Eva ANGLESSY **30 October 2025**

England & Portugal: a long-standing alliance

Sintra: view of the Castle of the Moors and the Tagus (far left) from the Pena Palace (own photo).

Contents

Origins of the “world’s oldest alliance”

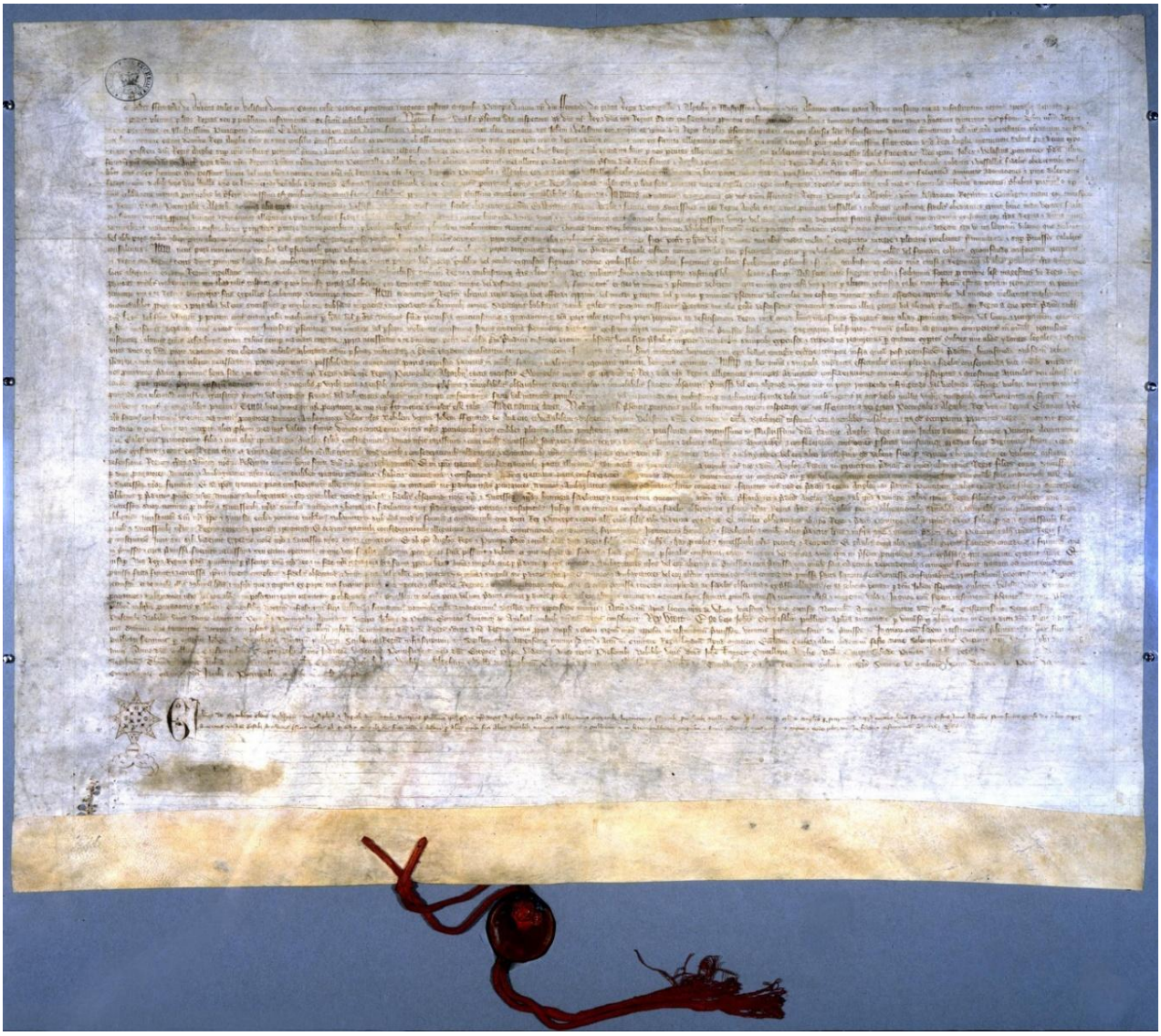
Winston Churchill, in a speech in the House of Commons in October 1943, famously described the unique and ancient friendship between England and Portugal as an alliance “without parallel in world history”. This long-lasting relationship, now regarded as “the world’s oldest alliance,” can be traced back to 1147, when English and Scottish crusaders—on their way to the Holy Land to wage war as part of the Second Crusades—helped the self-proclaimed King Alfonso I capture Lisbon from the Moors.

