

THE BONES IN BANDA: VISION, ART AND MEMORY IN MALUKU

Julie Berger Hochstrasser

In the seventeenth century, the Banda Islands in Maluku, then known as the Spice Islands, were the only known source for true nutmeg. The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC) sought control of this lucrative trade with brutal military force. This paper explores the role of visual culture in the collective memory of the Dutch presence, from VOC coins still turning up in the fields to the fort that still towers over Neira Town. Even when recent Muslim-Christian violence left the Dutch Reformed Church a burned-out ruin, the seventeenth-century gravestones paving the floor survived to remind the inhabitants of the bones in Banda. DOI: [10.18277/makf.2015.14](https://doi.org/10.18277/makf.2015.14)

By all accounts, the past hangs heavy in Banda (fig. 1)¹. That was my own forceful first impression when I visited this remote island in eastern Indonesia in 2006, but since then I have found it echoed again and again in the reactions of others. In *Banda: A Journey through Indonesia's Fabled Isles of Fire and Spice*, Nigel Simmonds writes:



Figure 1. Benteng Belgica, Banda Neira, Banda Islands, Maluku, 2006. Unless otherwise noted, all the following photographs and videos were taken by the author on the island of Banda Neira, Banda Islands, Maluku, in 2006.

The volcano [fig. 2] is by far the most obvious of Banda's attractions, although perhaps not the most intriguing. That accolade must go to the town of Neira [fig. 3], where the past is thrust into the consciousness of the first-time visitor with all the force of a tropical typhoon. Here, amid a confusing mix of peoples, cultures and religions, Banda's past is placed on exhibit for leisurely inspection: European mansions, mighty forts, ancient coins, and solid-cast cannons [fig. 4] compete with tropical languor, curving mosques, and smiling inhabitants. It is as if the Creator has somehow confused time with place, setting the wrong backdrop to the wrong soil, culminating in a charming, incongruous mix of East and West that has survived the centuries. In today's modern, bustling Asia, isolated little Banda stands alone as the last true record of Europe's deep involvement in the South-east Asian region.²



Figure 2. The Gunung Api volcano.



Figure 3. Neira Town.



Figure 4. Cannons at Hotel Maulana.



Figure 5. Interior of the former dwelling of Governor-General Jan Pietersz Coen

The author is unequivocal: Europe's past still lives in Banda's present. And how is this? The mute witness is all around: the material remains of colonization—mansions, forts, coins, cannons—are visible and pervasive presences. What is the impact of Dutch visual culture in this place, in terms both art historical and human? A deep reply resonates in this haunting imprint, the long memory sustained by the abiding presence of this visual culture among the people of Banda.

Maria Dermoût captured it yet more poetically, in her haunting novel of colonial Maluku, *The Ten Thousand Things*.

On a sunny spot between the small trees—when it gets warm there's such a strong smell of spices there . . . In one of those silent ruined rooms, with a real Dutch sash window and a deep window sill . . . [fig. 5] On a stretch of beach under the planes, where the little waves of the surf flow out: three waves, one behind the other—behind the other—behind the other . . . What could it be?

The remembrance of a human being, of something that happened, can remain in a place, tangible almost—perhaps there is someone left who knows of it and thinks about it sometimes.³

And a few pages further on:

There was a net of roads and paths and tracks and stairs hewn in the mountains [fig. 6] leading to large and small villages: of Christians, of Mohammedans; the old communities under the mystic numbers Nine and Five (Nine and Five do not tolerate each other at all). In between, here and there, a “garden,” a decrepit little fort, a small old church with seventeenth-century Dutch armorial shields, a gaudily painted wooden mosque beside its tall minaret, a large carved tombstone over a forgotten grave—In Everlasting Remembrance—everlasting is so long!⁴



Figure 6. Spices drying, Pulau Run.

Dermoût is writing about the island of Ambon—but the description applies as well to Banda Neira, many miles still farther east in Maluku, the island that was home to the oldest European settlement in the East. She, too, enumerates those enduring remainders—fort, church, tombstone, even the deep sill on a “real Dutch sash window”—precisely the material (and thus also visual) markers of Dutch presence in these places, that do indeed conjure memory. Dermoût, once more:

Here it was different again: with no foothold anywhere, no certainty—nothing more than a question? A perhaps? . . . Who was standing on the beach then, staring over the three little waves of the surf? And over the bay? At what?

A silence like an answer, a silence of both resignation and expectation; a past and not past.”⁵

Past and not past. The durability of these visual remains, their lasting presence, which has earned them this quality—these are the artistic legacy that was left to the Bandanese in the wake of the Dutch departure. So it is that influence, that presence—or, what Richard Leppert called, in reference to India’s British colonials, “present absence”—that is the real topic of this essay.⁶

For my point of departure here is, appropriately, a visual memory of my own: it is 2006, and I am standing on the island of Banda Neira, in the burned-out ruins of the church in the center of town (fig. 7). I am here in search of what survives of art and visual culture from the VOC days, when

this handful of tiny islands (fig. 8)—then the world’s only source for the coveted fine spices of mace and nutmeg—were the intense focus of international competition for a wildly lucrative European market. Ousting the Portuguese, the Dutch struggled for monopoly with a notorious ruthlessness toward the indigenous population, in a prolonged rivalry with the English.



