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THE MANGGARAI REGION ON THE FLORES,
ISLAND INDONESIA
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A b s t r a c t. Manggarai, as a region with its own cultural system, appears, likely thousands other regions in the archipelago, not just as a separate field of scientific research, but as a set of value systems that over time formed (and is still forming) the character of individuals to be able to live in a such diverse country, Indonesia. This “being Manggarai/Manggaraian”, which expresses the whole (person, character, customs, beliefs), can be considered as one of the factors of the development of the region (at the micro scale) and the country (at the macro scale) and as a strategy in the dealing with crises in both levels (micro and macro) as well. This article describes the background and cultural characteristics of a region which, in such a diverse and rapidly developing country, continues to keep the cultural remains of its ancestors in a reasonable way.

Keywords: Manggarai; culture; adat; custom; ritual.

PREFACE

Manggarai is a region situated in the west of the island of Flores and a part of the province of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands (Nusa Tenggara Timur). At present, the Manggarai area is divided into three counties.¹ It covers a territory of 7,136.4 km². It also includes 44 smaller islands such as Rinca, Komodo, Mules, or Bidadari. There are 858.282 inhabitants living

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¹ Manggarai with its capital in Ruteng, Western Manggarai with its capital in Labuan Bajo and Eastern Manggarai with its capital in Borong.

there.² 96,3% of the population are Catholics and the area has become the diocese of Ruteng.³

The term “Manggarai” encompasses not only the territory, but also the entire social, cultural, and moral concepts (known as *adat*) of the people who live there.⁴ In the mind of the people, there are three types of *adat* relationships that vary hierarchically: *adat* resulting from a sense of “statehood” is understood as a common good of the people, *adat* of a clan that is observed at the level of the individual’s relationship with the whole clan, and *adat* of a family.⁵ All these aspects become the main issue in this article. It is part of my dissertation from 2012 about the inculturation of the liturgical music in Manggarai.



Map of Lesser Sunda Islands (NTT)⁶

² Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Manggarai (BPSKM), „Statistik Daerah Tahun 2020”, accessed August 06, 2020, <https://manggaraikab.bps.go.id>; Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Manggarai Timur (BPSKMT), „Jumlah Penduduk Menurut Jenis Kelamin (Jiwa), 2018-2020”, accessed August 06, 2020, <https://manggaraitimurkab.bps.go.id/indicator/12/69/1/jumlah-penduduk-menurut-jenis-kelamin.html>; Pemerintah Kabupaten Manggarai Barat, „Profil Kependudukan”, accessed August 06, 2020, <https://manggarai Baratkab.go.id/1599-2/>.

³ Dokpen KWI, „Keuskupan Ruteng”, accessed October 20, 2020, <https://www.dokpenkwi.org/2015/10/26/keuskupan-ruteng/>.

⁴ The word *adat* comes from Arabic *adah*, which means a custom or custom inherited from generation to generation. – See Hasan Shadily, *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, vol. 1 (Jakarta, 1992), 76.

⁵ Moira Moeliono, “The Drums of Rura: Land Tenure and the Making of Place in Manggarai, West Flores, Indonesia” (PhD diss., University of Hawaii 2000), 3.

⁶ Accessed August 06, 2020, <https://www.mapsofworld.com/indonesia/provinces/nusa-tenggara-timur.html>.

I. THE PEOPLE OF MANGGARAI

The inhabitants of Flores Island are racially mixed groups.⁷ In the legends and stories of the Manggaraians there are different versions about the origin of their ancestors.⁸ They divide themselves into *ata ici* (local people) and *ata cai* (newcomer).⁹ About this, M. Erb, an anthropologist, after investigating traditional stories, discovered that the inhabitants of Desu are descendants of the first human couple in Manggarai.¹⁰ The descendants of this couple lived in this village until the arrival of Mashur from Minangkabau (Sumatra), thus *ata cai*. The *ata cai* people are subclans, which, according to their legends, come from different parts of the archipelago: Bugis, Gowa, Makasar, Serang, Sumba, Bima and Boneng Kabo.¹¹

