

THE EDGES OF EMPIRE:
INDIGENIZATION AND LOCALIZATION OF THE
“BLACK PORTUGUESE” IN SEVENTEENTH AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EASTERN INDONESIA

LEONARD Y. ANDAYA *

Introduction

In history textbooks and in academic discourses, the sixteenth century in Asia has tended to be regarded as the highpoint of Portuguese achievement within the *Estado da India* centered in Goa. The subsequent centuries are therefore regarded as a decline in Portuguese influence in face of the strong military and economic challenges posed by the northern Europeans. More recently, however, there have been scholars who have begun to examine this premise of “decline”. Subrahmanyam, for example, shows that in the latter third of seventeenth century a substantial Portuguese trade was being conducted between Macau and Southeast Asia, mainly centered at Makassar, Melaka, and Tonkin.¹ In an exciting departure from traditional ways of viewing “Portuguese” trade, Boyajian emphasizes the significance of the private Portuguese trade as the basis for Macau’s displacement of Goa as a Portuguese economic center in Asia. He writes:

“The expansion of private trade during the second half of the sixteenth century in fact gradually transformed the Portuguese overseas venture from a

* University of Hawai’i (Manoa).

¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700 – A Political and Economic History*, Londres, Longman, 1993, pp. 207-8.

regime of plunder, tributes, and privileged trade of the king and a few aristocrats into a truly commercial empire, whose wealth derived from the private trade of merchants in Lisbon and across Asia, Africa, and the Americas.”²

He further argues that private Portuguese trade prior to 1600 involved far larger capital infusion than available to the Dutch or English East India Companies in their Asian trade. While Portuguese private trade slowed with the intervention of the Dutch, it was still a factor in the middle of the seventeenth century.³

Following in the footsteps of these scholars, I believe that much more can be learned about the Portuguese in Asia by shifting our gaze away from Goa and its earlier concerns to the “edges of empire.” In areas such as eastern Indonesia, the Portuguese successfully maintained a political and economic presence as a result of a process of readjustment to local realities. It involved a reassessment of what it meant to be “Portuguese” and a conscious decision to preserve the old but reinterpreted “Portuguese” identity, while assuming a new indigenous one. This was possible because they were “children” of Albuquerque, the *mestiços*, whose intermediary position allowed them the freedom to exploit identity to strengthen and hence preserve the unity of their communities in Asia. This, then, is the story of the process that led to the preservation of East Timor as one of the few “Portuguese” enclaves that survived into the twentieth century.

One of the fateful decisions taken by Afonso de Albuquerque shortly after the Portuguese had established a permanent foothold in Asia was to encourage the marriage of the Portuguese to local women of the better classes. The aim was to produce offspring who would be faithful to the Portuguese and therefore help to staff what he envisioned as a Portuguese Asian empire. Although the perfect union was never achieved, and the Portuguese were forced to seek partners of lower classes, nevertheless the emergence of the Portuguese *mestiço* became a social phenomenon which long survived the formal *Estado da Índia* and the informal remnants of the Portuguese empire in the eastern Indonesian islands.

The Portuguese *mestiço* became an important ingredient in the establishment and maintenance of Portuguese posts in Asia, and they formed a useful link between the Portuguese and the local communities from which their mothers originated. Their special position midway between the European and the indigenous communities had economic and often political benefits to both, but socially the *mestiço* suffered the fate of a person not fully accepted by either side. For this reason the *mestiços* formed strong links among themselves and developed a culture that was distinctively their own. So strong was the *mestiço* identity that it was viewed as a single phenomenon, particularly after the decline of the

² James C. Boyajian *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp. 242-3.

³ J. C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade...*, p. 244.

Estado da Índia, when various groups with some attachment to the Portuguese – whether through religion, language, or culture – tended to form a separate entity and be called by outsiders, the “black Portuguese.”

In the Malay-Indonesian archipelago (and very likely the whole of Southeast Asia) the distinctive backgrounds and cultures of the *mestiço*, the *Mardijkers* (freed slaves of mainly Indian origins who became Christian), the Pampangans (Philippine mercenaries under the Spaniards), and native Christians became subsumed under this new exonym (name given to the group by outsiders).⁴ While the exonym was a convenient short-hand applied by outsiders, it became a source of confusion because outsiders expected that the “black Portuguese” would be indistinguishable except for color from the “white” or European Portuguese. The term “black Portuguese” was applied to all those who shared adherence to Catholicism and varying degrees of facility in the Portuguese language but who were distinct from the European Portuguese because of their attachment to a native Asian culture.

One such “black Portuguese” groups was the Topas, who emerged as a unique community in the Lesser Sunda Islands (Nusatenggara Timur) of Indonesia. In the early sources these islands were referred to as the “Solor archipelago” and included the islands of Flores, Solor, Adonara, Lembata, Timor, and some of the smaller offshore islands. The name “Topas” is traceable to the Hindustani word “*topi*” meaning “hat.” This appears to be the most acceptable explanation since the Portuguese called this group “*gente dos chapeos*,” or the “hat people.”⁵ The name may have originated from the practice of *mestiços* wearing Portuguese hats. Such images can be found in the historical literature, and in addition to the Topas, some local groups have incorporated a version of the Portuguese hat into their ritual. One of the rulers in Timor was called “*Sobe Kase*” (“strange hat”) because he wore a hat given to him by the Portuguese. Even in the twentieth century a ruler of Sikka in eastern Flores is depicted in a photograph proudly wearing a version of the Portuguese hat.⁶

⁴ In a previous article I termed this composite group in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, the “Portuguese tribe (*suku*) because it functioned very much as other *suku* in the archipelago. Leonard Y. Andaya, “The Portuguese Tribe in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” in Francis A. Dutra and João Camilo dos Santos (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on The Portuguese and the Pacific*, Santa Barbara, Center for Portuguese Studies, UC Santa Barbara, 1995, pp. 129-48.

⁵ Another less convincing origin of the term is from the Tamil term *tuppasi* or “interpreter.” C. R. Boxer, “The Topas of Timor”, *Koninklijke Vereeniging Indisch Instituut*, Mededeling no. 73, Afdeling Volkenkunde no. 24, 1947, p. 1.

⁶ H. G. Schulte Nordholt saw the ruler of Sikka with this hat in 1939. H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System of the Atoni of Timor*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, p. 165, fn. 25.

Despite the colorful, remarkable history of the Topas, there has been very little systematic attempt to explain their success.⁷ In this essay I explore this question and attribute the success to three interlocking factors: (1) the simultaneous process of indigenization and localization of the Topas communities; (2) the ability of the black Portuguese to maintain a prestigious and spiritually potent association with "the Portuguese," while becoming incorporated as part of the indigenous communities; (3) and the eventual dominance of the black over the white Portuguese in the Solor archipelago. The combination of these elements enabled the Portuguese to maintain a foothold in eastern Timor in the Indonesian archipelago while all other areas eventually succumbed to the Dutch.