Figure 7. Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 8. Johannes Janssonius (1582–1664), *Insularum Bandanesium novissima delineatio*, engraving, 442 x 530 mm. From *Atlas Major*, Volume V (Amsterdam, 1657).

The first church, built of stone on this site in the 1600s, was the pride of Neira Town; in the seventeenth century, services were held there in Dutch in the morning and Malay in the afternoon. By François Valentijn’s account, here already was an icon of Dutch visual culture in this distant outpost: he reported that it was “very spacious inside, beautifully light, and provisioned with various pews, as well as a good pulpit, and from the outside it well resembles a native Dutch house with a native Dutch façade” (*glykt, van buiten aan te zien, wel een vaderlands huis met een vader-*

landzen voorgevel).⁷ Like so much else in this restless terrain, it suffered repeated devastation by earthquakes and the intermittent eruptions of the still-active volcano Gunung Api, but it was just as repeatedly restored. Valentijn noted that already in the seventeenth century it had been badly damaged by a quake, but repaired in 1688 so services could be held there again—this only to be destroyed by another in the 1800s, and rebuilt again.⁸ Just since my visit in 2006, the church has been rebuilt once more—but we'll get back to that.

For I arrived in 2006 to discover that, in the wake of the Muslim-Christian violence that swept in from Ambon between 1998 and 2002, all that survived within the blackened shell of the structure were the massive granite stones still paving the floor.⁹ They mark the graves of Dutch officials and *perkeniers* of former centuries, their epitaphs graven in the stone beneath heraldic crests (fig. 9) or ominous skulls-and-crossbones (fig. 10), or—that ubiquitous motif throughout the company's far-flung reaches—the monogram insignia of the VOC (fig. 11).¹⁰



Figure 9. Gravestone on floor of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 10. Gravestone on floor of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 11. VOC logo in pavement inside Dutch Reformed Church.

So here is one bit of visual culture that has lasted through it all—the earthquakes, the volcanoes, the fighting, the slaughter. Yet my memory is more about the children: Ambonese Christian refugees who had taken shelter here in the churchyard since their own homes were likewise put to the torch during the outbreak (fig. 12).¹¹ Their laundry was strung about the charred walls; their mothers quietly retreated upon my arrival, but the children slowly gathered around me, curious as anywhere, as I inspected the gravestones set into the church floor. The gentleman who had walked with me to the church sent a boy to find a broom so we could sweep the thick deposits of dirt and ash away from the carved inscriptions (fig. 13: video). Shy at first, the kids caught on quickly to the sweeping game, and pitched in with some glee. I eventually managed a few murky photographs (better by far are my shots of the children) and distributed some rupiah as thanks to our young assistants.



Figure 12. Ambonese refugees living in ruins of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 13. Video: Sweeping the ashes off the graves inside Dutch Reformed Church.

The exchange was poignant in many ways, layered as it was with the blights of the poverty and religious strife that were more recent legacies of this place. What lingered with me most was the memory of the children, living in those burnt-out ruins, and sweeping away dirt and ash to reveal these centuries-old remains. It was a potent metaphor for my experiences in Banda but also for theirs—for the presence of this “art” in the lives of the people of this place. Pierre Nora’s conception of “lieux de memoire” is useful here, exploring the ways that “space” influences a national or collective memory, for the very presence of so many Dutch remains is a statement in itself about their influence in Banda—but here it is a complex palimpsest indeed.¹²

Naturally, the most durable remains are architectural, and by far the most durable of these are the forts—though even they have sometimes come and gone. Towering over Neira today at the top of Tabaleku Hill, commanding a grand and sweeping view of the surrounding islands is Benteng [Fort] Belgica (see fig. 1). Built in 1611 by Pieter Both, first governor-general of the Bandas, but rebuilt and expanded several times during the Dutch occupation, today it has been restored to its original size, renovated in 1991 Banda’s then-Rajah Des Alwi and the Yayasan Warisan dan Budaya Banda (Foundation for Banda Cultural Heritage).¹³

The first fort the Dutch had built on Neira (fig. 14) has *not* been restored, and perhaps its history explains why. In 1599, when Vice Admiral Jacob van Heemskerck made the first Dutch landfall in Banda, he rented two houses on shore that the ships’ carpenters remodeled to serve as trading posts.¹⁴ The nutmeg marketed back in Holland brought 320 times what he had paid for it, and the Dutch went after the Spice Islands in earnest. Steven van der Hagen returned in 1600 and built a fort and factory in Hitu on the island of Ambon to signal Dutch ambitions for trade and territory. In 1605, he seized Ambon Fort from the Portuguese, then loaded timbers taken from a Portuguese church, and sailed for Banda to build a factory there.¹⁵



Figure 14. Ruins of Fort Nassau.

