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Looking for Adê
A contribution to Timorese historiography

Introduction

In the centuries-old and turbulent history of Portuguese colonialism in East Timor, place names such as Lifao, Mena, Manatuto, Kupang and Dili (after 1769) are redolent of the early record of contact and trading relationships that fuelled the colonial desire for sandalwood, slaves and Christian souls in equal measure. Another name of similar antiquity and significance, also widely reported in the collective Portuguese archive, is the trading entrepôt of Adê (sometimes written as Adem). However, whereas most of these former ports of Portuguese engagement have retained their emplaced identity both within the historical record and as sites of contemporary settlement, the significance of Adê has faded with time. It rarely features in the contemporary Portuguese literature, and much uncertainty now surrounds its physical location beyond a general idea that it lay somewhere along the north coast of the island east of the current capital of Dili. In this brief communication I attempt to shed some light on the whereabouts of this curious and otherwise obscure fragmenta of Timorese historiography.

My interest in locating Adê arose during recent ethnographic and historical research on the small harbour settlement of Com in the north-eastern extremity of Timor. In the process I came across a reference from the Portuguese historian Humberto Leitão, who records a series of significant ports along the north coast. The list includes Manatuto, Vemasse, Baucau, Laga, Laivai, Lautem and Adem. The latter he supposed referred to 'the small port of Com' (Leitão 1948:151). In a footnote to this point, Leitão cites information from a former governor of East Timor, Pimentel,[1] who situated the port of Adem (or

[1] Leitão (1948) does not provide a clear source for this information and may be referring to the first Portuguese governor to land on Timor, António de Mesquita Pimentel, who was later ousted in 1697 by the so-called Black Portuguese or Topass commander, Domingos da Costa (Gunn 1999:79).

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Adê) 'some two and a half or three leagues from the northeast head of the island',[2] which Leitão (1948:151) was satisfied 'approximated the location of the port of Com some 11 miles to the east of Lautem'.

Given the prominence accorded Adê in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century records of Portuguese colonialism on Timor, the association of Com with the old port of Adê suggested rich opportunities for further historical enquiry. Unfortunately, these possibilities were constrained by a complete lack of recognition of the name Adê among contemporary residents of Com. More significantly, a survey of the Portuguese historical literature of Timor indicated that Leitão was alone in making this connection and there was no corroboration of his observation. On further consideration it seemed to me that the port of Com is much more likely to be associated with historical references to a Rey de Hum (King of Hum), listed as one of the political rulers of Timor 'subject to Portuguese governance' in a treaty of 1703 (Leitão 1948:150; see also De Matos 1974:336-9). The grouping of Hum with other far eastern domains of Sarau and Faturo adds weight to this supposition, as does De Roever's reference (2002:235) to the northern coastal port of 'Hon', which is likely to be another version of the site known as Com. The variation in terms highlights the whole question of nomenclature and the inconsistency of place names accorded sites on Timor, which contributes a degree of uncertainty to the collective Portuguese archive. Present-day Com is itself a Portuguese version of its local name, *kon*(*u*) (meaning 'night' in the local Fataluku language). The name derives from the central anchorage of the port, O'o lo kon (the mouth of Kon), a name subsequently adopted by the senior resident Fataluku clan, Konu Ratu (McWilliam forthcoming).

Leaving aside for the moment the question of local name variants for the port known as Adê, the great majority of Portuguese historians either elide the matter of its physical location or leave the issue indeterminate. Boxer (1947, 1948), for example in his detailed descriptions of Portuguese involvement in Timor, makes no mention of the place at all. Another example can be seen in the recently published and otherwise detailed four-volume history of the Portuguese in the Far East (Marques 1998-2000). In a chapter on Timor, Figueiredo (2000:698) presents a map with Adê located on the eastern tip of the island accompanied by a question mark. No clarification is offered in his text. Other writers suggest that Adê may no longer be known or referred to but appears to have been situated somewhere in the region of Manatuto.[3] Certainly most Portuguese writers, where they make any mention of Adê,

2 Pimentel's reported specific directions being '*a duas léguas e meia ou tres da cabeça NE de Ilha*' (Leitão 1948:151).

3 De Sá 1956:488-9; Loureiro 1995:145. Loureiro (1995:154, note 5) referring to Adê writes, 'localidade que se supõe desaparecida, e que situaria nas proximidades de Manatuto'. Similarly, De Sá (1956:489, note 44) notes, 'Adem, localidade e porto na área de Manatuto, ao que parece, e que hoje já não se nomeia'.

tend to do so in combination with the place named Manatuto, the latter being one of the early recorded sites of Portuguese trade and settlement along the north east coast of Timor.[4]

Adê in historical context

If the location of the port of Adê has become an elusive site within the collective Portuguese historical record of Timor, there is broad consensus over its early prominence, especially from the second half of the sixteenth century when the Portuguese were extending their presence in the eastern islands of Indonesia. At the vanguard of these Portuguese strategic incursions were members of the Dominican order of monks (Padroade de São Domingos). Drawing on the records of the Dominican mission archives for the period 1568-1579, Artur de Sá (1956:489) records observations that, 'for some years Muslim traders (Mouros) arriving in Timor via Makassar (in Sulawesi) were trading for sandalwood (*sandâlo*), beeswax (*cera*)[5] and slaves (*escravagem*) from two settlements (*povoções*), two staging places (*paragems*),[6] named Manatuto and Adê' (see also De Morais 1944:106, who adds the information that these sea ports had knowledge of the seeding and propagation of sandalwood).