Being "Portuguese" in Eastern Indonesia

The first Europeans that the local people encountered in the Solor archipelago were the Portuguese, and the most prominent were the Catholic friars who brought Christianity to the area. Another type of white European that was present here was the small class of officials appointed to govern the far reaches of the *Estado da Índia*. They made much less of an impression on the local communities because of their relatively brief periods of service, and their basically confined lives in the Portuguese forts. In support of these officials was always a contingent of white European soldiers and private individuals who had far greater contact with the indigenous populations and informal liaisons with local women.⁸ The officials were dependent upon the religious personnel to arouse support for official policy among the native Christian converts. This close cooperation between the religious and civilian personnel was a consequence of the *Padroado Real* and reinforced the local perception of Christianity being synonymous with Portuguese.⁹ When official posts were abandoned, oftentimes the only Portuguese presence that remained was that of the friars, who exercised considerable influence among the Christian populations and among the Portuguese civil authorities.

⁷ C. R. Boxer was among the first to attempt to describe the Topas in an interesting article entitled "The Topasses of Timor", which was published in 1947. See C. R. Boxer, "Topasses of Timor...".

⁸ Suthachai Yimprasert, "Portuguese Lançados in Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", PhD dissertation, University of Bristol, 1998, p. 117.

⁹ The *Padroado Real* or "Royal Patronage" consisted of rights, privileges and duties granted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the Papacy to both the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns in their overseas empires. The intent was to delegate the responsibility of converting the heathens to the secular authorities, who would then exercise some control over the religious in the field. This amalgamating of religious and secular officials led the indigenous groups to regard both the secular and religious European presence as one and the same.

White Portuguese traders formed a third but smaller European presence in the area because of the important sandalwood trade. They brought the sandalwood collected in Timor to Solor and Makassar, which was then transshipped to Gresik in east Java and Melaka as the regional entrepôts, before continuing on to Macao and the Coromandel Coast as the two major destinations serving the China and the India markets, respectively. While there were some extraordinary traders, such as the highly successful Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, whose remarkable activities have been well-documented by C. R. Boxer,¹⁰ there were countless others of less influence and bravado, who participated in the trade in sandalwood, wax, and honey from Timor. According to a letter written by the Dominican Baltasar Dias in 1559, the Portuguese traders were highly successful in making conversions on the island of Solor, thus rivaling the practice among Muslim traders of carrying Muslim teachers and missionaries to convert the local people.¹¹

As the center of Portuguese trade and missionary activity moved further east after the fall of Portuguese Melaka to the Dutch in 1641, there was a corresponding expansion of Portuguese settlements. Within the forts were often erected the churches reserved for the Europeans and the monasteries, while within the shadows or close proximity to the fortifications were settlements of Christian *mestiços* and native Christians. For the local people, therefore, "Portuguese" came to mean not only the European but also others of mixed blood. Those *mestiços* who were from other areas were regarded as foreign as the Europeans, but in time many *mestiços* were offspring of European Portuguese and local women. The local connection was important because the children were mainly raised by their indigenous mothers, whose continuing contact with their families inevitably led to their offspring speaking the local language and becoming immersed in local ways. They may have been classified by the European Portuguese as *mestiço*, but they would have been regarded as far more indigenous than *mestiços* from elsewhere.

In the Solor archipelago the exonym "black Portuguese" consisted almost wholly of the *mestiços*, who were also dubbed "Topas" or the "Hat People." There were also small numbers of *Mardijkers*, or freed Christian slaves mainly of Indian background, who were used by the Dutch as mercenaries in their campaigns. Natives who converted to Christianity, however, were not regarded as Topas. Portuguese rulers in the sixteenth century emphasized that Christianity, not color, should be the guiding principle determining Portuguese citizenship, and that Asian converts should be regarded as the equal to white Portuguese

¹⁰ C. R. Boxer, "Topasses of Timor...".

¹¹ G. P. Rouffaer, "Chronologie der Dominikaner Missie op Solor en Flores, vooral Poeloe Ende, ca. 1556-1638 en Bibliografie over het Ende-Fort", *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw* 8 (1923-4), p. 205.

Christians, particularly if they were more or less assimilated to Portuguese culture and had been baptized.¹² But laws to the effect passed between 1562 and 1582 were never fully implemented.¹³ In the Solor archipelago, the very few white Portuguese maintained their superior status by emphasizing difference in culture rather than commonality of religion. As a result, the indigenous groups who converted to Christianity continued to maintain their ritual specialists and their old traditions, seeing themselves as separate and distinct from their white Portuguese co-religionists.¹⁴

Because the native Christians were relatively numerous in the Solor archipelago, they viewed themselves as distinct from the black Portuguese, unlike the case in other areas where native Christians were only a small minority. The distinction is clearly seen in the allocation of churches and congregations after the establishment of a Portuguese fort in Solor in 1562, which was converted to a stone fortress in 1566 after a Javanese attack.¹⁵ One village established on the west side of the fort consisted of about 2000 local Christian inhabitants with their own leader and church. The village on the east side contained 1000 inhabitants, both Portuguese and native Christians, but the Portuguese worshipped within the fort. On the little island of Ende off the south central coast of Flores, the Portuguese also erected a fort with three local Christian settlements around it. The Portuguese worshipped in the fort itself, while two and possibly all three settlements worshipped in their own churches located outside the walls of the fort.¹⁶ The black Portuguese remain unmentioned as a separate group and may have just been regarded as "Portuguese" as distinct from the local Christians.

Although the Portuguese white and *mestiço* communities were initially viewed by the local people as being simply "Portuguese/Christian," the former groups saw themselves as different. One of the primary reasons was the color-bar, which though eschewed by the Royal Ordinances, was nevertheless a major

¹² A. da Silva Rego *Portuguese Colonization in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of the Royal Ordinances (Regimentos)*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1959, p. 66.

¹³ Artur Basílio de Sá (ed.), *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente-Insulindia*, Lisboa, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1956, vol. 4.

¹⁴ Abdurrachman cites the case in Sika (Flores), where keepers of the regalia continued their important function. Apparently other native Christian communities also maintained their old traditions, which would have included certain religious ideas. Paramita R. Abdurachman, "Portuguese Settlements and Christian Communities in Solor and Flores (1556-1630)", paper presented to the symposium, "Western Performance in Southeast Asia and the Indigenous Response", Manila, January 1982, p. 15.

¹⁵ Artur Teodoro de Matos, *Portugal na Rota das Especiarias de Malaca à Austrália*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1995, p. 102.