On April 25, 1609, Admiral Verhoeven landed 750 soldiers on Neira to start construction on the coast facing the island of Lonthor; after abortive attempts on an unstable site, they shifted operations to massive stone foundations that had been abandoned by the Portuguese nearly a century earlier.¹⁶ Things took a fateful turn on May 22 when Verhoeven was ambushed and murdered by a group of Bandanese freedom fighters.¹⁷ Simon Janszoon Hoen, elected to replace him and understandably now anxious, rushed the work on the defenses, and by August 1609 Fort Nassau was nearing completion.¹⁸ A young junior merchant who escaped what the Dutch then referred to as the “vile Bandanese treachery of 1609” was to remember it long after: Jan Pieterszoon Coen would return as governor-general in 1621 and on May 8 order forty-four Bandanese *orang kaya* (village chiefs or elders) decapitated and quartered at Fort Nassau.¹⁹

Just across the strait, the high ridge that forms Banda Besar (Lonthor Island) was dominated by the fortress Hollandia, which Valentijn simply described as “very old,” finding it mentioned in the oldest writings of the secretary of Banda, which begin in 1619.²⁰ The 260 stone steps built from the shore to reach its commanding heights still remain

(fig.15), but Fort Hollandia, already dilapidated in 1724 according to Valentijn's report, was destroyed by earthquake in 1743 and never restored—again, perhaps with good reason, for this site, too, recalls an ignominious past, as headquarters for Coen's dire strategy to depopulate the islands by shipping the Bandanese off to Batavia; hundreds died of exposure, starvation, and disease, or leapt to their deaths from the sheer sea cliffs (fig. 16). A few escaped to English protection on the smaller islands of Ai and Run, but in the end Coen had massacred, enslaved, or banished some 90 percent of the population: of some fifteen thousand souls, fewer than a thousand survived; the islands were repopulated by Dutch planters and their Asian slaves.²¹



Figure 15. Steps to the summit of Lonthor Island (Banda Besar) and the site of Fort Hollandia.



Figure 16. Neira Town from atop Lonthor Island.

Already in 1609, the English Captain Keeling described Banda as “a collectious nation of many people compound-ed.”²² But the decimation of the population in the 1620s gave Banda a dubious distinction: virtually no genuinely autochthonous population survives today. Anthropologist Phillip Winn argues that this makes space and place still more crucial in the definition of personal identity for the Bandanese.²³ And if, as Winn contends, diversity is a metric for the importance of space and place to human identity, Banda's is thus important indeed; this in turn further compounds the significance of the conspicuous Dutch presences within that space.

Notwithstanding their grim past, however, such monuments can also take on gentler functions. Today Fort Hollandia's verdant overgrown site serves as a playground for children.²⁴ Likewise, the massive walls of “Fort Revenge” on Pulau Ai (fig. 17) now play a more peaceful role for the island's inhabitants, sheltering a small plantation of nutmeg trees within their circumference (fig. 18), while the crumbling surfaces of their wide expanse have gardens planted atop them.²⁵



Figure 17. Ruins of Fort Revenge, Pulau Ai.



Figure 18. Nutmeg trees growing inside the ruins of Fort Revenge, Pulau Ai.

Furthermore, the fame these islands enjoyed as such a coveted target for global trade remains a point of pride for local inhabitants: on the still more remote island of Run, only a few stones remain from the English fortifications that Coen had dismantled when he took over—yet a local resident could still recount to me with obvious pleasure how the Dutch traded away Manhattan to secure Run in the Treaty of Breda (fig. 19: video).²⁶



Figure 20. Former residence of Governor-General Jan Pietersz Coen.



Figure 19. Video: Interview with Djamin Karnudu, Pulau Run.

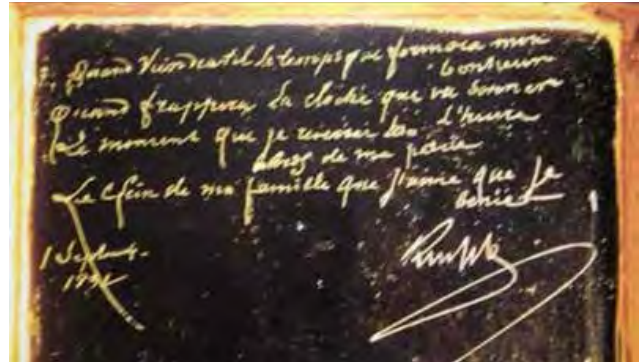


Figure 21. Text etched in the window of the Coen mansion (see figs. 5 and 20).

But locals also retain vivid awareness of the way the past can haunt a place. The VOC mansion (fig. 20), built in 1611 by the first controller of the VOC, stands empty, too; is it because it was later occupied by Governor-General Coen? Or because locals say the front room is haunted—*Kamar spok*? In a pane of a window looking out on the Zonnegat strait, an inscription has been etched [fig. 21]:

Quand reviendra t'il le Temps qui formera mon Bonheur?
 Quand frappera la cloche qui va sonner l'heure,
 Le Moment que je reverai les bords de ma Patrie,
 Le Sein de ma famille que j'aime et que je bénis?

When will come the time that will form my happiness?
 When will the bell strike the hour,
 The moment I will see again the shores of my country,
 The bosom of my family that I love and bless?

—Charles Rumpley, September 1, 1831²⁷

Haunting words, indeed, but more so because the story goes that the young officer scratched them into the glass with his diamond ring, then hung himself from the chandelier. The legend is refuted by other reports that the inscription was made by a thirty-five-year-old resident named Rutger Martens Schwabbing, who did not die until April 12, 1832.²⁸ But the point, again, is the power of this place within the collective imagination as a *lieu de memoire*—inhabited at the very least by history, if not literally by its ghosts. Inhabited, sadly, too (at least as of 2006), by more Ambonese refugees, in the courtyard behind the mansion, since the place had been abandoned by everyone else (fig. 22).



