Occasional Paper No. 26

OF TRADE AND TRADERS IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY INDIA : AN UNPUBLISHED FRENCH MEMOIR BY GEORGE ROQUES

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Occasional Paper No. 26

Of Trade and Traders in Seventeenth Century India : An Unpublished French Memoir by George Roques

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September, 1979

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Acknowledgements

I owe my initial awareness of the Roques Ms. to a catalogue of unpublished French records in possession of my teacher, the late Professor Sibapada Sen, who was an eminent authority on French presence in India. I remain indebted to him for having kindly permitted me to use this catalogue, when I was working at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, in 1964.

I am thankful to Mr. John Irwin, former keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for his kind and encouraging response to my enquiries concerning the manuscript. My special gratitude is due to my friend Mademoiselle Colette Dutilh for having made available to me a microfilm of the complete text in 1973. A U.G.C. grant, received in the same year, while I was attached to the Department of History, University of Jadavpur, enabled me to have the entire document photocopied.

It was only after I joined the CESSC in 1974 that I had the time and the facilities to start working on the Roques Ms. A brief working paper on a few aspects of the manuscript was presented at a Seminar on Urban History of Surat, organised by the Department of History University of Baroda (29 June - 3 July, 1974). Sunil Munshi's unfailing encouragement sustained my efforts to expand its scope with further research, as well as with translation of part of the document for the purpose of the present paper. Robert Antoine S.J., Reader in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University found time, in spite of his very heavy engagements, to answer to my numerous queries regarding particularly baffling passages in the text. Amalendu Guha and Barun De made many valuable suggestions and comments on reading the first draft of the paper. Discussions with Ashin Dasgupta, Department of History, Visva-Bharati University, Asok Sen, Nirmala Banerjee and Gautam Bhadra have been of much help in sorting out my own ideas at different stages of my study of the manuscript. Anjusree Chakravarti took particular care in preparing the map. I am grateful to all of them. The responsibility for the inadequacies of the paper is solely mine.

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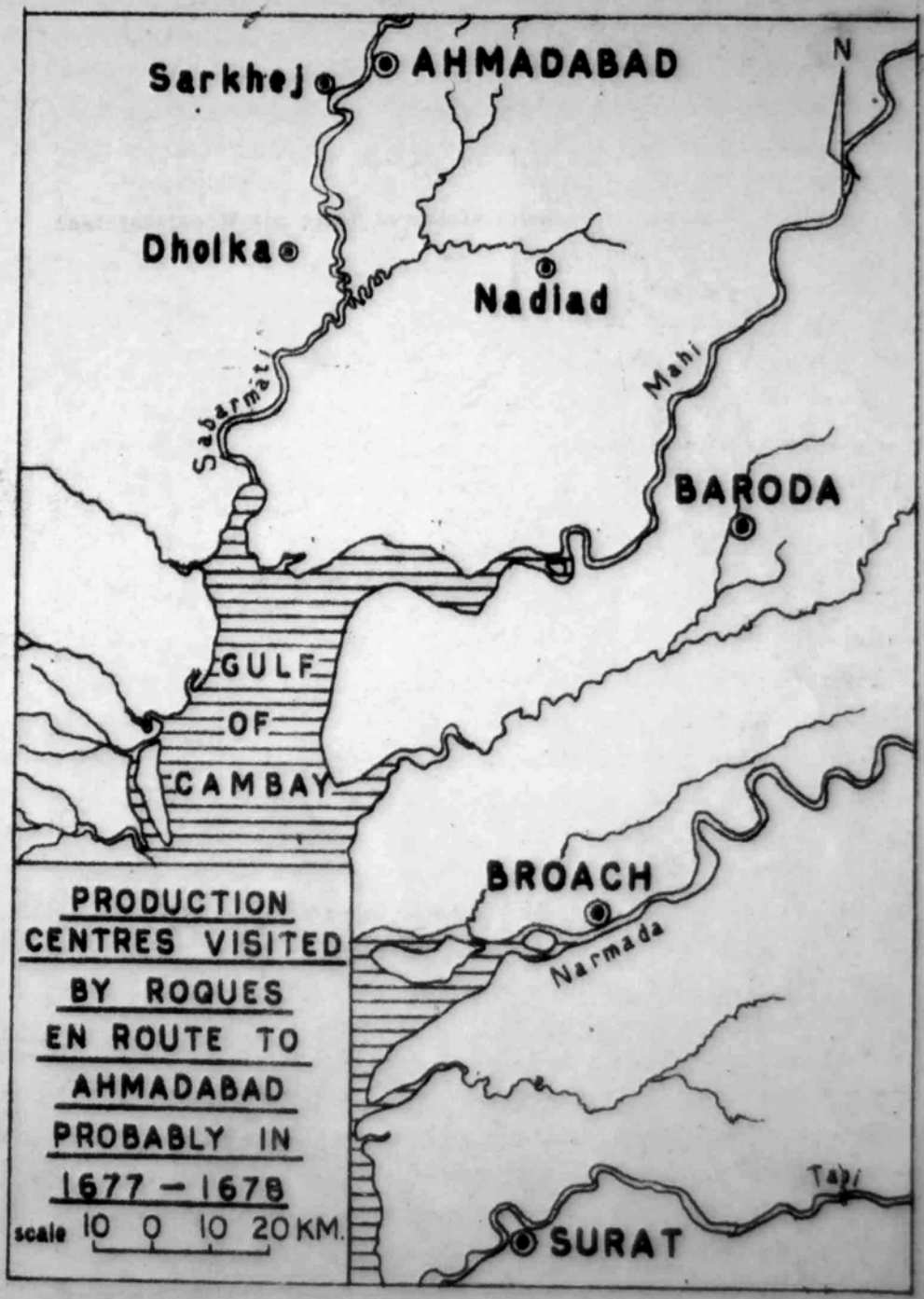
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PRODUCTION CENTRES VISITED BY ROQUES EN ROUTE TO AHMADABAD PROBABLY IN 1677 – 1678
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Introduction

I
In pursuit of an illusion.

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to part of an unpublished French document, a rather curious "Formulary of Annotations" as it is described by its author George Roques. In spite of its professed aim to enlighten employees of the French East India Company,[1] in the method of trading in the East Indies, it actually deals with trade and production in late seventeenth century Gujarat, and with some of Gujarat's important trade linkages, such as Burhanpur and Sironj in neighbouring provinces.

La maniere de negotier dans Les Indes Orientalles dediee a mes Chers amis Et Confreres Les Engages de la Royalle Compagnye de Frence[2] (The method of trading in the East Indies dedicated to my dear friends and colleagues, employees of the Royal Company of France) is besides, both more and less than a standard contemporary "Instruction" for the benefit of European Companies trading with India. Its three parts or volumes contain a remarkable amount of information on various aspects of cotton and silk textile production in Gujarat and beyond, and on certain occupational groups closely connected with trade in these articles. Such information is however neither systematic nor always complete in technical details.[3] The major attraction of the discourse lies rather in a combination, often awkward, of commercial information presented by an experienced employee of a European trading Company, with the wider curiosity, presuppositions, and violent reactions characteristic

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1. Founded in 1664, through the initiative of Colbert. Henceforth FEIC.

2. Henceforth Roques. Manuscript of 341 pags, preserved at the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (Reference No. Fonds Francais 14614).

3. See for example his description of contracts between the indigenous merchants and alien buyers Roques, p.46, p.69, or his classification of cotton piece-goods, ibid, pp.20-30.

of many contemporary European travellers.

The author's viewpoint remains basically that of an alien merchant, forced to fend for himself alone against a formidable array of "rascals". His preoccupations are those of quite a typical agent of an East India Company, ever on the lookout for new centres of production, and markets with better prospects for buying cheap and selling dear, keen to secure every possible information on the activities of his masters' European rivals. It is the requirements of the metropolitan market which shape his queries regarding the quality, use and price of textile goods, the merchandise which holds the price of place in Roques' treatise. What enlivens it and distinguishes it from the usual staid and dry reports[4] is its pronounced personal tone, a tense, jerky style and the ability to bring out the drama inherent in early encounters between the alien merchant and the indigenous system.

This is most apparent in the first part or volume of the work, (Roques pp.1-77), almost entirely given to warning his colleagues against the knavery of the Indian banian. References to "knavery" and "sharpness" of the Indian middleman were of course as much a part of most contemporary European travelogues as the inevitable eye-witness account of a "Sati". To get some idea of the former one only has to glance through the observations of Fryer or Tavernier.[5] Employees of

4. See for example : (a) The Manner of the silk and Taffaty Investment in Cassambazar in The Diaries of Streynsham Master (1675-1680) : London, 1911, Vol.II, pp.9-13.

(b) Tavernier J.B. : Travels in India Two Volumes. W. Crooke (ed. First Indian Edition New Delhi, 1977. "Concerning the articles of merchandise yielded by the Empire of the Great Mogul...". Chapter Vol.II.

5(a) Fryer, John, A New Account of East India and Persia 1672-1681, Vol.I ed., W. Crooke, London 1909, pp.211-217.

(b) Tavernier, I, p.24; II, pp.143-144.

European factories were equally if not more preoccupied with the bad faith and misdeeds of these middlemen. John Irwin relies largely on the experience of the Dutch and the English traders with Gujarati brokers to conclude that "the broker system was a primary cause of the weaver's extreme poverty".[6] Roques' uniqueness consists firstly in his attempt to build up his denunciation or diatribe of the banian into an elaborate structure. The weaver, the ordinary merchant, the foreign merchants' private broker and the state-appointed market broker constitute its four essential components. Each is treated with a view to disclosing his role in cheating the alien merchant. Secondly, the essence of Roques' instructions is to drive home the lesson that unless the newcomer is prepared to train himself in all the techniques involved in the textile trade, he stands no chance against this formidable network, dominated by the omnipotent banian. The first volume thus presents an intriguing intermingling of forms: a rather stylised description of the banian-middleman is interspersed with precise empirical observations on relevant aspects of production and trade. In spite of the many problems this approach creates, one can see that the central concern of Roques is to achieve the desired margin of profit from trade in India. The multifaced banian stands out as his chief obstacle and the need to acquire a high level of technical expertise is his precondition for any successful mercantile venture in such adverse conditions as presented by the Indian market. The first volume is rounded off with a neat little section on Muslim merchants. Roques' unstinted praise for their trusthworthiness, their opulence and their business methods provide a welcome relief after his scathing attacks on the banians, falsehood, and he chooses this topic, as he himself says "since one should end better than he had commenced".[7]

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6. Irwin J, and Schwartz P.R., : Studies in Indo -- European Textile History, Ahmedabad, 1966, p.14.

7. Roques, p.73.

The second volume of the Roques Ms. (pp. 78-171) opens abruptly with a description of several important textile production and trade centres on the Surat -- Ahmedabad route, catering to sizeable European and Asian clienteles. (He explains this abrupt switchover as prompted by a sense of futility in his allegoric journey in search of an honest banian.)[8] The volume's arrangement is based on the author's own experience of a journey he undertook, probably early in 1678, along that route. He touched Broach, Baroda, Nadiad, Dolka and Sarkhej on his way to Ahmedabad, to which city alone he devotes all but twenty pages of the entire volume.

The description of the centres en route follows the more familiar pattern of dealing with relevant aspects of production and trade of each place in considerable details. It clearly brings out Roques' priorities, always concerned with requirements of the FEIC'S trade. He notes the nature and destination of the annual purchases of the English and the Dutch Companies, and discusses at length the selling prospects of one or other variety of cotton goods in the Ruropean markets. The imposing presence of the Asian buyer is evident from his suggestion of steps to entice away fully occupied weavers from serving their traditional customers. These were mainly Armenians and Muslim shipowning merchants.

It will be beyond the scope of this Introduction to do justice to the wealth of information provided by Roques on Ahmedabad "a very highly populated" and "extraordinarily large city". Roques finds it's pre-eminence based as much on its magnificient silk fabrics as on a thriving, far-flung trade in an immense quantity and variety of

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8. Letter of dedication without date or pagination to Baron the Chief of the French factory at Surat. This letter is not included in the present paper.

9. Roques pp.97-98.

printed cotton goods produced within the city. Descriptions of both the industries are remarkable in their scope and details.

Roques makes it clear at the outset that he does not intend to describe the life and manners of the local people, since that would divert him "from the subject which is more necessary to our profession". But he cannot help reacting to the "brutal nature" and "selfishness" of the city's "humbler people", whom he declares unfit "to reside in such a big city".[10] The cloth printers of Ahmedabad in fact stand out in clear contrast to weavers, whom Roques always finds "grovelling" under the control of middlemen. At the other end the ruling group at the court, headed by Gujarat's governor, Muhammed Amin Khan gets off with much less censure than what was customary among contemporary company agents in describing day-to-day relations between themselves and local political authorities. Here as elsewhere the position of rival European traders and the advantages of the city for the FEIC'S trade got the author's close attention. The overall picture of intense industrial and commercial activities in no way suggests an atmosphere of decline into which the city is considered to have fallen since the second quarter of the seventeenth century.[11]

The third volume of the treatise (pp.172-326) contains informations of a varied sort and is considered incomplete by the author himself.[12] It begins with Roques' favourite refrain of his unending and fruitless search for an honest banian which takes him this time from Ahmedabad to Sironj. He notes his date of departure from Ahmedabad as I April 1678. The comments he makes about the unusual detour made by him through the territories of a Hindu Raja bring out concerns which were so far absent from his placid narrative of trade centres --- the burden of exorbitant

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10. Ibid., pp.102-104.

11. Gillion K : Ahmedabad A study in urban History, Berkeley 1968. pp.29-

12. See infra, Section III.

road taxes as well as the fear of thieves and robbers on the better known and easier routes. References to the misery of the villages on the route from Burhanpur to Sironj, and to the decline of trade in Sironj due to systematic robbery on the highway from Sironj to Agra by Raja Chhatra Sal Bundela[13] add up to a prevailing picture of trouble and uncertainty in that region. These very disturbances, which brought down price of the most cherished textile products of the area was one of the considerations that swayed Roques in favour of Sironj, as a trading centre with great prospects for the FEIC. Another important reason was the presence of 400 houses of printers whose handiworks were eagerly bought by Asians and Europeans. To the best of my knowledge Roques' description of Sironj remains unsurpassed by any other contemporary account.

From p.214 Roques switches over to certain aspects of indigenous moneylending business in Gujarat. He dwells at length on the sarafs or shroffs, indigenous banker and money-changers, as indispensable as the brokers in the Indian market (pp,223-249). From there he goes on to make observations of a rather uneven nature about Armenian and Khatri merchants (pp.250-261). Pp.261-277 contain a discussion of trade between India and Persia. The rest of the volume is taken up with trade of the Portuguese, the English, the Dutch, the Danes and the French. Excepting the Portuguese, the rest are mainly dealt with reference to the respective East India Companies of their countries. By the end of the third volume Roques seems to have become tired of his own "pursuit" and concerned more with the treatment his work was likely to get from the FEIC.

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13. Roques pp.187-188. Roques refers to this chieftain as "Raja Champet". But he obviously means Chhatra Sal, his son, since Champat Rao died in 1661. The descriptions of the pillages are similar to those described in Sarkar J.N. History of Aurangzeb, Vol.V, 1952, Calcutta pp.325-327.

II

The Man and His Milieu

At the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to suggest more than a bare outline of George Roques' career. As for his early life, one can only hazard a few guesses, based on chance references in the text itself. He most probably never had a formal schooling. This can be seen from the atrocious spelling and the equally appalling grammer, even if we attribute the former to an ignorant copyist.[14] Excellent observer as he is, Roques often finds it difficult to express himself in words. The sentences are often lengthy and contrived to the point of obscurity.[15] Roques is never more candid as when, in the formal dedication of the work to Baron, he admits never having studied "the modern dictionary, being neither Parisian, poet, nor orator". This does not prevent him however, from being imbued with the prevalent cultural ethos - a deep seated conviction of superiority of the Christian nations, which is apparent in his analysis of Oriental perfidy. Moreover, he seems to have acquired sufficient experience as a merchant and a book-keeper before he came to India. He was familiar with products and market conditions of important French industrial towns such as Lyon and Rouen, and with sale prospects of various Indian textile goods in several European markets beyond France. His painstaking descriptions of cotton piece-goods of Baroda or Nadiad for example, often include relevant comparisons with French textile products. His rather vague knowledge of geography of the Indian ocean does not affect his professional competence.

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14. It is still to be ascertained whether the Roques Ms. preserved at the Bibliotheque Nationale (Henceforth B.N.) is the original. See Note 29 of Introduction.

15. Roques, p.18, p.48, p.78 contain good examples of this defect.

His subsequent career as a merchant employee of the FEIC, so far as it can be gathered from his own words, from the records of the FEIC[16] and from the invaluable Memoirs of Francois Martin,[17] was in no way extraordinary. Roques had first served the Company as merchant and book-keeper at Madagascar (Ile Dauphine of the French) sometime between 1668 and 1672. During this period he was involved in the long drawn "Marcara affair" involving the conflict of Marcara, an Armenian merchant in service of the FEIC with Caron the first Director of the FEIC in Madagascar and India. One contemporary record also refers to his trial in France on a charge of enbezzlement and subsequent release through judicious gifts of "diamonds and others things" to persons who mattered.[18] Roques was sufficiently restored in favour to be sent to Surat in 1676 by the FEIC with the specific object of preparing a report of its affairs in India.[19]

From November 1676 till his appointment as second councillor at Surat in 1686, Roques was often engaged as agent of the FEIC at several subordinate factories such as Ahmedabad and Baroda. The experience gained at such an important urban production and trade centre as Ahmedabad seems to have particularly coloured his understanding of the banian merchant and broker as generalised in his work. We have seen that

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16. Preserved mostly at the Archives Nationales (Henceforth A.N.) Paris.

