INDIGENOUS-DRIVEN MISSION
RECONSTRUCTING RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MALUKU

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DECLARATION

I, Brett Charles Baker, hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

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Brett Charles Baker
11 January 2012
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Note: All translations from Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Dutch, and Indonesian are my own.
ABSTRACT

During the sixteenth century, tens of thousands of people in the region which the Europeans called Maluku embraced Christianity. Contemporary writers of both secular and mission chronicles celebrated this Christianisation as the work of Europeans, both colonial administrators and missionaries, who had won over the converts by persuasion, by godly attributes, and by military prowess. Though always focussed on European actors, these chroniclers also expected indigenous rulers to play a role in conversion. These kings and chiefs, once they had been persuaded by captains or missionaries to become Christians themselves, were understood to have the power to bring their subjects with them into the new faith in an effortless top-down process. Consequently, religious change was often reported as instances of passive and rather superficial ‘mass conversion.’ This representation of early Christianisation in Maluku has persisted in texts as divergent as reports written by seventeenth-century Dutch ministers, twentieth-century Catholic mission histories, and more recent works by secular scholars.

During the past four decades, thousands of pages of contemporary letters and reports composed by colonial authorities, Portuguese merchants, and Jesuit missionaries have been published by the Portuguese Government and the Society of Jesus. Careful, critical reading of these primary source materials reveals that the Europe-centric view of conversion in sixteenth-century Maluku is mostly erroneous. In actuality, religious change in the region occurred as a consequence of an indigenous-driven mission effort. Interest in Christianity originated with indigenous people, not with Europeans, and not with missionaries once they arrived. Local individuals actively sought out opportunities to explore and embrace the new faith. They then aggressively attempted to draw Christian influence into their lands. Jesuit missionaries in Maluku served as appendages to the local mission effort, frequently told where they would labour and whom they would
visit. In some instances, missionaries and other Europeans found themselves either held against their will or even traded like exotic goods.

Although conversion to Christianity often generated strong opposition, it never occurred as the result of outside pressure. When faced with threats and intimidation from others, indigenous Christians stubbornly maintained the ability to act for themselves, in many cases prodding the Portuguese colonial apparatus to wield its power in support of Christian communities. Though religious change often appeared to be a mass movement, with villages or particular ethnic groups converting in totality, this was never the case. Conversion remained an individual act, resulting in a religiously diverse landscape. Despite persistent Portuguese expectations that mass conversion to Christianity in Maluku should occur as a consequence of the power of Christian rulers over their people, kings and chiefs who did convert lacked both the power and the will to impose a new faith on their subjects.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the accounts which he wrote after returning to Europe, António Galvão, captain of the Portuguese fortress in Ternate from 1536 to 1539, made mention of some conversions to Christianity which had occurred in the Maluku region during his captaincy. Most of the details he provided concern the baptisms of two Muslim nobles—one ‘a first cousin to the King of Jailolo’ and the other a Ternatan ‘of great esteem, he being one of the counsellors to the king.’ In addition to these two nobles from the heart of Maluku, Galvão in each of his accounts also highlighted the conversion of six kings in the island of Mindanao. Other, seemingly less significant conversions in north Sulawesi, Ambon, and the Moro area of Halmahera were mentioned as well, and

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2 Historically, ‘Maluku’ (and its numerous variants) has been an extremely fluid term. In this work, it designates the broad geographic region which in the sixteenth century had regular interactions with the clove-producing islands of Ternate and Tidore: stretching from the southern periphery of Mindanao in the north to the Banda and Kai archipelagos in the south, from the Raja Ampat Islands of New Guinea in the East, to the peninsulas of north and central Sulawesi.
3 Of the two texts referred to, only one of them is known conclusively to have been written by Galvão, the Tratado, translated into English as The Discoveries of the World. The other one, published under the title A Treatise on the Moluccas, bears all the marks of having been written by Galvão and is universally accepted as being an early version of his lost História das Molucas.
5 The reference to Sulawesi in the Tratado is unclear. The Portuguese text reads: ‘dos celebres Mocasares, Amboynos, Moros, Maratax, & outras diuerras partes.’ The 1601 Hakluyt translation renders this as ‘of the Celebes, Macasares, Amboynos, Moros, Moratax and diuers other places.’ However, since ‘celebres’ in the original lacks an initial capital and is not separated from ‘Mocasares’ by a comma, it could be a misspelling for the plural of the Portuguese adjective celebre, ‘notable, famous, illustrious.’ However, from the fact that Galvão elsewhere used the spelling Selebres to mean Celebes, the Portuguese term for north Sulawesi, and from the context here, it seems likely that (north) Sulawesi was indeed intended in this passage.
6 The Moro area consisted of the island of Morotai, located off the northeast coast of Halmahera, as well as this coast itself, referred to as Morotia.
one record, the Tratado, includes amongst those who had received baptism during his
captaincy some people from Macassar or the southwest peninsula of Sulawesi. In neither
narrative, however, did Galvão supply any details about these ordinary Christian converts
outside Ternate and Mindanao. In all probability, he focussed on the baptisms of the
kings and nobles because such individuals occupied the central role in the paradigm of
Christian expansion which he had brought with him from Europe: though anonymous
others might here and there embrace the religion of the Portuguese, the Christianisation of
Maluku would be accomplished in a top-down process whereby European agents would
convert indigenous rulers who, as good Christian princes, would then impose the new
faith on their largely passive subjects.

The Portuguese captain, however, focussed his accounts on the wrong individuals.
Despite the handful of high-profile baptisms reported with anticipation by Galvão,
Christianity never really gained a large following in Ternate, Jailolo, or southern
Mindanao during the sixteenth century. It did expand dramatically throughout north
Sulawesi, Ambon, and Moro, precisely the areas which the Portuguese captain almost
ignored in his reports on conversion but where indigenous people aggressively sought
out, embraced, and then spread the new faith. These local Christians, not the Europeans,
were the real agents of religious change in the Maluku region during this period. Galvão
in his accounts overlooked them since, from his perspective, the only ones worth
distinguishing from the mass of people were those at the very top of the social order who,
due to their influence as local rulers, would help the Europeans mastermind a mass

veyo da India às nossas partes, & assi de todos os descobrimentos antigos & modernos, que são feitos até a

Though the terms remained fluid for many years, ‘Celebes’ can be generally understand to refer to the
northern peninsula of Sulawesi and surrounding islands whilst ‘Macassar’ specifically referred to the entire
area of southwest Sulawesi. (I have maintained the spelling Macassar [Macasar in the Portuguese] to
distinguish this use from Makassar, for the modern city, and Makasar, for the cultural and linguistic group.)
For decades Europeans failed to grasp that these two locations, Celebes and Macassar, actually belonged to
a single island.
movement. In actuality, conversion to Christianity began as and remained a very individual act, demonstrating the resilience, cunning, and agency of the local people who engaged in and directed it. Christianisation in sixteenth-century Maluku belonged to the converts. Later, when Francis Xavier visited the region and established the Maluku Jesuit Mission, the processes of religious change remained the same. Despite the presence of trained and eager missionaries, they were merely appendages to an indigenous-driven mission.

The example of converts from Macassar, mentioned very briefly by the Portuguese captain and then only in the *Tratado*, neatly illustrates many facets of this process of Christian expansion in the Maluku region—and the indigenous agency which underpinned it. Despite Galvão’s near silence on the subject, other reports from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries supplement what was written down in the captain’s account. The most important of these was composed by Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, who lived in India from 1528 until 1538, quite possibly spending some of this time in Maluku itself. Having travelled to the East with his father, who had been appointed magistrate of Portuguese Goa, Castanheda spent his decade there reading and collecting letters and reports as well as conducting interviews whenever possible with eyewitnesses, all in preparation for writing his eventual ten-volume chronicle of Portuguese presence in Asia, *História do Descobrimento e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*. Though succinct, Castanheda’s account of some early converts from Macassar, first published in 1561, carries great significance because it sketches a pattern

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9 The other sixteenth-century account is found in João de Barros’s *Da Ásia*, decade IV, book IX, chapter XXI. A second account dates to Sebastião Gonçalves’s 1614 *História da Companhia na Índia*, excerpts of which were published under the title ‘Apostolado de Francisco Xavier nas Molucas’ in 1955. Both of these accounts postdate Castanheda’s and appear to have been derived from it. See below for complete details.

10 Though there exists no contemporary documentation with which to verify the assertion, Castanheda in his book ‘makes the general claim to have visited the places which he describes; Do Couto, keeper of the Goa archives in the later sixteenth century, records in his *Ásia* that Castanheda travelled extensively east of India and even to the Moluccas’ (Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe: The Century of Discovery*, 3 vols., vol. 1, Book Two. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965. 496).
of religious expansion which was to be repeated in and around Maluku in the sixteenth
century:

And at this time two Macassarese brothers went to visit Ternate, who, being
in Ternate and being heathens, were inspired of our Lord to become
Christians, and their godfather was António Galvão, whose name the older
one took, and the younger one received the name of Miguel Galvão; upon
being baptised they departed for the island of Macassar where they were
natives, and from there they returned to see António Galvão with an armada
loaded with sandalwood and some gold and weapons and other wares,
which they told António Galvão were present in the islands of Macassar
and of Celebes, where they would be very happy to have dealings with the
Portuguese, and, if the Portuguese would go there, many would become
Christians, and some noble youths had come in order to be christened, to
whom immediately the water of baptism was given.\textsuperscript{11}

Several salient points arise from this passage. First, these early converts from
Macassar appear to have been two very common brothers, there being no indication that
they were rulers or other important figures,\textsuperscript{12} and, rather than having been sought out in
any way, they had travelled to Ternate on their own, quite possibly driven by curiosity
about Christianity or at least its practitioners.\textsuperscript{13} Once in the island, no European had
targeted them for conversion. Instead, their desire to embrace a new faith was so
internally driven that it could only be explained as having been inspired of God. As new
Christians, they immediately assumed the role of missionaries as well, sharing with those
at home what they had embraced. When they later revisited Ternate, it was specifically
an attempt to draw European Christian presence back into their homeland. Already
keenly aware of Portuguese expectations and greed, they had showed up with the best

\textsuperscript{11} Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses por
459-460.}

\textsuperscript{12} As Galvão focussed on the conversions of local rulers when discussing the growth of Christianity in
Maluku, he almost certainly would have identified these brothers as chiefs or noblemen or even
ambassadors if such had been the case.

\textsuperscript{13} The Portuguese text reads, \textquote{fôrão ter a Ternate.} The ir ter a construction suggests making a visit or
even travelling somewhere to reside for a time. No indication is given that the purpose of their visit was to
trade; note that it was on their second visit that they arrived with vessels laden with wares. As will be
discussed in the rest of this work, it is quite possible that they had travelled to Ternate with the specific
intention of learning more about the faith of the Iberians.
lures they could: the children of genuinely important people to be baptised, on one hand, and material goods with which they hoped to purchase access, on the other.

This clever plot to lure a greater Christian presence into the Macassar area nearly worked, too:

And hearing the news from this land, António Galvão was very happy in this manner to enlarge the faith of Christ in the land as well as to profit the Portuguese; and for this he immediately arranged to send there a married gentleman named Francisco de Castro, a man well suited for this, to whom he gave a decree to establish treaties of friendship with the kings of those lands and to labour by faith to convert them and that all might be for good.15

In this section of Castanheda’s report, several themes emerge. The ‘faith of Christ’ was to be enlarged in the land specifically at the invitation of indigenes, and it was understood that the material benefits arising therefrom would flow to the Portuguese. Nevertheless, Galvão apparently still assumed that the process of conversion in the Maluku region would rely upon European Christians labouring to convert local kings, despite the fact that the two figures in front of him who were then attempting to drive conversion in their home area did not fit this description. In the end, though it failed to reach Macassar, the Castro expedition did reach Mindanao, culminating in the royal baptisms which the Portuguese captain celebrated in both of his treatises as mentioned above. Galvão’s account of this voyage records that it departed in 153816 and that the purpose was ‘to baptise as many people as they could because some in those parts were requesting this’—an accurate explanation which further reinforces the idea of indigenous-driven mission.17

The failure of the expedition was caused by winds ‘so contrary that they were driven back

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14 The word used is *casado*, meaning a Portuguese man who had married a local woman—though not necessarily local to the Maluku region. ‘Laymen who married after reaching India [meaning the East] were allowed to leave the royal service and settle down as citizens or traders.... The remainder were classified as soldados (soldiers) and were liable for military service...’ (C.R. Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion, 1415-1825: A Succinct Survey*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1961. 18).
16 Castanheda, though he does not mention the year, reports that Castro ‘departed from Ternate in May’ (ibid.).
a thousand times.’  

It is impossible to know how the expectant Macassarese may have responded to the failure of the Portuguese ship to arrive, but, as will be discussed in chapter two, only four years later people in the area—who may have had some or no connection with those baptised in Maluku—were actively embracing Christianity, though this time outside the purview of the Portuguese fortress in Ternate.

This, then, is the basic pattern which from the beginning characterised the spread of Christianity in the Maluku region in the sixteenth century, each facet of which will be treated separately in subsequent chapters of this work:

1) With almost no exceptions, interest in conversion to Christianity originated with indigenous people, not with Europeans, and, significantly, not with European missionaries even after they had arrived on the scene. Local individuals actively sought out opportunities to explore, consider, and then embrace the new faith. They then aggressively attempted to draw Christian influence into their lands, often though not always succeeding. In every regard, the spread of Christianity was therefore indigenous-driven.

2) Although conversion to Christianity often generated strong opposition, including violent attacks on both life and property, it never occurred as the result of outside pressure. Portuguese military might was seen as attractive by many converts, but it was insufficiently effective to be the cause of religious change. When faced with threats and intimidation from others, indigenous Christians stubbornly maintained the ability to act for themselves, utilising a range of effective

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strategies—including, in many cases, prodding the Portuguese colonial apparatus to wield its power in support of local Christian communities.

3) Even after the arrival of Jesuit missionaries, missionary work in the Maluku region remained an indigenous-driven process. Missionaries were alternately overwhelmed by local people who demanded to be instructed and baptised and frustrated by people who completely ignored them or treated them with disdain. Local Christians frequently told them where they would labour and whom they would visit. In some instances, both missionaries and other European Christians found themselves basically held against their will or even traded from one village to the next like exotic trade goods.

4) Though religious change often appeared to be a mass movement, with villages or particular ethnic groups converting in totality, this was never the case. Conversion remained an individual act, resulting in a religiously diverse landscape in Maluku. As necessary, people were willing to uproot themselves in order to pursue their personal choices when it came to matters of faith and religious practice.

5) Despite persistent Portuguese expectations that mass conversion to Christianity in Maluku would inevitably occur as a consequence of the power of Christian rulers over their people, kings and chiefs who did convert lacked the power and will to impose their new faith on their subjects, though they quickly learnt to make whatever promises might be necessary to try to attract priests to their lands. Overwhelmingly, ordinary people drove the processes of conversion, with religious change remaining always an individual act.

On this final point, it is instructive to note alterations later made to Castanheda’s account of the conversion of António and Miguel Galvão, the Christian brothers from
Macassar. Two other retellings of this event which appeared in the next half century clearly derived from Castanheda’s narrative in the *História*, repeating it in nearly every detail. The earlier written of these comes from João de Barros’s four-volume chronicle, *Décadas da Ásia:*

At that same time two Macassarese brothers came to Ternate, noblemen, who were christened, one of them being called António Galvão, after his godfather, and the other, Miguel Galvão: these returned to their land, and, then wanting to come to visit their godfather, they brought certain ships loaded with sandalwood and some gold and merchandise, which they said were available in their island and in those of Celebes where, if the Portuguese would go, many would be converted, and they would have profit from their trade. Some noble youths had come with these with the intention of being christened, which in fact was done.

Two significant changes appear in this account. First, Barros dropped from his narrative the point that the Macassarese brothers had been inspired of the Lord in seeking out baptism. Second and more obvious, he turned two completely ordinary brothers into ‘noblemen.’

Tellingly, nearly identical alterations were made in Sebastião Gonçalves’s 1614 retelling of this event, contained in his *História da Companhia na Índia.* Though written decades after Barro’s finished his fourth book of *Décadas da Ásia,* it was actually published one year earlier and so must have likewise depended upon the original account from Castanheda:

This island [Sulawesi] is divided into different states and kingdoms, from one of which, in years past, two noblemen came to Ternate, and they were brothers; they, persuaded by Captain António Galvão, received the holy

19 Though the fourth volume of this chronicle was published posthumously in 1615, it had been completed before Barro’s death in 1570.
20 Barro, *Da Ásia.* 591-592.
21 Diogo de Couto took over composing the *Décadas da Ásia* in 1595 and published his own fourth volume in 1602. It was not until a fifth volume was published in 1612, however, that Couto addressed the narrative of the Macassarese brothers, identifying them as nobles and part of an official embassy. Since it appeared two years before Gonçalves composed his account of the same event, it is possible that the latter historian had been influenced by Couto’s work. This seems unlikely, though, in large part because, apart from identifying the brothers as nobles, Gonçalves’s retelling does not follow Couto’s narrative at all. It does follow Castanheda’s.
22 By the early seventeenth century, the Europeans in the Archipelago had finally discovered that Celebes, Macassar, and points in between belonged to the same island.
baptism; and, when they returned to their lands, they said such things to their people about the holiness of our religion that they sent ambassadors to this same captain, with ships laden with all the goods which the land produced, and some noble youths to receive the holy baptism, not expecting more from the Portuguese than ministers of the Gospel from whom they might hear and receive the faith. António Galvão greatly esteemed the embassy; the noblemen were baptised with solemnity…23

In this passage, Gonçalves introduced three alterations to Castanheda’s account. First, concerning the voyage back to Ternate, he replaced the Christian brothers with ambassadors for some reason. More important, he completely switched the agent responsible for inspiring the first converts. No longer had they been independently inspired of the Lord to embrace Christianity; in this retelling, they had been ‘persuaded by Captain António Galvão.’ In addition, exactly like Barros, Gonçalves added an explanation which transformed these ordinary brothers into noblemen.

The question here arises as to why two Portuguese chroniclers, working independently of each other and several decades apart, would make two very similar alterations when repeating the same brief account of some early conversions to Christianity in Ternate. The most likely answer is that they simply made the details fit their preconceptions and expectations. They may not even have been aware of this mental process; rather, a narrative of conversion already existed in their consciousnesses, a narrative which understood that Christianity would be spread throughout the world as important Europeans, fully invested with personal agency, acted to persuade indigenous nobles to embrace the faith. These Christian rulers would then impose the new faith en masse on their passive subjects. When both Barros and Gonçalves encountered an instance of Christian conversion from Maluku which did not quite mesh with this particular narrative, they read their preconceptions back into it: two brothers from Macassar, never identified in the earliest account as anything other than ordinary men,

became noblemen since such was what they must have been. Who else but important local rulers of some kind would be in a position to return to Ternate with a boatload of noble youths ready and willing to be baptised? Moreover, rather than having sought out an interaction with the new faith on their own, these inevitably noble brothers must have been persuaded (in the case of Gonçalves) by the Portuguese captain of the fort, who was acting in his prescribed role as the ‘apostle of the Moluccas,’ as he would later come to be called.24

This emphasis in historical texts on Europeans as the agents of religious change in sixteenth-century Maluku had actually begun before the appearance of the passages penned by Barros and Gonçalves, and it continued for the next five centuries. Galvão’s own Tratado, finished before 1557 but published posthumously in 1563, portrays him as the prime agent of conversion to Christianity in Maluku during his captaincy. After relating that he had sent Francisco de Castro north, ‘having commandment to convert as many as he could to the faith,’ he personally accepted full credit for conversions which had occurred in ‘divers other places’: ‘and this same António Galvão had made many [converts] of the people of Celebes, Macassar, Moro, [and] Morotai.”25 The História, which was almost certainly written by Galvão as well, makes the point even more sharply. The Portuguese captain, having first established a prosperous peace in the region, had ‘asked permission from the kings to be able to make Christians.’26 Thereafter, even when the baptism of the King of Ternate’s formerly Muslim counsellor had nearly destabilised the fragile peace, the European heroically defended his role as prime evangeliser, promising ‘that he would make as many Christians as he could and

25 Galvão, The Discoveries of the World. 208, spelling modernised. The final quotation is my own translation from the original Portuguese.
26 A Treatise on the Moluccas. 296.
that for this he would die a martyr.\textsuperscript{27} Again, Galvão also took credit for the ‘many others’ who had been converted throughout the region, specifically in Mindanao, Sulawesi, Ambon, and Moro: ‘And António Galvão, with the help of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit, was the first who performed this service for them in this land, and not without much cost to himself.’\textsuperscript{28}

Significantly, in neither account did Galvão mention the fact that thousands of people in the Maluku region had managed to adopt Christian identities before his arrival, with ‘Christian villages’ already existent in both Ambon and Moro; rather, it is claimed that conversion began with the zealous Portuguese captain. Neither did he bring up the original purpose for sending Castro northward—because visitors from Macassar had been baptised at their own request, and their subsequent missionary labours back in southwest Sulawesi had there generated requests for a priest. To his credit, Galvão did disclose that the abovementioned king’s counsellor, christened as Manuel Galvão, had himself requested the rite of conversion (as had others), but even then it is the Portuguese captain who looms large in the retelling of events. When both King Hairun of Ternate and some resident Portuguese who feared the possibility of a local uprising arrived at the gate of the fort and demanded that the new convert be handed over, it was Captain Galvão who bravely ‘arose and said that he would defend him against the entire world with sword in hand, that he must not deny the water of baptism to anyone in the vineyard who asked, as he had already done to some.’\textsuperscript{29} This image of Galvão and his central role in spreading the Christian faith was perpetuated by the former captain’s friend and publisher, Francisco de Sousa Tavares, who in the Tratado’s foreword explained that Galvão had taken 10,000 cruzados of his own money to Maluku with him, ‘which he spent not in

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. 298.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. 296.
idleness, nor yet in play, but only in bringing of many kings and innumerable towns unto our holy faith, and in the preserving of Maluco.\(^3^0\)

Despite this emphasis on Europeans as the agents of religious change in Maluku, most sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century historical works actually pay very little attention to Christian conversion in the region. Galvão’s *Tratado*, as its full name indicates,\(^3^1\) is an attempt to summarise all of the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries up to 1550, providing a year-by-year synopsis of what the author deemed to be the most important events. Consequently, it contains merely a single paragraph which deals with the spread of Christianity in the region, with two additional and very brief references to local Christians appearing only because these people were encountered by some Spaniards from the 1542-1543 Villalobos expedition from Mexico.\(^3^2\) More surprising is the fact that Galvão’s *História*, despite focussing primarily on Maluku, remains nearly as silent on the subject of the growth of Christianity in the region. The first 26 chapters, forming over half of the text, report on various aspects of Moluccan geography, culture, and economy. Subsequent chapters recount the beginnings of Portuguese overseas expansion and the well-known voyages of discovery (fourteen chapters) and briefly summarise events under the first seven Portuguese captains to serve in Maluku (five chapters). The remaining fourteen chapters conclude by narrating events from Galvão’s three years in the region. As already noted above, no mention is made of any conversions before Galvão, and, despite the focus on his exploits in the region, the entire work contains only three paragraphs which discuss in any detail the spread of Christianity.

31 *Tratado que compôs o nobre & notauel capitão Antonio Galuão, dos diuersos & desuayrados caminhos, por onde nos tempos passados a pimenta & especearia veyo da India às nossas partes, & assi de todos os descobrimentos antigos & modernos, que são feitos até a era de mil & quinhentos & cincoenta, Lisboa 1563.* [Treatise which the noble and notable captain António Galvão composed concerning the diverse and bewildering routes by which in times past the pepper and spices came from India to our parts, & thus concerning all the ancient & modern discoveries which have been carried out until the year 1550, Lisbon 1563.]
during his captaincy. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the first and longest treats the conversion of two important figures, Kolano Sabia (the counsellor to the King of Ternate and a ‘person of great esteem’) and the King of Jailolo’s first cousin; the second credits Galvão with other unspecified conversions in the region; and the third retells how, in order to support and provide a secure footing for the growth of the faith, the captain ‘directed the heirs, children of the important people [principaes], to come to his house, which he made into a school; he taught them to read and write and [taught them] the Cartilha and all other good customs, to better establish them in our holy faith. The emphases here follow the normal outline of expectations, with the European agent at the centre of the missionary effort, assisted by local figures of importance who had been persuaded—and whose children were being educated—to embrace the new faith. Nevertheless, it should again be highlighted that this discussion of Christianisation in Maluku during the time of Galvão’s captaincy forms a very tiny part of his own narrative.

Conversion to Christianity in Maluku remained a minor, peripheral issue in other secular chronicles composed in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, making no appearance at all in some texts. In Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo’s Historia General y
Natural de las Indias, the relevant volume of which was written by the official Spanish chronicler of the Indies between 1535 and 1549, the only ‘Christians’ who appear in the chapters on Maluku are the Europeans, contrasted always with the ‘indios,’ who, the use of these terms falsely implies, were all heathens or Muslims. Published in 1565, Damião de Gois’s lengthy account of Portuguese expansion during the reign of King Manuel I makes no mention whatsoever of Christianity in Maluku, almost completely ignoring the region altogether. Chapters delve into rather specific details when it comes to India—‘What Lopo Soares did after he arrived in Cochin,’ ‘The customs which the Abexis maintain concerning religion,’ ‘What occurred the entire time the ambassadors were in the court of Sheikh Ismail,’—but the only comment on Maluku in the entire work appears in a chapter which discusses the contest which Portugal had with Spain over which kingdom had rights to trade with the islands based upon having divided the world
into two ‘demarcation’ zones.\textsuperscript{41} Published 21 years later, Jerónimo Osório’s \textit{De rebus Emmanuelis regis Lusitaniae invictissimi virtute et auspicio gestis libri duodecim} closely follows Gois’s chronicle\textsuperscript{42} and likewise ignores the entire Maluku region apart from the question of the demarcation issue.\textsuperscript{43}

Other chronicles pay relatively more attention to Maluku and also mention the spread of Christianity in the region during the sixteenth century, but the accounts of conversion found therein tend to be limited. One probable reason for this apparent lack of attention stems from both chronology and distance. Though there was a continuous Portuguese presence in Maluku from early 1512 onward, with annual trading voyages the norm, the islands remained on the extreme periphery of the Portuguese empire, with few details about anything trickling back in the early decades. Information which did arrive in Europe was often suppressed by the crown.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, the adoption of Christian identities there probably did not begin until the 1520s and only really started to accelerate in the 1530s. Several of the Portuguese chronicles, however, do not document events beyond 1540, the focus being on the empire before it started to crumble and contract.\textsuperscript{45}

Consequently, religious change began to be an issue which might draw attention only toward the end of the time period under consideration in the secular chronicles, when information on both Maluku and the development of local Christian communities there was still thin though beginning to increase.

References to Maluku in Castanheda’s \textit{História do Descobrimento & Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses}, the first volume of which appeared in 1551, illustrate these

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. 516-519.
\textsuperscript{42} Lach, \textit{Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume I, Book One}. 196.
\textsuperscript{43} Jerónimo Osório, \textit{The History of the Portuguese, During the Reign of Emmanuel: Containing All their Discoveries, from the Coast of Africk to the farthest Parts of China; their Battles by Sea and Land, their Sieges, and other memorable Exploits: With a Description of those Countries, and a particular Account of the Religion, Government, and Customs of the Natives. Including also, Their Discovery of the Brazils, and Their Wars with the Moors.}, 2 vols., vol. 2. London: A Millar, 1752. 267-272.
\textsuperscript{44} Lach, \textit{Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume I, Book One}. 195-196.
\textsuperscript{45} Lach, \textit{Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume I, Book Two}. 496, 609.
points. The earliest mention of the region appears in the third book of the chronicle (which spans November 1509 to September 1515⁴⁶), noting that António de Abreu had returned to Malacca in December 1512 after successfully making the first European voyage to Maluku whilst Francisco Serrão, his fellow voyager, had stayed behind in the islands.⁴⁷ In the next two books (September 1515 to January 1522⁴⁸), far-distant Maluku merits only three more very brief mentions: Tristão de Meneses was dispatched there in December 1518 with letters and presents from the King of Portugal intended to help facilitate trade;⁴⁹ Jorge de Brito left for the region on 6 May 1521 with eight vessels but few men since most of them had fled when they learnt they were being sent to Maluku;⁵₀ and António de Brito, upon his brother Jorge’s death in Aceh later that same year, continued on to the region in his stead, becoming the first captain of the fort which would be constructed in Ternate in 1522.⁵¹ With a manned fortress in place, more information about the islands appears to have become available. By book six of Castanheda’s chronicle (Jan 1522 to February 1526⁵²), eleven chapters report on happenings in Maluku, though seven of them focus on conflicts between the Portuguese and Spanish ‘interlopers’ or between António de Brito (1522-1525) and his replacement as captain, Garcia Henrique (1525-1527).⁵³ Indicating both an opening up of information flows and an increasing focus on the economic importance of the region, the next book of the chronicle

⁴⁶ Book three covers the period during which Afonso de Albuquerque was the Governor of Portuguese India (Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *História do Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses por Fernão Lopez de Castanheda*, Nova edição ed., 8 vols., vol. 3. Lisboa: Typographia Rollandiana, 1833. 1).