Figure 22. Christian refugee sleeping in the courtyard of the Coen mansion.

If architectural remains provide the most prominent visual presence on the land, exerting persistent influence within the indigenous psyche, a steady flow of more fleeting objects of material and visual culture has also had its impact (fig. 23). For the history of Banda is studded throughout with these more portable goods; after all, from the start, the story of the Dutch in these islands was all about trade.²⁹ In time the notorious excesses of the *perkeniers* gave rise to splendid mansions built and rebuilt in Neira Town: “spacious structures with floors of polished marble or brightly colored tiles (brought in as ballast), crystal chandeliers, elegant European style furnishings, and much display of fine mirrors in gilt frames, massive tables and chairs of highly polished, beautifully grained wood.”³⁰ Their lavish trappings have mostly vanished, though shells of these once grand homes still line the streets of the Old Town.



Figure 23. Dutch clay pipes, 17th century, Rumah Budaya museum.



Figure 24. *Martavans*, Rumah Budaya museum.

Des Alwi, then rajah of Banda (now deceased), made his ancestral home on Banda Neira into a museum, Rumah Budaya, which is filled with memorabilia of the island’s long history; the place is as steeped in the past as it is in the Dutch role within it. Here are ancient *martavans*, the massive clay jars that transported water, oil, palm wine, and salted foods for long voyages (fig. 24); they came from Pegu (Myanmar, formerly Burma), where the Dutch had settled in 1625 (in Arakan) and where the VOC had had offices since 1635 (in the coastal towns of Syriam and Ava).³¹ Moldering in a glass case is a pistol from Heemskerck’s first contact with Neira in 1599, and Portuguese helmets still worn by dancers in the Cakalele performance that ritually reenacts Coen’s massacre of Banda. Along with ornately carved colonial furniture, there is even a Victrola (from a later time) that still plays—as Des happily demonstrated for me. There are scores of coins stamped with the VOC monogram, and the bar-style currency that could flexibly be hacked off to the required weight to complete a transaction. And the instinct for trade lives on: while I was there a girl brought in a jarful of coins that her uncle had found in his field, and Des pulled out his book to identify and appraise them (fig. 25). He picked out some and paid her; later at dinner, hosting a visiting German dive ship, he offered an assortment for sale to a wealthy tourist, who bought a few (fig. 26).



Figure 25. Des Alwi at Rumah Budaya identifying VOC coins found on Banda Neira.



Figure 26. VOC coins found on Banda Neira.

Other kinds of relics continue to resurface as well—artifacts that testify to the diversity of the art and visual culture that accumulated in this nexus of trade. One day a knock at my door back at the hotel brought a request from a vacationing Australian businessman; he had heard I was an art historian and could I please take a look at these plates a young man was offering him for sale? The boy said they'd been in the possession of his grandmother for years: four hefty platters, all with a dull gray surface suggesting age and long submersion. One looked decidedly Chinese, with the delicate overall floral decoration typical of eighteenth-century Qing Dynasty blue and white ware (fig. 27).³² Another bore a repeated motif surrounding the rim that could be a stylized interpretation of the *bismallah* (بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ), the Arabic phrase meaning “in the name of God” (fig. 28).³³ A third was painted with motifs more local to the islands—a drum and a bird of paradise (fig. 29)—while the last roughly imitated some patterns and the red and blue colors of Japanese Ko-Imari, except that the vase of flowers in its center was more reminiscent of the multicolored variety of Delftware (fig. 30).³⁴ The disparity of the pieces bore witness to the profoundly mixed population of these islands, and to the commerce that had so long intersected here—Arab, Chinese, Japanese, inter-island trade, and throughout, the Dutch intercessions. In 1868 A. W. A. Ludeking had reported that even the head-hunting tribes on Ceram were aficionados of these exotic treasures (as later related by E. M. Beekman): “For the Alfurs, porcelain plates represented wealth and were greatly desired. They especially coveted *kena patu* [large plates] from the days of the seventeenth-century Dutch Trading Company, or VOC, which were usually Delft blue.”³⁵



Figure 27. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 19 inches, origin possibly China, late 18th-century Qing Dynasty).



Figure 28. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly China, but produced for the Arab market).



Figure 29. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly 20th century, Banda Islands).



Figure 30. Ceramic plate offered for sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly Dutch, 19th century; rim patterns roughly imitate Japanese Ko-Imari ware).

So, to reflect: if these colonial remains are repositories of memory, what kind of memory is it? It is more complicated than it might at first seem: as evidenced in architecture and artifacts which, while connected to events that are undeniably grim, are yet held in fonder regard by some—the very complication becoming in certain ways even useful.

