



# Timor, Sandalwood, and Global Trade Rivalry on Timor

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## \*ABSTRACT

Timor island is the place where the best, the most fragrant and the largest sandalwood in the world comes and sandalwood is usually appreciated by its potential usage in the fine aromatic oil from its heartwood. The development of East Timor ancient kingdoms had tight relationship with the sandalwood trade. In the past, the value and usage of sandalwood in many things made many foreign countries to come, reach, control, and dominate the trade of Timor sandalwood. The rivalry between The Dutch and the Portuguese was the example of the contestation on the product which influenced the local polemic and problem in various aspects. Through historical study, the essay tries to describe how the Timor sandalwood became the important product in some centuries ago that attracted various global traders to possess. Finally, it is also to describe how the Dutch and Portuguese (especially in the seventeenth century) involved in gaining the Timor sandalwood and their rivalries in controlling sandalwood had influenced the dynamics of Timor in some sides. The contestation of these two European trading powers had segregated the local people and divided sandalwood store into their rivalry. Moreover, their rivalries had disturbed the local unity and fraternity. Although sandalwood gave wealth and honor for local kings, sandalwood circumstantially caused the disintegration of Timor. Finally, the Timor sandalwood was still existing with limited amount but the Timor colony had changed.

**Keywords:** *Timor, sandalwood, global trade rivalry, Dutch, Portuguese, history*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sandalwood is usually appreciated by its potential usage in the fine aromatic oil from its heartwood. Recognized by its aromatic qualities, sandalwood was used in South and East Asia (especially in India and China) as incense, carving, and medicine. Sandalwood is an indigenous plant in Java and Timor, including all the Lesser Sunda Island and Sumba, however, many scholars notice that sandalwood is more abundant in Timor. It became the image, the identity of Timor. Sandalwood was Timor and Timor was sandalwood that historical record stated Timor dynamic along with sandalwood.

In pre-modern times Timor Island was hardly reached by sailing boat during the easterly monsoon. The island lacks good harbors on the north and south coasts. Kupang bay was the only location that provided a good shelter, though this place did not offer much sandalwood [1]. In the north of Timor lies Solor Island, which was suitable as a stronghold for Western ships due to several geographic and climatic reasons. Generally, Solor provided a shelter to avoid the malarial coast of Timor and as a good port where a ship could wait for the changing of monsoon wind [2].

The growth and development of ancient kingdoms in the East Nusa Tenggara region was closely related to the sandalwood trade. Timorese Sandalwood had best quality product with the most fragrant. Timor had the largest sandalwood in the world and it was very cheap to boat because there was no other wood except sandalwood in the forest. Tomé Pires [3] states that the Malay merchants say that God made Timor for sandalwood and Banda for mace and the Moluccas for cloves—these merchandises are not known anywhere else in the world except in these places. As a consequence, the abundant and lucrative Timorese sandalwood fomented competing trading interests among local and foreign powers who struggled for influence and a share of profit from its exploitation and sale across Asia [3]. Since the sixteenth century, sandalwood brought profit and rivalry from its control and trade among foreign and local allegiances. Like spices, sandalwood from Timor was profitable and valuable product in global trade. Through historical and literature studies, the aim of this essay is to describe how Timorese sandalwood trade took place and how the rivalry of the Dutch and Portuguese as well as its impact on Timor happened, particularly in the seventeenth century.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The essay will comprise of brief description about Timor and its history connected to sandalwood, then followed by sandalwood trade in the seventeenth century, global rivalry, and its impact on Timor.

### 3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

As historical study, some literatures were explored to gain broaden understanding about the event, particularly related to sandalwood and its trade rivalry among traders. Sandalwood was the main and excellent product in the history of global trade. R.A. Donkin (2003) describes the excellences of sandalwood as: “light, smooth, not dry, unctuous with oil like butter, pleasant in smell, penetrating the skin, unobtrusive, not losing color, capable of bearing heat, allaying heat, and pleasant to touch”. Sandalwood is often used as medicine and material for ritual ceremony, particularly for Hindus and Buddhist [4]. Pigafetta [4] believes that nowhere else is white sandalwood to be found except Timor and Da Orta notes that sandalwood grew in Timor in greatest quantity and it is called *chandam*, as well as Pires mentions that between the islands of Solor and Bima, there is the channel of Timor island, where the sandalwoods are provided.