All inhabitants of the region speak local language *curup Manggarai*, as a *lingua franca*, apart from *Bahasa Indonesia* as national language. J. Verheijen first made the linguistic division of Manggarai into west, middle, east, and *s-h* dialect.¹² In the east of Manggarai there are a number of dialects, which Verheijen even qualified as separate languages.¹³ These are Rembong, Rajong, Kepo, Rongga Koe, and several dialects like Manus, Biting, and Congkar. They show strong influences from Central Flores (Ngada, Nage Keo, and Lio).

⁷ Evidence of this can be obtained by the finding of a pitcanthropist on Java Island in Wajak. – See Koentjaraningrat, *Manusia dan Kebudayaan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2002), 4.

⁸ In their conversations with the Manggaraians, they often mention Bonengkabo or simply ‘overseas’ (*lage tacik mese*) for the place of origin of the ancestor of their particular clan. Van Bekkum also had these conversations. – See Wilhelm Van Bekkum, “Warloka – Todo-Pongkor: Een Brok Geshiedenis van Manggarai (West Flores)”, *Cultureel India* VI (1944):147.

⁹ Dami N. Toda, *Manggarai Mencari Pencerahan Historiografi* (Ende: Nusa Indah, 1999), 221.

¹⁰ People in Manggarai know the story about the first human couple, who came out of a bamboo tree (*belang*) that burst in the morning sun. – See Maribeth Erb, *The Manggaraians: A Guide to Traditional Lifestyles* (Singapore: Time Editions, 1999), 31. In Eastern Manggarai there is a similar legend of Ndiwal and Obak.

¹¹ Adi M. Nggoro, *Budaya Manggarai Selayang Pandang* (Ende: Nusa Indah, 2006), 26-27. See also the interviews with R. Mudjur on 31 May 2010 and Andreas Alang on 27 July 2010.

¹² Jilis Verheijen, *Kamus Manggarai* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1967), 9; Maribeth Erb, “Woman Below, Man Above. Songs of Sex and Love in Eastern Manggarai,” in *Go’et Nggejang. Songs and Dance Texts from Northeast Manggarai (Flores, Indonesia)*, ed. Leo Quaaen (Nijmegen: Centre for Pacific and Asian Studies, 2008), 35. – See also: Willem Beribe, “Manggarai Noun and Verb Formation. A Descriptive Analysis of the Morphology of the Manggarai Tengah Dialect. A Comparative Study,” (PhD diss., Undana Kupang, 1982), 23.

¹³ Verheijen, *Kamus*, 13.

II. THE SUPREME BEING

The Manggaraians believe on the existence of the supernatural beings (*darat tana*) and the interference of the spirits of their ancestors (*wura ceki*) in the daily life. But the most supreme power is referred to the highest being, *Mori Kraeng* (God)¹⁴. *Mori Kraeng* is given many predicates, like *Morin agu Ngaran* (the Owner), *Mori Jari agu Dedek* (the Creator), *Ame eta*, *Ine wa* (Father above, Mother below: as the uniting power), the same meaning in *Tana wa*, *Awang eta* (the earth below, the sky above) or *Par agu Kolep* (the east and west) and *Ulun le, wa'in lau* (the beginning and the end, God as the Alpha and Omega).¹⁵

Mori Kraeng reigns from “above the sky” (*eta awang beta*). He concerns about the life of human being and gave the commandments in *adat* law. He recompenses for good deeds and punishes for disobediences. Therefore, in all rituals, people ask for His care and protection through the supernatural beings and the ancestors, since people believe, that the deceased people go to *Mori Kraeng* and can be mediators for the living relatives.¹⁶