Of course, it is the distinct province of things visual to accommodate just this kind of ambiguity, these multiple valencies of complex signification. And so they restore the fort, and rebuild the church yet again, this time in the wake of contemporary conflict (fig. 31).³⁶

Can we consider Banda as *pars pro toto* for Indonesia as a whole? Yes and no.³⁷ On one hand, certainly, remnants of Dutch visual culture are to be found all throughout Indonesia, where the *longue durée* of colonial presence has colored life and art in so many ways. But I would argue that in Banda the sheer psychological impact of these presences is particularly intense, comprising in fact the chief register of Dutch aesthetic influence—whether massive and looming, like the physical occupation of place that Benteng Belgica commands, in an imposing demonstration of Foucault’s contention that space is power—or lesser, but myriad, like Dermout’s ten thousand things.³⁸ Why? In the sprawling, teeming metropolis that Jakarta has become, modern development crowds around these remains (fig. 32); the past hangs heavier in Banda because history has turned away from this place. When the English occupied Banda in the 1790s, they shipped choice seedlings off to Ceylon, Bencoolen (now Bengkulu), and Penang.³⁹ Still earlier, Pierre Poivre had transported Moluccan seed and seedlings to the French colonies; they did especially well in Zanzibar and Madagascar.⁴⁰ In the mid-nineteenth century, even the Dutch and local planters began growing spices in Celebes, Java, and Sumatra—but already by 1800 it had become clear that Banda’s monopoly on the precious spice was at an end. And even though Grenada’s “long nutmegs,” which now supply most of the American and European market, lack the pungency of Banda’s original “round nutmeg” cultivar, the local Moluccan economy has been largely starved out of the world market by a huge Rotterdam cartel that suppresses prices below survival wages.⁴¹

The intrusion of modernity that has transfigured Jakarta, engulfing its history in a postmodern cacophony, is only a whisper on these quiet islands (fig. 33). The *pelni* (ferry) arrives every other Tuesday, outbound toward the Kei islands beyond, and stops back every other Thursday to collect passengers for the overnight voyage back to Ambon.⁴² Sometimes a plane lands on Banda Neira—but, as it was explained to me, the runway is short, and “then comes the sea and then comes the volcano,”—so if the wind is blowing the wrong way when the plane approaches, it must turn tail, fly the hour back to Ambon, and wait another week to try again. And that’s when weekly flights are even scheduled, since last I heard when I was headed there, the plane had tipped over and no flights were going at all.⁴³

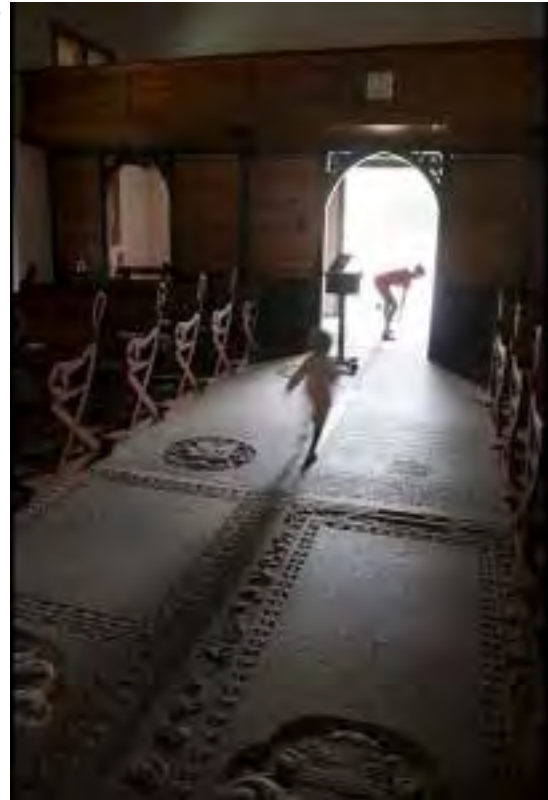


Figure 31. Restored interior of Dutch Reformed Church, 2009 (photo courtesy of Doug Meilke).



Figure 32. Maritime Museum (formerly VOC godowns) visible at right, Jakarta, Java, Indonesia, 2006.



Figure 33. View of Gunung Api from Pulau Ai

On March 28, 2009, Karel Albert Ralahal, the governor of Maluku, announced a new campaign to stimulate tourism for the province of Maluku—and as elsewhere in the postcolonial world, the restoration and preservation of Dutch remains hold promise for that effort; still, for now, these tiny islands remain a distant outpost of the global village.⁴⁴ As in the seventeenth century, a boy paddles a long, low, dugout *perahu* silently across the shining sea (fig. 34); now as then, the granite monuments pave the church floor. Ever so slowly, their carvings are wearing smoother, some gradually effaced along with the particular memories they were conceived to protect (fig. 35). But for the children inhabiting that space as refugees from Ambon’s twentieth-century violence, the skull and crossbones graven in stone bespoke mortality as clearly as ever, watching still over the bones in Banda.⁴⁵



Figure 34. Perahu crossing from Banda Neira to Lonthor, Banda Islands, Maluku, 2006.



Figure 35. Interior of Dutch Reformed Church, 2006.

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¹ Banda, or the Banda Islands, form part of the Maluku Islands (also known as the Moluccas), a large archipelago in eastern Indonesia. Historically Chinese and Europeans called them the Spice Islands, often referring specifically to Banda. Today Maluku is also the name of the province in which the Bandas are located. Banda Neira is one of the Banda Islands

² Nigel Simmonds in Willard A. Hanna, *Banda: A Journey Through Indonesia’s Fabled Isles of Fire and Spice*, ed. Nigel Simmonds (Banda: Yayasan Warisan dan Budaya Banda, 1997), 20. For an exhaustive catalogue of early literature on the Moluccas, see W. Ruinen and A. B. Tutein Nolthenius, eds., *Overzicht van de Literatuur betreffende de Molukken*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Molukken-Instituut, 1928–35).