¹⁶ G. P. Rouffaer, "Chronologie...", pp. 206-7. "Sengaji Adipati" is a Javanese title and suggests a strong Javanese presence in the island prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. Solor was one of the areas listed as being under the protection of the fourteenth century east Javanese kingdom of Majapahit. Robson, *Deawarnana*, 34.

barrier to native Christians becoming full-fledged members of the higher status white Portuguese. With the steady weakening of the *Estado da Índia*, white Portuguese officialdom gradually lost authority while retaining their racial superiority. Private Portuguese trade filled the vacuum left by the declining concessionary trade,¹⁷ while *mestiços* became more prominent in the political relationships in Nusatenggara Timor. The story of these *mestiços*, particularly the stunning achievements of two of the families, the Hornays and the da Costas, reveals the complexity of white and black Portuguese identity in eastern Indonesia. Equally important in the success of the black Portuguese, or Topas, was their "indigenization," or the process by which the Topas became part of the cultural framework of the local people, first in the Lamaholot area and later in Timor.

The "Indigenization" and "Localization" of the Topas in the Lamaholot

It was in the Lamaholot cultural area that the Topas and the local communities first became engaged in the process of "indigenization" and "localization". In the former, the outsider (the Topas) themselves actively seek to become part of the indigenous world; whereas, the latter process it is the local populations that domesticate and naturalize the foreign to make it an integral part of their world. Because of the desire of both parties to find an accommodation, the indigenization and localization processes proved successful both in the Lamaholot and later in Timor.

In 1562 the Portuguese built a fort in Solor, which became the major center of Portuguese activities before the establishment of posts in Timor. It was probably at this time that the first *mestiço* population arrived on the island.¹⁸ Within the fort were a church, a cloister, a seminary, and a well.¹⁹ When the Dutch Commander Apolonius Scotte seized the fort from the Portuguese in 1613, he commented on the large *mestiço* population in the area. He counted himself lucky that the campaign had occurred at the time when many of the inhabitants were in Timor to collect or purchase sandalwood. Among the prisoners taken at the fort were 250 able-bodied natives and *mestiços* and some 30 white Portuguese, but the remainder of the garrison that had gone to Timor brought the numbers to 450 *mestiços* and 80 whites. The *mestiços* grew prosperous from the trade in sandalwood, which was brought from Timor to Solor on galliots crewed by native Solorese and *mestiços*, then transhipped to Makassar and onward to its

¹⁷ S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History*, London, Longman, 1993; J. C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade...*

¹⁸ H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 166.

¹⁹ G. P. Rouffaer, "Chronologie...", p. 206.

final destination of Macau.²⁰ The *mestiços* were concentrated on the island of Solor and at Larantuka at the eastern end of the island of Flores. So large was the population of *mestiços* in Larantuka that the white Portuguese called the *mestiços* "Larantuqueiros", or "Larantuka folk".²¹

The native population of Solor and Larantuka belonged to the Lamaholot cultural area, which included the eastern part of the island of Flores, the neighboring islands of Adonara, Solor, Lembata (except in Kedang in the east), and the scattered enclaves on the coasts of Pantar and Alor.²² One of the striking features of the Lamaholot is the presence of a dualism between the Damon and the Paji. Although evidence of the existence of this dualism was first noted in the sixteenth century, the earliest detailed discussion of it was by a nineteenth century Dominican, P. P. Arndt.²³ The local characterization of this dualism is expressed succinctly as "*Damon lewo pulo, Paji watang léma*", meaning that the Damon have ten districts and the Paji have five coastal areas. The expression captures the distinction between these two groups. The Damon are associated with the interior, with agriculture; the Paji with the coast and trade. By the seventeenth century, as a result of contact with the Portuguese, the Damon became identified with Christianity (or Pagan beliefs), while the Paji became associated with Islam (or Pagan beliefs). But this formal and precise distinction obscures the complexity of the division. There are enclaves of one group situated in the midst of another group. Moreover, despite the enmity between the two represented by skirmishes and headhunting, they also may reach friendly accommodations with the other particularly in the marketplace. According to reports between the sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries, the principal leader of the Damon was the Raja Larantuka, while the Paji were led by the Raja Adonara and in later years also by the Raja Solor. At one stage the Raja Larantuka succeeded in conquering western and central Adonara, thereby introducing the Damon into a formerly totally Paji region. The Paji were apparently once dominant in the area but the Damon eventually became a larger and more powerful group.²⁴

²⁰ R. H. Barnes, "Avarice and Iniquity at the Solor Fort", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 143, ii & iii (1987), p. 223; H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 166.

²¹ C. R. Boxer, "Topasses of Timor...", p. 3.

²² R. H. Barnes, *Kedang: A Study of the Collective Thought of an Eastern Indonesian People*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 4.

²³ The following account of the Damon and Paji is based on Arndt, "Damon und Padzi."

²⁴ The dualism of the Damon and the Paji described by Arndt is very similar to that found in northern Maluku at about the same time. Ternate and Tidore represented this dualism, and their relationship continually puzzled European observers. During warfare between these two kingdoms, the Dutch reported that the people were still intermarrying and engaging with the other in the marketplace as if there were no hostilities. The low casualty rate and the fact that neither side wanted to pursue a war which resulted in the annihilation of the other made the Europeans suspect that warfare was merely feigned. As the Dutch began to intervene in order to prevent disruption to the

Because of the strength of the Damon-Paji dualism in the Lamaholot area, the Topas became associated with the Damon. The Topas knew that they could rely on their native Damon allies because of the intense dualism between the Damon and the Paji communities. The Topas were therefore able to maintain their strongholds at Larantuka because they were shielded by the local Damon communities. The latter, on the other hand, could rely on the Topas for help against their enemies, which did occur in the history of the region. Within this protective environment, the Topas were able to develop into a formidable unity in the Solor archipelago. The emergence of a rivalry between the families of the Hornays and the da Costas for leadership of the Topas would have been regarded by the indigenous inhabitants as "natural". The Lamaholot and many other eastern Indonesian societies share the belief that the world consists of dualisms in which the opposing halves are both antagonistic yet complementary.

The progenitor of the Hornay clan was Jan de Hornay, a Dutch commander of the Solor fort who fled to Larantuka with his Solorese wife in 1629. He had incurred the wrath of the Dutch East India Company's Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen because of having acted without authority in agreeing to an armed truce with the Portuguese commander in Larantuka.²⁵ Having a wife from Solor and resettling in Larantuka, Jan Hornay would have quickly become incorporated into the Damon group. The large community of Larantuqueros (*mestiços*) assured the dominance of the Damon over the Paji. To counter this development, four envoys representing the heads (*sang dipati*) of Solor and Ende arrived in Batavia in September 1636 to request help against the Portuguese. They were Muslims and acknowledged the overlordship of the kingdom of Ternate. By the description in a Dutch report, it is obvious that the delegation represented the Paji, and their wish was not simply to remove the Portuguese but also to damage the Damon.²⁶ The Dutch were eager to gain allies in the east to wrest control of the sandalwood trade from the Portuguese, and they saw an ideal opportunity to establish an alliance with the enemies of the Portuguese. In December 1636 the Dutch sent a fleet of four ships not to reoccupy the Solor fort but simply to serve to assist the Paji group to remove their enemies.²⁷ The Dutch were only willing to play a supporting role, which was insufficient for the

spice trade, the dualism took an unexpected turn with the dualistic struggle occurring in the ongoing competition to demonstrate superiority in the process of negotiating and obtaining concessions from the Dutch East India Company officials. Leonard Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1993, *passim*.