⁴⁷ Ibid. 289-290.


⁴⁹ Ibid. 111.

⁵₀ Ibid. 233.


⁵² Spanning the governorships of Duarte de Menezes, Vasco de Gama, and Henrique de Menezes (Castanheda, *História do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 6*. 1).

⁵³ Ibid.
(February 1526 to November 1529\textsuperscript{54}) contains 23 chapters which relate events in Maluku, comprising more than one-fifth of the entire work.\textsuperscript{55} Still, no mention of conversion to Christianity makes an appearance in any of these chapters, perhaps because it was still occurring outside any official missionary framework and also because it had not yet created any difficulties for the Europeans.

Only in the eighth and final\textsuperscript{56} book of Castanheda’s chronicle (November 1529 to September 1538\textsuperscript{57}) do local Christians make an appearance. An entire chapter is devoted to the large number of conversions which occurred in the Moro area of Halmahera during the captaincy of Tristão de Ataíde (1533-1536).\textsuperscript{58} Later, mention is made of how these new Christians were targeted for military attack by the King of Jailolo and his allies in order to ‘distract’ the Portuguese ‘because they knew that Ataíde would have to send help to them.’\textsuperscript{59} Antagonised by both Jailolo and the Portuguese who had been sent to defend them, many of the Moro Christians rebelled against the Europeans, a situation which merits its own chapter,\textsuperscript{60} as does the courageous but shocking response to persecution of King Dom João of Mamuya, one of the earliest converts in Moro.\textsuperscript{61} Finally, the last chapter of the book succinctly reports on the rebaptism of some apostates in Moro after the violence had settled down as well as the recommencement of conversion there,


\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56} Before passing away, Castanheda had actually written all ten planned volumes, the ninth and tenth covering the period from 1538 to 1548, but the publication of these was banned by King Dom João, apparently because some important Portuguese figures did not approve of how they were portrayed therein (C. Wessels, ’Een en dertig hoofdstukken uit het verloren gegane livro IX van Lopes de Castanheda’s ‘História do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses,’’ \textit{Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde} 85, no. 1, 1929: 1-2).

\textsuperscript{57} Spanning the governorship of Nuno da Cunha (Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8}. 1).

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. 218-219.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. 266.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid. 270-272.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid. 272-275. The King of Mamuya almost singlehandedly held his Muslim attackers at bay for some time and then, when he feared defeat, murdered his wife and children in order to prevent them engaging in any torture-induced apostasy.
demands for baptism from three villages in Ambon, and the above-discussed conversions of the two Macassarese brothers followed by Francisco de Castro’s failed attempt to sail to Macassar to satisfy the demands of these new converts. In total, 48 of 200 chapters deal with Maluku, though only five of those mention local Christians, one in only a single sentence. Overwhelmingly, these references focus on the developing Christian communities in Moro, probably because they had entangled the Portuguese in weighty political and military complications.

Castanheda’s brief narratives became the basis for nearly all later accounts of conversion in the Maluku region found in secular chronicles composed during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; apart from embellishments, other chroniclers added little or nothing of substance. If anything, Barros’s Décadas da Ásia, the first volume of which was published one year after the first volume of Castanheda’s História, offers less. Barros never set foot in the East and, as explained above, relied upon Castanheda’s narratives in preparing many of his own. Surprisingly, then, he completely skipped over mentioning the wave of conversion which had occurred in the Moro area during the time of Tristão de Ataíde. He did report on the plot to attack Moro in order to distract the Portuguese but failed to point out the presumed reason why this plot might work: because the Europeans would feel obligated to defend their fellow Christians. The same chapter does mention that, when the attack was launched, there were two clerics in Moro, Simão Vaz and Francisco Álvares, ‘who had there baptised some heathens,’ yet this feels like an understatement in light of the fact that thousands of people in Moro had at this point embraced Christian identities, with demands by both new

62 Ibid. 458–461.
64 Barros, Da Ásia. 156.
65 Ibid. 159-161.
Christians and would-be converts having necessitated the sending of the two priests in the first place. For some reason difficult to fathom, the Christians of Moro almost disappear in Barros’s work. Elsewhere, however, the chronicler followed Castanheda exactly, providing a chapter which, like the final one in the *História*, briefly discusses the baptisms of people in Moro after peace had been restored, of villagers in Ambon, of the two brothers from Macassar, and of those encountered by Francisco de Castro on his failed attempt to visit Macassar.66

Although Gaspar Correia spent more than 35 years67 in the East and ‘had at his disposal sources of information which were untapped [by] or unknown to Barros and Castanheda,’68 in his chronicle of Portuguese expansion, *Lendas da Índia,*69 he followed the same narrative outline established by Castanheda in describing the spread of Christianity in the Moro area of Maluku. In fact, a side-by-side comparison of their accounts shows that, despite Correia’s supposedly superior familiarity with the Portuguese presence in Asia, all he did was to abridge the other’s earlier reports. Though less detailed, the same information is presented, and in the same order: large numbers of converts in Moro, rebellion in Moro, and the surprising response of King Dom João of

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66 Ibid. 588-595.
67 The introduction to the first published volume of Correia’s chronicle claims that the future chronicler embarked for India in March of 1512 and arrived there ‘fifteen years before Fernão Lopes de Castanheda’ which would have been 1513, (‘Notícia Preliminar,’ in *Lendas da Índia por Gaspar Correa, publicadas de ordem da Classe de Sciencias Moraes, Politicas e Bellas Letras da Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa e sob a direcção de Rodrigo José de Lima Felner, socio effectivo da mesma academia. Obra subsidiada pelo Governo de Portugal. Livro Primeiro. Contendo as acçoens de Vasco da Gama, Pedralvares Cabral, João da Nova, Francisco de Alboquerque, Vicente Sodre’, Duarte Pacheco, Lopo Soares, Manuel Telles, D. Francisco D’Almeida. Lenda d’13 Annos, desde o primeiro descobrimento da India até ao anno de 1510. Lisboa: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1858. VII). Henry Stanley, in preparing an English translation of a small part Correia’s work, agreed that the writer ‘arrived in India fifteen years before Castanheda’ but argued that this produced a date of 1514, only fourteen years before Castanheda (Henry E.J. Stanley, "Introduction," in *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama, and his Viceroyalty. From the Lendas da Índia of Gaspar Correa. Accompanied by Original Documents. London: Hakluyt Society, 1869. i-ii"). Ethel Pope concurred that Correia departed India in 1512; she also placed him back in Europe in 1529 and then again in India till the end of his life (Ethel M. Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature*. New Delhi: J. Jetley, 1989. 69). It is unknown exactly when Correia passed away in Goa, but it must have been before 1583 (Stanley, "Introduction." ii).
69 First published in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was completed during Correia’s lifetime, and the author mentions writing part of it in 1561, ten years after the first volume of Castanheda’s chronicle appeared (Stanley, "Introduction." ii).
Mamuya. Unlike Barros, however, Correia ignored areas outside Moro; he made no mention of conversions in Ambon, the brothers from Macassar, or the local rulers baptised by the Castro expedition. In addition, though the time period which his chronicle covers extends to 1550, he failed to include in it the visit to Maluku of Francis Xavier in 1546-1547 or the subsequent establishment of a Jesuit mission there, sticking only with what could be gleaned from Castanheda.

Diogo do Couto had spent 34 years in India, first as a soldier and then as the factor of the royal warehouses, before he was appointed in 1595 to continue Barros’s chronicle, an opportunity for which he had personally campaigned. He then spent the next 20 years in Goa as the keeper of the archives there, adding a total of nine subsequent volumes to the *Décadas da Ásia*. Though Barros had already finished volume four of the chronicle before passing away in 1570, it still had not been published when Couto took over the project, so the latter historian began by creating his own historical summaries of the same time period. Despite his long years of experience in the East, Couto, like Correia before him, chose to follow the basic outline established by Castanheda in the *História* when narrating events involving early Christian conversion in Maluku, with his accounts exactly paralleling the earlier ones in both organisation and content. Also like Correia, Couto abridged parts of the original narrative. In particular, the less-than-edifying retelling of widespread apostasy in Moro, which takes up two printed pages in the

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70 The one notable difference appears to be a mistake. Castanheda identified the cleric who supposedly travelled to Moro with the newly baptised Dom João of Mamuya as Simão Vaz (Castanheda, *História do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8*, 219). Correia called this same man João Dias but then also placed a Simão Vaz in Moro later on (Gaspar Correa, *Lendas da India por Gaspar Correa, publicadas de ordem da Classe de Ciencias Moraes, Politicas e Bellas Letras da Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa e sob a direcção de Rodrigo José de Lima Felner, socio efectivo da mesma academía. Obra subsidiada pelo Governo de Portugal. Livro terceiro, que conta dos feitos de Pero Mascarenhas, e Lopo Vaz de Sampayo, e Nuno da Cunha. Em que se passarão 17 annos.,* 4 vols., vol. III, part II. Lisboa: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1863. 633, 729).

71 *Lendas da India* spans the time period from the departure of Vasco da Gama from Lisbon in July 1497 until the end of Jorge Cabral’s governorship in November 1550 (Stanley, “Introduction,” ii).

História, was reduced to a single sentence by Couto. As will be discussed below, however, Couto also dramatically embellished the rest of the Castanheda’s narrative, manufacturing flourishes of detail missing in any earlier chronicle. Though the additions to Décadas da Ásia extend beyond the earlier chronicles by narrating events up to the end of the sixteenth century, including therefore the years when a full-fledged Jesuit mission was operating in the region, discussions of Christian conversion in Maluku become even less prominent in the later volumes. Couto did summarise a few details from missionaries’ reports, but these summaries tend to brevity: for the year 1562, for example, a mere two sentences in the chronicle mention that the Jesuits were making new converts every day and that Father Nicolau Nunes had baptised two rulers in Lisabata (located on the north coast of Seram), with nothing more to report. Like the other secular chronicles, Couto’s volumes of the Décadas da Ásia pay relatively scant attention to issues of religious change in Maluku, even less so when not copying from Castanheda’s História.

Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola’s Conquista de las Islas Molucas, published in 1609 to celebrate the Spanish capture of Ternate three years earlier, likewise depends in large part on the narrative outline of early conversion in Maluku established by Castanheda, though by way of Couto’s imaginative reworking. Like Barros, Argensola had never set foot in the East, and he therefore was forced to utilise earlier Portuguese chronicles in preparing a history of the region during the sixteenth century. His account

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73 Diogo do Couto, Decada quarta da Asia, dos feitos que os Portugueses fizeram na conquista e descobrimento das terras, & mares do Oriente: em quanto governaraõ a India Lopo Vaz de saõ Payo, & parte de Nuno da Cunha. Composta por mandado do invencivel Monarcha de Espanha dom Felipe Rey de Portugal o primeiro deste nome: Por Diogo do Couto guarda mor da torre do tombo do estado da India., vol. 4. Lisboa: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1602.
75 John Villiers, “‘A truthful pen and an impartial spirit’: Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola and the Conquista de las Islas Malucas,” Renaissance Studies 17, no. 3, 2003: 459.
76 Ibid.: 461.
of early conversion in the Moro area was clearly lifted directly from the fourth decade of Couto’s chronicle, with the same embellishments, first introduced by Couto, appearing in both—supplemented in some cases by the Spanish chronicler’s own flourishes. Due to this dependence on what had already been published by Couto—and therefore by Castanheda—Argensola had very little specific to say about the tens of thousands of conversions which had occurred in the Maluku region after the middle part of the sixteenth century, though he composed his account after the fact. In a single paragraph he summarised some of what had transpired, the focus, however, overwhelmingly on the gruesome persecutions which some of the Jesuit missionaries had reported being committed against the Amboinese Christians.  

Consequently, once again the topic of Christian conversion in Maluku forms a tiny portion of the entire work, eight paragraphs in a work of 260 pages, and nearly all of it originating from Castanheda’s earlier accounts.

Though none of the secular chroniclers dedicated much ink to the issue of religious change in Maluku, each of those who did mention it did so within the conventional framework of expectations, highlighting Europeans as the chief agents of this change, with the secondary focus on important local figures who had embraced the new faith. In this regard, the most balanced accounts come from Castanheda and Correia. The first of these, having spent ten years in the East, wrote from personal experience and intentionally sought to avoid exaggerating the importance of Portuguese figures in his accounts.  

This self-conscious attempt at objectivity means that, in parts of the História,

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traces of indigenous initiative show through clearly, as in the account of the two Maccasarese brothers who embraced Christianity in Ternate. At the same time, Castanheda often reverted to established assumptions about conversion. Consequently, his chronicle mistakenly suggests that the thousands of Christian conversions which occurred in the Moro area during the captaincy of Tristão de Ataíde stemmed from the labours of two Portuguese clerics, Simão Vaz and Francisco Álvares, the first of whom supposedly travelled back from Ternate with the newly baptised King of Mamuya in order to begin preaching. In reality, as will be discussed in chapter 2 below, no priest accompanied Dom João back to Moro, and the work of evangelisation which occurred was performed by the new converts themselves; the clerics only showed up later to perform the necessary baptisms. Being a simple abridgement of a portion of Castanheda’s accounts, Correia’s *Lendas da Índia* demonstrates identical strengths and weaknesses.

In contrast, Barros belonged to a branch of Portuguese renaissance historiography which intentionally sought to emphasise the importance of aristocratic Europeans in the East and to augment the greatness of Portugal. Consequently, when it comes to issues of conversion, Portuguese figures in the first four volumes of *Décadas da Ásia* take centre stage. For example, when writing about what had transpired in Moro after the first rebellion of the Christians there, Castanheda commented simply that a priest, Fernão Vinagre, had ‘rebaptised many who had been Christian and christened many new ones,’ leading António Galvão to send Vinagre back to the area ‘to christen even more.’ Barros, on the other hand, failed to mention the rebaptism of those who had earlier embraced the faith and instead emphasised Vinagre’s supposed role as an agent of

80 See pages 61-63.
81 Literature: Renaissance Historiography.
82 Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8.* 458.
conversion: ‘When António Galvão saw such good success [in Moro], he sent him there again to win over the will of those people and to persuade them to convert to the faith of Christ; he, with his preaching and persuasions, made many more Christians.’ In this embellishment of Castanheda’s earlier account, the people of Moro appear passive, needing to be acted upon by the persuasive powers of the priest. Barros went even further in describing the active role of the Portuguese captain in the spreading of Christianity. According to Castanheda, because Galvão had given instruction that they could be catechised and taught to read and write at his expense, Vinagre brought some of the Christian children from Moro to Ternate, where the captain also gave arms to the parents when they came to visit him ‘because in this way he secured them in Christianity and in friendship.’ Barros again felt the need to improve upon this narrative: the children brought were specifically the offspring of Moro’s ‘noblemen,’ a point never mentioned by Castanheda, and they were held in Ternate ‘as hostages [arrefens]’ to secure their parents’ ‘Christianity and friendship.’ Later, Galvão sent Diogo Lopes de Azevedo, the Portuguese fleet commander, to Ambon in order to attack an armada which had come to buy cloves in exchange for arms. Whilst there, according to Castanheda, the fleet commander had christened the residents of three villages, ‘they having asked this of him with great insistence.’ In Barros’s retelling, however, the fleet commander became the actor and ‘made [them] become Christians [fez tornar-se Christãos].’

Like his predecessor, Couto in his volumes of *Décadas da Ásia* embellished Castanheda’s basic accounts of early Christian conversion in Maluku to focus even more attention on Europeans as the principal actors. For example, his version of what happened when Fernão Vinagre went to Moro after the end of the first Christian rebellion

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83 Barros, *Da Ásia*. 589.
84 Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*. Volume 8. 458.
85 Barros, *Da Ásia*. 589.
87 Barros, *Da Ásia*. 590.
places the emphasis not so much on the Portuguese cleric’s powers of persuasion, as in Barros’s retelling, but on the irresistible power of his goodness: ‘This he did with so much love and gentleness that he not only obliged the Christians to be true but even forced many heathens to request baptism.’

A similar pattern emerges when dealing with the fleet captained by Diogo Lopez de Azevedo and sent to Ambon. As pointed out above, Barros changed the original narrative from three villages having requested baptism of the fleet commander to Azevedo having imposed Christianity on the villages. Couto likewise identified Azevedo as the agent of conversion but focussed instead on the fleet commander as a benevolent promoter of the faith:

Diogo Lopez de Azevedo did not wish to have been in this part an unprofitable servant, and thus did not arrive at any of those islands without inviting the natives to the banquets of the Lord, by means of a priest which he took with him, and thus he brought to the flock and fold of the Lord the villages of Hatiwi, Amantelo, and Nusaniwi, whose inhabitants received the water of holy baptism with great joy and contentment by all, their governors and rulers being the first.

Unsurprisingly, this passage also suggests that the local rulers enjoyed a preeminent role in the conversion of these three villages, a point once again not made by Castanheda in the original account, which states simply that the ‘residents’ had asked for and received baptism.

An emphasis on indigenous nobles also appears in Couto’s account of the conversions in Ternate of the two brothers from Macassar. Like Barros before him, the later chronicler converted these brothers into ‘noble youths,’ adding moreover that they had come to Ternate not as mere traders or curiosity seekers but as ‘ambassadors’ from

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88 Diogo do Couto, Decada Quinta da Asia. Dos feitos que os Portugueses fizeraõ no descobrimento dos mares, & conquista das terras do Oriente: em quanto governaraõ a India Nuno da Cunha, com Garcia de Noronha, dom Estevao da Gama, & Martim Afonso de Sousa. Composta por mandado dos muito Catholicos & invenciveis Monarchas d'Espanha, & Reys de Portugal, dom Felipe de gloriosa memoria, o primeiro deste nome: & de seu filho dom Felipe nosso Senhor, o segundo do mesmo nome. Por Diogo do Couto chronista e guarda mór da torre do Tombo do estado da India., vol. 5. Lisboa: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1612. 131.
89 Ibid. 132.
their islands. Even then, they still played a very secondary role to the real actor in the scenario, Captain António Galvão, who first befriended them and then, ‘finding them disposed for that which he desired, invited them a few times to banquets, and he sounded them out by gentle means to see if he could introduce them into the flock and fold of the Lord, and he laboured so much at this that he won them over.’

In inverting Castanheda’s original narrative, Couto turned two ordinary brothers who were inspired by God to embrace Christianity into two noble ambassadors who were instead won over by European wining, dining, and patient persuasion. He then reversed another important aspect of the story. According to Castanheda, sometime after their baptisms the two new Christians returned to Ternate to visit Galvão ‘with an armada loaded with sandalwood and some gold and weapons and other wares,’ explaining that there was more where this came from if only the Europeans would go to their lands. In Couto’s retelling, however, the Portuguese were the ones with the material wealth to use as lures: when the Macassarese converts returned to Ternate, they came empty handed, but, when they had earlier been baptised, Galvão had sent them home with gifts of guns and earrings. To his credit, the chronicler recognised what must have happened when the Christian brothers had returned home—‘they made themselves new preachers of our law and the Christian religion’—but, in the established pattern of expectations, this role actually belonged to enlightened indigenous rulers who, won over by wealthy and persuasive European agents, would assist in occasioning a top-down process of mass conversion amongst their own people.

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90 Ibid. 139.
91 Ibid.
93 Couto, Decada Quinta da Asia. 139-140.
94 Ibid. 140.
Though a Spaniard interested in defending the greatness of Spain, not Portugal, Argensola also sought to aggrandise the roles earlier Portuguese had played in helping to spread Christianity in the Maluku region. Writing his chronicle between 1606 and 1609, he had access both to Castanheda’s original accounts and to Couto’s revisions of them. (Though Barros had completed his own decade four before his death in 1570, because it was not published til 1615, Argensola could not have known of it.) Strikingly, though it was less complete than what was written in the História, he chose Couto’s version of events to include in Conquista de las Islas Molucas. A side-by-side comparison shows that Argensola copied these accounts almost word for word, though he also added a few flourishes of his own. For example, Castanheda, in reporting the King of Mamuya’s christening in Ternate, wrote simply that ‘he received the water of baptism with great celebration and solemnity.’ Couto reported that the baptism had been accompanied by ‘the greatest festivities which Ternate could give of itself.’ Demonstrating that he was familiar with both version of events, Argensola combined these descriptions into ‘public rejoicings, and greater solemnity than had ever been seen in Ternate’ followed by a number of fabricated details: ‘There was not a Christian but what brought palm-branches and flowers from that natural garden of the island; besides music, dancing, firing of great guns, and even the very barbarians rejoiced.’

95 A somewhat moot distinction by 1603, the year that Spain captured Tidore. A succession crisis in Portugal had resulted in Philip II of Spain having assumed the Portuguese throne in 1580. The two kingdoms remained mostly independent, however, Philip having sworn ‘not to interfere in the laws, customs or government of the country’ (Tom Gallagher, Portugal: A Twentieth-Century Interpretation. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983. 8).
96 Volume eight of Castanheda’s História was published in 1561; decade four of Couto’s Décadas da Ásia was published in 1602.
97 Castanheda’s narratives relating to the spread of Christianity in Maluku are all located in volume eight of his work, but they were split up by Couto between decade four and decade five of his chronicle. Because decade five was not published til 1612, it was not available to Argensola, and so none of its narratives made it into the Conquista. This material easily could have been taken from Castanheda but was not.
98 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 219.
99 Couto, Decada quarta da Asia. 167.
100 Argensola, The Discovery and Conquest of the Molucco and Philippine Islands. 27, spelling and capitalisation modernised.
both chronicles, Couto’s ‘improvements’ appear to have better suited the Spaniard’s rhetorical purposes.

Standing apart from the commissioned chronicles, both Portuguese and Spanish, are a pair of less formal histories composed by men who each spent a significant number of years in the Maluku region during the sixteenth century. The first of these is an anonymous\(^{101}\) text composed by a Portuguese who dwelt in Ambon during the time when Sancho de Vasconcelos was captain of the fort there, from 1572 to 1591.\(^{102}\) Published in 1955 under the title ‘A Capitania de Amboino,’\(^{103}\) this work is difficult to categorise. On the one hand, it lacks the self-conscious objectivity of Castanheda’s chronicle, its purpose, according to the first chapter, being specifically to recount Vasconcelos’s ‘heroic deeds.’\(^{104}\) As a result, though it hardly mentions anything relating to local Christianity at all, the focus when it does is primarily on the Jesuit missionaries whom the author associated with in Ambon. Pero Mascarenhas, for example, is described as ‘a father of great example and virtue and holiness, a nobleman and native of Arzila, [and] a great augmenter of the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, because his only intention is to bring true knowledge to the salvation of souls.’\(^{105}\) In addition, the author clearly possessed a close familiarity with Ambon and wrote from personal observation and experience. Consequently, important traces of indigenous agency also appear in the narrative. This text, in fact, provides the most reliable evidence that the people of Ambon

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\(^{101}\) At one time it was assumed that António Bocarro had composed this manuscript, but it has since been determined that he in fact did not (Boxer, “Some Portuguese Sources for Indonesian Historiography.” 221). Consequently, the actual author remains anonymous.


\(^{103}\) This title was appended by Artur Basílio de Sá, the editor of the collection in which it appears. As shown in the frontispiece to the manuscript (facing page 168), at one point someone had entitled it ‘Historia de Maluco no tempo de Gonçalo Pereira Marramaque e Sancho de Vasconcelos,’ but this cannot be its original title since the frontispiece also erroneously identifies António Bocarro as the author. The most accurate title, therefore, is the one which appears as the first chapter heading, ‘Relação dos feitos eroicos em armas, que Sancho de Vasconcelos fez nas partes de Amboyno e Maluco, sendo capitão in ellas, vinte annos, pouco mais ou menos’ (“A Capitania de Amboino.” 171).

\(^{104}\) Ibid. 171.

