

Leonard Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, ix, 306 pp. Price: \$38.00.

Chris F. van Fraassen

*The World of Maluku* encompasses three centuries of European and Moluccan interaction (sixteenth–eighteenth centuries). Maluku, i.e., Maluku proper (the four realms of Ternate, Tidore, Jailolo, and Bacan), overlaps the present subprovince of the North Moluccas. These four realms are important in Indonesian history due to the fact that up to the sixteenth century they controlled the total world production of cloves. The position of power of the rulers in these four realms was based on the grip they had on the production and trading of cloves, which were very much in demand in Asia and Europe. Portuguese and Spaniards were attracted by the clove trade from the beginning of the sixteenth century and they made alliances with, respectively, Ternate and Tidore. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company (VOC) became the dominant European power in the Moluccas. In due course the VOC established a strongly guarded monopoly in buying and trading cloves, obstructed all free trade, and controlled political life in the Moluccas.

In the book under review, Leonard Andaya, while giving a sketch of the course of events, stresses the gap between the European intellectual milieu and the Moluccan frame of reference concerning historical perception, center-periphery relations, symbolic classification, etc. According to Andaya, there was a gap of incomprehension between, on the one hand, the Europeans, whose mental world was based on classical and Christian principles, and, on the other hand, the Moluccans, who stressed the unity of their universe in spite of the fact that their universe consisted of four realms divided in two moieties, represented by Ternate and Tidore.

The description of what Andaya calls “The World of the European” is essentially a synopsis of a few popular books on the subject. More difficult is the description and analysis of “The World of Maluku.” Andaya is right in observing: “To suggest what may have been the overriding concerns of the Malukans in the past is a risky business at best” (p. 21). Nevertheless, he seems to be pretty sure of himself, writing: “. . . There is a specific Malukan way of organizing and interpreting their history. When events in the period under study are placed within this indigenous conceptual framework, the activities of both outsiders and locals acquire a specific significance which provides a distinctive interpretation of Maluku’s past” (p. 22). The value of this statement is very much dependent on Andaya’s knowledge and understanding of “the indigenous conceptual framework.” Andaya does not make use of the most important written Moluccan sources available (i.e., the history of Ternate composed by Naidah, published in 1878, and the *Hikayat Ternate*, kept in the library of Leiden University).<sup>1</sup> The only Moluccan written source mentioned and used by Andaya is a typed essay, composed in 1979. Besides this, he was not very assiduous in consulting European sources in which the Moluccan conceptual framework is described and analyzed. Furthermore, quite a number of statements are clearly based on uncritical use of a theoretical framework developed by anthropologists.

A few random chosen examples will be sufficient to illustrate these points.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ch. F. van Fraassen, “Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel; van soa organisatie en vierdeling,” 2 vols. (PhD dissertation, University of Leiden, 1987), 1: 9-11.

Quite a number of Moluccan words, terms, and names have been mistranslated. The original title of the "prime minister" or vizir was not *jogugu* (interpreted as a shortened version of *kolano magugu* by Andaya and translated as "the lord who holds the kingdom in his hand"), but *gogugu*, lit. "manager." *Fato* does not mean "to tell the history" but "to order"; *bobato* does not mean "that which gives order" but "he who brings order." *Guna* does not mean "fortune," but "usefulness, virtue, quality."

The way Andaya deals with his sources is perfectly illustrated by comparing an extract from the *Treatise* (ascribed by Andaya without reservation to Galvao) with an extract from Andaya's study based on the relevant extract from the *Treatise*.

There is another palace official, whom they call the *pinate*; in him a master of ceremonies and a royal superintendent are said to be combined. He is appointed to the task of levying and assigning to each town the amount of foodstuffs that each is to provide, and of collecting and ordering the preparation of the food for the banquets and the guests.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, international trade was comfortably incorporated into the traditional ritual exchange. Galvao described a long established practice whereby products of the land were first delivered to the ruler via an official known as the *pinate* and then later consumed in a community feast. Such ceremonies are well known in anthropological literature and are interpreted as a symbolic exchange reaffirming the bonds between the people and their chiefs. (Andaya, pp. 56–57.)