²⁵ P. A. Tiele, *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, 's-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1890, vol. 2, pp. L-LI; G. P. Rouffaer, "Chronologie...", p. 215.

²⁶ *Dagh Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India*, 's-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1898, vol. 1636, p. 222.

²⁷ *Dagh-Register...*, vol. 1636, p. 223.

Paji to make much headway against the Damon and Larantuqueros under the leadership of Jan de Hornay.

Jan de Hornay was eventually issued a pardon by the VOC. It recognized the importance of de Hornay in the sandalwood trade, which was brought by the Topas from Timor to Larantuka, making the latter one of the major stapling ports for the export of this highly prized wood. The Portuguese private traders found the port to be one in which they could carry on their activities without disturbance and with the protection of the authorities, and one of the principal local merchants was Jan de Hornay, who had strong links to the Portuguese private traders based in Makassar. In order to assure the steady supply of sandalwood, and to encourage the Portuguese private traders to bring their products directly to Batavia, Governor-General Antonio van Diemen finally issued a pardon to de Hornay in 1643. It was a move most likely motivated by economic reasons because the de Hornay family had become one of the most important traders in cassia linga in Flores and in sandalwood in north Timor in the vicinity of Mena. Jan's son Gonsalvo de Hornay had even established his own kingdom and was regarded as one of the most powerful in Timor. Gonsalvo's sons Antonio and Francisco also became important rajas in Timor.²⁸ Antonio served the Portuguese captain in Larantuka, Simão Luis, who was a protégé of the great Portuguese entrepreneur, Francisco Vieira de Figueredo. At Luis' death in 1664, Antonio was proposed as the new Captain Major (*Capitão Mor*), which was strongly opposed by another Topas leader, Mateus da Costa, who had distinguished himself in battles against the Dutch on Timor. This was the beginning of the struggle between the Hornay and the da Costa families for dominance in the Solor archipelago, but particularly in Timor.²⁹

The "Indigenization" and "Localization" of the Topas in Timor

Having experienced the benefits of becoming "indigenized" in the Lamaholot area, the Topas also sought to become part of the indigenous communities in Timor. There would have been a smooth transition from the Lamaholot areas to Timor. The exchange of products and food between the Lamaholot and the Timorese over the centuries contributed to the existence of tales that reflect their relationship. The ancestors of the rajas of Sikka in eastern Flores, for example, are said to have run aground and settled on the island. Associated with this voyage were also the settlements of Kongas to the south of Larantuka

²⁸ Arend de Roever, *De jacht op sandelhout: de VOC en de tweedeling van Timor in de seveniende eeuw*, Zutphen, Walberg Pers, 2002, pp. 239-40, 256.

²⁹ Boxer, *Francisco Vieira*, 46-7; G. P. Rouffaer, "Chronologie...", p. 216.

and of Oekussi in northern Timor.³⁰ The Topas' links with these Damon settlements would have thus facilitated their acceptance in Oecussi in Timor. But an equally noteworthy aspect of the tale is its inclusion of the two powerful families of the Topas: the Hornays and the Costas. In this same ancestral story, there are two quarreling sons of the ruler of the well-known Malay kingdom of Melaka. One decides to leave with his nephew, and they eventually land in Flores and establish the settlement of Sikka across from the island of Endeh. The son is called Costa and his nephew, Hornay. Costa goes to Timor, marries the daughter of the Raja Ambeno, and then succeeds his father-in-law. He then names Hornay to succeed him.³¹ Once again, the relations between Flores and Timor are close, and the tale as recorded by Roever is obviously of recent vintage but demonstrates the practice of history constantly being reinterpreted within a traditional dynamic oral framework.

In Timor as in the Lamaholot, there was a dual process at work: the Topas became indigenized because of the local communities' willingness to "localize" them within their cultural world. The leaders of the Topas continued the practice begun in the Lamaholot of intermarriage with the royal houses of the many kingdoms on the island. One auspicious marriage was that between Antonio Hornay with the daughter of the ruler of the kingdom of Ambeno. The offspring of this marriage contributed to the influence of the Topas within the Ambeno kingdom.³² But through economic dominance and sheer force, the Topas were able to establish their own kingdoms, as occurred with Gonsalvo, Antonio, and Francisco de Hornay. By becoming rajas and intermarrying with other royal households, the two powerful Topas families of de Hornays and da Costas became an integral part of the political, economic, and cultural landscape of Timor. While in the Lamaholot area the Topas became part of the Damon-Paji dualism, in Timor they became viewed by many local kingdoms as worthy successors of the prestigious overlords associated with the Sonba'i and Wehale kingdoms.

In 1522 Pigafetta, the Italian doctor on board Magellan's fleet, noted that in the southern part of Timor were four brothers who were kings of the island. Of these four, two were particularly important in the history of Timor. One ruled in "Oibich", possibly Waiwiku, a major center of the South Belu kingdom of Wehale. The second was ruler at "Lichsana", perhaps Insana, with its principal port at Mena. Insana may have represented the whole of the Atoni-speaking area and hence would have been equivalent to the Sonba'i realm.³³ Almost a century later in 1613 the ruler of Mena was regarded by the Dutch as the most important of the many kings of Timor. Intriguing is the statement that Mena maintained

³⁰ A. Roever, *De jacht...*, p. 65

³¹ A. Roever, *De jacht...*, pp. 65-6.

³² R. H. Barnes, "Avarice and Iniquity...", p. 230.

³³ H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 160.

relations with the Muslims in Adonara.³⁴ These Muslims in Adonara belonged to the Paji within the Lamaholot cultural area. In this period, therefore, Sonba'i via the ruler at the port of Mena would have been linked to the Muslim Paji under the rulers of Adonara and Solor and hence the natural enemies of the Damon and their Portuguese allies. In the diary of Portuguese Count of Sarzedas on the years 1655-6 are comments that reflect the division of the island of Timor between the Belu and the Atoni (called "Vaiquenos" by the Portuguese). Under the "emperor" of the Belu were 46 independent rajas, while the subject rajas under the "emperor" of the Atoni numbered 16. All these independent rajas recognized either the ruler of South Belu or the ruler of Atoni as their overlord. The kingdom of the South Belu was Wehale, while the realm of the "emperor" of the Atoni was Sonba'i. The Portuguese sources talk of a kingdom called "Servião", which is most likely Sorbiam, a port in the kingdom of Sonba'i.³⁵