17. The Memoirs (1665-1696) of Francois Martin, the leading figure in the FEIC's early history in India constitute an invaluable source of information on Mughal India during the second half of the seventeenth century. These were published in Paris by Alfred Martineau in three volumes between 1931 and 1934. Henceforth Martin.

18. B.N. Fonds Francais 8972, contains these details on this phase of Roques' career.

19. Martin, II, p.79. Later, in March 1681 Martin, while in Pondichery notes the Company's order to Surat to send Roques back "so that he could inform it of his observations concerning trade in the Indies and, to be instructed in general of the state of its affairs", ibid, p.221.

he had also gone on extensive inspection tours of the various production centres in the hinterland of Surat, which took him upto Sironj. This period was marked by a renewal of efforts by the FEIC to revitalise its trade in India.[20] Assessment of possible new sources of supply was part of the programme. Attempts to bypass the ubiquitious middlemen in trade transactions with primary producers might have been another. Neither effort was original. The English had acted with similar aims on their arrival at India's coastal port towns.[21]

Francois Martin's deadpan style notwithstanding, his Memoirs reveal the image of an irritable and often troublesome Roques, always at loggerheads with the Indian brokers in service of the FEIC, whether at Ahmedabad or at Baroda. "The reasons were personal but not very difficult to discern" comments Martin laconically concerning these disputes.[22] These were however serious enough to require Martin's personal intervention in Ahmedabad in March 1683.[23] The perpetual conflicts with his Indian partners left a permanent impact on Roques. They seem to have provided material for most of the first volume of his work, with its highly dramatic description of the evil machinations of the Indian merchant and broker. However, his persistent and violent indictments might simply be reflecting reactions of a representative of a potentially aggressive European merchantile capitalism against the

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20. Paul Kaeppelin's monumental work La Compagnie des Indes Orientales et Francois Martin, Paris, 1908, constitutes the best study to date of the FEIC between 1664 and 1720. See pp.172-187 for the period under study.

21. a. Tawney R.H. (ed.) Studies in Economic History : The Collected Papers of John Unwin. London, 1966, pp.355-356.

b. Chaudhuri K.N. : The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p.139.

22. Martin II, p.312.

23. Ibid, pp.293, 309, 311-312.

middleman, the greatest obstacle to its monopolistic ambitions.[24] A near complete indifference towards Indian society, so characteristic of many contemporary European merchants residing in India partly accounts for Roques' clumsy analysis of the social and cultural milieu of an average Gujarati banian when he tries to explain why Gujarati banians acted as they did.[25]

In spite of Roques' eccentricities, his opinions were valued by the astute Martin. While on a sojourn to Surat (August 1681 - April 1686), where he was summoned by Baron, the ailing Director, in a desperate attempt to save the FEIC's trade from total collapse, Martin had occasion to send for Roques from Ahmedabad in order to discuss with him local situations, and policies relevant to the Company's affairs in India.[26] Moreover, one or two letters written personally by Roques to the home authorities in the early 1680s reveal a firm grasp of many of the FEIC's problems, and his growing conviction of the greater possibilities of the Coromandal Coast and Bengal as the principal future furnishers of the European market's requirements.[27] Similar consideratio are reflected in his assessment of Sironj as a production centre. On mor than one occasion, he is found coolly advising his Company to take alvantage of the misery of a disturbed area, or the poverty of weavers

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24. See specially Roques p.16, pp.109-110 for his assessment of the banian's role in this context.

25. Roques pp.1-9.

26. Martin, II, p.364, pp.386-387.

27. See for example. Roques' letter to the FEIC dated 1.4.1682. A.N.C[2] 63 f 26 v where he mentions the growing European demand for "Casses, mallemolles and an infinite quantity of other precious clothes made in Bengal"; he points out that being very cheap, they would bring a profit of 4-500%. Roques' observations were sufficiently important to have distinguished him as the first employee of the FEIC "to have made a judicious criticism of the commercial system of the Company". Kaeppelin, p.178.

during offseason, to bargain for cheaper rates. The middleman's devices to do the same, are of course, properly denounced by him as inhuman ! One need not blame Roques unduly, if his suggestions to move over to fresh grounds also betray a faint hope of being nominated as the "right person" to supervise the new areas.

The post of second councillor at Surat was however the highest Roques could every reach. There he stayed till 1693, when after his repeated requests, he was finally permitted to embark for France. Already unwell at the time of departure, Roques was down with high fever by the time the homebound ship touched Goa. Against better judgement, he refused to stay back and died on board soon after.

II

The Roques Ms.

Roques seems to have compiled his "Formulary" over a period of several years. Although neither the dedication, nor the preface is dated, the bulk of it (at least the first 200 odd pages) was obviously written at a time not much later than 1678, during the year when we find him making his tour of production centres between Ahmedabad and Sironj, travelling via Burhanpur. In this dedication, he informs Baron that, although his third volume required further material for completion he was nevertheless sending it to the Directors, so as to acquaint him with the advantages of establishing a trading post in Sironj. Roques went on with his discourse even after the death of baron in 1683. This is evident from several references in the course of the last hundred pages of the manuscript to the years 1688 and 1691. We do not know whether any part of the text ever reached Baron in its present form. From the rather haphazard arrangement of the subjects after p.213, they seem so far to be rather a collection of notes than a systematically arranged presentation. Which Roques, for some reason or other chose to keep

together with the dedication, and the earlier two volumes.

In the dedication Roques refers to requests from several of his friends and colleagues which prompted him to prepare a work in three volumes on peculiarities of Indian trading methods. The informal gossipy style which he follows throughout the first volume and his way of addressing his friends and colleagues as "you, my dear reader", at appropriate or dramatic moments also do not suggest the format of an official report. The entire second volume (pp.78-171) and portions of the third (pp.171-213) containing informations on production centres such as Ahmedabad and Sironj might have been planned in response to official requirements. But this really does not account for the emphasis and the arrangement of the entire text. And so far we do not know whether the Ms. was ultimately sent to the authorities in France during Roques' lifetime, or how it found its way to the Bibliotheque Nationale.

The discourse seems to have remained unexplored till quite a recent date. It was through the chance discovery of the worth of the manuscript in 1966 by John Irwin, then the Curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and because of its subsequent partial exploration by the late Paul Schwartz, President of the Musee de L'Impression sur Etoffes (Museum of Cloth Printing) in Mulhouse, France, that its exceptional importance as a source of information on the history of Gujarat's textile industry has come to light. Schwartz edited and published the section dealing with the techniques of wood block printing in Ahmedabad (Roques pp.155-171), and the index (Roques pp.327-) in the Bulletin de la Societe Industrielle de Mulhouse, 1967. According to him the document conclusively proves that "it is not Europe which can claim the distinction of having been the first to print with thickened mokdants as many authors ancient and modern had believed could be affirm-

We must now concede to India a priority beyond all dispute."[28] The published text and the examination of the techniques make a valuable contribution to the history of medieval Indian technology. It's historical introduction however is quite inadequate. For example, Schwartz was unaware of Martin's Memoirs as having been already published; and the few manuscript folios of Martin preserved at the Bibliotheque Nationale utilised by him were not helpful in tracing Roque's career in India.[29] Unfamiliarity with Indian languages posed another problem to him.[30] The rest of the manuscript remains unpublished.

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The present paper contains the translation of the Preface and the first 118 pages of the actual "Discourse" or "Formulary" with a minimum of footnotes. This covers the entire first volume and part of the second. Publication of the complete text would require a different format as well as much further research. I decided to include a part of the second volume in this paper since it constitutes one principal component of the work---Roques' report on the textile production centres. The first volume by itself would not have been sufficiently representative of either his style or his content.

My research on the Roques Ms. and on its author being still far from complete, this paper in no way claims to be a well-organised critical edition of the part concerned. In this Introduction I have simply tried to sketch an outline of my initial understanding of the man and his work. At this stage, I have often found it easier to see

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28. My comments on Schwartz is based on the English translation of his paper, brought out in an elegant edition. Schwartz P. Printing on Cotton at Ahmedabad, India in 1678. Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, India Museum Monograph No.1, 1969 (Henceforth Schwartz) P.1.

29. Ibid, pp.1-3. Schwartz considers the text to be a copy of the original.

30. See, infra, P.17, Note 22.

them together. And I have not elaborated my reasons for considering Roques worth translating. Roques actually does not make for an easy translation. To some extent my problem has been of course that of the uninitiated, trying to decipher passages too cryptic to make sense to an outsider. Pages 22 to 35, explaining methods of assessing the quality of cotton wool, spun cotton and woven piece goods would illustrate this point. The handwriting, legible on the whole, is misleading regarding certain letters. I have already referred to Roques' linguistic limitations. So far, he seems more adept in directly recording empirical observations than in communicating his ideas about personages and institutions. However, in spite of all the confusions, contradictions and obscurities the wealth of material as well as Roques' vivacious style cannot but impress and often provoke the reader, as he follows the author in his self-styled pursuit of the impossible - an honest Indian merchant - or shares his sense of wonder at the prodigious quantity of cloth leaving Gujarat for the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf every year.

Preface

Among all the functions that a merchant exercises to get his trade going, I do not find any one more difficult than that of proper investment of his money; it is on this that his success or failure in business depends; and being the most important, obliges him to look for all the possible means for guarunteeing himself against loss. If good faith and frankness were equally practised by the entire universe, he would be free from all the worries that trouble him due to the apprehension of getting into a mess from which he will not be able to get out; for as the different nations make for differences in the mind of men and render them more or less avid, he also has to use different methods which lead him to his well-being, or help him to ward off evil. That which one should use in the oriental countries is quite unique and a little distant from the sincerity and frankness so much in practice among the European merchants; because it seems to the Orientals, that by belonging to their sects - gentil, pitagorian[1], mahometan and many others, full of idolatry, they are naturally accorded the privilege, to usurp, without scruple, from us who profess the veritable religion of Christianity, that which does not belong to them. This is what forces us to be in a state of continuous mistrust and which, in spite of the candour of our soul, quite often forces us to disguise the truth, to avoid to traps which are laid for us when we want to do trade with these barbarous and perfidious nations, who have no other passion but the appetite for an illicit profit. This makes them disdain the honour in order to run after self interest abandonning entirely the first one in order to submit to the latter and to aim only at cheating you. It hardly matters to them how they are esteemed, provided they can acquire wealth not considering themselves to be responsible in the other world for ill begotten wealth, if they can possess it by their care and vigilance, by fraud or otherwise.

I do not propose, dear friends and colleagues, to describe to you the life and manners of so many sects (of people), it will be too long because there are more than two hundred sects of these, -- even less to

1. Pythagorians. Many European travellers believed that the Hindu theory of transmigration of souls was borrowed from Pythagoras.

describe to you what to observe for not going astray from the path which should lead us to the salvation of our souls while exercising our profession. You are too good Catholics to be ignorant of its principles, and not to practise them as much as it will be possible for you to do in whatever part of the world you might be. So this is only to present you with the commentary of my travels in the lands of the Indies[2] and to inform you of what I have been able to notice, as of the greatest use to our profession for the purpose of trade in this country, and to safeguard us from the ambush of traders. Hence, please accept this compilation of mine, of diverse annotations which I have prepared, begging you to receive them from somebody who only aspires to give you the proof of his friendship and affection with the desire of deserving the advantage of being able to call himself, with all the force of tenderness.

Monsieur Your Most Humble and Most obedient servant

G.R.

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2. Les Indes in the text. Like many of his contemporaries Roques uses both Inde and Indes to denote India. If translated literally, it would mean Indias.

In all the countries of India there is an infinite number of
1 banians who do business; and what I admire as most remarkable is that they all use the same routine and artifice when they sell to or buy from a foreigner. And the particular method that they practise exempt them from all risks subject to luck and to hazards of trade, by the precaution they take to use the wealth of others without ever forwarding their own - whatever profit they might make out of it. For they are marked by a spirit of distrust. They are in continuous perplexity, in fear of losing their investment; because although they handle the biggest business they are so sensitive to loss that they are inconsolable at the least reverse of fortune however modest that might be. As their soul is low and grovelling, the desire of profit touches them so close and with so much avidity, that they are not preoccupied with others.

This they openly show in their manner of living which is so mean
2 that the most miserable petty thieves would put them to shame if these two were compared. It is useless to go into details as to whether they are more thrifty in everything necessary for life or only in what can distinguish the wealth of the ones from the lack of the others. Everything is the same among them; the rich do not spend more than the poor, and will be even worse furnished if one can apply that term to a miserable cot (?) without mattress or bedspread, its only decoration being a wretched sheet of thick cloth, and a pillow made of three sers of cotton, a few earthen pots, a wooden spoon, a stool with three legs, several pitchers to keep drinking water, and others for washing their bodies. The most precious utensil that I have come to notice was a small pot of yellow copper,[3] worth about 15 sol, from which they and their whole family drink. Nevertheless it is they who

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3. Brass

4. Sol = Sou : old French coin, evaluated by Roques at about $\frac{1}{30}$ th of a roupie; see infra Roques, p.36.

handle the entire trade. Nothing escapes from their hand, and (they)
3 never have a sol. But, asone would ask me, to make the entire trade r
never to have a sol, this seems something extraordinary, for one
cannot trade without money. I am going to satisfy you.

You are to note at the first instance that the banians do not follow any other profession than that of merchant. Rich and poor alike, all of them take it up after having been taught in the schools to read, write, count and to calculate on slabs of wood covered with sand, so as to save paper. They work hard at arithmetic and are very good at calculation. It is their only patrimony from home, for the father gives nothing to his son, and the son would willingly let the father die before helping him in his need. This policy is so current among them that it passes for custom, without anyone finding fault. The reason offered for justifying this inhumanity does not seem very much acceptable to me. They say that their children's wedding has ruined them, for they marry the boys between the age of six to twelve and the girls between the same to nine at the latest. They make no provision for dowry, neither the one nor the other. It is in the wedding that they incur the biggest expenditure of their life some more, some less according to one's reach; this expense is ruinous.

4 The boy's father decks him up in <u>cabaye</u>,[5] turban and sash; and the girl has some gargantilles (?) of gold for necklace, two bracelets of silver on the arms and two anklets for the feet. These are rather big but hollow : and are the sign of marriage, for neither unmarried girls nor widows wear them; the latter take them off after the death of their husbands. They remain widows for the rest of their life, not being permitted to remarry, but the men are. The other expense consists of a feast of vegetables (cooked) in butter, rice and a few sweetmeats, but no meat, as

5. Cabaya, a tunic or jacket.

they follow the law of pitagore. The feast thus composed continues for eight days. Not only the relatives and friends are invited but all belonging to their caste go there if they want. There are sometimes two to three hundred persons, who, under the pretext of doing honour to the festival go there to fill the stomach. They are covered with saffran from head to feet, not with our saffran from Europe but with the powder of turmeric soaked in water, in such a way that all these invitees are as if masked, after having been properly satiated.

This is all the patrimony of the children[6] and the daughters, and all the expense that is incurred by the fathers for their children during their life and even this with a lot of regret. This is also the strongest reason advanced by them for not helping one another. Fathers never forget this expense and the children who got nothing out of it, do not remember it at all. As a result if they want to keep alive, they have to go in search of food and to begin scampering in the bazars as the market places are called. (They) would take a piece of (cotton) cloth[7] or some other tissue from a shopkeeper on condition to return it if they are unable to sell it. And would give it away at very little profit, and sometimes at loss in order to keep themselves alive, giving to understand that it is not yet sold, in the hope of some better encounter, where they can make up what they have lost on the first. At this humble beginning they can keep nothing aside in reserve, being only too happy to gain (enough) to live for the day, and often going to sleep without having eaten anything, although they are able to sustain their life with one sol of rice or vegetables.

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6. Roques uses the word "enfant", (child) although he obviously means "sons."
7. The word "toilles" is used throughout the original to designate cotton cloth pieces of various length and breadth, as distinct from silk ~~silk and cotton~~ fabrics. To avoid repetition it is mainly translated simply as cloth(s), cloth pieces or pieces.

When, by dint of work or intrigue they would have saved upto one roupie which is as much as 30 sols, they would bury it, and would never bring it out, for whatever need it might be, and would rather die than touch it. For they think that they will enjoy this hidden money after their death, and that whoever would have gathered the biggest amount, would enjoy the greatest beatitude in the next world, or in this one, after their soul would have passed seven times in another body, either of an animal or of an insect. That is why they never eat anything that has life, and let themselves be bitten by vermin rather than kill them.

