

To cite this article: Irwan Abbas (2022). THE SPICES TRADE ROUTE IN MOLLUCAS IN THE XVI AND XVII CENTURIES, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 5 (5): 105-116 Article No. 670, Sub Id 1078

THE SPICES TRADE ROUTE IN MOLLUCAS IN THE XVI AND XVII CENTURIES

Irwan Abbas

¹Khairun University, Civic and Pancasila Education,
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Ternate, Indonesia.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2022.5507>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the spice trade system concerning the colonial trading network in Mollucas. In the XVI and VII centuries, Mollucas had an essential role in inter-regional connectivity in the Archipelago. Traders came from all over the world in search of spices. Several Indonesian commodities have become essential in international trade. In the sixteenth century, many Europeans entered the Archipelago's trade network, driven by the high demand for spices. In this study, the historical method used heuristics is the initial stage of tracking sources.

Furthermore, source criticism, this stage selects valid sources. The next stage of interpretation is done by linking and analyzing existing sources. The final stage is historiography to rewrite the interpretation results in the results of the study. This research concludes that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Mollucas was known as a center for clove and nutmeg production (the Spice Islands). The trading network of the past has placed spices as the primary commodity. In the context of global trade, a trade network is formed that connects the Western world as consumers and the Eastern world as commodity producers.

KEYWORDS: Spices Trade Route, Mollucas, the Archipelago interconnectivity, trade voyage

INTRODUCTION

Spices have been one of the crucial commodities in the Archipelago for centuries and have played an essential role in connectivity between regions in the Archipelago. Through the exchange of spices with commodities of basic needs between regions in the Archipelago, at least it has formed a communication network in the Archipelago in order of mutual need. The spice trade also had its ups and downs. In trade, there are four main components: people who interact, goods or commodities, transportation or tools used to move goods or commodities, and both parties involved in the trade. A trading system in the context of a trade network can be interpreted as a systematic effort to regulate the flow of goods and services, namely, how to obtain and collect commodity goods and how to distribute goods from the place of origin to the destination. If it is positioned in the upstream and

downstream context, the effort to obtain and collect commodity goods is an upstream part of the trading system.[1]

In another context, the main components that support the trading system are producers, traders, and consumers. These three components are interrelated in the trading network system. The trade network of the past has placed spices as the primary commodity since the beginning of AD with contacts between Nusantara traders and Chinese, Arab, and Indian traders. The spice trade network was then increasingly bustling with the arrival of Europeans around the 16th century, marked by the Portuguese control of Malacca, one of the most important ports in the Southeast Asian trade network, in 1511. The arrival of Europeans to the Asian region cannot be separated from the success of the Portuguese in finding shipping lanes connecting mainland Europe and Asia through Africa. This shipping lane later became an alternative route for the world trade network, which was previously a land route.[2] Thus, in the context of the spice trade, especially for Europeans, a network has been formed that directly connects Southeast Asia, especially the Archipelago Islands as the leading producer of spices and Europe as the consumer.

Since the arrival of the Portuguese, whom other Europeans followed in the 16th century, the Archipelago Archipelago has become one of the shipping routes and global trade because it is the center of the trade in spices and other agricultural products. Geographical conditions and natural resources support this network, and sea transportation networks facilitate the distribution of superior commodity products so that large airports appear as essential trading ports, which are interconnected with one another. and can be separated from other interrelated areas, acting as a buffer zone, producer, distributor, or port of call. Thus, the Nusantara network was formed as a transit port for commodities before being sent to Europe and a local network that is a route to collect commodities. One of the crucial commodities in the past trade network in the Archipelago was spices, which placed Mollucas as the leading producer of cloves and nutmeg.[3]

In the global context of past trade, the trade network of the Western Archipelago was formed as the main transit port, and the Eastern Archipelago (Mollucas Archipelago) was the leading producer of cloves and nutmeg. As a producer area, Mollucas, an archipelagic region, consists of several ports collecting ports for these commodities to form an inter-island network pattern. The geographical condition of Mollucas, which consists of large and small islands, forms this region as a local network consisting of small ports to collect clove commodities.[4]

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in writing this article is using the historical method. There are four stages carried out. The first stage is heuristics. Two types of data are used in this article, namely primary and secondary sources.[5] Source criticism is the second stage. Not all sources obtained from the heuristic process are relevant sources that can be used as historical sources, both in terms of the authenticity of the source and its contents.[6] In this paper, only internal criticism is used because the

sources used are not primary sources. This internal criticism is used to assess the validity of a source and make an interpretation.

