Maraila: Exploring the Meaning of *Kapata* in a Customary*Patita* Banquet of Tuni Clan in Oma

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Abstract. *Maraila* is a traditional song which in Maluku local term is called *kapata*. This song is usually used to accompany the dance in the traditional *patita* banquets by Soa (Clan) Tuni in Oma Island, Haruku Island. As a traditional song, *Maraila* has many symbols and meanings that need to be studied to contribute to theological values in the context of Maluku society. This study aims to explore the wealth of meaning contained in the tradition of *Maraila* by using a cultural interpretation approach. Interpretation of symbols and meanings in the tradition is important because; (1) songs in the traditions of Christian indigenous peoples are more dominated by European songs (centered on Europe), thus the space for traditional songs that are rich in moral ethical values tends to be closed. (2) Customary songs are considered lack of theological values than the songs of European heritage. By using a cultural interpretation approach to the tradition of the traditional *Maraila* song, there is a room to hear other voices from the experiences of the people in Maluku, especially the Oma village which has been marginalized (periphery). *Maraila* is a way for people to build, devote and pass on the quality of life values to each generation. The results of this study indicate that *Maraila*has moral ethical values as well as being a theological model in contextual relations with God, community and the nature.

Keywords: Maraila, kapata, custom, symbols, contextual theology

1 Introduction

Despite the shift, but actually the appreciation and even obedience of the people to their customs is not completely lost. This reality is indicated through the discovery of a variety of customary wealth that is still stored and practiced in the Maluku people's way of life. A custom is valued forit is an ideal form of culture which usually functions as a code of conduct that regulates, controls and directs people's attitudes and actions in society. In every culture, there are myth, ethos and rite which have become recognized traditions and are tangible ancestral heritage in clothing, houses, musical instruments, songs, dances and others. The local wealth is also found in the living practices of the Oma people known as *kapata*. *Kapata*is an ancestral tradition and it is still maintained to the present time. *Kapata*is a form of oral tradition which contains moral messages that are usually spoken or sung by Maluku people. *Kapata*is usually sung in the native language of the local community at traditional ceremonies. For example, during the inauguration ceremony of the king and the head of *soa*(clan),

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