From fifteenth century (1436), sandalwood had been recorded as a potential product of trade by the Chinese and the Javanese. In the early centuries of the previous millennium, particularly before the Portuguese engaged into maritime expansion, Solor and Timor had become important stations on the main traffic route for Javanese, Malay, Gujarat, Persian, Arab, and Chinese merchants for their expeditions in looking for spices, sandalwood, and slaves in the eastern part of Indonesian archipelago [5]. The traders took sandalwood by themselves in the few miles from the beach and had to pay tribute to the local ruler as a payment for a permission to cut the sandalwood. Later on, the system was changed by the local rulers that only the natives could cut the wood. The amount of wood cut was limited to the demand and number of ships which arrived. Further, this amount was limited by the quantity of wood that the natives could load to the ships or sandalwood cutting was depended on the local people. After Portuguese conquered Malacca, they quickly made Solor and Timor as an entrepot for products from Timor and Java regions and maintained their trading position in the Indian Ocean [6].

The rivalry especially between colonial global powers (the Dutch and Portuguese) in Nusantara was not only about the spices but also regarding the aromatic wood from Timor. Both the Portuguese and Dutch visited Timor occasionally to attain sandalwood and slaves. However, the Portuguese purpose came to Timor was viewed differently by many scholars. For example, Andrea K. Molnar (2005) claims that Portuguese’s effort was merely to set up Catholic mission, therefore, initially Portuguese settlement on Timor was not colonial administration or trading post or military garrisons. Portuguese penetration into Timor gradually happened along with its reaction to the Dutch and the increasing relations with the neighboring island and west Timor [7]. Then, James Fox (2000) claims that the Portuguese were the first Europeans who came to Timor because of sandalwood trade. However, Portuguese needed 50 years to take over and establish their presence in the area after their conquest of Malacca in 1511. Portuguese chose to set up themselves to the north of Timor, originally on the island of Solor, where the Dominican preacher gained their first convert [8].

Therefore, the history of Timor cannot be detached from the history of struggle for sandalwood. It is not separated also from the clash between local rulers and foreign role interpolation in ripping unity of Timorese concordance. Timor is an example of market conquest and cross-cultural impact of trade and commerce that was conducted by Europeans in maintaining their complete network of trade for commercial success [9]. Shifting control of areas around Timor, Solor, and Flores was also the impact of local and foreign ambitions to take over the power, territory, sympathy, endorsement, and sandalwood part.

### 4. METHODS

This study uses descriptive qualitative method. The article tries to explore historical sources in digging Timor and Sandalwood trade in colonial period particularly in the seventeenth century. Through historical literatures, the article describes the role of sandalwood as the valuable product in global maritime trade and later became the source of rivalry and conflict among global trading powers and local realms. The article comprises of brief description about the dynamic of sandalwood trade, the rivalry between global trading powers (the Dutch and Portuguese) in the seventeenth century, and its impact on Timor.

### 5. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

#### 5.1. The Dynamics of Timorese Sandalwood Trade

In the maritime trade period, Timor became a place for refreshment of Malay and Javanese merchants in their expedition to Moluccas. On this island, trading exchange took place while the merchants changed their product with local products [10]. Lucrative sandalwood in Timor was already explored by Malay and Javanese merchants, and found

that India was one of potential markets for it. India used sandalwood as material for ointment and perfumes as well as it played important material in cremation ceremonies and sacrifices [10].