Interpretation is to interpret facts.[7] In this stage, it can be determined from sources that have gone through the critical stage that they are more meaningful because they are interconnected or mutually supportive. The sources obtained are connected between the facts to find out the history of those related to the topic discussed.[8] A historiography is a form of writing that aims to present the results of reports from research conducted by writing history properly and correctly.[9]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Beginning of the Spice Trade in Mollucas

Mollucas has been one of the crucial areas in international trade since ancient times, and this area has been visited by merchant ships from the Sriwijaya kingdom, then the Majapahit kingdom, and continued during the Islamic period after the arrival of Europeans.[10] The contact between the Mollucas region and the western region of the Archipelago can be traced through the Negarakertagama Book, which mentions several areas with relations with the Majapahit Kingdom.[11] These areas, including; Wanda (Banda Neira), Ambwan (Ambon), and Seran (Seram) in Mollucas and Jilolo/Jailolo and Bacan in North Mollucas.[12] It is possible that since the heyday of the Majapahit Kingdom on the island of Java, the Mollucas region has served as a center for spice commodities, namely cloves and nutmeg. Even long before, the spice trade had involved Nusantara traders who sailed between China and India around the 5th and 6th centuries. In the 7th century, Arab traders, mainly from India, sailed to Southeast Asia.[13] Widespread trade was not only carried out in the Archipelago but even reached the southern part of China. In the following centuries, Arab traders came to bring and spread Islam to the Archipelago.[14]

The earliest description of the spice trade was before the arrival of Europeans, as recorded by Tome Pires. He states that until the 15th century, the spice trade was dominated by Muslim traders.[15] The trade route that was formed was that Malay traders took spices from the Moluccas, which were then brought to Malacca as one of Asia's most important trading centers. These commodities were sent to Gujarat, Ormus to Istanbul via the Red Sea, from which Venetian merchants continued their journey to Europe, as economic interests preceded the main interest of the Colonial nation in coming to this region. On the plains of Europe then, the spice trade was bustling, and much in demand by Europeans was used as an ingredient to add flavor to dishes and for making perfumes.

Thus, European countries then competed to "pick up gold" (by visiting the center of spice production in the eastern world) to gain multiple benefits. The history of the arrival of Europeans to this region began with the Portuguese. The Portuguese 1511 succeeded in controlling Malacca as a center for the spice trade, which then wanted to visit the spice production center in Mollucas. After this success, the Portuguese then achieved subsequent success, namely controlling the spice production center by

conducting trade cooperation with Ternate in 1512. At first, the first area they visited was the Banda Islands, but then they abandoned and headed to the NorthNorth, namely Ternate, because it was considered a Kingdom that influenced and controlled the Mollucas region.[16]

The Colonial Period of Spice Trading in Mollucas

Before the arrival of Europeans, the spice trade in Mollucas was dominated by Chinese, Arab and native traders. However, since the arrival of Europeans, the spice trade has become a bone of contention among European traders. Starting with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1512, then the Dutch in 1599. The competition ended with the victory of the Dutch, who succeeded in expelling the Portuguese from Mollucas in 1605. The Dutch, through their trading company, the VOC, then made Ambon, the center of government. During the three terms of office of the Governor-General from 1610 to 1619.[17] The success of the Dutch in expelling the Portuguese made the Dutch more flexible in implementing the spice monopoly system in Mollucas. To strengthen this system, the Dutch tried to suppress various local resistance in several areas, including; Hitu (P. Ambon) in 1634, In the 1620s. Based on data on the distribution of existing forts, it shows that until the mid-17th century, the Dutch had succeeded in building forts on every island in Mollucas (especially Ambon Island and Lease Islands, and Banda Islands). The support for this defense system has also strengthened the policy to concentrate the spice commodity in the two regions, namely, Ambon Island and the Lease Islands, as well as the Banda Islands.

Governor de Vlaming marked this success in January 1652 by urging the Sultan of Ternate Mandar Syah to sign an agreement on the prohibition of planting clove trees in Mollucas (and North Mollucas) except on Ambon Island and the surrounding small islands. This policy was also followed by the concentration of nutmeg tree planting in the Banda Islands. Not only the function of defense, facilities in the form of commodity warehouses and docks that complement the function of trade make the fort the primary means of supporting the spice trade system in Mollucas.