\(^{105}\) Ibid. 352.
had begun to appropriate Christian identities no later than the early 1520s, more than 20 years before the first missionary set foot on the island.\footnote{Ibid. 196. For a full discussion, see chapter four.}

The second history which must be mentioned was also composed by a Portuguese who spent many years in the Maluku region and who wrote about what he had both seen and heard personally. Gabriel Rebelo served as a court clerk in Ternate from about 1543 to 1554 and then returned as a factor in 1566, remaining a further four years.\footnote{Ibid. 150.} He also spent time in the Moro area.\footnote{Ibid. 150.} In India in 1561, he prepared a manuscript História das Ilhas de Maluco, which was published for the first time in 1955 under the title ‘Informação sobre as Molucas (Texto I).’\footnote{Gabriel Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I,” in Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Insulindia, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1955.} Back in the islands, Rebelo revised this manuscript in 1569, renaming it Informação das cousas de Maluco. This version was first published in 1856, but the result was faulty and unreliable.\footnote{Boxer, “Some Portuguese Sources for Indonesian Historiography.” 223.} It was then republished alongside the earlier draft with the title ‘Informação sobre as Molucas (Texto II).’\footnote{Gabriel Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II,” in Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Insulindia, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1955.} Charles Boxer described this work as ‘the best and fullest description of the Spice Islands which we have from the pen of a Portuguese.’\footnote{Boxer, “Some Portuguese Sources for Indonesian Historiography.” 222.} Rebelo, apparently intending his history to be a continuation of Galvão’s Tratado, began it with the captaincy of Galvão’s successor, Jorge de Castro (1539-1544\footnote{Frade, “A Presença Portuguesa nas Ilhas de Maluco,” 4.}), during whose service Rebelo himself had first arrived in Maluku.\footnote{Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 192.} In addition, his narrative frequently jumps backward to earlier periods to provide historical context for later events or simply to add information which he had learnt from local informants.
Like other secular accounts, Rebelo’s two versions of his history do not focus on issues of conversion to Christianity, but they do contain lengthier references to local Christians and their stories than any other contemporary text. Due most probably to his having been based in Ternate and having spent time in northern Halmahera, the only local Christians to make an appearance in Rebelo’s histories are those from the Moro area. He makes no mention of the Christian communities scattered throughout Ambon and nearby islands, in Bacan, in Siau, or in parts of north Sulawesi, suggesting that he wrote only when he had firsthand experience or information, and it is this firsthand information which is the real strength of Rebelo’s accounts. From the text, it is clear that he gathered much of his information from speaking with the people involved, allowing him to report a number of past events in addition to ones which he personally participated in. For example, in relating miracles which the Christians of Cawa in Moro considered important to their communal religious history, the Portuguese clerk used phrases such as ‘they say,’ ‘I remember being told,’ and ‘one Don Fernando, ruler of Cawa, told me.’\footnote{Ibid. 338, 404.} Because of his closeness to the people and their stories, Rebelo recorded in the two versions of his history important details which shine a light on otherwise obscure indigenous agency. As an example, in the 1540s, the Muslim King of Jailolo sought to capture the Christian city of Tolo, alternately using ‘promises on one hand and trouble and wars on the other.’\footnote{Ibid. 336.} In the end, the city ‘surrendered and most of the people with it.’\footnote{Ibid. 336, emphasis added.} This comment draws a clear distinction between the actions of a ruler and those of individual people and calls into question narratives which suggest either mass conversion or mass apostasy. Subtle details such as this abound in both versions of Rebelo’s history and help to provide a much more accurate picture of religious change in the Moro area during the sixteenth century.
In addition to the secular accounts discussed above, a number of missionary chronicles which discuss conversion in the Maluku region also appeared in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These were inspired by the Jesuit missions in Asia and the letters and reports which proceeded therefrom, including from Maluku. Francis Xavier, co-founder of the Society of Jesus, arrived in Portuguese Goa in 1542, and four years later he travelled to Ambon and then on to Moro to visit the Christian communities which already existed in both locations.\textsuperscript{118} Upon returning to Malacca, he summoned other members of the Society and dispatched them to the region in 1547, creating the Maluku Jesuit Mission.\textsuperscript{119} Like other Society members in the East, missionaries in Maluku composed annual letters which were sent to Goa and then on to Portugal and Rome to be shared with Society leaders and members alike.\textsuperscript{120} Selected letters then circulated widely in Europe, both as manuscripts and as broadsides, with the first collection in book form appearing in 1552.\textsuperscript{121} Because the letterbooks contained a random assortment of correspondence which had frequently been censored and/or rewritten, they did not present a coherent historical narrative.\textsuperscript{122} By the 1560s, society members were requesting that an official chronicle be commissioned, and Giovanni Pietro Maffei was selected to prepare a history of the mission in Asia.\textsuperscript{123}

Maffei’s first attempt, \textit{Rerum a Societate Jesu in Oriente gestarum commentarius}, published in 1571, was universally condemned for its unreliability. Though little more than a translation of an unpublished history composed by the Portuguese Jesuit, Manuel da Costa, Costa himself claimed that the work was full of ‘errors and lies.’\textsuperscript{124} Maffei,
who never travelled to Asia, was then given a second chance, producing a new chronicle in 1588, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*. Despite its construction as a mission history, this work in large part closely follows the outline earlier established by Barros in the first three volumes of *Décadas da Ásia*, supplemented only in very small ways by the aforementioned Jesuit letters. Decade four, which contained all of Barros’s narratives concerning conversion in Maluku, had not yet been published, however, and no Jesuits had been in Maluku until much later; consequently, Maffei had to turn elsewhere to obtain material concerning the spread of Christianity in the region in the early decades. He resorted to Castanheda. Maffei’s accounts, like those of so many writers both before and after him, closely parallel those found in the *História* in both organisation and content. Though overwhelmingly faithful to Castanheda’s narratives, Maffei did on occasion introduce a few changes or additions. Unsurprisingly, these alterations tend in subtle ways to highlight Europeans as the prime agents of religious change. For example, he embellished the role which Gonçalo Veloso supposedly played in the conversion of the King of Mamuya, suggesting that the Portuguese trader had actively sought to bring the ruler to Christianity, an assertion impossible to verify with Castanheda’s simple narrative. In addition, though he correctly reported that the newly baptised Macassarese brothers had returned to Ternate with ships filled with ‘various kinds of cargo’ in the hope of securing Portuguese friendship, he also added that, when Galvão then attempted to send Francisco de Castro back to Macassar to baptise the people there, he sent him with gifts to use in winning over the indigenous rulers—another point simply not present in the original account. Interestingly, the additions to Castanheda’s basic narratives all seem to have come from Maffei’s imagination and not from any Jesuits who

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127 Ibid. 463.
had actually laboured in Maluku. Though members of the Society had been there continuously since 1547, Maffei in his work confined his attention to the first half of the sixteenth century and therefore chose not to incorporate any of their reports into the chronicle, not even reporting on Francis Xavier’s visits to Ambon and Moro.\textsuperscript{128}

In stark contrast, the focus in most of the Jesuit chronicles which appeared in print after Maffei’s second history falls unmistakably on Xavier and on the Jesuits who laboured in Maluku after him.\textsuperscript{129} These missionaries are repeatedly represented as having been the primary actors responsible for the tens of thousands of new Christians in the region, the heroes—for mission literature is nothing if not heroic—who imposed their wills upon a largely passive population by means of persuasive preaching and the power of their examples, generating in many instances mass conversions. Occasionally aiding them in this task, as the outline of expectations demanded, were local Christian rulers who, once won over by the missionaries, supposedly possessed the capacity to bring to the faith those over whom they despotically governed.

Though published for the first time in 1944, Alessandro Valignano’s \textit{Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesus en las Indias Orientales} actually predates Maffei’s \textit{Historiarum} in its composition, the first part of the manuscript having arrived in

\textsuperscript{128} Lach, \textit{Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume I, Book Two}. 496.

\textsuperscript{129} A couple of seventeenth-century Jesuit chronicles make very little mention of conversion in Maluku. The earlier of these, Fernão Guerreiro’s \textit{Relaçam Annal}, as its full title indicates, provides a summary of events which occurred in various mission stations around the world in 1602 and 1603. In doing so, it focuses on the dire situation of the Jesuits then in Maluku, constrained to Tidore and persecuted by the newly arrived Dutch and their Ternatan allies. In addition, it provides a quick overview of what had at one time been ‘[o]ne of the greatest and most illustrious Christian communities which existed in the regions of the orient,’ produced and cultivated, of course, by the Jesuits themselves (Fernão Guerreiro, \textit{Relaçam Annal das cousas que fezam os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas Partes da India Oriental, & no Brasil, Angola, Cabo verde, Guine, nos annos de seiscentos & tres, & do processo da conversam, & christandade daquellas partes, tirada das cartas dos mesmos padres que de là vieram. Pelo padre Fernam Guerreiro da mesma Companhia, natural de Almodowar de Portugal. Vay dividido em quatro livros}. \textit{O primeiro de Iapã. O II. da China & Maluco. O III. da India. O IIII. do Brasil, Angola, & Guine. Lisboa: Jorge Rodrigues impressor de liuros, 1605. book two, 28-34). Published six decades later, Francisco Colín’s \textit{Labor Evangelica} reports on the labours of the Jesuits in the Philippines, which mission by then included Maluku, but includes almost no mention of the region (Francisco Colín, \textit{Labor Evangelica, Ministerios Apostolicos de los Obreros da ca Companhia de Jesus en las Islas Filipinas por el P. Francisco Colín de la Misma Companhia.}, Nueva edición ed., 3 vols., vol. 1. Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía de Henrich y Compañía, 1904.).
Europe from Japan in 1585, and Maffei apparently obtained some of his descriptions therefrom.\textsuperscript{130} When addressing conversion in Maluku, this chronicle clearly identifies Xavier as the central figure. The co-founder of the Society, the reader is informed, had travelled to Ambon to minister to the Christians ‘who had been converted by the Portuguese who lived there.’\textsuperscript{131} Because Xavier had written at length about his labours in Ambon having consisted primarily of working with Europeans in port, Valignano had little opportunity to aggrandise the missionary’s labours in that island, but lack of details from his time spent in Moro seems to have allowed him to construct a more suitably heroic narrative for Xavier there.\textsuperscript{132} During his three months in area, the account claims, Xavier had sought ‘to tame [the people] and make them familiar and convert them to a better life and to teach them the doctrine,’ no easy task when they were ‘so incapable and brutal.’\textsuperscript{133} The future saint persisted, however, and ‘in the end he laboured so much and worked so much with them that, little by little, he domesticated them, creating there many Christians, and seeking to aid them and teach them the doctrine.’\textsuperscript{134} All of this, it must be pointed out, is what Valignano presumed to have happened; Xavier himself left behind no record of any missionary successes in Moro; he merely visited all of the Christian villages, where he baptised the children who lacked this sacrament and enjoyed mutual consolation with their already-baptised parents.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{130} Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume I, Book One. 325.
\textsuperscript{131} Alessandro Valignano, Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesus en las Indias Orientales 1542-1564, ed. Josef Wicki, Bibliotheca Instituti Historici S.I. Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1944. 93.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid. 96-99.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid. 101.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} ‘At the end of the three months, I departed from this city of Maluku for some islands which are 60 leagues from Maluku, which are called the islands of Moro, because in these there were many Christian villages, and they had not been visited for many days, both because they were very far from India and because the natives had murdered a Father who had gone there. In those islands I baptised many infants who needed baptising, and I was there three months and visited at this time all of the Christian villages: I greatly consoled myself with them, and they with me’ (Francisco Xavier, “Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to his Fellow Jesuits in Rome. Cochin, January 20, 1548,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 36).
Another Jesuit chronicle which partially utilised Valignano’s manuscript history and therefore resembles it in approach appeared in 1601, composed by Luis de Gusmán and entitled *Historia de las missiones que han hecho los religiosos de la Compañia de Iesvs*. Like Valignano, Guzmán claimed that Xavier had been able to turn the people of Moro from ‘cruel and barbarous men’ to ‘tame, docile, and tractable’ Christians, this time, however, attaching a figure of 20,000 converts to the Jesuit’s three short months in the area. Guzmán also discussed later missionaries and credited them with similar powers of persuasion, in some instances completely altering narratives in order to focus attention on the Jesuits and their divine mission. In the case of Diogo de Magalhães, who was sent to the island of Siau specifically because the local ruler had for several years demanded a visit by a priest, Guzmán instead declared that the Jesuit had ended up in the island because, after being blown into the area by a storm, he had ‘disembarked in the Kingdom of Siau, not without particular providence from heaven.’ Converted rulers of course play an important secondary role in this *Historia*, with the Christian Kings of Mamuya and Baca identified as having helped bring their people into the fold.

Thirteen years after the appearance of Guzmán’s chronicle, Sebastião Gonçalves, a Jesuit resident in India, composed a manuscript history of his own, *Historia da Companhia de Jesus*. As indicated near the beginning of this chapter, it was Gonçalves who, like Barros before him, had felt the need to subtly alter the account of the

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137 Luis de Guzmán, *Historia de las missiones que han hecho los religiosos de la Compañia de Iesvs, para predicar el Sancto Euangelio en la India Oriental, y en los Reynos de la China y Iapon*. Escrita por el Padre Lvis de Guzman, Religioso de la misma Compania. Primera parte. En la qual se contienen seys libros, tres de la India Oriental, vno de la China, y dos de Iapon. Dirigida a Doña Ana Feliz de Gvzman, Marquesa de Camaras, Condesa de Ricla, Señora del Adelantamiento de Caçorla. Alcalá: Biudade Iuan Gracian, 1601. 50.
138 See chapter two for further details.
139 Guzmán, *Historia de las missiones que han hecho los religiosos de la Compañia de Iesvs*. 190.
140 Ibid. 181, 189.
141 Though Gonçalves clearly intended it for publication, the chronicle did not appear in print until the twentieth century. The text can be found in its entirety in Sebastião Gonçalves, *Historia dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus e do que fizeram com a divina graça na conversão dos infiéis a nossa santa fe catholica nos reynos e provincias da India Oriental*, ed. Josef Wicki, vol. 1-3. Coimbra: Atlântida, 1957, 1962. Portions of it were also published in Gonçalves, "Apostolado de Francisco Xavier nas Molucas."
conversion of the two brothers from Macassar to make it conform more to preconceived expectations, changing the converts into nobles and, more drastically, asserting that the Portuguese captain of the fort had persuaded them to embrace Christianity. Other alterations in his Historia appear less subtle. Similar to Valignano and Guzmán, Gonçalves filled in the gaps by claiming undocumented missionary success for Xavier in Moro: ‘He baptised many children; many heathens and Muslims converted and received the holy baptism. He built many churches and, during the months that he was in those islands, he christened between 20,000 and 25,000 souls.’

Beyond this, however, he also made comparable claims for Xavier’s time in Ambon, disregarding what the missionary himself had written about how, after baptising the children in the island’s seven Christian villages, he had spent the bulk of his time ministering to the Portuguese and Spanish who were there with their ships: ‘in the letter which he sent to Goa from Ambon, he did not pay attention to anything else but the baptisms of the children...; nevertheless, we know that, in this island, he converted to our holy faith, a large number of people.’

Nearly four decades later, the Jesuit historiographer Daniello Bartoli far exceeded these unsubstantiated claims in the first volume of his chronicle, Dell’Historia della Compagnia di Giesu. Again ignoring Xavier’s own reports on the subject, the author insisted that in Ambon the Society co-founder had begun ‘preaching to the idolaters and

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143 Ibid. 480.
144 Bartoli derived many of his exaggerations from the Processes, accounts of Xavier’s miraculous works which were collected in preparation for his canonisation (Henry James Coleridge, The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier, New Edition ed., 2 vols., vol. 1. London: Burns and Oates, 1881. 164; 214, note 117). Some biographers have justified these additions to Xavier’s actual letters, claiming that the future Saint failed to record the miracles himself out of modesty (Coleridge, The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier. 164). More critical writers have demonstrated the complete unreliability of these additions (Henry Venn, The Missionary Life and Labours of Francis Xavier Taken from his own Correspondence: With a Sketch of the General Results of Roman Catholic Missions among the Heathen. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1862. 84ff). It is outside the scope of this work to consider in detail the biographies of Xavier although many of them touch upon the time he spent in the Maluku region.
145 Published in 1656, volume one of this work bears the general subtitle L’Asia. Volumes two and three then focussed on specific regions of the East: Il Giappone and La Cina. He also composed three volumes of Jesuit history dealing with mission in Europe.
the Muslims, and did all he could, God cooperating with the industry of his zeal, so that no small part of the island was led to the knowledge of Christ, establishing churches in all the villages.\(^{146}\) In Moro, Xavier had ‘baptised by his own hand 25,000 idolaters’ not throughout the entire area as claimed by Guzmán but just in the single city of Tolo.\(^{147}\) In this way, Tolo, which had been considered a Christian village since the 1530s,\(^{148}\) had actually been ‘converted by the Apostle St Francis,’ with other Jesuits afterward extending his success there.\(^{149}\) It should be unsurprising, then, that in narrating early conversions in Maluku, Bartoli similarly credited the Europeans as being the primary agents of religious change. The two brothers from Macassar, for example, had been led to embrace Christianity after Captain António Galvão had engaged them in a theological discussion, reasoning with them on the topic of ‘true religion’ and attacking the vanity of their idols.\(^{150}\) In this way, the spread of Christianity in Maluku had occurred precisely according to expectations, with European agents converting local rulers who then imposed observance of the new faith on their subjects: ‘And as long as the royal ministers [captains] there behaved properly, piety increased in the princes, and religion in the people.’\(^{151}\)

The final Jesuit chronicle to be discussed is Francisco de Sousa’s two-volume *Oriente Conquistado*, published in 1710, which reads almost like a catalogue of many earlier attempts to make the matter of conversion in Maluku conform to preconceived

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147 Ibid. 543.
148 Numerous references to Tolo as a Christian locale occur in Castanheda’s chronicle and other earlier sources. In addition, a 1571 Jesuit letter from Maluku identified the ruler of Tolo as ‘an old man and a long-time Christian…who is called Tristão de Ataíde’ (Jerónimo de Olmedo, “Fr. Jerónimo de Olmedo SJ to the Jesuits of the College in Goa. Ambo, May 12, 1571,” in *Documenta Malucensia*, ed. Hubert Jacobs, *Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 628). This name strongly implies that the king had converted during Ataíde’s tenure as captain of the fort in Ternate, 1533-1536.
150 Ibid. 86-87.
151 Ibid. 112.
patterns. The two ordinary Maccasarese brothers baptised in Ternate during the captaincy of António Galvão are identified not just as noblemen but as ‘some of the chief nobles.’

In Mamuya, the Portuguese trader Gonçalo Veloso supposedly ‘persuaded the lord of the land...to become a Christian.’ Following this same king’s baptism in Ternate, Sousa’s chronicle reports that Simão Vaz returned to Moro with him and ‘subjected many thousands of souls to the easy yoke of Christ.’ Later on in Moro, the cleric Fernão Vinagre ‘pacified the land’ and converted masses before returning to Ternate ‘like a victorious soldier’; thereafter he visited Moro again ‘as an apostolic missionary [and] baptised a large number of heathens.’ The children of these converts, Sousa claimed in the spirit of Barros, were then held in Ternate as ‘hostages’ of their parents’

faithfulness. Once the Jesuits arrived on the scene, they too wielded great power over the people of Maluku as exemplified by the works of Francis Xavier. For example, like Bartoli’s chronicle, the Oriente Conquistado claims that the Society co-founder had been responsible for baptising every resident of Tolo although the village had been identified as Christian for at least a decade. Despite familiarity with the contrary evidence, Sousa even repeated the assertion that Xavier had also been present and somehow responsible when Tolo, many of its people having abandoned Christianity due to intense persecution, was later destroyed in a volcanic eruption: ‘The bull of canonisation attributes this success to Saint Francis Xavier, still alive, and being a certain thing that the Saint at this

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152 Francisco de Sousa, Oriente Conquistado a Jesus Christo pelos Padres da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa. Primeyra parte, Na qual se contém os primeyros vinte, & dous annos desta Provincia, ordenada Pelo P. Francisco de Sousa Religoso da mesma Companhia de Jesus, 2 vols., vol. 1. 1710. 364.
153 Ibíd. 356.
154 Ibíd.
155 Ibíd. 363.
156 Ibíd.
157 Ibíd. 414.
time was in other very distant regions, we are obligated to say that he was then found in Moro, miraculously reproduced.\(^{158}\)

For the next two centuries, historical interest in early Christian conversion in Maluku all but disappeared apart from brief mentions in a few Dutch sources. Both the Portuguese and the Spanish seem to have lost interest, having been completely driven from the region by the middle of the seventeenth century, and the Society of Jesus was formally suppressed by Pope Clement XIII in 1767. At the same time, Catholic communities in the Maluku region disappeared as well. In some heavily Christian areas such as Moro, relentless persecution had destroyed both villages and individuals, with Christians slaughtered, enslaved, and forcibly relocated. In this way, Morotai and the nearby island of Rau—both referred to as Morotai in sixteenth-century sources—were almost completely depopulated, eventually to be repopulated by non-Christians.\(^{159}\) In other areas, such as Ambon and parts of north Sulawesi, Catholic communities persisted into the seventeenth century, but the Dutch East India Company (VOC) wished to let ‘the popish superstition slowly die by itself,’ as noted by François Valentijn, a Protestant minister who served in the area at the end of the century.\(^{160}\) The Dutch had captured the Portuguese fortress in Ambon on 23 February 1605. By 12 May, Frederik de Houtman, the local commander, ordered all Jesuits to depart the area.\(^{161}\) Two years later, rulers of the Christian villages lodged a complaint with the Dutch about the lack of Christian instruction; it took another five years, however, before the first church service was held for them and their people.\(^{162}\) Only in 1617 did the local Christians obtain a minister employed specifically to care for their pastoral needs, a Dutch protestant by the name of

\(^{158}\) Ibid. 417. Ten ‘indisputable’ miracles were attributed to Xavier in the process of canonisation, this being the final one: ‘He rains ashes upon the city of Tolo’ (Venn, The Missionary Life and Labours of Francis Xavier. 99).

\(^{159}\) Heuken, "Catholic Converts in the Moluccas." 57.

\(^{160}\) Quoted in Ibid. 49.

\(^{161}\) Ibid. 47-48.

\(^{162}\) Ibid. 49.
Sebastiaen Danckaerts. In the meantime, the Dutch in Ambon had required that all Catholic crosses and religious statues be removed from the villages. Over time, local Christians chose to adapt to this new situation by adopting Protestant identities, and the early Christian history of the areas involved was eventually subsumed within a much larger Protestant narrative.

Dutch references to Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku composed during the next hundred years, though lacking any direct connection with earlier secular or Jesuit chronicles, still approached the topic within the same framework of expectations concerning how the faith must have spread. Present in Ambon during the early years when Catholic Christians were just beginning to transfer allegiance to Protestantism, Danckaerts sought to describe the current state of Christianity in the island in a short report which was published in 1621 as *Historische ende grondich verhael van de standt des Christendoms int quartier van Amboina*. Though replacing their heroism with villainy, he too saw sixteenth-century Europeans as the prime actors responsible for religious change in Maluku, having foisted a corrupt form of the faith upon a nearly helpless and largely passive population. Referring to the earliest conversions in Ambon, the people, he argued, had been motivated purely out of military weakness and a subsequent need to seek the strength of the Portuguese through baptism. They had remained Christians due only to ‘the force which the Portuguese had exercised over them,’ being ‘grievously punished’ in order to keep them observant. Beyond those Ambonese who had reached out to the Europeans in desperation, the Portuguese had aggressively sought to subject others to the Catholic faith, using ‘all possible means in

166 Ibid.: 119-120.
167 Ibid.: 120.
working to bring other villages somewhat under their obedience.\textsuperscript{168} The only real agency the indigenous people had been able to exercise, according to Danckaerts, was furtive resistance, having defied the Jesuits by secretly maintaining the worship of the devil in their houses, in their towns, and in the jungle.\textsuperscript{169}

In his \textit{Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën}, published in eight volumes in 1724-1726, Valentijn, mentioned above, likewise credited early conversion in Ambon to desperation. Though acknowledging that the people of Hatiwi had sought out Portuguese attention, they had done so merely ‘to be better able to place themselves in a position against Hitu,’ their Muslim enemy on the north coast of the island.\textsuperscript{170} Once a mutual agreement with the Portuguese had been reached, the Europeans then took over and sent the chief [‘\textit{orang kaja}’] of Hatiwi, his sister, and several other locals to Goa as an embassy to request auxiliary troops. Without providing any further explanation, Valentijn asserted simply that most of these envoys had been baptised there, including the chief and his sister.\textsuperscript{171} In short, European actors had sent a group of needy indigenous people off to India where they were baptised, the only converts worth identifying being a local ruler and his sister. Interestingly, this retelling of early Christian conversion in Hatiwi seems to have come out of thin air and stands in stark contrast to Castanheda’s narrative of the people of Hatiwi having been amongst those who, ‘with much insistence,’ had requested and received baptism from Diogo Lopes de Azevedo when he was visiting Ambon.\textsuperscript{172}

Pope Pius VII lifted the ban on the Society of Jesus in 1814, and six years earlier the colonial administration of what had by then become the Netherlands Indies allowed

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.: 120-121.
\textsuperscript{170} François Valentijn, \textit{Oud en Nieuw Ost-Indiën, vervattende een naukeurige en uitvoerige verhandelingen van Nederlands molchenhyd in die gewesten, benevens eene wydlyufige beschryvinge der Moluccos}, vol. 2. Dordrecht: J. van Braam, 1724. part 2, section 1, book 1, chapter 1, 15.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid. part 2, section 1, book 1, chapter 1. 1, 15.
\textsuperscript{172} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India}. Volume 8. 522.
Roman Catholic clergy to resume an active role in the islands\textsuperscript{173} (though proselytising amongst Muslims or Protestants was still effectively banned\textsuperscript{174}). These two changes were eventually followed by a short burst of renewed historical interest in conversion to Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku, primarily on the part of missionaries. The first new work to appear on this topic, published in 1925, was a history composed by B.J.J. Visser, a Catholic mission superintendent in Java. In the introduction to his \textit{Onder Portugeesch-Spaansche Vlag: De Katholieke Missie van Indonesië, 1511-1605}, he noted that he was motivated by an accusation that the Church had neglected this part of its history.\textsuperscript{175} His own work, however, would be limited itself to ‘vague outlines’ because of a reliance on printed sources to which he had access.\textsuperscript{176} When recounting events connected to pre-Jesuit Christianity in Maluku, these sources mostly consisted of some of the early chronicles, with writers such as Argensola and Sousa specifically mentioned.\textsuperscript{177} As a consequence, Visser tended to replicate both the focus and the flaws of these earlier chronicles, with the emphasis clearly on Europeans having actively evangelised the people of Maluku: António Galvão used his time as captain of Ternate specifically to

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid. v-vi.
\textsuperscript{177} Visser also utilised Valentijn as a source in his history, attempting to blend this writer’s version of early conversion in Ambon with the contradictory accounts from the earlier Iberian writers (ibid. 19-20). In addition, Visser relied heavily on chronicles written by Franciscan chroniclers, all of which argue for a very early mission in Maluku which was run by their order. References to this material have been omitted here and elsewhere in this work because there exists absolutely no documentary evidence for a Franciscan presence anywhere in the archipelago before 1578 (Achilles Meersman, \textit{The Franciscans in the Indonesian Archipelago, 1300-1775}. Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1967. 27). Beyond a simple lack of evidence, many of the claims made by Franciscan chroniclers can be proven false due to demonstrable inconsistencies (Sigfridus Stokman, \textit{De Missie der Minderbroeders op de Molukken, Celebes en Sangihe in de XVIe en XVIIe Eeuw}, vol. II, \textit{Overdruk uit Collectanea Franciscana Neerlandica}. ‘s-Hertogenbosch: Teulings' Uitgevers-Maatschappij, 1931. 507-508). The notion that early conversions in Maluku must have occurred under the auspices and with the aid of an organised mission of some kind further reinforces the almost-universal assumption that religious change depended upon active proselytising by Europeans and frequently appeared in works composed after Visser’s as well.
forward ‘the work of civilising and conversion.’ The Azevedo fleet which he sent to Ambon to try to prevent the sale of cloves to merchants from other islands becomes in this retelling ‘a successful attempt to introduce Catholicism into Ambon.’ Presumably because Visser saw missionaries as essential for conversion, subsequent growth of Christianity in the island must have come from some unknown (because it never existed) mission. The two Macassarese brothers who received baptism in Ternate were prominent [‘voornaam’] men, and Galvão had undoubtedly ‘used his influence to move [them] to adopt Catholicism.’ And so on. Visser even specifically applied the European legal concept of *cuius regio eius religio*—‘the religion of the ruler is the religion of his people’—to the islands of Southeast Asia, thereby insinuating that conversion for many people involved nothing more than following their leader.

Nevertheless, Visser did not incorporate wholesale the flaws of his sources. For example, in dealing with Francis Xavier’s visit to Maluku, he repeated some of the more outrageous claims made by the early chroniclers, such as that the Jesuit founder had singlehandedly converted 25,000 people in Tolo and had personally called down its subsequent destruction by volcano, but, importantly, he also included in this discussion references to later Jesuit letters from Maluku which cast doubt on this established narrative.

For the period after Xavier, Visser relied upon additional Jesuit letters to reconstruct a narrative. The number of these letters available to him in print was rather

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179 Ibid. 19.
180 Ibid. 20.
181 Ibid. 22.
182 Ibid. 15-16. Note that Visser got the Latin formulation wrong, writing ‘*cuius ditio eius et religio,*’ but provided the correct translation into Dutch.
183 Ibid. 68-72.
small, though, a fact which he acknowledged. Of the 220 Jesuit documents dealing with Maluku during the period 1542-1577 now known and published, only 22 of them were available in print when Visser completed his research. Nevertheless, he created from these letters an accurate summary of their valuable firsthand contents, providing a basic outline of missionary activity in the Maluku region during the latter half of the sixteenth century. In doing so, however, he constructed a narrative which, in its own way, focuses on European actors just as much as the increasingly exaggerated accounts in the earlier Iberian chronicles. There are at least two reasons for this: first, the Jesuit letters were written by missionaries to be consumed by other missionaries, and they therefore take mission life as their main concern. From them one can learn who served where and, quite often, for how long, along with detailed accounts of the difficulties—‘spiritual consolations’ was Xavier’s term—which they proudly faced in labouring, often alone, in such a remote and sometimes openly hostile region. In addition, the express purpose of many of these letters was to provide edification to fellow Jesuits, creating a need to emphasise the missionary successes which accompanied all the suffering. Second, the missionaries who composed these letters shared with the writers of the early chronicles their expectations about how their faith would inevitably spread: missionaries served alongside powerful Portuguese administrators as the primary agents responsible for causing religious change, with local Christian rulers sometimes playing important

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184 ‘Due to the lack of necessary sources, we shall not be able to follow the subsequent missionaries so closely as with the great Francis Xavier. Yet we have enough material to serve to at least map out their work broadly’ (ibid. 98).

185 ‘I give you this account so that you may know how abundant these islands are in spiritual consolations; because all of these dangers and labours, voluntarily undertaken for only the love and service of God our Lord, are abundant treasures of great spiritual consolations, and in such a way that the islands are disposed and apt for a man in a few years to lose the sight of his physical eyes with an abundance of consoling tears. I cannot remember ever having had so many and such continual spiritual consolations as in these islands, with so little sensation of physical labour; walking continually in islands encircled by enemies and peopled by rather unreliable friends, and in lands lacking remedies for physical ailments, and lacking almost all aids of other kinds for the preservation of life’ (Xavier, "Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to his Fellow Jesuits in Rome. Cochin, January 20, 1548." 36).

auxiliary roles. As will be discussed in detail in chapter six, the Jesuits who laboured in the region seem to have maintained these expectations even when repeatedly faced with a very different reality on the ground.

