

# Lancarote De Seixas and Madampe: A Portuguese *casado*<sup>1</sup> in a Sinhalese village

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At the end of the sixteenth century,<sup>2</sup> when the Portuguese came into possession of the south-western sea-board, Madampe proper, was a sizeable village inhabited by about a hundred families.<sup>3</sup> Though situated some forty miles to the north of Colombo, the centre of Portuguese power and activity, Madampe was in some respects well located being within seven miles of the important port of Chilaw and within three miles of the sea, over which the Portuguese still had undisputed control.<sup>4</sup> The village moreover, had twenty two minor villages attached to it, the whole forming the *gabadagama*<sup>5</sup> or royal demense of Madampe, an area of approximately sixty square miles.

Evidence seems to indicate that when Portuguese took possession of Madampe its prosperity had declined somewhat from the level it had attained in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. During the hey day of the kingdom of Kotte, Madampe had profited by being on the land trade route from Kotte to the northern kingdom of Jaffna. Madampe was also in proximity to Chilaw and Negombo both of which developed as ports serving the Seven Korales and the western half of the kingdom of Kandy.<sup>6</sup>

The Chilaw-Madampe-Negombo region temporarily gained added economic importance in the mid-sixteenth century when the growing kingdom of Sitawaka, denied of its natural outlets to the sea was forced to

1. A married Portuguese soldier.
2. The Portuguese seized control of most of the kingdom of Kotte on behalf of the Sinhalese king Dom Joao Dharmapala after the death of Rajasinha of Sitawaka in 1593. They claimed *de jure* control over this region after the death of Dharmapala in 1597. For further details see T. B. H. Abeyesinghe—*Portuguese rule in Ceylon 1594-1612*. Colombo, 1966. pp. 8-22.
3. *Arquivo Historico Ultramarino*, Lisbon, codice 280. ff. 15-16 P. E. Pieris has summarised (rather inaccurately in some places) and translated the above codice in *The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593, Colombo, 1949. Codice 280 reflects the conditions in Kotte in 1614 and forms a part of the four volume *tombo* or land register completed by Antao Vaz Freire in that year.
4. The Dutch had arrived in the East by 1596 but except for a Danish squadron which anchored off Ceylon's eastern shores in 1618-1619, no naval power challenged the Portuguese in force in Ceylon's coastal waters till 1638, although hostile vessels were sighted off and on.
5. For further information on *gabadagam* see Ralph Pieris, *Sinhalese social organization*, Colombo, 1956. pp. 50-55. The twenty out of the twenty two villages mentioned in the *tombo* of 1614 can still be identified. See map.
6. Trade between Madampe and Kandyan areas persisted until well into the seventeenth century despite hostility between the Portuguese and the Kandyans. See *Arquivo Nacional do Torre de Tombo-Livros das Moncoes* 45. f. 354.

divert its foreign trade through this region. However, the fall of Sitawaka, Portuguese hostility towards the king of Kandy, and Sinhalese resistance to the Portuguese in the Seven Korales, gradually led to a restriction of trade in the area.<sup>7</sup>

A more significant pointer to the economic decline of the Madampe area is the abandonment of cultivable land. The Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 records 122 *amunas*<sup>8</sup> of paddy land as abandoned.<sup>9</sup> It is almost certain that some of these lands were abandoned during the early years of Portuguese rule viz. 1597-1613 when Sinhalese resistance was particularly strong in this area.<sup>10</sup> However, the process of abandoning land had started much earlier for 20 *amunas* at Tinipitiya are recorded as having been forested since the 1550's.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, even in the early seventeenth century, Madampe remained a relatively prosperous area. The total area of paddy land abandoned during the previous century was but a fraction of the 946 *amunas* still being regularly cultivated, though the seven fold yield was somewhat lower than in other parts of south-west Ceylon.<sup>12</sup> The decline in paddy cultivation must in some degree have been offset by the increase in the plantation of coconut. Evidence in the *tombo* indicates that the coconut tree had been known to the inhabitants for a very long period before 1600.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand until about the sixteenth century the number of trees planted would have been barely sufficient to pay royal dues and provide for subsistence.<sup>14</sup>

7. According to the *tombo* of Kotte prepared by Jorge Froilim de Almeida in 1599 the revenues of the port of Negombo were at least double those of Colombo. De Almeida further states '...se diz q em tempo de Rajo era este porto o principal de Redimento e q rendia tres vezes mais.' (*Archivo Nacional de Torre de Tombo, Lisbon, Manuscritos de Convento de Graca, tomo 6D. pp. 335-336*. Within twenty years the situation was reversed. The customs revenue of Negombo fell, from three or four thousand *pardaos* to two thousand *pardaos* while those of Colombo rose to well over six thousand *pardaos*. (*Filmoteca Ultramarina Portuguesa, Lisbon, Livros das Moncoes 19D. 33/2-5; Biblioteca Publica Eborense, Evora, GR Arm. V-VI. 14-5.f.169; Biblioteca de Ajuda, Lisbon. 51-V-44.f.23v; Archivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Livros das Moncoes 6.f. 258*)
8. An *amuna* equals five bushels of paddy or the extent sown by five bushels of paddy. The figures for paddy cultivation in Madampe given in P. E. Pieris, *The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593, page 19 are inaccurate.
9. AHU 280. ff. 15-25.
10. Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo (captain-general of Ceylon, 1594-1612) is known to have devastated much of the Seven Korales in an attempt to regain it in 1596-1601 and 1603-1612. T. Abeysinghe 32; C. R. de Silva, *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*. Colombo 1972 p. 31.
11. AHU codice 280. f. 22v. It could be noted that much of the abandonment of land may be traced to the era of the conflict between Sitawaka on the one hand and the Portuguese sponsored kings of Kotte on the other.
12. AHU 280. ff. 15-25. Paddy yields as recorded in the Portuguese *tombo*s of Kotte vary between five-fold and ten-fold. In the Madampe region the cultivation of dry grains was also important, 46 *amunas* and one *pela* being devoted to them in the area. Other items of food included white jaggery, curd and ghee. See P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593 pp. 12, 16; *History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, Part II, (University of Ceylon Press, Colombo, 1960) p. 722.
13. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593, p. 18.
14. The port regulations for Chilaw which detail the dues to be charged for various quantities of rice, dry grains, arecanut, betle, pepper, cloth, salt, opium and spices make no mention of coconut or coconut oil.

