

Prior to the present century India's tiny state of Goa suffered from lack of interest in its indigenous craft. In 2008 the author was by chance alerted to their imminent disappearance and commenced the first of six seasons of fieldwork recording surviving specimens (Fenwick 2015). The following year Zeeshan Shaikh completed his unpublished M.A. thesis on traditional Goan boats, and excerpts were subsequently published (2009; Shaikh *et al.* 2011; 2012). Earlier neglect seems partly due to the fact that the little state was an undeveloped Portuguese possession. It lay outside the purview of British India and its able fisheries officer James Hornell. He was stationed in Madras and his subordinates based in other ports supplied him with information when required (*n.d.*; 1946). The Portuguese lacuna has made Pâris's report of exceptional importance and it has to be the starting-point for research on Goan sewn-plank craft.

Pâris was a junior officer aboard a frigate which anchored in Aguada Bay in 1838 (Laplace 1854, 3: 21 ff) (Fig.1). He supplemented his description with professional plans, elevations and sections of three small sewn vessels, supervising their publication on his return to France. Two are of the same type – small pirogues with a dugout underbody, extended with sewn planks, stabilized with a three-part outrigger, propelled either by oar or a light sail, and steered with a rudder (1843: pl. 15). Some 250 years earlier Jan Huygen Van Linschoten artistically depicted two sewn-plank craft, one with an outrigger propelled by oars, the other with sail and rudder, to illustrate an account of his five-year residence in Goa (1596: pl. 21).

Surviving fishing vessels

Large pirogues used for seine fishing are now endangered and no new craft have been built for a number of years, although dugout canoes with sewn repairs are still extensively used for fishing and transport on the state's smooth-flowing but shallow