

**KAREL STANĚK, VE SLUŽBĚ BOHU A ZA ČEST KRÁLE: PORTUGALSKÁ
EXPANZE V MAROKU (1415-1769) [IN GOD'S SERVICE AND FOR THE SAKE
OF KING'S GLORY: PORTUGUESE EXPANSION TO MORROCCO 1415-1769)],
PRAHA: SCRIPTORIUM 2018, ISBN 978-80-88013-65-5, 473 P.,
APPENDICES, ILLUSTRATIONS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX**



It is just one year that has gone by since a monograph on attempt by the Portuguese to colonize Sri Lanka in 1580–1630 written by Karel Staněk went out to be followed by another book published in the 'Scriptorium' devoted now to the history of expansion to Morocco. All this proves that young Lusitanist Karel Staněk really is an industrious scholar.

Likewise was the monograph on Sri Lanka, this one is devoted to Portuguese monarchs' unrealized dreams: to take control over the territory of today's Morocco. Anyhow it was just a dream only achieved for a while the given subject is not to be belittled since the Portuguese had been in Morocco for long time. It was the primary area of the Portuguese overseas expansion where the basic characteristic traits developed, therefore, makes it unique to the history of European expansions at the turn of the Middle Ages and in the early modern times. The fact that the Portuguese expansion to Africa receded into the background after 1498 due to accomplishments in Asia and expansion to Brazil after 1530 makes no dramatic difference. What proves the significance of Morocco for the Portuguese is the term 'Overseas Algrave', which would secure for that region of strategic importance the Portuguese kingdom from the South, was a base for Muslim expansion to the Iberian Peninsula, and would secure control over the Strait of Gibraltar and trade routes leading to India and the Mediterranean Basin.

The author aims to fill a gap in existing Czech literature, so describes in 12 chapters the presence of the Portuguese in that region. The events that represent the major landmarks are the conquest of Ceuta in 1415, and the evacuation from the town of El Jadida in 1769. Yet there is a certain question as to why the author has not preferred the year 1774 as the upper limit, for it is the year of signing a peace accord between Portugal and Morocco, which has not been broken since, although he himself describes circumstances surrounding that peace settlement (pp. 343–344).

The author depicts in detail the Portuguese's interest in Morocco dating back to the 12th century. The heart of the book is devoted to the period between 1415 and 1578, that is the span from the fall of Ceuta to the battle of Alcácer Quibir (pp. 45–313). The development of Portuguese dependencies in the following epoch (1578–1773) has not been conceived so broadly (pp. 314–345). Thus the core gives a portrayal of the Portuguese's dream of expansion to Africa that closely follows the Reconquista. He unfolds a fruitless endeavour to extend the territorial base of the Portuguese domination in Morocco, which finally ended in failure while laying siege to Tangier in 1437, and Infant Ferdinand's tragic death in Arab captivity. It also contains an expansion embarked on by King Alfonso V called the African linked to the domination of Ksar es-Seghir (1458), Asilah and Tangier (1471), when the continuous territory of Portugal regarded as an immediate part of the Portuguese kingdom arose, as well an inland region under informal Portuguese influence controlled by 'friendly Moors', vassals of the King of Portugal. Besides defending these dependencies against Spanish



competition in war conflicts, Portugal achieved to enlarge their territory by protectorates Safi and Azemmour (1480s). The attempt made by Manuel I to take control over Morocco's entire area after 1500 ended in a catastrophic defeat at Mehdyia in 1515, despite a fair amount of partial success. The Portuguese were driven to defence and had to face a new enemy, the Saadi Dynasty that would seize the fortress Agadir in 1541, and force the Portuguese to withdraw from Safi, Azemmour and other areas. King Sebastian I's attempt to reverse that course ended in the tragic Battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578. Although the establishment of the Iberian Confederation added to protect the Portuguese dependencies in Morocco, it eliminated Portuguese exclusive rights on that region secured by many previous peace deals as well. Therefore, the re-establishment of Portugal resulted in destruction of remaining Portuguese dependencies in Morocco leading to evacuation of El Jadida in 1769 ending so the presence of the Portuguese in Morocco.

Possessing all medieval traits, Christianizing motives and interpretation of expansion, such as medieval crusades against Muslims in its overall civilization context, the region of today's Morocco was a territory where the characteristic features of overseas expansion began to form. The author claims that the Portuguese gained first military and cultural experience with the Muslim environment there, and would use it in future years. That is undoubtedly true, with reservations, since they had got experience in the Reconquista period so they brought it from their homeland.

The author devoted Part 2 (pp. 351-426) to Portuguese towns functioning in Morocco from administrative, military, economic, and religious aspects. Concurrently, particular attention in all chapters is paid to coexistence of Christians and Muslims. This part of the book is the most interesting, the most valuable as to information, and extremely readable. It provides colourful, vivid and not schematic illustration of the society and its problems on the border of two worlds. The chapter that is of cardinal importance is that devoted to trade offering evidence of significance of Morocco as a food, horse or saltpetre supplier, a dealer in Trans-Saharan trade's products, or a business partner providing goods as exchange commodities in Portuguese settlements in Equatorial Africa.

Reflecting the author's sound knowledge of mostly Romance languages, Staněk's work is mostly based on serious critical analysis of Portuguese provenience sources and studying extensive literature. The author is not Arabist, yet without a doubt, the book lacks a partial insight into Arab chronicles coming from that traced period to give a contrasting view. The thing that is not to be neglected when revising the book is rich book appendices providing readers with ready access to clarification of a maze of names of the Portuguese Crown's representatives in North Africa, and monarchs of Portugal or Muslim empires on the territory of today's Morocco.

Despite minor reservations, Staněk's work is to be termed as a breakthrough in the Czech environment giving information on a part of European overseas expansion that has been neglected so far.

Michal Wanner