

## St. Francis Xavier and the Jesuits in Ambon (1546-1580)

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The names of the present-day Christian villages on the islands of Ambon, Haruku, Saparua, and Nusalaut<sup>1</sup> are greatly similar to the names of the Christian villages on the same islands mentioned here and there in the letters and reports of the Portuguese Jesuits visiting those islands during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is also true for the Muslim villages on those same islands. It is as if during the three hundred or so intervening years of the Dutch presence in those islands, no fundamental changes occurred in the distribution of Christian and Muslim villages. It is as though time has stood still since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in terms of the configuration of the villages in the Ambon-Lease Islands.<sup>2</sup>

This is all the more interesting because it happened while Muslims from neighbouring Hitu continually raided the Christian villages during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and during the second half of that century war fleets from Ternate continually attacked those same villages and the Portuguese strongholds. During that period hardly year went by without raids, sieges, or attacks. Nevertheless, in between the conflicts, the Portuguese Jesuits succeeded in carving a socio-geographical area in the Ambon-

Lease Islands whose inhabitants were (and are) Christians, while the Muslims in general also succeeded in keeping their villages intact. A similar socio-geographical configuration never materialized in North Maluku, where the Portuguese concentrated their trade, fleets, and politics. Why it happened in the Ambon-Lease Islands is the topic of this paper.<sup>3</sup>

### THE JESUITS<sup>4</sup>

The Society of Jesus was created by Inácio de Loyola in 1540. The first Jesuit to visit the Ambon-Lease Islands was Francis Xavier, who is regarded as the founding father of the Jesuit mission to Asia. He left Portugal with the blessing of King João III, who succeeded in reviving the *Padroado Real* (royal responsibility for the mission in conquered lands) received from the Pope by the Portuguese monarchs in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Xavier's pioneering journey to the Ambon Islands was made from February to May 1546, and again in April and May 1547 during a return journey from Maluku to Malacca.<sup>5</sup>

Francis Xavier was able to convince the authorities of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* in Goa and the Jesuit leaders in Rome that Maluku and the Ambon-Lease Islands were very promising missionary fields, but it seems that Xavier was too optimistic. When the Portuguese arrived in Maluku and Ambon in the early 1520s, many of the villagers had converted to Islam in around the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Besides that, it was Maluku, with its rich clove production, that was the main attraction for Portuguese trading interests, not the Ambon-Lease Islands, where this commodity

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was not produced until the 1570s. Not long after the Portuguese fortress in Ternate was built (1522), animosity emerged between the captains of the fortress and the sultans of Ternate. By the time Xavier visited Ambon and Maluku in 1546-1547, the animosity had turned into open physical conflict.

Although the Ambon-Lease Islands did not produce cloves during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in 1518 Portuguese ships began to use Hitu, the western peninsula of the Island of Ambon (the eastern peninsula is called Leitimor), to wait for the east monsoon, which starts in May, to continue their journey to Malacca (the journey from Ternate to Ambon takes eight to ten days, and from Ambon to Malacca six weeks). They were allowed to build a wooden house near the village of Hitu, but, due to religious disagreements, had to leave the area in the 1530s. After that, throughout the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they successively built small wooden fortresses at different places in the southern coast of Hitu in the bay of Ambon that separates the peninsula of Hitu and the peninsula of Leitimor. It seems that not long afterwards, Franciscan priests began to visit those villages. The first village to turn Christian in this area was Hatiwe, whose village head took the name of Manuel. By the time Francis Xavier arrived in 1546, there were already three Christian villages.

Xavier's optimism about the future of the mission in Ambon was based on a belief that the island would soon become the property of the future captain of Ternate, Jordão de Freitas. The story began with the arrest of Sultan Tabarija (1523-1535) by captain Tristão de Ataíde, who ordered the sultan to go to Goa to stand trial. Hairun, his stepbrother, was installed by the captain as sultan in 1535. In Goa, Tabarija was befriended by Jordão de Freitas, who persuaded him to become a Christian (Dom Manuel was his Christian name). In his gratitude, Tabarija offered the island of Ambon to Freitas, but on his return journey Tabarija died in Malacca, and Freitas, who became the captain of the Ternate fortress (1544-1547), never went to Ambon to claim his right.<sup>6</sup>

Rome and Goa agreed with Xavier and made the Ambon Islands one of its priorities. According to



St. Francis Xavier blessing Portuguese soldiers before their fleet sails. Oil on canvas by André Reinoso (17<sup>th</sup> century). Sacristy of the Church of São Roque, Holy House of Mercy in Lisbon. Photograph by Júlio Marques.