III. A MANGGARAIAN HOUSE OR *MBARU*

In the ancient Manggarai families of the entire clan used to live together. The architectural description by M. Erb shows that there are separate rooms in the house, each inhabited by clan members.¹⁷ The more important members lived in a room close to the one in power. In western Manggarai one could meet large houses on square stilts, the so-called *mbaru lempang*, which housed 400 inhabitants. In other parts of the round houses were half the size of a roundhouse. They were called *mbaru niang* (or *mbaru ponggor*).¹⁸

¹⁴ The belief on Supreme Being as the most sovereign power is similar among many ethnics of Southeast Indonesia. This name *Mori Kraeng* refers to the monotheistic concept of God and is commonly used in the Catholic belief until today. – See Jilis Verheijen, *Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi* (Jakarta: LIPI, 1991), 9-15.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 38-54.

¹⁶ Max Regus, and Kanisius T. Deki, eds. *Gereja Menyapa Manggarai* (Jakarta: Grafika Desa Putra, 2011), 28.

¹⁷ Erb, *The Manggaraians*, 101.

¹⁸ Wilhelm van Bekkum, “Het Gendanghuis en de Megalith in het Roetengshce,” manuscript (Ruteng, 1940): 117; Robert Lawang, “Stratifikasi Sosial Di Cancar-Manggarai Flores Barat” (PhD diss., Universitas Indonesia, 1989), 125. 208; Maribeth Erb, “Contested Time and

Building a house consists of series of rituals, such as gathering the poles and constructing the house frame (*cincang*), putting the frame on its place (*tongke*) and putting the roof (*ceko*). When the house is ready to be lived in another rituals are made, such as *we'e mbaru* (entering the new house), *pesek sapo* (setting the hearth, *sapo*).¹⁹

The house (*mbaru*) symbolizes and at the same time marks the boundaries of social space. This space covers not only life and its needs, but also the entire supernatural zone, which is connected with the spiritual sphere.²⁰ The *mbaru* is believed to be inhabited by both living beings and the spirits of ancestors, whose cult is still alive. The house brings together and unites all aspects of people's lives, as rightly noted by researchers, who discuss the function of the house in the peoples of Southeast Asia.²¹ In line with Levi-Strauss' research, the home is a sovereign social institution and has an inherited hierarchical structure to sustain, nurture, and perpetuate cultural values. Since the house occupies a certain space, there must also be an inextricable link between the house and the farmland. This farmland (*lingko*) is considered as an extension of the space used by human being.²² The house and the are connected as two complementary elements of social and cosmological space.

At the centre of the *mbaru* are the drums, which are hung on a central pole, called *siri bongkok*. Drums and gongs are direct tools for establishing contact with the supernatural (spiritual) world. The "drum house" (*mbaru gendang/mbaru tembong*) means the most important house in every village, where all ritual celebrations begin or take place.²³

Place. Constructions of History in Todo, Manggarai (Western Flores, Indonesia)." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 64.

¹⁹ Regus, Deki, eds., *Gereja*, 86-98.

²⁰ Erb, *The Manggaraians*, 1; Idem, "Contested Time and Place," 61. About the importance of homes in different cultures of Indonesian ethnic groups, see: Roxana Waterson, *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1990), 138 etc.; oraz James J. Fox, *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1993), 5.

²¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropology and myth: lectures 1951-1982* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 156; Shelly Errington, *Meaning and Power in A Southeast Asian Realm* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 236-241.

²² The philosophy of *mbaru/gendang one lingko pe'ang* (drum/house inside, field outside) is emphasized in every aspect of Manggaraian social life. They express in this way a close attachment to those elements of their culture that cannot be separated.

²³ Catherine Allerton, „Authentic Housing, Authentic Culture," *Indonesian and the Malay World* 3, no. 89 (2003): 7.



