Dutch Colonial Containment of Islam in Manggarai, West-Flores, in Favour of Catholicism, 1907-1942

Karel Steenbrink
Professor Emeritus in Comparative Theology, Utrecht University
karel@steenbrink.nu

Abstract
West Flores or Manggarai was until 1900 known as territory of the Muslim Sultan of Bima. In 1907 the Dutch effectively took possession of the region and after 1910 they entrusted the introduction of schools to the Catholic missionaries. The coastal Muslim settlements were neglected in favour of the mountain region, where finally one local chief, mission-educated Alexander Baroek became the most important native counterpart of the colonial rule. The ties with Bima were formally broken in the 1920s. Herewith Catholicism gained political and social influence to the detriment of the expansion of Islam and Manggarai joined the rest of Flores to become a majority Catholic society. There was no overall strategy to destroy Muslim influence, but it was simply the result of a longer chain of not always related decisions. This choice was in line with the colonial strategy of creating a prosperous Flores.

Keywords
East Indonesia, Bima, Manggarai, Islam, Catholic mission

For many centuries Indonesia has been characterized by a Muslim coastal zone versus pagan societies in the interior. In North Sumatra it was Aceh and the Malay Sultanates dominating the coast while the mountainous Batak region maintained the old traditions for a long time, until it was subject to Islamization in the early nineteenth century (from the Paderi of Minangkabau) and to conversion to Christianity (starting from Sipirok in the 1860s by the German missionaries). A similar process took place in Kalimantan where the Muslim sultanates dominated the coastal towns and slowly gained influence along the major rivers, until around 1900 German and Dutch missionaries started propagating their religion beginning in the interior. Finally the two religions met at some 25 km from the coast.

and from major centres along the great rivers. For Sulawesi and especially the central mountains of the Toraja tribes a similar process took place: after 1915 Christianity became the dominant religion in the mountainous regions, while people living below the altitude of 200-300 metres remained or became Muslim. It is clear that the late colonial society put a halt to the expansion of Islam in various parts of the colony, although in some others the pax neerlandica also made safer regions that were in earlier periods closed for (Muslim) traders and in this way the Dutch were somehow instrumental in the spread of Islam in some regions especially of Sumatra and Kalimantan. In this contribution we will look in some detail to developments in the utmost western region of the island of Flores, Manggarai.

Muslims in Flores, Prior to the Perang Pasifikasi of 1907

It is quite striking to see how multiethnic and multicultural an island like Flores had been at the eve of the truly colonial period, that is, prior to the actions of Captain Hans Christoffel from 9 August until late 15 December 1907 for West Flores and immediately thereupon until late February 1908 in Central Flores. The Catholics of East Flores, concentrating in Larantuka, Sikka and Maumere, traced their origins in part back to the Portuguese and the Malays of Malaka. The interior was divided among many people who had not much contact, due to lack of roads and the difficult geography of Flores with its many mountain chains. There were, however, also four main Muslim centres in the island.1

Around 1900 these four quite different Muslim groups in this region lived in Manggarai, Ende, the Northeast coast of Geliting, and KangaE, and finally on the islands of Solor and Adonare. The coastal regions of Manggarai were for centuries under the authority of the Sultan of Bima on Sumbawa. The nearly extinct Sultanate of Sumbawa traced its origin to Banjarmasin. The more vital Sultanate of Bima cherished a remembrance of its origin from the Javanese rulers of Hindu-Majapahit but kept even more vivid relations with the Muslim cultures of Buginese and Macassarese from South Sulawesi from the time of their conversion in the 1630s.2 The Sultan of Bima

1 The following section is partly based on Steenbrink 2007:85-6.
2 Noorduyn 1987a and 1987b.
claimed sovereignty over the western part of Flores with Labuan Bajo, Reo and Riung as its most important coastal places.3

On the south coast of Flores, the island of Ende and the nearby coastal places were already dominated by Muslims of Macassarese origin since their victory over the Portuguese traders and priests between 1620 and 1630. This bloody conflict had ended with the destruction of the Portuguese fortification on the island of Ende, built by the Dominican friars about 1570.4

There were some Arab traders who settled probably during the nineteenth century in Ende, Sumba, and Timor. Although a small community (in 1905 there were 303 people of Arab descent in the Kupang residency; they grew to 2688 in 1930), they held a quite prominent social position. Around 1900 there was a saying on Sumba that ‘the Endenese have more authority than the Dutch’.5 In 1927 a hoofd der Arabieren or representative of the Arabs was nominated in Ende (Said Abdoelqadir bin Djadid al-Habsji) and in Sumba (Said Oemar bin Abdoelqadir al-Djoefri).6

A more recent settlement of Macassarese and Buginese Muslims was found in the coastal region east of Maumere, where the head of the settlement Geliting even received some recognition as an independent Raja of KangaE in 1902 and 1904.7 This more or less independent realm would have meant a fourth Islamic centre after the Bimanese vassal Manggarai in the West, Ende in the South and Adonara, in the East of Flores. The ruler of KangaE was not a fervent and intolerant Muslim. In the early 1920s, he donated 900 guilders for the church in his realm and ordered his subjects to join the construction work.8 KangaE became integrated again in the

---

3 I received an interesting comment from John Prior on this claim (in an e-mail 18-12-2008) ‘I hear that adat songs in parts of Manggarai survive which tell of how the incoming Bima were ‘thrown into the sea’. Would be interesting to find Bima’s version of such “war songs”—and compare!’
4 For the early history of these Catholics in their fight against Muslims, Heuken 2002:327-74.
5 Couvreur 1924:14, ‘dat de Endenees meer macht had dan de compenie’. For the position of Endenese Arabs of Membaru, Sumba, in the trade of slaves and horses also Needham, 1983:22-30, on the saying that ‘the Company was strong at sea, where it was master, but not on land.’ Membaru was the centre for Endenese traders on Sumba. See also Clarence-Smith 2002.
6 Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië 1935.
8 Buis, 1925:164. A discussion of the religious affiliation(s) of this ruler in Lewis 2010:364-6.
territory of Sikka in 1929 as consequence of the centralization of power. This was a success for Don Thomas of Sikka, ruling from Maumere.

