

## EXPEDITIONS FOR SERENDIPITY

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### Abstract

*This research paper tends to discuss the trade activities that occurred after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D., which according to some historians marked the end of the middle age. The fall of Constantinople can be identified as a milestone in the history of the world that was able to transform many things. This also further defines how that very same incident provided the opportunity for marine trade activities exploring the new world. As a result of Constantinople getting into the hands of the Arabs, Europeans started to embark new voyages through sea, in order to re-establish their trade activities. These new expeditions, led to the European countries discovering many new lands and as a result, they wanted to culminate their powers in these newly found lands. This denotes the beginning of colonialization, which was especially experienced in the Asian continent. This negatively affected the colonised countries because the European nations exploited the resources of these countries and gained profits for themselves by selling products in European markets at higher prices. These European nations included the British, Portuguese as well as the Dutch. They spread their dominance in the southern parts of Asia, by forming colonies under their rule. The paper discusses the first European expeditions to Sri Lanka, which is a turning point in the country's history.*

**Keywords:** *Constantinople, Maritime trade, European imperialism, Sri Lanka*

### INTRODUCTION

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of European nations led to changes in the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the lives of the people in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, it can be considered as a milestone in the history of Sri Lanka because major changes in the fields of economic, social, cultural and political, transformed the prevailing order. There are reasons other than politics like spreading their religion and also to find out about the mythical conceptions about Christianity in the east propagated by Fester John, to answer why European nations came to the East at that time. Simply their motivations to come to the east can be denoted as to find God, gold and glory. The European nations began to take a special interest in the East in the late decade of the fifteenth century, but it must be noted that even before that there were relations between the nations of the East and the West. Ptolemy who drafted the first map included Sri Lanka in it by getting information from traders who conducted trade activities in the island. The Mahavamsa also mentions about king Bhathikabaya of Sri

Lanka sending a group of ambassadors to Rome to meet Emperor Claudius. The Nainativu Tamil inscription by King Parakramabahu I mentions about if any merchant vessels are wrecked in Sri Lankan waters, they were to provide half of the goods carried by the vessels to the Sri Lankan king.

There is evidence that Alexander the Great invaded the East from time to time during the Roman civilization, sometime around the 4th century BC specially India and the Persian empire. This paved the way for Sri Lanka to get recognition among the Greeks about the utopian island which they denoted as Taprobane. It's been mentioned that one of the main reasons for Sri Lanka to not get recognized was because goods from Sri Lanka was sold at Indian markets and therefore there was no need to acquire goods directly from the island. But later when the Greek wanted fresher and more luxurious good, they contacted the island directly specially for goods like ivory and tortoise shells. (D.P.M Weerakkody, 1987). Around the 6th century AD, the Roman Empire collapsed due to invasions from various tribes in the German territory, resulting in a dark period for the countries of Europe. The feudal political economic and social patterns based on self-sufficient agriculture confined the European nations to their land mass. With the spread of Islam in the 7th century AD, European countries faced new challenges due to various conflicts that occurred in the Arab countries of the Middle East. The people of Arabia spread not only to European countries but also to Asia and engaged in the building of a large Islamic empire. People living in areas such as Arabia, Persia, Asia Minor<sup>1</sup>, Abyssinia, and Egypt at that time embraced Islam and developed a common culture and were known as Muslims. In a very short period, they became strongly involved in trade activities between the two West Indies. The arrival of European nations in the East came to a complete halt as they took on the intermediate role of supplying essential commodities to Europe, including spices from Asia. Europe that has been isolated for hundreds of years, attempted to reappear systemically leading to confrontation between Europe and the then expanding Muslims and the Ottoman Turks. In 1453, Constantinople, which belonged to devout European nations, was conquered by the Turks (reference). The action taken by the European nations in response to this defeat resulted in the expansion of their power beyond Europe, which had hitherto been confined to Europe. The Turkish influence spread to the Asian, African and American continents, and they built large empires

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<sup>1</sup> Asia Minor (as the country was called to distinguish it from the continent of Asia), or Anatolia, is the name given to the peninsula which reaches out between the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus) on the North and the Mediterranean on the South, forming an elevated land-bridge between central Asia and south eastern Europe.

based on those areas. Therefore, from the last decade of the fifteenth century, various European nations, such as the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English, came on expeditions to the East. For about five centuries, from the 15th century to the twentieth century, Asia was rich in resources to meet the various needs of European states. To make the most of those resources, they set up their empire in Asia and built the European Empire. Thus, this research intends to discuss the Fall of Constantinople; Navigation in the European context; Explorations of the Portuguese, English and French; Trade activities in the East; and lastly, the Portuguese presence in Sri Lanka.