When, by such a poor beginning of business, by a small borrowed fund, they have acquired the title of merchant, it has to continue in proportion with their growing age and experience. This is done in the same way as they have begun it, till they have saved about a hundred roupies. Then they set upon buying a house, for all of them have this ambition, in order to be able to hide their money with greater certainty. Those hundred roupies would suffice for this plan and even beyond it, because a cowshed or a pigsty has a better appearance than their domicile. It also has to be in proportion to their family as I have described it. Thus they are housed, well or otherwise. That is not all; they must have a cow, and see that it occupies the finest room in their house, often being at the foot of their bed, because this is an animal for which they have the utmost respect, believing that after their death their soul makes its first entry in the body of this animal. They even keep it very near a dying person who is carried to the side of a river, where he is washed and rewashed in all his last days in order to wipe off his sins. Then (he is) thrown on a pyre and reduced to ashes so as not to be eaten by worms. This cow is carefully kept and looked after in the house with such great respect that she provides them with their oath, when they want to affirm some truth. They never commit perjury if they take the oath on the back of this animal, fearing that their soul would not be granted entry there. The cow bears a calf, their women also give birth, expenses go up; having been married

young, they have a seed-bed of children before having a single hair on
8 the chin. The head of the family has more and more worry to sustain all this herd. His wife cannot help him; she is too busy bringing water for the house. They need a lot of it; young and old all wash their bodies before eating anything. This occupation and household work keep her too busy to think of anything else; she has no servant to relieve her, the expense would be too great; their children have already attained the age of five or six, it is a dishonour to leave them too long without marrying them, one has to give a thought to this; their first profit was employed in this house and in the cow, what they have gained since then has served for the upkeep of this numerous family. There they are, without money, and wanting to marry their children. It is necessary to take money on interest and pawn the house; this interest causes them a lot of strain, as they have no other capital. They throw themselves in the jobs of insuring and insure at all risk whatever may happen. If the ships arrive safely, they are on their feet. If they are unlucky they
9 cannot pay the sum insured; they are informed of the shipwreck earlier than the proprietor, who finds no body at home, because they have fled, and left the province to get into another. If they are lucky in the insurance they still do not pay what they borrowed, in order to use this money which will soon bring hundred percent profit for them without any risk or fear of losing. This is how it happens.

All the countries of India are filled with workers, weavers, spinners[8] and other people who work at the cultivation of cotton. To put to use crop which grows abundantly throughout the country, is the first basis of business. It makes subsist an infinite number of people of all ages and both sexes and provides occupation to banians in various ways according to the capital or industry possessed by each of them. Let us begin with the lowest class, and then rise by rank. For one cannot become rich all of a sudden and there is more trouble to establish oneself than to

8. Spinners were invariably women, according to Roques.

gain anything when one has something in hand.

10 The first class of banians, that is to say the small sub-merchants (hagglers) is those that haunt the bazars, sell a piece of borrowed cloth and praise themselves to acquire credit, for since they bury their money as it is gained, nobody among them knows of the wealth of another.

The second class is that of those whom a mediocre fortune has endowed with about fifty roupies or so, which is much for somebody who has nothing; These people do not haunt the markets any more, but the streets, and go from door to door in search of cotton yarn to buy. There is an infinite number of this type of traders as well as spinners because all the female slaves of the Muslims[9] make their masters subsist by the wheel. I exempt the big merchants from this, because there are very rich ones, who do a great trade by sea. The banian carries the scales beside him, cotton yarn is brought to him, he agrees upon the price, pays, and takes it away. When he has gathered three or four sers -- more or less
11 the quantity needed for a piece of cloth, according to the quality of cotton, he takes it to the weaver, decides with him about the wage, teaches him how to be stingy in order to save on the cotton. I will describe later about the ruses they adopt to alter the warp and the weft of this piece of cloth, along with all the cheatings that take place - which even the shrewdest will not be able to note without a long experience.

So now our banian is raised to the status of a merchant. He is having something produced for his account, and in eight days he will have a piece of cloth. During this time he will go on buying cotton yarn in order to give it to other weavers, and will add to his number of pieces. He will consider himself secure enough to dare to negotiate with a Musli

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9. Maure in original.

or a European trader who sends ships on Asian trade,[10] where these pieces are in demand. On these samples of two to three pieces he will contract with them for one hundred corges which make two thousand pieces. He can see a clear profit for himself, for he will ask for advance money. This fine custom of taking up no work for anybody without having something in hand is well established among them. Hence he will
12 make a contract with you for this quantity, in return of advance money. It is then that they emerge from this class to pass to the rank of those in the third. They clear the account of their house with your money and bury the rest of their own money feeling to be sufficiently rich enjoying your wealth, of which they will secure the better part.

The European buyer or the Muslim merchant would have made his contract with this swindler of a banian on two or three pieces of cloth, for they never make a deal on one single piece, in order not to lose their sale, and also in order to be able to do so on that sample out of the three which will always be the most inferior one, as you can imagine. These three pieces will be high, middle and low, although of the same quality and will differ by at least two roupies par corge from one another. They will not tell you that they will get you only the "low" ones. And at whatever price they make the contract with you, the best of the three pieces will be shown to you. You will think that you are going to buy
13 it at the lowest price and will figure having made a good purchase. But in the end you will come to know of the deceit of this banian, for he will not furnish you with a single piece conforming to any of the samples on which you have made the deal : And will say at the same time that he has employed your money, so as not to be obliged to return it, which they never do, even if you are not satisfied with the cloth; they will get off

10. More Universally known as "country trade" - trade in the Indian ocean. The usual contemporary French expression, if translated literally, would be "Trade from India to India".

with some reduction in the price. This is how they employ your money.

The banian has moved away from his primary function of roaming in the street and going from door to door in search of spun cotton. He brings it to the care of the weaver, in order to make a new contract with him. The pieces which this weaver has made for him are of a certain quantity of vissas in the warp which determines the price of the cloth. He orders it with less width and lesser quantity of vissas. I will explain this term vissa in its proper place.[11] He knows how to sell it and is assured of his profit. But this is not the only profit of the sale, which he makes on you. He is expecting a much more considerable one, which he will make on the weaver by the means of the advances which you have given

The weaver is without contradection the most miserable of all artisans. And the maxim which the banians follow with these poor miserables is inhuman. This they do, in order to keep them always grovelling, and to deprive them of the resources to work by themselves, so that they cannot destroy the profit that they (banians) make in their trade by the sale of their (the weavers') product.

The banian is already in possession of your money, for providing you the goods. He astutely applies his care to get it produced. The weaver cannot work at it without money to buy cotton. He will advance yours to him, but at conditions that surpass usury, because they are pitiless when lucre is concerned. The more needy a worker, the more they crush him so that he can never recover. The conditions for lending which he makes with them are different according to the seasons. If these are from January till May, then they will be better for the banian than those from May to October because the weaver is more occupied from May to the end of October and there is no dearth of work for him. At that time everybody gets cloth

11. See infra Roques pp.28-32.

prepared in order to have them ready for the monsoon of November, December and January, when all ships set sail for here or there. During these months the weaver has a little bit of money and passes smoothly his miserable life. But (that period) being over, he has no more work for the rest of the year, as there is no ship loading, and consumes whatever he might have gained.[12] It is then that my banian settles his account, and taking advantage of the indigence of the weaver advances him a bit of your money, for supplying him cloth at a certain price, woven with cotton of such price par man, and having such length and breadth as stipulated in the contract made with you. And for the fifty roupies advanced to him, for three or four months, will quite often exact as much, at least twenty-five or thirty which is what they take ordinarily for the abovementioned period. Hence this is the first profit that the banian makes of your money — that is to say on the weaver. The second is the profit he draws on the sale of the goods which you buy from him which bears all these interests or to put it better, all these
16 extortions and it is you, merchant buyer who pay for all this. The banian has calculated the price himself, rather than fixing it with your agreement. Had it not been for these swindlings of the banians, the fabrics would be almost for nothing, according to the calculations that I have made. And for one écu you could have a very beautiful piece 12 aune long and 7/8 aune wide, instead of which you buy them at five or six livres par piece.[13] For the weaver has to recover from the cloth the interest which he pays to the banian. He would not be able to survive without that.

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12. In a letter written from Ahmedabad on 1.4.1682, Roques himself advises the Directors of the FEIC to see to it that its purchases are made during the summer month, directly from the weavers since then "they have to come to us, otherwise the interest they pay will eat up all their profit, since (even) the best weaver does not possess a capital of fifty roupies". (A.N. Colonies C² 63 f 27).

13. (a) Ecu - old French coin, worth 60 sols or 3 livres. Roques evaluates one écu at two roupies. See Roques p.81.

    (b) Aulne in Roques. French unit of measurement. One aune of Paris = 1.188m. see also infra, Roques pp. 29-30.

The term of delivery by your supplier is due. The workers will have delivered the cloths to him. He will bring them to you. The first ones, which you will receive will be in small numbers and tolerably good so as not to disgust you, and in order to exact further advances. (He) will tell you that all your money has been distributed to weavers; that it is necessary to buy more cotton; and (will give you) many more pretex which will seem legitimate to you. He will assure (you) that his attent is not diverted to any other business but in getting your goods ready and that he takes only two roupies par corge from you for all the troubl he takes on himself; and that for so little, he is responsible for the
17 money which he distributes to workers, who are daily insulting him. Finally, he will plead to you with so many subtle reasons that you will irresistibly to the purse for giving him more advance money. So far you were taken by one foot only; now both are bogged. After receiving this money he continues to give advances to the workers, because he profits from it as I have already said. He receives the goods from them, squeez these in a special warehouse, never at his place. This is in order to gain his end and so as not to get discovered during the period fixed for bringing you the goods. So that in your discontent, you cannot do him a violence and take them away by force. From time to time he will render a few corges which will be but the smallest portion of what he has got i his possession so as to let the time pass and to force you, due to the need of your business, to accept the rest just as he brings them. For y cannot have recourse to try to buy them anywhere else. They hold it for their maxim never to get (anything) done which they cannot sell. This method and that of advances are practised throughout India. You sollici
18 your banian to furnish you what he is obliged to do by his contract. Th more he is pressed, the more he retreats, although the pieces are in his possession, till you cannot put up with it any more. The monsoon oblige you to send off your ship. Then the banian calculates the money he has received from you, and furnishes you as much cloth, not a single piece beyond, although he has to furnish you a hundred corges. The reason is

they know that they are cheating you and that you cannot be satisfied with them, since they have not delivered goods conforming to the sample in the contract. So they apprehend that you will not pay them the rest of the money due to them if they delivered it to you. This is not the worst (for them) since it will constitute the capital for another buyer.[14] It is this capital that was acquired of your profits, and that which he made on the weaver, --- which makes him pass on to the rank of the high class merchant. You are pressed by time. You cannot delay any more. You are forced by necessity to accept what cloth in brought to you, good or bad, which will differ by three to four roupies and even more from the sample, depending on whether he thinks of doing business with you in future. You have to suffer all this fraud. You complain to your broker for having put such a perfidious man in your service. The broker who has a share in the cake will act vexed, will say abusive words to the banian, will pretend to be angry in order to mollify you. The maliciousness of the other is not unknown to him. He has always informed the former about the disposition of your affairs and your feelings concerning the purchase. You cannot break the contract new, since time is too short. The banian cannot return your money, as he has none besides what he has stolen from you in this encounter. Unable to withdraw the advance or to have any other explanation from him, you ask for a reduction. Then this banian lets out an exclamation which would frighten fifty cows, starts to weep, throws his cap on the ground and cuts hundred figures of an afflicted person. All these poses are planned with the broker, who is the first person to betray you. This broker whispers to you "What can you do ? He cannot return you advance. You need the goods. You are pursued by time for its leading. It has to be arranged in such a way that he reduces something of the price". He them acts the mediator; and the banian plays at being difficult. He will say that he has been cheated by the

14. This part of the text is too obscure to permit more than guess what Roques tries to convey.

weavers who have taken the money; this is an impudent lie because he has
20 been very well paid out of it and also got the interests. And in spite of their misery he has got more out of them than out of you, from whom he can never secure so much profit, because you have not made the purchase without knowing more or less about the market price of the goods. You want to get out of this business. You have to request your broker to adjust this reduction to your greatest advantage. In the end you are tir[illegible] of all this fight. As they never get upset, they will put up with all your anger, and will let you fume; when it subsides a little, the broker will propose a diminution, but so small that it will not suffice for even buying weeds. They are not ashamed to offer you so little, because their effrontery knows no bound. They will propose a reduction of only half a roupie par corge which is not even one-twelvth of the expected reduced price of the merchandise, as par the samples. They always bring a fake trader with them, who feigns indifference. The broker addresses this man, puts a couple of cloth pieces in his hand, which he turns and twists from all sides, examines them as if he wants to buy them.
21 All this is nothing but comedy. After this examination by the man your broker sets himself up as the judge, gives his hand to the other under the panery which is something like a cape in which they cover themselves. They will fix up your rebate at one or two roupies par corge, which in all fairness should have been at least six. Thus you somehow come out of this affair because you are pressed for time and cannot find other readymade goods.

But what do the experts, rendered wise in this trade by experience do to ward off all this artifice before making the purchase ? I propose that the buyer learns a little the principles which will lead him to this knowledge, so that he can put them in practice. They deserve that I put them down in writing as they are very important, and lest somebody should be unaware of them.

It is necessary that the buyer knows three things perfectly as the most essential in the practice of buying piece goods.

The first one is to know the cotton wool : if it is coarse or fine, if it is dirty or clean, if its hair is long or curly, if it is white or reddish, if it feels soft or coarse when handled. All this is to be learnt, for although the cotton comes from a shrub with its
22 leaves similar to those that will grow in another country, this is not to say that they produce cotton of the same fineness, neither of the same whiteness. Its quality depends on the soil just as the fine grass given to the sheep who produces wool determines the wools quality although one is attached to the skin of an animal and the other grows on a tree[15] like a hazel tree. There the cotton germinates between two leaves, and comes out when the grain is mature; these are deep black, and the size of small beans. Then the cotton is ready to be collected. The difference between the thick and fine variety cannot be determined by the price, because one roupie more or less par man of one or the other quality will not make much of a difference. Each man is of 40 sers or 34½ livres. The highest price that I have seen for the fine has never passed four roupies a man. Nevertheless it is very much necessary to know how to distinguish them, not by price but by the quality. I will tell you why.

One can spin the grossest variety of cotton into as fine thread as the finest one and will furnish you as beautiful a piece of cloth. But when it is bleached you will find something quite different.[16] The
23 thick cotton will shrink during bleaching and will turn the cloth thin sparse and reddish. While the fine cotton swells, fills up the cloth and turns a marvellous white. That is why the Indians put cangi[17] on the thin

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15. In spite of his reference to both a shrub and a tree in describing the cotton tree, Roques evidently means the Indian cotton tree (Kapash).

16. Roques gives details of the process of bleaching in Roques, pp.176-179.

17. Starch made from rice.

and loosely woven cloth --- that is to say they soak it in a paste made from the whitest rice that they can find. This mash fills up the gaps; then by beating the cloth with a thick wooden mallet, they crush its grains which get congealed with the mash, and gives body to the piece of cloth. The fine cotton does not need this artifice; it swells and gives an uniformly beautiful piece, smooth and closely woven, with its grain like that of Shagreen leather; this type of cloth does not need any stiffening. You would take them for the fabrics of Rouen, as was proved by the test I carried out with a bale, No.48, containing 80 pieces sent to France as sample.[18] Those with experience can distinguish the pieces at sight because those made of fine cotton is semi white when they come out of the loom, while the others are always reddish, and can be never bleached well. It could also be that the soil gives it this colour although it is made of fine cotton. Then you handle the piece. If it feels soft
24 and limp between your fingers you can take it. It will be as good and will become white as the other. But if it is rough and coarse it will not be so, and will be cheaper in price. This is the first principle that the buyer should know. Let us turn to the second.

The second principle is to know the cotton yarn, know how to appreciate it (which is a little difficult-R.), but by dint of handling if you will come to be able to do so. I suppose you already know how to distinguish cotton wool of different qualities, by the instruction of the preceeding section. It is important for you to know perfectly this first principle, without it you will not be able to discern the cotton yarn. That must be your guide for fixing the price of the latter, taking into consideration the quality of spinning, that is to say, how loose or well twisted it is. Let us set about giving it its proper value. What do you do if you are not yet quite an expert ? You give the money to somebody in whom you have confidence, and make him act as did the banian of whom I

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18. Later referred to as bale No.38. Roques p.87.

have spoken, who went from house to house with his scaler, to buy a few skeins of cotton[19] of diverse price in order to arrive at the perfect knowledge of their value. Or to be absolutely sure, send a man to the market who observes those small traders, or you can even go there yourself as if out of curiosity. But one has to be there at the small hours of the day because at sunrise you will find nothing, the reason being that the earlier it is in the morning and the later it is, (towards evening?) the more untangled and finer is the appearence of the cotton. This is the trick of those who sell it, of which you should beware, or you will pay more if you buy them at these hours. Remember that it is one class below than that what it appears to be, and settle the price accordingly. For as I have already said, the trade of the Indians is nothing but subtlety, ruse and fraud. So you send this man to the bazar for observing those who buy; and having noticed the price you buy it from them (the buyer) at second hand, who would not have overpaid as this is their business Give them some profit for having this test. You stamp in your mind the primary purchasing price of these samples or if you do not have a good memory, attach a tag on it; observe if it is evenly wound, (twisted), whether it feels rough or flaccid, whether it is fit for the warp or weft of the cloth. For different qualities are needed for them even if they are of the same fineness. The yarn of the warp costs a little more because it is more twisted and more even; that of the weft costs less although it has more volume; this is necessary for filling up the cloth and giving it more body. By handling and rehandling of this cotton yarn while examining it several times you imprint its price and fineness in your judgement and learn to differentiate it. It is necessary to make a study of this or you will pay more for it than that is reasonable.

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19. Throughout this section Roques writes cotton to designate cotton yarn.

As to the third principle, you have to do the work of the weaver, that is, to know how many sers of cotton should go into a cloth of such length, width or fineness, how much is given for preparing and dressing the warp which is ½ of a roupie, the rate of weaving ¼, it is according to the cloth; finally all the circumstances for knowing what it comes to, when coming out of the loom. It is easy for you, if you weigh the cloth, assess the cotton and the workmanship, along with these small expenses. It is then that you can fix the right price of its worth, without being cheated; that you will be, in the quality of the cloth if
27 you are not careful there; for the weaver will not have employed sufficient cotton to give it the expected quality and it should weigh more.