A fourth and probably oldest Muslim stronghold was in the island of Solor, where people retained the memory of their origin from Seram or Ternate and a victory in the fight against the Portuguese, who had left their fortification Henricus in 1636.9 Other Muslim strongholds in the Solor archipelago were Adonara and Trong, small places on the southern coast of the island of Adonara.10

The Interest of Bima in Manggarai

In 1900 there were four semi-independent native rulers with the title of Sultan on the island of Sumbawa. The old Sultanate of Sumbawa continued to exist. The smallest realms were the sultanates of Dompo and Sanggar. About Dompo Resident Karthaus of Timor wrote in 1931 that it was in a very sad condition because it was left without proper rule ‘by a senile, burnt out, Sultan and a gang of looting sons and other members of the sultan’s family’.11 Dompo and Sanggar were between October 1926 (when the sultan of Sanggar died) and 1934 (when the old sultan of Dompo died) included in the Sultanate of Bima as a compensation for the loss of Manggarai. So, finally Sumbawa and Bima were the two remaining native rulers.

The realm of Bima had accepted Islam in the seventeenth century after Makassar had embraced the new religion. Consequent religious change in Bima took place by order of the rulers of Makassar.12 In the further development of the Sultanate of Bima relations often remained unclear. For some time the Makassarese themselves claimed sovereignty over Manggarai, in the same way that some other settlements like Geliting on the north coast of Flores were taken as areas of Makassar rule (even for some time the whole Sultanate of Bima), but finally, in the second half of the eighteenth century.

---

10 Interpretations on the Muslim nature of Adonare in Barnes 2005.
11 Karthaus 1931:82 “Het ongeluk van Djompoe is dat het bestuurd wordt, of eigenlijk aan zijn lot overgelaten door een seniele versleten sultan en prijsgegeven wordt aan een bende vexeerende zoons en andere familieleden van dien Sultan.”
12 Noorduyn 1987b.
century, the authority of a more or less independent Bima was more generally recognized.\textsuperscript{13}

The Bimanese took Reo as their major settlement in Flores and the Sultan of Bima was represented by a \textit{naib tahta kerajaan} [deputy of the throne of the kindom].\textsuperscript{14} Another but lower official was posted in Labuan Bajo on the western coast, while two minor places on the northern coast, Pota and Bari also had a representative of the Sultan of Bima. They collected the annual tax, with slaves and horses as most important items and wax as a minor commodity. Already during the seventeenth century the number of Manggarai slaves was so big that a district of Jakarta has been named after them. The officials of Bima received the slaves from the Manggarai chiefs or heads of the 38 districts or \textit{dalu}-regions. On 1 January 1860 the trade in slaves became forbidden in the Dutch colony, but only in 1910 were the slaves actually set free in Sumbawa. In the reports of the colonial officials under discussion in this article, there is no longer mention of the slave trade. Only \textit{controleur} Coolhaas (in Manggarai 1926–7) mentions that slaves were collected from Manggarai until the first decade of the twentieth century and only stopped when the Dutch took effective rule in 1908. The relation between the Bimanese and the original Manggarai population was dominated by the history of taxes to be paid in slaves, horses and wax. This made relations between the two peoples very unbalanced. Moreover, there were even strict rules for the Bimanese in the coastal places ‘not to join their Manggarai spouses when they go to inland territory. They have to stay in Reo, Pota, Bari, Talo or Nangaili, otherwise they spoil their religion and their \textit{adat}’.\textsuperscript{15} Another aspect of this unbalanced relation was that native Manggarai people under Bimanese rule were not allowed to do any direct trade with the outside world. This was reserved for the Bimanese. Coolhaas gives a dramatic description of the position of native Manggarai in the coastal places:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Coolhaas 1942:162-3.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Nooteboom 1950.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Nooteboom 1950:210 quotes the ruling of the 1770s. See also for the modern period the note by Coolhaas 1985:370 that the Radja Naib of Reo and Pota never would leave his residence, but in case of necessity send some lower officials to inland places, ‘De radja naib verliet zijn standplaats nooit. Moest men om de een of andere reden het binnenland in, dan maakten eenige ratoe’s de reis.’ More detailed figures about the number of slaves in Coolhaas 1942:172-3.
\end{itemize}
Native Manggarai people could be sure that they would be cheated and despised in the Bimanese coastal places, if they were so lucky not to be injured or even to be taken away as slaves. Only in urgent cases they come to these places with the salesware that they could offer: wax, sleeping mats and cinnamon. For some products like salt and iron, for the more beautiful textiles, they had to go there... Bimanese people only went to inland regions in great and well-armed parties. Their common purpose was to collect fines (this was the name for their robberies) for their own profit and to incite one dalu against another, which should lead to new wars and this again to new fines.

Cooperation between Colonial Administration and Catholic Mission after 1907

After effective colonial rule was established in East Flores with the deposition of Don Lorenzo II in July 1904, attention was given to Central and West Flores, culminating in the perang pasifikasi of 1907-8. One Kakadoepa, a ruler of the southern coast on the west side of Ende, attacked on 3 June 1907 the posthouder of Ende in Central Flores. This was the opportunity to start a military campaign under the experienced military leader Captain Hans Christoffel, who started with a ruthless campaign to show and consolidate the power of the colonizer. He left on 8 August from Ende for a campaign westwards and moved later towards the northwestern regions of Ngada and Manggarai. After a short rest again in Ende he moved towards Lio, eastwards of Ende, until he regarded his work as finished by end February 1908. A light-hearted article in a Dutch weekly later reported about one of his tactics: he promised his soldiers a rijksdaalder (2.5 guilders) for each head they won in the war. One Lewakabessie killed with his gun in one action 52 people, men, wives, and children who had sought refuge in a cave. He received some days later 52 ringgit as a reward for this action. There was already at that time criticism for his actions. The responsible Resident of Kupang, J.F.A. de Rooy, wrote in mid-1908 that he wondered whether in somewhat more patient way and twice the time of this action and with less violence a more durable success with less hatred could have been created.