Furthermore, to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Netherlands implemented another policy, namely the hongi shipping or the hongitochten expedition. Shipping hongi or hongi fleet is the deployment of a fleet of ships armed to monitor clove-producing areas. Hongi voyages have been going on since the Portuguese occupation. The Dutch continued the system after they succeeded in seizing control of this area. Since the Portuguese administration, there has been a relationship between the residents of Leitimor (the eastern part of Ambon Island) to provide transport boats called kora-kora (traditional Malukan boats). This fleet was then used to carry out the hongi voyage, or during the Dutch period, it was called the hongitochten expedition. To control the clove trade, Europeans imposed tree planting restrictions to maintain cloves' supply and prices. Of course, if the supply of cloves is in excess, then the price in the market will fall, but if the supply of cloves can be maintained, then the price of this commodity can also be maintained. Not only that, but this fleet also aims to supervise the indigenous population so that they continue to sell their clove harvest to the Dutch.[18]

Another policy that supports the spice trading system, especially cloves, is the success of the Dutch in interfering with the social structure of the indigenous population. In Mollucas, especially on the island of Ambon and the Lease islands, the village system is called Negeri. The social structure called the country only emerged in the 17th century when the VOC interfered in the lives of the population, intending to secure its monopoly system. In this social structure, the regulation of the clove trade system can be seen in the duties and obligations of the village head (Kingking), which the governor has determined, namely overseeing the planting, maintenance, and harvesting of cloves. In addition, the Kingking gets a share of "kwarto," or people who can be employed to cultivate the garden, look for fish, repair houses, or do other personal work. The following policy is the dati land system, which is land owned by the batih family or people who have the same clan; the batih families then process this dati land. This system has been known since the VOC period and required native land owners to plant a predetermined number of Clove trees.[19]

The results from the clove harvest were then sold to the VOC, whose price had also been determined. This system was later called the dati system, so the Dutch government carefully recorded the population of a country and the land of dati and clove trees and their fruit. Meanwhile, the Netherlands implemented a different system for nutmeg commodities with the existence of nutmeg plantations. This system divides the fertile lands on each island in the Banda Islands: Ay Island, Lonthor Island, and Banda Islands. This division began in 1616 and was completed in 1628. This nutmeg plantation was then handed over to Europeans who had capital with a rental system. However, the plantations have turned into property rights and have undergone many changes, expanding area by buying and reducing area by inheritance to the next generation. These plantations were then processed by bringing in workers from Java, Buton, and other areas. The system of division of plantation land, then continued by bringing in workers from outside, was possible because of the success of the Dutch in controlling this area.[20]

Spice Trade Route

In the overall trade route at that time, the active seafarers of the Archipelago could not be underestimated. The nations of the Archipelago are not passive elements in the traffic but as the primary movers in the spice trade. Various commodities in the trade network formed in the territorial waters of the Archipelago that were able to connect with other nations in the Asian Archipelago and India throughout the 14th century included pepper, nutmeg, cloves, camphor, rice, sugar, elephants, tin, copper, wood, sweet, teak, gold, textiles, silk, diamonds, and silver. Meanwhile, commodity trade routes in the Archipelago and Southeast Asia, and China include pepper, spices, tin, rice, sugar, fish, salt, agarwood, resin, silk, tea, ceramics, and fruit. Some of these commodities originate or can be found in various regions of the Archipelago. Meanwhile, Mollucas and Banda's islands are central spices and nutmeg producers. Essential commodities in commerce in Southeast Asia and the Archipelago are transported from upstream to downstream through rivers and streams before being transferred to Chinese and Indian ships.

They were sharing commodities in shipping and trading networks that were formed in the territorial waters of the Archipelago that connected the people of the Archipelago with nations in Southeast Asia and India throughout the 14th century, including pepper, nutmeg, cloves, camphor, rice, sugar, elephant, tin, copper, cinnamon, gold, textiles, diamonds, silver. Meanwhile, trade commodities between the Archipelago and Southeast Asia and China include pepper, spices, tin, rice, sugar, fish, salt, agarwood, resin, silk, tea, ceramics, and fruit. Some of these commodities originate or can be found in various parts of the Archipelago. Sumatra, for example, has long been known for producing gold, pepper, resin, camphor, the wood of various types, pearls, silk, honey, wax, cotton, and rattan. Meanwhile, the Mollucas and Banda Islands are spice and nutmeg production centers. Java, which has fertile soil for agriculture, becomes a producer or granary of rice. Since the 6th century, camphor has been known in various regions, including China and the Middle East. Camphor is found in the interior of Barus, Borneo, and the Malay Peninsula.[18]

