</sup>

Mullā ‘Alī Shāh and ‘Abdul Shaikh visited the Agent who confirmed that the Company would move to an island. They suggested that the Company, the Dutch and themselves should go to either Qishm or Hormuz and that all of them should act together for their mutual defence.<sup>184</sup> They chose Qishm as the island to which they would repair if necessary, as water and supplies were plentiful and the factories’ seamen would live under the rule of ‘Abdul Shaikh. The Agent and the Dutch Chief said they had no preference for either island but expressed their view that the two factories should begin loading their stock on board their ships forthwith to save them from being plundered.<sup>185</sup> By 7 January 1751 the English and the Dutch had loaded their ships to the full but still had valuable goods in their warehouses. The Dutch informed the English Agent that they intended leaving Bandar Abbas as soon as they had finished loading their ships which had just arrived from Basrah. They asked if the English intended to leave with them, in accordance with the agreement between them: the English replied that the agreement covered only joint action if they were attacked by ‘Alī Mardān Khān but, in any case, they could leave only with permission from Bombay.<sup>186</sup>

At this stage Mullā 'Alī Shāh complained about the *Shaftesbury* and made threats (see page 81). The Agent replied that the threats carried no weight with the Company, but it was anyway unreasonable of Mullā 'Alī Shāh to expect them to off-load the ship in such troubled times simply to pay him customs duties. He was also told that he himself had first broken the agreement by agreeing to submit to Nāṣir Khān at Lār.<sup>187</sup>

The Dutch Agent was also visited by Mullā 'Alī Shāh who asked why the Dutch were leaving when the danger from Lār had passed, and 'Alī Mardān Khān had gone back to Shiraz. He also asked, since the English had loaded their ships, if the Dutch were leaving as well, and begged them to stay. The Agent replied that the Dutch had been disposed to go for some time because of the unsettled nature of the country, adding that Mullā 'Alī Shāh had not been the best Governor and that they had suffered more from him than from any other. The Agent remarked that if both European factories left that would be an economic disaster for Bandar Abbas, which would reflect badly on Mullā 'Alī Shāh with any new King.<sup>188</sup>

The Dutch left Bandar Abbas on 27 February 1751 with two ships, bound at first for Surat. A ship belonging to Mullā 'Alī Shāh left with them, bound for Bombay with a cargo of pearls, dates, brimstone, horses and *red earth*. The English Agent received a letter from Nāṣir Khān on 5 March asking him not to leave Bandar Abbas as that would be the ruin of the place.<sup>189</sup> The Agent also received a letter from the Presidency on 21 May, but dated 15 March and brought by the warship *Syren*, ordering again that the Company was forbidden to seize the Persian fleet and once more postponing any decision to take Bahrain.<sup>190</sup>

Mullā 'Alī Shāh visited the Agent on 23 September 1751, saying that the Arabs wanted him to attack Bushire with them and, as he was their near relation by marriage, he felt obliged to do so. The Agent opposed this by pointing out that he would be leaving Bandar Abbas unprotected and would prejudice his standing with the Persian authorities. The Agent further advised him to secure his family on board ship or

at Hormuz for their safety. Mullā 'Alī Shāh insisted that he had to go but would leave Shaikh Qā'id al-Qāsimī to look after Bandar Abbas as his deputy. Again the Agent countered by saying that to all of Persia it would look as if the Arabs had seized Bandar Abbas, but if he was compelled to go, he should deputise Shariārī of Mināb, who was a Persian. The Agent then revealed that the Company at that time had authority from the Presidency in Bombay (received on 17 July 1751 by the *Mahmoody*) to leave at the first sign of fresh trouble and to take possession of Bahrain or any other island up the Gulf. The English proposed to do just that if Mullā 'Alī Shāh did not act as expected of him by keeping things quiet and the sea routes open, rather than embroiling the whole country by introducing a large number of unmanageable Arabs. This threat seemed to impress him and he promised to do his best to follow the Agent's advice.<sup>191</sup>

### ***3.8.3 Withdrawal to Qishm or Henjam, 1752***

There seemed to be little doubt that the English were happy with the ascendancy of Nāṣir Khān, but they still maintained firm reservations about mainland Persia and made surveys of the offshore islands. The English Agent returned from a visit to the islands of Larak, Henjam and Qishm on 26 March 1752, and reported that, if compelled at a later date to leave the mainland, the Company should go to Qishm, where 'Abdul Shaikh had asked the English to take possession in return for their protection and a pension for him. He also reported that Qishm abounded in fresh water, wood, barley, flax, dates and all kinds of provisions, besides a great deal of good land for animal husbandry. The Shaikh, moreover, was a civil and hospitable person, well disposed to the English.<sup>192</sup> The Company had made surveys of Qishm the year before, when the survey team led by Captain England and Lieutenant Ward reported that the fort was in mediocre condition, with 12 of its 21 guns incapable of being used, but boasted a good, deep ditch around it which could easily be defended by the guns and soldiers taken there from the Bandar Abbas factory. Close to the walls of the fort there was a fine anchorage for the Company's guardship.

At the eastern end of the island, in the spot also called Qishm, there was an area where there would be enough room to erect a fine settlement for the people and where there was good water. That area ran for about four miles from the eastern point of Qishm island, westward to a hill which stretched all the way from the northern to the southern shore of the island, so that a European-style fort and three guard towers to defend the three passes through the hill would make the area well protected. However, the area was infertile and it would therefore be necessary to control the whole island, which would require a garrison of 400 men, and would necessitate the destruction of the Persian fleet.<sup>193</sup>

In describing Henjam, the Agent mentioned that when he was there in March 1752 he noted that it was an island somewhat larger than Bombay (Henjam is 1½ x 3 miles), entirely covered by rocks and devoid of any inhabitants or animals of any kind. It was sandy and barren, with no vegetation except two trees and tufts of hard grass; the water was insufferably bad, except for a small amount contained in two or three old tanks standing towards the Qishm side of the island.<sup>194</sup>

At that time the internal situation in Persia had worsened almost beyond hope of any recovery and the Agent had made application to the President and Council in Bombay for permission to withdraw from Bandar Abbas, either to the island of Qishm or to Henjam.<sup>195</sup> Based on his previous account, the Agent informed the Presidency on 17 September 1752 that he regarded Henjam as a very unfit place on which to settle, and had chosen the south-eastern point of Qishm island; a grant of it from the King of Persia or from Nāṣir Khān, at that time the Governor of the Garmsīrāt (the 'hot regions', i.e. the coastal strip), was therefore needed.<sup>196</sup> But ten days later the Agent wrote another letter to the Presidency saying that the Agency at Bandar Abbas was now perfectly safe; he saw many objections which could be made against withdrawal, and the benefit to be expected from it was double-edged, perhaps leading to a rupture with the Persians.<sup>197</sup>

#### **3.8.4 *Withdrawal to Hormuz, 1760***

On the receipt of orders from the Presidency in October 1760 to take possession of the island of Hormuz, the Agent and Captain Baillie went there and met the Chief of the fort. The Agent wrote to Bombay that Hormuz was quite barren and its supplies came from the mainland. The fort would cost Rs 80,000 to put in proper order and altogether Hormuz was not a suitable place for moving to.<sup>198</sup>

#### **3.8.5 *Withdrawal to any place of security, 1761***

After receiving the report referred to above, the President and Governor of Bombay wrote back to the Agent and Council at Bandar Abbas on 2 April 1761, noting that the report focused only on removing to the island of Hormuz, whereas the President's requirement was the Agent's opinion on any secure place in the Gulf which he might regard as suitable for the purpose. He gave the Agent the power to withdraw to wherever he thought best.<sup>199</sup> The Agent therefore set off to Basrah to start viewing all of the islands, some of which, he imagined, would be better than the mainland, where there were daily impositions and a lack of safety for the Company's property.<sup>200</sup> On his return to Bandar Abbas the Agent reported to the Presidency that he had visited Bushire and met the Shaikh; he recommended sending a Resident there as a trial<sup>201</sup> (see Chapter 5).

#### **3.8.6 *Trial of the Bushire market before commitment, 1762***

The Agent reminded the Presidency in a letter of 24 December 1761 that if they wanted to remove to one of the islands a sea force would be necessary to protect both the factory and the merchants who traded with it. He commented that if the Government of Bandar Abbas was settled, Bandar Abbas was still the best place but '... those who hold it in Government are of a bad disposition & not to be relied on ... nor is much regard had for the merchants'.<sup>202</sup>

A letter from the Presidency dated 9 February 1762 ordered that either the Agent, Alexander Douglas, or Dymoke Lyster, Assistant Agent in Basrah, should give the



Bushire market a trial before a commitment was made to moving there. There was to be no new settlement made in the Gulf without the Presidency's permission.<sup>203</sup> Meanwhile, the Presidency on 16 January 1763 recommended removing the Agency from Bandar Abbas to Basrah, and later, on 26 February, sent further commands by the *Prince of Wales* and *Drake*, to which the Agent replied by giving details of all developments since the Presidency's recommendation:

- i) The Company's woollen goods remaining at Bandar Abbas had amounted to 326 bales and cases; these, to a value of *Shāhīs* 1,374,532 (Rs 114,544), had been loaded on board a trankey and consigned to Basrah
- ii) Two trankeys loaded with a great variety of the Company's other goods (between 8-900 cases) were despatched to Basrah.
- iii) A quantity of Mahmudis, not very common in India, had been sent to the Agent in Basrah by the *Swallow*, to the value of *Shāhīs* 45,500.
- iv) The *Prince of Wales* was sent to Bombay carrying cash amounting to *Shāhīs* 1,361,161.
- v) The Agent had been unable to sell two of the Company's trankeys and planned to send one of them with the ketch *Drake*, with instructions to Jervis at Bushire to dispose of it at any port on the Persian coast. He planned to send the other under the escort of Captain Court of the *Prince of Wales*, to be sold at Muscat when he called there for water.<sup>204</sup>

On his own responsibility, Douglas decided on 4 March 1763 to attack the Persian fort and the old Dutch factory in Bandar Abbas before his departure. He alleged that the Deputy Governor of Bandar Abbas had publicly declared his intention to impede the withdrawal of the factory, and was refusing to pay any compensation for the

extortion which he and others in the local government had practised on the Company in the past few years. Douglas also claimed that he had to secure a safe passage for the English from their house, which was some distance from the sea. The Agent decided to take possession of effects belonging to the Deputy Governor and others in the government, in the house formerly belonging to the Dutch. On the same day, therefore, the English made an attack, which was eventually successful after an hour and a half, during which time the Deputy Governor's wife and family (whom Douglas had hoped to capture and hold as hostages) escaped through an embrasure at the western end of the house, carrying most of their valuable possessions with them.

The next attack was made on the fort, with European military landed from the *Prince of Wales*. The *Drake* and *Swallow* anchored about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the shore and bombarded the fort until the next morning, the 5th, when the English captured it but found nothing of value there. It was clear that the Persians had evacuated the fort by night and withdrawn to a village called Serou, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. On the English side those killed included three Europeans from the *Prince of Wales*' crew, four of the military, one of the ships' gunners and five sepoys. On the morning of the 7th the English discovered that reinforcements of about 250 horsemen had arrived and Douglas therefore ordered the Captains to embark all their people, taking whatever they could with them.

Douglas was greatly disappointed not to gain any compensation for the past three years at Bandar Abbas. He thought of attacking Mullā 'Alī Shāh in his fort at Qishm, but the latter had spent all of his money for Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī and his tribe of Arabs in the conflicts of the Persian coast so there would be nothing to be gained by attacking him. He then thought of capturing the ship *Rahmany*, but his Captains advised him that the risk and dangers were very great. Douglas finally decided to send the *Drake* with the two trankeys to Basrah while he returned to Bombay on 10 March 1763 aboard the *Prince of Wales*. There he wrote his application to retire,

saying that he preferred to return to his position in the Presidency and not move to Basrah under a junior officer.<sup>205</sup>

### **3.9 The Recession**

The position enjoyed by the East India Company up to now had been one of great privilege; it now changed radically to one of some gravity in terms of both security and economic viability. Because of the 'commotions' in the vicinity of Bandar Abbas trade had begun declining from March 1760. Even prior to that, Edward Ives visited Bandar Abbas in 1754 and reported that the two factory houses were the only buildings of importance remaining: apart from them the entire town was in almost total ruin.<sup>206</sup> The Agent, Alexander Douglas, had documented the downturn for the Presidency at Bombay and the Court of Directors in London in a succession of reports. There is ample evidence of the decline in trade at Bandar Abbas.

- i) 31 March 1760: no wool was received from Kirmān.<sup>207</sup>
  
- ii) 29 June 1760: because of the struggles between the Khāns near Kirmān the inhabitants were in a state of fear and business had come to a complete stop; no caravans had come from that area for many months past and little or no trade was carried on at Kirmān.<sup>208</sup>
  
- iii) Disturbances in Khurāsān affected the Company's trade in 1760, when much less business was done than Douglas had expected, because woollens were normally in demand in such inland areas.<sup>209</sup>
  
- iv) 11 February 1761: for a long time, no merchants had been at Bandar Abbas and the English had not received any orders from inland. At Bandar Abbas there had been no trade for some time past, and merchant vessels were not frequenting the port as they formerly did. Trading was being carried on



through Mināb (50 miles east of Bandar Abbas), and caravans with various kinds of Indian goods were travelling to Kirmān and other inland places.<sup>210</sup>

v) 9 April 1761: no merchants had been at Bandar Abbas for sometime and there was no trade whatever going on.<sup>211</sup>

vi) 28 June 1761: the caravan from Kirmān arrived, but without merchants or goods.<sup>212</sup>

vii) 10 December 1761: no trade was being carried on at that time with Kirmān.<sup>213</sup>

viii) 24 December 1761: broadcloth was in demand in the inland areas but disturbances, especially in Kirmān, had prevented any merchants going to Bandar Abbas.<sup>214</sup>

ix) 19 February 1762: no trade was going on at Bandar Abbas at that time.<sup>215</sup>

x) 21 February 1762: goods shipped for Bandar Abbas had to be sent on to Basrah.<sup>216</sup>

xi) 9 March 1762: the boat trade out of Bandar Abbas was entirely stopped because of the wars between Nāṣir Khān and Taqī Khān on the mainland, and between the Qawāsīm (the ruling family on both sides of the western part of the Gulf) and the Banū Ma'īn.<sup>217</sup>

xii) 13 April 1762: the poor state of the market since 1761 had made most ships by-pass Bandar Abbas port.<sup>218</sup>

xiii) 19 April 1762: as inland areas were far from being settled, Douglas asked his superiors not to send any more goods until the troubles ceased, the roads were open and trade was flourishing. Because the Kirmān government was stopping caravans passing through its territories to the Garmsīrāt (coastal area) merchants were unable to get to Bandar Abbas.<sup>219</sup>

xiv) 20 July 1762: a local vessel from Bengal called at Bandar Abbas but carried the goods consigned there on to Basrah.

For the previous 12 months few people from the interior had come to Bandar Abbas, and the whole extent of purchases by inland merchants was not more than Rs 25,000; the Company's total sales to them and to others during that period would not come to Rs 36,000.

The government of Kirmān was very bad: Kirmān was the mart where all the goods for Khurāsān, Kandahar (Afghanistan) and Meshhed used to be bought. The Multan (northern Pakistan of today) merchants who used to deal there in the woollen trade had made no purchases. The people running Kirmān were taking goods carried by merchants from Bandar Abbas at their own imposed prices, giving in return any rubbish they pleased. There was stagnation in trade at Kirmān thanks to the oppressions and banditry, and the declaration by the local government that caravans would not pass; if any one tried to use local routes without paying, Kirmān would send people to plunder the caravan.<sup>220</sup>

On 4 September 1762 no trade was reported at Kirmān and no merchants were going there as before.<sup>221</sup> On 11 September 1762 woollen goods were in demand in the interior but no merchants were making their appearance at Bandar Abbas.<sup>222</sup> By 7 October 1762 the rule of Nāṣir Khān's Government had reduced most of the inhabitants to poverty.<sup>223</sup>

In 1743 the entire expense of the English settlement at Bandar Abbas, exclusive of charges for the Marine (the cost of ship services), had not exceeded Shāhīs 250,000. But that was before the ‘commotions’, whereas the costs for the five years of disturbances (1755-1760) make a telling comparison (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2: Expenses of the English settlement at Bandar Abbas,  
1755-1760 (in Shāhīs)<sup>224</sup>**

a)	General charges 1 August 1755 - 31 July 1756 (exclusive of Marine charges)	437,039
	Average daily costs	1,197
b)	General charges 1 August 1756 - 31 July 1757 (exclusive of Marine charges)	425,652
	Average daily costs	1,166
c)	General charges 1 August 1757 - 31 July 1758 (exclusive of Marine charges)	552,915
	Average daily costs	1,515

NOTE Account books from 1 August 1758 to 31 July 1759 were destroyed by the French and accounting began again on 12 February 1760

d)	General charges 12 February 1760 - 31 July 1760	337,444
	(exclusive of Marine charges):	
	Average daily costs	1,985
	i.e. an annual rate of	724,512

The increase in expenditure was caused largely by garrison and stabling costs, needed for the additional security forces (see Appendix 9).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

In the detailed Table of Contents to his *Gazetteer*, Lorimer lists the events leading up to the withdrawal of the English headquarters from Bandar Abbas as:

a)	Events before accession of Nādir Shāh	1722-1736
b)	Events during reign of Nādir Shāh	1716*-1747
c)	Events after reign of Nādir Shāh	1747-1763

\*(*sic*), but should be 1736.

But in Lorimer's work no connection is established between these four groups of events and the withdrawal, and no mention is made of a longstanding English intention to leave Bandar Abbas. A review of the sub-chapter on the withdrawal of the English factory from Bandar Abbas reveals only intentions to withdraw to places which offered security, or good facilities and no threat. Lorimer has indeed explained the events themselves, but has not established any linkage with the drift towards withdrawal (see an example of faulty linkage on page 93). After explaining what was happening in 1760-1763 at Bandar Abbas between Mullā 'Alī Shāh, the Banū Ma'īn, Shaikh Rāshid, the Charak Arabs etc, Lorimer simply states '... but at this juncture the English Agency was suddenly withdrawn.'<sup>226</sup> The implication of a sudden decision is clearly mistaken. The possibility of withdrawal had been considered and explored for a dozen years and included:

1. **Withdrawal to Bahrain in 1750.** The root of this proposal was the view of the East India Company's representative in Bandar Abbas that their situation on the coast of Persia was very precarious. No measures were taken to implement the move.
2. **Withdrawal to Qishm, Hormuz or Bahrain in 1751.** This proposal stemmed from the arrival of 'Alī Mardān Khān in Bandar Abbas to seize Mullā 'Alī Shāh. Mullā 'Alī Shāh, 'Abdul Shaikh, the Dutch and the English decided to leave Bandar Abbas to one of the islands, but nothing happened.
3. **Withdrawal to Qishm or Henjam in 1752.** This was simply a suggestion by the English Agent at Bandar Abbas: after a few days he wrote again saying that the Agency at Bandar Abbas was perfectly safe.

4. **Withdrawal to Hormuz in 1760.** This came as an order from the Presidency, but the Agent wrote to Bombay that Hormuz was not a suitable place for moving to.

5. **Withdrawal to any place of security in 1761.** This was a contingency power given to the Agent to withdraw to wherever he thought best.

6. **Trial of the Bushire market before commitment, in 1762.** Before this decision was taken the Agent wrote to the Presidency saying 'Was the Government of GAMBROON in proper hands it would be the greatest port in the Gulph of Persia for the Inland trade' and added '... the greatest inconveniency attending the place at present is that those who hold it in Government are of a bad disposition & not to be relied on, nor are oaths or anything else of any weight, nor is much regard had for the merchants.'<sup>227</sup>

The 'commotions' were thus very clearly the main cause of the withdrawal of the settlement from Bandar Abbas. The English Agent wrote, in a letter to the Court of Directors in London in October 1762, that 'GAMBROON is in the hands of a set of men who have neither honesty or shame and may properly be called a nest of freebooters. As they do not know how long their Government may continue, they only look to the present time.'<sup>228</sup>

Although this Chapter ends with the withdrawal of the Bandar Abbas factory and a decision to try the market in Bushire, the chronological sequence will be broken in the next Chapter in order to introduce parallel developments in Bandar Rīq and Khark: the Bushire story will resume in Chapter 5.



### Chapter 3: References

- <sup>1</sup> John Gordon Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908-15), vol.1, p.29.
- <sup>2</sup> Giovanni Berchet, *Dispacchi dei Consoli Veneti nella Siria* (Turin: 1865), p.77. (in Italian)
- <sup>3</sup> Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), (General State Archives, The Hague), Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) (Archives of the Dutch East India Company), vol.1109, fol.66-74.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., vol.1083, fol.166.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., vol.1082, fol.103.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol.1108, fol.B115.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol.1085, fol.55v; vol.1108, fol.857-8.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., vol.1084, fol.88-91.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., vol.1084, fol.78v.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol.1121, fol.1655v.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., vol.1150, fol.160-1.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., fol.157v.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol.1127, fol.112; vol.1134, fol.222v.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., vol.1146, fol.92; vol.1150, fol.149-149v.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., vol.1150, fol.136v.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., vol.1127, fol.113v.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., vol.1074, fol.78; vol.1084, fol.78v; vol.1103, fol.213; vol.1108, fol.B117.
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<sup>24</sup> Tavernier, *Six voyages*, p. 255.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome Antony Saldanha, ed., *The Persian Gulf Précis*, 8 vols.: vol.1, *Selections from State Papers, Bombay, regarding the East India Company's connection with the Persian Gulf: with a summary of events 1600-1800* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908) (*Sel. SP* hereafter), p.ii.

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<sup>30</sup> Tavernier, *Six voyages*, p.255.

<sup>31</sup> John Bruce, *Annals of the Honorable East India Company*, 3 vols. (London: Black, Parry, & Kingsbury, 1810), vol.1, pp.243-4; *Sel. SP*, p.xvii.

<sup>32</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, pp.29-30.

<sup>33</sup> ARA, Report no. 877 by Van Reede, member of the Batavia High Government, 'Description of the Dutch East India Company's interests in Persia', (1756 manuscript in Schneither family papers, fol.132). (in Dutch)

<sup>34</sup> ARA, Van Reede.

<sup>35</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.71.

<sup>36</sup> ARA, Van Reede.

<sup>37</sup> Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.31.

<sup>38</sup> Bruce, *Annals*, vol.3, p.160.

<sup>39</sup> Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, *Omani-French Relations 1715-1900*, trans. B.R. Pridham (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), p.9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> India Office Library and Records (IOR), Gombroon Diary, vol.4 (G/29/4), Report dated 3 July 1727; ARA, Van Reede.

<sup>42</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.134.

- <sup>43</sup> al-Qasimi, *Omani-French*, p.1.
- <sup>44</sup> *Sel. SP*, pp.46,52; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.134.
- <sup>45</sup> ARA, Van Reede.
- <sup>46</sup> IOR, G/29/1, pp.1-19.
- <sup>47</sup> *Sel. SP*, pp.xvii-xxi.
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- <sup>52</sup> *Sel. SP*, p.iv.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxi.
- <sup>54</sup> ARA, Van Reede; Stapel and van Boetzelaer, *Pieter van Dam*, p.294.
- <sup>55</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.45.
- <sup>56</sup> *Sel. SP*, p.xxi.
- <sup>57</sup> ARA, Van Reede.
- <sup>58</sup> *Sel. SP*, p.xxi; ARA, Van Reede.
- <sup>59</sup> ARA, Van Reede.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> ARA, VOC, vol. 1178, fol.604, Persia to Ceylon, 15 May 1649.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.612, Persia to Batavia, 1 July 1649.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.629, Persia to Batavia, 16 October 1649.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.633v-635, Persia to Surat, 16 October 1649.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.661, Persia to Surat, 28 October 1649.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.662, Persia to Surat, 1 December 1649.
- <sup>68</sup> ARA, Van Reede.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.645, Persia to Surat, 1 January 1650.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.xxii-xxiii; Stapel and Boetzelaer, *Pieter van Dam*, pp.295-6,313; B.J. Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784* (Leidschendam: 1993), p.76.
- <sup>71</sup> ARA, Van Reede.

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- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxiv.
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- <sup>91</sup> *Sel. SP*, p.xxxvii; Slot, *Arabs*, p.292.
- <sup>92</sup> IOR, G/29/6, Reports dated 1736-43.
- <sup>93</sup> Laurence Lockhart, *Nadir Shah* (London: Luzac, 1938).
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- <sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 16 February and 23 July 1747.
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 9 and 21 September 1746.
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 12, 20, 21 and 30 March; 2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20, 24 and 25 April; 9, 17, 21 and 27 May; 21 June and 2 July 1747.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 28 November 1746 and 31 March 1747.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 22 and 23 April; 3, 9, 22, 24 and 26 May; and 1 July 1747.

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- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., Report dated 17 September 1747.
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- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp.132-5.
- <sup>106</sup> IOR, G/29/7, Reports dated 10 September, 10 October, 4 and 9 November 1750; 13 and 23 January, 4 February, 9 March, 7 and 26 April, 19 June and 11 July 1751.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., G/29/9, Reports dated 8, 12 and 31 August; 5 September; 4 October; 23 November; 21, 24 and 30 December 1755; 21 March; 26 May; 8 and 29 June 1756.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., G/29/10, Reports dated 7 August, 28 September and 11 October 1756; 25 February, 4 and 16 April, 15 May and 9 July 1757.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., G/29/11, Reports dated 16 August; 10, 16 and 22 September; 23 October 1757; 28 January, 10 February, 17 March, 14 April and 9 June 1758.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., G/29/13, Report dated 10 August 1761.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., G/29/12, Reports dated 18 January, 30 April and 10 July 1760.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., G/29/13, Report dated 28 February 1761.
- <sup>113</sup> IOR, G/29/11, pp.49,53-4.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp.62,83; Henry Yule and Arthur C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (London: John Murray, 1903), p.722.
- <sup>115</sup> G/29/11, pp.95,106,114,118.
- <sup>116</sup> Public Record Office (PRO), Admirals' In-Letters, ADM1/161; *Sel. SP*, pp.132-6; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, pp.102-6.
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- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., Reports dated 17 and 25 August 1747.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid., Reports dated 24 August and 1 September 1747, and 20 March 1748.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid., Reports dated 11 and 29 April, and 5 and 8 May 1748.
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- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., Reports dated 8 and 30 September, 30 October 1747, and 29 March 1748.
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- 155 Ibid., G/29/13, Report dated 2 October 1760.
- 156 Ibid., Report dated 3 October 1760.
- 157 Ibid., Reports dated 4, 9 and 22 December 1760.

- <sup>158</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.123.
- <sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 7 January 1761.
- <sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 14-20 October 1761.
- <sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, G/29/14, Reports dated 7 and 24 December 1761.
- <sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 13 February 1762.
- <sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 9 March 1762.
- <sup>164</sup> IOR, G/29/7, Report dated 1 July 1747.
- <sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 23 August 1749 and 15 January 1751.
- <sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 5 February 1751.
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- <sup>171</sup> ARA, VOC, Vol. 2937 (Gombroon Diary), nos. 10-11.
- <sup>172</sup> IOR, G/29/7, Report dated 9 October 1750.
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- <sup>210</sup> Ibid., G/29/13, Report dated 11 February 1761.
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- <sup>217</sup> Ibid., Report dated 9 March 1762.
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## CHAPTER 4

### BANDAR RĪQ AND KHARK ISLAND

(1753-1766)

#### 4.0 Introduction

At the beginning of 1753, the Dutch, in dispute with the Turkish Government at Basrah, closed their factory there and began to establish themselves on Khark island. The English in the Kingdom of Persia had been labouring under the 'commotions' around Bandar Abbas since 1753, and decided in 1755 to establish themselves at Bandar Rīq, but leaving Bandar Abbas open to continue its struggle for existence.<sup>1</sup> The chapter traces the fortunes of Bandar Rīq and Khark island over the following 13 years. The English were forced out of Bandar Rīq in 1756, and the Dutch were forced out of Khark in 1766. The reasons for the failure of European trading in these places are revealed from the record of primary documents, and important light is shed on the different approaches of the English and Dutch. This seems, therefore, a suitable point at which to comment on the main differences of organisation, resources, attitudes etc between the Dutch and English East India Companies.

#### 1. Organisation

The Dutch East India Company was centrally organised in Asia, with only one main office (Batavia/Jakarta), to which all establishments in the *octrooigebied* (the area in which the Dutch Company had received the monopoly for all trade from Holland with the Indian and Pacific Oceans), were subordinate. Orders to Dutch establishments were always given by Batavia, never directly from Holland. The English Company, on the other hand, had three centres - in Bombay, Madras and Bengal.

## 2. Approach

The Dutch Company, unlike its English counterpart, had a large number of very big ships, and was able to trade with its own ships: it did not need to issue passports for ships to trade between Europe and Asia. Only to a very limited extent did the Dutch tend to issue passports to private traders for routes inside the *octrooigebied*, and then only to former Company staff who had established themselves in Asia on the expiry of their contract of employment. This latter arrangement obtained, for example, in the sugar trade between Java and Muscat in 1766 (outside the scope of this study). The English Company had a more limited number of ships and acted, to a large degree, as a Consular body, providing passports and protection to private ships, subject to payment of taxes.

Generally, the Dutch Company had more establishments in Asia, and these were larger because they were not merely a species of Consulates, but regular trade and shipping offices, often protected by a considerable military garrison. In Bandar Abbas, and later in Khark, there were about 100 or more soldiers. The English factories in the Persian Gulf were not nearly as large.

## 3. Shipping

Because the Dutch usually limited themselves to the Company's own large ships (generally 130-170 ft overall and displacing upwards of 1,000 tons), they tended to limit themselves to a lower number of sailings to the larger ports, and employed local shipping to concentrate their merchandise in those ports when necessary. There were many smaller private English ships which also traded to the smaller ports, and since the English East India Company did not have the monopoly enjoyed by the Dutch it had difficulty in filling its own ships.

## 4. Trade

The Dutch normally sent ships with merchandise directly from the main stores in Batavia, whereas the English goods came from their nearer sources in India. Both

Companies were, of course, mainly concerned to earn money in the Persian Gulf by selling goods there: in this way they would have the cash in hand to buy products for Europe from elsewhere in Asia, thereby diminishing the huge annual cashflow from Europe to Asia. Originally, both Companies had come to the Gulf to buy silk, but the importance of the silk trade had greatly declined in the 18th century. The products bought by both the Dutch and the English were of the same kind, mostly Asiatic products such as spices, sugar and Indian textiles. The English spice trade was virtually limited to pepper, because the Dutch had an effective monopoly of nutmegs and cloves, which gained them a considerable profit. Cotton cloth was sold by both of them, mainly obtained from their establishments in Bengal and Coromandel. In the 17th century the Dutch also brought textiles from Vietnam. Indigo and other dyes figured largely in the trade of both Companies, increasingly so in the 18th century. From the late 17th century onwards, with the expansion of production in Java, sugar became ever more important for the Dutch, while the English had access to less of it. In the later periods, especially, the English sent brightly-coloured woolen cloth to Persia and Basrah. The Dutch were less active in this field, partly because they normally had no direct shipping between Persia and Europe, and partly because the trade was not popular with the Dutch Directors. They were anxious to avoid spoiling the very profitable Levant trade, part of which took place internally in the Ottoman empire and was carried on to Basrah and the Gulf.

##### 5. Staff

The Dutch East India Company employed many foreign staff, the Gulf included, even in quite high ranks, where Germans, Scandinavians, Russians and even French, Italians and Ottoman Christians figured. Two heads of establishments in the Gulf during this period of study were Germans: Koenad (c. 1736) and Kniphausen (1750-9). The English Company was almost entirely English in composition.

## 6. The legal position

The two Companies did not share the same legal status. The English had a contract which granted them a half share of all the customs duties received in Bandar Abbas (as a reward for their help in ousting the Portuguese from Hormuz). In reality, they never received their share to its full extent - usually a small proportion only. The Dutch had a contract that they would pay no customs duties on condition that they would buy a defined amount of silk from the Persian Government, at rather a high price.

## 7. Revenue

The Dutch Company's revenues were far more favourable than the English Company's from their factory at Bandar Abbas, until the withdrawal of the Dutch factory from Bandar Abbas (1623-1747: see Chapter 3.3 - 3.3.5). During the period of the commotions (1747-1795) the English Company managed to garner some revenue, whereas the Dutch Company's revenue at Khark was almost nothing (see preceding and following chapters).

### 4.1 Geographical background

On the mainland and to the north of Khark island, Bandar Rīq was an Arab colony inhabited by an Arab tribe called the Za'āb, who also lived on the island near Ras al-Khaimah called Jazīrat al-Ḥamrā' as well as in Kalba; it did not have as good a harbour as Bushire - large ships having to lie in the anchorage, which was reasonably good. A long narrow island right in front of the town offered shelter to smaller vessels close in to the town itself. At the ebb during high tides there was a depth of seven to eight feet of water between the island and the town (see the Atlas, Map nos. 19, 25 and Figure 4.1).

Three hundred and fifty years ago (1647), there were very large numbers of vessels and seafaring people at Bandar Rīq. At that time, the inhabitants of Khark island,



Figure 4.1 The Persian Coast

who had always remained independent after the departure of the Portuguese from the Gulf, submitted themselves to the protection of Mīr Ḥamad, then the ruler of Bandar Rīq, and promised him a tribute of Rs (*rupees*) 240 a year on condition that he protected them from the plundering of the seafaring Arabs. The first part of the agreement was well observed: the second part was not. The unfortunate inhabitants of Khark island were, until the coming of the Dutch, always exposed to the extortions of the *trankeys* which passed there daily.<sup>2</sup>

Some interesting references to Bandar Rīq, and the importance of its port, occur in books by European travellers. In the 17th century, Teixeira, de Thévenot and Barthélémy Carré all mentioned the wheat trade of Bandar Rīq and the calling of English and Dutch ships at the port, where many important merchants from Shiraz had gone to settle after the Afghan conquest of their city.<sup>3</sup> Carré visited Bandar Rīq twice, in 1670 and 1671. On his first visit he described the complaints of the Āl Ḥaram Shaikh that the Arabs of Rīq, Khark, Dawraq and Bushire sailed every year to the pearl banks of Bahrain and tried to make themselves masters of the pearl trade.<sup>4</sup> Apparently, the resentment against the upper Gulf Arabs had intensified when Carré visited the region for a second time for he heard that the Huwalah (Arabs from the Persian coast) had attacked Bandar Rīq with 400 vessels and massacred the entire population, women and children included. When he finally managed to get to Rīq he found the Shaikh of the place, whom he had met previously, and had a very friendly meeting with him. Carré left Bandar Rīq on a Dutch ship because, following the recent atrocities, Arab ships no longer dared to go there.<sup>5</sup>

After the death of Mīr Ḥamad (Dutch sources have him still ruling in 1705), Bandar Rīq went into a deep decline as a result of the murders and wars between his successors, until Mīr Nāṣir came into power. By virtue of his good rule, strict control over his tribesmen and his amiability and generosity to all the merchants and foreigners, Bandar Rīq began to recover. A large ship from the fleet of Nādir Shāh (Shāh of Persia who died in 1747 and had built a navy for warfare against the Arabs of Oman -



Figure 4.2 The mid-Persian Gulf



carrying its wood across Persia from the Caspian Sea to the Gulf) still remained at Bandar Rīq at that time, its hull seeming to be strong and in good shape. There were more than 30 other vessels, large and small, and about 300 able-bodied sailors in the port. Mīr Nāṣir's father had by then gone over to the Persian religion (i.e. he became a shi'ite) and his family had married into the families of nearby Persian governors so they could hardly be considered as Arabs any longer.<sup>6</sup>

This same Dutch document gives the story of Mīr Nāṣir's temporary rule over Bahrain (see Figure 4.2). It describes how Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire, who was no less ambitious than he was money-grubbing, planned to profit from the remains of the Bandar Rīq fleet to conquer the island of Bahrain. He had found that his own forces were insufficient for the purpose; he had at that time at most 400 men from his own people. He therefore combined forces with Mīr Nāṣir of Bandar Rīq who had some 500 armed men. They armed three ships and two *gallivats* and conquered the Āl Ḥaram (a Huwalah tribe from Asilu, closely connected with the Qawāsim) on Bahrain island, with only slight losses. By the use of certain pretexts Mīr Nāṣir was able to persuade the Bushire ruler to be the first to return home, whereupon he became sole master of Bahrain and never gave his ally the least part of its revenues. He did not even want to pay him his expenses on the expedition, and this became one of the reasons for their deadly enmity. Mīr Nāṣir, in the meantime, was obliged to keep with him the best and largest element of his army for the occupation of Bahrain, and the man he had left as Governor of Bandar Rīq in his absence, Kāyid Ḥaidar, the lord of Ganawah (a small place not far north of Bandar Rīq), sought to use the situation to establish himself as lord of Bandar Rīq. When Mīr Nāṣir heard the news he was forced to leave Bahrain and was just in time to save his already beleaguered fortress of Bandar Rīq.<sup>7</sup> Shaikh Nāṣir immediately occupied Bahrain and it remained under his rule thereafter (see the Atlas, Map no. 52)

The island of Khark is situated at latitude 15° 29'N, longitude 50° 20'E about 30 miles north of Bushire and 22 miles from Bandar Rīq.<sup>8</sup> Piggott, one of those accompanying

Edward Ives on his travels through the Gulf in 1753-4, describes Khark as being nearly triangular in shape, about 4½ miles in length, 2½ in breadth and 12 or 13 in circumference (see the Atlas, Map nos. 19, 64). The central part was high land, very rocky and barren, as were all parts of the island except a plain of about three miles between the central hill and the fort, situated on a sandy point close to the water's edge.<sup>9</sup> This central hill, called Daidaban and rising 285 ft above sea level, gave its name to the island - *khark* meaning 'rock' in Persian. As the writer himself noticed when visiting Khark island in 1974 it resembles a rock sticking out of the water when it first comes into view (see the Atlas, Map no. 38). The smaller island of Kharku lies two miles from Khark (see the Atlas, Map no. 45). The Muslim geographers from the 9th century onwards differ in their spelling of Khark. Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī called it Khark. Similarly, the unknown author of *ḥudūd al-'ālam min al-mashriq ilā al-maghrib*; Ibn Ḥawqal; Ibn Khurdādhbih, the 9th century geographer; Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, the astronomer; and Ibn al-Balkhī, the author of *fārs nāmāh*: all of them wrote it as Khark. But Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, in his book *mu'jam al-buldān*, and al-Jawālīqī, in his book *al-mu'arrab min al-kalām*, wrote Kharak, as the English pronounce it.<sup>10</sup>

De Thévenot visited the island in 1665 and observed that it had a Governor dependent on the Governor of Bandar Rīq: all of its people were fishermen.<sup>11</sup> Abraham Parsons, who visited Khark in 1775, mentioned that the island was uninhabited before the arrival of the Dutch.<sup>12</sup> De Thévenot recorded that the island was producing wheat, barley, dates and good grapes, while there was fresh water to be found there also.<sup>13</sup> The island had a bay at its north-eastern end where there was a safe anchorage,<sup>14</sup>(see the Atlas, Map no. 28).

As regards navigation around Khark island, research shows some slight differences in the prescribed sailing routes. On a comparison of different nautical charts this writer observed that some routes go between Khark and Kharku, while others go between the two islands and the mainland of the Persian coast. The oldest charts, the Dutch chart

of 1645-6 (see the Atlas, Map no. 57) and the English chart (n.d., but 1638 or later) in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (see the Atlas, Map no. 66), both show the route between Khark and Kharku only. Dutch and English nautical charts of the 17th century all show this route between the two islands but later on a route along the Persian coast was added, as is the case with the Dutch chart VEL 221 (undated, as manuscript maps usually were, but about 1690: see the Atlas, Map no. 58). The charts by John Thornton (1703) and John Friend (1764) (see the Atlas, Map nos. 32, 38) show the route between Khark and Kharku, but Samuel Thornton (1716) has a route along the east of the islands, not between them (see the Atlas, Map no. 32). A French manuscript nautical chart in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, SH 209/2/12 (based on the Dutch expedition of 1645-6: see the Atlas, Map no. 65) is slightly different and is the oldest with one route between Khark and Kharku and another around the eastern side of these islands. The two editions of *Neptune Oriental* (1745 and 1776) both lack the route between the islands (see the Atlas, Map no. 33). It is not easy to find an obvious reason for these divergences: some geographers have thought the cause to be the depth of water, but one can see from the depths on both old and modern charts that these variations cannot be the reason. Other geographers thought that the route between Khark and Kharku was easier because it pointed straight at the entrance to the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab; this would make a favourable course for 17th century ships which were difficult to manoeuvre.

In studying the charts, however, the writer discovered an anchor sign on the route which lies on the eastern side of the islands, opposite Bandar Rīq (see the Atlas, Map no. 19), which means that the ships going to Basrah and calling at Bandar Rīq took the route between the islands and the coast, while the ships going to Basrah and calling at Khark took the route between the two islands. As Piggott observed, ‘these ships, as was the custom, stopped at Kharg for a pilot’.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of this chapter attention was drawn to the calling of many ships at these ports. Through finding the oldest detailed sailing instructions by Davenport (an Englishman, apparently, dating from about 1720 or earlier) in a French translation in Delisle’s papers in the

Archives Nationales in Paris<sup>16</sup> - the English original not being found - we learn that for the route to Basrah a pilot should be taken on in Khark and that one should sail between Khark and Kharku. Davenport also gives another route, along the eastern side of the islands, via Bandar Rīq to Basrah. This discovery is very helpful in explaining the relationship between the different cartographic traditions, and will probably solve some difficult questions posed by geographers.

#### **4.2 The Dutch Establishment on Khark Island**

On the withdrawal of the Dutch factory from Basrah their Resident, Frederik von Kniphausen, passed via Khark in February 1753 on his way to Batavia (Jakarta).<sup>17</sup> Kniphausen was Prussian by birth, and brother of the Ambassador to London at that time: after leaving the Prussian Monarch's service he went to the East Indies and was appointed Resident for the Dutch Company at Basrah. He anchored, made a survey of the island and went to Bandar Rīq, where he met Mīr Nāṣir who offered him Khark, then belonging to his family. The Dutch Governor-General at Batavia approved Kniphausen's plan and sent him back to Khark with several ships loaded up with large quantities of European and Indian goods, as well as building materials to erect a fort there.<sup>18</sup> On 15 November 1753, Kniphausen arrived back at Khark with two ships, *Getrouwt* and *Fortune*, full of men, ammunition and timber. A few days later two small Dutch vessels also arrived, full of merchandise.<sup>19</sup> By January 1755 the Dutch had completed a regular fort on Khark composed of four bastions, each mounting ten guns, and several Armenian and Persian merchants had gone to live on the island<sup>20</sup>(see the Atlas, Map nos. 62, 64).

The Dutch Residents, Kniphausen and van der Hulst (the Dutch official on Khark itself), had asked Mīr Nāṣir of Bandar Rīq to assist them with his ships if the Governor of Basrah refused to settle with the Dutch (see page 116) but Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire, out of his enmity towards Mīr Nāṣir and his allies, told the Governor of Basrah that the Dutch had no naval power of any importance and the Pasha therefore

decided not to pay. But Mīr Nāṣir agreed to help the Dutch with his gallivats in a blockade of Basrah river as soon as the dates became ripe and shipping to Basrah started again. When the Pasha of Basrah heard that the Dutch were busy building their fort on Khark island he wrote to Mīr Nāṣir saying that he was ready to pay back the money he had taken from them.<sup>21</sup> This account comes from Dutch sources, whereas the English had a different story. In the Gombroon (Bandar Abbas) Diary it is recorded that the Dutch, after completing their fort on Khark, sent two of their ships to block both mouths of the Basrah river and seized several ships which were sent to Khark. Two of the ships which were taken belonged to Shalabī, a well-known Basran merchant of that time, and were carrying a rich cargo from Surat, now fallen into the hands of the Dutch at Khark. The Dutch recalled their two ships from the Basrah river and proposed making a prize of Shalabī's vessel unless they received immediate payment of the Turkish government's debts.<sup>22</sup> The Dutch Resident, Kniphausen, may have been irresponsible in acting in this way, and how far he might have been able to answer to his government for his actions, in seizing the Grand Seignor's subjects and Turkish vessels, could only be determined in the event of the Turks taking revenge.

As it was, by January 1755 the Dutch had resolved their dispute with the Turkish government at Basrah, which had paid them the moneys previously extorted from them. They were given the liberty and assistance to recover all of their outstanding debts, and to export their effects. On receiving satisfaction from the Turkish government they released Shalabī's and other vessels.<sup>23</sup> In his book, *The Arabs of the Gulf*, Slot describes the authorities in Basrah as the losers in the affair. They were fearful of the competition from Khark and sent expensive presents to Kniphausen, urging him to return to Basrah.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch therefore diverted a ship (when used in contradistinction to other kinds of craft this indicated a large, European-style vessel) and a *sloop* from their destination in the Gulf, the latter laden with spices, sugar, iron, lead and *piece goods*, and sent them to Basrah with two of their officials, with a view to re-establishing their factory at the specific request and invitation of Sulaimān

Bāshā of Baghdad. Kniphausen, however, having gone there for that purpose and finding the place involved in troubles and offering no prospect of quick and profitable sales, thought it better to postpone the re-establishment to a more favourable opportunity.<sup>25</sup>

From the time of Kniphausen's arrival in the Gulf, the English had kept a watchful eye on his proceedings in order to prevent any encroachment on the East India Company's privileges in the Gulf. If he had any designs in that sense the English hoped it would be within their power to stop him. The English Resident in Basrah, being so close to Khark, was in a position to give the Company a detailed account of Dutch affairs and was under continuous instructions to report fully on the subject.<sup>26</sup> Persia, meanwhile, continued as before to labour under 'commotions', whereby every ruler on the Persian coast acted according to his own wishes.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4.3 'Commotion' at Bandar Rīq

On 4 or 5 July 1754, Mīr Nāṣir was ready to go to Khark island with his ships and gallivats, as he had agreed with the Dutch, and to follow their ships to the Basrah river. All the preparations for the voyage had been made and he had already sent three gallivats to Khark so the Dutch were expecting him at any time. On 6 July, however, news came that Mīr Nāṣir had been killed the day before by his youngest son Mīr Muhannā, with the help of some criminal elements, at the moment when his oldest son Mīr Ḥusain was busy readying the ship and the two other gallivats on the anchorage. Mīr Ḥusain, accompanied by very few men, fled in a small native craft and arrived at Khark island. The murderers, using a mixture of violence and bribery, had induced most of the inhabitants of Bandar Rīq to accept Mīr Muhannā as their ruler, and the two gallivats which had arrived at Khark fled away at night, attracted by promises from the new ruler.<sup>28</sup> The killing of Mīr Nāṣir by his son, Mīr Muhannā, was said to originate in the father taking one of his son's favourite Georgian women from him and giving her to the Dutch on Khark.<sup>29</sup>

Mīr Ḥusain, who had received help from the rulers of Dashtistān after writing to them, and received money also from the Dutch, landed secretly between Bushire and Bandar Rīq on 25 July and went to visit the rulers of the area. On 6 August, he arrived before Bandar Rīq whereupon most inhabitants rallied to his side. His evil brother and his adherents fled, so Mīr Ḥusain became master of Bandar Rīq and its dependencies on 10 August 1754. This was a good development for the Dutch because he was a sincere man and no less devoted to the interests of the Dutch East Indies Company than his father was.<sup>30</sup> On 11 December, however, Mīr Muhannā, supported by a native ruler related to him on his mother's side, Kāyid Ḥaidar of Ganawah (who lived from robbing and plundering caravans, and was mentioned on page 123), made a night attack with a force of about 300 men against his brother Mīr Ḥusain. Thirty men were killed in Mīr Ḥusain's house and Ḥusain himself, seriously wounded, was taken prisoner. Mīr Muhannā thus brought Bandar Rīq under his control but Mīr Ḥusain managed to escape from prison on 16 December and went to the Dashtistān army, by which means he was re-instated in government. Mīr Muhannā was taken to Tang-i Sīr, whose ruler was a friend of Mīr Ḥusain and an enemy of the ruler of Bushire. Mīr Ḥusain went to Khark island and presented the Dutch with a gallivat in return for their assistance.<sup>31</sup>

The Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies took note of the assistance given and issued an order to the Dutch Resident on Khark not to interfere in conflicts between local peoples, but received the following reply:

Your honor should understand that we are unable to maintain ourselves here [on Khark] without entertaining close friendship with some of the local rulers, especially those nearby. This friendship can only be obtained by gifts or hope of military assistance. We deem that by giving 3 barrels of powder and bullets we served the Company better than by giving presents that only stimulate the other rulers to ask for the same. The imprudence you accuse us of in supporting Mir Hussain with the *sloop* 'Pasgeld' with 8 European men and two three-pounder guns has not caused the evil consequences you expected but given us great prestige among the Persians, because they have seen that a sloop with 8 Europeans can do more than they achieve with 4000-5000 soldiers.<sup>32</sup>

The Persian Government had sent Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh, a Persian officer, with a body of men to subjugate Cazaroon (a district between Shiraz and Bushire) where they had massacred a number of innocent people. The inhabitants of Dashtistān joined with Mīr Ḥusain of Bandar Rīq who began making the necessary preparations to defend himself in the event of an attack. Upon hearing reports of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh’s plan to march towards Bandar Rīq and Bushire, most of the principal Armenian merchants retired with their effects to Khark island.<sup>33</sup>

#### **4.4 The English Settlement at Bandar Rīq**

Ever since 1753 the English had been looking for a place in the Gulf in which to settle before departing from Bandar Abbas. Mr Ellis, lately the Resident at Basrah, had told his superiors in Bombay that it would be advantageous for the East India Company to have an employee residing at Bandar Rīq.<sup>34</sup> The writer has found no mention in the English records of the English asking permission of the Mīr to open an establishment in Bandar Rīq but the Dutch records tell us<sup>35</sup> ‘The English had originally asked permission in a letter to Mir Nasir, but they had received no reply because of Mir Nasir’s death’. The Dutch believed the request to be just an intrigue to make trouble between the Dutch and the ruler of Bandar Rīq.<sup>36</sup>

The Court of Directors of the East India Company in England, in an order dated 5 April 1754, left it to the Governor of Bombay to settle an employee at Bandar Rīq ‘in the Gulf of Persia’, and he decided to establish a factory there under the charge of Francis Wood. Instructions were issued to Wood to promote the consumption of English woollen manufactures, and to hinder the merchants from dealing in French or any other foreign woollen manufactures. He was empowered to levy a duty on all imports and exports by people trading under the East India Company’s protection. He was further advised that upon his arrival at Bandar Rīq he should notify the purpose of his coming to the Shaikh or the government in the plainest and most open



manner, so that there should be no dispute or misunderstanding with either the government or the Dutch who, at that time, had great influence in the Gulf.<sup>37</sup> (see Appendix 10)

Francis Wood departed on his way to Bandar Rīq after a long wait for a suitable ship from Bandar Abbas to Bushire.<sup>38</sup> He arrived there on 16 March 1755 and enquired about the situation in Bandar Rīq. He was told that the place was in such a state of confusion and poverty through civil strife that to go there would be very dangerous as well as unprofitable.<sup>39</sup> On 22 March Mīr Muhannā was set free by the ruler of Tang-i Sīr on the recommendation of the local rulers and arrived in Bushire, where he held secret talks with Francis Wood and with the ruler of Bushire, the contents of which no-one knew. Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire induced some local chiefs of Dashtistān to cooperate with him for the re-instatement of Mīr Muhannā and a force of about 500 men set off. A day's travel from Bandar Rīq, however, they were bribed by the forces of other Dashtistān rulers, friends of Mīr Ḥusain, to desert the cause of Shaikh Nāṣir and Mīr Muhannā and these two were obliged to retire to Bushire in a hurry. Mr Wood, seeing little progress in plans to re-instate Mīr Muhannā, decided now to go to Bandar Rīq but Shaikh Nāṣir ordered all local vessels to refuse to carry him; he was therefore practically a prisoner in Bushire.<sup>40</sup> That, at any rate, is what the Dutch reported but on 9 April 1755 Wood wrote to Alexander Douglas, the Agent at Bandar Abbas: 'In the midst of these disagreeable considerations, not to mention the influence of the Dutch, and the danger in such perilous times of dwelling in an open town without wall or fortification, I have judged it most advisable to remain at this place till your worship's further orders'.<sup>41</sup>

Wood added that since Mīr Nāṣir's death many rich merchants had resorted to Bushire so that the place had become a mart for all the commodities appropriate to the Persian trade. This attraction had encouraged him to make the same sort of proposals to the Shaikh of Bushire as his instructions had required him to make at Bandar Rīq, if he could have gone there. He said that the Shaikh of Bushire readily agreed to the

proposals with many a profession of friendship, but could not help remarking that for the Europeans, who were held to be among the most reasonable and shrewd people in the world, the privilege of trading custom-free ought to be considered a sufficient indulgence, he thought, without expecting the additional advantage of levying duties at a port where it had never been customary. Wood said the Shaikh assured him that it would give him the greatest satisfaction to have his town honoured with an English settlement, but that the customs duty proposal would, he feared, cause the merchants to take their goods elsewhere. Even if it did not give rise to that drawback, the shipping people would demand higher rates in proportion to the increase in their charges so, unless he made an equivalent allowance in the inland customs to the up-country merchants, the markets for all commodities, either imports or exports, via the English would become that much percent worse than they were before.<sup>42</sup>

Since there was nothing in the Shaikh's arguments with which Wood could disagree, he neither agreed nor dissented, but in discussion pressed the Shaikh to bring the negotiation to a fair and speedy conclusion so that no disputes might arise later. After Wood's mention of several Dutch precedents the Shaikh at last agreed to accept Rs 1,500 per annum, but, Wood having warned him that nothing could be finally settled without the endorsement of Alexander Douglas, the Shaikh granted a trial year during which the East India Company would see whether it would suit the Company's purpose to maintain a Resident in Bushire or not. If it did, the Shaikh would expect to receive the agreed consideration to recompense him for the loss he would incur by the Company's customs levy.<sup>43</sup>

When Alexander Douglas received Francis Wood's letter he was surprised to read that, on a mere report of trouble at Bandar Rīq, Wood had deviated from the instructions given him by the President and Council of the East India Company. He wrote back, saying:

Had you, as without doubt you ought, proceeded thither and found it impracticable or unadviseable to settle a Factory there you should

then have tried Bushire and advised us thereof, when we should have given you such directions as we might deem most beneficial to the Interest of the Honble Company but what could induce you to enter into any agreements with Shaik Nasseir, e're you were convinced Bunderick was ruind. We know not, however, as the principal cause of you being orderd to Bunderick was of sending a large quantity of Woolen goods, you may after making a Tryal at Bunderick and finding it impossible or imprudent to settle, return to Busshire, where you are to follow the same instructions as given you by the Governour and Council.<sup>44</sup>

On 4 June 1755 Wood arrived at Bandar Rīq, which was completely devoid of merchants or any other inhabitants except fishermen. He found Mīr Ḥusain surrounded with soldiers and on the point of departing for Shiraz: Ḥusain nevertheless postponed his journey for three days out of courtesy to Wood and freely granted him all the privileges which the Governor of Bombay had charged him to obtain. After Mīr Ḥusain's departure the Arabs at Bandar Rīq became so threatening that Wood was forced to leave and made his way to Khark, where Kniphausen received him very civilly but Wood, not wanting to inconvenience him, went on to Basrah, where he stayed until July. Since Mīr Ḥusain had still not returned from Shiraz, Wood then proceeded to Bushire where he would have waited until Mīr Ḥusain returned and resumed the government of Bandar Rīq. Karīm Khān, meanwhile, summoned Mīr Muhannā, Shaikh Kāyid Ḥaidar of Ganawah, Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire and a large number of the people of Bushire to Shiraz and threatened them as to their future behaviour. He then let them leave, quite devoid of provisions, clothes and money, for Bushire, where Wood made them a gift of rice and piece goods to the value of nearly Rs 360. Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire remained in prison in Shiraz for not rendering the account for his lease of the late Nādir Shāh's ships, and not paying the 5,000 *Tomans* due for the past three years of revenue from Bahrain. During his stay in Bushire Wood obtained a *raqam* from Karīm Khān permitting a factory at Bandar Rīq and went there on 9 September, reporting that the inhabitants expressed great satisfaction at his arrival. He also secured a *raqam* from Karīm Khān by which all the chiefs of the adjacent areas were strictly forbidden to give him the slightest trouble: Mīr Muhannā and all the Shaikhs of both opposed parties assured him of the most considerate treatment. So Wood began building a house for the East India Company and

had high hopes of establishing a profitable settlement for the selling of English manufactures. He was certain that the credit enjoyed by the English would soon draw all the merchants back again and restore the port to its former flourishing state.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, within seven months of his arrival in Bandar Rīq Wood expressed to Douglas his fears that little could be done at Bandar Rīq, and seemed of the opinion - after the overtures made to him by the Shaikh of Bushire - that a settlement there would be much more suitable.<sup>46</sup>

#### **4.5 The Dutch activity on Khark Island**

On 6 April 1756, Wood, now the Resident at Bandar Rīq, crossed over to Khark island and toured around it with van der Hulst, the Dutch second-in-charge, who showed him the lands allocated for cultivation by the Chinese; he confirmed the Dutch intention to settle 80 Chinese families there and to expel the Arab inhabitants. Kniphausen, he learnt, had eight or ten small trankeys with pearl divers in constant employment, whenever the day was calm, fishing for pearls - there being an abundance of oysters around the island. He sent the natives of the island out in the boats to take the oysters from the divers and deliver them to Kniphausen, just as they came from the sea. In this way, unless a man saw the oysters being opened, and this was always done in private, no-one could judge what particular success he had achieved.<sup>47</sup>

Kniphausen thought it worth making a trial of the Khark pearl fisheries because he had observed that its inhabitants, albeit unable to dive, were able to gather oysters at the lowest tides. The year before, therefore, he had taken on divers from the mainland coast and brought them to Khark: these did not include most of the best divers who were tied by the pressure of debts to their boat owners.

The divers having been hired and adequately equipped, Kniphausen ordered them to dive daily around the islands, but he found that it was impossible to make any profit

this way unless he was present himself, because the sailors were not moving and the divers were going no deeper than two or three fathoms - and that scarcely five or six times a day. He saw that it would be impracticable for Europeans to incite the local people to greater activity without the violence and beatings they themselves used. But Kniphausen had convinced himself that the fishery around the two islands might offer considerable profits if other means could be employed. He accordingly wrote to the Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company to elaborate his proposals. The first arose from the fact that the mediocre divers who had served him so badly barely compensated for their cost: the experts estimated the value of the pearls he had sent at Rs 865, whereas the sum paid to the divers and the sailors, and for the vessels and provisions was Rs 854. Kniphausen thought that if divers who could dive, according to reports, very much deeper could be brought from the Coromandel coast, Ceylon or Toticorin, the heart of the pearl fishery in the Tamil areas, considerable profits could be made. And Europeans working as rowers on the gallivats would further reduce expenses.

The second proposal which Kniphausen thought might be used in the pearl fishery with less expense but no less gain was to bring some glass diving bells from Holland for experiment. The invention, he said, had been made in England some years previously and had been used with great success on sunken ships. According to reports in the English press a diver was thus enabled to go into very deep water and to stay there a long time doing whatever was necessary. These characteristics promised great advantages in pearl diving because the divers could thereby reach deep areas which had never before been visited by the Arabs. Moreover, because apparently the best catch was in those depths and because the diver would not be driven to the surface for lack of breath so quickly, he would have the time to look carefully around; he would be able to fill large baskets with oysters and so be able to achieve more than four of the best ordinary divers. These reasons had impelled Kniphausen to add six of the glass bells, with clear instructions for their use, to his normal requests for merchandise.<sup>48</sup>

Knipphausen's plan to use diving bells for pearling in the Gulf was also noted by the English traveller, Edward Ives, who passed by Khark in 1753. Ives said that Knipphausen was very inquisitive about the diving bell and about other recent discoveries made in England for enabling men to stay a long time under water. He commissioned Ives to buy and send him from England various books and instruments.<sup>49</sup> The Dutch tried every means to divert trade into their own hands and, according to Wood, if an obstinate perseverance in selling their goods at low prices in order to encourage the merchants, taken with their steady resolve to carry on with fortifications and buildings at almost incredible expense could be considered means of achieving that success, then the Dutch were well on their way. But Wood could not see any trade going on nor did he believe that Khark would in any way repay the costs the Dutch had incurred till Persia in general became settled. Then, he thought, its very location would make it both populous and flourishing.

Although 100 Europeans was the military establishment allowed by Batavia for the defence of Khark island, Wood saw about 60, including seven or eight petty officers, 'neat handsome men', maintaining the strictest discipline. Beside these Knipphausen had more than 100 native slaves who were well armed in the style of the country with swords and shields. From his manner of dealing with them they seemed likely to remain loyal and content, although under bondage, since he took care to supply them with plenty of dates, fish and bread, decent clothing and, to 'cool the natural fervor of their dispositions', he allowed a large number of native women to live among them in common. Nor did he ever interfere in their religion. When they committed a fault, however, he severely punished them: whenever he had occasion to beat any of the Arabs or the local people he ordered two or three of the slaves to take the matter in hand - which, Wood observed, was particularly suited to them.

The marine strength officially allocated to the island comprised a sloop of ten carriage-guns and six swivel-guns; a gallivat mounting six three-pounders and four

swivel-guns; and three new trankeys. Wood tried to discover whether the Dutch really intended to take possession of Bahrain, as Kniphausen was apparently planning, but could glean no dependable information. If there were such a scheme in their heads, he said, it was very secret and he thought they would not put it into execution until the Chinese were well settled on Khark. Kniphausen's superiors, in fact, disapproved of such a venture.<sup>50</sup>

The town itself had no wall around it but had instead a deep ditch with drawbridges, which was capable of admitting and providing a safe harbour for the gallivats and trankeys. Kniphausen told Wood that he had ordered it to be dug and estimated that the cost would amount to about Rs 45,000.<sup>51</sup> The Dutch warehouses were full of goods - particularly sugar, sugar candy, pepper, other spices of all kinds, tin, zinc, iron, lead, rice, leather, double-width *perpets* and different kinds of broadcloth.<sup>52</sup>

In June 1756 Mīr Ḥusain, ruler of Bandar Rīq, had gone to Karīm Khān in Shiraz in order to complain about the help Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire planned to give to Ḥusain's brother Mīr Muhannā. Karīm Khān had written to the Dutch several times about this and to inform them that he had appointed Mīr Ḥusain as ruler of Bandar Rīq, asking them to help Ḥusain against his enemies as much as they could. The Dutch replied to these letters in a friendly way but without committing themselves to anything. Then, in August 1756, the Dutch were invited by a special messenger from Karīm Khān and Mīr Ḥusain to send a competent surgeon to Shiraz. They sent the chief surgeon, Fitch, from Khark and used the occasion to send Karīm Khān a letter of complaint against Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire.<sup>53</sup> Notwithstanding all this activity, the period 1755-61 saw no increase in Khark island trade for the Dutch<sup>54</sup> (see Appendices 11 to 16).

