Chapter 5

The Trading Network of the Eastern Archipelago

The Spice Islands have held the attention of historians primarily due to the nature of the contact between these islands and the trading ports of the western archipelago, particularly those of the north coast of Java and Malacca, and the interrelationship between these islands and the Europeans in the east. Aspects of this interrelationship have been dealt with in other works in varying detail, and so will not be repeated here.[1] The focus of this chapter is the immediate environs of the Spice Islands, and will reconstruct the trading network of the eastern archipelago in which the Moluccas and Banda were participating, but were not necessarily the focus.

This network had been functioning in the eastern archipelago long before any commercial intercourse was documented by either Asian or European sources, and it has continued to function, albeit in an altered form, long after the intrusion of the Europeans into that arena. Sources from which the following information was obtained consist primarily of accounts of Europeans who had first-hand encounters with the Spice Islands and their trade in the period of initial contact between East and West. These are complimented by several studies from nineteenth century Orientalists whose works have provided insights into the nature of the people of the eastern archipelago and how in their lives trade and culture are inextricably bound, and they also serve to illustrate the on-going nature of the trade of the region. Additional information has been taken from numerous secondary sources which contained invaluable translations from Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch contemporaries of the period under study.

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1 See for example, M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, The Hague, 1962; J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, The Hague, 1955. These are standard works on the subject.

The first section of this chapter will discuss the eastern archipelago network in general, while the second section sets out which islands traded in which commodities. The first section proposes that many of the articles which became integral parts of the islanders' daily lives were, in fact, cultural adoptions. It is suggested that the early contact with merchants from the western archipelago stimulated the demand among the islanders for goods which were readily adapted to the spiritual and material needs of the eastern archipelago islanders. It also shows that staples such as sago, and later rice, formed the bulk of the inter-island trade. The latter section clearly shows the interrelationship between the islands of the region, and their relationship with the trade network which operated to the west, including their dependence of the goods traded by the western merchants.

While the entire region operated essentially as a redistribution centre for goods destined for the Chinese, Javanese, Malaccan, Indian or European markets, there existed a smaller sub-regional trading system in which the numerous islands of the eastern archipelago catered to local demands. The Moluccas and the Banda islands have received prominence in the former role, and while their position as major gathering points for spices and other produce of the region is not disputed, attention must be also drawn to the other participants engaged in the sub-regional trade. Small islands to the east of Banda, those lying between Gilolo and New Guinea, and islands reaching north to the Philippines all contributed in a most important way to the functioning of that trading system. Their merchants obtained select goods which were then transported to the gathering points or entrepôts of the region. Of course this was a two-way process, with these merchants carrying home a cargo of goods traded in from the western archipelago.

The trade of this system never reached the proportions of that conducted with the western archipelago. This essentially was because the commodities most often dealt in here were also readily available in the western archipelago from sources within that region, perhaps with the exception of the massoi bark produced in New Guinea. Foodstuffs, most notably sago, were the most common articles of trade among the eastern islands, but the islanders were not limited to this. An enormous variety of goods passed through the ports of these places, either for internal use or for re-export, ranging from slaves to the feathers of the bird of paradise.

These goods can be divided into three basic categories; the first being foodstuffs - sago, fruit and rice; the second, items of cultural value originating from within the eastern archipelago network, for example, feathers of the bird of paradise; and the third, items of cultural value imported to the region but adopted by the islanders for their own cultural application, such as the Javanese gongs, krisses, or Chinese porcelain.

Although it is impossible to determine a starting date for inter-island trade in the eastern archipelago region, it is highly probable that foodstuffs formed the basis of the majority of early exchanges. Island groups such as the Moluccas and the Bandas were unable to support their populations with the natural produce of their own soils, and therefore importations were a necessity. The pre-existing indigenous population may have readily subsisted on the fruits of those islands and only later found it necessary to import to sustain its larger population. It is possible, particularly on the Moluccas, that the importation of foodstuffs did not begin until the mid thirteenth century, when the islands experienced an influx of residents from neighbouring Halmahera. It is equally possible that the beginnings of Ternatan expansion was rooted in the island's need for a regular and reliable food supply.

Sago was one of the main items of trade in the region, carried from Kai, Aru and Amboina in the south to Banda, and from Halmahera and the Moro region in the north to the various Moluccan islands. Ellen has argued that the imported sago was exchanged for 'locality-specific produce', fish, shell, and forest products.[2] The relative ease of its harvest and its long storage ability made it an eminently suitable trade commodity. As well as foodstuffs, craft specialisations emerged in some areas, and these also became items of trade, building on the established sago exchange. It is suggested this remained the dominant pattern of trade within the eastern archipelago region until increased interest from merchants from the western archipelago brought prolong ed contact with them and their products.

Apart from sago, the islands in the region dealt with a variety of goods directly connected with the cultural aspects of the islanders' lives. Feathers from the bird of paradise formed part of the warrior's attire on a number of the region's islands; small shells decorated their shields. It is likely these items were valued and sought after because of the essential role they played in the lives of the islanders' in the period before extensive

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2 Ellen, *op.cit.*, p.53

'outside' contact. Used by warriors, they were associated with strength and power. Van Neck notes that the warriors of Banda believed they were "sure and safe enough" if they wore such feathers in their head-dress, and some even wore the whole bird, believing they were invincible.[3] Gold was also traded in small quantities, from the Moro area, Ceram and New Guinea.

It was shown in Chapter 4 that the Moluccan islanders began trading with merchants from the western archipelago in an organised manner at least from the early fourteenth century. References in both Muslim[4] and Chinese sources indicate that this trade dates back much farther than this. Cloves were known in the Roman Empire, and were often listed as tribute or import items into the Chinese Empire in Sung and Yuan records.[5] It has been suggested that the Chinese exchange commodities - porcelain and textiles in particular - played a substantial role in the cultural tastes of the people of the region, in part due to the long exposure of the islanders to these commodities. There are numerous accounts of the vital role of porcelain in the accumulation of 'treasure' by the islanders and also as a required part of the marriage dowry.[6]

Contact with the Javanese traders had a similar impact upon the cultural lives of the islanders. According to Moluccan legends concerning the introduction of Islam, Tidore Vongue's Javanese wife introduced Javanese style dress, the kris and other aspects of the culture of her homeland. This rather late introduction should perhaps be reconsidered in the light of Valentyn's information concerning the foreign mother of Ternate's fifth *kolano*, Komala.[7] This woman was said to have encouraged Malayan and Javanese traders to come to the islands, this

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3 van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.32

4 G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on Southeast Asia*, Leiden, 1979, pp.179-182 cites four early Muslim texts which refer to the trade in cloves. The earliest, by Ibn Khurdadhbih, is dated c.850. The texts however, imply that the cloves were collected from Java (Jaba, Jawa) rather from the Moluccas themselves, although their general whereabouts was known the the Arab traders.

5 R. Ptak, 'The Northern Trade Route to the Spice Islands: South China Sea - Sulu Zone - North Moluccas' in *Archipel*, 43, p.31

6 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.141; also Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, pp.74, 174 for instances of this custom on Amboina and in the Moro region. Schurhammer describes this porcelain as "gaily colored", but Paul Wheatley, in his 'Geographical Notes on some Commodities involved in Sung Maritime Trade, *JMBRAS*, Vol.37, Pt.2, pp.83-85, says that white porcelain was exported to the eastern archipelago, with blue-and-white traded to Java. No description of the porcelain has been sighted in the sources consulted.

7 See Chapter 4.

contact dating to the early years of the fourteenth century. As with the goods traded into the area by the Chinese, this early contact with the Javanese and Malays left its mark in the culture of the islanders, observed and recorded by the Europeans who soon followed the same trade routes to the Spice Islands.

One of the items traded from Java which had an assured market throughout the eastern archipelago were their famous gongs. Crawfurd describes them as:

> a composition of copper, zinc, and tin .... Some of them are enormous of size, being occasionally from three to four feet in diameter. They have a nob in the centre, which is struck with a mallet .... They are usually suspended from a rich frame, and the tone which they produce is the deepest and richest that can be imagined.[8]

The gongs were collected as treasure, to be buried in the mountains or under the house. They were used in dowries, as were Chinese porcelains, ivory, cloth goods and other such items - all commodities with a high exchange value, as well as a high cultural value attached. They were usually traded for sago, bird of paradise feathers or other local produce. The role that these imported products played in the cultural life of the islanders is significant. They were treasures in a pure sense of the word, hidden away and used only for important occasions.

The Banda Islands

One of the main contemporary sources for information concerning Banda's trade in the sixteenth century was Tomé Pires, who enumerated in detail the exchange of commodities through Banda's main port. From his account it is easy to see that Banda played an important role in the sub-regional trading system, but it must be said that if it were not for its production of nutmeg and mace, Banda would have received scant attention from the spice-hungry Europeans and historians of the era. These spices were the only attraction of the tiny group for the merchants of Europe, the remainder of its trade was focussed on satisfying its own immediate wants and needs. Arguably the business brought by the Malay and Javanese traders gave Banda an importance in the region shared only by the clove-producing islands to the north. To the local traders and

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8 Crawfurd, *A History, op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.336

consumers it was one of the major gathering points within the eastern archipelago where they could exchange their wares for those of other production centres within the sub-regional trading system, or for the goods from markets not readily accessible to them, notably those in India.