I have already told you and reiterate that the weaver is the poorest and the most miserable of all artisans. It would be difficult for him to sustain his family if he did not have recourse to some stratagem in order to survive. For the one roupie which he can gain at most par week of full work cannot provide for his upkeep. He tries his best to be free from want by all the expedients that the practice of his art presents him; and puts in use, in various extremely subtle manners, the tricks he has learnt from the banians when he has worked for them. The commonest is to (make as if to) render you the cloth at the same weight of cotton which you have furnished him; he is obliged to do so. What does he do for taking away half a ser from each piece and still giving it the same weight? He pastes his warp with canji or with flour of gram[20] these are chick peas or pointed ones, same as those of France, and lets it absorb so much that the warp seems to be made of catgut; and thus dressed, the
28 warp helps him a lot to hurry through his work for the thread does not break so often. When the cloth is finished, he weighs it. If this debasement (adulteration) does not make up the exact weight of cotton which he has received he leaves it for one night or two in the evening

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20. Gron in original.

dew. Cotton, which by itself is extremely warm attracts this humidity and gets more of it than necessary. Then he weighs it, brings it to you, renders weight for weight after having chosen and kept aside half a ser of the best cotton. Thus this half ser from each of six pieces will give him one piece which will cost him nothing, this goes upto fifteen percent. This method is a little crude, but he supports his larceny, saying that he would not be able to work on the cloth without putting this dressing there although he can. For if he separated the twisted thread from the others and prepared his warp with it, it would not need and stiffening to resist the reed's beating. This ruse passes for custom, there is no worker who does not practise it. Let us go over to other more subtle ones where I will give explanation of the vissas. Moreover, it would be wise for you not to receive the cloth when the weaver brings
29 to you; leave it in the air for two days and then weigh it, deduct the difference or more, if you can, from his rate so that he does not repeat it. The banians by themselves sometimes buy the piece goods without seeing them, by their names and by the number of vissas the warp should contain, which determines the price, taking into consideration the current price of the cotton of which they are made. This is found out by the number of vissas employed. As we are dealing with cotton yarn which constitutes the vissas, let me go on spinning this yarn a bit more.

In the whole land of Hindustan[21] and of Guserate the cotton piece goods have only three names, dorgagis, sauvagagis and baftas[21a] the fine and thick ones are named accordingly.[22] The dorgagis must be one and a half

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21. Roques generally uses the word Hindusthan to imply, loosely, Northern and Central India.

21a. Bafeta in original.

22. Roques obviously means "classifications" when he refers to the three "names", which are none but terms specifying the standard widths of the usual varieties of cotton cloth. Unfamiliarity with such terms as dorgagi (dorgazi = 1½ yards) or sauvagai (1¼ yards) has led Paul Schwartz to comment on the lack of clarity of this text. See Schwartz op. cit, Appendix I, p.26.

cobe in width, the sauvagagis one and a quarter, and the baftas one full cobe which consists of 24 tassous; 42 of these (tassous) make one aune.[23] But all these regulations are spoilt due to the little (state) control in India , and they are made one or two tassous less in width and half a cobe or more less in length. Nevertheless when they buy without seeing
30 them, they fix the price on this basis. This is the most certain method because it permits them to cheat on the length and width, which going up to two cobes par piece, means a loss of ten per cent for the buyer. For example, a dorgagi of nine vissas will be middling fine, because nine vissas consist of 1440 threads, one vissa having 160 threads. This is what a vissa is — one hundred and sixty threads in the warp. Price of cotton yarn is judged by these nine vissas. But this secret is not known to Europeans, who have not acquired the fundamentals of manufacture which the banians keep very well hidden. Since then this cloth contains nine vissas, is twenty cobes in length and one cobe ten tassous in width, it is a sign that the cotton (yarn) should not cost more than nine roupies a man. If it is more, price of each vissa will go up. So you know now how much the cotton of this cloth costs since you know the secret of vissas, by reducing it to its weight and adding the cost of labour. You know how much it comes to for the banian, in order to take measure regarding the purchase.

It is on the vissas that the weaver employes his subtlest tricks
31 for stealing cotton and giving the same width to the cloth which it has when complete. Your seller has a hand in this as he makes a profit by supplying the weaver with reeds specially made to cheat you. There are four types of these. The first one is bona fide which has equal gaps throughout. They rarely use this one. The second tends to cheat a little; its gaps

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23. (a) The tassou corresponds to 2.826 cm.

(b) Cobe - covid = 67.8864 c.m. Schwartz op. cit. p.26. See also Tavernier Vol. I, pp.334-335. Roques himself equates one cobe with one gaise (Gaz = yard) without however specifying the measurement, see Roques f 85.

are wider in the middle; this will not take away more than forty threads from the cloth - meaning ½ of a vissa and as much as five pessas par[24] piece from its esteemed cost. The gaps of the 3rd reed would have twice as much of opening as the second which takes away half a vissa that is to say 80 threads, and as a result 10 pessas and the 4th takes away one full vissa, and you can say 20 pessas. Curiosity, combined with the awarness that it would be of use to me led me to see these artificial reeds and examine their structure. For you I could best compare them with a double organ. There the pedals that play the biggest fugues are in the middle and they get finer as they move left or right. Gaps of the above (mentioned) reeds are arranged in the same way; they (the weavers) also
32 take away entire vissas by the first reed, the bone fide one with equal gaps. They use this one when the cloth they are to weave is to contain more vissas than their reed has. The fraud is curiously planned. The cloth will be equally sparse upto a width of four fingers near the right and left bordors; that on the right hand side on which one folds the cloth is a little more close woven than the left. This artifice is made with the help of two small reeds only four fingers in width which they fit in the first when they want to cheat in this way. I have often wondered why the authority suffers all this brigandge. But as these small thiefs imitate the big, everything is in confusion among them. Money charms them so much that the most conscientious have no scruples in selling the power accorded to justice, and who has money wins his case although it might be very bad.

So, Reader, my dear friend, you are enlightened of the fraud practised in the fabrication of cloth, and have the knowledge which the quantity of vissas gives you for estimating them. You also know how wary
33 you have to be of these cheaters. Let us now turn to the manner of choosing them, so as not to be deceived and in order to invest well your money

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24. Paisa.

The method of choosing cloth consists of diverse points. The first is never to accept it from the weaver when he brings it to you, before having left it in the air for a couple of days and then to weigh it to see if the cotton which has been used is the one you furnished. Let us suppose, that it has been. Then, when you have received a few pieces thus weighed, you count the vissas of the lightest ones, as we have already said that the price goes up in proportion to the vissas. If the vissas are found to be complete in this one it is made of a finer cotton than the other and as a result better for washing.

But one would tell me that the others weigh more, and for this reason should be better than this one. I would reply that although they weigh more they will still be lacking in number of threads and will be (made) of a thicker variety of cotton. For the fine ones fill out more and do not weigh so much, just the opposite of the other; the more it (the latter) weighs the less it should cost, although it might be spun in the same way as the one which suits you, because they would change it and
34 use the inferior variety in order to gain more. To know this one is to follow the principle which I have mentioned, that is, to handle them piece by piece and separate the yellowish ones from the whitish ones, then to go over them to see whether the cotton is soft, whether the cloth is rough or soaked in cangi. If it has its (proper) weight, you can take it at the agreed price and fix another price for those you have rejected, although their weight and vissas correspond, for they are not made with your cotton. You should observe the same thing when you contract with a banian and with even more caution, because the weaver gives him his hand in order to cheat you.

One chooses them also in another way in order to find out the trick played on you with the reeds. If the borders of the cloth are equal, that is to say smooth and do not go one over the other [25] that

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25. The meaning is not clear.

makes it certain that the cloth is well made in the middle and will be good. But if they are uneven, the cloth will be invariably badly woven and thin in several places. Its thread will never be the same all over; this you can ascertain without opening it, by handling its back, for it is sold folded in double. If you find it damp some fraud is involved. But if it resists and is firm, the cloth will be equally good everywhere, and you can take it. If the borders of a cloth are found to be finer than your sample, (that means) they have used specially inserted reeds to cheat you by this trap. Look inside, you will be ascertained of this truth.

Those who are diffident of their experience or who are not yet versed in all items examine all, piece by piece, inside and outside reject what does not please them. But they have advanced their money, and have to do get its with worth from what they bring. What to do since the banian never returns it (the money)? Here is the expedient.

When you contract with a banian, treat him as he intends to treat you. Entertain him with nice words and promise to furnish him with more money than he needs, for having your cloth made, till he has delivered some corges to you. For even if he does not have any money, he will get it from the sarafs. These are the bankers who will lend him willingly for making his advance when they know that you have contracted with them. Never pay him the entire sum at the first delivery, and contract with several of them for the same quality of goods. If you succeed in this, you have your banian bridled who is in a continuous apprehension of losing the remnant of what is due to him (as they are extremely suspicious) or of not being paid for the rejected pieces. Therefore he will get you better pieces, and will try to please you even if you owe him very little. But it has to be so that you owe him rather than he owes you. By this means you will succeed; if he owes you, you will be always forced to take whatever he brings you, good or bad. I have tested it in every way and found this one the most certain.

In all your purchases you need a broker. This is the custom of the country; one cannot do without him, because a broker gives credence to your words whether you are a foreigner or a native, and stands guaruntee for you. For this you pay him at the rate of two percent on your purchases as well as on your sales. He also accepts responsibility
37 for the money which you advance to unknown people and which you lend. Oh! what a happy merchant you would be and how you would get on with your business with a lot of success and ease if he were satisfied with this profit which accrues to him by (his)right! So far you had only to mistrust the tricks of the weaver and your seller. Now you have three robbers in front who are only set on grabbing your purse, and very soon this one will bring to you the fourth who is the town broker or market broker, as they are known. His post is public. All accords and contracts which are made before him are legally binding. There are one or two for each merchandise, and one would not dare sell you anything without his participation. This bazar broker will not deal with you alone if your private broker is not present at this contract, and does not intervene to fix the price. They conclude it without words, putting one hand under the panery and holding a finger which signifies a number or one tenth. This is how they make the agreement for you and for themselves because they have
38 an understanding between themselves. The first finger which is the thumb means one, the second two and when they are (at the) fifth, hold the hand for saying five or fifty; and they also use the hand when they want to say 49 or 48 ~~xxx~~ lowering one or two fingers that is to say, so many fingers lowered make so many numbers taken away from fifty.

The private broker has been pointed out to you or he has got in, by himself. You take him; they are very obliging in offering you their service when they sense that there is money to be gained. Unless you accept him it seems that you have the plague on you, nobody approaches you. Once you are provided with a private broker, for better or worse

it is as if you have appointed a controller to your activities. For he will appoint two or three spies to know who enters or who comes out of your house, in order to check all your measures and so that everything passes through his hands and he can get the share he wants of your purse. He will get into your most secret thoughts, will find out what goes on at your place through your servants, whom he would have gained to his side
39 by the means of money, which he will get back through usury. Finally you end up with a guardian and with your servants as so many reporters. A solitary soul among many rascals !

You go to the spot in order to buy; you have to declare to your broker the goods that you desire, there is no other way. Your broker will take his time and will not take up your propositions so soon. This is to find out if you mistrust him and if you have spoken of it to anybody else. For he who has bad intentions always fears being found out. You tell him two three four times of the merchandise you want to buy. You do not know that at the very first instance he has called the public broker to his place and has questioned him about all the necessary points, in order to find out the current price of the merchandise, and to know if there are other buyers. They observe well this point to prevent you from knowing who are the other buyers, so that you cannot decide about the price on the basis of theirs.

Your broker will do his best to find out the price you want to
40 pay for the merchandise. There is no expedient that he will not try inorder to fathom your thought. And if you are so ill advised as to declare it to him, (which can happen if you do not know the consequences) you are done for. These swindlers are already holding your purse string, they will soon put their fingers therein. For they never bring you goods at the price you want, always inferior in order to share this surplus. This is how the two brokers have planned it in private. What you should do is to ask for three or four sorts of different prices, and not accept a single one till you have seen and examined all. Even when you want to finalise

always begin by bargaining over the price of something which you do not want. That way you will discover the price of others, in order to settle it. (On the other hand) if you begin with the cloth you want to buy, you spoil your entire business. Put them in such a confusion that they are unable to know your inclination. And if you want to assort goods of different prices begin haggling over the lowest (never the highest) priced one, going up according to the increasing number of vissas
41 in the cloth. Here you follow the preceding instruction of counting them without their knowing that you know this secret. For if you begin by the highest priced one, as they will try to make you do, so that the others seem less expensive, you will overpay them (the latter). This is all the mystery that there is. The greatest advantage that you can get from the price of your purchases is by counting the vissas. These should guide you. You cannot be deceived if the cloth contains them, and above all, if it is not starched in order to deprive you of the knowledge of good and bad cotton. Those who are destined to purchase cloth should follow this method, and this is how they should act so as not to be cheated. Because remember, and take it for certain that banians possess neither faith nor law, nor capital, and live only by rapine. Their mutual understanding is so great and their union so close that all you wealth will not be able to corrupt one in order to know what the other does. That
42 is how they survive. It has never been possible for me to win over a single one and I have not been able to prevent them from suborning my servants whom I drive away the moment I notice this. If you are a subordinate agent they will aim even at you and will offer you considerable gifts so that you give them your hand, or adhere to what they do. In short they try an honest man in every possible manner, and if he is weak enough to accept something with this intention, his reputation as well his business are lost. For this connivance gives such an authority to your broker that he is, as if, the master of you and your purse, and he does whatever he pleases. Therefore you should never accept anything from them. Or if, out of politeness you cannot help

accepting a small present at the time of their divaly which is the first day of the year, or at your reception which is practised everywhere, be quits with him, by a more considerable present, and make him see that he has made a wrong choice in revealing his intention to you. He will not try it again and will act more sincerely for your business, fearing that you will change him for another - as the present
43 he offers you is only for establishing himself firmly.

Since I am dealing with the brokers, and since a description of their life has enough matter for composing several volumes, which will bore rather than divert the reader, I will content myself with showing in my discussion how they behave when they aspire to this post, and the maxim they follow when they are once installed. Then I will speak of the market or public broker, how to behave with him in order to get something out of the purchases. Let us rather put him first, since he is the public broker and the other is only your personal broker, whom you can change when you wish and perhaps take a worse one as none of them is worth anything.

At the first place one should know that in India there have always been public or market brokers, as they are known. They are those who have come to the post of intermediaries through the favour of governors, and which they carefully maintain from father to son. They
44 have no other profession than that of making others sell and buy, as they are forbidden, at the risk of losing their posts, to engage in any private trade, which they would fail to hide, since they are too well spied upon by the sellers. There is an infinite number of these bazar brokers, one or two for every kind of merchandise, however trifling it might be, for horses, bullocks, buffaloes and camels, for hay and straw - and generally for all sorts of things relating to trade as well as to necessities of life. All those who need to buy are obliged to

make your proposals to him, find out the rate of the goods and finally you reveal your wish to him. He will not tell you whether he knows about the goods to be sold, neither by whom, but will mention plenty of difficulties, in order to render himself more useful so that you are more grateful to him for his cares - all this to be better rewarded, although you, as buyer are not obliged to pay him anything. It is for the seller to pay him 2 per cent. However, everything being topsy turvy, in India, it is catch as catch can. Taking advantage of the fact that one cannot do without them, they squeeze all that they can from the seller. He also forces out at least one per cent from the buyer although he does not have the right to exact this. You would have no regret in giving it to him if you know that he was serving you loyally and you would recover it on the price of the merchandise. But as you have not come to improve the customs, think only of making your purchases. Follow the track of others and take the best path if possible. The luck or otherwise of your business depends on this bazar broker. It is him rather than your private broker whom you should cherish. The latter is spoon fed by the other without moving from his seat, and by telling a few lies gets his two per cent from you besides what he will have arranged with the market broker, when he put his hand under the panery before finalising your contract. He will finally bring you a merchant with a few pieces of cloth of the same length as samples; of each sort there will be two or three, high middle and low. When you ask them why the three different pieces have the same price they will answer that all the fingers of the hand are not equal, and that in a bale there are usually the head, the belly and the feet. (Weak reasoning since all the roupies that they are given weigh the same R.). You judge this merchandise in front of them. Your broker acts the man of affair. He thinks the goods as already sold at the price agreed between him and the market broker. For the seller is

as if an idiot, happy with what the others have promised him privately in case the buyer takes it, and lets them act. They put themselves to the task of finalising the price under the panery according to custom. You should let them do so and observe them. Make them appraise the three sorts. Even when they would have told you the fairest price put it off till the next day, in order to have the time to count the vissas and to evaluate them yourself, according to the quality of cotton with which you think they are woven. And you calculate as to what they could cost. Then you know whether they are overpricing. Then you act indifferent, saying that they are too costly, and you do not want them; but you must put a mark inside before they take them away for they will change them. After having returned them thus, let the affair mature without talking about it at all. Now it is the seller, wanting to get to
47 your purse, who starts to act. He begs the market broker, prays yours also to help him sell his cloths, makes promises to each of them, on his own. This business suits you well, because that he promises them from his own purse is as much as you would have paid on the price, and he would not have given anything to the broker. Had you concluded earlier, you would have acquiesced in all their pretentions because they would have stuck to it, taking you as enamoured of the merchandise. You should never seem so to them even if you like it. This is how one should buy in India - after having learnt all that one should know to be a good buyer. Most people that make a profession of it do so without knowing what they buy, happy to act by conjecture : "This cloth costs me so much, and I will sell it at so much !" This is but the path of cows in a flat country. Won't it be better if you get it cheaper in order to gain more ? This is where the skill of a buyer should enter. He should try to acquire the friendship of the public broker, to promise him a lot and give little, in order to whet up his appetite. And when he has given you satisfaction by sufficient proof, you acknowledge your gratitude which his services merit, with one per cent as his due. He has saved atleast as much for you.