### **THE CAPTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY OTTOMAN TURKS IN 1453**

Constantinople was the largest city in the Christian world in the 10<sup>th</sup> century: the seat of the imperial court and government, a large population centre, and the pivot of foreign trade in the largest quantities. The town market sold goods from many parts of the world as a natural geographical entrepot between the east and west. From Russia to the Constantinople furs and timber flowed across the Black Sea from Northern Europe across the Mediterranean and the Balkans to Venice.

Through Arabia, spices, silk, jewels, and luxury goods came to Constantinople. According to McKay et al (2007, p. 212) by the eleventh century, only Baghdad surpassed Constantinople in the quantity and value of goods traded there by India and China. The Spanish Jew Benjamin of Tutela recorded that Constantinople had around a thousand and sixty merchant communities from Babylon.



Figure 1: The geographical advantages of Constantinople

Source: <https://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/3600/3625/3625.htm>

On April 2, 1453, the Ottoman army, led by the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmed II, laid siege to the city with 80,000 men. Despite a desperate last-ditch defence of the city by the massively outnumbered Christian forces (7,000 men, 2,000 of whom were sent by Rome), Constantinople finally fell to the Ottomans after a two-month siege on May 29, 1453. The last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaeologus, was last seen casting off his imperial regalia and throwing himself into hand-to-hand combat after the walls of the city were taken.



Figure 2: Importance of Constantinople after 1453 A. D.

Source: [ancient-spice-trade-route-from-asia-to-europe.com](http://ancient-spice-trade-route-from-asia-to-europe.com)

On the third day, Mehmed II ordered all looting to stop and sent his troops back outside the city walls. Byzantine historian George Sphrantzes, an eyewitness to the fall of Constantinople, described the Sultan's actions:

On the third day after the fall of our city, the Sultan celebrated his victory with a great, joyful triumph. He issued a proclamation: the citizens of all ages who had managed to escape detection were to leave their hiding places throughout the city and come out into the open, as they were to remain free and no question would be asked. He further declared the restoration of houses and property to those who had abandoned our city before the siege, if they returned home; they would be treated according to their rank and religion, as if nothing had changed.

The capture of Constantinople (and two other Byzantine splinters) marked the end of the Roman Empire, an imperial state that had lasted for nearly 1,500 years. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople also dealt a massive blow to Christendom, as the Islamic Ottoman armies thereafter were left unchecked to advance into Europe without an adversary to their rear. After the conquest, Sultan Mehmed II transferred the capital of the Ottoman Empire from Edirne to Constantinople. Constantinople was transformed into an Islamic city: the Hagia Sophia became a mosque, and the city eventually became known as Istanbul. The conquest of the city of Constantinople, and the end of the Byzantine Empire, was a key event in the late middle ages. (Rawo and Adagama, 1999).

### **NAVIGATION IN EUROPE**

An interest in mystical experiences and a curiosity to explore different things were born in the European nations during the Renaissance. After the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, European nations had to rely on Italian traders to import goods from the East. Fortunately, both before and after the Crusades, the Italians had prosperous trade relations with the Arabs. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, a group of Italian merchants sailed across the seas to land to China. It took the group led by Marco Polo about two and a half years to reach China. At that time, the Mongol ruler, Kublai Khan, welcomed the Italian merchants, including Marco Polo. The same group of traders, who had gone to Japan and from there to the Spice Islands, returned safely to their native home, Venice. Many who heard of the travellers' travelogues and inspiring experiences also developed a desire to have such an experience and a curiosity to seek information. From there onwards, people not only started exploring new destinations through land but also across the Ocean.

### **FACTORS THAT AIDED THE EXPLORATION OF SERENDIB**

European traders and rulers were helped several factors to meet the expectations like, gaining enormous profits from trading with the East, and also, European rulers sought to increase their power and prestige by establishing trade relations with the East. The most important of these was the Europeans' new knowledge of the compass, the compass, and the northern star gauge. The first of these was made by the Chinese and helped sailors know the direction of navigation at sea.



The cross-staff assisted navigators to safely reach a specific location by measuring the distance from where it was to the stars. The fact that European nations began to build sailing ships that could be used for long-distance travel was also a major factor in land exploration. The state sponsorship of exploration helped the Portuguese commence navigation over 300 years. The Naval Research Institute built and maintained by Prince Henry Portugal. (1394-1460 AD), helped sailors gain a broader understanding of high tides and low tides, making it safer to navigate/Europe's best sailors, astronomers and geologists were drawn to Prince Henry's Naval Education Centre. The centre annually sends naval exploration teams along the west coast of Africa. His sailors discovered the island of Madeira and were able to reach the areas of Sudan and Senegal, leading to the building of the Portuguese Empire in the next century by the expedition of those explorers who brought slaves and gold to Europe from those areas.