As a consequence, by merely summarising the letters available to him, Visser constructed a reasonable history of the Jesuit missionaries in Maluku—including their assumptions and expectations—but one which virtually ignores both the local people and any active role they may have played. Instead, converts appear en masse and always as the passive and inevitable fruit of a missionary’s labours and goodness: Father Nuno Ribeiro ‘in four months time baptised 600 heathens and Muslims’ in Ambon.\(^{187}\) The process: ‘He followed the lessons given to him by Xavier and desired to make himself much loved by the people, whom he bound to himself by great love and mercy.’\(^{188}\) Generally, the only converts distinct from the mass are the local rulers who, as good Christian princes, supposedly assisted the Jesuits in enacting mass conversion. For example, Visser repeats the Jesuit claim that, after his baptism, the King of Bacan accompanied Father António Vaz ‘on his tour of the neighbouring islands which belonged to his realm to be helpful in the accomplishment and expansion of the work of conversion. This help had such influence that the majority of the population became Christian.’\(^{189}\) As will be demonstrated in chapter six, however, the population of Bacan remained overwhelmingly non-Christian at this point, and the king could not even persuade his own household to adopt the new faith.

In the next four years, two more works directly addressing sixteenth-century conversion in the Maluku region appeared, both penned by Cornelius Wessels, a Dutch Jesuit. The first, *De geschiedenis der R.K. Missie in Amboina*, was published as a

\(^{188}\) Ibid.
\(^{189}\) Ibid. 124.
monograph in 1926.\textsuperscript{190} The second, an article entitled ‘De Katholieke Missie in het Sultanaat Batjan,’ was published in 1929.\textsuperscript{191} Both of these works provide far more thorough considerations of early Christian mission in the region than Visser’s history, in large part because Wessels utilised not only printed source materials but also numerous manuscript letters and reports preserved in the Jesuit Archive in Rome.\textsuperscript{192} The end result, however, though considerably more detailed, does not differ too much from Visser’s earlier attempt, placing its focus squarely on the actions of the Europeans and in very similar ways. For example, when discussing conversion in Maluku prior to the formation of the Jesuit mission, Wessels likewise relied uncritically on the early chronicles, repeating many of their errors and exaggerations.\textsuperscript{193} Consequently, though he noted that it was ‘certainly remarkable’ that Xavier had made no mention whatsoever of preaching to any non-Christians in the Ambon area, Wessels nevertheless insisted that he did, and he even explained how the future Saint must have significantly shortened his normal preaching regimen in order to teach and convert so many during the short time he was there.\textsuperscript{194} Wessels saw missionaries as so essential to conversion that, like Visser, he even posited a non-existent mission. In referring to the three Ambonese villages which early on had requested baptism from Diogo Lopes de Azevedo, he suggested that this interest in Christianity ‘may have been the work of Franciscan missionaries.’\textsuperscript{195} Also like Visser, Wessels uncritically reported on the supposedly successful missionary efforts of the Christian King of Bacan working in tandem with Father António Vaz: ‘He accompanied

\begin{footnotes}
\item[193] Wessels’s early sources included Barros, Couto, Castanheda, Maffei, Galvão, Bartoli, Sousa, Argensola, Rebelo, and Valentijn.
\item[195] Ibid. 6.
\end{footnotes}
the missionary on this journey throughout his territory and everywhere urged the inhabitants so that, after five months, only a small part of his subjects had not been baptised. 196 Though he had many more letters to work from, in narrating events in Maluku after the establishment of the Jesuit mission there, Wessels too largely summarised what the missionaries themselves had written, focusing on who served where and for how long, what difficulties they faced, and the political events occurring around them, with conversions generally reported simply as large numbers of undistinguished people.

After the publication of Wessels’s works, concentrated interest in early Christianisation in Maluku seems to have faded for a time, but the notion that missionaries of some kind had been essential in generating conversion in the region was repeated briefly in two more publications. The earlier of these, published in 1935, was a collaborative report on the missionary situation in the Dutch East Indies prepared by the Protestant-affiliated World Dominion Press. Just a few pages in length, the accounts therein clearly tie conversion in Maluku to the work of heroic European actors. For example, to explain those who embraced Christianity before the introduction of the Jesuit mission, a ‘lay apostolate of Portuguese merchants’ is posited. 197 The active preaching of one of these, Gonçalo Veloso (spelt Belosos), had ‘led to the conversion of the king and population of Moro.’ 198 Captains, too, had joined the missionary effort, with António

196 Wessels, "De Katholieke missie in het sutanaat Batjan, 1557-1609," 122. Writing 20 years later in a work dealing with mission not in Maluku but in South Sulawesi, Wessels even repeated many of the embellishments added over time to Castanheda’s original account of the baptism in Ternate of the two Maccasareese brothers, claiming that they were noblemen who had come as part of an embassy, that Galvão had befriended them and then ‘made [them] more familiar with Catholicism by his action,’ and that, after their baptisms, they ‘returned to their land with many gifts’ (C. Wessels, "De Katholieke missie in Zuid-Celebes, 1525-1668," Het Missiewerk 28, 1949: 65-66).
198 Ibid.
Galvão (spelt Calvano) having ‘converted the island of Ternate.’¹⁹⁹ Later, with an actual mission in place, the Jesuits were responsible for having converted 80,000.²⁰⁰

Five years later, Alphons Mulders, the first professor of mission studies at the Catholic University of Nijmegen,²⁰¹ published *De missie in tropisch Nederland*; like the abovementioned report, it deals primarily with Catholic missionary activity in the Indies in the 19th and 20th centuries but also contains a brief account of earlier Christianity in Maluku. In it, the professor suggested that, despite lack of evidence, very early interest in the faith may well have been generated by the ‘incidental’ preaching of Franciscan friars who were passing through the region to or from China.²⁰² He also sought to explain away conversion before the existence of a mission by pointing out that Portuguese settlements generally included secular priests who, as circumstances allowed, must have here and there engaged in ‘mission enterprises.’²⁰³ Like others, when discussing the later Jesuit mission, he repeated reports of mass converts gleaned from a couple of missionary letters and suggested that there would have been even more Christians if only there had been more missionaries.²⁰⁴ Despite this only superficial interest in early conversion in Maluku, Mulders also indicated a significant development, noting that source materials which could help to clear up much of the confusion over early Christian mission in the islands of Southeast Asia were increasingly available.²⁰⁵

The next five decades saw multiple thousands of pages of primary source material relating to early Christian mission in the East collected, transcribed, and published under the auspices of both the Society of Jesus and the Portuguese government. The driving

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰⁰ Ibid. 31, 32.
²⁰³ Ibid. 51.
²⁰⁴ Ibid. 51-53.
²⁰⁵ Ibid. 50.
force behind the earliest of these efforts was António da Silva Rego, a secular Catholic priest who began collecting documents in the 1930s in preparation for writing a history of early Portuguese missions in India.\(^{206}\) Though he never actually wrote the intended history,\(^{207}\) his collection of texts, *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: India*, was published by the Portuguese Agência Geral das Colónias and its successor after 1951, the Agência Geral do Ultramar, with the first of twelve volumes appearing in 1947.\(^{208}\) Under Silva Rego’s direction, another series of documents began appearing seven years later, this time with the focus specifically on the islands of the Malay Archipelago. Edited by Artur Basílio de Sá, the *Documentação para a história das missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Insulíndia* contains six volumes of documents which relate in some way to early conversion in the islands.\(^{209}\)

This collection provides valuable access to a number of texts ranging from letters to previously unpublished histories, composed by an assortment of men including captains of the fort in Ternate, traders, soldiers, and missionaries. Since Maluku supported a Jesuit mission, the main source for missionary letters and reports is the Society itself. Commencing in 1948, The Jesuit Historical Institute began publication of the *Documenta Indica*, a collection of extant letters and reports from the Indian Jesuit Province.\(^{210}\)

Because the Maluku mission was administratively a part of the province, a number of documents dealing with Maluku can be found in this series. It was eventually decided, however, that the Maluku texts ought to be separated out from the Indian material, an endeavour which resulted in the publication in 1974 of the first volume of *Documenta Indica*.


\(^{207}\) Ibid.: 23.


Malucensia. The three volumes in this series contain a comprehensive collection of texts, amassed from nearly 20 archives and libraries in Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and India. Together with Sá’s Documentação, this collection provides an invaluable source of firsthand accounts for anyone researching Christian conversion in Maluku in the sixteenth century.

The final volume of Documenta Malucensia was published in 1984, and the final volume of Documentação...Insulíndia appeared four years later. Remarkably, very little scholarly interest has been paid to either collection or, perhaps more significantly, to their primary subject matter. In 1988, the historian John Villiers did publish ‘Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios: The Jesuit Mission in Moro 1546-1571,’ utilising numerous letters made available in both Sá’s and Jacobs’s compilations, but his clearly stated purpose in writing was not actually to consider the issue of religious change per se, which he suggested was ‘of less interest to us now,’ but to ‘glean from [the letters] some of the information they contain about the social and political conditions in Moro during the forty years or so in the sixteenth century when both the Jesuit missionaries and the Portuguese were active in the region.’

Though not primarily interested in conversion, Villiers nonetheless did offer some observations on the topic. Unsurprisingly, these comments reinforce the persistent image of Europeans as the primary agents of religious change. For example, he claimed that the Portuguese merchant, Gonçalo Veloso, was responsible for first introducing Christianity into Moro, and, during the next ten years before Xavier’s arrival, ‘priests had visited the area and made conversions.’ More important, like the Dutch writers of the seventeenth century, Villiers saw the local Christians as having had very little interest in the new faith, suggesting that they acted out of desperation or that in

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213 Ibid.: 594-595.
some way it had been imposed on them. Conversion for some, he stated, had been ‘superficial,’ driven only by a desire to be freed from slavery.214 Other conversions, ‘made as a result of the initiatives’ of some of the captains of the fort were ‘probably only temporary.’215 The suggestion in this final assessment is that people adopted and maintained Christian identities only when continually acted upon by Europeans.

Villier’s observations on conversion differ little from those made by another researcher who wrote very briefly on early conversion in Maluku. Published in 1996, Gerry van Klinken’s Minority, modernity and the emerging nation: Christians in Indonesia, a biographical approach focuses on Christianity in the Indies/Indonesia during the 20th century but seeks to provide historical context by invoking sixteenth-century Maluku. Relying on the works of Visser and Mulders instead of any early documents, the author dismissed early conversions as nothing more than ‘political professions of adherence to Christianity.’216 Motivated by military weakness, local kings sought European protection and then ‘proved their submission to the Portuguese by professing their faith.’217 These Christian princes then brought their passive subjects unquestioningly into the fold with them since, as claimed earlier by Visser, the European practice of cuius regio eius religo was also the ‘operative principle’ in Maluku.218

The approaches of Villiers and Van Klinken reflect a modern scepticism identified by Bronwen Douglas as a common ‘post-Christian’ academic discomfort ‘with religious beliefs in general and Christianity in particular.’219 Douglas has suggested that this discomfort leads researchers to focus on socio-political concerns even when dealing with

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214 Ibid.: 602. Villiers even suggested that this judgment had originated with the missionaries themselves but then failed to reference a single Jesuit letter or report in which such a statement can be found.
215 Ibid.: 598.
216 Van Klinken, Minority, Modernity and the Emerging Nation. 8.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
ostensibly religious issues and to view occurrences of Christianity outside the West as ‘an inauthentic veneer imposed by Europeans’ or, at the very least, a phenomenon driven by economic need.\textsuperscript{220} Despite its 20\textsuperscript{th}-century expression, however, this approach produces narratives not much different to those constructed by earlier writers who seem to have been fully invested in their own Christian outlooks. The early secular chroniclers paid scant attention to the issue of conversion in Maluku and, when they did touch upon it, focussed primarily on heroic European actors, whether captains or merchants or missionaries, who had persuaded and even compelled a passive population into embracing Christian identities, sometimes with the aid of supposedly powerful local rulers. The Jesuit missionaries and their chroniclers wrote nothing to challenge this image. Motivated by their hatred of what they considered a false faith, the Dutch Protestant authors of the seventeenth century saw the actions of their Roman Catholic predecessors in the Maluku region as more demonic than heroic but nonetheless concluded, as Villiers and Van Klinken eventually would, that conversion occurred as local peoples were coerced into adopting purely superficial Catholic identities by a potent combination of desperation mingled with European compulsion.

A final account of conversion to Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku combines many of these assumptions and approaches from the past nearly 500 years. Appearing in a 2008 volume on the history of Christianity in Indonesia, Adolf Heuken’s ‘Catholic Converts in the Moluccas, Minahasa and Sangihe Talaud, 1512-1680’ seeks to provide a thorough summary of this region’s early Christian history. The author, himself a Jesuit, utilised many of the early chronicles as well as the now-available Jesuit letters in researching and writing his account, and the focus remains overwhelmingly upon Europeans as the primary agents of religious change in the region. In considering

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.: 37-38, 42.
conversion before the creation of the Jesuit mission, the discussion centres on the Portuguese captains and the political situations they faced interacting with local rulers. Consequently, as indicated in the heading to the section on Ambon—‘Ambon and Lease Islands: political structures as background for religious choices’—the author explained away early Christianisation in that island as nothing more than a consequence of conflict between the Portuguese and Muslim Ternate, with a person’s clan-based political alliance determining religious identity.\footnote{Heuken, "Catholic Converts in the Moluccas." 32.} ‘This social structure should be kept in mind when conversions of whole villages are reported,’ Heuken argued without ever noticing the numerous indications in the Jesuit letters that, contrary to what the missionaries reported, whole villages in Ambon did not actually convert in their entirety.\footnote{Ibid.} Repeating assertions first made by anti-Catholic Dutch ministers in the seventeenth century, the work claims that these converts in Ambon ‘regarded baptism as a way to obtain protection from the Portuguese’; consequently, the three villages which had insistently asked for baptism from Diogo Lopez de Azevedo in the 1530s had mingled that request with one for military assistance, a point simply not mentioned in any of the earliest accounts of this event.\footnote{Ibid. 34, 40.} Xavier, when he arrived in island, ‘converted many islanders in Moro,’ despite having never mentioned this fact in any of his letters, and then sent additional Jesuits, ‘the beginning of an organised evangelisation that continued for a few decades.’\footnote{Ibid. 28.} The rest of the account summarises content from some of the Jesuit letters, emphasising the difficulties faced by the missionaries and the persecutions experienced by the local Christians.

Like all those which preceded it, Heuken’s portrait of the growth and spread of Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku—seen from the perspective of European
chroniclers, missionaries, and historians—looks almost nothing like the one outlined near the beginning of this chapter: Christianisation driven by indigenous peoples who actively sought to attract and then appropriate Christian influence, who in many instances controlled and directed missionaries and other Europeans, and who acted independently of their clans, their fellow villagers, and even their rulers. As early as 1939, J.C. van Leur, a Dutch colonial civil servant and historian of the Indies, had called into question this tendency of writers to view the history of island Southeast Asia ‘from the deck of the ship, the ramparts of the fortress, the high gallery of the trading house,’ a perspective which would eventually come to be called ‘Europe-centric.’ By the time he wrote on the topic in 1961, John Smail could claim that ‘almost all—perhaps all—historians interested in Southeast Asia now reject the postulates of pure colonial history and with varying degrees of enthusiasm and conviction now espouse the ideal of an “Asia-centric” history of Southeast Asia.’ Indeed, Leonard Andaya’s 1993 history of the region, The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period, consciously seeks to remedy previous Europe-centric narratives by presenting separate chapters exploring ‘the “cultural realities” of both the Europeans and the Malukans,’ with the intended focus on the latter. As the foregoing review of the literature clearly shows, however, this profound shift in historical approach for some reason has not yet had a noticeable impact on what has been written about conversion to Christianity in Maluku in the sixteenth century. This work seeks to begin making that much-needed correction by exploring the active role which would-be converts and local Christians played in the processes of religious change.

227 Ibid.: 72-73.
The question here arises about how the correction can be made. The difficulty identified by Andaya in the introduction to his general history is the same one which no doubt has contributed in a large way to the almost totally European-focussed accounts of early religious change in Maluku composed even in recent times: quite simply, there are no indigenous textual materials to work from in reconstructing the story, and so one is forced to work exclusively from contemporary European sources. This limitation means that, unless read critically, the assumptions and biases of these sources merely replicate themselves in any narratives constructed therefrom. As Andaya’s work evidences, however, if a careful researcher first identifies the conventions and constraints which shaped and ordered the European accounts, it is then possible to discover useful information ‘between the lines.’ This strategy is what Douglas has called the ‘critical exploitation of colonial texts.’ The first essential step of this strategy is to recognise, as has become commonly accepted in much recent ethnographic literature, that colonial Europeans, though they certainly played important roles in cross-cultural encounters, ‘were never pivotal in indigenous experience and understandings to the extent or in the ways that they assumed themselves to be.’ The next step is to recognise that colonial sources, despite their superficial homogeneity, also register ‘indigenous countersigns’ which call into question and often subvert the overlying narrative: ‘That is, colonial texts encode cryptic traces of indigenous actions, desires, and patterns of social and gender relations which, in unintended, muffled but sometimes profound ways, helped formulate colonial experiences, strategies, actions and representations.’ Such countersigns appear most abundantly in accounts written by those who possessed the greatest familiarity with the local populations—historians such as Castanheda, Rebelo, and the anonymous author.

229 Ibid. 7.
230 Ibid.
231 Douglas, "Encounters with the Enemy?" 42.
232 Ibid.
233 Ibid.
of the *Relação dos Feitos Eroicos*; merchants and certain captains; and, in a significant way, the Jesuits who for decades lived with the people and laboured amongst them. The texts produced by these authors are filled with traces of indigenous presence, much of it not very cryptic at all once one starts looking for it. For example, historians for centuries have taken at face value claims by missionaries that entire villages in the Maluku region converted to Christianity *en masse*...even when these very same missionaries continued to record in their letters and reports day-to-day interactions with numerous non-Christians residing in these villages. To see beyond such claims to the reality recorded in the selfsame documents merely requires avoiding the presumption of superficial mass conversion in the first place.

Interestingly, the narrative of conversion in sixteenth-century Maluku which emerges from a critical reading of these colonial texts, though radically different from most of what has previously been written, is not that surprising. Instead, it closely aligns with aspects of indigenous culture which are commonly understood from other contexts. Approaching a new faith with an aggressive and acquisitive curiosity fits perfectly with what is now understood about the widespread Austronesian cultural trait of seeing powerful new ideas as the prime commodity to be gained from encounters with foreigners. 234 Attempts by the people of Maluku to actively draw Christian clerics into their villages resemble similar aggressive attempts by a number of villages in Sulawesi only a few decades later to attract VOC personnel, and this phenomenon also slots neatly into the basic paradigm of the stranger-king common throughout the islands of the Pacific. 235 The willingness of Christian converts to leave behind village, kin, and clan illustrates the shifting alliances and population mobility which characterised early-

234 Anne Salmond, "Cross-cultural Voyaging: Exploring the Explorers" (Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, Canberra, 27 May 2004).

modern Southeast Asia. And the very limited role which indigenous Christian rulers actually played in the processes of Christianisation reinforces what is already known about indigenous patterns of kingship in the Archipelago. Years before there was a Jesuit mission in Maluku—and even whilst the mission operated—there existed a thriving indigenous-driven mission in the region, one shaped by the actions, desires, and social relations of those driving it.
CHAPTER TWO

THE INDIGENOUS ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN MISSION IN MALUKU

As touched upon in the Introduction, Visser, Wessels, Rauws et al., and Mulders all attempted to explain early conversion to Christianity in Maluku by suggesting that the region must have supported some kind of missionary outreach before the creation of the Maluku Jesuit Mission in 1547, with either Franciscans or lay clergy responsible. It has been established beyond reasonable doubt, however, that no Franciscans were anywhere in the Malay Archipelago before 1578. More important, firsthand accounts of the earliest conversions in the region make it abundantly clear that it did not occur as the consequence of lay clergy assuming missionary roles. One of the most revealing facts about early conversion in Maluku is precisely that it occurred outside any formal mission and completely without missionaries, at least without the sort people usually think of. In all cases, indigenous people drove the process. Moved by curiosity and the desire to pick up new ideas from the strangers in their midst, they looked for opportunities to engage with and learn about the faith of the Europeans. Seeking baptism wherever and however they could obtain it, they travelled to Portuguese forts to seek this rite of conversion, insistently requested visits from clerics, and sometimes even demanded lay baptism from the merchants they met. The newly baptised then became the region’s first missionaries, enthusiastically sharing the newly adopted faith with their fellows, creating an increasing demand for priests (and, in some cases, for protection), a demand which often though not always succeeded in drawing Portuguese involvement.

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1 This chapter heading was inspired by David Henley, “Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King: Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere,” Modern Asian Studies 38, no. 1, 2004.
2 Visser, Onder Portugeesch-Spaaanske Vlag. 20.
4 Rauws et al., The Netherlands Indies. 31.
5 Mulders, De missie in tropisch Nederland. 50-51.
6 Meersman, The Franciscans in the Indonesian Archipelago. 27.
out of the fortress and into villages scattered across the region, creating entanglements with the local populations which in many cases strained European resourcefulness.

The earliest conversions for which good firsthand accounts exist occurred in 1534 amongst the people of Moro, during the captaincy of Tristão de Ataíde (1533-1536). Ataíde’s own report on this matter does much to reinforce several facets of the pattern of indigenous-driven mission outlined above. In a letter to the Portuguese king dated 20 February 1534, the captain explained that, when he and his forces had captured the sultanate of Jailolo (on the west coast of Halmahera) in December of the previous year, he had been assisted by two local rulers (identified by the title of *sangaji* in some chronicles) from Moro. These rulers presumably had joined the punitive expedition, launched because Jailolo was harbouring Spanish ‘intruders,’ because they were ‘subjects of the King of Ternate,’ and Ternate, as an ally of Portugal, had also accompanied Ataíde to Jailolo. The letter notes that the two rulers governed over ‘five or six thousand souls,’ and Ataíde elsewhere identified one of these two men as the ‘lord’ of Mamuya, later to be baptised under the name of Dom João. The expedition against Jailolo may well have been Ataíde’s introduction to these two local chiefs, and he takes

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7 The area known as Moro consisted of the Morotia region along the coast of northeast Halmahera, the nearby island of Morotai, plus Rau and some other smaller islands.
9 Ibid. 316.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid. 297.
12 Ibid. 316.
13 Mamuya lay on the coast of Morotia, west of Gunung (Mount) Mamuya, the volcano which still bears this name.
14 Tristão de Ataíde, “Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537,” in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Insulindia*, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1954. 347. Georg Schurhammer suggested that the other ruler was probably the ruler of Tolo because ‘this town lay near Mamojo [Mamuya] and its chief received the name of D. Tristão de Ataide in baptism’ (Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*. 11, note 99). This conjecture cannot be established.
no credit for having tried to convert them. In fact, the short account makes it clear on which side of the encounter the idea of conversion arose:

And as they had seen the destruction which I had wrought there [Jailolo], with so few people, and how I had brought the Castilians and their artillery to this fort, they saw how powerful Your Highness was, and they desired to be your people; and after I had returned to this fort, they told me that they wanted to be Christians, on the condition that I free them from the King of Ternate and from all his people, who had been tyrannising them and taking from them all that they had.\(^{15}\)

Ataíde, who here took credit for impressing the rulers with his military prowess, likely would have highlighted any role he may have played in their interest in converting to Christianity.\(^{16}\) Significantly, he did not. Perhaps even more significant is what Ataíde recorded the new converts saying upon being baptised:

I immediately christened these rulers, with much honour, giving them some object, and another seven or eight who had come in their company were christened; they told me that, as soon as they returned to their villages and their people saw that they had become Christians, everyone would become one and that for this purpose they wanted to depart immediately to convert them [‘e que por amor diso se queriam logo partir para os converter’].\(^{17}\)

These then were the first missionaries to Moro. Unfortunately, the generally reliable Castanheda, the earliest of the chroniclers and the one whose account most later writers have repeated, fell into error on this point: ‘And when he [Dom João] departed [from Ternate], Tristão de Ataíde sent with him a cleric called Simão Vaz to baptise the people.’\(^{18}\) In contrast, two men who knew these events firsthand provided clear evidence that Vaz travelled to Moro at a later date. Leonel de Lima, a Portuguese naval captain

\(^{15}\) Ataíde, “Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rey. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534.” 316.

\(^{16}\) Revealingly, Ataíde, in a letter written after his captaincy had ended, showed no hesitancy in pointing out to the Portuguese king what a virtuous servant he had been in other ways. ‘I consider that I have served you very well,’ he wrote before supplying specific instances of meritorious deeds such as the following: ‘And throughout this war, Lord, which lasted eighteen months, I did not go to my lodging in the holding tower as other captains do; but rather the door of the fort was my habitation during all the time of this siege; where I slept and fed many of your noblemen and servants and others, very poor, who because of this were very needy’ (Ataíde, "Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537.” 343, 346-347).

\(^{17}\) Ataíde, “Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rey. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534.” 316-317, emphasis added.

\(^{18}\) Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 219.
present in Maluku around this time, recalled that Captain Ataíde sent the vicar to Moro only after the King of Ternate failed to get those converting there to relocate to the Portuguese fort, thus acknowledging that religious change had continued in Moro before a priest was sent. Though Ataíde made no mention of this attempt to relocate the Christian converts, he also stated that no priest accompanied Dom João from Ternate to Moro, despite two Portuguese going with the newly baptised rulers, men ‘who knew the land and had friendship with them.’ Added Ataíde: ‘These I commanded to observe the disposition of the land, and also of the people, and whether it was their will to become of our faith.’ Neither of these was a cleric, however, based upon the report they must have sent back to the fort. As planned, the new converts seem to have been successful in spreading interest in the new religion; consequently, Ataíde noted that ‘there was such great pleasure in all the land that there could not have been greater, and all, at one hand, would have been christened if there had been a priest there.’

The fact that, contrary to what many writers have stated, at this point in time no priest had set foot there did not stop others in the Moro area from actively pursuing

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19 Elsewhere in his 1534 letter to the king, Ataíde spoke of transporting cloves the following year in a ship captained by Lima (Ataíde, "Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534." 316). Three years later he again mentioned ‘Lionel de Lima’s ship’ being in Maluku (Ataíde, "Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537." 353).  
21 Since conversion in the Moro area ultimately interrupted the provision of food to Ternate, it does not seem implausible for the King of Ternate to have made this request of the Portuguese captain, who may have had good reason for not mentioning it—or his defiance of it—in official correspondence. In fact, Ataíde in his 1534 letter seems to go out of his way to assure the Portuguese monarch that his actions will not lead to any future difficulties: The King of Ternate had been consulted ‘on behalf of Your Highness’ and was found to be ‘content’ with the conversions of Dom João and Dom Tristão de Ataíde as long as ‘neither he nor his people be afflicted by their breaking of his laws’ (Ataíde, "Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534." 317). Writing after nearly three years of difficulties specifically related to Christian conversion in Moro, Lima, on the other hand, acerbically notes that these conflicts were ‘truly unnecessary’ and resulted from Ataíde having taken action ‘without counsel’ and without involving ‘anyone except for himself’ (Lima, "Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536." 222). Consequently, he had good reason for bringing this matter up.  
23 Ibid.  
24 Ibid. 317, emphasis added.
conversion to Christianity. Ataíde mentioned ‘two other rulers’ who, caught up in the ‘fervour’ which resulted from the return of the newly baptised converts, ‘said that they wanted to come to this fort to be christened [and] who set out in a rowing vessel which they call a korakora, and two others, their sons, set out in another korakora to become Christians also.’ On the date when he composed his letter, Ataíde had in his safekeeping the two sons, their fathers having been driven back by bad weather, and he was only ‘waiting on their fathers to christen them with much honour, for they are very leading men.’ This active seeking after baptism by those who had been influenced by the earlier converts finally succeeded in drawing a priest—along with other Europeans—into the Moro region. Speaking of the two rulers then en route to Ternate in order to receive baptism, Ataíde informed the Portuguese king that ‘[a]s soon as these are christened, I will immediately send the vicar priest [Simão Vaz], with ten or twelve Portuguese, armed with guns and two short pieces of artillery, for them to build a church, at their expense, for they are sending requests expressing their desire to build.’ With a priest finally in their lands, the active engagement of the people of Moro with Christianity only increased, overwhelming Vaz and drawing a second priest into the area. Castanheda noted that ‘this work of the Lord advanced with such increase that it was necessary for Tristão de Ataíde to send another cleric by the name of Francisco Álvares to assist Simão

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25 Like the ruler of Mamuya’s companion, these two native chiefs remain nameless in Ataíde’s account. Schurhammer argued that the first of them was the ruler of Sugala, ‘a small village on the northeast coast of Halmahera. We conclude that the other was the governor of Chiaoa [Sao] from the fact that we find the vicar stationed there in 1535 and his chaplain Álvares in Sugala, opposite to it’ (Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 161, note 102). Again, these conjectures cannot be established.