No contemporary estimate of the population of the area is available. The Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 being primarily a land register, mentions persons only in connection with land and/or revenue and thus the total of 617 families recorded may well be an underestimate. In any case the amount of paddy available for consumption by the local inhabitants (once taxes were paid and an allowance made for purposes of barter) could well have sustained a population of about four thousand five hundred people.

The inhabitants themselves included many who had migrated from India since the 13th century.

Some of them had been residents long enough to obtain land grants under the service tenure system. For instance five *parea* weavers are recorded as having paddy land in the villages of Madampe, Kumbukkana, Puruduwela, Hattiniya and Tinipitiya.<sup>15</sup> The *careas pascadores* or *karawe* fishermen were another such group. In Madampe they had not as yet obtained paddy land although the *tombo* of 1614 records them as having obtained garden land planted with coconut.<sup>16</sup> The twenty *chaleas canaleiros* or Salagama cinnamon peelers likewise have gardens with coconut but no mud land.<sup>17</sup> There were also small communities of Muslims at Tinipitiya and Kadupiti Koswadiya.<sup>18</sup> The strong Dravidian tinge in the population content is attested to by the fact that five of the thirteen local chieftains who came forward to aid the Portuguese to make the *tombo* answered to the name of Perumal.<sup>19</sup>

The land tenure arrangements in Madampe while broadly in conformity to the traditional Sinhalese pattern, nevertheless present interesting variations. For example only 23.6% of paddy land was allocated according to service tenure, 1.7% formed *muttettu*<sup>20</sup> land for the village holder and the *vidanes*<sup>21</sup> and, all the rest, some 74.7% of paddy land was cultivated under *otu*.<sup>22</sup> This was a reversal of the normal distribution of

15. AHU 280. ff.15-16v, 21, 22v. Three others at Wennappuwa, Katuneriya and Nambiratipati had only garden land.

16. The sixteen *karawe* families at Galamune and Galahitiyawa possessed sixteen gardens with a total of 1300 coconut trees.

17. Their twenty gardens contained 965 coconut trees. The above implies that either *parea* weavers preceded the two other groups to Ceylon or were more successful in finding a niche in the local land tenure system.

18. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 17. Twenty eight Muslim families owned 1800 coconut trees.

19. *Ibid.* 9.

20. *Muttettu*=land of the king or village holder which had to be cultivated free of charge by the villagers. For further details on *muttettu* and other Sinhalese land tenure nomenclature see H. W. Codrington, *Ancient land tenure and revenue in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1938. pp. 8-30.

21. *Vidane* was the collector of revenue.

22. *Otu*, a form of lease under which the cultivator paid a part of the crop to the owner. In Madampe the payment was one *amuna* of paddy for every *amuna* sown.

If abandoned land are taken into consideration the percentages would be 11.4% abandoned, 66.2% *otu*, 20.8% service land tenure and 1.4% *muttettu*

land in villages in the interior of Kotte where most paddy land was allocated in exchange for services, the *otu* tenure prevailing in only a few fields.<sup>23</sup>

The lack of evidence hinders any assessment of the reasons for this variation. Perhaps the *otu* fields were those opened up by more recent immigrants.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively they might have been lands abandoned by their cultivators (*malapalu* and *nilapalu* lands) later converted into *otu* fields by the king or the village holder. Whatever the causes, this development had important effects, for now the nexus between the village holder and the villager was more the payment of dues (albeit in kind) than the performance of services.

Another curious feature in Madampe before Portuguese occupation was the unusually high tax on coconut trees in the region. The Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 refers to 'the very ancient duty of giving the lord one crop out of three collected every year.'<sup>25</sup> If the total annual produce of one coconut tree is estimated at fifteen nuts,<sup>26</sup> this involved a payment of five nuts per tree. Apart from this the inhabitants had to pay an additional nut per tree to supply coconut oil for the lord. This stands in contrast to the standard *pol aya* or coconut tax paid in other parts of the country of one *fanam*<sup>27</sup> per ten coconut trees which is really the equivalent of one nut per tree.<sup>28</sup> Even when land with coconut trees standing was granted the practice had been merely to charge double the *pol aya*.<sup>29</sup>

The combination of an unusually large proportion of *otu* fields and a high tax on coconut made Madampe an exceptionally lucrative area to possess. Although it had traditionally been a *gabadagama* in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the king of Kotte began the practice of assigning this valuable area to one of their kinsmen at pleasure.<sup>30</sup> The earliest known of these holders was Taniya Vallabahu, a son of

23. See P. E. Pieris on the *Kiraveli Pattuwa* in the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Vol. XXXVI. Part 4. 1946.

Madampe however, was by no means an isolated case. Other instances of large proportions of *otu* lands were found in the coastal districts. For example see P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593 pages 5, 88 on Velihane (belonging to the Hindu temple at Munneswaram) and Bambaranda. But these cover areas of smaller size.