I have somewhat condensed the chapter on the public broker in order to extend myself on the intrigues of the private broker and to show how he installs himself by your side and the stratagems he uses in order to achieve his ends.

You have come to know from all that I have told you so far, that whatever reputation and credit you might possess, nobody will deal with you unless you have a private broker. This is the custom of the country. You have to follow it and choose one. All banians are traders; there is not a single one of them who does not want to be a broker in order to be sure of somehow earning his livelihood, without capital. Hence let us choose one and then close our eyes ! For here the most clairvoyant will not succeed more than the blind, or than you, confident in your experience, which consists of knowing the cotton wool and cotton yarn perfectly well and knowing how to distinguish one from another by price upto a quarter
49 roupie par man. The first principle and a lesson which you should learn well, is never to follow the counsels of your broker concerning purchases and sales, but above all in purchases, for you will find them disadvantageous.

The Bazars, which are public places are also the meeting places of banians for getting news. The post offices are there. They learn, by letters or by listening to others' conversations, all that happen outside. If you, buyer, are en route, they will know positively from their correspondents the date of your arrival. They also know the house which will be destined for you, for you should foresee this before making a trip to the town where you wanted to stay. If you just go the foliage of a tree will be the roof of your house, (as) there is no resting place. You are obliged to drag with you all your utensils and necessary things the Indians professing a religion other than yours. They behave in the same way among themselves because of the difference in caste. They would hardly give you water, in fact their door is closed to you, you can judge the rest for yourself.

50 You have hardly put your feet on the ground when an infinite number of petty dealers carrying packets surround you impudently in your house, and most often even wait for you there. All these sub brokers are spies sent by these who are set to be your broker. A man who comes personally would give a bad impression of himself and would be taken as needy. They are too well advised to do it so openly but this is how they go about it, and he who is lucky does not arouse the jealousy of others. From this you can judge the close union that exists between these people. Each of these petty traders has under his arm a packet of different goods. They make great efforts to sell these and strive with one another to persuade you, at which they are extremely adroit. If they cannot sell you anything, they will try to render you some small service, for it is impossible for a newcomer not to be needing something at his arrival. He would have letters to deliver, his luggage will go straight to the customs to be checked, he would be needing wood and water, in order to start running his household. In a word he will have to employ somebody from among these who come,
51 since you find them so well intentioned. He who is chosen by you for running this small errand, or who will buy some other thing for you does wonders on this occasion. He argues with the person who comes to sell, when he has brought himself so that by the very means of this bait you form a good estimate of his affection. He will willingly risk half a roupie for concluding the deal which he has undertaken, and to show that he has protected your purse, if you happen to get your purchase assessed. You then enter the net by the good opinion which you form of this masked swindler. As he has acquitted himself well of this first job, you assign something more important to him. Then he goes to look for the person on whose behalf he is acting and presents him to you, saying this is his father, his brother or his partner - for they always have some compatriots and more relatives than Natusalem[26] who lived for such a long time.

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26. Matusalem, A patriarch --- grandfather of Noa. He is reputed to have lived for 969 years.

You consider this serious man, ask him about several things; his answers will be just, because all of them have intelligence and a lot of judgement. You will tell yourself "This man reasons well, he is intelligent, has a lot of knowledge, he is ignorant of nothing. This is the man for me; I can confide in him about the state of my affairs, and I think that he will do his duty". That he will do very well - for himself and will not fail there. You are more shrewd than
52 a gypsy if you can prevent him. I have already told you the reason - all your money won't be able to make any one of them declare what another does. This is an inviolable sacrament between them. But your broker never lacks in spies or creatures to find out what you are doing. They relieve one another from time to time and never stop keeping an eye on your door - none acts otherwise. They know all that happens at your place and you cannot learn anything from them.

It is hence to this broker that you are obliged to declare the aim of your voyage, if you want him to act for your business. You have come once for buying. He will get you to believe that your money will be soon employed. But he will enjoy it and will invest it. He knows the merchandise you want to buy; this cannot be hidden from him. You have chosen it and agreed on the price. But he will buy the same
53 thing or of an inferior quality at a much lower price than yours, which he will put in your merchants' hands, in order to pass it along with his goods. It is your money which circulates and gives him a profit through you. This is his first entry. If you have only bills of exchange or credit to pay for your purchases, he delays their collection as long as possible in order to enjoy the interest which your debtor owes you, after the term lapses, for in India they count upto the minutes.[27] He will put off paying for your goods as long as possible, and at the time of payment, will take yet one fourth per cent from the receiver, as if the seraf has paid it to him by your order. This is again the second profit that your broker

27. This I find too succint to be understood by any but the initiated.

makes, which is as much as if you have bought at second hand ! Let us pursue the story.

The market broker is the instrument of everything and of the frauds which one practises on you, because he has an understanding with your seller, and settles with him for a lower price than at which he will deliver. Your broker who knows all this secret, wants also to have his share, and overprices the merchandise by as much. You will not have it at less - you can take it or leave it. This is then a third profit that your broker makes from the same business, which, with
54 the two per cent (due to him) will amounts to four. This goes far. Nevertheless you pay this on the price of purchase. This is the practice among the brokers of India so far as the purchases are concerned. Let us, I pray, see a little what they do on the occasion of sales. You will not find more loyalty there, I am sure.

A foreign merchant or a local one if you want, will be having goods fit for a country. He will carry it there and accompany it for getting better advantage from the sale. He is there with his goods, he needs a broker, nothing is done otherwise. All the banians know from the customs the goods that come in or go out. If it is in demand, they will go for it, if it is not, you have made an unlucky trip. For, just remember, and take it for certain, that the banians buy nothing which they cannot sell from hand to hand. They have no capital for paying from their purse, but pay you from the sale they make, reserving the profit for themselves. In order to make you lose the hope of a good sale they will gather a troop of petty traders who will come to pester you to buy from them the same goods which you have brought; (this is) to persuade you that it is abundant at that spot. If you ask them the price, all will give the watchword at fifteen to twenty per
55 cent less than the cost, in order to make you lose all interest in holding yourself firm on yours. You inform of your business to the broker, ask him to see your merchandise. He replies that there is a lot of it in

town, it is very cheap, and is abundaunt all around. He will give you the sane price as the others. This conformity in words will disgust you very much and will persuade you that it does not cost more. You are, so to say, resolved to give it at that price rather than take it back. Alas ! poor merchant, it is you who are sold, rather than your goods! They will have it at the price they want and it will be a matter of great surprise if they do not make you swallow half of it before the price is fixed. This is how it is done.

Your broker will bring you a buyer who will offer you even less than they have done; for, as he will say, he wants to make some profit out of it. It would seem a proper reason if it were true. You do not want to give it, there is too much to lose, and will keep it longer in the hope of (gaining) more. Too bad for you not to agree in order to make an end of this merchandise. The consequences will make you know your mistake.
56 He brings to you another merchant who will offer you even less than the first, a third, less than the second. All these three false buyers are none but the person who makes them act in accordance with your broker. You will find the offer of the first more reasonable than the two others. It is with that one that you want to strike the deal. You make him speak. He answers that he does not want it any more. As he defaults, (you turn to) the two others, who tell you the same thing. Thus you lose all hope of selling; they will leave you at that, without a word, taking you for granted assured by your broker that the merchandise will not escape them, for all those who deal with the same merchandise constitute one body for the purchase, represented by the person who was the first to bargain. You are forced to fall in his hands or carry it away with you, which will seem quite painful to you. You request your broker to arrange that the first merchant takes it as he has offered the highest. The broker is waiting for this occasion to show you that he renders you a considerable service in betraying you. He will not make him pay you according to his first offer but four or five per cent less, although the first buyer has not gone back

57 on his words. But the difference of what you get will go to the pocket of your broker as reward from the buyer for having secured him such a good bargain. Moreover it is you that pay him yet two per cent as his due which make six per cent without taking into account the lower rate at which you sold and you bear all this burden.

You take this affair as over, either with profit or less. It is still too soon ! You have to suffer a lot of other attacks before the money enters in your purse. The broker will have you understand that the money is not yet ready, although it is, and will take an extremely long time in paying it, in order to get an interest on it for himself, or invest it in some business where he sees some chance of making profit. However, in India you incur excessive expenses for people who are of as little account as merchants. You are obliged to imitate the customs of the country. Otherwise one ignores you. Time passes, while you await your payment. You have to eat the little bit of profit if you have made it, or increase your loss by this expense. You want to make profit by investing your money on some goods which are in demand in some other region. Get information to know for certain that they will sell well there, and take your resolution to buy on this advice. The money which you are waiting for will not give you profit
58 if you take it back with you. Once again you have to convey this thought to your broker. So far you have been cheated in selling only. You will be even more so in the purchases you want to undertake.

Your broker will be employed to make these purchases (which is only fair - R) since he has, according to you, served you very well in the sale of your merchandise. It would not have yet been sold without his having brought about the deal and you would not have touched this money for making new purchases. He will serve you in the same way as he did, and even worse. What he did with the buyer, to fix the lowest (price) he does now, with the seller, in order to get the highest; that is, he reverses the medal. He arranges with the seller for a long term

payment in order to use your money or deducts from this term at his profit if you pay him cash. These are already two profits that he makes, the latter being greater deducting from your money at least six months (of interest) which are 4½ p.c. Let us see the third one ! That will be some bales inferior to the good ones, which he will pass together, and will deduct the difference from the amount to be paid to the seller. He will please the latter by ridding him of it, in order to load you with it. It will be unparalleled loyalty on the broker's part if he surrendered this deducted sum to you but he keeps it for his third profit.

Let us see what he can pillage in order to make the fourth profit - that will be on an account of impossible expenses, on the most
59 equitable of which he will gain 27 for one; for what they get done for one badan,[28] they make us pay one pessa, and from pessas to ¼ and ½ roupies. For with us Europeans who have the purse better furnished than they, the pessas at least have to jump out, well accompanied, for the least of things. Each pessa is worth 28 badans or 8-(illegible). I speak only of the most apparent expenses, for things known, not taking into account those invented and imaginary ones with which the account will be full, which he will usurp from you. This serves him for his household expenses for six months or one year as the case may be, and as the fifth profit. The merchant has to leave for the destined place to sell his purchases. He perceives (too late —R.) that his broker is shaking his purse to (?) him, and if he remains longer, he will not even have the passage money to cross the ocean - the broker would secure the better part of it. He (the broker) sees to it that his claims of brokerage are well protected, fearing that he would not be paid if his frauds were discovered. You will see very rarely and perhaps you have never seen a broker, who while settling

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28. Badam. For the use of bitter almonds as small coinage in Gujarat, see Tavernier, Vol.I, p.23, p.329.

60 account with his merchant, asks him for his brokerage.[29] He is always indebted to you and keeps it in hand, so as to be continued. At the same time he will make it understood to those with whom you have to do, that you owe big sums to him, that he has none of your money, in order to make them come to terms, and so as to gain from the reduction he exacts from parties whom you believe for a long time as having been paid according to the account you settled with him. Hence this will be the sixth profit. You cannot guess all this intrigue. Nobody informs you about anything. None but those faithful to him enter your house, in order to observe if somebody gets in for complaining (and) asking for repayment of the rebate which your broker has secured from him. Nobody tells you a word as they do not want to displease your broker who is more esteemed than you since he holds the purse which is the magnet that attracts all this rabble. You yourself would not be in a position to leave if he still found out something to bite.

The terms which your broker has set in making the payment of your purchases and the rebates which he has exacted on your goods are injurious to a true merchant who knows nothing of all this, nor whether his broker passes him as insolvent. He only aims at disparaging you on
61 the sly although he knows that your business position is very good and that you are opulent. He does this in order to keep you in check so that you cannot undertake any business yourself without always having recourse to him. When a merchant falls in such bad hands he is lost. Even if he has sold his goods he would only face loss for the discredit to which his broker has subjected him; this makes the buyers believe that you are selling in order to meet some payments, that you are forced to do so by some need. At this thought they just snatch it from your hands, and increase the loss in which it has put you. You cannot use your own wealth in order to make it move, you have to depend on loans and have recourse to

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29. Roques does not care to explain how in such a case, the broker makes one of his profits from his brokerage of 2%. Roques p.53.

the broker for money. Your disparagement by him results in that nobody is satisfied either with your words or with your written undertaking. The broker is not in a hurry to lend you the very amount of which he has robbed you. The merchandise which you failed to sell is going to be pawned as security for the sum borrowed at a rate of interest higher than customary, and whatever money or belongings your broker might be having of you will never help to recover the goods. He will always engage you in new business, the other is buried, he will not want to think of it till he has drained you.

62 You will soon be so, for your purchases will not succeed more than your sales. Your broker will let it be understood to sellers that you buy on credit although he tells you that it is cash. Due to this long term this merchandise will be burdened with a double interest for this is how the seller makes his account as he does not believe you to be so punctual in paying and it seems to him that he is risking it in your hands; and he only delivers it to you because of the big profits which he makes out of it and under the guarantee of your broker. The latter argues as he has done before without procuring for you the sale of that (merchandise) which is pawned. That is to which he gives the least thought till you have left, in order to inform you that somebody wants to buy it, which is perhaps sold without your knowing it. This is to use the money himself and draw towards him the interest you pay to the seraf who will give him his hand, so that in the end you will find that you have got nothing from this pawned merchandise for the interest has eaten it up. The view that one makes great profits in India thus will have betrayed you because you have not been versed in all the ruses which the banians use for squeezing you dry when you have anything to do with them.

63 The information you had that goods bought by you will sell well in that far away region will excite you to send them there promptly. It is with this aim that you have bought them. You have to inform your broker that such and such are the places where you want to go with your goods. He will point out big obstacles, risks of thieves and wars on the route and similar things, although there is no more risk there than on this paper. All the difficulties with which he confronts you are only to oblige you to have your goods insured, to which you would agree for your greatest good. The moment you utter the word about these insurances, there appears a man set up (by the broker) who will ask for eight or ten per cent as the case may be. Your broker will let you argue with him for a little more or less; and when he sees you nearing the goal, will agree with this man at a certain sum which is a little less than what he asked for; because it is he who is your insurer, under the name of the other who is worth nothing and who speaks for him in exchange of one ser of butter and a few pounds of rice, as the banians are never generous. As soon as the agreement is made, the broker requests you to go to his place in order to get from your purse the sum to which the insurance might amount, although they are only paid after one receives the information that the
64 merchandise has reached its destination. But since you are going to travel he does not want to leave this behind and gets hold of this money which he suddenly passes to your account and brings you a note of this false insurer or with some unknown name. He does it promptly so that even if you find out the truth about the 'danger' which he has described to you, you will not be able to retract your words and/so that he can defend himself saying, "Your money is given and the note received, I cannot in justice go back on the agreement you have made". It cannot be avoided and you have had it for your insurances which will constitute his seventh profit or theft which he will have committed in your business

where you have only lost.[30]

There now your merchandise gone and rendered safely to the destined place, surcharged with its credit, its insurances, a big carriage, the expenses of your journey and the brokerages. Now expose it to sale; you will find merchants from the place you left, offering the same sort at prices thirty per cent cheaper than yours since they have not paid all those unjustified sums, and have taken more precaution than you so as not to be cheated in their purchases. Thus they are able to offer it at this price with a good profit. It is not possible to take it (the merchandise) elsewhere; expenses will render it even dearer (it is already too much --R.) or it will not be in demand there. You are forced to make an end of it and would give it at whatever price one asks for. After having lost in your sale, in your purchases, with your goods mortgaged to the serafs, which is almost eaten up by its interest — after all these losses you cannot but be having your nose on the ground while your broker turns up his in a fine carriage with horses, such as is in vogue in this country. The petty packet carrier which he was when he entered your service, who looked for cotton yarn from door to door, who ran about in the bazar in order to earn one pessa, happy to have earned it before he retired for the day now relaxes in a house padded (?)[31] from top to toe which he has built with your money. In short he has enriched himself by thefts which your inadvertence has permitted him or which your little experience has failed to fend off. These are the risks to which the foreign merchants are

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30. In view of the existence of a fairly well organised system of insurance in 17th century Gujarat, Roques' reactions seem, once again, to be reflecting his personal prejudice rather than his knowledge about functioning of this institution. See Habib, Irfan : Banking in Mughal India, in Contribution to Indian Economic History I, Calcutta 1960, pp.15-17.

31. That is if the word seultures in the text is taken to mean feutree (felted) since the letters "s" and "f" ~~in~~roques are often impossible to distinguish in Roques.

exposed in India, who, due to too much trust or credulity, follow the perncious advice of their broker. I conclude in this way because I have seen and experienced this, because of the attacks I have had, and because of what could have happened to me if I had not always been wary and careful in protecting the purse of the company, making all the payments myself, never leaving a sol at the disposition of the broker.

We have spoken enough, and in great details about the small and big banians, the public and private brokers, the method of buying and selling, the suspicion which you should have when you receive goods from the weaver, necessary principles for choosing them well and about several other useful things in trade. Let us now speak a little about the agents[32] and correspondents who are away from the person who gives them orders. Let us see a little if more loyalty is to be found there (I doubt it -R). If these were not banians I could have promised myself something better from them than from the brokers, but I am afraid that what I find will be worse.