#### **4.6 The Withdrawal of the English Settlement from Bandar Rīq**

On 8 June 1756, Wood received a letter from Kniphausen warning him to be aware of the danger of an impending attack on Bandar Rīq by Mīr Muhannā. From this Wood

concluded that Kniphausen had at last decided to punish Mīr Ḥusain and that Bandar Rīq might be involved in troubles very suddenly: he immediately pondered what advantages the Dutch could expect from an open rupture with Mīr Ḥusain other than to prevent an English settlement being established there. Since he could not think of one of any significance he panicked and thought it advisable to leave for Basrah, returning after the trouble was over. From Basrah, Wood wrote to Douglas asking him to satisfy the needs of his people for arms, and both timber and stores, to finish the building - which he was anxious to give a defensive capability. He accused the Dutch of having helped Mīr Muhannā<sup>55</sup> but Slot holds that there is no firm proof for these accusations.<sup>56</sup> The Resident at Basrah, Shaw, met Wood, who expressed his fear that little could be done at Bandar Rīq and seemed to be of the opinion, by virtue of the overtures made him by the Shaikh of Bushire, that a settlement there would be much more suitable. Shaw wrote to the Governor of Bombay about the situation without copying his letter to Douglas, the Resident at Bandar Abbas, who complained to Shaw and ordered Wood to return to Bandar Rīq.<sup>57</sup>

Wood returned to Bandar Rīq on 2 July 1756 to find the plot had been fully realised. Mīr Muhannā, together with a 'pack of drunken, idle wretches', who had been his accomplices in the murder of his father, entered Bandar Rīq and killed his brother, Mīr Ḥusain, along with several others. The East India Company's house, on which Rs 20,000 had already been spent, had been levelled to the ground and the English flag had been struck. At the same time, the troubles there had prevented the consignment of woollen goods and tin from the *Betsy* being taken ashore and she had been sent on with her cargo to Basrah.<sup>58</sup> Mīr Muhannā refused to allow Wood to collect duties from merchants trading under English protection unless he agreed to pay Muhannā Rs 2,000 a year. By his harsh treatment of them he also drove away the few merchants and useful inhabitants who were there and he was reduced to great poverty. In spite of everything, his allies in Khark supported him and, playing upon their support, he became extremely insolent to all his neighbours, who were ready to destroy him the moment he was deserted by the Dutch. Wood reported that the Dutch



gave Mīr Muhannā Rs 2,000 and Shaikh 'Alī Ma'ṣūm (one of the Shaikhs who had joined Mīr Muhannā) also received Rs 1,200 and four shawls - a customary and valued gift at the time.<sup>59</sup> Finding the troubles still in progress, Wood secretly carried all his valuable effects back with him to Basrah on the very same day, 2 July 1756, and, on the day he left, Mīr Muhannā employed a large number of labourers to carry off the materials of the Company's house to build a wall around his town.<sup>60</sup> Whilst Douglas, at Bandar Abbas, was getting ready to embark William Hughes, whom he had appointed Assistant Resident at Bandar Rīq, along with two carpenters and to load the medicines, stationery, stores and materials on board a ship proceeding to Bandar Rīq, he received a letter from Wood informing him of the troubles at Bandar Rīq and of his departure from there.<sup>61</sup> Douglas was greatly concerned by this news and criticised Wood as pusillanimous, writing:

You ought to represent to Meer Manna the advantages it will be to Bunderick our Hon'ble Masters having a settlement there, on the other hand that he may depend the Hon'ble the President and Council of Bombay will take satisfaction for any insults offered the Hon'ble Company or their Servants.<sup>62</sup>

In April 1756 the vessel *Pasterenia*, under English protection, ran ashore and was stranded at Kangun. Douglas accused the Shaikh of Kangun of having plundered the consignments and sent the *Swallow* and the *Drake* of the Bombay Marine in the Gulf to demand satisfaction of the Shaikh. Since Wood was well acquainted with the circumstances of the case, having already approached the Shaikh about it, Douglas asked him to use the expedition to establish the factory at Bandar Rīq, or at least to obtain satisfaction from Mīr Muhannā for his recent behaviour in demolishing the Company's house, and from there to take the expedition to Kangun. The expedition left Bandar Abbas on 15 October and arrived at Bandar Rīq at the end of that month.<sup>63</sup> As far as the *Swallow* and *Drake* going to Bandar Rīq was concerned, Wood's opinion was that their forces were inadequate for their purpose since he had consulted their Captains and found that they could not land more than 65 or 70 men from both ships. Moreover, the town of Bandar Rīq was situated in such a manner that a large vessel

such as the Bombay ships could not approach nearer than two miles to it. Mīr Muhannā had upwards of 500 men of his own tribe within one hour's notice and they were tolerably good soldiers when employed in houses or behind walls in their normal way of fighting. Wood thought it distinctly ill-advised to arrive at an open rupture with the people of Bandar Rīq because the Mīr himself was miserably poor and the inhabitants had only salt-fish and dates to lose, unless the English could lay hands on a few old boats and three ships belonging to the Mīr. In that event the Company's hopes of settling there again would be totally destroyed.<sup>64</sup>

As regards the Shaikh of Kangun, Wood wrote that many of the freighters as well as the Captain and officers of the *Pasterenia* had signed an agreement with the Shaikh to share equally anything that could be salvaged: what the Shaikh had done, therefore, bore the appearance of justice to some extent. He added that this was not his main objection; the village was very straggling and had been extended along the coast among date gardens so that, if the English bombarded it from the sea, they would cause it very little harm. Moreover, the village was situated near the mountains and, in the event of the English landing, the Arabs could easily remove their valuable possessions to safety in less than half an hour. So, after killing a number of innocent people and risking the loss of many of the English, the remainder would be forced to retire without obtaining any satisfaction, while the Arabs would be so hostile towards the English that there would be unhappy consequences for any of the latter who might later fall into their hands.<sup>65</sup> For these reasons Wood delayed beginning hostilities against the Arabs of Bandar Rīq and Kangun, and while he was planning to despatch the two vessels on 8 November 1756, along with the East India Company's *Dragon*, an unfortunate event took place.

Between 10 and 11 p.m. on 6 November, Mīr Muhannā sent a guard of Arab soldiers under Shaikh Ghānim, one of his relatives, to turn Wood and all the Europeans out of the place immediately. They insisted very forcefully on the Europeans leaving in less than half an hour but without giving any reason other than Muhannā's suspicion that

the English were his enemies. A Mr George Purnell, who spoke Arabic, helped Wood to persuade the guard that the English were friends but he could not prevail upon Shaikh Ghānim to let them stay until morning. Wood then offered Shaikh Ghānim Rs 40 if he would bring Ḥajjī Ḥusain Saffery, the chief of the tribe and a calm, well-disposed man. Shaikh Ghānim told Wood, however, that the Mīr's orders were so positive that he, and all the soldiers with him, ran a great risk in talking with him for so long and that, if they did not leave immediately, he might oblige them to do so by force. He thereupon ordered his men to surround the gateway, their powder matches already lit, and peremptorily asked again whether they would go or not. The English thought it unwise to argue any further and went on board the *Dragon*, leaving behind everything save the clothes on their backs. The Arab soldiers then disarmed the soldiers of the detachment, took possession of Wood's effects and the specie, and took away three months' provisions.

The next day Mīr Muhannā sent Aghā Maḥmūd, an Arab officer, to bring Wood and Hughes ashore again but Wood detained Aghā Maḥmūd and made him send one of his servants with a letter to Mīr Muhannā, saying that he would not release his prisoner until his money and goods were restored. The Mīr asked for gunpowder as part of the deal, whereupon two barrels were supplied, and within ten days Wood received everything on board the *Swallow* which could conveniently be brought off. Aghā Maḥmūd was released after the embarkation of the detachment of soldiers and then the whole party left Bandar Rīq.<sup>66</sup>

#### **4.7 The Siege of Bandar Rīq**

In January 1757, Karīm Khān was provoked to anger against the Dashtistān Shaikhs and the Dutch Company by their assistance to Mīr Ḥusain (see page 130). He brought all of the Dashtistān Shaikhs as far as Bandar Rīq under his control and took them as hostages: he made threats against the Dutch on Khark island, animated by the prospect of winning great booty there from the Company and from the Armenian,

*Banian* and Muslim merchants.<sup>67</sup> Nine months later Karīm Khān marched again to the coast to besiege the ruler of Ganawah, Kāyid Ḥaidar, who had refused to submit to him, and was accompanied in the expedition by three gallivats from Bandar Rīq under the authority of Mīr Muhannā. This put Kniphausen on his guard, knowing the Mīr as unreliable and the murderer of both his father and his brother. On its way to Basrah, a ship belonging to Kniphausen carrying merchandise bought on Khark and the property of local merchants, met adverse winds and strayed out of the sight of the Dutch gallivats: Mīr Muhannā, without any orders from the Khān, pursued and robbed it of its cargo, leaving it empty. A brother of Karīm Khān, and other Persian dignitaries, went on board the ship to see what was left and quarrelled with him before going away to report to the Khān. Mīr Muhannā meanwhile fled with his three gallivats and the stolen ship. The Khān immediately sent 4,000 men to Bandar Rīq and informed the inhabitants that if the Mīr did not submit himself within three days he would plunder the place and burn it to the ground.

Kniphausen thought that if the Dutch took revenge for the Mīr's aggression they would gain the favour of the Khān. They therefore sent the sloop *'t Loo* with the gallivat *Draak*, reinforced with soldiers, against Mīr Muhannā's vessels, which were then lying under Cape Bang (part of Bang mountain, rising to 1,000 ft above sea level, on the coast 30 miles north of Khark island). A strong NW breeze and the unwieldiness of the sloop hindered the Dutch from taking any action against the Mīr for three days and, during that time, he disembarked and went to the Persian army. There he was arrested and the Dutch concluded that by ordering their ships back they could expect satisfaction from Karīm Khān. He, in fact, wrote them a friendly letter explaining that the ship had been taken without his permission; that the bad behaviour of Mīr Muhannā had caused most of the merchandise to be lost in the confusion; that he would arrange the matter of their merchandise with the merchants who were his subjects; but that he could not make restitution of the goods which belonged to the Dutch. The Dutch answered with complaints about the damage to trade and the fact that some of their merchandise valued at 2,704 Guilders had belonged to Kniphausen.

Following on from this the stolen vessel was returned to the Dutch with the promise of restitution of the merchandise. Kniphausen took the precaution of arresting the inhabitants of Bandar Rīq who were on Khark in order to have security for his goods: the advantage of this was that Mīr Muhannā was kept as a prisoner and, in his place, his youngest brother, Mīr ‘Alī, had been appointed ruler of Bandar Rīq and the Dutch expected good things of him.<sup>68</sup>

Before leaving Shiraz at the beginning of 1758 to fight against Muḥammad Khān of Isfahan, Karīm Khān had released Mīr Muhannā from prison against promise of payment of a certain sum, and had appointed him ruler of Bandar Abbas.<sup>69</sup> With the army of Karīm Khān marching north in March 1758, Muḥammad Khān’s forces besieged Shiraz with Karīm Khān for a few months and this gave Mīr Muhannā the chance to leave Bandar Abbas and go to Bandar Rīq, where he gave orders to execute his brother, Mīr ‘Alī, and two of his cousins. Muhannā behaved well towards the Dutch and they worked to maintain this situation.<sup>70</sup> Kniphausen asked Mossel, the Governor General in Batavia, to release him from the Residency of Khark and, in 1759, he left for Batavia: his assistant, van der Hulst, was appointed Resident at Khark in his stead.<sup>71</sup>

During the whole year of 1759 navigation in the Gulf was impeded by the depredations of Mīr Muhannā. During the month of November he was up the Basrah river with three gallivats pursuing the Qawāsim of Sīr (Sīr was the coast from Ras al-Khaimah up to Sharjah) who used to sail from there with their vessels laden with dates. Mīr Muhannā made the pretence of believing that the Qawāsim had done him some harm, whereas it seemed in reality that his pretexts merely hid the intent to plunder. The Qawāsim, however, had gathered all their vessels together and Muhannā did not dare attack them. Instead, he captured a ship belonging to Luft (on Qishm island) with a moderately rich cargo. Soon after, he captured another ship from Basrah and let it be known that he had now captured enough to be able to lead a rich and prosperous life in Bandar Rīq.

The distribution of the two ships' cargoes among the Mīr's people attracted a crowd of thieves and desperadoes to Bandar Rīq, with the result that every week one or two gallivats left for three or four days and returned with trankeys they had encountered, releasing only those that were empty. This state of affairs caused the Dutch some anxiety because the gallivats' success attracted even more bandits and villains to Bandar Rīq. Several letters had been written to Mīr Muhannā by Kniphausen when he was residing on Khark island, asking for merchandise belonging to people from Khark island to be returned, but without reply. The Mīr's gallivats now captured trankeys even within sight of Khark, as was the case with a vessel belonging to the ruler of Ganawah. The Dutch felt obliged to do something so they decided not to allow his vessels access to Khark any more and, if his gallivats came in sight, to pursue them with the gallivats of the Dutch Company. This had little effect, in fact, because the Arab gallivats were full of men and could row correspondingly fast.

The Mīr's gallivats continued to attack ships in 1759 in the upper part of the Gulf until they captured a large trankey from Basrah between Khark and Basrah, and came unexpectedly in sight of Khark. The Dutch sent the gallivats *Draak* and *Tiger* in pursuit and, because the stolen trankey was too heavily laden to cross the shoals off Bandar Rīq, it was left there. The Dutch gallivats dared not cross the shallows because they did not know the area, and found only 4 ft of water, so anchored near the trankey. Mīr Muhannā's gallivats observing this, and believing that the Dutch were in disarray with rigging problems, thought that this was an opportune moment to capture the Dutch vessels. They therefore approached the *Draak* at great speed, down to musket range, but were then met with artillery as well as small arms fire which caused such confusion that the Mīr's sailors jumped overboard and tried to drag the Dutch gallivats over the shallows by ropes. The *Draak* lifted its anchor and blocked their way, overpowering Mīr Muhannā's best gallivat. Meanwhile, before the *Tiger* could get near, the other gallivat escaped but the *Tiger* was able to take the stolen Basrah trankey, and both returned to Khark.

This sea action prevented Mīr Muhannā from putting to sea again although he daily employed his people on shore in stealing corn. All the merchants and seafarers of the Gulf and the Red Sea expressed their satisfaction and gratitude saying that the Dutch establishment on Khark was the greatest support for their navigation in the Gulf and was a benefit for them in all respects. The captured gallivat was kept by the Dutch Company for a sum of 3,750 Guilders and the cargo on it was sold at auction for 1648 Guilders, after deduction of a quarter for the Dutch Company: that money was distributed among the sailors from the Dutch East India Company's gallivat. At the request of the merchants of Basrah, the Dutch decided to return the stolen trankey. In this way the Dutch came to a complete rupture with Mīr Muhannā and decided to enter upon a close friendship with his neighbour, and worst enemy, Kāyid Ḥaidar, to whom they offered gifts to the value of 713 Guilders. The advantage to the Dutch was that Mīr Muhannā would now have to be on his guard to landward, and that they could easily obtain provisions for Khark island from the mainland.<sup>72</sup>

In 1760 the Persian kingdom was in turmoil and Karīm Khān was the main cause of this, being at war with his enemies to the north of Shiraz and leaving Mīr Muhannā free on the south coast. The Mīr besieged Kāyid Ḥaidar in Ganawah on 29 December 1759 but the Company's gallivats secured the coast and, thanks to some lucky artillery hits on the besiegers, Muhannā was obliged to lift the siege on 15 January and retire to Bandar Rīq, where he continued to plunder the surrounding area. The ruler of Bushire and the Shaikhs of all Dashtistān marched against him on 7 August 1760, but quarrels among their leaders and a small victory gained by Muhannā over a group of their horsemen made them retire. Mīr Muhannā remained at war with all of his neighbours during the year<sup>73</sup> and his continued robbery forced the rulers of Dashtistān on the mainland to complain about him to Karīm Khān. At the beginning of January 1761, an envoy from Karīm Khān arrived on Khark island asking the Dutch to blockade Bandar Rīq from the sea while the Khān besieged it. The Dutch promised to do so. The Khān therefore sent Wālī Khān, in early January 1761, with some troops to

join the Dashtistān forces in the siege of Bandar Rīq, but he was shot dead on 25 January and another Persian commander continued the siege until 10 February, when he was surprised by Muhannā's soldiers at night and chased away from Bandar Rīq.

Sa'ām Khān arrived with fresh troops before Bandar Rīq on 18 March, accompanied by Ra'īs Muẓaffar, the principal ruler of Dashtistān, and the siege was resumed. For two months they camped before Bandar Rīq and reduced it to great hardship, but Muhannā then made a deal with Ra'īs Muẓaffar, and Sa'ām Khān was forced to break off the siege. He retired to Cazaroon, where he reported to Karīm Khān and asked for either orders to retire or fresh troops to resume the siege. It was to be expected that Karīm Khān would opt for fresh troops in order to maintain his authority in that part of Persia, whilst towards the Caspian Sea everything was quiet and he had no enemies, as well as to make Bandar Rīq submit and to punish Mīr Muhannā. Muhannā, for his part, had lost many men and was clearly weakened. He did his utmost to repair the damage and to become even stronger than before. His renewed depredations on land made Shaikh Kāyid Ḥaidar of Ganawah decide to abandon his domain because he had been unable to cultivate his land for three years, and many of his people had left him. Unable to withstand Mīr Muhannā's constant harassment, he retired with his family to Khark, where the Dutch could not deny him asylum because he had been a good ally of theirs.<sup>74</sup>

After reaching his agreement with Ra'īs Muẓaffar and forcing Sa'ām Khān to raise the siege, Mīr Muhannā had captured two important caravans, worth over Rs 20,000, travelling from Shiraz to Bushire. This increased his strength and he was able keep the roads in an unsafe state: from mid-1761 no caravans went from Bushire to Shiraz, and none came from Shiraz. There was great damage to trade since the Shaikh of Bushire was unable, on his own, to keep the roads secure and protect the caravans against the attacks of Mīr Muhannā. The Mīr was also still at war with Shaikh Sulaimān of the Ka'b (an Arab tribe living in Khuzistān, on the east bank of the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab in Persian territory). The conflict between Muhannā and the Dashtistān



shaikhs started up again although the Dutch kept out of it. Several of the merchants said that they had reliable news of the Khān with a large army on his way to Dashtistān: the Mīr's gallivats stayed in port without venturing out to sea during this period. In September 1761 he had secretly sent out some small craft but they had been captured by two armed ships from Bushire.<sup>75</sup>

On 29 March 1762, however, a misfortune befell the Dutch when the Company gallivats, *Draak* and *Tiger*, at the Khark anchorage, were attacked by some of Mīr Muhannā's armed vessels and the boatswain in charge of the gallivats was killed in trying to defend them. The sailors with him jumped overboard without offering any further defence and some made for the island, swimming or in the gallivats' launches. In this surprise attack the Dutch lost two gallivats, their boatswain and 16 sailors dead: with them they lost their power at sea and were left with only the gallivat *Darwiesh*. Muhannā's men, with their own gallivats and the captured ones, retired out of range of the Dutch artillery, disembarked 200 men and advanced nearly to the plain where the fortress had been built. The Dutch sent a force of 31 soldiers and the same number of African slaves, with two pieces of field artillery, and quickly chased the invaders back to the sea cliffs. In that action several of the Mīr's men were killed or wounded while the Dutch had only five lightly injured but, because of the weakness of their garrison, could not expose their forces in a pursuit of the Mīr's men among the cliffs and caves and so expel them entirely from the island. Mīr Muhannā's people remained on the island for five days, not daring to go within range of the Dutch artillery but sometimes showing themselves on the plain by night and being each time repulsed with losses. They finally re-embarked on 5 April and crossed to Bandar Rīq, having achieved nothing but the plundering of houses on the mountain.

Shaikh Ghaith, brother of the Shaikh of Bushire, arrived on Khark island on the following day, 6 April, with two gallivats, one *dinghi* and seven other vessels equipped for war, and accompanied by Kāyid Ḥaidar, the former ruler of Ganawah, with 100 men. On the first day that Mīr Muhannā's men landed on Khark the Dutch had sent a

vessel to Basrah asking the Dutch sloop *Cornelia* to come to their assistance; the *Cornelia* duly arrived on the 7th, in the company of a small English ship, the *Monmouth*, whose Captain, Joseph Price, had left his cargo in Basrah in order to offer the Dutch his services. The Dutch thus regained their mastery of the sea with the gallivat *Darwiesh*, the two sloops from Basrah, and the vessels from Bushire. In the event, the Dutch sloop, *Cornelia*, was of poor quality and could render little service so it was allowed to return to Basrah on 15 May but the English sloop, *Monmouth*, was retained until 20 July, when the new gallivat, under construction since shortly after the disaster of 29 March (see next paragraph), was brought to sea and equipped. With that gallivat and the *Darwiesh* the Dutch could keep the sea around Khark secure for the time being and, up to August 1762, Mīr Muhannā had not tried to take to the sea again.

Nevertheless, a serious outbreak of disease in the autumn of 1761 had cost the Dutch the lives of 27 soldiers and sailors. Taken together with the loss of 17 sailors from the gallivats and the number of wounded in that action there was, therefore, a considerable diminution in the strength of the Dutch hold on Khark island. Through the medium of a message carried by an English ship passing on its way to Surat at the time that Mīr Muhannā's men were on the island, the Dutch Director and Council in Surat were informed of the situation and asked to send a sloop or gallivat. Failing that they were asked for the necessary wood to build a third gallivat on Khark (see previous paragraph), since Mīr Muhannā at that time had six gallivats and, in the longer term, the Dutch could not keep the sea safe with only two.<sup>76</sup> On land, the Dutch had been obliged to recruit some local soldiers to man the fortress and the emergency trenches they had dug. For these they could find none better than the men of Kāyid Ḥaidar, ruler of Ganawah, who were the sworn enemies of Mīr Muhannā and Bandar Rīq and so the most reliable.<sup>77</sup> All the rulers of Dashtistān and neighbouring areas were also the Mīr's inveterate enemies and were convinced that they would never be secure in their possessions as long as he was alive.<sup>78</sup>

Van der Hulst was recalled by the High Government in Batavia because he had been remiss in his duties. He left Khark on 20 October 1762 but, instead of going to Batavia he returned to Europe.<sup>79</sup> Niebuhr wrote that van der Hulst had been recalled because of his misfortune not to be in favour with the Governor of Batavia<sup>80</sup> but this is incorrect: more probably, he was removed for poor management.

Since his expedition to Khark in March, Mīr Muhannā had never been at sea with his gallivats, because of his land-wars with his neighbours and Persian threats. Shaikh Sa'dī, an inhabitant of Khark island, had made himself suspect because of his behaviour during the time that the Mīr's Arabs from Bandar Rīq had been on the island and an enquiry into him was launched. The enquiry showed that he had a great affinity with the people of Bandar Rīq but that he was not guilty of treason, and he was banished for life from all lands of the Dutch Company. Ten sailors had escaped at risk to their lives from prison in Bandar Rīq and had resumed their service on Khark.<sup>81</sup>

In October 1762 it became widely known that Karīm Khān had defeated his last dangerous enemy Kalb 'Alī Khān (his Persian rival in Bandar Abbas) some months before and had become master of Tabriz (a town to the north of Tehran) and, consequently, of all Persia. He had therefore decided to exterminate Mīr Muhannā that winter and had sent out the Khāns leading his main force from Shiraz towards the mountains behind Bandar Rīq. Another Khān was moving with an army corps and an artillery train to the coast by way of Cazaroon. Earlier plans to eliminate Mīr Muhannā had failed each time because the armies sent against him had been poor and their commanders in dispute with one another. This time, however, it was believed that better troops and more experienced commanders were going against him and the merchants expected the Mīr's end to be imminent. They thus hoped for a state of security for profitable trade in which they could send large quantities of merchandise to all the stable areas of the Persian kingdom.<sup>82</sup> In the event, the expectation that Mīr Muhannā would be eliminated that winter was dashed because Karīm Khān was

defeated by Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān (in revolt in Kirmān) and was in trouble in Upper Persia. In February 1763, the few troops sent against the Mīr by Karīm Khān had fled away and now almost the whole coast of Dashtistān, with the exception of Bushire, had submitted to Muhannā who constituted a daily threat to Bushire, and there was a fear that he would conquer it. The roads around Bushire were cut by Muhannā and in Khark this caused a scarcity in provisions such as sheep, much of which was transported to Khark from there.

Van der Hulst had not been a good manager and, as noted on page 149, had left Khark, to be succeeded by his deputy, Buschman. Buschman, the new Resident, realised that the circumstances were critical, with a danger of Bushire falling into Mīr Muhannā’s hands; he therefore looked for a different solution. Muhannā had sent his congratulations to Buschman upon his promotion to Resident and continued to propose peace with the Dutch Company, saying that he was not unwilling to return the two captured gallivats if, instead, he could have the Dutch gallivat *Darwiesh*. This gave Buschman the opportunity to change course and to iron out the difficulties. After receiving a polite reply Mīr Muhannā sent two plenipotentiary envoys to negotiate peace and the restitution of the gallivats. He also wrote to the Dutch Resident notifying him that, in order to forward the cause of peace, he renounced all pretensions to the islands and all contracts which he claimed to have been concluded with his father, Mīr Nāṣir, and that he was ready to return the gallivats. The affair could not be decided as quickly as that, however, because he also wanted to exchange the silver swords and daggers which had been on the *Darwiesh* against artillery and ammunition. In the meantime some Khark vessels were able to cross over to Bandar Rīq and returned with sheep and all other kinds of provisions: in addition, Muhannā sent back, of his own initiative, a ship belonging to the people of Khark which he had captured and in which were about 9,000 lbs of dates.<sup>83</sup>

Mīr Muhannā made two attacks on Bushire in May 1763. Both failed but did not persuade him to give up his plans to overcome Bushire at any cost. Fears had mounted

in Bushire, in view of Muhannā's determination, and he would have reached his goal but for the intervention of a ship of the English East India Company.<sup>84</sup> From mid-1763 there was little improvement in the situation along the Gulf coast. Mīr Muhannā was allowing caravans to pass without molestation between Upper Persia and the Gulf, but he could not so easily improve his bad reputation and the merchants hesitated to risk their capital by going down to Bushire. At the end of 1763 Karīm Khān had his hands free once more and decided to employ all his resources against Mīr Muhannā: he went on the march with a large army and, according to reports, he made steady progress. In mid-1764 Karīm Khān requested the Governor and Council at Bombay to assist him with a vessel or two to prevent Mīr Muhannā from escaping him by sea in his gallivat, and declared that he himself would attack Mīr Muhannā in November or December 1764. Mīr Muhannā, for his part, brought himself to a high level of readiness by laying in large stores of provisions and forcing all the inhabitants of Bandar Rīq who had no work to collect the provisions necessary for their self-sufficiency for one year.

As the year 1764 was closing the Dutch on Khark island were in harmony with the surrounding rulers: Mīr Muhannā maintained a prudent policy towards them and kept the peace. The merchants among his subjects regularly went to Khark in order to trade on his behalf.<sup>85</sup> Muhannā's neighbours still hoped that he would be destroyed by Karīm Khān, to whom he had never cared to submit, but every siege of his town had been lifted: a positive result to the coming attack would be very beneficial to trade. At the end of May 1764, a Khān with 15,000 soldiers was sent to besiege Bandar Rīq again and, at their approach, Muhannā fled with his boats (six gallivats and many other vessels) to Kharku. He asked the Dutch for permission to establish himself on the other side of Khark, which had belonged to his father. Buschman felt rather embarrassed by the request but refused it in the friendliest possible manner, giving the scarcity of provisions as the reason. Muhannā was dissatisfied with the reply and entrenched himself on Kharku, which seemed dangerous to the Dutch given his unreliability and capacity to molest them at will. The Dutch, however, having

only two gallivats now and a few European soldiers could do little to stop him, although Buschman did all he could to avoid a break with him. Muhannā was now ensconced behind trenches and huge baskets filled with sand, especially at the north bay, the only part of the island which was not unapproachable because of rocks and shallows. He had large quantities of provisions with him and also plundered the ships which passed by.<sup>86</sup>

#### **4.8 The End of the Dutch Establishment on Khark**

An envoy of Karīm Khān arrived on Khark in March 1765: he was *Kalanthar Serkies*, head of the Armenian community in Persia, who was well-regarded by the Khān and who brought a letter from him saying that, after an absence of seven years, Karīm Khān would visit the coast and 'exterminate the well-known troublemaker', Mīr Muhannā. The Mīr's fall would, the letter said, be a blessing for all inhabitants of the area and the Khān would then be master of the whole Persian kingdom. He wished to preserve friendship with the Dutch Company, like all previous kings of Persia, and asked only that the Company should help him against the rebellious Mīr, whose rebellion impeded the whole nation's commerce. Karīm Khān said that he had entrusted several matters to his envoy and asked the Dutch to give him credence.<sup>87</sup>

The envoy brought three proposals for Dutch action: (i.) to co-operate with Bushire in attacking Muhannā on sea when he fled from the Persian onslaught; (ii.) to send all the Armenians living on Khark to Julfa, an Armenian suburb of Isfahan; and (iii.) since Khark belonged to Persia and the Dutch had traded there for so many years, Karīm Khān should be paid customs duties of 5% since the start of trading. On this last point he was particularly insistent, not seeming to doubt that the Dutch would agree and would allow him to buy merchandise, using those duties as security.<sup>88</sup>

On the first point, a written proposal from Karīm Khān, Buschman replied that it would be desirable to subdue Mīr Muhannā but that the meagre Dutch sea-power

could be effective only if combined with the sea-power of Bushire and the English, because the Dutch ships were manned mainly with local people. Otherwise, the Dutch would suffer a renewed loss of face and would again be troubled daily by renewed hostilities from Muhannā. The Dutch could not stop him landing at the back of the island in the last attack (see page 147) and their Europeans were now very tired from their day and night efforts, and suffering from the seasonal diseases. In order not to reject the proposal entirely Buschman suggested postponing the action to a better time.<sup>89</sup>

The envoy's second proposal was not written in Karīm Khān's letter, but Buschman replied that it was not reasonable for people who had their houses and their income on Khark to be expelled against their wishes. When Serkies started to demand money from the Armenians and threatened them, Buschman had to order him not to interfere before receiving the answer to his master.<sup>90</sup>

Buschman expressed astonishment at the third point, which was also presented only verbally. His master should know that the duties on all merchandise carried from Khark to Bushire and elsewhere had already been paid by the merchants but the Company, by virtue of privileges granted by previous Shāhs, had never paid any duties. Karīm Khān, himself, seven years before, had officially and unconditionally recognised the Company as the possessors of Khark and he could not now change his attitude like this. Buschman would report this matter to his masters but they would draw no other conclusion than to terminate once and for all the trade with Persia. Since the Khān had not mentioned this point in his letter Buschman would reply only orally.<sup>91</sup>

Serkies remained on Khark for two months waiting for a reply and claiming that he had orders to wait there for Karīm Khān to arrive in the region. The daily cost to the Dutch of his embassy was 405 Guilders, not counting the wine, and, given the envoy's eminence, Buschman felt obliged to offer him a gift of 444 Guilders on his departure and regarded these expenses as unavoidable. Serkies did not insist further

on his third point, saying that he had received letters from Karīm Khān in which he asked for nothing more than assistance against Mīr Muhannā during the Khān's presence in the region. While the envoy was on Khark, Muhannā was attacked by the Bushire people and by the English (who were now settled in Bushire; see the next chapter) on Kharku. The envoy showed Buschman repeated written orders seeking Dutch help to the English in the attack on Kharku and threatening that, otherwise, the Dutch would not be allowed to send merchandise to Persia and Persian merchants would be forbidden to visit Khark. The Dutch saw no chance of the attack succeeding and maintained strict neutrality. The anger of Karīm Khān and the Bushire people at the Dutch refusal led to their trade coming to a complete standstill. From then on no important merchants went to Khark or ordered goods, although this was also partly owing to the general insecurity at sea.<sup>92</sup>

After having blockaded Kharku for 20 days, the English and Bushire ships returned to Bushire. During that period they fired a few shots at Kharku and Mīr Muhannā's galleons. During this sea action two *baghalas* were secured to the shore below the Dutch fortress on Khark island: a *batil* from Bushire captured them, killing a man who was on board, and sailed back to their sister ship which was on the anchorage.<sup>93</sup>

In these circumstances a group of men and women from Kharku crossed over to Khark. In order to obviate possibly dangerous consequences Buschman told the new arrivals that, owing to the shortage of provisions, those who had no income on Khark would have to leave, and wrote in the same vein to Mīr Muhannā. His object was to block any hostile intentions of the Bandar Rīq people, so many of them being on Kharku at that time, which could be very dangerous in that they could surprise the Dutch at night and capture the batteries: their greatest strength was in the surprise attack. Mīr Muhannā himself was trying to recover his position and was less reliable than ever when the Dutch had an enemy within as well as without.<sup>94</sup>



After the English and Bushire blockade of Kharku had finished Mīr Muhannā resumed his old ways and claims, making all kinds of unjustified requests and proposals. Through his plundering, and he had no other source of income, he stopped all trading activity on both land and sea. His vessels regularly took groups of armed men to the mainland to rob the passing merchants; the merchants no longer dared to go over to Khark and the Shaikh of Bushire also prevented them from going there, unless under escort by the Dutch gallivats, reinforced with soldiers. But the absence of those soldiers from the garrison of Khark caused it to be weakened, in the face of fears of a surprise attack by Mīr Muhannā. Following the arrival of the Dutch ship *Walcheren* in Khark the Dutch heard of his plan to board it at night while it was still not ready to sail and overpower it; they accordingly took preparatory measures and readied themselves for defence.<sup>95</sup>

This was now August 1765 and matters remained in this state without any initiative from Mīr Muhannā, until the *Walcheren*'s cargo was almost all unloaded and the ship was ready to depart in a few days.<sup>96</sup> On 31 August the Dutch ship *Kronenburg* arrived at Khark, bearing the new Resident, Houting.<sup>97</sup> Trade continued to stagnate, with merchants fearing to come to Khark and being stopped in Bushire by order of Karīm Khān. The Persians continued to press the newly-arrived Resident, who had two ships present at that time, to join forces with them, saying there were only a few fighters on the small island (Kharku) and it would not be too difficult to destroy the cause of all the disturbances, who was looking only for an opportunity to take Khark by surprise.<sup>98</sup>

The outgoing Buschman had briefed the new Resident, Houting, in a written memorandum and immediately embarked in order not to delay the ship. The memorandum mentioned the stagnation of trade and the scant hope of improvement, as well as the requests from Karīm Khān and Bushire, and their consequences. On the other hand, Buschman also warned Houting of the danger that Mīr Muhannā had not yet received any satisfaction from him and might try something during the winter.

If things went wrong they could have fatal results and he recommended prudence because the Dutch had not yet broken with the Mīr. Houting tried to keep an open mind. He was in difficulty because he had withheld the ships which should have departed for Batavia and Buschman, still on board, decided to send them on 25 or 26 September. Moreover, he remained under pressure from Karīm Khān and Bushire, and faced the stagnation of trade and the insolence of Mīr Muhannā, whose envoys had rejected the customary small farewell presents and had merely collected the goods belonging to Bandar Rīq merchants which had been sent to Khark when they had fled from Bandar Rīq. Letters arriving on 17 September from Karīm Khān and Bushire demanded a clear response from the Dutch to the request to join forces against Muhannā or risk an embargo on the importation of Dutch goods in Bushire, the principal mart in the Gulf, and a ban on Persians buying their goods. If they would not co-operate the Dutch would be regarded as friends of the enemies of the lord and master of all Persia.<sup>99</sup>

Houting was in a difficult dilemma: both choices were dangerous but he chose the way that seemed less so according to all reason, and joined the stronger party in the hope of restoring the moribund commerce.<sup>100</sup> It would have been better if a proposal by The Hague in 1762 for the total evacuation and closure of the Khark establishment had been implemented in time to avoid the tragic events now unfolding.<sup>101</sup> When the letter from Bushire arrived the Dutch Accountant, Winklaer, wrote to Buschman, the outgoing Resident, on behalf of his successor, Houting, asking his advice about planning with the Shaikh of Bushire to destroy the focus of trouble, Mīr Muhannā, once and for all. Buschman replied that it was a matter for careful thought; the ships could easily be damaged in such an operation; there were several disadvantages in co-operating with Bushire; and that, although a landing was a good idea in principle, the Dutch had insufficient soldiers to bring it to a successful conclusion. Houting, however, was of the opinion that a landing was absolutely necessary to put an end to Muhannā. On the following day, 19 September, therefore, he sent his Assistant, Christian Boucher, to negotiate with the Shaikh of Bushire on a plan for proceeding.

Boucher returned on 21 September and the attack was delayed until 7 October when the Bushire squadron would arrive. The squadron consisted of three gallivats and some other vessels, and was to be escorted by the two Dutch ships (*Kronenburg* and *Walcheren*, both giants of 160 ft overall) and three gallivats.<sup>102</sup>

The force left Khark on 9 October commanded by the Captain of the *Walcheren*, Hans Cornelissen, except for the Bushire gallivats which were commanded by the Shaikh himself. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon they anchored under Kharku. They found that the island was fortified with artillery positions, ramparts of sand within wooden box-work, some artillery behind sand-filled basketry and with a group of gallivats drawn up on the beach. The Dutch began by firing with all their weaponry on the gallivats and the island itself: with the vessels at their disposal that was all they could accomplish.<sup>103</sup> Within a few days all of Mīr Muhannā's vessels were holed, and one gallivat was set on fire. On 12 October a force was landed consisting of 500 soldiers from Bushire, 8 or 9 Dutch gunners with three artillery pieces, and some European military. This force captured two outposts on Kharku but was then attacked from the rear and on the flank by Muhannā's cavalry. The Bushire soldiers fled after having lost 150 men; the Dutch force became disordered during a fighting retreat when their commanding officer was killed on the beach near the *Kronenburg*'s launch. After that the two big ships, which had not suffered any significant damage, retired to Khark. The Bushire ships also withdrew to recuperate but could not remain on the Khark anchorage because of the increasing southerly wind: the Bushire Shaikh was also demanding payment from the Dutch for his ships and men.<sup>104</sup> In his report Cornelissen records that he received no orders from Houting other than by word of mouth to be alert: he wanted to keep his ships at Khark until help arrived from Karīm Khān.<sup>105</sup>

The Dutch waited for help to come from Karīm Khān, as promised, but when it failed to arrive decided to let the *Walcheren* depart two days later. Mīr Muhannā had kept quiet up to that point and the Dutch had been able to recruit some local soldiers to compensate for their losses. The southerly wind obliged the two big ships to seek

shelter at Bandar Rīq and, on their return Buschman (still on board one of them) and Cornelissen heard that their two gallivats had been captured by Muhannā on 11 December 1765. The Mīr's strength had recovered to the point of now having four gallivats and five batils,<sup>106</sup> and concern was rising because his small privateering ships were already sailing almost daily around Khark so that no vessel could land there except at great risk. In an attempt to stop these activities the two big ships were cruising out to sea and their land communications were broken off. In a long letter Buschman tried to persuade Houting to evacuate the establishment altogether, because it could not be maintained, and to carry away everything of value which could be transported - such as money, spices and papers - on one of the ships. Houting could not decide what to do but it was impossible, in any event, to carry the valuables off because Mīr Muhannā's batils blockaded Khark and the big ships could not approach because of the changeable winds.

It was then decided to put forward proposals for peace and the return of the gallivats; the Assistant Resident, Christian Boucher, and the Interpreter were sent to Kharku to hear what Muhannā would demand in the light of the contract concluded with his father, Mīr Nāṣir, which was a part cause of the war and of Muhannā's turbulent behaviour, although he had renounced it four years previously on the conclusion of peace. Since then he had repeatedly told the Dutch that he was ready to make peace if they paid him 1,000 Tomans or Rs 20,000 a year. The Dutch could not accept such an exorbitant claim but Muhannā was unwilling to listen to any other proposal.<sup>107</sup>

Muhannā ferried his soldiers in batils with their munitions to the north bay of Khark from 17 to 20 December. The guns of the big ships fired on them to the extent that they could see them and continued to do so on 22-23 December with both artillery and small arms.<sup>108</sup> Muhannā gained a firm footing in the Armenian houses outside the town (see the Atlas, Map no. 19) and, a few days later, attacked and took the outer batteries: they had brought the assault ladders with them for this purpose.

There was great consternation among both Europeans and natives and Houting was forced to raise the white flag the next day (30 December) to start negotiations, because Muhannā now outflanked him with artillery from the bastions as well as small arms from the houses. Communications between the fortress and the big ships were almost broken by Muhannā's gallivats and batils, so that the Dutch could not save any cash or merchandise other than what was already on the *Walcheren*.<sup>109</sup> At one o'clock in the afternoon a small boat brought a letter from the Resident, Houting, to the *Walcheren*, in which he informed Buschman that Muhannā and his people had overpowered the outer fortress during the night; with the other Europeans Houting was now in the inner fortress. The boat also brought 36 fugitives, among them the native chief of Khark who said that it was now impossible to escape from Khark, and that Mīr Muhannā would undoubtedly attack the big ships as well - he had 50-60 ships ready, great and small. In the evening they saw a ship flying the Kharku flag approaching and the fugitives claimed that Mīr Muhannā was on board. No shots from the fortress guard were heard that evening and, for the Dutch, this did not bode well.<sup>110</sup>

On New Year's Day 1766 the Dutch on board the two big ships saw continuous movement of people in and out of the fortress, whose barrier was wide open, and no guards were visible. They ran up flags and each fired a shot, but there was no response. At 9 o'clock Cornelissen, the Captain of the *Walcheren* went on board the *Kronenburg* to discuss what to do and all agreed that, with Mīr Muhannā's ship right under the fortress and near the beach, the people on Khark could not give them any information. They fired two more shots but saw no movement, nor anything to indicate that the Dutch were still in the fortress. Finally, a ships' council was held and the decision taken to depart, so as not to put the ships in danger. While making the ships ready they fired another shot but saw no Europeans and the situation remained as before. They therefore raised anchor at 3 o'clock and sailed away to Bandar Abbas,<sup>111</sup> where they arrived on 11 January and endeavoured to sell their cargoes there. A certain Meijer, the first mate of a Dutch ship, arrived while they were there

and told them that the fortress had fallen on 1 January in the early evening and that he, with Houting and the few surviving Europeans, had been held prisoner for three days. Mīr Muhannā had visited them in prison and then given them all their freedom, sending them with two vessels to Kangun.<sup>112</sup> On the way to Kangun, Houting forced the *nakhoda* of his boat to go instead to Bushire, while the other boat continued to Kangun. Houting stayed with his people at Bushire for 6 months, in full confidence and daily expectation that Šādiq Khān would retake Khark and deliver it, together with all their other properties, into their hands again. But after 6 months of his expectations failing to materialise, Houting left Bushire on 21 June aboard a Dutch ship for Surat<sup>113</sup> (A full account of the fall of Khark can be seen in Houting's report, written by him in Surat, which is at Appendix 17). In the early part of this period, the letter brought by Meijer from Houting asked the ships to return to pick him and the others up, but this was impossible because the season had changed and the NW winds ruled out such a voyage.<sup>114</sup>

Shaikh 'Abdallāh of the Banū Ma'īn tribe met Buschman in Bandar Abbas and handed him a letter to the Governor General in Batavia, inviting the Dutch to settle in Hormuz.<sup>115</sup> This was not the first time that Shaikh 'Abdallāh had invited the Dutch to Hormuz: he had given a similar letter to a Dutch Captain on 8 January 1765<sup>116</sup> (see Appendices 18 and 19). The Resident, Houting, who had left Rs 800,000 in the fortress together with merchandise, provisions and ammunition to an astonishing value, travelled with 60 others from Bushire to Bandar Abbas, and from there to India. A number of the merchants arrived in Basrah and they, too, had been robbed of everything.<sup>117</sup>

On hearing of the fall of Khark, Karīm Khān sent 3-4,000 soldiers under his brother's command to the neighbourhood of Bandar Rīq, where they killed numbers of Mīr Muhannā's men, enslaved many families and captured quantities of cattle. The Shaikh of Bushire, Sa'dūn, recruited 500 soldiers and sent for his brother, the ruler of Bahrain, who arrived with 800 men, a ship and four gallivats: with the naval elements

from Bushire these made a sufficient force to make a landing on Khark. Shaikh Sa'dūn said that Karīm Khān would come with a large army to destroy Mīr Muhannā and give the island back to the Dutch.<sup>118</sup> The Dutch, however, never thought in terms of re-opening their establishment on Khark island, or any other place in the Gulf, in spite of many invitations to do so.<sup>119</sup>

#### **4.9 Conclusions on the cessation of trading at Bandar Rīq and Khark island**

**Bandar Rīq** There were several factors which, directly or indirectly, affected trading at Bandar Rīq. One was the high rate of expenditure incurred. This included payment to Mīr Muhannā for customs dues, contrary to the agreement; the heavy cost of constructing the Company house at Bandar Rīq; and the losses sustained by Wood when he was forced from Bandar Rīq.

Extra costs arose in respect of the English trade, for which the provision of support was a crucial consideration. The Dutch would have absorbed all of the trade of Bandar Rīq unless the English East India Company built a defensible house there<sup>120</sup>, and the authorities at Bombay postponed a decision on resettling a factory at Bandar Rīq until they could send suitable vessels into the Gulf to facilitate and support such an undertaking.<sup>121</sup> Wood suggested establishing a secure house or small fort at Bandar Rīq, but was not authorised to do so.<sup>122</sup> He also suggested an adequate force in the Gulf, such as the *Swallow*, with 200 able men and a couple of properly manned gallivats, to patrol in front of Bandar Rīq so that the Arabs could see that the English had the power to retaliate and to carry out their policies in the face of any opposition.<sup>123</sup>

Wood disregarded his orders from the Governor of Bombay to

follow the instructions hereafter mentioned and all such others as you shall from time to time receive from us, or the agent and council at Gombroon who have our directions to give you the best advice and assistance whenever necessary.<sup>124</sup>

Wood, instead, followed the instructions of Shaw, the Agent at Basrah, who did not want to have another trading centre taking part of the trade going to Basrah and so reducing the percentage for himself. From the beginning of the Bandar Rīq operation, therefore, he was advising Wood to close the factory there and move to Bushire.

The most important of the factors, however, was probably the 'commotions' - the main cause of the English settlement's withdrawal from Bandar Rīq. After leaving Bandar Rīq, Wood wrote to Douglas about it 'which I still believe to be by far the most proper part of the Gulf to settle in, but even there (while the Kingdom of Persia continues in this state of confusion and anarchy) I can't pretend to give your Honble Co any great hopes of advantage'.<sup>125</sup> As a result of the commotions there was a near cessation of trading caused by the merchants fearing to go there because of the unsafe routes by land; it became impossible to unload big ships there, and bad debts and withheld payments became commonplace.

**Khark island**            The Dutch did not find it economically worthwhile to maintain themselves on the island because its revenues were almost nothing. The Dutch Company operated in such a way that it could be defrauded: the three successive Residents left there with fortunes stolen, without much doubt, from the Company. Whenever a cargo of spices arrived from Batavia the Resident in Khark, who was also the leading merchant, would buy the whole cargo on his own account, and then charge the Company for the expenses of its sale. He would next sell the cargo in small parcels at 30%, and sometimes 50%, profit. The value of the cargo would be about Rs 70,000 and such a shipment would arrive twice a year. The Resident was able, in this way, to make himself very rich.

The garrison, also, was badly managed: the soldiers were very good but were commanded by inept officers, as can be judged from the last engagement with Mīr Muhannā.<sup>126</sup> Mīr Muhannā's expulsion of the garrison of the Dutch fortress and its



officers from Khark, and his seizure of booty on that occasion, amounting to several million Guilders, weakened the Dutch position irreparably.<sup>127</sup>

The main cause of the closure of the Dutch establishment on Khark island, however, was that the Dutch forces were caught up in the 'commotion' and their Residents became involved in local politics. With the departure of the Dutch, the English were now left without any significant foreign rival in the Persian Gulf.

Having brought consideration of Bandar Abbas, Bandar Rīq and Khark to much the same period we should now return to Bandar Abbas, where trade had declined in 1761 to such an extent that an immediate order was given to Alexander Douglas to move the English factory to Bushire on a trial basis.

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- <sup>19</sup> John Gordon Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908-15), vol.1, pp.129-30.
- <sup>20</sup> India Office Library and Records (IOR), Gombroon Diary vol.8 (G/29/8), Report

dated 30 July 1754; *Sel. SP*, pp.90-1.

<sup>21</sup> VOC 2864, pp.7-9.

<sup>22</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 30 July 1754.

<sup>23</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 4 January 1756.

<sup>24</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.357.

<sup>25</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 4 January 1756; G/29/10, Report dated 5 August 1756.

<sup>26</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 2 December 1755.

<sup>27</sup> Saldanha, *Sel. SP*, p.93.

<sup>28</sup> VOC 2864, pp.10-11; IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 30 July 1754.

<sup>29</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 6-7 April 1755.

<sup>30</sup> VOC 2864, p.16.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.33-4; IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 1 February 1755.

<sup>32</sup> VOC 2885, Khark, Part 3, pp.10-11.

<sup>33</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 24 September 1754.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 15 October 1754.

<sup>35</sup> VOC 2864, pp.35-6.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Reports dated 18 October and 23 December 1754.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Reports dated 22 January, 1 February and 6 March 1755; G/29/9, Report dated 22 July 1755.

<sup>39</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 9 April 1755.

<sup>40</sup> ARA, VOC 2864, pp.42-3.

<sup>41</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 9 April 1755.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 9 April 1755.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Report dated 11 April 1755.

<sup>45</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Reports dated 9 August, 25 August, 23 September and 2 December 1755: and 24 February and 26 May 1756; Saldanha, *Sel. SP*, pp.94-102.

<sup>46</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 23 April 1756.

<sup>47</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 24 July 1756; G/29/10, Report dated 5 August 1756.

<sup>48</sup> ARA, VOC 2937, Report on the pearl fisheries in the Gulf (Khark section), pp. 33-40.

- <sup>49</sup> Ives, *Voyage*, pp.214-15.
- <sup>50</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.361.
- <sup>51</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 24 July 1756.
- <sup>52</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Report dated 5 August 1756.
- <sup>53</sup> ARA, VOC 2885, Khark, Part 1, pp.6-7.
- <sup>54</sup> ARA, VOC 2909, Khark, p.55; Ibid., 2937, p.29; Ibid., 2968, p.29; Ibid., 2996, pp.20-2; Ibid., 3027, pp.20-1; Ibid., 3064 (Khark Part I), pp.50-5.
- <sup>55</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Reports dated 29 June and 21 July 1756.
- <sup>56</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.363.
- <sup>57</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Reports dated 5 August and 20 October 1756.
- <sup>58</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Reports dated 21 and 24 July 1756; G/29/10, Reports dated 2 and 9 September 1756.
- <sup>59</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Reports dated 21 July and 18 November 1756.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Report dated 17 July 1756.
- <sup>62</sup> IOR, G/29/9, Report dated 24 July 1756.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., Report dated 21 April 1756; G/29/10, Reports dated 17 July and 14 September 1756.
- <sup>64</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Report dated 18 November 1756.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., Reports dated 18 November and 7 December 1756.
- <sup>67</sup> ARA, VOC 2909, Khark, pp.11-12.
- <sup>68</sup> ARA, VOC 2937, Khark, pp.5-8.
- <sup>69</sup> ARA, VOC 2968, Khark part 1, pp.17-18.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.; Gamron part 2, pp.13-15, letter dated 1 May 1759 from Gerrit Aansorgh, Resident in Gamron, to the Batavia High Government.
- <sup>71</sup> ARA, VOC 2996, Kharg, 30 November 1759, p.15.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp.6-12, Report dated 30 November 1759 by Kniphausen and van der Hulst.
- <sup>73</sup> ARA, VOC 3027, Khark part 1, pp.3-4.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., Khark part 2, p.6, Report by van der Hulst and Buschman.
- <sup>75</sup> ARA, VOC 3064, pp.26-7.
- <sup>76</sup> ARA, VOC 3092, Khark part 1, p.59, Report dated 21 August 1762 by van der Hulst and Buschman.

- <sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.15, Report dated 19 October 1762 by van der Hulst and Buschman.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.43.
- <sup>79</sup> ARA, VOC 1016, 27 May 1762, p.99; VOC 3092, 4 November 1762, pp.65-6.
- <sup>80</sup> Carsten Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: S.J. Baalde, 1774), vol.2, p.173. (in French)
- <sup>81</sup> ARA, VOC 3092, Khark part 1, pp.51,53.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid., p.43.
- <sup>83</sup> ARA, VOC 3092, Khark part 2, pp.9-10, Report dated February 16 by van der Hulst and Buschman.
- <sup>84</sup> ARA, VOC 3123, Khark 1, p.4, Report dated 8 May 1763 by Buschman.
- <sup>85</sup> ARA, VOC 3156, Khark part 2, pp.37-8, Report dated 5 October 1763 by Buschman; IOR, Bushire Residency Records, R/15/1/1, pp.120,409; Bombay Archives (BA), Basrah Diary no. 194, p.76.
- <sup>86</sup> ARA, VOC 3184, pp.9 *et seq.*, Report dated 1 May 1765 by Buschman.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> ARA, VOC 3184, pp.9 *et seq.*, Report dated 1 May 1765 by Buschman.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid. and Khark part 3, 65-70.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup> ARA, VOC 3184, pp.9 *et seq.*
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid.; Slot, *Arabs*, pp.365-6.
- <sup>102</sup> ARA, VOC 3184, pp.9 *et seq.*
- <sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp.51 *et seq.*, Report of the Captain of the *Walcheren*, Hans Cornelissen.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp.9 *et seq.*
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp.51 *et seq.*

- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp.9 *et seq.*
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp.51 *et seq.*
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp.9 *et seq.*
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp.51 *et seq.*
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp.31,51 *et seq.*
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp.31,33.
- <sup>113</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.169,177.
- <sup>114</sup> ARA, VOC 3184, pp.31,33.
- <sup>115</sup> ARA, VOC 3156, pp.48-51.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp.54-5.
- <sup>117</sup> Archives of the Dutch Embassy in Turkey, Docs. 1 and 2, Letters received by the Dutch Consul-General in Aleppo, Nicolo van Maseyk, from Monsignor Carlo, Bishop of Malabar, written in Basrah, 25 January and 20 March 1766.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., Doc 2.
- <sup>119</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.370.
- <sup>120</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Report dated 7 December 1756.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid., Report dated 14 March 1757.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., Report dated 5 December 1756.
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>124</sup> IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 23 December 1754.
- <sup>125</sup> IOR, G/29/10, Report dated 5 December 1756.
- <sup>126</sup> Archives of the Dutch Embassy in Turkey, Doc. 3, Letter of the Dutch Council in Aleppo to the Ambassador in Turkey, January 1766.
- <sup>127</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.369.

## CHAPTER 5

### BUSHIRE IN TURMOIL

(1762-1769)

#### 5.0 Introduction

Bandar Abbas suffered a setback on Ja'far Khān's return as Governor in 1761-2, when he again set about oppressing both the local people and the English. As discussed in Chapter 3, the English Agent had been instructed by the Presidency to consider places where their factory might be relocated, other than Hormuz. He reported in December 1761 to the Presidency that the only place where trade was being carried on between Bandar Abbas and Basrah was Bushire.<sup>1</sup> An agreement to allow the English to begin trading there was reached in 1762, and trading began in 1763. The aim of this chapter is to trace the fortunes of the English there, and to compare these with the English experience in Bandar Abbas and Bandar Rīq.

#### 5.1 Geographical background

Bushire lay on a peninsula connected to the mainland by 2½ miles of marshy land which was very difficult to cross during the rainy season. It was surrounded by a wall mounting some good cannon. To the north of the town, just under two miles away, Deira creek was an anchorage where ships drawing up to 20 ft could anchor, while larger ships could anchor 4¼ miles away<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 5.1 and the Atlas, Map nos. 20, 25, 43, 48). After his visit to the Gulf in 1764, Niebuhr recorded that, although Bushire was the port for Shiraz, it was in fact an Arab colony: the town's most important families were those of the three Arab tribes - Za'āb, Āl Bū Mahair and Maṭārīsh.<sup>3</sup> Kniphausen's report of 1756 records that to the east of Bushire there was a long coastal area called Dashtistān, inhabited by Persian peasantry who had no

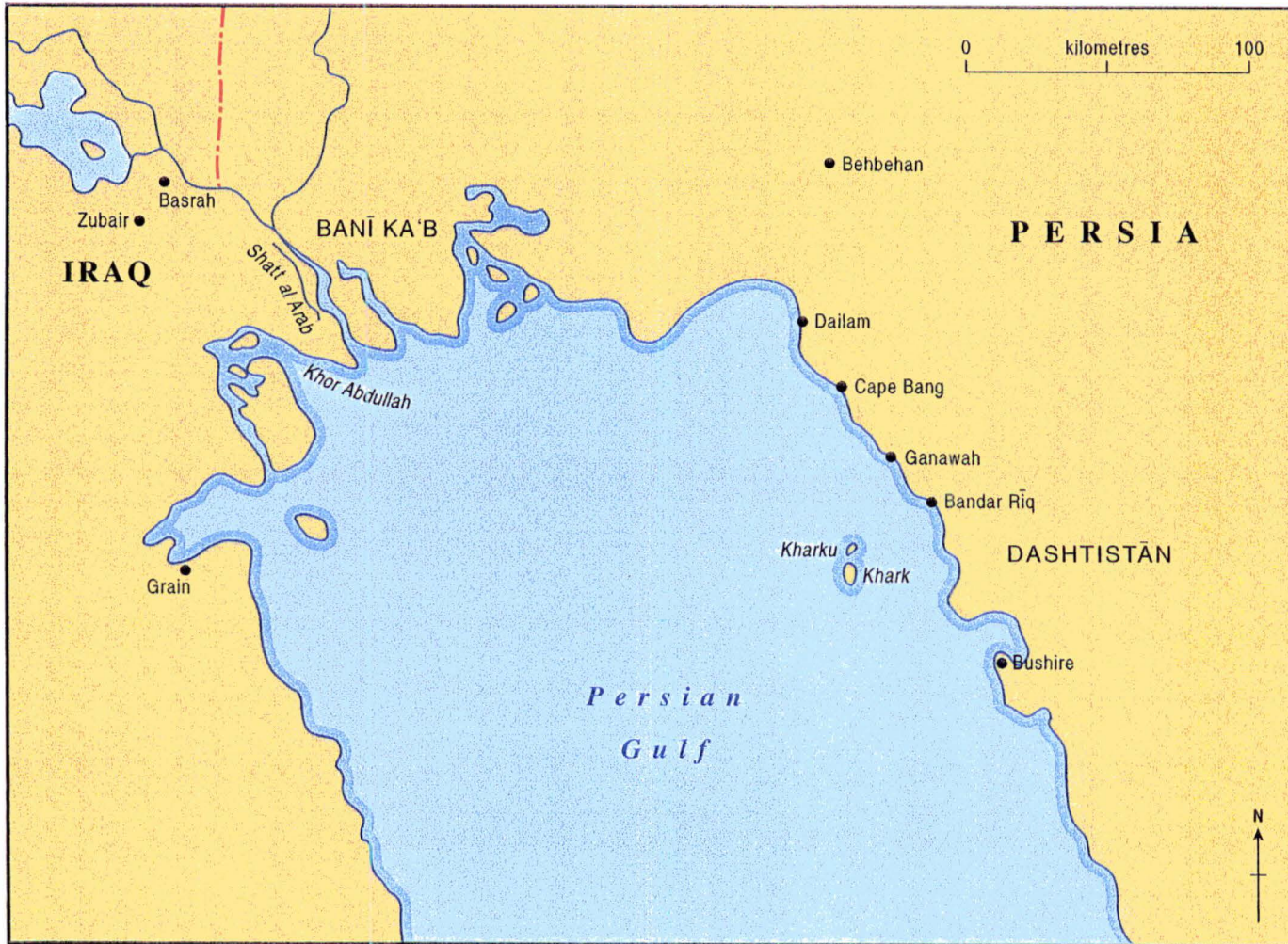


Figure 5.1 The Northern Persian Gulf



contact with the outside world. His report also mentions some villages on the coast: Niebuhr's map, of about the same period, gives some additional names<sup>4</sup> (see the Atlas, Map no. 17). To the west lay Bandar Rīq, and to the north mountain ranges.

William Monteith carried out a survey of the trading route from Bushire to Shiraz in 1820, when he calculated the total distance as 165 miles. To illustrate that shipping was only one of the transportation problems facing the merchants of even that late date, the main features of the route are given here. During its first six miles the route followed a dry river bed (which, of course, would flow after rains). There followed 12 miles of cultivated land before the mountains were reached, when the track became stony for 13 miles and the springs offered clear water. Rising steeply, partly in a river bed, the track continued very rough and rocky until achieving a pass 1½ miles in length, where the going was very steep and difficult. Then came a cultivated but stony valley for about five miles, and the cultivation continued alongside a difficult ascent to a pass 2½ miles long, where only one mule at a time could pass. Nine miles beyond this, the track followed a cultivated valley with mountains rising 2,000 feet on either side for five miles, before coming to another pass (the bed of a 'torrent') where it was stony and narrow for three miles. The valley called Cazaroon came next - well provided with vegetation, but the track was still stony for nine miles through the valley. At the foot of the next mountain range a causeway over a finger of a salt lake was crossed before the track traversed 27 miles of a range of low hills, reaching a large river, and following a valley for 22 miles. A further range of hills stretching 20 miles came next and another bed, dry at the time, of a 'torrent' was crossed on a bridge. From there Shiraz lay only six miles further on, surrounded by its suburbs<sup>5</sup> (see the Atlas, Map no. 38, and Figure 4.1).

## **5.2 The English Settlement at Bushire**

In April 1761, Alexander Douglas, the East India Company Agent at Gombroon (Bandar Abbas), was directed by his superiors to visit Bushire to give his opinion on a

suitable place for a settlement, and recorded that the only port between Gombroon and Basrah where any trade was being carried on was Bushire. Caravans (*qāfilas*) took 12 days between Bushire and Shiraz, and 20 to Isfahan: Bushire was full of inland merchants who seemed to be at complete liberty to buy, sell or export their goods as they thought best, without the slightest impediment. Genuine trading seemed to be going on.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch Company had settled at Bushire at the invitation of the Persian central government in 1737, arriving there with the *Bouche*, a Company-owned *trankey*. Many ships from all over the Gulf were coming to Bushire to load goods and the local merchants concluded a contract governing the sale of merchandise with the Dutch<sup>7</sup> (see Appendix 20 for sales figures). The Dutch settlement at Bushire was later closed (the records do not reveal the date) but in 1747 the Dutch re-established their settlement. It, too, was closed down at an unknown date.<sup>8</sup> The English, for their part, had planned to set up an establishment in Bushire as early as 1727.<sup>9</sup>

Given the disturbances in the eastern provinces of Persia around Gombroon, the English were continually on the search for an alternative location and had surveyed most of the islands in the Gulf, but found them unsuitable for the establishment of a factory. Douglas recalled the report on Bushire by Wood (see Chapter 4.4) in 1755 and now, in December 1761, was able to report to the Presidency that Bushire was full of merchants plying their goods to Isfahan and Shiraz, and that Shaikh Sa'dūn, the Shaikh of Bushire, was keen for the English to settle there. He was reported to be of excellent character and unlikely to be influenced by the Dutch, as well as being a sworn enemy of Mīr Muhannā.<sup>10</sup> Orders were sent from the Presidency on 29 March 1762 that the Bushire market be given a one-year trial before any commitment was made, and that either Douglas or Dymoke Lyster (Assistant Agent in Basrah) should undertake the trial.<sup>11</sup>

In mid-1762, Douglas went to Bushire where he met the Shaikh, who made promises that the Company's goods would be free from all government duties and that nobody

at all would have anything to pay.<sup>12</sup> The President and the Council at Bombay charged William Andrew Price, Counsellor to the Company, with establishing a Residency at Bushire, in order, especially, to introduce the sale of woollen goods into Persia.<sup>13</sup> Price arrived there from Bombay on 6 April 1763 on board the *Tartar*, only to learn that the Shaikh and his brother had both moved against Mīr Muhannā of Bandar Rīq. The next day the Shaikh's son, with some of the principal people of the place, went on board and invited Price to come ashore, saying that his father was very keen for the East India Company to have a factory at Bushire and that he, the son, was invested with full authority to settle the terms with Price. Accompanying the *Tartar* were two trankeys full of the Company's goods from Gombroon and, on the evening of the 8th, a number of Persian merchants came to visit Price on board the *Tartar*: some came from Isfahan and Shiraz, the rest from Bushire.

On the following day the Shaikh's son entered into negotiations with Price to settle all the points of the agreement, and the negotiations lasted several days.<sup>14</sup> He admitted to Price that he could not agree to certain articles of the agreement, particularly the one granting the Company exclusive trading rights in woollen goods, without the Shaikh's consent. On 11 April, therefore, the Company's Linguist, Stephen Hermit, set out for Shaikh Sa'dūn's camp before Bandar Rīq with a suitable letter (see Appendix 21) and a copy of the articles proposed. Five days later he returned and told Price that, although Shaikh Sa'dūn had stated objections to some of the articles, especially the 2nd and 6th, he at length signed the agreement. He wrote a letter of confirmation to Price with a rider to only the 2nd article, providing that, as some of the Bushire merchants had gone to Jeddah and other ports and might well bring back broadcloth, it was not to enter into effect for four months from the date of the agreement.<sup>15</sup>

The detailed agreement (see Appendix 22) made between the Company and Shaikh Sa'dūn, the Shaikh of Bushire, allowed the English to establish a settlement there. The Shaikh was to be paid Rs (*rupees*) 1,000 annually for providing warehousing and living accommodation in buildings belonging to his brother Shaikh Nāṣir, and the

Residency, in line with the Company's normal practice in support of its settlements, was to levy a customs duty of 3% on all goods imported or exported by those trading under the Company's protection, whether transacted directly through the Resident or not. The Shaikh was to levy his own duties on the Persian merchants trading with the English.<sup>16</sup>

On 29 March 1763 Price was empowered by the President and Council in Bombay to appoint Benjamin Jervis as Resident at Bushire and advised him of his instructions: knowing that a large caravan was expected shortly from Shiraz, Price landed 385 bales of broadcloth, 176 bales of *perpets* and four chests of *tabbies* and satins, thought to be the appropriate materials suitable for the Persian market, and recommended Jervis to dispose of these at the price such materials usually fetched at Gombroon. Jervis was to invite the merchants from up-country, in order to discourage the Dutch at Khark and any others from bringing woollens into the Gulf and so lowering the prices. As the money realised would be paid in different currencies, of both gold and silver, a *shroff* would be necessary to prevent losses and Jervis was therefore authorised to appoint one. To encourage the shroff's commitment and honesty he was to receive a shroffage (money-dealer's commission) of ½%.

Jervis was to levy the agreed 3% duty on all goods imported or exported by those trading under the East India Company's protection, and hold the amount collected to its credit. In order to prevent any fraud or trickery in that respect he was to be guided by the 10th article of the agreement made with Shaikh Sa'dūn, whereby an account was to be rendered to the Resident if any Bushire merchants bought goods from an English-protected person, other than from the factory. For that purpose, one of the Resident's staff would attend at the weighing and delivery of all goods sold in that way. Furthermore, because article 12 of the agreement did not permit any of the Shaikh's subjects to purchase goods from English vessels in the roads, and the collection of the Company's customs dues depended upon a proper attention to these two articles, Jervis was to take care that they were duly enforced at all times. The Presi-

dent and Council in Bombay permitted Jervis a retainer of 1% on all English trade and he was to levy it accordingly, keeping half of it for himself with the other being posted to the credit of the Agent in Basrah,<sup>17</sup> where the factory had already been established in June 1640 (see Chapter 6).