³ Maria Dermoût, *The Ten Thousand Things: A Novel*, trans. Hans Koning (1958; repr., Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 4. (Originally published in Dutch: *De Tienduizend Dingen*, 1955).

⁴ Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 10.

⁵ Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things* 4. Dermoût was born on a sugar plantation near Pekalongan in central Java in 1888; at twelve she was sent to Holland for schooling, returning to Java in 1905 and marrying a colonial official the following year. For nearly thirty years (with the exception of three years of medical furlough) she lived in various parts of the Indies, mostly in Java and the Moluccas, as her husband was transferred regularly, finally returning to Holland only in 1933. Then in her mid-forties, Dermoût had lived nearly half her life in the tropics but never returned again. See E. M. Beekman, “Afterword,” in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 271–73.

⁶ See Richard Leppert, “Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India,” in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 80.

⁷ François Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën* (Dordrecht and Amsterdam: Joannes van Braam, 1724–26), 3:4: “De Hollandsche Kerk staat naast een Gabba Gabba loots, die tusschen de zelve, en ‘t huis van den opperkoopman, plagt te staan. Zy wiert in ‘t pas gemelde jaar, alzo zy door de aardbeving nog zeer geschouden, en niet bequaam tot het waarnemen van den dienst was, zoo verre weder in staat gebragt, dat, dar men bevoorens in die loots ‘smorgens Duits, en ‘smiddags Maleits, plagt te prediken, men dat in ‘t jaar 1688 weer in deze steene Kerk begon te doen. Zy is van binnen vraai ruim, moi licht, en van verscheide gestoeltens, gelyk ook van een goeden predikstoel, voorzien, en glykt, van buiten aan te zien, wel een vaderlands huis met een vaderlandzen voorgevel.” (The Dutch Church stands next to a Gabba Gabba *loots*, which used to stand between it and the house of the head merchant. In the aforemen-

tioned year, as it was still badly damaged by the earthquake, and not suitable for conducting the service, it was once again restored to the state that, where they had previously used to preach Dutch in the mornings and Malay in the afternoons in the *loots*, in the year 1688 they again resumed doing this in the stone church. It is very spacious inside, beautifully light, and provisioned with various pews, as well as a good pulpit, and from the outside it well resembles a native Dutch house with a native Dutch façade).

⁸ Willard A. Hanna recorded that it was rebuilt in 1852, while the plaque on the front wall dedicates a cornerstone laid in 1873. Hanna's research was originally published in *Indonesian Banda: Colonialism and Its Aftermath in the Nutmeg Islands* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978), though the text is reproduced, combined with commentary from Nigel Simmonds, in the beautifully illustrated 1997 edition cited in note 1; page numbers here will be cited from the latter volume.

⁹ The truly tragic events of April 21, 1999, were reported by Rick van den Broeke in "Tragedy on the Banda Islands," <http://members.upc.nl/rvandenbroeke/waling.htm#01>, accessed December 14, 2009. Due to tensions on Ambon and Ceram, about four thousand Ambonese were moved to Banda, where further violence erupted. A group of rioters burned the church on Neira; the interior of the historic church on Pulau Ai was also demolished; and five members of the Van den Broeke family were murdered: Tie (widow of Wim, the "last perkenier" of the historic plantation Groot Waling), her sister, her daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters, age eight and nine. On the early history of Islamization in Banda and Muslim-Christian violence, see Peter V. Lape, "Political Dynamics and Religious Change in the Late Pre-colonial Banda Islands, Eastern Indonesia," *World Archaeology* 32, no. 1 (June 2000): 138–55.

¹⁰ On the earlier *perkeniers* (owners and operators of the spice plantations, or *perks*), see Vincent Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers in the Banda Islands in the 17th Century," *Cakalele* 6 (1995): 13–35.

¹¹ On Ambon, too, when I passed through en route to Banda in 2006, the large church opposite the Museum Siwa Lima had been burned to the ground, and the road from the airport into town was still studded with the burned-out homes of families who had fled to Banda.

¹² Pierre Nora, *Space*, vol. 2 of *Rethinking France*, trans. directed by David P. Jordan (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xi. Nora's project on *lieux de memoire* is so enormous that two different approaches have been taken to organizing the material, which appears in two different collected publications; this particular volume on space has the most direct connection with the literal sense of *lieux* as it applies here.

¹³ In fact, some critics feel they over-renovated, stirring in too much concrete in their zeal. See Hanna, *Banda*, 105.

¹⁴ Hanna, *Banda*, 39.

¹⁵ Hanna, *Banda*, 43.

¹⁶ Verhoeven wasted considerable time on a site where the ground turned out to be too unstable, before transferring his efforts to the site of the old Portuguese foundation. Hanna, *Banda*, 57.

¹⁷ Hanna, *Banda*, 60–61, 63.

¹⁸ This by Hanna's word, though Valentijn comments of both Nassau and Belgica, "Wanneer of door wie die gebouwt zyn, blykt my nergens klaar." (When or by whom they were built, has never been clear to me). Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:2.

¹⁹ Hanna, *Banda*, 84.