In later developments since the 16th century, Barus was known as a camphor export port. West Sumatra, China, said that Barus was a northeastern Sumatra kingdom with several ports on the east coast. Teak wood was brought to the Malay Peninsula from Java. Camphor, gold, rattan, candles, honey, and enslaved women are sold in Pase and Pidie (Aceh). Rivers also carried these goods, then exchanged them for cloth or textiles and other commodities. Ma Huan notes that money made from gold and tin has also been used in Sumatra.

Essential commodities in trade in Southeast Asia and the Archipelago are transported from upstream to downstream through big and small rivers before being transferred to large ships to India or China. When the Srivijaya kingdom came to power in the 7th to 11th centuries AD, the kingdom centered in the southern and central parts of Sumatra and controlled parts of the Malay Peninsula, the Malacca Strait, northern Sumatra to the southern part, and the Sunda Strait. The commodities traded during the heyday of Sriwijaya included textiles, camphor, pearls, wood, spices, pepper, ivory, cotton, silver, gold, ceramics, and sugar. Chola attacked in the 11th century and was pushed back by the power of Majapahit in the late 13th century.

On the other hand, Javanese traders on the other hand also controlled the Mollucas spice trade, and the ports around the north coast of Java and also the port of Makassar in the NorthNorth became part of the trading activities along the Java sea. Java, in terms of the need for spices, is very strategic. In trade between East and West, the merchandise brought to the west consisted of spices, wood, and camphor, while the merchandise brought by Indian, Persian, or Arab merchants was textiles or cloth. In contrast, porcelain or ceramics were brought from China. In the shipping and trade network of East-West Nusantara, the exchange of commodities between the Archipelago and other nations in trade places the Archipelago in a critical position, especially if some commodities, such as spices, are precious in the international market.[3] Although the eastern region of the Archipelago is peripheral, this area is vital since the Archipelago was involved in international shipping and trade. The involvement of the Archipelago in international shipping and trade cannot be separated from the

eastern part of the Archipelago as the production of various types of spices needed in international trade, especially: cloves, nutmeg, mace, and cinnamon. Thus, the Eastern Archipelago is a vital producer center in the context of trade on a local, regional and international scale. There are various ports of Makassar, Ambon, Ternate, Tidore, and other ports both in the Mollucas islands and the bird's head beach area on the island of Papua.

As a producer area for various spices, which are very important for international trade, the eastern region of the Archipelago has had links with international shipping and trade networks. Therefore, various ancient ports in this area emerged as nodes for trade transactions between sellers and buyers and groups of traders. Intermediary. Port cities' economic activity has developed as marketplaces essential for developing politics, culture, and the surrounding area's economy. These ports also have a significant meaning as a place of refuge for ships and sailors on long-distance voyages to fill supplies and for protection from the dangers of piracy or natural disturbances such as storms.

The production of Banda spices that is sought after by traders in the world is nutmeg which contains mace. In trade centers in the Western world, nutmeg has a reasonably high market value. As an illustration, when the Padang brought nutmeg from Banda and arrived at the ports of Anden, Hormuz, Surat, Alexandria, Venice, Barcelona, and Antwerp. The trader also became a distributor who made enormous profits and became wealthy. This context includes several Gujarati merchants who control the distribution of nutmeg to the Mediterranean market.

The spice trade was not only profitable for foreign traders, such as Gujarat and Coastal Arabia, but the merchants of Java in the northern part of the coast also prospered because they became intermediaries for the production of nutmeg from Banda. Through this nutmeg trade, the role of the Malacca port became one of the busiest cities because it was a meeting place for traders from China, India, and the western world with Nusantara traders. This condition also contributed to the hectic spice trade, which also led to commerce and shipping between islands (insular) in Southeastern Malaku, such as the Seram, Kei, Aru, and Hitu Islands, which did not stop bringing their food products to the port of Banda in exchange for nutmeg and mace.