Statue of *Dom Afonso Henriques* (1109-1185), first King of Portugal. Castelo de Sao Jorge, Lisbon (1947). Own photo

Later, an Anglo-Portuguese alliance was born primarily out of converging strategic interests to balance the alliance between France and Castile (precursor to the kingdom of Spain) in 1369, which had worried the English court. Indeed, 14th-century Anglo-French relations mostly alternated between hostile rivalry at best to periods of open conflict and war at worst. These wars went on for so long that historians have called them the Hundred Years War. Through the alliance with Castile, which had one of the largest fleets in Western Europe, France could utilise Castilian Sea power in its struggle against England. Therefore, closer union with Castile’s western neighbour Portugal was a logical step to counter this threat.

The beginning of the formalization of the Alliance, based on the perpetual friendship between the two countries, occurred with the signing of the **Treaty of Tagilde** on the 10th of July 1372.

Then the Alliance was formally constituted by the **Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Alliance**, sealed at St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, on the 16th of June 1373, by King Edward III of England and King Fernando and Queen Leonor of Portugal (see picture below, The National Archive: E 30/275).



Treaty of alliance signed on 16th June 1373 (The National Archives: E 30-275)

This alliance was renewed in the **Treaty of Windsor**, signed on May 19, 1386, between the Kingdom of England (King Richard II) and the Kingdom of Portugal (King John I). The terms of the treaty included provisions for guaranteeing the mutual security of both nations and strengthening of commercial ties such as the right of both countries to trade on the terms enjoyed by the subjects of that country. There were even clauses encouraging freedom of movement and settlement between the two countries, as subjects of either country had the right to dwell in the domains of the other.

This diplomatic alliance was further sealed by the marriage of King John I of Portugal to Philippa of Lancaster, the daughter of the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt. Philippa provided royal patronage for England's commercial interests at the time. In return for cod and cloth desired by the Portuguese, wine, cork, salt, and oil were shipped through the English warehouses at Porto and traded between ports.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, dining with John I, King of Portugal, in 1386. Public Domain [1]

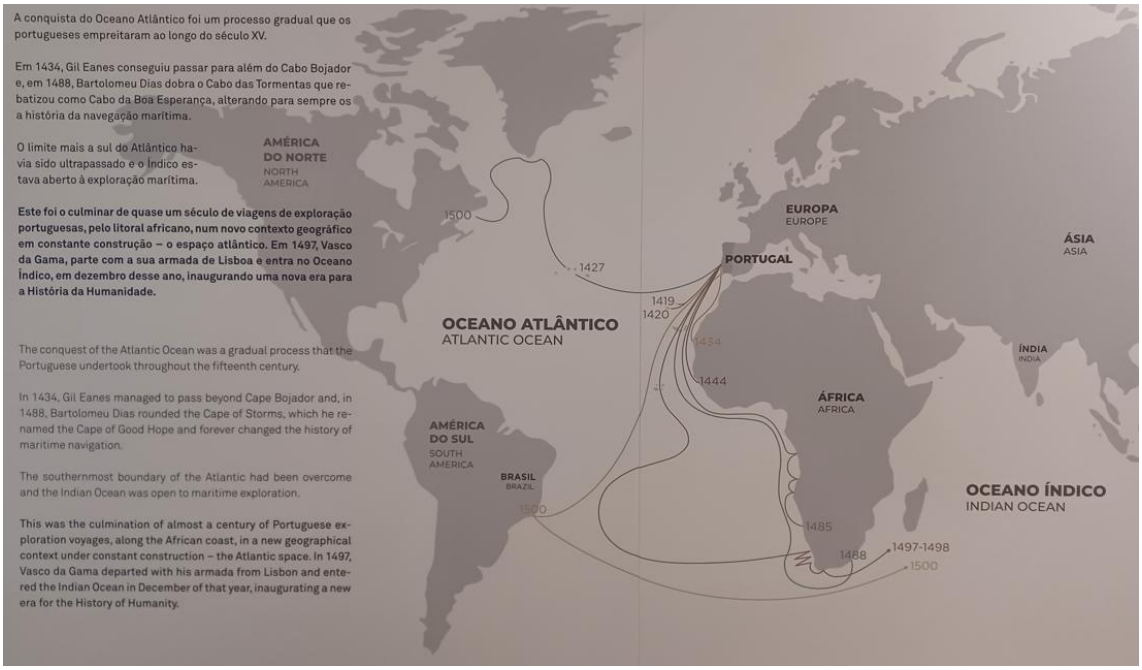
The Treaty of Windsor sealed on 9th May 1386 (The National Archives: E 30/310) [2]