Gendang on the pole *siri bongkok*²⁴

Mbaru niang/lempang as a common home for the whole clan was not ideal for living in terms of hygiene. The old houses were built without windows due to the mountainous, cold climate. It was heated by the heat of a burning fire (*sapo*). Lack of ventilation resulted in high air pollution and suffocation. At the beginning of the 19th century, the colonial authorities (the Dutch) started to forbid people to live in such houses.²⁵ Therefore, the Manggaraians started to leave their traditional houses *en masse* and build their own family houses, which, however, in their shape and location also formed a “u” shape, which referred to the old traditional building. However, these cottages formed a village (*beo*) and were already built with windows. In the main house (*mbaru mese*) there was a separate place for the living part (bedrooms and guest rooms), and a separate place (or building) for the kitchen (*dapur*).

In modern Manggarai there are only a little number of such *mbaru niang/lempang*, some functioning as a museum (see photo below).²⁶ In every village, however, there is still a “drum house,” which no longer has a traditional architectural shape, but still has the same function (see the other photo be-

²⁴ Photo from: <http://tunawisma.com/poster-ruteng/>.

²⁵ Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-orang Katolik di Indonesia* (Maumere: Penerbit Ledalero, 2006), 117.

²⁶ The village of Wae Rebo is a cultural reserve, where people still live in houses of ancient architecture (*mbaru niang*) and do not intend to change the style of construction.

low). There are several churches being built according to this motive. The construction model of modern houses is not uniform and has little in common with the native tradition.



The village Wae Rebo with its traditional houses mbaru niang²⁷



A modern drum house²⁸

²⁷ Photo from: <https://komodotourismotour.com/warebo-2-days-1-night-tour/>.

²⁸ Photo from: <http://www.beritaflores.com/2018/04/27/gendang-rembong-mokel-torok-go-lo-niang-sita-dan-paket-aset/>.

IV. FOLK CUSTOMS AND RITUALS

1. Annual rituals

Penti – thanksgiving and the new agrarian year

Penti is a celebration of thanksgiving for a successful yearly harvest and the most festive traditional feast in agrarian Manggarai.²⁹ It has also an imploratory meaning as it expresses a request for further success in both material and spiritual life through the mediation of the ancestors and spirits, whose presence is recalled from the very beginning. They are mediators between the Creator and the people, They are believed to watch over the entire community. They are also witnesses and mediators in conflict matters, because the feast of *pent*i also serves the purpose of reconciliation. Finally, *Penti* is an opportunity to organize a family reunion of members of the family living in different parts of the country.³⁰



A Manggaraian girl in regional festive costume (Photo: Diana Manehat)

²⁹ In the dialects of Eastern Manggarai *peti* refers to a more modest clan or family celebration, also thanksgiving for the crop and the harvest, opening the time of consumption of the new crop, as this is not allowed until then. This is also referred to as *ghan kae/nalun weru* – consumption of new corn/rice (*nalun* means boiled rice). *Penti*, on the other hand, is referred to as *Ghan Woja* (consumption of rice – *wojalwoja* means rice as a plant), or *paras* in Rembong sub-language, with a similar pattern, including a three-day representation of *caci*. – See Erb, “Contested Place and Time,” 62.

³⁰ Petrus Jangur, *Butir-butir Adat Manggarai* (Ruteng: Penerbit Yayasan Siri Bongkok, 2010), 121-22. There he outlines the vertical (to God) and horizontal (to his neighbors) dimensions of the *pent*i ceremony.

In the agrarian calendar, the *pent* ceremony is commonly known as the Manggarian New Year celebration.³¹ Each agrarian year ends with the harvesting of crops and the preparation of sowing for next year. The whole ceremony consists of three parts. The ceremony starts on the designated day in the afternoon. The afternoon cycle begins with a procession from the “drum house” (*mbaru gendang*) to the field (*lingko*) in the spirit of the philosophy “drum inside, earth/ground outside” (*gendang one, lingko peang*). This is followed by a *barong lodok* ritual, in which the ancestors and the spirits who watch over the ground are asked to allow the ceremony to take place and to be present during it.³²



A young boy with festive costume³³

In the past, during the *barong lodok* there was a field split for clan members.³⁴ According to the *Adat*, the divided land (*lodok*) was placed with the forefinger and the middle finger in the shape of an inverted letter “v”. Each

³¹ John L. Gordon, “The Manggarai: Social and Economic Transformation in and Eastern Indonesian Society,” PhD diss. (Harvard University, 1975), 134.