Sandalwood became a main export in Malacca and it traveled to other areas such as South India, Malay Peninsula, Philippines, and Persia. For India, Bengal merchants were the ones who had role in sandalwood trade. Every year, four to five ships from Bengal sailed to Malacca and the Sumatran port of Pasè with extensive cargo. The cargo of one or two ships was worth at least 80,000 to 90,000 *cruzados*<sup>1</sup> [10]. The Bengali merchants supplied neighboring countries and Malacca with large quantities of foodstuff, such as rice, sugar, dried and salted meat and fish, preserved vegetables and candied fruits like ginger, oranges, lemons, figs, cucumbers and textile products. Then, Bengali merchants shipped out from Malacca large quantities of camphor from Borneo, pepper from Sumatra; sandalwood from Timor and other products such as cloves, mace, nutmeg, pearls, silk, and white porcelain.

In the early sixteenth century, annual export of Timorese sandalwood was about 270-360 tons. In the seventeenth century the amount of Timorese sandalwood export was twice—660 tons [11]. In 1630, sandalwood of Timor obtained profits for 150-200 percent, when it was shipped to China in the early seventeenth century and it was one of the most profitable businesses in Macao at the turn of century. The Batavian *Dag Registers* for 1663-1682 shows that ships trading between Macao and Timor frequently called at Japara, Batavia, and Bantam, in which the main product was the aromatic sandalwood that so highly prized by the Chinese [12]. The trade between Macao and Timor was first arranged via Solor and later on via Larantuka. Then, it was via Jepara and Batavia, and finally with Lifao.

Relation to Timorese sandalwood and China, Ptak concludes some aspect from Chinese source that first, Chinese merchants directly traded with Timor; second, Timor directed its sandalwood export through several ports and it imported various goods from abroad; and third, profit from sandalwood trade was considered high [6]. Roelofs (1962) describes that Chinese had also visited Timor since the ancient time [10]. Whereas, Arend de Roever (2002) notes that there is no authentic information about the route and the coming of Chinese to Timor [9]. The Chinese did not directly reach Timor as a trade destination. The cyclical visits of the Chinese followed the monsoon pattern, following the route of Sumatra to Java then to Lesser Sunda Island.

However, the direct trade of China was decline coinciding with the rise of Malacca. It could be assumed that in the early Ming era in fifteenth century, the contact between Chinese and Timor decreased. Then Chinese contact to obtain sandalwood increasingly took place via Malacca exclusively [10]. With the rise of the commercial center of Malacca, the Chinese could get sufficient supply of sandalwood through Javanese or Malaccan intermediary traders. Besides Malacca, the Chinese were inclined to trade in Batavia and Makassar as the newly increasing markets in the first half seventeenth century, where the sandalwood was abundantly available, and where they could sell and buy with less risk [13].

Timor had many great trading settlements which were all under separate chiefs. Timor was the place for refreshment for many merchants from and to Spice Islands. The way trade was described in much later in Chinese sources from the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century (Wang Ch'i Tsung) [10]. The chiefs, sometimes the king (*raja*), were in-charge to supervise, when foreign merchant arrived and came to market. The chief controlled the trade activities between the foreign merchants and the inhabitants who gathered and bartered their wood for outsiders. No trading took place without the presence of chief. Chang Hsieh's account notes that in Timor around 1617/18, the natives cut sandalwood, which they brought frequently for trading with merchants [6]. The merchants would not be allowed to trade if the king had returned home in order to avoid disputes between local and foreign traders. They had to have the king's permission to come and trade again. In trade, the native traders supplied the foreign merchants with sandalwood and large quantities of wax and honey. Sometimes, only women came aboard to trade when the ships arrived.

## 5.2. Sandalwood Source and Trade Rivalry of The Global Trading Powers

Explicit direct contact and sandalwood exploration in Timor by Portuguese could be perceived from a draft report of the Malacca Captain, Afonso Lopes da Costa, to the king of Portugal [2]. This document concluded that within few years of occupation at Malacca, the Portuguese had set a tendency to explore the islands east of Java and the motivation was directed to the source of profitable sandalwood. The profitable sandalwood tempted Portuguese to monopolize the products in areas of Timor and Solor. However, it was not successful since Chinese continued to hold Timor. The Chinese presence in those areas had been sturdy since the Chinese merchant could supply the goods that the natives needed, and which could not be supplied by the Portuguese, even Javanese and other traders from other areas [10].