[1] Source: John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster dining with the King of Portugal - Chronique d' Angleterre (Volume III) (late 15th C), f.244v - BL Royal MS 14 E IV - Anglo-Portuguese Alliance - Wikipedia

[2] See: History's Unparalleled Alliance: the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of Windsor, 9th May 1386 – History of government

Philippa's eldest son, Duarte, authored moral works and became king in 1433; Pedro, who travelled widely and had an interest in history, became regent (1439–1448) after Duarte died of the plague in 1438; Ferdinand the Saint Prince (1402–1443), who became a crusader, participated in the attack on Tangiers in 1437; and Henrique—also known as Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460)—became the master of the Order of Christ and the instigator and organiser of Portugal's early voyages of discovery, ushering in the "Portuguese golden age". By the time of his death in 1460, a large part of the African coast (between Cape Bojador and Sierra Leone) had been explored, the archipelagos of Madeira, Azores, and Cape Verde discovered, and the Atlantic finally open to maritime exploration.

Prince Henry leading the navigators, *Padrao dos Descobrimentos* (1960), Belem, Lisbon (own photo).



Map of Portuguese maritime discoveries during the 15th century, Maritime Museum, Lisbon (own photo)

Portugal was the first European power to start building a colonial empire: new ships and innovative astronomical navigation techniques helped to overcome the many challenges presented by each new voyage. During the 15th century, Portuguese explorers discovered an eastern route to India that rounded the Cape of Good Hope and explored the Indian Ocean, where they established trading

routes throughout most of southern Asia. In the first half of the 16th century, they discovered and conquered Brazil, and sent the first diplomatic missions to China and Japan.

Aftermath of the Treaty of Windsor

The Treaty was suspended from 1580 to 1640 during the Iberian Union, which began after the Portuguese succession crisis of 1580. Portugal became ruled by the Catholic, Spanish king Philip II while England was ruled by the last Tudor sovereign, the Protestant Elizabeth I. The Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) started with England's expeditions to the Spanish Netherlands in support of the Protestant Dutch rebellion against Spanish rule. Its climax was reached in 1588 with the defeat of Philip II's Armada by a triumphant Elizabeth (see her portrait below), but for the powerful Philip II, it was only a setback: the war dragged on, another Armada was built, and clashes between English and Spanish ships continued, until James I, who acceded the British throne in 1603 after Elizabeth's death, put an end to the war in 1604.

Illustration 7: The Armada Portrait, c. 1588. Formerly attributed to George Gower. [3]

In this idealistic portrait, a masterpiece of propaganda, domination and power stem from Elizabeth's costume and symbols surrounding her. She faces toward the sunny and calm seas on her right, where sails the English fleet, and turns away from the stormy waters where the Spanish ships are

[3] Public Domain: File:Elizabeth I (Armada Portrait).jpg - Wikipedia

floundering, thanks to the “Protestant wind” of the English army. She is positioned as a calm force for good, in contrast with the chaos of Catholic Europe. This opposition disappears in the painting below, depicting The Somerset House Conference, held in 1604 to negotiate the end of the Anglo-Spanish War. Though in this group portrait delegates from Spain and the Spanish Netherlands are seated on the left and the English on the right of the table, their looks and attires seem quite similar.

The Somerset House Conference, 1604. National Portrait Gallery, London (own photo, cropped)

The Iberian Union ended with the Portuguese Restoration War against Philip III, which started in 1640. The House of Braganza was established as Portugal's new ruling dynasty with the acclamation of John IV as the new king of Portugal. Spain recognized Portugal's sovereignty and made peace on 13 February 1668. However, the Portuguese Empire had been weakened during the Union, and it continued to be challenged throughout the 17th century. The increasing raids on Portuguese merchant shipping by Dutch, English and French privateers and their establishment of trading posts in Africa, Asia and the Americas undermined Portugal's monopoly on the lucrative spice trade. The decline of this trade in Portugal’s economy increased its dependency on its colonies, first India and then Brazil.