³² *Barong* means “to notify, to inform,” thus here to inform the spirits and ancestors and ask for their blessing for the coming rituals. – See Jangur, *Butir-butir*, 124.

³³ Photo from: <https://youonlylivetwiceweb.wordpress.com/author/youonlylivetwiceweb/>.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 124-125.

marked plot of land has this shape so far. The centre is the planted tree and the plots of land spread out in circles forming a shape of a spider web (see photo below).



A rice field in the shape of spider web in Cancar (VagDoc)

The next ritual takes place at a water spring, from where the drinking water for the village or clan is taken. This ritual is known as *barong wae*. From the water source, people go to the cemetery. There, a *barong boa* (*boa* = grave/burial) takes place. The head of the gathering asks the deceased members of the clan for permission and their presence at the ceremony. After this ritual, before going to *mbaru gendang*, the people stop at the altar/*compang* to do the *barong compang* ritual. The Manggaraians believe there is a “spiritual guardian” of the village they call the *naga galo*, who protects the inhabitants from any misfortune, such as war, fire, cataclysm, or discord.³⁵

After the *barong* rituals, everyone goes to the *mbaru gendang* for the *wisi loce* ritual (unfolding the mat). It is an evening cycle, where the ceremony culminates. The *wisi loce* is a sign of readiness and warm welcome of ancestors and invited guests from other villages and clans. In other villages it is called *toi loce* (show the mat to sit).³⁶ Before the meal, food is put under the main pillar of the house (*siri bongkok*) as a symbolic meal for the ances-

³⁵ Maribeth Erb, “Uniting the Bodies, Cleansing the Village,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 31, no. 89 (2003): 133.

³⁶ For example, at the Bajo clan in Western Manggarai. In the east side they call it *kiat / toi nepe*. – See Hendrikus Aron, “Ritus Pentu Suku Bajo di Manggarai” (BA thesis) STFK Ledalero, 1995: 17.

stors. One of the points of the feast is a meeting of clan leaders with their hosts to discuss common plans for the future.

The climax of the *penti* feast is at midnight. It takes place in the ritual *rengela penti*, which literally means offering a sacrifice from a pig that is ritually killed after a ritual speech or prayer (*torok* or *tudak*) is recited or sung.³⁷

On the second day there are folk games of *mbata*, *danding* and *caci*. *Mbata* is sung and played in *mbaru gendang*, while *danding* and *caci* in the village courtyard (*natas*). In some villages, it is only on this day the arable land is granted to members of the clan and the village.³⁸

As a thanksgiving ceremony, *penti* is held on other occasions as well, however without the whole processes. E.g. on celebrating life successes or the breakthrough moments of life – which takes place especially in urban communities.

Establishing a village (rame beo or seser tompok)

The establishment of the village called *rame beo* is also connected with numerous rituals. It is related to the preparing the land for housing, as well as to the cleansing of the area from evil spirits, diseases, and misfortunes.³⁹

If the village is still to be established, the elders of the clans set one central place where an altar (*compang*) is to stand. *Compang* is the sacred place, where the sacrifice for the ancestors is made, that brings prosperity for the whole clan and protects it from misfortunes all year round.⁴⁰ A fig tree (*ficus benjamina*) was planted on the altar site (*langke/purus* in Mang. or *beringin* in Ind.), which should be poured with the blood of the sacrificial animal.⁴¹ In modern villages,

³⁷ Jangur, *Butir-butir*, 127.

³⁸ Cf. Marsel Nahas, "Pesta Penti dan perayaan Ekaristi" (BA thesis) STFK Ledalero, 1972: 15-37.

