

# Portugal as Preparer for the British Mission

*by*

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Portugal and Spain, which together constitute the Iberian Peninsula, are not really differentiated from one another either geographically, geologically, or even in point of language, for the Portuguese tongue is no more different from the Spanish than the Castilian, Catalanian, or Basque. Nor are the political frontiers between Portugal and Spain in any real sense natural frontiers. The independent existence of Portugal side by side with Spain is indeed one of the riddles of history, but in truth this independence, seemingly so unfounded, is deeply rooted in the history of mankind more so than a history of Portugal from the merely national aspect can reveal.

It was in fact the transition from the mediaeval to the modern consciousness of mankind that gave birth to Portugal as an independent entity. One might even say that the new age created for itself, in Portugal, a destined instrument for the progress of all mankind. The immense change from mediaeval bonds of consciousness to the free and world-wide outlook of the modern is profoundly rooted in the history of the Portuguese, more especially in their voyages of discovery, whereby the Far East India above all was brought into more intimate contact with Europe. What in antiquity, in Alexanders time, had been but an isolated adventure, now became a firmly established relationship of commerce between East and West.

Vasco de Gamas discovery was followed by Francisco Almeidas conquest of India on behalf of the Portuguese crown, and Albuquerque made what was thus achieved into a lasting possession. Thus there arose the world-embracing trade of modern time, which became a thing of far wider than merely national significance. Men of all nations indeed took part in these voyages, whether as merchants, scientists and scholars, or simple adventurers. Martin Behaim constructed his famous globe, which can be seen to this day in the Nuremberg museum and bears witness to the extent of his knowledge a knowledge founded still in ancient spiritual traditions. He too, in the spirit, accompanied the bold seafarers. In the State Library at Munich there is a manuscript account of the journey by a German who accompanied the Portuguese on their voyage to India. Members of nearly all the European nations were present there. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the voyage was inspired by the great Orders of Chivalry, all of which were cosmopolitan in character. These knightly Orders I mention for example those that were founded in England with the renewal of the

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Arthurian legends by Henry VII were intimately connected, above all, with the Order of Knights of Santiago di Compostella. Maximilian too, the Roman king, had his share in these international communities of the Spirit.

The Portuguese voyagers owed their knowledge and their skill to the School of Navigation at Sagrs in the south of Portugal, the founder of which was Henry the Seafarer. The latter was Grand Master of the Order of Christ, which had been founded by the Portuguese king Dinis after the dissolution of the Knights Templars with the intention to protect and carry forward the valuable impulses of the latter Order. These Orders, too, stood for an international community of Spirit.

Henry the Seafarer himself was half Portuguese and half English. His mother was Phillipa, daughter of John of Gaunt, who was the third son of King Edward III of England. Phillipas mother was Blanche of Lancaster. Thus the Red Rose of Lancaster is also interwoven with the history of the Portuguese discoveries. Azurara has bequeathed to us Henry the Seafarers horoscope. In the interpretation we read that Henry was well fitted to seek out things that were hidden from other men, as is shown by the position of Saturn, the guardian of secrets. If ever a horoscope was of significance it was this one, which, though recorded and worked out at the time of his birth, was literally fulfilled by his life; for Henry was chosen by destiny to discover the hitherto unknown African continent, and it was his ocean map which at a later time guided Columbus to the West.

Henry the Seafarer was a man of extraordinary features. The mighty and prominent chin was some indication of his unusual character. He was a mathematical genius, knowing in advance, with intuitive feeling what others had to calculate. Small wonder if the things he initiated worked on into the future. Englishman and Portuguese at one and the same time, he united realistic common sense with fine sensibility. Thus he became not only a national hero of Portugal, but a representative of the spirit of the coming time.

The Dutch inherited what the Portuguese had discovered and had made into the lasting foundation of a new world-commerce. At the end of the sixteenth century, when Spain put an end to Portugals independence and the reactionary spirit was threatening to gain the upper hand once more, the united Netherlands were separated off from the same Spanish empire. The two events were simultaneous. It was as though the spirit of modern time, at the moment of losing hold on Portugal, created a new instrument for itself in the Netherlands, the heroic characters of which, by their strong sense of liberty, appeared as the true children of modern time. The Dutch trading companies inherited what the Portuguese seamen had achieved in the Far East, and the Dutch inheritance was taken over by the English in their turn. England can therefore look back on all this as on a page of her own history.

It is a wonderful thing to observe how the Earth-embracing impulses of the new time,

sustained by a spiritual community of individuals belonging to nearly all the countries, eventually gained the day in conflict with those older forms of society which were still based entirely on communities of interest brought about by way of marriage. This conflict is most distinctly shown in Spanish and Portuguese history of the epoch we are now considering. At the death of Henry IV of Castile, when the question arose who was to succeed him, Alphonso V of Portugal believed that the right of inheritance was his as brother of Joanna, Henrys wife. But Henry IV of Castile also had a sister Isabella, famous in history as the consort of Ferdinand the Catholic. The issue lay between Isabella, Henrys wife Joanna, and Juana, the daughter of the latter.