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Wessels, from the time of Francis Xavier until 1606, no less than fifty-two missionaries were sent to Maluku. Two of them were killed together with the ship's crew when their ships passed North Javanese ports, and never arrived at their destination.<sup>7</sup> Only five of the priests were trained at Coimbra Jesuit College. Most of the Jesuits entered the Society in Goa. Among them there were a very few who never entered the priesthood. The average time spent by the missionaries in the Ambon-Lease Islands varied from a couple of months to two or three years. Only one Portuguese priest, Pedro Mascarenhas, stayed for ten years (1570-1580).

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Italian, Spanish, and even Belgian Jesuits began to visit Maluku and Ambon after Phillip II became king of both Spain and Portugal in 1580. These Jesuits were sent from Manila, not Goa. Among the most important of them was Bernardino Ferrari, an Italian, who reached Tidore from Manila in 1580 to become the first supervisor in Maluku and Ambon and died in Ambon in 1584. The second was Antonio Marta, also Italian, who succeeded Ferrari as first supervisor for this mission area in 1587 and died in Tidore in 1598.

The activities of the Jesuits consisted mostly of teaching the Gospel, baptising, building churches and big crosses in each Christian village, and giving communion to those who were ready for it. They must have set a timetable to enable them to visit all those villages. The language barrier must have been a great obstacle to the priests. According to Xavier:

"Each island speaks its own dialect, and there is even an island where nearly every village has its own style of talking. Nevertheless, Malay, which is also used in Malacca, is very common here."<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Jesuits used Xavier's translations into Malay of church materials like the *Credo* and its short explanations, the *Confessione Generalis*, *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Salve Regina* and the ten commandments.<sup>9</sup> The life of the Jesuits was, naturally, far from easy. Francis Xavier described the situation in the Ambon-Lease Islands in the following words:

"The climate of these islands is mild with much rainfalls. Mostly covered by thick forests, the mountains are high and difficult to climb, making them a safe place for the inhabitants, who shelter there during the wars. There are no horses, and one cannot ride a horse here. Earthquakes and 'seauquakes' occur very frequently here. The feeling during a 'seauquake' is as though a ship is flung on a rock. An earthquake is very frightening. Many islands spit fire accompanied by thundering sounds, incomparable to the sound of the largest guns. The fire is so strong that it can carry large rocks from the crater."<sup>10</sup>

The relatively short stay of the Jesuits in Ambon-Lease was not only due to the physical conditions. The animosity of the Muslims in Ambon-Lease was another cause. Nuno Ribeiro (trained at Coimbra and entered the Society in 1543), the second Portuguese Jesuit visiting Ambon after Xavier, twice escaped death when his hut was burned during the night. But on August 16, 1548, one of his helpers put poison in his food, and after suffering for some days, he died on August 23. For many years after his death, no Jesuit visited the islands. António Fernandes (not a priest), who arrived at Ambon on February 22, 1554, was drowned a month later (March 12) during a sea journey to the island of Buru, when his *prau* was hit by a storm. Afonso de Castro (born in Lisbon and entered the Society in Goa in 1547) began his work in Ternate in 1549, and in 1555 spent a few months in Ambon before going to Halmahera. He was crucified on January 1, 1558 on the small island of Hiri, north of Ternate, in 1556. Pedro Mascarenhas (1570-81) died by poisoning.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from the physical condition and the animosity of the Muslims, the food seemed also to be a great problem to the Jesuits. Antonio Marta reported that the daily food of the missionaries was not very different from that of the people. Sago (a flour produced from the bark of a palm tree) and fish were