24. Unfortunately the *tombo* does not mention the castes of those who cultivated *otu* land except in one case when it records that only the *salagama* people cultivated the 37 *amunas* of *otu* at Haligama.

25. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1596. p. 18.

26. This figure given in the Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 was perhaps an underestimate.

27. In the sixteenth century approximately seven *fanams* equalled one *larim*. By 1614 the value of the *fanam* had fallen so that twenty *fanams* equalled one *larim*. For further details see H. W. Codrington—*Ceylon coins and currency*, Colombo, 1924.

28. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. pp. 35, 56.

29. 'E coando elRey dava algua de reRa q tinha ja palm<sup>ras</sup> lhes pagava de foro dobrado q era de cada dez palm<sup>ras</sup> dous fanoes...' ANTT *Manuscritos da Convento da Graca*, tomo 6D. page 330.

30. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 10.

King Vira Parakramabahu of Kotte (1477-1496).<sup>31</sup> This energetic prince was apparently able to transform Madampe into a semi-independent principality. He built a palace for himself on a small hillock near the modern township of Madampe<sup>32</sup> and the area was held by his descendents for two further generations. Taniya Vallabahu's grandson, Vidiya Bandara eventually inherited Madampe and rose to great power by marriage to the daughter of King Bhuvaneka Bahu of Kotte, (1521-1557)<sup>33</sup>.

The growth of Madampe as the centre of an autonomous principality was checked by the political upheavals of the mid-sixteenth century. The Portuguese had by this time won a position of great power and influence in Kotte, thanks to the disunity among the Sinhalese. Seeing in Vidiya Bandara the main obstacle to their complete dominance over Kotte, the Portuguese tried to imprison him but the chieftain made good his escape and tried to rouse the country against the foreigner. The Portuguese however soon regained the initiative, for not only did they retain their hold on Vidiya's elder son, Dom João Dharmapala, who was the Portuguese sponsored king of Kotte but they also eventually obtained the assistance of their erstwhile enemy Mayadunne of Sitawaka. Defeated by the combined forces of his enemies Vidiya Bandara eventually returned to the area that had traditional loyalties to his family. Unfortunately for him, he was swiftly followed by the forces of Sitawaka under Rajasinha, son of Mayadunne and with the final rout of Vidiya, Madampe passed into the hands of Sitawaka.<sup>34</sup>

The area nevertheless continued to be a prized possession. It is known to have yielded a revenue of thirty five thousand *fanams* about this time.<sup>35</sup>

31. *Rajavaliya* (trans., by B. Gunasekera) Colombo, 1900 p. 71; *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. XIX. No. 1. April 1961 pp. 10-29; *JCBRAS XXVIII*, 1920, pp. 36-38.
32. The site of the palace today is part of a coconut estate appropriately known as the Maligawatte Estate. Inhabitants of the area report that pieces of pottery, bricks and the like are regularly unearthed in the neighbourhood. The site itself is approximately one and a half miles south of Madampe (old town) bazaar and is near the Kadupiti Ela. The identification of the site is confirmed by information in a late sixteenth century prose account *Alakeswara Yuddhaya* (ed. by E. V. Suraweera) Colombo, 1965 which states that Taniya Vallabahu lived at Kadupiti Madampe.  
The autonomy gained by the local princes at the time of the advent of the Portuguese to Ceylon is an index of the weakness of the Kotte kingdom.
33. The Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 is confused on this subject. It mentions that Tribile Pandar (the name by which the Portuguese knew Vidiya Bandara) held Madampe, and then goes on to mention that it was his brother Trigu Pandar who married Samudra Biso, Bhuvaneka Bahu's daughter. (P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593, p. 10). The *tombo* of 1599 however makes it clear that the same person held Madampe and married Samudra Biso. In 1619 the Bishop of Cochín commented '*Esta aldeia com suas terras foi patrimonio dos Reys de Ceilao e ali rezidia el Rey Dom João Pereapandar e com aquellas terra se sustentare sua casa...*' (*ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 16, f. 210v).
34. For further details see Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, trans S. G. Perera, Colombo 1930. pp. 306-326; *Rajavaliya* 80-86.  
Evidence in the *Rajavaliya* (80-86) Queyroz (318-319) and the Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 (AHU codice 280. f. 14v) indicate that the Portuguese and King Dharmapala gave up claims to the Seven Korales to Sitawaka in exchange for support against Vidiya Bandara. Thus the year 1555 would mark an important stage in the rise of the power of Sitawaka.
35. *ANTT Manuscritos do convento da Graca, tomo 6D*. p. 381.

Rajasinha showed his appreciation of the value of this region by conferring it on his brother, Prince Timbiripola. On the death of Prince Timbiripola in 1581, Rajasinha resumed the *gabadagama* and it remained a crown possession of the kings of Sitawaka until the conquest of that kingdom by the Portuguese in 1593 on behalf of Dom João Dharmapala, king of Kotte.<sup>36</sup>

The restoration of Madampe to Dharmapala was in a sense a return of the family of Taniya Vallabahu to power in their ancestral domain, but Dharmapala was already aged and being without an heir, was continually pestered by both Portuguese and Sinhalese for various grants of lands and revenue in recognition of their services to him. Madampe was eyed by many, including the much feared leader of Sinhalese forces, Simão Correa but on Dharmapala's demise in 1597 the *gabadagama* was granted to Bamunugama Appuhamy who apparently had a valid grant from Dharmapala. The matter did not end there for Simão Correa had his rival assassinated within a month and by 1598 obtained possession of Madampe for a quit rent of five hundred *xerafims* a year.<sup>37</sup> Simão Correa probably considered that he would be able to get away with such a high-handed act as he had the confidence of the captain-general Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo.<sup>38</sup> Correa however, had reckoned without Dom Pedro Manoel, a Sinhalese nobleman who had also extracted a grant of Madampe from King Dharmapala before he died.<sup>39</sup> Dom Pedro appealed to the count of Vidigueira, viceroy of India<sup>40</sup> who promptly decreed that Madampe should be handed over by Correa to Dom Pedro. Dom Pedro came into possession on 1st June 1599.<sup>41</sup>