The competition between Portuguese and Chinese already happened since second half of the sixteenth century. After the Portuguese dominated Malacca, Chinese merchants avoided facing Portuguese in Malacca port and turned to other ports, such as the ports on the Malay Peninsula, Pattani, Johor, and Pahang. Chinese tried to reach Timor and other places Borneo and Sumatra without passing Malacca. They sailed via the west of Borneo and the east coast of Sumatra to Bantam and Timor in order to obtain pepper and sandalwood. Chinese also avoided the Malay Straits where wars were continued between Portuguese and the Malay states of Aceh and Johore. However, the Portuguese tried to obstruct

<sup>1</sup>*Crzados*: An early Portuguese coin of gold or silver, bearing the figure of a cross. An old Portuguese coin of gold or silver having a cross pictured on the reverse. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cruzados>

Chinese trade in some areas such as in Sunda, Pattani, Pahang, and Indragiri, where pepper was grown, and tried to block Chinese to reach Solor and Timor for sandalwood [10],

Portuguese tried to maintain regular contact with Timorese. Regularly, the Portuguese sailed to the island of Timor from Ende of Flores to purchase sandalwood and slaves as well as to do missionary purpose [14]. In most cases, Timorese sandalwood was also the main product for Portuguese to trade with Macao. This trade was important, chiefly after the Japanese authority permanently banned Portuguese access into Japan in 1639. In the later time, the Portuguese could obtain the Macao support also in their struggle against the Dutch.

In 1556, two years after founding a church in Malacca, members of the Dominican order chose the first settlement in the small island of Solor to the northwest of Timor. Portuguese had known Solor from the first time of their arrival in Malacca. Later, Solor grew as the main entrepot for Portuguese trading activities in the eastern archipelago in the Flores and Solor zone.

In the seventeenth century, The Dutch also turned their interest in Timor primarily due to the lucrative sandalwood. They succeeded penetrating Timor by taking Solor from the Portuguese in 1613. Then, they abandoned Solor in 1615, but occupied it again in 1618. They also succeeded to overlord Kupang in 1653. However, their eagerness to control sandalwood was challenged from Black Portuguese or "Topasses". The Topasses were Christian and mixed blood with the Portuguese, they spoke Portuguese and they mostly stayed in Flores [15]. In 1749, the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie* – Dutch East India Company) could overcome Topasses' resistance and also could force Portuguese to secede to East Timor. Then, the Dutch officers and their allies controlled and acted freely in Kupang as a main power in West Timor [15]. But their gains in the sandalwood trade were low due to VOC's decline.

Initially, the Portuguese knew Timor and sandalwood from the merchants' information, when they seized Goa (1509) and conquered Malacca (1511). The guide who brought the Portuguese (such as Flotilla Antonio de Brito, Simao Abreu, and Francisco Rodrigues) to Timor was a Malay skipper, named Ismail, in 1511 [16]. The early sixteenth century, the Portuguese penetrated the Island through Catholicism missionaries. Since 1515, some Dominican priests propagated Roman Catholicism on Timor. During the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Church's effort was centered on the north and south coastal chiefdom. Indirectly, the Catholicism missionaries' approach could made Portuguese penetrated into Timor for sandalwood purpose.

Afterwards, the Portuguese used east Flores as place for collecting all products from eastern Indonesia, such as Timor, Rote, Sawu, and Sumba. Then they decided Solor Island (1555) as an entrepot and as a center of gospel dissemination. The Captain of Solor fortress was a Dominican and was chosen by head of Dominican order at Malacca. Hereafter, the mixed community between the Portuguese and Christian Timor grew.