There is even more of bad faith in the transaction of employees than that found among the brokers. It will be a little difficult for me to dwell at length on all their intrigues. Nevertheless I am going to give a detailed account of what I have come to know about them, as I have done about the conduct of the brokers.

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32. Although Roques uses the word "commetans" both in the text and in the index (p. 329) a commetant is an employer. In the index, however he elucidates the word as the commission agent of the banian, which seems more appropriate. Schwartz replaces "commetan" by "komati" in the reproduction of the index in Schwartz p.27. This leads to confusion, since a komati as is well known "is a term used chiefly in the north of the Madras presidency" (Hobson - Jobson p.237) meaning a trader, in Telugu and Canara. Roques most probably uses it to signify a "commis" (as he does in p.71) - somebody like the Bengali gomasta.

In the first place you give them samples of goods which you want them to buy for your account. These are stamped with your seal along with the price. You keep a similar set with you. These employees are usually agents or salaried servants of your chief broker. By chief broker I mean the person who resides and looks after your business in the place where you have settled, as in the centre of your trade to which all the rest responds. This principal broker knows all that you are to buy, he has a statement of your instructions and of goods which you need. He undertakes to get them from the places where they are produced, proposes to you the merchants with whom to negotiate, who will promise to deliver the goods to you within a fixed
68 period, at the price agreed upon and on the samples which you give them.

You think that this man or these people with whom you deal are your actual sellers. (Wake up --R) The actual buyers on the spot are none other than the aids of the servant sent by your principal broker, and the latter your seller under the name of merchants. One never makes a contract without quite considerable advances, for worked cloth is bought on cash payment.[33] They (the advances) will come to about half of what this purchase would cost. You deliver this money to your merchants, who will receive it in order to add colour to this business. But they put it immediately in the broker's hand, from which he pays a little to his agent in order to begin giving some advances to the weavers or to buy cotton yarn, and invests the rest in his business. One does not advance more than ten roupies to each weaver, and even this is a lot. These contractor-merchants are ordinarily the public brokers of the places from which the goods come. They have made a secret agreement with your broker at six, seven, eight roupies less par corge than what you give. The servant sent there also acts for the profit of his master;

33. The sentence makes no sense unless we take Roques to be meaning "only the worked cloth is bought on cash payment". The description of purchasing gold and silver worked cotonis in Ahmedabad (pp.133-137) in the next volume starting from p.78 would suggest this.

he buys at much less than the samples, and is inspector of others who
69 are to furnish cloth with a certain number of vissas. If a few tassous are missing on the width or half a cobe on the length, he deducts their price proportionately. He does the same thing if the cloth does not conform to the sample. All this is to the profit of the broker; this is not all that he gets, there are many others. (Here they are --R.)

He makes the weaver pay a triple interest for the advances and when he (the latter) sells the cloth if it does not conform lashes out at him. You can see that by acting in this way they cannot furnish you the goods similar to the samples although it is in your contract. They divide them in three sorts which would have the same length and width. The finest of the three will differ from your sample by at least 2 roupies par corge, the second by 4, the third by 6. Calculate where it goes along with the fact that you pay much more than the market price. They mix these three sorts together when the time of delivery is up and bring them to you thus mixed in the bales. If they are not paid in full before the goods are taken away, they quite often take money from the seraf and deliver the merchandise to him although you have actually
70 paid to the broker, who takes a great care in asking you for money for those men, by the letters which he is supposed to have received. But for all this he does not let them have it so soon. He will use it till the point of departure of ships and still longer if he were not afraid that then it would go to his account. He acts this way, so that during your greatest activity for the expedition you do not have the time to examine them. This has happened several times to his advantage. If you have not paid them fully as this can happen, they will take this opportunity to present you with accounts quite fat with interests for the serafs give them a hand there for very little.[34] If they lend one hundred

34. Here and else where Roques refers to the money-lender's complicity with the broker, but instead of including this group among the band of rascals (Roques p.39) he deals with it in the third volume (pp.223-249).

a thousand, lent long ago although they themselves (the agents) owe these to the cotton sellers and weavers, and do not pay them till long after the reception. It has even been found that even 3 (8 ?) months after the goods were received, they have not paid the serafs of Baroda who have complained against this. By such bad conduct they discredit their employers as bad payers. But it hardly matters to them provided they can do their business, their only consideration being their interest. Those supposed interests constitute hence another profit for them.

71 When one receives these goods in the factory, they are inspected and examined by the employees. Nothing is found to be conforming to the sample. It cannot be - since it was ordered at three different prices by the broker. You have to enter in arguments, your money is given, the goods paid for, you will not receive it without this. Your merchants will never admit that they have acted by the order of your broker, and that it is he who gets all the profit and they the trouble. Perhaps your ships are awaiting this merchandise; it being so, you have to come to some sort of a compromise by a reduction which will seem exorbitant to them (even) if it is only two roupies par corge on the most inferior sort. You arrange this affair well or otherwise; and you do not know that out of the total, plenty of good merchandise is still lying with the broker, since they are of three different prices. Add to this purchase what amount less he pays for the merchandise, the profits that his servant has secured for him on the purchase, the two per cent of brokerage, and you will find that he makes a profit of at least fifteen 72 to sixteen per cent on this affair by receiving the good and bad cloth mixed together. That is why the other nations who are also aware of these frauds maintain one of their employees[35] in all the places of manufacture where they do business. He is worth the expenses the Companies incur for him. He keeps watch over everything, and you receive better goods which are never overpaid. It seems to me that our Company should also do this

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35. "Comis" (commis) in original.

for the sake of its greatest benefit, without entering into consideration of the expenses which would be rather an economy.

All that I came to write down in seventy two pages leaves an odour of swindling to the reader so as to persuade him that in India there are no traders who act loyally and are more trustworthy than the banians. I will get you to know them, although remaining convinced that the cheats are greater in number, for all banians without exception can be termed thus. But as these are not the only ones in Asia, as there are some of the richest ones, who never live by tricks as they do, it is reasonable that I say just two words in order to make known how the merchants who do a great trade by sea and land in the Indies, carry themselves in business. There you will certainly find more sincerity and
73 good faith than you have come across in all that you have read. This is also the reason why I isolate him from the others by this special chapter which will bring this treatise to a close since, as goes the saying, one should end better than he had commenced.

The Muslim Merchants

The Muslim or Masuleman nation, as the indigenous people of this country calls it, gets itself respected by all the other (nations) of India. It is not to be compared with any one (of them). They despise the banian (nation) which has no religion and does not even know how it lives, and those of whom I am speaking have the al Coran which teaches them more conscientious lessons. They also have something more noble and more human in them, which prevents them from following in the footsteps of the banians.[36] Neither do they take to manufacture of cotton cloth, although the majority of weavers are Muslims. They consider this as beneath them

36. This tallies with Roques' observations on the Muslim merchants of Ahmedabad. See below Roques, p.111.

and if they need cotton goods for some cargo or commission, they send for a banian with whom they negotiate and who walks more straight in dealing with them, than he has done with the merchant about whom I
74 have spoken, for otherwise he will get the bastinado. They are also better served by the weaver when he learns from the banian that he is working for a man of his own faith. This is why the banians seek the agency of Europeans, Persians, Turks, Armenians more eagerly than theirs, as they can rob them (the Muslims) of very little beyond the brokerage because they will have to regurgitate it at their own cost.

Trade of the Muslim merchants is based more on the manufacture of silk, and gold and silver fabrics and on doranes[37] than anything else. If they do any other trade, that will be for the return of their ships, or in goods which they order in very distant regions in exchange of those of silk which they send there. For example, those who reside in Amedabat which is the town which produces more silk (cloth) than any other in India, send them to Agra, Kolcunda (Golconda), Bengal, and other places in the far end of the kingdom. In exchange they receive turbans, sashes and extremely fine and light cloth for cabayes, which they sell in retail to other merchants. If it concerns the return of their ships, it will be tutenague which is some sort of a metal which is used for several worked household utensils, calin which is something like tin, sapanwood
75 for dyeing, eaglewood and sandal for (manufacturing) perfumes and all sorts of drugs and goods according to the nature of their trade.

It is satisfying to deal with them. If God wished them to be involved in the manufacture of cotton cloth, one would have saved a good deal of money. If you need any of their merchandise you send your broker there who brings samples to you and tells you the price. Your broker cannot commit big rapines here, because if the goods please you and the prices do not disgust you, which happens but rarely for the Muslims demand little beyond what they claim as justified, tell you the

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37. Dorias or striped pieces ?

most fair price and stick to it ~~and~~ they do not indulge in any cheating in the sale, and use very few words. You go to their place to see if everything is according to the sample which they gave you. You conclude the deal between you two. Your broker is only a spectator. Of course he does his best to prevent you from getting in touch with the merchant; he will bring his (the merchant's) people to you who will have an understanding with him for sharing the surplus of the price at which they are to deliver the merchandise. So they will hold it at a price higher than that intended by the proprietor. If the thing is
76 worth the trouble, have recourse to the merchant, and never deal with his man. If it is only the matter of a piece or two of silk cloth it is of little importance, you know what it is worth, know the price, and you arrange with this agent. The only skill required in the business you do with the Muslims is that of speaking to them, which is soon done. You do not have to communicate it to your broker, who is not at all necessary to you on this occasion and you save a lot of money.

But it is a big affair to ward of the tricks and shrewdness of the banians, for the proprietor of the goods which you want to buy is unknown and you never talk to him. If you insist on seeing him, your broker will bring a man of straw to you who is not worth his cabaye, and will say, "Here is the merchant". This fake trader is briefed, he behaves like the proprietor and cheats you. This is why, my dear fellow worker think over the importance of endeavouring to know well all sorts of merchandise with which you deal. Since everything is against you in the purchases as well as in the sales, you should trust only your own experience and should act with a lot of calm in dealing with the banians. For if they sense your temper, you are caught indubitably.

77 To mention every type of business which one has with the banians in India would add an endless discourse to this volume. My dear friends and fellow workers, please be satisfied for the time being with what I have said in this small compilation where I have to the best of my ability, enumerated the truth as I saw and noticed in the places where I have been dealing with them. I found their maxims the same in the most far-away regions. Their only aim is to cheat you if they can, and to get hold of all your money by their tricks. Wait till I have completed my travels, to present you with the memoirs and special remarks on what one can sell and buy for the utility and advantage of those illustrious personnages who constitute the body of the Royal Company of France[38] whom we have the honour to serve. In the (above) mentioned memoir which I am preparing for you, you will find the resources presented by the manufactures in the towns and villages which are to be found on my route, in order to draw the advantage which you will judge the most suitable for the good of their business - as well as what I have been able to find about the trade of other nations who have come earlier than us to India.

Brochia

Brocha (sic) was once a very fine big town, but is now ruined by kings and princes fighting with one another, adorned with a handsome castle partly destroyed built on rock at the foot of a vast river[39]. Ships could enter it once, but since a long time the passages are blocked by sand from the sea. There is a Customs there which receives some small

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38. As the company was more generally known, in seventeenth century France, revealing its virtual submission to state control.

39. It was impossible to turn the text into a proper sentence without taking mere plenty of liberty with the original.

duties for the passage of goods which are transported to Suratte from an infinite number of places. It (Surat) has attracted the entire trade of the place mentioned because of its port readstead and rivers; it is two days journey from there (Broach).

The English have a correspondent there, and the Dutch, a factory. The former buy little there, but it is there that they get bleached all the cloth that come to them from the farthest places, because it has been noticed that the bleaching done at the place surpasses[40] all others done within 100 lieues[41] around. Another reason that obliges this nation to maintain an agent there is that by
79 his care the merchandise is finished better, and with more diligence, to be received conveniently at Surat and loaded in their ships. Moreover they save four or five per cent, the work being done by themselves.

The Dutch have a factory there and make considerable purchases there for their Asian Trade, buying nothing there for selling in Europe. These goods consist of certain multi coloured paignes (?) which serve to clothe the negro women who are in the islands and from the southern coast and for other uses in the same country. They also get made other paignes, more narrow and shorter, named longuis, for the blacks. They wrap these around the middle of their bodies and pass them around the thighs.[42] This type of merchandise is of little value --- at most twenty roupies par corge but have a great demand with an extraordinary profit, as much as they want, if it can be said so; for they use it to pay the islanders who work for them at the cultivation of muscade and cinnamon with the remnants. There (in Broach) they get bleached the cloth they receive from Brodera and Neriade[43]. Sometimes they also buy thick baftas

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40. The bleaching "properties" of the water of the Narmada find mention in all the important contemporary travelogues. See, for example, Tavernier, VI p.54, Thevenot, p.9.

41. Lieue = Old French measure of distance, of variable length. The old lieue de poste of France was equal to 2 miles and 743 yards. Tavernier I, p.334 Editor's note.

42. Lungees, although Roques' clumsy description suggests rather a dhoti.

43. Baroda and Nadiad.

which they get dyed in the same place, in the deepest shade of blue possible, putting in as much indigo as they can. They do this with more than one object in view. One is that thus they do not pay the duties on indigo which are imposed upon them. Another is that once in Holland they boil these to extract the extra colour which leaves the cloth pale blue. These baftas are then sent to Germany to be sold.

The production of Brochia which we refer to commonly as Baroche, consists of coarse thick cloth, one and one half cobe wide and twenty five cobes long. If ordered, they also make a finer variety of this cloth, but this fabric is not at all esteemed as they make it with a coarse variety of cotton. Baftas are to be excepted from this. They are only 20 cobes long and 19 to 20 tassous wide. It is the Persis (Parsis) residing there, who devote themselves greatly to this manufacture, and excel therein over all other workers. Their baftas are very much sought after and have a great market in the country, for the use of Indians. They make them with the finest cotton, their price starting from 3 roupies and going upto 25-30. They put a gold border on these. These are transported to all the regions of the country and the highest (personnages) dress in these. They (the Parsis) also weave coarse baftas 25 cobes long at one and a half roupie par piece. These are dyed in blue and taken to achem[44] for sale, with some amount of fine
81 ones which also sell well there. But neither the one nor the other is fit for France because of their little width. Those same Persis also weave allegas.[45] These are cloth made of silk and cotton. Those of Surat are better and more fine; nevertheless the former are sold as much and are consumed in the country, used by Muslims and other persons who wear turbans. Sometimes and quite often (?) there are shops full of saltpetre brought on bullocks from the neighbourhood of Agra. It is left

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44. The kingdom of Achin in Sumatra.

45. Allegas : a species of fabric, its warp being of silk and the weft of cotton. According to Roques, Ahmedabad allegeas surpassed all others : Roques, p.121.

there till some buyers appear or one of the nations with a Company needs it-because without them the sale is not at all considerable.

Brodera

It is a little town with several neighbouring big villages dependent on it. It is situated in a plain at two days journey from Brochia. There is a governor named Set Mamout, who does not live there often, being always busy fighting —— either (against) his neighbour or at the order of his king. He is a good soldier. His father is also in the king's service who gives him a thousand horsemen as pay; he (the father) resides in Amedabat where they have two beautiful houses, the father one, and the son another. They do not get along well.

The English have a correspondent there who purchase a number of merchandise every year. Almost all of it is coarse cloth - dorgagis - at a price of 35 to 44 Roupies more or less par corge, according to the current price. In all the places where I have been, where this nation does trade, I have noticed the same thing, and think that most of these piece goods are sold in Virginia, Bermuda and other islands which they possess in America. They also do trade in it in Africa - in cape verde
82 Angola and all along that coast. They exchange it with the blacks for powdered gold and ivory. The surplus is sent off to Ireland, Scotland and other regions of the kingdom for household use, and often to our Frenchmen who believe that what one brings to them is not as tasteful as that they (the English) go to look for far away, with risk, and at greater cost; although all of it comes from the same place and at a lesser price than demanded by the foreigners who cannot sell it cheaper than us being the worst served of the three nations when the fidelity of the brokers is concerned. The latter cheat them even more than us. All the advantage that they have is to have a principal broker who is expeditious, gets the work done with diligence and is concerned only with

business of that Company. He also profits very well from it. He is considered to be capable, a man worth consulting, and is highly esteemed by that nation for his long years of service. He acts like those old governesses in France who quite often give lectures to their mistresses who do not dare utter a single word because of the hold they have secured over the household by their seniority. This
83 one is the same. He has rendered himself so absolute that he clips and pares as he pleases, without being watched or opposed. Due to this advantage he oils his palm just as it should be done. That Company still owes him three or four lacqs[46] of roupies. Each lacq is worth fifty thousand Ecus. All the employees who are in the factories look for his friendship. The correspondents, brokers or commissioners are his brothers or relatives, who are posted in all their trading establishments and factories. They give him a faithful account of all that he can usurp in the commissions or purchases;[47] this comes to him for his own account. He also receives big presents from the head(s) of factories because as they have the permission to trade in their private capacity, he serves them in their business and even lends them money. This keeps them under control in such a way that they close their eyes to what they know, so as not to break up with a man whom they need, allowing him to act as he fancies. This is the veritable policy used by all brokers, to attract to themselves if they can, by all sorts of means, those who are in power, so that they cannot harm them in their freedom of action.

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46. Lakh, one hundred thousand.

47. Such lamentations were only too common. Amnesty, president of the English factory at Surat observes at length in 1696 that "it has been the policy of the Brokers by degrees to settle in all places of the Investment their relations and creatures to carry it on ....'. Quoted by Chaudhuri K.N., op.cit., p.70.