It was at this stage that Lancarote de Seixas Cabreira entered the scene. Little is known of his origins and early life. He apparently left his homeland for the East early in his life and like most Portuguese who wandered about in search of riches in the sixteenth century, he was never to return to Europe.<sup>42</sup> Sometime after reaching India, de Seixas married the daughter of a *casado* of Cochin. For the next twenty years Cochin was his home.<sup>43</sup> Here, de Seixas, like other Portuguese settlers, no doubt made

36. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593, p. 11.

37. *Ibid*, page 11; *ANTT Manuscritos do convento da Graça* tomo 6D. p. 351.

38. Abeyasinghe, p. 81.

39. Dharmapala in his last years either due to dotage or to satisfy all his followers apparently granted the same area to a number of persons.

40. Dom Francisco da Gama, a descendent of Vasco da Gama. He was the viceroy of India from 1597-1600.

41. *ANTT Manuscritos do convento da Graça* tomo 6D. p. 381. On the 29th of November 1599 Jorge Frolim de Almeida, *vedor* of Ceylon commented as follows, '... *E o Sor Conde Vissorey deu esta reRa por despacho Somte a DomP<sup>o</sup> o nat, e CoRe com el a de prim<sup>o</sup> de Junho de 599 em diante e nao declara ainda o q a de pagar de foro...*'

42. There is no evidence of his birth in Portugal but his numerous enemies never sneered at him for being a 'natural da India'.

43. *Simancas SP*. 1523.f.3.

money in private trade but he also shone as a soldier. In 1597 he was specially rewarded for services in an expedition conveying aid to the Portuguese fort at Malacca. In 1599 he participated in the final battle against the Kunjalis, the admirals of the Zamorin of Calicut who had contested the Portuguese control of the Arabian Sea for almost a century.<sup>44</sup>

It is not clear how de Seixas first obtained possession of Madampe. What probably did happen was that de Seixas petitioned the viceroy giving a record of his services and asking for Madampe as a reward. Whatever the method adopted the result was that Aires de Saldanha, the new viceroy of India (1600-1604) granted Madampe and its annexures to Lancarote de Seixas for 'three lives'.<sup>45</sup>

Dom Pedro Manoel protested vigorously once more. His petitions were accompanied by those of another Sinhalese, Dom João Barreto who also presented a decree from his uncle King Dharmapala granting him the *gabadagam* of Madampe. However, it proved much more difficult to obtain justice against a Portuguese than against a Sinhalese. De Seixas apparently had powerful friends in Goa. He acted vigorously to maintain and strengthen his claims, making several journeys to Goa to present his point of view to the officials of the High Court (or *Relação*) of Goa to which the case was referred. He secured the withdrawal of the claims of Dom Pedro Manoel by promising to nominate him as his successor. De Seixas also promptly brought his family as well his wife's parents from Cochin and settled them in Madampe thus establishing *de facto* occupation. As the higher revenue and judicial officials of Goa admitted, in the face of evidence presented it was difficult to justify the grant of Madampe to de Seixas, but in view of the disturbed conditions in Ceylon<sup>46</sup> it was considered much better to keep a valuable area such as Madampe under a Portuguese than a Sinhalese and so Madampe remained in the hands of de Seixas. It was a measure of de Seixas' far sightedness that he did not rest content with this legal victory. Soon after he made a private agreement with Dom João, by which the Sinhalese nobleman handed over all his claims to the area to de Seixas.<sup>47</sup>

The achievement of de Seixas was that not merely did he take possession of Madampe in the face of contenders with far better claims than himself but he maintained his hold on the area till about the time of his

44. *Ibid.* f. 5v-6. In the battles against the Kunjalis died João de Seixas, brother of Lancarote de Seixas.

45. *Ibid.* f. 5v. It is not known whether de Saldanha was ignorant of his predecessor's decree or whether he decided to ignore it.

A grant for 'three lives' implied the right to hold the village till death and to transmit it to two others in succession.

46. The rebellions of Akaragama Aratchi and Domingos Correa in the period 1594-1598 must certainly have inspired considerable distrust of the Sinhalese among the Portuguese.

47. *Simancas SP* 1523 ff.4-4v; *ANTT Livros das Moncoes*. 16.f.211; 24.f.21v.