16 Coolhaas 1942:171.
17 W. (pseudonym) 1917.
18 De Rooy 1908:15-16 'Het is echter de vraag of door een meer bezadigd optreden gedurende het dubbele van dien tijd niet meer duurzam succes verkregen en minder wrok gezaaid zou zijn.'
However, there were still some uprisings in this region until the end of the colonial period.19

During these military actions Controleur A.J.L. Couvreur wrote from Ngada a remarkable letter to the Catholic mission in Larantuka,

Between Nanga Pandan and Aimere we found a magnificent, fertile and densely populated highland, at an average height of 750 up to 1200 metres. The area is about 70 by 30 sq. km and is inhabited by at least 250,000 people. We should definitely not use the word ‘uncivilized’ for them, but we can maintain the qualification ‘rapacious’. I made a personal inspection to the south-western section of this area commonly called the Tokka-area, but better called the district of the Ngada, inhabited by the Komitero tribe (named after their red moustache). They have a higher level of civilization than the population of East Flores. As proof, I mention to you that their chiefs asked Captain Christoffel to start a school in this region.

You will accept from me without further proof, that this is an extremely good region for the Catholic mission, as well as from the viewpoint of economic profit (a very fertile area, an excellent health station or Luftkurort). We will very soon start with the construction of a road inland from the Bay of Aimere. We will give priority to this.

I can assure you, that it will be a main concern for the mission, but also for government and people, to send a priest as soon as possible, together with a teacher and carpenter from the religious order to settle there. For reasons which are known to you, I must urge you to consider this letter as strictly confidential, also for the sake of the development in this place. Yours.20

A few months later, on 12 February 1908, Couvreur wrote another letter to the priests of Larantuka (East Flores), again urging them to start missionary work as quickly as possible in Central and West Flores. He hoped that the priests should quickly baptize as many people as possible, in order to secure that the region would be gained for Christianity. Couvreur uttered severe criticism of the Reformed mission in Sumba, because they were quite hesitant in baptising people who had no thorough knowledge of

19 On the revolts of Papang (1908) and Kuwu (1909) see Toda 1999:313-323.
20 Letter of Couvreur to Jesuit priest Jos Hoeberechts, 1 October 1907, Dutch text in Steenbrink 2007:457. A.J.L. Couvreur entered the colonial service (BB, Binnenlandsch Bestuur) in 1896. He was Controleur of Flores 1906-9, of Sumba 1912-5 and Resident of Timor in the period 1921-4. In 1924 he became Governor of Makassar but still tried to have influence in Flores and Timor, especially related to Manggarai. In 1929 Couvreur became member of the Council of the Indies, but went into European retirement in 1930. He interfered in the Manggarai affairs from Makassar because he expected that Makassar would become the capital of Grote Oost, the whole territory of East Indonesia. Coolhaas 1985:84-7; Dietrich 1989:8-11.
Christian doctrine and had not proven firm conviction. Nevertheless, he put some blackmail in the correspondence. He wrote, also on behalf of the great military man, Captain Christoffel, that he would feel obliged to offer West Flores to the Protestant church of Batavia (that is, the ‘white church’ or Indische Kerk, also active in Timor) if the Catholics could not take the initiative to a settlement in this region.

If we do not act fast, Islam will occupy the interior and we will have lost this case forever. This is the more regrettable because until now the mission settled in the economically and also spiritually most backward part of Flores. That is a region with some promise, but will never be able to keep pace with Manggarai and the region north of Ende. Also the density of the population in these regions is much higher than in Maumere and Larantuka. If we act fast, Flores, with the exception of a few coastal places, can be secured for the Catholic Church, including the fertile Manggarai, until now under the influence of the Muslim Bima, including the whole interior of Ende. As a lay person I suppose that the clergy in the first years will work extensively rather than intensively. They will have to pay many visits to the villages and to baptize rather than give much instruction. Shortly, their major job in the first years will be that people declare themselves supporting Christianity. If we succeed in inducing them to say saja orang serani (I am a Christian), we still have thousands of years to make them true serani (Christians). Because, when this goal, saja orang serani is implemented we will have closed the door to Islam.21

Couvreur used all kind of arguments to stimulate the Catholic mission. At the same time he asked for caution and secrecy because the Resident of Timor of the period (F.F.A. de Rooy, March 1905-August 1908) was strongly opposed to any Christian mission. Couvreur had his own reasons to see this action as necessary for the welfare and future of Flores.22

22 Couvreur, Letter of 12 February 1908: ‘De huidige resident is tegen de zending, als ambtenaar bega ik hier dus een daad die ik strikt genomen niet kan verantwoorden. Deze politiek is echter in mijn ogen zo stupide, zo tegen elk gezond verstand indruischend, zo in het desbelang van Flores, dat ik in het belang van Flores over dezen om ondergeschikte ambtelijke bezwaren heen stap.’ We may take for granted that Couvreur was a Catholic. Shortly after his arrival as controleur in Larantuka he attended Sunday Mass on 21 April 1907. But this may have been an exception, because the coming weeks he did not repeat this visit and the missionaries were afraid that it was only a courtesy (‘Jammer dat hij er zelf zo weinig aan doet.. De eerste Zondag schijnt een beleefheidsbezoek geweest te zijn.’) Laan, Larantuka 1315-7.
In fact the involvement of Christian mission in the further development of the Southeastern Islands was started in 1906 at the initiative of the official for the development of the Outer Islands, Hendrik Colijn. Between 1905 and 1907 he made a long trip to all major places in the territories outside Java, in preparation of a colonial strategy for these regions. On 23 August 1906 he arrived in Larantuka. Much to the surprise of the missionaries, he came with a blueprint for mission participation in the ambitious plans to establish a broad network of three-year village schools in the whole colony. In eastern Indonesia this system should be run by the Catholic and Protestant mission. Indeed, in 1913 contracts between the colonial government and Catholic mission were signed that gave full responsibility and generous subsidies for education in Flores and the eastern section of Timor to the Catholic mission. A similar decision was taken for Sumba in favour of the Reformed mission.23