Over the next few centuries, England and Portugal would lend each other support in matters of international concern and potential warfare. The alliance saw the two countries unite over their common enemies which at the time included Spain, the Netherlands and France.
During the Seven Years’ War (1756 to 1763), Anglo-Portuguese forces successfully defeated a Spanish invasion force in 1762.
Then Portugal and Great Britain came together again during the Peninsula War (1808 – 1814), a major conflict during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815).

The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance during the Peninsula War (1807-1814)

Between 1792 and 1815, Europe witnessed a near constant state of war, with the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. Due to its ancestral alliance with the United Kingdom, Portugal became involved in the fighting against France, with the Portuguese and British navies cooperating extensively during these years. This was also a period of global warfare, with Portugal having to protect the trade routes to its colonies.

The Peninsular War—a major conflict of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815)—was waged in the Iberian Peninsula by Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom against the French army's invasion.

Napoleon, allied to Spain since 1796, summoned (on 19 July 1807) the Portuguese "to close their ports to the British and declare war on Britain." His intention was to make economic war against Britain, for there was no other means to bring it to seek peace than by striking at its trade. When the Portuguese proved dilatory, Napoleon ordered General Junot, with a force of 30,000, to march through Spain to Portugal (October–November 1807).

By 30 November, French soldiers had occupied Lisbon, forcing the Portuguese royal family to flee to their colony of Brazil, where they set up a government in exile. Queen Mary I of Portugal and the Prince Regent John left Lisbon onboard the Royal Brigantine (see picture below and next page) before boarding the warship "Principe Real" to cross the Atlantic. The Portuguese and British navies escorted the Portuguese Royal Household from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro: between 27 and 29 November, a convoy of 56 ships carrying over 15.000 people departed from the Tagus River.

The Portuguese royal family evacuates Lisbon for Brazil. Painting by Henri L'Evêque, 1812.[4]

[4] Source: Evacuation of the Portuguese Royal Family to Brazil - World History Encyclopedia

The original Royal Brigantine, built in 1784, now in the Maritime Museum, Belem, Lisbon (own photo)

The French army that conquered Portugal also occupied parts of northern Spain. Napoleon, then, claimed all of Portugal and certain provinces of northern Spain. Unable to organize government resistance, the Spanish minister Godoy persuaded his king, Charles IV, to imitate the Portuguese royal family and escape to South America. Turning against his previous ally, Napoleon deposed the Spanish House of Bourbon and installed his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as King of Spain, in May 1808. But he had gravely underestimated Spanish patriotism.

On 2 May, the people of Madrid had already risen against the invader, and the war for Spanish independence had begun. Although the Madrid revolt was ruthlessly suppressed by the French, provincial insurrections took place throughout Spain, and the Spaniards showed great capacity for guerrilla warfare, with guerilla fighters killing more French soldiers than the major battles between regular troops. The Spanish won an early victory at the Battle of Bailén (16-19 July 1808), which marked the first major defeat of a French Imperial army, inspiring further resistance movements.

In the next five years, hundreds of thousands of French soldiers were sent to fight in Spain and Portugal, putting a strain on French military resources that would become sorely needed elsewhere. Only the obstinate resistance of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), in Portugal, the continuous activity of the guerrillas, and dissensions among the French saved the peninsula from final submission. Indeed, the British forces, which had first landed in Portugal on 1 August 1808, quickly achieved some successes, conquering Lisbon and forcing the evacuation of the French from Portugal, according to the terms of the controversial Convention of Cintra, 30 August 1808 (see next paragraph). In 1809 the French returned to Portugal, briefly holding Oporto and Lisbon; but Wellington, with some difficulties, was able to outflank them and lead a force toward Madrid. His victory at the Battle of Talavera (July 27–28, 1809) was short-lived, nevertheless, and he was compelled to retreat to central Portugal, where he fortified himself within the country around