The primary occupation of the Banda islanders was the harvesting of the nutmeg and mace. An estimation of the average annual harvest of the spices is difficult due to the inconsistency of information found in the accounts consulted. Pires noted that while the islands were once capable of producing 1,000 bahars of mace, their average production was now 500 bahars of mace, and 6-7,000 bahars of nutmeg. He further said that the fruit was ripe all year round, and that it was gathered monthly.[9]

The nutmeg was native to Banda, though initially its production was not confined to the group. The nutmeg trees (*Myristica fragrans*) grew to heights of twenty to thirty feet and were shaded by the majestic kanara trees (*Kanarium commune*). There were three types of trees: male, or barren; royal nutmeg, producing long nuts; and the queen, producing the round nut.[10] The trees did not bear fruit until they were eight or nine years old, when they then produced first small yellowish buds which, after a further eight or nine months maturing on the tree, developed into the fruit. "It is of a tough, fleshy consistence, but when ripe splits open, and shows the dark-brown nut within, covered with the crimson mace, and is then a most beautiful object."[11] The fruit was not sold straight from the tree, but underwent a lengthy processing. It was dried over a slow fire for five weeks, after which the nutmeg could be extracted.[12] It was then soaked in tubs of lime and sea water, and then left in closets for six weeks to allow the nuts to sweat without losing any of their strength.[13]

The fruit was sold in a variety of forms. Milburne noted that the whitish outer shell of the fruit was "very good preserved in sugar, or stewed."[14] Portuguese accounts from the sixteenth century relate that it was exported from Banda preserved in jars of vinegar, and that upon

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9 van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.206; Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.295: "All the year round flowers and ripe fruit are to be found...."

10 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, p.397

11 Wallace, *ibid.*, p.295

12 This was the work of the women of the islands; van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.34

13 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, pp.397-98; Milburne also noted that nutmegs prepared in this way were not fit for propagation. Note that this is a mid-nineteenth century account and the process of fruit production may have changed somewhat from the traditional methods with the increased demand caused by the European market

14 *Ibid.*, p.397

arrival in India it was converted into a conserve with sugar.[15] Likewise Linschoten describes it as "the best preserve in all India."[16] It was also in demand for culinary purposes, as a flavour enhancer and preservative, though its consumption never rivalled that of pepper, either in Asia or in Europe. [17] Nutmeg was also used for medicinal purposes and as a narcotic. Oil of nutmeg (also called oil of mace and Banda soap[18]) was known as a remedy for chills,[19] while Doctor Garcia da Orta had found that the nutmeg itself was used as a breath sweetener, a remedy for disorders of the brain and a cure of hysterics and nervous ailments.[20] As a narcotic, it was combined with several other Southeast Asian products and mixed with opium.[21]

Nutmeg and mace were harvested and exported in their natural forms; additionally nutmeg was also exported as fruit preserve[22] and oil[23]. The availability of nutmeg does not appear to have been seasonally dependent, although accounts do vary regarding the harvest of the fruit. Pires tells us that nutmeg was ripe throughout the year, and accordingly was gathered monthly.[24] If properly preserved (in lime or vinegar) and protected from scavengers there is the harvested nutmeg was able to be stored for long periods between visits of the traders who came from other islands to collect it. However, Pires' information is at variance with other sources. An English source of the early seventeenth century noted that mace was harvested three times per year; July to September was the main period securing the best of the fruit, then again in December and in February.[25] As mace is the coating on the nutmeg itself, and is only

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15 *O Estado da India e aonde tem o sue principio,* in Villiers, *Trade and Society, op.cit.*, p.726

16 J. Huyghen van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies*, Vol.II, London, 1885, p.84

17 "Nutmegs and cloves are not necessaries of life; they are not even used as spices by the natives of the Moluccas", Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.296

18 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, p.398

19 Castanheda in Villiers, *Trade and Society, op.cit.*, p.725

20 Orta in Villiers, *ibid.*, p.726

21 Frei Sebastien Manrique in Villiers, *Trade and Society, ibid.*, p.725, observed this in Bengal. The other products were mace, cloves, Borneo camphor, ambergris and almiscre.

22 van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.25; Villiers, *Trade and Society, op.cit.*, p.726

23 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, p.398

24 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.206

25 'A Discription of the Iland of Amboyna translated out of Dutch, 1605' in Birdwood, G. and Foster, W. (eds.), *The Register of Letters etc. of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies ,1600-1619*, London, 1893, p.74

suitable for gathering when the nutmeg is matured for harvest this account probably also refers to the thrice yearly harvest of both nutmeg and mace. Varthema, travelling in the sixteenth century, noted that nutmeg was harvested in September, and that "every man gathers as much as he can",[26] while van Neck states that it was harvested three times per year, in April, August and December. In April the best and most nuts were picked.[27]

It is known that nutmeg was a valuable item of barter for the goods desired by the Spice Island inhabitants. It also had several, more intoxicating uses. In rural eastern Indonesia nutmeg, in its powdered form, was used as snuff.[28] A nineteenth century *Materia medica* published in Bombay recorded that "the Hindus of West India take Myristica as an intoxicant"[29], corroborating the earlier evidence of the sixteenth century medic Doctor Garcia da Orta.[30] It is possible that narcosis was induced to serve some specific religious purpose, as the consumption of alcohol was by the great Javanese king Kertaganera, but if this was so it must have been in the period prior to the influence of Islam in the region.

The narcotic effect of the nutmeg is derived from the presence of two potent hallucinogens found in the oil.[31] Its effect is not uniform, but ranges from no discernible effect at all to perceived space and time distortion, visual hallucinations, to unpleasant side effects of headache, nausea, vertigo, tachycardia or constipation.[32] These effects were described in 1829 as being similar to cannabis intoxication, that is, drowsiness and

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26 Varthema, L., *The Travels of Lodovico de Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Deserta and Arabia Felix*, ed. G.P. Badger, trans. J. Winter Jones, London, 1863, p.244

27 van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.24

28 W. Emboden, *Narcotic Plants*, New York, 1979, p.48. Although this information is derived from a recent study of narcotic plants, the history of the medicinal and/or narcotic qualities of plants is well documented, and there can be very little doubt that nutmeg was used in this context in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as it is today.

29 cited in *loc.cit.*

30 See reference in previous chapter, fn.34. Emboden, *op.cit.*, p.48, also reports that in modern times nutmeg was used in Egypt as a substitute for hashish.

31 Emboden, *op.cit.*, p.48. TMA (trimethoxy amphetamine) and MMDA (3-methoxy-4, 5-methylenodioxy amphetamine). This combination is approximately 0.0625% of the total oil composition of the nutmeg. Emboden notes that freshly grated nutmeg has the most potent effect, whereas powdered nutmeg has a reduced or no effect, depending on its age.

32 *Loc.cit.*

temporary euphoria.[33] While obviously a mild relaxant, nutmeg probably failed to obtain the widespread usage among Indonesians as had/has betel because of the debilitating effect on the user while under the influence.

The medicinal properties of nutmeg should also be noted. In Europe at least it was prized for its reputed qualities. Linschoten records that:

> it comforteth the braine, sharpeneth the memorie, warmeth and strengtheneth the Maw, driveth winde out of the body, maketh a sweet breath, driveth downe Urine, stoppeth the Laske [diarrhoea], and to conclude, is good against all colde diseases in the heade, in the braine, the Mawe, the Liver and the Matrice.[34]

Apart from this the nutmeg was known as an abortifacient, an aphrodisiac and a sleep inducer - an unusual combination of properties indeed! Mace, too, was beneficial for the body in much the same way, as was the oil, "for all the aforesaid named infirmities."

As part of a local trading system, Banda required several imports which can be regarded as staples. The most important of these was sago, for although this was produced on the small island of Nailaka, it was obviously not enough to support the 15,000 strong population of the Banda group. Pires says that a great deal of sago came from the "surrounding islands";[35] among these the Moluccas, Amboina and Aru were known to export sago to Banda. Goram also brought sago. The dried sago bread was used as money on Banda,[36] a very practical use for a versatile commodity which never lost its intrinsic value. As a staple it was readily available to all the inhabitants of the eastern archipelago and its self-propagation ensured an abundant supply.[37] Rice was another foodstuff which was brought into the island group in large quantities, both for local consumption and for sale or barter to traders from the islands east of Banda, Aru and Kai among them.

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33 *Loc.cit.* A biologist, Purkinjie, ate three nutmegs to obtain this comparison of effect.

34 Linschoten, Vol.II, *op.cit.*, p.86; van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.25

35 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.208

36 *Loc.cit.* "They bring a great deal from the islands near to the islands of Banda, and it is used for money - so much sago for such and such a thing, in the same way as pepper in Pase", p.209

37 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*,p. 372 used the estimate taken from Mr. Logan's article in the third volume of the Journal of the Indian Archipelago to arrive at a figure of 700 pounds or 12.5 bushells of edible sago pulp from one average tree.