26 The korakora was a very long, narrow outrigger canoe with peaked ends which was utilised throughout the islands of Maluku. Larger ones could take up to 90 oarsmen (Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1996. 159-160).


28 Ibid.

29 Ibid. 317-318.
Vaz, and both produced so much fruit that they changed most of those heathens’ shrines into churches, in which they celebrated the divine office.  

Castanheda’s account, however, includes further details which, if accurate, can be interpreted to challenge the assertion that the very first conversions in Moro were thoroughly indigenous-driven. The chronicler clarified that the future Christians communicated their interest in securing baptism to the Portuguese captain via an embassy:

And at this time there came to him [Ataíde] a messenger from a heathen ruler of a city in Moro called Mamuya, by whom he had sent word that he would become a Christian if he [Ataíde] would vow to free him from the Muslims who, whenever they went there with an armada, would vex them and the other heathens, taking from them what they had and treating them like captives.

Castanheda then appended an intriguing piece of information: ‘And with this messenger went a Portuguese called Gonçalo Veloso, because of whose counsel this ruler wanted to become a Christian.’ It should here be noted that neither Ataíde nor Lima, both firsthand observers, ever mentioned Veloso in relation to conversion in Moro, meaning quite possibly that Castaneda got this point wrong, as he did with the supposed sending of the vicar, Simão Vaz, back to Mamuya along with its newly christened ruler. Regardless, as suggested in the Introduction, most subsequent commentators have latched onto this particular detail, making it the focus of their narratives about the earliest conversions in Moro, undoubtedly because they saw it as satisfying their expectations. Veloso, their works all claim, was the one responsible for actively initiating Christian conversion in Moro, not the local people themselves. The ruler of Mamuya’s sole concern, it is implied, was security, not faith.

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31 Ibid. 218.
32 Ibid. 218, emphasis added.
One of the more imaginative and often repeated retellings of this occurrence comes from Couto:

It happened in the beginning of his [Ataíde’s] government that two korakora of Muslims attacked a city in Moro called Mamuya, whose natives were idolaters, and they sacked and destroyed it, the lord of it, a heathen sangaji and morally virtuous and honourable man, escaping. At this same time a Portuguese named Gonçalo Veloso was in a nearby place, trading his merchandise. After this had happened, he visited the city of Mamuya and met with that sangaji, who made great complaints to him about these Muslims who were his neighbours, asking him for counsel about how to avenge himself and be satisfied with them because he was very scandalised; Gonçalo Veloso, God inspiring his language, told him that the remedy was certain, if he wanted to accept it, which was to send a request to the Captain of Maluku for a treaty, and to form friendships with the Portuguese, because, by having them as friends, no king or lord would affront him, for they could not do it to him without risking their lives and estate because thus had their king commanded. But that, in order to do this better and with better gusto, it was necessary to become a Christian because, in this way, he would save his soul (which was the most important) and possess his domain in peace and quiet. With this he spoke concerning the things of our faith so highly that the sangaji was amazed: and, touched by God, he came to know this truth.33

Couto, it must be remembered, depended upon Castanheda’s chronicle in constructing the above account, and the apparent clarifications contained therein are nothing more than embellishments which reveal a great deal about how the chronicler himself presumed conversion to Christianity must have started in the Moro area but very little about what may really have transpired between the heathen ruler of Mamuya and the Portuguese merchant. Nevertheless, these embellishments have been repeatedly utilised by later historians to construct their own European-centred accounts, though often unattributed. Georg Schurhammer, the great German biographer of Xavier, for instance, claimed to base his version of these events in Moro on Ataíde’s and Lima’s letters and on the works of Castanheda and Rebelo, Couto’s account offering ‘nothing new,’ yet his paragraph exactly follows Couto’s highly embellished account in detail.34 Likewise, John Villiers

referred only Castanheda and Correia but included in his retelling details found in neither attributed chronicle but first introduced by Couto.\(^{35}\)

Couto’s fabrications, of course, were an attempt by the chronicler to flesh out what Castanheda must have meant when he wrote that the ruler of Mamuya had decided to become a Christian because of Veloso’s council. What may have been the relationship between a heathen ruler and a Portuguese merchant? What kind of counsel might the latter have given to encourage the former to embrace Christianity? In what context may the counsel have arisen? Couto provided one very imaginative interpretation in answering these questions, one based on little more than his own assumptions and expectations. Other interpretations, however, are possible—interpretations which are grounded more on what was really occurring in the region at the time rather than on mere presumption. It may be useful in this case to return briefly to the words of Castanheda, to see what they really do and do not say. Castanheda, one should remember, provides the only original mention of Gonçalo Veloso’s involvement with the ruler of Mamuya’s conversion; consequently, he is the nearest and most reliable source, and his words, though few, are therefore paramount: ‘And with this messenger went a Portuguese called Gonçalo Veloso, because of whose counsel this ruler wanted to become a Christian [E coeste messageyro hia um Portugues chamado Gonçalo velos, per cuiò cõselho se əria este regedor tornar Christão].’\(^{36}\)

Notes on two words from the original Portuguese are in

\(^{35}\) (Villiers, "Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios," 595; 596, note 595). In the same paragraph, Villiers copied Schurhammer—again unattributed—by, amongst other thing, identifying other early converts from Moro as the sangaji of Tolo, Sugala, and Cawa. The most telling fact here must be that, by using the name ‘Cawa,’ Villiers actually perpetuated an error made by Schurhammer in one of his footnotes. The latter wrote ‘Chiaoa’ in the footnote, a Portuguese spelling, as he identified on page 168, for Tjawa (Cawa in modern Indonesian orthography), a village on the east coast of Halmahera near the modern-day Tobelo. However, this name is in error, as the footnote itself makes clear when it also mentions ‘Sugala, a small village on the northeast coast of Halmahera’ and then states that Chiaoa was ‘opposite to Sugala’ and that the vicar (Simão Vaz) was ‘stationed there [when he was killed] in 1535’ (161, note 2). Chiaoa/Tjawa/Cawa was not opposite Sugala; it was approximately 50km south-southeast of Sugala and on the self-same coast. Moreover, elsewhere Schurhammer correctly identified the intended settlement as ‘Sao, a large village on the south-western part of Morotai, opposite Sugala’ (163).

\(^{36}\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*. Volume 8. 218.
order here. First, *conselho* can include a broad range of meanings, including not only ‘advice’ but also ‘teaching’ and even ‘lesson.’ Second, *per*, an obsolete form of the preposition *por*, above all else indicates instrumentality: ‘by means of.’ Thus, an equally valid translation of Castanheda’s short statement could read thus: ‘And with this messenger went a Portuguese called Gonçalo Veloso, by means of whose instruction this ruler wanted to become a Christian.’ Indeed, one finds this very construction used in a similar context and with an apparently similar intention in a letter written by a Jesuit in Maluku some years later. Speaking of some indigenes from Labuha, on the island of Bacan, he explained that ‘[t]hey arrived in Ternate to ask for Fathers and, when they saw themselves without the necessary assistance, they made themselves subjects of the Muslim King of Ternate, because of counsel from many Islamic preachers and sorcerers.’

It seems likely in this context that the kind of *conselho* given by Islamic preachers should at the very least be understood to have included religious instruction.

Two questions here arise: first, is it possible that a Portuguese merchant might have been giving a local chief lessons in Christian doctrine? Second, if so, could the ruler still be considered the prime agent in this exchange? If one merely looks to what was happening elsewhere in the region at roughly the same time, the answer to both questions is yes. Only ten years after the baptism of Dom João of Mamuya, another Portuguese merchant named António de Paiva was in the Macassar area of southwest Sulawesi discoursing on Christian doctrine with two indigenous rulers and ‘counselling’ them to become Christians. Thankfully, he left behind a rather detailed account of his interactions with these two local kings—an account which, because of its temporal and spatial proximity, seems more likely to elucidate the nature of the interaction between Gonçalo

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Veloso and the ruler of Mamuya than the imaginings of Couto—distant in both time and space—ever could.  

Paiva’s letter focuses on a trading voyage to Macassar which he pursued in 1544, having been sent by the then-captain of Malacca to obtain sandalwood, though he had been in the area at least once before in the company of a Portuguese casado (a soldier married to an indigenous woman). In actuality, he must have spent a rather extensive time there in the past since he repeatedly mentioned his ability to speak and understand the Makasar language well, giving considerable evidence that this was indeed the case. Most important, however, the letter was written specifically to justify to the Bishop of Goa Paiva’s actions in relationship to both teaching and baptising two indigenous kings. In this regard, Paiva mentions the bishop’s amazement upon hearing his oral report of the events and reminds the bishop that he is writing the letter to fulfil the religious leader’s commands that the trader ‘give [him] an account in writing of how and in what manner the kings of Macassar received the holy baptism and became of our holy faith.’

The first of these kings mentioned by Paiva was the King of Suppa, a small kingdom to the north of Parepare Bay. Paiva gives no indication that he had ever visited the port of Suppa before, though he may well have since he recorded earlier that, when trading with the casado from Malacca, they ‘put in along the coast of Siang

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39 Following sixteenth-century Portuguese usage, Macassar here refers to all of southwest Sulawesi, distinct from both the modern-day city of Makassar and Makasar, the name for a specific cultural and linguistic group.  
42 Ibid.: 67. It seems quite possible that the bishop was amazed specifically because Pavia’s experiences ran counter to standard European expectations.  
43 Ibid.: 62.  
44 This is the regular Indonesian form of the name. The Portuguese form is Supa. In Bugis, there is a final glottal stop, Suppa.'
[approximately 100km to the south of Suppa] for three months…until arriving at
Durate,\textsuperscript{45} the land of sandalwood,\textsuperscript{46} which was somewhere north of Suppa, the sense
being that Paiva may have had at least passing familiarity with many of the small realms
spread along the west coast of southwest Sulawesi. Regardless, the Portuguese trader
explains that, ‘having come across news that the land of sandalwood was in rebellion,’ he
arrived at Suppa instead.\textsuperscript{47}

The king’s behaviour upon learning of the Portuguese merchant’s arrival is
instructive:

As soon as the king was aware that I was [anchored]\textsuperscript{48} in his port, he came
in person to see me, bringing with him a son of 15 years, and there came
with him close to thirty women, all of them young, in golden bracelets. He
is probably 70 years old. For some time on this same visit he tested me on
the merit of our holy faith, asking me the reason why we have more wars
with the Muslims than with any other race.\textsuperscript{49}

Paiva then recorded his response, a list of complaints against Muslims typical for a
sixteenth-century European: dishonest, tyrannical, polygamous, carnal, incestuous, full of
evil acts—all of which, he argued, helped to explain the attraction of the faith to Muslim
converts, especially tolerance of polygamy and of divorce. That was all the conversation
the king had time for that afternoon, but the following day, according to the account, he
returned to the merchant’s junk for more discussion and armed with further questions:
‘And because at times the Muslims had said to him that the Christians would call upon
and name Saint James in battles, this same king asked me who he was or how we would

\textsuperscript{45} Durate appears on early maps on the west coast of Sulawesi, just north of the equator. Its identification
has been much discussed (C. Pelras, “Les premières données occidentals concernant Célèbes-Sud,”
identification of ‘the land of sandalwood’ with the small realm of Sendana, about 30km north of Majene.
The regular Malay word for sandalwood is \textit{cendana} (with corrupt forms in Makasar). The confusion — if it
is a confusion — between Sendana and \textit{cendana} could have been made by the Portuguese themselves, since
they would have known the Malay word from experience in Malacca. This location fits this and later
references to the ‘land of sandalwood,’ but it does not explain the name Durate.

\textsuperscript{46} Baker, “South Sulawesi in 1544,” 62.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{48} The published English translation contains an error here. The original Portuguese word is \textit{çurto [surto]},
meaning ‘anchored.’

\textsuperscript{49} Baker, “South Sulawesi in 1544,” 63.
call on him. Paiva then recorded his response to this question, noting the ruler’s great reverence for and interest in possessing an altarpiece bearing the image of Saint James once his role as a protector of the oppressed had been explained. Then, despite both parties having discussed the possibility of conversion, Paiva concluded with an expression of powerlessness: ‘Because the time was short and I had been informed how the land of sandalwood was in revolt, and also because these words of the aforementioned king were only words, without my being able to perceive the part which divine providence had taken on his heart, I decided to sail for the port of Siang.’

Three things stand out in Paiva’s retelling of his encounter with the King of Suppa: first, the king clearly initiated the encounter and was the one who chose to focus the discussion on Christian behaviour. Paiva obviously played a role by engaging in rather lengthy discourses on Christian doctrine—he said in summary that he ‘rehearse[d] the words of our holy faith, not forgetting the recollection of it’—but he did so in response to the initiative taken by the ruler. Second, the king maintained this active role throughout the encounter. He ‘imposed’ on Paiva by entering his junk with his retinue, he asked the questions, he determined when the discussions had been sufficient, and he felt under no pressure to convert. Third, the King of Suppa’s interest in Christianity clearly had been piqued by discussions he had previously held with Muslims. It seems probable, therefore, that the king had been actively engaging Muslim traders in his port in similar conversations ‘on the merit’ of their faith. This suggests a pattern of engaged enquiry on religious behaviour and issues. These same three elements likewise appear in the next religious exchange which Paiva recorded in his letter, this time with the King of Siang.

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50 Ibid.: 64.
51 Ibid.: 65.
52 Ibid.: 64.
Paiva was not a newcomer to Siang, a small realm located near the modern-day town of Pangkajene.\(^{53}\) When on a previous voyage he had been left behind to die in Macassar, he had been left specifically in Siang. He was thus familiar with the king, the ruler having given him shelter in his house throughout his period of illness.\(^{54}\) Nonetheless, the response of this king to learning that the Portuguese trader was in his port was similar to that of the King of Suppa: ‘And as soon as I arrived in the port…, the king came to the sea in person to see me, toiling a league beyond the bar, because he knew me…. Giving me a grand welcome in front of all the Portuguese, he told me that he was so happy with my visit, that it could not be but that some great good must come to him from it.’\(^{55}\) Religion does not seem to have been a topic of discussion that first day in port, but it was the focus from the next day onward. This was not the first time, however, that the King of Siang had engaged the Portuguese merchant in a religious discussion. Christianity had apparently been discussed at length during the time that Paiva had been resident in the king’s house, and it is clear who resumed the discussion. The trader reported to his bishop that, when he took a prau upriver to Siang the morning after arriving in port,

the king was already waiting for me and, with great hospitality, said to me: ‘António de Paiva, since the time when you were here sick, when you shared with me in conversation this account of the most holy faith which your people hold, never, from then until today, has my desire to be baptised waned, and neither has my affection for that true God whom your people believe in and worship.’\(^{56}\)

Having reinitiated this discussion of religion, the King of Siang continued as the main actor in the exchange. Informing his Portuguese visitor that his reluctance to

\(^{53}\) Sião in the Portuguese. There has been considerable archaeological work in the area; see Ali Fadillah and Irfan Mahmud, *Kerajaan Siang Kuna: tutur, teks dan tapak arkeologi*. Makassar: Balai Arkeologi Makassar, 2000. Campbell Macknight notes that a former branch of the Pangkajene River once gave much easier access from the coast to the locality of Kampungsiang—as marked on modern maps—than is now the case.

\(^{54}\) Baker, “South Sulawesi in 1544,” 65.

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
embrace Christianity fully stemmed from a fear that his subjects would rebel against him if he abandoned traditional ways, he proposed a plan: they should continue their discussions but in front of the ‘nobles of [his] house,’ so that they too might hopefully come to accept Paiva’s teachings.\(^57\) This the merchant did over the course of several days, both in the king’s residence and on the anchored junk, discoursing on the Ten Commandments and the Fourteen Works of Mercy.\(^58\) Interestingly, the king was not willing to allow Paiva to do all the teaching. The latter recorded that one morning, when the king had arrived on the junk ‘with many of his people,’ he repeated back all that Paiva had taught the previous day ‘in front of all the Portuguese.’\(^59\)

Also of interest is the fact that Paiva seems to have been hesitant to do much more than teach the basics, i.e. the Ten Commandments and the Works of Mercy. The king, however, was not satisfied with basics. The merchant reported that,

> [a]s the point was to do business, I quit the pursuit of this incident, but…the very next day a message from the king came to me, commanding me to go to him, which I did. … And having ascended to where the king was and being welcomed by him, I was directed by the king to sit not far from him, and in his own language, which I understood well, I again spoke, by his order, with him and with all his people who were present.\(^60\)

The ruler of Siang had many questions for his Christian guest. Did he have any information about the creation of the world? What was a Saint? A lie? How was one to judge truth? As in the case of the King of Suppa, many of these questions seem to have stemmed from discussions the king had been engaging in with Muslims in Siang. That he had been speaking with Muslims about religion is quite clear from what Paiva recorded as the king’s reaction to the claim that Christians alone possessed the truth: ‘The king took

\(^{57}\) Ibid.: 65-66.

\(^{58}\) 1) feeding the hungry, 2) giving drink to the thirsty, 3) clothing the naked, 4) sheltering the homeless, 5) visiting the sick, 6) ransoming the captive, 7) burying the dead, 8) instructing the ignorant, 9) counselling the doubtful, 10) admonishing sinners, 11) bearing wrongs patiently, 12) forgiving offences willingly, 13) comforting the afflicted, and 14) praying for the living and the dead.


\(^{60}\) Ibid.: 68-69.
his eyes off of me and, looking at his people, said: “I have just begun to believe that the seed of these Muslims is bad.” Then he turned to me and said: “António de Paiva, the Muslims say that they have the truth, and you others, the lie.” Paiva was in the midst of his response to this challenge when what both parties perceived as a divine manifestation occurred:

I being thus discoursing with the king, the weather began to grow cloudy — it being a very great drought as I already said — in such a way that it appeared to be the Judgment, with dreadful thunderclaps and gusts of wind and rain such that we could not hear, by which the roof of the king’s house overhead was totally bent back, rain falling on top of the king himself; he was covered by large umbrellas, and he had these removed and undressed himself, remaining covered, and, while he washed his body in the water, I said to him: ‘Lord, these are the works of the true God,’ and then immediately upon [the mention of] this name he lifted his hands to his head previous to being a Christian.

Despite this seeming miracle, however, Paiva concluded this section of his account once again on a note of resigned powerlessness: ‘When the rain stopped, I returned to my junk, hoping that the king might finish his councils.’

These ‘councils’ the king held in several locations throughout his realm because of his continued concern, according to what he reportedly told Paiva, ‘that such suddenness in abandoning that manner of living which his ancestors had had since the creation of the world and which he now had would give his people occasion to take him for a crazy man and be suspicious of [Paiva].’ Significantly, the Portuguese merchant-cum-teacher did not participate in any of these councils, nor was he expected to; as was the case with the first converts from Moro, the King of Siang seems to have felt more than adequate at this point to carry discussion of the new religion to his people. Though he did not attend any of these gatherings, Paiva did give some sense of what they must have been like by pointing out, first, that the king had decided to extend the number of

61 Ibid.: 69.
62 Ibid.: 70.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.: 66.
councils from three to four, and, second, that the original three councils took two days longer than expected ‘because of the tremendous debating over Christianity.’ This contention over the king’s desire to embrace a new faith apparently arose mainly from the realm’s bissu—a class of transvestite or ‘third gender’ men, homosexual in behaviour, seen as intermediaries between humans and deities—who probably felt they stood to lose much from a change in their patron’s religious identification. Whilst the work of Christian preaching was proceeding entirely in indigenous hands, the European, powerless to speed up or affect this process, sailed south to Gowa where he could shelter ‘on the windward side of the shoals.’

He did not sail alone, however; the King of Suppa—newly renamed Dom Luís—accompanied him. Whilst Paiva had been kept waiting in the port of Siang because of the king’s councils having run overtime, the ruler of Suppa had one morning borne down upon him with an armada consisting of about 20 praus, each carrying 70 or 80 oarsmen. Afraid that he and his vessels were under attack, Paiva had armed his men in preparation for defending the junk. He need not have worried. The same king who had actively

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65 Ibid.: 70, 72.
66 Ibid.: 70.
68 Their societal roles included guarding Siang’s gaukêng, “the original guardian spirit of the community” (Leonard Y. Andaya, The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 91 The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981. 15). This spirit was manifest in “some sacred objects which [were], like the chiefs who serve[d] them, of heavenly descent” (Anthony Reid, "A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian Family: Matouya and Pattingalloang of Macassar," Masyarakat Indonesia 8, no. 1, 1981: 3). Consequently, "any outside interference with these gaukêng-based institutions was courting the wrath of the local Lord of the Soil" (Andaya, The Heritage of Arung Palakka, 15).
69 Gowa is the name of what became the major Makasar state. (There is no link between the names of Gowa in Sulawesi and Goa in India.) The easiest interpretation of the passage is that Paiva anchored off the mouth of the Jeneberang River where the ruler of Gowa was establishing a trading base after capturing the settlement of Garassi’. Subsequently, the fortress of Somba Opu was developed at the mouth of the river and the ruler moved there from the older centre of Kale Gowa, up the river. The indigenous court chronicle of Gowa also records that during the reign of Tumapa’risi’ Kallonna (c. 1511–46) the Portuguese arrived for the first time.
70 Baker, "South Sulawesi in 1544," 72.
sailed out to meet the Portuguese merchant to seek information about his Christian faith when he was anchored in the port of Suppa had now decided to pursue Paiva to the port of Siang to request the rite of Christian conversion. This took place aboard the junk, the lay baptism being performed by an ‘honourable’ old Portuguese from Paiva’s company, after which some of the king’s relatives were also baptised.  

Like his counterpart from Suppa, the King of Siang eventually pursued baptism of his own accord as well. Three days after Paiva and the newly baptised Dom Luís had arrived in the port of Gowa, the king sent two ambassadors with word that he had finished his councils and ‘had concluded with his people, namely with the chiefs and with part of his priests, to be Christians, and therefore immediately to be baptised.’  

Leaving the junk at Gowa, the merchant returned to Siang in the prau to perform the sacrament which the king had requested, the baptism taking place only after Paiva had satisfactorily answered the king’s final doctrinal question concerning Jesus’ Incarnation. The newly baptised Dom João then three times pledged ‘in the hearing of all that he swore to die and live in that holy faith, and that he renounced his first custom because he knew it to be bad, and he would have only this [faith] because he knew it to be holy and true.’  

Following this, ’25 or 30 of the most powerful in his kingdom’ were baptised, along with ‘other people.’  

After the completion of these baptisms and a subsequent dinner, an important discussion occurred between Paiva and Dom João of Siang—one which has the potential to clarify further the nature of Simão Vaz’s ‘counsel’ to the ruler of Mamuya. As mentioned above, Castanheda recorded that, when the envoy from Mamuya first arrived in Ternate, his message was that the ruler ‘would become Christian if he [the Portuguese
This account is verified by Captain Tristão de Ataíde himself in the letter he wrote shortly after the event: ‘and after I had returned to this fort, they told me that they wanted to be Christians, on the condition that I free them from the King of Ternate and from all his people, who had been tyrannising them and taking from them all that they had.’ Clearly, the ruler of Mamuya linked conversion to Christianity with securing Portuguese protection. The problem is that, as discussed above, later historians have assumed that this linkage originated with Veloso, that this in fact must have been the essence of his ‘counsel’ to the ruler, because of which the latter, who had really only been seeking help against his tormenters, ‘wanted to become a Christian.’ It seems counterintuitive perhaps that the Portuguese trader’s counsel might actually have been instruction in Christian doctrine, with the idea that conversion might necessitate the forging of new alliances having originated from the indigenous parties involved, but this appears to have been the very case in Paiva’s interactions with the Kings of Suppa and Siang, and this suggests it may well have been the case in Veloso’s interactions with the ruler of Mamuya.

According to his account, Paiva’s post-dinner conversation with the newly baptised Dom João of Siang included the issue of political and military alliances, but this topic did not originate with the Portuguese merchant. Rather, he merely bore the message from the King of Suppa, whom he had left behind in the port of Gowa in order to attend to the King of Siang’s baptism. Paiva recorded that, when Dom Luís of Suppa had learnt that his counterpart in Siang had also requested baptism, his concern was with how this might impact the alliance the two of them had shared up to this point in time. He

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specifically worried that a change in religious identity might generate security concerns, both with his neighbour and with his own people; consequently, the King of Suppa asked Paiva to deliver a request to the King of Siang for him: ‘that he might thus be his brother in arms after becoming a Christian as he had been as a heathen, that he thus promised to be such, and that, if the people of either of them were to rebel against that holy work, that one might have help from the other.’\textsuperscript{78} After the King of Siang had enjoyed his post-baptism dinner, Paiva conveyed this proposal to his host, asking that the former alliance not be altered in any way but that it be renewed, ‘and in this they both agreed as was later confirmed by ambassadors from one to the other.’\textsuperscript{79} It is extremely important to note here that, for both of these rulers, issues of alliances and security, rather than having driven their interest in Christianity, arose only when they had first made the decision to embrace the new faith. It was a consequence of conversion, not a cause.

It is, of course, impossible to know how similar the interactions between Gonçalo Veloso and the ruler of Mamuya may have been to the interactions between António de Paiva and the kings of Suppa and Siang. It remains a possibility that Couto correctly guessed what Veloso’s counsel to the chief in Mamuya consisted of and that all later writers who relied, directly or indirectly, on Couto’s account therefore got it right as well. What Paiva’s narration of his experiences in Sulawesi does is to suggest another interpretation, one which is grounded in actual events which occurred in the same broad region as Moro and at roughly the same time. In light of the accounts of indigenous-directed Christianisation which will be given below, this second possibility appears far more plausible—and more in line with the simplest, most straight-forward reading of Castanheda’s account. In all probability, the ruler of Mamuya, perhaps intrigued by what he had observed whilst fighting alongside the Portuguese in Jailolo, had taken advantage

\textsuperscript{78} Baker, "South Sulawesi in 1544," 72-73.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.: 78.
of Veloso’s presence in Moro, seeking him out specifically to question him about his faith. The trader’s ‘counsel’ most likely consisted of answering questions and teaching Christian doctrine sufficiently to satisfy the chief, who, like his counterparts in Sulawesi, then counselled with his people before determining to be baptised. Having been vexed and looted by Ternate and its Muslim allies repeatedly in the past, the people of Mamuya may have suspected that their ruler’s adoption of Christianity was not going to improve their situation any. The ruler therefore, concerned that his conversion might adversely affect himself and his people, expressed to the Portuguese captain in Ternate his desire to be baptised on the condition that the captain ‘would vow to free him from the Muslims.’

An observation on this final point: Couto and others have claimed that the future Dom João of Mamuya’s overriding motive in seeking out baptism was to secure greater security from his enemies, something which he supposedly was quite willing to embrace a new faith in order to accomplish. His enemies, however, were identified by both Castanheda and Ataíde as Muslims, including the Muslim King of Ternate and his people. If the driving force behind the ruler of Mamuya’s religious change really was simply a desire to be safe from Muslim enemies, both from Ternate and from the wider Moro area, why did he not just try adopting their religion? This solution would have been much easier, and probably much safer, than seeking help from a handful of foreigners whose sole fortress in the entire region was more than 250 kilometres away by sea. In later years, Christian complaints that the Portuguese were unable to adequately protect them from their enemies became widespread, with the Jesuits repeatedly

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81 This category includes not just those who saw Gonçalo Veloso as responsible. Like Ataíde and Castanheda, Leonel de Lima never mentioned Veloso, but he nevertheless concluded that the people of Moro had begun embracing Christianity because they had been told ‘that they might become free and emancipated if they were to become Christian’ (Lima, “Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536.” 220-221). The Portuguese captain did indeed speak these words: ‘And I told them, if they wanted to be Christians, I would make them exempt from the King of Ternate and from his people’ (Ataíde, “Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rey. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534.” 316-317). He did so, however, only after he had been approached by the ruler of Mamuya’s messenger and asked for this specific assurance.
requesting a greater European military presence in the region on behalf of the indigenous Catholics. Despite Ataide’s boastfulness about the destruction which, supported by local allies, he had been able to inflict upon Jailolo, the situation would have been much worse during the 1530s.