In order to protect the Company's goods and to lend some prestige to its affairs, Price landed an artillery officer, five artillerymen and six soldiers. He also ordered Jervis to employ Stephen Hermit, lately the Linguist at Gombroon, in the same capacity at Bushire: the Shaikh had asked Price for an account to be rendered to him of all the goods bought or sold by the English so that he could levy his own duties, as appropriate, from the Persian merchants. Price directed the Linguist at Carmania (modern Kirmān) to send the wool there to Bushire in readiness.<sup>18</sup>

Price now set out to renew the grant of the Company's former privileges in the Kingdom of Persia: he had already received a request from the Persians for the Company to keep a cruiser in the Gulf to defend Bushire against Mīr Muhannā's ambitions, for which they would pay Rs 20,000 annually.<sup>19</sup> Price had to send the Linguist to Shiraz with a present to Šādiq Khān, in return for one sent from him, and thought that it might offer a suitable opportunity for obtaining the reinstatement of the Company's former privileges. The Linguist was therefore instructed to make a request for restitution: he set off for Shiraz and returned a month later with the grants obtained from Šādiq Khān. One copy, in Persian, was sent to Jervis by the Linguist and another to Šādiq's brother, Karīm Khān, for him to confirm and seal before sending it to Bushire (see Appendix 23 for Karīm Khān's *faramān*). The Linguist told Jervis that Šādiq Khān was anxious that the Company should have a guard ship stationed at Bushire, for the expenses of which he agreed to pay Rs 22,000 annually; the payment to be made from assignment of the customs or other revenues of Bushire port.<sup>20</sup>

From September 1763 there was at least one caravan from Shiraz to Bushire every month, buying large quantities of broadcloth, perpets and copper, but Bushire's

prosperity took off from January 1764 when caravans began arriving not only from Shiraz, but also from other parts of Persia.<sup>21</sup> The results of the trial were apparently successful and the new Residency of Bushire was constituted subordinate to the Agency at Basrah.<sup>22</sup> The decision to establish a settlement at Bushire was taken unilaterally by Bombay, and lacked the approval of the Court of Directors in London. Although the Court had been informed about the sale of woollens at Bushire, with which they were content, they expressed alarm over the settlement in their Commands of 2 June 1764:

We cannot help being alarmed at a Settlement at Bushire on that shore in these precarious Times, and especially in the Place now mentioned, where we apprehend there is much more Risque than even at Gombroon where the Company has suffered so much.<sup>23</sup>

The Court expressed readiness to supply the markets of Shiraz and Isfahan with woollens but instructed that no expense be incurred in the erection of any buildings. The Resident would have to be satisfied with renting the necessary accommodation until a state of tranquillity existed in the region.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.3 English neutrality during the 'Commotion'

Karīm Khān was trying to assemble forces to send against Mīr Muhannā, who had, to a large extent, put an end to the Bushire trade from the end of March 1764, since when no caravan had ventured there. There was scarcely any money in the town and Jervis had sold goods on the Company's account to the value of only Rs 6,818 in the succeeding four-month period. In June 1764 Şādiq Khān sent the Company a proposal asking for assistance against Mīr Muhannā,<sup>25</sup> and Karīm Khān declared that he himself would move against the Mīr in November or December. He requested the President and Council in Bombay to help him with a vessel or two to prevent Mīr Muhannā escaping by sea in his *gallivats*, and offered to assign the Company an annual sum of Rs 40,000 for two cruisers or 20,000 for one, to be stationed in the Gulf for the protection of trade. He also offered to make the town and government of Bandar Rīq over to the Company.<sup>26</sup> The Governor and Council in Bombay rejected Karīm Khān's proposal and wrote to Jervis on 4 December 1764:

We cannot at present accept Carim Cauns Proposal for stationing a Vessel or two constantly in the Gulph for the Protection of the Trade but if at any time you think it essential for our Hon'ble Masters Interest to assist him with one occasionally we permit thereof provided the same does not interfere with transporting goods to Bussora or other more material Services of the Companys.<sup>27</sup>

The English at Bushire acted in a neutral manner until July 1764 when Captain Herbert Sutherland traded with Bandar Rīq; Karīm Khān was disgusted by this and deemed it an actual breach of friendship. The Agent at Basrah, Peter Elwin Wrench, wrote to Jervis saying that the English response should be to the effect that although the Khān regarded it as a breach of friendship to trade with Mīr Muhannā, the English knew of no articles in treaties subsisting between them and the Khān or Shaikh Sa'dūn which forbade the English from having such trade.<sup>28</sup> Peter Wrench, in his correspondence with Jervis, directed that a posture of neutrality be maintained in the dispute between Karīm Khān and Mīr Muhannā, arguing:

... if we openly declare against Meermanah and the Caun should retire with his Army without Reducing him but should even force him to fly to some of the Islands for shelter, we should find a troublesome Neighbour to us hereafter, with whom the Companys Property might be liable to Run no small risk when at Bushire. We therefore think it would be good Policy till the orders arrive from Bombay in Consequence of the Cauns Proposals with Regard to Bunderick that you endeavour to act as Neutral a part as possible in their Disputes.<sup>29</sup>

Jervis issued an order forbidding Sutherland from going to Bandar Rīq,<sup>30</sup> but the English were in a very difficult situation between Karīm Khān's demands and Mīr Muhannā's hostility. They had already suffered loss at the Mīr's hands. In October 1764 he sent a party of men to plunder the adjacent villages to Bushire and, among other booty, they took four of the Company's water buffalo and cut off the waterman's ears. Wrench wrote to Mīr Muhannā to restore the cattle and he immediately returned two.<sup>31</sup> Mīr Muhannā had been a great obstacle to the Bushire trade and at the beginning of 1765 the English also suffered losses in their customs duties by goods being bought and sold on board ships in Bushire harbour. Caravans were detained for many days by Mīr Muhannā's forces lying in wait for them on the road between Bushire and Shiraz: in April 1765, his people carried off a small caravan bound from Bushire to Shiraz valued at about Rs 40,000. The interruption in

the Bushire trade caused by Muhannā made specie very scarce and prevented many inland merchants from going to Bushire. There were complaints from the merchants of the poor state of the markets inland, and of the great shortage of money. The carriage of goods and merchandise from Bushire to Shiraz, because of the dangers on the road, was raised to Rs 40.44 per Tabrizi *maund*, having previously been Rs 24.20.<sup>32</sup>

As far as Karīm Khān was concerned, the situation was both more important and more complicated. The Linguist returned to Bushire from Karīm Khān's camp on 13 November 1764 but, instead of obtaining the due confirmation of Şādiq Khān's grant, as he had advised Jervis by letter a few months before, he brought with him a set of extraordinary grants quite contrary to the instructions Jervis had given him.

Jervis had directed the Linguist to see if he could obtain a grant covering the island of Bushaib, so that the Company could have the option of moving there if they found that their trade at Bushire was inadequate. As Jervis saw it, not only would there be no additional expense to have such an article included (whether it was later accepted or not) but it would be the best way of pressuring the Shaikh of Bushire to carry out his agreement with the English, for fear that the Company might remove their settlement to Bushaib and thereby lose him the great advantage he enjoyed from their having a factory at Bushire. The Linguist, however, without any regard to that article and several others in Jervis' instructions to him had not obtained a single order relating to Bushire. On the contrary, he had all the grants written as if the Company was firmly decided to make a settlement on the island of Bushaib (see the Atlas, Map no. 45): wherever Bushire was mentioned in the grants formerly obtained from Şādiq Khān he had inserted Bushaib. When Jervis demanded to know why the Linguist had acted contrary to his orders, the Linguist pleaded that he had misunderstood them. Now that he saw his error he told Jervis that he would engage himself to get the mistake put right by having the grants properly drawn up without any additional expense, and that he would repay all the costs of his journey.<sup>33</sup>



Karīm Khān, for his part, sent a letter to Jervis in March 1765 saying that the matter should be rectified and that the Company would find him ready to grant whatever they might require. He added that he hoped the English would assist him with a vessel or two against Mīr Muhannā to prevent his escape by sea; he also mentioned that he was marching for Bandar Rīq.<sup>34</sup> Part of the Khān's forces besieged Bandar Rīq, while Shaikh Sa'dūn's fleet from Bushire, together with an English vessel, was supposed to blockade the port of Bandar Rīq. Following the Khān's orders to him, Shaikh Sa'dūn applied to Jervis for the help of the Company's ship *Tartar*: the ship was made ready immediately but Shaikh Sa'dūn delayed so much that it was early on 4 June before they sailed. News then arrived that Mīr Muhannā had left Bandar Rīq on 2 June and had retreated with his gallivats and about 400 men to the island of Kharku.<sup>35</sup>

In October 1765, Karīm Khān proposed that the Company should remove its factory to Bandar Rīq in the hope of persuading the English to assist him. Jervis wrote to Wrench at Basrah<sup>36</sup> who replied with instructions to answer Karīm Khān 'We shall advise our superiors of the offers he has made & when their answer arrives shall acquaint you with their resolutions, till when you are not to solicit him on that subject'.<sup>37</sup> Karīm Khān was so angry that the English would not help him more effectively against Mīr Muhannā that he decided not to receive the Linguist or admit Edward Hercules, the Agent at Shiraz, to an audience.<sup>38</sup>

The Dutch at Khark had declared against Mīr Muhannā (see Chapter 4.8) and had made an offer to Shaikh Sa'dūn to join their forces with his fleet in order to destroy the Mīr. The Shaikh asked Jervis to let the *Tartar* join with him and the Dutch in blockading Mīr Muhannā at Kharku so, on 5 October 1765, the Shaikh's fleet and the *Tartar* sailed for Kharku. With the *Tartar* joining the Shaikh's fleet and the *Yacht* arriving at Bushire, the Shaikh asked Jervis insistently for the loan of the *Yacht* to go and join the augmented fleet lying at Kharku. Wrench, however, wrote to Jervis that he had broken his orders, and told him to return the *Yacht* to Basrah loaded with bar-

ley for the Company's horses; he further ordered him to recall the *Tartar* from Kharku and send it to Bombay with surplus cash amounting to Rs 54,000.<sup>39</sup>

Mīr Muhannā made himself master of the town and Dutch fort at Khark on 1 January 1766 and became quiescent. Zakī Khān, the brother of Karīm Khān, went to Ganawah with 2,000 men and was joined by a considerable body from different shaikhs to attempt the destruction of Mīr Muhannā. Zakī wrote to Jervis asking for the *Tartar* to be sent in support of his attack on Khark island and Jervis again detained the *Tartar*, which was going to Bombay carrying Rs 30,000, the balance of cash in Bushire.<sup>40</sup> Wrench learnt of this and wrote to Jervis:

We Observe you have thought it best to detain the Tartar for the Purposes mentioned therein it is needless for us to say anything more on that Subject, having already given you our sentiments about it, than that it must now be referred to the Governour & Council to judge of this transaction.<sup>41</sup>

In February 1766, and after nearly twelve months had passed, the Linguist had made the Khān a present of more than Rs 5,000 and had brought with him the package of grants relating to Bushaib instead of Bushire.<sup>42</sup> A few days before the Linguist's departure from Shiraz, Karīm Khān sent him a message asking for Jervis to be told that if the Company would give him effective help against Mīr Muhannā, he would very readily grant them whatever privileges they wanted.<sup>43</sup> Jervis maintained his vilification of Muhannā; a practice he continued in a series of letters to Wrench, despite the fact that Muhannā had always professed friendship for the English and had committed no serious breach of the friendship throughout the time they had been settled in Bushire. This fact was clearly pointed out to Jervis by Wrench in a letter from Basrah of 7 July 1766:

We cannot but acquaint you, it is the Presidencys orders to us, not to come to any rupture with Meer Mahanna, unless he should have given sufficient Cause, which hitherto he has not, nay on the contrary, we have some convincing proofs of his inclinations and desire of being upon a good footing with us which ought to be cultivated and which we must recommend to you.<sup>44</sup>

Jervis, in frequently urging that the Company should assist Karīm Khān in the destruction of Mīr Muhannā, had argued that they really had no choice, situated as

they were on the Persian mainland, if they were to maintain their settlement, trading privileges and personal safety. As mentioned before, this would appear to be a valid, logical argument and the power structure in the Company, i.e. the Court, the Presidency and the Agency, had placed Jervis in an invidious position by insisting on neutrality in the conflict between Karīm Khān and Mīr Muhannā.<sup>45</sup> The Court of Directors sent their Commands dated 17 May 1766 on this subject, received in Basrah only on 13 October 1766:

We also direct that our Resident at Bushire do not correspond with Carem Caun or any other Man that may be at the Head of Affairs in that Country, on any matters that may regard obtaining new settlements or Phirmaunds [*faramāns*] for the Company, without leave first obtained from you our Agent and Council.<sup>46</sup>

In the meantime, Jervis had left for Bombay in July 1766 and was succeeded as Resident at Bushire by William Bowyear, until then the Factor. He immediately wrote to Wrench asking for the use of a cruiser for his defence if Mīr Muhannā should attack Bushire. Wrench replied in a letter dated 10 August 1766:

We cannot but apprehend your fears of Meermanna in case he should attack Bushire to be unnecessary from the several instances he has shewn to preserve or rather Cultivate our friendship, morespecially as Mr Jervis who was the only one who offended him, is removed, and an amicable correspondence entered into with him by the Agent, and which we imagine might easily be done by the Resident, nay, we are apprehensive your having a Cruizer might be attended with sev'ral inconveniences unforeseen by you for in the case of the Caun or any of his principal officers coming down they would certainly require her of you for their assistance, and a refusal would lay you under their displeasure, and a Compliance would be breaking thro' the possitive orders of the Presidency, which you have been acquainted are, that we are not to commence hostilities against him unless his Conduct should oblige us, so that you must very seriously consider the affair of detaining one of the Cruizers on their return.<sup>47</sup>

Very shortly after succeeding Jervis as Resident in Bushire, Bowyear began to face difficulties. In the first place, the return of Zakī Khān with his body of troops back to Shiraz from the Bushire area on 20 June 1766 left the surrounding country open to Mīr Muhannā, and the bandits between Bushire and Shiraz who were levying duties on English cloth.<sup>48</sup> Also in June, Shaikh Nāṣir arrived in Bushire. He was the older

brother of Shaikh Sa'dūn and had been Governor of Bushire till Karīm Khān carried him captive up-country about ten years before; he remained a prisoner throughout that time in spite of repeated requests for his freedom. Now released, he acted again as Shaikh of Bushire and began to stir up trouble. The Company's factory was the property of Shaikh Nāṣir, to whom the Company paid rent of Rs 1,000 annually, nearly the full value of the whole house. Being of a fractious nature, however, the Shaikh demanded that Bowyear pay Rs 1,000 more or otherwise leave the factory.<sup>49</sup>

The Ka'b, too, became a problem. They were an Arab tribe living on the eastern bank of the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab whom Karīm Khān had tried to bring under his control in 1756 and 1757, without lasting results.<sup>50</sup> In July 1765 the Ka'b had captured three English ships, the *Sally*, the *Yacht*, and the *Fort William*: the English sent an expedition into the Gulf to reduce the Ka'b to obedience and to exact revenge for the insult.<sup>51</sup> By the beginning of March 1766 Karīm Khān had heard of an English fleet approaching the Gulf (see next paragraph) with orders from the Presidency to chastise the Ka'b for seizing the English ships, and expressed himself very ready to give the Company his help; he would, if necessary, himself march down to the coast with 20,000 men for that purpose, but the Resident had no instructions to deal with him on the subject.<sup>52</sup>

The English fleet arrived at Bushire on 10 March 1766 and began to attack the Ka'b. Karīm Khān, heavily bribed by the Ka'b, intervened by claiming that the Ka'b were his subjects and that he would not tolerate English and Turkish actions against them.<sup>53</sup> Wrench wrote to Bowyear on 20 October 1766 reporting that the Khān had placed the Ka'b under his protection and had ordered the Turks and their 'auxiliaries' (meaning the English) to quit his dominions.<sup>54</sup> Bowyear informed the Presidency and Wrench that Karīm Khān, his largest single buyer, had not made the usual purchases to clothe his army and the merchants, knowing of the Khān's displeasure with the English and fearing the consequences for themselves, were not trading with him.<sup>55</sup> The English

attacks ended in a painful defeat with heavy casualties and the loss of their field artillery.<sup>56</sup>

Wrench had established a rapport with Mīr Muhannā, sending him a letter in January 1766 about the friendship between them, to which the Mīr replied on 21 February:

In good time I received your letter with much satisfaction and comprehended the whole of its contents. In regard to what you are pleased to write of our friendship it subsisted in the time of my Father, and entirely with the English nation. I have therefore always solicited the English to traffic freely and peacefully in my lands, inviting them in friendly terms that this might be effected Captain Sutherland has evinced all the civilities in my power to show him, and that out of regard to friendship, not for love of gain, but the *Balios* (Mr Jervis) of Bushire has returned me opposite treatment, that is, evil for good, enmity for friendship.<sup>57</sup>

Wrench continued these communications until 11 February 1767 when the Presidency put an end to them by issuing orders for him to return to the Presidency and appointing Henry Moore as Agent at Basrah, to be in charge of the Company's affairs in the Gulf.<sup>58</sup> Moore visited Bushire on 23 March 1767 on his way to Basrah, and wrote a letter to Karīm Khān hoping that the disputes might be brought to a speedy conclusion<sup>59</sup> (see Appendix 24). Bowyear, as Resident at Bushire, was controlled by the Agency at Basrah and wrote there for advice when he heard, in February, that Karīm Khān was going to transport six or seven thousand men to Khark and, since the English had a force in the Gulf, he might compel them to help him in the expedition:

As we are obliged to pay a due obedience to all your orders and act only conformable thereto, what answers in cases of such earnest necessity Gentlemen can we give if applied to for our assistance. Reason or Excuses of any kind or all that imagination can suggest will not we believe avail us in so defenceless a situation and at their mercy as we are here. For in case they are resolved we must submit, or by a refusal run the hazard of our persons and the loss of near £60,000 what of the Companys and other Merchants.<sup>60</sup>

As regards the answer Bowyear should give the Khān if he asked for assistance, the Agency replied on 1 March that Bowyear should advise the Agency before giving a full answer.<sup>61</sup> The Agency sent further directions on 17 March 1767:

Notwithstanding our Directions to you under the 1st instant, You are hereby directed not to interfere or carry on any negotiations with the Caun or his ministers, either in regard to the particular affairs of the Chaub [Ka'b] or Meer Mahanna or indeed in regard to any other without our further directions, but in case of application from them, you are in general to refer their application to the Agency and must desire them also to write hither that we may be the better enabled to carry into execution the intentions of the Honble the President and Council.<sup>62</sup>

After succeeding Jervis as Resident at Bushire, Bowyear began reporting to both Wrench and the Presidency that Karīm Khān was 'disgusted' with the English as a result of various irregularities in the previous management of the settlement. Wrench, clearly no friend of Jervis (as evidenced by the tone of the correspondence between them when Jervis resided at Bushire), asked Bowyear to pursue the reasons for Karīm Khān's displeasure. Bowyear therefore put forward various allegations, albeit in a somewhat guarded way, probably conscious of the fact that Jervis was at that time a member of the Council in Bombay and would be privy to all his correspondence. Jervis naturally reacted with denials, explanations, and counter-accusations against Bowyear of fabrication or misjudgement. Possibly because of Jervis' rank and long experience of the Gulf, Bowyear was ordered by Dymoke Lyster, second-in-command at Basrah, in March 1767 to let the matter drop on the instruction of the Presidency. Bowyear, however, conscious that his standing in the Company was being tarnished and that trade was suffering the after-effects of the misdemeanours committed by Jervis for which he, Bowyear, would eventually be held responsible, persisted in his allegations.

Bowyear's tenacity was rewarded when, on 25 April 1767, Henry Moore demanded that he furnish proof of his allegations against Jervis.<sup>63</sup> The allegations made by Bowyear may be summarised as follows:<sup>64</sup>

- i) That Jervis had appointed an agent of his own, Edward Hercules, at Karīm Khān's court in Shiraz and had, without the permission of either the Agency at Basrah or the Presidency, styled Hercules as the Company's Ambassador rather than as his own agent, as he had informed the Company.

- ii) That the title of Ambassador had been used by Hercules on Jervis' instructions to add more substance to their status and enable them to operate their own private business more advantageously.
- iii) That Jervis had utilised the names of bogus merchants in the Company's records to conceal his own purchases from the Company and the trade that resulted.
- iv) That Jervis had extracted the items of cloth from the bales which were most acceptable in the Persian market and diverted them to his private business, thus detracting from the Company's sales.
- v) That Jervis had also undertaken private dealings with Shaikh Sa'dūn and, following a disagreement with the Shaikh about his share of the proceeds, had attempted, through the Court at Shiraz, to have the government of Bushire changed.
- vi) That Jervis had either not informed Karīm Khān that he was subordinate to the Agent at Basrah or, at the very least, had allowed him to think that Jervis was authorised by Bombay to make all decisions relating to Bushire. He had used this distortion of the facts to offer Karīm Khān the use of the Company's fleet, when one was available in the Gulf, to destroy Mīr Muhannā and the Ka'b for a sum of Rs 50,000. Bowyear suspected that Jervis had collected some part of this money by deploying the *Tartar* against Mīr Muhannā when the latter fled from Bandar Rīq to Kharku.

On 25 April 1767 Moore raised several queries about the allegations, which Bowyear answered, and the allegations were submitted to the Presidency but they, in the end, let the matter drop because of Jervis' position as a member of the Board of the Presidency.

The Presidency, the Agent at Basrah and the Ambassador at Shiraz all acted with impartiality in this critical period, but Bowyear acted as he liked. Henry Moore had written a letter to Karīm Khān on his arrival at Bushire (see page 183) and ordered

Bowyear to send it to the Court of Shiraz. Out of his dislike for George Skipp, the Ambassador at Shiraz, Bowyear sent the letter on 25 March 1767 to Ra'is Aḥmad Shāh, a powerful adviser to Karīm Khān, asking him in a separate letter to open a correspondence between them, instead of handing it to Ambassador Skipp, who was recommended by his superiors and furnished with the proper *faramāns*.<sup>65</sup> On the same day, Bowyear replied to a letter of 17 March from Moore warning him not to have any connections with the Persian Government:

Your orders shall be strictly complied with respecting the Caun and his ministers, no one here has any inland Connections or any concerns whatever at Court or the least occasion to correspond with any person, nor was ever any letter wrote from hence.<sup>66</sup>

Moore ordered Skipp on 14 April to go to the Court at Shiraz and open a correspondence with the Khān, ordering also Bowyear to assist him:

Mr Geo. Skipp in consequence of being the person recommended by our Superiors, for to proceed to the Court of Schiras, now takes passage on the Defiance, to whom you are to make known, the state of the Honble Companys Factory under your management, jointly considering on such methods as may appear most eligible to remove the several obstacles and impediments you lie under with respect to commerce or other ways; you are also to afford him all the Assistance in your power.<sup>67</sup>

Skipp, for his part, also wrote a letter on 31 May 1767 to Bowyear telling him not to have relations or any communication with Mīr Muhannā:

This is purposely to inform you that it is absolutely necessary for the Honble Companys Interest as far as relates to the Success of the Negotiations intrusted to my care at this Court that for the present at least, We hold no intercourse or have any Communication with Meer Mahanna, I therefore request you will possitively direct all commanders of Ships bound up the Gulph by no means to touch at Carrack as they shall answer for the same.<sup>68</sup>

To aid the success of Skipp's negotiations, on 6 June Bowyear ordered that the English should avoid having any relations with Mīr Muhannā at that time.<sup>69</sup> Moore did not leave the matter up to Bowyear, however, given his reckless behaviour, and wrote to him on 18 June:



As to the Carrack affair, we mean the preventing ships from putting in there, we think it an affair of little or no consequence: the wheel of politicks may take such a turn, as to oblige us to make a temporary friend of the Meer instead of a foe.<sup>70</sup>

#### **5.4 The decline of trade at Bushire**

By mid-1767 the English were in confusion, torn between the ill disposition of Karīm Khān and the threat of Mīr Muhannā. Trade had been declining since May 1766, when the month's sales had fallen short of English expectations, and they had sustained an annual loss of Rs 2,000 on the Persian Government account. In December 1766, English sales were trifling, and no Shiraz merchants had been at Bushire, out of apprehension for trading with the English in view of the Khān's displeasure with them. Jervis' private engagements with the Khān remaining unfulfilled by the Company and the withholding of ships had incensed the Khān considerably.<sup>71</sup> In January 1767 the price of goods dropped, and wool stopped coming from Kirmān because of the trouble there which had disposed of most of the sheep. The place was being besieged at that time by the Khān and plundered by his troops, with nobody able to come or go.<sup>72</sup> Bowyear commented to Wrench at Basrah, 'It is a little difficult to re-establish a branch of business of this nature, Considering the present state of this Country, and that the parties who provide this article are so far distant from Bushire.'<sup>73</sup>

In April 1767 nine different bandits were operating between Bushire and Shiraz and each levied duties on the English cloth and other staples which were being carried by the merchants; this was itself an impediment to the English trade.<sup>74</sup> The raw silk which used to be brought down from Gīlān (a northern district of Persia) and sent on to India had almost stopped - a great part of the trade now being carried to Russia and the rest exported through Turkey<sup>75</sup> (see Appendix 25). A new and significant impediment to trade at Bushire now arose. Orders came from Karīm Khān's Court that all the merchants should leave Bushire with their families within 20 days at most. As a result of these orders every merchant who had an agent in Bushire recalled him, and

many merchants who lived there left Bushire completely: the few who remained were preparing to leave as soon as possible. Even some cloth merchants who were on the road to Bushire were obliged to turn back. The Khān also prohibited any merchant carrying specie to Bushire on any pretext whatever and, should they do any trade, they should exchange Persian products for all foreign goods. By the end of June 1767 the merchants had all left Bushire in response to Karīm Khān's orders.<sup>76</sup>

Another policy decision from Karīm Khān followed this blow to English trade. His second order not only prohibited specie from being sent to Bushire but firmly directed that no merchandise whatever should be imported from Bushire into the inland areas of the Persian dominions, that no Persian products be sent to Bushire, and that the merchants should have no contact with the place. Karīm Khān told Skipp quite plainly that, since his orders were not respected at Bushire, he was obliged to take some measures to show his displeasure there. His actions touching on trade with Bushire may not have been altogether directed at the English because he had taken strongly against Shaikh Sa'dūn, who had never paid him a courtesy visit during his two years' residence in Bushire, nor accounted to him for the customs duties of Bushire and Bahrain, which he expected the Shaikh to do. The only quick and effective way of removing the difficulties under which English trade laboured at that moment would be for the Shaikh to pay him, on those accounts, an annual sum on which they could agree.<sup>77</sup>

Since before Nādir Shāh's time Bushire had been governed by Shaikh Sa'dūn's family, headed by Shaikh Nāṣir with whom the English had formerly discussed the establishment of a settlement at Bushire in mid-1755, before eventually settling at Bandar Rīq. Shaikh Nāṣir and the tribes of Dashtistān had allied themselves to Karīm Khān in the Persian power-struggle, but had been forced to change their allegiance when Shiraz had come under siege from the forces of Ḥusain Khān Qājār, the pretender in Tabriz, in May 1756. As the balance of power again shifted in his favour, Karīm Khān launched a reprisal attack on the Dashtistān province in late 1756 and early

1757. It was probably at this time that Shaikh Nāṣir was compelled to live at Shiraz as a hostage (see pages 181-2). Shaikh Nāṣir being still in captivity in 1767, his younger brothers, Shaikhs Sa'dūn and 'Isā, were governing Bushire and Bahrain respectively. In February 1767 it was being reported that the traditional tribute payable to the Shāhs of Persia by both Bushire and Bahrain had not been rendered for the 20 years elapsed since the death of Nādir Shāh; in consequence, Karīm Khān's displeasure was manifest.<sup>78</sup>

Shaikh Sa'dūn sent his son to Karīm Khān with an offer of Rs 20,000, but the son came back from Shiraz without resolving any single point at issue with the Khān, notwithstanding the offer being raised to Rs 26,000.<sup>79</sup> Shaikh Sa'dūn himself returned to Bushire on 17 January 1768 and informed Morley (see page 201 for his succession to Bowyear) that, though the Khān had shown him particular regard during his stay in Shiraz, his persuasion had no effect in inducing the Khān to allow any trade to be carried on at Bushire with the inland areas of his dominions. The Khān had frequently said to him '... as the English Interest was chiefly concerned therein, his final resolutions, as to that affair, depended entirely on the answer he should receive to some proposals he had made them.'<sup>80</sup>

### **5.5 Karīm Khān's 'disgust' with the English**

Bowyear's allegation that Jervis had been the cause of Karīm Khān's 'disgust' with the English was true. In April 1767 Bowyear received from Ṣādiq Khān the letter which had been sent to Ṣādiq by Hercules, then Jervis' agent at the Persian Court, proving that Jervis had offered to destroy Mīr Muhannā for Karīm Khān in return for Rs 50,000.<sup>81</sup> Karīm Khān wanted to renew the ancient friendship subsisting between the English and the Persians in the time of the Kings (Shāh 'Abbās I and King James I), and sent proposals in March 1767 to Moore in Basrah, who forwarded them to the President and Governor of Council in Bombay. These provided that a nominee on the

English part and another on behalf of Shaikh Sulaimān of the Ka‘b should go to him and he would settle any substantial demands.

The President and Governor of Council in Bombay replied to Karīm Khān’s proposals on 15 March 1767, asking him to take steps to obtain satisfaction for the English from the Ka‘b. He asked also for the most advantageous terms for the Company which the Khān could determine, among which the following seemed to him the most essential:<sup>82</sup>

- i) Confirmation of Şādiq Khān’s grant permitting a settlement at Bushire with the building of a fort or factory there and the mounting of some cannon on it.
- ii) An annual sum of Rs 20 to 25,000 to be paid to the Company from the Bushire customs to defray the costs of keeping a cruiser always in the Gulf.
- iii) A grant of any of the islands in the Gulf should the Company wish to settle on one.
- iv) Ample restitution for all their losses to be made to the English out of any booty which might be taken from the Ka‘b: the latter’s vessels to be destroyed or surrendered to the English, or, at least, full guarantees to be given that they would never again be employed against the English.
- v) Half of all booty or plunder of whatever kind taken from Mīr Muhannā to be given to the English.
- vi) In the event of the English undertaking an expedition against Mīr Muhannā jointly with Karīm Khān, and proving successful at Khark, the Khān might be permitted to retain its possession.

On receipt of the President’s Commands (formal letter) Skipp had the proposals translated into Persian but did not deliver them to Karīm Khān. Thinking that the delay was on the Khān’s side, Moore waited for three months and then wrote to Bowyear at Bushire on 1 July 1767. He asked Bowyear, in case a rupture with Karīm Khān

became inevitable and the English were thereby forced to withdraw their factory from Bushire, to find out as secretly as possible:

- a) Whether an alliance with Mīr Muhannā of Khark was practicable and whether the English could maintain a factory on that island to greater advantage than in Bushire.
- b) Whether, in that case, Mīr Muhannā would join whole-heartedly with the English in the destruction of the Ka‘b.<sup>83</sup>

Bowyear replied to Moore’s letter on 13 July 1767 and put before him some objections which he believed to be insurmountable for the English:

Firstly, it would incense Karīm Khān beyond belief; it would put an end, in effect, to English trade in the Khān’s territories, and merchants would still not be permitted to go to Bushire while he lived or any of his family held power, for they too would resent it. Secondly, Mīr Muhannā was so notorious for his bad character that no-one would willingly choose to live under his government. This was a man who had murdered his father, burnt his mother to death, exposed his wife and new-born infant to the sun until they died, thrown his sister into the sea and cut down 65 of his relations in one night. He was also greatly addicted to alcohol and no better than a madman in his cups.<sup>84</sup> Thirdly, the Mīr could not supply more than 500 men and there was a possibility of Karīm Khān rallying to the Ka‘b if he found that Muhannā was a party to the attack. Nonetheless, Bowyear thought that an alliance with Mīr Muhannā would be possible and that the English could gain his assistance against the Ka‘b.<sup>85</sup>

Moore ordered Bowyear to send the Company’s ships the *Tyger*, the *Schooner* and the *Launch* to him in order to put his plan against Karīm Khān into operation:

It is with the greatest concern that we find the Caun will not comply with the proposals that we have made to him, should Mr Skipp therefore be returned to Bushire of which according to his own advices we make not the least doubt, you have already our orders for your future proceedings: the Honble Companys as well as private property being embarked we would have the seizure of every persian Ship and Vessel to be the first object. You are then to forward by the next secure messenger the accompanying letter to Carim

Caun, a translate of which we now inclose you, and on the return of the Cauns answer we direct that you open it, and see the purport, if he is willing to come to terms with us, you will consequently send us the most immediate intelligence; but if not, and that he still continues his protection of the Chaub we would then have the *Grab* and Salamander [a *bomb-ketch*: see page 198] ordered as close to the Town as possible and there represent to the Shaik the immediate destruction of the Town, unless he is willing to save it by the paying you a very large ransom Six *lacks* of Rupees we think ought to be demanded. Get however as much as you can and then give Captain Elphinstone orders to proceed immediately to the Island of Car-rack.<sup>86</sup>

Moore further ordered Bowyear, on his arrival at Khark, to intimate to Mīr Muḥannā the reason for his presence, i.e. to seek the Mīr's permission to have a factory on the island of Khark, and to promise him the friendship and protection of the English if he would join them with his gallivats in the destruction of the Khān and the Ka'b.

Moore also recommended to Bowyear that, if the Shaikh of Bushire and his brother had any influence at the Persian Court, they should write to Shiraz and try to bring the Khān to the terms the English wanted. Otherwise, when Skipp arrived they should begin to ship off all the English property and then seize all the gallivats and other ships belonging to Karīm Khān, the Shaikh of Bahrain and the Shaikh of Bushire. That done, they should return to Basrah.<sup>87</sup> Skipp had already indirectly informed Karīm Khān of the plan to destroy Bushire as well as the other towns on the Persian coast, if he rejected the English proposals.<sup>88</sup> The Khān offered the sum of 12,500 *Tomans* for several of the losses but this was rejected by the English, who demanded the full amount of the losses sustained and the surrender of the Ka'b gallivats.<sup>89</sup>

In July 1767, Skipp delivered his further proposals in writing to Karīm Khān, who told him that they were of a kind he could not possibly comply with, and the next day he replied 'These demands are rather like the orders of a master to his servant, they have no power to send me orders'.<sup>90</sup> On the rejection of the compensation he replied:

... if the English would come to me and beg of me to take the sum of 12500 Tomands to settle your disputes I would not do it I have

taken much trouble to bring your affairs as I thought to this happy conclusion, and now you are not satisfied therewith. I will now give leave to the Chaub to make war on you, and to do everything in his power to take your vessels - the reason of my expressing myself with so much anger is that you would not stay to know how I had proceeded in your business but send these demands before you were acquainted this sum of 12500 Tomands is the firm cost of your Goods, ought you not therefore to be contented, and make your account that for one voyage you got no profit, it now plainly appears to me the English do not want to settle this affair, but do as you please and act in what manner you can by the Chaub<sup>91</sup> (see Appendix 26).

Moore now sent a letter to Mīr Muhannā concerning the English making a settlement at Khark,<sup>92</sup> and proposed an alliance with him for the destruction of the Ka‘b. Muhannā approved of the English alliance and promised everything which they had requested.<sup>93</sup> Bowyear, on the contrary, wrote ‘... the Khan is too powerful for the Mir to give him the least anxiety’.<sup>94</sup>

With remarkable arrogance, Moore issued an ultimatum to Karīm Khān on 11 August 1767. It was to the effect that unless the Khān ceased his support of the Shaikh of the Ka‘b, compelled him to hand his gallivats over to the English and provided compensation for the losses they had sustained, they, the English, would destroy all Persian ships and coastal towns<sup>95</sup> (see Appendix 27).

Before leaving Shiraz on 30 August 1767, Skipp waited on Karīm Khān to take his leave and expressed great regret at his departure, observing that the friendship so long-standing between the English and Persians would be completely shattered by his doing so. After a long discussion with Karīm Khān, Skipp wrote to Moore:

... in regard to the Chaub he would oblige him to pay the sum of 250000 Rupees and will give a Pheramaund to pay the full value if ever we sustained any further losses by him his Galivats or otherwise that the remainder he looked on as so much given to him, as on his account we quitted it, and that he would return it ten for one provided he was once convinced we had an equal inclination to be on terms with him of amity and friendship that he wanted also grant us for the benefit of the Honorable Companys commerce in his dominions a confirmation of our antient phirmaund, including full and free liberty of importing and exporting all our goods and merchandize, and carrying them to any part of the Kingdom free of all Customs, and impositions also full and free liberty to build a fort of

any strength the Company may chuize, and mount as many cannon and of any size they may think proper at Bushire, Bunderick, Congoon and Bander Abassi at all or either of these places or any other place on the Coast, he also offeres a grant of any one of the Islands in the Gulph such as you may chuze, and likewise full permission to establish factories at Schirash, Ispahaun and Carmania, where he observes the Honorable Companys houses are ready to be delivered them, and in return for this he desires our assistance by sea against his enemies by which he does not doubt but in 3 or 4 months we may be gained more than ten times the amount of what we shall on his account, remit to the Chaub.<sup>96</sup>

Skipp asked Moore to accept Karīm Khān's proposal whereby the Bushire trade would again be on the English account, and the Khān would not agree to Skipp's departure until a reply had been received to it.<sup>97</sup> Moore replied to Karīm Khān directly on 29 August 1767, refusing the offer of Rs 250,000, and trying to impress him with the strength Moore had behind him in the Gulf at that moment:

Your Majesty must be very sensible from the force I now have with me in the Gulph, that it is in my power to do you the greatest of services by reducing the disobedient to obedience, by fixing your Majesty and your Royal son securely in your Government, and making you as happy as you are now great, but your Majesty in defiance to my endeavours in defiance to your own interests, will not let me be your friend you will not let me contribute to the revival of commerce in your Dominions but are forcing me to quit your Kingdom by withdrawing the English factory from Bushire, by forming destructive alliances against your Majesty, the end of which God only knows. If your Majesty will oblige me by forcing the Chaub to come into the terms I have humbly requested of you there is nothing that your Majesty can in reason ask that I will not in gladness grant ... As the Whole Gulph of Persia belongs to your Majesty there ought not to be an armed ship or vessel in it but what belongs either to your Majesty or the English you want to reduce the whole Gulph to your obedience, at the same time that you are leaving one of the principal sea powers in it, in full power to molest and injure us, let me advise you to begin at Bussora and not end until you get down to Muscat you will never have such another opportunity, I entreat your Majesty therefore immediately to embrace it, and prevent the Slaughter and bloodshed that must otherwise be the inevitable consequence.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, Moore tabled his demands, saying that the Khān had only to direct the Ka'ab to surrender his gallivats to the English and send them Rs 500,000, and the English would make peace with him whenever the Khān decided<sup>99</sup> (see Appendix 28).

This letter from the Agent at Basrah was handed to Karīm Khān on 30 September; the next morning he summoned all the leading men of his Court and the Agent's letter



was read to him again before all of them. He immediately sent for *Coja* Huşain, the Ka'b representative at Court, and gave him a letter to the Ka'b. The Khān ordered him to return to his master and tell him that, as he had seized the property of the English, they had both reason and justice on their side in trying to recover it. If, therefore, the English made war against them they should not expect any help from him: Coja Huşain took his leave and returned to the Ka'b. Two days later Karīm Khān responded that he would forthwith give an undertaking to pay the Rs. 500,000 out of his own treasury. The money would be paid into the hands of Skipp, as soon as the English informed him that their squadron was ready to move against Mīr Muhannā of Khark. The Khān had withdrawn his protection from the Ka'b and gave the English complete liberty to attack them, albeit without Turkish assistance, anywhere and any time they saw fit, for the prime purpose of the Ka'b surrendering their gallivats.<sup>100</sup>

## 5.6 The expedition against Hormuz

Moore wrote to Karīm Khān on 3 October 1767 that he had ordered some of his ships and forces to go and attack the island of Hormuz, because he understood that Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz had insolently refused to pay allegiance to the Khān who, therefore, wanted to destroy the island. Moore accordingly had sent his ships against Hormuz and would, at the same time, exact reparations from Shaikh 'Abdallāh for some losses he had caused the English. He had ordered Shaikh 'Abdallāh to be taken prisoner, and his gallivats to be seized and held at the Khān's disposal.<sup>101</sup> The Khān replied that he was displeased that the English should think of an expedition against Hormuz before they had agreed to the proposals he had made to them about the Ka'b and Mīr Muhannā. He said he would send troops to protect Shaikh 'Abdallāh, whom he considered his subject, if the English made any attempt to defeat him.<sup>102</sup>

The aim of the expedition to Hormuz was to try to recover the pearls and treasure taken from the ship *Islamabad* in February 1765 by mutinous Arab *lascars* on the

ship, who murdered the Captain, Herbert Sutherland.<sup>103</sup> The history of the *Islamabad* affair was that, having gone down the Gulf from Bushire at the beginning of February 1765, she encountered a very violent S.E. wind near the island of Qishm in which the ship lost two anchors and was close to foundering. Captain Sutherland bore away before the wind up the Gulf again, as far as Mughu on the Persian coast. Being short of water and provisions, the Captain sent his long-boat with men ashore on 6 February to obtain both, and they returned the next day with supplies, although they had some difficulty in reaching the ship. The wind was blowing very hard and a rope was thrown to the boat by some of the lascars, and several men from the long-boat climbed aboard. As the Captain's own servant was boarding, however, some of the Arab lascars (hired by Captain Sutherland at Basrah) wounded him in several places with a lance and he fell back into the water before being pulled back into the long-boat. Soon after this, the same Arabs shot the 3rd Officer through the head, killing him instantly, and the men still in the long-boat cast off, bearing away to save their lives. During the period the long-boat was alongside, its occupants could not see Captain Sutherland or any officers on the quarter-deck.

The long-boat came ashore at a little town about a league to the south of Mughu, where the Shaikh seized and stripped the boat. Meanwhile, the Arab lascars had murdered Captain Sutherland and the other officers, and plundered the ship of a considerable amount of money. When they landed with it on the island of Qays (see the Atlas, Map no. 44) the Shaikh of the island seized them, took the treasure, and consigned them in a small boat to the mainland. This account was confirmed by several people who arrived in Bushire from Kangun and other parts, who swore that they had heard the story from the very Arabs who had mutinied and now excused themselves by claiming to have been very cruelly treated by Captain Sutherland and the officers. After those Arabs had left the ship the remaining people on board hired two pilots in Qays and sailed with her for Muscat.<sup>104</sup>

It then appeared that Nāṣir Khān, the Governor of Lār, had sent a large force against the island of Qays under the command of Shaikh ‘Abdallāh al-Ma‘īni of Hormuz who took the *Islamabad*'s pearls and treasure from the Shaikh of Qays. Captain William Justice, the Captain of the *Berkshire*, wrote from Muscat to Wrench on 19 September 1766 saying that he had, as promised, enquired at Gombroon about the *Islamabad*'s treasure, and had stayed three or four days on Hormuz with Shaikh ‘Abdallāh without giving him the slightest hint that the English suspected him of having any part of the treasure.<sup>105</sup> The President and Council in Bombay had previously, on 5 January 1766, informed the Agent at Basrah that if the restitution of all or the greater part of the treasure and effects taken from the *Islamabad* might be achieved by the right measures, then he was permitted to use his forces for that purpose as soon as the campaign against the Ka‘b finished.<sup>106</sup>

Moore therefore wrote to Lyster and Bowyear on 23 October 1767 that for the honour and in the interests of his employers' affairs in the Persian Gulf it had been suggested to him to send an expedition to Hormuz and Qays, in order to demand satisfaction from the Shaikhs of the two islands for the injury done and the insults shown to English trade in the Gulf. He accordingly appointed the two of them as joint managers in negotiations with the two Shaikhs and gave them the necessary instructions for their guidance:

- i) The treasure stolen from the *Islamabad*, or its value, was at that time in the possession of Shaikh ‘Abdallāh of Hormuz and from him they should demand the largest repayment of the whole loss, estimated at Rs 3-400,000. Beyond that, Moore wanted them to demand Rs 100,000 on account of the trouble and expense taken by the Company in sending a force against the island, and Rs 40,000 on account of its capture.
- ii) Apart from the above demands, Moore directed them to require Shaikh ‘Abdallāh's cession of the large ship then laying at Hormuz and the fighting gallivats, as well as his complete renunciation of the island of Hormuz in favour of the English.

- iii) Moore did not by any means want them to resort to hostile action unless the Shaikh refused to negotiate and rejected the terms.
- iv) If the Shaikh refused to negotiate with them they should immediately notify the Commanders of the Marine and Military Departments, and leave the execution of the hostilities to them.
- v) If they were lucky enough to capture Shaikh ‘Abdallāh in person they were to treat him with the greatest consideration. If Karīm Khān had sent forces the Shaikh should be handed over to the Persian Commander; otherwise he should be taken to Bushire.
- vi) The forces earmarked by Moore for the expedition were the *Defiance*, the *bomb-ketch Salamander* and the gallivat *Wolf*. A detachment of artillery, 86 military and 112 *sepoys* were embarked on these ships: the Marine Department commanded by Commodore Fountain-Price and the Military by Captain Lytton Leslie.
- vii) Once finished at Hormuz, they should give Commodore Fountain-Price orders to continue on to the island of Qays, since a large part of the *Islamabad*'s treasure remained in the possession of the Shaikh of Qays. They should make enquiries and demand as much compensation as they thought him capable of paying. If the Shaikh had any gallivats he should give them up, and also the Shaikhdom of the island to whomsoever Karīm Khān might appoint in charge. If he refused, hostile action should be taken as at Hormuz, and the Shaikh consigned to Bushire.

Moore also instructed Lyster and Bowyear to demand satisfaction from the Shaikh of Charak for taking the Bushire armed boat on her return from Muscat in May 1767. There was cargo valued at Rs 10,000 on the boat when the Shaikh seized her, and he must not only make full restitution for it, but also pay heavily for his insult to the English flag, and his cruelty to their people. His gallivats were all to be seized, his island made over to Karīm Khān and he himself to be taken prisoner, if they could, and be sent to Bushire.<sup>107</sup>

This affair of the English armed boat from Bushire began when it was sent by order of the then Agent to Muscat in April 1767, to water the *Success* and the *Tartar* en route. On her return journey she was forced by heavy weather to run into Charak. The boat was cast ashore and stranded there, so Bowyear sent down an express boat with a letter to the Shaikh and one also from Shaikh Sa'dūn, asking him to take care of what was on board the boat and to return her. On 3 May 1767 the *nakhoda* of the boat arrived at Bushire from Charak and told Bowyear that he was forced by N.W. winds to run into Charak, where he anchored. The next morning, when he attempted to weigh anchor, four boats put off from the shore full of armed men who boarded the Company's boat with scimitars drawn, captured the crew and ran the boat close inshore. There they landed everything from the boat, stripped the *nakhoda* and lascars of everything they had and treated them very cruelly. When the *nakhoda* was brought before the Shaikh and told him that the boat belonged to the Company, the Shaikh ordered him to be struck and used very abusive language to him, saying that the English were not equal to his shoes and that he would take their boats whenever they came his way.<sup>108</sup>

Bowyear wrote to Moore on the same day, the 3rd of May, asking him to punish the Shaikhs of Hormuz, Qays and Charak: Moore's reply on 27 May 1767 read in part:

The insolence of the Shaik of Charrack merits corrections; we will not neglect him, he may depend on it, at present the calling on him is unseasonable. We are very sorry for the accident that has happened to your armed boat on her return from Muscat; give us a good reason for her going there at all, the one you mention is a very frivolous one, very puerile, indeed 'to water the *Tartar* and *Success* between Bushire and Muscat!' we hope you'll find a better, when you address the Governor and Council<sup>109</sup>

Bowyear sent the express boat to the Shaikh of Charak again in June 1767, with a letter instructing him to return the armed boat belonging to the Company which he had seized. The Shaikh firmly refused to give the boat up and after reading the letter returned it to the *tindal* saying 'That he should keep the boat or anything else he could

take from the English.’ The express boat itself had a very narrow escape from being captured, but just managed to get under way as three armed boats were sent to board it, and pursued it for some distance.<sup>110</sup>

As for the expedition itself, it sailed on 25 October 1767 from Basrah to Bushire and on to Hormuz on 7 November. A letter from Moore for the Khān was received by the Resident in Bushire on the same day, translated and given the date of 19 November - after the departure of the expedition.<sup>111</sup> This letter (see Appendix 29) to Karīm Khān informed him of the expedition’s departure: ‘I intended sending our ships against Shaikh Abdulla of Ormuse our ships are since gone on that expedition, I conclude your Majesty will be rejoiced thereat’.<sup>112</sup>

The reply came from *Kalanthar* Serkies (see also Chapter 4.8), an Armenian at Shiraz who was very much in the confidence of Karīm Khān, who wrote to Moore explaining the Khān’s reaction to Moore’s letter:

In this letter you wrote you had ordered your ships against Ormuse, and to seize Shaik Abdulla the Shaik of that island in order to deliver him to the Caun, that as Shaik Abdulla was his subject; the English had no business with him, for that he was then serving him the Caun: owing to the influence these people had with the Caun, he became somewhat angry, and displeased on this he immediately sent for me, and asked me what it was the English had wrote to me. I told him I had not received any letter from them, the Vackeel [Karīm Khān] on this observed how came the English not to write to you now, as you are always applied to upon their business? I told him that by this *Pattamar* they really had not written me - the Vackeel upon this asked ‘what business have the English just now with Shaik Abdulla?’ I must tell you that your engaging on this expedition has prevented the Caun from writing to you; four or five days afterwards in his private apartments, he began a conversation upon the English affairs, everything that was necessary I observed to him, and told him particularly, that the taking of Shaik Abdulla was one of the articles of his agreement with the English; this he allowed: but at the same time said that the Chaub’s business was first to be finished, then Meer Mahanna and then Ormuse: he proceeded, why have they left them and gone to Shaik Abdulla? my reply was, that this was the most proper season for it, as the ships were now idle, and laying in Bussora river would not answer; on that account they were willing to employ their ships first against Shaik Abdulla by the time that business was finished news would arrive from Bombay, they would set about the other: this some what struck him, and he remained for some time silent.<sup>113</sup>

From the time of Commodore Fountain-Price setting sail from Bushire, Moore received no news about him or any part of his squadron until he was surprised by the arrival of the bomb-ketch *Salamander*, commanded by Lieutenant Gage, at Basrah on 15 December with the news that the *Defiance* had blown up on 15 November between the island of Qishm and the mainland (see the extract from Lieut. Gage's Journal regarding the blowing up of the *Defiance* in Appendix 30). Only 35 men were saved from the 300 and upwards on board. Those who perished included Commodore Fountain-Price, Dymoke Lyster and William Bowyear; from the Military, Captain Lytton Leslie, Lieutenant Milenburgh and Lieutenant William Robbins; from the *Defiance*, Lieutenants Richard Watkins, James Dowling, James Watkin and Surgeon Michael Cummings; and the Bushire Linguist Hermit. This sad disaster had completely frustrated the Hormuz expedition and the English were not only obliged to set that enterprise aside but feared that the accident would greatly influence their future operations.<sup>114</sup> As Bowyear was among the dead, Moore appointed James Morley as the new Resident in Bushire on 9 January 1768.<sup>115</sup>

### **5.7 The expedition against Khark Island**

On 15 January 1768, the *Eagle*; the *Success*; the bomb ketch *Fancy*; and the gallivat *Wolf* were despatched with men, provisions and stores from Bombay bound for Basrah. The *Revenge* and the storeship *Essex* were also sent from Bombay for Bushire on 24 January.<sup>116</sup> The whole fleet, under the command of Captain Charles Elphinstone (Commander-in-Chief of the United East India Company and Marine Forces in the Persian Gulf), arrived at Bushire on 19 March 1768 and started cruising between there and Basrah in order to convoy all English merchant vessels passing Mīr Muhannā's port and to foil any attempt by him to seize them.<sup>117</sup> In the fear that Mīr Muhannā might exploit the absence of the English cruisers from Bushire by trying to threaten the port and so damage the Company's interests, the *Fancy*, the *Wolf* and the *schooners* *Tyger* and *Dolphin* were sent to remain in Bushire for its security.<sup>118</sup> Merchant vessels from Bushire were to be taken under convoy by the *Wolf*, *Tyger* and

*Dolphin*, and seen safely to 12 leagues beyond Khark, after which the escorts would return to Bushire.<sup>119</sup>

Although the main objective of the English was to reduce Khark and capture Mīr Muhannā, this action was to be taken jointly with Karīm Khān with whom, however, they were still in negotiation. They therefore had to suspend any attack on the island until they knew the result of the negotiations.<sup>120</sup> At the end of March 1768 the English in Bushire were accordingly surprised by the unexpected return of Shaikh 'Isā of Bahrain, sent there by Karīm Khān in a great hurry to get some vessels ready to assist a mounted party marching to attack Ganawah. Mīr Muhannā's people based there had recently inflicted severe depredation on the neighbouring villages. Shaikh 'Isā left Bushire on 3 April for Ganawah with a fleet consisting of two ships (i.e. large ships compared with the gallivats) and three gallivats, and forced the Mīr's supporters to abandon the place before demolishing its fortifications.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, the Turks were seizing eleven trankeys and other boats belonging to Mīr Muhannā which he had sent up with goods to Basrah and intended bringing back with provisions to Khark. The day before the Turks were allowed by the English to seize these vessels, the *Bombay*, the *Tyger* and the *Wolf* were despatched to Basrah on the pretext of looking out for English shipping but in reality to capture five of the Mīr's gallivats which, the English had been informed, were lying at the mouth of the river. The English intended to keep these vessels until Muhannā gave proper satisfaction for some insults he had lately shown to the English pass and colours (the customary phrase of the time referring to the ship's papers and flag).

The Mīr by then had received information about the forces gathering in the area, the seizure of his trankeys by the Turks, and the *coup* which the English planned against him: it was assumed that he would certainly try to revenge himself by capturing any English vessels which were not strong enough to fight him off.<sup>122</sup> To prevent damage arising from the Mīr's retaliation, orders were given to the Captains of all vessels to be very much on their guard and to await further orders from Skipp in Shiraz.<sup>123</sup>



The Agent, Moore, and the Council at Basrah were informed by Skipp on 27 April 1768 that he had agreed with Karīm Khān that the English squadron with its forces embarked should make an immediate attempt on the island of Khark: all of the advantage which the English hoped to gain from the alliance with the Khān depended upon this. Moore therefore directed Captain Elphinstone to undertake the action with the forces under his command. The *Bombay* and the *Essex* from Basrah came to join him, having embarked all the military elements, the sepoys who had been left at Basrah, and all the factory sepoys.<sup>124</sup> Captain John McKenly, Commander of the *Fancy*, and Lieutenants John Hall, John Birket and Richard Field, in command respectively of the *Tyger*, *Dolphin* and *Wolf* at Bushire received Moore's instructions to join the fleet.<sup>125</sup>

The English did not expect any assistance from the Khān's ships or soldiers. Skipp wrote to Moore that the Khān was possessed by an extreme distrust of the English and he could not be convinced of their sincerity in his cause by any means other than an attack on Khark. The Shaikhs of Bushire and Bahrain were putting every obstacle they could in the way of the English, and they would delay both the embarkation of any troops that the Khān might order as well as the sailing of the Persian fleet for weeks, if not months. Yet, on the other hand, Mīr Muhannā's forces numbered only 1,500 men.<sup>126</sup> Moore wrote to Captain Elphinstone on 27 April 1768 that 'To remedy therefore these disappointments we are compelled to order you to endeavour to make yourselves [masters] of the Island of Khark'. He added the following instructions:

In case there are any of the Meers people that are desirous of quitting Carrack, the Caun desires that they would repair to Bushire, and assures them of a favourable reception from him. The Caun is most anxious for the delivery up of the Meers Person: but this should he fall into your hands we would have by no means done; untill we can insure his safety, and get the Caun to grant the several points we are in want of from him. ... Should Meer Mahanna be desirous of coming to terms without having recourse to hostilities, and acknowledge himself a subject of the Cauns with the renunciation of his Island Gallivats and treasure, and trust to the Cauns

clemency for his security, we would have you treat with him accordingly, and immediately advise the Factors at Bushire thereof.<sup>127</sup>

The commanders of Karīm Khān's forces around Ganawah and Bandar Rīq reported to him on 7 and 8 May 1768 that English vessels were then attacking Khark. He was waiting only for confirmation of this before sending orders to his troops and the Bushire ships to help in reducing the island.<sup>128</sup> Šādiq Khān, the Persian military commander, now granted a number of 'bonuses' (unspecified) in favour of the English,<sup>129</sup> but the attack on Khark still did not start because the ships which had left Bushire were unable to join the fleet owing to the extremely strong North-westerlies.<sup>130</sup> Karīm Khān promised to help the English in the reduction of Khark as soon as he received firm information that the English fleet had actually begun the attack.<sup>131</sup>

The English Commander-in-Chief represented to Morley, the Resident in Bushire, that he would need 20 small trankeys for landing his troops on Khark, and Morley immediately began trying to procure them. However, the Shaikhs then governing Bushire heard of the plan and strictly forbade any of their people offering their boats or themselves in the English service. As it clearly appeared to the English, the Shaikhs were hoping that denying the assistance would make it impossible to make any move against the Mīr: they feared that otherwise the English would be able to ingratiate themselves with the Khān so much that his bad opinion of them, which the Shaikhs had been fostering for some time, would be erased. In accounting for such an unfriendly way of behaving towards them, the English could only suppose that the Shaikhs were averse to any English connection with Karīm Khān for fear that English naval forces might be employed against them, in conjunction with his troops, if they incurred his displeasure later on. If that happened, it would inevitably mean their downfall because it would deprive them of their only way of escaping the Khān's anger, i.e. by retreating to sea with their ships and gallivats: on the whole, it seemed likely that they were influenced in this sense.

These obstacles did not entirely prevent the English from procuring some boats for their fleet. Morley bought five and sent them off in the charge of Lieutenant Field, Captain of the *Wolf*, but the bad luck experienced by the *Wolf* after sailing from Bushire on her return to the fleet seemed to put an end to English hopes.<sup>132</sup> The Agent at Basrah received a detailed report from Lieut. Field who returned to Bushire on 14 May 1768:

That in the afternoon of the 13th (the day after he left Bushire) it began to blow very fresh from the N.W., which obliged him to Anchor about 6 Leagues to the Northward of this place. That the Gale increased in the Evening and occasioning a very heavy Sea which frequently made a passage over his Vessel, he weighed again to run into shoal water. That soon after getting under sail one of the Trankeys in Tow broke adrift, with a Lascar in her, on which he sent his Boat with Mr Higgins and four other Europeans to save that person, but a squall coming on before her return she was obliged to put for the shore. That two of our Trankeys belonging to us which were at Anchor astern of him when the Gale began weighed in the Night and he imagines were run ashore by their people to save their lives, as they had no more than one days provisions on board. That the people in his own Boat were entirely unprovided with Provisions or water and supposing they have all run ashore somewhere between Bushire and Hallela, he hopes that some intelligence may be had of them. That he had brought two of the Trankeys with him with great difficulty and there were 1 *Syrang*, 9 Lascars and 8 Seepoys in the Two Trankeys lost, and 5 Europeans and 1 Lascar in his own Boat.<sup>133</sup>

On receiving this news Morley straightaway sent people overland to look along the shore as far as Halela for the men and boats lost from the *Wolf*, and also sent a trankey to do the same as far as Kangun, if she did not meet them nearer Bushire. The overland party came back with news that one of the trankeys with nine men on board were safe in Halela Bay and they were brought back to Bushire.<sup>134</sup> The boat sent by Morley towards Kangun looking for the trankey and the ship's boat came back to Bushire on 21 May with the latter. Four of the Europeans in her at the time were drowned when she capsized, and the trankey was lost.<sup>135</sup> Morley then sent four boats for the expedition, one of them being the trankey which separated from the *Wolf* in the gale.<sup>136</sup>

Meanwhile, Morley wrote to Skipp on 9 May about his need for boats and telling him of the Shaikhs' behaviour. Skipp immediately wrote to Karīm Khān about Morley's

needs. He represented to the Khān that such a reasonable request, and one for his own particular benefit on a mission which he had so earnestly asked the English to undertake, should not meet with any difficulties. But it had met with many, and the behaviour of Karīm Khān, who had not put a stop to them, was dilatory and inexplicable. When the Khān read Skipp's request for boats and the complaint about the Shaikhs' behaviour, he condemned them and sent for them to explain the reasons for their actions. The Shaikhs replied that they were ready to help with boats, but that their boats could not survive at sea where the ships were going: they would probably be lost in the high winds with the loss of all hands, if they were not first killed by Mīr Muhannā by venturing near Khark. To this rather sensible submission Karīm Khān replied that he did not want his poor people to run so great a risk, and equally sensibly ordered Mīrzā, the son of Zakī Khān, to arrange for 15 boats to be supplied, but without crews.

Skipp now called on Karīm Khān himself and, with Shaikhs present, protested in the strongest terms about the behaviour of the Shaikhs at Bushire. He asked the Khān to give the Shaikhs orders to supply the boats requested. At the same time he urged him to require the Shaikhs to go with their ships, gallivats and all the forces they could collect to join the English squadron and act jointly with the English forces at Khark. He told the Khān that, in order to ensure success, he should send 3,000 of his own troops to act together with the English on the island. The Khān instantly insisted that he would send his brother with 10,000 men, and observed that he would rather have a thousand of his own men killed in the attack than ten of the English. But this was all a charade of obvious lies and contradictions: one minute denying what he had promised a minute earlier and finally refusing to send a single man. At one point he claimed that if the Agent at Basrah had written to him saying what was necessary he would have sent the required number. When Skipp showed him the futility of that excuse he said the hot weather had set in and would kill all his soldiers: he therefore excused himself from sending any.

Karīm Khān several times told Skipp that if the Agent at Basrah was not happy with the terms which had been agreed there, the English were very welcome to abrogate them, even though they had been settled. He spoke in this way so earnestly and frequently that Skipp believed he was looking for a pretext for declaring them void. At last, however, a *faramān* was drawn up and signed, ordering 12 boats to be duly supplied and also directing Shaikh 'Isā to go with the three Bushire gallivats to join the English fleet off Khark.<sup>137</sup> A courier was despatched to Bushire by Karīm Khān on 20 May 1768 with orders to the Shaikhs of Bushire to supply the English with 12 boats for service in the expedition.<sup>138</sup> Skipp pressed Karīm Khān hard to have a body of troops ready at Bushire or Bandar Rīq to join the English forces, but the Khān's troops refused to serve off the mainland.<sup>139</sup>

In front of Khark a Council of War was convened on 19 May on board the *Revenge*, composed of the various Captains and the most senior Lieutenants in each Corps. It was decided to attack Khark next day in the morning, to damage the defences and make a breach in the north curtain of the fort. On the 20th the signal was made at 1 p.m. to prepare for action at 2.30 p.m. The fleet came within point-blank range of the fort but the wind shifted suddenly from N.W. to S.W. by W. This forced the fleet to anchor at a much greater distance than they intended, having hoped to run in close. Nevertheless, the ships continued to cannonade and bombard the fort for nearly three hours - but with little success. The *Bombay* cut its cable and ran at 4.30, being on fire in the starboard quarter. At the same time, the wind freshened and seemed likely to stand against them. As it was not possible to warp the ships nearer, the signal for engaging was lowered and the ships ran out a little way. The *Revenge* and the *Bombay* had suffered a good deal in their masts and rigging, and had a number of shots in their hulls. Mīr Muhannā's forces had directed their fire very well, and had stood to their guns much better than expected. The *Revenge* had three of her men's legs shot off and the *Bombay* had ten men wounded, one fatally, while the schooner *Dolphin* had one man killed.

Another Council of War, composed as before, was called in the evening (20th) to prepare for renewing the attack in the morning if the weather permitted.<sup>140</sup> The next morning, the English force accordingly returned to sea but had received a letter from Skipp in the meantime, asking for them to write a letter, in the name of the Commanders on the expedition, to Karīm Khān. The occasion for the letter was that the Khān had often asked that they should brief him on the situation at Khark and whether it was necessary for a body of his troops to be ordered to act in conjunction with the English for the reduction of the island. Until this much was confirmed to him there was no possibility of persuading him to give the English such help.<sup>141</sup>

The letter to Karīm Khān (see Appendix 31) was written that day, the 21st, and concluded:

Confiding in this your royal promise, we are now resolved to suspend all further hostile proceedings against the Enemy in regard to his Town, till the Junction of those Troops with our Forces (unless the orders of our Superior the Agent at Bussora should direct otherwise) hoping the number will amount to at least 3,000 men and that they will be in readiness to proceed to Action before the heats, from which they might find some inconvenience, are much further advanced.<sup>142</sup>

As there were a number of sick and wounded in the fleet, arrangements were made to send them to Bushire, where a hospital was prepared for their reception.<sup>143</sup> Three of Mīr Muhannā's gallivats did not return to Bushire that day, although they had been chasing six of the boats which had sailed from Bushire to join the fleet and which were now returning to Bushire.<sup>144</sup>

After a long meeting, lasting some hours, with Karīm Khān on 23 May 1768 Skipp had finally made enough progress to confirm him in his resolve to send a body of men. He promised Skipp he would do so, and when Skipp repeatedly asked him if he was fully committed and whether Skipp could depend upon it, he declared that Skipp could be quite sure of it; he would not break his word and he proposed sending about 7,000 men commanded by Zakī Khān.