Initially the missionaries were not really happy with the plans of Colijn, as they were also not so eager to accept the suggestion of extension of mission work by Couvreur. They had bad experiences with the colonial officials because the missionaries had supported the Catholic ruler Don Lorenzo II of Larantuka, who was sent into exile to Jogjakarta, in 1904. Before that date they had sung in their church on Sundays *Domine salvum fac regem nostrum Laurentium* (Lord, save our king Lorenzo), instead of praying for the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina. After Lorenzo II was sent into exile there was a comment of a missionary to Resident Heckler: ‘Imagine a foreign army suddenly attacking Holland and taking the queen prisoner: what would you call such an act?’24

There was another reason why the Catholic mission initially was quite reluctant to join the new colonial plans. They were short of money and personnel. In 1898 the Jesuits had withdrawn from Sumba because of difficult and very expensive connections, but mostly because of their shortage

---

24 On this very sharp remark, that in 1904 was reported by Resident F.A. Heckler to Governor-General Van Heutz, see Steenbrink 2003:96. See also a note by retiring Resident of Kupang in 1908 about this case. ‘Met een enkel woord moet ik als waarschuwing er op wijzen dat de katholieke missie te Larantoeka de neiging heeft of althans had om de belangen van den verbannen Katholieken Radja te steunen.’ De Rooy 1908:16. Was this the reason why Couvreur guessed that De Rooy was quite reluctant to ask the missionaries for support in developing plans for this region?
of personnel. Instead they wanted to start more serious missionary efforts in Central Java. Until 1900 the Jesuits were the only Catholic missionary order in the archipelago. In 1903 they handed over the Kei Islands and New Guinea to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) and in 1905 Kalimantan to the Capuchin Friars. In 1913 the Southeastern Islands were transmitted to the Society of the Divine Word, known as the SVD priests. This German-Dutch order experienced many problems in sending personnel during World War I and only after 1920 could the Flores mission really expand. Resident Van Rietschoten of Kupang wrote in 1913,

> We cannot yet show a considerable increase of Christianity. The main reason is that the various missions are short of personnel. Therefore they are not in a position to erect new mission posts and must give their attention to the consolidation of existing congregations. Expansion, including the necessary preparation, is too heavy burden for them. Especially for Flores, where Islam is expanding, this has to be lamented, because, besides other reasons that are in favour of the expansion of Christianity, a Christian population will be a more solid base for our power than a majority of Muslims.\(^{25}\)

This is again a very exceptional statement of negative feelings towards Muslims. Officially, the colonial administration had to remain neutral, although the educational policy clearly promoted Christianity.

Instead of sending foreign missionaries, the Jesuits could from 1909 on only send local teachers. These were young men who were educated at the quite modest mission schools in Larantuka and Lela-Sikka. Although they had most often no more training than the five years of school, they spoke and wrote proper Malay and had some experience in teaching. These young men were the first to start schools and the spread of Catholicism in Manggarai. In 1911 the first mission schools were opened in the coastal towns of Reo and Labuan Bajo, in 1912 the first two in inland territory, Ruteng and Pota. In 1914 for the first time a priest made a short visit to Manggarai and baptized children who had received their preparation for baptism from the teachers in the newly established schools. The number of schools increased rapidly and in 1925 there were already 25 schools. Mission stations for priests and chapels or churches were later built. In 1920 the SVD priest, Bernard Glanemann became the first to reside permanently in Ruteng. A grand mission compound was built with a parish house, a school with a dormitory

---

\(^{25}\) Van Rietschoten 1913:35-36.
(for the five-year Standard School, opened in 1924 to train teachers and village chiefs). In 1939, at the celebration of its twenty-fifth year of existence, the Manggarai mission was able to claim a sensational success. It counted 65,592 baptized Catholics out of a population of some 190,000, served by 14 priests, seven of Dutch and seven of German origin. In that same year another 7,388 people were baptized, half of them children below the age of six and therefore to be seen as children of established Catholics. The deanery of Manggarai was by then divided in ten parishes with numerous small stations. None of the ten parishes was established in a coastal town, while the small inland town of Ruteng became not only the centre for the colonial administration, but also for the Catholic mission.

Initially the local government, village or district, should take care for the finances of the small schools, both buildings and salaries for teachers. This proved to be impossible and finances became the responsibility of the administration of the Residency of Kupang. After some debates the salaries were not paid by the residential cashier to the teachers, but through the missionaries. In every district of Flores, one of the missionaries also became school inspector and received a salary for this educational task. The cooperation between colonialism and mission had become very close in this region of Indonesia.

Colonial Officials Defending Islam

The colonial administration should remain neutral in matters of religion. This ruling is more complicated than it sounds. The Constitution of the Indies (Regeeringsreglement, later Indische Staatsregeling) has already some regulation of interference of authorities in the field of religion, as in article 124 the rule that ‘native priests who do not confess Christianity are placed under supervision of rulers, regents and chiefs, according to their religion’. The Protestant church (not the missionary activities) was under government administration. Especially in the Southeastern Islands, missionary personnel had through their schools quite great influence on the local population and there could be close cooperation, rivalry, or even animosity between clergy and government officials. From the 1920s on it became common practice that Catholic officials were placed in ‘Protestant’ areas and the reverse. So, the Protestant Herman Gerrit Schulte Nordholt
was in the 1930s controleur in Larantuka and from 1939 in North Central Timor, districts assigned to the Catholic mission.

