

## **Report on the conference “Hormuz 1622: Connected Histories and Transcultural Receptions”**

**Online and in person at Cohen Quad, Exeter College, Oxford, 11 March 2022**

**Organisers:** Edmund Herzig (Oriental Studies, Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre), Ladan Niayesh (Early Modern English Studies, Université Paris Cité)

**Sponsors:** Centre for Early Modern Studies (Oxford), Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre, Faculty of Oriental Studies (Oxford), Hakluyt Society, ERC-TIDE, Exeter College, British Institute of Persian Studies, LARCA (Université Paris Cité), the Iran Society

The idea of this international conference originated in exchanges with the Centre for Early Modern Studies and the Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre on the occasion of my visiting fellowship there. We chose the topic for its potential to yield a collaborative event and a dialogue of disciplines at Oxford and beyond (Oriental studies, English studies, Iberian studies, etc), using a wide array of methodological tools (global and imperial history, literature and art history, classical and cultural studies, etc).

Hormuz appeared to co-organiser Edmund Herzig and myself an apt object for cross-disciplinary conversations and a *cas d'école* of early modern connected histories at work, bringing together the very small scale of a barren island strategically positioned at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, and the very large scale of the Asian and European empires of trade and power involved in its (re)capture four hundred years ago from Iberian hands by the joint forces of the Persian Safavids and the English East India Company. Opposition, collaboration and all the intermediary nuances between these two poles were covered in the global dynamics unleashed by the pivotal event.

Our conference was placed under the aegis of ERC-TIDE project (Travel, Identity and Transculturality, 1550-1700), and was much influenced by its theoretical models, in particular its *Keywords* offering a backbone for approaching the overlapping identities and conflicting allegiances of the figures involved in the event and its reception. TIDE also offered us technical and promotional support, and secured the conference venue for us at Exeter college.

The conference itself became the occasion, not just for confronting the perspectives of international actors in the early modern period, but for doing so through interactions between international specialists near and far, from my own Université Paris Cité and various institutions from Britain, to continental Europe, the United States and even China (Hong Kong). As an emblematic publisher of material related to the transcultural experience of the world, the Hakluyt Society was our natural partner, and it generously sponsored our keynote by Joan-Pau Rubiés (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona), offering us a comparative view on theories of empire in the early modern period, as mobilized by the forces present in and around Hormuz.

Other highlights at the conference included a diachronic panel where the pre-Islamic mythology of kingship enlisted by the Safavids was confronted with contemporary receptions of Hormuz around the “Persian Gulf day” instituted under the Islamic Republic of Iran. The day concluded with a book launch event for Peter Good’s *The East India Company in Persia: Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Eighteenth Century* (I. B. Tauris, 2022).

Our hybrid event was followed by more than a hundred attendants in person or online. The next stage for us is now to publish the proceedings through the British Institute of Persian Studies, also a generous sponsor of the event.

Full programme and descriptive of the event here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hormuz-1622-connected-histories-and-transcultural-receptions-in-person-tickets-277386890657#>

***Ladan Niayesh***