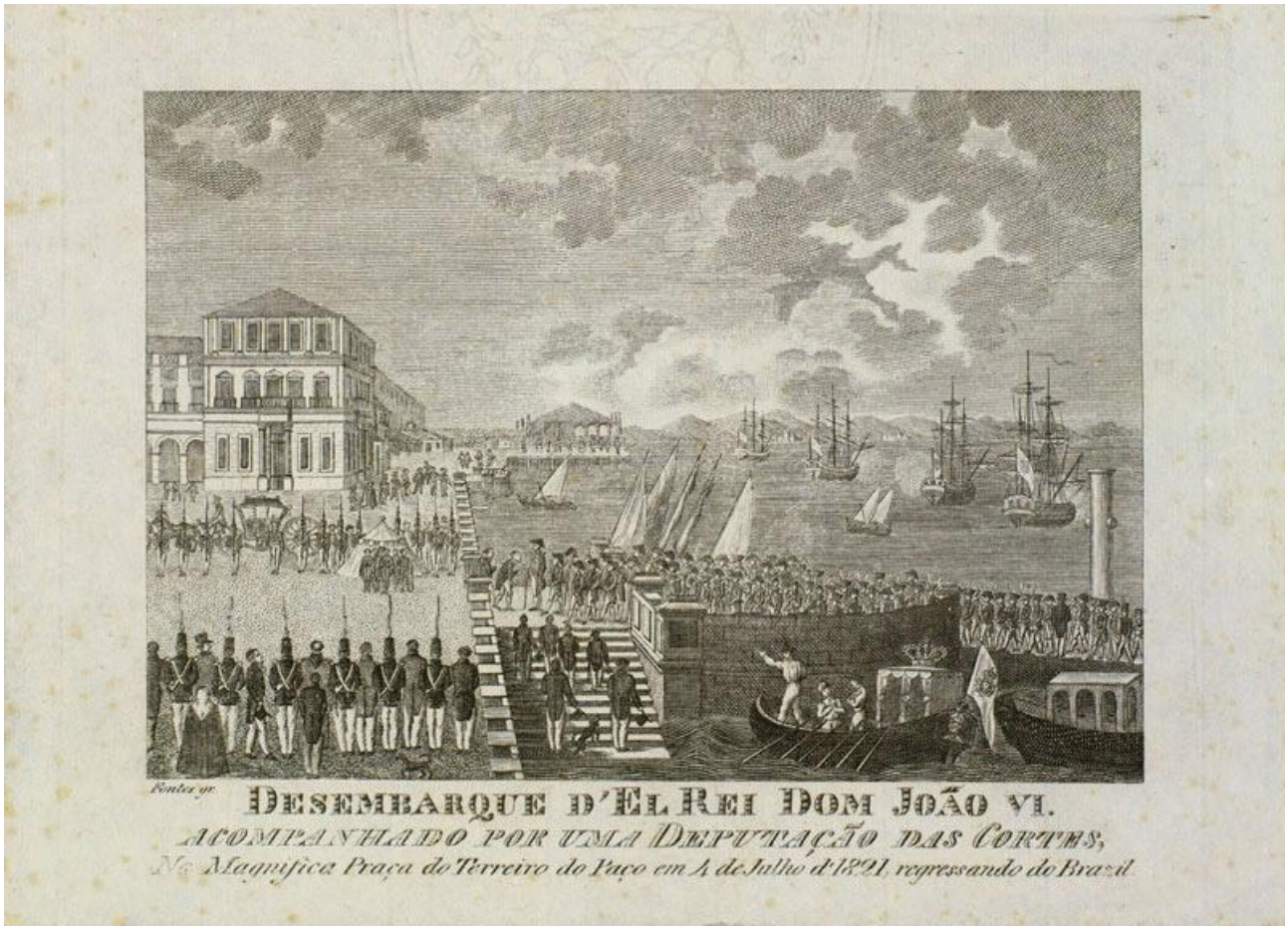
Lisbon, now again under British rule. His celebrated “lines of Torres Vedras” were defensive works designed to resist any army that Napoleon could send against them.

Part of a sketch map showing the deployment of Anglo-Portuguese and French forces (led respectively by Wellington and Masséna) at the battle of Bussaco on 27 September 1810. (The National Archives: WO 78/5964)

Although the tide of war shifted back and forth, France's hold over the country eventually began to slip; the victory of Wellington and his Anglo-Spanish-Portuguese army at the Battle of Vitoria (21 June 1813) finally sealed the fate of Bonapartist Spain. The Bourbon King Ferdinand VII of Spain was restored on 11 December 1813. Wellington's army pushed on into France. Hostilities ended after the first abdication of Napoleon in April 1814.

Meanwhile, with the King absent and the country devastated by the Peninsular War and the consequent mass hunger and enormous exodus of emigrants, Portugal became a *de facto* British protectorate upon the final expulsion of the French. It was administered by William Carr Beresford, who took a high hand in his dealings with the Portuguese government.