By the mid-seventeenth century the decline of the kingdoms of Wehale and Sonba'i as the spiritual centers of the Belu and Atoni, respectively, coincided with or was directly related to the increasing involvement of the Portuguese and the Dutch in the affairs of Timor.³⁶ From this period onward, the contemporary sources describe a situation in which the many independent kingdoms in Timor maintained their traditional enmities and alliances but now aligned themselves either under the new sources of power, the Portuguese at Lifau or the Dutch at Kupang. The principal kingdoms that sought "protection" and hence acknowledged the dominance of the Dutch were the so-called "Timorese", among whom were the kings in the vicinity of Kupang, Sonba'i, Ambenu Taibenu, Amfoam, and Miamofo (called Amakon in the Dutch sources). The Topas received the allegiance of the kingdoms of Mena,³⁷ Asson, and others in the north coast; and Amarassi, Amanuban and Kamanas on the south coast. Lifau (Oecussi) served as the center of Portuguese (Topas) activity. Amarassi proved to be one of the major thorns in the side of the Dutch and their allies because of its proximity to Kupang. What is apparent, however, is that the Europeans were regarded as powerful patrons who would provide protection and assistance against their enemies. The enmity between the Portuguese and the Dutch continued but was often dictated by their indigenous allies and their quarrels. Both European powers quickly realized that to retain and even extend their network of alliances required a demonstration of their military, and hence spiritual, superiority. It was a con-

³⁴ Adriaen van der Velde "Brief van Adriaen van de Velde aan Pt. Both, 1 May 1614" in P. A. Tiele (ed.), *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, 's-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1886, vol. 1, pp. 19-20.

³⁵ H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 161.

³⁶ H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 162-3.

³⁷ Mena by this time had come under the new raja, Gonsalvo de Hornay, hence a Topas indigenous kingdom. A. Roever, *De jacht...*, p. 257.

cept that was well-understood in Timor and was known in the Atoni language as *le'u musu*, or the sacred powers that are summoned to defeat an enemy.³⁸

The first major showdown between these two new European overlords occurred in 1656. The Dutch East India Company leaders in Batavia dispatched a large force under Arnoldus de Vlamingh van Oudtshoorn, who had distinguished himself in a number of previous military campaigns in the region. In Timor, however, he met more than his match against the Topas, who were led by Antonio Hornay and Mateus da Costa. In two expeditions against the Portuguese, both white and black, the Dutch were roundly defeated at Amarassi. In the debacle the Dutch laid the blame on the native troops from Solor who they claimed proved cowardly on the battlefield. The Queen of Solor, however, disputed this version of events and proudly defended her people, saying:

... who followed the gentleman Vlamingh, who carried the gunpowder and the shots? Who carried the wicks? Not those from Roti or from Sawu, or from Amabi or Sonba'i, nor [Dutch] soldiers or sailors or whoever. Who carried those who were wounded in the mountains back to the ships? They were my people, all of whom are children of sengajis [local lords] and of the better class, all of whom had remained on Timor with [the former Dutch commander in Solor] Jacob van der Heijden for the affairs of the [Dutch] Company, not those of Solor.³⁹

Then in September 1658 the Portuguese *Capitão Mor*, Simão Luis, led his troops against the Dutch allies Sonba'i and Amabi in the effort to bring central and west Timor under Portuguese control. His force divided into eight "banners" encircled the defenders who had taken a stand on Mt. Mollo. The Dutch sent a contingent from Kupang to assist their beleaguered allies, but they proved too small to make a difference. While the Dutch managed to make their escape, the Raja Amabi and some 4-5000 men were slaughtered by the Portuguese and their allies. The kingdoms of Sonba'i and Amabi were therefore absorbed by the Portuguese.⁴⁰ Both the Dutch and the Portuguese forces had access to European guns and knowledge of European warfare, and both groups had the assistance of local allies. In the eyes of the Timorese, therefore, the victory of the Portuguese could only be explained by a superior spiritual force, the *le'u musu*. The stunning success of the Portuguese in Timor, which enabled them to maintain an enclave in a sea of islands under Dutch control made a strong impression in eastern Indonesia to the present day. In Aru, the anthropologist Patricia Spyer was told the tale of the "Portugis" who brought civilization to the island. Of greatest interest

³⁸ H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System...*, p. 502.

³⁹ *Dagh-Register...*, vol. 1657, p. 227.

⁴⁰ A. Roever, *De jacht...*, pp. 266-7.

to the people was the story of the rescue of a Portuguese staff of office from a sinking ship, thus bringing authority to the land. For those in Aru, the Portuguese are regarded as having precedence over all other colonial powers.⁴¹ In Minahassa in northern Sulawesi, the Portuguese had very little to do with the community and yet their reputation has even penetrated here.⁴² In short, the Portuguese were associated with superior spiritual powers and were incorporated into the traditions of many communities in eastern Indonesia.

The Struggle between "White" and "Black" Portuguese

In the Portuguese victory over the Dutch in 1656 and 1658, a major role was played by the Topas. It was apparent to many that the maintenance of Portuguese control in the region was heavily dependent upon the far more numerous "black" than "white" Portuguese. Although the Topas continued to retain their "Portuguese" identity (defined strictly as being Christian and able to converse to some degree in Portuguese), they were also children of native mothers and a part of their mothers' communities. Increasingly the "Portuguese" meant the Topas, and the latter was so successful in adapting to indigenous Timorese society that the Dutch found it difficult to make a distinction.⁴³ The indigenization and localization of the Topas contributed to growing friction between them and the white Portuguese. From the mid-seventeenth century onward, the substantial numbers and strength of the Topas in the Lamaholot areas and in Timor allowed them first to ignore and later to challenge the authority of the white Portuguese officials sent from Portugal, Goa, or Macau.

The leader of the Topas in the victories against the Dutch was Antonio de Hornay. With Topas control over most of the important sandalwood-producing areas of Timor, Antonio was able to act as an independent lord even while formally acknowledging the authority of the white Portuguese. He continued guerrilla-type campaigns against the few remaining areas around the Dutch fort at Kupang that remained outside his control but never undertook any further larger campaigns against them due to their proximity to the Dutch garrison. The only other area that resisted him was the kingdoms of Ade, Hon, and Manetutu at the eastern end of Timor. They had just regained their freedom from the Makassarrese, and were unwilling to submit to the Topas. To safeguard their independence, they sought to ally with the Dutch, but the latter refused to become involved in a perilous venture so far from their stronghold in Kupang. These eastern kingdoms

⁴¹ Patricia Spyer, *The Memory of Trade: Modernity's Entanglements on an Eastern Indonesian Island*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 87.

⁴² Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility*, 40.