death in 1632.<sup>48</sup> Continuous possessions of a village for such a long period was unusual in seventeenth century Ceylon for successive captains general and superintendants of revenue had developed the fine art of depriving both Portuguese and Sinhalese village holders of their possessions on relatively flimsy excuses in order to reward their relatives and favourites.<sup>49</sup> It was all the more creditable because de Seixas had a highly inflammable temper. He had open quarrels with two captains-general of Ceylon—Dom Jorge de Albuquerque (1621-1623) and Dom Filipe Mascarenhas (1630-1631).<sup>50</sup> In disputes with lesser officials, de Seixas did not hesitate to use violence. In late 1621 he and a party of his supporters are known to have manhandled the *ouvidor* or judge and locked him in his jail house.<sup>51</sup> Nine years later de Seixas, when serving as the superintendent of revenue for the second time, waylaid another *ouvidor* João de Sequeira de Albuquerque who was killed in the scuffle.<sup>52</sup> The intervention of de Seixas in the elections to the local *Santa Casa de Misericórdia*<sup>53</sup> in 1621 is known to have led to the death of one soldier and the wounding of several others in the clashes that followed.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand de Seixas also had the knack of making influential friends. Antão Vaz Freire, superintendent of revenue (1608-1616) commended de Seixas in his letters to Lisbon.<sup>55</sup> Constantino de Sa de Noronha (captain-general of Ceylon, 1618-1621 and 1623-1630) thought so highly of him that he recommended de Seixas as his interim successor.<sup>56</sup> The key to the success of de Seixas was perhaps an innate sense of timing. He intervened at crucial moments and made an excellent impression on those who counted. For example when Dom Francisco de Menezes (captain-general of Ceylon, 1612-1614) started to rebuild the walls of the Colombo fort, de Seixas was the first *casado* to offer assistance.<sup>57</sup> Such promptitude did not go unrewarded. When the *Mesa de Repartição*<sup>58</sup> set up according to

48. *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 30.f.183.

Madampe was resumed by the state as a *gabadagama* in 1632.

49. *AHU Caixa VI*. 2.11.1618; *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 55, ff. 29, 114, 192; *Livro* 18.f. 244; C. R. de Silva, pp. 61, 136.

50. *Assentos do conselho do Estado da India* (ed. Panduronga S. S. Pissurlencar) Bastora, 1953. Vol. I. p. 353; *Biblioteca Nacional*, Lisbon, *Fundo Geral* 939 f. 39a; C. R. de Silva, p. 61.

51. '...o dito Lancarote de Seixas ajudado de outro homes seu parcial e tomando pollo cabecao o ouvidor o levou ao tronco e meteo nelle...' viceroy to the king of Portugal, 18.2.1622 (*ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 15.f.191).

52. Ajuda 51-VIII-51.f.269-270; *Assentos I*. 299; *Filmoteca, Livros das Moncoes* 14. 114/3-5. In the struggle de Sequeira is said to have hit de Seixas with a bamboo whereupon de Seixas' servant stabbed him with a small lance.

53. The Holy House of Mercy—primarily a charity organisation which had branches all over Portuguese territories.

54. *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 15.f.191.

55. *AHU Caixa IV*. 24.11.1615; *AHU Caixa VI*. 2.11.1618.

56. C. R. de Silva, p. 116.

57. *AHU Caixa IV*. 24.11.1615.

58. Also called the *junta*. It was made up of the captain-general, the *vedor da fazenda* or superintendent of revenue and one other person. Its decisions were subject to confirmation by the king of Portugal.



royal instructions to deal with the allocation of villages met in 1614, it confirmed the grant of Madampe to Lancarote de Seixas, thus giving him a better title to the area than he ever had before.<sup>59</sup> By 1617 de Seixas was appointed captain of the fort of Colombo.<sup>60</sup> A year later he was unanimously chosen by the viceroy-in-council in Goa as the *vedor da fazenda* of Ceylon.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly when de Seixas was under a cloud for his high handed activities in the early 1620's, he bounced back into favour by joining the incoming viceroy, count of Vidigueira (1623-1628) with a ship equipped at his own cost to fight the Anglo-Dutch squadron blockading Goa. Once again he was promptly rewarded, this time with the post of *provedor mor dos contos* (chief accountant) at Goa which post he held for a year.<sup>62</sup>

De Seixas needed all the goodwill he had built up in combating the threat to his possession of Madampe which arose at the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century. This threat came not from any individual but rather from the Portuguese state itself. During the twenty years that followed the death of the last Sinhalese king of Kotte, the Portuguese administration was plagued with a recurrent deficit.<sup>63</sup> As the expenses of the army rations formed a substantial part of the state expenditure, the authorities in Lisbon became convinced that if twelve of the best villages be set apart to meet this need the financial problems of Portuguese might well be solved. Unfortunately for de Seixas, Madampe was one of the areas recommended as most suitable for this purpose by the Bishop of Cochin in 1619 and for the next thirteen years, de Seixas had to spend much of his energy in preventing this step being taken. In this sphere he had the support of powerful vested interests, spear-headed by the Jesuits who feared the loss of their land at Munneswaram. No captain-general proved willing to challenge such opposition and therefore until the Kandyan invasion of the lowlands in 1630-1631 dislocated the pattern of land-holding, His Catholic Majesty's most loyal subjects held on to their land, at the expense of His Majesty's interests.<sup>64</sup>

59. *Simancas SP* 1523.f.3.

60. *Ceylon Literary Register*, Third series, Vol. II. p. 536.

61. *Documentos Remittidos da India on Livros das Moncoes*, Lisbon, 1884, Vol. IV. p. 221. The king had requested the viceroy-in-council to choose one of two names.

62. *Simancas SP* 1523 ff.4v.6; *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 17, f.59; 19.f.70v.

63. Abeyasinghe, pp. 182-183.

64. Other individuals who stood to lose included the captain-major-of-the-field (Dorawaka, Ulapane and Mandamarawita) the *disava* of the Seven Korales (Talampitiya), and the *disava* of Sabaragamuwa (Opanaiyake). The Bishop's list also included Gampaha, Gilimale, Visinave and the following unidentified villages—Apuvita, Uramala Kandangora, Cota-peti, Bandaravato, Anabulumtana, Cadangora and Canangora. João de Costa Perestello (former factor) in addition recommended the villages of Weligama, Urubokka, Katuwana, Bambaranda, Maggona-Paiyagala, Walgama, Wewalgamuwa and two other unidentified villages.

*ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 16.f.208; 23.f.237; 20.f.205; 24.f.21; 26.f.333; 28.f.184; 31.f.259; 45.f.354; *AHU Caixa VI*. (1619); Bib. Naç. FG 1983.f.119v 125; Filtoteca 1.M 13a 11/5; LM 15 50/2-3; 54/3-4; LM 14 117/1-4.

From the point of view of de Seixas there is little doubt that the struggle was worth it. Before he obtained Madampe, de Seixas, despite his twenty years of service, was a relatively little-known soldier. Two decades of village ownership in Ceylon made him one of the wealthiest and most influential *casados* in Ceylon. Dom Frei Luis de Brito, Bishop of Cochin maintained in 1619, that Madampe yielded 6000 *pardaos* a year. Although this was obviously an exaggerated estimate designed to make the state official covetous of Madampe, it is very likely that the total gross revenue of 1010 *xerafims* recorded in *tombo* of 1614 was an underestimate.<sup>65</sup> In any case, the value of Madampe to de Seixas was by no means confined to land revenue alone.<sup>66</sup> It was the source from which he obtained supplies of cinnamon which he exported from the island in violation of the regulations imposing a royal monopoly of trade.<sup>67</sup> It was the base for a profitable trade with Kandy in cloth, salt and opium.<sup>68</sup> It was finally the stepping stone to such lucrative posts as that of the superintendent of revenue.<sup>69</sup> In short, Madampe was a key factor in the rise of Lancarote de Seixas to prominence.

The impact of de Seixas on Madampe is less easy to gauge but it should be borne in mind that after Lancarote de Seixas entered public life by acquiring high office in Ceylon he was to a large extent an absentee landlord. In fact even during the first sixteen years of the seventeenth century de Seixas was by no means continuously resident at Madampe. He is known to have visited Goa, Cochin, Jaffna and the eastern coast of Ceylon at various different times.<sup>70</sup> During the periods 1617-1624 and 1628-1632 there is sufficient evidence to indicate that he did not have an opportunity to reside at Madampe for any long period. In his absence the affairs at Madampe would have been managed by one of his sons.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, de Seixas was a man who had very definite views on most subjects<sup>72</sup> and as

65. De Seixas argued that the estimates in the *tombo* were just, pointing out that in the last years of King Dharmapala's reign Madampe yielded hardly 900 *xerafims* a year. On the other hand it is known to have yielded about 1250 *xerafims* to Rajasinha of Sitawaka. In 1628 de Seixas obtained a grant of Chilaw for life. This would have enhanced his private income considerably.

*Simancas SP* 1523 ff.3v.5; *ANTT Manuscritos do convento de Graca tomo 6D* p. 381; *AHU Codice* 280.f.15-25. *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 16. ff.210v, 371.

66. According to the *tombo* of 1614 this after payment of quit rent, amounted to 876 *xerafims*, 3 *larins* a year.

67. *AHU Codice* 33. ff.16-17; Abeyasinghe p. 149.

68. *AHU Codice* 33.f.17.

69. The salary of the *vedor* was 4000 *xerafims* a year. The perquisites and fringe benefits came to another 2000 *xerafims* at least. De Seixas first tenure in this post roused great opposition as is seen from the following extracts of a letter sent to Lisbon, '...nunca convem q o vorda fza seja casado em Ceilão por q se he casado ali roubesse mais de 15,000 cruzados ha fazda de V Mgde pa elle seus parentes...' (*AHU codice* 33.f.22).

70. *Simancas SP* 1523 f.3.

71. De Seixas had at least two sons—Francisco de Seixas Cabreira and Lancarote de Seixas Jr., (*Simancas SP* 1523 f.3; *AHU codice* 445.f.41v).

72. See for example his comments on policy towards Kandy, '...Eu lhe ouvi dizer q se sua Mage queria ser Senhor desta ilha q nao convinha aver nella outro Rey ne Sr eu digo que n h u home esta seguro q sua casa morando seu inimigo dentro della...' (*Ajuda* 51-VIII-f.224v).

such he was unlikely to leave the running of his domains wholly to others for any long period. He realized the need to keep the local inhabitants contented but he also strongly opposed giving them any measure of independence.<sup>73</sup>

One of the spheres in which de Seixas made a definite impact on Madampe was that of coconut cultivation. In the first place, as Hapu Naide testified before Antão Vaz Freire in 1614, Lancarote de Seixas by an agreement with the local inhabitants commuted the old tax of 'one crop in three' for one nut per tree apart from which he received an additional nut per tree for coconut oil.<sup>74</sup> This sharp reduction in dues would undoubtedly have stimulated a further expansion in coconut. Lancarote de Seixas himself was active in planting coconut. When he took over the village there had been 11 *muttettu* gardens with a total of under 600 coconut trees. By 1614 he had four new gardens cleared and planted with a further 1200 trees. He claimed to have planted another 1200 trees by 1630. De Seixas was perhaps only accelerating an existing trend, for coconut cultivation had been spreading on the south-west coast of Ceylon during the two preceding centuries.<sup>75</sup> However, his work in this respect acquires significance, for interest in agricultural pursuits among Portuguese in Ceylon has been little known.

