

= Sierk Coolsma =

Sierk Coolsma (Dutch pronunciation : [sirk ?ko?lsma?] ; 26 January 1840 ? 20 March 1926) was a Dutch Protestant missionary who wrote extensively on the Sundanese language . Born in the Netherlands , he became a missionary in his early twenties and arrived in the Dutch East Indies in 1865 . First tasked to Cianjur , he studied Sundanese in more detail than his contemporaries , gaining an appreciation for the language . Further missionary activities in Bogor , begun in 1869 , were a failure , and in 1873 he was tasked with translating the New Testament into Sundanese . Although the Sundanese people highly valued poetry , he did the translation in prose hoping that it would help readers entertain new ideas .

In 1876 , Coolsma returned to the Netherlands and became the leader of the Netherlands Missionary Union , promoting further missionary activity in the predominantly Muslim western portion of the East Indies . He also wrote extensively on Sundanese , including a grammar and two dictionaries . Although his Bible translation had little lasting impact , these later works have remained in use .

= = Early life and missionary work = =

Sierk Coolsma was born in Leeuwarden in the Netherlands , on 26 January 1840 , as son of worker Foppe Coolsma and Maaïke Nauta .

Coolsma first worked in a printer 's office , but began training to be a missionary in Rotterdam in 1861 , after having studied several months under Rev. Witteveen in Ermelo in the previous year . He finished his training on 5 May 1864 ; that December he left for Batavia (now Jakarta) , the capital of the Dutch colony in the East Indies .

Upon arrival in April 1865 , Coolsma was sent by the Netherlands Missionary Union (Nederlandsche Zendingenvereniging , NZV) to the town of Cianjur . There , on 5 April 1866 , he married Maria Johanna Gerretson , six years his younger . He also baptised the NZV 's first Sundanese Christians , a husband and wife named Ismael and Moerti . Ismael continued to treat Coolsma as his teacher and help the missionaries spread Christianity until his death in 1872 .

While in Cianjur , Coolsma began to study the language used by the Sundanese people who inhabited the area . Eventually , according to Mikihiro Moriyama of Nanzan University , he " had a sharper insight and deeper knowledge " than contemporary missionaries and government workers . Later missionaries would not study the language in such detail .

Coolsma left Cianjur in 1869 and went to Bogor , also a majority @-@ Sundanese city . He found little success in preaching to the European citizens of the city or converting the Sundanese . On 31 May 1869 , he opened a school at his home , which provided a free education in both secular and religious studies . The first class had ten students , a total which grew quickly ; at its peak , the school had 111 students . After a government @-@ funded school was opened in 1872 , most of the Sundanese students moved there to avoid the Christian teachings . The remaining students were mostly ethnic Chinese , few of whom converted .

= = Bible translation = =

In 1873 , Coolsma published a grammar of the Sundanese language , titled Handleiding bij de beoefening der Soendaneesche taal (Manual for the Writing of the Sundanese Language) . He reluctantly used a transcription method developed by K.F. Holle and proscribed by the colonial government . That year he was tasked with translating the New Testament into Sundanese . He left his school in the hands of fellow missionary D. J. van der Linden and went to Sumedang ; there he worked on his translation over a period of three years .

Coolsma found that Sundanese literature consisted predominantly of poetry , including the narrative wawacan , and thought that prose needed to be developed as well so that the people would embrace modernity . He considered that they rarely read , instead preferring to listen to more educated persons sing in verse . As such , the contents of written prose would not be conveyed .

This is not to say that he disliked Sundanese poetry ; he was appreciative of the dangding verse forms ? derived from Javanese literary tradition ? which were used to write wawacan , and considered an existing translation of the Gospel of Matthew in dangding to be the best Sundanese @-@ language book in print .

Ultimately , Coolsma chose to translate the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles using prose , believing that dangding was " too traditional to convey new ideas " and hoping to promote a " new spirit " . However , for accessibility 's sake he published using the Jawi script ; most literate Sundanese could read it , unlike the Javanese or Latin scripts also used in the area . The translation grew to include much of the New Testament , and by the 1890s the whole Bible . It was , however , little read .

= = Later life = =

Coolsma returned to the Netherlands with his wife in 1876 and became the leader of the NZV , holding the office until 1908 . He disputed the idea that missionary work should be focused on the non @-@ Islamicised eastern portion of the colony . He believed instead that missionary work should be prioritised in the western portion , where Islam had already become entrenched .

Coolsma continued to write about both missionary work and the Sundanese language . In 1881 , he wrote a series of condemnatory reviews of Sundanese @-@ language schoolbooks offered by the colonial government , arguing that the content had little value and the language was mostly artificial . He published a Sundanese @-@ Dutch dictionary in 1884 , consulting various works of Sundanese literature for his lexemes . In 1901 , he published a history of the mission in the East Indies , titled *De zendingseeuw voor Nederlandsche Oost @-@ Indiës* (The Century of the Mission in the Dutch East Indies) . It described the 19th century as time of extensive growth .

In 1904 , Coolsma published a revised version of his grammar . Working with fellow missionary Christiaan Albers , who had also preached in Cianjur , Coolsma published a Dutch @-@ Sundanese dictionary in 1911 ; this was followed by a revised version of his Sundanese @-@ Dutch dictionary in 1913 . Coolsma 's wife died on 27 September 1917 . Her death led him to reduce his workload , although he found time to publish his memoirs , *Terugblik op mijn levensweg , 1840 ? 1924* (Looking Back on my Life , 1840 ? 1924) , in 1924 . He died two years later , on 20 March 1926 .

= = Legacy = =

Coolsma was recognised as a Knight of the Order of Orange @-@ Nassau before his death . Moriyama writes that Coolsma 's " unrivaled " dictionary and grammar had a much greater impact than his Bible translations , serving as a basis for the standardisation of written Sundanese . The grammar remains an authoritative source on Sundanese syntax , and despite the colonial government limiting its distribution ? afraid the publication of a work by Christian missionaries would provoke the majority @-@ Muslim Sundanese ? it was used in various Sundanese educational institutions . In 1985 , the grammar was translated into Indonesian and republished by Djambatan .