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A JEW IN THE SERVICE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1601.

It is well known that many of the great navigators and discoverers of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries were under great obligations to the knowledge, linguistic and mathematical, of Jews. Jehuda Cresques was director of Prince Henry the Navigator's School of Navigation at Sagres. Columbus constantly used on his voyages the astronomical tables of the Jewish mathematician, Abraham Zacuto of Salamanca, and took with him as interpreter on his first voyage to America a recently baptized Jew. Vasco da Gama owed much to the scientific knowledge of Zacuto, and something to the skill and experience of the well-known Jewish pilot who, when compelled to undergo baptism, adopted the name of Gaspar da Gama. D'Albuquerque habitually employed Jewish interpreters¹.

It is less well known, and, indeed, the fact has, I believe, escaped the notice of writers on the "middle period" of Anglo-Jewish history, i.e. the period between the expulsion of the Jews from England by Edward I and their constitutional recall under Cromwell, that a Jew, settled in England and well acquainted with the English language, though not of English birth, took part in the most important English expedition by sea of the reign of Elizabeth, viz. the first voyage of the East India Company. The object of this voyage was the establishment of trading relations with the East Indies, a name which included not only India proper but also the Malay Archipelago. The importance of securing the services of an interpreter competent to carry on negotiations with the native rulers was well known to the leaders of the expedition, and to the adventurers who had sent them forth, more especially since John Davis, the great navigator, who went out as chief pilot of the fleet, was able, as a result of his former experience in the East, to inform them of the warlike power and disposition of the Sultan of Achen, the greatest kingdom in Sumatra, and of his willingness to enter into friendly relations with English traders if properly approached. Fortunately, Captain James Lancaster, the commander of the expedition, had as body-servant a Jew

¹ Kayserling, *Christopher Columbus* (New York, 1894), p. 115; *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Juden und des Judenthums* (Leipzig), vol. III (1863), pp. 305-317.

who had been taken by the English from the Barbary States, who had, during his long residence in England, learned to speak English well, and who was also familiar with Arabic, the language spoken in Achen.

The five ships that had been entrusted to Captain Lancaster for the purposes of the expedition, sailed from Woolwich in February, 1600-1, and cast anchor in the harbour of Achen in June, 1602. A few days after his arrival, Lancaster presented to the Sultan a friendly letter from the Queen, which, with similar letters to the other native rulers into whose territory he was likely to come, had been furnished to him on his departure from England. With the help of the Jewish interpreter, lengthy negotiations were carried on between Lancaster and the Sultan. In the end, the Sultan agreed to allow all English traders in his territory to enjoy protection, freedom of trade, and "freedom of conscience," and gave Lancaster a letter to take back to Elizabeth, in which he confirmed the grant of these privileges. After remaining for some months in the neighbourhood of Achen, the English went to Bantam in Java and established friendly relations with the king; and then, with their ships laden with pepper, cloves, and cinnamon, sailed homewards. Thus was laid the foundation of British power in the East.

The narrative of the English expedition makes no further mention of the Jew beyond the point at which it records that he acted as interpreter at Achen. For his subsequent history we are indebted to François Pyrard, the historiographer of the French expedition which set sail from St. Malo on a voyage to the East, three months after the departure of the East India Company's expedition from England. According to Pyrard, the Jew left the English ships at Bantam, carrying with him "twelve or fifteen hundred pieces of forty sols Spanish," which he had stolen from Lancaster. Thence he went about from place to place, spending his money freely and marrying a wife wherever he stayed. At last he returned to Achen, embarked on a ship bound for Surat, disembarked at the Maldives, where Pyrard met him and learnt his history, and "came to make offer of his services to the king, under the pretext that he was a good gunner; but he knew nothing about it. He was well received at first; but when it was seen that he was a liar, no further notice was taken of him. Soon after, he fell sick and begged me to get his leave of the king; and I, making the request through the lord with whom I resided, obtained it with great difficulty. He said he was married in Guzeratte, and had a child there, which was partly the cause why his leave was granted; though after he got it he remained three or four months longer, and spent the remainder of his money, and then embarked with the richest

merchant of Cananor, a Malabar Mahometan, and the greatest man of that place next to the king."

Pyrard, it will be seen, had a great contempt for the Jew. He summarily describes him as "the greatest scoundrel in the world." It is late in the day to dispute this severe verdict, but it is only fair to point out that the very full *quasi*-official narrative of Lancaster's expedition does not say a word about the theft of the "twelve or fifteen hundred Spanish pieces."

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AUTHORITIES : *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to the East Indies* (Hakluyt Society), 1877, pp. 74-101; *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, &c.* (Hakluyt Society), 1887, pp. 283-285.

Σαββαθιον: NOTE TO PAGE 51 ABOVE.

IN my citation of this term from one of Mr. Grenfell's Ptolemaic Papyri, I adduced that scholar's view that Σαββαθιον means "Synagogue." Professor Schürer, however, in an article just published in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (Sept. 26, 1896, col. 522), offers an alternative suggestion which is very attractive.

Professor Schürer admits that the translation "Synagogue" is possible in the context, but he argues that as the document in which it occurs contains a list of personal names, it is probable that Σαββαθιον also is the name of a person. Nay more, it is the name of a woman. Female names terminating in *ιον* are elsewhere found, as, for instance, *Tarιον* in a Jewish inscription at Phoecea. (Cf. Reinach, *Revue des Études Juives*, vol. XII, 1886, p. 236 sq.) Reinach has noticed other instances. Moreover, there is evidence that the masculine form of the name was also current; thus Σαββαρις occurs in the *Corp. Inscr. Graec.*, n. 9910 (cf. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüd. Volkes*, II, 518). I might also point out that the name "Sabbatai" has always been popular with Jews. At least three Talmudical Rabbis bear the name, and in the Middle Ages it was even more common. (See e.g. the Index to Dr. Neubauer's *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, vol. II.) In modern times the name is