### **EXPLORATIONS OF PORTUGUESE SAILORS**

Among the next important milestones on the Portuguese voyage were the exceeding the equator of Loop Gonsalves and the arrival of Bartholomew Dios Point or Greeting Point. Sailor Vasco da Gama, who set sail ten years later, sailed along the route of the Bartholomew Dias and then sailed a short distance from Africa along the east coast. He then sailed to India and reached the port of Calicut in India in 1498. Vasco da Gama's discovery of a new sea route from Europe to India was a significant event not only in European history but also in Asian history. Two years later, Cabral, a Portuguese general, was stranded on the west coast of Africa when he was swept away by a storm and was able to reach the east coast of South America, where he discovered Brazil in the 1500s (Rawo and Adagama, 1999).

### **COLUMBUS DISCOVERING THE NEW WORLD**

There is evidence to suggest that the Vikings landed on the new continent during the invasion of the Roman Empire by barbaric tribes. About a thousand years later, Geneva Columbus set out to find a new sea route to the east. In August 1492, under the patronage of the Spanish royal couple Ferdinand and Isabela, he set sail across the Atlantic Ocean. After a long and arduous voyage, Columbus was able to reach the Bahamas on October 2, 1492. Columbus called the inhabitants of the Bahamas, Indians, as he thought he has reached the coast of India. During the voyage he also

discovered Hein and the islands of Cuba. After three more voyages to the area, Columbus discovered several Caribbean islands. The ownership of all those islands discovered by Columbus was transferred to the royal couple in Spain. The Portuguese rulers were jealous of the fact that Spain had so many new territories. So, the pope had to intervene to prevent a conflict between the two countries. Accordingly, the pope divided the world map from north to south, allocating areas that could be dominated by Spain and Portugal for exploration. The new island which was discovered by Columbus was named as America by the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci continued to explore the areas discovered by Columbus and concluded that it was a new area other than Columbus's thought of India. A German geographer named the new continent the American continent after creating a world map that included those newly explored areas. It was named the American Continent in honour of the discovery of Amerigo Vespucci (Rawo and Adagama, 1999).

### **BALBOA EXPLORING THE PACIFIC OCEAN (1513)**

The Spanish explorer went to a new world in search of gold. As he approached the Strait of Panama, he saw beyond it the vast blue ocean. It is the Pacific Ocean. The Pons de Leon then went towards the north and discovered Florida. (Rawo and Adagama, 1999)

### **FERDINAND MAGELLAN AND HIS JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD (1519-1522)**

When Magellan came to India, he felt that the world was spherical. But he wanted to go west to Europe and find a way to the east. He asked the Portuguese king for help, but he refused. Undeterred, Magellan Isabela's grandson made a request to King Charles I of Spain, and the Spanish ruler agreed to sponsor him. He set sail from Spain in September 1519 with a crew of five freshmen and 267 sailors. The group reached the coast of South America and sailed south along it. Reaching the southern tip, he crossed the strait now known as Magellan and entered the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, several sailors from Magellan's group died of illness and starvation, but the rest managed to reach the Philippines. Magellan was killed in a battle with the locals, but the group 'Victoria' arrived at the site in 1522 with several sailors. It was a successful voyage of exploration around the world (Rawo and Adagama,1999).

## **EXPLORATIONS OF ENGLISH NATIONS**

John Cabot an Italian was one of the explorers of the late fifteenth century trying to find a new sea route to the East. King Henry VII of England set out to find a sea route across the Atlantic to India in the northwest. John Cabot sailed the ocean in 1494 and reached the Cape Britten Island near Newfoundland. He thought he had reached China. John Cobb's exploration of Canada's coastline gave the English the opportunity to claim large tracts of land in North America. In the last quarter of the 16th century, English explorers such as Gilbert and Raleigh set out to explore the East Coast of North America. The English claimed Loren's to Florida. In the early seventeenth century, the English trading company also established several trading posts in India. (Rawo and Adagama,1999)

## **EXPLORATIONS OF THE FRENCH**

Early English explorers as well as French Jacques Cartier sailed to the coast of North America with the aim of finding a way northwest to reached China. By 1535 he had found the way to St. Lawrence River. Another Frenchman Champlain Marquette discovered the Kwibek areas in 1608.