⁴³ A. Roever, *De jacht...*, pp. 255-6.

were thus conquered by the Topas and suffered a loss of about 2000 lives with another 700 men, women, and children made slaves.⁴⁴

By the latter part of the seventeenth century many of the Topas were born in the Solor archipelago, including Timor, and were truly "*mestiço*" in blood, attitudes, and loyalties. Topas communities were found in different areas in the eastern part of Timor, and some came to play important roles as bodyguards to local rulers. By 1729 the Dutch estimated that there were approximately 40,000 Topas scattered through the whole Solor archipelago. This was a considerable force when compared to the gradually diminishing numbers of both white Portuguese and Dutch in these islands. Moreover, they were ably led by the Hornays and da Costas, who eventually agreed to alternate leadership between the two families. Acting as indigenous rulers, they had contracted marriages with the many royal families on Timor and hence become part of the local cultural and political landscape. When the people of South Belu finally agreed to a peace with the white Portuguese in 1728 after a long period of hostilities, their one demand was that they be placed under "their lawful lord", Francisco Hornay.⁴⁵ With well-respected rulers, a formidable fighting force, and strong cultural links to the area, the Topas gained acceptance as one of the many independent, indigenous kingdoms that dotted the landscape in Timor and the other islands of the Solor archipelago.

Despite the obvious numerical and military superiority of the Topas, their leaders continued to be placed in subordinate positions to the white governors and officials appointed either from Portugal or from the Viceroyalty in Goa. Albuquerque's vision of the Portuguese *mestiço* offspring manning the far-flung Portuguese Asian empire had been achieved, but the higher positions continued to be held by the white Portuguese. Albuquerque had not foreseen the conflict that would arise in such a situation, particularly when the *mestiço* population resented their subordinate positions and far outnumbered the white Portuguese. The records of the Dutch East India Company, which maintained a post in Ft. Concordia in Kupang since 1653, provide a brief but revealing account of the conflicts between the white Portuguese and the Topas. At the time the Topas were led by Mateus da Costa and Antonio Hornay, both of whom had proved their bravery in killing Dutch commanders in combat. Though they were serious rivals, they had set their differences aside and had led the Topas and their native allies to victory over the large, well-armed Dutch forces under Arnoldus de Vlamingh van Outshoorn in 1656.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ A. Roever, *De jacht...*, p. 281.

⁴⁵ *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, s'Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960-1997, vol. VIII, 8 Dec. 1728, p. 199.

⁴⁶ C. R. Boxer, "Topasses of Timor...", p. 6.

As true *mestios* the Topas never totally abandoned their Portuguese identity and manipulated it equally well for their advantage. Although initially they had accepted the direction of the white Portuguese governor based at Lifau and appointed by the Viceroy of Goa, in time they saw little value in supporting an entire state apparatus that was more of a burden than advantage to their community. Sources tend to emphasize the success of the Portuguese, both white and black, in preventing the Dutch from seizing the whole of the island of Timor. Historical events, however, reveal a story more of mutual antagonism and conflict than cooperation among these two groups of Portuguese. C. R. Boxer's account of this period tends to view the black Portuguese as rebellious subjects who are manfully kept in check by the timely arrival and bravery of white Portuguese governors. Yet this reading of the situation is contradicted by the reports that were being compiled by the officials of the Dutch East India Company at the time. The Dutch accounts from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries depict a white Portuguese garrison occasionally besieged by the Topas and their native allies, and dependent for its survival on the goodwill of the Topas leaders. For much of this period, the Topas controlled the Timorese trade in sandalwood, wax, and slaves and openly traded with the Dutch at Kupang. In the economic sphere the Topas leadership viewed the outside world, including the Dutch, as useful trade partners from whom they could obtain all necessary goods, including arms and gunpowder.

First indications of problems between the white and black Portuguese arose in 1668, when Macau sent a white Portuguese Fernão Martins da Ponte to become the Captain-Major (*Capitão Mor*) at Lifau. At the time the black Portuguese acknowledged Antonio Hornay at Larantuka as their Captain-Major and refused to recognize Martins. The division of the Portuguese based along color lines was not apparent because Mateus da Costa, leader of the rival faction of black Portuguese, was preeminent in Lifau and had actually fought a battle with Hornay the year previously.⁴⁷ Fernão Martins da Ponte never received the full support of the Topas community, and in 1672 he finally had to abandon his post and return to Goa. The Dutch sources do not reveal when Mateus da Costa assumed the position of Captain-Major, but when he died in 1673, Antonio Hornay came from Larantuka to Lifau with a fleet of well-armed boats and black Portuguese, or Topas, to claim for himself the title of Captain-Major, which was a position that the Dutch understood to be "the general head of the Portuguese nation" in the area.⁴⁸ Although he was formally presented with the position by the Viceroy of Goa, he was already the de facto Captain-Major and the acknowledged leader of the black Portuguese.⁴⁹ In his now officially designated post, Antonio Hornay

⁴⁷ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. III, 5 Oct. 1667 582-3; 17 Nov 1669, 681.

⁴⁸ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. III, 31 Jan. 1674, 902.

⁴⁹ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. III, 17 Nov. 1674, 941.

led a Portuguese expedition from Lifau in 1676 to punish some rebels at Ade and Manatuto, sandalwood-exporting ports at the eastern end of the island of Timor.⁵⁰

There was a major difference between Mateus da Costa and Antonio Hornay in their capacities as Captain-Major. Under the former, the white Portuguese (and especially the Dominicans) were willing to participate alongside da Costa and the Topas in campaigns, but this was not the case with regard to the latter. When Hornay led a large expedition of about 2000 men against Ade, his force consisted of men from Larantuka, Konga, Sikka and Ugi in the eastern part of the island of Flores (whom he brought every March to Timor), as well as those from the island of Roti, pagan groups, Timorese Christians, slaves, and others who joined the march. But unlike the period of da Costa's tenure as Captain-Major, the white Portuguese remained in Lifau and did not participate in any of Hornay's campaigns since he took office.⁵¹ This was the beginning of considerable strains in the relationship between the white and black Portuguese in the Solor archipelago, which at times erupted into open warfare. When João Antunes arrived at Larantuka with a commission from the king of Portugal and the Viceroy of Goa as the new Captain-Major, Hornay refused to allow him to disembark and even declined to provide provisions to the fleet. Antunes was therefore forced to return to Goa without having exercised his official post.⁵²

Hornay's ability to defy orders from the Portuguese authorities was partially due to the inability of the white Portuguese to undertake any major expedition against the powerful Hornay, whose Topas followers were fiercely loyal to him and as proficient with the use of firearms as the white Portuguese. Moreover, they were far more numerous than any major force that the Portuguese authorities could send against him. The other major reason for Hornay's confidence was his success in operating very much as just one of the native kingdoms in the region. He had made alliances with many of the native rulers, and he had courted the Dutch East India Company through his willingness to deliver sandalwood to the Dutch. He was also in a very strong position and had his forces spread out throughout the island and particularly along the coasts.⁵³ As a native ruler Hornay engaged in international relations by agreeing to accede to the "command" of the ruler of Butun to take charge of the Solor islands, and by requesting armed ships from the ruler of Bone in South Sulawesi as his overlord to protect the coasts of Flores from raids by the ruler of Bima,⁵⁴ Hornay could claim to be the leader

⁵⁰ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IV, 28 Nov. 1676, 140.

⁵¹ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IV, 13 Feb. 1679, 273.