In short, when read back into a context of what was actually occurring in the region at the time, the story of the earliest Christian conversion in Moro fits the basic pattern of religious expansion outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Neither European missionaries nor administrators targeted the area and its people for conversion, and it seems unlikely that a merchant like Gonçalo Veloso did either. Rather, this religious shift began in Moro when people from the area, quite probably after already having explored the faith, showed up at the Portuguese fort in Ternate and requested to be baptised. Back in their villages, they became Moro’s first missionaries, spreading news of their new religion and generating sufficient interest that others also travelled to Ternate and requested to be christened. These requests finally drew lay priests, first one and then another, out of the fort and into Moro’s villages. They also drew Portuguese soldiers into their lands. Significantly, this pattern of indigenous-driven mission, which started in the early decades of Portuguese presence before any European missionaries entered the area, continued after the advent of a Jesuit mission in Maluku. The following accounts of how indigenous people sought to draw the Jesuits into other parts of the Maluku region, selected from amongst dozens of similar examples, reinforce and extend this basic pattern.
Manado

Unsurprisingly, the Manado area of north Sulawesi\(^{82}\) may have succeeded in appropriating some Christian influence before the arrival there of the first Jesuit missionary. In a 1556 report to the Jesuits in Portugal, Luís Fróis mentioned that Nicolau Nunes, a Jesuit brother who had then spent nine years in the Maluku Mission,\(^{83}\) had ‘confirmed’ to him that in Celebes\(^{84}\) there was ‘a Christian king called the King of Manado.’\(^{85}\) Unfortunately, no other documents of any kind provide any details about this king or his supposed conversion. The only certainty is that, if it happened in Sulawesi, the Jesuits played no role in it because their letters make it clear that the first Society member did not arrive in the area of north Sulawesi until 1563.\(^{86}\) Possibly this man had at some point demanded baptism from a lay cleric who was merely passing through aboard a Portuguese vessel in the annual fleet from Malacca. A 1588 report by Antonio Marta, Visitor to the Maluku Mission, mentions ‘some Christians whom a previous secular cleric had already baptised in the islands of Celebes.’\(^{87}\) Alternatively, like at least four rulers from Moro, he may have sought out the rite of Christian conversion in Ternate. Juan de Beira, a Jesuit who had served in Maluku between 1547 and 1552, recorded in a letter

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\(^{82}\) Until the seventeenth century, the kingdom of Manado was located on the small island of Manado Tua, an extinct volcano located just off the coast of the present-day city of Manado (David Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context: Minahasa in the Dutch East Indies, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 168.* Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996. 30).


\(^{84}\) The sixteenth-century Portuguese name for north Sulawesi, including the Sangir and Talaud Islands.


composed early in 1553 that he had there baptised people from north Sulawesi, as had the vicar of the fort in Ternate. In either case, there was no longer a Christian king in Manado when the first Jesuit missionary arrived. If such a figure had existed, he had by then passed away. This earlier Christian influence, however, helps explain the intense interest in Christianity which finally succeeded in drawing a Jesuit mission presence into the kingdom.

The main source on this first visit by a Jesuit is a report, written in Ternate early in 1564 by Pero Mascarenhas, which both comments on what occurred in the lead-up to the mission voyage and reproduces a detailed letter composed in Manado by Diogo de Magalhães, the Jesuit who had arrived there the previous year. Mascarenhas’s commentary is interesting because it reveals a very complicated situation, out of the midst of which emerges the classic pattern of indigenous-driven Christianisation discussed above. According to Mascarenhas, in May 1563 Sultan Hairun of Ternate formed a large armada, under the direction of his son, ‘to make [the heathens in Celebes] Muslims by force.’

Earlier, Henrique de Sá, captain of the Portuguese fortress in Ternate, had asked the Jesuit rector in Ternate, Marcos Prancudo, ‘to send a priest to the people of Celebes, but it had not been done at that time because there was no one from the Society who could go there.’ However, whilst the sultan’s armada was still being assembled,

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88 Juan de Beira, “Fr. Juan de Beira SJ to the Jesuits of Coimbra. Cochin, February 7, 1553,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 121. Possibly some of these Christian converts baptised by the vicar may have returned to north Sulawesi and were the ‘Christians whom a previous secular cleric had already baptised in the islands of Celebes,’ mentioned by Marta in 1588. Marta did, however, state clearly that these converts had been baptised in north Sulawesi.

89 Mascarenhas, “Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of São Roque, Lisbon. Ternate, February 10, 1564.” 412. It is difficult to know how to approach the notion of Islamisation by force in this letter. On the one hand, the Europeans in sixteenth-century Maluku appear to have been as cynical—and often as mistaken—about the spread of Islam in the area as later commentators have been about the spread of Christianity. Surely, they reasoned, the only motives for embracing such a repugnant and false religion must be force and/or bribery, two themes which appear repeatedly in the Jesuit texts. In reality, Islam may have spread in the Maluku region in much the same way that Christianity did. Nevertheless, powerful sultans (such as those in Ternate, and, at an earlier time, Jailolo) did occasionally apply military force to the spreading of Islam.

90 Ibid.
Magalhães arrived in Ternate from Ambon, and so Sá again requested a priest be sent, offering him two korakora and ‘eight or ten Portuguese’ to accompany him. This the Jesuits finally agreed to, but only ‘[a]fter this was commended to God for some days.’ The plan, as Mascarenhas related it, was for Magalhães to arrive in north Sulawesi before the Muslim armada could and baptise the people, the presumption being that Christians, even newly baptised ones, were less likely than heathens to embrace Islam, even when accompanied by ‘force.’ Hairun seems to have shared this presumption because, as soon as he ‘knew that the captain was sending korakora and the priest was going, he determined to hinder as much as he could.’ This he did by waiting until the day after Magalhães had departed and then spreading a rumour that three Castilian (and thus enemy) ships had been sighted in the area of Moro; consequently, the captain sent a prau to catch up to the korakora and instruct them to return to Ternate, where they waited ‘seven or eight days’ until definitive word came from Moro that no such ships existed. Such was the urgency which accompanied this power-play between the sultan and the captain of the fort that, as soon as Sá realised that he had been deceived, he ordered the two korakora to depart immediately for north Sulawesi ‘although the weather and the seas were very severe and the people from the korakora said they would be lost if they departed in that weather.’ He was so desperate, in fact, that he threatened the captains of the two vessels that, ‘if they did not depart immediately, he would put them into the stocks in irons.’ As a result, they departed, arriving in Manado after a journey of two days and two nights.

91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid. 413.
96 Ibid.
The reported circumstances surrounding Magalhães’s first mission voyage to Manado are rather dramatic and attention grabbing, so much so, in fact, that, if one is not careful, a person can easily get caught up in all the machinations and political power-plays in Ternate whilst overlooking the central role played by the people from north Sulawesi themselves, who, as here demonstrated, can be left entirely out of the picture. Bert Supit, for example, made this very mistake in his history of Minahasa,\(^97\) constructing the following narrative:

Sultan Hairun prepared an expedition which was led by his heir, named Baab Ullah. The Portuguese governor [captain] in Ternate, Henrique de Sá, though he had learnt of the plan, at first was not at all interested in pursuing the Ternatans. But the Fathers who had learnt of Hairun’s plan, and who felt sure that the expedition was intended to promulgate Islam, pressed the governor [captain] to mount a competing expedition, which he eventually agreed to do. It could also be pointed out that one thing which helped to clinch this decision was the arrival of some people from Manado who invited the Portuguese authorities to visit the Manado area to baptise the inhabitants there.\(^98\)

Beyond completely reversing the roles of Sá and the Jesuits—and thereby placing undue emphasis on the missionaries—Supit here made a very serious error: by focussing his narrative on the interplay amongst the sultan, the captain, and the Jesuits in Ternate, he did not introduce the future Christians of Celebes until the end of his short account, and then only couched in terms which minimise the role they played. The phrases ‘It could also be pointed out’ and ‘one thing which helped’ both suggest a very minor role for these people from north Sulawesi, and bringing them up last reinforces the notion that most of the action had taken place before they arrived on the scene.

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. Despite placing its focus squarely on the political dramas and intrigues, Mascarenhas’s account also clarifies exactly who and what inspired this Ternatan/Portuguese race to get to north Sulawesi:

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\(^{97}\) The modern-day Indonesian regency occupying the tip of northern Sulawesi.

And primarily I will discuss one event which...then happened in the following May, the King of Ternate having assembled a large armada in which he was sending his son Babu [Baab Ullah], who is heir to the kingdom, to the people of Celebes, who are heathens, to make them Muslims by force; these people of Celebes had many times sent messages to this fort saying that they wanted to become Christians and that someone should be sent to baptise them.99

As a consequence, the Portuguese captain had ‘days before this...asked the Father Rector to send a priest to Celebes.’ An accurate chronology for the events, then, first has people from north Sulawesi repeatedly sending envoys to Ternate to request clerics but to no avail due to a shortage of priests. Eventually, the sultan started amassing an armada to be sent to the area to promulgate Islam instead.100 Magalhães, however, arrived in Ternate before this armada could be launched and, after one false start, successfully arrived in north Sulawesi in fulfilment of the numerous requests of the people there. Once again, the persistent demands of indigenous actors had succeeded in drawing Christian influence into their lands. And it was these same actors—not the sultan, not the Portuguese captain, and definitely not the reluctant Jesuits—who, through their insistent petitions, had generated all the excitement in Ternate in the first place.

According to Magalhães’s letter, which is quoted in its entirety in Mascarenhas’s report, once the Jesuit had arrived in Manado, ‘the king and most of the people asked [him] to christen them.’101 Clearly, they had been amongst those sending all the earlier requests. Magalhães recorded that he first spent two weeks in the area, during which time he ‘taught them the doctrine [catechism], practicing with them the things of the faith.’102 At the end of this time, he baptised the king and about 1,500 people, planning to baptise the remainder of those who desired it on a later visit. This later visit occurred after

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100 In this way, the spread of Islam in north Sulawesi can also be seen as a response—albeit a competing one—to these same requests, making Islamisation in the area similarly indigenous-driven.
102 Ibid.
Magalhães had spent several weeks visiting other villages in north Sulawesi and indicates how well the people of Manado had succeeded in appropriating a priest, at least for a time. In his letter, the Jesuit explained that he would be staying there ‘until the ship comes’. This ship would have been the annual vessel from Malacca, due to arrive in Maluku toward the end of the year. In the meantime, he explained, he wanted to stay in Manado ‘because I also want to teach the doctrine to these I have already christened’. Then, to indicate how successful the area had been in attracting Christian European attention, he noted that Manado needed a priest to be stationed there permanently.

**Siau and Kolongan**

Siau and Kolongan, both located off the north coast of Sulawesi, provide clear illustrations of how thoroughly indigenous actors, not European missionaries, determined where exactly Christianity would gain a foothold in the Maluku region. When Diogo de Magalhães arrived in Manado for the first time in 1563, the King of Siau was there visiting. The Jesuit had little to say about this man, reporting simply that he seemed like a good ruler and that his island had probably 20,000 to 25,000 people and

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103 Ibid. 415.
104 That Magalhães knew he could simply wait in Manado for the royal ship to arrive is an important reminder that, though the first Jesuit did not arrive there til 1563, the kingdoms and villages of north Sulawesi were regulated visited by Portuguese sailors and soldiers travelling to Maluku via the northern route.
106 Ibid. 416.
107 Siau lies about 150 kilometres northeast of Manado in the string of small islands known as the Sangi Archipelago. (The name of this archipelago has various modern-day forms: Sangi, Sangir, Sangihe. Spellings used in the Jesuit texts include Sanguim, Sanguir, Sanghir, Sanguin, Sanguil, and even St. Guel. The most basic form is used here.)
108 That the king was visiting Manado offers no surprise. As Henley has pointed out, referring to this very visit, ‘[t]he kingdoms of northern Celebes were part of a loose cosmopolitan network held together by alliance and kinship as well as trade and navigation’ (Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, 28).
109 Though there is some suggestion that native rulers regularly exaggerated the size of the populations they governed, this figure appears reasonable, though possibly a bit high. Henley estimated that in 1600 the
possessed abundant food and good water. In addition, he recorded that, following the usual pattern, he had felt compelled to baptise this king ‘because he much requested it of me.’

At the invitation of the king, now named Dom Jerónimo, Magalhães intended to visit Siau, ‘which is a two-day journey from here in Manado,’ but that visit never materialised. For one reason or another—including the fact that the King of Siau’s people rose up in rebellion against him the following year, forcing him to live in exile—no Jesuit made it to the island until 1568. In that year, the king received an invitation to return to his homeland, and the decision was made to honour his request for a priest and send Father Pero Mascarenhas with him. According to the standard narrative, with a missionary now in Siau, the work of conversion should have begun in earnest. In fact, the presence of a Jesuit priest in the island had virtually no impact. The people themselves had not sought out this opportunity, and, without pre-existing interest, proselytising simply did not occur. According to his own account, the sole person Mascarenhas was able to work with in his role as missionary was Dom Jerónimo’s elderly father, ‘for he is very happy to hear and ask questions about the matters of the faith, and

population of the Sangi(r) archipelago—consisting of Sangi Besar, Siau, Tagulandang and some smaller islands—was 35,000 people (David Henley, "Population and the Means of Subsistence: Explaining the Historical Demography of Island Southeast Asia, with Particular Reference to Sulawesi," Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 36, no. 3, 2005: 345). Strangely, Marta, writing in 1588, reported that Siau, both ‘along the seashore and in the jungle of the interior,’ contained fourteen villages but provided as population figures only 1,300 to 1,400 Christians and ‘a little more or less than 1,000’ others (Antonio Marta, "Fr. Antonio Marta, Visitor of Maluku, to Fr. Provincial in Goa. Report of Visitation. [Tidore, April], 1588. First via," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1980. 262). This suggests an unusually small average village size of 170 people, especially since Pero Mascarenhas in 1569 reported having stayed in a village in Siau that consisted of ‘300 men, not counting women and children’ (Pero Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 534). Based on this detail, Magalhães’s earlier report, and Henley’s estimate, Marta’s figures seem to be off by about a power of ten. He wrote, however, as a visitor and may have been misinformed or may have misunderstood the data supplied to him.


Ibid. 415.

Ibid. 531-532.
they seem very good to him; and he is very happy to do what they teach him, saying that there is no other God nor truth than ours.\footnote{114}

It was in Siau, however, that Mascarenhas received an embassy from Kolongan, leading to the beginning of Christian conversion in that small kingdom. This event, in stark contrast to what had—or, more importantly, had not—been happening in Siau, provides a clear and unmistakable example of how indigenous actors mapped the spread of the new religion in the Maluku region, actively seeing out Christian influence and then drawing it back into their areas. Kolongan was a kingdom located on the northwest coast of the island of Sangi, north of the island of Siau.\footnote{115} Upon finding out that a Jesuit priest was in the latter island, a sizable embassy from Kolongan, consisting of ‘all the chiefs…except for the king’ travelled to Siau toward the end of September 1568 specifically to engage with the visiting cleric:\footnote{116} they told me that they had come from their land solely to seek me and that, although I had been in Manado or much further away, they would have come to seek me because they had great desires to be Christians, and that they had brought these desires to where I was in Siau.\footnote{117}

The Kolongan chiefs were more than just moderately interested, it seems, informing Mascarenhas that ‘they would not return without my promising to christen them.’\footnote{118} To further emphasise this point, they also engaged in an act of significant cultural symbolism: ‘And so that I might see the desire they had to be christened, they cut their hair, which they usually keep long like women, and cutting it is very difficult for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[114] Ibid. 534.
\item[115] Ibid. 534, note 516. Mascarenhas and other Jesuits simply called the place Sangi, and its leader was called the King of Sangi. As Jacobs indicated in his note, however, the relatively large island of Sangi at this time supported two different kingdoms, Kolongan on the northwest coast and Tabukan on the northeast coast. The south of the island, sometimes referred to as Tamako, was a vassal of Siau. That the polity visited by Mascarenhas was the Kingdom of Kolongan was established when the Jesuit wrote that Kolongan was ‘the main city in the kingdom where the king resides’ (Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569." 536).
\item[116] Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569." 534-535.
\item[117] Ibid. 535.
\item[118] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
them.’ Importantly, as the Jesuit later learnt, this interest in being baptised was not new, and the determination of the Kolongan chiefs arose at least in part from having lived so long with unfulfilled wishes. A ‘long time’ before, according to what the actual Portuguese involved later told him, some Europeans had visited the island of Sangi, and at that time they had been asked ‘with much urgency’ to christen the king and his people, but they had declined. This time, with an actual priest in the area, the people were determined not to be frustrated. Holding true to their promise, they waited in Siau until Mascarenhas, ‘three or four days’ later, conceded to their demand and ‘told them to go ahead and send me an equipped korakora in which I might go, and that I would go to their land and christen them.\footnote{Ibid. 535.}

The people of Kolongan did everything in their power to show hospitality to Mascarenhas—and to King Dom Jerónimo ‘and all the chiefs of Siau,’ who had chosen to travel with him\footnote{Ibid. 537.}—in preparation for their long-awaited christening. They had attempted to have new houses ready for their guests when they arrived, but, having failed, ‘the second person in the kingdom, in order to make us more welcome, withdrew from his houses where he dwelt with his wife and children and moved into smaller ones so to give us the larger ones, for they were the best of the land.’\footnote{Ibid. 536.} After the Jesuit had spent three
days in the main village, the rulers of the people, who clearly were not unfamiliar with Christianity, gathered to be taught. This assembly included ‘the king and the chiefs of the land’ along with ‘the queen…with all the chiefs’ wives.’\textsuperscript{124} After listening to Mascarenhas explicate ‘the matters of our holy faith…, they being very attentive, they replied to me that they were so satisfied with what they had heard, that they much desired now to be Christians, and that they would do whatever I might command them which was doable.’\textsuperscript{125} Consequently, the king and queen were baptised, along with all the chiefs and their wives, first wives in each case then being married to their husbands in Christian rites. The Jesuit then spent ‘close to fifteen more days’ in the island, during which time ‘all the chiefs occupied themselves in nothing else but in who would better serve and prepare banquets and send the most things, both chickens and pigs as well as all kinds of fruits,’ the ‘palaces’ where the priest and the visitors from Siau were staying being thus filled ‘day and night’ with people bringing presents.\textsuperscript{126} Gift exchange, however, was not the only purpose which brought the throngs around the clock. Echoing Paiva’s account of his experiences in south Sulawesi, Mascarenhas also recorded that others came specifically to speak with him and ‘ask questions about the matter of their salvation.’\textsuperscript{127}

Before he departed the island, the Jesuit visitor had seen the new Christians construct and erect a cross—having ‘searched two or three days for the best wood and the straightest tree they could find’ and allowing only the sons of the chiefs to ‘touch or work it’\textsuperscript{128}—and then worship it accompanied by the beating of drums and the sounding of gongs ‘throughout all the city.’\textsuperscript{129} He had also selected, at their insistence, a spot on which a church should be built, they wanting ‘to have ready all the necessary wood when

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. 536-537.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. 537.
I would return.’ He reported that ‘their fervour and desires to have a church were so
great’ that the chiefs had managed to clear all the trees from the site in a single morning,
and the queen had ‘sent word to me that she and all the wives would come also to take
part in the merits and would serve to remove the grass.’ Mascarenhas did not find
departing Kolongan terribly easy, though. Having successfully drawn a priest into their
land, the people resented letting him go and tried to keep him there longer by promising
better hospitality and more food, offering to ‘immediately send vessels to bring foodstuffs
and pigs and chickens’ if he would stay. The Jesuit, however, insisted that he needed
to take advantage of the monsoon to visit some other Christians whom Diogo de
Magalhães had baptised five years earlier and so was able to make his escape.

**Banggai**

As mentioned briefly in the section above, conversion to Christianity in Kolongan
seems to have had its beginning not with the arrival of a missionary in the area but with a
visit of some Europeans to this remote kingdom many years earlier. Consequently,
though the request for baptism made to Mascarenhas by the embassy from Kolongan
appears somewhat spontaneous and rather random on the surface, it was neither. The
people had been familiar with the faith for years and had already failed in an attempt to
obtain the rite of Christian conversion at least once before. Had the Jesuit missionary not
met the actual Portuguese (presumably traders) who had earlier been in the kingdom, he
may never have known this background story, and the arrival of the embassy in Siau
would continue to appear entirely unmotivated in his account. Such is the case with
dozens of requests for baptism recorded throughout the Jesuit letters. In most cases, the

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130 Ibid. 538.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid. 537.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
very first time a missionary encountered a group of people was when he travelled there to fulfil a request to christen them. As a consequence, he seldom had any grasp of what had transpired earlier to generate the request in the first place. On this point, Mascarenhas’s report of his time in Kolongan provides a second bit of clarification: whilst he was there, the people had thronged his house day and night, not only bringing food and gifts but wishing to ask him questions about the faith. This detail provides some suggestion of how the earlier traders might have been treated, and it further hints at what was happening elsewhere in the Archipelago prior to each request for baptism.

The example of Banggai provides additional insight into the curiosity and investigation—so often unrecorded—which led people in the Maluku region to embrace a new faith. Like the Kings of Suppa and Siang, the King of Banggai seems to have spent some time considering the merits of both Islam and Christianity. In a letter composed near the beginning of 1564, Pero Mascarenhas, recorded that the king ‘sent his eldest son to this city [Ternate], to observe the behaviour and customs of both Muslims and the faithful and to choose the most suitable according to the same, and whatever the son then approved, he himself would afterward follow.’ A contemporaneous account may also mention this occurrence, though, instead of a son, it mentions a ‘nephew of a heathen king’ who ‘came to this fort [Ternate] by order of his uncle to learn what kind of thing our religion was, and with a message from his uncle that, if it seemed good to him, to be christened and ask for some Father to go to baptise him and all his kingdom.’ One of the Jesuit writers may simply have got the family relationship wrong, the King of

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135 Ibid. 536.
136 In the sixteenth century this toponym referred to the east-central peninsula of Sulawesi, separating the Bays of Tomini and Tolo, and the islands located off of its tip.
Banggai may have sent both a son and a nephew, or Prancudo may have been referring to a totally unrelated occurrence. For what it may be worth, a Jesuit report prepared in India, and apparently reliant on the same conflicting source texts, assigns Prancudo’s account to Banggai; it mentions in one paragraph ‘the King of Banggai’s nephew’ who ‘wanted to be christened’\textsuperscript{139} and in a later paragraph the King of Banggai’s son who in 1564 was sent ‘to the fort in Ternate to decide which religion was better to choose.’\textsuperscript{140} Mascarenhas, who clearly identified that he was speaking of Banggai, indicated that the youth ‘was pleased with Christian customs and prudent living,’\textsuperscript{141} but did not indicate whether he was baptised or not. It seems unlikely that he would not have been. If one understands the nephew in Prancudo’s account to be the same person as the son in Mascarenhas’s, then this was most certainly the case since the former was christened after arriving at the fort and was still there. ‘And his uncle is waiting for him and for some Father to baptise him with his entire kingdom.’\textsuperscript{142} This waiting was no small matter. Five years later another Jesuit priest, Nicolau Nunes, reported without any explanation that ‘to the south there is a king of the lands of Banggai, who has been requesting Christianity for a long time.’\textsuperscript{143} Had the king sought to learn more about the faith from European traders, for example, rather than sending his son/nephew to evaluate Christianity in the Portuguese fort in Ternate, this would appear to be one more random, spontaneous request for baptism. Instead, it had clearly been preceded by an active investigation into the new faith.


\textsuperscript{140} Ibid. 486.

\textsuperscript{141} Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to Fr. Francisco Rodrigues SJ, Goa. Ternate, [December 1563 to February 1564]." 433.

\textsuperscript{142} Prancudo, "Fr. Marcos Prancudo SJ to Fr. General Diego Laínez, Rome. Maluku [Ternate], February 12, 1564." 423.

Buru

The degree to which Christianisation in Maluku was driven by the local people and not by the missionaries can be seen in how aggressively some behaved despite persistent lack of access to priests. Many of these people succeeded in obtaining not only their instruction but also their christening from traders or other sailors, sometimes even by force. In a letter sent from Ternate in 1550, the Jesuit priest Juan de Beira mentioned to his superiors in both Rome and Portugal the problematic reality of lay baptisms in the Maluku region:

There are in these parts many islands, well populated by people, which have been visited by the Portuguese. In some of them they began to christen the people, suggesting to them some things of our faith, baptising them because they asked for it; they left them without doctrine because they were sailors and did not take priests with them. We have not been able to succour them until now because of being occupied in that which I have said.

It is impossible to know which islands exactly Beira had in mind here—because he wrote six years after António de Paiva’s experiences with the Kings of Suppa and Siang, Macassar is one option—but his use of the word ‘some’ indicates that this was not an entirely uncommon event. Such lay baptisms had occurred in the island of Buru by 1553, when another Jesuit informed the same superiors that six villages there, having a total population of about 4,000 souls, had become Christian. What he failed to mention, however, is how these Buru villagers, not yet visited by a Jesuit or a secular priest, had obtained the rite of Christian conversion, presumably because he did not know.

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144 Note here how Beira began his account with a European-centred approach, noting that the problem was with the Portuguese sailors who were discussing Christianity and even beginning to provide baptism. The actual nature of the situation, however, becomes clear with a single phrase: “because they asked for it.”
146 Located immediately west of Ambon, Buru is the third largest island in the Maluku region.
The following year, a third writer, not a Jesuit but labouring with them in Ambon,\(^{148}\) had obtained more of the story from Portuguese traders who had been there, and he then used this information to shore up what was to become a common complaint from the Jesuits in Maluku, who, only eight years after the opening of the mission, were already overwhelmed by the demands of the indigenous populations. As Vicente Pereira explained, the land was suffering mostly due to a lack of workers, because there are many Christians in it and many more would convert, if there were someone to baptise them. In Greater and Lesser Buru\(^{149}\) they shout and cry that they might convert, and it is so much their desire that, when some men went with a ship to trade, they put into shore in this land, and they did not let them launch out to sea until they had baptised them. Then they christened them as well as they knew how, about 4,000 souls.\(^{150}\)

In a letter dated only two days after Pereira’s, António Fernandes confirmed the details as they had come to be understood in Ambon: ‘There is a land twelve leagues from here, which is called Greater Buru…. They lament and ask for mercy that they might be baptised, and there would already be there 3,000 or 4,000 Christians who were christened by Portuguese merchants who go there to trade their goods because they importuned them.’\(^{151}\)

These short accounts from Buru clearly reinforce the basic pattern of indigenous-driven mission outlined at the beginning of this chapter, including continued attempts after conversion to draw a missionary into their island. The Christians of Buru, however,

\(^{148}\) Vicente Pereira’s exact relationship with the Society of Jesus is not entirely clear in the documents. In his 1554 letter, quoted in part below, he indicates that he did not belong to the order: ‘Father Juan de Beira sent Brother António Fernandes to Ambon because they was no Father who might go there; and also, due to the lack of Brothers from the Society who might go with him, he sent me as his companion to stay here until Our Lord might have mercy on me’ (Pereira, “Vicente Pereira to the Rector of the College in Goa. Ambon, February 26, 1554.” 150-151). He apparently hoped to become a Jesuit, however, since a letter written later that year by a Jesuit brother mentioned that Pereira ‘still has not been received [into the Society]’ (António Fernandes, “Br. António Fernandes SJ to the Rector of the College, Goa. Ambon, February 28, 1554.” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 155). What is obvious is that Pereira, though not a Jesuit, worked closely with them and is an equally valid source of information.