In 1560, Joliet the exploration of the Mississippi River Valley and the La Sale explored about the Mississippi River Face. It thus belonged to the France from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the mouth of the Mississippi River. The northern part of the area was called New France, and the southern part was named Louisiana after King Louis XIV. (Rawo and Adagama,1999)

## **RESULTS OF LAND EXPLORATION**

The long-term effects of these explorations on Europe in general are very comprehensive as well as extremely important. The long-term results clearly and obviously shifted from the Mediterranean to the tropics, which were important centres for trade and commerce in Europe. Cities such as Alexandria, Pisa, Geneva and Venice, which functioned as important trading centres in the middle ages, had to retreat to allow new European trading centres such as the Lisbon, cadies, Savile London and ant verse. The sea route across the Cape of Good Hope was of great importance until the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869, as trade in the East and West began to flow mainly by sea. The discovery of a new sea route to the Americas and Asia led to the introduction of several European goods, even before Europe had



known them. Potatoes, cocoa, rainbow, dyes, indigo, tea, coffee, etc. were important among them. There was a great demand in the European market for Indian textiles and Persian carpets. The new continent brought to Europe in bulk precious metals such as gold and silver. Mexico and Piraeus became famous for their vast treasures hidden underground and were plundered by greedy explorers. Europe's employment and living standards have made great strides due to the large - scale circulation.

The concept of imperialism that developed among the European nations can be described as the worst result of patriotism. The European powers reached out to Asia, Africa, and the Americas to establish trade relations, mainly as territories, but eventually settled in them as conquering masters. Those islands were colonized by European nations and exploited politically and economically. Negroes in Africa were taken to the European continents of Britain and the Americas and sold into the open market as slaves. They began colonial rule with the aim of civilizing the peoples of various European nations or their territories. It was during that colonial period that Asian and African countries became extremely poor. They made the European nations richer day by day at the expense of their colonies. The revolution was caused by the fact that Europe was accelerating the further exploitation of those colonies. After the Industrial Revolution, European countries needed to sell their products and get more markets to get the raw material.

Other than that Exploration had other consequences. These include changes in social organization, such as the birth of a middle class, the rise of monarchies, the large-scale migration of Europeans, and the expansion of the Christian missionary movement. The voyages of explorers later led to the emergence of commercial power in Europe. Exploration eventually led Western European countries to expand their dominance over the rest of the world (Rawo and Adagama, 1999).

### **TRADE ACTIVITIES IN THE EAST**

Before the fall of the Constantinople which also paved way for the Europeans to embark on expeditions, trade in Middle East was quite famous and the period from 8<sup>th</sup> century to 13<sup>th</sup> century was considered as the Islamic Golden Age. Many advanced economic practices were conducted during this era and businesses like agribusiness, ceramics, chemicals, pulp and paper, perfumery, medicine etc. were available. The knowledge from these industries was transferred to the European industrialization and this provides evidence that the base for the European economies as well as

businesses were gained from the east. As mentioned in Middle Eastern folklore of the story of *One Thousand- and One-Night's* collection, Baghdad was considered one of the wealthiest and richest cities in the world. Most of the time, heroes in these Middle Eastern stories were merchant capitalists who thrive to benefit not only themselves but also the society through their wealth. But this concept of merchant capitalists becomes heroes change when it comes to the European context where the entrepreneur merchant becomes the villain.

Accordingly, trade and commerce in the east has a very long history which dates to 4000 years during the Mesopotamian civilizations mainly based on the cities of Babylonia and Assyria. Clay tablets regarding sales transactions have been found from these cities. Dutch historians Robartus Johannes van der Spek and Kees Mandemakers in their article *Sense and nonsense in the statistical approach of Babylonian prices* has mentioned "The market mechanisms played their part in the Babylonian economy seems now to be unquestionable". This further emphasizes the accuracy and the advancement developed in the ancient civilization on economy.