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries represented the high point of sandalwood extraction and trade from Timor and ushered in a long period of intense rivalry between Portuguese, Dutch, Makassarese (Sulawesi) and Chinese traders for control over the lucrative revenue that flowed from the sandalwood trade.[7] It is apparent that Adê was one of the key ports where this struggle was actively played out during the early colonial period. Confirmation is also provided in the records of the Goanese-based trader Manuel Godinho de Erédia (1562-1623), who refers to the sandalwood ports along the 'inside' coast of Timor (*costa de dentro*)[8] as Mena, Cercião, Assan,[9] Batugade and Adem. In a footnote to this reference, there is an editorial comment to the effect that Adem was located in the 'far east' (*extremidade orientale*)

4 Das Dores (1903:11) makes the unlikely comment that Adê is located in the province of Servião (the name given to much of the western areas of Timor by the Portuguese), and was the site of the first Catholic mission and church in Timor, now under Dutch control. Das Dores, however, is unreliable in his listings, and his note is more likely to apply to the port of Mena, which by all other accounts was the site of the first Catholic church on Timor (see Map 1).

5 Beeswax was an important export commodity from Timor for centuries (Meitzner Yoder 2005:62-3).

6 The actual word recorded is '*paragons*', which is not a known Portuguese word and is more likely to be a transcription error for the word '*paragems*'.

7 For perspectives, see Gunn 1999; Therik 2004; Boxer 1947, 1948; De Roever 2002.

8 In contrast to the 'outer coast' following the southern shores of the islands in the archipelago.

9 The first three of these sites refers geographically to the northwest coast of Timor, where the Portuguese concentrated their early exploits.

of the island (Loureiro 1995:121). In his description, De Erédia also notes the presence in Adem of mining activity extracting material from rock columns or outcrops in the area. He uses the term *tambaga suaça*,[10] a phrase no longer in common usage but referred to by Boxer (1967:48), somewhat confusingly, as an 'alloy of copper and zinc'. No further elaboration is forthcoming on this activity, and like much of the long period of Portuguese engagement with Timor, the record is patchy and incomplete.

As Gunn (1999:78) has pointed out, although the anchorage of Lifao (in the present-day enclave district of Oecussi-Ambeno) became the favourite port of call for Portuguese sandalwood traders from Macau during the seventeenth century, by the 1650s there was still no permanent Portuguese settlement on the island. The Portuguese sandalwood trade was controlled from the Royal Treasury in Macau (Ptak 1987:35), and from the early seventeenth century the Catholic settlement of Larantuka on Flores Island (see Map 2) served as the collection point and base for Portuguese trade and the Dominican mission.[11] Thus, to the extent that Portuguese historiography elaborates on this period, it tends to focus on the establishment and history of Portuguese colonial activities in Lifao (Oecussi), the enclave on the north west coast of Timor that became the principal base for colonial governance.[12] Certainly there is a more extensive archival record for this region, supported by the observations of a number of other European visitors who left detailed commentaries of the settlement and history (see, for example, Dampier's description (1703) of the port town and its inhabitants in 1699). For much of the more eastern regions of Timor, colonial relations with local Timorese political communities tended to be fragile and highly changeable, which precluded the continuity of a Portuguese presence in many areas and with it the opportunity of detailed written records.[13] This feature is also reflected in most Portuguese colonial maps of Timor, which tend to give emphasis to areas where their presence was stronger. The early, and distorted, seventeenth-century map of Timor attributed to Manuel Godinho de Erédia[14] is notable for the number of named places around the coast and particularly its focus on Lifao and Mena, but, frustratingly, does not show the location of ports like Manatuto and Adê in

10 De Erédia uses the phrase 'Adem é um porto da costa setentrional, onde se descobriram algumas minas de *tambaga suaça*, que nasce pelas aberturas da terra, como penedos colunares' (Loureiro 1995:121).

11 The initial fortified settlement on Solor Island changed hands repeatedly under attacks from the Dutch with a small force of Butonese, and was abandoned as a trading base by the Portuguese after 1613.