The impact of the regime of de Seixas on paddy cultivation cannot be properly assessed for lack of evidence. Jorge Froilim de Almeida unfortunately omits to give the paddy yield for Madampe in his *tombo* of 1599 and thus the only set of figures we have are those from Antão Vaz Freire's *tombo* of 1614. On the whole however, evidence seems to indicate that the level of production of 1614 was maintained if not increased at least up to 1630.<sup>76</sup> The Bishop of Cochín gives a glowing picture of the prosperity of Madampe in 1619 '*...he hua aldeia q tem en sy muittas e mais de 6 legoas a milhor terra q ha em Ceilão e tem annexas m<sup>tas</sup> e campos e mattos de canella, pimenta, areca, a m<sup>tos</sup> palmos de fruto e ou<sup>tros</sup> vaszeas em q se semeao e outors mantimentos a gente da terra gosta...*'<sup>77</sup> This would seem to indicate that Madampe had escaped the worst of the ravages that affected the Seven Korales at the time of the revolt of Nikapitiya Bandara (1616-1617).<sup>78</sup>

73. He opposed the grant to the Sinhalese of the right to inherit and bequeath land. *Ajuda* 51-VIII-40.f.225-225v.

74. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 10.

75. *JCBRAS* XIX, 56-63; *Simancas SP* 1523.f.3-3v.

76. In 1630 came the Kandyan invasion of the Portuguese territories. This would have led to considerable dislocation.

77. *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 16.d.210v. There is however no indication of a spectacular rise in production as occurred in neighbouring Munneswaram under the Jesuits.

78. The rebellion however did effect the neighbourhood of Madampe. At Kammala, on the southern border of Madampe the conversions for 1617-1618 were down to 1/10 their normal figure. At Munneswaram only 7 people were baptized for the whole year. The ruthless suppression of the rebellion is estimated to have left 7000 Sinhalese dead in the Seven Korales. The total population of the region could not have been much over 50,000.

The Portuguese impact on the production of two commercial crops—cinnamon and pepper can be calculated with somewhat greater precision. According to the *tombo* of 1614 the cinnamon peelers of Madampe gave de Seixas twenty *bahars* of cinnamon in lieu of land held but the *regimento* given by the viceroy to the incoming *vedor* Diogo Mendes de Brito in 1639 states that the *chaleas* of Madampe produce a hundred to a hundred and ten *bahars*.<sup>79</sup> This five-fold increase in production within twenty five years could not have been made with the existing *chalea* labour force. As it was in 1614 the Salagama people of Madampe had the very high burden of one *bahar* per family,<sup>80</sup> and therefore in increasing production de Seixas must have followed the example of de Azevedo who forced people of other castes in the Seven Korales to peel cinnamon.<sup>81</sup> This increase in cinnamon production incidentally reveals another reason why de Seixas wished so much to retain Madampe. Even if the hundred *bahars* were sold to the Portuguese treasury at the official rate of four or five *xerafims* a *bahar*<sup>82</sup> the income accruing to de Seixas would have been substantial. If smuggled to Cochin and sold even at the depressed level of cinnamon prices of the 1620's it would have fetched at least four times that amount. In the face of such profits, it is easy to see how the caste sensibilities of the Sinhalese were often forgotten.

If the story of cinnamon was one of successful adoption of orthodox as well as unorthodox methods to increase production, the history of Portuguese policy towards pepper cultivation, in Madampe as in the rest of Ceylon, was one of the failure of an unimaginative policy. The Portuguese had for long been interested in the stimulation of pepper production in Ceylon partly because pepper could be conveniently packed with cinnamon for export and partly because a secure supply from Ceylon would free the Portuguese from the vagaries of Malabar politics.<sup>83</sup> However, the instruments of policy used by them to attain this objective—compulsory purchase and compulsory cultivation—both ultimately proved ineffective. These policies were originally proposed in 1599 by Jorge Froilim de Almeida who recommended that villages be granted only on the condition that a specified quantity of pepper is cultivated in them and moreover that

79. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 18; *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 45. f.352v: A *bahar* is about 500 lbs.

80. In the *mahabadda* the highest dues came to about 350 lbs. per land holder. Often the due was as little as 1/5 of this amount. (See P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 64).

81. '...pela partes de Negombo tanbe ha m<sup>a</sup> canela e ha m<sup>tos</sup> servidores q davao erva para os alefantes do Rey de q tanbe tinhao teRas de q vivem a quem a geral Dom Jrmo dazdo os obriga facao canela pois nao ha alifantes pera obrigacao da erva e tanbe os cortadores dos matos e campos tem tras de q vivem por isso e pois nao ha ao presente tanta necessidade deste ouvirão tanbe se ocuparem em fazere a canela pera elRey...' *ANTT Manuscritos do Convento do Graca* tomo 6D. p. 333.

82. P. E. Pieris—*The Ceylon Littoral*, 1593. p. 18.

83. On the contemporary Malabar pepper trade see Jan Kieniewicz 'The Portuguese factory and trade in pepper in Malabar during the 16th century' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. VI, No. I (1969).

this pepper be sold to the state at a fixed price. The proposed price was one *larim* for eight large measures (or 32 Portuguese measures).<sup>84</sup>

The Portuguese *tombo* of 1614 laid down a modified version of this scheme. In lands where pepper could be grown, 1/3 of the quit rent had to be paid in pepper within four years.<sup>85</sup> The price offered was rather high—perhaps too high—a *larim* for every six measures. The result was that the village holders, both Sinhalese and Portuguese, intent on making more money simply confiscated all the pepper in their villages and sold it to the state. This is well illustrated in the case of Madampe where all pepper vines recorded were considered the property of de Seixas. The obvious result was that the Sinhalese farmers ceased the cultivation of pepper.<sup>86</sup> The Portuguese at first tried to counter this by decrees enforcing compulsory cultivation by all classes. For example a proclamation of captain-general Dom Nuno Alvares Pereira laid down that each *cully* was to plant five pepper vines, each *lascarin* six, each *mayoral* seven and each *senhor* twenty.<sup>87</sup>

Proclamations rarely have as much effect as incentives, but it was only in Constantino de Sa's second term of office (1623-1630) that the Portuguese began to consider giving the peasant a stake in pepper cultivation. De Sa laid down that each official should plant three pepper vines, each *nilakaraya* four, each *mayoral* five and each village holder eight. Failure to comply with these requirements was punishable by a fine of five *chakrams*. De Sa however, did not rely on compulsion alone. He held that land holders should be allowed to keep a part of the produce for consumption and should sell the rest direct to the royal treasury but this last measure proved difficult to enforce, for by this time the village holders had obtained a strong grip on the pepper produced in the villages. The Portuguese, therefore, never obtained the expansion of supply they required.