In the modern context cities such as Mosul and Aleppo are conquered by war and fundamentalism but before institutionalization took place in Europe, these two cities supported free exchange for many centuries. Mosul was a prominent and a mega city that prevailed along the ancient Silk route which bounded India, China, middle East, Africa and Europe as a global network engaging in trade. These cities along the silk route were also home to manufacturing industries in large scale that produced goods for international markets. This city of Mosul was also a prominent industrial centre. It was famous for petrochemical industry as well as the city was a weaving centre. Similarly, Aleppo was known for cloth and garment manufacturing. Many business and trade activities have been conducted in the city of Aleppo and was then flourishing with commerce. It is said through ancient sources that many caravans that carried goods between China and Europe, Persia and India went through the city of Aleppo. Some of the commodities traded from the Persian island Hormuz were animal husbandry and agricultural products as well as industrial goods like fine cloths and silk and carpets. One of the Portuguese explorers has also complimented Persian technology on coin making as "extraordinary pure silver coins" that were manufactured in the city of Lara. One of the reasons for Muslim countries to be so advanced has been answered as the port of Gerun in the island of Hormuz that was considered a free market. India was also among the main trade hubs in the East. India

was quite famous for its textile industry and the Portuguese official Duarte Barbosa has accounted the city of Gujarat as a leading trade centre for cotton. These textiles from Gujarat were exported to regions mainly based on Arabia and South East Asia specially countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines. Iban Battuta who was a Moorish traveller has also mentioned about the prominent place for cotton in India. Silk was another type of cloth produced in India. India also engaged in exportation of gold embroiders cloth caps, clay pots, sandalwood, ivory, diamond and other precious stones. Red sea and the Mediterranean ports were used by the Arabs to ship Indian goods to the European markets.

In relations to the trade activities in the Indian ocean, Sri Lankan relations with the Europeans play a significant role. Renaissance can be identified as one of the main reasons for the Europeans to come to Sri Lanka. The island's geostrategic location made it quite important for the Europeans in conducting trade in the Indian Ocean. Namely ancient Sri Lanka had maintained trade relations with countries like Greece, Rome, Persia, South East Asian countries and China. It is discovered that Sri Lanka was used as a meeting point for the traders coming from the east and the traders coming from the west through the Persian Gulf making the country a milepost in the maritime network of the Indian ocean. The factor which made Sri Lanka famous is the availability of several harbours which could anchor a large number of vessels at the same time which was very beneficial for the European traders.

The Greek writer Cosmas records that Sri Lanka was a main trade market during the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D and he also mentions that Sri Lanka was also used reexport goods which were brought from countries like China, Persia, Ethiopia and Sindhu, Male, Kalliana which were Indian ports. Countries which came in search of Sri Lanka's native products also came in quest for goods from other countries which were bought for re-export. These factors greatly influenced the course of Sri Lanka while increasing its international commercial importance in the Indian Ocean. When considering about the harbours of the island, even during different periods of times at least one of the harbours had played important roles in the history which was not common in many other countries. The port at Mahathitta was the prominent among them which existed as the main port for so many decades starting from the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C to 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C. As a result, many artifacts like coins and porcelain ware have been excavated from the site. The port at Jambukolapattana also was an important port for travellers to embark on the island apart from commercial activities.

History declares that Sri Lanka was a commercially famous country for valuable and luxurious goods. Among these products were spices, gems, pearls, ivory, elephants and turtles' shells. There are many foreign records with information which mentions about the gems of Ceylon than local records. They also mention that no country in the world possessed such varieties of gems which were valuable and rare. Arabia who was one of the earliest countries to establish trade relations with Ceylon used to interpret the country as "Jazirat Ul Yaqut" which translates to "Island of Rubies". Sapphires and pearls were the most famous gems. Megasthenis in his book "Indica" mentions that Ceylon exported elephants to India during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C and he also says that elephants from Ceylon were larger in size and were intelligent in all aspects.

Apart from these countries' goods were exported from countries like China, Burma, Philippines etc. to the west.

From the ancient times there were three main trade routes followed by the Europeans in conducting trade relations with the Asian region. They were;

- i. From Constantinople to Persia, then from Middle East to China which was also known as the silk route.
- ii. From Constantinople to the Mediterranean Sea through Egypt, and through red sea into the Indian Ocean.
- iii. From Constantinople to Baghdad, and Persian Gulf through India.

But after the fall of Constantinople instability started to rise in European region and that was the beginning of tending to use the Black Sea as well as the Mediterranean Sea into the Turkish trade. Also, the Ottomans started to levy heavy taxes for the goods which were to be transported to Europe from Asia. Thus, the goods became very expensive. Portuguese were interested in spices which were also highly valued in European markets. Portugal was a country which was situated facing the Atlantic Ocean therefore they had to conduct their trade relations mostly through the sea. Most of the European nations were having sea borders which made them interested in conducting trade expeditions through maritime routes. As a result, many European nationalists started expeditions from the sea to find new trade routes and these voyages were also supported and sponsored by the royals.