According to Valentyn, Banda also obtained slaves from the Kai islanders. They, and the Aru islanders, also brought to Banda *toetombos* (boxes made of leaves and sea horns), feathers of the birds of paradise, the whole birds, dried and preserved, beans, woodwork for their ships, dried fish and other foods.[38]

It was the commodities brought to Banda by the western Indonesian traders in return for Bandanese spices that gave Banda a pre-eminent position among the many small islands of the eastern archipelago, all of which served as gathering points. Banda operated as an initial redistribution point for rice from Sumbawa and Bima, coarse cloth from these islands, and the highly-regarded Indian textiles, including cotton and silk cloth from Cambay. It also was a source of cultural treasures imported from Java, namely the Javanese gongs, for which Barbosa says the Bandanese would pay twenty bahars of mace. Merchants brought large quantities of copper, some quicksilver, tin, and lead. "Brasse peeces of Ordinances wth Chambers in the breeches", brought from Bantam and China were also sought by the Bandanese.[39] They also brought "certain hairy caps from the Levant".[40] Cloth which was reported to sell well in the Banda group included "pinthados" (painted cloth, chintzes) and "Iava girdles", or batiked cotton cloth.[41] While the Banda Islands were not the exclusive source of many of these goods in the eastern archipelago, they were a major entrepôt in that region for traders wishing to obtain items from the western archipelago markets and beyond.

The Moluccas

As the primary producer of cloves in the sixteenth century, the Moluccas played a significant role in the sub-regional trade and politics of the eastern archipelago. Although they had an estimated combined annual output of 6,000 bahars of cloves, the separate islands did not act in concert but often pursued individual interests. Indeed the enmity between Ternate and Tidore reached back into the pre-European era, originating from a struggle for dominance in the region.

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38 Valentyn, *Beschryving der Banda, op.cit.*, pp.41-42. Valentyn says that in his time the Bandanese were buying slaves from the Kai islanders, paying from 10 to 20 rix-dollars, p.39.

39 Birdwood, *op.cit.*, 'A Discripcon of the Iland of Banda', p.73

40 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.198

41 Birdwood, *op.cit.*, 'A Discripcon of the Iland of Banda', p.73

As in Banda, the main income of the islands was derived from the sale of spices. Sources cannot agree on the quantity, times of harvest or numbers of harvests per year. According to Pires, cloves produces six good crops per year, and although they were available all throughout the year, he says that in these six periods there are more.[42] Pigafetta says they were gathered twice a year, in December and in June, whereas Linschoten favours one long harvest season, from September to January.[43] The clove trees reached maturity at nine years and after this, at the onset of the monsoon season, they produce small green buds which grow to a perfect clove shape by August/September. These turn yellow, then red at which time they are suitable for harvesting. If they are not harvested at this time, they swell and become suitable for propagation, but unsuitable for sale as a dried spice.[44] Clove trees were tall, and the fruit had to be pulled off by long hooks or beaten with bamboo. A cloth was spread under the tree to prevent waste, and the ground under the trees was even swept for this purpose. After this they were spread out in the sun to dry, or put in smoke-houses if there is no sun. After the cloves are dried, they were sprinkled with salt water to prevent mould and "preserve its full virtues".[45] As in Banda, this work was done by the women. Linschoten observes that the trees were growing "about the length of a great shot from the Sea side, and are neither planted nor set, and nothing else is done [unto them]." The cloves were also preserved in vinegar, and were made into conserves with sugar which were "verie pleasant to bee eaten".[46] In these forms they were traded to Malacca and India, as were the preserved nutmegs.

Cloves were desired for their medicinal properties as well as their culinary favours.

> The water of greene Cloves distilled is very pleasant of smel, and strengthneth the hart, likewise they procure sweating in men that have the Pox .... They strengthen the Liver, the Maw, and the hart, they further digestion, they procure evacuation of

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42 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.216

43 Pigafetta, B & R, *op.cit.*, p.45; Linschoten, Vol.II, *op.cit.*, p.83

44 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, pp.400-401. Milburne also writes that Valentyn described four types of cloves - the male, which is picked for drying; the female, which is best for extracting oil; the king and the rice clove, both rare.

45 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.202; Milburne, *op.cit.*, pp400-401. says they were dried either by oven or by the sun, the latter method was deemed best.

46 Linschoten, Vol.II., *op.cit.*, p.82

> the Urine, and stop lascativenes, and being put into the eyes, preserveth the sight".[47]

Linschoten further notes that they were chewed by Indian and Portuguese women in the east as breath fresheners, and that taken with "foure Drammes [of] Milke, doe procure lust." Galvão mentions the use of the cloves by the early Moluccans; when indisposed they put it on their face and forehead.[48] The nature of the illness or the cure is unknown, but Linschoten says that the powder of cloves on the head relieved the symptoms of a cold.[49]

The islands also produced ginger which was dried in lime, and honey, sugarcane, coconut oil and a variety of other fruits.[50] There is no evidence that these products were traded, but, as well as internal consumption, they possibly were used as exchange commodities within the Moluccan region.

A wide variety of goods were brought to the Moluccas to be exchanged for the cloves. Barbosa records that ships from Malacca and Java came annually to the islands to collect the cloves and brought with them copper, quicksilver, vermillion, Cambay cloths cummin, silver, porcelain and Javanese gongs[51] - much the same items of trade as were in demand in the Banda group.

Ternate was the main island in the group, its hegemony extending over a large proportion of near and distant islands. The island produced somewhere in the vicinity of 1,400 - 1,500 bahars of cloves annually,[52] but did not have the larger share of the trade of the group as its port was only able to anchor two or three ships at any one time.[53] It accommodated foreign merchants, Javanese, Malayan and Chinese, as permanent residents, and perhaps those of Celebes and other surrounding islands on a short-term basis. The Ternatans exchanged their cloves with the Javanese and Malay merchants for coarse Cambay cloth and cloths of a finer type.[54] They also required the peculiar commodity of tails of white

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47 *Ibid.*, pp.83-84

48 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.77

49 Linschoten, Vol.II, *op.cit.*, p.84

50 Pigafetta, B & R, *op.cit.*, p.73

51 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.202

52 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.214, says that Ternate only produced 150 bahars of cloves per year. This is obviously a gross under-estimation, and one must concur with Meilink-Roelofsz, *op.cit.*, p.97, and place the amount produced somewhere between that of Tidore and Makian.

53 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.214

54 *Ibid.*, p.216

oxen and cows,[55] whether these were to adorn their person or their houses is unknown. The brilliant plumage of birds of paradise were imported for the personal adornment of warriors.[56] The main source for these feathers was Aru, to the east of Banda, although different species of the bird of paradise were indigenous to several islands within the sub-region. Iron goods came to Ternate from the Banggai archipelago in the form of axes, choppers, swords and knives. Ternate re-exported some of this iron to the Moro region,[57] no doubt receiving sago and other foodstuffs in return. Other imported items were gold and parrots from the Morotai islands and Ceram.[58] Pires also mentions ivory and coarse native cloth, although he is ambiguous in this - did Ternate have these or were they, too, imports?[59] Meilink-Roelofsz assumes these to be imports,[60] but regarding the cloth, at least, the natives did weave a coarse dark fabric from the bud of the sago tree which they wore during mourning.[61] It is possible that the ivory came from the Kai and Aru islands, via Banda.

Tidore was the second most powerful island in the group, but this was not contingent on its direct trade for, although its clove production was estimated at 1,400 bahars annually, it had no port in which ships could anchor. It had approximately two thousand fighting men and fleet of eighty praus.[62] This amounts to a considerable array of force, and was a strong factor in its position *vis-a-vis* Ternate. Pires says that, in his time, the ruler of Tidore, Raja Almancor, had expressed a desire to trade with the Portuguese.[63] Unless the Portuguese were to co-opt the shallow-bottomed native vessels to trade directly onto Tidore, Almancor must have intended this trade to be conducted through Makian. With no port of its own, the only outlet for Tidore's clove crop and some of the "many foodstuffs" grown there was Makian. Such an arrangement would no doubt be facilitated by the familial relationship between the two rulers.

Makian was the main trading centre of the Moluccas. It had the superior port in the Moluccas which allowed the deep-sea vessels of the Malay and Javanese traders safe anchorage whilst they conducted their

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55 *Loc.cit.*
56 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.147
57 *Ibid.*, p.174
58 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.216
59 *Loc.cit.*
60 Meilink-Roelofsz, p.98
61 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.43
62 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.217
63 *Loc.cit.*

business. The island had one hundred and thirty praus which may have been used to aid Tidore in its campaigns against Ternate, as well as some inter-island trade, or to ferry cargoes from ship to port on Makian. The port was kept busy with the constant traffic of the local merchants delivering their produce and the Javanese and Malays coming to lade cloves. Foreign merchants also resided permanently on Makian, including a community of Chinese merchants who chose Makian "as its population was cultured, affable, and well-disposed".[64] As well as being the commercial centre of the Moluccas, Makian itself produced about 1,500 bahars of cloves for export.[65]

The remaining islands in the main group of the Moluccas were Motir and Bachian, with an annual clove harvest of 1,200 and 500 bahars respectively.[66] Motir was subject to both Ternate and Tidore. Whether this division was territorially equal, or in whose area the larger proportion of cloves grew has not yet been established. Lancharas would have carried the island's clove harvest to Makian, and they may have carried foodstuffs to supplement this cargo. Bachian imported its foodstuffs, but had for export parrots, mats and its 500 bahars of cloves.[67] The leaves of the clove tree were said by Pires to be dried and used as a substitute for betel, and that this most Indonesian pastime was now found in Europe.[68] It produced pitch, but Pires does not indicate whether this was a trading item.