Andaya's opinion that the policy of the VOC led to a transformation of the exchange from a ritual one based on spiritual values to a purely economic one based on profit and power (p. 57), shows a pronounced and somewhat romantic but unjustified perception in which an original balanced situation was changed by European intervention to a distorted relationship favoring the ruler. The statement that "Islam provided the newest and perhaps the most important basis of royal authority in Maluku" (pp. 57, 62), might be called questionable; compare for example Minangkabau society, which was profoundly influenced by Islam without developing a strong royal authority, with Polynesian societies, which were never influenced by Islam but nevertheless developed strong royal dynasties.<sup>3</sup>

It is misleading, and in view of the facts available unjustified, to portray the sixteenth-century Moluccan rulers as *primus inter pares* (pp. 60, 69). Andaya uncritically follows Valentijn (1724!) in writing that in Ternate early expansion was led by the Fala Raha (Four Houses) (p. 83); in fact, only two of the four "houses," Tomagola and Tomaito, deployed activities outside Ternate. Andaya does not seem to realize that the VOC had an interest of its own in stressing Ternate's formal suzerainty over East and North Sulawesi (pp. 84–85); by acknowledging Ternate's pretensions of sovereignty, the Dutch, as "overlords" of Ternate, in an indirect way claimed to be "overlords" of all the dependencies of Ternate and so created a legal basis for denying access to these areas to anyone who could be a threat to the position of the Dutch in the archipelago. It is very questionable whether center and periphery saw themselves as members of one Moluccan family (p. 112) and, in view of the many denials of the authority and suzerainty of Ternate in areas that by Ternatans and by the Dutch were regarded as dependencies of Ternate (p. 162), it is equally questionable whether, as Andaya puts it, "the nature of the exchange of products and services for

<sup>2</sup> H. Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas* (c. 1544). Probably the preliminary version of Antonio Galvao's *Historia das Molucas*. (Rome, 1971), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> For the relationship between royalty and Islam in Ternate, see van Fraassen, "Ternate," vol. 1, pp. 32–33, 344.

prestige goods and spiritual blessings was in no way regarded as an unequal and oppressive arrangement" (p. 112).

These examples could be multiplied. As to the facts, historical sources have been copied in an uncritical and sloppy way. A lot of faults and inaccuracies could have been avoided by more careful reading. Another shortcoming of the book is that Andaya simply does not mention a number of important facts and issues, such as the fact that the population of Maluku was of very heterogeneous origin. Andaya does not even make an estimate of the number of inhabitants of Maluku.

The main shortcoming of the book, however, is that Andaya is apt to reduce a complex situation to a simple picture, in which the Europeans in general make the impression upon the reader of being simple souls who in the Moluccas lost nothing of their European narrow-mindedness. In my view he is exaggerating when he writes: "Being very much products of long-held classical and medieval views, the Europeans believed that 'abroad' (that is, the periphery) could not be anything but the antithesis of everything that was good at 'home' (that is, the center)" (p. 44). By putting it this way, he passes over the fact, for example, that the Dutch did not feel any problem in entering into alliances with Moslem realms and principalities like Ternate and Hitu in order to be able to throw their Portuguese co-Europeans out of the Moluccas. He also passes over differences in opinion within the European camp, such as appeared in the "debate" between J. P. Coen, who opted for very firm action in the Moluccas, and the governors of Ternate and Ambon, Reael and Van der Haghen, who asked themselves on what legal basis the Asiatic traders could be kept out of the Moluccas.<sup>4</sup> Andaya also writes down propositions that are not worked out nor substantiated, like: "This European conception of time and 'progress' was in stark contrast to the Malukan idea of cyclical and episodic time. These two distinct modes of interpreting the past, present, and future constituted a fundamental issue in the relationships between the groups in this early modern period." (p. 24).

Summing up, Andaya has been very selective in making use of the sources available and did not seriously test his starting points and hypotheses. The study has been written off the cuff, an approach that certainly is beneficial for the readability of the book. This book probably is best characterized as a product of a scholarly tourist who writes well but who did not sufficiently check his interesting views with the facts available.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 41.