Within this structure however Lancarote de Seixas did what he could. When he took possession of Madampe there were 80 pepper vines to whose produce he was entitled. During the next twelve years he had a further 238 vines grown.<sup>88</sup> But this was a mere fraction of what could have been produced had the inhabitants been given a share of the profits.

84. 'Nas patentes dos aforamentos se pode declarar q semearao pimenta seg<sup>a</sup> a teRa fore venderao por este preco a el Reyou por mais algua cousa em desconto do foro q ouvere de pagar a sMge por se teRa que dava mta pimenta...' TT. *Manuscritos do convento da Graca*, tomo 6D. pg. 331.

85. JCBRAS XXXVI page 141; *Doc. Rem.* II.155-156; Abeyasinghe p. 123; P. da Trindade *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente, Lisboa*, 1968. Vol. II p. 20.

86. AHU caixa IV. 20.11.1615; ANTT *Livros das Moncoes* 22.f.87v; Queyroz p. 1088.

87. AHU caixa 31.f.91.

*culle*=cooly or labourer, *lascarin*=native soldier, *mayoral*=headman, *senhor*=village holder.

88. AHU *codice* 280.f.15-25.

It is clear that the greatest Portuguese economic impact on Madampe was therefore in relation to crops which had a commercial value—cinnamon, pepper, coconut and arecanut.<sup>89</sup> While in some respects the inhabitants of Madampe may have benefited,<sup>90</sup> in others Portuguese policy bore hard on the people. In this respect however, the people of Madampe were perhaps more fortunate than most, for de Seixas was a landlord shrewd enough to know the value of a contented peasantry. Therefore, although the Sinhalese peasants probably did have to toil to build '*huas casas nobres e grandes*' they must have also appreciated his interest in the planting of jak, mango and *pera* trees.<sup>91</sup>

The religious impact on Madampe was probably as significant as the economic one. In this respect however the role of de Seixas was minimal. It was not that he opposed the activities of the missionaries. On the contrary he is known to have actively supported them in other parts of the island but he always remained critical of some of their activities which he perceived had led to the alienation of the people.<sup>92</sup> He was also critical of the extensive land grants held by the Jesuits and in 1621 made an unsuccessful attempt to deprive them of their villages in return for which he offered an annual stipend for all Jesuits in the field.<sup>93</sup> Thus, it is likely that missionary activity in Madampe operated, though with his consent and approval, in a manner largely independent of de Seixas.

Madampe was part of the area allocated to the Jesuits soon after their arrival in the island in 1602. In the early years Madampe was looked after by the Jesuit stationed at Chilaw. The village of Madampe itself and Marawila were the original areas of activity. Fr. Emmanuel Barradas claimed that 200 people were converted during the year 1613 in Madampe.<sup>94</sup> Gradually the Christian community grew. A separate Jesuit priest was stationed at Madampe and awarded an allowance 90 *xerafims* a year from state funds.<sup>95</sup> He was in charge of three churches in the area—Assumption of Our Lady at Madampe with a congregation of over 1100, the Church of Saint Francis Xavier at Marawila with 650 and the Church of Saint Ambrose at Katuneriya with 230.<sup>96</sup> About half of Madampe's population had embraced the new faith.

89. On Portuguese policy in relation to arecanut see Abeyasinghe pp. 154-159; C. R. de Silva pp. 207-211.

It proved to be extremely burdensome to the peasant.

90. For example coconut cultivation.

91. *Simancas SP* 1523.f.3.

The above does not necessarily imply a contented populace. There is reason to believe that when the Kandyans invaded the lowlands in 1630, Madampe also joined in revolt against the Portuguese.

92. *ANTT Livros das Moncoes* 28.f.274; *AHU Caixa XII*. 6.12.1635.

93. *AHU codice* 35.f.40v.

94. Queyroz p. 719; *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*. Vol. II. pp. 72, 86.

95. *Archivo Portugese Oriental (nova edicao) Tomo IV. Vol. 2. Part I*. p. 365.

96. R. Boudens—*The Catholic church in Ceylon under Dutch rule*. Rome, 1957. p. 51.

The combined effect of the events of the first four decades of the seventeenth century had a tremendous impact on the people of Madampe. New masters had arrived and with them, a new religion and also new economic burdens. The old society was disrupted and men had to adjust to the new environment. Yet after all Madampe was experiencing only what the rest of south west Ceylon did at the same time and that in a somewhat less violent manner.

CHILAW

Sedaraweli

Chilaw Lake

Palahitiyawa

Kudirippuwa

Iranawila

MADAMPE

Tinipitiya tank

Henepola

Tinipitigama

Kadupiti Oya

Kumbukana  
MALIGAWATTA

Galamuna  
Purudawella

Kalimulla

Yafakalana

Halgama

Kadupiti

Koswadiya

Hattiniya

Marawila

Wirahena

Katuneriya

Wennappuwa  
Utahitiyawa

Neyinamadama

Kaamala

Wana Oya

# MADAMPE IN THE EARLY 17th CENTURY

Scale 1 0 1 2 Miles