12 For descriptions, see Boxer 1947; De Matos 1974; Oliveira 1950; Meitzner Yoder 2005.

13 The disastrous fire in Dili in 1799, when many colonial buildings were torched in protest against the much resented collective taxes (*finta*) imposed on local populations, contributed to the destruction of records that had accumulated up to that point (Soares 2003:147).

14 The map is dated between 1615 and 1622, and is one of the earliest detailed cartographic representations of the island. Sixteenth-century maps of Timor tend to lack detailed place names.

the much contracted representation of the eastern part of the island (Cortesão and Da Mota 1960: Plate 418c, Folio 61v).

For ports like Adê on the neglected north eastern coast of Timor, there are only passing references and brief notes from Portuguese historians about its location and political character. Historian De Sá, for instance, records the murder and death of the Dominican Friar Gaspar Evangelista in the church of Adê during 1676. The Friar had been pursuing his mission activities under the auspices of the Vicar General (*vigario geral*) of Solor, Frey Domingus de Rozario (De Sá 1958:443). Referring to a similar period, Gunn (1999:76) highlights the death, in 1658, of two rival Jesuit priests, João Nogueira and Pedro Francisco,[15] who had been proselytizing in the kingdom of Luca in southeast Timor, and were killed for straying into the territory of the King of Adê. Gunn here follows the ambiguous phraseology adopted by numerous Portuguese chronicles in locating Adê on the 'northeast tip' of Timor.

Brief as they are, these references provide significant clues to the nature and whereabouts of the port of Adê and its regional location. They suggest that, by the second half of the seventeenth century, the area known by that name had attained or retained a degree of political prominence and was a strategic enough location for the missionary activities of the Dominicans to sponsor the construction of a church, still a comparatively rare structure in Timor at this time.[16]

If, as suggested in the archival material, Adê referred to both a port on the north coast to the east of Manatuto and simultaneously a 'kingdom' of some significance, the evidence suggests the possibility that Adê was in fact an alternate name for the Timorese 'kingdom' of Vemasse; a domain that bordered Manatuto to the east and became more widely known in the later literature by that name. Indeed, the Portuguese historian Leitão (1948:163)

15 The rivalry for Christian souls between Dominican and Jesuit orders was a lively, and sometimes murderous, accompaniment to Portuguese attempts to assert economic and political control over the region (Boxer 1948:170-1, 1967).

16 The first recorded Portuguese proselytizing on Timor is associated with one Frei António Taveira, thought to be from the Franciscan order, who was sent to the island in 1556 by his senior, Frei António da Cruz, from their base on the island of Solor (Sousa 1767:282; Lobato 2000:358; Soares 2003:27). It is not clear where Taveira pursued his mission activities, but he is reported to have converted up to 5,000 'pagan' souls (Fernandes 1992:10). A later effort was mounted in 1589 by Frei Belchior da Luz, who landed at Mena on the northwest coast and persuaded the local ruler to adopt Christianity and construct the first recorded church on the island (Gunn 1999:73). Six months later the efforts were apparently abandoned. A number of poorly documented missionizing attempts followed, until the more concerted and successful efforts of Frei António de São Jacinto in 1641-2 who, with his Dominican colleagues, won converts and firmly established their order in a series of Timorese 'kingdoms' (*reino*) from Luca in the southeast of the island to Kupang (*Cupao*) in the far west (Gunn 1999:73-8; De Sá 1952:62-5; De Matos 1974; Leitão 1948; De Morais 1944:109-10; Fernandes 1992:13-4). By the middle of the seventeenth century Timor was reported to have some 22 established churches (Felgas 1956:225; see also Rouffaer 1923-24 for notes on the chronology of the Dominican mission in the Solor-Flores region).

himself recognized this possibility when he noted that the 'kingdom' of Vemasse was not mentioned in the document that speaks of Adê, in spite of its importance, nor was it mentioned as one of the kingdoms of Timor in the report of Albuquerque Coelho'. The latter reference is to a former Portuguese governor of Timor (1722-1725) who sought to document the known range of Timorese political domains at the time. However, Leitão was evidently not persuaded to make the connection more explicit and his suggestion has not been taken up by contemporary Portuguese historians of Timor.

Dutch clarifications

In a somewhat rueful remark, the celebrated Portuguese poet, administrator and anthropologist Ruy Cinatti (1964:1830) has made the point that

> [T]he Portuguese have been known to be more ready for action than for writing; when they did write they concerned themselves with politics and history at the expense of the description of the physical world and material culture, which they regarded as less important.

I would add that the politics and history that they did concern themselves with was focused almost exclusively on Portuguese activities and their fortunes; reflecting what Boxer (1948:50) has characterized as 'the conquistador and clerical mentality'. Gunn (1999:23) has made a similar point noting that,

> [I]t is certainly not the case that Timor has been neglected in Portuguese letters, but just that few of the massive histories and compilations of documents went beyond a Portugalizing perspective.