There were some government officials who opposed the domination of the Catholic mission in the field of education in Flores and Timor and they defended in various cases the rights of Muslims not to be indoctrinated by compulsory religious education or other ways. The most outspoken of these was B.C.C.M.M. van Suchtelen, who was once the Gezaghebber in Ende. A school was opened in Labuan Bajo in 1911 with one Manuel Fernandez (a Catholic from Larantuka) as teacher. One of the main activities of the school was the singing of church hymns in Malay, *menjanji Melajoe seperti di gereja*, but Van Suchtelen later forbade this because the list of school children only showed Muslim names.26 At the same time two sons of the village-head of Wakuleo in Mbuli asked Van Suchtelen if they were allowed to convert to Islam. The colonial official answered them that it was very good to do so. Consequently, he forbade the teacher from introducing the Catholic catechism in the school.27 There were some other frictions on this matter between colonial officials and Catholic clergy. For Central Flores, the clergy was not happy with the prominent position of Muslim Ende in the administration. For their schools the clergy moved towards Ndona, just 5 km outside Ende, but no longer in Muslim territory. Still, they finally had to accept Ende proper as the central place for the civil administration. In East Flores there was opposition of the clergy when KangaE was established as a distinct independent realm. KangaE was close to Geliting, a settlement of Muslims from Makassar. Its raja became Muslim in 1904 and the process to become independent from coastal Maumere and from Sikka, later the most important town of the region was seen as a government approval of this move towards Islam. However, in 1929 the Muslim raja died and his territory was included in the greater district of Sikka, ruled by the outspoken Catholic Don Thomas da Silva.

26 Laan Larantuka:1445.

27 Laan Larantuka:1447. Van Suchtelen defended his action with the argument that ‘until now there is not yet an official agreement with the mission: the school is owned by the government and should therefore remain neutral.’ For this episode see also Steenbrink 2007:88. Judging from his full name Van Suchtelen (B.C.C.M.M., ending Margarethe Marie) must have been a Catholic.
The Many Steps towards an Inevitable Rupture and the End of Bimanese Rule in Manggarai

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Resident of Makassar still had authority over Sumbawa, including the Sultanate of Bima. This may have been due to the long relations between Bima and Makassar. In 1908 this authority was transferred to the Resident of Kupang who from that time supervised all ‘lesser Sunda islands’.

In 1913 the situation changed to such extent that the territory of Manggarai under rule of the Radja Naib of Reo was separated from Bima and became an administrative unit of its own. But it was stipulated that the present Radja Naib should not be succeeded by his own son but by a son of the Sultan of Bima.28 In 1919 this was not yet completely implemented. Resident Maier reported in that year that ‘probably very soon’ a new elaborated contract should be signed with the Sultan of Bima about the separation of Bima and Manggarai, with a note about the son of the Sultan of Bima who should be placed at the head of the new district. This son, Abdul Kadiem, was from July 1917 in the sekolah radja, the training school for future native chiefs, in Makassar. His school fees and other costs, 1800 guilders per year, were paid by the Sultan of Bima, but after early 1919 were assumed by the treasury of Manggarai.29 Abdul Kadiem, however, died in the early 1920s and therefore another candidate, Nasaroeddin (born 1905), was nominated. He was a younger brother of the Sultan of Bima, had finished the Dutch Language primary school HIS, Hollandsch Inlandsche School, in Makassar, and had from 1922 worked as an assistant to Controleur Heyting in Boeleleng, Bali. In 1924 retiring Resident Couvrleur hoped that he should gain some experience of administrative work in Java and then be available as the leading native ruler for Manggarai. Couvrleur added some remarks about future politics, warning against a Bimanese ruler in Manggarai,

28 Van Rietbergen 1913:20, ‘De sultan van Bima heeft zijne bemoeienis met dat gebied geheel overgedragen aan de z.g. Radja Naib, die thans het bestuur over die landstreek voert. Echter zal deze nimmer als zelfbestuurder kunnen worden erkend, noch de waardigheid in zijn geslacht erfelijk worden. De beste oplossing zou zijn dat een der jongere zonen van den Sultan van Bima, bij het overlijden van laatstgenoemde, als zelfstandig bestuurder van Manggarai optrad.’
29 Maier 1919:100 and 140.
Nasaroeddin is still young (19 years) and will need much guidance. For this reason and in order to assure a close contact with the leading European official, he must reside in Roeteng. I put some emphasis on this wish, because people will try to elect the Bima-nese dominated residence Reo, located on the north coast and not the Manggarai dominated settlement in the interior. We must not give in to the pressure for Reo, because in that case the ruler will be too much under Bimanese influence and ideas. This is an unwelcome possibility because the Bimanese have a very low esteem of the people of Manggarai.30

Things were executed in a different way. Between 1927 and 1929 several government decisions introduced a radical change. All Bimanese officials were revoked from Manggarai and Baroek, a young son of Tamur, the chief of the important inland district Todo, was nominated as the new *Radja van Manggarai*. Baroek, born 1900, had been educated at the mission school of Ende. The illiterate Kraeng Bagoeng (ca 1870-1949) who had been nominated *Radja van Manggarai* in 1924, saw his position changed to that of *Radja Bitojara van Manggarai* in 1931. The formal decision, abolishing the power of Bima over Manggarai was taken on 21 April 1929, while Baroek on 13 November 1930 was inaugurated as the new *Radja*.31 With this quite surprising final decision, the Muslim rule over Manggarai ended and a Catholic native chief was elected to lead the region, under supervision of a Dutch official.

