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Abstracts

GABRIELE NATTA, *Dealing with the Devil. The Luso-Ottoman Rivalry in the Red Sea Region and the Political Theology of a Merchant Empire (1530-1550)*

During the central decades of the 16th century, the Ottoman expansionism towards the Indian Ocean emerged as a major threat to the Portuguese empire in Asia. Portugal used any means possible to answer that menace and, behind the screen of military and diplomatic confrontations, the more subtle instruments of law, theology and political rhetoric played a crucial role in defining a new pattern of power in the Asian seas. While scholars have already addressed the main episodes that signed the evolution of the Portuguese-Ottoman rivalry in Asia from a political and diplomatic perspective, much remains to be said about the culture that produced and shaped actions in those fields. This paper aims precisely to address the theme of the Portuguese response to the Ottoman expansionism from a cultural perspective, showing the impact this threat had on the evolution of the Portuguese imperial culture of the period. Drawing on archival and secondary sources, mainly Portuguese, this work will shed new light on the complex pattern made of theological arguments, economic interests and juridical claims that enforced Portugal to adapt its imperial theory and practice to a rapidly changing world.

Keywords:

Portuguese-Ottoman Relations

Portuguese Imperial Culture

Red Sea Region