The presence of Portuguese was considered hazardous by local residents for their sovereignty and trading rival. Since 1598, local resistance towards the Portuguese occurred but was unsuccessful. Besides the Portuguese, the big threat for local sovereignty also came from the Dutch. After the Dutch took Solor, the Portuguese had to look for protection in Larantuka, a small settlement on the eastern end of the island of Flores. The head of Topasses Solor, Joao de Hornay was forced to go to Larantuka as well. Since then, the Portuguese activity was centered in Larantuka and the present of the Dutch East Indies gave an end to the Portuguese hegemony in the eastern Indonesian archipelago

The Dutch was successful in the handling and monopoly of the entire sandalwood trade on Timor because their effectiveness in the blockade of the important southern shores of Timor. According Arend de Roever, the Dutch was helped by the monsoon wind that prevented any ships to reach the southern shores of Timor from April to November. Therefore, they only needed to watch the sea entrance near the Bay of Kupang for remaining months. Based on the monsoons and influxes, only certain ships were allowed to enter the southern Timorese shores from where most of sandalwood was taken. By occupying Solor, they could establish a maritime system from Solorose Straits and control over the sandalwood routes to and from Timor [17].

### ***5.3. The Impact of Colonial Sandalwood Trade on Timor***

The intense foreign rivalry in Timor between the Dutch and the Portuguese was ended by a treaty of 1916. The treaty emphasized the segregation of the sandalwood reserves in the frontier districts. According to Gunn, the rivalry between the Dutch and the Portuguese over the island of Timor was a part of broader contest, which arose because of the complex political situation of destructive Thirty Years War in Europe [2]. In the seventeenth century, Timor was mainly separated into western and eastern part which made Timor trapped into economic and political rivalry between those two powers. The Portuguese were supported by white soldiers and Topasses, and the Dutch was supported by white soldiers and recruited men from Rote, Sabu, and Timor Islands.

Economic rivalry between the Portuguese and the Dutch influenced harmony of chieftains, which was mostly based on kinship. Some rules in Tasi Feto were extracted to Portuguese and Dutch sides. One of them was the queen of Mena who later on converted to Christianity. Related to Portuguese, Portuguese came to Timor not only with few articles but also brought white soldiers and armed Topasses. They were considered having a bad intention, which was translated in the form of stone fortresses that were built since 1562.

The Portuguese grew on Solor and the Dominicans established a permanent stone fortress Enrique in 1566. This fortress functioned as a rendezvous for Portuguese sandalwood traders. Around this stone fortress grew up a settlement inhabited by native converts, and by offspring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors, and sandalwood traders from

Malacca and Macao, most of whom intermarried with native women. Around this fort developed a mixed population which was partly Portuguese partly local Christians (many of those Portuguese were involved in the sandalwood trade in Timor) [8]. Portuguese position became stronger in Tasi Feto waters with the rise of Topasses. Topasses were carried from Goa and Malacca to Solor. They were Portuguese cross bred and they spoke Portuguese. They were half Portuguese and considered different with Timorese even though they were black which normally the Dutch called them black Portuguese.

The Dutch force was able to seize the fort (Solor) when over 500 of its occupants were going to Timor for sandalwood trade [8]. The siege happened in the rainy east monsoon trading season from January to April 1613, when almost all the men of Solor went to Timor for searching sandalwood [17]. The Dutch commander allowed Portuguese to settle in a small village at Larantuka. In this place, Portuguese controlled a small island and converted as many local islanders as possible through their Dominican preachers. From here, they tried to realize their religious goal and also to control sandalwood trade on Timor. From Larantuka, sandalwood seeking and logging were arranged periodically. Then, it was supplied through Makassar to Macao.

To further penetration to local communities and sandalwood sources, Portuguese tried a strategy. In Larantuka, Portuguese appointed Antonio de Hornay as the captain-major of the territory. As the former of the Dutch, he knew more about the sandalwood than anybody else [17]. He knew to whom or which kings on Timor he had to trade his products. Besides, he also knew about the geographical position of the most lucrative sandalwood was growing. In order to penetrate to local authority, he intermarried the local princess. De Hornay married the Timorese women, who were converted to Catholicism and with whom he had many sons and grandsons to become the next chieftain. His children would also be involved in the sandalwood trade as they become adults. This method was used in order to take chieftains' support – based on kinship which later on influenced the control of territory and wealth. Schulte Nordholt mentions that such alliances became a basis of political claim, when a king could acquire a political prestige in another principedom by marrying off a daughter with another king [18].