\(^{149}\) These terms the Portuguese used to signify Buru and its much smaller neighbour, Ambelau.


were unsuccessful in securing priests, though they remained actively engaged in seeking to obtain this objective for a number of years. In his 1554 report, Fernandes mentioned that he had been commanded in a message from his superior to go visit the Christians in Buru if he could, ‘but the time has not given me opportunity and moreover there is a shortage of companions.’ Jesuit letters from 1556, 1561, and 1563 all mention the people of Buru’s continued desire for priests. Still, they did not give up. Fifteen years after Pereira and Fernandes gave the first details on these lay baptisms, Pero Mascarenhas, a Jesuit missionary labouring in Ambon, wrote that ‘for about two months there have been in this fort rulers of the Christian villages [of Buru], asking for Fathers to go to instruct them,’ a request which the Jesuits simply could not fulfil. Sometime during the next seven years, a ‘Brother from the Society went to visit this island of Buru... , and the Christians wept with him, they asking if there were still any Portuguese or if there were dead.’

Taken together, the above accounts of how Christianity first began to be adopted in Moro, Manado, Kolongan, Banggai, and Buru paint a reasonably clear image of indigenous-driven mission, both before and after the arrival of European missionaries. In every way, this image resembles the one presented in detail by António Paiva in the account of his experiences in the Macassar area of southwest Sulawesi: local people

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152 Ibid.
155 In all of the extant Jesuit letters and reports, this is the only mention of a Jesuit ever having visited Buru Island. If he produced a report of his visit, it has not survived.
initiated religious discussions, asked questions, made observations, consulted those with opposing viewpoints, and analysed the merits of what they had learnt, often over the space of several weeks, months, or even years. Understanding that baptism was the necessary rite to become a Christian, those who wished to then pursue this next step took often aggressive action to receive this sacrament—in some cases travelling to where a priest was, in other cases making repeated and insistent requests for a priest to visit, in still other cases seeking to obtain baptism from lay Christians. This was the pattern of conversion before the creation of the Maluku Jesuit Mission, and it continued to be the pattern even after the European missionaries arrived. The Jesuits simply slipped seamlessly into the already-existing role of much-sought-after priest and immediately found themselves drawn into interactions which they had no hand in initiating.

Clearly, this image of religious change differs greatly from that presented in previous chronicles and histories. Nevertheless, it finds support not just in the numerous primary source materials from which it has been constructed but also from complementary research with which it shares significant parallels. In particular, Anne Salmond, a New Zealand historian who has likewise sought to liberate her historical subjects from colonial assumptions, has depicted interactions between the Maori and the Europeans in the early decades of British presence in ways which strongly resemble the interaction which António Paiva reported to have had with the Kings of Suppa and Siang: ‘The missionaries in their journals often refer to long conversations where they were questioned (sometimes all night) about astronomy, geography, agriculture, European marriage patterns, trade, law, and government; and of interested, reflective debates over European theology and its contradictory doctrines.’¹⁵⁷ The point about sometimes being queried ‘all night’ also calls to mind Pero Mascarenhas’s experience in Kolongan where

people came to him day and night to ‘ask questions about the matter of their salvation.’ Salmond has in fact argued that, throughout the islands of the Pacific, indigenous people largely expected some form of intellectual or spiritual acquisition from their contact with foreigners and intentionally sought out such encounters for this very reason. When European missionaries in New Zealand failed to live up to local expectations in this regard, it actually disappointed the Maori, leading to requests for ‘more intelligent, better educated missionaries.’ Though distant from the people of sixteenth-century Maluku in both time and space, the Maori belong to the same broad Austronesian cultural complex, and seeing these expectations and behaviours emerge from critical readings of missionary accounts written about them creates resonance with the assertion presented in this chapter that in Maluku Europeans were also enthusiastically queried about their religious beliefs.

The notion that indigenous people were responsible for determining where in Maluku European missionaries laboured, aggressively seeking to lure their influence and their presence into their lands, finds its own parallel much closer in time and in the same place. The historian of Minahasa, David Henley, has shown that this very process continued to operate in northern Sulawesi after the Dutch takeover of Maluku in the seventeenth century. With no replacement for the Jesuit mission, however, the influence being sought was not religious but political, and the requests were for East India Company (VOC) personnel, not for priests. Without a critical reading of the relevant literature, the spread of Dutch influence in Sulawesi readily appears as an act of European-directed colonial expansion, just as many have seen the growth of Christian communities in sixteenth-century Maluku as part of the Portuguese colonial project. As

158 Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569." 536.
159 Salmond, “Cross-cultural Voyaging: Exploring the Explorers”.
Henley has pointed out, despite northern Sulawesi’s peripheral importance to the VOC, by 1750 there were at least a dozen Dutch forts there. By 1850, the entire northern peninsula of the island, with a population of nearly 200,000 people, was under direct European rule. Yet, based on a careful reading of contemporary reports, ‘no episode in this remarkable process of expansion was initiated unilaterally by the Dutch themselves.’ Just as they had actively sought to draw Christian influence in an earlier century, the indigenous people from this area aggressively sought to pull Dutch influence into their midst: ‘Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, the VOC and colonial authorities in Manado and Ternate regularly received unsolicited invitations from all over northern Sulawesi to establish new outposts.’ Reflecting the situation with Pero Mascarenhas in Kolongan—where the people were prepared to build him his own house and feed him, later fearing that they had not fed him enough and promising that they would ‘immediately send vessels to bring foodstuffs and pigs and chickens’ if he only he would stay—many of these requests for VOC presence were accompanied by promises that the people would fully support the Dutch who might reside in their villages. These requests became, as Henley called them, the ‘indigenous roots of colonial rule.’ In the sixteenth century, similar requests for priests and baptism had formed the indigenous roots of Christian mission.

162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.: 88-90.
164 Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569." 537.
165 Henley, "Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King," 90, note 96.
Conversion to Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku did not occur in a vacuum. Inevitably, socio-political considerations influenced both initial decisions to become more familiar with the new faith and later decisions to actually pursue a change in religious identity by seeking out baptism. Indigenous Christians then often found themselves in the midst of persistent or novel political struggles, military campaigns, and sometimes intense persecution, all of which similarly influenced their maintenance of Christian identities and any further spreading of the faith in the affected areas. So dramatic were many of these conflicts that the retelling of them has in most cases become the main story of early Christian conversion in the islands. These European-centred histories, including the Jesuit letters, are filled with discussions of political intrigue between Portuguese administrators and powerful local rulers, skirmishes between the Portuguese and a number of Spanish fleets which attempted to stake a claim in the islands, local wars fought over control of vassals, and Muslim attacks on Christian villages. Against this backdrop, the adoption of and continued commitment to Christianity have many times been perceived as not just affected by these conflicts but directly caused by them, with the most extreme example perhaps being Sebastiaen Danckaerts’s suggestion that the Ambonese had remained Christian only because of Portuguese force.¹ Such an approach, however, overlooks the agency which indigenous Christians continued to exercise in the face of sometimes very difficult circumstances. This agency emerges clearly from contemporary and historical texts via indigenous countersigns which reveal that outside might did not generate a unified response on the part of all involved. This heterogeneity

¹ Danckaerts, "Historisch ende Grondich Verhail des Christendoms," 120.
of responses clearly indicates that people were able to choose from a range of strategic options when navigating political and social conflicts. Moreover, in very many situations, what many have incorrectly interpreted as powerful or even forceful actions on the part of the Europeans were actually reactions to local initiatives. This was very much the case in relation to religious change and religious identity. Mission in Maluku not only began as an indigenous-drive enterprise but also remained one, even in the midst of grave political upheavals. The convoluted story of Christianity in sixteenth-century Moro—characterised by cycles of conversion and apostasy, peace and persecution—provides perhaps the best illustration of these points.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the people of Moro actively began to convert to Christianity early in 1534. This burst of interest was so intense, according to Castanheda, that many people

\[\text{turned to the holy Catholic faith in a short time, and this work of our Lord advanced with such increase that it was necessary for Tristão de Ataíde to send another cleric by the name of Francisco Álvares to assist Simão Vaz, and both produced so much fruit that most of those heathens’ pagodas changed into churches, in which they celebrated the divine office.}^{2}\]

By the end of the same year, however, people in Moro had already started to turn against their newly adopted faith. In 1535, Luís Correa, the Christian ruler of Sugala,\(^3\) renounced Christianity ‘and became a heathen and an enemy to the Portuguese,’ forbidding anyone from his land to give or even to sell food supplies to the desperate Europeans, whose fort in Ternate was facing siege.\(^4\) This same year, ‘Vicar Simão Vaz was killed, along with all the Portuguese who were with him, by the natives whom he had been baptising.’\(^5\) The

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\(^2\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India.* Volume 8. 219.
\(^3\) Sugala was one of the northernmost villages on the Morotia coast after rounding the Cape of Bissoa, due west of the island of Morotai.
\(^4\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India.* Volume 8. 271.
\(^5\) Ibid.
following year the residents of Cawa\textsuperscript{6} burnt down their church, a few of them first having destroyed its altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin Mary so that one of them could use the wood to fashion a sword scabbard.\textsuperscript{7}

Writers, both from the sixteenth century and from more recent times, have sought to explain this apostasy by describing the outside forces which converged on the Moro region as a consequence of the conversions which had been occurring. The people of Moro, however, were not unaccustomed to outside influences. According to Rebelo, sometime after the kings of Maluku had adopted Islam,\textsuperscript{8} they began conquering the Moro region, ‘each one taking as many villages as he could, the largest and best portion falling to the King of Ternate.’\textsuperscript{9} The motivation for this, according to Lima’s contemporary account, was the need for food:\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{6} Cawa was the southernmost village in Morotia, located near the present-day town of Tobelo (J.D.M. Platenkamp, "Tobelo, Moro, Ternate: The Cosmological Valorization of Historical Events," \textit{Cakalele} 4, 1993: 62-63).
  \item \textsuperscript{8} The \textit{Treatise}, ascribed to Galvão, claims that these kings became Muslims ‘about eighty to ninety years ago,’ which Jacobs, based on his estimate of when the text was most likely composed, determined to be around 1460-1465 (\textit{A Treatise on the Moluccas}. 83, note 85). At the time that Rebelo was writing, the Muslim kings of Maluku would have included those from Ternate, Tidore, Jailolo, and Bacan (Paramita R. Abdurachman, "Niachile Pokaraga: A Sad Story of a Moluccan Queen," \textit{Modern Asian Studies} 1988, 575).
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 398.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} In attempting to correlate the explanations here, two possibilities present themselves: On one hand, the smaller spice-producing islands of Maluku may have always relied on food imports from places like Moro, but—perhaps to secure these imports—they had only subjected the Moro region to their actual rule after their respective kings had embraced Islam. Schurhammer indirectly endorsed this view by claiming that ‘[f]rom time immemorial’ the Kings of Ternate, Tidore, and Jailolo had relied on supplies from Moro, citing in support only the letter from Lima quoted here, though this passage speaks merely of the then-present situation without addressing the past (Schurhammer, \textit{Francis Xavier}. 160; note 196). On the other hand, the spice-producing islands may not always have been so dependent on imported foodstuffs, growing some or all of their own food crops during times of less-intensive demand for cloves. In such a scenario, the drive to secure Moro’s food surplus may have been related directly to an intensification of spice cultivation in these areas. Indeed, as mentioned above, Rebelo linked the conquest of Moro with conversion to Islam, and the author of the \textit{Treatise} linked conversion to Islam with the fact that, during the fifteenth century, ‘these islands were more frequented’ by ‘Malays and Javanese’ and ‘Persians and Arabs’ who were seeking to trade for spices (\textit{A Treatise on the Moluccas}. 82). Meilink-Roelofsz’s research seems to support this view: ‘Moreover there was a close interplay of factors [in the spice-producing islands of Maluku], that is to say, more spice trees meant less agriculture, and vice versa’ (M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, \textit{Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630}. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962. 99).
\end{itemize}
The islands of Maluku have of themselves very few provisions, and the kings of these islands of Maluku have a land, which is called Moro, divided amongst themselves, this land being 60 or 70 leagues from Maluku; and these aforementioned kings have no other provisions or revenues with which to sustain themselves, except for that Moro, whence comes much rice and sago and pork and chickens, which nearly supplies the islands of Maluku.\textsuperscript{11}

The appearance of Europeans in the region had assisted in altering this division of Moro and its much-needed provisions. Jailolo had actively sought to forge ties with the Castilians who had been left behind in the area—remnants of the ill-fated Loaísa expedition, which had arrived in the Maluku region in 1527, and members of the Saavedra expedition, which had arrived the following year\textsuperscript{12}—specifically because the King of Jailolo ‘was labouring as much as possible to gain all of Moro, for he greatly desired to be the lord of it and because the Castilians had promised to make him such if he came to help them.’\textsuperscript{13} Jailolo thereafter, ‘supported by the Castilians,’ was able to conquer the King of Ternate’s vassal villages in Moro.\textsuperscript{14} Naturally, this situation had not been allowed to remain. The Portuguese captain and the King of Ternate had turned on their mutual enemies, resulting in the joint attack on Jailolo at the end of 1533, during which Tristão de Ataíde ‘brought the Castilians and their artillery to [the] fort’ in Ternate.\textsuperscript{15} It was this attack on Jailolo in which the first two Moro rulers to seek baptism, the future Dom João of Mamuya and one other, had participated.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{11} Lima, "Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536.” 220.
\textsuperscript{12} Schurhammer, \textit{Francis Xavier}. 116.
\textsuperscript{13} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 7}. 170.
\textsuperscript{14} Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 398. It is unclear what form exactly the ‘support’ of the Castilians may have taken. Castanheda pointed out that Jailolo’s conquest of Ternate’s vassal villages in Moro occurred after the Portuguese had concluded a ‘some armistices’ with the other Iberians, so they may not have been involved militarily; nevertheless, Castanheda also indicated that the leader of the Castilian band had refrained from agreeing to any further treaties due to advice from the Kings of Tidore and Jailolo, the latter of whom ‘had everything ready to renew the war with which he hoped to make himself entirely lord of Moro’ (Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8}. 7). It should also be mentioned that, according to Castanheda, in addition to the armada sent to Moro by the ruler of Jailolo ‘to capture the villages belonging to the King or Ternate, …the King of Tidore sent one too’ (ibid.).
\textsuperscript{15} Ataíde, "Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rey. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534.” 316.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
As discussed in the preceding chapter, one concern which these early Moro converts had was how their adoption of Christianity would affect their status as vassals to the King of Ternate. This concern makes more sense considering that, in the space of a few decades, they had been conquered by Ternate, conquered again by Jailolo with the help of the Castilians, and then reconquered by Ternate with the help of the Portuguese. Moreover, Rebelo indicated that, despite having assisted with the attack on Jailolo, when ‘the conquered people’ faced restoration to Ternate’s vassalage, they ‘were afraid of harm/loss [dano].’ The loss they feared was expressed by the King of Mamuya’s envoy to Tristão de Ataíde: the King of Ternate and his people, he informed the Portuguese captain, ‘had been tyrannising them and taking from them all that they had.’ To this, Ataíde replied that, ‘if they wanted to be Christians, [he] would make them exempt from the King of Ternate and from his people.’ Apparently the King of Ternate also agreed to this matter on the condition that ‘neither he nor his people be afflicted by their [the

17 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 398.
18 It is important to recognise here that the envoy probably was not referring to experiences with a single king. In the 22 years since the Portuguese had arrived in Maluku, Ternate had experienced a series of rulers, most of them in the previous twelve years. Sultan Bayan Sirullah (also called Abulais or, in the Portuguese documents, Boleife), king when Serrão first arrived in the islands, governed Ternate until he was poisoned by the other three Moluccan kings in 1522. Kaicil Vaidua, his younger brother, had briefly ruled thereafter until one of Bayan Sirullah’s sons, Daroes, took over on behalf of his half-brother and the designated heir, Abu Hayat. When Captain António de Brito arrested Abu Hayat and his two younger brothers (between 1523 and 1525), Daroes became the outright ruler in Ternate. This lasted until Captain Jorge de Meneses (1527-1530) had Daroes beheaded. At this point, the queen regent, whom historical sources name only by her title Niachile Pokaraga (Nyacilik Boki Raja), filled the power vacuum until 1531, when she finally convinced Captain Vicente de Fonseca to free her two remaining sons, Abu Hayat having died from poisoning sometime after 1526. Dayalo, the second son, ruled for a brief time but was so disliked in Ternate that he had to flee to neighbouring Tidore. Thereafter the third son, Tabarija, assumed the kingship of Ternate for four years and would have been the new King of Ternate when Jailolo was attacked and when the first Moro chiefs questioned whether their conversions would free them from their vassalage to Ternate (Abdurachman, "'Niachile Pokaraga,'" 575-587). It seems likely, then, that the concern was not with a specific king but with the state of vassalage itself and/or a pattern of perceived mistreatment over many years.
19 Ataíde, "Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534." 316. Castanheda confirmed this account, writing that the envoy had complained to Ataíde about ‘the Muslims who, every time they went there in an armada, would vex them and the other heathens, taking from them what they had and treating them like captives’ (Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 218). Likewise, Lima, in explaining the situation immediately before the people began to convert, stated, ‘This people of this land of Moro are slaves of the kings’ of Maluku (Lima, "Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536." 220).
people of Moro’s] breaking of his laws,’ though it seems possible from this statement that the king had no real grasp of what the Portuguese captain had promised or of what was about to happen. What did happen is that the newly baptised Christians, having taken Ataíde at his word, and supported minimally by Portuguese soldiers, ‘rebelled against the kings, no longer giving them provisions nor allowing the people…to go there.’

Considering the degree to which the spice-producing islands had come to depend on food supplies from Moro, this state of affairs simply could not endure. As this problem began to unfold, the King of Ternate first attempted to get the new Christians to relocate to the Portuguese fort, where ‘he would give them lands and houses in which to live,’ thus preventing any upset to the established state of affairs in Moro. Ataíde, his

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21 Ibid. 317.
22 Tabarija, the king at this point, was only fifteen years old, had spent most of his life imprisoned in the Portuguese fort, and had been ruling Ternate for less than three years; consequently, he might have been excused to some extent for not fully grasping the implications of this matter. Nevertheless, his mother, the queen regent, was a skilled ruler who had earlier led a successful Ternatan attack on the Portuguese fort, resulting in the death of Captain Gonçalo Pereira, and who had then mobilised her Moluccan rivals to assist in a blockade of the fort in order to force Vicente Fonseca, the new captain, to release her imprisoned sons (Abdurachman, ”Niachile Pokaraga.” 586).
23 Castanheda claimed that, as the number of baptisms in Moro began to take off, ‘Tristão de Ataíde sent there some Portuguese who, in a stockade which they had built, guarded and protected those Christians, so that the Muslims did not molest them’ (Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 219). Schurhammer placed this ‘redoubt’ (as he called it) in Mamuya and maintained that it had been built by ‘ten or twelve Portuguese arquebusiers with two field guns’ who had been sent by Ataíde for this purpose (Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 161). Ataíde, however, never mentioned a Portuguese-built stockade. He did indicate that, when Dom João of Mamuya was attacked by Jailolo, ‘he defended himself within his stockades, with two Portuguese which he had from there [Ternate], including one of my servants’ (Ataíde, “Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534.” 317-318). Clearly the Moro converts were aided in some way by the Portuguese soldiers in the area, but this assistance seems to have been rather minimal.
24 Lima, ”Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536.” 221.
25 Ibid.
hope being specifically the destruction of the authority of Maluku’s four Muslim kings, rejected this proposal, ‘immediately sending many men and the vicar to christen [the people of Moro] and sustain them.’ Consequently,’ Lima added, ‘the abovementioned [Muslim] kings determined to rebel.’

This ‘rebellion,’ which was really a concerted effort to attack and then drive the Europeans from the archipelago and destroy their indigenous allies, took many forms and progressed through a number of stages. Local rulers spread rumours that gold could be found in the island of Sulawesi in the hopes that they could ‘distract’ the Portuguese and weaken their military resistance. When this no longer worked, Katarabumi, the King of Jailolo, marshalled the aid of the Tobarus, a savage inland tribe of heathens with whom he had an alliance, to wage war against both Gamkonora and Moro, ‘within which lordships were found many Christians…because they knew that Tristão de Ataíde would have to send help to them, which he did, sending an armada of Ternatans and Portuguese’ to both locations. The armada sent to Moro had orders both ‘to support the Christians in the land’ and ‘to buy all the foodstuffs they could before the Ternatans might stir up the land,’ but for this latter task it showed up too late. People from Ternate had already arrived in Moro, where ‘they had explained how they were rebelling against the fort, and they were going to wage war against it, not ceasing until they had captured and killed

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26 ‘I would establish peace in these islands, and I would make them all Your Highness’s, and they would render everything to you; for, toward some, with love and gifts, and toward others, with fear, there would remain neither king nor influential men in the land (and more so with having Moro for Your Highness’s and its being Christian, for all the provisions will come to me from there)’ (Ataíde, "Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rey. Molucas, 20 de Fevereiro de 1534." 319).

27 Lima, "Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536." 221.

28 Ibid.

29 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 265-266.


31 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 266.

32 Ibid. 270.
Tristão de Ataíde and all the other Portuguese. They made their appeal in the name of Dayalo, elder brother of the then King of Ternate, who had ruled briefly in 1531 but had then fled to Tidore due to ‘criticism and rumblings…among the people’ based on his poor performance. Despite his earlier failures, he had apparently become a rallying point for the rebellion. As ‘their king and natural lord, against whom they had committed so much evil, as they were aware…, he was ordering them, as his vassals, not to sell any foodstuffs’ to the Portuguese.

Some—though not all—of the newly baptised Christians, ‘as soon as they heard that the Ternatans were rebelling against the fort and that King Kaicil Dayalo had been restored to his kingdom, immediately renounced their Christianity and became heathens as before, and they took the side of King Kaicil Dayalo, as did some heathens.’

Because these rebels refused to sell provisions to the Portuguese, the price of rice increased tenfold, ‘and thus the price of most things increased every day.’ Difficulty in obtaining foodstuffs from Moro caused a panic amongst the Europeans, whose only hope of surviving a siege of their fort in Ternate was quickly securing an adequate food supply. Frustration with this situation led the Portuguese to demand assistance from the faithful Moro Christians, whom the former probably assumed should be their allies in this matter, offending some of them and thereby further increasing the difficulty of obtaining food in the area. As a result, the Portuguese captain ‘sought succour from the King of Jailolo, who, in order to hide his enmity, sent him four korakora laden with sago.’

33 Ibid.
34 Abdurachman, "Niachile Pokaraga," 586. The author of the Treatise indicated that ‘the Portuguese and the Muslims expelled him [Dayalo] from the island…, and he sailed to Tidore and from there to Jailolo, where he stayed temporarily, living with this disgust’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 222).
35 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 270.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid. 270-271.
38 Ibid. 271.
39 Ibid. 272.
This pretence of friendship did not persist, however. Dayalo eventually took control of the entire island of Ternate ‘at the petition of the Ternatans…and was once again obeyed as king.’ Thereafter, Jailolo’s King Katarabumi, ‘being certain of a war between the Ternatans and the Portuguese, …sent a message to King Kaicil Dayalo that he was ready to aid him in the war against Tristão de Ataíde and to fulfil what he had sworn with the other kings, that he would hand over to him the villages which he had taken from him in Moro.’ Consequently, Dayalo sent one of his captains to accompany Katarabumi, who had amassed ‘the most powerful armada he could,’ with which he succeeded in reconquering all of the villages which had formerly been his vassals in Moro, including the former Christian strongholds of Tolo, Sugala, and Mamuya.

This brief account of the outside forces which converged on the Moro region—and, in some cases, more particularly on the Moro Christians—gives some idea of what the typical narrative which deals with this topic has focussed on at least since the publication in the sixteenth century of Castanheda’s chronicle, upon which this and most later retellings rely. None of the details presented here is known to be inaccurate, and

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40 Ibid. The author of the Treatise summarised Dayalo’s return to power in this way: ‘Dayalo was restored to his estate by the Muslims, and the first thing they did was to burn the city of Ternate and the greater part of the island. They sailed to Tidore, Makian, Bacan, and Jailolo, and thus they all encircled the fort, and others fortified themselves in the mountain’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 224).
42 Castanheda merely reported that Katarabumi had captured ‘the main village,’ but this likely referred to Tolo, as Tolo was often identified as the ‘chief village’ in Moro. See, for example, Castro, “Fr. Afonso de Castro SJ to Frs. Ignatius Loyola SJ, Rome, and Simão Rodrigues SJ, Portugal. Maluku [Ternate], February 7, 1553.” 135. Also see Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 336.
44 As Schurhammer has pointed out, two main accounts of the first ‘Moro rebellion’ exist, Castanheda’s chronicle and a letter composed by Captain Tristão de Ataíde, but these texts are filled with contradictions, specifically in relation to events as they transpired in Sugala and Mamuya (Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 162, note 104). For the two accounts, see Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da Indìa. Volume 8. 270-282. Also see Ataíde, ‘Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537.’ 347-350). According to Castanheda, Dom Luís Correa, ruler of Sugala, renounced Christianity in 1535 and thereafter became an enemy to the Portuguese, but, according to Ataíde, he was a faithful Christian who defied military attack by the King of Jailolo, preferring to kill his family and attempting to kill himself over surrendering to a Muslim king. In contrast, Castanheda attributed this spirited defence of the new religion to Dom João of Mamuya, not to Dom Luís Correa. These differences are clearly significant and irreconcilable. Usually, in such a case, one would tend to lend greater credence to a firsthand account than to a chronicle compiled in India, but in this case Castanheda seems to have been the more trustworthy recorder of facts. Specifically, later writers repeatedly confirmed the faithfulness and
therefore it is important to be aware of them. The people of Moro genuinely found themselves repeatedly acted upon by both indigenous and European figures who not only battled amongst themselves over access to the area’s food surplus but who also treated Moro itself as a symbolic prize as they struggled to establish some kind of political supremacy in the Maluku region as a whole. The problem arises from seeing only what was done to the people of Moro whilst overlooking what was done by them. Failure to view these people as agents can lead to a very damaging misperception: if the behaviour of the Moro people was simply caused by overwhelming outside forces, then little room remains to acknowledge individual actions. Because conversion could presumably be imposed, individuals did not matter, and the whole process then became ‘mass conversion’; likewise, imposed apostasy manifested as ‘mass apostasy.’ Thus one gets simple black-and-white statements like the following contemporary account from Leonel de Lima: ‘In this land of Moro, where they became Christians, these same Christians also rebelled and killed the Portuguese and the vicar who were there.’

Here, no distinctions appear; the people—all of them, seemingly—converted, and then the same people—again, all of them—rebelled. It could be argued that Lima’s phrasing at least suggests that this mass of people behaved of its own accord, but this is not really the case. In the same passage, Lima blamed everything that happened not on the people who had steadfastness of Dom João of Mamuya, both to the Christian faith and to the Portuguese crown. For example, twelve years after Katarabumi’s first attack on the Christian villages in Moro, Francisco Palha wrote, ‘In Moro there are Christian villages…, and were it not for one Dom João, ruler of some villages which are called Mamuya, all of them would already have become Muslims. This man, because of serving God and Your Highness, suffers many travails; many of his brothers and relatives and people of his area have been killed; and because of sustaining the Christians, he is ruined’ (Francisco Palha, “Carta de Francisco Palha a El-Rei D. João III: Goa, 20 de Novembro de 1548,” in *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente: Insulíndia*, ed. Artur Basílio de Sá. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1954. 574-575). In contrast, Sugala repeatedly appears in later texts as a ‘renegade’ village opposed to the Portuguese fort, better matching Castanheda’s version of events. Rebelo, for example, pointed out that, when a Castilian expedition under the command of Ruy López de Villalobos arrived in the Maluku region in 1544 against Portuguese protests, it had headed for Sugala, ‘a village of renegades who were supporting Jailolo,’ the term *arrenegado* in Portuguese meaning not only ‘renegade’ but also ‘apostate’ (Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 205). Consequently, this summary follows Castanheda’s account and not Ataíde’s.