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the main dishes. Pork was rarely seen on the table, but vegetables were plentiful, as well as fruits, especially durian. Instead of wine the good fathers drank *tuak*, an alcoholic substance produced from a palm tree (not the sago tree). Due to the lack of European medicine, the health of the priests was a serious problem. *Tuak* mixed with lemon juice was a standard medicine against many illnesses, as was the bark of the *manga bara* tree.<sup>12</sup>

Many priests died of what was at that time regarded as a mysterious sickness called in Malay *beri-beri*. On this Bernardino Ferrari reported:

"I saw three priests suffering from this sickness. Due to the loss of strength, Father Rodrigues was contaminated by a sickness called *beri-beri*. It starts at the legs, restricting the freedom of movement, and then it moves to both arms, and ends at the heart, followed by death. In its early stage the illness can still be cured, but if most of the body has been contaminated, it becomes fatal."<sup>13</sup>

The death toll was indeed very high. Of the fifty missionaries visiting Maluku and Ambon during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, seventeen died in the vicinity, while twenty-one died in other parts of Asia.<sup>14</sup>

One of the seventeen Portuguese missionaries, who spent ten years of his life in Ambon-Lease, was the aforesaid Father Pedro Mascarenhas (1570-1581). He was born in Arzila and entered the Society in Goa in 1558. After being stationed in other missionary areas, in 1568 he visited Siau (Sangir Islands in North Sulawesi), and arrived in Ambon in 1569.

During the first years of his stay in Ambon-Lease, the islands were in a relatively peaceful condition, and thus conducive to missionary work. In a letter to his superiors in Goa and Rome he put forward a plan to convert even the big island of Seram and Buru if the necessary missionaries were sent to assist him. In his letter dated May 25, 1570 he said that Christianity was in full bloom on the island of Ambon:

"Because this island, although no more than 20 miles in length, has 66 settlements—the smallest not included. The smallest has more than 140 inhabitants, and the large ones about 4,000 to 5,000. I will be able to visit the surrounding islands, which are much bigger, where there are already a number of Christians, and many more are asking for baptism." (With this he means the islands of Seram and Buru).<sup>15</sup>

However, Mascarenhas was too optimistic. A few months later, in 1570, war broke out in Maluku and Ambon-Lease led by Sultan Baabullah from Ternate. During the absence of Portuguese forces, many villages in Ambon-Lease had to turn away from the Jesuits to protect themselves from the attacks of the fleets. Mascarenhas took it upon himself to go to Malacca to ask for help. During his return journey to Ambon he was imprisoned in Java, bought free, and arrived in Ambon at the end of 1572, where he stayed until 1580. A year later he moved to Tidore and died there on December 6, 1581.<sup>16</sup>

## EDIFICATION BY NUMBERS

It is a well-known fact that the Jesuit letters and reports published and circulated among the missionaries, besides providing information on the activities of the Jesuits in different missionary areas in Asia, Brazil and Africa, were also meant to reinforce the morale of other missionaries who read those published letters.<sup>17</sup> The edifying aspect of those published letters is especially obvious from the numbers of converts mentioned. The bigger the numbers, the more it would encourage others to work harder. Also the exact number of converts was not given in the letters, but always in thousands, ten of thousands, or hundred of thousands, stressing quantity, not quality.

Perhaps due to the above-mentioned goal underpinning most of the Jesuit's letters, it is not easy to determine the attitude of the local inhabitants from the text.<sup>18</sup> Although these reports provide interesting information on the geographical conditions of the places they visited, social and cultural descriptions of the locals are mostly left out. One of the most interesting pieces of information on the locals concerns the number of converts.<sup>19</sup> The number of Christians in the Ambon and Lease Islands fluctuates following the ups and downs of the wars between the Portuguese and the local inhabitants and the Ternatans during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Before the arrival of Xavier in February 1546, there were only three Christian communities (kampongs or villages). The relative peace that prevailed while Xavier was in Ambon made it possible to increase the number of those villages to seven.<sup>20</sup>

The relatively peaceful situation that lasted until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century was indeed very conducive to the work of the Jesuits in Ambon-Lease. The results were