Together with the nomination of Baroek as native ruler for Manggarai also an internal Manggarai conflict had been solved. The Makassar influence from Goa had continued during the nineteenth and early twentieth-century and was strongest in the *dalu* districts of Cibal and Lambaleda. The Dutch initially used Bima to weaken the control of the districts on the north coast through the setting of Bima’s Manggarai capital in Reo. Later the Dutch used the ruler of Todo-Pongkor and some other *dalu* to push Bima out of Manggarai by the nomination of Raja Bagoeng (1924) and Raja Baroek and by shifting the capital from Reo on the coast to Ruteng in the centre. The Catholic Mission made full use of the Dutch for its own interests by ensuring the installation of a Catholic Raja and later by transmigrating baptized Manggaraians from the interior to the coast, to prevent a coastal ‘encirclement’ of the interior by Muslims. This internal dynamics between

30 Couvreur 1924:123.
Cibal and Todo-Pongkor is not so much found in the colonial documents, but strongly put forward in the later historiography.32

Small Conflicts between Colonial Officials and Catholic Missionaries

There were some colonial officials in the region who openly expressed their personal Catholic confession. The most influential was Anton Hens, who served as controleur and later assistent-resident of Ende between 1908-1916. In 1916, on furlough in the Netherlands, he received the pontifical award Pro Ecclesia et Pontifrice.33 In 1917, army officer Lieutenant Henri Hamilton, of Scottish origin, became the Gezaghebber of Bajawa. He was married to a Dutch-born lady, Petronella Hoebens, from the southern province of Brabant. Hamilton was (re)baptized a Catholic in that same year. Prefect Noyen was born in the same region as the new Mrs. Hamilton and there were from that time warm relations between the Catholic leader and the Gezaghebber of Bajawa.34 This was a relation that was cherished by the clergy, but soon somewhat mitigated and criticized by colonial authority.35

It was not all harmony and warm relations between colonial administration and the mission. In general it was recognized that missionaries respected the colonial officials and also the rights of native rulers. Sometimes we may notice a sentiment of surprise or even jealousy as to the resources and result of the Catholic mission. Several officials compared the Catholics to the Protestants. Especially the Reformed Mission of Sumba was judged quite negatively by various officials. They estimated that these missionaries were very strict and asked the full 100% of all converts, while the Catholic mission had much lower criteria for baptism. For Catholics the basic inclination was already enough: ‘Major interest is for them that pagans embrace Catholicism, while a deepening of faith may be postponed and will follow automatically, eventually, in a coming generation if it does not take place in this generation.’36

---

32 Van Bekkum 1944; Toda 1999 and information from a letter of Dr. John Prior 18-12-2008.
33 Steenbrink 2007:81-83.
34 Laan Endeh 177.
35 More on Catholic officials in Flores in Steenbrink 2007:112.
36 Bosch 1938:15. ‘De overgang tot den R.K. Godsdienst wordt daarenboven nog bevrderd door het feit, dat de Missie—voorzover ik dat althans beoordelen kan—daarvoor geen
As to the Catholics, the colonial officials estimated that they had ample resources, in personnel and finances. De Nijs Bik reported in 1934 about the contrast between the many Catholic missionaries and the single European Protestant minister of Kupang, a position that was vacant in 1934. Besides, he had heard that the Catholics ‘received from all parts of the world legacies for the construction of often very costly churches’. His successor Bosch reported in 1938 about the fast growing number of converts thanks to the 125 priests in the Flores-Timor mission, assisted by a large staff of lay brothers and sisters, while the mission can use ‘nearly inexhaustible financial means’.

The most exuberant praise of the missionaries is found in the 1932 report by the military commander (Civiel Gezaghebber) of Manggarai, W.L.J. Kooymans.
Besides official ministers the Catholic mission uses for its propaganda a very large number (I guess some five hundred) so-called *guru agama*. They spread the first principles of the religion in the villages, teach the prayers and lead the common prayer services in the *rumah serani*, small chapels that are already extant in most *kampong*. . . . The important civilising influence which accompanies the process of Christianising only will have a positive influence on land and people. The large number of *guru agama* (notwithstanding some of lower quality) also guarantees law and order. They know everything that is happening in the villages and when something of importance occurs, they will inform the government official. The latter, without forgetting his neutral position as to religion, will pursue a good relation with the Catholic mission. The loyal attitude of mission superior Father Koning is highly appreciated by this author.39

There were, however, also some minor conflicts. The most serious was with an unnamed priest who had been ‘too hasty’ to baptize children and had done so without the consent of the parents. Several parents had caused trouble in these cases and therefore this priest had been removed to another region of Flores. Another problem was the reluctance of the clergy to accept the favourite marriage pattern in Manggarai, called *tungku*, marriage between cousins. In this case the government official gave the advice to the clergy to follow the milder vision that often was used in Europe and to practise a more liberal policy of dispensations, because ‘the present generation is still too close to the primitive stage and is not able to understand the objections of the priest.’40

39 Kooymans 1932:16-17 ‘Naast de officiële geestelijken beschikt de Missie voor hare propaganda over een zeer groot aantal (ik schat een goede vijfhonderd) z.g. goeroe’s agama. Zij zijn het die de eerste beginselen van den godsdienst in de kampong verkondigen, de gebeden leeren en voorgaan bij de gezamelijke bidstonden, welke in de z.g. roemah serani d.z. kleine bedehuisjes welke reeds in veel kampons bestaan, gehouden worden . . . De groote beschavende invloed welke met de kerstening samengaat, kan land en volk slechts ten goede komen. Ook het groote aantal goeroe’s agama, hoewel er uiteraard minder goede onder zijn, levert zeker een waarborg voor de goede handhaving van rust en orde. Zij zijn bekend met alles wat in de kampong voorvalt en, er kan niets werkelijk belangrijks gebeuren, of de bestuursambtenaar die zonder het neutrale standpunt uit het oog te verliezen, streeft naar goede verstandhouding, wordt ingelicht. De loyal houding, speciaal van den plaatselijken missie overste, Pastoor Koning, werd door steller dezes zeer gewaardeerd.’