Although listed as an import item in the pre-European era, copper was later found on Bachian, as well as gold and coal.[69] In the nineteenth century it was also home to a small community of boat-builders from Galela, a district in the extreme north of Gilolo.[70] While there is no evidence to suggest that this community had been established for any length of time, there is the possibility, remote though it is, that there was some connection between Bachian and Galela in the earlier period. Bachian was said to have more praus than any of the Moluccan kings,[71] perhaps a good working environment and a ready market led to the early establishment of a boat-building industry. It may be that a use was found

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64 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.* p.81
65 *Ibid.*, p.218
66 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, pp.217-218
67 *Ibid.*, p.219
68 *Loc.cit.*
69 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.349
70 *Ibid.*, p.331
71 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.218

in this early industry for the pitch Pires mentioned as being produced on the island.

Gilolo

Gilolo was recorded by Pires as having "many foodstuffs, many people and many *praus*",[72] indicative of a country well able to engage in the trade of the region. It is a large, unusually shaped island, physically resembling a smaller version of Celebes. The island had a good port (the only port according to Pires), also named Gilolo. While he does not name them as a trading commodity, Pires says that Gilolo produced many wild cloves, and "they say they are working to make it good",[73] which should be taken as meaning that their clove trees had come under cultivation to produce the saleable crops found on the other islands on the Moluccas. John Saris confirmed Pires' information concerning cloves, although the amount he recorded was very small indeed, no more than thirty five bahars annually.[74] Pires' information concerning the cloves was given further support by the nineteenth century Orientalist, William Milburne. Writing in 1825, Milburne listed cloves among commodities traded from Gilolo, although he does not specify any quantity.[75] This information is at odds with that of De Barros who says that there were no clove trees found on Gilolo, and "expressly states this fact."[76] How we reconcile these observations is unclear, although De Couto had described the islanders as "savages, without laws, and without kings or towns, dwelling in the forests", and this picture was neatly explained by Crawfurd as resulting "probably ... to the absence of the clove, which brought commerce and civilization to the Molucca Islands".[77] Wallace, however (without addressing the problem of the absent clove trees), draws a distinction between the coastal dwellers on the western side of the island and the Alfuros who lived on the eastern coast and the interior of the northern peninsula. He claimed that he had "discovered the exact boundary-line between the Malay and Papuan races"; those of the western side exhibiting

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72 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.221

73 *Loc.cit.*

74 John Saris, 'The eighth Voyage set forth by the East-Indian Societie, wherein were imployed three Ships, the Clove, the Hector, and the Thomas, under the command of Captaine John Saris' in S. Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, Vol.III, Book IV, Ch.I, p.432

75 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, p.406

76 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.10

77 *Ibid.*, p.11

obvious Malay features, while those east and north displayed a semi-Papuan heritage.[78] De Couto and Crawfurd must have been referring to the Alfuros of the north and east of the island, while Pires and Saris were referring to the west coast dwellers and harvesters of cloves. If this were so, De Couto and Crawfurd agree with the description of the Alfuros given by Schurhammer,[79] but why they would refer to the Alfuros rather than the Malay-influenced people of the west coast cannot be surmised.

Gilolo had a very lucrative alternative to cloves in the trade of the region, it dealt in slaves. Miguel Roxo de Brito, sailing in 1581, wrote of the great trade between the King of Papua (Gilolo) and the King of *Serdenha*.[80] The role of the Papuan king in the trade is not entirely clear, what is certain from De Brito's account is that the arrangement between the two kings was extremely profitable to both of them. It also dealt in gold, Pigafetta says its heathen king was "exceedingly rich in gold".[81]

The northern, or Moro region, of Gilolo supplied both Tidore and Ternate with a large amount of foodstuffs, including rice, sago and fish.[82] What they received in return for these goods is uncertain, but Chinese porcelain and iron were a part of the exchange.[83] Some part or parts of Gilolo, not identified by Pires, served as a market for the produce of Banda, people there sailing from Gilolo to buy Banda cloth.[84] Other trading contacts of the Gilolo islanders have not been determined. Despite having many praus they may have confined their trading activities to their immediate neighbours in the Moluccas.

Also productive in that region were the Southern Loloda Islands. These were six volcanic islands, a legendary place of origin for the Moluccan kings. By the sixteenth century they had become vassal to Ternate, governed by a *sengadji*.[85] The Southern Lolodas were known for their edible birds' nests, giant turtles and abundance of fish. The birds' nests were a valued commodity in China, where it was used as an ingredient in soup or was cooked with sugar crystals. It was also regarded

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78 Wallace, *op.cit.*, pp.323-324

79 Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, p.173 - "The people were still at a low cultural level."

80 C.R. Boxer and P.-Y. Manguin, 'Miguel Roxo De Brito's Narrative of his Voyage to the Raja Empat, May 1581-November 1582' in *Archipel* 18, 1979

81 Pigafetta, Robertson, *op.cit.*, p.68

82 Observed by A. Marta (1588), cited in Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, p.174, fn.176

83 Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, p.174 s

84 Pires, *Suma Oriental*, *op.cit.*, p.221

85 Rebello in Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.168

for its medicinal value, dissolving flegm and aiding digestion. Nor should its qualities as an aphrodisiac be ignored.[86] Subject to Ternate, the goods from the Southern Lolodas probably travelled to Ternate for collection by merchants travelling to Malacca or the north Java ports.

Amboina

Contrary to Pires' statement that it "has no trade", Amboina did have its own supply of cloves, annually gathering up to three hundred bahars although these were inferior to those of the Moluccas.[87] According to Rumphius, cloves were established on West Hitu as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century, secretly bought from the Moluccas to Luhu on Ceram and then to West Hitu by the natives of Luhu.[88] To what extent this is a reliable account of the introduction of cloves to Ceram and then Amboina is difficult to ascertain, but it obviously points to an established interaction between Ceram and Amboina and Ceram and the Moluccas, probably of a trading nature. The harvesting of cloves for trade was testified to in the recommendation of the English East India Company's commission to Sir Henry Middleton re: his impending voyage to Banda and the Moluccas. Commissioned to lade cloves and mace at Banda, Middleton was also advised to stop at Amboina "or any other Iland by the way where Cloues may be had" to "furnish yor selfe wth what quantitie you cann gett whereby you may the lesse depend vpon yor puision of Cloues att Banda".[89] He was able to secure a cargo at the port of Mamalla.[90] A Dutch description of 1605 noted that on Amboina "Theare groweth aboundance of Cloues not eury yeare, but eury third yeare"[91]. In exchange for their cloves the Ambonese favoured Cambay cloth, individuals aiming to collect a pile as high as a man.[92] A variety of

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86 L. Blussé, 'In Praise of Commodities: an essay on the crosscultural trade in edible birdsnests',1989, p.5

87 Rebello in Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.64, fn.101

88 Rumphius in Schurhammer, *op.cit.* Vol.III, p.64, fn.101

89 Commission from the Company to Sir Henry Middleton for the *Second Voyage*, 1605 in Birdwood, *The First Letter Book, op.cit.* p.66. Perhaps the East India Company's directors anticipated some trouble with the Dutch on Banda.

90 Middleton, *op.cit.* (Hakluyt),p.22-23

91 'A Discription of the Iland of Amboyna translated out of Dutch, 1605' in Birdwood and Foster, *op.cit.*, p.74

92 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.199

English and Dutch goods were saleable on Amboina,[93] indicating that trade was not an occupation foreign to the Ambonese.

Cloves were not the only saleable commodity produced in Amboina. Van Neck recorded that it had a:

> "...great aboundance of fruit, as Oringes, Lemons, Citrons, Cokars, Bononas, Sugar-canes, and such like, which things are to be had there maruailous cheape, for a man may haue 80. Oringes for a button...."[94]

It is possible that the Ambonese traded these fruits to Banda to supplement their clove cargoes, but this is not established fact. It is clear that they bartered them in their own ports for an assortment of items available from visiting merchants. They also sold the rice cake observed by Van Neck, mentioned in the previous chapter, but Van Neck must have mistaken the sago cake for a rice cake. Sago was the daily staple of the people. The sixteenth century source, Prancudo wrote that whoever ate rice was as a king, implying this food was beyond the normal availability to the common people.[95]

Ceram

Major items of trade for Ceram included sago and cloves. Ceramese sago was imported by Banda, either through the ports of Amboina or directly, as Banda was only two days or less away by sail.[96]. The island, however, had three good ports - Gule Gule, Bemu (*Bemuaor*) and Paulohi or Poeleh (*Cejlam*) - and safe navigation according to Pires' informants.[97] Perhaps we may assume that in the pre-European period these ports witnessed a two-way traffic, the Ceramese themselves voyaging, at least, to Amboina, and incoming junks or praus collecting their cargoes. Ceram did export white parrots to Ternate[98], but this does not necessarily mean direct trade with Ternate. According to Rodrigues' map[99] Ceram also had gold (ceiram tem houro), though Pires made no mention of this, nor did

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93 Engraved or gilt head-pieces, firearms, an assortment of cloths, painted drinking cups, looking glasses, knives and Spanish rialls of eight, 'A Discription of the Iland of Amboyna translated out of Dutch, 1605' in Birdwood and Foster, *op.cit.*, p.76

94 van Neck, *op.cit.*, p.25

95 Prancudo in Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, p.75, fn.178. Van Neck, *op.cit.*, p.25, says that these rice/sago cakes were carried to adjoining islands for sale. Perhaps the Ambonese also carried their fruits to sell along with the cakes.