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reported by Afonso de Castro (1555-1557) in a letter dated May 13, 1555. He mentioned that the number of Christian villages on the island of Ambon had increased to thirty. Another report, besides confirming the number of Christian villages on Ambon reported by Castro, added thirteen villages on the Lease Islands, and gave ten thousand as the total number of Christians in those islands.<sup>21</sup>

In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century the situation changed drastically. This started in 1557 with the conflict between Duarte d'Eça, the captain of Ternate, and Hairun, the sultan (1546-70). D'Eça detained Hairun and his aging mother in the fort, causing an unexpected rebellion by the Ternatans. Other Portuguese officials in Ternate released Hairun and his mother and sent d'Eça to Goa to stand trial, but the damage was done. Upon his release, Hairun began a series of attacks on the Ambon Islands.<sup>22</sup> In 1558 he sent a formidable fleet led by Kaicili Leilato to attack the Christian villages in Ambon-Lease. To counter the Ternatan fleet, Henrique de Sá, the new captain of Ternate, led a small fleet to Ambon. From that time on, the Ambon-Lease Islands were continually being attacked either from Ternate or Hitu.

Letters from the Jesuits in the islands were repeatedly sent to their superiors in Goa and Rome complaining about the lack of attention paid by the Portuguese authorities to the deteriorating situation of those islands. In the end, the complaints from the Jesuits bore fruit. In 1562 Goa sent António Pais with a fleet to become the first captain in Ambon.<sup>23</sup> He was instructed to build a stronger fortress in a friendly area, but the enemy was too strong. Pais failed to build the fortress and lost his life in battle.

Stronger voices began to be heard from the General of the Society in Rome. Even in Lisbon, the young King Sebastião demanded the Viceroy in Goa to attend to the situation in the Ambon-Lease Islands. In 1567 Goa responded by sending a much larger fleet led by Gonçalo Pereira Marraque, who stayed in the area until 1571. During that period, the letters from the Jesuits were again optimistic. In a letter dated January 31, 1566, Luís de Góis reported that at that time there were about 70,000 Christians in Maluku and Ambon-Lease.<sup>24</sup>

During the following years, the war started to escalate. In 1570 Hairun was murdered by the Portuguese captain in Ternate, and his son and successor, Baabullah (1570-83) declared a war against the Portuguese that continued until his death. In a letter from Goa addressed to the General in Rome, Pero Nunez, who worked for some years in Ambon, wrote: "At present there are only a small number of Christians in Ambon and Lease, only about four to five thousand."<sup>25</sup>

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While Baabullah concentrated his attacks in Ternate and Halmahera in the north, in Ambon-Lease things seemed to be not so bad. The 1578 annual report from Goa to Rome stated that in those islands there were about ten to eleven thousand Christians.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Baabullah never really left Ambon-Lease in peace. In 1580 the second superior, Father Bernardino Ferrari, reported from Ambon that on that island there were only six or seven Christian villages left.<sup>27</sup> This situation continued until the arrival of a Portuguese fleet led by Furtado de Mendonça in 1601.

## THE VILLAGE ALLIANCES

Although no single letter or report from the Jesuits provides a complete description or map of all the Christian villages on Ambon-Lease, the repeated mention of the names of those villages in letters and reports throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century enable one to recognize a certain stable pattern of settlements, especially on the island of Ambon. The pattern becomes much more clear when one compares those

St. Francis Xavier and the miracle of the crab on Ceram.  
Oil on canvas by André Reinoso (17<sup>th</sup> century). Sacristy of the Church  
of São Roque, Holy House of Mercy in Lisbon. Photograph by Júlio Marques.