³⁹ *Rame beo* in the local language literally means: to enjoy the village or to have fun on the occasion of a new village being built. Jangur used to call this *congko lokap*, whose course he describes as here. – See Jangur, *Butir-butir*, 34. But according to the elderly people with whom the author talked, the *congko lokap* is a ritual that cleanses the village of all misfortunes, which takes place from time to time depending on the settlement of the inhabitants. It is also known as *seser tompok*, which literally means: to clear the area. *Tompok* (or *topok* in the Eastern Manggaraian dialects) means the remnants of trunks of cut down trees or plants growing on the ground.

⁴⁰ Erb, "Contested Time and Place," 75.

⁴¹ The choice of such a tree and not another one to be planted on the *compang* altar is justified by the fact that this tree can grow, is strong and does not lose its leaves in the dry season. Many bird species nest on it. The young leaves can be used as a salad. Therefore *beringin* (in local language: *purus*, *riton* or *ruteng*) is a symbol of unity, prosperity and safety. An informant, A. Alang told about how they witnessed an unusual event several times that

the remains of these altars can still be found. After the ritual is over, folklore games are held: *caci*, *danding*, *sanda*, and *mbata*.



A village with an altar compang in the centre
(Photo: Erick Kuwu)

The buffalo killing (paki kaba)

The term *paki kaba* describes the killing of buffalo in a sacrifice for ancestors to the rhythm of a *raga-sae* dance with songs of *mbata* and *concong* (*soso* in eastern dialect).⁴² There are 5 types of this ritual:⁴³

- *paki seser tompok* – during the founding of the village;
- *paki ruda lodok rame* – during *penti*, to thank the Creator (*Mori Kraeng*) and the ancestors (*wura seki*) for the successes and prosperity they have given over the years;

planted fig trees actually grew after watering a sacrificial buffalo with blood, even in the driest season. – Interview with A. Alang on 27 July 2010.

⁴² Because the Catholic Church forbids the way of killing that causes the slow killing of an animal, so nowadays the dancers only swing their spear at a buffalo and the decisive blow is inflicted only once by the oldest of the clans. Drastic views are then avoided.

⁴³ Will the *kelas* for the dead replace Christian prayers for the salvation of souls? Individual publications appear, which try to connect the two or simply separate them. – See Bernardus Jebabun, “Makna Upacara Kematian Manggarai Bagi Liturgi,” (BA thesis) Ledalero, 1974; Fransiskus X. Doo Koo, “Jiwa Sesuai Paham Asli Manggarai,” (BA thesis) Ledalero, 1984; Hubertus Leteng, “Percik-percik Kristiani Dalam doa Asli Masyarakat Manggarai” (master thesis), Ledalero, 1986; Robilius Narto, “Kelahiran, Perkawinan dan Kematian dalam Siklus Kehidupan Orang Manggarai,” (master thesis) Ledalero, 2003.

– *paki capu toko* – to exhume the corpses of the ancestors who were buried in scattered graves in order to move them to the graves next to each other;
 – *paki poli nangki* – to ask the ancestors to let go of misfortunes and diseases; and *paki bombang bora* - to show the wealth of the clan members.

The ritual prayer during this ceremony (*tola*, *tudak* or otherwise *torok*) contains five requests to the Creator and ancestors, so it is also called *torok raja lima* (prayer in five requests). The content of the prayer and the way it is expressed are transcendent. They include three essential elements of human existence: the community of the living, the community of deceased ancestors and the Creator himself, who is the ultimate goal of human life.

2. Life-crisis customs and rituals

The birth

In the ritual practices relating to the birth of a child there is a cycle of ceremonies aimed at protecting the new born child from evil and preparing it for life within the community. During the ritual activities, such props as a water bowl, cane and mat are used.⁴⁴ During pregnancy, it is usual to perform rituals to encourage good luck during childbirth.⁴⁵

If the birth takes place at home, one of the eldest of the family asks the question about the sex of the child before the door. This question is „ours or a stranger?“ (*ata one ko ata peang?*).⁴⁶ The answer “ours” means a male descendant because he will remain in the clan. The answer “stranger” refers to a female descendant because after getting married she will be outside the clan. Then the umbilical cord is cut off with a bamboo knife (*lampek*).⁴⁷ The umbilical cord is then placed in a coconut shell.