While Skipp was with him, Karīm Khān sent for Zakī Khān and ordered him to be ready to take the command of these forces and depart in six days. At the same time, Karīm gave directions for the necessary orders to be sent to Bushire for the ships, gallivats and boats to be ready to transport the troops. When the Khān announced his intention of sending 7,000 men, Skipp told him that it was more than was necessary: half of that number was quite sufficient to ensure success, but the Khān remarked that he was determined on that number to be certain that no shame should befall his army. But when it was time to send these orders to Bushire on 24 May, Karīm Khān's intentions changed completely and he would not now send a single man, claiming that the heat would be the death of all his people. However, on the return of the man he had sent to Bushire with the order for the boats he would then decide how to proceed. This was merely a pretence to keep the English in play while Mīr Muhannā, in the meantime, might send to make peace with him.<sup>145</sup>

After this farce Skipp wrote on the same day, the 24th, to Elphinstone:

I am led to think that let what will be the case and notwithstanding the solemn assurances he has all along given, he will not send a single man to the reduction of Carrack. Therefore should we make the attempt alone and not be ordained with success we shall then I hope have an opportunity of taking our own Satisfaction. I acquainted you of the above in order that you make what use you may think necessary thereof.<sup>146</sup>

Being given this scope for action, Elphinstone tried on 29 May to burn three of Mīr Muhannā's gallivats but his ships grounded, and with the gallivats being hauled too far up the beach for any chance of success, they were obliged to return. At the same time, Mīr Muhannā had laid a plan against the English in which he was to be very fortunate. The *Eagle*, the *Wolf* and a storeship being in need of water, they were ordered to Kharku on 27 May for that purpose: the English were afraid that if they sent the storeship to Bushire she would be unable to rejoin the fleet for a long period. The Commander-in-Chief gave orders to his officers that they were not to land if they saw any people on the island. They therefore examined the island closely before

sending their casks ashore but, out of fear of a surprise attack, Elphinstone also ordered one officer and 50 sepoy ashore to cover the watering party, with orders to embark every night at sunset. This order was duly complied with. On the 28th Captains Nelson and Bigg went on shore and walked all over the island without seeing the least sign of people, but it seems that during the night Mīr Muhannā sent 40 or 50 men in small boats who hid themselves in trenches dug in the sand. The next morning they waited for the watering party and sepoy guards to land and, about an hour and a half later, the Mīr's men rushed from their hiding places and threw the sepoy guard into confusion. Most of the guard threw their arms down and ran into the water: the few who stood to their arms were all cut to pieces to the number of twelve dead and six wounded. Of the four Europeans sent to fill the casks two were cut down and two taken prisoner (but see casualty report in Table 5.1 below).

As soon as the Commander-in-Chief saw the fighting he embarked all the troops from the *Revenge* and the *Bombay* into boats to send to the shore party's assistance, while the *Eagle* and the *Wolf* kept up a constant fire upon the Mīr's men. At this the latter boarded the small boats which had landed them during the night. Elphinstone signalled the *Bombay* and the *Fancy* to try and cut them off before they reached Khark, but the little or no wind prevented them from doing so.

Seeing that it was not necessary for the troops to land, and with everyone except those cut down now re-embarked, the Commander-in-Chief ordered everyone back to their respective ships. The English now knew that they had a bold and daring enemy to deal with: one who would exploit all manner of opportunities; whose troops were excellently disciplined; one who, since the first arrival of the English at Khark, had made great improvements in his fortifications to the surprise of those qualified to judge; and one whose people were far from being disaffected - quite the contrary. Elphinstone was obliged now to despatch the *Fancy*, *Wolf* and the storeship to Bushire for water, firewood and to land the wounded sepoys. The storeship was ordered to remain at Bushire until further orders, while the *Fancy* and the *Wolf* would return to



the fleet as soon as they had completed watering and loaded firewood. As the *Wolf* had lost most of her men in the last action Morley was asked to hire some Arab seamen to help work her. The eight boats without crews previously sent from Bushire were returned by these vessels.<sup>147</sup>

**Table 5.1: The watering party on Kharku:  
casualty list**<sup>148</sup>

	Killed	Wounded	Missing
European seamen	4		1
Sepoys	17	5	
Artillery lascars	1		
Sea lascars	1		
<i>Topasses</i>	1		
-----			
<b>Totals</b>	24	5	1
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On Mīr Muhannā's side more than one hundred died in Khark fort during the attack made by the English on 20 May 1768.<sup>149</sup>

### **5.8 The expulsion of Mīr Muhannā from Khark Island**

When Karīm Khān finally declared to Skipp that he could not send any men to assist in the Khark expedition (see page 209) he conceded that he was ashamed to admit this and was greatly obliged to the English for the help they were ready to give him. If the English could stay until August he would be grateful; he could then send a large body of men and would grant the English any favours they required. In the meantime he asked them not to attempt anything against Mīr Muhannā without a good chance of success because that would only weaken the English force to no good purpose.<sup>150</sup>

The English, however, were fed up with the Khān's manoeuvrings and took three decisions:

- i) As the Khān's troops were not yet embarked and he saw no likelihood of them doing so, Moore ordered the Commanders on 26 June 1768 to return to Bushire with the *Revenge* and *Essex*. On their arrival Morley would load them with the woollens, thereby reducing the value of the Company's property at risk from Rs 80,000 to Rs 40,000. On 10 August Moore further ordered the amount at risk to be reduced to Rs 5,000 and added that if Morley thought that the English personnel and the remaining effects were in any danger, whether from Karīm Khān, the Shaikhs of Bushire or from any other direction, he should embark them all forthwith on the *Revenge* and sail straight to Basrah.<sup>151</sup>
- ii) Moore similarly ordered Skipp on 26 June 1768 to quit Shiraz, unless Karīm Khān marched his troops in 15 days with orders to embark them for Khark. Skipp was directed to propose various articles to Karīm Khān for his acceptance, on condition that the English squadron stayed three more months,<sup>152</sup> whereby the Khān's troops would have to be marching by 27 July 1768, or close to it, and ready to embark in accordance with Skipp's requirements for the capture of Khark.<sup>153</sup>
- iii) If the Persian troops were not ready to proceed on the expedition by 31 August the whole expedition would return to Bombay.

In line with Skipp's agreement with Karīm Khān, Moore wrote to the Khān on 15 July to confirm the arrangements and added:

In obedience to your Majesty's commands and in expectation that your Troops will be in readiness for the service of Carrack according to the time you have promised, and which is no more than two and thirty days from this date I have directed the Commanders of our ships and Soldiers to wait your orders at Bushire and again to commence their operations against the Island of Carrack whenever your Majestys troops and Ships are ready to insure the reduction thereof.<sup>154</sup>

To reactivate the operation against Khark island Moore sent instructions on 27 July 1768 to Charles Elphinstone and Lawrence Nelson, the Commanders of the expedition, to move to Bushire to brief themselves from the English Factors there as to the movements of Karīm Khān's troops:<sup>155</sup>

- a) If the Khān's troops had arrived at Bushire or Bandar Rīq and had embarked on the Persian fleet by 31 August, the Commanders would go with them to join the other division of the squadron off Khark and would jointly do their utmost to capture the island and arrest Mīr Muhannā.
- b) If the Khān's troops were not embarked by 31 August, the *Bombay*, the gallivat *Wolf* and the storeship *Essex* would return with the expeditionary force to Bombay. The squadron composed of the *Revenge*, *Eagle*, the bomb-ketch *Fancy*, and the schooners *Tyger* and *Dolphin* would remain in the Gulf: the *Eagle*, *Fancy* and *Dolphin* to continue cruising off Khark, and the *Revenge* and *Tyger* to be placed under the orders of the Factors at Bushire.

Karīm Khān ordered the Bushire fleet in readiness on 15 August 1768 for the transport of his troops and Shaikh 'Isā, appointed Commander-in-Chief of his Marine forces by the Khān, was preparing the Bushire vessels for the task.<sup>156</sup> In June an emissary from Shaikh Khalīfah of Grain (modern Kuwait) had arrived in Bushire to propose amalgamating his vessels with those of Bushire against Khark, and Shaikh 'Isā had sent one gallivat and two *dinghis* to reinforce the Kuwaiti fleet. Now Shaikh Khalīfah arrived at Bushire with his fleet, asking Shaikh 'Isā for reinforcements to enable him to go in pursuit of Mīr Muhannā's gallivats.<sup>157</sup>

Karīm Khān's animosity towards Mīr Muhannā and desire to destroy him was believed to be more for his family than himself. His government was too well established and he himself too powerful for the Mīr to give him even one moment's anxiety. He had completed the conquest of Persia and, after great efforts, pacified all the inland provinces. He had conferred the most important positions, civil and military, on the chief people of his own tribe, in whom the kingdom's revenues at that time were centred, in the hope that they would support his son after his death. Mīr Muhannā was by birth the chief Shaikh of the coast and most of the province was formerly under his family's control; he had never sworn obedience to Karīm Khān and was the only leader still undefeated. The inhabitants of Dashtistān were a

troublesome, rebellious people who were much more attached to their tribes and Shaikhs since the death of Nādir Shāh than to the present government of Karīm Khān. After some violence committed by them about a year previously Karīm Khān had ordered the whole province to be wiped out but, after his ministers remonstrated with him, suspended the order: only 75 men of Ganawah lost their heads as a result.

Karīm Khān realised that after his death Mīr Muhannā would be the first to rebel against his son and would be joined by the whole province once he landed at Bandar Rīq: a rebellion breaking out so near to the capital would run like wildfire through the people before a leader became established and gained the power to subdue them. Some of them might be induced to join Mīr Muhannā and it would be impossible in that event for his son to keep a standing army in such a poorly-provided area, just to prevent the Mīr's forays. Whenever threatened by a superior force Mīr Muhannā had a secure refuge in Khark for himself and his followers which he could always depend upon. He might cause the Khān's son a good deal of trouble which could prove his downfall: if his son kept an army on the coast the tribes of the interior would rise and could not be kept in subjection.<sup>158</sup>

Mīr Muhannā, as it happened, was now ill and weakened by the loss of many of his people - 100 killed in the English attack of 20 May 1768 against Khark fort and others having deserted - and harassed by the English fleet cruising off Khark.<sup>159</sup> He sent a boat at the beginning of July 1768 with a message to the Shaikh of Bushire, offering his assistance in the event of Karīm Khān having designs on Bushire. The Shaikh, in reply, sent one of his servants over to Khark - something which had never happened from the time Mīr Muhannā took Khark and which ran the risk of the Khān's anger if it became known to him. In Bushire it was regarded as a remarkable step and it was supposed that the Mīr had sent some extraordinary news for the two of them to be plotting together. Whatever the case, and in apparent desperation, Mīr Muhannā decided to try his luck against the grab *Bombay* by sending six gallivats and many

boats armed with his best people in the hope of meeting up with the grab alone, either at Bushire or elsewhere.

The English expedition started firing on the Mīr's gallivats on 15 August 1768 and had some success in harassing the Mīr but, on the same day, the *Speedwell*, an English boat carrying a packet from Shiraz, en route from Bushire to Basrah, unluckily fell in with one of the Mīr's armed gallivats off Khark. The gallivat chased the *Speedwell* and drove it ashore near Bandar Rīq, where the packet was hidden before the attackers carried off the cargo of cloth (see also Chapter 6.1). The packet contained a letter from Skipp to Moore, mainly to advise him that Karīm Khān was still assuring him that the troops he had promised would set out from Shiraz by 21 August at the latest, and that he had sent orders to the Ka'b and several Shaikhs on the Persian coast to have their gallivats and boats ready at Bushire for transporting the troops to Khark. He added that Karīm Khān himself was getting ready to go with them. Five of Mīr Muhannā's gallivats escaped from Khark by night on 15 August and quickly overpowered a twin-masted ship attacked off Halela on the 17th. The *Bombay* and the two schooners came in sight of the gallivats and continued the chase until the evening of the 18th: the very light wind during that period enabled the gallivats with the help of their oars to outrun the English vessels and they escaped with their prize to an island near Grain on the Arab shore, where they awaited further orders from Mīr Muhannā.<sup>160</sup>

At the beginning of August 1768, Karīm Khān wrote to Moore, the Agent at Basrah, saying that he had reviewed all the preparations for the departure of the troops going to Ganawah by 31 August 1768 and had appointed his brother, Muḥammad Zakī Khān, as their commander. He asked for three or four vessels to be kept in readiness to assist him in the expedition against the Mīr.<sup>161</sup> (see Appendix 32) In Shiraz, Karīm Khān told his brother, Zakī Khān, that his troops were to proceed to Ganawah and embark on the English vessels, and the Bushire and Bahrain fleets.<sup>162</sup> Moore agreed

to help with the remaining English vessels going with the Persian fleet against Mīr Muhannā on condition:

- a) that Karīm Khān should immediately order the Ka‘b to send 15,000 Tomans to Moore at Basrah as compensation for losses, as the Khān had ordered;
- and b) that he should send someone of substance from his Court to Basrah to negotiate with Moore on the subject of English trade in the Khān’s territories.

Moore promised that when these two points had been settled to the satisfaction of the English, they would then, but not before, negotiate with him about helping his move against Mīr Muhannā<sup>163</sup> (see Appendix 33).

The deadline of 31 August passed and by 2 September 1768 the Persian troops promised by Karīm Khān to help the English in the capture of Khark had still not arrived at any of the sea ports in the neighbourhood of Bushire. The grab *Bombay* therefore set course for India, together with the storeship *Essex* and the gallivat *Wolf*. The English woollens at Bushire, to the value of Rs 76,784, were shipped on the *Revenge*, leaving only about Rs 5,000 worth to remain, and proceeded to Basrah. Permission was again given to the Resident to embark himself, the staff and remaining effects on the cruisers and go with them to Basrah if need be.<sup>164</sup>

In September 1768 Morley ordered Captain Thomas Farmer, then Commander-in-Chief of the Company’s Marine force in the Gulf, to despatch the *snow Eagle*, the bomb-ketch *Fancy* and the schooner *Dolphin* to cruise between Bushire and Khark island, and the *Revenge* and *Tyger* to cruise on to Basrah. Their aim was to prevent Mīr Muhannā having any communication with the Persian mainland, where his people had frequently carried off provisions from Halela on his five gallivats; as also to protect any of the English trading vessels coming from the south or elsewhere and to take or destroy all gallivats belonging to Mīr Muhannā which might come within reach.<sup>165</sup> From September 1768 to January 1769 the English vessels cruised the Persian coast

from Bushire to Basrah. Mīr Muhannā's gallivats were doing the same, sometimes reaching and attacking Qishm island, where there was no protection for English trading vessels: but no confrontation took place between the Mīr and the English. He had nine gallivats, several of which carried six 9-pounders and 2 swivel-guns: they had between 70 and 80 men in each. Apart from these vessels he had several armed trankeys. By December 1768 the English vessels were in a poor condition and were unaccustomed to the weather at that time of year, so were kept most of the time in port during January. The costs of the English vessels in December 1768 were Rs 2,510 but in January 1769 amounted to only Rs 374.7.<sup>166</sup>

The Persian military commander, Zakī Khān, encamped at Ganawah in November with an army of about 3,000 men. He remained there during the winter but Karīm Khān seemed to have no intention at that time to order his troops to attack Khark. On 6 November, Shaikh 'Isā, the Shaikh of Bahrain and brother of Shaikh Sa'dūn of Bushire, sailed from Bushire to Ganawah in order to receive the Khān's troops on board.<sup>167</sup>

As for Mīr Muhannā, on 26 January 1769 he imprisoned eight of his gallivat nakhodas on some unknown charge, and the heads of the most important Arab tribes on the island went to him to request their release. Muhannā agreed, subject to them paying him money, and set them free as soon as the money was paid. The principal nakhoda then rallied the leading people of the island to his side and they rose up against Mīr Muhannā, killing about 60 of his guards and supporters as he sat unsuspectingly in a silversmith's shop. He himself was wounded by scimitars and escaped with great difficulty, accompanied by ten men, to a small boat and made his way to the Basrah river. Another boat from Basrah accompanied his own and, on arriving at the mouth of the river, Mīr Muhannā took the nakhoda from the Basrah boat, who knew the river, into his, and they continued up Khor Abdullah (see the Atlas, Map no. 62). His intention was to put himself under the protection of Shaikh Thāmir, the son of the brother of Shaikh 'Abdallāh of the Muntafiq, with whom there

had been a long-standing friendship. Next day, when Mīr Muhannā was expecting to reach Zubair, the Turkish Mūtesellim (Governor) of Basrah was told of the Mīr's arrival on 3 February 1769 and sent 40 horsemen to find him. They left Zubair very early on 4 February to search along the banks of Khor Abdullah and soon found the Mīr with his ten slaves coming towards them on camels and horses. The Mūtesellim's men were worried that Muhannā would be alarmed if he saw Turks so deep into the desert and might escape to his boat. They therefore shed their Turkish capes and some of them circled around to intercept any move to his boat, and surrounded him before arousing his suspicions.

When the search party came up to Muhannā he expressed surprise at finding Turks so far into the desert, but they told him that it was quite usual for the Mūtesellim to send them out there in order to keep the roads clear of robbers. As the Mīr and his men appeared to be strangers they must allow themselves to be taken to Basrah to explain themselves to the Governor. The Mīr told them that he intended only to pay a visit to Shaikh Thāmir, after which he would continue to Baghdad before returning to Basrah. When he found that they would not allow this he followed them quietly towards Basrah. After some time Muhannā stopped, dismounted from his horse and said he could go no further without having his shoulder wound dressed: he therefore asked permission to return to Zubair, which they had passed not long before, after which he promised to accompany them to Basrah. A scuffle might have ensued except that 20 more Turkish horsemen arrived and forced him to continue on the road to Basrah. The Zubair people belonged to the Muntafiq and had shown a disposition to protect the Mīr, but he was rapidly taken to Government House in Basrah, where he was very well treated by the Mūtesellim but remained there as a Turkish prisoner.<sup>168</sup>

### **5.9 The withdrawal of the English settlement from Bushire**

In May 1768, Morley wrote to the Agent in Basrah telling him that Shaikh Nāṣir, the brother of the Shaikh of Bushire, had made frequent demands over the previous few



months, insisting that the Company should pay him an additional Rs 1,000 a year for the rent of the factory. In this he assumed that the English, having no other place to go, would have to agree to these exorbitant terms.<sup>169</sup> Then, in March 1768, he had resumed the dispute he had begun with Bowyear about the rent for the factory and ordered his attorney to give Morley notice that the English could no longer occupy it without paying him Rs 2,000 a year. Morley refused to accept such a great increase.<sup>170</sup> Shaikh Sa'dūn, too, in July 1768 insisted on being paid Rs 1,000 a year for serving as the factory's broker.<sup>171</sup>

Morley found himself put into a very difficult situation in January 1769 by Shaikh Manşūr, the eldest son of Shaikh Nāşir. He received a letter informing him that Manşūr's father had directed him to enter into a new agreement for the factory rent, for which he was demanding Rs 1,500 a year, and in claiming the arrears also insisted on receiving Rs 1,000 rent for every lunar year of 354 days from the time the English first took possession. This would make a difference of about 70 days to which he was certainly not entitled, as it was the general custom among the Persians, as well as the Europeans, to allow 365 days to the year in all bargains struck for that term. The Shaikhs themselves took advantage of that interpretation in their agreements with the Kings of Persia governing their annual tribute.

Despite being treated in such a cavalier manner, Morley did not enter into any argument with Shaikh Manşūr, contenting himself with replying that his decision would be made known by Shaikh Ḥājjī, the son of Shaikh Sa'dūn, who was Governor of Bushire at that time. He intended seeing Shaikh Ḥājjī the next day to see to what extent he would countenance these demands, and act accordingly. In the interim, however, he heard that some of Shaikh Nāşir's men, armed with large clubs, had been at the Hospital, which belonged to him, ordering the sick to move out immediately. It was only with great difficulty that they could be persuaded not to use violence, even though it was then late in the evening and there were no other places of shelter to be found: knowing that the patients were leaving a house belonging to

Shaikh Nāṣir, the local people would fear upsetting him by making any others available. There were no other caravanserais into which they could move.

Shaikh Ḥājjī went to Morley who stressed the injustice and discourtesy of these events and said that unless the Shaikh could guarantee him no further harassment he would no longer regard Bushire as a safe place for the Company's employees and effects, and would therefore immediately withdraw. This statement seemed to alarm the Shaikh a good deal and he expressed deep concern at the problems encountered by the English, which he attributed to Shaikh Manṣūr's obstinacy. He assured Morley that it was far from Shaikh Nāṣir's intention to give any offence to the English and that he could depend on having no cause for future complaints. Having also promised that Morley would receive a written agreement signed by Shaikh Manṣūr on behalf of Shaikh Nāṣir that the factory rent would continue to be Rs 1,000 for a year of 365 days, Shaikh Ḥājjī asked for a favour for which he would be greatly obliged. As regards the difference of 70 days in what the Company had paid in the past, he suggested a compromise to resolve the dispute by which Morley should pay Rs 1,000 in full settlement of all demands for the factory rent. Morley agreed to these terms.<sup>172</sup>

The next day, some of the Hospital people were trying to get in a local boat in order to go aboard the cruisers, when Morley heard that the Shaikh had placed a guard near the factory so as not allow them to put off, nor to take away any of the Company's effects. Morley consequently sent to see Shaikh Ḥājjī again. On his call the latter said it gave him the greatest concern to have just received orders from Zakī Khān which obliged him to detain Morley: unless the Persians were obeyed to the letter his father and two uncles at Shiraz might inevitably fall victim to the Khān's anger. Shaikh Ḥājjī told Morley that he was waiting for Zakī Khān's messenger to return soon from Shiraz, and he was certain he would receive orders not to molest the English.<sup>173</sup>

Morley now decided to withdraw the settlement from Bushire and wrote to the President and Governor in Council at Bombay:

In this situation I am now preparing for my departure and flatter myself your Honours will approve of the measures I have taken having acted entirely from a regard to the interest of my Honble Employers, with which, I must likewise beg to observe, the continuance of this settlement would in my opinion be no way consistent, while our affairs in the Gulf are in an unprosperous state, considering the treatment we have lately received from Sheik Nasir.<sup>174</sup>

Early on the morning of 6 February 1769, without giving the Shaikh any previous warning of such an intention, the Resident, James Morley, together with John Bothman, the Factor at Bushire, embarked with all the Company's effects on the *Revenge* and left for Basrah. On the 8th, the snow *Eagle*, the bomb-ketch *Fancy*, and the schooners *Dolphin* and *Tyger* took the same course.<sup>175</sup>

### 5.10 Conclusion

The withdrawal of the English from Bushire was probably inevitable, arising as it did from four fundamental factors.

- a) The commotions Although the English at Bushire acted in a neutral manner, their trade was forced into decline in any case by an environment of conflict and instability beyond their control. The English were boxed into a very difficult situation between Karīm Khān's demands and Mīr Muhannā's hostility. They had suffered palpable losses at Mīr Muhannā's hands, and yet Karīm Khān was so angry that the English would not (as he believed) help him against the Mīr that he determined not to receive the English Linguist, nor to admit their Ambassador at Shiraz to an audience.
- b) Corruption The poor quality of the staff (Jervis and the Linguist) gave rise to corrupt and costly management. Without any authorisation from Bombay, Jervis offered Karīm Khān the use of the Company's fleet to destroy Mīr Muhannā and the Ka'b, against a payment of Rs 50,000. This caused a distortion of the facts in Karīm Khān's mind and fuelled his 'disgust' with the English for many years. The Linguist,

Stephen Hermit, in his attempt to secure renewed grants from Karīm Khān, failed to obtain a single grant relating to Bushire. On the contrary, he had all the grants so written that the Company appeared to be firmly committed to settling at Bushaib: wherever Bushire had been mentioned in the grants formerly received from Šādiq Khān, Hermit had inserted Bushaib. By his carelessness, Hermit embroiled the Company and the Persian Government in many difficulties.

c) The poor financial returns From 1766 onwards the Company had sustained an annual loss of Rs 2,000 on the Persian Gulf account: English sales were trivial and no Shiraz merchant had been near Bushire. It is instructive to set out a rudimentary financial balance sheet for the 18 months from July 1767 to December 1768 (see Table 5.2). Staff costs and the cost of security, including the cruiser and soldiers, exceeded the revenue from sales. In all the circumstances it is remarkable that sales reached almost Rs 150,000.

d) Unsuccessful military operations There were, in addition, heavy expenditure and losses caused by the three unsuccessful military operations:

i) The expedition against the Ka'b (1766).

In July 1765 the English lost three ships, the *Sally*, the *Yacht* and the *Fort William*, captured by the Ka'b. On 10 March 1766 an English expedition arrived at Bushire to punish the Ka'b, but the attack ended in a painful defeat, with casualties and losses estimated at Rs 500,000.

ii) The expedition against Hormuz (1767).

The aim of the expedition to Hormuz was to recover the pearls and treasure taken from the *Islamabad* in February 1765 by the Arab lascars in its crew. Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz was accused of being involved in taking the treasure, which was estimated at Rs 3-400,000. The expedition was sent to Hormuz on 25 October 1767 but, on 15 November of the same year, its flagship, the *Defiance*, blew up. Only 35 men from the 300 or more on board were saved.

**Table 5.2: Balance sheet for Bushire  
trading, July 1767-December 1768**

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Rupees</b>
George Skipp's expenses at Bushire, August 1767	1,000
Advance to Skipp, October 1767	5,400
Payments for freight vessels (native boats)	3,244
Skipp's expenses at Shiraz, September 1768	13,500
Rentals for two years (July 1767 & July 1768)	2,000
Arrears of the rentals, 1763-1767	1,000
Cruiser costs - 4 months at 2,510	10,040
Linguist's salary July 1767-December 1768	900
Linguist's bonus (600 a year)	1,200
Bushire factory; staff salaries, July 1767-December 1768; Bushire guards (6 soldiers, 5 artillery men, one officer) for same period; Stables for same period	116,000
Cost of the Grab (service boat) July 1767- December 1768	<u>5,400</u>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b><u>Rs 159,684</u></b> <sup>176</sup>
<hr/>	
<b>Money borrowed from the Basrah Agency July 1767-December 1768</b>	
August 1767	10,000
November 1767	2,000
July 1767	<u>20,000</u>
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b><u>Rs 32,000</u></b>
<hr/>	
<b>Money repaid to Basrah Agency July 1767-December 1768</b>	
January 1768 (Bill of Exchange)	2,400
January 1768 (specie)	3,000
May 1768 (Bill of Exchange)	700
September (specie)	15,000
December 1768 (specie)	<u>1,164</u>
<b>Total repayments</b>	<b><u>Rs 22,264</u></b>
<hr/>	
<b>Sales balance July 1767-December 1768</b>	
Expenditure brought forward	159,684
Money repaid to Basrah	<u>22,264</u>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>181,948</b>
Less: Money borrowed from Basrah	<u>-32,000</u>
<b>Net sales</b>	<b>149,948</b>
<b>Losses on sales [as shown in the records]</b>	<b><u>3,585</u></b> <sup>177</sup>

iii) The expedition against Mīr Muhannā (1768).

The main objective of the English in this expedition was to reduce the island of Khark and capture Mīr Muhannā. The action was to be taken jointly with Karīm Khān but they remained, to the end, in negotiation rather than co-operation with him. When the English sent a party ashore on Khargu for water, Mīr Muhannā attacked them, killing 24, wounding 5 and leaving one missing.

These four factors well illustrate the problems of trading in the Gulf; when they operate together, as happened at Bushire, the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

Lorimer levelled the charge of unilaterally withdrawing the Residency from Bushire against Morley:

... Mr. J. Morley, the Resident at Būshehr, who seems to have had an inkling of their intentions before they were carried out, and who foresaw a rupture with Karīm Khān as the probable consequence that early in February he took steps, on his own responsibility, for withdrawing the Residency from Būshehr.<sup>178</sup>

But this is incorrect, since Moore had written to Morley on 11 October 1768 giving him permission to leave Bushire:

We again repeat our permission to you to embark yourselves and effects on board such cruizers as may be on the Bushire station and repair therewith to Bussora, in case you see any cause for apprehension from the Caun or his Troops.<sup>179</sup>

The 'cause for apprehension' from the Khān was shown in Morley's letter of 14 February 1769 to the President and Governor at Bombay, when he reported the visit of the Shaikh of Bushire's son:

On his second visit, he said it gave him the greatest uneasiness to have received the late orders from Zackey Caun, which laid him under an absolute necessity of detaining me, for that unless they were punctually obeyed his Father and two uncles at Shiraz must inevitably fall a sacrifice to the Caun's resentment.<sup>180</sup>

Morley clearly knew that he was warranted in withdrawing from Bushire, as he showed in his letter to the President and Governor in Bombay quoted on page 221.

Moreover, he received support for his action from Moore, in Basrah, who recorded his opinion that Morley 'acted prudently' in withdrawing; Moore did not bother to reply to Shaikh Ḥājjī's letter complaining of Morley's departure<sup>181</sup> (see Appendix 34).

Moreover, it has been shown above that, quite apart from the fear of the Khān, there were several other factors which indirectly motivated the withdrawal of the English settlement from Bushire. Whatever the case, profitable trade was impossible and the end result was that the perilous situation in Bushire induced the Resident, Morley, to leave there in February 1769, when he embarked all of the Company's effects on the *Revenge* and left for Basrah. In Chapter 6 the trade potential of Bushire becomes clear as turmoil gives way to peace.

## Chapter 5: References

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- <sup>2</sup> Jerome Antony Saldanha, ed., *The Persian Gulf Précis*, 8 vols.: vol.1, *Selections from State Papers, Bombay, regarding the East India Company's connection with the Persian Gulf: with a summary of events 1600-1800* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), pp.151-2.
- <sup>3</sup> Carsten Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie* (Copenhagen: Nicolas Möller, 1773), p.299. (in French)
- <sup>4</sup> B.J. Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784* (Leidschendam: 1993), p.17.
- <sup>5</sup> William Monteith, 'Notes on the Routes from Bushire to Shiraz', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol.27 (London: 1857), pp.108-19.
- <sup>6</sup> IOR, G/29/14, Report dated 24 December 1761.
- <sup>7</sup> Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), (General State Archives, The Hague), Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC): Archives of the Dutch East India Company (in Dutch), 2864, pp.1518-42,1595-9.
- <sup>8</sup> John Gordon Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia* 2 vols. in 4 pts. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908-15), vol.1, p.128.
- <sup>9</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.16.
- <sup>10</sup> IOR, G/29/14, Report dated 24 December 1761.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., Report dated 29 March 1762.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., Report dated 9 September 1762.
- <sup>13</sup> IOR, Bushire Residency Records, R/15/1/1, p.395.
- <sup>14</sup> Bombay Archives (BA), Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.22-30.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.30-8.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.30; IOR, R/15/1/1, p.395.
- <sup>17</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.31-4; IOR, R/15/1/1, p.392.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.163-4,166,168,178,191-4.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.166.
- <sup>21</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.174,180; IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.49-50,401-2.
- <sup>22</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, p.38; IOR, R/15/1/1, p.395.



- <sup>23</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.442.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.123.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp.124,409; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, p.76.
- <sup>27</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.417.
- <sup>28</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, pp.99-100; IOR, R/15/1/1, p.413.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, p.98.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp.92,106; IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.128,412,415.
- <sup>32</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.142,144,157,415,420; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, pp.66,97-8,124,130,148-9.
- <sup>33</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, p.111.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp.145-7,150; IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.140,144.
- <sup>35</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, pp.236-7,246.
- <sup>36</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.431.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 194, p.59.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 195, pp.16,32-8,59.
- <sup>40</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.164,167,169,172,174,439,448.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.423.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.437.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.170.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.451.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.482.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.60.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.453.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp.178,231.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp.183,231,472.
- <sup>50</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, p.352.
- <sup>51</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.154-5,171,426,440.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.171.

- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.456.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.194.
- <sup>56</sup> Slot, *Arabs*, pp.372-3.
- <sup>57</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 195, p.89.
- <sup>58</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.460,477.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.214.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.205.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.469.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.473.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.482.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.236,474.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp.215,503,480.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.214.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.480.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.487.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.251.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.488.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp.176,185,194.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp.201,219.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.200.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.231.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp.135,253.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp.236,249.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.493.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.205.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp.274,282.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.298.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.216.
- <sup>82</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 196, pp.430-3.

- <sup>83</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.489; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.20-4.
- <sup>84</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.259. The letter is wrongly dated by the writer who made the copy: the year is 1767, not 1768.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.503.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid.; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, p.47.
- <sup>88</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.277.
- <sup>89</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.28-9.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp.20-4.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp.21-2.
- <sup>92</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.271,509.
- <sup>93</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.37-8.
- <sup>94</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.503.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.506.
- <sup>96</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.57-8.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp.59-63,77.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp.89-90.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.90.
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp.144,173.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp.216-7.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., p.247.
- <sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp.178-9.
- <sup>104</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.143.
- <sup>105</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, p.179.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp.179-80.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp.208-11.
- <sup>108</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.234.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.486.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., p.249.
- <sup>111</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.224,259,266,308.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp.266-7.

- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp.282-5.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp.307-9.
- <sup>115</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.13.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp.15-16.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp.23-5,305-10,313-14.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., p.22.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.,pp.315-17.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.26.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid., pp.312,322.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., p.20.
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.30.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.319.
- <sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp.30,324.
- <sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.30.
- <sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp.33,326.
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid., p.325.
- <sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.35.
- <sup>131</sup> Ibid., p.327.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid., p.328.
- <sup>133</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>134</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.337.
- <sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.333.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp.40,42.
- <sup>138</sup> Ibid., p.335.
- <sup>139</sup> Ibid., p.47.
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.38.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp.338,340.
- <sup>142</sup> Ibid., p.338.

- <sup>143</sup> Ibid., p.339.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid., pp.38,352.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid., p.67.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>147</sup> Ibid., p.66.
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid., p.346.
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp.73,78,342.
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-2,64,347-8.
- <sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.81.
- <sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.86.
- <sup>154</sup> Ibid., p.82.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.87.
- <sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp.65,359,361.
- <sup>157</sup> Ibid., pp.351,357-8.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.259.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid., pp.85,259,346,353.
- <sup>160</sup> Ibid., p.359,362-3,366-7,369.
- <sup>161</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.61-2.
- <sup>162</sup> Ibid., p.62.
- <sup>163</sup> Ibid., p.74.
- <sup>164</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.54,367,369,373.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp.56,58,65,279,372-3,375-7.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp.56,58,124,365-8,378,382,386,388-91; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.136,253.
- <sup>167</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.203,383.
- <sup>168</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.248-53,260,264-6.
- <sup>169</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.33.
- <sup>170</sup> Ibid., pp.18,33,302,304.
- <sup>171</sup> Ibid., p.350.
- <sup>172</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.262-4.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., pp.264-6.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., pp.261-2.

<sup>176</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.56,58,124,268,271,281,285,347,365-8,373,378,382,386,388-91; BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.136,253,262.

<sup>177</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, pp.12,65,285,335,391.

<sup>178</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol.1, p.1809.

<sup>179</sup> IOR, R/15/1/1, p.53.

<sup>180</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.264-6.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p.267.

## CHAPTER 6

### BUSHIRE FROM TURMOIL TO PEACE

(1769-1820)

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter sees a transition from turmoil to peace in Bushire; from withdrawal from a field of repeated disasters, through confrontation of the enemy, to his decline, to the birth of another dynasty and, finally, peace. Most of the stages in this transition were realised through the actions of Henry Moore, who arrived in Basrah in February 1769 to take over control of all English affairs in the Gulf from the Basrah factory. The factory had been established in June 1640, after the first visit of an English vessel there on 31 May 1640.<sup>1</sup> In his *Travels in Mesopotamia*, Buckingham mentions the Basrah factory, which he visited in 1816<sup>2</sup>, and says 'it has continued to exist almost without interruption ever since'.<sup>3</sup> In reality, during the period of this study the factory was removed to Grain (Kuwait) for nearly three years, 1793-5 (see page 270 and Figure 5.1).

#### 6.1 The English and Khark Island

On 14 February 1769, the Agent at Basrah, Henry Moore, held a Consultation with John Beaumont, George Green and a Mr Lewis to discuss making good the English losses and expenses at Khark. They unanimously agreed:

- a) that the *Revenge*, *Eagle* and *Fancy* should be made ready to go to Khark as quickly as possible, and that the former Resident in Bushire, James Morley, should embark on the *Revenge* to find out on what terms the Kharkis wanted the friendship of the English.

b) that if the Kharkis chose to negotiate and make peace with the English, then Morley was empowered to make certain demands. If these were met he could promise English friendship and a guarantee of freedom from any harassment by the English. The English demands were:

- i) All the *gallivats* belonging to Mīr Muhannā, and their equipment, to be surrendered.
- ii) Ten *lacs* of *Rupees* to be paid on account of English losses and as compensation to the Company for its expenses.
- iii) The demolition of the fortifications and the hand-over of their ordnance to the East India Company.

The demands were to be made whether the Persians or the Kharkis were in power at Khark: if the first and second demands were complied with, the third could be waived. Those at the Consultation thought that there would be between 20 and 30 lacs of Rupees (Rs) worth of effects and money on Khark (but see Table 6.1 below).

If the Kharkis refused to negotiate it was decided that Morley should order the Commander of the squadron to do his best to seize all the Khark vessels, and to prevent, if possible, any effects being carried off - whether in the Khān's ships or otherwise. Morley was then to return with the *Eagle* and *Fancy* to Basrah, leaving the *Revenge* to cruise between the island and the mainland, until the other ships returned. If the Persians were in control of the island and were willing to accept the terms promised by Karīm Khān to Skipp during his first Embassy to Shiraz in August 1767, (*viz.* to surrender five lacs of Rupees, all of Mīr Muhannā's gallivats, all the warlike stores on the island and half of all effects there), Morley was authorised to accept. He was not, however, to allow any items to be taken from the island until the terms were fully complied with.

If the Kharkis refused to demolish the fortifications, but offered to hand the island over to the English on condition that the latter would protect them against the Per-



sians, Morley was to inform the Agent at Basrah of this and await his further orders. By then the Agent would very probably have received his own instructions from his superiors and could act accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

A report of 17 February 1769 claimed that 1,500 Persians had landed on the island of Khark that day, but Mīr Muhannā sent a servant from his prison to the Agent on 21 February to say that he had received news from Khark three days before to the effect that no Persian soldiers had arrived on Khark, although the place was in utter confusion. The servant added that Persians under Zakī Khān were said to be coming to Khark but that the islanders were determined not to surrender it.<sup>5</sup> By 22 February Morley had been given the instructions agreed in the Consultations, together with a letter to the interim Shaikh of Khark, foreshadowing the demands listed on page 234 (see Appendix 35). On the next morning, the 23rd, Morley sailed on board the *Revenge*, accompanied by a country (i.e. local) boat.<sup>6</sup>

Mīr Muhannā sent his servant to Moore, on 21 and again on 24 February 1769, to ask for help with some clothes, and the Agent agreed. But on 26 February Mīr Muhannā again sent to Moore asking to be taken under his protection, because the Mīr's situation under the Turks was dire. Moore told the servant that this was a request he could not comply with in any circumstances and asked not to be approached ever again on the subject.<sup>7</sup>

The expedition reached Khark island on 27 February 1769 and Morley despatched the country boat to the shore with the letter from the Agent to the interim Shaikh (who turned out to be Mīr Ḥusain Sulṭān), and another from himself asking the Shaikh to send him someone who was authorised to negotiate with him about the conditions for entering into an agreement of mutual friendship (see Appendix 36). The Shaikh answered that he sincerely wanted to be in friendship with the English and that the town and island were entirely at their disposal (see Appendix 37). At the same time an Armenian came on board and told Morley that the Shaikh was asking him to go

ashore. Morley declined, thinking it unwise to put himself in the Shaikh's power until his negotiations were showing signs of success. The Armenian was therefore sent ashore with the Linguist, with orders to try to get the Shaikh to come aboard, or at least some other notable from the island who might negotiate. Next day, the Linguist returned with Mullā 'Abbās, who used to be employed by Mīr Muhannā in the management of his mercantile business at Basrah before the recent rupture between him and the Turks. He gave Morley to understand that the Shaikh was ready to clear out the small fort and make it over to the English, provided they entered into an alliance, both defensive and offensive, with him against the enemies of both parties. The Shaikh, he said, was convinced that this was the only way of making himself independent of Karīm Khān.

In reply to that offer, Morley asked Mullā 'Abbās to inform the Shaikh of the instructions he had about the expenses incurred by the East India Company in fighting against Mīr Muhannā, and the losses suffered by the English through his depredations. Morley told Mullā 'Abbās that the English would expect the payment of a sum of money equivalent to both these elements and that the gallivats must be handed over to the English, complete with their equipment. Mullā 'Abbās replied that, as to the money, he had no authority to make any proposals, and Mīr Ḥusain had never spoken to him on the subject. As regards the gallivats, however, Morley could assume that the Shaikh would never agree, although he would readily put them into English service if occasion arose, so long as the English settled on the island.

As Morley saw it, after considering Mīr Ḥusain's offer to surrender the small fort without making any other proposals, the Shaikh was still deceiving himself in the belief that the English would be satisfied with simply settling on the island, leaving the Shaikh in sure possession of all, or most, of his wealth and full use of his gallivats. Morley therefore thought it time to tell the Shaikh the terms which the Agent in Basrah had ordered him to try to obtain. He wrote accordingly, but the Shaikh was so angry that he returned a defiant reply, declaring that the island, and everything in it,

was the possession of Karīm Khān, and that he would give nothing up without the Khān's orders (see Appendix 38). Morley could see that it was pointless to try any more to bring the Shaikh to any terms of agreement which matched his instructions, so he sailed on 8 March 1769 to Basrah with the *Eagle* and *Fancy*, leaving the *Revenge* to cruise between Khark and the mainland. As for the actual situation on Khark, Morley had discovered only that the few Persians sent there from the mainland had now all returned, and that Karīm Khān had assured Mīr Ḥusain of his protection.<sup>8</sup>

As the new Mīr of Khark would not agree to the English terms Moore had no alternative to having English ships patrol between Khark, Bushire and Ganawah, trying to prevent goods being carried off from Khark. He believed that Khark was the only possible source for making good the Company's expenses in any shape or form. At this critical juncture, Moore hoped that a sizeable force might arrive from the Presidency and take Khark, with Mīr Muhannā unable to react and internal dissensions prevalent on the island.<sup>9</sup> As it was, at midnight on 24 March 1769, Mīr Muhannā and an attendant were strangled at Basrah by order of the Pasha of Baghdad: his head was sent to Baghdad and, from there, to Karīm Khān. Karīm Khān returned the favour by releasing a Turkish boat which he was holding at that time. Moore was disturbed by this crime and wrote to the Governor of Bombay on 2 April 1769 '... they have been guilty of this act of barbarity. How great soever might have been the Meer's crimes, he was not a Turkish subject, and his being overpowered and a prisoner ought surely to have entitled him to their humanity and protection, if not that they ought to have given him up to the Caun, and not have stained their hands with his blood.'<sup>10</sup>

While the English continued cruising between Khark, Bushire and Ganawah to preempt the carriage of goods from Khark, a boat brought news to Basrah on 23 March that Karīm Khān had confirmed Mīr Ḥusain in the Shaikhdом of the islands, and had appointed him 'Admiral of the Gulf'. The report also said that Karīm Khān had sent 20 people, including writers, to take stock of the effects on Khark and to bring him

those which belonged to Mīr Muhannā.<sup>11</sup> And by the end of March 1769 the Ka‘b’s gallivats were on their way to Ganawah to help Karīm Khān in Khark.<sup>12</sup>

The *Eagle* and *Fancy* returned from Khark on 4 April 1769 after failing to stop effects being removed from the island; at that time the islanders and the Persians were fully engaged in this. There were Bushire gallivats at Bandar Rīq and the Ka‘b fleet, consisting of ten gallivats, came to anchor at Khark. Lieutenant Mackenley of the *Eagle* was forced to leave the Khark station with the *Fancy* for want of provisions; he had no cattle on board and only one cask of salt meat<sup>13</sup> (see Appendix 39). The English had been cruising off Khark, Bushire and Ganawah for almost four months without knowing what was going on in the island, until the arrival at Basrah on 4 June 1769 of an Armenian from Khark, who had been an inhabitant there for upwards of seven years. He reported that after Mīr Muhannā’s expulsion from Khark, Mīr Ḥusain wrote to Karīm Khān to tell him of it and acknowledging himself to be the Khān’s subject. He offered the Khān the possession of the island and all of the effects on it. Karīm Khān expressed his satisfaction and made Mīr Ḥusain a Khān, directing him to send all his fighting men, other than 200 musketeers, with their families over to Bandar Rīq. An Armenian and two Bengalis belonging to Khark were appointed to accompany the goods, and to make a division of the property of Mīr Muhannā and the Dutch into three equal shares. One share was given to Mīr Ḥusain and the Khark soldiers, one third to Zakī Khān and his troops, and the final third went to Karīm Khān himself and was therefore sent to Shiraz. The bales from Bengal, which had been taken from the English vessel *Speedwell* in August 1768 (see Chapter 5.8 and Appendix 14), were ordered not to be touched but to be sent to Shiraz; of the 160 bales taken from the ship no more than 90 to 100 remained when Mīr Muhannā was expelled.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 6.1: Property found on Khark<sup>15</sup>**

The effects belonging to Mīr Muhannā and the Dutch on the island were about:

120 chests of cloves and nutmegs	valued at	Rs 40,000
4,000 canisters* of sugar	valued at	Rs 300,000
15,000 <i>Tomans</i> in ready money	valued at	Rs 300,000
Total		<u>Rs 640,000</u>

\*basket chest

As far as pearls were concerned, the Armenian said that there had been a considerable amount but that he could not pretend to know their value: at the time of Mīr Muhannā's departure the military on the island had been very mutinous and Mīr Ḥusain, to quieten them, had distributed 4,000 Tomans worth among them. He told Karīm Khān of this and the Khān deducted that amount from Mīr Ḥusain's one-third share.

The guns on the fortifications, and the fortifications themselves, were just as they were in Mīr Muhannā's time. But the *Speedwell's* guns, and all others which were not too weighty, had been taken to Bandar Rīq; the ammunition was also equally divided between Bandar Rīq and Khark. The eight gallivats belonging to Mīr Muhannā, and two new ones built from the *Speedwell's* timbers - together with Bushire's ships and gallivats - had been put under the orders of Mīr Ḥusain, now appointed Admiral of the Gulf and Governor of Khark, with 200 military to back him. When the Armenian left Khark, Mīr Ḥusain was at Bandar Rīq, preparing to go to Shiraz. There were a few Armenians and *Banians* on Khark, as well as the Dutchmen who were in the Mīr's service.<sup>16</sup>

Moore asked his Captains to cruise between Basrah and Cape Bardistān in order to convoy any vessels to Basrah as necessary.<sup>17</sup> He instructed the Captains: 'We would not have you act offensively against the Galivats and armed boats of the Caun [Khān], Chaub [Ka'b] or other powers. Defend however to the utmost, keep your vessel in a constant posture of defence, and beware of Surprize.'<sup>18</sup>

## 6.2 The Persian attitude towards the English

### 6.2.1 *Negotiations on resettling at Bushire*

The Agent at Basrah received a letter on 8 November 1769 from Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire, in Shiraz at the time, asking the English to resettle in Bushire and complaining that the departure of the English had stopped the trade there completely. Simultaneously, a letter came from Shaikh Nāṣir's Attorney in Bushire saying that European cloth was in great demand there<sup>19</sup> (see Appendices 40 and 41). Another letter from Shaikh Nāṣir was received by the Agent on 26 November, and yet another from the Shaikh's Attorney repeating his claim that European cloth was much sought after. In his second letter Shaikh Nāṣir said 'Give me your orders and I will do it immediately, or if you choose to send any goods to Bushire, the town is yours.' He mentioned also that the French had sent their Linguist to negotiate with Karīm Khān<sup>20</sup> (see Appendices 42 and 43).

Moore replied to these letters on 29 November 1769 saying 'As to again resettling at Bushire, it is what I never think of, nor of having any further connections with Persia, unless I am ordered to do so'<sup>21</sup> (see Appendices 44 and 45). He wrote also to the Presidency about resettling at Bushire; he received a reply dated 4 May 1770 saying that if Karīm Khān wanted the English to be re-established at Bushire and wrote to the Agent to that effect (or empowered Shaikh Nāṣir or some other suitable person to do so), a representative would immediately be sent to negotiate.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of May 1770, Morley, the previous Resident at Bushire, passed by there on his way from Bombay to Basrah on the *Dolphin* and was invited ashore by Shaikh 'Īsā, the Governor, for discussions. When Shaikh Nāṣir heard about it he wrote to 'Īsā recommending that a letter on the subject be sent by the British, from either Bombay or Basrah, to Karīm Khān, rather than ask him to do so<sup>23</sup> (see Appendix 46).

Moore received further letters on 28 June from Shaikh Nāṣir at Shiraz, Āghā Kūčūk (the Shaikh's messenger from Shiraz) and Shaikh 'Īsā, all asking the English to

resettle at Bushire. Referring to Karīm Khān, Shaikh Nāṣir wrote ‘... you must write a Petition to him, and send it by a spirited and capable person, who can talk in a proper manner to so great a man as the Vackeel of Persia’<sup>24</sup> (see Appendices 47, 48 and 49). By the same boat which brought the letters from Bushire, Moore sent answers to Shaikh Nāṣir, Shaikh ‘Īsā and Āghā Küçük, agreeing to send the *Arzee* to Karīm Khān but adding that he was for the time being to defer action until receiving further orders from his superiors at the Presidency<sup>25</sup> (see Appendices 50, 51 and 52). In the interim, a month later, another letter was received from Shaikh ‘Īsā of Bushire repeating the request to resettle in Bushire<sup>26</sup> (see Appendix 53).

In August 1770 the Agent in Basrah received orders directly from the Company in London to defer the resettlement negotiations recommended by the Presidency in Bombay:

We have here to observe that the measure recommended by the Presidency, we mean the Re-Establishment of Bushire, or the forming some other settlement on the Coast of Persia surprizes us more, as we must consider the Orders we gave for withdrawing from Bushire as implying a prohibition of any attempt to re-settle in the Persian Dominions ... By our Directions on this subject you will perceive that the intended Embassy to Carem Caun is, as far as it relates to the Establishment of a residency at Bushire, become altogether unnecessary.<sup>27</sup>

The Company added that for its trade in the Gulf to be carried from Basrah alone would be the most convenient and profitable.<sup>28</sup> After receiving these instructions, Moore heard from Ḥusain Khān (the newly-elevated Mīr Ḥusain who had ousted Mīr Muhannā from Khark), by now the Governor of Khark and Bandar Rīq, who was offering his friendship, assistance to English ships, and a factory at Bandar Rīq. Moore answered politely, thanking him for the offers and informing him that the English could not at the moment think about settling at Bandar Rīq or anywhere else.<sup>29</sup>

### 6.2.2 *Piracy committed by the Persians*

After Mīr Ḥusain of Khark had been appointed Admiral of the Gulf by Karīm Khān in March 1769 and had taken over all the gallivats belonging to Mīr Muhannā, he began

preparing both the Khark and the Bushire gallivats for a large expedition in August of that year. The English thought that he was targetting them, but his intention was to take the boats south in order to intercept the coffee fleet from Muscat (see the Atlas, Map nos. 18, 46).<sup>30</sup> The basis of the dispute between the Persians and Muscat was the demands made on the Imam of Muscat by Karīm Khān, involving a Persian ship which had for long been in Muscati possession, and the arrears of annual tribute which Muscat had formerly paid to Nādir Shāh during his reign. The Muscatis argued that the ship was a lawful purchase made by them from Shaikh ‘Abdallāh, the Shaikh of Hormuz, for which they had exchanged several gallivats and paid the balance in cash. They had spent a great deal in repairing the ship, which had long been their property and they would not give it up. As for the annual tributes, Nādir Shāh was too powerful a tyrant to contend with so the tribute was paid, not as of right, in the belief that it would be impolitic not to do so. However, the powers of Nādir Shāh and Karīm Khān were widely different. One they dreaded, the other they rather despised: one was the conqueror of all Persia, the other was only the *Wakīl* of two or three of its provinces. If, therefore, Karīm Khān persisted in his demands and used that kind of argument with them, they would answer him with cannon and shot.<sup>31</sup> In his book *Karim Khan Zand*, Perry observes that the ship, the *Rahmani*, was sold by Shaikh ‘Abdallah Ma‘īnī of Hormuz without the Khān’s consent.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of October 1769, two large Muscati ships from Muscat, laden with coffee and other goods bound for Basrah, were captured by the Persian gallivats. The crews were put into a small boat and sent to Grain (Kuwait) by the Persian Commander.<sup>33</sup> To revenge this and similar captures of Muscat ships bound for Basrah, the Imam of Muscat fitted out a large fleet under his son’s command, and planned an attack on Bahrain.<sup>34</sup> The fleet indeed appeared off Bushire and made a show of force.<sup>35</sup>

Whatever Karīm Khān’s plans might be, and however detrimental they were to the tranquillity of the Gulf, the English took no notice provided he did not impede their



trade. Orders from the Presidency were positively against beginning any hostilities with Karīm Khān: Moore reported that English cruisers would not convoy or give protection to ships of any country in dispute with him unless they had English papers and colours. The English *galley Betsey*, a Bengal vessel, ran into the Persian gallivats by chance as she returned from Basrah and as they were chasing a large Muscat ship bound for Grain. The Commander of the Persian gallivats, Ḥusain Khān, took ten bales of coffee from the Muscat ship but the *Betsey* engaged the Persians, severely damaging two of their gallivats and killing many from their crews.<sup>36</sup> Between August 1770 and August 1771 there is no information available from any source, thanks to the loss of the Basrah Diaries for that period, other than some reports in the latter part about Karīm Khān fighting opposing forces in the northern provinces . These do not concern us here but, in any event, the result was a quiet situation in the Gulf which saw the English ships of that time sufficient for all their duties (the *Britannia* incident, in the next paragraph, took place in this period but was recorded thereafter).<sup>37</sup>

The Khark fleet consisted of ten gallivats, besides other boats. One of the gallivats mounted ten guns, another one eight guns, and the remainder carried six guns each, mostly six-pounders. They were very well built and, although manned by 60 to 80 men, drew no more than five feet. This fleet sailed down the Gulf and off Kangun, on 22 June 1771, they captured the *Britannia*, an English *snow* from Bombay laden with sugar, iron, spices and other goods belonging to William Shaw; a country *ketch* under English colours, carrying cotton amongst other goods; and a *batil* from Muscat. After seizing these prizes, Ḥusain Khān's men tried to take them up to Khark, but a strong north-west wind prevented them. Instead, they took the vessels initially over to Bahrain.<sup>38</sup> When the gallivat crews heard that English cruisers had been sent to look for the vessels they sold half of the goods at Bahrain and other places on their way to Khark. The vessels were being taken there in the charge of two gallivats but, as they approached the island, they saw the *grab Bombay*, the *Fox* and the *Success* in the distance and became so alarmed that they went instead to Bandar Rīq.<sup>39</sup> In his *Gazetteer*, Lorimer assigns this incident, erroneously, to the summer of 1770.<sup>40</sup>

When news of *Britannia's* capture reached Basrah on 9 July 1771, Moore immediately sent the *Resolution*, the *Expedition* and the *Dolphin* to Khark and Bandar Rīq, or any other place where they might get news of the vessels' whereabouts. He wrote a letter to Ḥusain Khān asking for the release of the *Britannia's* crew together with the correspondence aboard her (see Appendix 54). If the Khān refused, Commodore Ince, the squadron commander, was instructed not only to try to recover the vessels but also to take or destroy the Persian gallivats.<sup>41</sup> The squadron sailed from Basrah on 12 July 1771 to Khark. Finding no vessels there, Commodore Ince sailed for Bandar Rīq and sent the *Linguist* ashore on the 14th with the Agent's letter to Ḥusain Khān. He detached the *Expedition* and *Dolphin* to Bushire to gather information.

When the *Linguist* landed at Bandar Rīq he found that Ḥusain Khān was on Khark and he was therefore taken first to the Khān's agent, and then to three of Karīm Khān's men who were there to assess the value of the prize ships. These three pressed the *Linguist* to give them Moore's letter, but he refused to deliver it to anyone but Ḥusain Khān. The latter arrived the next day from Khark and took the letter. In the presence of the Persians he began by talking of attacking the English cruisers, but in private with the *Linguist* he spoke differently, throwing the whole blame for the incident on Karīm Khān. He asked the *Linguist* to assure the Agent in Basrah that, speaking for himself, he wanted to be friends with the English and would enter into alliance with them. If they would leave him alone he undertook to give Khark up to them and to remain there under their control.<sup>42</sup>

In his reply to the Agent, Ḥusain Khān claimed that the *Britannia* was not taken by any order from him or Karīm Khān, but that Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire was the sole instigator. He also alleged that the *Britannia* had attacked the gallivats first and they had reacted in self-defence. He undertook, however, to return the English passengers and crew as soon as they arrived back in Bandar Rīq<sup>43</sup> (see Appendix 55). His treat-

ment of the English crew was harsh in the extreme: they were given hardly any shelter from the sun (the temperature there in July and August reaches 50° Centigrade) nor the barest necessities of life. Captain Shaw and his First Officer, Nicholson, were ordered to Shiraz by Karīm Khān in order to give him an account of the *Britannia*'s cargo, and they left Bandar Rīq on 1 August. Captain Shaw died the next day, Nicholson continued to Shiraz, and part of the crew was sent to Bushire, arriving there on 16 August. The Second Officer, Rowe, and the remainder were returned to English hands by Ḥusain Khān, but all of the papers on board were destroyed by the Arabs in order to prevent Karīm Khān knowing what the cargo had been.<sup>44</sup>

Karīm Khān's letter in reply to the Agent at Basrah about the *Britannia* affair was received on 7 September 1771. The Khān outlined his displeasure with the English, citing the English failure to help him against Khark when he had sent his army to the coast to be transported by the English ships to the island, as agreed with Skipp when he was in Shiraz. He seemed also to be irritated by the English not resettling in his territories. At the same time Moore received a letter from Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire, advising the Agent to send Karīm Khān an account of the cargo on board the vessels<sup>45</sup> (see Appendices 56 and 57). This, in spite of the fact that the First Officer, Nicholson, had given a description of the cargo at Karīm Khān's request while he was in Shiraz<sup>46</sup> (see Appendix 58). A further request was made of Karīm Khān to return Mr Nicholson and two others of the *Britannia*'s crew at Shiraz, asking for them to be allowed to go to Basrah since their continued detention could not be of any advantage to him. Another letter was also sent to Shaikh Nāṣir asking him to help secure the release of the English at Shiraz<sup>47</sup> (see Appendices 59 and 60). The Agent finally received a letter on 22 October 1771 from Karīm Khān, and another from Shaikh Nāṣir, confirming the release of Mr Nicholson and the other two from the *Britannia*, and they arrived from Shiraz by way of Bushire on the 24th<sup>48</sup> (see Appendices 61 and 62).

An account of Mr Shaw's cargo on the *Britannia*, amounting to Rs 42,187.3, was sent to Karīm Khān on 17 January 1772 with a letter from the Agent<sup>49</sup> (see Appendix 63). The courier who took these to Shiraz came back on 18 March saying that Karīm Khān would not give him a written reply to the Agent's letter, but that his deputy, Muḥammad Ja'far, told the courier to say - Yes, if the English wanted restitution of their goods they might apply to the deceased Ḥusain Khān. Ḥusain had recently been murdered by Mīr 'Alī in revenge for the expulsion of Mīr Muḥannā, a relation of Mīr 'Alī's, from Khark<sup>50</sup> (see Appendix 64).

Mīr 'Alī was sent as a prisoner to Shiraz in March 1772 but was received with honour. Karīm Khān gave him presents and positive orders to use the Bandar Rīq gallivats, inactive since Ḥusain Khān's death, to take all the English vessels they encountered. At the end of March the Bandar Rīq gallivats under Mīr 'Alī took about 20 boats, mostly from Basrah, but then released them with all their contents because his orders from Karīm Khān related to English and Muscati vessels. In the next month, April, three Bandar Rīq gallivats were fitted out to take the English *cutter Sky* on her return from Basrah. They lay at the mouth of the River Euphrates for several days, but returned to Bandar Rīq on hearing that the *Sky* was accompanied by the *Expedition*.<sup>51</sup>

The protection of the *Sky* resulted from the recommendations the Agent had received in March 1772 from the Presidency to employ the cruisers on the Basrah station for the protection of English trade, and to convoy any English merchant vessels lying in Muscat and bound for Basrah. The cruisers were the *Expedition*, commanded by Captain Robert Freeman Gage, *Tyger*, Lieutenant James Scott, and the snow *Drake*, John Mackenley. The Agent ordered them to take or destroy any gallivats or armed boats belonging to Bandar Rīq which they came across. The convoys between Basrah and Muscat prevented any of the English trade falling into Bandar Rīq hands, while the Imam of Muscat allotted four of his ships to the convoying of the Muscat coffee fleet.<sup>52</sup>

Moore in Basrah received another letter from Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire on 17 May 1772 to say that other Europeans had asked him for a factory at Bushire, but that he delayed giving permission because he hoped that the English would again settle there. He assured the Agent that he would give the English the same privileges as they enjoyed before, and the Agent, thanking him, said that he could not accept the offer without his superiors' permission<sup>53</sup> (see Appendix 65). On 16 October 1772, Shaikhs Sa'dūn and 'Īsā of Bushire sent Āghā Kūčūk on board the *Revenge*, at anchor off Bushire with Moore aboard, to salute the Agent and invite him on shore. Moore politely declined, saying that his cruise was for health, not business. The Shaikhs appeared to be in high hopes of the English resettling.<sup>54</sup>

But another act of Persian piracy followed these contacts. On 26 April 1773, the *brig* *Tyger* was preceding the *Drake* down the Shatt al-Arab by about 3 or 4 miles, Bombay bound, when it was boarded by four Bandar Rīq gallivats and, in spite of *Drake's* best efforts to overtake them, was towed off by them and another gallivat which had joined them. They had let the *Tyger* pass them with no sign of hostile intent and Lieutenant Scott therefore imagined that they were Muscat vessels. He was not shown his mistake until the gallivats' men poured onto his decks in numbers. Finding that his *lascars* had all jumped overboard, and having only 11 Europeans to face the mob attacking him, he also jumped overboard and was picked up by the *Drake*, together with two other Europeans and two lascars. John Beaumont and George Green, both members of the Council of the Basrah Agency, who were on their way to Bombay were taken along with the ship and remaining passengers and crew (see Appendix 66). The *Tyger* was taken to Bandar Rīq where Beaumont and Green were landed and, at first, treated kindly by the Governor, Shaikh 'Alī. However, as soon as he received instructions from Karīm Khān, on whose orders the ship was captured, he began treating them harshly.<sup>55</sup>

### 6.2.3 *Persian extortions*

Beaumont and Green were taken to Shiraz on Karīm Khān's orders and the Governor and Council at Bombay wrote to him on 27 October 1773 asking for their release and the return of both ships (*Britannia* and *Tyger*), with whatever goods had been on board<sup>56</sup> (see Appendix 67). The letter was carried by Moore, in Bombay at the time, who was instructed to stop at Bushire on his way up the Gulf and to make whatever approach to Karīm Khān seemed most likely to persuade the Khān to release the hostages and the ships, with their cargoes. If Karīm Khān refused to release Beaumont and Green without the English agreeing to establish themselves somewhere on the Persian coast, Moore was to tell him that the English were anxious to be on good terms with him and to meet his wishes, but that their superiors' orders were expressly against doing so. They had no power to comply without previous sanction.<sup>57</sup>

The Agent, Moore, sailed on 28 October on board the *Revenge*, bound for Basrah, and arrived at Bushire on 18 December 1773, following a short stay at Muscat and Gombroon. Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire sent a man to invite the Agent ashore and to offer his services: the Agent sent a letter with his compliments and the Governor's letter to Karīm Khān by the hand of Mr Abraham, a member of the Basrah Council. Abraham delivered the letters to Shaikh Nāṣir, who was hopeful that the Governor of Bombay would re-establish the English factory at Bushire. When, however, Abraham pressed Shaikh Nāṣir to know whether Beaumont and Green were on their way to Basrah, as Karīm Khān had promised them, he became evasive before finally admitting that they would not be released until a present was given.<sup>58</sup> The Agent did not understand the hint made by Shaikh Nāṣir talking of a present before the men could be released, and left Bushire on 23 December 1773.