40 Kooymans 1932:19 ‘Toch wil het mij voorkomen dat, gezien het in Europa ingenomen standpunt, men ook hier wat vrijgeviger met de dispensatie kan zijn. De huidige oude generatie staat nog te dicht bij het primitieve stadium, dat zij in staat is de door voorgangers ten deze aan te voeren bezwaren te begrijpen.’
Another conflict between administration and Catholic missionaries has been registered by Father Niek Kuiper SVD in an interview given to researchers of Nijmegen University in 1980 and recorded on tape. Kuiper, born 1907, went to the Flores mission in 1934 and was first based in Riung, a Muslim district of Ngada, close to Northern Manggarai. According to Kuiper there was some resentment from the side of the gezaghebber regarding the missionary. This became a rivalry in 1937 when the gezaghebber P. Koster ordered the building of a modest house for the agricultural official, a mantri pertanian who would visit the region from time to time. At the request of Kuipers the local population was busy building a small chapel in one of the villages of Riung. For this they collected building material. By order of the gezaghebber this material should be used for a house for the mantri. The population and especially the catechist, also the school teacher, became angry: they refused to obey the order of the Dutch official and put the building material in a secret place elsewhere. The case became quite difficult after the police had discovered the place where the wood was hidden. The gezaghebber complained to the Assistant Resident in Ende about the opposition to his orders and Apostolic Vicar Henricus Leven, a German who had accepted Dutch citizenship and who showed much reverence for the colonial administration, wrote a strong and punishing letter to missionary Kuiper. Finally, it turned out that the mantri did not like using these small residences because he permanently lived in Bajawa and made a tour to the districts once per month only. Also the ten other villages that were ordered to build a place for this official were lazy and did not obey this order. The catechist or guru agama who had organized the opposition against the order and had been put in jail for a few days, received ten guilders compensation and there was a message from the Central Mission Office in Jakarta\(^3\) that the chapel could be rebuilt. Kuipers commented about this affair that took more than a year before it was settled: ‘They were all free masons, especially the Assistant Resident, but some were neat and good people.’\(^2\)

\(^3\) For this Centraal Missie Bureau that settled many problems between Catholic Mission and Colonial Government at the national level, see Steenbrink 2007:11-13.

\(^2\) This paragraph is based on the interview given by Father Niek Kuiper SVD on 11-07-1979 and kept at the KDC, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Radboud University Nijmegen as KMM 314 (Kommissie Memoires).
In November 1930 there were big festivities in Ruteng, celebrating the inauguration of Alexander Baroek as the new zelfbestuurder or Radja van Manggarai. The big ceremony was on Saturday 14 November, but guests had arrived before. One of these, the SVD priest and film-maker Simon Buis had brought his two great movies. On the eve of the great day Buis had shown the two-hour movie Ria Rago to officials and local people, some 4000 watching the melodramatic story of the girl who is pushed to become the second wife of a Muslim and therefore had to leave the mission school of the sisters in Lela. After the inauguration on the following day, four people gave a formal speech, Resident Karthaus from Kupang, the Military Commander Kooymans (gezaghebber) of Ruteng, Baroek himself and SVD priest Koning, dean of Maumere. In the evening there was dance, music and the show of another movie, Floresfilm, the story of a missionary who leaves from Rotterdam for the Dutch Indies and travels through this colony towards Flores. The movie is announced as ‘a living piece of mission history, travelling through the most famous waters of the world, a trip through tropical Holland, a surprising view on the life of a heathen people.’

The following day, Sunday 15 November 1930, the Resident, the Assistant Resident, the Captain of the government steamer, the government doctor, the military commander, ‘the King and the Queen’ and the 38 rulers of the dalu areas or sub-districts attended Mass in the great church of Ruteng. This was definitely one of the finest hours for the Catholic mission, after only some 20 years of work. The report of this event by Simon Buis mentioned only briefly in the beginning that until recently Manggarai had been under strong influence of the Sultan of Bima.43

In 1932 the military commander reported that Alexander Baroek had performed well during a food crisis in 1931, but in general he remained too much dependent upon the European officials.44

43 Buis 1930. Simon Buis uses the grandiose Dutch terminology of ‘koning, koningin’ for the couple. Buis included many photographs and wrote in passing that Radja Baroek was married to a lady from Menado, ‘who may look to her husband in a critical way and may well have some influence with her outspoken ideas and true Catholic conviction’, Mevrouw Baroek is ‘n flinke koningin, die met haar heldere oogen wel eens veelbetekenend naar haar gemaal kan opzien en die met haar forsche zeggingskracht en echt katholieke geloofsovertuiging een zegenende invloed op haar gemaal kan uitoefenen.

44 Kooymans 1932:88.
Figure 1. Advertisement for the Flores movie as used for promotion of missionary activities in the Netherlands, from the magazine *Het Missiewerk* in 1930.

Figure 2. Baroek and Buis: The new Raja of Manggarai Alexander Baroek with SVD missionary Simon Buis, *De Katholieke Missiën*, vol. 56, April 1931:105.
Religion was not a neutral matter in Dutch colonialism. Because Islam was generally seen as hostile or dangerous to the Dutch rule, sometimes Christianity was in several regions clearly promoted. Batakland and Toraja are the best known examples of this. This has led to what Schrauwers has labelled the Indonesian variant of Dutch pillarization (*verzuiling*) or a variation of apartheid as a segmentation of society according to religious denomination. Within a pluralist state ethno-religious blocks were created. From the example of Manggarai we may not conclude that there was a premeditated division of the Dutch colony according to religion. The colonial officials themselves were more concerned with customary law or *adat* and wanted to preserve weak groups from foreign domination. In combination with the educational endeavour that was entrusted to the Catholic missionaries and their local organization, this policy in fact resulted in a Catholic domination for Manggarai, as some decades before had become reality in the rest of Flores.

In 1996, at the end of the Suharto era, the Catholic priest Y.B. Mangunwijaya launched the idea of *Gereja Diaspora*, a church living as a minority in a country with a plurality of religions. Mangunwijaya criticized the Catholic missionaries who mostly originated from the southern provinces of the Netherlands with their homogeneous Catholic population and a great civil and cultural authority for the clergy who could control many aspects of the life of their flock. In this way a self-confident laity could never emerge and no independent expressions of living faith could start, while relations to outsiders would become very difficult. In a period of increasing inter-religious tensions, Mangunwijaya estimated that religion had too much authority in his country, in short that ‘there was too much religion’. Not only among Muslims, but also among Catholics, their religious identity had become too dominant. The first purpose of Catholicism had become the institutional growth and power of the own community, not the service to other communities and to the nation as a whole.