This tendency of the Portuguese historiography of Timor contributes to a frustrating lack of clarity on significant points of Timor history and indigenous political geography; the case of Adê is a striking example.

Fortunately and perhaps ironically, given the long history of animosity and mutual feuding that characterized their relations in the Indonesian archipelago, it is the Dutch chroniclers of Timorese history who can shed further light on the question of Adê. Key confirmation, for instance, is offered by that most productive of colonial scholars, P.J. Veth, drawing on his reading of the eighteenth-century writer François Valentijn.[17] Veth (1855:60) concludes that in the seventeenth century the area of Adê was 'the same as the place the Portuguese called Vemasse'; adding the important point that '[I]n the old literature it is called "Wey Massoy alias Ady"'. Valentijn refers to the whole

[17] Referring here to the eighteenth-century missionary and former director of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC, Dutch East India Company) in Amboina (Moluccas), Valentijn, and his chronicle of life and trade in the 'East Indies' from the perspective of Maluku 1724-1726.

district as Ade-Manatoetoe but others, as Veth notes, consider that they were separate political entities.

Dutch scholarship also provides further clarification on the shifting political circumstances of seventeenth-century Timor that point to reasons for the paucity of recorded documentation of Adê in the Portuguese literature of the time. This is due to the fact that trading centres along the north eastern seaboard of Timor were, for extended periods of time, outside the reach and coercive control of Portuguese colonial interests. A key event in this respect was the maritime attack in 1640 on Portuguese and Timorese settlements by the Makassarese King of Tallo, Toemamalijang (also known by his Islamic name, Moezhaffar). Although estimates vary, the attack on the Portuguese fortification at Larantuka (eastern Flores) involved up to 150 ships and some 6,000 men, who then sailed on to Timor, where the fleet split, half heading to the south coast of Timor, the remainder sailing along the northeast coast where they 'vanquished' the strategic ports of Manatuto, Adê and Hon which subsequently came under their control.[18]

Just what this meant in practice is difficult to assess. Clearly the Makassarese had been pursuing trading interests in the northeast ports for decades, a feature confirmed in the early Portuguese Dominican records. De Roever (2002:235), for example, reports that some of the rajas of East Timor were offering annual tribute to Makassar that included 50 slaves as well as stockpiles of sandalwood. It is also reported that the Makassarese came yearly with five, six, or more ships and traded (bees)wax, sandalwood, tortoiseshell and amber in return for cloth (see also *Generale missiven* 1968, III:930).

Makassarese trade dominance of northeast Timor appears to have continued uncontested until the successful Dutch attack on the city of Makassar itself in 1667. From that time renewed rivalry for political and trading influence emerged. In 1668, for example, the VOC governor of the Banda Islands (Moluccas), Jakob Kops, ordered new negotiations with the 'kings of the eastern corner' of Timor, an initiative prompted by reports of a rich copper mine (*koperberg*) at Adê.[19] On 23 May of that year a treaty (*bondgenootschap*) was confirmed with the Raja of Manatuto, the Raja of Adê, and other *negerij* (indigenous political domains) which stood in a dependent relation to the Raja of Manatoetoe. The rajas would acknowledge the 'supreme authority' of the VOC. They would deliver all trading articles including slaves and sandalwood at a reasonable price, and agreed that no other traders would be engaged who did not have a permit from the Company. In return, the

[18] De Roever 2002:235. The attack also made the nearby island of Alor a Makassarese dependency, although the Dutch, according to VOC Governor General Cornelis Speelman, refused to recognize the claim (De Roever 2002:236).

[19] *Generale missiven* 1968, III:677. Along with trading possibilities in slaves and beeswax, but apparently not in sufficient quantities to warrant establishing a post there.

Dutch offered protection and allowed the subject domains to sail under the Company's flag.[20] However, the protection of the VOC appears to have been more in spirit than in practice, as the region was almost immediately subject to sustained attacks by the so-called Black Portuguese or Larantouqueiro[21] forces seeking to assert their political and trading interests. The Dutch reinstated their authority in 1688 along with the previous agreements, but the situation appears to have been fluid for many years.

Insights into the turbulent politics of Adê in the late seventeenth century can be gleaned from the records and documentation of the VOC during a brief period when the area attracted Dutch attention. The settlement appears to have come under frequent attack from Portuguese forces from the late 1660s onwards. In 1669 reference is made to the 'Queen of Adê' having fled to the mountains, probably in the face of Portuguese incursions (*Generale missiven* 1968, III:677). In 1674 the Orangkayi[22] or Raja Amachily (or Ama sili) of Adê was expelled to the offshore (Dutch) island of Kisser and then to Banda with his retainers where he beseeched the VOC to erect a fort at Adê for protection. He reports being forced to submit to the Portuguese in 1668 when 'no less than 2,000 of his subjects had been killed or taken as slaves to Lifao and Larantuka, including women and children' (*Generale missiven* 1968, III:929-30). In 1676 Adê and Manatuto are noted to have rebelled in despair against Portuguese slaving in the area, but were forced to submit once again when the Portuguese leader Antonio Hornay arrived on 27 May with 12 well-armed vessels and quelled the rebellion (*Generale missiven* 1971, IV:140). By 1681 Raja Amachilly (of Adê) was living in exile on the offshore island of Wetar under Dutch protection, seeking support from the VOC to assert a Dutch protectorate in Adê against the Portuguese (*Generale missiven* 1971, IV:431, 435; 1975, V:352). In the