From the early times India was quite famous for its wealth as well as for the resources it possessed. Most of the explorers from Europe wanted to find India to gain resources and their goods gained good prices in the European markets. The Europeans became

quite agitated with the Arabian traders because they were milking all the profits within the region while leaving the Europeans with only marginal benefits. The Muslims collected spices and many other valuable commodities from Asia and sold them at a higher price in the European market and made a huge sum of profit. The Portuguese and the Spanish were interested in finding new routes to gain profits in the East by finding India. They also had the background set to embark on new expeditions through sea routes.

- i. Discovery of the compass and North Star map for safer and accurate voyages.
- ii. Discovering that the earth is round during the renaissance.
- iii. A better understanding about the earth through Ptolemy's map.
- iv. Sponsorships from the royals.

### **VASCO DE GAMA IN EAST**

As a result, Vasco De Gama was commissioned to find new maritime routes towards the east sponsored by King Manuel I. During his embark on the island of Mozambique De Gama learned that the inhabitants have trade relations with the Arabs and that there are Arab vessels loaded with gold, silver, precious stones and spices were anchored in the ports. De Gama also learnt that the Christian ruler, Prester John who was eagerly sought by many, seems to be dwelling in one of the coastal cities. During this time, the Muslims held the monopoly of trade in these areas. His main intension was to divert all the Indian trade to Portugal and restrict Arabian ventures. De Gama also had the intention to spread the Christianity religion in India. So here it is very clear that the main reason for the Europeans to explore on new maritime routes were to conduct and gain monopoly of trade in the east.

Apart from that they were quite interested in spices from Asia which they used to preserve food during winter as well as to taste. Spreading of religion was another intention of the Europeans. Most of the Christians as well as the Protestants were eager to go on missionaries and acquire converts. So, this was done by explorers. The excitement for new knowledge also paved the way for new voyages. This was massively supported by the renaissance which made everything free to acquire without any restrictions. That helped greatly on cartography which was very useful for navigators as well as explorers.



Figure 3: Maritime trade route of Vasco de Gama

Source [www. World maps](http://www.worldmaps.com)

On May 1498 Vasco De Gama landed in the coast of Calicut, India. After he landed in India, he had stated that “We came in search of Christians and Spices.” The people and the king of Indian welcomed these foreign navigators warmly, but peace did not last for long. He failed to come to a pact with the Indian ruler Zamorin. De Gama and the Muslim traders got into combat with each other. Vasco De Gama can be identified as one of the pioneers in exploring the new world. He was later appointed the viceroy to India by King John III.

### **THE PORTUGUESE IN SRI LANKA (1505 – 1658)**

Around 1500, Arab, Indian, Malay and Chinese traders dominated the Indian ocean trade. The first visit of the Portuguese to Ceylon and the political situation prevailing at that time. It said that due to the Crusades, the sea route through the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea to Europe was blocked. Vasco Da Gama sailed south in the Atlantic Ocean, crossed the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, entered the Indian Ocean. Vasco da Gama arrived in India in 1498 as a result of a voyage of discovery. According to Ranawella et al (1997,11) it was clear to the Portuguese on that first voyage that India was in a position to build not only Christians and spices but also a colonial empire in Asia. There, Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut, allowed them to get the merchandise they needed. Nevertheless, it was clear to the Portuguese that the Muslims had great power in the kingdom of Calicut. Therefore, it was during this voyage that they gained an understanding of the difficulties they might face in expanding their power on the Malabar Coast. Vasco da Gama received help from the Hindu ruler of Covin during the riots caused by the refusal of Calicut Zamorin to pay him taxes for the merchandise he had taken with him on that voyage. Zamorin challenged the Portuguese ruler to



become the master of naval affairs in the East Sea, and until 1499 he was able to thwart the Portuguese expansion on the Malabar coast and gain several victories over the Portuguese in that area. But it did not take long for the Portuguese to gain control of the Indian Ocean trade, which until then had been enjoyed by the Muslims. Realizing the need to capture several important centres in the Indian Ocean in order to usurp the monopoly of trade between the East and the West, the Portuguese began to expand their power from the Cavin area. Francisco de Almeida was first appointed governor of the Portuguese East in 1505, known as the Viceroy. But Albrooke, who had a reputation for establishing Portuguese power in the East, not only laid a solid foundation for the expansion of Portuguese power in the East with his accession to the throne in 1560. In 1509 they captured Ormes, known as the Persian port of checkpoint, and in 1510 they captured Malacca in 1511, the gateway to the Red Sea. By the time of Albrook was died in the 1500s, almost all of the important centres of trade in the West Bank had been taken over by the Portuguese before the complete defeat of Muslim domination in the Indian Ocean. Missionary work to spread Christianity under the Portuguese with the intervention of the government. Goa, the political centre of the Eastern Portuguese, was their religious place. The entire cost of the religious organization centered on it was borne by the King of Portugal. The King of Portugal was instructed by the King of Portugal to destroy the pagans whom the Portuguese considered pagans, and he acted accordingly.