96 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.209

97 *Ibid.*, pp.209-211

98 *Ibid.*, p.216

99 *Ibid.*, p.209, map, p.208

the English merchants who traded there. The English stopped at Ceram to lade sago which they then sold in Banda; in return for this product the English traded Indian cloth, brass cannon, guns with spring locks and engraved and gilt headpieces.[100]

Celebes

Celebes is mentioned by Pires only in passing, and its trade (and that of several other islands) is covered by the general statement: "they produce many foodstuffs".[101] Celebes, however, was a producer of many articles of trade from weapons to gold to the foodstuffs mentioned by Pires. The trading history of the island reaches back past the reputed discovery of the island in 1525 by the Portuguese,[102] to an established intercourse between the islanders and the Malay and Javanese merchants who plied the waters between their own ports and the countless islands of the archipelago. This early contact is attested to by the presence of Malay and Javanese words in the Celebesian language, covering such things as cultivated crops, weapons, items of trade and concepts relating to religion.[103]

Gold dust, birds'-nests, tortoise-shell, trepang, scented woods and rice were all articles of trade exported from Celebes, as were horses[104] and slaves. It has been noted previously that sago was also an export commodity, destined for Banda. De Couto names additional products; "red gems, which are made into ornaments, with sandal-wood and sapan-wood, and the people manufacture much good cloth of silk of many sorts."[105] Apart from Malayan and Javanese merchants visiting the island, Chinese merchants also formed part of the Celebes trade network. They no doubt came to secure quantities of trepang, birds'-nests and tortoise-shell. St.John notes that in the nineteenth century Chinese traders still

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100 'A Discription of the Iland of Seran" in Birdwood and Foster, *op.cit.*, p.78. The small cannon was made in China and bought by the English in Bantam. The description emphasises that Ceram offers nothing of any commercial value other than sago "for to make bread to be sold to good pfitt onelie att Banda."

101 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.221

102 De Barros in Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.89. According to de Barros the Celebes were discovered by Portuguese sailing from the Moluccas in search of gold and the islands said to produce it.

103 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.91

104 Horses are mentioned by De Couto along with elephants, fowl, sheep, buffaloes, deer, hogs, partridges and other forest game, but he does not specifically name them as export stock. St.John, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.354, does name horses as being exported to Java, India and Mauritius.

105 De Couto in *ibid.*, p.90

frequented Celebes' ports where they were offered junk sails, cables of braided rattan and wooden anchors by the local vendors.[106]

Barbosa wrote that the Celebes islanders traded to the Moluccas in "ill-constructed barks", although according to De Couto they had several different types of vessels.[107] He named the *pelang* (a Malay barge or pinnacle), used for war on account of their speed; the *lopi*, used for cargo; and larger vessels called *jojoga*.[108] Considering they were essentially a maritime people we can assume that their ship-building skills were commensurate with the demands of their maritime environment. The Celebes traders came to the Moluccas to obtain cargoes of cloves, copper, Cambay cloth and tin, and in return brought with them long and broad one-edged swords, iron work and "much gold".[109] It would not appear that the Celebesian sailors lengthened their voyages to take their goods directly to Banda, but were content to confine their trade to the Moluccas. English merchants found that a variety of cloths were easily disposed of on Celebes, as well as drinking glasses, looking glasses and knives. In exchange the English took rice to sell at Amboina and Banda, indigo and bezoar, "wch theare in aboundance are to be hadd."[110]

Goram

Often neglected in the surveys of the trading ports of the eastern archipelago is Goram group, lying off the southeastern point of Ceram.[111] Whilst it produced none of the spices so esteemed by Asian and European traders, it nevertheless was a busy trading port in its own right. Goram conducted a lucrative trade with its neighbours in the sixteenth century,[112] and this continued into the nineteenth century when it was witnessed by

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106 St.John, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.354

107 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.205, De Couto in Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.90

108 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.90

109 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.205. De Couto mentions that copper was among the ores available in Celebes, as does St.John, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.354 - why they should wish to obtain Moluccan copper is uncertain, unless Barbosa has mistaken exported copper for an import.

110 "A Discription of the Iland Selebes or Makasser" in Birdwood and Foster, *op.cit.*, p.77

111 Whilst in no way claiming complete familiarity with all sources for this region, no reference to Goram in the available literature consulted has been sighted.

112 C.R. Boxer and P.-Y. Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.180, fn.14. This article is comprised of two parts; De Brito's text in Spanish, and Boxer and Manguin's footnotes in English. In further references to this article 'Boxer and Manguin' should be taken to refer to the footnotes, and 'De Brito' to a translation of the text.

Wallace. Whilst it is not prudent to assert that the organisation and nature of the trade observed by Wallace had remained wholly unchanged through the course of three centuries, any change would most likely be limited to the introduction of new commodities. Once regular markets had been established they were unlikely to be abandoned whilst that trade bought mutual benefit, unless the trading environment itself was altered.

Wallace recorded that the Goram traders annually visited the Tenimbar, Kai and Aru Islands; indeed they travelled in the praus built by the Kai islanders.[113] They also sailed to Banda, Amboina, Ternate and Tidore in the Moluccas, Waigiou and Misoöl, and even to the northwest coast of New Guinea.[114] Their own island provided safe anchorage "in all weathers", he noted.[115] It is probable that the Bugis traders came to Goram itself as well as dealing with its traders on Ceram-Laut.

It was not only the merchant population which was mobile, sometime between the years 1545 and 1547 a number of people from Goram emigrated to Amboina and settled in the village of Kilang.[116] The reason for this migration is unknown, but it is difficult to see a connection with trade or trading opportunities as Kilang is located on the central southern coast of the southern peninsula, Leitimor, quite some distance from the established trading ports of the island.

The chief items of Goram's trade were wild nutmegs, massoi bark and tortoise-shell from New Guinea, and trepang, possibly obtained in the Philippines or from Aru. They also purchased coconut oil from the Matabello islanders, which was then sold on Banda.[117] Goram traders carried their goods to the island of Kaliwaru, a small island in the Ceram-Laut group where they were purchased by Bugis and traders from mainland Ceram.

Ceram-Laut

Another small group of islands is the Ceram-Laut group, lying off the southeast tip of Ceram. Like Goram they receive no mention in the contemporary European sources and this does not reflect the amount of trade based on this group. They are recorded as trading mainly in tortoise-

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113 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.376

114 *Loc.cit.*

115 *Ibid.*, p.374

116 Schurhammer, *op.cit.* Vol.III, p.86

117 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.372. This was also sold to Bugis traders. The island also produced areca or betel-nut palm, but Wallace does not indicate if this was sold to visiting traders.

shell and trepang, and for these they sailed to New Guinea and its neighbouring islands.[118] They also traded in seed-pearls, scented woods, nutmegs, stuffed birds of paradise, parrots and pigeons, and sulphur.[119] The sulphur may have been fetched from the Philippines. Crawfurd names five islands in the group, among them Sereni and Kilawaru, while Wallace indicates by a map the existence of four large islands and nine smaller islands.[120] The names designated by the latter differ greatly from those given by Crawfurd, but whether this is an inaccuracy on the part of one of these gentlemen has not been established. The significance of the names becomes important with the information left by Miguel Roxo de Brito.

It is known from the nineteenth century accounts referred to above that a reasonable trade was conducted on the Ceram-Laut island of Kilawaru, and it may be assumed that this trade had been long-established. The island was a gathering point for the various goods brought by traders. Wallace described it as a large floating village, "a place of great traffic, being the emporium for much of the produce of these Eastern seas".[121] Physically, the island was a sandbank, roughly fifty feet across and only three to four feet above the high-tide level. While this does not sound like the ideal location for an emporium of note, it nevertheless provided good anchorage during both monsoons. In addition to this there was the availability of fresh drinking water and, most significantly, a central situation in the Papuan trading-district.[122] This small area was reputedly home to both Bugis and Ceramese traders, and was resorted to by the traders of Goram.[123]

The main trade was in massoi bark and trepang, with smaller quantities of wild nutmegs, tortoise-shell, pearls, birds of paradise and opium.[124] Sago was brought from mainland Ceram, probably exported from the port of Gule-Gule, and no doubt to sustained the local population as well as being an item for re-export. Rice was also available,

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118 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.93

119 *Loc.cit.* Crawfurd adds that it was unknown from what volcano the Ceram-Laut traders obtained their supplies of sulphur.

120 *Loc.cit.*; Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.369. Crawfurd only names the largest islands of the group; he acknowledges there is a greater number than five.

121 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.368

122 *Ibid.*, p.380

123 *Ibid.*, pp.368, 380

124 *Ibid.*, p.380. Wallace noted that the Goram traders also procured cargoes of opium on Kilawaru, to trade to Mysol and Waigiou as well as for their own consumption.

brought by Balinese and Makassarese traders.[125] Papuan slaves were taken by the Balinese, whether this was in exchange for the foodstuffs they brought is unknown but likely, as Wallace does not mention the exchange of currency in his account of the trading practices. In later years Kilawaru played host to Bugis traders carrying Kling cloth and China wares from Singapore,[126] and while this is obviously too far in the future to be taken into serious consideration, it does illustrate the point that Kilawaru remained busy as an important gathering and redistribution point among the eastern islands.

