

C. R. Boxer: Diogo do Couto's unpublished account of Angkor.

Diogo do Couto, the official chronicler and keeper of the archives of Portuguese India, from 1595 until his death at Goa in December 1616, wrote an account of Angkor which has remained unpublished until now. This account forms chapter six of a manuscript version of the first five books of Couto's twelfth Decade, formerly in the Augustinian convent of Nossa Senhora da Graça, at Lisbon, and removed to the National Archive of the Torre do Tombo on the suppression of the monasteries in 1834 (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Codice 537 de MSS. da Livraria, "Cinco livros da duodecima Decada da Asia," cap. vi, fls. 110-12). The manuscript is not in Couto's own hand, but in that of one of his clerks, and it differs in many respects from the published version of this incomplete Decade, the *Cinco Livros da Decada Doze da Historia da India* (Paris, 1645). Among the differences, is the suppression of chapter six in the published version. From Couto's account, it is clear that he relied mainly, if not entirely, on the description of Angkor by a Portuguese Capuchin missionary friar, Fr. Antonio da Magdalena, who evidently visited Angkor in 1585-6, and told Couto about the Khmer capital a couple of years later. This account is not only the earliest surviving European description of Angkor, but it is much fuller than those by Fr. Marcelo de Ribadeneyra, O.F.M., and Fr. Gabriel Quiroga de Santo Antonio, O.P., which were printed in 1601-04, and have been given chronological priority hitherto. It clearly embodies local traditions about the reoccupation of the old Khmer capital by King Satha, and provides some interesting new material, such as the description of the canals and hydraulic engineering works which greatly impressed the Capuchin friar. The Musée Guimet has kindly consented to publish this account, together with a French translation, in a collected edition of all the early European accounts of Angkor from 1586 to 1666, with copious archaeological notes and identifications by Mons. Bernard Groslier of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient. The undersigned and Mons. Groslier are now actively working on this book, which it is hoped will appear in 1956.