The last of the rituals is to welcome a new family member to the clan (*wa'u wa tana*) as the opening of the life path for the new member of the clan.⁴⁸ It takes place five days after birth and involves giving a name.

⁴⁴ Erb, *The Manggaraians*, 35.

⁴⁵ Narto, “Kelahiran,” 40.

⁴⁶ In rural environments, children are born at home with the help of a midwife, so more rituals can take place. In the case of those born in hospitals, after being brought home, some rituals are still being organized. – See Catherine Allerton, “The path of marriage; Journeys and transformations in Manggarai, eastern Indonesia,” *BTLV* 160, no. 2/3 (2004): 344.

⁴⁷ This ritual is called the *lampek lima* (five-cut) because up to the fifth cut of the umbilical cord must be cut. Here again the number 5 appears, which is important for the culture of the Manggarai region.

⁴⁸ This ritual is also called *cear cumpe*, it's fire extinguishing *api cumpe*. The name

The ceremony of the wedding (palak wina)

The wedding is a matter for the whole clan.⁴⁹ The process of the wedding includes informing the parents of the future wife (*kreba/palak/jaka*), arranging the amount or type of dowry (*kempu*), and the final fixing before the church wedding (*wagal*). After the wedding, the wife is introduced to her husband's house (*padong*).⁵⁰ At the entrance to the husband's house, the wife treats one egg with her leg (rituals of *wega ruha* and *tuke mbaru*), which symbolizes her membership in a new family. This is also confirmed by the sprinkling of the spouses' legs with the blood of the slaughtered animal (the *dara wa'i* ritual).⁵¹ The official reception of the wife is followed by a wedding feast, sometimes accompanied by folk games such as *caci*, *danding*, or *mbata*.

The death and funeral

The moment of death is seen by the Manggaraians as a transition from the living world (*tana lino*) to the world on the other side (*paang be le, pale sina*).⁵² After the death of a family or clan member the villagers and relatives visit the home of the deceased bringing presents (*haeng nai*) in the form of a pig, goat, cock, *songket* material or money (*pa'u lu'u*).⁵³ After the fu-

derives from the fact that until then the mother and child leave the house and a small *api cumpe* fire is always burnt for heating. – See P. Jangur, *Butir-butir*, 91.

⁴⁹ John L. Gordon, "The Marriage Nexus Among The Manggarai of West Flores," in *The Flow of Life: Essays on Eastern Indonesia*, ed. James J. Fox (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 56.

⁵⁰ The wife's first trip to her husband's house is usually a solemn one; she is accompanied by a large group of friends and relatives. The women of the family and the village make sad lamentations. They say goodbye to her with a heartbreak but at the same time wish her luck and happiness on her new journey. They also accompany the bride to the groom's house. Depending on the distance, the *padong/podo* takes place on foot or by bus. And there is a traditional *nggong-tembong* – orchestra, consisting of drums and gongs, played by local women, playing welcome joyful rhythms: *suru/curu molas*.

⁵¹ Allerton, "The Secret Life," 345. Of course, the process of getting married can vary from place to place. Ngoro and Jangur in their books present a different path as well as the definitions of the different stages. I had the opportunity to follow the wedding of my cousin in June 2019. And the course was as described by C. Allerton, apart from saying goodbye and greeting by playing drums.

⁵² In other cultures, this perception of death can also be encountered. In Poland, this phenomenon is dealt with by Prof. Zdzisław Kupisiński, who studies the customs of the inhabitants of the Opoczno and Radom regions. – See Zdzisław Kupisiński, *Śmierć jako wydarzenia eschatyczne. Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia pogrzebowe oraz zaduszkowe mieszkańców regionu opoczyńskiego i radomskiego* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2007), 71.