Isabella and Henry IV were children of the same father, John II, of different mothers, John having been twice wedded. Juana (the child of Joanna, Alphonsos sister) was held to be illegitimate, her father Henry IV being deemed incapable of begetting children. The fatherhood of Juana was attributed to Beltram de la Cueva, who was on terms of friendship with Juanas mother, Henry himself, however, with good reason, declared her to be his own offspring. He too was twice married; the first union had been dissolved as being childless. It was his second wife, Joanna, who in the year 1462 bore him the daughter Juana, known to history as Juana Beltraneja. The terrible fate of this child, which cannot but awaken the sympathy of every feeling heart, reveals the ultimate reductio ad absurdum of politics based on heredity and conflicts of succession. The unhappy maiden was betrothed, one after another, to the various aspirants for the throne of Castile. At last she pined away her young life in prison and monastery. No one inquired what was her own will or inclination. She became the mere tool of high politics. When she was only two years old, Henry IV had offered her to Alphonso V of Portugal for his son Joao, hoping thereby to enlist the help of Portugal against his own noblemen with whom he was in conflict. At the age of four Juana was betrothed to the twelve-year-old son of Juan II, half-brother of Henry IV, but her bridegroom died in his fifteenth year on July 15, 1468, When Juana was eight years old the plan arose to betroth her to the brother of the French king; this, however, was prevented by the Castilians. The union was put off, and in the end it did not come about.

After the death of Henry IV, the Portuguese king, Alphonso V, himself resolved to marry Juana, but the necessary dispensation was refused by the Pope, and the union was not consummated. Juana was only twelve years old when she became Alphonsos wife, while the king was already in the twenty-sixth year of his reign. In her seventeenth year she was divested of all honors and dignities, had to resign the title, Queen of Castile, and was no longer allowed to call herself Infanta or Princess. The intention was to unite her with the son of Ferdinand and Isabella when he should reach the age of seven. Till then she should remain a prisoner, and she was only to be released if the boy should reach the age of fourteen

without claiming her hand in marriage. Juana now had to decide what she would prefer, the prison of Moura or the monastery of the Order of Poor Clares. She chose the latter. Her eyes filled with tears, and accompanied by the lamentations of her friends, she laid aside the title of Queen, her royal garments and decorations, and from now onward wore the dark garment of a nun of the Order of Poor Clares. She became known as Dona Juana, and the monastery of Santarem closed its door behind her. The probationary year passed by, and Juana still elected to remain in the monastery. Fear for her life gave her no choice. On the 15th of November 1480, she was solemnly consecrated. Alphonso left the conduct of these matters to Prince Joao. The latter was married to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of their union was born a son, Alphonso. It was Joaos plan that this child should in due course unite the thrones of Portugal and Castile. But the world-guidance of Destiny, having to serve the spirit of the new time, could not allow Portugals independence to be jeopardized until the Northern peoples were ready to take over the Portuguese mission. For these peoples the Netherlands and England, above all the time had not yet come. Thus it befell that Juana, after so many trials and sufferings, was once again bereft of the husband who had been intended for her. From her window in the Monastery of Santarem she witnessed how the one on whose behalf she had been imprisoned fell from his horse and came to grief. They bedded him in straw, and he who was to have brought about the union of Spain and Portugal died in a fishermans hut.

Juana could not know why Fate had brought her so much pain and suffering, but the fact was that through her sufferings two cosmic powers were battling for victory: the spirit of an age that was past and that had now become reactionary, seeking to form the destinies of nations by way of marriages and inheritances, and the spirit of the more modern age, desiring to give to the individual the free choice of his own destiny and to the nations world-embracing ways of communication. The latter spirit gained the day, and Portugal remained an independent country until the peoples of the North were ready to take over the world-embracing mission.

It was the great knightly Orders that were the instrument of this spirit of modern time. Fundamentally peaceful in tendency, for its aim was the development of world-wide intercourse and economy, the spirit of the new age had in that time no other means of preparing the way for world-economy than by the sword of Chivalry. Oriental trade had to be wrested from the Arabs, in whose hands it lay.

In the name of Christ, that is to say with a religious motive, and by the power of the sword, the foundations were thus laid for the modern time the time in which we live, wherein we must learn to lay aside the sword and to make all the Earth the bearer of a peaceful world-economy, embracing all the nations. We must transmute the courage of the

warriors of the fifteenth century, and the great sufferings of that time, into Thoughts no less world-embracing and courageous, but with full consciousness envisioning the aim of peace.