20 De Roever 2002:280; Veth 1855:61. The use of flags and banners was a common strategy of the Dutch as well as the Portuguese to signify political submission and to secure conditions for the conduct of trade (Ellen 2003:90). The involvement of Banda in this exercise highlights the fact that eastern Timor was very much within the Moluccan sphere of trade and political alliance. The slave trade from Timor also supplied labour for the Banda spice plantations (Rodenwaldt 1927:19).

21 The name accorded the part-Portuguese freelance traders and de facto rulers of much of Timor during the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries and described by Gunn (1999:94) as having a 'testy loyalty to the [Portuguese] Crown often amounting to economic independence'. De Roever (2005:222-6) provides a detailed description of their origins and operational strategy. Boxer (1947:11) notes of the period that there seems to have been something about the atmosphere of Timor which was conducive to violence, and offers the example of the attack early in 1668, by the *Zwarte Portugeesen* on the inhabitants of Kisser island, off the northeast coast of Timor, killing 200 people, mainly women and children, and carrying away 450 persons as slaves, most of whom were later rescued by an expedition sent by Jacob Kops, the self-same governor of Banda.

22 A term used widely across the Malay trading world including the islands of eastern Indonesia, where the *orang kayi* or *orang kaya* (literally person/people of wealth) represented an oligarchy of senior men from small but wealthy communities who had established a 'mercantile aristocracy' (Villiers 1981:728-9).

interim, which appears to have lasted for over ten years, Adê itself fell under direct Portuguese control with a succession of externally appointed commanders. In 1684 Joseph Sivola de Genua (a defector from the VOC) was appointed Portuguese Captain at Adê. In 1703 the 'Black Portuguese' commander, Matteus da Costa, is reported to have been persecuting and terrorizing the people of Adê (*Generale missiven* 1971, IV: 712; 1976, VI:292).

The records of the latter seventeenth century reveal numerous calls from the people of Adê-Manatuto for assistance and protection from the VOC against Portuguese heavy-handedness. However, by the 1690s the Dutch were seeking a more conciliatory and accommodating position in relation to their old Portuguese rivals, and evidently resisted the entreaties of their allies in Manatuto and Adê.

This did not mean the end of hostilities in the region, however, as Heijmering (1847:135) notes that as late as 1743 the Portuguese were still struggling to assert their hegemony over the kings of Adê and Manatuto, who sought to retain their independence and trading autonomy.[23] Nevertheless, some kind of accommodation to coercive Portuguese pressure appears to have been made. De Morais (1934:34), for example, reports the existence in 1750 of a Catholic Church in Adê known as Nossa Sra do Rosário (Our Lady of the Rosary). By this time the Dutch had, in any case, well and truly abandoned any interest in the Adê and Manatuto region, and references to the sites fade from the archival records.

These machinations and shifting alliances that characterized the relations of local Timorese polities with changing colonial interests seeking their subjugation probably contributed to a paucity of information about the internal social and political organization of 'kingdoms' such as Manatuto and Adê, at least until well into the nineteenth century, by which time Adê had become firmly entrenched in Portuguese reporting as Vemasse. The fragmentary and discontinuous references to the changing political leadership of Adê found in the colonial Dutch records provide a window into the shifting geo-politics of colonial East Timor, and reveal unique insights that are absent from the Portuguese archive. But ultimately the references offer insufficient detail to define or discuss the nature and scope of the polity itself.

For all this added clarification from the Dutch archives, there remains the outstanding question of where the port of Adê was actually located along the coastal foreshores. Dutch records suggest that the 'kingdom of Adê' was probably another name for the northeastern Timorese political realm of Vemasse,[24]

[23] In 1731 a Portuguese governor, Colonel Pedro de Mello (1729-1731), with 50 European and Macanese troops, suffered an 85-day siege at Manatuto before making their escape to Lifao (Gunn 1999:98).