The same thing happened in the Mollucas islands. In the 13th century, Ternate, Tidore, Makian, and Bacan, were busy exchanging Cloves and Banda nutmeg. On the other hand, Banda traders were present at the ports of Ternate and Makian, looking for Cloves as deposits which they exchanged for ivory. Meanwhile, traders on the north coast of Java helped Banda traders in commercial shipping. Traders on the north coast of Java introduced intermediary exchanges between woven cloth, nutmeg, and mace. Likewise, rice and other foodstuffs such as pepper, garlic, and red are supplied by Javanese traders. The Bandanese were introduced to the international trading network for the role of Javanese traders. Javanese traders also encouraged the rich to make long-distance voyages to the port of Malacca. Banda merchants bought junk sailing ships with the Javanese, and then the rich sailed to

the port of Malacca by using the south route, which was the route for the Javanese to sail to the Mollucas islands.[12]

The harvest of nutmeg and mace flows to the port of Banda, where they are exchanged for various goods that can be exchanged again. At that time, the nutmeg mace exchange did not use currency because there were still at least Chinese coins in circulation. The regulation of nutmeg was mainly in the Banda and Mollucas islands, which lasted from the 10th century to the 17th century. During the bartering period, sometimes the Bandanese, through the rich, negotiated with Javanese traders to exchange nutmeg and mace for gold or ivory. These two items can become the savings of Banda residents. Trading in this way made the Banda people prosperous; they could buy boats with traders from the Seram Islands and other ships to sail long distances. At that time, the rich expressed the prosperity of the Banda people with a rhyme: "By shaking a nutmeg tree, the ringgits fall from the sky." The rhyme has become folklore that is told from one island to another in Banda. Nutmeg became a symbol of the hormone era, namely in the commercial era in the 14th century until the end of the 16th century. As a symbol of prosperity, at that time, there was a strong urge among the people of Banda to maintain and cultivate nutmeg plants. The people of Banda concentrate on nutmeg. They do not grow other crops. Also, a trade network was formed between islands in the Mollucas archipelago through nutmeg. The commercial network connects one port to another in the Archipelago.

The port of the Banda Islands as a spice production line has five ports. Four are on the island of Banda Besar, and one is on the island of Banda Neria. Meanwhile, Run Island and Ai Island, which also produce nutmeg and mace, are far from Banda Neria and Banda Besar Island. However, Ai and Run Island, each time they harvest nutmeg, they send it to the Orantata port in Banda Besar to estimate the volume and value of the nutmeg.

The arrival of Western nations in the Banda islands began with the Portuguese.[21] Portuguese ships set sail in November 1511. They departed from Malacca in the east monsoon via the South route and arrived at Banda Neira in January 1512. The Portuguese ships first sailed the Banda islands following the same shipping route as the junks of Malacca and Java, stopping at the Gresik and other ports on the northern coast of Java, and then sailed through the Lesser Sunda islands to Banda, Ambon, and Mollucas. Around 1520, they used the "Borneo route," which took them to the Moluccas via Brunei in only 40 days, a quick mileage. However, the traditional (South) route was still commercially profitable, allowing Portuguese merchants to trade to Javanese ports and collect goods in the Lesser Sunda Islands, particularly Timor sandalwood. The presence of the Portuguese did not change the trading system that had been formed in the Banda Islands. They sold nutmeg and mace at the highest price the Portuguese received.

This situation shows that the Portuguese recognized the existing and running trading system. The Portuguese have been in the Banda Islands for a long time, which is about 87 years. They also had a

chance to build a Catholic church in Luthor. As long as the Portuguese empire carried out trade in the Banda Islands, it suffered losses. The Persian merchants made huge profits. The Portuguese King received only a tiny profit from the Banda trade, which had the same drawbacks as the Malukan trade. The cost of sending expeditions to the Banda Islands is very high. When compared to other spices, nutmeg takes up much space in the vessel. Therefore, shipping had to use the most significant ship owned by the Portuguese in the Indies. Every year one such ship (which could carry 1,200 bahars of nutmeg and mace) sailed to the Banda islands. This Portuguese royal trade expedition took the form of a voyage left to a worthy captain.

Meanwhile, the kingdom itself had rights to 2/7 of the cargo. In addition, private traders were allowed to sail on royal ships to Banda to buy nutmeg and mace in exchange for merchandise from royal shops. When the ship arrived in Malacca, quite some nutmeg and mace that should have been for the kingdom fell into the wrong hands.