⁵³ *Haeng nai* in the local language literally means "to be on time at the moment of so-

neral, everyone comes home mourning for the *pange poti* ritual. The aim of this ritual is not to let the spirit of the deceased and the accompanying ghosts into the house. The third day after the funeral is the day of cleansing. On this day, the ritual *so'it buing* is practised, as the sack of gifts brought by mourners on the day of death is taken off the wall.

There is a big ritual after the funeral, which is called *Kelas*. This ceremony is also called *paka di'a* (literally: let him/her be well), because it is a kind of farewell to the deceased and at the same time praying, so that he/she and his/her family are well.⁵⁴ In the past, *kelas* took place literally five days after death, but today the date set by the clan may be more distant.

CONCLUSION

Each attempt to define a culture generally concerns only selected aspects of it, never captures the phenomena as a whole. Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn have collected more than 200 definitions of culture, but none of them defines the exact complexity of the term.⁵⁵ On the basis of all definitions, E. Nowicka is willing to combine various aspects of culture in order to define its basic features. According to this author, culture is characterized by such phenomena as “its relation to man and social group and the presence of certain permanent elements which normalize the development of culture in a social group. The cultural message itself consists in transmitting not only the content of culture itself, but also in learning the norms that are associated with it.”⁵⁶

The fact, how close the Manggarai people to their tradition (*adat*) are and how loyally they nurture it, could be the affirmation of Nowicka's discourse about the meaning of culture. Above all, the culture is dynamic and will be more heterogenous, especially in time of the accelerated transformation. Manggarai as a region is growing in many aspects and thus the approach toward the traditional mindset is going to be more dynamic. Therefore, the

meone's death.” Outside the urban environment there is no custom with flower wreaths. *Pa'u lu'u* means “tear drop,” that symbolizes that means pity for the grieving family. This custom is also applied to the liturgy of Good Friday.

⁵⁴ Jangur, *Butir-butir*, 160.

⁵⁵ Sławomira Żerańska-Kominek, *Muzyka w kulturze. Wprowadzenie do etnomuzykologii* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1995), 20.

⁵⁶ Ewa Nowicka, *Świat człowieka, świat kultury* (Warszawa: PWN, 2006), 49.

description of the rituals I made a decade ago could be different from those, one can observe today. Moreover, these descriptions can also differ from one to other places. I follow until today the situations of the region and I could point out the dynamism of the culture there. Therefore, I would like to underline that this article may be one of the models of reference to the traditions of the Manggarai people and all the other ethnic groups in Indonesia. For them, being truly Manggaraian and truly Indonesian can be perfectly compatible with each other.⁵⁷

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⁵⁷ Regus, *Gereja*, 299.

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REGION MANGGARAI NA WYSPIE FLORES, INDONEZJA
UWARUNKOWANIA HISTORYCZNE I KULTUROWE

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Manggarai, jako region z własnym systemem kulturowym, jawi się nie tyle jako odrębna dziedzina badań naukowych, ile jako zbiór systemów wartości, które z czasem tworzyły i nadal tworzą charakter jednostek, którym dane jest żyć w tak różnorodnym kraju, jakim jest Indo-

nezja. Więcej, ta „manggarajskość”, która jest przymiotnikiem wyrażającym całość (osobę, charakter, zwyczaje, wierzenia) dla jednostek wywodzących się z tego regionu, można uznać za jeden z czynników rozwoju regionu (w skali mikro) i kraju (w skali makro). Jest to również czynnik radzenia sobie z kryzysami w obu skalach (tj. mikro i makro). W niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę przedstawienia tła i charakterystyki kulturowej regionu, który w tak zróżnicowanym i szybko rozwijającym się kraju nadal w rozsądny sposób pielęgnuje kulturowe pozostałości swoich przodków.

Słowa kluczowe: Manggarai; kultura; adat; zwyczaje; rytuał.