[24] While accepting that there remains a degree of uncertainty over the relationship. It is worth noting that there are Dutch references in 1733 to 'Adê, Uymassin and Manatuto' suggesting that the

but they do not clearly identify the site of the trading port or anchorage of the same name. References in the Dutch literature and VOC archives do provide some further details, such as the report of 'three rivers in the bay of Adê, which is well situated and provides a good anchorage during the eastern monsoon' (*Generale missiven* 1968, III:930). Valentijn also presents a detailed but unclear navigation to 'Ade Manatoetoe' in his 1726 publication. Giving directions in (nautical) miles along the north coast of Timor from its eastern extremity, and mentioning a number of promontories (*hoek*) and named places (Hon,[25] Marenti and Labet, the latter two not immediately recognizable), he arrives at length at the small but extended bay of 'Ade Manatoetoe', said to be one mile wide and some three miles long (Valentijn 1726, III:121). He also mentions a small reef three miles off the western point of Adê bay.

Valentijn, however, does not provide a map to accompany his textual directions, and on this point one might have expected further clarification from the extensive cartographic representations of Timor over the centuries. Unfortunately, the varied and multiple maps of Timor offer little definitive assistance in this regard. The few maps that do appear to locate Adê by name on the northeastern coast of Timor are those produced during the late seventeenth century. One example of these maps is the representation of the Malay archipelago by Joan Blaeu the Younger (1688) (see Map 1).

What is striking about this map of Timor, and others of the period, is the exaggerated and bulbous shape of the northeast coast, where a series of names are seen to coincide with coastal indentations suggesting ports or harbours. Although these names are barely legible, arguably three of the place names can be read as Adê, Manatuto and Kom. The principal difficulty, however, is that the cartography is still very crude and bears no resemblance to contemporary maps or actual geo-referenced representations of the island.

In these early maps the eastern parts of the island are also much contracted, and if nothing else offer one reason why the location of Adê is described, somewhat confusingly by many reporters, to lie in the far or extreme east of the island (*extremidade orientale* in Portuguese, *oosthoek* in Dutch).

In summary, then, the extent of the evidence available in the historical record provides confirmation that Adê was probably an alternate name for the Timorese political domain or kingdom of Vemasse, but it does not locate the port of Adê with any precision. The best we can say from the historical archives is that the Adê anchorage probably lies somewhere east of the settlement of Manatuto and west of the contemporary town of Baucau.

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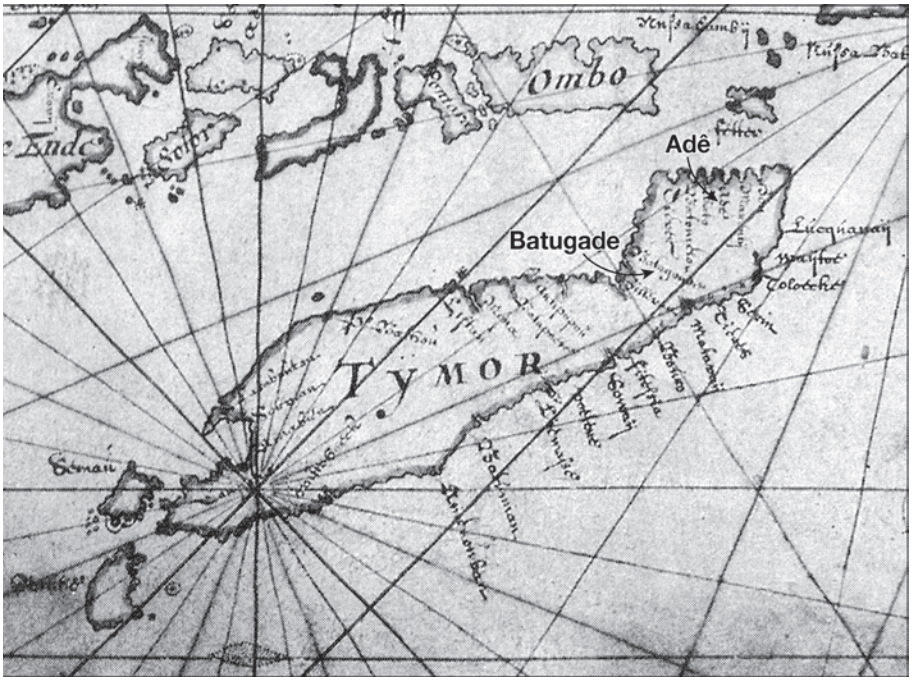
places were not interchangeable (*Generale missiven* 1988, IX: 491). Moreover, in the Dutch documents of the *Corpus diplomaticum* 1602-1800, mention is made of the 'orangkaij' named Amagalij of the domain of Lettemomme alias Adij (Solor en Timor Section II, 394), introducing a new complication.

[25] Significantly, Valentijn (1726, III:121) describes the location of 'Hon' as a bay located a mile or two west of the easternmost point of Timor, a location relatively consistent with the present location of the anchorage of Com.



Map 1. Map extract of Timor by Joan Blaeu the Younger (Klemp 1989: Map 45)

Postscript: Adê visited?