Then in 1599, the Dutch trading company (VOC) was present in the Banda Islands and was followed by the English trading company (EIC) in 1601. Dutch sailing ships under the leadership of Admiral Jacob Van Neck. The VOC bore the entire cost of their trip. When they came to the syahbandar, they were required to give gifts to the rich and pay all customs duties on the syahbandar. The Dutch agreed to the request by giving gifts of mirrors, knives, crystal glasses, red velvet, and a small cannon along with the gunpowder. Then, the rich Bandanese retaliated by allowing the Dutch to set up a trading post in a rented house on the beach.

On the other hand, the Dutch began formulating a strategy to control the Banda Islands. The trade route between the Aru and Kei islands to the Banda Islands is a traditional trade route. The Aru and Kei islands are located east of the Banda Islands, and traders are from the two islands along the southern coast of the Banda Sea. The actual food production brought by Aru and Kei traders Kei is sago. Sago was exchanged for coarsely woven cloth and textiles obtained by the Bandanese from the Javanese and Malays in exchange for spices. Sago is so important to the Banda islands that in the 15th century, sago was used as a means of payment.[17]

Merchants Aru and Kei brought sago, gold, and luxury products to Banda, especially dried parrots and Cenderawasih birds. Later, this product was exchanged for textiles by the Banda people. Hence the shame of the Bengali merchants, this luxury product arrived in the lands of the Turks and Persians, who used it as a guava head covering. In addition, Kei traders trade boats with Banda traders. The residents ask boats made by the Kei people of Banda to make short-distance voyages. This boat is suitable for shipping routes from the Kei Islands to the Banda Islands. The boats were exchanged for textiles or spices. When the market opened in the Banda islands, especially for the east wind people, Aru and Kei traders came to Banda. The proximity of the Kei people to the people of Banda creates a close relationship in commerce. They can order the goods they want in advance.

When there was the conquest of the Banda people by the Dutch under Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Bandanese fled to the Kei islands. Thousands of Banda residents left Banda in droves in 1621. The Bandanese settled on Kai Besar's island (Nuhu Yuut). Two villages in the Kei Islands are inhabited by the Bandanese, namely Banda Eli (Wanda Eli) and Banda Elat (Wanda Elat), in the West and Northeast of Kei Besar Island. This trade route was stopped during the war of conquest. As a result, the cost of sending food from the islands of Aru and Kei to Banda is high. Then the Dutch tried to revive the ancient trade routes carried out by the people of Kei and Aru with the Banda islands.

The Seram Islands' influences on the Banda people can be seen in Hikayat Lonthor, which tells that Cilustar, the daughter of the nobleman of Lonthor, was proposed to by Kapitan from the East. The title Kapitan Timur can be translated as nobility from the Sultanate of Ternate. Hikayat Lonthor also emphasizes that "Banda Island is visited by many people from the islands from the east. Today, the place is called the East coast."

Trade from the Seram Islands to the Banda Islands is a trade pattern that is almost the same as that of the Aru and Kei islands. Banda Islands as an intermediary marketplace. The traders departed from Seram through the port of Amahi. The trade route in place by the Seram traders by following the eastern coast of Seram turned south and arrived at Banda. Before turning to Banda, the Seram traders stopped at Hitu to exchange the goods they brought, such as pearl jewelry and coarsely woven cloth.

Meanwhile, traders from the mysterious islands traded in Banda with cloves. In the 16th century, the clove plantations in Seram were expanded to the southern part of the Archipelago. Traders from Seram also brought forest products such as resin, honey, and kitchen/cooking utensils made from pottery. The goods were exchanged for coarsely woven fabrics, Gujarati textiles, and other imported goods.

CONCLUSION

The trading network of the past has placed spices as the primary commodity. This trading network was increasingly crowded with the arrival of Europeans around the 16th century. In the context of global trade, a trade network is formed that connects the Western world as consumers and the Eastern world as commodity producers. Mollucas are the center of clove and nutmeg production (Spice Islands). However, how is this global trade network linked to the local trade system? This study aims to overview the spice trade system concerning the colonial trading network in Mollucas.

The trading network of the past has placed spices as the primary commodity since the beginning of AD, with contacts between Nusantara traders and Chinese, Arab, and Indian traders. The spice trade network was then increasingly bustling with the arrival of Europeans around the 16th century, marked by the control of Malacca, one of the most important ports in the Southeast Asian trade network – in 1511 by the Portuguese. The arrival of Europeans to the Asian region cannot be separated from the success of the Portuguese in finding shipping lanes connecting mainland Europe and Asia through

Africa. The shipping route to obtain an overview of the spice trade system concerning the colonial period trade network in Mollucas.

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