In Brazil, the general opinion was that the King's return to Portugal could mean loss of the autonomy Brazil had gained and a return to its prior colonial status. With political pressure becoming stronger in Portugal in 1821, King John VI designated his son Prince Pedro regent for Brazil in his name and left for Lisbon on 25 April 1821. The King and his court arrived in Lisbon on 3 July. His return was orchestrated in such a manner as not to imply that the King had been coerced, but in fact a new political environment had already been established. A constitution had been drafted, and the King was required to swear loyalty to it on 1 October 1822.



Desdembarque de Dom João VI em Portugal em seu regresso do Brasil (1821). Public Domain.[5]

Today, we can still read a firsthand account of the consequences of the French invasion in Portugal and Spain in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto the First (1812). Though his poem was published in 1812, Byron travelled in Portugal and Spain in 1809, and in his preface to the First and Second Cantos, he wrote "The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe… the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries".

In his verse relating to Portugal (see Appendix), Byron bitterly laments the Convention of Cintra, seen as a disgrace by many in Great Britain, who felt that a complete defeat of Junot had been transformed into a French escape. Indeed, 20,900 defeated French troops were evacuated without further conflict from Portugal to Rochefort (France) with all their equipment and personal property by the Royal Navy (getting free transport meant that the French would travel loaded, instead of lightly like a defeated garrison marching to its own lines).
Interestingly, although in his poem Byron thought that the convention was signed in the palace of the Marchese Marialva[6], it was signed at the Palace of Queluz (the official residence of the Portuguese Prince Regent John) in Cintra, on 30 August 1808.

[5] Source : DomJoãoVIemPortugal - John VI of Portugal - Wikipedia
[6] Lord Byron, *Selected Poems*, p. 71.

XXIV.

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!
Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
With diadem hight foolscap, lo! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe arrayed, and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazoned glare names known to chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
Whereat the urchin points, and laughs with all his soul.

XXV.

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foiled the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
Here Folly dashed to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regained what Arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!
Woe to the conquering, not the conquered host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast.

XXVI.

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra, at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year?

Byron, though praising the beauty of the landscapes he saw in Portugal, was very critical of the Portuguese people: “A nation swoll'n with ignorance and pride, / Who lick, yet loathe, the hand that waves the sword” (XVI), “Poor, paltry slaves! yet born midst noblest scenes—/ Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?” (XVIII), and opposed them to the proud Spaniards:

For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low. (XXXIII)

The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance in recent history

During the 19th century, though the support between the respective nations continued—with British involvement in the Portuguese Civil War (1828 to 1834), thus providing crucial support to the Liberal faction during the crisis over the issue of royal succession—tensions began to happen as the two empires developed their economic ties across the world. Their interests began to collide and competition in the age of expansion resulted in a controversial foreign policy move by the British

government. On 11 January 1890, a British Ultimatum was issued, forcing the Portuguese military to push back from areas which they had previously laid claim, on the basis that Great Britain had current occupation in the area. These disputed lands included areas between Mozambique and Angola, in addition to Zimbabwe, Zambia and large sections of Malawi.
The Portuguese were outraged and felt humiliated on the world stage. They considered the move in breach of their agreement signed in 1386. Not only did this British act greatly damage the special relationship which had developed over the previous centuries, but it led to the denouncement of the Portuguese government which subsequently fell.

However, despite this breach of trust, the Portuguese and British governments managed to weather the stormy international waters and remain supportive of each other during the 20th-century wars, when the old peace treaty was invoked on several occasions.

During World War I (1914 – 1918), the Portuguese troops fought on the Western Front along with the Allied soldiers after German incursions in Mozambique.
During World War II (1939 – 1945), Portugal remained arguably neutral, keeping trade with both sides (although this neutrality is up for debate). Britain did not ask for assistance and accepted this neutrality, not wanting Spain to enter the war on the side of the Axis. In 1940, the Portuguese leader Salazar helped the British when Gibraltar evacuees were shipped to Madeira, and in 1943, he granted access to naval basis in the Azores to the British and later American troops.
Forty years later the treaty was invoked again, when Britain requested the use of military facilities on the Azores in 1982 during the Falklands conflict.