In 1534, a bishop was appointed to direct religious affairs. This was the time of the religious revolution in Europe. Here are some of the reasons why the Portuguese were able to easily establish Eastern power. One factor is the situation of political struggles in the coastal areas of India and Sri Lanka in South Asia. When Vasco da Gama landed in the Calicut region of India in 1498 and the subsequent Portuguese attempts to expand Indian power, the Portuguese were able to lay the foundations of an Asian empire with the help of the Hindu rulers, although the Zamorin rose up against them. Even in Sri Lanka the kingdom of Kotte which was the main kingdom when the Portuguese came was in a very favourable position for the expansion of foreign power in the political arena due to the disputes between the princes who ruled the various areas. The division of the state and the various political, economic, religious and personal rivalries between the two kingdoms were the main factors that helped the Portuguese to expand their power in Asia. The naval power and military prowess of the Portuguese was another factor that helped them establish their power in the

East. By the 16th century, the Portuguese army, which had been accustomed to using weapons such as artillery and ammunition, had improved its naval power as well as navy power, using new discoveries as a result of long-term naval experiments and the scientific renaissance was stronger than the armies of the Asians. As the Portuguese naval technology surpassed the traditional methods of warfare familiar to the Asian Empire at that time, the coastal lowlands of countries such as Ceylon and India were easily subjugated.

### **ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE IN CEYLON**

Ceylon was known by the Portuguese as Ceylon, meaning "Land of the Sinhalese", an important centre of the main sea trade route from Madagascar and the islands of Mauritius to Malacca and Sumatra. Ceylon was then known as the country that produced the best cinnamon. Francisco de Almeida was initially ordered by the Emperor of Portugal to pay special attention to the conquest of this precious small island, both commercially and militarily important, but he neglected to do so. His son Lorenzo de Almeida's fleet, which had been chasing several Muslim merchant ships off the island of Mauritius at the time, arrived in Sri Lanka by chance after a storm. Later Portuguese writers have exaggerated the story of the Portuguese's first voyage to Ceylon. The following information can be gleaned from an examination of the records of the first Portuguese writers: Lorenzo de Almeida arrived at the port of Galle. A delegation led by Susa was sent to meet the king. Muslim merchants have taken this delegation through a detour that feels like a long distance and met a glorious man who pretended to be the king of a huge Palace. The delegation informed that they had come to trade in cinnamon and would like to establish friendly relations with the King of this country. The group has been sent back. Pio de Susa and Lorenzo de Almeida were now told that the man they had met was not the real king of the country, but perhaps the ruler of the Galle period, and that the whole mission could be a trap for Muslim merchants. Later, Lorenzo de Almeida sailed to the port of Galle to buy a quantity of cinnamon and erect a monument with a Portuguese emblem to commemorate his voyage. Lorenzo da Almeida has also sailed to Covin. It is said that King Francisco de Almeida was overjoyed to learn about this journey from Lorenzo de Almeida. He sent a brief letter to the Emperor of Portugal about the incident, sending his son-in-law, Diego de Almeida, to Lisbon, where he wrote that he had conquered Ceylon by his son, Lorenzo de Almeida, as ordered by the emperor. The letter also