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names in the Jesuit letters with the description provided by Rumphius in his *Ambonsche Landbeschrijving* [Description of the Land of Ambon] written in 1679.<sup>28</sup>

George Everhardus Rumphius was an employee of the Dutch East India Company of German descent (his German name was Georg Rumph). He started his career as a soldier in the Dutch East India Company in 1653 and four years later became a civilian employee with the rank of *koopman* (trader) stationed at Larike and later at Hila (the Dutch centers of the clove trade), both on the peninsula of Hitu. Besides his work, Rumphius had the habit of collecting samples of the fauna and flora of Ambon-Lease. Although in later years he became blind, with the assistance of a clerk provided by the company he was able to write two manuscripts on the fauna and flora of the islands with beautiful and artistic illustrations. Naturalists at the time were impressed by his work, and in 1681 the Academia Naturae Curiosorum in Vienna regarded him as *Plinius Indicum*. These manuscripts were not published until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Two other manuscripts from his hands are the *Ambonsche Landbeschrijving*, which has never been published, and the *Ambonsche Historie* [History of Ambon], published in 1910.<sup>29</sup>

The *Ambonsche Landbeschrijving* is in fact a general description of the villages in the islands of Ambon-Lease, complete with genealogies of the families of the main village heads. For the description of the villages in Hitu, Rumphius depends on another manuscript – the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* [Story of Hitu]. The manuscript was written by Imam Rijali, the most prestigious priest at the mosque of Hitu, while in exile at Makassar in the 1680s and seems to have immediately circulated in Hitu.<sup>30</sup> Besides his own personal knowledge, for information on Leitimor, Rumphius mentioned a book entitled *Oost-Indische Schetsboek* [East Indian Scrapbook] written by a certain Jaricus.<sup>31</sup>

Based on Rijali's manuscript, Rumphius described thirty Muslim villages on the peninsula of Hitu grouped into seven village federations or *uli* (Hitu indeed means seven). Those village federations were: (1) Uli Helawan (villages: Hunut, Tomu and Mosapal), (2) Uli Sailesi (villages: Mamala, Polut, Hausihol, Luyen and Liang), (3) Uli Sawani (villages: Wakal, Pelisa, Eli, Sanelo, Hukunalo), (4) Uli Hutunuku (villages: Kaitetu, Nukuhai, Tealaa, Wawani, Esen), (5) Uli Ala (villages: Seith, Hautuna, Lebelau, Wausela,

Laing), (6) Uli Nau-Binau (villages: Nau, Binau, Henelehu, Henelale, Henelatu), and (7) Uli Solemata (villages: Tulehu, Tial, and two others).

The description by Rumphius of the village alliances on Leitimor followed a very different pattern from Rijali's. Basically he grouped the villages into *prau* units, the central element of the organisation of the Dutch Company's fleet consisting of a number of *praus* or *korakora*<sup>32</sup> from Ambon-Lease to assist the governor in patrolling the islands each year. Rumphius mentioned twelve *korakora* on the island of Ambon, each manned by villagers from a group of villages led by one village as its leader. From Rumphius' description it is obvious that the *prau* unit must have been based on the *uli* or village alliance still functioning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although not every *prau* unit mentioned by Rumphius was an *uli*.

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The *prau* units were: (1) Nusaniwe (villages: Sailale, Latuhalat, Amahusu, Hatu), (2) Kilang (villages: Kilang, Naku, Hatala), (3) Soya (villages: Soya, Amantelo, Ahusen, Urtetu), (4) Halong (villages: Halong, Hatiwe Kecil, Lateri), (5) Hatiwe (villages: Hatiwe, Tawiri, Hukunalo, Rumatiga), (6) Ema (villages: Ema, Hukurila, Rutong, Lateri), (7) Maridika, (8) Allang (villages: Alang, Liliboi), (9) Urimesing (villages: Urimesing, Kappa, Seri), (10) Hutumuri, (11) Baguala (villages: Baguala and Suli), (12) Wai.

The description of the village alliances in Hitu must correspond closely to reality since it was based on Rijali's personal knowledge while he was in Hitu and known as the imam of the mosque in Hitu and an important member of the Nusatapi clan.<sup>33</sup> Rijali also



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mentioned a coordinating institution consisting of four functionaries, or the *Empat Perdana* (Malay), chosen from each of the four clans forming the *Uli Helawan* (Golden *Uli*): Tanihitumesing, Nusatapi, Totohatu and Pati Tuban. One of the four functionaries, from the Tanihitumessing clan, was also regarded as the spokesman of the other *ulis* (the Portuguese mistakenly named him *Raja Hitu* (the King of Hitu). After the Portuguese made Hitu their transit station to and from Malacca, they appointed a Captain of Hitu (*Kapitan Hitu*) chosen from the Nusatapi clan, who was responsible for the relations between Hitu and the Portuguese.