The struggle with the Arabian power reached its height in the siege and eventual conquest of Granada, which was the last stronghold of the Arabians in Europe. Across the snow-covered peaks of the Sierra Nevada the army of Christian knights draws near to the fortress of Granada. The knights of Santiago di Compostella, Portuguese and Spaniards side by side, had worked out the plan of campaign. From the very outset, the leaders of the Order were fully conscious as to the far-reaching purpose of the campaign. And when, after a lengthy siege, the longed-for surrender was attained and the flags of Ferdinand and of the Order of St. Iago di Compostella surmounted the ramparts of Granada, the knights of St. Iago felt that this achievement of deep significance for all Christendom would not have been possible without the inner organization of the Order. Granada had been encompassed with such good fortune that one of the gates was seized from two sides at once; the attacking knights assailed the defenders in front and by artillery established on a high hill at the rear. The position can be seen to this day, including heavy cannon balls that still remain there. It was a bold and brilliant piece of artillery work to bring about the fall of the strong castle by this means. With the short-range cannon of that time it was only possible by bringing the cannon comparatively near the gateway.

Among the Portuguese knights who took part with initiative in these events, was Francisco Almeida. With the leave of the Portuguese king and as a knight of St. Iago he was among the foremost in the siege and fall of Granada. It was he who afterwards became, on behalf of Emmanuel I of Portugal, the first Viceroy of India, thus introducing the form of administration that continues to this day and is of such essential significance for Great Britain. Documentary history tells us comparatively little of Almeida, who was closely connected not only with Emmanuel of Portugal but with Ferdinand and Isabella also. Almeida had been an eyewitness of the unhappy bargaining with the hand of Juana, for as ambassador of Alphonso V he had prepared the latter's journey to Louis XI of France. The awful nature of Juanas treatment had entered deeply into Almeidas soul, and had awakened in him the sure knowledge that a new age was coming, wherein the destinies of nations would be guided in quite other ways than by marrying and giving in marriage. He wanted to see Portugal and Spain united not by marriages but by brave and conscious deed, of significance for all mankind. It was indeed an event of the greatest importance when the Christian army assailed the rose-covered walls of Granada, and planted thereon the ensign of the Order, whose coat of arms contained the sword, it is true, but with a heart in place of the handle, for in the traditions of the Order it was known that in future ages love must take the place of the sword only the time for this was not yet fully come.

In the hands of the Moors who held Granada there was at that time a sacred treasure, with the possession of which a kind of hidden knowledge was associated. It was a sacred relic connected with a form of Alchemy. Destiny brought it about that this object and the knowledge associated with it fell into the hands of Francisco Almeida. Almeida felt that he had the right to dispose of it after his own insight, but the Order of St. Iago did not agree with him, and desired to keep for itself the right of disposal, both of the relic itself, and of the hidden knowledge which went with it. Almeida however insisted on his right and eventually passed on the relic and the knowledge to a certain man from Alsace, whose name was Stefan Rautter. This individuality is known to history under the pseudonym Basil Valentine. His writings, preserved by his pupils and circulated in manuscript form, were at a later time collected and published by Thlde, secretary of the Rosicrucian Order. Thldes edition contains a few biographical remarks by Basil Valentine himself, but the real name of the latter is not given; it is only inserted in handwriting in one of the extant copies of the edition. Basil Valentine here mentions, among other things, that he undertook in peril of his life a journey to St. Iago di Compostella, and he remarks that those who may now benefit from the knowledge which he brought from thence should thank God that he was enabled to complete the arduous journey.

Basil Valentines work contains the great secret of Alchemy, which consists in the study of certain transmutations of carbon, referred to mysteriously as the prima materia. The secret is not revealed; it is only hinted at in a half-jocular form, where it is said that the disciple of Alchemy must not take it amiss if he be called upon to dirty his hands with coal.

Basil Valentine also mentions that he came to England. Thomas Malory, who here became his pupil, repeats the same jest in the story of the knight, Beaumains. Indeed, the entire seventh book of Malorys *Morte dArthur* proves him a pupil of Basil Valentine; only what Basil refers to as the stone that goes through many colors is for Malory the knight of many-colored amour.

It was Almeida, therefore, who withheld the knowledge from the Order of St. Iago and was responsible for giving it to Basil Valentine. The hidden knowledge, and the preparation in question, was preserved from thenceforth in the Rosicrucian schools of Alchemy. This knowledge is indeed very ancient, and in the last resort goes back to the time of Alexander the Great, who learned the secret of substance and of its medical use from his tutor, Aristotle. The coal, the transmutation of which is the subject of Alchemy, is indeed none other than the carbon that is contained in every living substance. In the living body of man this carbon does indeed take on all colors, inasmuch as all the organs are made up of its compounds. Carbon builds up the human body, which is not only alive, but also permeated in its living substance by soul and spirit. What Basil Valentine calls the Philosophers Stone is none

other than the human being looked at from the threefold aspect of Body, Soul, and Spirit. Therefore the Philosophers Stone is represented as consisting of three substances, though one in essence. In the Mystery Schools of Antiquity it was always known that the human being must experience a transmutation in body, soul, and spirit if the ordinary consciousness is to be changed into a higher, clairvoyant consciousness. To describe this transmutation in the language of carbon chemistry was the essential content of Basil Valentines Alchemy. Thus Almeida brought the Royal Art from Granada to Compostella and from thence, by the hand of Basil Valentine, to Alsace and to Thomas Malory in England.