The long-lasting alliance served both countries well through periods of hardship, economic expansion, international conflict and social changes. The cooperation between Portugal and the United Kingdom continues to this day. Since 1973 and the celebration of the 600 years of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, many events and activities have kept alive the friendship between the two countries. Today, the organization Portugal-UK 650, under the patronage of King Charles III and the President of the Portuguese Republic, intends to celebrate and promote the common history; write new chapters of friendship, cooperation and trade; undertake scientific research on the Alliance, and promote the values of the treaty of Alliance in today's world – peace, friendship, truth, fidelity, constancy, sincerity, kindness and solidarity.[7]

"**From henceforth there shall be between us true, faithful, constant and perpetual peace and friendship, union and alliance and league of sincere affection**" (Article 1, Treaty of Alliance between Portugal and England, 16 June 1373).

[7] Source : Portugal-UK 650 - Portugal-Uk 650

Appendix

Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto the First, stanzas XIV to XXXIV (1812)

XIV.

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

XV.

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand:
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge.

XVI.

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford
A nation swoll'n with ignorance and pride,
Who lick, yet loathe, the hand that waves the sword.
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

XVII.

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
Mid many things unsightly to strange e'e;
For hut and palace show like filthily;
The dingy denizens are reared in dirt;
No personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout or shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwashed, unhurt.

XVIII.

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born midst noblest scenes—
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken
Than those whereof such things the bard relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlocked Elysium's gates?

XIX.

The horrid crags, by toppling convent crowned,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain moss by scorching skies imbrowned,
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mixed in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow.

XX.

Then slowly climb the many-winding way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's House of Woe;'
Where frugal monks their little relics show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punished been; and lo,
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth a Hell.

XXI.

And here and there, as up the crags you spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path;
Yet deem not these devotion's offering—
These are memorials frail of murderous wrath;
For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
Poured forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
Throughout this purple land, where law secures not life! *(see Byron's note, p. 70)*

XXII.

On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
Are domes where whilom kings did make repair;
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe:
Yet ruined splendour still is lingering there.
And yonder towers the prince's palace fair:
There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.

XXIII.

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan.
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow;
But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide.

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Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!
Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
With diadem hight foolscap, lo! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
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For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!
Woe to the conquering, not the conquered host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast.

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And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra, at thy name; *(see Byron's note p. 71)*
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year?

XXVII.

So deemed the Childe, as o'er the mountains he
Did take his way in solitary guise:
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
More restless than the swallow in the skies:
Though here awhile he learned to moralise,
For Meditation fixed at times on him,
And conscious Reason whispered to despise
His early youth misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gazed on Truth, his aching eyes grew dim.

XXVIII.

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
Onward he flies, nor fixed as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll,
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

XXIX.

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;
And church and court did mingle their array,
And mass and revel were alternate seen;
Lordlings and freres—ill-sorted fry, I ween!
But here the Babylonian whore had built
A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to garnish guilt.

XXX.

O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills,
(Oh that such hills upheld a free-born race!)
Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills,
Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place.
Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace.
Oh, there is sweetness in the mountain air
And life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share.

XXXI.

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend:
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear, whereon her shepherds tend
Flocks, whose rich fleece right well the trader knows—
Now must the pastor's arm his lambs defend:
For Spain is compassed by unyielding foes,
And all must shield their all, or share Subjection's woes.

XXXII.

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,
Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
Or e'er the jealous queens of nations greet,
Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark sierras rise in craggy pride?
Or fence of art, like China's vasty wall?—
Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall
Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul

XXXIII.

But these between a silver streamlet glides,
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foemen flow:
For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low. *(See Byron's note 1 p. 74)*

Byron's notes (in *Selected Poems*):

Note p. 70: It is a well-known fact, that in the year 1809, the assassinations in the streets of Lisbon and its vicinity were not confined by the Portuguese to their countrymen; but that Englishmen were daily butchered: and so far from redress being obtained, we were requested not to interfere if we perceived any compatriot defending himself against his allies. (…)

Note p. 71: The Convention of Cintra was signed in the palace of the Marchese Marialva.

Note 1 p. 74: "As I have found the Portuguese, so have I characterized them. That they are since improved, at least in courage, is evident. The late exploits of Lord Wellington have effaced the follies of Cintra. He has, indeed, done wonders: he has, perhaps, changed the character of a nation, reconciled rival superstitions, and baffled an enemy who never retreated before his predecessors — 1812.

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