Shaikh Nāṣir now wrote to Karīm Khān claiming that a Persian subject, a merchant on board the *Revenge*, had quarrelled with the English and, after a reconciliation, dined with them - only to die soon after. The Shaikh hinted that the causes were not

natural and that the body was thrown overboard; the English refusing to deliver his effects up to Shaikh Nāṣir.<sup>59</sup> A friend of Moore's, *Coja* Agasy, heard of the story Shaikh Nāṣir was trying to put into Karīm Khān's head and four times visited the Khān to speak his mind in front of the grandees of Shiraz, who also were very much the Agent's friends, unlike Karīm Khān himself. When Shaikh Nāṣir visited Shiraz in March 1774, Agasy called on him and asked how he came to fabricate such a story to Karīm Khān about Moore, and whether that was not a poor return for Moore putting into Bushire and trading there, to Shaikh Nāṣir's profit. Shaikh Nāṣir replied 'I sent off 20 sheep to Mr. Moore as a present, the present Mr. Moore returned me was only 6 pieces of *Chintz*. Was that a present proper to send to me! I confess however I was wrong in writing what I did to the Vackeel [Karīm Khān] about the death of the Persian, but now I will do what I can to get Mr. Beaumont and Green their liberty.'<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, Moore wrote on 16 January to Karīm Khān from Basrah asking him to release Beaumont and Green, and offered all kinds of cloth to be provided to him<sup>61</sup> (see Appendix 68). On the other hand, the Agent also recommended all Commanders of English ships to be constantly on their guard against gallivats or armed boats belonging to any power in the Gulf, but not to take the offensive against them unless they first made a hostile move. At the same time, he ordered that if they came across the brig *Tyger*, then in possession of the Bandar Rīq gallivats, they should do everything possible to recover her. He also directed that they should not supply the Persians with lead, iron or any other warlike stores; nor should they take on freight for anywhere in Persia.<sup>62</sup>

Since the end of 1773 Karīm Khān had been preoccupied by the shameful performance of the troops he had sent to Muscat under his brother, Zakī Khān. It seems that 3-4,000 of them had been lured into an ambush by Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz who allowed them to occupy Qishm island, and then informed the Muscat people who surrounded the island. The Persian gallivats fled, after one from Bushire and one from Bandar Rīq had been captured. The Shaikhs of those places - and Ma'ṣūm Khān of

Ganawah - were pardoned by Zakī Khān and returned to him at Bandar Abbas with their fleets. Soon afterwards, however, Shaikh 'Īsā and Ma'şūm Khān deserted again with their fleets and they were arrested, along with Mīr 'Alī (of Khark), put in irons and bastinadoed twice a day. At one moment it seemed that Mīr 'Alī might be strangled, after his money had all been taken from him, because Zakī Khān had intercepted a letter from him to the Muscatis, offering to defect to them with his gallivats. Thirty other Persian leaders were indeed strangled at that time.<sup>63</sup>

Zakī Khān invited Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz to join him in Bandar Abbas in March 1774, having previously sworn to the safety of the Shaikh. Shaikh 'Abdallāh accepted the invitation and they agreed on a peace plan, one of whose provisions was that Zakī Khān should marry Shaikh 'Abdallāh's daughter. Under persuasion from the Shaikh and bolstered by confidence in the new treaty, Zakī Khān went to Hormuz with 40 of his men, and was forthwith imprisoned. The Shaikh told Zakī Khān that he would stay in prison until Karīm Khān released the Shaikh's son from detention in Shiraz.<sup>64</sup>

Beaumont and Green wrote to Moore from Shiraz in January 1774 saying that the head of the Armenian community in Persia, Serkies, had told them of Karīm Khān wanting to ask the English to help him against Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz. Moore therefore wrote to the Presidency seeking the Governor's instructions on the basis that he could offer the assistance on condition that Karīm Khān first released the two prisoners and gave compensation for the *Britannia* and *Tyger*. No reply from the Governor is recorded.<sup>65</sup>

A copy of the Agent's letter was handed to Karīm Khān by Beaumont and Green, still detained in Shiraz. After reading it, Karīm Khān dismissed it as 'fictitious' and ordered them to write to Moore asking him to loan or sell the vessels to him, in which case English losses would be made good. In their letter to Moore relating this, Beaumont and Green wrote 'We set forth the absurdity of our writing such non-



sense'.<sup>66</sup> They added that they had told Karīm Khān that the Agent would not reply to such a peremptory and insulting a letter, nor even receive the messenger. As a result, the original letter was torn up and a more friendly one drawn up, to be delivered to Basrah by Ibrāhīm Āghā.<sup>67</sup>

Ibrāhīm Āghā and a second courier, Muḥammad Āghā, arrived in Basrah on 10 February 1774 from Shiraz with two letters, to the Agent and to the Mūtesellim (Governor of Basrah), from Karīm Khān. To the Governor of Basrah, Karīm Khān wrote that he was very powerful by land and his forces were innumerable, but he had no ships. This prevented him taking Muscat, as he was determined to do, so if the English would either lease or sell him the ships they currently had at Basrah he would pay ready cash: for this he appointed the Mūtesellim his Attorney. Then he would release Beaumont and Green, together with the *Tyger* and the value of her contents.<sup>68</sup>

The Mūtesellim spoke to the Agent as Karīm Khān had requested and Moore replied, in front of the two couriers. He said:

- i) He was very anxious to be on good terms with Karīm Khān and to trade in his kingdom, as before.
- ii) The Governor of Bombay had expressed the same wish in the strongest terms to him when he was in Bombay, and he was sure the Governor would do everything in his power to oblige Karīm Khān.
- iii) He would inform the Governor of Karīm Khān's request but he, as Agent, could neither sell nor loan a single ship without orders from the Governor.
- iv) If Karīm Khān first released the two Englishmen and the English vessels, the Agent might then convince the Governor of the Khān's friendly intentions and expect him in return to do his best to help the Khān.
- v) The Imam of Muscat had requested English assistance against Karīm Khān but had not taken the same steps to obtain it that Karīm Khān had: the Imam had Mr Abraham in his power at Muscat but did not once think of detaining him.

vi) Karīm Khān had shown scant friendliness towards the English by taking their vessels and people when they had done nothing to offend him.<sup>69</sup>

The couriers had little to say in reply. They repeated the strong desire that Karīm Khān had for the friendship of the English and his willingness to give them Khark, Bushire, Bandar Rīq or anywhere else in his realm they might want. The Agent remarked that if Karīm Khān was well-disposed enough to give the English so much belonging to him, why wouldn't he give them back their own property? The couriers repeated that he would restore it and release the prisoners if the English gave him the help he wanted.<sup>70</sup> Karīm Khān's letter to Moore seemed to be as vague and indeterminate as ever; his general behaviour reminded Moore of the negotiations about the expedition to Khark in 1768. His reply of 12 February 1774 to the Khān was along the same lines as his response in front of the Mūtesellim and couriers<sup>71</sup> (see Appendices 69 and 70). He wrote a private letter at the same time to Serkies, asking him to help in releasing Beaumont and Green, and promising 'a present payable either to you or your order of 5000 Rupees as soon as ever you get their liberty to return to Basrah - this will much recommend you to the English nation'.<sup>72</sup>

The Armenian merchant and Persian grandee, Coja Agasy, wrote to Moore from Shiraz in February 1774 saying that Karīm Khān would not allow Beaumont and Green to leave. He was angry with the English because of their refusal of the English ships, and he proposed to go to Basrah in order to take them.<sup>73</sup> The Khān's courier returned from Shiraz to Basrah on 3 March 1774 with a letter for Moore. Karīm Khān qu'oted the Governor of Bombay as saying that if he had any commands in his relations with the English he should write to the Agent, but now Moore was refusing him<sup>74</sup> (see Appendix 71). Given Karīm Khān's interpretation of the Governor's letter Moore told his Council on 3 March that he suspected the letter had not been properly translated into Persian in Bombay. He therefore decided to translate it afresh and send a copy to the Khān but commented 'though we do this, we are at the same time sensible a person of the Caun's ignorant and capricious disposition may doubt the

translation being an injurious one'.<sup>75</sup> The new translation was duly made and sent to the Khān<sup>76</sup> (see Appendix 72).

Aware that there were many people involved in the affair and being blamed for fabricating the story about Moore killing the Persian merchant (see pages 248-9), Shaikh Nāṣir returned to Bushire in February 1774. He affected concern for Beaumont and Green by claiming that the other Europeans and lascars left in the *Tyger* at Bandar Rīq had run away and were at that time in Bushire, where he had ordered them provisions and given instructions for them to be returned to Basrah as soon as possible.<sup>77</sup> But this was untrue: they had been forced back again to Bandar Rīq and were in great need of a little money to buy essentials.<sup>78</sup> Beaumont and Green wrote on 2 March 1774 to Moore '... but we cannot altogether credit the Shaiks assertion that they will be suffered to depart, he having proved himself to us as well versed in deception as any Persian whatever.'<sup>79</sup>

Moore received a further report on 18 April about the Khān's enmity towards the English and Shaikh Nāṣir's machinations. He immediately sent orders to maintain the curbs on communications between English ships and all places in Karīm Khān's territory: he noted that trade carried on in those places increased his revenues, benefited his subjects and simultaneously put English ships at risk by lying in ports where friendship could not be relied upon.<sup>80</sup>

Shaikh Nāṣir was able to secure the release of Beaumont and Green into his hands on 25 April 1774 and they set out on the 28th towards Bushire. Moore received letters from both the Shaikh and Karīm Khān from Shiraz on 19 May 1774. Karīm Khān's letter said that he had granted the release of the prisoners to Shaikh Nāṣir who, in his letter, requested Moore to make an amicable settlement of the differences between the Persians and Muscat<sup>81</sup> (see Appendix 73). It seemed to Moore that Beaumont and Green had merely changed one place of confinement for another, since no mention was made in either letter of their release from Bushire.

The settlement proposed by Shaikh Nāṣir on Karīm Khān's behalf was communicated via Beaumont and Green and called for the English:

- i) to depute someone to go to Muscat to negotiate between Karīm Khān and the Imam of Muscat.
- ii) to send vessels to Hormuz to safeguard Shaikh Nāṣir's expedition against Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz, which was being undertaken to secure the release of Karīm Khān's brother, Zakī Khān.
- iii) to re-establish a factory at Bushire, at which time Karīm Khān would grant the English every privilege in his power.<sup>82</sup>

Moore's reaction, summarised in a letter dated 22 May 1774 to Shaikh Nāṣir, was that:

- i) he had never promised Karīm Khān to negotiate peace between him and the Imam of Muscat; he simply advised the Khān to make it up with the Imam and offered a passage on an English cruiser to any person the Khān might wish to send for that purpose. With the differences settled between Karīm Khān and the English, the latter could have sent someone with the Khān's Ambassador to show a greater respect and to mediate between the main parties. But Karīm Khān had refused this, thinking that it was not consistent with his dignity. Therefore, for the English on their own account to send someone to Muscat with Shaikh Nāṣir's man, and with no appearance of Karīm Khān being aware of the matter would achieve nothing other than making the English look ridiculous.
- ii) although Karīm Khān and Shaikh Nāṣir said that they wanted the English vessels simply to safeguard the expedition to Hormuz, and not in the slightest to help it against Shaikh 'Abdallāh, nevertheless, the Muscatis and Shaikh 'Abdallāh would not know what the English intentions were. They would appear to them to be hostile, and the Agent's superiors had positively forbidden all hostile measures.

iii) as regards settlement, the Governor and Council in their letters had told the Agent that they could not settle in any part of Persia without previously receiving the Company's permission<sup>83</sup> (see Appendix 74).

Moore also wrote to Karīm Khān that he was obliged to him for giving permission for Beaumont and Green to travel to Bushire<sup>84</sup> (see Appendix 75).

#### **6.2.4      *The release of the Europeans from Persia***

The situation began to change in favour of the English. In mid-1774, Shaikh Nāṣir received orders from Karīm Khān to make peace with the Imam of Muscat at any cost. In that context Shaikh 'Abdallāh's son had been released by Karīm Khān, and the Shaikh had given the Khān's brother, Zakī Khān, his freedom, although Zakī remained in disgrace with Karīm Khān. Shaikh Nāṣir was to go to Khor Fakkan, on the east coast of the Musandam peninsula, to be joined by Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī of Julfār, Shaikh 'Abdallāh of Hormuz and the Imam of Muscat's authorised representative: there, everything was to be settled.<sup>85</sup> Shaikh Nāṣir's journey was aborted when he had news that the Imam would not listen to such disgraceful terms as Shaikh Nāṣir had to propose. Muscat wanted to be on an amicable footing with the Persians but would not buy their friendship by an annual tribute. Moreover, Shaikh Nāṣir was given to understand, the Imam's fleet was going up the Gulf with trade as usual, and Karīm Khān and the other powers in the Gulf could behave towards them as they saw fit in their own interests.<sup>86</sup>

Shaikh Nāṣir returned to Bushire from his expedition to the south on 17 August 1774 and started preparing his gallivats to attack the Ka'b. They had captured a boat belonging to one of the Bushire shaikhs and sent its complement to their capital: the boat was said to contain treasure belonging to the Bushire merchants valued at 3,000 Tomans. The capture had been made in revenge for the Shaikh of Bushire hanging three Ka'b Arabs for robbery and other crimes.<sup>87</sup> Shaikh Nāṣir was still collecting his gallivats together on 15 October 1774 in order to follow the Ka'b fleet to Bahrain, where 14 Ka'b gallivats were said to be lying.<sup>88</sup> Karīm Khān was also making

preparations in October for the Persian army to march against Kurdistān in November.<sup>89</sup> In these circumstances, ideas of attacking Muscat or the English mediating evaporated: all that was left of Karīm Khān's and Shaikh Nāṣir's points for the release of the Europeans, including Beaumont and Green, was the re-settlement of the Residency at Bushire.

Shaikh Nāṣir released three Europeans from the brig *Tyger* at the end of June 1774. These were named as Samuel Brown, George Adder and Compeachy and they arrived in Basrah on 24 July 1774. The Agent received letters from Beaumont and Green quoting Shaikh Nāṣir as still very keen for the English to re-settle at Bushire.<sup>90</sup> He also received a letter from his superiors on 26 July ordering him not to enter into any agreement with Karīm Khān until Beaumont and Green were released, and to transmit any proposals which Karīm Khān might thereafter put forward.<sup>91</sup> Moore once again advised English ships against touching at Bushire, or any other Persian port or island, except of necessity. He also repeated his orders not to engage the gallivats of any power in the Gulf, unless they were approached by them. However, if they fell in with the brig *Tyger* in Persian hands, and had a chance to retake her, they should do their utmost to do so.<sup>92</sup>

George Green arrived at Basrah on 19 September 1774 from Bushire and brought two letters from Beaumont and Shaikh Nāṣir. In his letter Beaumont wrote that Shaikh Nāṣir had finally decided to allow Green to go to Basrah to propose the terms of an accommodation to the Agent, namely that someone should be sent to Bushire as temporary Resident, and that English vessels should trade to Bushire as before. In return for this, Shaikh Nāṣir promised to give back the *Tyger* with her stores. He also engaged himself to be answerable for any piracies that might be committed against the English by Bandar Rīq or Ganawah gallivats and to put a total stop to their plunder, as well as releasing Beaumont.<sup>93</sup> Shaikh Nāṣir's letter also remarked that Beaumont and Green had told him that it would be much better for one of them to go to Basrah

and explain everything to the Agent: he had therefore given Green his liberty for that purpose<sup>94</sup> (see Appendix 76).

The Agent wrote to Shaikh Nāṣir on 23 September 1774 explaining that it was not in his power to re-settle in Bushire, but that if Beaumont arrived at Basrah he would then write to the Governor of Bombay about Shaikh Nāṣir's friendship for the English<sup>95</sup> (see Appendix 77). A week later Moore concluded that Shaikh Nāṣir would not run the risk of sending Beaumont to Basrah in any of his own gallivats or boats, and that the Shaikh's reply to Moore's letter of the 23rd might have been lost in a boat taken by the Ka'b near Basrah. He decided, therefore, to send the ketch *Success* to Bushire: Lieutenant Thistleton, Commander of the *Success*, was to deliver the Agent's letter and Moore hoped that the benefit to Shaikh Nāṣir from communication being re-opened between English ships and Bushire would induce him to release Beaumont forthwith<sup>96</sup> (see Appendix 78).

The *Success* sailed on 3 October 1774 and arrived at Bushire on the 6th, when Lieutenant Thistleton delivered the Agent's letters to Shaikh Nāṣir and Beaumont. On 15 October 1774 the *Success* arrived back in Basrah with replies from both of them.<sup>97</sup> Beaumont was disappointed by the results of the latest exchange and wrote to Moore:

It is with Greatest concern that I see all the Generous endeavours in your power prove unsuccessful to procure my liberty which I have no hopes of until my Honorable Superiours at Bombay with their usual goodness are pleased to take some effectual measure for my delivrance from almost an eighteen months captivity with the Melancholy circumstances attending it. Which I beg the favour you will be pleased to represent to them.<sup>98</sup>

In fact, Moore thought that Shaikh Nāṣir's letter was complete nonsense and that there would be no use in writing again<sup>99</sup> (see Appendix 79). A secret letter from Āghā Kūčük to Moore even suggested what Moore considered a dishonourable ploy, which he refused to adopt. Kūčük advised:

If you want the release of Mr. Beaumont this is the only method for procuring it. There can be no harm in trying. Mr. Morley when he went away left such a man in his room [i.e. place], and a few days afterwards the man went away likewise. If the Shaikh does not

behave properly to the man that you may send, he may leave Bushire at any time. This is my opinion if you think otherwise and will not follow my advise Mr. Beaumont will not get his liberty.<sup>100</sup>

In a private letter of 28 December 1774, received by Moore in Basrah on 6 January 1775, Beaumont reported that it was firmly believed in Bushire and Bandar Rīq that Karīm Khān had ordered Shaikh Nāṣir to release him. When questioned by Beaumont, Shaikh 'Alī, the provisional Governor of Bushire, confirmed the report. But Shaikh Nāṣir was then absent in Bahrain and Shaikh Sa'dūn had no authority to deal with the Beaumont affair.<sup>101</sup>

In March 1775 Karīm Khān's brother, Ṣādiq Khān, was on the march as Commander of the Persian forces going to attack Basrah, when English ships engaged gallivats of his ally the Ka'b on 15 March, destroying two of them and disabling the others, which Ṣādiq was able to recover. Moore sent a letter to Ṣādiq Khān on 29 March 1775 offering to send someone to re-establish the English factory at Bushire if Ṣādiq surrendered the Ka'b gallivats to him, put the Bandar Rīq and Ganawah gallivats in the charge of Shaikh Nāṣir, returned the *Tyger*, and released Beaumont. That, he said, would settle the peace of the Gulf at once. Moore wrote to Shaikh Nāṣir telling him of the communication between him and Ṣādiq Khān, and English ships underlined the message by attacking Shaikh Nāṣir's gallivats. Shaikh Nāṣir immediately replied that he would continue to be a friend of the English and would do everything in his power for them.<sup>102</sup>

At the beginning of April 1775, four English ships - the *Drake*, Captain Robert Freeman Gage; the *schooner Betsy*, Lieutenant George Kuirson, from Bombay; the *Jatty Boy*, Captain Thomas Smith, from Surat; and the *Trident*, Captain Tresdale, from Bengal, arrived at Bushire. On board the *Trident* was Robert Garden, sent from the Presidency with powers to make peace with Shaikh Nāṣir and re-establish a factory in Bushire. Garden sent a message to Karīm Khān about his mission and, in a few days, received a favourable reply, in which Karīm Khān ordered the release of Beaumont.<sup>103</sup>



### 6.3 The re-establishment of the Bushire settlement

In the face of the Persian invasion the Basrah Agent, Moore, left there on 11 April 1775 on board the *Eagle*, accompanied by the *Tigris*, *Euphrates* and the *Success* for an action against the Ka'b gallivats. They reached Khark with the Agent debating whether they had sufficient force to return to Basrah; if not, they had no option but to carry on to India. They anchored in the inner roads at Bushire on 24 April and found the four English vessels riding at anchor there.<sup>104</sup> On the next day, the 25th, Moore received a note from Garden telling him that he had amicably settled all the differences with the Persians, and that Beaumont was on board the *Trident*. He had ordered Captain Gage to fire a salute in honour of Karīm Khān's *faramān*, and asked Moore to do likewise. Garden and Beaumont went ashore and were saluted by the *Trident* and *Drake* in succession: the whole fleet and other vessels then saluted the English flag which was raised over the English factory.<sup>105</sup>

Moore asked Garden for an account of his negotiations and Garden replied:

In answer to your favour of this date, I am to inform you that in consequence of Mr Beaumont having been delivered up to me and the assurances of Carem Caun that the Tyger shall be returned to me with all her stores, immediately on her coming back from Bussorah [where she was part of the besieging Persian fleet], I have agreed to a re-establishment at Bushire, in the same conditions as heretofore.<sup>106</sup>

Garden received two *faramāns* on 13 May 1775, one for the release of Beaumont and one for the return of the English vessel *Tyger*, with all her stores to him<sup>107</sup> (see Appendices 80 and 81).

The President and Council of Bombay decreed the appointment of John Beaumont as the Company's Resident at Bushire, and Moore appointed George Green to assist in the running of the factory there. At the beginning of May 1775 Karīm Khān expressed his surprise that the English had not as yet unloaded any goods and

wondered if they were trying to deceive him by simply raising a flag in Bushire. The English therefore told him of the woollens at that time on board the *Drake* and *Betsy*<sup>108</sup> (see Appendix 82). By 16 May 1775 the two ships were almost unloaded of goods valued at Rs 34,522.<sup>109</sup> Karīm Khān replied on 20 May to Moore's letter advising the Khān that he had arrived at Bushire from Basrah, and referred to his earlier reply to Garden:

I have in reply thereto told him, wherever the English are pleased to settle in my dominions whether at Bushire or other places I shall give them protection and all the encouragement in my power which I desire you to believe, having immediately on Mr. Garden's arrival directed Shaik Sadoon to give the English the best of treatment and I have now ordered him to render you every good service, that the English may be convinced I set a proper value upon their friendship but if you have any service beyond his power you need but signify it to me and think while you write me that it should be immediately complied with.<sup>110</sup>

Garden wrote to the Governor of Bombay on 23 April 1775 that Karīm Khān, in his letter to the Governor and to the President, ascribed the blame for the rift between the English and the Persians entirely to Henry Moore.<sup>111</sup>

#### 6.4 Karīm Khān's last efforts

Neither Lorimer in his *Gazetteer*, nor John Perry in his *Karim Khan Zand*, mentioned the reasons for Karīm Khān's attacks on Kurdistān in the north, and Basrah in the south of Turkish Iraq. They have been followed by later historians.<sup>112</sup> The reasons appear to have been as follows.

At the beginning of 1774, the Pasha of Baghdad removed Muḥammad Bāshā from the government of Kurdistān, one of the Pasha's provinces: Muḥammad complained to Karīm Khān, who had some influence in the province and who, in November 1774, ordered one of his Generals, 'Alī Murād Khān, to march with 10,000 men to Muḥammad Bāshā's assistance. On being joined by Muḥammad's own men his total forces amounted to 12,000. The Pasha of Baghdad had sent only about 3,000 men to support 'Abdallāh Bāshā, the replacement of Muḥammad. The two armies clashed

near a place called Čamčamāl, between Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk. After a few hours the Persians were beaten and fled; the Turks pursued them vigorously until the remnant Persian army was back inside Persian territory, and in the process captured 'Alī Murād Khān with 10 or 12 of his senior officers and many of lower rank. When the battle was over they also seized a courier bringing a letter from Karīm Khān to 'Alī Murād Khān in which he ordered 'Alī not to enter Ottoman territory, but to return immediately with his army to Shiraz, where he had other tasks for him.<sup>113</sup>

None of the historians mentioned before has noted, in this context, the beginnings of the revolution which led to the establishment of the Qājār dynasty and, by ending the power struggle, opened up the Gulf for free trading. In November 1774, Ḥusain Khān, son of Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān of the Qājār tribe, revolted: the Qājārs inhabited Astarābād and the province of Māzandarān bordering the Caspian Sea. About 17 years before they had captured Isfahan from Karīm Khān, but were later defeated by Karīm Khān's army and their leader killed. Astarābād and Māzandarān fell to Karīm Khān, who took two sons of Ḥusain Khān with him as prisoners to Shiraz; a younger son fled to the mountains bordering Māzandarān where he was well received by one of the tribal leaders, whose daughter he married. With the help of his father-in-law, he invaded Māzandarān, defeated Karīm Khān's Governor, and took the province over. An army sent against him by Karīm Khān was similarly defeated.<sup>114</sup> Karīm Khān then assembled an army at Astarābād, and another of 6,000 men was to leave Shiraz and would be joined by about 14,000 more collected en route. The grandson of Nādir Shāh wrote to Ḥusain Khān's son from Gīlān, on the Caspian, which he had recently seized, recommending him to make a stand against Karīm Khān's troops and promising to join him as soon as he had firmly settled himself into his new possession.<sup>115</sup>

Also in November 1774, Karīm Khān ordered another army of 10,000 men to be in readiness to march against Basrah. At the beginning of February 1755, his brother Šādiq Khān set off there by land. He crossed the Ottoman Turkish border at

Huwaizah, about 60 miles north of Basrah, and captured it. Şādiq Khān wrote a very arrogant letter to the English Agent in Basrah, without the opening compliments which were normal in those parts, telling him that he had 30,000 troops and expected 10,000 more to join him from Shaikh Nāṣir, Ma'şūm Khān of Bandar Rīq, and sundry other places on the coast of Persia. They would be augmented by forces from the Ka'b, who would come by sea, and the whole would then attack Basrah<sup>116</sup> (see Appendix 83). He also described his reason for attacking Basrah '... the only cause of my being ordered out with the army from Shiraz is to take Bussorah for the good of the place and the people of it.'<sup>117</sup> He ordered the Agent to come and meet him, but Moore replied that he had already left Basrah.<sup>118</sup> Lorimer holds that the spur for the invasion was the defeat administered to the Persians by the Turks in the north: this is erroneous since the two armies had been prepared at the same time.<sup>119</sup>

On his departure for Bombay, Moore left the Company's affairs at Basrah in the hands of Garden and Abraham. In August 1775 Garden sent a letter to Karīm Khān asking him to instruct Şādiq Khān to safeguard the security of English property at Basrah if the town was captured. Karīm Khān therefore wrote a *faramān* to his brother to take care of the English factory, the house and English property there<sup>120</sup> (see Appendix 84).

The siege of Basrah lasted 13 months, as noted by Perry in *Karim Khan Zand*, and very briefly by Lorimer.<sup>121</sup> Abraham Parsons, who was in Basrah when it was under siege, records in his *Travels* that the garrison there consisted of fewer than 1,500 men and a small naval force in the river.<sup>122</sup>

Şādiq Khān finally occupied Basrah on 21 April 1776, without executions or oppression according to Perry, who relied on Persian sources in his research.<sup>123</sup> James Capper reports otherwise. He was an English traveller in Basrah at that time and records that when the Persians took Basrah they appointed 'Alī Muḥammad as its Governor,

leaving a garrison of 15,500 with him. The Governor, Capper alleges, raped the daughter of an Arab physician and:

Notwithstanding such unheard of barbarity, the major part of the inhabitants of Zebeer and Coebda were so infatuated as to continue to live within twelve miles of him; imprudently relying on the faith of one who had thus publicly violated all laws, both divine and human. A few, and but very few of the most prudent of them had left either of these places, when one night in a fit of drunkenness, and instigated by avarice, Aly Mahomed marched from Bassora with a body of troops and burnt Zebeer; at the same time putting to death all those who attempted to escape from the flames: from thence he marched to Coebda, where he acted in the same manner, and then returned to Bassora; exulting as much in having treacherously massacred, in cold blood, a number of defenceless people, as if he had obtained a glorious victory over a powerful army.<sup>124</sup>

The English Resident in Basrah, Abraham, wrote about the same atrocity to the Resident in Bushire on 3 July 1778 saying 'The 30th of June at night the Persians under Ally Mahomed Caun proceeded to Zebere and on some pretence or other killed or made slaves of all the Arabs that they found there - the latter they are now selling publicly to whoever will purchase them'.<sup>125</sup> Meanwhile, the Mutesellim of Basrah, Sulaimān Āghā, had been captured on the occupation of Basrah and sent a prisoner to Shiraz.<sup>126</sup>

Karīm Khān died on 2 March 1779; Perry wrongly gives the date as 1777 or 1778.<sup>127</sup> His son, Abū'l-Faḥ Khān succeeded him and Shiraz stayed quiet under the close guard of his brother, Zakī Khān. Several couriers were sent to Basrah to recall Ṣādiq Khān to Shiraz.<sup>128</sup> Acting on the messages from Shiraz, Ṣādiq Khān devolved control of Basrah to Shaikh Darwīsh of the Muntafiq tribe, until such time as he could arrange for the previous Mutesellim, Sulaimān Āghā, to be sent back from his Shiraz imprisonment and to take over. Ṣādiq left Basrah on 24 March 1779 en route to Shiraz, and on the 26th all the gallivats from Bushire, Ganawah and Bandar Rīq returned to their respective ports. Sulaimān Āghā left Shiraz in the opposite direction on 4 April.<sup>129</sup>

**6.5 Trade at Bushire from the time of its re-establishment up to the death of Karīm Khān: 1775-1779**

Trade in 1775 amounted to no more than Rs 80,000, while in 1776 the Company was selling at a loss. Lorimer curiously attributes this to the merchants' custom of retiring from Bushire to Shiraz to escape the heat from June to August.<sup>130</sup> Table 6.2 shows a marginal price gain on most items for that year but leaves other very significant costs out of account (such as shipping and other overheads):

**Table 6.2: Bushire trade in 1776<sup>131</sup>**

(original form of record retained)

i	Pieces Rupees	Cost in	(Rupees)	Sold for
Fine Medleys	12	5.0.00	per <i>Guz.</i>	5.2.10
Coarse do.	36	3.2.18	do.	4.3.00
Superfine cloth	42	5.3.17	do.	6.2.10
Fine do.	102	3.2.18	do.	4.2.10
Coarse do.	78	3.0.05	do.	2.2.10
Worsters	66	3.0.01	do.	3.1.05
<i>Drabs</i>	6	6.0.15	do.	8.0.00
Ditto	22	6.0.15*	do.	7.0.05
<i>Perpets</i>	1,070	20.0.12	each	21.0.00

\* (the presents deducted)

A report in November 1776 showed that annual sales at Bushire never exceeded Rs 88,000 at the best of times.<sup>132</sup> See Appendix 85, however, for an optimistic estimate that Rs 188,240 worth of broadcloth and perpets could be sold annually in the Bushire market.<sup>133</sup> The actual imports of broadcloth to Bushire in 1777, compared with Basrah, are shown in Table 6.3. Nevertheless, the Resident at Bushire reported in 1778 that trade had become 'unmarketable'<sup>134</sup> (Lorimer mistakenly records that in the same year there was a strong demand at Bushire for perpets, coarse medleys and coarse cloth<sup>135</sup>), and in 1779 was in need of money, writing to the Presidency, 'I have nothing of the honourable Company's under my charge but Dead Stock'.<sup>136</sup> The Resident was able to ship pearls and specie valued at Rs 31,115 to Bombay on the ketch *Success* on 2 May 1779<sup>137</sup> (see Appendix 86), and a similar consignment worth Rs 34,486 on the snow *Eagle* on 15 July 1780<sup>138</sup> (see Appendix 87).

**Table 6.3: Imports of broadcloth to Basrah and Bushire, 1777<sup>139</sup>**

(original form of record retained)

	Bussora	Bushire
Scarlet	16	58
Aurora	12	44
Blue	10	55
French Green	6	39
Emerald do.	6	50
Grass do.	--	12
Purple	7	20
Wine	1	6
Cherry	1	8
Yellow and Red	5	--
Popinjay	3	11
Cinnamon, Dove & Black	--	5
	—	—
Bales	67	Bales 308

#### **6.6 The decline of the Zand dynasty, 1779-1794**

The Persian dependency of Bahrain was lost on 23 July 1783 to the Arab tribe of 'Utūb, from Zubārah on the west coast of the Qatar peninsula. Most historians followed the mistake of Francis Warden, in his 'Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs', where he attributes Shaikh Nāṣir's earlier attacks on Zubārah to the jealousy of Shaikh Nāṣir (Shaikh of both Bushire and Bahrain), caused by Zubārah's prosperity, and claims that repeated attempts were made to reduce Zubārah between 1777 and 1801.<sup>140</sup> This is incorrect: the true story of the 'Utūb conquest of Bahrain begins with a visit in 1782 by some of the Zubārah people to the island in order to buy wood. A quarrel arose between them and the Bahraini people, in which an 'Utūbī Shaikh's slave was killed.<sup>141</sup> The 'Utūb retaliated on 9 September 1782 by descending on Bahrain and engaging in a short battle in which several lives were lost on both sides. They plundered and destroyed the town before returning to Zubārah after three days, taking with them one of the Bushire gallivats which Shaikh Nāṣir had sent over to collect the annual tribute from the island. This news reached Bushire on

13 September, and on 1 October Shaikh Nāṣir was accordingly ordered by the (now released) Persian warlord in Shiraz, 'Alī Murād Khān, to prepare an expedition against Zubārah, in which he would be supported by the Shaikhs of Bandar Rīq, Ganawah and Dashtistān.<sup>142</sup>

It took Shaikh Nāṣir until 12 December 1782 to put together a sufficient force, which sailed for Bahrain as a fleet of four large gallivats, 13 or 14 *dhow*s, and nearly as many other boats, bearing altogether 2,000 men. A further three gallivats were to follow a few days later. Extensive powers had been given to Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimī of Julfār to settle matters between the two parties<sup>143</sup> but he joined Shaikh Nāṣir at Bahrain, having failed in his mediation. The Persian forces landed at Zubārah on 17 May 1783 and launched an immediate attack. After a stiff fight, in which many were killed on both sides, the Persians threw down their arms and fled to their boats. Shaikh Muḥammad, nephew of Shaikh Nāṣir, and Shaikh Rāshid bin Sa'dūn's nephew were both killed in the action. The 'Utūbī fleet from Grain (Kuwait) of six gallivats and a number of armed boats arrived the same day and plundered the town of Bahrain before setting fire to it.

The 'Utūb also took a boat belonging to Shaikh Rāshid al-Qāsimi and put the crew of 18 to the sword: the Shaikh had, in fact, taken an active part against the 'Utūb. The Persian forces returned home and began again to collect a sufficient strength to attack Zubārah once more.<sup>144</sup> But Shaikh Rāshid bin Sa'dūn, nephew of Shaikh Nāṣir, arrived back in Bushire on 5 August 1783 to report that he had been forced to abandon the fort of Bahrain to the 'Utūb on 23 July. The remains of the Persian garrison left for Bushire with him.<sup>145</sup>

With the last Shāh of the Zand dynasty, Luṭf 'Alī Khān, failing to re-establish its ascendancy over Persia, Bandar Abbas was leased in 1794 to a foreign power, the Imam of Muscat, for the first time.<sup>146</sup> Although Bandar Abbas was leased to the Imam at that time, there are no records of the original agreement, except the report in



a letter from Dr Jukes, Political Agent at Qishm, to the Presidency on 24 August 1821:

I regret extremely that neither at Maskat, nor at Kishm have I been able to obtain a sight of one of the old Persian Farmauns by which His Highness the Imam farms Bunder Abbasee from the sovereign of Persia, in order to ascertain what places are particularly specified as constituting its dependencies. I think it unlikely that such an important document as the grant, or Farmaun of the King of Persia, by which His Highness the Imam farms so large a portion of territory and for which he pays 4,000 tumans annually should not be in existence; it is possible it might have been mislaid at the time I was at Maskat, or it might have been intentionally withheld, but I was expressly informed by Saiyid Abdul Kahir, His Highness's confidential Secretary that neither Kishm, Ormuz, nor Larak, are specified on the receipts annually granted by the Persian Government, for the stipulated sum paid to them; and in reply to a series of questions which I wrote out to be answered at Maskat, and which I know were carried by Saiyid Abdul Kahir to His Highness the Imam himself, it was expressly declared that the islands of Kishm, Ormuz and Larak belonged exclusively to the Imam.<sup>147</sup>

In her work *Oman & Muscat*, Patricia Risso distorts this arrangement to the port being on lease 'from a hostile power' and the customs being let out to a wealthy merchant named Ḥājjī Khalīl.<sup>148</sup> In his *Myth of Arab piracy in the Gulf*, al-Qasimi wrote that in 1794 the Imam of Muscat leased the port from the Persians and collected an annual revenue of 8,600 to 10,000 Maria Theresa Dollars (*riyals*).<sup>149</sup>

## **6.7 Trade between the death of Karīm Khān (1779) and the downfall of the Zand dynasty (1795)**

Persia was given over to disorders and civil wars. Four Shāhs were killed or blinded, four Khāns were killed or blinded, and many provinces became separated from Persia. Along the whole coast from Hormuz to Bandar Rīq and Khark, fighting broke out among the various Shaikhs.<sup>150</sup> The period comprising the decline of the Zand dynasty (1779-95) saw a comparable decline in Persian trade. The Bushire Resident wrote to Bombay on 7 June 1783:

On balancing the Honorable Companys Books of this Settlement ending the 30th April last it appears that their Net Loss for the Year amounts to Rupees 6517.3 and the amount of Charges general to Rupees 9647.3.15 or a decrease of Rupees 1034.2.19 on the former and Rupees 928.1.03 on the latter when compared with the preceding Year. Permit me to observe also to Your Honor &ca. that no

Customs was collected during the last year, that no Treasure and Pearl freight offered, and that owing to the communication between this place and Bussora having been stopped for some time past.<sup>151</sup>

George Melcham was sent to Persia on 1 February 1785 to try to identify the causes of this decline in Persian trade.<sup>152</sup> The difficult trading conditions of the time are, in fact, clearly indicated in the *faramān* issued by Ja'far Khān on 18 January 1788 (see Appendix 88). Table 6.4 gives a statement of goods exported from Bombay to Bushire in this period.

**Table 6.4: Summary of goods exported from Bombay to Bushire, 1787-1792**<sup>153</sup>

Year	Date	Quantity	Value in Rs	Ship
1787	26 May	16 bales of broadcloth	13,556	Panther
1788	4 May	150 bales of perpets	53,863	Drake
1789	22 Feb	{50,000 <i>maunds</i> of iron {55,000 <i>maunds</i> of steel {38,000 <i>maunds</i> of tin	{55,000} {60,500} {49,400}	Intrepid
1789	July	60 bales of broadcloth	36,063	Intrepid
1790	26 April	50 bales of broadcloth and 20 bales of tin	36,621	Morning Star
1792	25 March	Consignment of tin	6,949	Drake
1792	12 Dec	Perpets (imported from Europe) and 245 bales of bullion cloth 15 bales of scarlet perpets	58,874} 5,383}	Drake

N.B. *Drake's* last load was consigned to Basrah but landed at Bushire

The revolution at Shiraz, which lasted from July 1791 to June 1792, imposed a total stoppage on trade with Bushire for the last part of this period. Only 67 pieces of broadcloth were disposed of at that time whilst all of the Company's tin had not been cleared by the end of the period, after nearly 2,500 *maunds* had been bought.<sup>154</sup> The balance of cash in the Bushire treasury on 30 June 1792 was only Rs 1,842.<sup>155</sup>

Exports from Bushire to Bombay during the same period (1779-1794) were limited to wool from Kirmān<sup>156</sup>: the Resident in Bushire bought about 560 maunds of this wool in January 1792. Table 6.5 summarises these exports for part of the period.

**Table 6.5: Kirmān wool exported from Bushire to Bombay, 1790-1795<sup>157</sup>**

Year	Date	Quantity	Value in Rs
1790	4 Feb	122 maunds	732.
	25 July	1,000 maunds	6,000.
1792	30 July	537 maunds	3,222.
1793	25 June	68¾ maunds	415.50
1795	March	200 maunds	1,200.
1795	1 Nov	401 maunds	1,879.

The financial position of the Bushire settlement was that debt had reached Rs 7,045 by November 1788, and had increased to Rs 10,149 by April 1789<sup>158</sup>: losses from 1 May 1788 to 30 April 1789 amounted to Rs 12,779 - an increase of Rs 2,112 over the figure one year earlier.<sup>159</sup>

Bombay was also exporting to the Basrah factory during this same period and Table 6.6 shows something of both the quantities and values involved.

**Table 6.6: Summary of goods exported from Bombay to Basrah, 1787-1792<sup>160</sup>**

Year	Date	Quantity	Value in Rs	Ship
1787	27 Jan	20 bales of broadcloth	17,609	Scorpion (snow)
1787	27 April	19 bales of broadcloth	16,353	Panther
1789	4 July	60 bales of broadcloth	36,063	Intrepid
1790	26 April	50 bales of broadcloth	21,385	Morning Star
1791	17 Feb	Consignment of woollens	27,217	Intrepid
1792	25 March	{ Consignment of broad- { cloth and perpets { Tin in bars	{ 26,122 { 6,943}	Drake

Generally speaking, the sale of woollens at Bushire from 1780 to 1790 produced a total net loss of £1,232 12s 6d (about Rs 12,000), or 5¼ per cent on the 'first cost'.

At Basrah during the same period the total net loss was £11,305 10s (about Rs 110,000), or about 21¾ per cent on the first cost (see Appendices 89 and 90).<sup>161</sup> The consignment of woollens imported in February 1791 to Basrah (Table 6.6 above) remained in the warehouse and was not expected to be sold for some years. The reason for this was that the Gulf market, which in former years had taken a large proportion of the Company's woollens, was now to a large extent being supplied overland by French manufactures.<sup>162</sup> Samuel Manesty wrote from Basrah in August 1792 to the Board in Bombay '... we beg leave respectfully to request that your Hon'ble Board will take the necessary measures to prevent the further consignments of that assortment of cloth ['medleys'] to Bussora'.<sup>163</sup> He reported that in the previous month, July, the French ship *Le Grain* had brought a quantity of canvas, cordage and iron to the Gulf market, along with a few bales of broadcloth.<sup>164</sup> In these circumstances Manesty was nevertheless able to sell a quantity of woollens in September for 1,544 Tomans<sup>165</sup> (see Appendix 91).

Before the end of 1792 the factory at Basrah was closed, and a consignment of 245 bales of bullion cloth, and 15 bales of scarlet perperets were landed from the *Drake* at Bushire instead (see Table 6.4). The Basrah factory had been brought to a critical situation as a result of the dispute caused by the Turkish Pasha of Baghdad's various acts of interference, as well as the obstructive nature of Samuel Manesty, the Resident at Basrah. The factory was therefore moved to Grain (modern Kuwait) for three years, 1793-5,<sup>166</sup> and had as its main function the reception and forwarding to Aleppo of packets from Bombay, for onward transmission to Constantinople.<sup>167</sup> Some goods were also landed at Grain and carried overland to Basrah by caravans.<sup>168</sup>

## **6.8 The establishment of the Qājār dynasty, 1795-1799**

The Qājār dynasty (named after Qājār Khān, the leader of the Turcoman tribe), took some years to establish its power, and thus to restore Persia to a position of respect through its control of all the Persian provinces.<sup>169</sup> The founder of the Qājār dynasty

in Persia, Āghā Muḥammad Khān, ruled from 1795 to 1797. During that period losses arose on sales at both Bushire and Basrah.<sup>170</sup>

### 6.8.1 *Bushire's trade*

At the beginning of 1797 the Shaikh of Bushire took control of the Company's business by ordering the Resident not to deal directly with the local merchants. He instructed the Resident to deliver goods to a named person or persons, then collected the full purchase price, deducted 10% profit for himself, and paid the remainder to the Resident. The confusion arising from the death of Āghā Muḥammad Khān in mid-1797 put an effective stop to all trading. The successor to Āghā Muḥammad Khān was Fath 'Alī Shāh, who now began to impose his control on Persia. In the case of Bushire, he sent Ḥusain Qulī Khān, Governor of Shiraz and Beglerbegi (Commander) of Forces, with 12,000 men, in mid-1798, to punish Shaikh Nāṣir for his independent behaviour in the past. Nāṣir and his men evacuated Bushire temporarily, and Ḥusain Qulī Khān took possession. The Resident, Nicholas Hankey Smith, reported to Bombay that he had given presents amounting to Rs 60,000 and had succeeded in renewing the validity of the *faramāns* governing the Bushire factory.<sup>171</sup> The Grand Vizier or Chief Minister, Ḥājji Ibrāhīm, was given Rs 10,000 for himself.<sup>172</sup> In a letter dated 6 October 1798 to the Governor in Bombay, Smith elegantly characterised the events as a revolution:<sup>173</sup>

I have already informed your Hon'ble Board of the revolution which took place here on the 20th ultimo, and am sorry to add that it appears to be the determination of the present dynasty to reduce the Shaikh's power and subject Bushire as in the reign of Nadir Shaw to the military government of an officer nominated by the Governor of Sherauz or immediately under his injunctions. In consequence of this avulsion of authority, Shaikh Nassir is already degraded to the allegorical vocation of Collector and Custom Master, under the vigilant eye of jealous and voracious circumspection, the curb of affectitious power, and the perplexity of fraudulent artifice and intrigue.

### 6.8.2 *Basrah's trade*

The factory at Basrah was re-established in October 1795 and the dispute with the Pasha was finally brought to a successful conclusion.<sup>174</sup> In December 1796, the

Board of Trade in Bombay accused Samuel Manesty (the Resident at Basrah) by implication of being less zealous than the previous Resident in his desire and efforts to promote the Company's woollen sales at Basrah. Manesty replied in July 1797 that, after the re-establishment of the Basrah factory, he had asked the Bombay Government to send him quickly a large consignment of woollens for sale on the Company's account: he could not, then, be reasonably suspected of subsequent indifference in the matter. The losses which had arisen on the sales of broadcloth for the period precisely from his take-over of the Residency from John Griffith had 'unavoidably' grown out of the general losses on the sales of woollens in the Gulf.<sup>175</sup>

At the beginning of 1797, the Board noticed an increase in the quantities of copper being exported from Basrah to Persia, and thus competing with the Company's copper imported through Bushire. The results of their enquiries into the copper being produced in the Turkish dominions (marketed through Basrah in copper cake) and its comparison with European copper in plates, imported through the Company, are summarised in Tables 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9.

**Table 6.7: Costing of European copper, 1791-1796**<sup>176</sup>

Year	Prime cost per cwt	15% advance for charges	Total Rupees
1791	37.1.94	6.2.48	44.0.42
1792	41.1.53	6.0.44	47.1.97
1793	51.1.65	7.2.84	59.0.49
1794	50.1.09	7.2.15	57.3.24
1795	50.1.09	7.2.15	57.3.24
1796	47.0.67	7.0.28	54.0.95

**Table 6.8: European copper imported and sold, 1791-1796**<sup>177</sup>

Year	Quantity imported (cwt)	Quantity sold	Median price for general sales of cwts in Rs
1791	7,210	7,210	46.2.45
1792	1,798	1,798	57.2.04
1793	888	none	
1794	2,358	1,346	of the uncleared 1792 56.3.16
1795	none	3,150	of the 1793/4 imports 61.3.44
1796	730	730	62.1.00

**Table 6.9: Pricing of Basrah copper, 1791-1796<sup>178</sup>**

**1791**

Cake of 30 lbs cost 80 *Mahmudis*: 10 Mahmudis = Rs 1

Equivalent of one hundredweight (112 lbs) in Rupees = 29.3.46

Freight	1.2.00
Commission @ 2½ %	3.20
Insurance @ 5%	1.2.40
Customs: reckoned @	
15% - advance @ 2½ %	3.68
Hamallage [porterage]	1.00

5.0.28

**34.3.74**

**1796**

Cake of 30 lbs cost 130 Mahmudis: 10 Mahmudis = Rs 1

Equivalent of one hundredweight (112 lbs) in Rupees = 48.2.12

Freight	2.1.60
Commission @ 2½ %	1.0.84
Insurance @ 5%	2.1.68
Customs: reckoned @	
15% - advance @ 2½ %	1.1.56
Hamallage	1.00

7.2.68

**56.0.80**

Until 1796 the actual quantities of copper exports from Basrah were unknown, but in that year they amounted to 7,000 maunds at 30 lbs each, or 1,875 hundredweight (cwt). They sold at an average of Rs 63 per cwt, which was three quarters of a Rupee greater than the Company's highest copper prices in Basrah.<sup>179</sup>

### **6.8.3 Persian Gulf trade**

During the decline of the Zand dynasty and the establishment of the Qājār dynasty trade in the Persian Gulf fell to its lowest level. The general statement of exports and imports between India (Surat) and the Persian Gulf by the Company is summarised in Table 6.10, for the period between 1 May 1794 and 30 April 1799. Large quantities of goods were also carried between India and the Persian Gulf by the native merchants. Table 6.11 shows the quantities and values imported and exported between 1 May 1794 and 30 April 1799.

**Table 6.10: East India Company trade between Surat  
and the Persian Gulf, 1794-1799 (in Rupees)<sup>180</sup>**

Year	Imports to Surat	Exports to the Persian Gulf	From various ports: re-exported to the Gulf
1794/95	48,570.0.45	36,263.2.40	29,370.3.20
1795/96	175,036.2.25	120,008.0.60	33,829.0.38
1796/97	77,598.2.25	165,470.1.00	44,089.3.00
1797/98	80,997.2.50	56,260.2.60	20,276.2.80
1798/99	28,328.3.70	49,834.1.80	19,390.2.80

In 1798/99 exports from Surat to Bombay for re-export to the Persian Gulf amounted to Rs 48,528.1.95.

**Table 6.11: Native merchant trade between Surat  
and the Persian Gulf, 1794-1799 (in Rupees)<sup>181</sup>**

Year	Imports to Surat	Exports to the Persian Gulf
1794/95	69,801.3.60	432,768.1.40
1795/96	118,605.2.05	401,532.1.00
1796/97	129,513.3.57	460,682.1.70
1797/98	125,896.1.13	344,621.0.60
1798/99	114,129.1.94	416,586.3.20

Tables 6.10 and 6.11 show that in the year 1794/95 the value of goods carried by native merchants from India to the Persian Gulf was over six times the value carried by the Company. This situation led to protests being raised against the Company's Chief in Surat, Daniel Seton, who withdrew the privileges he had allowed to the merchants. Immediately, the native merchants reacted with a letter in May 1796 to the Governor of Bombay, translated as:<sup>182</sup>

Four months ago some of our Merchants sent your Excellency a Petition in which there was no complaint against any individual, the present Chief Daniel Seton Esqr. has shown us the highest degree of support and protection and we are exceedingly happy and content under him. Therefore we hope that we shall be favoured with his assistance, and advice for the Management and advantage of our Trade with Mocha Juddah and Bussorah for the ensuing season. We here [*sic*] troubled you that from your excessive goodness you will be pleased to communicate this our desire in a friendly way to the Chief.

The Governor, however, gave orders for the reform of the Surat establishment, reducing it to a form better related to its objectives. He suggested that the post of Chief be



reduced to that of a Resident, although with all the powers and functions of the last Chief, and that there should be an adequate number of Assistants.<sup>183</sup> Following the reform, the disparity in favour of the native merchants between 1795/96 and 1798/99 reduced at first to under three times, and never rose again to previous levels.

## **6.9 The increase in the value of English trade with Bushire, 1800-1820**

In the last few years of the century the East India Company had thus noticed a decline in trade with Bushire. The Bombay Government sent a letter on 14 July 1798 to the Resident at Bushire, asking for his observations about trade there. He replied:<sup>184</sup>

The propriety of abdicating or protractising this establishment depends, I should imagine, on the prospects the Hon'ble Company have or may have of commercial or political views in the country, consequently the expediency of the one must be determined by your Hon'ble Boards expectations as superior discernments of the feasibility of the other.

The Company therefore decided to send a number of missions to Persia to boost its trade and political influence in that country. As a result, this period in Gulf history was characterised by close relations between the English and the Persians:<sup>185</sup> missions from Bombay visited Tehran (the new capital) and the Gulf ports, while English imports and exports both increased.<sup>186</sup>

### **6.9.1 *The missions***

#### **a) The East India Company's missions**

##### **1. Mehdi Ali Khan's mission 1799**

Mehdi Ali Khan (Mahdī 'Alī Khān) was a Persian from Khurāsān, domiciled in India, who was appointed by Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay, to be Resident at Bushire. His predecessor as Resident there, Nicholas Smith, handed over charge of the English factory to Mehdi Ali Khan, as well as the Company's cash amounting to Rs 6,338 and its dead stock. But Smith returned to the Presidency without handing the British flag over to Mehdi Ali Khan; refusing, as he said, to deliver the flag to a non-English Resident. This was the first - and the last - time such a thing occurred, and Smith was ordered to send the

flag back to Mehdi Ali Khan with the *Panther*. Mehdi Ali Khan was then installed on 30 October 1798.<sup>187</sup> He was received by the Shāh in the next year, and succeeded in persuading him to continue his hostilities against Afghanistan, which was then threatening India.<sup>188</sup>

## **2. Malcolm's missions to Persia 1800, 1808, 1810**

Captain John Malcolm was appointed by Lord Mornington on 10 August 1799 as Envoy to the Court of Persia: on his first mission, Malcolm signed an agreement at the beginning of 1801 with the Persians, by which he secured commercial concessions. His second mission failed to reach Tehran and was aborted because the Persian Government was busy with a French mission under General Gardane; Malcolm returned to Bombay. His third mission was to bolster the effect of the preliminary treaty with the Persians earlier arranged by Sir Harford Jones.<sup>189</sup>

## **3. The mission of Sir Harford Jones 1808-1809**

The activities of Sir Harford Jones, deputed by the British Government and not under the Governor General's control, caused friction; his relations with India became so strained that his function was suspended. Nonetheless, the good work he had done remained of value for many years.<sup>190</sup> His preliminary treaty was made definitive in 1814.

### **b) The Persian missions**

#### **1. Hājji Khalīl's mission 1801-1802**

Khalīl's function was to dispose of the points connected with trade which still remained unsettled. In the event, he was struck by a stray bullet while in Bombay and fell dead.<sup>191</sup>

## 2. Muḥammad Nabī Khān's mission 1805-1807

With this mission the Shāh hoped to obtain protection from the British against the Russians. The Bombay Government, however, referred all questions of British policy to His Majesty's Government at home, and the envoy returned to Persia empty-handed.<sup>192</sup>

### 6.9.2 *Measures tending to boost trade*

- i) The safety of the seas and the protection of the East India Company's ships now became important considerations, and the Bombay Marine was strengthened at the beginning of 1800.<sup>193</sup>
- ii) In the past the terms and conditions of trade might well have been analogous as between British merchants and those trading under British protection, e.g. the Indian native merchants (see pages 274-5). In recent years, however, the Bombay Government had become aware of a vast increase in British shipping owned and freighted by natives of India and Persia. Even on vessels which were the property of Europeans, their own importations were a very small proportion of the whole. After the Governor of Bombay's intervention that proportion would increase, to the benefit of the British merchants.<sup>194</sup>
- iii) The Shāh's inclination to cultivate the friendship of the English.<sup>195</sup>

## 6.10 The trade of Bushire at peace, 1800-1820

The trade of Bushire during this period consisted principally of:-

### 6.10.1 *Bushire's imports from India*

Cotton, cotton yarn, cardamoms, cloves, cinnamon, chinaware, *cassia buds*, China *camphire*, ginger, indigo, iron, lead, musk, nutmegs, peppers, red lead, sugar candy, steel, shawls, silk goods, turmeric, tin and woollens.<sup>196</sup>

### 6.10.2 *Bushire's exports to India*

Persian and Turkish coins, Venetian sequins (coins), German crowns, and gold and silver in bars. One fifth of imports were balanced by exports of Persian commodities, consisting of drugs of various kinds, carpets, rose-water, attar of roses and Shiraz wine.<sup>197</sup>

### 6.10.3 *The trade of the Bushire factory*

After disposing of 5,000 pieces of perpet and other goods to the value of Rs 200,000, in November 1800,<sup>198</sup> the Resident at Bushire placed the order shown in Table 6.12 with Bombay.

**Table 6.12: Cloth ordered by Bushire, 1800<sup>199</sup>**

Perpets	3,000 pieces
Broadcloth	162 pieces
Worsters (fine smooth yarn)	126 pieces
Fine cloth	174 pieces
Superfine cloth	258 pieces

In March 1801, the Resident estimated (badly, as it turned out) the indent of goods required for the succeeding years of 1801 to 1804; see Table 6.13.

**Table 6.13: Estimate of goods required in Bushire, 1801-1804<sup>200</sup>**

Year	Cloth type	Bales	Pieces
1801	Coarse & medleys	20	120
1802	“	“	“
1803	Coarse & medleys	“	240
	Superfine	“	240
	Fine	“	120
	Coarse Aurora	“	190
	Worsters	“	210
1804	Coarse & medleys	“	240
	Superfine	“	240
	Fine	“	120
	Coarse Aurora	“	190
	Worsters	“	210

The statement of accounts at Bushire during the following three years is set out in Tables 6.14 and 6.15.

**Table 6.14: Bushire factory accounts - Debits<sup>201</sup>**  
(in Rupees)

Year	Amount of disbursements	Losses and drafts
1800 (Nov & Dec)	3,095	
1801	11,633	
1802	10,942	Losses: 12,425
		Cash forwarded to Manesty (Basrah): 20,307
		Expenses on death of Persian Ambassador: 13,846
1803 (1-15 Jan)	<u>5,416</u>	Mission expenses: <u>12,692</u>
<b>Total Rupees</b>	<b><u>43,511</u></b>	<b><u>59,270</u></b>

**Table 6.15: Bushire factory accounts - Credits<sup>202</sup>**  
(in Rupees)

Year	Profit	Cash
1800 (Nov & Dec)		Account closed: 13,080
		Woollens sale: 3,606
1801	6,352	Woollens received from Presidency: 565,474
1802	290	326 pieces of broadcloth & 100 cwt of lead from the Presidency: 12,099
1803 (1-15 Jan)	<u>        </u>	166 bales of broadcloth: <u>2,682</u>
<b>Total Rupees</b>	<b><u>6,642</u></b>	<b><u>596,941</u></b>

Tables 6.14 and 6.15 make the situation of the Bushire factory quite clear. The goodwill engendered by the missions, and the practical effect of the measures on page 277, saw the factory moving into profitability.

For the year 1804 the Resident re-ordered perperets, not exceeding 5,000 pieces, and 1,500 cwts of metals, divided between tin - 300 cwt; lead - 700 cwt; iron - 300 cwt; and steel - 200 cwt.<sup>203</sup> Tin went to both Basrah and Bushire from the year 1805/6 onwards to a value of upwards of Rs 50,000 to 60,000 a year, until 1810/11 when it rose to Rs 81,663.<sup>204</sup> As for other commodities, in May 1801 the Resident managed to sell all the goods sent there in 1798, at a prime cost of Rs 99,600, making a net profit of Rs 13,400.<sup>205</sup> But the 'Europe' cloth was not saleable in the market, and

several bales sent in 1800 were sent back to the Presidency as there was no prospect of selling them.<sup>206</sup>

By the last quarter of 1801 the factory at Bushire was perfectly secure but its sales - the marketing of the East India Company's woollens, especially its perpets - depended largely on their being taken up for Afghanistan. At that time Afghanistan had been reduced to a state of distress and no-one, therefore, ventured to buy such large quantities of the Company's woollens.<sup>207</sup> The woollens mainly in use there had of late been brought from Russia, by the safe and easy route through Herat. There they sold cheaply and were distributed to various parts of Afghanistan and Punjab.<sup>208</sup> In August 1803, the Resident wrote to the Secretary to Government in the Revenue Department at Bombay about current imports being so low, seldom more than a few hundred Rupees.<sup>209</sup> On the basis of this latest information from Bushire, the Bombay Government recommended that no more goods should be sent to the Persian and Afghan markets.<sup>210</sup>

The sale of goods in the Bushire market in 1811 was satisfactory, except for the sale of woollens: large quantities had been bought up by private individuals, who sold at prices much lower than the Company's prime cost, and a large amount therefore remained unsold.<sup>211</sup> In August 1812, the Resident at Bushire drew up two statements of the current prices of goods which were saleable in the Bushire market, and goods which could be bought there (see Tables 6.16 and 6.17).

**Table 6.16: Prices of goods on the market at Bushire, 1812<sup>212</sup>**  
(original form of record and N.B. retained)

To be purchased in the Bushere Market	Mahmoodies- $\frac{1}{4}$
Almonds p. Tubreez Maund	5.2
Dried Roses	6
Persian Silk as p. <i>Muster</i>	302.2
Carminia [Kirmān] Wool as p. Muster	84
Persian Copper	36
Saffron	206
Raisins	6

N.B. A Tabreez Maund consists of 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  Pounds English & One Bombay Rupee of 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  Mahmoodees - As further opportunities of information offer the above Statement will be extended.

**Table 6.17: Prices of goods saleable at Bushire, 1812<sup>213</sup>**  
(original form of record retained)

Saleable in the Bushere Market	Mahmoodies-¼
Cheewullee [locality in India] Turmeric p. Tabreez Maund	6
Bengal Soft Sugar 1st Sort	16.2
Do. Do. Do. 2nd Do.	14
China Soft Sugar in Chest	16.2
Cannister [i.e. basket chest] Sugar of Batavia	16.2
Batavia Sugar in Bags	13.2
Sugar Candy 1st Sort	24.2
Do. Do. 2nd Do.	23
<i>Moorah</i> Pepper	9
Bag Pepper	8.1
<i>Camphor</i>	91
<i>Sal Ammoniac</i>	30.1
Tin	31.2
Cloves of the Isle of France [Mauritius]	115.2
Cardamums 1st Sort	118
Cloves of Batavia	121
<i>Tutenague</i>	27.2
Ginger	9
Nutmegs	220.2
Ivory of their Sort [three qualities were recognised]	50
Kuth [ <i>kath</i> ] & Hurtoo [ <i>hurtaul</i> ]	9
<i>Blue Vitriol</i>	33
Lead	10
Cotton 1st Sort	16.2
Bengal Indigo 1st Sort	192.2
Chinnamon [ <i>sic</i> ]	36
Cassia in Sticks from Surat 1st Sort	14
Bengal Rice 1st Sort per Bag of 22 Tubrees Maund	60
Raw Bengal Rice Do.	[ <i>sic</i> ] 66
Pegu [southern Myanmar] Sealingwax	22
<i>Vermillion</i> Europe 1st Sort	1100
Chintzes Europe as p. Pattion [pattern] p. Guz-e-Shah [ <i>shaw</i> ] or 100 Guz-e-Shah = 107 yds English	45
Teak Planks p. 20 Planks	1800
Mocha Coffee p. Coffee bag of 52½ Mds 55 or 60 Spanish Dollars [ <i>rials</i> ] p. bag	

#### 6.10.4 *East India Company trade with the Gulf, 1800-1820*

The drop in the sale of woollens reduced the value of exports from Bombay to the Persian Gulf in the year 1810/11 from Rs 1,771,470 to Rs 1,021,953.<sup>214</sup> But, during this period in general, peace in Persia helped to increase the volume of the Company's trade. Imports to Bombay increased more than two-fold and exports from Bombay rose about three-fold (see Appendices 92 and 93).

Table 6.18 contains a summary statement of the East India Company's woollen and other main staples exported from Bombay to the Persian Gulf from 1 May 1801 to 30 April 1811.

**Table 6.18: Value of EIC exports to the Persian Gulf, 1801-1811<sup>215</sup>**

(in Rupees and by principal articles only)

Year	Broad Cloth	Long Ells	Lead	Iron	Copper	Steel	Tin	Coch- ineal
1801/2	3,424		18,239	19,458	990	19,059	11,050	2,619
1802/3	6,300		9,232	39,043	62	7,459	2,321	2,796
1803/4	15,303		10,697	79,753	1,425	9,052	422	6,827
1804/5	10,525	1,200	33,555	26,449	1,750	3,600	3,405	24,255
1805/6	300		13,212	49,807	650	5,455	30,150	5,663
1806/7	31,103		4,340	75,023	2,358	6,766	87,013	16,505
1807/8	20,585	16,800	25,876	11,194	2,443	5,091	90,679	40,340
1808/9	16,360	2,650	39,998	29,127	500	510	16,335	
1809/10	41,808	57,035	8,526	12,745	300	8,434	46,675	9,440
1810/11	4,660	15,930	11,155	20,430		525	139,129	3,000

## 6.11 Conclusion

Karīm Khān blamed his 'disgust' with the English on Moore, as he indicated to both the Governor of Bombay and to Garden. The Presidency nevertheless insisted on leaving the handling of the relationship with Karīm Khān in Moore's hands, with the result that:

- a) An expedition was sent against Khark in February 1769, to negotiate whilst besieging the island;
  - b) Orders were given to English cruisers to attack any ship which came too close;
- and c) English cruisers gave convoy to the Imam of Muscat's fleet.

These events in turn led to the Persian piracies in which English ships were captured and English citizens imprisoned. Notwithstanding Karīm Khān's nature and the disgraceful treatment that the English had received from him, Moore proceeded on a thoroughgoing negotiation with him to achieve the re-settlement at Bushire. He



summed Karīm Khān up as 'the most unsteady and perverse of characters'.<sup>216</sup> Karīm Khān never changed his demands, while the English had to give up all of theirs. The Persians wanted the English to come back and resettle at Bushire after they found that their war with the Ottoman Turks had isolated them from the north, and up to their southern borders. The only country they could trade with was India - and India was in the hands of the English.

The growth of trade in Bushire passed through many stages, from the failure of trade between 1775 and 1799, up to the success of 1800-1820.

Stage 1. The period from the re-establishment at Bushire to the death of Karīm Khān, 1775-1779: the occupation of Basrah by the Persians and the death of Karīm Khān caused the Company to sell at a loss at the beginning of the period, and to be left with dead stock at the end.

Stage 2. Between the death of Karīm Khān (1779) and the downfall of the Zand dynasty (1795): the revolution at Shiraz imposed a total stoppage on trade with Bushire.

Stage 3. The establishment of the Qājār dynasty, 1795-1799: the confusion arising from the death of Āghā Muḥammad, the revolution of Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire, and the punishment he received from the Commander of the Persian forces for his actions, all combined to put an effective end to all trading.

Stage 4. The remaining period of comparative peace (1800-1820), marked by the increasing value of English trade through Bushire, when imports to Bombay more than doubled and exports almost trebled (see Appendices 92 and 93).

Appendix 92 shows a decline in the value of exports from Bombay for the year 1810/11 of about Rs 750,000: in the year 1811/12 they rose by Rs 927,000. When he visited Bushire in 1811, James Morier recorded in his book *A Second Journey through Persia etc* that the port was frequented annually by no more than eight ships under English colours and about six from Muscat, making an average annual total of

about 4,500 tons of shipping.<sup>217</sup> There were, however, special circumstances affecting trade at that moment. The decline was caused by:

- a) Operations by French privateers from their bases in the islands of Bourbon and Mauritius, at the time of the Anglo-French war, which sank over 15,000 tons of the Company's shipping in the Indian Ocean, with the loss, in 1809-10 alone, of cargoes to the value of more than £1 million sterling.
- b) The financial strain which the Company in Bombay experienced between 1807-1812, forcing it to seek assistance: in those years the Company in England had to raise £6 million in bonds.<sup>218</sup>

When political conditions were stable and relationships normal, the Persian trade of the East India Company could thrive. The variety of goods imported and exported is impressive, and the potential profits were attractive.

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<sup>195</sup> J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.71.