During a recent visit to East Timor, I took the opportunity to explore possible locations for the port of Adê within the former political domain of Vemasse. I was looking simultaneously for a suitable anchorage defined by three rivers, the remnants of or local knowledge about early churches in the area, and local narratives of early maritime trade in sandalwood and other commodities, particularly the mining of *tambaga*.

The present administrative capital of the sub-district of Vemasse is located on the main road some twenty kilometres east of Manatuto. From its elevated position the small town overlooks a narrow coastal plain, which produces wet-season rice but for much of the year lies fallow; a hot, arid landscape of scattered hamlets and grazing goats. Historically, this region has been the centre of the kingdom of Vemasse for centuries, and therefore it is logical that the port of Adê may be found along the indented coastal bays and anchorages that fringe the coastal plain. Of these numerous sites which extend east to the limestone plateau of Baucau, one in particular stood out as a likely candidate. Located nine kilometres east of present-day Vemasse township is the small coastal set-

tlement known as Eong Teheng (local Galolien language), but more commonly referred to as Caravela. The latter name is said to derive from the first visits of the Portuguese ships (caravel design), and by way of evidence, I was taken to a point along the beachfront and shown the site where the 'first' Portuguese boat was secured with a mooring line. The site is marked by a mature *ai lo'ok* tree (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) that my local advisers said had grown out of the decayed roots of the original when it died. The embayment itself is open to the sea, but on this particular day of blustery southeast trade winds, the seafront remained comparatively calm, offering a relatively protected anchorage.

The bay itself has a number of watercourses draining from the land, including the Vermasse River that borders in the west. Several smaller creeks are located in the eastern curve of the embayment. In this respect the seventeenth-century Dutch description is confirmed, but only weakly so.

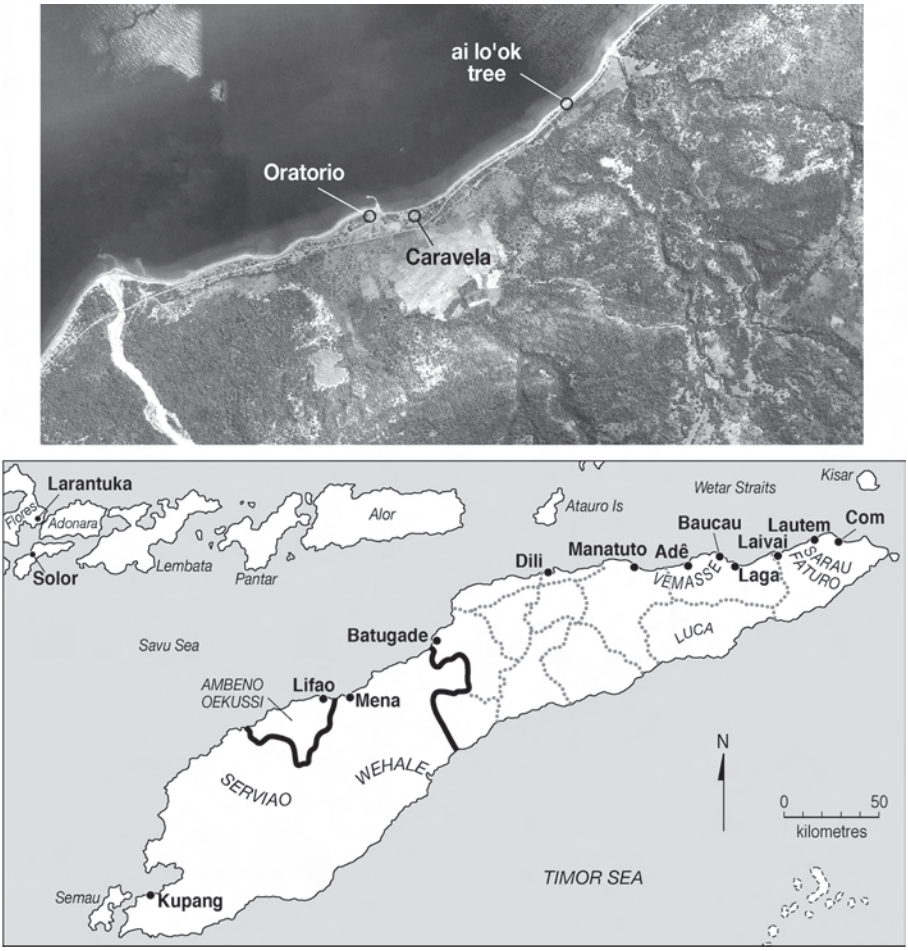
A further significant feature of Caravela is the knowledge and existence of an old church that formerly stood near the beachfront and held an ancient (*antigu*) collection of religious iconography. Unfortunately, the building and all its contents were destroyed in 1975 during the Indonesian armed occupation of East Timor. All that remains of the site are the foundation stones and scattered blocks of the former drystone walls within a thicket of invading castor oil plants.