The Dutch have always had and still have a rented house there, occupied by their broker, but they have made no purchases there since five or six years. I cannot guess the reason but think that it is the war in Europe[48] which prevents them, because those types of piece goods of Brodera are more suitable for France than for Holland; they produce at home ~~at~~ cloth of a more lasting variety, and so far as cotton cloth is concerned, use only those that they receive from Coromandel and Bengal.
84 This, in my opinion, is the reason for their having discontinued their purchases; and our Frenchmen not being able to go to them, they have no need for these, but when they (the French) will be able to, it will be quite apparent in our return sales, for there is no doubt that the merchants look for all the means to gather a varied stock and to put their money to as good use as possible. Our Company could satisfy them very well if she wanted to.

The cloth of Brodera is excellent. The cotton which is used is middling fine - which is gathered in their own region and brought from Jambessa and Cambaie.[49] There is a great number of weavers there, who do not take to preparing the sorts demanded by us unless these are ordered with money advance, as everywhere in India. It is thereby that they have their hold on us, and serve us in the worst possible way without risking anything. Plenty of coarse baftas are produced there, ordered by Muslims and other merchants trading in gulf of the Red Sea, Zeda Bassera and other regions of that - ?.[50] As a great quantity of white and blue cloth is consumed there, it always keeps the weavers busy. But if you order them for fine and middling dorgagis and sauvagagis they will

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48. The Franco-Dutch War of 1672-1678.

49. Jambusar and Cambay.

50. Text illegible . Roques usually refers to the Red sea and the Persian Gulf as one single area.

willingly quit weaving baftas; for they will gain more wage and will rob you of cotton if supplied by you.[51] There I got made 300 corges of the above mentioned pieces. I was satisfied with part of these but was very much discontented with the thick
85 dorgagis, for the English snatched away all that they could find of this variety, good or bad. This allowed the workers to make them yet coarser in order to finish one piece faster and begin another.[52]

If the Companies could practise the same maxim as followed by the merchants of lion,[53] in their purchases they would always have good merchandise at a very low price: when several buyers of the same merchandise meet in one town they leave the entire commission to the first comer, who acts for all; the others move on and render a similar service to that person if he needs to buy other goods elsewhere. He gives his instructions to them. And when all the purchasers return to lion, the goods are divided in parcels; each taking what falls to him. This could be carried out if we could do without the broker, who, being knowledgeable of the business would give such advice as to upset this plan.

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51. The original reads .. "will gain by robbing you of cotton and wage if it (italics mine) is supplied by you".

52. Variations on this theme, for explaining the "dissatisfaction with merchandise received"can be found in letters and reports of all the Companies.

53. Lyon.

Neriade

Neriade was once quite a big walled town, but has now become a bourg[54] because the walls have fallen off, which have never been raised again. Only the grooves have been sealed up in places with steel and the four gates have been preserved. It is at a distance of one and half day from Brodera and a good one day from Amedabat, to which it pays revenue; the governor is a domestic or favourite of that of Amedabat.

86 The English maintain a broker there, who gets made as much of thick dorgagis as possible, throughout the year, either for the Company or for various employees. In unbleached condition, these are 21 gaise[55] or cobes in length and from eleven to 12 tassous to one full cobe in width. Price varies according to year and to buyers, some times more, sometimes less; for the cotton neither raises nor diminishes the merchandise; the harvest is adequate and certain, the number of spinners increases rather than decreases, for even the smallest children are engaged in this work. As a result they are always at the footing of 42 to 44 Roupies. I have experienced in our sales in France that the bulk goods (here I speak of cotton cloth) fetch twenty five per cent more than the fine (variety) since the other nations have it in their power to secure the very fine ones which they secure from the Coromandel Coast and Bengal at very low price.[56] So in the country of Hindusthan and guserate they buy only coarse cloth which has the required body for the use of common people. This is the reason (so I think) as to why the English buy nothing else in this country.

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54. Bourg - literelly a borough. In this context, a big village or settlement distinct from a town. The presence of a surrounding wall was considered by many European travellers as the primary distinguishing feature of a town.

55. Gaz-yard.

56. See Introduction p.x.

The Dutch buy nothing there; they have neither store house
87 nor correspondents. I think I have mentioned the reason in the chapter on Brodera. Nevertheless, when they cannot find a sufficient quantity of thick baftas in Amedabat for preparing chittes[57] they order it in Neriade, a piece having 25 cobes ~~this~~ in length; they cut each piece in two chittes in order to send all of it to Batavia. It is done only when Amedabat fails.

Neriade cloth is very good. The cotton is passably fine. There is no charlatanism as to the fabrics --- they are of the same texture almost all over. The quality of the dorgagis surpasses that of the Brodera ones. But the sauvagagis of Brodera are finer than those of Neriade. Hence these two places balance each other.

Neriade piece goods are of a raised grain, with the same texture everywhere, without any starching; and when bleached, without any dressing you would take them for Rouen cloth at 3 livres 10 sols par aune. I have tested this on 4 corges marked no.38 to be sent to France.[58] I esteem that they will be accepted and their price will come to about three Roupies and three fourth par piece of 20 cobes.

The inhabitants are almost all weavers who, like those of Bordera are engaged in weaving thick baftas to be dyed in blue or to be made in Chittes. Armenian and Muslim merchants order a lot of this and it is something marvellous to watch the quantity loaded on ships as
89 the merchandise with which they have the greatest success in sale.[59] So if one wants to get the weavers of Neriade to weave finer and wider pieces, they are at pains to make up their mind to do so, for in that case they will

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57. Chintz in English. Printed and/or painted textile goods, too well known to require further elaboration in this context. The best recent treatment of the subject known to me is by John Irwin. See specially Origins of Chintz, Irwin and Brett, London 1970.

58. Referred to as No.48 in Roques, p.23.

59. The page number reads 89 instead of 88.

have to change their looms and to buy a different (type of) cotton. This interrupts their work, and makesthem lose time although they sense that it will bring them higher profit. Besides, as they have already collected the coarse cotton for baftas, which does not involve much capital, they prefer using that, rather than undertaking another job. Moreover, as they can finish off one piece of this baftas quite fast they get very much bored working on a piece of fine cloth, which requires twice or thrice that time. This is why one finds it difficult to make them decide to quit and it will be expedient for those wanting to get a large number of cloths made, to choose a certain number of the best weavers and to keep them occupied throughout the year. I contracted for 2000 corges at that place and over a period of six months could hardly secure 150 which I found tolerably good. In view of its usefulness, the Company should attach itself more to the product of Neriade than that of Brodera, it (the former) is assuredly better and more saleable. I have compared them before saying so. They are cheaper by two roupies par corge. The whole thing depends on finding loyal correspondents, something not possible in the Indies. But one can supervise their activities from the entrepot of Amedabat, sending a man from time to time to see what is going on, in order to keep them in fear. The same person should make a review of the weavers, and secure someone among them by money, for, as they are Muslims they hardly care for the banians excepting in so far as the latter advance them something with which to work. By these means one will learn all that is happening, what method of contracting was practised by the correspondent with them, as also the price of cotton with which they were working, (and) several other circumstances in order to take one's measures and precautions. All this can be done without trouble.

In that place one also manufactures chittes and palempours[60] in imitation of Amedabat. But they have neither such suitable water nor as much skill as those of Amedabat. Nevertheless their products sell locally and in the environs. The properties of the waters of this region are something to admire, so much so that the more one washes a piece of chitte the brighter it becomes. It is in this that the river of Amedabat has a special quality and when the chitte is below standard, it is a sign, that the worker has not given all his efforts therein.

Dolka (Dholka)

91 Dolka is a bourg, constructed as those of which I have spoken, situated at one small day's or better at six hours of journey from Amedabat. The inhabitants are almost all Muslims, very few of other castes. They all work at looms. The governor is a servant of that of Amedabat.

None of the European nations but the French buys dorgagis or sauvagagis there. But the others buy a good deal of baftas as they do elsewhere. One finds good merchandise there when it is chosen well and is of a different make from those I have named; it is similar to the melis of Morlais (?) in France. The weft is much thicker than the warp and with less twist. As a result, when beaten with the reed, the weft, not being well twisted closes itself and later, the shuttle, moving back and forth, presses thread against thread, which adds body to the cloth. Moreover, the cotton swells at the time of bleaching, if it is of good quality; since that of the weft has been closed by the beating of the reed, it swells in proportion to its entire expanse. This is what turns it into a cloth that lasts long, which has the body to resist the wear and tear of household use, and in a word wears as well as those of France.

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60. Palamposh - bed spread. Also used to mean a quilt. See below, Roques p.108.

They are made in such fineness, length and width as demanded. They
92 are usually 22 cobes when raw, and one cobe and a half in width. It is this type of cloth which is worth contracting for, in colours in the fashion of German canvas (?) to be employed in all sorts of uses, for tailors, upholsterers, table linen, bed sheet, mens drawers and .....[61] of household. To sum up, they can be used in any way one likes, for there are fine as well as thick varieties, the price being from 42 to 60 roupies the corge. But one must be careful not to be cheated while buying them, for in most of them the small inserted reed to which I referred in the other book on the ruses of weavers, would play its tricks. You will find them much finer at both the ends (borders ?) than in the middle. If you only look only upto four fingers from both the edges you will be deceived. But examine them well inside and everywhere. If it is the same, you will have an excellent cloth, but if it is not, it should be rejected as it will never come out well at bleaching and will need a lot of starching to cover its defects, which will hinder its sale. Another precaution to be taken
93 is to see if it is not fluted --- that is to say that it does not have lines, thicker than the cloth, at intervals; for the weavers, in order to steal fine cotton, take to this meanness. But to be fully assured, open the entire piece and examine fold by fold. If it is as you desire, you will have a very fine cloth.

In this place other piece-goods are also manufactured, these have the same width as the above mentioned one, but they are only 14 cobes long. These are called Cacers. One can take these almost without seeing them, for they are uniform all over. If they were of the same length as the others, one would not have needed any other cloth for France, but from this area. These are preferable to all others of the

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61. Illegible.

Indies for their durability. It might so happen that the weavers would manufacture them with the desired length, on getting a proportionally higher rate. It will be easy to bring them to do this, if they are engaged to work for you throughout the year, and if the best of them are chosen. For they are usually occupied in weaving coarse baftas which they dye in red for the countries of Zeda and other places. This work they never lack.

One can procure annually one thousand to twelve hundred corges of cloth from Dolka. This place is situated at six hours of road
94 journey from Amedabat from where one can go to visit them and come back the same day, which is very advantageous. By engaging a number of workers in this way, you do not need the participation of your broker, only a storehouse for stocking the cloth received, sending a Frenchman there every eight days to receive them, or even to make him reside there, to have an eye as to what should be done. When a (sufficient) quantity of cloth is ready, it is to be carted to Baroche, to be bleached there. I have bought 144 corges of cloth of the above mentioned sorts, but I have found the cacers and sauvagagis better than the dorgagis for I had to do with a banian whom Naggi Bouder the broker of Amedabat indicated to me. I came to know that he had an understanding with him to get them made with lesser number of vissas than that stipulated in our agreement; and when these were brought to me I paid them according to their value for they were still to receive six or seven hundred roupies, which justifies my saying once more in this book what I have said in the other-that one should always try to be indebted to the banians in order to get even with their frauds.[62] Without that you will never come to the end. And I was obliged to choose them piece by piece, when they delivered these to me after bleaching, in order to distinguish the good ones from the bad, and to evaluate the sorts according to their correct value, which one can have noticed at Surat by their different prices, although being of

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62. Roques p.36.

the same quality. It is a great misfortune for a merchant when he is cheated by the person who acts in his business. The brokers can easily do that as long as you are unaware of the local intrigue. But once you understand it they suffer martyrdom and you laugh at them for you contract directly without their participation.

Cerquis (Sarkhej)

I will not say much about that place, for the greatest trade there is that in indigo. There are nevertheless weavers who manufacture dorgagis, 27 cobes long and 1 cobe 11 tassous wide. Although made of coarse cotton, they are sought after because of the length and the price is quite modest, 40 to 42 roupies par corge. Of the local merchants with whom I did business the best are two brothers who are called Mangissas, with whom you can contract. I was satisfied with what they delivered to me, which I got printed at Amedabat.[63] Their colour came out as well as on those costing 10 roupies more, as they were well furnished with cotton which improved even further in printing. In order to secure what one demands in France with regard to coloured cloth, it will be a propos to get them from that place. There will be a lot to gain, by cutting them in two, then to dye and finish them at Amedabat, which is only two cosses from there. These are a little too thick for being made in chittes, but very suitable for what I say. This place does not have a big trade because being so close to Amedabat, that
96 city attracts all to itself. Hence the cloth to be sold is taken there.

The indigo which they produce there is quite good, but one must be careful when they make it in paste to see that they do not put send in it, or that they do not put it to dry on sandy ground where the wind will blow dust on it.[64] The English once had a try at manufacturing

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63. It can also mean : which I got printed Amedabat style.

64. See Tavernier Vol.II, pp.25-26 for similar remarks regarding "Frauds practised in Indigo".

indigo themselves, (they) bought a good deal of leaves in order to carry out the design. But the banians, jealous of being deprived of this job, managed so well the workers who worked at it that they spoiled everything, and caused them lose more than 20 thousand roupies, which they could never recover. They (the English) follow the method of making indigo in small cakes or slabs, which can be packed very comfortably in cases, and are preserved fully, without breaking. I find this method much better than ours, which is to make them in balls, and then to put them in leather covered sacks. This way they wear out easily and are reduced to dust at the least
97 shock received while moving them. I think that it will be apropos to imitate them. One would even save on packing and would be able to stow it better in the ships. This indigo will retain its lustre and will sell better. When you buy this drug, you must empty the sacks (i.e. take out their contents) at three different points, and must be careful when you come to the middle of the bag, for therin lies all the trick, and must break a number of balls to see if it is not loaded. The whole art of choosing indigo consists only of this. The leaf produces a uniformly fine paste throughout the country and if it is deeper in certain regions than others, that means that it was exposed to the sun on a hot ground. It is nothing but a sort of false effect[65] created by them to raise or to reduce the price, which in no way renders the indigo pure. Since here we are, so close to the great and renowned city of Amedabat, let us go and see what goes on there, in order to give you an account.

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65. "Sophistication" is the word Roques uses, obviously in its sense of "adulteration".

Amadebat

It is an extraordinarily big city, surrounded by good brick walls, with bastions at equal distances. It is more than six cosses, that is to say six French lieues in circumference including its outskirt. Formerly it was the residence of the kings of
98 Guserate. But all the beautiful edifices built by their Majesties in memory of their reigns are entirely ruined due to lack of care. One has only preserved a mosque which is in the heart of the city. (It is) very beautiful, quite spacious, built of square stone slabs and with a big dome at each corner.[66] There remains also a garden at half a lieue from the city. The magnificience of the building's structure reveals the greatness of the kings. The flower beds are enormous but ill-maintained, although the king pays fifty thousand écus annually for its upkeep. Those who are paid for this do it very badly. I had been there once to see it, by curiosity. The city is very highly populated - by all sorts of artisans, a great number of banians, very few muslims, and gentils of all castes.

The governor's name is Mamet Amican.[67] He is one of the most powerful lords of the country and in fact I do not think anybody else matches him in his wealth. He has never been able to calculate his revenues which are spread all over the kingdom. He lives within a gunshot of the city. I find his temparament more rustic than urban; he does not often occupy the great castle (the usual residence
99 of the governors) which is within the city. He comes there occasionally to render justice when it is an important affair. What causes this is

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66. Does he mean the Jami Masjid ? (For a near contemporary description, see, Indian Travels of Thevenot & Careri, Sen S.N. ed. New Delhi, 1949, p.13.

67. Muhammed Amin Khan, son of Mir Jumla, was viceroy of Gujarat from 1672 to 1682. For a more or less similar sketch of his personality, with occasional further details, see Martin, Vol.II, pp.296-297. While referring to his enormous wealth and his avidity, Martin points out his affection for Persians and Arabs. "Those of these two nations who visited India were sure to find an assured shelter and a powerful protection at Ahmedabad ...". Ibid, p.297.

that he is constantly building or embellishing a country seat which he has begun. But one would say that this is rather a bourg than a private residence, because all his favourites and servants stay there. Eighty elephants, two hundred camels, two hundred pair of bullocks for the baggage carts have their appartments there. His horses and his horsemen also live there. To sum up he has the ways of a king and imitates his grandeur, because he does not give way to any body. His late father who has left him all this property was called Mirza Mela.[68] Originally from the Coromandel coast, he was a soldier and pushed himself forward by his valour. He seized upon the chance to rise during the war which this king had with his brothers and, by attaching himself to the person of the present ruler. The latter refused him nothing in his conquests and gave him as much land as he wanted in his country. This he got very well cultivated and made it yield good revenue. Hence, being the only son he enjoys at present all these possessions and revenues.[69] And the post of governor of Amedabat and of its dependencies brings him a revenue which is inestimable. Several times he has lent three to four millions to the king for which he has received gifts of a great revenue, which are always swelling his own. He is lucky to gain by his loans, which would have been ruinous for others, repaid with so much gratitude. He has his good qualities as well as bad ones as the rest of mankind. He does not help his own men, neither those who have served him well during a number of years. He is not at all generous-one can even add there a little avarice, for he pays only half the price for the materials of all the fine edifices he gets constructed. He does the same for the daily wage of the artisans whom he gets by force to work for him, and who cannot maintain their families with what little they receive. He renders

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68. Mir Jumla.