The village federations on the peninsula of Leitimor described by Rumphius were totally different from those in Hitu. There was no coordinating institution in Leitimor because this function was, naturally, in the hands of the Portuguese. One *uli* mentioned by Rumphius as a *prau* unit did not exist any more, namely Nusaniwe, the largest, strongest and richest *uli* in Leitimor in the last part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Urimesing, another large *uli* during the same period, later became a part of the city of Ambon. At present there is no village by the name of Baguala, and Mardika is certainly not an *uli* since it was the village of the *mardijkers*.<sup>34</sup>

## DICHOTOMIC-SYMBIOSIS

According to Rijali and Rumphius, the system of village federations in Hitu belonged to *Ulilima* (five *ulis*), and the system in Leitimor belonged to *Ulisiwa* (nine *ulis*). This is a very common principle of social organisation in Maluku and Ambon-Lease. A number of Dutch officials in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were also aware of the system, but it was not until the 1930s that academicians, especially anthropologists, began to study these social organisations. Van Wouden opened the discussion in 1935,<sup>35</sup> followed by Manusama in 1977 mentioned earlier,<sup>36</sup> then Van Frassen in 1987,<sup>37</sup> and Andaya in 1993.<sup>38</sup>

Van Wouden mentioned a “dualism” among the Seramese, the people belonging to the Patasiwa in West Seram, and the *Patalima* in East Seram, the *hena* (the village with feminine characteristics) and the *aman* (the male village).<sup>39</sup> Both sides were dependent on each other. Manusama analyzed the system of Hitu. Van Fraesen analyzed the *soa* as a territorial division on the

island of Ternate based on similar principles. And Andaya pointed to the fact that a “dualism” existed between Ternate and Tidore from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ternate belonged to the *Ulilima* system and Tidore to the *Ulisiwa* system. Both depended on each other, the dependence being institutionalized by, among other things, Tidore as the wife giver to the sultans of Ternate, and the sultans of Ternate the wife receivers from Tidore.

I would like to suggest here that this social organisation should be seen as a dichotomic-symbiosis. In this sense the Hitu *Ulilima* could not possibly exist without the Leitimor *Ulisiwa*, nor the *Ulilimas* in north-west Haruku with the *Ulisiwas* in the south-west, or the *Ulilimas* of Saparua and the *Ulisiwas* of the same island. Both parts were different from the other, but the one could only identify itself if the other were there.

Thus the continuous raids, war and Christianization during the presence of the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was also a struggle among the people of Ambon-Lease to preserve the dichotomic-symbiosis. Hitu, which in the beginning befriended the Portuguese, later began to see them as a threat to their identity as the *Ulilima* part of Ambon and Maluku and as Muslims in the wider world of the Indonesian archipelago. The *Ulisiwas* might have seen the Portuguese as an opportunity to preserve their identity as *Ulisiwas*. The acceptance of Christianity also placed the *Ulisiwas* in a much wider world.

The *Ulilimas* of Hitu fought the *feldalogs* and forced them to leave northern Hitu and move to its southern coast where the villages belonged to *Ulisiwa*, while the *Ulisiwas* took the opportunity to use the Portuguese as protection against the raids of Hitu and the demands for tax by Ternate.