<sup>196</sup> William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce* (London: Kingsbury Parbury and Allen, 1825), p.93.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> BA, Commercial Department Diary no. 28/1801, pp.306-11.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 27/1800, pp.1298-1301.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 28/1801, pp.306-15.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 48/1805, pp.1853-8.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 81/1811, pp.2066-73.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 30/1801, pp.765-6.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 35/1802, pp.1122-3.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 31/1801, pp.1503-10.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 24/1799, pp.1166-70.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 38/1803, pp.1294-6.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 42/1804, pp.1498-1515.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 83/1811, pp.422-4.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p.2362.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., Diary no. 98/1812, pp.2360-1.

<sup>214</sup> India Office Library, Bombay Commerce Internal and External Reports, Range 419, vols. 39-57, 1801-21.

<sup>215</sup> BA, Commercial Department Diary no. 87/1811, p.2060.

<sup>216</sup> BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.292.

<sup>217</sup> James Justinian Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, between the Years 1810 and 1816* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1818), p.38.

<sup>218</sup> C.H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), pp.155-6.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.0 Introduction

The overall concern of this thesis has been to make a contribution towards the understanding of events leading up to the withdrawal of European trade settlements from Persian ports during the second half of the 18th century. The particular aim has been to examine the effects of Persian power struggles, and other local conflicts on trade in the Persian Gulf and on the affairs of the European East India Companies.

Some writers have blamed the lack of reliable research materials for the lacunae in their studies. The present study has been undertaken on the basis of an almost total reliance on authentic primary sources from the records of the European Companies, which are preserved in many archives and libraries. In the writings of earlier authors no connection is made between the events they describe preceding the withdrawals, and the withdrawals themselves. It was therefore logical and timely to ask what the reasons actually were for the withdrawal of European trading establishments from Persian ports.

To answer this question it will be useful to summarise what this thesis has uncovered in the way of main contributory factors to the failure of Bandar Abbas, Bandar Rīq, Khark, and Bushire. Some remarks will also be made about the nature of the Persian Gulf trade itself, and the Companies' roles in promoting their share of the trade in the prevailing circumstances. Finally, more general conclusions are added, together with a brief note on possible further research into this topic.

## 7.1 The English withdrawal from Bandar Abbas, 1763

It was inconceivable that the violent and bloody reign of Nādir Shāh, who usurped the Persian throne in 1736, would prove remotely conducive to successful external or local trade in Persia. He admittedly directed that a loss sustained by Jonas Hanway (when rebels seized his woollen goods in Astarābād in 1744) should be made good to him:<sup>1</sup> but such parts of the English Company's records at Bandar Abbas which touch on Persian affairs are replete with instances of his oppressive actions against the factories at Isfahan and Bandar Abbas, and of the insults and provocations he offered to the Company servants there.<sup>2</sup>

From the assassination of Nādir Shāh in 1747 to the establishment in office of Karīm Khān, Persia was plunged into the most acute turmoil and distress it had ever experienced. Although Karīm Khān was able to consolidate power in his hands in 1763, assuming the title of *Wakīl* (Regent), Persia remained in the grip of disturbances until his death. English trade in Persia had declined so much that, taking also into account the extortions they continually suffered from the Persian Governor in Bandar Abbas, Mullā 'Alī Shāh, neither good sense nor self-interest could justify the English Company supporting so expensive an establishment. The Company therefore considered over a period of a dozen years the many places to which the factory might be withdrawn, before action was taken. In seeking alternatives, political stability was a prime consideration.

The possibility of withdrawal to Bahrain was examined in 1750, but the initiative by the Agent was stopped by the Presidency, after hearing that Bahrain was a most 'inhospitable' place. In 1751 the Agent was given authority by the Presidency in Bombay to leave Bandar Abbas at the first sign of fresh trouble, and to take possession of Bahrain or any other island in the Gulf, such as Qishm or Hormuz. The Agent threatened Mullā 'Alī Shāh that if he did not act as expected of him, in keeping things quiet and the sea routes open, the factory would be closed. The threat seemed

to impress Mullā 'Alī Shāh, and he promised to do his best to follow the advice. After visiting the islands of Qishm and Henjam, the Agent reported to the Presidency in 1752 that the Company factory should move to one of them. A few months later, however, he wrote again, saying that the factory was quite safe in Bandar Abbas for the time being. He saw many arguments against withdrawal, whilst the notional benefits from doing so could be double-edged, perhaps leading to a rupture with the Persians. However, in October 1760 the Agent received instructions from the Presidency to take possession of the island of Hormuz. He visited it, and reported back that it was by no means a suitable place to move to. After receiving this report, in 1761 the President and Governor in Bombay wrote back to the Agent at Bandar Abbas, giving him *carte blanche* to withdraw to wherever he thought best.

In February 1762, the Presidency ordered the Agent in Bandar Abbas or the Assistant Agent in Basrah to give the Bushire market a trial before any commitment was made to moving there. The Presidency recommended removing the factory from Bandar Abbas to Basrah for security reasons on 16 January 1763, and on 4 March 1763 the Agent attacked the Persian fort in Bandar Abbas after receiving threats from the port's Deputy Governor. On 7 March the English discovered that Persian reinforcements of about 250 horsemen had arrived, and the Agent therefore ordered the three English ships waiting in the port to embark everyone and load whatever they could before sailing for Basrah. The Agent himself returned to Bombay on 10 March 1763 aboard the *Prince of Wales*. One can scarcely doubt that the withdrawal of the English factory from Bandar Abbas was caused by the situation of chaos and anarchy then prevailing, which affected all forms of trade.

## **7.2 The withdrawal of the English settlement from Bandar Rīq, 1756**

The little port of Bandar Rīq, situated almost opposite the island of Khark, benefitted from certain natural advantages, and in normal times would have thrived as a trading centre. Although the ports of Bushire and Bandar Rīq are much the same distance

from the island of Khark they differ significantly in their accessibility from Shiraz, the market for which the greater part of Dutch imports was destined. A caravan (*qāfilah*) departing from Bushire for Shiraz generally completed its journey in 12 to 14 days: those coming from Bandar Rīq required no more than 7 or 8 days on the road. This difference in travel time obviously translated into a difference in the costs of the journey, so that the Dutch always preferred to land their goods consigned to Shiraz at Bandar Rīq rather than Bushire, whether on the Dutch Company's account or on the account of private merchants. Moreover, most of the Bandar Rīq merchants who lived at Bushire made frequent commercial trips to Khark, where they bought large quantities of spices and sugars. These were then despatched from Khark to Shiraz.

The port at Bandar Rīq, depending as it did on the trading settlements on Khark for its commercial importance, lapsed into its former obscurity when the Dutch withdrew from the island in 1766,<sup>3</sup> but while the link existed the English operated a trading establishment at the port which lasted for two years (1755-1756). It was a period of dangers and high expenditure, accentuated by rivalry with the Dutch in that area. The English factory was closed as a direct result of the struggle for power between Mīr Muhannā and his brothers on one hand, and the Persian authorities on the other. But other factors hastened the decision to withdraw. One was the high rate of expenditure already referred to: the other was the disregard of the Agent, Wood, for his orders from the Governor of Bombay. The Governor had instructed Wood to take his directions from Bombay or the Agent at Bandar Abbas. Instead, he followed the instructions of the Basrah Agent, Shaw, who had no wish to see another trading centre taking part of the trade going to Basrah and thereby diminishing his own percentage.

### **7.3 The withdrawal of the Dutch settlement from Khark island, 1766**

The violence offered by the Turkish Governor of Basrah to Frederik von Kniphausen, chief of the Dutch factory there, prompted the establishment of a Dutch fort and a

factory on Khark island in 1754. Kniphausen soon added lodgings for the Dutch Company's servants, warehouses for their goods, and barracks for the troops stationed there for the island's defence. Dutch imports to Khark consisted mainly of sugar and spices from Batavia, and other south Asian products. The return trade included pearls, mules, wines from Shiraz, and drugs produced in different parts of Persia.

There were several factors which worked towards ending the Dutch settlement on Khark island. First, the Dutch operated in such a way that they could be defrauded, and the Dutch garrison on Khark was badly managed. Second, the Dutch Resident became involved in local politics, and the lack of awareness of local power struggles of the new Dutch Resident allowed the Dutch forces to be caught up in the local 'commotion'.<sup>4</sup> Above all, Dutch involvement in the struggle between Mīr Muhannā and the Persians led to the Dutch factory on Khark island being captured by Mīr Muhannā, with the result that the Dutch were forced to withdraw from the Gulf, never to return.

#### **7.4 The withdrawal of the English settlement from Bushire, 1769**

The Government of Bombay ordered a member of their Board, William Andrew Price, who was on his way to Basrah, to visit Bushire in April 1763 along with the Agent at Basrah. His remit was to negotiate with Shaikh Sa'dūn of Bushire for the establishment of an English factory in the port. He found no difficulty in carrying out his instructions and left Benjamin Jervis as Resident in charge of the Company's affairs. The new Residency was constituted subordinate to the Agent in Basrah, and subject to the the Presidency and Council in Bombay. Jervis occasionally made large sales of woollens and velvets on the Company's account, whilst trade carried on by private merchants living there increased daily. Bushire soon became an important port following the opening of the English Residency.

Nevertheless, Persia had been reduced to desperate straits by the long period of civil war and by expensive military campaigns, so that Karīm Khān's necessary expenditures far exceeded the revenues he could collect. The economic climate and Karīm Khān's hostility prompted English thoughts of withdrawing from Bushire. After nearly eight years of trying to maintain their neutrality, the English were unable to avoid becoming embroiled in conflict and instability. As with the withdrawal from Bandar Rīq, there were also other factors at work. The corruption or incompetence of Jervis and the factory's Linguist fuelled Karīm Khān's hostility towards the English for many years, for what he saw as false promises to use the Company's fleet to reduce Mīr Muhannā and the Banī Ka'b. Even so, unsuccessful military operations against both the Mīr and the Ka'b cost many lives and hundreds of thousands of Rupees. The prevailing instability caused poor financial returns which did not even cover staff costs and security provisions: the Company was suffering an annual loss on the Persian Gulf account.

Following six years of disputes with Karīm Khān, the English re-established their Bushire factory in 1775. Unfortunately, at the outset of this period the commerce of Persia was already moving almost imperceptibly into decline. In the period of 45 years from 1775 to 1820 trade followed the political journey from turmoil to peace, as the conflict for supremacy between the Persian dynasties came to an end. In its first half, this period witnessed the decline and downfall of the Zand dynasty from 1775 to 1795. This was followed by the establishment of the Qājār dynasty, which took five years to become stabilised. During that time there was an almost total stoppage of trade with Bushire.

To boost its trade and gain political influence in the country, the East India Company decided to send a number of missions to Persia. These were led by Mehdi Ali Khan in 1799, John Malcolm in 1800, 1808 and 1810, and Harford Jones in 1808-1809. During the same period the Persian Government sent missions in the reverse direction: Hājji Khalīl's mission in 1801-1802, and Muḥammad Nabī Khān's mission in



1805-1807. At much the same time, extra protection for merchant ships was provided by the Bombay Marine, and the competition of native merchants with the Company's trade was curbed. Thereafter, English imports and exports started increasing. From 1801 to 1821, importations from the Persian Gulf to Bombay more than doubled in value and exports from Bombay to the Gulf almost trebled. That growth in the value of trade did not stop there, but continued increasing as long as there was stability in Persia. Study of the subsequent period - from 1821 to 1858 - when Persia enjoyed stability, shows that the value of trade from Bombay to the Persian Gulf nearly doubled, from Rs 3,359,000 to Rs 6,431,000 (see Appendix 94). It continued to rise, until the final closure of the British Residency at Bushire in 1947, after a political dispute between the British Government and Iran. The prosperity of Bushire during the period of relative political stability and peace after 1800 demonstrates what might have been, had other trading centres in the Gulf similarly enjoyed the essential pre-conditions for trade in earlier years.

## **7.5 General conclusions**

At the beginning of the 17th century the situation in the Gulf was generally peaceful. The dominant powers were the Ottoman Empire, Persia and the Portuguese, apart from some small independent states within the Gulf itself. The Ottoman Empire became unable to maintain its position in the Gulf except for Basrah, which was partially able to act as a gateway between the East and the West. Persia was essentially an inland power bent on extending its influence to the Persian coast of the Gulf. The Portuguese, as a maritime power, had a free hand in Gulf waters and a monopoly in its trade.

By the second decade of the 17th century the English had succeeded in obtaining a foothold in the area in order to share in the Gulf trade: this was Jask, actually outside the Gulf where no trade had been carried on. Nonetheless, the Portuguese began harrying the English ships and the English had to defend their trade by force. In this

way, the interests of the English fell into line with those of the Persians. With English help the Persians could expel the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622, and re-expel them with the combined Dutch and English fleets when they briefly re-occupied Hormuz in 1625. Neither the English nor the Dutch, however, could replace the Portuguese military power deployed in the Gulf: the impact of this was that many of the small Gulf states became, or made bids to become, independent.

A century later, in the first half of the 18th century, the impact of events was equally significant. The downfall of the Safavi dynasty in 1722 and the Afghan invasions of 1723 plunged Persia into a power vacuum, until the rise of Nadir Shah in 1736, followed by his extraordinary campaigns in Turkey, Afghanistan, Tartary, Oman and India. Until his death in 1747 Persia was a power with real authority, but the vacuum before his rise saw coastal Shaikhs starting to establish their own trade centres (see, for example, pages 65-6).

The second half of the century witnessed the the phenomenon of falling European trade and the withdrawal of trade settlements from the Gulf, as a result of power struggles and consequent instability. In this period the power struggles had an enormous impact on the whole of the Persian coast from Jask to the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab: all of the coastal states rebelled against the central government and acted independently. The northern districts of Persia were also in conflict with Shiraz during the whole period.

It is important to stress that the political instability had a direct impact on the East India Company's trade: it was not just an irritation. During the earlier power struggles rivalry between the Europeans was able to flourish. The Portuguese were a spent force at that time, but Anglo-Dutch competition began when the Dutch changed their trading methods from selling in Isfahan to selling at the port of Bandar Abbas, where the whole market had been in English hands. The rivalry increased from 1653, during the Anglo-Dutch wars, and persisted until 1753-1754 when the English became

involved in problems with Kniphausen on Khark island (see pages 8-11 and 57-8). Anglo-French rivalry also erupted occasionally. Although the French arrived late in Persia (1665), their challenge to the English started from 1698, when the English claimed that French ships coming to the Gulf were privateers. War between the two nations saw the number of French warships and privateers in the Gulf increase from May 1757, and in October 1759 the French went so far as to destroy the English factory at Bandar Abbas, and loot its contents (see pages 51-2 and 76-7 for example).

Rivalry of another kind also prospered during the power struggle. The perennially opposed Turks and Persians both claimed the important Ka'b tribe as their subjects, and this had its impact on the East India Company. Although the Ka'b attacked and inflicted losses on the Company's trade the English were unable to obtain redress because Karīm Khān placed the Ka'b under his protection, warning both the English and the Turks to leave them alone (for the complications caused the English in this way, see pages 145 and 182). Apart from the Ka'b, bandits exploited the absence of an effective central government by controlling the land routes for caravans and levying duties on English goods, as pages 181 and 187 show.

In fact, the most important and obvious impact of political disorder on trade was the interruption of trading routes, whether on land or sea. When instability was rife armed ships would be needed (and seldom available) to protect merchant ships. The latter, therefore, were sometimes forced to bypass the Persian ports without discharging: this was particularly damaging in that there was a general shortage of ships, described in pages 61-2, in any case. Many examples have been given of unprotected trading vessels being attacked (see pages 144, 236, 242 and 247 for some of these), while attacks on caravans, such as those cited on pages 80, 146, 150 and 177, forced the Company to buy and sell on board ship sometimes.

During periods of war or lower-level conflict, markets were not held and people preferred not to spend money, even if they had not suffered financially from the dis-

order. As a result, goods were sometimes returned to India and orders had to be given to stop importations. Examples of this happening are given on pages 68, 91-2, 103 and 154. At other times, ships might be lost, burnt or seized; supply depots might be looted or destroyed, as pages 77, 138, 199 and 201 show; and goods might be lost to extortion (see pages 88, 141, 177 and 190).

Other less dramatic but important aspects of instability which were injurious to trade derived from the absence of continuous and effective government. Treaties and agreements at various levels were difficult to achieve, and the agreements were often broken, with no redress (see pages 79 and 98). In the prevailing anarchy the leadership was unpredictable and the power hierarchy was uncertain, with governors and the like being appointed and driven out too often. Examples are given on pages 106, 128, 173 and 235.

In an environment such as has been outlined above trade becomes physically impossible, extremely hazardous and risky at times, and above all expensive to maintain. Witness the attack on the Ka'b in March 1766, which ended in such a painful defeat with casualties and losses estimated at Rs 500,000 (over and above the original loss). Against that sort of background the customary toll of disease among the Europeans (see pages 88 and 148) and the normally high costs of operating warships were more than usually onerous (see pages 91 and 222 for examples of these costs). Such an environment also accentuates the frailties of human nature. Some Company officials were corrupt, others were greedy or incompetent, or simply exceeded their terms of reference. The Dutch suffered from maladministration on Khark island, where Kniphausen diverted trade to his own account and van der Hulst was a poor manager. At Bushire, Jervis was of poor quality and allowed a corrupt and costly management to prevail. He was charged with maladministration, egoism, disobedience, and ill-treatment of others; his inadequacies feature on pages 8, 175-6, 180-5 and 221. Although the behaviour of the European Companies' officials was not a major factor in the failure of their trading settlements, it certainly hastened the fate of some of

them. The underlying structure of the Companies and their officials' terms of reference may have been to blame. In the case of the Dutch, major decisions were taken far away in Batavia and the local Agent had a free hand. The English had the opposite problem of orders coming from Bombay, Madras and Calcutta at one level, whilst a typical Resident might also be subject locally to an Agent elsewhere in the Gulf, or to the Ambassadors in the capitals (in Persia and Baghdad). This structure, likewise, encouraged officials to press ahead with personal initiatives.

## **7.6 Proposals for further research**

Two classes of material have been little used or not at all in this research. One is the peripheral accounts which focus on social and similar aspects of Persia during the study period. Persia was a much visited country by Europeans, and there is a large stock of travellers' tales which could be systematically studied in parallel with the English and Dutch official records. To the extent that they throw light on the subject of this thesis they have, of course, been examined. The other is the Persian source material which has always been difficult to access, particularly in recent years: parts have been translated by Europeans who had insufficient knowledge of the language and were working without the benefit of modern research. The time may be coming when researchers will be able to work in the Persian archives and establish whether they constitute a valuable resource: given the confusion of the period studied in this thesis it may be unlikely. Further research on the Qājārs however, mainly after this period, will certainly profit from the Persian sources.

## Chapter 7: References

- <sup>1</sup> Bombay Archives (BA), Manuscript Selections, Compilation no. 90: Samuel Manesty and Harford Jones, 'Report on the Commerce of Arabia and Persia', vol.7, pp.85-7.
- <sup>2</sup> John Gordon Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908-15), vol.1, pp. 86-90.
- <sup>3</sup> BA, 'Report of Commerce', vol.7, pp.92-4.
- <sup>4</sup> B.J. Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784* (Leidschendam: 1993), p.369.

(India Office Library, G/29/1, Factory Records: Persia and the Persian Gulf.  
Early Documents relating to Persia 1620-97, pp. 632-5)

Letter from King James I to Shāh 'Abbās  
about English trading in Persia 1621

Letter from King James I to Shah Abbas King of Persia relative to establishing a Trade in the Persian Dominions. 19th March 1620/1

James by the Grace of Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, King of Great Brittain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Christian Faith

To the High and Mighty Monarch, the Great Lord Abbas Emperor of Persia, Media and Armenia &c. High and Mighty Prince, not long since we directed our princely Letters unto you which were delivered by our Agent Thomas Barker to your Royal Hands, since which time we are advertised that you have not only lovingly received them, but have with all princely regard afforded many princely favors to ours residing within your Dominions and Territories, for which as we cannot omit to render unto you condign thanks, so we have thought meet to further the Advancement and establishing of this Trade, which upon mature deliberation we foresee (being once settled) will prove of great importance for the behalf of the Subjects of both our Kingdoms and Dominions, yet because no design can be prosecuted much less brought to perfection without many interruptions which do from time to time occur to the prejudice and impeachment thereof.

We have therefore once again addressed our Royal Letters to you, wherein we recommend to your princely consideration not only the furtherance of the Trade in general by accommodation thereof with such privileges and immunity as may most conduce to the advancement of so important a Business, but also certain particularities incident thereto, amongst which one is that the place from whence our Merchants fetch the Silk is so far remote from the Port at Jasques where their Ships come and the carriage of the Silk so far by Land, subject to so many difficulties and dangers, that unless you shall be pleased to appoint some convenient mart Town near the Port whither our Subjects may resort to buy their silks and speedily put them aboard their Ships, it will not only much indamage and discourage our Merchants in the prosecution of their Trade but to expose their Ships which ride off at Sea expecting their lading, to the attempts of the Portugalls who being ill willers of their Trade seeke, by indirect meanes, to drive our Subjects from all trade in those parts. And other is that our Merchants may have that freedom of Commerce and traffick with your Subjects as is usual among the Subjects of Princes in amity one with another and whereof at present they are restrained. And that the native Commodities of our Kingdoms and such other Merchandizes as our People shall import into your Territories and are useful for your Subjects may be accepted in part of satisfaction for such Silk of your Dominions as our Merchants shall contract for. For the better accommodation of which circumstances, and out of our affection to the prosperity of the trade, we have been pleased to interpose our mediation unto you on the behalf of our Subjects and more particularly to signify that we have appointed and authorised our Trusty Subject and Servant [space left in original] to be our Agent to negotiate with your Royal Person for obtaining such privileges as may be advantageous for your benefit and establishing of that trade and for the removing of all such impedements and redressing of such inconveniences as our Subjects have incountered and may interrupt the prosperous proceeding thereof. Expecting that you will give full credit to our Agent and grant him access to your Royal Person upon all occasions wherein he shall have cause to address himself unto &ca

APPENDIX 2

(Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), Kolonial Archief (KA), Vol. 10753, p.53)

Dutch cargoes received in Batavia  
from Persia in 1703 [summary]

Two ships:

i) Cargo valued at 210,991 pounds sterling (buying price). All cash (gold and mostly Persian silver coinage) except:

£4,759	gold cloth
1,837	woollen cloth
11	melon seeds

ii) Cargo valued at 23,411 pounds sterling, of which 11,698 in gold, and including 6 camels. The remainder being: small quantities of carpets, velvets, leather, almonds, *kismis* prunes, rose-water, Shiraz wine, seeds and drugs.

APPENDIX 3

(Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), Kolonial Archief (KA), Vol. 11838, pp.462-3)

Dutch East India Company  
imports into Persia 1714  
[summary]

Value of goods sent to Persia by the Dutch East India Company in the year 1714, amounting to 515,564 guilders in all:

20,009	pounds	tin	6,503	guilders
40,139	"	cloves	12,543	"
24,000	"	cinnamon	7,200	"
25,169	"	nutmeg	1,573	"
1,000,000	"	black pepper	132,000	"
20,433	"	<i>benzoin</i>	10,723	"
6,061	"	Japanese camphor	5,387	"
5,000	"	elephants' teeth	8,757	"
250,056	"	candy sugar	34,831	"
800,222	"	granulated sugar	57,791	"
60,000	"	<i>zappan</i> wood	1,735	"
39,040	pieces	sundry kinds of		
		Indian cottons	221,000	"

The weights here are in Amsterdam pounds of 494 metric grams



APPENDIX 4

(Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), Kolonial Archief (KA), Vol. 10760, p.207)

Dutch East India Company  
imports from Persia into Batavia 1715  
[summary]

Two ships from Persia delivered merchandise to Batavia in 1715; one of them, the *Kockenge*, arrived 21 March carrying a total value of 217,178.17 guilders, almost all in cash or bullion - the remainder being:

	Pounds Sterling
100 boxes Shiraz claret	2,008
1 box tarragon vinegar	22
620 pounds red raisins	113
800 pounds <i>kismis</i>	135
250 pounds pistachios	174
200 pounds almonds	163
792 pounds drugs	1,694
30,000 pounds, or 10 loads <i>red earth</i>	95
750 pieces Kirman pottery	256

APPENDIX 5

(Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), Kolonial Archief (KA), Vol. 10769, p.51)

Dutch East India Company  
imports from Persia into Batavia 1735  
[summary]

Two ships were received from Persia, the cargo of one was valued at 250,960 guilders, and the second at 61,735.5 guilders. All was in cash or bullion except as under:

1st ship	Pounds Sterling
44,063 pounds Kirman wool	78,050
100 boxes rose-water	5,256.14
81 loads <i>red earth</i>	2,926
tools	2,009

(Public Record Office, Admirals' In-Letters, ADM1/161)

14 October 1759

## ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION WITH THE FRENCH AT GOMBROON.

Articles of Capitulation for the English East India Company's Factory of Gombroon between Alexander Douglas Esq., Chief of the said Settlement and Council; and Monsieur Des Essars, Captain of His most Christian Majesty's Ship Conde and Commander in Chief of the present Expedition and Monsieur Charuyan, Captain Commandant of the Land Forces.

*Article 1st*

So soon as the present Capitulation is signed a Detachment of French Troops are to take Possession of the Factory, the Keys are to be delivered to the Commanding Officer and no Person is to come in or go out, without his permission, as he will take care to prevent Disorders and Thefts.

*Article 2nd*

All Effects of what kind soever contained in the Factory are to belong to the Besiegers, and are to be delivered to the French Commissary, with all Books and Papers in Possession of the Besieged: the Besiegers are to be shown the Warehouses, that they may place the necessary Centinels over them; the Artillery, Arms, Ammunition, Provisions, Money, Merchandise and Stores; in general everything contained within the Factory, are comprehended in this Article.

*Article 3rd*

The Chief, the Garrison, Factors, Writers and all Europeans, in the service of the English East India Company, in general all the subjects of His Britannick Majesty in the Factory are to be Prisoners of War, under the following Clauses only.

*Article 4th*

Whereas Monsieur D'Estaing, Brigadier of foot and formerly a Prisoner of His Britannick Majesty now on Board the ship Conde in his way to Europe by way of Bussorah, being desirous of rendering more Secure the Intelligence received of an Exchange having been made in his behalf between Governor Pigot Esq., of Madras, and Monsieur Lally Lieutenant General; it is now agreed between the Besiegers and Besieged that Alexander Douglas Esq., Chief of the English East India Company's Factory at Gombroon, with William Nash, Ensign Johnson, Dymoke Lyster, Lieutenant George Bembow, Lieutenant Richard Evans, and Richard Mainwaring are Lawfully exchanged for Monsieur D'Estaing, and they are at full Liberty to go where, and to what places they Please, in Consequence of which, Monsieur D'Estaing is under no other Clause than what's specified in the sixth Article.

*Article 5th*

Tho' the present Exchange of Prisoners is an unnecessary Precaution in behalf of Monsieur D'Estaing, yet all Persons mentioned in the preceding Article, are absolutely Free; but should Monsieur D'Estaing have been already Exchanged, as he undoubtedly is, in that Case, the seven Persons already mentioned who now enjoy their Liberty; a like Number and of equal Station of His most Christian Majesty's Subjects are to be released whenever a Cartel is made.

*Article 6th*

Monsieur D'Estaing, in order to fulfill with the greatest Exactitude, the Promise he made Governor Pigot, that he would not take Arms against the English, on the Cormandel Coast only, for the space of Eighteen Months, reckoning from the first of May, One Thousand Seven Hundred fifty Nine, desires it may be inserted in the Present Capitulation, that notwithstanding he is now exchanged, yet he will keep the Promise made Governor Pigot of not taking Arms against the English, on the Coast of Cormandel only, for the Space of Eighteen Months; but he is at free Liberty in all other Places to take Arms.

*Article 7th*

If it is possible to agree about the repurchasing of Gombroon Factory, it will be looked on as part of the Present Capitulation, the Besiegers reserving to themselves, the Liberty nevertheless, to do therewith as they think fit, should no agreement be concluded with the Besieged.

*Article 8th*

In Consideration of the Exchange of Monsieur D'Estaing and at his particular request to Monsieur Des Essars, Alexander Douglas Esq., Chief of the English East India Company's Settlement of Gombroon, and all others mentioned in the fourth Article have Liberty, and may carry away all their Effects, of what kind or sort soever excepting Ammunition, Provisions, Marine, Military or Warlike Stores, or any thing tending thereto, or to the Art of War.

Gombroon the fourteenth day of October  
at six o'Clock in the Morning, and in  
the Year of our Lord, One Thousand seven  
Hundred fifty Nine.

DES ESSARS  
CHARUYAU

ALEXANDER DOUGLAS  
WILLIAM NASH  
RICHARD JOHNSON

A true Copy

Dymoke Lyster

## APPENDIX 7

(Klerk de Reus, G.C., *Geschichtlicher Ueberblick der administrativen, rechtlichen und finanziellen Entwicklung der Niederländisch-Ostindischen Compagnie*, Batavia - 's-Gravenhage, 1894, Appendix IX)

The decline of Dutch trade in  
the Persian Gulf in the 18th century  
[summarised]

Years	Average Profit (guilders)
1700-10	581,027
1710-20	475,344
1720-30	219,868
1730-40	102,565
1740-50	46,592
1750-57	47,956

## APPENDIX 8

(ARA, VOC, Vol. 2937 [Gombroon Diary], nos. 10,11)

Dutch trade in Bandar Abbas  
1757 [summarised extract]

One consignment was sold in Bandar Abbas in 1757, comprising:

5,277 pounds	cloves	2,150 guilders
4,675 "	nutmeg	953 "
15,914 "	tin	?
28,524 "	pepper	21,000 "
189,171 "	granulated sugar	17,702 "
105,094 "	candy sugar	14,450 "
2,800 "	coffee (Java)	365 "
5,000 pieces	Indian cotton cloth	15,094 "
3,500 "	Dutch woollen cloth	12,175 "

(IOR, G/29/13, Report dated 2 April 1761)

**Charges General From 1<sup>st</sup>. August 1755 to the**

	31 <sup>st</sup> July 1756	Do 1757	Do 1758	from 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1760 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 1760
Medicines Hospital Stores	1500.6	3617.	1692.8	5722.1
Sanitary Ware	1470.6½	1292.4	806.7	945.3
Table Expences	107530.	126838.3	151241.3	61810.2
Garrison Charges	103420.7	115290.2	128288.4	168595.8
Charges Extraordinary	84348.7	99228.1	100469.4	44186.7
Charges on Merchandize	36292.8	21722.4	24933.3	13226.
Stable Charges	17447.	27880.6	44032.5	-
Servants Wages	20420.	19560.	19750.6	17742.
Accounts Presents	32994.	38659.	49523.	-
Account Salaries	5308.	25000.	25888.8	21232.8
Asseen Garden	26306.6	6563.8	6287.5	2360.
House Repairs				6571.5
	437039.	485651.8	552914.5	337444.4

Bombay Castle 19<sup>th</sup> Februry 1761  
Errors Excepted.

Per. Benjamin Pervis Account.

(IOR, G/29/8, Report dated 23 December 1754)

Governor of Bombay to Francis Wood  
ordering a settlement at Bandar Rig

To Mr. Francis Wood

Sir

1st. The Honble the Court of Directors in their Command of the 5th April last, having left it to our Discretion to settle a Servant at Bunderick in the Gulph of Persia, and we having carefully attended to such matter as has been delivered to us on this Subject, deem it of advantage to them to fix a factory there, and have pitched upon you to carry this our design into execution, you are therefore to take your passage, on the Indian Queen, Captain John Demare (who has been ordered to receive and entertain you in a becoming manner) and follow the instructions hereafter mentioned and all such others as you shall from time to time receive from us, or the agent and council at Gombroon who have our directions to give you their best advice and assistance whenever necessary.

2ndly. Your utmost abilities and attention must on all Occasion be exerted to promote the Consumption of the British Woolen Manufacture at Banderick which is the chief reason of your being employed there. In order therefore be careful to make yourself acquainted with the sortments, that are most proper for that market and frame your indents to Gombroon accordingly.

3rdly. Large sales tho at a moderate Profit, will always meet with Honble Companys approbation, you are therefore to take all proper methods to hinder the Merchants from dealing in French or other Foreign Woolen Manufacture, and likewise to discourage the Alleppo adventurers from dealing in these Commodities as much as possible.

4thly. No Consideration whatever will be deemed sufficient to warrant your lending goods or money to the Government upon the Honble Companys account, and all your Bargains with the Merchants must be for ready money only, receiving the amount of the Goods before they are delivered. Hereby all bad debts and disputes will be effectually prevented.

5thly. Embrace all opportunities of advising the Agent and Council at Gombroon, with the State of affairs under your Direction, transmitting an account of your Sales, remains in Warehouse and Ballance of Cash, by every Conveyance, you must avoid keeping any quantity of money by you, but embrace every good opportunity that Offers for conveying it to Gombroon.

6thly. As it will be for the Honble Companys Credit and Honour, and a means of alleviating their expenses, to Collect Customs at Bunderick, you must insist on this Priviledge from the Shaik or Governour, and we hereby empower you to levy a Duty upon all imports and Exports by people trading under the Honble Companys protection, in the same manner as at Gombroon of which a particular account must be annually sent thither agreeable to the practice of the Resident at Bussora.

7thly. Upon your arrival at Bunderick the Purpose of your Coming must be notified to the Shaik or Governour, in the Plainest and openest manner, that no dispute is may or is hereafter thro a misunderstanding, and all controversy whether with

the Government or Dutch, who have now a great influence in the Gulph must be carefully avoided and as we do not at present think it necessary or adviseable that the Honble Company should have any Dead Stock at this place you are to hire one of the most commodious houses in the town, unto which may be added such conveniences of Repairs as in Moderation may appear requisite, so that the Honble Companys goods and Servants may have a safe and proper lodging.

We wish you Success in this undertaking and are

Your Loving Friends

Bombay Castle  
1st October 1754

A True Copy  
William Andrew Price  
Secretary

Richard Bouchier  
Hugh Symmons  
William Sedgwicke  
Thomas Byfeld  
Brabazon Ellis  
William Hornby  
William Andrew Price  
John Spencer

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1755-6

**List of shipping at Khark for the accounting year 1755-1756 (Sept-Aug)**

British ship *St George* from Bengal to Gombroon and Basrah:  
rice, sugar, Bengali cotton and gum *lac*

French ship *Le Moore* from Bengal to Basrah:  
300 parcels of Bengali cotton cloth (mostly for Armenian merchants)  
50 of the same on its own account  
600 bags of sugar  
60 tons of rice

Wrecked near Cape Bardistan in 1756, a British ship from Bombay en route to Bandar Riq:

750 boxes of chinaware  
80 bales of Surat cotton cloth (all taken away by local inhabitants)  
50 bales of indigo

British ship *Ganges* passed by Khark to Basrah, having sold rice in Muscat:  
600 bags of sugar  
12,000 pounds of gum lac  
25,000 pounds of iron  
6,000 pounds of tin  
350 bales of cotton cloth for Armenian merchants, and 40-50 on its own account

British ship *Elizabeth* from Bengal sold part of its cargo in Muscat and Gombroon:  
6,000 pounds of pepper  
5,000 pounds of cardamom  
40 bales of Bengali cotton cloth (370 bales sold in Gombroon)  
10,000 pounds of tin from England (cast in ingots of the same shape used for Malay tin)

French ship *Tegenapatnam* from Bengal, having sold rice in Muscat:  
400 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
700 bales of sugar  
30,000 pounds of iron

British ship *Success* to Bushire:  
rice, pepper, cardamom, china. It could not sell its cargo in Bushire and went on to Gombroon

Two ships from Surat to Basrah, owned by the Muslim merchant Shalabi, with cargo for Muslim and Armenian merchants:  
1,000 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
130 packs of indigo

British ship *Experiment* from Malabar to Bandar Riq  
rice  
10,000 pound of pepper  
5,000 pounds of cardamom



4 boxes of cloves  
2 boxes of nutmeg and mace

It was unable to sell its rice in Riq; took on wheat there and sailed on to Basrah

French ship *Saint Catherine* from Mahé, sold rice in Muscat and 30,000 pounds of iron in Bushire; then carried to Basrah:

50,000 pounds of pepper  
10,000 pounds of cardamom  
6,000 pounds of ginger  
5,000 pounds of *curcuma*  
1,000 pounds of false cinnamon  
50 pounds of *benzoin*  
18 boxes of chinaware  
1,000 ropes  
2 bales of French fine woollen cloth

British ship *Warren* (belonging to the British Governor of Bombay) from Bombay to Bandar Riq:

100 boxes of chinaware  
250 bales of cotton cloth

Went to Bandar Riq and was unable to sell there, but out of friendship towards the Governor was allowed to sell its cargo in Khark.

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1756-7

**List of shipping at Khark for the accounting year 1756-1757 (Sept-Aug)**

British ships *Dragon* and *Swallow* sent empty for the repair of the settlement in Bandar Riq

The Captain of the wrecked British ship *Phoenix* arrived at Khark

British ship *Dragon* from Bombay to Basrah:

150 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
24,000 pounds of iron  
30,000 pounds of pewter  
13,000 pounds of lead  
20,000 pounds of pepper  
400 packs of indigo  
150 bales of Surat, and 100 bales of coastal cotton cloth on account of the Armenian merchants

Moorish [*sc.* Arab] ship *Leifde* from Surat, owned by the brother of Salih Shalabi:

400 pieces of Surat cotton cloth sent to Basrah  
300 packs of indigo

British ship *Success* from Bengal to Basrah:

2,000-3,000 bags of rice sold in Muscat  
500 bales of Guinea [made for the West African trade] cotton cloth sold in Khark  
61 bales of sundry other cotton cloth  
200 pounds of cardamom

Native ship *Armandien* from Surat in the service of the British Company, bound for Basrah:

200 pieces of Surat cotton cloth  
80 packs of indigo

A Surat *grab* passed by carrying coffee from Mocha

British *sloop Phoenix* carrying news of the fall of Chandernagore but no cargo

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1757-8

**List of shipping at Khark for the accounting year 1757-1758 (Sept-Aug)**

Three British ships sent to Muscat carried only rice and did not enter the Gulf (the British brought a good deal of woollen cloth and Indian manufactures to Bandar Abbas, which was then carried on native ships to Basrah)

British ship *Triumvirate* came to Bandar Kung and Ṭāhirī:  
Malabar cinnamon, Bengali ginger, gum *lac*, *curcuma* and rhubarb

French frigate *Bristol* from Mahé to Basrah:

200 pounds of pepper

150 packs of sugar

Took on wheat at Khark which had been brought there by native ships from Ganaveh and Bandar Riq

British ship *Hibernia* from Bengal:

rice, iron, gum lac and lead

400 large bales, each of 200 pieces of Bengali *mulmul*, mostly for Moorish merchants

British ship *Dragon* belonging to the Governor of Bombay:

200 bales of Surat cotton cloth

800 bales of kapok

indigo, rice, gum lac

chinaware, Chinese rhubarb

also packets for native merchants

Ship belonging to Shalabi from Surat to Basrah:

rice, indigo and cotton cloth

Dutch private ship owned by the Company's broker in Surat:

indigo, rice and Surat cotton cloth

*St John the Baptist*, private ship of the Armenian Tarkhan, in Surat, flying the Dutch flag:

iron, lead, sugar, Malabar cinnamon, pepper, chinaware and rhubarb

British *grab Katti* from Malacca and Malabar:

sugar (sold in Muscat)

rice, curcuma, ginger and chinaware

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1758-9

**List of shipping at Khark for the accounting year 1758-1759 (Sept-Aug)**

Dutch private ship *Phoenix* from Bengal:

400 bales of cotton cloth  
5,000 pounds of gum *lac*  
rice

British private *galley Neptune* from Bombay to Basrah:  
rice and copperware

British Company ship *Swallow*:  
European manufactures to Basrah

British *grab Monmouth* from Bengal:  
gum lac, Malabar cinnamon, kapok and cardamom  
6 bales of Bengal cotton cloth  
sold rice in Muscat

British private ship *Tess* from Bombay:  
*curcuma*, ginger, pepper, cardamom and rice

British private ship *Dragon* to Basrah carrying goods belonging to its Captain

Ship *Sulaiman* belonging to Shalabi of Basrah

British *ketch Ketti* passed on way to Basrah:  
400 bales of British woollen cloth

British galley *Rose*:  
sold kapok and rice in Bandar Riq

British ship *Welcome* from Bengal:  
200 bales of cotton cloth for the natives in Basrah  
sold rice in Muscat

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1760

**List of shipping at Khark for the period March-August 1760**

British *grab Speedwell* from Bengal to Basrah:

85 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
iron, pepper, ginger, cardamom, *curcuma* and lead

British private ship *William* from Bengal to Basrah:

200 bales of Bengali cotton cloth; tin and iron

British private ship *Defence* from Bengal to Basrah:

300 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
iron, pepper, tin, cardamom, *curcuma*, gum *lac* and sugar

British private ship *Admiral Pocock* passed by from Bombay to Basrah, carrying:

300 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
800 bales of European woollen cloth  
150 *churls* of indigo

British private ship *Dudley* from Bengal to Basrah:

300 bales of Bengali cotton cloth (of which 200 for Armenian merchants)  
200 *gunnies* of sugar  
gum lac, lead and rice

British Company ship *Swallow* from Bombay carrying only letters

Danish private *galley Success* from Bengal to Basrah:

450 bales of Bengali cotton cloth (mostly for Armenian merchants)  
200 boxes of cardamom  
60 boxes of chinaware  
100 packs of gum lac  
iron, lead and tin

British private ship *Dragon* from Bengal to Basrah:

250 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
150 *churls* of indigo  
100 packs of pepper  
iron

Small ship belonging to the Muslim merchant Shalabi from Surat to Basrah:

60 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
wood, pepper, cinnamon and indigo

British ship *Prince Edward* from Bengal to Basrah:

120 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
rice and false cinnamon

Danish *sloop Eleanora Adriana* from Bengal to Basrah

120 bales of Bengali cotton cloth and iron

Ship belonging to Ali Raja of Malabar, from Malabar to Basrah:

300 packs of pepper  
20 packs of false cinnamon  
cardamom and wood

British galley *Rose*

60 packs of kapok  
10 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
500 packs of pepper  
iron, tin, lead, cardamom and chinaware

British grab carrying only letters from Bombay to Basrah

Khark: abstract of shipping activity  
from Dutch archives - 1760-1

**List of shipping at Khark for the accounting year 1760-1761 (Sept-Aug)**

British private ship *Prince Edward* from Basrah to Bengal cash and a little merchandise

Danish ship *Eleanora Adriana* from Basrah to Bengal carrying cash

Moorish [Arab] ship belonging to Shalabi from Basrah to Surat with cash and a little merchandise

Moorish private ship of Ali Raja from Basrah to Cananore with cash and a little merchandise

British private ship *Dragon* from Basrah to Bombay with cash and a little merchandise

Moorish ship *Sulaiman* belonging to Shalabi from Basrah to Surat with cash and a little merchandise

British private ship *Monmouth* from Bengal and Madras to Basrah:

40 bales of cotton cloth  
tin, lead and dry ginger

Moorish ship *Santa Catharina* of Hajji Yusuf from Basrah with dates and wheat to Muscat and Diwel

British ship *Monmouth* from Basrah to Bombay and Bengal with cash

British Company ship *Swallow* carrying new Residents to Basrah

British private ship *Admiral Pocock* from Bengal to Bombay:

200 bales of Bengali cotton cloth  
150 bales of Surat cotton cloth  
300 *churls* of indigo

British private ships *Fort William* and *Dudley*:

500 bales of Bengali cotton cloth (mostly for Armenian merchants)

Moorish ship belonging to Shalabi from Malabar to Basrah:

500 packs of pepper  
30 packs of false cinnamon  
cardamom

Danish ship *Adriana Eleanora* (sic) from Bengal to Basrah:

180 bales of Bengali cotton cloth (mostly for Armenian merchants)  
dry ginger

Moorish ship *Sulaiman* belonging to Shalabi from Surat to Basrah

200 packs of Bengali cotton cloth  
400 *churls* of indigo

The same ship returning to Malabar with cash

British private ship *Admiral Pocock* from Basrah to Bombay with cash and a little merchandise

Danish ship *Adriana Eleanora* from Basrah to Bengal with cash and a little merchandise

Account by the Dutch Resident, Houting, of the fall of Khark in January 1766

(written from Surat)

On December 12th a ship approached from Basra. We sent out 2 *gallivats* as an escort, but after they left we saw that were approached by 4 gallivats of the enemy and 4-5 privateer *batils*. Our gallivats could not retire to port because the wind had turned. They drifted towards the enemy. We could not support them with our artillery. So 40 European sailors and 48 native sailors became prisoners.

The 21st of December Mir Muhanna sent his troops to Kharg and they were in control of the island on the next day. He used the houses that were built immediately outside the fortress to put his artillery in under cover from our guns. We could not flush them out of there because we had only 80 European and 120 Moorish soldiers, the latter being a mixed lot that we had been obliged to recruit as an emergency. They were not as reliable as the outcome proved. I tried to persuade the captains to put their ships between the two islands and chase the enemy from his bridgehead on Kharg or to sail to Khargu to make a diversion, but they refused, telling me that this was impossible because of the unsteadiness of the weather, although the weather was good at the time. At that moment I notified the Shaikh of Bushihr of the difficulties we were in, as I had already done at the occasion of the capturing of the gallivats, but he was so much afraid that he did not dare to send his force without the escort of one of our ships, and in the circumstances I could not allow the ship to leave.

The 30th of December the enemy attacked with a force of 600-700 men at midnight at a gate where native soldiers stood on guard with 2 European gunners. They climbed the walls [of the outer fortress] with ladders and cut down all those who opposed them (then there were not so many because the native soldiers were cowards and may have had contact with enemy, otherwise the enemy would not so easily have overpowered them). The battery position held out until 7 in the morning with great courage, but then the gunners were obliged because of the great crowd of attackers inside and outside to return into the [inner] fortress. The enemy, having captured the batteries, established himself there immediately and also in the nearby bazaar and in the houses near the inner fortress where they hindered us with fire of small arms while they were under cover from the fire of the fortress, even safe from our heavy artillery. All native soldiers deserted after the fall of the batteries. This discouraged the Europeans who had not slept for 11-12 days and who were very tired. Because I could expect no help at all I decided to surrender in order to try to safeguard some of the Company's merchandise and I sent somebody to Khargu to negotiate.

Hardly had the [negotiator's] boat left the island than we saw a big *batil* that carried a pennant approaching. In it was Mir Muhanna himself who had already been informed of his victory and came instantly to Kharg. His proposal to us consisted of three items: first that we leave everything behind us but depart in freedom, the second that we would pay him 300,000 *rupees* once and 20,000 *rupees* each year and then we could stay to continue our trade, but he would remain master of the outer fortifications. The third was that I would come outside and negotiate a peace treaty with him.

Misled by these false words and hoping that by risking my person to the enemy I might safeguard many lives and the possessions of my masters I left January 1st and I was received by him in a friendly manner, but after I had sat for some time, he asked me what the ships that he could see leaving from there were planning to do, whether they would leave me now and depart. This question did not surprise me because his remark was not unfounded, but I could not know whether it was really their intention



to leave without my knowledge and without that they knew how the situation was on land. I had had no occasion for some days to send them a vessel because the enemy was continually cruising. He, seeing the ships departing, declared that now we should do business, and that he would deliberate with his counsellors and that he would send me his answer. He let me go then, and under way it was announced by one of his superior officers to me and to two clerks whom I had taken with me that we were prisoners and that I had no other choice but to write a letter to the fort to the deputy chief and to the commander to leave the fortress with the garrison and to evacuate the fortress. Forced by violence and in the conviction that the ships had now entirely left us I wrote to the deputy what had happened, these were unable to disobey my command because the soldiers had started a mutiny already in the afternoon, refusing brazenly to fight any more and to be killed all. Threats or good words could not help because they had seen the departure of the ships. At that occasion I could only obtain that the Europeans were allowed to keep their swords, but I could not obtain that they could keep the firearms. In this way, partly through superiority of arms, partly by treason and deceit has Mir Muhanna captured the establishment of the Company on Kharg. He has sent us away on January 4th (after we had been in arrest in the meantime), I thought I could go where I wanted, but when we were already in the vessel, it was shouted to the *nakhuda* that he should carry us to Kangoon, a miserable place inhabited by people to whose robbery instinct we were exposed once again. I presumed that the ships would be in Bushihr to wait for any sure news how it was finished with the affairs of the Company, so I forced the Nakhuda to bring us to that place, where we arrived in the morning of the 5th with half of our people, the others had sailed to Kangun, because we had no chance to inform them of our intention. They arrived there after much deprivation and left to Muscat.

To our distress we found at our arrival that the two ships had not even called there, and we sent immediately messengers overland and by sea to Bandar Abbas, to do all possible to make the ships return, because we could not undertake the travel with 40 men in open boats in this season. On February 4th our messenger returned with the communication that the ships could not decide to return, but that they would wait for us to arrive either by sea or by land until February 15th. Being uncertain to find the ships there I did not dare to undertake this travel to a place where we could not expect any assistance and where we had nothing while here we were received friendly by the English Resident because we had here still some money of the Company standing out to an amount of 8,000 rupees which I could recover from time to time with the assistance of the Shaikh.

I immediately sent a letter to Karim Khan to notify him of the failure of the war we had started on his instigation and for his interests against Mir Muhanna and I could not avoid to show him the damage caused by the fact that he had not assisted us. This had as a result that 400 horsemen were sent to the coast who now encircle the lands belonging to Mir Muhanna in expectation of a big army. Karim Khan sent this news to me through the former ruler of Ganaveh, Kayyid Hather, sent expressly to assure us, adding that he would not permit us to leave the Kingdom of Persia, until he had fully revenged the shame done to the Company. This kept me from undertaking the dangerous voyage to Bandar Abbas even more, but I stayed here to wait for some time the outcome.

The Resident Buschman has written me that he would leave some merchandise in Bandar Abbas and Muscat in case we would have no money to live from, and I did not dare to trust Buffkens or the broker Narratoen and I will send the deputy Winckler and the assistant Brandt to send them to me.

(ARA, VOC 3156, Khark, pp.54-5)

Letter of Shaikh ‘Abdallāh bin Muḥammad  
to an unknown Dutch Captain

8 January 1765

I expected in vain your visit to Hormuz so that I would be able to be of service to you, and because Bandar Abbas, Hormuz and the other islands are now ruled by one and the same person, all are now equally submissive to the Dutch East India Company, so your servant has written a letter to the Governor General in which he asked ... to send a reliable person with orders to build a Dutch factory on Hormuz and to start trade there ...

(ARA, VOC 3156, Kharg, pp.48-51)

Letter of Shaikh ‘Abdallāh bin Muḥammad of Hormuz to the Dutch  
Governor General and High Council of India

January 1766

Your humble servant the Arab Abdulla Muhammad notifies most reverently that I do not know why the Dutch factory in Bandar Abbas has been empty for over 7 years ... but now Hormuz, Adjaron and the island of Draas otherwise called the Long Island [modern Qishm] pronounce their submission to the Company so you are free to build a factory there and place a reliable person in it to continue the Company's trade. You do not have to fear anything because the judges of the ‘Ajam, otherwise said the ‘negorij’ [an error: ‘ajam = Persians, whereas negorij = natives] of Iran, have no authority there at all and that the merchants are free to come here ... I also request you to sell me a sloop [*sloop*] or patschalling [small, versatile sailing vessel].

Sale of Dutch merchandise at Bushire - 1737

Figures for Dutch exports to Bushire in 1737; prices in guilders.

Item	Weight (lbs)	Buying Price	Clear Profit
Cloves	490.5	160	2,246
Nutmeg	297.5	23	828
Powder sugar	9,595	756	1,636
Candy sugar	5,313	845	744
Pepper	1,637	234	633
Cardamom	120	19	40
Iron	5,971	572	581
<b>Textiles</b>	<b>Piece</b>		
Small bedspreads	20	214	140
<i>Boutidas</i>	50	386	244
<i>Muramath</i>	42	358	189
<i>Abba</i>	20	177	125
Long <i>lungi</i>	20	34	28

## APPENDIX 21

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.26-30)

Letter from William Andrew Price to Shaikh Sa' dūn (at Bandar Rig)  
seeking agreement on settlement at Bushire

To Shaik Saddoon

After compliments

I was duly favoured with your letter, wherein you invite me to settle in Bushire and desire me to land my goods, for this purpose I have had several meetings with your son, and shown him a set of articles but as he now acquaints me, that he is not sufficiently authorised to adjust the terms without your consent, I despatch Stephen Hermit our Linguist, with those articles for your approbation, as nothing is contained therein but what will lend to the benefit of your port and increase of your revenues. I do not doubt of your concurrence, the English are merchants, and their views nothing but trade, the good character you bear induces us to settle in your country and as you have for many years been in friendship with our nation we hope this will be a means of cementing it more strongly.

I desire you will give me a speedy answer by the Linguist, to whom I refer you, for all further particulars. May God the giver of all victory make you successful over your enemies.

Bushire  
10th April 1763

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 193, pp.26-30)

Articles of Agreement between Shaikh Sa'dūn of Bushire  
and English East India Company

12 April 1763

Articles of Agreement made and concluded this 12th day of April 1763 between the Right Honourable William Andrew Price Esq., Agent for Affairs of the British Nation in the Gulf of Persia, in behalf of the Honourable United English East India Company on the one part, and Shaik Saddoon of Bushire on the other part.

1st - no customs or duties to be collected on goods imported or exported by the English and in like manner only 3% to be taken from the merchants who buy from or sell to the English.

2nd - the importation and sale of woollen goods to be solely in the hands of the English, and if any person whatever attempts to bring woollen goods clandestinely it shall be lawful for the English to seize them, this article to take place in four months from the date hereof.

3rd - no European nation whatever is to be permitted to settle at Bushire so long as the English continue a Factory here.

4th - the Brokers, linguists, servants and others of the English, are to be entirely under the protection and Government of the English, nor is the Shaik or his people in any shape to molest them, or to interfere in their affairs.

5th - in case of any of the inhabitants, become truly indebted to the English and refuse payment, the Shaik shall oblige them to give the English satisfaction.

6th - the English to have such a spot of ground, as they may pitch upon for erecting a Factory, and proper conveniences for carrying on their commerce to be built at the Shaik's expense, they are to hoist the colours upon it, and have twenty-one guns for saluting.

7th - a proper spot of ground to be allotted the English for a garden and another for a burial ground.

8th - the English and those under their protection not to be impeded in their religion.

9th - soldiers, sailors, servants, slaves and others belonging to the English who may desert, are not to be protected, or entertained by the Shaik or his people, but bona fide secured and returned.

10th - in case any English ship, sell to or buy from the country merchants apart from the Factory, a due account thereof is to be rendered to the English Chief for the time being, for which purpose, one of his people is to attend at the weight and delivery of all goods so sold, which is to be done at the public Custom House.

11th - if through any accident an English vessel should be drove on shore, in the country belonging to the Shaik, they shall not in any respect be plundered, but on the contrary, the Shaik shall afford the English all the assistance in his power for saving them and their effects the English paying them for their trouble.

12th - the Shaik shall not permit his subjects to purchase any goods from the English vessels in the Road, but only on shore.

Seal of Shaik Saddoon

(Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries*, vol.13, Calcutta: Government of India 1933, pp.42-4)

Karīm Khān's *faramān* establishing the Bushire factory  
[original italics]

2 July 1763

The Great God having, of his infinite mercy, given victory unto Karem Khan, and made him Chief Governor of all the kingdoms of Persia, and established under him the peace and tranquillity of the said kingdoms, by means of his victorious sword, he is desirous that the said kingdoms should flourish and re-obtain their ancient grandeur by the increase of trade and commerce, as well as by a due execution of justice.

Having been informed that the Right Worshipful William Andrew Price, Esq., Governor-General for the English nation in the Gulf of Persia, is arrived with power to settle a factory at Bushire, and has left Mr. Benjamin Jervis, Resident, who, by directions from the said Governor-General, has sent unto me Mr. Thomas Durnford and Stephen Hermit, linguist, to obtain a grant of their ancient privileges in these kingdoms, I do, of my free will and great friendship for the English nation, grant unto the said Governor-General, in behalf of his king and Company, the following privileges, which shall be inviolably observed and held sacred in good faith:-

That the English Company may have as much ground, and in any part of Bushire, they choose to build a factory on, or at any other port in the Gulf. They may have as many cannon mounted on it as they choose, but not to be larger than six pounds bore; and they may build factory houses in any part of the kingdom they choose.

No customs shall be charged the English on any goods imported or exported by them at Bushire, or at any other port in the Gulf of Persia, on condition that at no time they import or export other persons' goods in their names. They may also send their goods customs free all over the kingdom of Persia; and on what goods they sell at Bushire, or elsewhere, the Shaik, or Governor, shall only charge the merchants an export duty of three per cent.

No other European nation, or other persons, shall import any woollen goods to any port on the Persian shore in the Gulf, but the English Company only; and should any one attempt to do it clandestinely, their goods shall be seized and confiscated.

Should any of the Persian merchants, or others, become truly indebted to the English, the Shaik, or Governor of the place, shall oblige them to pay it; but should he fail in his duty herein the English Chief may do his own justice and act as he pleases with the debtors to recover what owed him [sic] or them.

In all the kingdom of Persia the English may sell their goods to and buy from whomever they judge proper; nor shall the Governor, or Shaik, of any ports or places, prevent their importing or exporting any goods whatever.

When any English ship or ships arrive at any ports in the Gulf of Persia, no merchants shall purchase from them clandestinely, but with the consent and knowledge of the English Chief there resident.

Should any English ship or vessel be drove on shore, unfortunately wrecked, or otherwise lost in any part of the Gulf of Persia, the Shaiks, or Governors of the adjacent places, shall not claim any share of the said wrecks, but shall assist the English, all in their power, in saving the whole or any part of the vessel or cargo.

The English, and all those under their protection, in any part of the kingdom of Persia, shall have the free exercise of their religion, without molestation from any one.

Should soldiers, sailors or slaves desert from the English in any part of Persia, they shall not be protected or encouraged, but, *bonâ fide*, delivered up, but not be punished for the first or second offence.

Wherever the English may have a factory in Persia their linguist, brokers, and all their servants, shall be exempt from all taxes and impositions whatever, and under their command and justice, without any one interfering therein.

Wherever the English are they shall have a spot of ground allotted them for a burying ground; and if they want a spot for a garden, if the king's property, it shall be given them *gratis*; if belonging to any private person, they must pay a reasonable price for it.

The house that formerly belonged to the English Company at Schyrash, I now re-deliver to them, with garden and water thereto belonging.

### Articles desired by the Khan - 1763

That the English, according to what was formerly customary, shall purchase from the Persian merchants such goods as will answer for sending to England or India, provided they and the Persians shall agree on reasonable prices for the same, and not export from Persia the whole amount of their sales in ready money, as this will impoverish the kingdom and in the end prejudice trade in general.

That the English, wherever they are settled, shall not maltreat the Musssulmen.

What goods are imported by the English into Persia they shall give the preference in sale of them to the principal merchants and men of credit.

The English shall not give protection to any of the king's rebellious subjects, nor carry them out of the kingdom, but deliver any up that may desert to them, who shall not be punished for the first or second offence.

The English shall at no time, either directly or indirectly, assist the king's enemies.

All our Governors of provinces, sea-ports, and other towns are ordered to pay strict obedience to these our orders, on pain of incurring our displeasure, and of being punished for their disobedience or neglect.

*Dated in Schyrash, the 23rd of Seerhoja 1176, or the 2nd of July 1763*

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān  
hoping to solve all disputes

To  
Carem Caun  
from the Agent

After Compliments

The friendship so long subsisting between you and the English Nation makes me very happy in the opportunity I now have of paying my Compliments to you from Bushire, and of assuring you of their inviolable attachment to your person, and their good wishes for the success of your royal house and kingdom. Tomorrow I embark for Bussora, where I have the honour of being appointed Agent by the Honble the President and Council of Bombay for the management of the East India Company's affairs in the Gulph of Persia, and am in hopes I shall be honoured with your friendship that the present disputes may be speedily brought to a Conclusion and your wisdom be proclaimed in all parts of the world. I hope for the protection of my Honble Employers affairs at this Factory and that you will do me the honour of letting me hear from you. May the Almighty receive you into his protection.

Bushire  
23rd of March 1767

Henry Moore

Silk trade and exports from northern Persia

20 February 1765

[Extract from letter of 20 February 1765 from Benjamin Jervis, Resident at Bushire, to the President and Governor of Bombay, Charles Crommelin]

Account of the Raw Silk of Gilan & Schirvan Schamaky as received from *Cojee* Sarhees who was three years Custom Master for Carim Caun at Ruchd the Capital of Gilan.

**The Annual Produce of Raw Silk**

at Gilan about	30,000 Md. <i>Shaw</i>
at Schirvan Schamaky	50,000 Ditto
	-----
	80,000
	-----
Exclusive of the Above is produced Kedje a kind of Silk Cotton	20,000 Md. Shaw

**The Annual Exportation**

To Yezd in Persia & Manufactured there in Brocades & 1st Sort	10,000
To Spahaun Carmania & other parts of Persia 2 sorts about	10,000
To Turkey (mostly to Smirna) at 2 & 3 sort about	30,000
To Russia 2 & 3 Ditto	30,000
	-----
	80,000
	-----

The Kedge about 5000 Md. is annually exported to Turkey & the Remainder used in Persia, it is spun into a Thread after the manner of Cotton & then wove into a Coarse Silk Cloth.

**The Prices the Raw Silk sold at during his Residence in Ruchd**

	1st sort for Yezd from 300 to 400 Mam per Md Shaw	
	2 sort for Spahaun at 200 to 250 Ditto	Ditto
An equal	}2 & 3 sort for Turkey 180 to 230 Ditto	Ditto
proportion of each	}2 & 3 sort for Russia 180 to 250 Ditto	Ditto

N.B. The Md [*maund*] Shaw is about 13 lb English Weight & *Mammoodies* 6 are one *Rupee*  
Kedje from 120 to 180 per Md. Shaw

The exports to Turkey are partly by Turkey Merchants who come to Gilan to Purchase it & partly by the Merchants of Schirvan. The Russians have a Consull at Anzalee, a small Island in the Caspian about 3 Leagues from Ruschd & another at Saleean about 25 Leagues from Schirvan Schamahia for the Protection of their Sub-



jects who trade for Silk to Gilan & Schirvan. A great part of this Trade to Russia is carried on by Georgian & Armenian Merchants, he observes that very large Customs are collected at different Places by the Russians on this Article of Raw Silk only, is a considerable branch of the Emperors Revenue.

The Russians Import into Gilan Woollen Goods, Hides, Cocheneal, Indigo & Furs & the Merchants from Turkey mostly Woollens, Cocheneal & Indigo, the woollens are partly the Manufacture of England & partly French.

He is very confident, that the Silk may be brought to Bushire for about half the Expences attending its being carried into Turkey & to Petersbrough in Russia & imagines that it will be very easy to contract with the Gilan & other Persia Merchants to bring it down at their Risque & thinks that the Customs between here and Ruschd are very inconsiderable. He also thinks that the Merchants would take in return considerable Quantity of Coarse Cloths & *Perpets* besides Indigo & many sorts of India Piece Goods, such as Bengall ... *Hummums Cossas* & Surat *Chint* Goods, with Sugar, Sugar Candy, Pepper & Different sorts of Spices.

He judges that at the very utmost the Expences bringing down the Raw Silk to this Place, including all Charges whatever cannot exceed Rupees 40 per Ass Load of sixteen Mds Shaw & Adds that so long that the present Government continues there is not the least Risque from Ruschd to this Place till it comes near Meer Mahanna & should Carim Caun not destroy him, he will be very cautious of meddling with the Companys Property as he is sensible it is in their Power at any Time to destroy him with a very small Force.

**An Account of the Raw Silk Trade of Gilan as Received from Antonio Pillon sent by me to Ruschd, for *Musters* & to learn the particulars relative to this Branch of Commerce.**

He informs me the Produce & Exports are much the same as mentioned by Cojee Sarhees, & that by the best Accounts he could learn that the Prices for some years past have been much the same as mentioned in the above Account, but as the proper time for purchasing this article on the cheapest terms is in June, July & he did not arrive there till November, & the *Musters* he bought being so small a quantity he paid for them as follows.

Md Shaw		Md	Md
1st & 2nd Sorts	½oz 6	at 400 per Md. Shaw	212
3rd & 4th Ditto	96	at 300 Ditto	144

Md Shaw 2			
Charges at Ruchd Weighing Duty	6.10		
Brokerage	2		
Dungaree Cloth for a bag	1.10	10	
	----		
Customs at Spahaun		6	
		----	
		372	
		----	
	or Rupees	62	
		----	

He says there are no other Customs to be paid on the Exportation but the Weighing Duty & that the Russians are excused from this.

**The Rout the Silk must be brought to Bushire & the Hire thereon.**

From Ruschd to Cazbin 32 Leagues in 6 Days from thence to Spahaun 80 Leagues in 15 Days the Hire of an Ass Load Mid. Shaw (16)			
from Gilan to Spahaun is		Rupees	16
From Spahaun to Schirass 72 Leagues in 72 Days the Hire for an Ass Load			8
From Schyrass to Bushire 50 Leagues in ten Days the Hire of an Ass Load			7
			---
		Rupees	31
			---

**The price that the Silk would cost at Bushire with hire thereon & at the Prices bought as above.**

1st & 2nd Sort 16 Md	400	6400	
Gilan & Spahaun Charges		256	
Hire to Bushire		180	6836
		-----	-----
		Rupees	1139.1.33
			-----

This is 71.83 Rupees per Md. Shaw of 17 *Sear* or better & is a little more than 10 Rupees per *Sear*.