Further information on the building and its sacra was offered by Domingus de Sá Freitas, a local teacher and grandson of the former catechist of the small church or Capela, known locally as the Oratorio Caravela. Domingus recalls a number of religious figurines, the most prominent being a Madonna statue known as the Maria Auciliadora dos Christanos,[26] which, along with a number of other statues was given to the community by the early Portuguese missionaries. He also added that the religious statues were carved from ivory and were of ancient origin.

Something of a local historian himself, Mr Freitas had previously owned a collection of old Portuguese manuscripts (*manuscrito*) which referred to early historical activities in the area and correspondence. Unfortunately, most of them went the way of the Capela in 1975 and he salvaged very little. However, he made a number of points which give further credence to the possibility of Caravela as Adê. He noted, for instance, that at the time of the first Portuguese arrivals, the ruler (Liurai) of Vemasse lived at Caravela itself, and that it was there that he accepted the conditions of a Portuguese treaty (the staff of office, the flag, and the written agreement).[27] Another striking point of interest was

[26] The new church at Caravela has a large statue of the Madonna with the baby Christ, which is also referred to by this name.

[27] He also noted that the ruler of Luca, the great kingdom of southern east Timor (located within the current district of Viqueque), was related to the ruler of Vemasse (*ipar*, cousin-in-law) and that both had made treaties with the Portuguese at the same time.



Map 2. Map of Timor with ortho-photo of Caravela

the information that the first-known Portuguese priest to land at Caravela was Padre António Taveira. Mr Freitas even provided his arrival date of 29 June 1577. He could not offer a precise source for this intriguing reference, but it lies within the time frame of António Taveira's pioneering missionary activities from his base in Solor reportedly beginning in 1556.[28]

The final piece of fragmentary evidence obtained in contemporary Vemasse is the former practice of small-scale extraction of mineralized stone in the hills and rocky outcrops of the hinterland. Although the local Vemasse residents

[28] See note 15. Soares (2003:27-8), drawing on Portuguese historical references, notes that in 1577, there were 64 missionaries based in Solor who were 'dispersed again to the island of Timor' (that is, following Taveira's pioneering efforts).

I spoke with had no specific knowledge of early mining or mining product trading, they pointed out that in more recent Portuguese times, there had been limited export of a dense grey-black stone which was quarried out of surrounding hills and loaded onto ships. They associated this stone with the Malay term *tambaga,* which has a variety of conventional meanings, but in this case probably refers to the mineral manganese, as high concentrations of manganese oxides (black manganese) are reported in the local sediments of the Vemasse area (*Exploration East Timor* 1937:30). Whether this material is the same as that reported by De Erédia nearly 400 years ago is a moot point, one that would require more detailed archaeological investigations into early artisanal mining practices in the area.[29]

If these elements of contemporary knowledge about Timorese historical engagement with the Portuguese suggest strongly that Caravela in Vemasse may indeed have been the site of an early and acclaimed Portuguese trading port in Timor, the one remaining uncertainty is the name Adê itself. This term was not recognized in Vemasse, nor could anyone offer an explanation for its association with the area.[30] If Adê was once used widely as an alternate name for the former kingdom, the connection is no longer made.

I also pursued this question among local Waima'a speakers in the neighbouring area of Baucau, east of Vemasse, and indeed came across a site known as Adê Rai. The place name describes a barren stony plateau above the old town of Baucau, with little to distinguish it apart from the current walled compound of the Rapid Intervention Unit of the East Timorese police force. However, my local adviser on this matter, Mauricio Belo, was not aware of any noteworthy historical significance attached to the name Adê Rai, nor of any explicit association of the place name with Vemasse. As a native Waima'a speaker himself, Mauricio attached no local etymology to the name Adê. It was simply a place name.

At this point, with few prospective lines of further enquiry available, it was appropriate to draw to an end this study into the faded imprint of Adê on Timor. As a closing note, it is perhaps worth mentioning that during discussions with local Vemasse teacher and historian Dominggus de Sá Freitas, he had commented on a visit several years before by Timor's religious leader and Nobel laureate, Bishop Carlos Belo, who was asking a similar set of questions. Bishop Belo was also seeking a site known as Adê, perhaps having drawn the same conclusions about its location from historical sources. Like my own experience, however, his grace was obliged to leave without a defini-

[29] It is noted that manganese ore deposits are often described as veined or layered within other material, which may suggest a link to the 'columns' (*colunares*) of *tambaga* described by De Erédia.
[30] One speculative suggestion offered to me was that the name Adê may be a mistranslation of the name of the small port or landing at the mouth of the Vemasse River several kilometres to the north of the present town, known by the place name Edang.

tive answer to this historical puzzle, but possibly satisfied that he had located one of the early sites of the Portuguese engagement and colonial conjuncture that was to have such a profound and ambivalent impact on the subsequent course of Timorese history.

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