²⁰ Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:7: "Vesting Hollandia: Deze vesting, is vry oud, aangezien zy in de oudste schriften der Secretary van Banda, die in 't jaar 1619 beginnen, al bekend was, zonder dat daar eenigzins bleek, wanneer, of door wie, zy gebouwt is, alleenlyk ziet man, dat zy, te vooren Lonthoir genaamt, de naam van Hollandia in 't jaar 1628 van den Heer Landvoogt Pieter Vlak gekregen heeft. Zy is oud en vervallen, hoewel van eenig geschut verzien, doch van zeer weinig belang." (This fortress is very old, considering it was already known in the oldest writings

of the Secretary of Banda, which begin in the year 1619, without it appearing anywhere at all when or by whom it was built. One only sees that, previously named Lonthoir, it got the name of Hollandia in the year 1628 from the Governor-General Pieter Vlak. It is old and dilapidated, though not from any artillery fire, but rather from lack of care). In contrast, Hanna writes that Coen began construction of Fort Hollandia (formerly Fort Lonthoir) in 1621 and that it was probably completed in 1642 (Hanna, *Banda*, 80).

²¹ Hanna, *Indonesian Banda*; Lape, "Political Dynamics," 139, referencing Hanna, *Banda* (1997); and Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers." See also Vincent Loth, "Armed Incidents and Unpaid Bills: Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Banda Islands in the Seventeenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1995): 705–40.

²² S. Purchas and R. Hakluyt, *Purchas his pilgrims. In five books* (London: printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), 710, quoted in Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149. Historical documents are punctuated throughout with references to resident Turks, Persians, Bengalese, Gujeratis, Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Javanese, Macassarese, and people from the other Maluku islands of Seram, Ambon, Kei, Ternate, Tidore, and Aru. See Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149, referencing Hanna, *Indonesian Banda*; and Purchas and Hakluyt, *Purchas his pilgrims*. See also T. Pires and F. Rodrigues, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires, an account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515, and The book of Francisco Rodrigues, rutter of a voyage in the Red Sea, nautical rules, almanac and maps, written and drawn in the East before 1515*, trans. Armando Cortesao, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series, Part 1, Nos. 89–90 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944); J. Villiers, "Trade and Society in the Banda Islands in the Sixteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 15 (1981): 723–50; and J. Villiers, "The Cash Crop Economy and State Formation in the Spice Islands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise*, ed. J. Kathirithamby-Wells and J. Villiers, (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), 83–105.

²³ Winn's research engages the same keen awareness of the power of space and place in the lives of people as this study seeks to invoke. Phillip Winn, "Graves, Groves, and Gardens: Place and Identity in Central Maluku, Indonesia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (2001): 21–44. See also Phillip Winn, "'Banda is the Blessed Land': Sacred Practice and Identity in the Banda Islands, Maluku," *Antropologi Indonesia* 57 (1998): 71–80. Other anthropologists, too, have linked these notions in local area studies: "'Space' and, more recently, 'place' have drawn much attention from anthropologists working in Southeast Asia." Gregory Forth, *Place and Space in Eastern Indonesia*, Occasional Paper No. 16 (University of Kent at Canterbury: Centre of South-East Asian Studies, 1991).

²⁴ Hanna, *Banda*, 83–84; 110.

²⁵ The Dutch seized Fort Revenge from the English; Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:28: "In 't Noorden heeft het een regelmatig kasteel, Revenge genaamt, om redden, die wy by de verovering van dit Eiland zullen geven. . . . Door wie of wanneer dit gebouwt is, blykt al mede, niet, maar wel, dat het er al voor 't jaar 1619 nevens Nassau, en 't andere Kasteel, geweest is." (In the North it [the island of Ai] has an orderly castle, named Revenge, for the reason that we should give by the capture of this island. . . . By whom or when this was built, also has not been found, but it is well known that it was already before the year 1619, along with Nassau, and the other castle). Hanna's observations regarding Dutch attitudes register the complexity of the history as well: he maintained that only Revenge (on Ai) and Hollandia (on Lonthor) "ever symbolized victory" for the Dutch, yet their memories of Fort Revenge were as disquieting as those of Nassau and Belgica, and Hollandia reminded them of Coen's deeds, "which the early 19th century could not condone." Hanna, *Banda*, 110.

²⁶ Run had been England's very first colony, authorized by Queen Elizabeth; when the Dutch seized it they allowed the English to stay on the tiny (really tiny!!) neighboring island of Neijalakka. In June 1665, Run formally reverted to the English; Hanna recorded that in 1667 they had traded it back to the Dutch (*Banda*, 85, 97). Wim Frijhoff has called this last a common misconception, specifying it was not technically a trade (in conversation, during the conference "Going Dutch: Holland in America, 1609–2009," University of Denver, March 2005).

²⁷ Transcribed and translated in Hanna, *Banda*, 20.

²⁸ Compare for example http://www.indonesiatraveling.com/Indonesia%20Travelling%20by%20Sea/pages_moluccas/

banda_islands.htm, accessed December 14, 2009.

²⁹ Notes on Vice Admiral Jacob van Heemskerck's earliest barter, from the first Dutch visit in 1599, record disputes over moldy mace and decayed nutmegs, mildewed textiles, broken mirrors, and rusty knives; upon his departure Heemskerck promised the elders a heavily ornamented clock, "such decoration not to include, however, any representation of the human figure," in accordance with Muslim strictures—though he never returned, nor is there any mention of such an object being delivered. Regional traders brought batiks from Java, calicoes from India, Chinese porcelain, metal wares, medicines, and potions. Hanna, *Banda*, 36, 38, 42.