2 & 3 Sort 16 Md Shaw at 300 Md		4800	
Gilan & Spahaun Charges		192	
Hire to Bushire		180	5252
		-----	-----
		Rupees	875.1.33
			-----

This is Rupees 54.2.80 per Md Shaw of 7 per *Sear* & is something more than 7 3/4 per *Sear*.

The above is estimated at the Prices he gave for the *Musters*, but says he was informed by the Merchants that in June & July any large quantity may be bought, 1st & 2nd at Md 350 & 2 & 3 at 250 & that the Merchants trading in this Article to Russia & Turkey get it still cheaper by Advancing Money to the Factorers beforehand & he says many Merchants told him they would bring it to Bushire if sure sale, for a reasonable Profit & .... that they would take many Goods in return.

**Goods most in Demand at Gilan & their Current Prices when he was there Viz.**

Cochineal	per Md Shaw	600
Indigo	Do	400
Coarse Cloths	per <i>Guz</i>	20
Worsters	Do	30
Fine Cloths	Do	40
Medleys Coarse	Do	60
<i>Drabs</i>	Do	70
Perpets	Do	180
Tin	per Md Shaw	60
Lead	Do	30
Sugar	Do	30
Sugar Candy	Do	50
Pepper Heavy	Do	70
Cardamomes	Do	200

Bengal & other India Piece Goods

Cossas	pc	120
<i>Mulmulls</i>	Do	120
<i>Baftaes</i>	Do	70
<i>Sannas</i>	Do	50
<i>Chappa</i> Handkerchiefs	Do	60
<i>Mogadooties</i> not much used	per <i>Corge</i>	350
Musalapatam Painted Chints	per pc	180
Ditto Printed Ditto	Ditto	120
Suratt Chints	Do	30
Gujarrat	Do	50
Do <i>Palampores</i>	Do	50
Do Suratt	Do	30

The Goods in greatest Demand & Consumption are Broad Cloths Perpetts Bengall Goods Cochineal, Indigo, Tin, Sugar, Pepper & Cardamoms, of the others, the Consumption is but small.

(BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.20-4)

Karīm Khān's reply (via his Vakil to Skipp)  
to Moore's demands

August 1767

These demands are rather like the orders of a master to his servant, they have no power to send me orders; they first demand I should send soldiers against the Chaub [Ka'b] to destroy him joyntly with the English and the Turks: this is contrary to all reason and justice and the custom of our Countries, the Chaub has fled to me for protection, which I have promised him and secure within I would not molest him, I will not send a force to assist you, nor will I on any account let the Turks make war on the Chaub in my dominions I have treaties with the Turks by which we have reciprocally agreed not to enter each others territories to make war, if the Turks break these treaties, it will give me great satisfaction, as I have for some time past desired they would do, for I think myself in many respects, ill used by them, and shall be glad of this pretence to make war on them, I will go with my troops to Stambole and give orders to the Chaub to destroy Bussora and Bagdad. If I wanted to destroy the Chaub it is not necessary I should send a force against him. I would send only a manservant and he dare not refuse but it is not my intention to hurt him, for I have sworn not to do it when he fled to me for protection, neither the English, Turks or any other nation have sustained the losses I have done by the Chaub, but on his flying to me and begging my protection I forgot it all pardoned and promised it to him at the time I wanted to destroy the Chaub, I came just to Bassora and neither the English nor Turks would assist me, why would they not at that time assist me with their force by sea it was then my full intention not to leave a single Chaub alive. The English and Turks at that time never considered the great expence I was at but declined assisting me tho I asked it, if the English and Turks at that time had shown the least Friendship by a small assistance by sea I would now with pleasure convince them I was sensible of it, but nonetheless if the English only chuse to make war on the Chaub I will not impede or assist either side, they are welcome to do anything in their power to obtain their own satisfaction, but if I hear there is one Turk joyned with them I will then send ten thousand of my soldiers to assist the Chaub against the Turks (but the English I will not molest) I will break the treaties subsisting between us and will make war upon the Turks.

In answer to the 4 articles you demand ... 1st in regard to the payment of your losses and expences amounting to 5 *lack of rupees*, this I cannot order the Chaub to comply with, the Chaub says that in Bussora the Chief there was satisfied to take the sum of 5500 *Tomands* in full I out of regard to the English and from the friendship I was desirous of cultivating with them obliged the Chaub to consent to return the sum of 12500 Tomands Raige [coined in] Schiras, but more that that I cannot do, this I have done for your sakes, but it appears by your last demands that you will not be satisfied therewith in such case do what you can to obtain your own satisfaction, but it is necessary you should consider that you will not afterwards get one fluce [Arabic: *fulūs*, pl. of *fil*, a tiny coin] from the Chaub, and after this day if the English would come to me and beg of me to take the sum of 12500 Tomands to settle your disputes I would not do it I have taken much trouble to bring your affairs as I thought to this happy conclusion, and now you are not satisfied therewith. I will now give leave to the Chaub to make war on you, and to do everything in his power to take your vessels - the reason of my expressing myself with so much anger is that you would not stay to know how I had proceeded in your business but send these demands before you were acquainted this sum of 12500 Tomands is the firm cost of your Goods, ought you not therefore to be contented, and make your account that for one voyage you got no profit, it now plainly appears to me the English do not want to settle this affair, but do as you please and act in what manner you can by the Chaub.

By what law or justice am I to order the Chaub to deliver his *Gallivats* to you? you want to take all your losses, and then you must have his Gallivats; the laws and religion of my country will not permit me to do any such thing, such a demand as this you ought to make at the time the Chaub is your prisoner, and then he will be obliged to comply with this or any such like demands to save his life - but you should consider you are not ... nor in my opinion like to be so, you should therefore be contented with such a peace as I made for you, the nature of a peace is to compromise matters on both sides, and so I did as I thought for your Credit.

In regard to the release of prisoners taken by the Chaub it is reasonable and if you had been satisfied with the sum I had fixed and the peace I was desirous of making, I should readily have ordered the Chaub to return your prisoners.

In answer to that part wherein you demand the Chaub should quit the territory of Gaban, I look upon it Gabab is the territory of the Turks I think it is not right in you to demand this it is the Turkish territories let the Turks come and ... it. I have received many letters from Omar Pacha regarding these affairs, but he has never once mentioned it to me, if your intentions by this are to keep the River of Bussora open and clear so that your ships and boats may pass without any impediment from the Chaub, this the Turks ought to take care of, they are very considerable gainors by your trade to Bussora if they have power let them go and take possession of their territories, it is theirs and why have they not done it for a long time past, it appears to me, the Turks are greater cowards than Women, they sit in their houses with fear and leave the burthen of the war on the English.

What I have before said is on account of the friendship I desired to have with you, it appears to me the Turks have deceived you, and I find you do not yet see it, I am of opinion all these unreasonable demands which you have sent me was done by the advices of the Turks, I cannot think the Turks have any real intentions or desire to obtain you satisfaction, from the Chaub it is now two years since the English have brought their vessels into the Gulph, and have expended vast sums of money for the sake of the Turks, and what advantage or satisfaction have you yet got for the expences losses and dishonour you have suffered, have they ever yet procured you an offer from the Chaub of peace on such reasonable terms as I have now done, all the council the Turks give you, are not for your sake or good but calculated for their own interest only have not the English yet found out that the Turks did not desire these vessels from them for the sake of obtaining satisfaction from the Chaub, no, quite contrary were their intentions, it was only for the protection of the ... , that it might not fall into the hands of the Chaub, I am firmly of this opinion.

Ultimatum to Karīm Khān about the Ka'b  
by Moore, Agent at Basrah

Bussora  
11 August 1767

To  
Carim Caun

After Compliments

I am very sorry to learn from our Ambassador, Mr George Skipp, that your Majesty has been displeas'd at the proposals I directed him to make known unto you, to displease you was not my intention, neither was it in my power to order your Majesty to come to those terms that have been proposed to you, if your Majesty disapproves them.

It was at your Majesty's request that a gentleman was sent to Schiras in order to have the disputes between the English and the Chaub [Ka'b] adjusted, and as your Majesty undertook to be the mediator I had very little reason to doubt but what the peace would have been such as the interest of my Honble Employers and honour of my Country would not have compelled me to have rejected Your Letters and the words of your Ambassador Agassy Caun are sufficient to evince how contrary your resolutions are to the promises made on your behalf. This person declared both to us and the Turks in publick Divan, that he was come to demand of the Chaub in our name full restitution for us, and to the Turks the relinquishing their territories: that the Cause of his coming first to Bussora, was to obtain the account of our losses from us, in which we duly complied by delivering them to him with what slight and contempt he was treated by the Chaub, no doubt but he has acquainted you on his return, he assured us he would inform you of the facts, and in your name declared that it was sufficient only for one of my gentlemen to proceed to Schirass and you would reimburse our losses out of your own treasury - once sworn, and that for the last time I again make the same proposals to you, nor will I recede from the most trivial Article of them.

Your Majesty is to consider how we have been used by the Chaub, what we have lost by him, and whether the sum of Twelve thousand *Tomaunds* is any way equal to the losses we have suffered, and the expenses we have been at since Soliman first molested us. You are to consider in protecting him, you are protecting a rebel and a robber. You are to consider that by doing it you are drawing on yourself an Enemy, whom would you make a friend of have it in their power to do you more service that the Chaub possibly can do.

Your Majesty is not to imagine that our having a settlement at Bushire will induce us to come into the terms you have proposed, the impediments our trade has long laboured under at that Settlement make it a settlement of very little consequence to us on that account I have ordered it to be withdrawn.

The Squadron that his Excellency the General of Bombay has sent into the Gulph was sent to do the English justice for the injuries they had received from the Chaub & Shaik Soliman, but this your Majesty prevents by the protection and countenance you are giving this Chaub on your Majesty therefore now rests the making of the English either your friend or Enemy; I would recommend to your Majesty to consider well before you determine if you make these your friends. There is nothing that you can in reason ask of me, that I will not in reason do to serve and oblige you, but if you

oblige me to use force I will not leave a persian ship, Vessel or boat in the whole Gulph. There shall not be a persian town upon the Sea Coast within the reach of our Cannon, that shall not be destroyed, Bushire shall be the first, if you protect Traytors and thieves against us on account of any assistance or benefit you may receive from them, there are those who are more powerful who sollicit our protection which we have just cause to grant, what can you do without Vessels against Carrack and other Islands, especially when under our protection (which we have just cause to grant) may even encourage your Enemies not to confine themselves to Islands.

I would not have you imagine that I am now writing on behalf of the Turks: pay the English their demands and deliver up to them the Chaubs *Gallivats*, the Turks will then settle with you about Gaban.

Your Majestys threats regarding the Turks, your going to Stambole, the ordering the Chaub to take Bagdat and Bussora, make a very great appearance upon paper but a person of your Majesty's great wisdom I make no doubt would well consider on matters of that nature before you undertake them.

To avoid all these disagreeable circumstances I once more hold out my hand to your Majesty to be received by you as your friend, let me assure you, you will find the friendship of the English of much more consequence that your protecting such a traitor as the Chaub. The English want to be your friends but you will not let them, your Majesty's answer to this letter will determine me, weigh therefore what I have now written and consider the distruction you are bringing upon your Country which you have in your power now so easily to prevent.

Your Majesty alledges that Shaik Soliman having fled to you for favour and protection you have sworn to grant him it and will not molest him, but give me leave to represent to you, that application was made to you on behalf of the English by the late Agent long before the Chaub fled to you and that we never entered your territories, till we had advice from the *Calentar* [Kalanthar Serkies] that on account the concern you was under, with respect to Carmenia, he could not prevail on you to answer our letters but that you directed him to acquaint us that as Shaik Soliman was a rebel and a robber you had nothing to say to him, and that we and our Allies might act against him as we thought proper, for the Truth of which we refer you to the said Calentar.

May God preserve your Majesty many years, may your wisdom be universal and may it be employed in the producing an immediate peace rather than a troublesome and destructive war.

(BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.88-90)

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān demanding  
Rs 500,000 and the Ka'b's surrender

29 August 1767

To  
Carim Caun

After Compliments

I have received a letter from Mr Skipp our Ambassador, who is now at your Majestys renowned Court in which he has signified to me the friendship you profess for the English nation and the terms on which your Majesty is desirous of accommodating the differences that have so long subsisted between the English and the Chaub [Ka'b] shaik Soliman.

It would afford me the highest satisfaction to come into the measures which your Majesty has condescended to point out to me, could I consider them in the light of restoring a lasting quiet on this Gulph of answering the end for which at your Majestys own request Mr Skipp attended upon you at Schiras, but this end I must inform you is not the least answered, the Chaub Shaik Soliman, still continues in possession of all his *Galivats*.

The sum of two hundred and fifty thousand (250000) *Rupees* is by no means an aquitment for the losses the English have Sustained since those troubles have been brought upon them and by your Majestys not obliging the Chaub to reside entirely at Doorack your Majesty leaves open a door for perpetual contention between him and the Turks, in which it is impossible but we must more or less continue to take a part, so long as we continue a factory at Bussora.

I am very sorry to find your Majesty should imagine I am influenced to write to you from any motive but the honor and Interest, of the Honorable body, whom it is my duty, as well as my happiness to serve, their long friendship and attachment to your Majestys royal Ancestors the former Kings of Persia, I hope you will admit me to renew the profession of and to assure you at the same time, that it affords me no small share of satisfaction, that in my endeavours to serve them I at the same time am serving your Majesty.

Your Majesty must be very sensible from the force I now have with me in the Gulph, that it is in my power to do you the greatest of services by reducing the disobedient to obedience, by fixing your Majesty and your Royal son securely in your Government, and making you as happy as you are now great, but your Majesty in defiance to my endeavours in defiance to your own interests, will not let me be your friend you will not let me contribute to the revival of commerce in your Dominions but are forcing me to quit your Kingdom by withdrawing the English factory from Bushire, by forming destructive alliances against your Majesty, the end of which God only knows.

If your Majesty will oblige me by forcing the Chaub to come into the terms I have humbly requested of you there is nothing that your Majesty can in reason ask that I will not in gladness grant. Let me recommend to your Majesty but for a moment to consider, whether it is for your fame or your advantage, to protect such a robber as this Chaub, and make a friend of a man who cannot essentially serve you in preference to those who so essentially can.



As the Whole Gulph of Persia belongs to your Majesty there ought not to be an armed ship or vessel in it but what belongs either to your Majesty or the English you want to reduce the whole Gulph to your obedience, at the same time that you are leaving one of the most principal sea powers in it, in full power to molest and injure us, let me advise you to begin at Bussora and not end until you get down to Muscat you will never have such another opportunity, I entreat your Majesty therefore immediately to embrace it, and prevent the Slaughter and bloodshed that must otherwise be the inevitable consequence.

How easy is it for your Majesty to put an immediate stop to all our troubles, how must it add to your name and glory the settling in a few hours, what other powers have been for years attempting.

You have only to direct the Chaub to deliver us up his Galivats and send me 5 *Lacks* of Rupees and we will make a peace with him whenever your Majesty orders it.

If I may be permitted to advise your Majesty I would immediately order my renowned General and Brother Zahey Caun down to Doorack, and whom I will order Mr Skipp to accompany to demand of the Chaub the articles we have solicited of you, this will be the most speedy and effectual method of concluding every thing and as such for your Honor and interest as well as my own I mention it to you.

As to Gaban if your Majesty does not chuse to have the Credit of obliging the Chaub to relinquish it, we will leave it to be settled between the Chaub and the Turks.

I hope your Majesty will ... consider the matter on which I have written you, and reflect on the great services I may be of to you if you oblige the Chaub to come into the terms which I propose to you. If you do not oblige him to come into them I have ordered Mr Skipp to proceed immediately to Bushire and there with all our merchants and effects embark on board our ships that are laying there. I hope you will furnish him with the necessary passports.

I am afraid your Majesty has too great dependence on the Chaubs galivats, take my word for it they cannot do you the least service, so long as we have an English Cruizer in the Gulph of Persia, besides with us for your friends what can you want with them.

Alliances in this Gulph I must make if your Majesty now for the last time refuse me your friendship.

Once more then consider what I have written you may now command my friendship and services, reflect with them what services are before you without them what destruction is impending.

May God receive your Majesty into his sacred protection and may you accept me as the Friend which it is my inclination to be.

Henry Moore

Bussora  
29th August 1767

(BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.266-7)

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān  
saying the English expedition had departed to Hormuz

To  
Carim Caun

After Compliments

I have already had the honour to write your Majesty three letters since Mr. Skipp left Schiras, which I hope have duly reached your greatness, and by the favour of God and your Majestys favour I daily expect your answer thereto.

In these letters I acquainted your Majesty how happy I was, on hearing the favour you were ready to show us; Mr. Skipp has informed me thereof fully by word of mouth, and I hope shortly to receive your Majestys answer to be convinced you still intend the same friendship to us. Your Majestys letter which I received by that Gentleman, I look on as a great favour, I was happy in receiving that mark of your friendship.

In those letters I advised your Majesty that I intended sending our ships against Shaik Abdulla of Ormuse; our ships are since gone on that expedition, I conclude your Majesty will be rejoiced there at; I undertook this Expedition on your account to convince your Majesty of the value of our friendship, and to show to the world, that in future we shall always be friends and at peace with those who are friends to your Majesty, and enemies to those who dare presume to refuse paying obedience to your conquering sword. I don't want to keep possession of Ormuse, in the same manner as the English and in Ancient times reduced this island and delivered it into the hands of former King of Persia: so have I ordered it to be delivered to your Majesty or any person you may think proper to send to take possession of it on your account.

Meer Mahanna has lately sent many boats hither to purchase provisions and dates, I acquainted the Mussaleem [Mütesellim; Governor of Basrah] it was not proper your enemies should be supplied here, and this Government will to do every thing for your Majestys benefit ordered no provisions should on any account go from hence to Carrack, all this I hope will convince your Majesty of the value of our friendship, and by the favour of God I hope to give your Majesty in a short time much greater proofs of it.

I beg your Majesty of your greatness will show your protection our Factory at Bushire throughout the whole of your Majestys extensive dominions we have at present but one Factory and it will be a discredit to us should we be obliged to withdraw the same by the chastisement you have been pleased to inflict on the place. The whole world will conclude your Majestys favour is not towards us I do not request of your Majesty to quit the demands you make on Bushire, such is not my intention, I request only you will permit trade to flourish there and that the effects of the Honorable Company may not be subject to a perpetual risque, our effects there are of great value.

By the favour of God I shall shortly receive his Excellency the Governor Beglerbeg [Turkish title: 'Bey of Beys'] of Bombay his orders, whom I do not in the least doubt will be happy in your friendship, and order that the whole of your Majestys commands be compleated to your satisfaction. I then propose Mr. Skipp shall again present himself before your Majesty - your Majestys answer I beg to be favoured with and then I may be so happy as to hear your favour and friendship is towards us, and that every-thing necessary may be done for your Majestys service, the moment the orders of the Governor of Bombay reaches me. I always pray to God for your Majestys health and prosperity, and that the same may be daily increased.

Bussora  
the 19th November 1767

Henry Moore

(BA, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 197, pp.297-9)

Extract from Lieutenant Gage's Journal  
on the blowing up of the *Defiance*

Saturday 14th Pleasant land and sea breezes at 4 p.m. observed the Commodore haul up with an intention of going between the island of Kishmee and the Main d° [ditto] haul up after her at 8 p.m., anchored in ½ ... to fathom by the *Defiance* at day light the Southermost end of Kishmee SE by E off shore about 4 leagues.

Sunday 15th At 1 p.m. weighed in Company with the *Defiance*, Launch and *Trankey*, steered ENE till 9 p.m., then anchored by the *Defiance*. At 11 p.m., the fleet weighed, wind N by E at ½ past 1 a.m. the *Defiance* was taken aback, and came to an anchor at the same time the Commodore ordered me to stand on as long as the flood run. At ½ past 2 a.m. observed some thing inshore of us, took it to be a large trankey undersail; fired a shot at her to bring her to, soon after heard a great noise on board her; at 3 d° fired 3 shots more at her discovered her to be a large ship at Anchor, she fired several musquets at us out of her tops; we past her about a musquet shot distance, and anchored to the Eastward of her within Gun shot; made the signal to the Commodore of seeing a strange ship, and immediately dispatched Lieutenant Kerr to the Commoodore to acquaint him that we was at Anchor by a strange ship.

At this time the *Defiance* was at anchor distance from us about 4 miles. Lieutenant Kerr acquainting the Commodore that we was at anchor by the ship, weighed and stood towards us and we at times burnt blue lights to let the Commodore see where we was - there being little wind and the tide of ebb against him, he couldn't get near us, and a little after day light the *Defiance* anchored, distance from the ship about a mile and from us about 1½ miles - found with the ship 3 *Gallivats* and four armed *Trankeys*. At 7 d° Lieutenant Kerr returned acquainting me that the Commodore intended attacking the ship, and board her as soon as possible, and to keep our boat manned and armed, in case he should make the signal for her - all this time the ship and *Gallivats* making preparations - At 8 a.m. the Launch with the Commodores boats was alongside him taking the Military in for boarding the ship. At ¾ past 8 saw a smoke from the *Defiance* took it to be a gun fired from her, but to our great surprize she blew up in less than two minutes after - we were then about a mile and a half distance from her, but could not observe any men living about the wreck, indeed the explosion was so great that we could not think it was possible that there was any men saved from her - the enemy immediately on seeing this manned their ship and *Gallivats*, with a number of men - that was not seen before which prevented us from getting under sail and making towards the wreck, but if we had weighed, we should have dropt on board the ship, it being strong tide of ebb, and no wind at 9 a.m. observed the enemys trankeys under way, and thought they were making for our *Trankey*, that has about forty *Seapoys* in which the trankey weighed and stood back again - but we soon saw the enemys trankey alongside the wreck getting what they would out of her. At 11 a.m. the enemys trankeys returned from them and went on shore, soon after the tide of flood making, and thinking it was impracticable for us to pretend to engage the enemy, they have so many vessels, and such a number of men; thought it more prudent for us to make the best of our way to Gombroon road to join the Wolf *Gallivat*, who parted company with us the 12th instant and then to proceed to Kishme to endeavour to water, having only one Tank of water on board, and then to make the best of our way to Bussora or Bushire according as our water held out.

Monday the 16th saw some Europeans on shore, sent our boats to see who they were, we then being to the Eastward of the Enemy about ½ miles - the boat soon .

after returned with 10 seamen, 1 soldier, 10 *Lascars*, 8 Seapoys, 2 *Topasses*, 2 Servants belonging to Mr. Bowyear, 1 Servant belonging to the Commodore; and a black Carpenter, who informed us they were saved by being in the fore part of the ship, and says that the ship was blown up by the carelessness of the Gunner, and Steward who had a candle down in the after hold drawing *Arrack* off which took fire.

The foregoing thirty five men are all that were saved of 3 hundred and more there were Eighty six Europeans military on board about as many European seamen, and the remainder consisted of Seapoys and lascars: The gentlemen who unfortunately perished by this sad event, are

Commodore Fountain Price	
Dymoke Lyster }	joined managers on the Ormuse expedition
William Bowyear }	
Capt. Lyton Leslie }	Military
Lieut. Wm. Robbins }	
Lieut. Melenburgh }	
Richard Watkins }	Lieutenant
James Dewling }	
" Watkins }	
Michael Cummings	Surgeon
Elemine [Stephen] Hermit	the Bushire Linguist

Letter of Commanders of the Khark expedition to Karīm Khān

To  
Carim Caun

After Compliments

We the Commanders in Chief of the land and Sea forces belonging to the English Nation in the Gulph of Persia, think it incumbent on us to acquaint your Majesty with the present situation of affairs regarding the Island of Carrack. Our forces having lately assembled off that place, We received orders from our superiors at Bussora, to make an attempt for the reduction thereof, in consequence of your Majestys desire signified to him by our Ambassador to your renowned Court. To put those orders into Execution we were obliged to wait some days for a favourable wind which would enable us dispose of our Ships in a proper manner for commencing the attack. This opportunity happening yesterday by the wind being at NW, our fleet advanced towards the Fort about 2 hours after noon, but shifting unfortunately to the SW before they could reach their proper stations, it obliged them to Anchor at a much greater distance from the Fort than we intended not being able to go in any further. However to testify our zeal for your Majestys Service We determined to continue our endeavour to contribute thereto, notwithstanding this disadvantage hoping that Fortune would still render us superior to the Efforts of the Enemy, to the end we might have the satisfaction of advising your Majesty of the utter destruction of your rebellious subject the Meer, but his last hour being not yet come, We perceived after an Engagement of two hours that our ships were then at too great a distance from the Fort to do so much Execution as was necessary to make a breach for the entrance of our troops into the town, that the wind increased and night nearly approached - We judged therefore it would be most advisable to discontinue the Attack for that day and renew it again the next morning if the wind would permit. We accordingly returned again to Sea, but having received a Letter in that interval from our Ambassador at your Magnificent Court acquainting us your Majesty had been graciously pleased to promise him that a body of your Troops should be ordered to Act in Conjunction with us in this undertaking the issue of which would be rather doubtful with only the small number of Troops we are able to land, (tho we could not neglect the opportunity to give your Majesty an Instance of the continuance of that friendship on our parts towards your Majesty which had always subsisted between your Royal Predecessors, the ancient Kings of Persia and our nation, by commencing hostilities against Meer Mahanna who has had the presumption to act contrary to your royal will and pleasure in defiance of that authority with which the great God has invested your Majesty, for the benefit of mankind). Confiding in this your royal promise, we are now resolved to suspend all further hostile proceedings against the Enemy in regard to his Town, till the Junction of those Troops with our Forces (unless the orders of our Superior the Agent at Bussora should direct otherwise) hoping the number will amount to at least 3000 men and that they will be in readiness to proceed to Action before the heats, from which they might find some inconvenience, are much further advanced.

21st May 1768

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.61-2)

Letter from Karīm Khān to Moore  
on his preparations against Mīr Muhannā

August 1768

The most honble amongst the tribe of Jesus and the most esteemed of the Law of Christ, Mr Moore, *Balios* of Bussora for the most honorable English company we desire he will be fully satisfied and assured we have much friendship and favours towards him. Before this time we acquainted him of the departure of the brave soldiers of our Kingdom on the expedition against Mahanna, the whole that we acquainted him therein. We have our troops, we have reviewed, all the preparations for their departure on this expedition, and have named for their commander the most honble, the ... and most Royal Mahomed Zackey Caun our brother. All the guns and ammunitions for war and provisions we have made ready that on the 17th of this moon which is rabal sauney [Rabī' al-thānī] they will depart, and day by day will travel and on the 29th of this same moon will be arrived in ginover [Ganawah] that in this place they may embark on the vessels and embarkations of our kingdom with the assistance of the vessels of the most honble English company. We have also ordered that from every place under our power on the seacoast, that they shall bring as many embarkations as possible to genover, that in the end these troops may embark and pass over to the Island of carrack and taken the fort and finish the affairs of mahanna, beside these, every day we shall view and send to the sea coast, as many soldiers as possible, by way of precaution, as we have seen it necessary to advise you of the departure of these troops and now we again make renew our promises to you and on this account we have wrote this short phirmaund [*faramān*] and ... you by ally Beg *gillopdar* to go as *choppar* and arrive with speed and we request that as soon as the phirmaun will be received by you, Honble sir, conformable to all the conditions which I now again confirm that you will order your commanders in the manner we before requested, to keep ready 3 or 4 vessels, that at the end of this moon, when my respectable brother with the troops shall arrive on the sea coast, they may not be retarded to finish this expedition as soon as possible, every thing stands agreeable to the promises I have made, and after finishing the affair of mahoona, you shall be fully convinced of the veracity of my promises, and they shall be fully accomplished agreeable thereto. This we request you will confide and believe in as from us.

Rebual Sauney 1182

A True Translate  
George Skipp

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.74-5)

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān  
offering help on certain conditions

August 1768

I have been honored with Your Majesty's letter by your trusty messenger and fully understand the contents of it.

Your Majesty has therein been pleased to solicit the assistance of the east India company's remaining ships and vessels, in order jointly with your own fleet to proceed against Meer Mahanna of Carrack. It was for this service, the Begler Beg [Governor] of Bombay, sent the Squadron into the gulf in the month of November last, he wrote you so; I then wrote to you also. The condition of this assistance on our parts, was the prior performance of sundry promises on yours; whether you have performed those promises or not I submit to Your Majesty's determination. To convince you, however, how much we wished to be your friends, this public breach of your faith was overlooked by us, and in the month of may last we acceded to the agreement then passed between Your Majesty and Mr. Skipp in consequence thereof our ships attacked Carrack, but the God of victory was against them, since that time not a persian troop has marched, after an immense expences of men and money you have compelled us to return a great part of our squadron to India without performing a single service for which they were sent hither by attaching ourselves to Your Majesty's cause, we have met with nothing but perfidy, disgrace and disappointment. These several points considered and Your Majesty must not think it extraordinary, that we cannot have the confidence in you, that we would wish to have.

For these reasons we sometime since directed Mr. Skipp to quit Shiraz, he informs us Your Majesty would not admit thereof, again we have repeated our orders to him, and are to request you would indulge him with the necessary passports for that purpose.

Should Your Majesty think proper to attack Carrack with your own ships and forces we hope Your Majesty will be successful, your treatment to us has been by far too injurious to admit of our now assisting you, but on the following conditions.

That you immediately order the Chaub [Ka'b] to send to us at Bussora the sum of 15,000 *Tomaunds* ... losses, this sum Mr. Skipp writes Your Majesty has promised.

That you send to Bussora a person of the first distinction about your court to treat with us on the subject of our Commerce in Your Majesty's Dominions.

These points concluded to our satisfaction and we will then treat with Your Majesty on the subject of assisting you against Meer Mahanna and not before.

I pray God to give Your Majesty health and wisdom

and am respectfully  
Your very obedient humble servant





(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, p.278)

Letter from Moore to the Shaikh of Khark  
on compensation for losses caused by Mīr Muhannā

To,  
The Sheik of Carrack for the time being

A.C.,

You must be very well acquainted with the great losses which the English have sustained from the late Sheik of your island, Meer Mahana, whom you have expelled from Carrack, and who is now a prisoner with the Turks for which losses the English have never received any consideration; I therefore now send Mr. Morley our late Resident at Bushire to give you an account thereof and to make such other demands as the honble the E.I. company are from justice and honor entitled to, and on your granting those demands, you may be always assured of my friendship and the friendship of the English nation.

Bussora 22nd Feb. 1769

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, p.298)

Morley's letter to the Shaikh of Khark  
asking for negotiations to begin

Translate of a letter from Mr. James Morley to the Sheik of Carrack for the time being, on board the Revenge off that island the 27th February 1769.

A.C.,

Accompanying this you receive a letter from the honble English East India company, their agent at Bussora, acquainting you with the intention of sending me to you, agreeable to which I am now waiting here in expectation of seeing a person of consequence and capacity on board this ship very shortly, fully empowered to treat with me in your behalf on the conditions of our entering into a mutual, and lasting friendship with each other, which you must doubtless be convinced must be so essential to your interest that the rejecting this offer must in the end inevitably prove your destruction.

Whomsoever you may employ in this negotiation, I assure on the good faith and sincerity for which our nation is so justly famous, will be in no danger of any hurt or molestation from us, but shall be entirely at liberty to return again whenever he may think proper.

True Translation  
J. Botham *Assistant*

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, p.298)

Shaikh of Khark's letter to Morley  
professing friendship and co-operation

Translate of a letter to Mr. Morley from Meer Husain Sultan the Sheik of Carrack received the 27th Feb 1769, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

A.C.,

I have received your letter and fully understand its contents. The offer you have made me that a mutual friendship should subsist between us, I am sincerely desirous of accepting, wishing that friendship may never diminish, but always continue to increase. By the favor of god whosoever reside here on your part, will experience the greatest friendship from us, and that this friendship is of the purest nature will also appear to every one of the English nation. As you have now proposed that we should be on friendship with each other, let it be bound with the strongest ties as before, and you will always find me sincerely disposed to act agreeable thereto. The town is yours, so is the country, and we will in future be so closely united as to be but one. Whatever has happened has happened, and whatever is gone is gone and may god forgive what has passed. Such orders as you may give me, I am ready to obey.

True Translation  
J. Botham Assistant

APPENDIX 38

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, p.299)

Defiant letter from the Shaikh of Khark to Morley

Translate of a letter from Meer Hussein Sultan Sheik of Carrack to Mr. Morley received the 28th Feb 1769 at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

After Compliments

Your welcome letter I have received and heartily rejoice to hear you are well. You first demand of us the *galivats*. Ten *lakhs* of *Rs/-* and the demolishing the fortifications and then declare you are ready to be in friendship with us. These demands you should not have made on us but on others who may stand in fear of you, for we are no way terrified thereby. I before wrote you a letter, thinking at that time you meant us well, but now it plainly appears you have other intentions. Be it known to you we have no property, the town and everything on the island belonging to the vackeel [Karīm Khān] whose favor may god preserve to us, and we also pray he may always be fortunate against his enemies. If you are desirous of having what you have demanded, bring me an order from the vackeel and it shall be obeyed; otherwise I cannot comply. This is my word contrary to which you must not entertain any thoughts.

What you intend you may do. Should you bring me an order from the vakeel to receive any money it shall be paid, but without, you nor any other shall ... anything from us but shot balls, and this is my final answer.

A True Translation J. Botham Assistant

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 199, pp.332-3)

Report (extract) of a cruise in the *Eagle*  
off Khark in March 1769

Extract from a Report of a Cruize in the Eagle *Snow* off Carrack  
March 1769

- Saturday 11                    Weighed from Bussora with a fresh breeze from the Southward.
- Wednesday 15th            Passed over the Bar
- Friday 17                    Being at anchor in 10 fathom, in the morning it began to blow so hard that we could not purchase our anchor, got Topgallant Yards and Masts down lowered the lower yards down and made the vessel as snug as possible.  
At 7 A.M. a hard Gale took us on the larboard Bow, and we drove with a whole cable out falling athwart the sea and laying much along we were water logged, the live stock all falling forward: were obliged to heave some of them over board to clear the cables, the small Bower Cable being over the sheet cable were obliged to let go the small Bower, and veered to half a cable, at which time we brought up.
- Saturday 18                    Joined the Revenge.
- Sunday 19th                    Anchored off Carrack in 20 Fathom when brought up the Extremes of Carrack ... distance off Carrack 7 or 8 miles, the Extreams of Cargo [Kharku] @ ... S to N. Wt. The ... distance 4 or 5 miles, we were obliged to give Corgo a good Birth on account of clearing it with an Easterly wind.
- 20th. 21st. 22nd.            There were many boats passed from Carrack to Corgo from that to the Main, but they without reach of our Guns, and close to Corgo could not chace them.
- Thursday 23rd.                Anchored off R... 9 fathom, Extreams of the Persian shore @ NE Wt ¼ Wt. S ... Bang being the ... extreem, Carrack @ NE Wt. ¾ ... distance of the main 3 leagues.
- Tuesday 28                    Finding that we could not block up the passage from Carrack to the main, weighed and ran over to Carrack, anchored in 21 fathom, the extreams of the Persian shore from ... distance about 6 leagues the trees on Cargo N.W. distance 4 miles. In the afternoon boats standing from Carrack towards the main, they coming pretty near us weighed and gave chace to them. At 4 P.M. we being within random Shot and they rather gaining on us we fired a gun to bring them to. But they not minding the first fired 76 [sic] more at them; at which time by the carelessness of one of the people a powder horn blew up, and two guns went off accidentally and wounded 5 men. Mr. Bond midshipman having his arm broke and hand hurt, William Germon Quarter Master having the powder horn in his hand much burnt, Joseph Jordon who died soon afterwards, two soldiers slightly burnt. At the same time 10 sail of *galivats* hove in sight at ½ past 4. Finding the chase gained on us bore away for the galivats, they seeing us standing for them they wore and stood to the northward. At sunset was near enough to them to discover they were the Chaubs [Ka'b] galivats but night coming on we lost sight of them; at ½ past 9 anchored. At midnight Richard Price Soldier in relieving the sentinel accidentally shot himself.
- Wednesday 29th              In the morning a fresh gale from the S.E. Quarter could not weigh, sent a midshipman up to the mast head, who saw the galivats at anchor off the fort of Carrack; saw two of the Bushire galivats inshore at anchor.
- Thursday 30                    Weighed and ran over off Carrack at noon the extream ...NW & W ½ ... the trees on Cargo NW & N Cape Bang N/171W Hallala peak SE & E distance of Carrack 4 or 5 miles there we saw 7 of their galivats on the beach at Carrack.
- Friday 31                      Bad weather and want of cables, our livestock being all done and only one cask of salt provisions on board bore away for Bussora.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.142)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire  
asking Moore for English resettlement

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Nassir at Schiras to the Agent received the 8th November 1769.

After Compliments

You have wrote me concerning your withdrawing your gentlemen from Bushire - at the time I heard of their leaving that place and returning to Bussora I was very sorrowful and at the same time was much puzzled to know your reasons for so doing, as the whole business of Bushire was stopped by it - it was on this account that I wrote you as a friend, desiring to know your reasons for leaving that place - For many years we been in friendship with the English and now more than ever, I desire to be friends with them, and to forward their interests as much as lies in my power. Concerning the Vackeel [Karīm Khān] you write me that when he sends a person to you, to pay your losses as he promised to do, you may then think of resettling in Persia - this I am afraid he never will do, unless you frst send a Gentleman to him, if you do this, I will then prove the friendship I have for you: I give you my word that your business shall be finished, and your Gentleman returned contented with his reception. I beg you will continue your friendly letters to me.

Shaikh Nassir

## APPENDIX 41

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.142)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir's Attorney in Bushire  
on the demand for European cloth

Translate of a letter from a person belonging to Shaikh Nassir named Alli Narrigh at Bushire, received with the foregoing [previous Appendix].

After Compliments,

Europe cloth is now in great demand at Bushire. I now send you a letter which Shaikh Nassir forwarded me for you from Schiras.

Alli Narrigh

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.143)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire to Moore  
warning of French hopes to settle in Bushire

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Nassir at Shiras to the Agent received the 26th November.

After Compliments,

If you have arrived that I should send a person to speak with and settle affairs, give me your orders and I will do it immediately, or if you choose to send any goods to Bushire the town is yours, and affords a good price for them - advise me if you send a Gentleman to act for you, and I will then prove the friendship I have for you. God knows that it is for this motive of friendship that I am so solicitous about your affairs. The French Linguist is arrived here. He wants to make a mercantile contract with the Vackeel [Karīm Khān], but with everyone the English goods are in the greatest esteem, and I doubt not but you would speedily sell as great a quantity as you could send. I write this to you in order that you may have a gentleman ready at Bushier with cloth, to sell to the merchants that would immediately go there for it. No one knows that I write you this letter; my first desire is to preserve your friendship, the next to follow the Vakeel's will. With the other nation I do not desire to have any concern. The French Vakeel a Linguist now here has many and long petitions to make to Carim Caun. I therefore advise you of it, that you may if you please send a person here in your behalf, if you choose to do so advise me of it some time before, that I may prepare the Vakeel for his reception. Consider well what I write, and then act as you think proper. I shall impatiently wait your answer to this.

Shaikh Nassir

## APPENDIX 43

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.143)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir's Attorney in Bushire  
confirming the demand for European cloth there

November 1769

Translate of a letter from Alli Narrigh a person at Bushire belonging to Shaikh Nassir at Schiras received with the foregoing. [previous Appendix]

I send you a letter from Shaikh Nassir at Schiras, who has desired me to wait on you at Bussora. I wait your orders on this head, and will attend you where you desire it - Europe cloth is in great demand at this place.

Alli Narrigh

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, pp.146-7)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh Nāṣir at Shiraz  
rejecting the idea of resettlement at Bushire

To Sheik Nasir at Schiras.

A.C.,

I have received two letters from you to which I would have replied sooner had not my absence from Bussora and business since my return prevented me.

My reason for withdrawing from Bushire was the ungenerous treatment that the English received from Carim Caun, and because continuing there was attended with no advantage to my Employers the East India Company. As to again resettling at Bushire, it is what I never think of, nor of having any further connections with Persia, unless I am ordered to do so or unless the Vakeel [Karīm Khān] thinks proper to do, what I have already mentioned to you. I am glad to hear cloths are in such demand in Persia - they are also in demand here. There is no occasion for your sending any person up to treat with me at Bussora, because I can treat with no one but Carem Caun, or one of the principal men of his court. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you have sent me with respect to the French Linguist and his mercantile Contracts with the Vakeel; the Vakeel I doubt not will do what is most conducive to his interests, and you, if you are a faithful subject, ought to assist him therein. I am much obliged for the good will you profess for me, and will good wishes for as much prosperity as you deserve, I am &ca

Bussora the 29th November 1769

Henry Moore

## APPENDIX 45

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.147)

Moore's reply to Shaikh Nāṣir's Attorney in Bushire  
about resettlement there

To Alli Narrigh at Bushire

After Compliments,

I have received your two letters with those you inclosed me from Shaikh Nassir, and fully understood the meaning thereof - be pleased to forward the inclosure to Sheikh Nassir, to whom I refer you, as to your coming to Bussora or not - I am &ca

Bussora the 29th November 1769

Henry Moore

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, pp.295-6)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir at Shiraz to Shaikh ‘Īsā at Bushire  
saying that the British alone should write to Karīm Khān

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Nassir at Schyras, to Shaikh Ise at Bushire.

At this time you write me that a vessel from Bombay is arrived with Mr. Morley who was formerly Resident at Bushire - that he was one day with you and that you paid him the necessary compliments and civilities. I find it was Mr. Morley's desire that you should write to me to procure from the Vakeel [Karīm Khān] a Phirmaund [*faramān*] for his return to Bushire. Bushire from the first was always under the orders of the English - from first to last we were their friends. By the favor of God during the English, or other strangers, their being at Gombroon, Bushire or other places in the Kingdom of Persia, I was as their Vakeel [agent], I promoted their interest all in my power, and do their business, when they thought proper to employ me. From us, they never received any hindrance or opposition. I believe it is very clear to them that Carem Caun gave Bushire to me, and that no one has any thing to do with such persons as I permit to reside there; now this is my recommendation; let Mr. Morley come and settle at Bushire: if he has any letters from the General of Bombay, let him send them to Carem Caun by a capable person; I will forward the business all in my power, and get a Phirmaund from the Vakeel [Karīm Khān] agreeable to his desire, and send it. If Mr. Morley has no letters from Bombay, let Mr. Moore write one from Bussora to Carem Caun and send a person with it. God willing he shall receive the Phirmaund he desires - but if Mr. Moore remains at Bussora and does not write, how can anyone else request Carem Caun to send him a letter, inviting him to resettle Bushire. In short until Mr. Morley is really settled at Bushire, to speak to the Vackeel to procure Phirmaunds, will answer no end. I would have applied for them, but I have been considering for a long time for an opportunity to speak to the Vackeel about this business and I found this was not a proper time. The English as they have wrote, have many favors to ask of Carem Caun; as I said before, let them send a person with a letter to him and their business shall be finished. I will get it done for I hope that Carem Caun will be content with everything that they shall with him because I want that he shall be friends with them. I have no interest in this affair - what Carem Caun's intentions is, I am very well acquainted with, but I want to do good for the English. This is what I write; inform them of the purport of this letter, and then let them do as they please.

A true translate  
 Bussora the 24th May 1770  
 William Digges Latouche  
 Secretary

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.315)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir to Moore recommending him  
to petition Karīm Khān about resettlement

Translate of a letter from Sheik Nassir to the Agent, received the 28th June. [1770]

After great compliments,

I write you this letter to enquire concerning your health. I have been informed from Bushire that Mr. Morley was there a few days, and departed for Bussora. Afterwards a ship from Europe arrived there; she stayed a few days and then sailed. The reason of her coming and going we are at a loss to find out - or what were your thoughts on that head. You must know for certain that that port belongs to the English as also its inhabitants as formerly - in the time of our father and Grandfather, who were always in the English Service. They were sincerely attached to the English Interest, and we are much more so. If any of your people want to trade in this country and you approve of their settling at Bushier, and want the Caun's Phirmaund [*faramān*] for that purpose, you must write a Petition to him, and send it by a spirited and capable person, who can talk in a proper manner to so great a man as the Vackeel of Persia. As I am your friend, I have wrote you this letter and because I want that the English should again settle at Bushire. I have sent a man to Bussora on purpose with it, and request you will send me an answer by him.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.315)

Letter from Āghā Kūčūk to Moore recommending him  
to petition Karīm Khān about resettlement

June 1770

Letter from Aga Cukheek at Bushire inclosing the foregoing [previous Appendix]

After compliments,

I write you this letter to enquire of your Health. At this time I have received a letter from my master Sheik Nassir which will give you pleasure, as it assures of his friendship. He sent me from Schiras to forward to you; it therefore goes now inclosed, together with one to you also from Sheik Ise. I have before wrote you two or three times and it gives me great concern that I have never received an answer from you. What has passed before this must now be forgotten and you must be friends with the people of this Country. As my Master has wrote to you according to his promise, you must confide in him, and consider this port as belonging to you. You must settle again at this place, and everything will then go well - the Gentlemen that come will always be certain of finding me a steady friend. But if you want to settle here on a more certain footing, write an *Arzee* to the great Ascander [he is equating Karīm Khān with Alexander the Great], as my Master has desired you, and send it by a capable person; he will be able to finish anything at Schyras and return to you in a few days - I beg you will send your answer to the present letters, as soon as possible.



(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, pp.315-6)

Letter from Shaikh 'Īsā to Moore recommending him  
to petition Karīm Khān about resettlement

June 1770

Translate of a letter from Sheik Ise

After Compliments,

I write you this letter to be informed of your health. The Sheik of Sheiks my brother, now writes to you, to desire you to settle a factory again at Bushire. If you settle here agreeable to my brothers desire and mind your business, without thinking on what has passed, you may depend that everything that he promised you shall be punctually performed. You must know very well that Ascander Shawn [Karīm Khān] has given everything belonging to this Port to my brother, and as my brother is a great friend of yours, he wants to give you proofs of his regard for you, and to do for the English everything that they desire - you may also be assured of my friendship. This boat is now sent on purpose with my brother's letter, and after you have read it, you will send your Gentlemen to settle at Bushire. If you want the Caun's Phirmaund [*faramān*], you must send a person with an *Arzee* to him, and my brother will assist him in procuring one, that will answer your expectations. But if you do not send a petition, how can my brother speak to the Vakeel [Karīm Khān] concerning your business. If you want anything done at this place, pray employ me.

## APPENDIX 50

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.318)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire  
on having to await orders from his superiors

July 1770

To Shaikh Nassir, at Schiras

After Compliments,

A few days since I was favoured with your letter for which I am now to thank you by the return of your servant. The information you received of Mr. Morley's arrival at Bushier was very true; he is now here and one of the Bussora Council. Concerning the ship which you mention to have arrived, to have stayed only a few days, and then to have returned, I am to inform you she was one of the King of England ships, dispatched here by the English commodore now in India, with a view for the British Government. The friendship which has so long subsisted between your family and the English is well known. I am obliged by your offers of service at Schiras, and you may depend when the business of the English renders it necessary to send a person thither, I shall take the liberty to make use of them. I will also in due time attend to your advice concerning the petition to be written to the Khan, and the sending a proper person to him; for the present however, for particular reasons we are obliged to defer both the one and the other, until we can receive the further orders of our Superiors at the Presidency. I am &ca

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, pp.318-9)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh 'Īsā at Bushire  
on having to await orders from his superiors

July 1770

To Shaikh Ice at Bushire

After Compliments,

I am obliged to you for your letter, for the enquiries concerning my health, and for your offers of service at Bushire. Your Brother's letter from Schiras is also very agreeable to me, and I now send him my reply to it. What has passed between the Bushire sheiks and the English must now be forgotten. I thank you for your offers of friendship, in due time perhaps I may call on you for them, when I hope to find you the friend to the English that you say you are. I will also in due time attend to your advice concerning the *Arzee* to be written to the Khan, and the sending a proper person to him. But for particular reasons, we are for the present obliged to defer both the one and the other, until we can receive the further orders of our Superiors at the Presidency, I am Ca.

APPENDIX 52

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.319)

Covering letter of thanks from Moore  
to Āghā Küçük in Bushire

July 1770

To Aga Cutcheek at Bushire

After Compliments

I thank you for your letter, also for the letters which you forwarded from Shaikh Nasir and Shaikh Ice; to both the one and the other I now write the needful, which I am to request you would deliver. I am in very good friendship with the people of Bushire, and shall be glad to do you or them any good offices at Bussora. When our ships touch at Bushire you must do them all the good offices you can, as the Khan, the Sheiks and English are now such good friends. I observe what you say concerning writing an *Arzee* to the great Ascander [accepting the Āghā's equating of Karīm Khān with Alexander the Great] and resettling at Bushire, to all which will be paid all due attention. My not writing you often is owing to my not having anything particular to say to you, I am &ca.

## APPENDIX 53

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 200, p.336)

### Letter from Shaikh 'Īsā of Bushire to Moore promising friendship and assistance

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Ice at Bushire to the Agent received the 26th July 1770.

After Compliments,

I have received your letter and am glad to hear of your health. The letter you inclosed for my brother Shaikh Nassir, I dispatched to Schiras the day it was received here. This port as I always told you belongs to the English - former disputes are entirely forgotten, and we are now sincerely attached to the interest of each other. Whenever you may think proper to resettle again at Bushire, you shall find me steady to the promises I have made you, of affording the Gentlemen you send down, every friendly assistance in my power. If you have any commands at this place by all means employ me.

## APPENDIX 54

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.3)

### Moore's letter to Ḥusain Khān of Bandar Riq requesting the release of *Britannia's* crew and papers

Delivered 15 July 1771

To Hossein Caun at Bunderick

After Compliments,

I have received the letter which you wrote to me by Commander Ince, the subject of it will be referred to the General of Bombay, who will act in consequence as will appear to him most just and proper. In the meantime I have only to request that you will deliver to the Commander of the Expedition sent to Bunderick the men belonging to the English Vessel which has been taken by your fleet, together with such packets and papers as were on board her. Your doing this will be a proof of the sincerity of the friendship which you profess for our nation.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.15)

Letter from Ḥusain Khān to Moore blaming  
Shaikh Nāṣir of Bushire for the *Britannia* incident

Early August 1771

Translate of a letter from Hossein Caun.

After Compliments,

I received your letter and understand the contents - you desire me to send the people belonging to your vessel. Before your letter arrived I sent the Captain with his people and some of mine to Bushire, from thence the Captain and one of his Officers were sent to Schyras by orders from Carem Caun. The Captain I hear is since dead, which has given me great concern: the Officer continued his journey to Schyras. This affair was entirely put under the management of Sheikh Nassir of Bushire - the capture of the Vessel and the sending to Schiras the Captain were entirely through his means; may the Almighty punish him for so doing! The other Officer with some of the people who remained here are now sent to you. The women belonging to the Captain and First Officer shall be also sent to you, as soon as the Officer returns from Schyras. I hope you will not have a bad opinion of me for detaining them until his return. I request you will believe that neither Carem Caun or I, have been the causes of the late unfortunate circumstance which has taken place. Shaikh Nassir of Bushire has been the sole promoter of it. I cannot write you more particularly on this head, but a person of your sense will guess the rest. I request you will not discontinue your correspondence with me, but employ me freely if I can be of any service to you.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, pp.33-4)

Letter to Moore from Karīm Khān  
justifying the taking of the *Britannia*

Received 7 September 1771

Translate of a letter from Carem Caun to the Agent

After Compliments,

The petition you wrote me concerning two of your Vessels taken by Sarmas Caun (Hossein Caun called Sarmas or most valiant) Admiral, I have received and understand the contents. You best know why those vessels were taken; formerly the Kings of Europe had houses in the kingdom of Persia to carry on their trade and business then, when the Persian Gulf was disturbed by Pirates, those Kings assisted the Kings of Persia by seizing and sending such Pirates to them: for which service the favour of the Kings of Persia was towards the Europeans. In such manner as the ancient Kings behaved, in such manner have I always done. Since you settled at Bussora many things have happened contrary to ancient custom; this has divided the friendship formerly subsisting between us.

When Mr. Skipp came to settle several points with me, one of which was his asking my permission to take Carrack, and sending Mahanna to me, for which service the English were to have liberty to settle on Carrack or elsewhere in Persia, I granted my permission. You then sent a few vessels and a few soldiers against Carrack and they did nothing. After this you desired my Army to send with your Army on board three large ships and a number of smaller vessels belonging to you against Carrack. I did not then know you would not keep your word with me, and I made preparations with a great ... and ammunition and sent them with Mr. Skipp, in order to assist you in taking the boats and Vessels belonging to Meer Mahanna, and giving them up to me. When my troops arrived near Bushire your goods and vessels were all sent to Bussora - this I understand was by your orders. My Army waited, depending on your promise, but they were deceived. By this management of yours, the friendship formerly subsisting between us divided. Your management is contrary to ancient capitulations between the English and Persians. I am not certain whether the Vessels you mention belong to the English to any other Europeans or to Muscat. You must know I have not behaved contrary to the ancient friendship subsisting between us.

I order you as soon as possible to send me a true account of the goods belonging to those vessels.

APPENDIX 57

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.24)

Letter from Shaikh Nāsir recommending Moore  
to send details of *Britannia's* cargo to Karīm Khān

Received on 7 September 1771

Translate of a letter from Sheikh Nassir to the Agent

I have always been a friend to the English and spoke well of them to Carem Caun. Your first *Pattamar* arrived here without a letter to me, and I then thought you had forgot me. By your second *Pattamar* you wrote me a letter the contents of which I fully understand. As you have wrote to me I must give you my advice, that is, to send Carem Caun as soon as possible a particular account of the Goods belonging to the Vessels you mention - if you do not you will injure your Nation.

APPENDIX 58

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.36)

Account of the *Britannia's* cargo given  
to Karīm Khān by First Officer Nicholson

August 1771

An account of the *Snow* Britannia's Cargo

Sugar Candy	Chests 255	<i>Cassia</i> flower	Chests 10
Soft sugar	Canisters 250	Musk	Box 1
<i>Camphor</i>	Tubs 17	Piece goods	Bales 17
<i>Sal Ammoniac</i>	Bales 18	Moorman's caps	Chests 3
Coffee	ditto 117	Bags of Black pepper	
Cloves	Chests 10	Bars of Iron	
Cinnamon	ditto 2	Pigs of Lead	
Cardamoms	Bales 1	Pigs of tin	
Quick Silver	Pots 2	Bales of Indigo	

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.45)

September 1771

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān urging  
the release of *Britannia*'s crew

To Carem Caun

After Compliments,

I have been honored with your Majesty's letter to me relative to the vessels taken by your Admiral Hossein Caun, and shall leave the whole world to judge whether the reasons you give in it are sufficient to justify such undeclared hostilities against a Nation, which has ever been as I observed in my last letter in friendship with yours, and from which your Majesty as well as the former Kings of Persia have received such services, performed too with large losses to itself. As your Majesty now has declared that the friendship between us is broken, I shall not trouble you any further with respect to the Vessels until I receive the further orders of my Honorable Superiors at Bombay. With those orders I expect to receive an account of the Cargo of our Vessels which has not as yet been sent me.

In the meantime I have a request to make to your Majesty which I hope you will not refuse me. It is that you will permit the Officer of the *Britannia* and our two other people now at Schiras to return to us. Your compliance therewith will be a proof of your humanity and cannot be of any detriment to you, as they are very poor, and have not the wherewithal to pay their ransom, should you expect any from them, having lost what little they had by the capture of the *Britannia*.

## APPENDIX 60

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.45)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh Nāṣir urging  
the release of *Britannia*'s crew

To Sheikh Nassir

After Compliments,

I have received your letter and should follow your advice in sending Carem Caun an account of our Vessels Cargo, but I have never received from India any account of it.

I enclose you another letter to him, which I request you will deliver. It is only to request the release of the Officer and the two men now at Schiras belonging to our vessel. It can be of no service to Carem Caun to detain them, and his discharging them will be an act of the greatest humanity, as they are very poor, having lost what little they had on board the *Britannia*. You will much oblige me by procuring their liberty. I have wrote to a Merchant at Schiras to advance them a small sum to bear their expenses to Bussora.

**APPENDIX 61**

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.64)

Karīm Khān's agreement to release  
the *Britannia* crew

Received 22 October 1771

Translate of a letter from Carem Caun

After Compliments,

I have received your letter relative to your three people, and agreeable to your request I have now sent them to you.

**APPENDIX 62**

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.64)

Shaikh Nāṣir's confirmation of the  
release of the *Britannia* crew

Received 22 October 1771

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Nassir

After Compliments,

I received your letter and delivered your Petition to the Vackeel, who now sends you your three people agreeable to your request. I have provided them with Mules and everything necessary for their journey, and have given orders to my people at Bushire to provide them with anything they may want and send them to Bussora. You have wrote very short concerning the account of your Vessels cargo - you know however your own affairs best.



APPENDIX 63

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.118)

Letter from Moore to Karīm Khān enclosing  
an account of the *Britannia's* cargo

17 January 1772

To Carem Caun

After Compliments,

I had the honor of writing your Majesty sometime ago, and then informed you that I had not at that time received any account of the cargo on board the *Britannia* when she was taken by your fleet under the command of Hossein Caun, having however received one a few days since, I now enclose it to your Majesty, agreeable to your desire, and the orders of the Governor of Bombay, and I doubt not but on receipt of it you will order Hossein Caun to make restitution as well of its amount, as the value of the Vessel and all damages that have been suffered by the capture.

Bussora  
the 17th January 1772

APPENDIX 64

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.145)

Letter from Karīm Khān's deputy to Moore  
explaining the absence of a written reply

Translate of a paper from Mahomed Jaffair, Carem Caun's second at Schiras received the 18th March 1772.

After Compliments,

Your letter to Carem Caun has been received by him, but he has not returned any answer to it, except what the *Pattamar* will inform you by word of mouth: I give this paper to your messengers lest you should be displeased with him thinking he had not delivered your letter.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, p.179)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir to Moore renewing  
his invitation to re-settle at Bushire

Translate of a letter from Shaikh Nassir received the 17th May 1772.

After Compliments,

It is a long time since I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, though you will know, I have always been a friend to the English. Bushire you will know too is yours. It is a long time since you withdrew your factory from thence, but I believe you now think of returning to that place. My friendship for your Nation leads me to wish that you would do so - other Nations have desired a Settlement there, but I have declined, and shall continue to decline granting them permission, because it is my desire that you should return and re-establish a Factory there. If you will do so, you will find many good effects will ensue. Have your Affairs prospered more since, that they did before you withdrew from Bushire? Or did I ever give your Gentlemen any cause to leave my place. I request your answer to this letter.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, pp.354-7)

Report of the capture of the Tyger

On Board the Drake - April 1773

Received from Lieutenant Scott the following account of the capture of the Tyger Brig.

## Report of the Tyger brig

April 24th - The winds from the S.E. with frequent Squalls, and hard rains, unmoored per order Henry Moore Esq. at ½ past 3 do. Received orders to weigh and to proceed to Bussora, and there to anchor, and send our Boat with an officer to the Factory to bring off Messrs. John Beaumont and George Green with their necessaries for Bombay. Accordingly, weighed and anchored off Bussora Creek, at 6 P.M.. sent our boat with an officer up at ½ past 10 do he returned with two large Baskets of necessaries, came on board Messrs. John Beaumont and George Green; one girl and two slave Boys, and two children. Weighed and worked a little below the Creek, where we anchored at midnight.

April 25 - Strong gales from the S.E. with constant rain and cloudy weather at 8 P.M. weighed and worked down the river at ½ do, anchored in 4 fathom off the S.E. end of Chellaby's Island, as did the Drake at ½ past 8 A.M., weighed and worked down the river, at noon anchored off the Tombs in 4 fathom as did the Drake the vessel being much lumbered endeavored to stow away sundry provisions &ca belonging to Messrs. Beaumont and Green.

26 - Strong Gales from the S.E. to S.W. with constant rain, cloudy weather, thunder and lightning which obliged us to batten down our hatches, and prevented getting our vessel clear, at ½ past 4 P.M. weighed and worked down the river. At 6 do passed the Hafar, at ½ past 6 grounded on the Arabian side, struck yards and Topmasts up, and made sail down the river, at 6 do past the Drake at anchor at 7 do passed deep water point, I saw a large number of boats and *Gallivats* at anchor, between the Island Hommusa and the Persian side of the river, at 9 do saw several *Gallivats* and *Dows* at anchor off Chubola point which we took to be the Muscat fleet, clearing the vessel, and got 4 guns clear, from 9 to ½ past 10, weighing between the above mentioned vessels and saw several more at anchor off Chellaby's point, which confirmed us in our opinion, of their being the Muscat Fleet. Seeing them have to appearance 250 or 300 men each which we took to be slaves, not having intelligence of the Chaubs [Ka'b's] or Bunderick *Gallivats* being in the River, though we anchored ... at times coming down, at ¾ past 10 working down the river, saw what we took for a *Trankey* in shore weigh and stand up the river under an easy sail, which we thought was going to join the other boats at anchor - she came close past us, and in a few minutes after (when we were in stays) she hauled her wind and stood after us as did three more which were now close by us having tripped their anchors and dropped towards us, as I now suspected they intended to attack us, I immediately made all the dispatch in my power to put the vessel in a posture of defence as we were much lumbered with the Stock & furniture of Messrs. Beaumont and Green, though we had used our utmost endeavors under the 25th to clear our Decks which we found however impossible owing to a quantity of goods received from Captain Mackenley in order to enable the Drake to receive on board, the Swallows consigned of Surat goods together with the Agents &ca necessaries on my mentioning it to Messrs. Beaumont and Green, whose orders I was under, my suspicions of these vessels, Mr. Beaumont asked me if I thought the vessel could defend herself against them and of

my letting him know I was of opinion she could not being under in command for want of wind, and her decks so lumbered that her guns could not play. Mr. Beaumont then requested I would not fire a gun which he said might be the means of saving the lives of the people which would in all probability be hazarded, should any of the Gallivats people be killed or wounded, however had I not received these verbal orders, and even had an opportunity of firing, my orders bound me up, in such a manner that I could not with any degree of safety to myself make any resistance till first attacked, and as the Gallivats sailing near me was not a sufficient proof of their intentions to attack us, I did not think myself warranted to fire on their approach. I however put about and stood for the Drake on which the Gallivats astern of us came up almost instantaneously, and the Tyger refusing the helm for want of wind, she boarded us, and thereby rendered our guns useless with about 200 men, the other three Gallivats close by us and were rowing, for our head, the *lascars* immediately jumped overboard and as I thought the remainder (consisting of 11 Europeans) stood no chance against such odds as poured in on us the Vessel was delivered up without firing again [*sic*], the Crew having fled, some on the Bow sprit others in the Shrouds (drove by the enemy) and finding my presence of no manner of service, I jumped into the river and got on shore where I had the good fortune to procure a boat, which carried me on board the Drake together one European, one *Tindal* and one Military *Topass*, who had likewise jumped overboard and gained the shore.

Drake *Snow*  
April the 30th 1773

James Scott

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 201, pp.375-6)

Governor of Bombay's letter to Karīm Khān requesting the return  
of the *Britannia* and the *Tyger*, and the release  
of Beaumont and Green

Copy of the President's letter to Carem Caun, Bombay the 27 October 1773.

After Compliments,

Having learnt that a small vessel belonging to the Hon'ble company coming out of Bussora river in April last was taken by some *Gallivats* belonging to Bunderick, on board which Vessel was Messrs. Beaumont and Green two gentlemen belonging to our Factory at Bussora, also a *Grab* belonging to William Shaw about two years ago was taken by the same Gallivats and carried into Bunderick and so I understand that those people are your subjects. In consequence of the friendship that has subsisted for many years between the kings of Persia and the Hon'ble English East India Company, I make this application to you to have those Vessels with whatever goods and Merchandize was on board them made good to the Hon'ble East India Company and their Owners, and likewise request that you will release Messrs. Beaumont and Green that were taken 7 or 8 months ago coming out of Bussora river, and the offenders punished. I cannot suppose that the people of Bunderick could have your Excellency's directions to commit these acts of Piracy, therefore hope your orders will be to punish the offenders and orders be given to make good every loss and damage we have sustained.

I hear you have ordered Messrs. Beaumont and Green to be brought up to Schyras, this letter I have delivered to Henry Moore Esq. the Company's Agent at Bussora who now returns thither and as directed to touch at Bunder Bushire to forward this letter to your Excellency and he will also write you what farther is necessary. May your days be many and happy.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.12-14)

Moore's letter to Karīm Khān offering various cloths  
and asking for the release of Beaumont and Green

16 January 1774

To Carim Caun, the King of Persia

After Compliments,

I had the honor to forward your Majesty from Bushire a letter from his Excellency the governor of Bombay; and now join my wishes to those of his Excellency for the continuation of your Majesty's health, and the prosperity of your kingdom. I would have addressed your Majesty from Bushire, but could not get a proper person there to translate my letter.

The purport of the letter that I forwarded you from his Excellency the Governor would be known to you on the perusal of the requests that his Excellency therein makes of your Majesty I hope be complied with, in order that the English may again trade to your Kingdom, from which benefit may accrue as well to you as them.

This however never can be the case so long as your Majesty permits the Bunderick and Carrack *Gallivats* to disturb the trade of the Persian Gulf in the manner they for some years past have done; and this too, at a time that the English have as I thought been in profound peace with your Majesty and no British subject that I have known of since my being at Bussora has ever dared to show your subjects the least insults, or given them the least molestation. If any British subjects have behaved in any shape improperly towards your Majesty I beg you would be pleased to inform me.