69. This is confirmed by what the standard English biography of Mir Jumla tells us about Muhammed Amin. See Life of Mir Jumla by Sarkar Jagadish Narayan, Calcutta, 1951. Appendix C pp.301-302.

justice very well and does not accept presents from anybody (remarkably curious for the Indian temparament --- R). If anybody offers him anything which he likes, he has it assessed and paid, or offers a present of an equal value. Those who want to obtain something from this lord, approaches the person who is the closest to him and whom he refuses nothing; that person will pretend that their request is very difficult to carry out, so that you grease his palm often. This is the Indian way, where nobody takes a single step for love or charity. Money or
101 presents should go ahead of you not only for the first time, but every time you want to see them either on a visit or for business. They make a solid income out of this. For if you pay them one year they believe that they will get as much from you in the following year also. They are impudent enough to have it asked for or to show that they have received nothing so far. Therefore, as the Companies cannot do without living in friendship with the leading personnages of the regions where they do trade and as it is necessary to slake the thirst of these leeches, they should, in my opinion, be sparing of their largesse. That is to say, to give little but often, to take their time and give according to the nature of the affair in which you need them. This method is certainly better for you and even more for those who receive and give nothing. When I say to give little and often I mean only to those whom you need most who are the governors of the Customs. These are the ones whom it matters to cultivate, for out of sheer caprice they can greatly delay the issuing of passports for your merchandises, and (thus) to cause you very severe prejudice. This I noticed in the case of the Dutch and the English who have dragged on their solicitation for months till they spoke their mind - and in a
102 nice silvery tone. This is what I practised and was the better for it for they have very fresh memory of the last present which you made and cannot refuse to be of use to you when you want it. Whereas even if you had given them half of your wealth very long ago, and had reminded them of that, they

would straightaway tell you that was then and not now. The Blacks of the Isle of Dauphine[70] gave us the same answer, when they were hungry.

If I proposed to describe the life and customs of the Indians I would get astray/from a subject which is more necessary to our profession. It is that which obliges me to bring this chapter to an end, in order to continue with which I proposed to do : to inform the reader, so that he is versed in the purchasing method in Amedabat, in the manufacture of cloth there, in the trade of silk fabrics, in chitte painting, in the quarrelsome temper of the artisans and common people and in all that has come to my knowledge so far.

Continuation of Amedabat.

103 The greatest trade in Amedabat is in painted* chitte coverlets, rugs or palempours and toques, in all sorts of cotton cloth, and great quantities of thick baftas dyed in blue for being distributed in Asian trade. These are the principal occupations of artisans and this provides livelihood to an infinite number of people. For such great quantities of paintings one also needs a great amount of cloth; here the spinning women and the weavers come in. The dyers and washermen, who are not the best of people, no more than the beaters, gain very well their livelihood and should be rich given the amount of work they do day and night, but God permit that they remain miserable as a compensation for their fraud. To tell the truth I do not think there are more perfidious men in the world. All those common people are extremely brutal and not at all fit to reside in such a great city. They are very selfish and would have their own throats cut if one reduces the least amount from what they
104 demand. They do nothing for anybody unless paid in advance and, (even) when thus paid, serve you as badly as they can. So much so that one can

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70. Madagascar. This is one of the rare references made by Roques to his stay in Madagascar prior to his coming to India.

* The author obviously means "printing". See also Schwartz, p.10, p.25.

neither be the master of ones own goods, nor get things done as he wants them.

All the chittes made there are not with their own cloth. They use a quantity of gazis; it is a coarse cloth, light and narrow, which is manufactured around Agra. Their length varies between 35-40-45 cobes; this is the reason why they do not sell them by piece but in one hundred royal cobes which is the measurement of Agra, which is one quarter more that the one used ordinarily in that place[71]. These pieces cost R.7 per hundred (cobes ?). They are cut in 12½ to 13 cobe long pieces in order to be made in chittes; the rate paid for painting is six to seven roupies par corge. These are sent to Bantam and to other areas in the South. One also gets saletis painted for those same regions. These are made of finer cotton than the above mentioned ones and are 19 to 20 cobes long but less by two tassous in width. They cost 23 roupies par corge in Amedabat, and are manufactured in Angene[72] a town three hundred cosses away (from Amedabad) and one hundred from Seronge.[73]

These saleti pieces are at the same time too long and not long enough; for the chittes have to be joined together in order to save the extra length. And on a corge one third will be found stitched; but this can be noticed only on the reverse side, as the painting hides
105 this defect and they pass as the others. Painting is also done on the cloth known as sati manufactured ....[74] and around Seronge. They are

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71. The Elahi Gaz of Akbar : 84.858 cm. Schwartz p.26.

72. Ujjaini.

73. Sironj, one of the Central Indian parganas of the State of Tonk.

74. There is a gap in the text here.

of the same price and width as the saletis (and) are only 14½ cobes and require the same devices for the extra two cobes in order not to break the order nor the tradition of the length of 12½ cobe which is required to cover a woman of the southern country.[75] None of these cloths are dyed in blue because they are rather fine and light, not having sufficient body. Those who buy these cloths brought by foreigners, do so when they cannot find what they need in Amedabat, for 25 cobe long baftas are woven in that place at 3 Roupies cheaper par corge. These are quite suitable for preparing two chittes but are not so fine and the painting does not come out so well, being made of a coarse cotton and uneven thread.

The Dutch do more trade in these sorts of narrow chittes than all other merchants together and get the artisans to work at them continuously for sending them to Batavia. The English also get them done every year for Bantam; so does the king of that place. The profit must be good for kings to take part in this. It will be a
106 propos to do as they do, when we shall be in peace, since we have a factory there, which lies useless due to war, being too close a neighbour of the enemy who have their greatest forces in the island of Java. Some Armenians, navigating in the Indian Ocean also carry them to Bantam. But this trade does not please the Dutch at all who would like to swallow all of it, and they being the strongest, often refuse their passports. ....

All the weavers of that place and the environs take to weaving baftas because of their great demand (saleability) as much for painting, as for being dyed in blue or red; and produce very few dorgagis and sauvagagis, types of cloth which we get painted in ordinary

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75. South India, according to Schwartz (p.26). The more than vague geographical references in Roques cannot but lead to confusions and/or guesses. But he usually indicates the Indian consumers of a particular merchandise. Southern country seems to mean rather the spice islands, as the rest ofthis page and the next one suggest.

chittes for France, because of their (suitable) width. I believe nevertheless that we shall be quite able to sell these coarse narrow pieces to the common people as well as in the American islands, for the chittes of Seronge which are hardly wider than these, are in demand there. This is an experiment which will be good to carry out as one has facilities for doing so.

The middling fine baftas made there, at 50 roupies per corge and 27 cobes long are wider by four tassous than those of 25 cobes; ~~xx~~ about $\frac{1}{10}$ of the aune. I have had a try at painting them
107 with double dyeing on new bases and designs. We are waiting for information as to their success in France for continuing. I have got some painted, Seronge style, ~~xxxx~~ the whole thing without starch or dressing, just as the painters sell them, and believe that these will find more favour than the beaten and finished ones, for I know that ladies detest this stiffness. Nevertheless, each to her taste and one must have all sorts to satisfy them. The retail merchants will still have quite some difficulty to sell them, even after using all their rhetoric. According to me only one fourth should be taken of the stiff variety or even less if possible. No doubt stiffening of the merchandise is very much suitable for the purpose of the merchant, but he has to calculate the caprice of the buyer rather than his own interest, which will double his gain by a greater sale.

The quality of baftas is the best of all cloth produced in India and they wear well; therefore the Indians hardly clothe themselves with anything else. It is true that they are not fit for all the uses which they would have been, had they been wider. They also cost a third more than other cloths in proportion to their width and fineness. I got made wider ones for fine quilts; they have the required body to resist moths and to protect the cotton better. They are 27 cobes long
108 and 1 cobe nine to ten tassous wide coming to Rs.105 par corge of raw cloth; another cloth with the same fineness and width would never cost

more than Rs.90. But within a short time the cotton would come out of moth holes as is known by the experience of fine palempous sold by us, sent by previous ships. The finest ones were painted on mamodis which are of a narrow, delicate variety, with no body to resist strain. They are in all prices and are made at Chamely, two days (journey) from Seronge. They are 20 cobes long, 22 tassous wide and of fine cotton. But the pieces are not well furnished with cotton, not the thread well twisted. Hence it is hardly lasting.

Let us talk a little about the other types of cloth made in that place, / (Ahmedabad) particularly those which we employ in chittes with a red base, which have satisfied the Company and the merchants who are expecting a good quantity of these. That cloth is known as dorgagi as others of a similar length, although it is 27 or 25½ cobes long and the others 20. I have given the explanation of piece goods of Industan and Guezerate in my other book; nevertheless I will repeat that they
109 have three names according to their width, the widest ones dorgagis these with a quarter of a cobe less, sauvagagis and the narrowest ones baftas. These names are not altered by their length.

I would say then that one cannot find any dorgagis for they are hardly suitable for the use of Indians, who as I have said use nothing but fine and thick baftas for the cabayes which is all the use they make of their cotton cloth for they do not use table or other household linen; and I can advance that if the foreign nations, particularly the Companies did not create a demand for the piece goods[76] the artisans would die of hunger and survive only because of us, due to the enormous purchases. And in spite of this they are but half alive. For a weaver does not even have the capital to make four pieces of cloth. This is what causes us a great deal of trouble in our purchases and also costs us dearly, for due to that poverty, we are forced to deal with persons who do

76. Dorgagis ?

not act in good faith; and thus, doing our business by a third party we can never have it as cheap as in the case of a well-to-do artisan. We could give advances to him and deal with him directly in the same
110 way as banians do when they are commissioned by us or when they are employed in our purchases who risk your money with them as they would not be able to deliver without being paid. On all sides, there are difficulties and a good deal of risk. This is the reason why one engages brokers who answer for your advances and are in no way more solvent than they (the weavers) are. And if the name of those who engage and employ them did not give them some credit they would be very much embarrassed in their own business.

Dorgagis of that place are supposed to be 1 cobe and half in width and 27 cobes in length, one tassou more or less on the width and one quarter of a cobe on the length. None of your contracts would be of any avail, neither the written nor the spoken ones have any basis whatsoever in India, so as to get justice when you are cheated and nobody can boast of having received full satisfaction in an agreement made with the banians. They always render you goods which fall short of the specified length and breadth which leads to peculiar troubles and contestations. What you have to do is to always receive your piece goods, short or long, provided they are good; and not to reject your seller totally, for this will lead to a delay in your business, but to put the name of the seller on the piece; and when your purchase is
111 made or when you want to send them to be painted or bleached, make him come and send for the city broker. Make him measure the entire lot, deduct one cobe par piece at each tassou less on the width; to this, add what is found less on the length and deduct from his account as if he is entirely paid. Take note of all the short aunes and deduct them in advance from the brokerage of your broker. This is what I have practised in the purchases made in that place, so that the dealers are warned once more that as we keep well our words to them, they should also do the same and the

broker should also give a hand there.

There as elsewhere it is the same - no advance, no merchandise. I mean the raw cloth which you order. Because, for the silk piecegoods you have three months to discuss if you want, for it is the Muslims who hold these products. You get more quarter from them; they are more reasonable than the banians and the artisans, the reason being that they are rich and possess capital; the latter have none, and live only by stratagem. Hence advance is to be given in order to have cotton cloth. (excellent law for the seller -R) It is all the more required for the dorgagis, which are rarely sold to others besides the three Companies. The weaver also has to change his bafta loom, in order to set up one for dorgagis. Your contractors will create a good deal of trouble for you on this change of reeds for they plead that the weaver, who only produces baftas does not possess the others, so either you furnish them, or he will do so, and will naturally ask you for the necessary sum. This is one trick for cheating some money out of you. Be firm and don't give him anything. A worker is no worker if he does not have his tools. So the weaver must be having them. And if he does not have all he needs, he will get it from a fellow worker, giving him something similar in return.

The dorgagis of that place (Ahmedabad) are of different prices according to their fineness. They have come down this year 1678 by fifteen percent. Those which I bought formerly for 59½ roupies are at
113 present 52 and the rest in proportion. Those with lower prices are made at cerquis and are sold in that place. Their price begins at 42 and goes upto 90 roupies. They are 27 cobes long and one gaise (gaz) 11 tassous wide.

Every year the English buy more than a thousand corges of this cloth, sometimes less, according to their orders and the season for one can never get made all the desired quantity. They take those of the same category as we do, and also use them for chittes with red base. Those which I have bought are finer than theirs, are much superior to those bought in previous years by Naggy Bouder, and do not cost as much. I have also tried to have the same chittes on sauvagagis, ¼ cobe less wide than the dorgagis, finer and of better cotton. They can be easily used for dressing gowns, and the dorgagis for household furnishings, coverlets, and tapestries and the baftas, finer than all these, with various bases and colours for womens dresses. These are the three sorts with different uses which I have assorted for satisfying ~~s~~ the Company which wants to please everyone in its sale; the fine and middling covers will also be of use in this matter.

The English also buy indigo there brought to them from Cerquis in small tablets, two fingers wide, four fingers long, as I have already mentioned in the chapter on that place. They put them in cases in order to preserve them. Employees of that Company who are permitted to do so, buy something there to load on ships navigating in these seas.

The Dutch hardly buy any of these dorgagis, excepting the
114 thickest sort, which they use for getting done very small painted coverlets for common people, and disperse them by their ships in all the islands where their garrisons are stationed. These are given to the soldiers and sailors against their wages at prices four times higher than the cost price. I have seen them doing this at the Cape of Good Hope, their conditions being that they will pay two thirds of the wages in money and one third in merchandise. As a result although they make so much profit they get the soldiers and sailors to serve them only for food, their wages being paid by these rags sold to them. The Dutch do practically the same thing with the great amount of chittes which they send to Batavia with blue cloth, paignes and Longuis of Baroche; they exchange these painted pieces

with the islanders of Ceylon for cinnamon. This is why they are
115 jealous of whatever goods one transports to Bantam and other places from this side. Those piecegoods are also sent to other islands, producing clove and nutmeg, and also for their slaves which they have in great number. The surplus is sold off in Batavia, never in Holland. Formerly they bought indigo there, now they get it from Agra. Purchase of this drug is now much reduced for they get a great quantity of it in Holland, extracting it from the blue cloth destined for Germany, as I have said. That is why they buy (indigo) of Agra, which is finer. These are the only purchases made by the Dutch in Amedabet. This does not oblige them to have such an imposing factory there, with eight or ten persons, whom them maintain in great style. But the sale of clove, cinnamon, mace, calin, copper and tutenag keep them there more than anything else. It is true that since a few years, the sale of these spices has become too small for such big expenses involved in maintaining all that pomp; but having begun in this manner in better days, it is a matter of prestige with them to continue in the same way.[77]

Their establishment in that place began thirty year ago
116 with the purchase of a small house in the quarter of the banians hardly suitable for their requirements. Every year they have added other houses in the neighbourhood to it. They have thus acquired a great space, containing a vast courtyard, and enough storage space. But their dwelling lodge is very small, and with no comfort whatsoever, as there are only pieces of furniture gathered at random, and arranged without any regularity. They also have a small garden outside the city, next to their cemetry. The land was unoccupied. They secured it, by giving something to the governor, who has allowed them to use it, with the condition to return it at the order of King, when asked for. It is all

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77. This observation about the Dutch in India recurs quite often in French records and continues till the 1740s.

youth in their factory excepting the Chief and his second. Their boarding expenses are met from the pay accorded to them in Surat for their upkeep that is 25 roupies per month for the Chief, and several varieties of wine and other refreshments in abundance; Rs.12 for his second and Rs.8 for the rest of the employees. They have nevertheless one single table, the Chief feeding them very well for that money. The rest of their expenses such as native servants known as pions or rather spies,[78] coaches, grooms, doormen, fodder for horses
117 and oxen is passed to the current account of Surat. Every month they send an account there to be finally passed into the General Books in Batavia. This is how it is regulated in all the factories. They know definitely the amount needed to maintain each of them and keeping this good order they clearly see their profits and losses every year so that they can withdraw from places which prove to be unprofiable. This is what they do not do although they have several posts too many which bring them no profit but a lot of expenses; even so they do not give them up. They are there, and there they want to stay, whatever be the cost. Those who have but a light job, endeavour to inform the head factory about what the others are doing, and about whatever happens there are around, down to the smallest detail. The Council takes its resolution on it, in order to go forward. By this excellent policy they know everything that happens in India, by sea and land, in order to profit from it. They go further, corrupting the patemards[79] carrying others' letters when they think that they concern some important affair.

The English also have a house there, finer and more regular
118 than the Dutch. Formerly they kept one Chief and several employees there, but a few years ago they have been withdrawn, leaving their broker to act, who lives in that vast house and does very well for himself.

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78. Another example of Roques' rhetorical flair, "espion" being the French word for "spy".

79. Pattamar : a foot-runner, a courier.

He is a relative of their principal broker who is the cause (so they say) of the suppression of this factory by the Company, in order to plant his relative there so that they cannot find out his malversations. This broker carries out the orders sent from Surat, for the preparation of chittes, and for the sale of copper which is of very little demand at present for it is now extracted from a mine belonging to a very powerful lord, Raja Rana. The name of his country is Andepour,[80] hundred cosses away from this place. He has iron and silver mines, which he does not disclose. For the king (Emperor) being informed of this treasure/an sent emissary there to take their possession. The Raja filled up his eyes with powder from his mine. This is what I can say about the trade carried on by the two other factories in Amedabat. Let us now
119 see a little what the manufacture of this great city consists of and let us find out what is there for us to do.

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80. Most probably Udaipur.

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