Marrying the king's daughter was also a way to get military assistance from the king. By doing so, the king could strengthen his political position, and the person who gave assistance was considered to be superior. Thus, the recipient had to pay him (king) tribute, which it was a traditional Timorese pattern. However, De Hornay and his opponent Mateas Da Costa ignored it. They married the princess because they desired to secure aid in their efforts to defeat the Dutch and Sonba'i.

The condition on Timor is described by Apollonius Scotte (1613) that there were two influential rajas on Timor: raja Mena and raja Asam, in the north coast of Timor. Raja Mena had a relationship with Muslim community at Adonare, southwest Solor, to equilibrate the Portuguese. However, in 1641, some chiefdoms, such as from Mena, Lifau, Amanabau, Luca and Batimau (Fatumean), made an agreement with the Portuguese and the people of the chiefdoms were baptized as Christian. Then, the Portuguese was allowed to collect sandalwood in their territory [16]. According to Nordholt, the weakening of the unity of realm was a result of Portuguese trade which gave the coastal rulers a wealth and power [18]. The agreement became the basis for the local loyalty to the Portuguese. Later on, Portuguese did not give tribute anymore to Wehale and Sonba'i, which The realm of Sonba'i was a part of the realm of Wehale.

Wehale was the political and religious center. Because of the allies, the Portuguese was successful, when for the first time they conducted military expedition into Timor mainland to conquer king of Wehale. Portuguese conquest on Wehale and the king surrender (1642). It meant that it was destruction of the center of traditional kingdom; as the center of Timor power and religion. The downfall of Wehale was followed by an effort of Topasses to retain their position and maintain their independence. Later on, the political tactics of the Timorese kings were influenced by the changing balance of power between foreigners, such as the Topasses and the Dutch [18].

The conflict between the Dutch and the Portuguese frequently happened. The climax was the Dutch finally could seize the Portuguese fortress at Kupang in 1653. The Dutch built a stronghold and small settlement, situated on the shore of a round bay at the western side of the island, where it was important strategic bay from where they could survey all access to the island's southern shore. Therefore, by obtaining this location, the Dutch could take opportunity to oversee the sandalwood trade from the southern Timorese shores and to control the maritime routes to the Moluccas and the island of Banda.

Anyhow, the Dutch effort to defeat the Portuguese from Larantuka failed. In 1662, a peace treaty between the Dutch and the Portuguese was made to finish the conflict between them [16]. However, the position of Topasses became stronger. Topasses tried to control Solor, Larantuka, even Timor. They headed not only the Topasses themselves but also communities of Chinese, Dutch deserters, and Portuguese soldiers [16]. In general, Topasses position was beneficial for Portuguese. Religious commonality among the Topasses and Portuguese positively encouraged Topasses-Portuguese affiliation, making them closer to the Portuguese than to the Dutch. The Topasses, for maintaining their social and political position in Sonba'i, married with daughters of the kings of small principalities which had strong ports for trading. Later on, Timor continued to be the center of Topasses' power and the stronghold of the De Hornays and the Da Costa.

De Hornay and Da Costa were two rival families and were mutually opposite. De Hornay was considered as the winner. He could acquire much land of his own, and was considered as a 'local' by Timorese. He provided merchant ships with sandalwood that was taken to Makassar, where it was either sold to the Dutch or shipped to Macao [17].

Conflict among powers happened such as between: the Topasses and the Portuguese against the Dutch, or, native sovereignties against the Topasses, and the Portuguese against the Dutch. Sometimes, there was conflict between the Topasses versus the Dutch or the Topasses versus the Portuguese. Moreover, controversy emerged among the native sovereignties or among Topasses themselves. So that, this period was called as 'turbulent Timor'[16]. Timor situation was considered as a field of conflict since sandalwood became the reason of their presence and defense.

Continual clash preoccupied the Dutch and the Portuguese. Arend de Roever notes that because of this, they hardly realized that they were losing their trading positions to the newly arising group (Larantouqueiros – Topasses). At the time when they realized, the emporium of the Larantouqueiros was already well established. As the result, the European had no role in the sandalwood trade again. They had to depend on the export of the Larantouqueiros who controlled the production on Timor and the maritime routings. Thus, later on the Topasses gained a monopolistic economic power [17].