There was another island lying close to Ceram's southeast point which was the focus of a trade possibly bigger and busier than that operating on Kilawaru. This was the *Serdenha* of Miguel Roxo de Brito's narrative. The tentative itinerary presented by Boxer and Manguin[127] indicates that de Brito did not actually visit all the islands for which he gathered his trading data, but nevertheless the information he has provided incorporates islands which are often either neglected or overlooked when discussing the trading history of islands within the region of the Spice Islands.

De Brito began his journey on 17 May, 1581, departing from Bachian in the company of an un-named Portuguese companion and one hundred and forty Moluccans.[128] They sailed in two kora-koras to Obi and then Tapa where the friendly natives helped launch his kora-kora, and then accompanied him for some time as he sailed for the Boo group. He noted that the Boo group of islands were seriously depopulated,[129] possibly as a result of the numerous groups of slavers operating within the region. He then sailed to Labey, Misool and Waigeo. Waigeo, De Brito noted, was well-populated in its northeastern territory, and here it had a lagoon which provided good anchorage. It harvested '*landan*', taken by the authors to be sago,[130] but De Brito does not record whether it was an item of trade. He does record the fact that Waigeo produced "much gold", and also that it had close contact with the island *Serdenha*.

Serdenha, located close to Ceram, was home to five thousand merchants, all "very rich". They were known as the great traders of the

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125 *Ibid.*, p.381
126 *Loc.cit.*
127 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.179 - map.
128 De Brito, *op.cit.*, p.177
129 *Loc.cit.*
130 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.178, fn.13

region, especially for their trade to New Guinea and Botan, the latter a general name for all islands in the region.[131] From Onin, the province on the western-most point of New Guinea, *Serdenha* obtained slaves in exchange for gold and gongs. The impression left by De Brito's account is that slaves were of the most profitable items in which the *Serdenhese* dealt.[132] It had a large fleet enabling it to conduct such a far-reaching operation. De Brito says it belonged to the King of *Serdenha*; Boxer and Manguin are not specific regarding its ownership, but while a king may possess a large fleet of his own, it is unlikely that he would have agents numbering up to five thousand, and equally unlikely that an independent community of five thousand would be content to conduct their business with vessels owned exclusively by the king. The unclear text at this point does not enlighten us in any way as to who owned the ships or how many there was in the fleet, nor does it tell us to where the *Serdenhese* merchants traded most profitably, although it has told us in what they traded to their benefit. The text does tell us that *Serdenha* traded to Java as well as to New Guinea, and this leads to the proposition that the merchant community was divided into at least two groups with distinct/separate spheres of business interests.

On the one hand we have a group who deals with the Java trade, and from De Brito's account we know that they traded massoi bark and sago to the Javanese ports. De Brito has not recorded what commodities were brought back from Java, but the cargo probably would have included rice and Chinese cashes, both in demand and easily traded within the eastern archipelago islands. *Serdenhese* traders also visited Timor, Bima and Bali. From Timor they obtained sandalwood, from Bima gold, amber and wax, and from Bali gold and cloth. Slaves, no doubt, formed part of the *Serdenhese* cargo to these islands, and in view of their extensive trading connections with the north and northeastern islands of the archipelago, massoi bark, gold, and possibly some spice from Banda.

On the other hand we have an extremely lucrative slave and gold trade between *Serdenha* and New Guinea. From a garbled report of a conversation between the Kings of *Serdenha* and Papua regarding the

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131 De Brito, *op.cit.*, p.180. Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.180,fn.17, note that the people of Ceram call the entire area Botan.

132 The text implies that slaves and gold were traded by the *Serdenha* merchants to islands in the region.

slave trade,[133] we may assume that the King of *Serdenha* was involved with this latter and more lucrative sphere of trade. This still does not solve the problem of how many ships *Serdenha* could operate or who owned them, but De Brito, in another section of confused text, does mention twenty to forty ships. He says that he departed from *Serdenha* accompanied by its merchant fleet,[134] possibly the above-mentioned twenty to forty ships, and he heads north. Although there is no clear evidence from the text, this merchant fleet probably belonged to the King and was embarking on another slave trading voyage. The question of the number of ships journeying south to Java, unfortunately, must remain unanswered for the present.

Serdenha's merchants sailed to New Guinea to obtain their valuable cargoes. The focus of the trade was the province of Onin where, De Brito noticed, there was a reasonably powerful king, a nice harbour and the people were all merchants.[135] Within the province, the town of Sekar (*Segat*) had a great market for the ransoming of slaves. *Serdenha* was their best customer.[136] West of Sekar was Sufia (*Ufia, Sufia*), to where the *Serdenha* merchants came for massoi bark. Here they traded iron and swords for the massoi and also for gold.[137] Sufia had "much gold", but it was not obtained from a purely local source. The island of Ogar (*Ugar*) also had "muncho oro" and possibly sent this to the markets at Sufia. Iron was also traded to Manggosa (*Magusia*). De Brito says it was brought from *Tanbuco*, which Boxer and Manguin tentatively identify as Madura, the name *Tanbuco* derived from Gunung Tambuku, Madura's highest

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133 *Ibid.*, p.182. Papua refers to Ceram and not New Guinea (the source of the slaves). A triangular connection exists between *Serdenha*, Ceram and New Guinea but the vagueness of the text gives very little indication of what the nature of this connection actually was. The possibilities are that once *Serdenha* obtained its slaves from New Guinea, Papua either guarded them, stole them and ransomed them back to *Serdenha* or Papua had itself obtained the slaves as prisoners-of-war and sold them to *Serdenha*. The only point which can be clearly made from all this is that the three countries were directly involved with the slave trade at great profit to all of them.

134 *Loc.cit.*

135 *Ibid.*, p.185

136 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.185, fn.39 note that Onin and its dependencies remained an important slave market in the seventeenth century.

137 Boxer & Manguin, *ibid.*, p.186, fn.44 suggest that *talisas* may be a misspelling of *calisas*, and if so, it could be that Javanese krisses were bartered against the massoi bark. This being the case, we may add krisses to the list of possible Javanese goods imported by *Serdenha's* merchants.

mountain.[138] This is entirely feasible in view of *Serdenhese* voyages to Java and its neighbouring islands.

In its immediate trading neighbourhood, *Serdenha's* merchants carried on a trade with the Banda islands. They exchanged the sago brought from a number of islands for the nutmeg and mace for which Banda was famous. The spices must have formed part of a cargo destined for Javanese ports, as it had been observed that they were not, as a rule, consumed by the local populations, and there is no evidence of them being exported further east. Any market for nutmeg there would have been catered to with the wild nutmegs grown in New Guinea.

Misoöl was another local trading partner, trading gold it had obtained from Onin for gongs and cloth brought from Java by the *Serdenha* merchants.[139] De Brito also mentions the island of Gebe which traded gongs to *Apaa*,[140] a location somewhere on the west New Guinea coast. Gebe however, does not appear to have any connection with *Serdenha* and its trade, its link in this trading system may be to Waigeo, which itself had trading connections with New Guinea.

De Brito's account firmly places *Serdenha* as a major centre of the east-west traffic in the products of the eastern archipelago. The island supported a large population, considering its own small size, of at least five thousand,[141] and this number does not take into account wives, children and slaves of the merchants community, nor the palace population, which itself was no doubt quite considerable. It had a fleet of junks which sailed to Java and the southern islands, although at which ports this fleet conducted its business with is unknown. A fleet also sailed to New Guinea to collect its cargoes of slaves and massoi bark. *Serdenha* had a limited trade with Banda and Misoöl in its immediate neighbourhood, and does not seem to have traded to the Moluccas at all. De Brito does not mention cloves as an item traded in by the *Serdenhese*. This leaves us with the picture of *Serdenha* operating as an independent merchant community within the eastern archipelago trading network,

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138 De Brito, *op.cit.*, p.184; Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.184

139 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.181 in their diagram appear to have made an error in the direction of their arrow connecting *Serdenha* and Misool. They show that gold, gongs and cloth were traded from *Serdenha* to Misool, and gold from Onin to Misool. Surely gold was traded from Misool to *Serdenha*, not the other way around. This would make more sense of their connection of Misool to Onin - gongs traded to Misool from *Serdenha* were traded to Onin in exchange for gold which was then exchanged between Misool and *Serdenha* for cloth and more gongs.

140 De Brito, *op.cit.*, p.189

141 *Ibid.*, p.180

and being a central part of that network by virtue of its traffic in massoi bark and slaves. It also leaves us with the picture of two independently functioning trading networks within the larger network; one centred on the Moluccas, the other on *Serdenha*.