The taking of a trading vessel from Bombay named the Britannia; and the taking of a small vessel in Bussora river belonging to the India Company my Employers, on board of which were Messrs. Beaumont and Green two of the Bussora Council - these are acts of the Commanders of the Bunderick Gallivats; but they are acts I hope not authorised by your Majesty - in that hope, I humbly trust your majesty will very severely punish these your offending subjects, and give immediate orders for the release of the two gentlemen with their families, and for the restitution of the abovementioned vessels, the remainder of the Tyger's crew, the stores and Cargoes.

My wishes and the orders of my masters are to be on terms of friendship and commerce with your Majesty, these points your majesty may be assured I will endeavor to cultivate to the utmost to that end, and as I imagined it would be pleasing to your Majesty, I touched at Bushire in my way hither with five ships, and transacted business with the Merchants at that place. I am very ready to obey your Commands at Bussora at which place I arrived the 5th instant.

Once more I humbly petition your Majesty to give Messieurs Beaumont and Green their liberty, and that your Majesty would be pleased to signify to them such schemes of commerce as may be most agreeable to you.

Our Warehouses have plenty of all sorts of cloths in them, which I should be very happy to dispose of to your Majesty provided your Majesty and I can agree on equitable conditions on both sides previous to the delivery of them.

I have the honor to be with great respect.

Bussora  
the 16th 1774

Your Majesty's  
Most obedient and humble servant  
H.M.

## APPENDIX 69

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.105-6)

### Karīm Khān's reply to Moore, offering help in return for ships

Translate of a letter from Carim Caun to the Agent received the 10th February 1774.

After Compliments,

The letter that you forwarded me from Bushire from the Governor of Bombay, I have received and perfectly understand the contents thereof. I have also received the letter you wrote me from Bussora after your arrival there, the purport of which touching Commerce, the release of Messrs. Beaumont and Green, the restitution of property taken by the Bunderick *Gallivats*, and prohibition of the said Gallivats acting offensively against the English, I also perfectly understand. Agreeable to your request I will return the Europeans that are prisoners in my country, the Vessel, and will punish the Bunderick people for their conduct. You say that trade will flourish in my country if I stop the depredations of the Bunderick Gallivats, because merchant ships will then sail up and down the Persian Gulf in safety; this I will also do because you require it - the gentlemen here shall be well treated.

In former times the English used to keep the Gulf clear of all that were enemies to the Kings of Persia, and to show their favour unto them. It now happens that the Conqueror of Muscat, which place was ever heretofore under the dominion of Persia, has thrown off his allegiance to us, and treats such merchants as trade to the Port of Muscat improperly; on this account I have ordered some of my troops to get ready for Muscat, as ships however will be necessary for conveying of my troops, which ships I know you have under your command as Agent for the English Nation, I therefore apply to you in consequence of the friendship that the General of Bombay and you have made a tender of to me, to assist me in this particular; any other act of friendship I ask not besides the one in question as I have no occasion for any. I therefore beg that for a few days you would lend me your ships to land my troops upon the Arab coast, and they will return again to you after this service is performed. If any accident to the ships happen on this service I will pay you the full amount of them. I am certain you cannot refuse me this favour, as our friendship will be so much increased by it. You may depend your gentlemen and the other English Prisoners shall be released, and that the Gulf shall be kept quiet by the Bunderick &ca Gallivats not molesting it in the manner you desire, that the merchant ships may go securely backward and forward.

On the arrival of my *Chubdar* Ibrahim Aga with you, this business I hope will be finished and then your desires shall in all points be accomplished. I trust you will not refuse me these my demands.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.107-8)

Moore's reply to Karīm Khān  
declining to provide ships

12 February 1774

To Carim Caun, Vackeel of Persia

After Compliments,

I have been honored with your Majesty's letter by the hands of your servant Ibrahim Beg, the contents of which I have read with very great attention, and perfectly understand them.

Your Majesty I am afraid has a much greater idea of the charge that is vested in me than it is deserving of; this circumstance has led your Majesty into the error of its being in my power to assist your Majesty with the English ships in order to transport your troops to the Arab Coast, for the prosecution of your war against the Muscatters; but your Majesty must know that no servant can do a thing of that sort, without permission from his master, if he did, loss of honor and life must be the consequence of it. This is directly my situation; in which light I hope your Majesty will consider it; and not to the want of inclination either to serve or oblige you. The Muscatters would have been glad of the English assistance against your Majesty, but it could not on any account be granted them.

By the first opportunity that offers for Bombay, I shall inform my Superiors of the request you Majesty has made of me; but I am afraid your request cannot be granted, because your Majesty still thinks proper to keep Mr. Beaumont and Green with sundry other British subjects, Prisoners in your dominions, prisoners taken in time of profound Peace, the release of these my unfortunate friends and Countrymen, with all English property will I hope be considered by your Majesty as the previous point, on which our future trading to your Country, and assisting your Majesty in other points depends. To assist your Majesty before these points are granted us would have a compulsory appearance incompatible with honor and fair fame.

I do therefor most humbly beseech your Majesty to take these points into your consideration, and hope you will give orders for the immediate release of Messieurs Beaumont and Green as they have now been near ten months your Prisoners, and their services are much wanted in Bussora.

If your Majesty has any letter to forward to the General of Bombay I beg to be favored with it as soon as possible, as a vessel will in about twenty five days sail for that Port.

Bussora  
the 12th February 1774

I have the honor to be  
with the most profound respect,  
Your most obedient humble servant  
H.M.



(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, p.140)

Karīm Khān's letter to Moore  
complaining of his refusal

Received 3 March 1774

Letter from Carim Caun

The letter I wrote you by Ibrahim Beg sometime since, you write you have received. Your answer to it by Mahomed Ziar Beg I have received and clearly understood everything that you have wrote in it. You say you must have the Governor of Bombay his orders before you can give me the ships - the Governor writes me that he is a friend of the Persians, and wishes always to be friends with them; this letter you forwarded from Bushire. The Governor also writes if I have any commands of business with the English I must write to Mr. Moore at Bussora, for these reasons I wrote to you for your two vessels to transport my troops to the Arab coast, and wrote you also, that I would be answerable for whatever accidents might happen to them. By your letter it appears you have not the power to let me have the ships; this does not agree with what the Governor writes. I am therefore of opinion you do not want to be friends with me and my kingdom; the favour I asked of you was a very small one, but you refused it. You may therefore suppose, that I shall most readily grant whatever favors you in turn may ask of me [*sic*]. You think you are acting properly in not lending your ships - go on therefore and act as seemed best unto you.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.144-5)

Moore's letter enclosing new translation  
of the Governor of Bombay's letter to Karīm Khān

4 March 1774

To Carim Caun, Vackeel of Persia

After Compliments,

I have this morning been honored with your Majesty's letter from the hands of your faithful servant Mohamed Ziar Beg and as he now returns to your sublime presence, I repeat by him my wishes for your Majesty's health, honor and prosperity.

From the construction that your Majesty has put on the letter that I forwarded you from Bushire from my Superior the honorable the President of Bombay, I am afraid the said letter has not been properly turned into the Persian language. For that reason I now send you another Translate thereof from a copy taken from them by the Governor himself, you will not I hope doubt the truth and purport of this letter sent with the hope of standing fair in your Majesty's good opinion.

Give me leave to assure your Majesty, that I am most anxious to be on terms of Commerce and friendship with you, and your subjects; to trade to your country as usual and to serve and oblige your Majesty. That is so far as I can do so consistent with my own honor and the honor and interest of those by whom I am employed.

Your Majesty must be sensible that the making war with other states solely depends of the will of kings and Princes; this is a power with which no subject is entrusted. Consequently your Majesty cannot in justice be offended with me as a subject for not assisting you with the English ships in your enterprises against the Muscatters. The Muscatters and the English have been long in strict friendship - they trade to our country, we to theirs; the benefit by this is reciprocal. Such is the situation I wish to be on with your Majesty, if your Majesty in wisdom and good Policy would but admit of it.

In friendship to your Majesty, I think it a duty incumbent on me to recommend to your consideration the making a peace with the Muscatters. Making war with them, must be injurious to your honor and your interest - their situation is their security - numerous as may be your troops, if you land them by *Laacks* upon the Arab Coast, they are so many subjects lost to the Persian dominions. If your Majesty therefore approves of sending a proper person to Muscat to treat with the Imaum touching the differences that are between you, he shall be conveyed thither in an English cruizer and if your Majesty pleases Messrs. Beaumont and Green shall also accompany him. My influence and mediation shall likewise be exerted with the Imaum for your Majesty's honor, and for the restitution of all Persian effects that are at present in the possession of the Muscatters.

I beg of your Majesty to take these matters into your consideration and pray God to give you an increase of years and wisdom.

The 4th March 1774

Henry Moore

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.179-80)

Shaikh Nāṣir's letter to Moore on the release of  
Beaumont and Green

Translate of a letter from Shaik Nassir received the 19th May 1774

After Compliments,

Before I went last to Bushire, I received a letter from Mr. Abraham relative to the English business. I wrote him an answer to it, but so long as I was at Bushire I never received a line from you. On account the friendship however that has so long subsisted, between the English and me, how many times I spoke to the Vackeel [Karīm Khān] about them. I made him understand in what manner the English and the Kings of Persia formerly visited one another, that the English had always settlements in Persia, and that the power of the Kings were upon them. If you choose therefore to resettle in this kingdom, the Vackeel will show you every indulgence in his power. When your letters to the Vackeel arrived particularly the one by Ibrahim Aga, I was present and did all in my power to make him pleased with them. It is needless for me to tell you what I said on the occasion as you must have heard it from others. I suppose Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Green have wrote you on that head. The Vackeel knows I am not the least interested in these affairs - I therefore spoke to him freely, requested the release of Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Green, and engaged to settle with you relative to those gentlemen. For this reason he granted them their liberty, called them before him, treated them like *Kiyas*, gave them coats of honor, spoke on the most gentle manner to them and honorably dismissed them. The 12th of last moon we left Schiras, the 22nd we arrived at Kesht. I know that Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Green have wrote you all the news. Moola Mahomet will deliver you this. I send him on purpose with it and the Vackeels Phirmaund [*faramān*], though it is not customary to send the original Phirmaund before the business on which it is wrote is settled, yet on account our friendship I do not regard the custom. When Moola Mahmood arrives with you, you will understand the meaning of the Phirmaund, and of this letter, and what trouble I have taken in this business. I beg you will not detain him above two or three days - consider that time of the things that the Vackeel expected from you, for the performance of which I bound myself for you, in the presence of the Vackeel and your Gentlemen. They will inform you of the particulars and the Phirmaund will show you that I have promised to settle them - when you have considered them you will then give such an answer as you may think most for your and the Company's interest. In your letter to the Vackeel you have promised that you will settle his differences with the Muscatters, if he will trust you with the negotiation. Before I left Schiras the Imaums uncle Shaik Salim, and Shaik Mahmed brought presents to the Vackeel. The Imaum and Shaik Calphan wrote letters to me at the same time, of the purport of which Messrs Beaumont and Green will inform you. The Vackeel has not engaged you in this business - but if you can settle amicably the differences between the Muscatters and the Persians, you will gain great honor. I wish we could see one another to settle these affairs - you know I am under orders, and have great business on my hands. I cannot therefore go to you at Bussora, but if you should think no trouble to come as far as Bushire, we could them settle everything in a very short time, without the interferences of a third person. You will consider of these things and wrote me an answer by Mulla Mahmood in 2 or 3 days, because agreeable to the orders which I have received from the Vackeel I cannot stay at Bushire a longer time - you will write me fully relative to the Muscat and your affairs.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.182-3)

Moore's letter declining to negotiate peace  
between Karīm Khān and Muscat

22 May 1774

To Shaik Nassir Khan Governor of Bushire.

After Compliments,

Your Secretary Moolla Mahomed now returning to Bushire, I have to thank you by him for the letter you favoured me with from Kesht, and for the very friendly part that you have acted in procuring the enlargement of Messrs, Beaumont and Green from Schiras - they write me in a very particular manner of your great influence with the Vackeel [Karīm Khān] and that it is entirely owing to you that they have obtained liberty to proceed to Bushire - this your good inclination will I hope be continued towards them, and in consequence I flatter myself with shortly seeing them at Bussora.

Your letter has been fully explained to me, and I am perfect as to the meaning of it. I will understand also what Messrs. Beaumont and Green have wrote. The principal points I find on which you seem solicitous are, the English resettling again at Bushire, the sending a Cruizer to Muscat with an English Gentleman on board in order to accommodate matters between the Vackeel and the Imaum [Imam of Muscat] and the sending a Cruizer to accompany you and your *Galivats* in an expedition against Ormuse. A compliance with the foregoing points is by no means in my power, and for the following reasons.

- 1st. Messrs Beaumont and Green are still Prisoners in Persia, though removed from Schiras to Bushire.
- 2nd. The India Company have forbid the resettling at Bushire or in any part of Persia.
- 3rd. We have only one Cruizer here - the services of which being wanted at Bussora, she cannot proceed on any expedition whatever, had I even permission from Bombay, to admit of her proceeding; which permission I have not.
- 4th. When I wrote the Vackeel that I would send a ship to Muscat it was to pay him a compliment by the accommodating of his Ambassador with a passage to Muscat, and at a time when the Vackeel was at war with the Imaum; but as a peace has now taken place between them, and the Vackeel thinks it would hurt his dignity the sending a person from his Court on this business, it would be as useless as dishonorable in my humble opinion was I to think of sending one. Besides I had then two ships here, and I have now only one.

When Mr. Beaumont and Green arrive at Bussora I shall then transmit a copy of your demands to the Governor and Council of Bombay, but until these Gentlemen are released, the Governor and Council cannot in honor enter into any commercial agreement whatever with you. By detaining them, you infallibly stop up all communication on our part with your Port of Bushire. This is a point that deserves your maturest consideration and I hope it will have its due weight with you - the Governor and Council as well as the English in General want to be on terms of commerce and

friendship with you and the Vackeel, but then the conditions thereof must not be repugnant to their honor and their interests.

It is not from want of respect that I do not pay you a visit at Bushire, but it is because of Messrs. Beaumont and Green are still prisoners in Persia, and because I cannot think of talking any business whatever, until they are first sent up to me; besides it would be a reflection I think on my judgement and understanding, the throwing myself into a situation from which I have been for so many months past so fruitlessly endeavouring to extricate them.

I congratulate you on the wise choice that the Caun has made in appointing you Commander in Chief of his fleet in the Persian Gulph; in that character I wish you honored success, and hope your power will only be exerted against such as disturb the peace and commerce of it.

the 22nd May 1774.

H.M.

## APPENDIX 75

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, p.182)

### Moore's thanks to Karīm Khān for releasing Beaumont and Green to Bushire

22 May 1774

To Carim Caun, Vackeel of Persia.

After Compliments,

I have been honored with the letter you wrote me by Shaik Nassir Caun Governor of Bushire, and am much obliged to your Majesty for the permission you have given Messrs. Beaumont and Green to proceed to that place. Those Gentlemen have wrote me of the honors you shewed them before their departure from Schiras, and when they arrive at Bussora, I shall then take the liberty of again paying my respects to your Majesty - in which time everything I hope will be properly settled between your Majesty and the English, in order that the commerce of both may benefit. Shaik Nassir has wrote me a letter; the purport of which I perfectly understand, and now send him a reply to it by his servant Moolla Mahmood. It's a copy I presume Shaik Nassir will forward to your Majesty; therefore I trouble you not with its purport, the more especially as your Majesty has referred me to Shaik Nassir relative to business.

the 22nd May 1774.

H.M.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.254-5)

Letter from Shaikh Nāṣir to Moore  
professing friendship and releasing Green

Translate of a letter from Shaik Nassir of Bushire to the Agent received the 19th September 1774 by Mr. George Green

After Compliments,

The long friendship that has subsisted between the English and me, and the desire you expressed to me when you was at Bushire for the release of Messieurs Beaumont and Green, induced me when I was at Schyras to enter upon this business. I was induced to enter upon it from my regard for the English, and from the promises Messieurs Beaumont and Green made in case I could bring about their liberty. In consequence, I used all my influence with the Vackeel [Karīm Khān], and made him many promises, that I would settle every thing with the English to the Vackeels satisfaction; the Vackeel for these reasons gave the gentlemen their liberty, and I brought them with honour to Bushire. When we first arrived at Bushire I wrote you a letter and sent it to you by one of my own servants named Moolah Mahomed, and I flattered myself that I should have received an answer from you by him, that would have been for your good as well as mine, but I find by your answer, that you make many more promises, the completion of which you say you must defer to a future day, I consider them therefore, as not made upon a sure foundation.

When this letter of yours came to me, I was just setting off upon an expedition to the southward and on that account could not immediately reply to it. On my return however I found affairs just in the same situation as when I left them. On my seeing Mr. Beaumont and Green they told me it would be much better that one of them should go to Bussora, and explain everything to you. For these reasons, I have given Mr. Green Liberty to proceed to Bussora, in order that you may know from him the promises that they made from first to last before the Vackeel, as the condition on which they were to sustain their liberty. When you hear this from Mr. Green, I suppose everything will then be settled in friendship between us - I call God to witness I have no private interest in this rather than the good of the Company and the release of your gentlemen.

You will now act as you think best, but I hope you will not do anything that will bring shame on me before the Vackeel. I do repeat to you Sir, I have no interest in this business, I have endeavoured to serve the company to the interest of my power, I have brought Messieurs Beaumont and Green from Shyrash to Bushire. Mr. Green I now send to you, you will therefore, I hope settle matters for the good of both, in order to give me honour in the eyes of the Vackeel.

I beg your answer to this letter, and if you have any comments I am ready to serve you.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, p.258)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh Nāṣir asking  
for Beaumont also to be released

23 September 1774

To Shaik Nassir of Bushire

After Compliments

Mr. Green arrived here four days ago, and delivered one of your letters. I have read it with very great attention, well interested in its purport, and am much pleased at the friendship that you entertain for the English, your giving Mr. Green his liberty, and the kind treatment that he and Mr. Beaumont have received since their being at your Bunder [port], are striking proofs of your attachment to us, and I most heartily thank you for them.

To send you any person to settle at your Bunder is not in my power, because my Employers the India Company, and my Superiours the Governor and Council of Bombay most positively forbid it. It is in my power however to admit of the English Ships touching at your Bunder, in order to trade with your subjects, and this I conclude will answer every commercial end that you can be desirous of. In about twenty days two ships will sail from hence for Bombay and Madrass both of which shall touch at Bushire provided Mr. Beaumont and his family are sent up to me, before they sail from Bussora.

I repeat to you my desire of being on terms of friendship and commerce with you, I wish it most heartily; but this cannot be so long as Mr. Beaumont continues your Prisoner. It is in your interest as well as mine that a friendship should take place between us; and this nothing prevents but Mr. Beaumonts detention at Bushire.

When he arrives at Bussora I will then write to the Governor and Council of your friendship for the English; and they I dare promise will do every thing in their power to serve you, that is not inconsistent with their honor, and the honor and interests of the English nation in general.

Bussora  
the 23rd September 1774

H.M.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.282-3)

Letter from Moore to Shaikh Nāsir sent in the  
Success repeating his request for Beaumont's release

3 October 1774

To Shaikh Nassir

After Compliments

I had the honour to write you some days since and then returned you my thanks for the favour you have done me in sending Mr. Green to Bussora. The cause of this letter is to bear to you my respects, and to repeat to you my desire of being on terms of friendship and commerce with you.

I am to inform you also, that [...] having been taken in Bussora river by the Chaub [Ka'b] Arabs, I think it probable a letter to me from you may have been sent in the said Boat; for this reason, and as our river is stopt by the Chaubs *Gallivats*, which must prevent my hearing from you for some time, I now send the Success Cruizer down to your Bunder [port], in order to bring me a letter from you and to have your determinations regarding Mr. Beaumont and his family. Permit me again to request the release of this Gentleman, and as a cruizer, with one Bengal, and one Madrass ship will sail for India in a few days, I want to advise the Governor and Council of Bombay whatever may be your final resolves regarding Mr. Beaumont.

Be assured your releasing him will bring you honour and profit, if you send him up to me the ships now here shall touch at your Bunder [port] in their way down, and I will do every thing, be assured, to serve you.

A Cruizer from Bombay and a Bengal ship arrived here a few days ago. The Commanders tell me that you fired many guns as they passed your Bunder; if as a compliment, I am obliged to you for it, as I am also for the boat of water that I hear you sent off for them.

The Cruizer is ordered to wait three days for your reply to this letter, and then to return to Bussora. I again beg of you to send Mr. Beaumont up to me by the Success, in order that you and I may then treat on such other points as may be conducive to the ... interests of you and my Employers the India Company.

Bussora  
the 3rd October 1774

H.M.



(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 202, pp.282-3)

Reply from Shaikh Nāṣir to Moore insisting  
that Moore must take the first steps

Translate of a letter from Shaik Nassir, received the 15th October 1774 per Success.

After Compliments,

I have received your letter to me by the Success, and perfectly understand the Contents, which you have wrote me concerning Mr. Beaumont. I also understand the request you have made regarding him appears to me extraordinary after the letters I wrote you since my arrival from Schyrass. They fully explained to you every thing that had passed after my return from my last expedition. By Mr. Beaumonts and Mr. Greens desire I sent Mr. Green to Bussora, to inform you of every thing and in hopes of bringing affairs to a proper conclusion. Now without having done any thing in the business, you desire me to release Mr. Beaumont. I most solemnly swear to you I have no interest in the affair, I only want for your good to make you friends with the Vackeel [Karīm Khān]. You must be very sensible that I am only a subject, that I can do nothing of myself. If you wanted now therefore to bring me to disgrace, and to draw on me the Vackeel's anger you would not have made the request that you have done. You write me that after Mr. Beaumont is returned you will talk with me. If you want to settle the business, you must do it now, before the Government again take notice of it, and the people there shall have an opportunity of representing my conduct in an unfavourable light to the Vackeel. After you have done this then ask me for Mr. Beaumont. I again most solemnly swear to you I want to make the English and the Vackeel friends and that I have no other views. If you think proper to write to the Vackeel, or to give me leave to send him your letter to me, and wait his answer, do so. If you reason coolly you will be sensible of my good intentions, and will not give ear to any malicious people that may endeavour to give my actions to you an unfavourable turn. A good friend never requests any thing of his friend that may hurt him. Show me how I can serve you, without suffering the Vackeels anger, or giving room to my enemies to speak against me. All the promises that I made to the Vackeel when I got Mr. Beaumont and Green from Schhyras I made from a regard to you. To all the letters which I have since wrote you, hoping to put affairs on a proper footing the only answer you return is Release Mr. Beaumont. You should put yourself in my place, and consider whether this is in my power, without giving people an opportunity of speaking against me, and drawing on me the Vackeels displeasure. You will easily understand me - I need not therefore say any more.

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.244)

Karīm Khān's *faramān* to Garden for the  
re-establishment of the English Factory in Bushire

Translate of Carim Caun's Phiramaund to Mr. Garden received by him 13th May 1775.

This is the Phiramaund to you Mr. Garden, Christian, *Balios* and greatest Chief amongst the English, my favour is towards you, be content.

I have received your letter informing me of your being sent by the General of Bombay, to know whether my favour was towards the English. You request that I will release Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Green. As soon as I received the General's letter to me requesting their release, I that moment gave orders that they should be delivered to you, and before you receive this they are with you. The General writes me that the English were formerly settled at Bushire and other places in Persia, that they were friends with the Persians, and that the favour of the Kings of Persia was towards the English. As it was formerly so the General requests it may be now. I before wrote to your people, and I write to you now, that greater favour shall be shewn to your nation than ever was shewn before, and I have sent particular orders to that purport to Bushire and all my other parts, that you may trade in my country, and not receive the least molestation. None of the Kings of Persia ever did your people the least harm. I shall now show you greater favour even than any of my Predecessors, and shall take care that you shall not receive the least molestation but that you may trade with the greatest security. Land your goods therefore in any part of my dominions carrying on your trade and if any person gives you the least hindrance inform me thereof. With respect to your house at Bussora [under Persian siege at the time] and the rest of the English effects there, I have given orders to Sadoo Caun [Šādiq Khān] agreeable to your request to take care of them when he gets possession of the place and if you want any thing else from me, let me know.

## APPENDIX 81

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.245)

Karīm Khān's *faramān* ordering the release  
of the *Tyger*

13 May 1775

Translate of Phiramaund to Meer Ali Governor of Bunderick

Mr. Garden Chief *Balios* of the English being at present at Bushire where he has landed his goods, I desire that as soon as the service at Bussora is finished you will deliver him the vessel which you took last year, and take his receipt for her at the back of this Phiramaund, that is when the arrival at Bussora is finished. [the *Tyger* was then in the Persian fleet attacking Basrah]

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.121)

The first consignment of cloth to  
Bushire after re-establishment

16 May 1775

Indent for Woollens for the use of Bushire Residency Vizt.

2 Bales Superfine Medleys 30 Brought over 50 Bales *perpets* Vizt.

	Superfine Vizt.	Worsters Vizt.	8 Scarlet
	2 Scarlet	4 Scarlet	7 Aurora
	2 Wine	3 Aurora	12 Maz Blue
10	2 French Green	3 Wine	7 Emerald Green
	1 Purple	1 Grass Green	3 Purple
	1 Saxon Green	2 Maz Blue	7 French Green
	1 Cinnamon	2 Purple	2 Red
	1 Cherry	1 Cherry and Scarlet	1 Wine
		20 1 Cinnamon	3 Popinjee
	Fines Vizt.	2 French Green	
	2 Scarlet	1 Sky Blue	
10	2 Aurora	-----	-----
	3 French Green	50 Bales cloth	50 Bales
	3 Wine	-----	-----

	<i>Drabs</i> Vizt.	Busshire 16th May 1775
	4 Cinnamon	
8	1 Purple	John Beaumont
	2 Wine	George Green
	1 Scarlet	

-----  
30 Bales Carried forward  
-----

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.39)

Letter from Šādiq Khān threatening  
the English factory in Basrah

Translate of a letter from Sadoq Caun the Persian General at Havezah to the English Agent and the English and Country Merchants at Bussorah, received the 10th March 1775:

No Compliments,

By the order of the King my brother I am now arrived at Havezah in Arabia with our army of the Kings consisting of 30,000 Persians and 10,000 more are expected under the command of Sheik Nassir of Bushire, Masoon Caun of Bundereek, Mahomed Tayhee Caun and all the Cauns of Baghertan with all the people in the Persian Gulf with their armies and fleets. The foregoing forces with those of the Chaub [Ka'ab] Arabs under Sheik Barakat are to join me by the way of the sea to attack and take Bussorah. About four days ago I arrived at Havezah; the only cause of my being ordered out with the army from Shiraz is to take Bussorah for the good of the place and the people of it. For this purpose you have now a letter from the Vackeel [Karīm Khān]. On my arrival at this place it is necessary you should come out to meet me in order to show your obedience. On your arrival with me you will be all treated according to your stations and your merits. If you do not do what I here recommend to you, you will not do good for yourselves. I send these letters by two servants of the Vackeels, named Ibrahim Beg and Mahomet Raysin Beg. When you have read these letters, I recommend that some of the principal amongst you come out and meet me. It will be for your good and you may depend on good treatment. All your desires will be granted. Be not too proud but do what I desire of you, lest your blood and the blood of your families be the fruit of your disobedience. What is proper to do I have desired you, neglect not therefore my advice. If you do, repentance will not wait you.

APPENDIX 84

(Bombay Archives, Basrah Diaries, Diary no. 203, p.244)

Faramān from Karīm Khān to Šādiq Khān  
ordering the safeguarding of English property in Basrah

August 1775

Translate of copy of Phiramaund to Sadoq Caun.

After Compliments,

With respect to the English house at Bussora at this time Mr. Garden has come to Bushire by order of the General of Bombay from whom he forwarded me a letter of friendship - desiring that we may be on the same amicable terms as formerly. Mr. Garden also has wrote me a letter to inform me that he is come on the part of the General to settle a friendship between the English and me in the same manner as with the former King of Persia. We for this reason must shew the English every favour. I have given orders for the release of Mr. Beaumont and Green, and when you receive this Phiramaund and have taken Bussora, you must take care of the English factory there, the ... of the English, and the houses of their people. You must take care that no one does harm to them or touches their effects - you will then deliver them safe to Mr. Garden, in order that he may take possession of them as Chief, and carry on his trade there in the same manner as before.

(India Office Library and Records, R/15/1/2, p.36)

Estimate of the market in Bushire for  
broadcloth and *perpets*

? mid-1775

Calculate of the Quantity, Sortments, Colours and C... of Perpets and Broad Cloth that will sell Annually at the Bushire Market, Viz.

Perpets 500 Bales or 5,000 Pieces, Viz.

150 bales	or 1,500	Pieces Scarlet in Grain		<i>Rupees</i> 38,600
100 do	1,000	do Mazarine blue	) 3,500 Pieces	
50 do	500	do Sky blue		<u>59,200</u>
200 do	2,000	do Grass, Saxon		
		Emerald or French Green)		
<u>500 Bales or</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>Pieces</u>		97,800

Colours ... In Perpets the above are most in esteem - a few bales may be included of Purple, Wine, Cherry, Clove and Good Browns excepting Snuff; if among the Remains - but these are not necessary.

Green ... The Merchants always prefer the lightest, such as Grass &c.

Crimson is not much liked.

Aurora is taken reluctantly either in Perpets or Broad Cloth.

But Red, Popinjay and especially Yellow or any colour tending to it, will not sell at Bushire at any rate.

Broad Cloth 175 Bales or 1,050 Pieces, Viz.

Superfine Medleys	10	Bales or 60 Pieces		12,400
Coarse Medleys	70	do 420 do		40,660

Fine Medleys will not suit this market, being Rupees 1½ per *Guz shaw* dearer than the Coarse, and the difference not discernable by the Merchants.

Colours ... Such as are generally sent are liked, that is all Browns, dark (particularly Clove) light & the intermediate Shades. But Snuff Colour or any tinged with Yellow or Purple, are in no esteem.

Fine Cloth 5 Bales or 30 Pieces Viz.

2	Scarlet & Crimson			1,680
<u>3</u>	<u>Grass, Emerald &amp; French Green</u>			
5				

Coarse Cloth 70 Bales or 420 Pieces Viz.

7	Scarlet			27,000
3	Crimson			
30	Mazarine blue			
<u>30</u>	<u>Grass, Emerald &amp; French Green</u>			

70

Worsters 20 Bales or 120 Pieces Viz.	8,700
2 Scarlet	
1 Crimson	
5 Mazarine blue	
<u>12 Grass, Emerald &amp; French Green</u>	
20	

Bales 175 or 1,050 Pieces	<u>90,440</u>
---------------------------	---------------

Rupees 188,240

N.B. Superfine Cloth & *Drabs* do not suit this Market.  
 The above Valuation is agreeable to the Cost of the Woolens laden via Congoon

Mr. John Beaumont

(India Office Library and Records, R/15/1/3, p.22)

Manifest of pearls and specie shipped  
from Bushire to Bombay on 2 May 1779

Abstract Manifest of Treasure Pearl &ca. Freight laden at Bushire on the Success  
*Ketch*. Lieutenant Jonathan Twiss for Bombay &ca. Viz.

By Whom Shipped	To Whom Consigned	Value	Freight to be received at Bombay
Petrus Lucas	Mary Cross	12,500	375
Do	Do	3,040	91.1
John Beaumont for W. D La Touche	Henry Moore Esqre.	5,200	156
John Beaumont	Mary Cross	4,368	131.4
Do	The Honble William Hornby Esqre.	1,190.2 freight.free	
Do	Andrew Ramsay Esq. for Daniel Seton	811.316 freight.free	
Do	Patrick Crawford Bruce	700.47 freight.free	
Do	John Griffith for Rawson Hart Boddam Esq	4002.2 freight.free	
Do	John Griffith	3797.2 freight.free	
Do	Pomdoojee Sevajee	607	18.1.1
Do	George Green & George Birch	2,800	84
Yapreannos	Zackary Owen John	2,600	78
		41,617.4.3	933.2.5
Deduct the amount Freight free		10,502.4.3	<i>Rupees</i>
		31,115 at 3 per cent	933.2.5

(India Office Library and Records, R/15/1/3, p.51)

Manifest of pearls and specie shipped  
from Bushire to Bombay on 15 July 1780

Manifest of Treasure, Pearls &ca Freight laden at Bushire on the Eagle *Snow*  
Lieutenant Joseph Alderson the 15th July 1780

Marks	By Whom Shipped	To Whom Consigned	Where to be delivered	Quality	Quantity	Value	Freight p. cent	Freight received at Bushire	Freight to be pd. at B'bay	Total Freight
D.P.	John Beaumont	Stephen Iveson of Dady Passenwanjee	B'bay	Silver	4 bags	9,006	3		270.18	
M.C.&P.A.	Do	Mary Cross	do	do	1 do	2,969	do		89.7	
H.I.	Do	Hirjee Iwanjee	do	Gold	1 do	1,900	do		57	
R.HB	Do	John Griffith	do	do	1 do	527		freight	free	
A.	Yapreanos	Coja Zackary	do	Gold & Silver	4 do	6,450	3		193.2.10	
B.	Do	Mary Cross	do	do	3 do	5,080	3		152.2	
C.	Isaac Ibraim	Lewis Barretts	do	Gold	1 do	1,581	3		47.2.3	
D.	Hodjee Baba	Himself	do	Gold & Silver	8 do	7,500	3		225	
						<u>35,013</u>				<u>1,034.</u>
						<u>527</u>				
						<u>Rupees 34,486</u>		at 3 p. Cent are Rupees		<u>1,034.</u>

Bushire 15th July 1780 Errors Excepted  
Pr/signed/Joseph Alderson Having received no part at Bushire  
of Rupees 1,034.2.18 freight money

No. 57 p.Eagle



(Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries*, vol.13, pp.44-5)

*Faramān granted by Ja'far Khān*  
in 1788

18 January 1788

In the name of the Almighty and Glorious God!  
This is exalted Firmana.

*After Compliments* - And as we are always desirous that the merchants and Cofias [*qāfilas*: caravans], who have occasion to pass backwards and forwards in our dominions, should do so in safety, that they should sleep in the cradle of security and confidence, and that they should transact all their business, as far as in us lies, without trouble or vexation:-

Therefore the high, exalted Firmana has been issued forth, containing the strictest mandates to all Governors and Commanders of our towns and castles, to all our Sirdars [Commanders], and to all Riot-dars [guardians of the roads: poll-tax collectors], who receive customs on the roads, that they do show every favour to all persons employed by the English nation in our dominions for the purpose of merchandize, whether it be for importation or exportation, and that they be constantly vigilant in protecting them and moreover that these our above-mentioned servants, upon no account or pretence whatsoever, require any customs, presents or money from the Agents of the English nation, but that it may so happen that from a confidence in us, and from a full persuasion of not receiving any insult or vexation, they, the English, may be induced to pass backwards and forwards and to trade in our dominions. And whenever they shall have disposed of the goods and merchandize which they may import for sale, they shall have full liberty to make their returns according to their own wishes.

And it is therefore necessary that our most honoured friend, the English *Balios* at Bussora, should perfectly understand that in this way our favour is equal in magnitude to whatever he can hope or desire, and it is moreover necessary that in order to make trial thereof he should encourage his nation to trade into Persia, and he has again our word that they shall do so in the fullest and most perfect security.

Again, whatever goods or merchandize the English nation shall import for sale there shall be no restrictions put upon the sale thereof, but after their Agents shall have completed the sales and fulfilled the design of their journey, they shall have every protection granted them on their return, and again upon our royal word there shall be no impositions laid upon them; for if ever, heretofore, there has been any impositions or vexations practised upon the English nation in Persia, it is our will that from this day they be abolished and forgotten.

And being persuaded of the sincerity of our most honoured friend the Balios; we accept of his offer of services and request of him to purchase immediately such rarities as are procurable at Bussora, favouring us at the same time with the amount cost thereof, in order that we may order the same to be repaid to the person who shall be sent with them.

Let our friend, therefore, on all occasions rest satisfied of our favour and protection. Let him on all occasions make known to us his wishes, and wants, and let the above for ever remain a compact between us.

*Written on the eighth of the second month of Rabbee in the year of Hijiree one thousand two hundred and two, answering the 18th January 1788*

The Refuge of Supplicants Jaffir, the son of Mahomed Saduck

(Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries*, vol.13, pp.44-5)

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(East India Company, *Three reports of the Select Committee, appointed by the Court of Directors of the East India Company to take into consideration the export trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, China, Japan, and Persia; laid before the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council, London 1793, p.102*)

Calculate of the Profit or Loss on Sales of Woollens at **BUSHIRE**, from 1780/1 to 1789/90

	Quantity sold		First Cost	Charges in England at ½ per Cent	Interest of Money, 2 Years, at 4 per Cent. per Annum	Insurance at 3 per Cent	Freight at £.10 per Ton in Time of Peace	TOTAL	Sale at Bushire at ⅔ the Rupee	Warehouse Charges at 2 per Cent	PROFIT	LOSS	Gain or Loss per Cent. on First Cost
	Bales	Ps	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>1780/1</b>													
Broad Cloth	81	--	4,245 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	339 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	127 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	101 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4,835 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	4,478 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	89 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>		446 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
Long Ells	107	2	2,395 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	191 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	71 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	89 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2,760 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2,434 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	48 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		374 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	15 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub>
Shalloons	2	--	297 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	8 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	10	341 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	311 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>		35 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	11 <sup>13</sup> / <sub>16</sub>
<b>Total</b>		£	6,938 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	555	208	200 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7,937	7,224 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	144 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		856 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
<b>1781/2</b>													
Broad Cloth	38	--	1,908	9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	152 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	57 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	47 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2,174 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2,111 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	42 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>		105 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
Long Ells	59	6	1,291	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	103 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	38 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	48 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1,488 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1,429 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>		87	6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
<b>Total</b>		£	3,199	16	255 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	96	96 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3,663 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3,541 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	70 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>		192 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	6
<b>1782/3</b>													
Broad Cloth	23	3	1,271	6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	101 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	38 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	29 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1,446 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1,354 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	27		119 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
Long Ells	14	--	401 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2	32	12	11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	459 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	623 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	151 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		37 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
<b>Total</b>		--	1,672 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	133 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	50 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	41	1,906	1,977 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	39 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	151 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	119 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	
Nett Profit, £.32 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> , or 2 per Cent. nearly													
<b>1783/4</b>	None	sold											
<b>1784/5</b>													
Broad Cloth	70	--	3,625 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	290	108 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	87 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	4,129 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	4,200 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	84		13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	-- <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
Long Ells	115	--	2,542 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	203 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	76 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	95 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2,930 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2,821 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	56 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		165 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
<b>Total</b>		£	6,168	30 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	493 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	185	183 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7,060 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	7,022 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	140 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		178 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
<b>1785/6</b>	None	sold											
<b>1786/7</b>													
Broad Cloth	44	--	2,027 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	162 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	60 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	55	2,315 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2,404	48	40 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>		2
Long Ells	30	--	710 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	56 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	25	817 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	973 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	137		19 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>16</sub>
<b>Total</b>		--	2,738	13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	218 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	82	80	3,132 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	3,377 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	67 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	177 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>		6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
<b>1787/8</b>													
Broad Cloth	1	--	77 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	-- <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	87 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	93 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
<b>1788/9</b>													
Broad Cloth	18	--	1,106 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	88 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1,256	1,199 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	24		80 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
Long Ells	67	--	1,520 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	121 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	45 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	55 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1,750 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1,645 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	32 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		138 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>13</sub>
<b>Total</b>		£	2,626 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	210 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	78 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	78 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3,006 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2,844 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	56 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>		219 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
<b>1789/90</b>	None	sold											
<b>TOTAL in 10 Years</b>		£	23,420 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	117	1,873	702 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	680 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	26,793 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	26,081 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	521 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	333 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1,566 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	
Total Nett Loss, £.1,232 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> , or 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> per Cent on First Cost													

(East India Company, *Three reports of the Select Committee, appointed by the Court of Directors of the East India Company to take into consideration the export trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, China, Japan, and Persia; laid before the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council, London 1793, p.101*)

Calculate of the Profit or Loss on Sales of Woollens at **BUSSORA**, from 1780/1 to 1789/90

	Quantity sold	First Cost	Charges in England at ½ per Cent	Interest of Money, 2 Years, at 4 per Cent per Annum	Insurance at 3 per Cent	Freight at £.10 per Ton in Time of Peace	Turkish Customs on Importation	TOTAL	Sale at Bussora, at ⅔ the Rupee	Bombay Warehouse Charges, at 2 per Cent	PROFIT	LOSS	Gain or Loss per Cent on First Cost
	Bales Ps	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
1780/1 Broad Cloth	29 3½	1,919	9½	153½	57½	36⅞	59	2,235⅞	1,347½	27		914⅞	47⅞
1781/2 Broad Cloth	122 --	5,847⅞	29¼	467¾	152½	175⅞	129¼	6,802	6,199½	124		726½	127/16
Long Ells	113 --	2,581	12⅞	206½	77⅞	94¼	45¼	3,017¼	2,740¼	54⅞		331⅞	1213/16
		8,428⅞	42⅞	674¼	252¾	246¾	175	9,819¼	8,939¾	178⅞		1,058⅞	12½
1782/3	None sold												
1783/4 Broad Cloth	145 --	6,537¼	32⅞	522⅞	196⅞	181¼	136	7,606⅞	6,652¼	133		1,086⅞	16¼
1784/5 Broad Cloth	165 --	7,642¼	38¼	611⅞	229¼	205	275	9,001⅞	7,732⅞	154⅞		1,423⅞	18⅞
Long Ells	155 --	3,559	17¼	284¾	106¾	129⅞	62	4,159⅞	3,793⅞	75⅞		441⅞	12¾
		11,201¼	56	896⅞	336	334⅞	337	13,160½	11,525¼	230½		1,865¼	16⅞
1785/6 Broad Cloth	78 --	4,113	20½	329	123⅞	97½		4,683⅞	3,583	71⅞		1,172¼	28½
1786/7	[None] sold												
1787/8 Broad Cloth	141 --	6,550⅞	32¼	524	196½	176¼	145¼	7,625⅞	6,759	135⅞		1,001¼	159/32
Long Ells	72 --	1,619	8	129½	48½	60	26⅞	1,891⅞	1,464	29¼		456⅞	28⅞
		8,169⅞	40¼	653½	245	236¼	171⅞	9,517	8,223	164⅞		1,458⅞	1727/16
1788/9 Broad Cloth	6 --	534½	2⅞	42¾	16	7½	12⅞	616	650¼	13	21¼		315/11
Long Ells	196 --	4,751⅞	23¼	380	142½	163¼	71¼	5,533⅞	3,877⅞	77½		1,732¾	367/16
		5,286⅞	26⅞	422¾	158½	170¾	84⅞	6,149⅞	4,528⅞	90½	21¼	1,732¾	
												Nett Loss, £1,711, or 32⅞ per Cent	
1789/90 Broad Cloth	65 --	4,019	20	321½	120½	90	81¼	4,652¼	3,677¼	72½		1,047	261/20
Long Ells	104 --	2,530	12⅞	202¾	75⅞	86¼	38	2,945⅞	1,994	39⅞		991½	39⅞
		6,549	32⅞	523⅞	196⅞	176¾	119¼	7,597⅞	5,671¼	112⅞		2,038½	31⅞
TOTAL in 10 Years		52,204⅞	260½	4,175⅞	1,565⅞	1,480¼	1,082¼	60,768⅞	50,471⅞	1,008½	21¼	11,327¼	
												Total Nett Loss, £11,305½, or 2111/16 per Cent on First Cost	

(Bombay Archives, Commercial Department Diary no. 7/1792, pp.409-10)

Sales of woollens at Basrah, September 1792

Woollens sold as follows to *Coja* Petrus Mellick for Coja Marcar Aviat of Bagdat, at a credit of 9 months, he being at liberty to make Payments on Account of the purchase whenever it may suit his convenience to do so drawing a Discount thereon of 1 p.Cent p.month viz<sup>t</sup>

Broad Cloth 29 Bales 171 Pieces viz<sup>t</sup>

Superfine Cloth 4 Bales 24 Pieces 407½ yards 543⅓ *Guz*  
@ *Mamoodies* 40 p.*Guz* Ts 217.33.20

Deduct damage in one Bale of Orange Color 68⅔ G. d<sup>o</sup>.  
27.46.80

Carried over 189.86.40  
Brought over Ts 189.86.40

Fine Cloath 8 Bales 48 pieces 822 yards 1096 *Guz* @  
*Mamoodies* 22.10 242.21.60

Coarse Cloath 5 Bales 29 pieces 665 yards 886⅔ *Guz* @  
*Mamoodies* 14.95 132.55.72

Worsters 12 Bales 70 Pieces 1810 yards 2414 *Guz* @  
*Mamoodies* 18.85 455.03.90

*Perpetuances* 30 Bales, 300 Pieces @ *Mamoodies* 1.75 p.piece 1019.67.62  
525.00.00

*Tomaunds* 1544.67.62

Bassora the 11th September 1792  
Errors Excepted  
Samuel Manesty

(India Office Library, Bombay Commerce, Internal and External Reports, Range 419, vols. 39-57, 1801-21)

Value of exports from Bombay to  
Persian Gulf and Red Sea, 1801-1822

<b>Year</b>	<b>Persian Gulf Value in Rupees in Lacks**</b>	<b>Arabian Gulf* Value in Rupees in Lacks**</b>
1801/2	12,15,579	3,04,259
1802/3	12,36,207	4,62,609
1803/4	9,17,198	3,71,630
1804/5	10,41,586	4,49,928
1805/6	13,49,095	6,54,891
1806/7	17,64,852	3,10,556
1807/8	14,69,210	3,02,128
1808/9	17,94,113	5,54,060
1809/10	17,71,470	4,80,759
1810/11	10,21,953	4,32,313
1811/12	19,48,205	3,64,831
1812/13	18,13,119	4,43,127
1813/14	14,80,539	5,77,382
1814/15	15,18,243	9,33,133
1815/16	18,26,294	5,75,206
1816/17	15,06,779	13,74,623
1817/18	19,24,928	12,79,580
1818/19	23,18,072	9,98,025
1819/20	20,32,064	10,73,089
1820/21	28,39,193	8,66,840
1821/22	33,59,384	12,03,820

[\* = Red Sea: \*\* = 100,000]

(India Office Library, Bombay Commerce, Internal and External Reports, Range 419, vols. 39-57, 1801-21)

Value of exports to Bombay  
from Persian Gulf and Red Sea, 1801-1822

Year	Persian Gulf Value in Rupees in Lacks**	Arabian Gulf* Value in Rupees in Lacks**
1801/2	16,84,028	7,05,042
1802/3	17,74,469	12,70,147
1803/4	22,88,315	15,84,031
1804/5	20,47,017	32,37,272
1805/6	28,71,000	13,00,376
1806/7	33,74,821	14,60,878
1807/8	19,00,754	7,45,282
1808/9	30,28,784	6,27,632
1809/10	30,64,687	7,19,549
1810/11	22,38,814	6,56,863
1811/12	21,40,724	9,44,292
1812/13	13,86,192	11,17,543
1813/14	13,58,836	7,37,492
1814/15	24,86,801	12,44,047
1815/16	36,41,611	14,32,431
1816/17	28,17,308	20,78,072
1817/18	36,99,059	25,43,655
1818/19	52,12,544	16,94,753
1819/20	29,80,639	17,06,560
1820/21	34,87,754	18,63,817
1821/22	33,85,197	14,33,313

[\* = Red Sea: \*\* = 100,000]

(India Office Library, Bombay Commerce, Internal and External Reports, Range 419, vols. 58-106, 1822-58)

Value of exports from Bombay to  
Persian Gulf and Red Sea, 1822-1858

Year	Persian Gulf Value in Rupees in Lacks**	Arabian Gulf* Value in Rupees in Lacks**
1822/23	30,91,782	12,59,814
1823/24	41,59,485	8,35,123
1824/25	37,15,960	6,58,905
1825/26	43,43,780	8,29,634
1826/27	41,91,821	7,41,105
1827/28	33,66,175	5,14,439
1828/29	45,12,274	6,60,294
1829/30	55,62,260	8,90,145
1830/31	45,60,266	11,00,850
1831/32	36,01,947	8,62,377
1832/33	27,35,720	8,83,740
1833/34	31,29,110	11,86,107
1834/35	21,87,338	11,42,997
1835/36	38,67,586	16,54,404
1836/37	35,00,241	12,65,130
1837/38	37,33,125	15,21,580
1838/39	24,13,961	16,28,946
1839/40	28,60,827	16,46,930
1840/41	37,42,975	19,93,296
1841/42	42,76,538	18,04,345
1842/43	49,60,143	15,07,447
1843/44	53,17,064	20,54,777
1844/45	45,72,282	18,14,310
1845/46	40,998,61	25,76,432
1846/47	50,27,454	26,71,490
1847/48	Persian and Arabian Gulfs combined: 78,85,700	
1848/49	Persian and Arabian Gulfs combined: 67,79,522	
1849/50	Persian and Arabian Gulfs combined: 72,64,346	
1850/51	Persian and Arabian Gulfs combined: 63,12,089	
1851/52	51,541,82	16,455,14
1852/53	57,700,32	18,493,70
1853/54	50,70,554	17,95,476
1854/55	56,74,424	23,24,299
1855/56	59,13,775	18,27,099
1856/57	66,29,705	22,53,621
1857/58	64,31,170	22,40,140

[\* = Red Sea: \*\* = 100,000]



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## GLOSSARY

The entries in this glossary are shown in *bold italics* on first mention in each Chapter or Appendix. Thereafter, only the foreign words used as such continue to be in *italics*. The remaining words have all appeared at one time or another in English dictionaries.

Certain works have been valuable in compiling this glossary. Pre-eminent among them is *Hobson-Jobson: a glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases* (see the end note). Others have been *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, edited by Peter Kemp (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and a wide range of contemporary travel accounts. Those listed in the Bibliography are by no means all of them.

- Abba** Arabic: *'abā'a*; a cloak-like outer wrap. Also written *abaya* in some English dictionaries.
- Alum** In this context probably aluminium hydroxide, used as a mordant (binder) in dyeing.
- Arrack/Arak** Arabic: *'araq*; alcoholic spirit made variously from dates, palm sap, grapes or rice, and sometimes flavoured with aniseed.
- Arzee** Arabic: *'ard*; petition.
- Asafoetida** (Also Hindi: *hing*) Foul-smelling gum-resin, used in Indian cooking: reputedly a cure for flatulence. Sometimes found in Western cuisine also.
- Bafta** Persian: *bāfta*; woven. A calico (q.v.) for which Broach was specially renowned, but *bafta* was later also used for silk cloth.
- Baghala** Twin-masted Arabian sailing vessel with arched, and finely carved, windowed transom, reminiscent of the galleon or the Indian *Kotia*. None now in use.
- Balios/Bailos** Italian: *bailo/baglio*; the term first used of Venetian envoys to the Porte; applied throughout the Gulf to senior British representatives.
- Banian** A Hindu Indian merchant, usually from Gujarat, residing in the Arabian peninsula or Persia.
- Batil** Twin-masted Arabian sailing vessel with fine lines and fast through the water. None now in use, and not to be confused with the Indian types, *Batel* and *Batella*.
- Benzoin** Arabic: *lubān jāwī* [Java frankincense]. Also appears in archaic English as *benjamin*. An incense from trees of the *Styrax* family.
- Bdellium** A gum resin, related to myrrh, from trees of the *Commiphora* spp. Also called balm (of Gilead). A local variety was called *gugal/gogul*.

<b>Bezoar</b>	A stony concretion from the stomachs of animals - especially wild goats of the same name - used in folk medicine.
<b>Bitter apples</b>	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i> , a cultivated gourd with a bitter pulp, used as a purgative.
<b>Blue vitriol</b>	Copper sulphate crystals, used medicinally at the time.
<b>Bomb-ketch</b>	A ketch (q.v.) fitted with one or two heavy mortars for bombarding targets on shore. Sometimes called simply 'Bomb'.
<b>Boutida</b>	A type of bafta (q.v.) from Surat. Also bootidar.
<b>Brig</b>	Twin-masted vessel, square-rigged on both fore and main masts.
<b>Brigantine</b>	Twin-masted vessel, square-rigged on the foremast but with its mainmast rigged fore and aft.
<b>Brimstone</b>	Sulphur.
<b>Calico</b>	A fine cotton fabric, originating in Calicut, printed with coloured designs.
<b>Camphire</b>	See Camphor.
<b>Camphor</b>	Arabic: <i>kāfir</i> . Gummy aromatic crystals from the tree <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> . Sometimes written camphire.
<b>Cassia</b>	In this context, probably 'Chinese cinnamon' - the bark of <i>Cinnamomum cassia</i> . 'Cassia buds' were the dried immature fruit of the tree. True cinnamon came from <i>C. zeylanicum</i> .
<b>Chabdār</b>	Persian: 'Keeper of the keys'; an attendant on Indian or Persian nobles.
<b>Chappa</b>	An unidentified piece good (q.v.).
<b>Chints(z)</b>	An Indian printed or painted cotton fabric, often a highly glazed, painted calico (q.v.). From the Hindi word for 'spotted'.
<b>Choppar</b>	See Chabdār.
<b>Churl</b>	Spanish: <i>churla/o</i> ; the traditional cow-hide wrapping for indigo shipments.
<b>Coja</b>	Persian: <i>khwāja</i> ; a title of respect.
<b>Corge</b>	Arabic: <i>khirqa</i> ; a lot or bale of 20 pieces of cloth.
<b>Cossa</b>	A fine, close-weaved muslin. Probably from Arabic: <i>khāṣṣa</i> ; special.

<b>Curcuma</b>	Arabic: <i>kurkum</i> ; turmeric. A family of plants yielding several dyes and spices, most notably turmeric, from <i>Curcuma longa</i> syn. <i>C. domestica</i> , but also arrowroot.
<b>Cutter</b>	Applied variously to different kinds of small, fast sailing vessels with one mast, or to ship's boats of a dozen or so oars and two lugsails.
<b>Dhow</b>	This was not the generic term now in usage for any local craft. It describes the largest lateen-rigged Arab or Indian ships of the time.
<b>Dinghi</b>	Hindi: a considerably bigger boat than the modern dinghy, from western India. With two masts and two outboard sails, plus jib and trysail. Not to be confused with the Dhangi - a double-ended deep-sea dhow from the Gulf of Kutch.
<b>Drab</b>	A dull grey or brown cloth.
<b>Ducat</b>	A gold coin, originally Venetian but used also in Holland and elsewhere in Europe. The preferred gold coin of the Ottoman Empire.
<b>Ell (Long)</b>	The ell was the classic measure, albeit variable, for woollens since the Middle Ages. The English ell was 45", but in the region of this study usually about 36".
<b>Earth (Red)</b>	Red ochre. Red oxide of iron (ferric oxide), found in natural deposits (including the Sharjah island of Abu Musa).
<b>Dye-wood/roots</b>	If not otherwise specified, usually, if not invariably, madder ( <i>Rubia tinctorum</i> or <i>cordifolia</i> ), giving a red dye (alizarin).
<b>Faramān</b>	Arabic (in Persian <i>farmān</i> ): an order or decree from the Shāh.
<b>Galbanum</b>	Bitter aromatic resin used in incense and derived from plants of the <i>Ferula</i> spp.
<b>Galingale</b>	Aromatic root, ginger flavoured, of a sedge, <i>Cyperus longus</i> . Used in perfumes.
<b>Gall-nuts</b>	Galls from the oak tree, yielding tannic acid for use as a mordant (binder) to produce a black dye.
<b>Galley</b>	In this context nearer to the galleass, i.e. a large vessel (up to 150ft) with two or three masts and a bank of oars.
<b>Gallivat</b>	The origin of the word is disputed: although it shares its derivation with jolly-boat and gellywatte it was much bigger than both. It was rather a galliot, a smaller, single-masted galley specially adapted to boarding other boats. NOT the small dhow from the Gulf known as <i>jalbūt</i> .
<b>Ghee</b>	Hindi <i>ghī</i> ; clarified butter.

<b>Gillopdar</b>	Persian: <i>jalavdār</i> ; a leader of mules or pack-horses. A caravan boss. More usually gelabdar.
<b>Gogul</b>	See bdellium.
<b>Grab</b>	Arabic: <i>ghurāb</i> (a crow); a coasting vessel ranging up to 300 tons, with one or two lateen-rigged masts according to size: smaller ones also carried oars.
<b>Gum ammoniac</b>	Aromatic gum resin from the Persian plant <i>Dorema ammoniacum</i> , used in medicines.
<b>Gunny</b>	Marathi: <i>gōnī</i> ; coarse jute sacking, or sack. The term is still used in the area.
<b>Guz/Gaz</b>	An ancient Indian unit of measurement. Under the Moguls standardised at 33 inches. At the beginning of the period under study it was 37½" for cloth and 27" for silks and carpets. By the end of the period it was evidently equal to 27 inches for all purposes, while the Guz Shaw (q.v.) was about 38".
<b>Humhum</b>	A thick, strong cloth used as a wrap in the cold season. From Arabic: <i>ḥammām</i> ; Turkish bath (commonly 'humhum'), where it supposedly originated.
<b>Hurtaul</b>	Hindi: <i>hartāl</i> ; orpiment (arsenic trisulphide), a bright yellow deposit from hot springs used for dyeing and as an artists' pigment.
<b>Hyacinth</b>	Jacinth: the yellow/orange/red variety of zircon.
<b>Jujube</b>	The fruits of <i>Ziziphus spp.</i> (in this context <i>Z. mauritiana</i> from India). The sweeter Chinese variety comes from <i>Z. jujuba</i> . Used in sweetmeats and medicines.
<b>Kalanthar</b>	Persian: <i>kalāntar</i> ; a senior local official or magistrate in Persia, especially in the Armenian communities.
<b>Kaṭh</b>	Hindi; an astringent extract from <i>Acacia spp.</i> which are natives of India. Used in dyeing and tanning. Usually called catch or cashoo at the time, and admitted to English dictionaries as catechu.
<b>Ketch</b>	Twin-masted sailing vessel. The smaller (mizzen) mast being aft of the main mast, this left a large open space forward, which served to accommodate heavy mortars in some vessels (see Bomb-ketch).
<b>Kia/Kaya</b>	A senior Ottoman official.
<b>Kismis</b>	Or Kishmish. A small, stoneless, sweet raisin or fresh grape.
<b>Labdanum</b>	Variant spelling of ladanum (q.v.).

<b>Lac</b>	i) The Indian measurement, still current, of 100,000 ii) A red resin used for dyeing and varnishing (cf. shellac, lacquer, and the colour lake).
<b>Ladanum</b>	Dark and fragrant gum resin from the rock rose, <i>Cistus ladanifer</i> , used in perfumes.
<b>Lakh</b>	See Lac (i).
<b>Lapis tute</b>	<i>Lapis tutiae</i> , a latinised form of Persian and Arabic: <i>tūtiyā</i> ; zinc. Usually called tutty - a zinc ore or oxide mixed with clay. Produced in Kirmān. See also tutenague.
<b>Lascar</b>	Arabic: <i>ʿaskar</i> ; most commonly a native sailor but, at that time, also a native soldier or artilleryman.
<b>Lunghi</b>	Hindi: <i>lungī</i> ; length of cotton worn as a loincloth or sarong. National dress in Burma. Still part of the Gulf's <i>lingua franca</i> .
<b>Mahm/oodi/udi</b>	A Persian silver coin ( <i>Mahmūdī</i> ). 100 Mahmudis = 1 Toman (q.v.). In 1721 one Bombay Rupee (q.v.) = 4 Mahmudis; in 1758 = 5-6 Mahmudis; in 1791-6 = 10 Mahmudis; in 1812 = 8¼ Mahmudis. 1 Mahmudi = 2 Shāhīs (q.v.). Usually regarded in EIC accounts as worth 8d.
<b>Maund/Maun</b>	Hindi: <i>man</i> ; the commonest West Asian weight. Very variable: the Tabrizi maund was round about 7 lb, the maund Shaw (q.v.) double that, the Bengal (standard) maund about 82 lb. The Bombay maund was 28 lbs.
<b>Mogadooti</b>	Cloth made of mooga (Bengali: <i>mūgā</i> ; wild silk) from Assam.
<b>Moorah</b>	A measure of weight equal to 4 candies: roughly 2,000 lbs or a ton.
<b>Mulmull</b>	Hindi; <i>malmal</i> ; muslin.
<b>Muramath</b>	An unidentified piece good (q.v.).
<b>Muster</b>	Portuguese: <i>mostra</i> ; sample, pattern.
<b>Nakhoda</b>	Persian: <i>nākhudā</i> ; the skipper of any native or country craft in the Gulf.
<b>Naphtha</b>	Arabic: <i>naft</i> ; petroleum. Not the hydrocarbon now known as naphtha, but the naturally occurring seepage of a volatile oil in Persia and Azerbaijan. A component in Greek fire.
<b>Olibanum</b>	Frankincense, from trees of <i>Boswellia spp.</i> in southern Arabia.
<b>Pal(l)ampore</b>	Hand-painted or stencilled chintz fabric from India, used especially as a bed-cover. More usually palempore.

<b>Pattamar</b>	<p>i) Fast-sailing twin-masted dhow from western India with open hull and additional outboard stern-sail. Used for fast communication at the time.</p> <p>ii) By extension from i), the messenger who travelled on such a vessel.</p>
<b>Perpet</b>	A hard-wearing (hence its derivation) woollen twill much exported from England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Sometimes called perpetuance.
<b>Piece goods</b>	Originally, Indian exports of cotton cloths in standard lengths. Their types were legion: in 1886 the classic Anglo-Indian glossary, <i>Hobson-Jobson</i> , noted 'Nothing is harder than to find intelligible explanations of the distinction between the numerous varieties of cotton stuffs formerly exported from India to Europe under a still greater variety of names; names and trade being generally alike obsolete.' <sup>1</sup>
<b>Raqam</b>	Persian: an Imperial decree.
<b>Real/Riyal/Rial</b>	The Maria Theresa Dollar. Sometimes referred to as a Thaler, Spanish dollar or German Crown. The preferred currency of Arabia until the 1960s at least.
<b>Rupee</b>	Hindi: <i>rūpiya</i> . For centuries the standard currency of the Mogul Empire and British India - and now of modern India. Of varying types and values at the time, but ten Bombay Rupees (Rs) equated roughly to £1.
<b>Sal ammoniac</b>	Ammonium chloride. Its many uses include cold and cough remedies.
<b>Sannas</b>	Sannoos ( <i>sic</i> ) were Bengali piece goods (q.v.) of a type exported to England.
<b>Scammony</b>	The dried roots of <i>Convulvulus scammonia</i> , used as a (strong) purgative.
<b>Schooner</b>	A sailing vessel with fore-and-aft sails on two or more masts (most had two). At the time in question they also carried square topsails.
<b>Ser/Sear</b>	Hindi: <i>ser</i> ; an Indian unit of weight equal to 2.057 lbs. There were 40 sers in one standard maund (q.v.). Used also as a liquid measure of about one litre.
<b>Sepoy</b>	Persian: <i>sipāht</i> ; a native soldier.
<b>Shāhbandar</b>	Persian: harbour-master or chief of Customs.
<b>Shāhī</b>	Persian currency: 200 Shāhīs usually equalled 1 Toman (q.v.). See also Shaw.
<b>Shalloon</b>	Named after Chalons-sur-Marne (France): a lightweight twilled fabric of wool or worsted. Used mainly as linings.

<b>Shaw</b>	Persian: <i>shāhī</i> ; royal. Indicating a greater than standard measurement (cf. 'king-size').
<b>Shroff</b>	Arabic: <i>ṣarrāf</i> ; money changer.
<b>Sloop</b>	During the period under study, an indiscriminate term for a smaller, square-rigged warship, usually of two masts.
<b>Snow</b>	A merchant ship; the largest two-masted ship of the period, rigged as a brig (q.v.) but with an additional trysail mast.
<b>Syrang/Serang</b>	Persian: <i>sarhang</i> ; overseer. Navigator or boatswain on Indian vessels.
<b>Tabbies/tabby</b>	Arabic: ' <i>attābīya</i> '; a quarter of Baghdad where the cloth originated. Tabby was a striped or watered fabric, usually silk.
<b>Tindal</b>	Malayalam: <i>taṇḍal</i> ; the head seaman on an Indian vessel.
<b>Toman</b>	Persian: <i>tūmān</i> ; still the currency of Iran. During the period of this study its value declined from about £3 7s to about £1. Its worth locally was generally held to be about £3 or Rupees (q.v.) 30. See Shāhī and Maḥmūdī.
<b>Topass</b>	Indo-Portuguese Christian.
<b>Trankey</b>	Probably derived from Persian: the Portuguese in the 16th century used <i>terranquim</i> . The common name at the time for different kinds of close-winded fast boats with fine lines, and usually with one huge lateen sail. Displacing upwards of 100 tons and capable of carrying 200 men: often equated with a batil (q.v.).
<b>Tutenague</b>	In part from Arabic: <i>tūtiyā</i> ; zinc. Strictly an alloy of zinc, copper and nickel. Used loosely in the India trade for zinc or pewter. See also lapis tute.
<b>Vermeil or Vermillion</b>	Silver gilt: also gilded bronze.
<b>Wakīl</b>	Arabic: an agent, attorney or deputy. Also the title used by Karīm Khān, who did not assume the style of Shāh.
<b>Wormseed</b>	Seeds with anthelmintic (worm-expelling) properties. From Santonica ( <i>Artemisia maritima</i> ), one of the wormwoods.
<b>Zappan</b>	A (red) dye-wood more commonly known as Sappan or Brazil-wood ( <i>Caesalpinia sappan</i> ).

#### Reference

<sup>1</sup> Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: a glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and of kindred terms, etymological, historical, geographical and discursive*, (London: John Murray, 1886), s.v. 'bafta'.