Furthermore, the sandalwood trade met its loss in volume. Continuous logging under strict competition and monopoly resulted to the lessening number of sandalwood trees. Uncontrolled cutting of the wood made groves of sandalwood became extinct by the late seventeenth century [17]. However, the Dutch and the Portuguese had left their traces. For example, the Portuguese had disseminated Catholicism and mix-race, and the Dutch had introduced a logistic system (the time when the native of Timor had to cut, collect, store, and sell the sandalwood to the Dutch). The Dutch also introduced a *parang* and its function to cut the tree. Even though, it also was used as a weapon to fight against enemies from their tribes, communities or families.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The usage of sandalwood for medicine and religious rituals of Buddhism and Hinduism made it an important and highly in-demand for some regions such as India and China. Thus, the aim for sandalwood exploration and conquest by the Dutch and the Portuguese was to provide the Chinese and Indian markets. Finally, the struggle among foreign and also local interests was occasioned by the objective to control and monopolize the sandalwood trade. In the seventeenth century, Timor was a field for contest between two European trading powers that afforded political and social shifts in local communities and dragged the native realms into their rivalry. It was continued until the partition of Timor between the Dutch and the Portuguese which divided sandalwood reserves in the frontier district.

Generally, most of the Portuguese and the Dutch could ship abundant sandalwood by their big ships and it was rarely carried out by Chinese, Makassarese, and Javanese small-medium ships. Before the Portuguese and the Dutch involved intensively to the sandalwood trade, Chinese, Makassarese, and Javanese had explored this wood and had transported it into China, Batavia and some areas in Java, and Malacca. From this entrepot, sandalwood was brought by many Asian merchants to other Asian markets. These traders maintained good relations with native rulers, as shown by giving them regular tributes for having permission to take sandalwood. On the contrary, the Portuguese tried to overlord Timor by making stable settlement and fortress. Intention was put on its lucrative sandalwood. By collecting the wood from direct source and by shipping it to high demand markets, Portuguese could collect vast profits, especially from Malacca port and Makassar, where Chinese and Indian merchants obtained the sandalwood.

The coming of the Dutch after their success to expel Portuguese from Solor was the initial Dutch involvement in Timor. The Dutch objective was to join the profitable sandalwood trade to obtain Chinese products especially silk which was highly profitable in Europe and Japan. After the siege of Malacca by the Dutch, Portuguese entrepot was moved to Makassar. However, the rivalry and conflict between the Dutch and Portuguese frequently happened that bothered the harmony of region and community on Timor.

Although sandalwood gave wealth and honor for local kings, sandalwood circumstantially caused the disintegration of Timor (comprised of many kingdoms under a center of power and political unity, Wehale). The seventeenth century showed the initial disintegration of the realm of Timor into smaller kingdoms. These kingdoms, previously bounded by fraternity, disintegrated due to the presence of the Dutch and the Portuguese who created an atmosphere of disloyalty to the Kingdom of Wehale.

After the end of Wehale kingdom as one single unitary realm, Timor became field of rivalry not only between the Dutch and the Portuguese, but also between two Topasses powers—Antonio de Hornay and Mattheus da Costa. These two men became not only as threats to the Dutch and the Portuguese, considering their common inclination to monopolize the sandalwood trade, but also as a threat to local unity and fraternity. Schulte Nordholt affirms that when the realm of Wehale or the realm of Liurai Sonba'i met its downfall in 1642, the independence of its confederate states was seriously endangered because the Topasses kept their dominant position on Timor.

Increasing sandalwood value and trade had resulted not only to discordance of many small kingdoms on Timor, but also environmental damage. Sandalwood exploration by irregular cutting, combustion of land, and absence of sandalwood replanting had made former sandalwood land damaged and sandalwood product decreased. However, contact with foreign traders also contributed to cultural traces. Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and also Makassarese had left their vestiges like religion and adjustment to the physical environment to attain a higher economical level.

## 7. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

This article is free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, and the publication process itself.

## 8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Erlita Tantri is the main author of this article.

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