Boxer and Manguin were unable to locate *Serdenha*, other than to place it near Ceram and about thirty leagues south from Misoöl.[142] Many of these islands were not deemed significant enough by the early Europeans trading in the region, and hence were rarely recorded by word or illustration. If De Brito's directions were accurate, this places the island in either the Ceram-Laut group or the Goram group. In most standard atlases such small islands are not shown, and the maps taken from the travel notes of Alfred Wallace do show some of these islands, but unfortunately he does not show any island whose name even vaguely resembles *Serdenha*, although he does show the small trading island of Kiliwaru. While it is tempting to identify *Serdenha* with Wallace's "rustic Venice ... [which] seems to float upon the water ... and is the residence of many Bugis and Ceramese traders", it is impossible (and incautious) to do so without evidence of a more substantial nature.

Crawfurd names the five largest islands in the group as Serenre, Gesir, Kilawaru, Gorong (Goram?) and Malongi, but seems to have combined some islands of the Goram group with those of Ceram-Laut. He does not even mention two of the larger Ceram-Laut islands, Keffing and Kwammer, even though Wallace describes them as "both thickly populated", and he names Serenre rather than Kilawaru as the island to which Bugis traders sailed to purchase or dispose of merchandise.[143] To complicate things even further, modern maps usually name Gesir only;[144] by implication this is the main and largest island in the group, but again there is no obvious relation between the names Gesir and *Serdenha*. Serenre is phonetically similar to the Malayan 'Serang-Laut', but a derivation from the name *Serdenha* is not apparent. Perhaps Wallace's Ceram-Laut, the largest island in the group, is Crawfurd's Serenre and De Brito's *Serdenha*. This is a simple conclusion, and is by no means put forward as a confident proposition. It is merely a tentative exploration of the possibilities.

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142 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.180,fn.14

143 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary*, *op.cit.*, p.93; Wallace, *op.cit.*, pp.367-368

144 The Comprehensive Times, etc. show Gesir only

The confusion of names applied to these islands make Boxer and Manguin's hesitant identification appreciable. Identification, at least as part of the Ceram-Laut group, could have been made if De Brito had made some separate and district reference to Goram or one of the islands within its group, but no such reference was made. Both groups of islands dealt in the same trading commodities, so no distinction can be made here. Perhaps a more detailed study of those items of trade may go some way to solving the puzzle of *Serdenha's* exact identity. If it could be determined that Goram did not deal in slaves, the focus would be squarely on the Ceram-Laut group, as it would not be feasible to have two centres in the sub-region operating a slave trade in such close proximity to each other. As it is, Serdenha must remain as Boxer and Manguin left it: "a) close to Seram, b) about 30 leagues, or 96 nautical miles, south of Misoöl."[145]

Waigeo

Waigeo is another island in the sub-regional trading network which had a prosperous trade with its neighbours. It was a well-populated island, with at least four thousand men obedient to the king.[146] Its trading contacts included both *Serdenha* and west New Guinea, and possibly the northern Javanese ports.[147] Many of the natives were involved in the production of sago which was probably confined to internal consumption in view of Waigeo's trade in the profitable items of gold and slaves. Waigeo produced gold which was worked into an appropriate form and was then sent to *Serdenha* or New Guinea.[148] Ogar, an island off the south coast of the Maccleur Golf, was the contact point for Waigeo. De Brito had been told by the king of Waigeo that the king of Ogar was rich in gold and very powerful, and he alludes to some sort of arrangement between the two kings, the nature of which is far from clear.[149]

Waigeo's king appears to have been ever-alert to new trading possibilities, for during De Brito's stay he indicated to him that he was desirous of schooling himself in the customs of the Catholic church, and he expressed an interest in the signs of the Cross and their meaning.[150] All

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145 Boxer & Manguin, *op.cit.*, p.180, fn.14

146 De Brito, *op.cit.*, p.178, though later he speakes of only 1,000 loyal subjects, p.184

147 *Ibid.*, pp.180, 191

148 *Ibid.*, p.180. Although it is not clear that the gold was worked into ornamental or decorative forms, the text implies this: "Aqui me trayan muncho oro labrado y por labrar para si lo queria comprar."

149 *Ibid.*, p.186

150 *Ibid.*, p.184

this may be interpreted as a pagan king ready to accept the religion of either a new force in the region which he recognised to be a potentially dominant force, or a genuine desire to convert to a Christian religion. An additional enquiry concerning Catholic attitudes to eating pig meat, however, tends to diminish the religious tone of the king's interest, and points to a sovereign seeking to discover in which direction he could find new trading partners. He had no doubt recognised the strong connection between trade and religious dissemination, and was aware of the two dominant influences operating, evident as they were in the eastern archipelago sub-region. Thus his choice lay between the Portuguese (Catholic) or Islamic traders. It appears from its later affiliations that Waigeo's king must have decided against the Portuguese.

Wallace, who visited the island in 1860, found that the islanders were under the rule of the Sultan of Tidore, and were sending a tribute of birds of paradise, sago and tortoise-shell. While the bird of paradise was indigenous to Waigeo, and sago was also grown on the island, the islanders were still voyaging to New Guinea to secure the necessary quantities of tortoise-shell, "and getting a few goods on credit from some Ceram or Bugis trader, make hard bargains with the natives, and gain enough to pay their tribute, and leave a little profit for themselves."[151] Wallace's account also indicates that the prosperity enjoyed by the king and people of Waigeo in the sixteenth century was not enduring. While they still were able to afford slaves, Wallace noted that their general standard of living was low and that they lived in "almost absolute idleness".[152]

Evidence is fairly light for the trade network of the small islands following, nevertheless these islands were integral to the functioning of the sub-regional trade.

Sulu

The Sulu Archipelago is comprised of approximately one hundred and fifty islands, most uninhabited. There are four main islands, with the principal island of the group also called Sulu.[153] Barbosa described Sulu as

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151 *Loc.cit.*
152 *Loc.cit.*
153 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.406

being "most abundant in the necessaries of life", and commented on the "civilised people of fair complexions and good dispositions". This fine description seems at odds with the reputation of the islanders as pirates and slave traders:

> Their predatory fleets extend their cruizes from one end of the Malay Archipelago to the other, but the chief theatres of their depredations are, and have always been, the Philippines.[154]

Slaving was a ongoing business - the Sulu pirates were observed by another nineteenth century source as conducting slave raids on Aru in 1857.[155] Less mercenary commodities dealt with by the Sulus included gold, trepang, tortoise-shell, swallows'-nests, pearl oysters and pearls fine enough to be presented to the king of Borneo.[156] Pires noted that Sulu produced gold and many foodstuffs which were bought to Banda.[157] The sago they produced was exchanged with the Bandanese for cloth bought to Banda by the Javanese and Malay merchants and rice purchased from Bima and bought by those same merchants.[158]

Aru

The chain of the Aru islands, lying east of Banda, cover an extensive area of one hundred miles in length by fifty miles in breadth.[159] As with most of the archipelagoes dotting Indonesian waters, many of these islands were no doubt uninhabited. The main islands in the group consist of a clump of three, namely Wokan, Maykor and Kobror. Dobbo, the main port of call for traders, was located on Wokan.

The islands were noted for their particular fauna - the magnificent bird of paradise. Other commodities available for trade or barter were birds'-nests, tortoise-shell, two kinds of mother-of-pearl shell, pearl

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154 *Ibid.*, p.408

155 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.441. Wallace was inconvenienced by these raids as the men of Dobbo, not surprisingly, were reluctant to leave their families and property undefended in order to convey he and his possessions elsewhere. He describes their fear of the pirates as "an excellent excuse for refusing to stir." He does add further information about the pirates, saying that their last attack on Aru was eleven years before (1846), "and thus by making their attacks at long and uncertain intervals the alarm dies away, and they find a population ...unarmed and unsuspicious".

156 Crawfurd, *Descriptive Dictionary, op.cit.*, p.408

157 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, pp.221-222

158 Villiers, *Trade and Society, op.cit.*, p.740

159 Crawfurd, *op.cit.*, p.23

oysters, trepang and the sago palm. Gold was also found on the islands and exported to Banda.

Two of the seventeen species of the bird of paradise identified by the nineteenth century entomologist and naturalist Alfred Wallace were indigenous to the Aru islands. These were the Great Paradise Bird and the King Paradise Bird, and were "prized more than any others".[160] The Great Paradise male was between eighteen and twenty-four inches in length and displayed a head of "an exceedingly delicate straw yellow", brilliant emerald green neck feathers, a velvet-like breast of glossy black, wings of chesnut, a pale coffee-coloured body covered in long, straight feathers similar to that of an ostrich, belly feathers of golden yellow and two long tail feathers of between twenty-four to thirty-four inches in length.[161] The female, in contrast, "is really a very plain and ordinary-looking bird of a uniform coffee-brown color which never changes".[162] The King Paradise male measured a mere six and a half inches in length, but his colouring was as brilliant as the larger birds of the species. Its head was a rich, glossy crimson-red, with a "fire-coloured" forehead. It had a pure white belly broken by a metallic green band and its body tapered into tail feathers, of which the two middle feathers:

> are modified into very slender wire-like shafts, nearly six inches long, each of which bears at the extremity, on the inner side only, a web of an emerald-green color, which is coiled up into a perfect spiral disc, and produces a most singular and charming effect.[163]

Again the female was a plain companion for such a magnificent bird. It was obviously the males of the species which were hunted by the islanders, its feathers to be worn ornamentally by the natives[164] or for export.