⁵² *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IV, 31 Dec. 1683, 612; Humberto J. Leitão, *Os Portugueses em Solor e Timor de 1515 a 1702*, Lisboa, Tip. LCGG, 1948, p. 243.

⁵³ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IV, 13 Feb. 1679, 273.

⁵⁴ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IV, 31 Dec. 1683, 612; vol. V, 13 Dec. 1686, 36, 38.

of his Topas and the natives who acknowledged his authority over central and eastern Flores, parts of the islands of Adonara, Solor, and Lembata, and in much of east and west Timor. He was far more powerful and influential in the region than the shell of white Portuguese control in Lifau in Timor. According to the Dutch there were only some 30 white Portuguese, mainly traders, in the whole of Larantuka and Lifau. The remainder of the population consisted of *mestiço* Christians from Melaka, Macao, Goa, and elsewhere, who were strongly devoted to Hornay.⁵⁵ But Hornay was not beyond using coercion when necessary. When two of the kingdoms rebelled against his rule, he sent a force of Topas and native allies which left only ten survivors of a thousand who resisted him.⁵⁶

Sometime in March 1697 Antonio Hornay passed away. He had exercised power as Captain-Major from 1673 until his death, which was even longer than his predecessor, Mateus da Costa, who held that office from 1653 to 1673. The length of their rule meant that they were able to amass a considerable following among both the Topas and the Portuguese native allies, unlike the white Portuguese governors who generally spent a very short time in Timor. The white Portuguese saw the death of Antonio Hornay as an ideal opportunity to replace him with one of their own, but the appointment was flatly rejected by the Topas. Instead, they raised Domingo da Costa, the son of Mateus da Costa, as their new Captain-Major.⁵⁷ The elevation of Domingo da Costa to the position of Captain-Major was not without challenge from other Topas leaders. In 1699 Gaspar Clase sought to be recognized as Captain-Major at Konga, southwest of Larantuka, but he and his followers were easily defeated by forces sent by da Costa. Another threat arose that year from Antonio Akimar, who also attempted to claim the title of Captain-Major at Lifau. On this occasion da Costa went with several armed boats from Larantuka to Lifau and ousted the pretender, who later took his life by poison.⁵⁸

In 1702 a more serious threat came from a white Portuguese called Antonio Coelho Guerreiro, who was appointed as Captain-Major at Lifau. He sought to enforce his authority by forcing Domingo da Costa relinquish his position. But the force that he sent against da Costa at the latter's stronghold in Larantuka was badly defeated and forced to retreat back to Lifau. Guerreiro immediately expelled all Topas living in Lifau, who sought safety in Larantuka. He then built a wooden stockade with six cannon fronting the sea to repel the expected Topas attack. At Larantuka da Costa assembled a large armed fleet which he divided into two to besiege Lifau and prevent any ships moving in or out of the port. The shortage of food and Guerreiro's harsh rule led to a steady exodus of people

⁵⁵ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. V, 30 Dec. 1689, 311.

⁵⁶ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. V, 31 Jan. 1692, 459.

⁵⁷ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. V, 30 Nov. 1697, 841.

⁵⁸ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. VI, 23 Nov. 1699, 73; 1 Dec. 1700, 123.

from the city. Guerreiro accused the Dutch of supplying arms and food to da Costa and the Topas, while refusing to sell anything to the defenders at Lifau despite their ability to pay good prices. In retaliation he had forced the subjects of the Dutch East India Company trading in these waters to trade their goods at Lifau, which had little to offer. Some of the ships and their cargoes were also arbitrarily seized. Guerreiro was also critical of the Dutch for refusing to return their runaway slaves, and he threatened to report this to the king of Portugal. But these threats made little impression on the Dutch, who realized that Guerreiro had very little chance of survival in his struggles with the Topas. Sometime in 1704 Guerreiro was discharged from his office and fled to Goa via Batavia disguised under the name of Alexander Pinto. He was replaced by a new white Portuguese governor, Lourenço Lopes.⁵⁹

The arrival of Lopes did little to settle matters between the white Portuguese in Lifau and the Topas in the surrounding areas. In 1707 two Portuguese warships from Macau brought a militia, which was then sent to attack Domingo da Costa and his followers at his base. Once again the Topas army proved superior to the white Portuguese militia, and the latter were forced to flee back to Lifau. This major setback led to a change of tactics. Instead of further hostilities, the white Portuguese sought instead to incorporate da Costa into the governing administration. Thus sometime in May, 1708, Domingo da Costa was made Lieutenant-General or Vice-Governor at Lifau.⁶⁰ Although tensions occasionally arose between the two Portuguese groups, in general this arrangement whereby the top post was held by a white Portuguese and the second-in-command by a Topas, proved workable until about 1722. In that year a new Portuguese governor, Antonio de Albuquerque Coelho, replaced the acting governor, friar Manuel. The year previously the unpopular governor in Lifau was deposed by friar Manuel and Francisco Hornay, who had replaced Domingo da Costa as the head of the Topas with the titles of lieutenant-general and vice-governor. Although Captain-Major Francisco Hornay was officially second-in-command, he was in practice the dominant figure in the relationship. Leadership of the Topas in the Solor archipelago continued to alternate between the da Costa and the Hornay families and was later formalized into a permanent arrangement.

Indications that the new white Portuguese governor planned to assert his authority over all Portuguese subjects became apparent very quickly after his arrival in 1722. When a Butunese boat was forced by strong winds and currents to land at Sitrana, one of the Topas strongholds, Governor Coelho had his men fire on the boat because he believed that they were carrying supplies to the Topas. The situation between the white Portuguese and the Topas remained hostile, and

⁵⁹ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. VI, 30 Nov. 1702, 196-7; 1 Dec. 1703, 240-1; 30 Nov. 1704, 291, 299, 354.

⁶⁰ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. VI, 30 Nov. 1707, 486, 539.

in 1724 the governor used a Portuguese ship from Macau and some 10 Belunese boats to patrol the waters off the major Topas settlements of Sitrana, Tulang Ikan, and Aminata to prevent any supplies reaching them. The Chinese and other traders were warned against trading with the Topas, and one of the Dutch burgers from Kupang was arrested on suspicion of having supplied lead, gunpowder, and other goods to the Topas.⁶¹ The arrival in 1725 of a new governor Antonio Moniz de Macedo brought a short period of peace between the white and black Portuguese.⁶² By 1729, however, hostilities had again broken out between the white Governor Don Pedro de Mello and the Lieutenant Governor and head of the Topas, Francisco Hornay. The latter was accused of inciting the Belunese to take up arms against the white Portuguese at the end of the previous year. With some estimated 40,000 black Portuguese communities in the archipelago, the white Portuguese were hard-pressed to maintain themselves. There was severe shortage of everything at Lifao, and smallpox raged among the population killing some 200 Portuguese. An uneasy peace between the warring groups was made first in 1731 and again in 1732.⁶³