Those who believed that the secret should have been retained within their Order brought about Almeidas recall from India, and on his journey home, in March 1510, he was killed by an unknown hand at Saldana Bay, in the extreme south of Africa. A lance of peculiar construction was driven into his face above the teeth and in this way he met his death. The lance was of steel, wrought in a peculiar wavy form. The chronicler Osorius says that natives killed him, but the strange form of the lance is inconsistent with this version, and the chronicle must in this point be corrected, without thereby imputing murder to any person. It was in fact an execution, and those responsible were avenging the betrayal of a secret; they only did not know that a new world- order was approaching, making necessary the transmission of certain sources of knowledge to the North. Almeida died for this. On his tombstone the words were written: Here rests Francisco Almeida, who never lied nor feared. An unknown hand afterwards removed the tombstone and the tomb.

The destiny of this enigmatic person reveals the conflict of two different epochs, the earlier of which had always the tendency to possess, to conserve, and to inherit, forming the destinies of nations by alliances of marriage. The tragic fate of Juana at the time when he was in the service of one of those who wooed her had revealed to Almeida that this epoch was now past. So he became the one who desired not merely to conserve the alchemical secrets bequeathed to the world by Aristotle. He took the secret from the Order of St. Iago, breaking thereby the power of the Order, and was quite ready to atone for this with his death. He passed the secret on into those regions where the knowledge of the mingling of substances within the human being might come to life again in a new way, as a knowledge of the working together of many nations for the development of a universal economic civilization. For the nations are in truth related to one another in the one world-economy, as are the several forces in the human being. But to elaborate these things was the destined gift, not of the Latin but of the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples; therefore he who understood this had to pass on the knowledge to Northern countries.

Thus in the fifteenth century the foundations were laid on which our work is based to this day. Through the courage of the great discoverers a new beginning was made, in continuity

with the world-embracing ideas of Alexander the Great and of his teacher Aristotle. Francisco Almeida was well aware that he was undertaking the same sea voyage, only in the opposite direction, on which Nearchus, admiral of Alexander the Great, had once upon a time been setting out. The voyage to India and the new age that it was helping to inaugurate signified a renewal of the world-embracing ideas of Alexander. Alexander died in the moment when Nearchus brought him the report that his fleet was lying ready in the harbour of Babylon to sail around Arabia. Alexander did not live to fulfill this, and so Arabia was not hellenized. Now, in the fifteenth century, the work that had then been interrupted had to be continued, and in this way the conflict with the Arabians came about.

The spiritual community, whose esoteric life was founded still on the Alchemy of Aristotle, tried, as Alexander himself had done, to embrace the Earth, but on this occasion in a more earthly, more realistic way.

In the letters of Almeida to King Emmanuel of Portugal, written on fine paper with a peculiar watermark, in the handwriting of his secretary Pereira, we can see Almeidas own signature in a rough sailors hand. He justifies the measures he had taken, comparing them with Nearchus. He writes: In Alexanders time the interior of the country had to be occupied; we, however, must rest content with fortifying certain points along the coast and thus securing the ocean path to India, for we must now wrest the trade from the hands of the Arabs and must take their place. This letter indicates for the first time the great significance of the oceanpath to India on which the British Empire is founded to this day. In the time of Alexander the Great, the Earth had had to be encompassed in a more spiritual sense. Alexander died a premature death in Babylon. The Arabs remained unhellenized. The Crusades and the wars against the Arabs in the time of the great discoveries were the ultimate consequences of this failure. Thomas Aquinas had to put right what had been falsified in the Arabian version of Aristotle. Therefore the mediaeval pictures represent him with his foot planted on the neck of Averrhoes.

In the period of the great discoveries the world had to be conquered in a political and military sense, so as to prepare the way for the new age that was to come. In this new age, the third, we are now living, and we shall have to learn how to embrace the Earth by peaceful, economic means.

Such is the Philosophers Stone for our age. It is made up of three: Culture, Politics, and Economic life. These are the three that are so hard to unite in one; they represent for our time the three that must be harmonized.

This is the task before us. It will be truly solved if the attempt is made in consciousness of the worldwide responsibility that the present time lays on the shoulders of those peoples who possess the substance of the Earth.