Which of these birds was the more commonly exported from Aru has not been fully established. We know from Pires that "only a few

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160 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.572; Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.209

161 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, pp.403-404, Wallace, *op.cit.*, pp.553-554. These two accounts disagree of some points concerning the appearance of the bird of paradise, but as Wallace actually spent some time studying and collecting specimens of the birds in their native habitat his information concerning the physical features and habits of the bird has been given preference, likewise Milburne, in his area of oriental commerce has been referred to for matters of trade concerning the birds.

162 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.554

163 *Ibid.*, pp.560-561, Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, pp.405-406

164 *Ibid.*, p.406

come" to Banda,[165] but on the basis of Wallaces' observations this does not incline towards either species. He describes flocks of female and young males of the Great Paradise as being abundant but the full-plummaged Great Paradise male as being "less plentiful", and the King Paradise as being "tolerably plentiful".[166] Additionally, he says of the Great Paradise variety that it was believed by the natives that only one egg was laid per nest and that the male moulted probably four times before reaching its mature and complete plumage in May.[167] Milburne, however, noted that in the early nineteenth century it was the Great Paradise bird which was sold on Banda, at a cost of one rix-dollar per bird, whereas in the Aru islands themselves the birds could be obtained for "a spike-nail, or old piece of iron."[168] We can assume it was the Great Paradise variety that made the journey to the Banda market in a greater proportion to the King Paradise, though this smaller bird was no doubt a substitute completely acceptable to the buyers on Banda. Two varieties of these birds were also traded to Makassar, or rather were collected by Makassarese traders in an annual voyage to the eastern islands.[169] The birds were shot with arrows armed with blunt tips. Thus stunned they were killed and skinned. The wings and feet were removed, and the body skinned up to the beak and the skull removed. They were then impaled on a stick, wrapped in a palm swathe and dried in a smoky hut. In this way the head and body are shrunk and "the greatest prominence is given to the flowering plumage."[170]

Kai

The Kai islands, west of Aru, are made up of three large islands and numerous islets. The main produce of the islands was sago which was exported to Banda in return for cloth and rice, as well as gongs, ivory and porcelain.[171] From the island's abundance of coconuts oil was made which was sold to Aru traders who came to lade cargoes of native crockery, wooden utensils and boats. The Kai islanders also made the journey to Aru. Other goods traded were fish, coconuts, earthen pans, sirip-leaves,

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165 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.209
166 Wallace, *op.cit.*, pp.555, 560
167 *Ibid.*, pp.554-555
168 Milburne, *Oriental Commerce, op.cit.*, p.404
169 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.409
170 *Ibid.*, pp.555-556
171 Meilink-Roelofsz, *op.cit.*, pp.95-96

wooden bowls, wooden trays and other local products.[172] These goods were then traded throughout the Moluccas[173], and possibly to Banda as well.

Dried parrots also formed part of the Kai export cargo, being shipped to Banda and thence to adorn the costume of Turks and Persians.[174] Bright scarlet lories found in the Kai islands were exported, but a species of the nutmeg-pigeon which, although bearing colours and a brilliance similar to the bird of paradise, does not appear to have been traded.[175] This pigeon was also found on the Banda islands, which is probably the reason why it was not in demand as a trading commodity.

The Kai islanders were noted for their ship-building skills. Using the timber blanketing the island, the natives built small and large canoes of up to twenty to thirty tons burden. These were entirely sea-worthy, capable of travelling from New Guinea to Singapore.[176]

> Their small canoes are beautifully formed, broad and low in the centre, but rising at each end, where they terminate in high-pointed beaks more or less carved, and ornamented with a plume of feathers.[177]

Wood and rattan were skilfully used to produce these craft. Planks of three or four inches thick were held together with pins of hard wood, and rattan secured seats or cross-beams, depending on the size of the vessel being built. These canoes were not caulked as were those of Bandanese construction, indicating perhaps a superior quality of workmanship.

While the islands discussed in this chapter are by no means an exhaustive compilation of those engaged in the trade of the eastern archipelago sub-region, they have been identified as the most important in terms of the exchange of staples in the trade network, and the exchange of what was perceived by the Europeans entering the east as being far more

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172 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.426

173 *Ibid.*, p.424

174 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.209

175 Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.423-424

176 *Ibid*, p.424-425. These distances were recorded in the canoes built in the nineteenth century, but as ship-building techniques changed very little in these regions, it is reasonable to expect similar distances being covered in preceding centuries.

177 *Loc.cit.* The following description is also from Wallace, pp.425-426. He comments that he believed such ships to be stronger and safer than those constructed with nails.

valuable commodities - spices. These islands, especially the smaller islands, may be considered to be representative of those not mentioned, for to do that, as Tomé Pires would have it:

> "... would mean writing about another hundred thousand ... it is certain that many of [the islands] are worth speaking about ... but it would be never ending and tedious."[178]

One aspect of the trade in the region which should be looked at before closing this chapter is the value of the various commodities dealt in. These values apply only to the post-European period, and it is impossible to determine a fixed value for any commodity.

Tomé Pires relates in some detail the quantities of cloves grown in the Moluccas, and the types of goods which the islanders demanded in exchange, but he does not give any indication of the relative worth of the produce. He does, however, make it clear that barter and exchange were the mode of trade, rather than buying and selling. Pigafetta has left an account of the trade carried out between the Tidorese and his own companions.[179] The Tidorese ruler had a house built for the Spaniards for their business, and they conducted a thriving trade in the following days. The following items were traded for one bahar of cloves[180]: ten fathoms of red cloth of very good quality; fifteen hatchers (hatchets?); thirty-five glass drinking cups; seventeen cathils of cinnebar; seven cathils of quicksilver; twenty-six fathoms of linen; twenty-five fathoms of finer linen; one hundred and fifty knives; fifty pairs of scissors; forty caps; ten pieces of Gujerat cloth; one quintal of bronze; four brazas of ribbon. For fifteen fathoms of cloth of not very good quality, they received one quintal and one hundred pounds, and two brass chains, worth one marcello, bought one hundred libras of cloves. For "three of those gongs of theirs" the Spanish received two bahars of cloves. Pigafetta adds that in "our haste to return to Spain made us dispose of our merchandise at better bargains [to the natives] than we should have done."[181] One form of cloth which was highly esteemed by the Moluccans was the *patola*, described by

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178 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, pp.222-223

179 Pigafetta, Robertson, *op.cit.*, pp.68-69; B & R., *op.cit.*, p.55. The marcello was a silver Venetian coin weighing 63 grams.

180 Pigafetta says the bahar used was equivalent ot four quintals and six pounds, Robertson, *op.cit.*, p.68

181 *Ibid.*, p.69. Pigafetta can hardly complain about the prices obtained for, as he says himself, many of the items they traded were booty from a captured Pulaoan junk.

Pigafetta as a cloth of gold and silk. They were said to be manufactured in China, and could fetch up to three bahars of cloves.[182]

In the Banda islands Barbosa says that for one of the Javanese gongs twenty bahars of mace could be expected. The same price for the gong could be had in the Moluccas, or for a gong of slightly less quality twenty quintals were paid, and thirty quintals for a large porcelain bowl.[183]

It is obvious from the above lists that imported cloth, particularly that from Gujerat and the *patolas* from China, and the precious Javanese gongs were the goods which demanded the higher rate of exchange in the islands. Overall, cloth was more in demand than the other items brought by the Europeans - mirrors, cups, and so on. Nevertheless, the iron goods, such as the knives or scissors, still obtained a reasonably large rate of exchange.

The role of the spices, cloves, nutmeg and mace, in the inter-island trade should now be apparent. These were exchanged with the Chinese traders from very early times, most probably for porcelain and other goods from that country. Javanese and Malay traders soon appeared, exchanging their goods for the desired cloves, and relatively soon thereafter, the Javanese traded with the Bandanese for their nutmeg and mace. There is no evidence to suggest that the spices were ever used within the island network, apart from medicinal references in Galvão. Other sources confirm that the islanders did not seek the spices for their own use. Therefore, the desire to acquire cloves, nutmeg and mace was generated by the demand for these commodities by outside agents - the Chinese, Javanese, Malays, Arabs, and then the Europeans.

Essentially then, the trade of the sub-region was one of staples and of items of cultural import. Foodstuffs were exchanged between islands and necessary items such as cloth were obtained. As the demand for the produce of the Spice Islands increased, they gained more prominence within the network as items of exchange. It is most surprising that the smaller islands were significant participants of this sub-regional trading network, and yet these were not recognised by the early Europeans. If this fact had been recognised, and the information involving details of trading processes and structures recorded, a fuller picture of the complexities of

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182 Pigafetta, B & R, op.cit., p.59. The ruler of Bachian gave 500 of these cloths to the ruler of Tidore on the occasion of the marriage of the Tidorese ruler's daughter to the brother of the Bachian ruler. It was also noted that, among the wealthy, these cloths were worn in mourning, "in order to show him more honour."

183 Barbosa, *op.cit.*, pp.198, 202-203

this sub-regional network could have been attempted. Obviously, the lack of information, and even interest, about these small empôria stems from the Europeans' obsessive desire to monopolise the nutmeg, mace and cloves, the products of only several of the productive eastern islands. All other commodities available were used as a means to an end. Sources such as Pires and Barbosa have left us with little more than the most basic facts and not a true reflection of the significance of these islands as the true entrepôts of the sub-regional trading network.