A similar criticism to the Catholic strategy of establishing communities with great civil influence for Catholic institutions has started with SVD priests who have attacked the strong connections between bishop Eduardus Sangsum of Ruteng (1985-2008) and the *bupati* Bagul, district head of Manggarai between 2000 and 2005. Poor coffee farmers were chased away from their ancestral land. The bishop only wanted to offer an intermediary position, while in other cases he used the heavy instrument of excommunication to win a land dispute against fellow Catholics. The activists and priests now question the close and warm relation between church leaders and political leaders and suggest that true Christianity should be in support of the poor, in any case.\[46\]

Most colonial officials of the time expressed the ideals of the ethical policy that had become colonial strategy since 1901. In the report of the *Perang Pasifikasi* of 1907/8 there is repeated mention of pacification, registration of the population, abolition of slavery, construction of roads, in general ‘the beginning of a situation of order and safety among the population that is still subjected to the rapacity and murderous actions of the mountain people.’\[47\] This was still a developmental view from the perspectives of the Bimanese, the people in the coastal regions. We have seen how this perspective has changed towards a defence of the inland population against what was then seen as piracy by foreign Bimanese. All in all it was developmental rather

\[46\] Emban Embu and Mirsel 2004.

\[47\] Indische Gids 29 (1907) 1850, from the monthly review of magazines.
than imperialistic or economic reasons that inspired the actions of the Dutch colonial government in Flores. Looking backward one may be satisfied or disappointed with the outcome in many respects. But one development clearly has had its impact for a long period, the containment of Islam and the numerical progress of Catholicism in this region.

Modern people who look at these developments may be tempted to talk about the issue of pemekaran (literally ‘blossoming’), after 1998 used for the greater autonomy of regions. Perhaps it was more the ethnic than the religious factor that dominated the debate in the 1920s. The Bimanese spoke a different language and felt absolutely superior to the Manggarai people. This was partly due to the difference in religion, but it was often not expressed as religious but as ethnic. The arguments by people like Coolhaas and Couvreur emphasize this ethnic element. But anyway, Bimanese identity was and is Muslim and the history discussed above had made Manggarai identity strongly and outspokenly Catholic.

Finally, Bimanese domination had ended, but new outsiders had arrived. First of all it was the Dutch who dominated politics until 1949 and religious life until the 1970s. After 1910 quite a few people from East Flores came to this region, as teachers, as pearl divers, and as lower government officials along with Ambonese and Javanese. For the better schools Menadonese Catholic teachers were hired and even Baroek himself married a Menadonese. Malay became the common language in schools and quite often also in the towns. Notwithstanding the later support of priests like Jilis Verheijen for Manggarai as a language, the ritual language virtually disappeared. Was there a growth towards Flores identity in Indonesia? There are few Manggarai people who first of all identify themselves as Manggarai instead of Flores descent outside their island. The colonial period definitely supported a move away from Bimanese and Muslim towards Manggarai and Catholic, but these never were the sole qualifications for a new identity.

References

Unpublished Sources

Bosch, J.J. 1938 Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, 1938, Nationaal Archief Den Haag, 2.10.39, MMK 345.
Dutch Colonial Containment of Islam in Flores, 1907-1942

Couvreur, A.J.L.
1924  Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, Nationaal Archief Den Haag 2.10.39 KIT 1268.

Karthaus, P.J.F.
1931  Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, Nationaal Archief Den Haag 2.10.39 MMK 343.

Kooijmans, W.J.

Laan, Petrus


Maier, E.G.Th.
1919  Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, 1919, Nationaal Archief Den Haag, 2.10.39 MMK 341.

Nijs Bik, E.H. de
1934  Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden 16 juni 1934, Nationaal Archief Den Haag, 2.10.39 MMK 344.

Rietschoten, C.F.A. van
1913  Memorie van Overgave van den aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, (about the period July 1911 until August 1913), Nationaal Archief Den Haag 2.10.39 MMK 340.

Rooy, F.F.A. de
1908  Memorie van Overgave van den Aftredend Resident van Timor en Onderhorigheden, 1908, Nationaal Archief Den Haag 2.10.39 MMK 339.

Published Sources

Barnes, R.H.

Bekkum, W. van
1944  ‘Warloka, Todo, Pongkor. Een brok geschiedenis van Manggarai’ Cultureel Indië vol. 6:144-152.

Buis, Simon
Clarence-Smith, William Gervase
2002  ‘Horse trading; The economic role of Arabs in the Lesser Sunda Islands, c. 1800 to c. 1940’, in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds), Transcending Borders; Arabs, politics, trade and Islam in Southeast Asia, pp. 143-63. Leiden: KITLV, 143-163.

Coolhaas, W.Ph.
1985  Controleur B.B. herinneringen van een jong bestuursambtenaar in Nederlands-Indie, Utrecht: HES.

Dietrich, Stefan
1989  Kolonialismus und Mission auf Flores (ca. 1900-1942), Hohenschäftlarn: Klaus Renner.

Emban Embu, J. and Robert Mirsel (eds.)

Heuken, Adolf

Lewis, E. Douglas
2010  The stranger-kings of Sikka. Leiden: KITLV.

Needham, Rodney

Noorduyn, J.
1987a  Bima en Sumbawa. Leiden: KITLV.

Nooteboom, C.

Schrauwers, Albert
2000  ‘Pillars of Faith; Religious rationalization in the Netherlands and Indonesia’, Documentatieblad voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken 7:11-23.

Steenbrink, Karel
2003  Catholics in Indonesia 1808-1942; A documented history, Vol I, A modest recovery 1808-1903, Leiden KITLV.

Toda, Dami N.
1999  Manggarai; Mencari pencerahan historiografi. Ende: Nusa Indah.
W. (acronym)