states that Diego de Almeida, who went to the country with his son and witnessed the events, had informed the king. Upon hearing the glad tidings of the conquest of Ceylon from Diego de Almeida, the emperor sent a letter to the pope in September 1507 informing him of the victory of his army. The letter contained a fascinating account of how the King of Ceylon washed his son at the Kotte Palace and received Almeida with great respect. The Pope also conducted a special prayer service for this victory. Later Portuguese writers obtained information about Lorenzo da Almeida was the first one who discovers Ceylon. Undoubtedly, Francisco de Almeida, who had not been able to carry out his decree on the matter, no doubt advised Diego Da Almeida to exaggerate the details of Lorenzo's voyage to Ceylon to win the emperor's heart. By this time, it is said that King Veera Parakramabahu was very old. Inscriptions reveal that the heroic king Parakramabahu died on June 7, 1509. The next day, King Vijayabahu, the son of the King, was crowned Vijayabahu VI at Jayewardenepura Kotte. There was another son of King Weeraparakramabahu VIII the First Queen and he is mentioned in the Rajavaliya as Dharma Parakramabahu. In the meantime, Francisco de Almeida was succeeded by George Albuquerque, who was appointed the new ruler of India and instructed to build a fortress in Ceylon somehow. In November 1513, the emperor sent a letter to the Emperor of Portugal stating that the death of King Ceylon Hill had led to a feud between the two sons over his kingship, and that one of the sons had sent an envoy to the Covens, promising to allow the Portuguese to build a fort in their country. The prince who appeared as Dharma Parakramabahu against Vijayabahu VI, succeeded to the throne after the death of his father. Lopo source da Alburgeria, who succeeded Albuquerque as emperor, came to Colombo in 1517 with the intention of building a fort, and Father Dharma Parakramabahu came to the port of Kalaba to meet him. Albergeria prepared to build fortifications and King Vijayabahu sent his army to attack the Portuguese and drive them out. It has been mentioned earlier that King Veera Parakramabahu died in 1509. He successfully kept the whole country under his control including the Satarakorala Upcountry, successfully facing the occasional revolts that arose during the last twenty years from 1490. It is proved that Vijayabahu VI, who came to the king in the same year, continued to remain on the throne until 1521, issuing orders from time to time through inscriptions and Sannasa. The information given by the Portuguese writers and accordingly to the Rajavali that his elder brother Dharmaparakramabahu VIII became the ninth Dharma Parakramabahu after the death of Veera Parakramabahu is incorrect. In 1513, a land offering made to

the "Naga Risha Nila Kovil" in Dondra by the Dondra Sannasa issued by King Vijayabahu VI after the death of Weeraparakramabahu VIII. A Kudagam inscription mentions a paddy land offering made to his 6th, 1514 Kinigoda Korale Mottappuliye Kovil. 1505 Weragama Sannase tells of a subsistence allowance given to them by the Pepiliyana Pirivena Books and Kadirana Sannase of a gift made to a Brahmin who ascended the throne of the Udugampola Raja Sabha on June 18, 1517, during a solar eclipse. 1519 Keragala Rajaguru Vanaratana Ma Thera's descendants of the Sasana Bandhu dynasty of Angoda kusal Asana village property security guarantee issued a royal decree is mentioned in a karagala inscription. The last inscription of King Vijayabahu VI is found at the Kappagoda Vihara in Satarakoralya. Ekanayake Perumal Ekanayake Perumal may have been the first Minister of the Eighth Weeraparakrama Raja Sabha who issued the King's 13th letter on behalf of the King regarding an allowance made to the temple. This year, in 1521, Vijayabahu VI's last conquest of Vijayabaha took. According to the Rajavali account of this event, King Bhuvanekabahu Raigambandara mayadunne, the three sons of King Vijayabahu at that time, had secretly tried to inherit the kingdom from his adopted prince Devaraja when he was there. Infuriated by this news, the three princes took troops from Jayaweera Bandara, the then Kandyan ruler, and occupied Kelaniya to fight against their father. Frightened by this, King Vijayabahu sent envoys to them under the guise of peace and planned to imprison them. By this time King Vijayabahu was being protected by the two Mudaliyars, Kandure Bandara and Ekanayake mentioned above. The princes promised peace if they betrayed each other. The king had to send the two Mudalis. Ekanayake Mudali hid in the Kelani temple on his way there and the Kandure Bandara was killed by the princes. The three princes had secretly taken troops and arrived in Kotte. King Vijayabahu locked himself and his army in a secret place to capture the princes and locked the door and entered the palace. Seven-year-old Prince Deva Raja, who was preparing to hand over the kingdom, went to Prince Mayadunne and revealed that the army was hiding in Kudawatta to kill the three of them. This was conveyed to the other two and all three ordered their troops stationed at Pita Kotte outside the palace gate to plunder the city. They also looted the palace. The next night, King Vijayabahu was assassinated by a stranger named Solomon. The next morning, the eldest prince was crowned Buwanekabahu VII. The spoliation of Vijayabahu took place in 1521.

## CONCLUSION

When considering the above-mentioned facts, an emergence of a quest for new lands since the fall of Constantinople, to its affecting other nations mainly in the East can be found. It is very evident that this particular incident contributed towards a massive change in shaping the history of the world. It gives birth to the discovery of a new world as well as to colonialization. It can be identified that trade played a huge role towards embarking on new expeditions. These trade interests led to Europeans coming into the East which ultimately resulted in the Portuguese discovering Sri Lanka. That marks a new beginning in Sri Lanka's prevailing system in many sectors.

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