The history of the spread of Christianity started in the village alliance of Hatiwe on the southern shores of Hitu, as told by Rumphius in his *Ambonsche Landbeschrijving*. According to his source, before the Portuguese moved from the north side of Hitu to its south, a conflict was going on in Hatiwe among two clan leaders for the leadership of the *uli*. One of them, Alaputula, so the story goes, succeeded in getting the favor of the Portuguese. When Hitu attacked and destroyed Hatiwe, Alaputula, his wife, his brother and a number of villagers went to Malacca to ask for assistance. Alaputula died in Malacca, but his family became Christian. His wife was named Dona Jubal,

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while his brother became Dom Manuel, and went back to Hatiwe to become the leader of the federation. Most of the people of Hatiwe must then have been converted by the Franciscans. Thus Dom Manuel succeeded in preserving the *Ulisiwa* identity of Hatiwe. This must have happened in 1538, when Admiral António Azevedo arrived in the islands to attack Hitu and expel them from the southern shores. However, after Azevedo left the islands, and in the absence of a strong force, the Portuguese were driven out of Hatiwe by Hitu, and Dom Manuel and the villagers were forced to follow the Portuguese. First the Portuguese settled at Poka (an *Ulisiwa* federation on the southern coast of Hitu), where they built a new wooden stronghold.<sup>40</sup> At this time the village of Rumatiga (also at the southern coast of Hitu) also asked for the protection of the Portuguese and became Christian.<sup>41</sup> Other federations on Leitimor must have followed when the Portuguese moved to Halong on the north coast of Leitimor. Each time a village put its fate in the hands of the *fidalgos*, the Jesuits followed to perform their own work. When Xavier left the islands, there were already seven Christian villages (he did not give the names of the villages).<sup>42</sup> In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Father Castro reported that the number of Christian villages had increased to about thirty, and another report mentioned thirteen in the other islands.<sup>43</sup>

Although Castro did not provide the names of the Christian villages, the number he gave does not differ much from the number (and names) of the Christian villages provided by Rumphius in his *Ambosche Landbeschrijving*. This means that from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century until the arrival of the last Portuguese fleet in Ambon-Lease led by André Furtado de Mendonça in 1601, no real change occurred in the number of Christian villages.

As mentioned earlier, the Jesuits, who were left alone, began writing to Goa and Rome complaining about the situation they were in. Finally, Rome and

Lisbon responded in the 1560s. António Pais was sent with a fleet in 1562 with the instruction to build a stronger fortress, but Pais failed to build the fortress and died in battle.<sup>44</sup> Admiral Gonçalo Marramaque followed in 1567, but he too died in 1571. His successor as captain of Ambon, Sancho Vasconcelos, did succeed in building the fortress in Honipopo between 1575 and 1576 and named it Nossa Senhora da Anunciada.<sup>45</sup> But that did not help much until the arrival of Furtado de Mendonça in 1601.

This does not mean that during the last half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Jesuits did not do their job, but most of the time the villagers laid low and communicated with the Jesuits as little as possible. Only a few of them were successful in fighting the Ternatans, such as Oma in Haruku, Ulat in Saparua, and Kilang in Leitimor. In Leitimor the defence was led by Dom Manuel, the head of Hatiwe, whose villagers were then staying near the new fort.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The work of the Jesuits in Ambon-Lease reached its peak in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. At that time about thirty villages in those islands had become Christian (about the same number were and are Muslim). This was a formidable accomplishment in itself by the Jesuits. This state of affairs has continued down to the present day. Unintentionally, the Jesuits were also a most important tool in those islands. Because of their presence in Ambon-Lease, the dichotomic-symbiosis was restored between the Muslim *Uliimas* and the Christian *Ulisiwas*. **RC**

**Author's note:** This article is based on a paper presented at the International Conference on "Portuguese and Dutch travels and travellers in Southeast Asia". "Porto 2001 – European Cultural Capital".