So dominant were the Topas by this time that only the Dutch and their Timorese allies remained as obstacles to their total supremacy on the island. In an all-out effort to oust the Dutch, the entire Topas community was united under the combined leadership of the Hornays, the da Costas, and other major Topas families, in the battle of Penefui in 1749. The decisive battle which ended in a Dutch victory was triumphantly recorded by a Dutch official and provides clear evidence of the considerable strength that the Topas commanded in the region. The first notice that the Dutch received of an impending attack came on 18 October from the ruler of Amabi, who reported that his people had seen a great many armed men and heard the sound of numerous drums who could only have been the Topas. Upon receiving this news, the Dutch sent some *Mardijkers* to scout the situation and ask the Raja Kupang to send a spy to Amarasi, where the head of the Topas had gone in person to gain his support for a joint attack. The scouts and spies reported that there were some 2800 riflemen, excluding those of Amarasi. The large Topas force was under Lieutenant-General Gaspar da Costa and other leaders, many of whom bore the surname da Costa. They were joined by the rulers of Amakona (Miamafu) and Ambenu, the head of the Topas from Larantuka, the Belunese, and others from the Timorese lands. The Topas and their allies appeared before Kupang under their various banners and with drums beating. Though far outnumbered, the Dutch troops consisting of Dutchmen, *Mardijkers*, and local allies defeated the Topas-led force and killed their commander, Gaspar da Costa, on 9 November 1749. According to the

⁶¹ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. VII, 30 Nov. 1722, 613; 3 Dec. 1723, 663; 30 Nov. 1724, 718.

⁶² *Generale Missiven...*, vol. VIII, 30 Nov. 1725, 14.

⁶³ *Generale Missiven...*, vol. IX, 30 Nov. 1729, 31, 152; 12 Oct. 1731, 235; 8 Dec. 1732, 372.

Dutch account, when the white Portuguese governor at Lifao, Manuel Correia de Lacerda, was informed of the outcome of the battle, he seemed unconcerned and conducted himself in a manner which indicated that he thought that the fate of the Topas leader, Gaspar da Costa, was deserved.⁶⁴ Such a reaction is understandable because relations between the white Portuguese and the Topas had always been strained in the Solor archipelago. The victory at Penefui assured the continuing presence of the Dutch in Timor.

The dominance of the Topas over the white Portuguese was necessary for the maintenance of "Portuguese" control in Timor. In the crucial battles against the Dutch based at Kupang, the Topas did not succeed in ousting the Dutch from the island, but neither did they lose their position on the island. Dutch reports attribute the strength of the Topas to their large numbers, ability to use European weapons as effectively as the Dutch, and to their many faithful allies among the native kingdoms. But a major factor in the ability of the Topas to retain the allegiance of their native allies was their success over the white Portuguese. The Hornays and the da Costas, as leaders of the Topas, were regarded as rulers of a Portuguese tribe and part of their political landscape; whereas, the small white Portuguese garrison at Lifau was seen as foreign and intrusive. The Topas were thus able to manipulate their dual Portuguese and native identities to preserve the Portuguese presence on Timor.

Conclusion

The Topas were children of a flawed imperial policy and a failed empire. Yet their status and identity as "*mestiço*" enabled them to adapt and prosper by emphasizing both their assertion of being Portuguese and their cultural links to the local communities. But this avenue of advancement would have been blocked had it not been for the readiness of the indigenous communities to localize or domesticate the Topas within their world view. Crucial to the acceptance of the Topas as an indigenous tribe was its continuing status as "Portuguese" with all its associated spiritual connotations. The victory of the Topas over the white Portuguese therefore acquired a new significance. Through the Topas' dominance over the white Portuguese, they were able to assert that they were indeed the more powerful and hence more legitimate Portuguese. In this struggle among the Portuguese, the local communities in Timor understood that victory was a sign of a superior *musu' le'u*, an Atoni term but with equivalents in other Timor communities.

The story of the Topas in eastern Indonesia is just one of many others which can perhaps be found throughout Asia. By rescuing the history of the Portuguese

⁶⁴ C. R. Boxer, "Topasses of Timor...", pp. 14-5; Haga, "Slag bij Penefoeij".

in Asia from the *Estado da Índia*, it is possible to reorient one's thinking from the formal empire to the informal activities of the Portuguese. Boyajian demonstrates that shifting one's focus away from Portuguese state trade to Portuguese private trade reveals an even greater volume and value of trade in the latter half of the sixteenth century, a period often associated with Portuguese decline in Asia. In a similar fashion, more studies should be directed to the "private" Portuguese communities located throughout Asia that functioned as part of the Portuguese "empire" but whose very survival depended upon their ability to indigenize and become localized to indigenous societies. Such a study should also problematize Portuguese identity, particularly between the white Portuguese and "Albuquerque's Children". The historical evolution of the Topas in eastern Indonesia is instructive as a case study of the complexity of what it meant to be Portuguese at the edges of empire. Finally, a study worthy of another C. R. Boxer is one which not only examines the manner in which remnants of Portuguese communities became indigenized and localized by their host societies after 1600, but also one that attempts to show how these scattered communities maintained contact in the shadows of the *Estado da Índia*.

GRUPOS POPULACIONAIS E DINÂMICAS DEMOGRÁFICAS NAS ILHAS DE GOA (1720-1830)

PAULO TEODORO DE MATOS *

O presente estudo insere-se numa linha de investigação que temos a vindo a desenvolver acerca da evolução demográfica do território goês e sua dinâmica entre 1720 e 1830. Os objectivos centrais respeitam às oscilações no volume dos efectivos das Ilhas de Goa comparativamente com a realidade verificada em todo o território das *Velhas Conquistas*: Bardez e Salcete.¹ Esta análise não perderá de vista os diversos grupos sociais intervenientes, procurando destacar-se a evolução quantitativa dos brancos, cristãos naturais, hindus, mouros e, ainda, os escravos. Numa segunda fase pretendemos evidenciar alguns dos vectores essenciais da dinâmica demográfica das Ilhas de Goa: a natalidade, mortalidade e nupcialidade em estreita articulação com os grupos intervenientes.

O âmbito desta investigação restringe-se à província das ilhas de Goa por duas razões essenciais. A primeira decorre da extraordinária mortalidade e mobilidade ocorrida neste espaço durante o século XVIII e o conseqüente decréscimo da população. A segunda, pela abundância e qualidade da documentação paroquial existente – a mais completa do território – e que permite lançar luz sobre alguns aspectos da demografia e família. No entanto, dada a escassez de informação bem preservada, as freguesias aqui estudadas segundo o método da *reconstituição de paróquias* não correspondem à amostra ideal, mas àquela que as fontes tornaram possível.

Para os propósitos aqui delineados utilizam-se os censos de 1720 e 1753, extensíveis a todo o território de Goa, e os mapas estatísticos decretados

* Investigador Auxiliar do CHAM (UNL-UA). Programa Ciência 2008.

¹ Exclui-se da análise o território das *Novas Conquistas* incorporado no de Goa a partir da segunda metade do século XVIII.