³⁰ Hanna, *Banda*, 101.

³¹ *Martavans* originally got their name from the ancient port of Martaban in southern Myanmar (formerly Pegu, later Burma), where they were produced as early as the fourteenth century. Historical reports by Lintschoten (1598) and Pierre de Laval (1610) mentioned the manufacture of *martaban* jars at Martaban. See Sumarah Adhyatman and Abu Ridho, *Martavans in Indonesia/Tempayan Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Himpunan Keramik Indonesia, 1984), and Sumarah Adhyatman, *Burmese Ceramics* (Ceramic Society of Indonesia, 1985). Volker confirmed that the *martaban* jars were nearly all shipped from Pegu and most probably were indeed Burmese and not Chinese (T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company, as Recorded in the Dagh-registers of Batavia Castle, Those of Hirado and Deshima, and Other Contemporary Papers, 1602–1682* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971], 221).

³² Such decoration is typical of the Qing Dynasty (1655–1912), from the time of the Emperor Kang-xi (1662–1722). But Chinese wares had already come to Banda long before the Dutch arrived. Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149, cited Chinese ceramics in early Bandanese archaeological sites as proof that long-distance traders reached Banda by the ninth century: he found a fragment of Chinese pottery in layers dated between 560 and 770 and Song dynasty (960–1279) ceramics and coins in sites dated before 1250. Archaeological sites dating to the sixteenth century contain considerable amounts of glazed ceramics, primarily from the Guangdong and Fujian provinces of China, as well as smaller amounts of Vietnamese and Thai ceramics.

³³ The central motif could be made up of the *bismallah* as well; as the first part of the phrase that opens most of the verses of the Quran, these letters appear frequently throughout Arabic arts, often freely interpreted in this way. My thanks to my colleague Björn Anderson at the University of Iowa for sharing his expertise on this matter. The spiral designs surrounding the center circle are reminiscent of a Chinese cloud pattern, suggesting a Chinese craftsman who may have been only imitating the Arabic letters for an Arabic market—a common occurrence in the production of Chinese export porcelain.

³⁴ Ko-Imari, or old Imari, was produced in Hizen until the end of the Edo Period (1603–1868). These artifacts are consistent with Lape's overall conclusion that "the archaeological and documentary evidence generally support the idea that Banda was a place of trade and contact with people from both the local region and further away." Lape, "Political Dynamics," 144.

³⁵ E. M. Beekman, "Afterword," in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 251 (also 249, where he indicates that the Alfurs, especially on Ceram, were head-hunters), citing E. W. A. Ludeking, "Schets van de Residentie Amboina," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* 15, nos. 1–2, [ser. 3, vol. 3] (1868): 65.

³⁶ My thanks to professional photographer Doug Meikle, who kindly provided me with this 2009 update.

³⁷ In remarking about Dermoût's use of literature on Maluku, E. M. Beekman observed: "Though the smallest of the greater Sunda Islands, Java has always been the most densely populated, with about two-thirds of all Indonesians living there. In many ways a history of Indonesia is, first and foremost, the history of Java. But in some ways Java's prominence is misleading because it belies the great diversity of this island realm. For instance, the destination of the first Europeans who sailed to Southeast Asia was not Java but the Moluccas." E. M. Beekman, "About the Series," in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 306.

³⁸ See "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 239–56. Interest in the relationships between space and identity have been widespread throughout other disciplines

³⁸ See “Space, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 239–56. Interest in the relationships between space and identity have been widespread throughout other disciplines as well; see Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, ed., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993).

³⁹ Hanna, Banda, 106.

⁴⁰ Hanna, Banda, 107. For the debate as to whether or not Poivre’s nutmeg was actually genuine, see E. C. Spary, “Of Nutmegs and Botanists: The Colonial Cultivation of Botanical Identity,” in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), 187–203.

⁴¹ See Charles Corn, *The Scents of Eden* (New York: Kodansha America, 1998), and Charles Corn, “A Taste of Adventure: The History of Spices Is the History of Trade: Kerala, India, and the Molucca Islands, Indonesia,” *The Economist* 349 (1998): 51–55; republished as “The Spice Trade: A History of Adventure: Kerala, India, and the Molucca Islands, Indonesia,” *The Encyclopedia of Spices*, <http://www.theepicentre.com/Spices/spicetrd.html>, accessed December 14, 2009.

⁴² At least, that was the case at the time of my 2006 journey there, when I arrived and departed by way of that ferry. Schedules may have changed since.

⁴³ As of an email communication from Tamalia Alisjahbana prior to my departure in 2006.

⁴⁴ The governor’s announcement, “MALUKU BECOMING AWARE OF TOURISM,” was centered at Pantai Pasir Putih (white sandy beach) of the village Allang on Ambon Island. See <http://malukutourism.com/>, accessed December 12, 2009. Renovating Benteng Belgica and rebuilding the Neira church were certainly part of this effort. In 2006, Des Alwi also expressed interest in making the VOC mansion into a boutique hotel, though kamar spok might yet prevail there.

⁴⁵ The inscription reads “GEDENKT TE STERVEN” (think on [remember] your death).

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