## THE SPIRITUAL CONQUEST OF THE FAR EAST. FROM XAVIER TO VALIGNANO

## NOTES

- 1 A common term for those four islands in Central Maluku is "Ambon-Lease", which is also used in this paper.
- 2 The use of topographical, personal and other names as indicators of historical facts is inspired by microhistory, a methodology pioneered by Carlo Ginzburg. See Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, *Microhistory and the Lost People of Europe*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- 3 The discussion in this paper focuses on the years from 1546, when the first Jesuit arrived in Ambon, to 1580, when Portugal came under the rule of Spain, and Jesuits of other nationalities entered the area from Manila.
- 4 The information on the Portuguese missionaries is taken from the classic work of C. Wessels, S. J., *De Geschiedenis der RK Missie in Amboina, 1546-1606* [The Roman Catholic Mission in Amboina, 1546-1606], Nijmegen-Utrecht: N. V. Dekker, van de Vegt, J. W. van Leeuwen, 1926.
- 5 The term "Maluku" is used here for North Maluku (the present-day Province of North Maluku), and "Ambon-Lease" is used for a part of Central Maluku or the present-day province of Maluku.
- 6 He sent his nephew, Vasco de Freitas, to Ambon to build a small fortress near Hatiwe. I am unable to find further information on him or on the claim of this family.
- 7 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-193.
- 8 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- 9 The documents had been copied several times and used throughout Maluku and Ambon, and yet Wessels could not find any examples of them during his research for his book. See Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 20, note.
- 10 In an *hijuela* published in *Monumenta Xaveriana* I, pp. 404-406, copied from Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- 11 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 77, 78.
- 12 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 95.
- 13 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- 14 Francis Xavier died on his journey to China on Sanchoan Island near the mouth of the West River on 27 November 1552.
- 15 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.
- 16 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
- 17 Leonard Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku. Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, p. 17.
- 18 Andaya concludes that the locals mostly accepted Catholic rituals, but not Christian doctrines. Andaya, *op. cit.* 128.
- 19 The letters and reports were published, among others, by Acosta (1571), and Avisi-Diversi (1558), Avisi-Nuovi (1559), Avisi-Nuovi (1571), a compendium by Polanco (1894-1898), and *Monumenta Xaveriana* (1912). This paper is based on Wessels' use of those documents.
- 20 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 20.
- 21 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 22 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 32.
- 23 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- 24 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-44.
- 25 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 62, 63.
- 26 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- 27 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- 28 There is a manuscript kept at the Algemeen Rijksarchief (General Royal Archives) in the Hague, and another in Arsip Nasional RI (National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia) in Jakarta. The Jakarta manuscript was transcribed by Dr. Z. J. Manusama for the National Archive in 1983.
- 29 In *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie* 64. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff (1910).
- 30 Transcribed, translated, provided with notes, and analysed by Z. J. Manusama in his Ph.D. thesis at Leiden University in 1977.
- 31 I am unable to trace this manuscript at the National Library in Jakarta.
- 32 A *korakora* at the time was specially meant for fighting and raiding. It is a large *prau* with two outriggers on which paddlers can sit, while inside the *prau* there is usually another group of paddlers. The *korakora* fleet was armed with small cannons (*lila*) and company's barks manned with soldiers.
- 33 After the Dutch Company destroyed the *Empat Perdana* system, Rijali succeeded in escaping to Makassar, where the famous and learned Pattilangoan, the First Minister of the kingdom of Goa-Tallo, became his mentor. He wrote *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* while in Makassar.
- 34 They were also found in other company towns like Batavia or Makassar. They were originally Portuguese slaves bought from the Portuguese coastal settlements in India, and after being freed and converted to Christianity, they were categorized as *mardijkers*, hence the village name Mardika.
- 35 F. A. E. van Wouden, *Sociale structuurtypen in de Groote Oost*, Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 1935 (Translated by R. Needham. *Types of Social Culture in Eastern Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968).
- 36 Z. J. Manusama, "Hikayat Tanah Hitu," Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 1977.
- 37 Ch. F. van Fraassen, "Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel," 2 vols. Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 1987.
- 38 Leonard Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.
- 39 *Hena*, from *ina* or mother, *aman* from *ama* meaning father.
- 40 The fortifications the Portuguese built in Ambon are described by Hubert Jacobs, S. J. "Wanneer werd de stad Ambon gesticht. Bij een vierde eeuwfeest," [When was the city of Ambon built? On the occasion of the fourth centenary commemoration], in *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 131, no. 4 (1975), pp. 427-460.
- 41 Hatiwe, Poka and Rumatiga might be three Christian villages converted by the Franciscans before the arrival of Xavier. Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 42 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- 43 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 44 Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- 45 Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 34, 38, 40.
- 46 Hubert Jacobs, S. J., *op. cit.*, p. 459.