45 Lima, "Carta de Leonel de Lima a El-Rei. Malaca, 8 de Novembro de 1536." 221.
converted and then rebelled but on the captain of the fort, who had acted ‘without
counsel’—presumably from Lima himself and from others—‘because, in the conversion
of these Christians, Tristão de Ataíde gave no part to anyone except to himself.’ 46
Whether in mass conversion or mass apostasy, the converts apparently had no part to play
in Lima’s mind. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, however, it is an enormous
mistake to see the people of Moro having passively received Christianity in the first
instance when in actuality they actively sought out interactions with the new religion;
consequently, it must be a similar mistake to see them having passively relinquished their
Christian identities when acted upon by irresistible outside forces. They clearly were
acted upon in these matters; nevertheless, contemporary accounts of conversion and
apostasy in Moro reveal a broad range of individual responses to outside forces, strongly
reinforcing the fact that the people of Moro remained agents able to exert significant
control over the processes of religious change.

Amongst the evidence that both converts and apostates remained the agents in
charge of their religious identities is the fact that apostasy during the first so-called Moro
Rebellion, in contrast to being a mass response to irresistible outside forces, was actually
extremely uneven in its occurrence. For example, as quoted above, Castanheda identified
that, in the face of attempts by Ternatans to stir up the people of Moro into rebellion,
‘some villages which had belonged to new Christians…immediately renounced their
Christianity and became heathens as before.’ 47 Clearly, other Christian villages had
maintained their Christian identities despite the presence in the area of Ternatans
preaching rebellion. One of these villages seems to have been Sugala. Castanheda
recorded that, after the price of provisions in Moro had skyrocketed following the initial
apostasies toward the end of 1534, Diogo Sardinha, who had been sent to buy supplies for

46 Ibid. 222.
47 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 270, emphasis added.
the Portuguese fort in Ternate the following year, complained to ‘the ruler of Sugala, a new Christian named Luis Correa’ about the difficulty of obtaining affordable food. The ruler of Sugala was either unable or unwilling to help in this regard, and the two men ‘arrived at harsh words, in which Diogo Sardinha called him an obstinate and apostate dog’ and threatened to kill him. It was after this that Luis Correa, ‘either because of this insult or because [he] was stirred up by the example of the others to abandon the Christian religion,’ declared himself no longer a Christian and forbade anyone in his land from giving or even selling foodstuffs to the Portuguese.

Importantly, this dramatic apostasy of Sugala’s ruler does not seem to have resulted necessarily in the apostasy of Sugala’s people. Several clues from Castanheda’s account suggest that individuals living in the village continued to identify as Christians during this time. First, Luis Correa, after becoming ‘a heathen and an enemy to the Portuguese,’ found it necessary to forbid both ‘the giving and the selling of any foodstuffs from his land’ to the Portuguese. Though it is impossible to know for sure, it seems likely that the only people in Sugala who may have wanted to give away their highly-prized commodities to the Europeans would have been Christian converts who felt some affinity for their co-religionists. Moreover, though the ruler of Sugala had denounced

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48 Ibid. 271.
49 It seems likely that this was more an issue of will than ability. Food supplies were obviously available in Sugala, as proved by the fact that Luis Correa forbade the selling of them after he renounced Christianity. Prices which Europeans had to pay for food in Moro had been driven upward intentionally by some villages, both former Christians and long-time heathens—‘And these were they who did not want to sell their foodstuffs, and they caused them to increase in price’—but this was not due to any real shortage, so theoretically Christians like those in Sugala could have continued to sell at the former prices (ibid. 270). That they refused to indicates an interesting tension between native converts and the Portuguese.
50 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 271.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
Christianity sometime in middle of 1535,\textsuperscript{54} the following year, when Katarabumi sailed into Moro waters to reconquer his former vassal villages before handing them over to Dayalo, Francisco Álvares, one of only two Catholic priests in the entire Moro region and the only one to be labouring in Morotia, was in Sugala. Considering that Christianity was very much alive and flourishing at this time in other Moro villages such as Mamuya, as will be discussed below, it seems highly unusual that Álvares would have chosen to remain in Sugala had there been no Christian community to be labouring amongst. The likelihood that there was an active Christian community still functioning in Sugala is also supported by the fact that, when Álvares was warned that he was going to be captured and handed over to Katarabumi, he first went to a clearly intact church ‘in which mass was said,’ to rescue ‘the altar stone, the chalice, and some ornaments.’\textsuperscript{55} In light of the fact that members of Katarabumi’s armada were so desirous later on to have these silk ornaments from Sugala’s church that they were willing to let Álvares and his Portuguese companions escape in order to try to obtain them,\textsuperscript{56} it appears that, despite their chief’s hostility to Christianity and Europeans, the people of Sugala, or at least a significant portion of them, did not share in that same hostility, or the church would probably have been looted long before these valuable items could have been rescued from it. Lastly, it needs to be pointed out that, though certain people in Sugala—led, quite possibly, by Luís Correa himself—had ‘summoned’ Katarabumi so that they could hand over Álvares, the reason the priest and the other Portuguese knew to flee was because this plot had been ‘revealed to them.’\textsuperscript{57} Apparently, the Europeans had both enemies and friends in Sugala, and it seems likely that many if not all of those friends were faithful Christian converts—who may even have been attending mass in a church which had remained operational

\textsuperscript{54} Schurhammer pointed out that Ataíde could have sent Sardinha to buy supplies in Moro only after the north monsoon had finished in April (Schurhammer, \textit{Francis Xavier}. 162).

\textsuperscript{55} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India}. Volume 8. 273.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. 273-274.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 273.
clear up to the moment the Europeans rescued the sacred objects from it and fled for their lives. The people of Sugala, apparently, were the agents of their own religious identities not only in the face of oppositional pressure from outside but also in the face of at least indirect oppositional pressure from their own apostate ruler.

Castanheda’s account of apostasy in Sugala focuses specifically on the behaviour of the chief because, to the sixteenth-century Europeans whose narratives provide the only documentary evidence from Maluku during this time period, the religion of the chief determined the religious identity of an entire village. Thus, ‘Christian villages’ were those whose rulers were Christian, regardless of whether anyone else was or not, and the apostasy of a ruler was sufficient to create a ‘renegade village.’ Consequently, in the case of Sugala, a critical reading of the source material provides verification that at least some people in the village resisted the pressure to apostatise from Christianity during the first Moro Rebellion. This is not the case when considering Mamuya during this same period of time since it was the village’s chief himself who repeatedly defied all attempts to force him into denying his newly adopted faith.

Castanheda recorded that Katarabumi’s armada worked its way through Moro, subjecting every village which had formerly belonged to Ternate and Jailolo, ‘the final one having the name of Mamuya.’ Dom João of Mamuya was one of the first two people from Moro to request baptism, and he clearly demonstrated that he was not

58 As will be discussed in chapter five, this concept rested upon the idea of cuius regio, eius religio [‘whose region, his religion’] which had emerged in Europe from the 1555 Peace of Augsburg and which specified ‘that the faith of a people was controlled by and large by the desires of [their] prince (’William T. Cavanaugh, “A Fire Strong Enough to Consum the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State,” Modern Theology 11, no. 4, 1995: 400).

59 Interestingly, this included the village of Sugala (Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 274). Clearly, rebelling against Christianity and declaring oneself an enemy of the Portuguese was not enough to prevent one’s village being conquered by Jailolo/Ternate. Consequently, it would be in error to see Luís Correa’s apostasy as an attempt to realign himself with his former patrons or to protect his village. Nevertheless, volunteering to hand over Francisco Álvares may have been intended as just such a protective measure. Castanheda’s narrative indicates that Sugala made this offer after ‘the main village had been captured’ and then suggests that, when the cleric had escaped, Sugala was the next village Katarabumi conquered (Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 273).

60 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 274.
interested in capitulating to the ruler of Jailolo, an act which he equated with renouncing his new faith. Most of the people of Mamuya, though many of them may have shared his religion, apparently did not share in their ruler’s defiance; influenced perhaps by the fact that every other village in the area had already willingly submitted or had been conquered after a difficult siege, they surrendered themselves to the King of Jailolo ‘upon his arrival.’

Dom João, however, ‘put himself in defence with some Portuguese whom he had, most of those who were in Moro being there, and they had made a stockade with some artillery, where Dom João stationed himself with them, and with some of his worthies, to defend himself or die.’ It is impossible to know how many Portuguese may have been with the sangaji and his men, but they did him very little good: as soon as Katarabumi launched an attack on the stockade, ‘without fighting, [they] immediately surrendered to him.’

Dom João and his remaining supporters held off the advancing forces all that day; however, as night fell, it became obvious that they could not resist much longer. Consequently, the chief reached a rather drastic conclusion: he did not want for his wife, out of her weakness, to be forced by the king to deny her faith in Christ, and likewise for his children who were small, and therefore he killed her and them, and after destroying his treasures, to prevent the king from getting them, he would have killed himself if his relatives and friends had not restrained him by force, which greatly offended him, and he begged them to let him do it because it would be better to kill himself than to fall into the power of a tyrant as cruel as the king.

This final act the chief’s companions did not allow but instead surrendered the stockade to Katarabumi. The conqueror, appalled when he heard of what had happened, questioned Dom João, who defended his actions in overtly Christian terms, asserting that

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61 Ataíde recorded that, when bribes did not work, Katarabumi assaulted the defiant villages ‘with a great armada by sea and many people by land’; if this was not enough, he resorted to torching both rice fields and palm groves in order to force a surrender (Ataíde, “Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537.” 347-348).

62 Castanheda, História do Descobrimento e Conquista da Índia. Volume 8. 274.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.
his family ‘would be better off in the glory of paradise, where he believed they must have

gone, than in such an evil land.’\footnote{Ibid. 275.} For his part, Katarabumi ‘wanted to make [Dom João]
become a Muslim, but he never could despite threatening him with the death which he did

not fear, nor did the king administer it to him because of the pleading of his relatives.’\footnote{Ibid.}

The examples of both Dom João of Mamuya and the unnamed Christians of Sugala—along with countless others—demonstrate that apostasy from Christianity was

not a universal phenomenon during the first ‘Moro Rebellion.’ Some converts, upon first

hearing that the political winds were shifting, immediately abandoned their Christian

identities. Others showed greater caution in deciding how they should react. For

example, a contingent of Moro Christians who travelled back to Ternate with Diogo

Sardinha ostensibly to aid their Portuguese allies, in reality went ‘to see if the Ternatans

had rebelled because they could not believe it. When they found that they had, they

became heathens and fought against the Portuguese.’\footnote{Ibid. 271.} Some who had adopted

Christianity plotted to hand over to his enemies the priest labouring in their midst whilst

others in the same village helped this same priest to preserve the sacred ornaments from

their church by escaping. Some converts quietly persisted in their new-found faith,

making it difficult to learn much about them from documentary sources. Others boldly

and dramatically defended Christianity, earning themselves a prominent place in letters

and chronicles. And this variety of responses shows that the Moro Christians, despite

being acted upon, were still very much capable of acting, remaining the agents in charge

of their own religious identities.

Of course, this is not to downplay the very real force brought to bear upon many

of the Moro Christians. The Tobarus whom the King of Jailolo sent to attack the
Christians in Moro and Gamkonora\textsuperscript{69} inevitably inflicted real harm, including death.

Afonso de Castro, after all, described them as ‘a very warlike and treasonous people, who kill no one without using treason’; consequently, people would give these ‘great persecutors of the Christians’ whatever they desired, ‘without being able to oppose them.’\textsuperscript{70} Moreover, attacks by Katarabumi’s armada were no small thing, including not only armed assaults but the destruction of garden plots and orchards, the lifeblood of Moro’s economy.\textsuperscript{71} Beyond re-establishing these villages as vassals of Jailolo/Ternate, one goal of these cumulative attacks on Moro genuinely seems to have been an attempt to ‘force’ the Christian converts into apostasy. Dom João of Mamuya, for example, had murdered his family specifically because he ‘did not want for his wife, out of her weakness, to be forced by the king to deny her faith in Christ.’\textsuperscript{72} Part of submitting to Katarabumi’s forces, apparently, included a renunciation of Christianity, imposed by the threat of death.\textsuperscript{73}

Though all the formerly Christian villages in Moro were eventually conquered and therefore must have submitted to this demand,\textsuperscript{74} there is some indication that not all Christians did. Tristão de Ataíde in his account of these events reported that a number of converts in the Moro area refused either to submit to the political authority of Jailolo/Ternate or to renounce their Christianity. For example, ‘a large part of the relatives of this Dom João [of Mamuya], and many others, who are very good Christians,

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. 266. Gamkonora, not to be confused with the volcano which now bears that name, lay on the west coast of the north Halmahera peninsula, south of Cawa, and therefore beyond the region known as Morotia (Platenkamp, "Tobelo, Moro, Ternate," 65). Its ruler was a man named Liliato, both a vassal and a brother-in-law to King Hairun of Ternate (Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II," 444). The presence of Christians in Gamkonora indicates that the new faith had spread beyond the Moro cultural area.


\textsuperscript{71} Ataíde, "Outra Carta de Tristão de Ataíde a El-Rei d. João III. Malaca, 15 de Novembro de 1537." 347-348.

\textsuperscript{72} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8.} 274.

\textsuperscript{73} Dom João was threatened with death if he did not agree to become a Muslim (ibid. 275). We can assume that similar threats were employed by Katarabumi on those people who refused to renounce Christianity.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
fled and settled in the mountains, and they are awaiting succour.\(^\text{75}\) In addition, Ataíde claimed that a large contingent of ‘nobles, all Christians’ had fled from Sugala ‘into a high mountain,’ where they had built a stronghold ‘in order not to surrender to any Muslims.’ ‘Beyond these,’ he added, ‘many others have fled to the mountains, and they do not submit to anyone except to Your Highness, and they are very good Christians.’\(^\text{76}\) Fleeing to a stronghold seems to have been a common tactic employed by the peoples of Maluku during this time period, including by Christians who faced persecution.\(^\text{77}\) Another way in which the Christians of Moro reacted to persecution and threats to both life and livelihood needs to be discussed. Inevitably, many converts surrendered and submitted to Katarabumi because they simply felt they had to. They may even have publicly renounced Christianity. This does not necessarily mean, however, that they ceased to be Christians. Secretly maintaining a religious identity was also a feasible response when outside forces sought to impose their will on particular populations. Tristão de Ataíde claimed that this was exactly what had happened in Moro. Speaking specifically of village chiefs (the Europeans always being most concerned with rulers), he assured the King of Portugal that, ‘although they submit to the kings of Maluku, [they] have not become Muslims but still are all Christians.’\(^\text{78}\) This assurance obviously was somewhat more hopeful than accurate—the ruler of Sugala, for example, had conscientiously turned against Christianity—but it probably represented reality for a certain segment of the converts in Moro, including many of the chiefs. They may have submitted with their mouths, but in their heads many of them still identified themselves as Christians.

\(^{76}\) Ibid. 349.  
\(^{77}\) ‘The typical defensive response of the weaker party was therefore to escape capture by fading away into the forest and waiting for the invading force to tire of plunder and to depart’ (Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, 2 vols., vol. 1: The Lands below the Winds. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. 122).  
If Ataíde’s assessment of the situation was correct, one would expect that both Christians who had fled to mountain retreats and those who had maintained ‘underground’ identities would have quickly re-established ties with the Portuguese fort once physical threats designed to force people to renounce Christianity were removed. Indeed, this appears to have been precisely what happened, though no documents directly address the issue. António Galvão replaced Tristão de Ataíde as captain of Ternate in October 1536 and immediately began restoring peace to the Maluku region. This he did by first offering a settlement to the four Muslim kings of Maluku—Ternate’s Dayalo and Jailolo’s Katarabumi having been joined in an alliance by King Mir of Tidore and King Laudim of Bacan— who were in Tidore preparing to drive the Portuguese out of the region. When this peace settlement was rejected, Galvão led a force of about 400 men against what the author of the *Treatise* claimed, almost certainly as an exaggeration, to be 40,000 to 50,000 ‘opponents.’ King Dayalo was fatally wounded in the first land assault, which allowed the Portuguese to take the Tidorese fort. A later attack on the three remaining kings and their forces resulted in the death of Katarabumi’s first cousin. Though their side held the numerical advantage, the kings of Jailolo and Bacan ‘considered this and the death of Dayalo as such an evil omen that each one left for his own kingdom.’ Thereafter Galvão was able to negotiate a peace settlement with King Mir, relying heavily on help from Kaicil Rade, the king’s brother. Peace with Jailolo and Bacan was reached when these two kings, ‘seeing themselves distressed and

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79 *A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 249.
80 Ibid. 233.
81 Ibid. 240.
82 Ibid. 249.
83 Ibid. 252. Elsewhere the author noted that Dayalo’s death was always kept hidden ‘because he was the first king of Maluku to die by iron, and they considered it a great dishonour and infamy because in those parts it is not customary to wound the king, let alone kill him; and they consider this a law because they consider it a holy and sacred thing’ (*A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 254). In addition, Anthony Reid has pointed out that an initial success in battle often demonstrated ‘that the supernatural forces which decided such things were on one’s side’ (Reid, *The Lands below the Winds*. 123).
84 *A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 257-265.
ashamed’ when it was revealed that they had repeatedly refused to duel with Galvão,\(^85\) ‘took counsel with their people, in which they came out in the end wanting peace.’\(^86\)

Interestingly, the establishment of friendly relations with all four Muslim kings of Maluku did not automatically result in friendly relations with all the villages in Moro. The author of the *Treatise* recorded that, sometime after the Portuguese had made peace with the allied kings, it had been necessary for Galvão to send an armada to Moro ‘to calm it down and to transport foodstuffs.’\(^87\) Though the image generated by this passage is that of an entire area still in tumult, Castanheda clarified that the difficulty was actually with ‘certain villages which were in rebellion there.’\(^88\) Though these villages remained unnamed and unidentified, as is the case in most reports on Moro, hints emerge from this second account which help to ascertain the likely religious identity of the villages. First of all, Castanheda recorded that João Freire, the captain of the armada, was accompanied in his endeavour ‘to return [these villages] to obedience to the fort,’ by Kaicil Rade,\(^89\) the King of Tidore’s brother who had not only helped broker the peace between his brother and Galvão but who had then also helped prevent the kings of Bacan and Jailolo devastating Maluku’s spice-producing islands as a means of punishing the Portuguese.\(^90\) Because of Kaicil Rade’s influence, ‘some of those villages immediately surrendered to João Freire.’\(^91\) It seems most likely, considering that Tidore had never ruled over these villages in Moro, that the Tidorese noble’s presence had an impact on these ‘rebel’ villages not so much because of his status as King Mir’s brother but because the rebel

\(^{85}\) Resolving a larger conflict by means of combat between individual champions was a common occurrence in the Malay Archipelago (Reid, *The Lands below the Winds*. 124).

\(^{86}\) *A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 268.

\(^{87}\) Ibid. 274.

\(^{88}\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*. Volume 8. 417.

\(^{89}\) Ibid.

\(^{90}\) ‘Whilst António Galvão was preparing to go against Jailolo and Bacan, Kaicil Rade came to him very covertly and told him to be advised not to depart from that port because the king [of Tidore] was being importuned by the kings of Bacan and Jailolo and by his own council that they should cut down the clove trees, destroy all the islands, and depopulate and abandon them, as had earlier been agreed to, that they might avenge the death of King Dayalo’ (*A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 264).

\(^{91}\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*. Volume 8. 417.
villages were Muslim and Kaicil Rade was a Muslim of some importance. This inference that the villages which had refused to submit to Portuguese authority were specifically Muslim in identity gains further support from a second piece of evidence: Castanheda, in discussing the other villages which did not immediately surrender to the team of Freire and Rade, recorded that these villages ‘defended themselves, and there was fighting there between the Muslims and the Portuguese.’ By not distinguishing between the two sets of ‘rebel’ villages, the text here clearly implies that all these villages were indeed Muslim in identity. Consequently, the text also indirectly confirms that, as predicted, the previously Christian villages which had been intimidated into rebelling against the Portuguese had stopped doing so once the persecutions had ceased.

Submitting to the political authority of the Portuguese fort was not sufficient to restore the status quo, however; Christians in Moro who had renounced their faith under duress once again had to actively seek out interactions with Christianity and to draw its influence back into their lands. This influence had begun to return to Moro in a major way when António Galvão chose a priest in Ternate to captain an armada sent to the area to deal with another rebellion against the fort. This rebellion was led by a local ‘captain’—no name or origin is given—who, beyond stirring up the land, commanded upon the sea a large armada with which he had become so haughty that he said that he

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92 Ibid.
93 The two documents which speak of this expedition disagree on the identity of the priest who headed it. Castanheda’s chronicle identifies the captain as ‘a cleric of the mass whose name was Fernão Vinagre’ (ibid. 458), but the Treatise identifies him as ‘Vicar Francisco Álvares Pinheiro’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 300). It is impossible to know which of these two accounts is the more accurate on this point, but, if the author of the Treatise, presumed to have been Galvão himself, was correct, this priest/captain may well have been the same Francisco Álvares who had laboured in Moro with Simão Vaz and who had escaped from the village of Sugala in 1536 after having been warned that some people there wished to hand him over to King Katarabumi (Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 273). However, the possibility that Castanheda may have been correct in this detail is supported by the Treatise itself, which confirms that there was ‘a Father, who is called Fernão Vinagre’ in Ternate during Galvão’s captaincy (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 290).
94 The Treatise does indicate that this man had been launching attacks ‘from the largest city in Moro’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 300). As discussed in note 42 above, this would have been Tolo, but then the phrasing leaves open the possibility that he was only using Tolo as a base.
would sail to Ternate,'\textsuperscript{95} presumably to attack the Portuguese. ‘When António Galvão became aware of this,’ Castanheda recorded, ‘he immediately sent there an armada of \textit{korakora} which the King of Tidore had lent him.'\textsuperscript{96} This armada, captained by the Portuguese priest and including 40 Portuguese soldiers, managed to kill the rebel leader ‘along with one of his brothers and many others, and the other people fled.'\textsuperscript{97} This was a significant victory for the Europeans because this indigenous leader had attracted considerable attention, and not just in Moro. The author of the \textit{Treatise} indicated that ‘[a]ll the kings and peoples had their eye on him and followed him like a holy thing, supporting his party in secret.'\textsuperscript{98} This interest derived, at least in part, from the fact that he was a charismatic and powerful figure ‘whom they said could not be killed by iron because he carried a bracelet or certain relic.'\textsuperscript{99} Nevertheless, in battle with the Portuguese the supposedly impossible happened: he and his brother were both slain by a single musket shot. The shock of this occurrence was apparently deep and lasting. ‘The death of this duke caused such great surprise in the land that all submitted and never again rebelled’ during Galvão’s captaincy.\textsuperscript{100} Castanheda’s account includes an interesting note about what happened next: ‘And after this victory, [the priest] pacified the land, and he rebaptised many who had been Christian, and he christened many new ones.'\textsuperscript{101}

Castanheda’s report of these baptisms—and, indeed, of this entire enterprise—does not really seem to support the assertion above that, after the first Moro rebellion, indigenous actors once again had to actively draw Christian influence back into their lands. In fact, the actors responsible for the re-emergence of Christianity in Moro all

\textsuperscript{95} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8}. 458.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{A Treatise on the Moluccas}. 300.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid. Belief in magical charms which could convey invincibility was common throughout Southeast Asia; moreover, ‘[i]nvulnerability to blades and bullets was the mark of a great warrior’ (Reid, \textit{The Lands below the Winds}. 125-157).
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{A Treatise on the Moluccas}. 302.
\textsuperscript{101} Castanheda, \textit{Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8}. 458.
seem to have been the Portuguese. Galvão ordered the armada, intentionally choosing a
priest as its captain. Portuguese soldiers ended the rebellion by slaying its leader, in the
wake of which event the priest/captain ‘pacified’ the land and then resumed performing
baptisms in Moro. Indeed, Galvão himself happily took credit for these conversions,
claiming that he was responsible for the baptisms ‘of the people from…Moro and
Morotai.' Writing centuries later, Schurhammer similarly identified the same agent:
‘Under Galvão the fleets of Freyre [Freire] and Vinagre\textsuperscript{103} had regained most of the lost
villages and new conversions had been made.’\textsuperscript{104} These ‘lost villages,’ according to
Schurhammer’s understanding, had resulted from the ‘defections of the Moro
Christians.’\textsuperscript{105} Consequently, he elsewhere stated that the expedition of João Freire had
‘regained most of the villages that had apostatized for Ternate and Christendom’\textsuperscript{106}—this
despite the fact that, as discussed above, the evidence all indicates that the ‘rebel’ villages
subdued by Freire were Muslim in identity, and, as will be discussed below, the people
both rebaptised and baptised during the visit of the second expedition were anything but
‘lost.’ This is an important point because Schurhammer’s erroneous retelling of events
clearly suggests that the Europeans re-imposed Christianity on defiant apostates by means
of well-equipped military fleets. Visser likewise identified the Portuguese as the sole
actors in the re-Christianisation of Moro during this period, praising Galvão’s ‘benevolent
leadership’ for the restoration of the Christian churches, ‘which, during the time of the
uprising, had been totally or partially destroyed.’\textsuperscript{107} In this endeavour, the Portuguese
captain was ‘supported mightily by Father Fernão Vinagre,’\textsuperscript{108} whom Visser, following

\textsuperscript{102} Galvão, \textit{The Discoveries of the World}. 208.
\textsuperscript{103} See note 93 above.
\textsuperscript{104} Schurhammer, \textit{Francis Xavier}. 164.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. 128. Note that the syntax of the English translation here is quite confusing. The phrase should have been translated, ‘regained for Ternate and Christendom most of the villages that had apostatized.’
\textsuperscript{107} Visser, \textit{Onder Portugeesch-Spaansche Vlag}.17
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.18. Note that Visser here identifies the captain-priest as Vinagre, as per Castanheda, and not as Francisco Álvares Pinheiro, as per the \textit{Treatise}. 
Sousa’s account, credited with having ‘conquered the rebels’ in Moro before he ‘laid down his weaponry to convert many to belief in Christ as a missionary.’ Many former Christians in Moro, according to Visser, ‘were reconciled to the church by Fernão Vinagre whilst many heathens were ready to be baptised. Thus Catholicism was restored on those distant shores thanks primarily to the successful cooperation between the captain and the missionary.’ Similarly, Villiers saw the re-emergence of Christian communities in Moro as a purely Portuguese undertaking, cynically implying moreover that these conversions meant little to the peoples of Moro: ‘some new and probably only temporary conversions had been made as a result of the initiatives of...António Galvão.’

In reality, people from Moro played a central role in every one of these events, and their actions informed and shaped the decisions made by Galvão and the other Portuguese. Writers from the sixteenth century onward have missed this point because it did not match their preconceptions of how things must have worked. A careful reading of the source texts, however, reveals an abundance of evidence to establish this claim. For example, Castanheda mentioned that Galvão sent the armada to Moro after he had ‘learnt that a captain [there] was rebelling,’ emphasising the Portuguese captain’s actions whilst completely overlooking the people who must have provided him with this information. The author of the Treatise, though never explicitly naming Galvão’s informants, did include sufficient details for one to conclude who they must have been. In one paragraph the writer, presumed to have been Galvão himself, recorded a visit to Ternate made by a

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109 Sousa, Oriente Conquistado. 363.
110 Visser, Onder Portugeesch-Spaansche Vlag.18
111 Ibid.18
112 Villiers, "Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios," 598, emphasis added. Note that Villiers’s assessment of these conversions as imposed and superficial also applies in this passage to those which occurred during the captaincy of Jorge de Castro, Galvão’s successor, which conversions will be discussed below.
number of rulers from Morotia who had been ‘assaulted’ on their way by this ‘lord and captain.’ ‘This man in the past had caused much harm and had not improved any in the present, nor did he ever want to accept peace at all, but rather he had given chase to these people with his armada.’ The very next paragraph then begins this way: ‘This having been made known to António Galvão, he decided to send there to seek for [this captain].’ Clearly, though he may have had some wind of this situation previous to the arrival of the Moro chiefs—remember that this man was widely known to have been a troublemaker in the past—they were his current sources of information, the ones who, having been assaulted and chased by this ‘rebel’ on their way to the fort, were able to tell the Portuguese captain what the enemy was up to at present, apparently providing the details which spurred Galvão to send an armada to the area. These rulers were so linked to this decision and subsequent action, in fact, that the author of the Treatise recorded that Galvão ‘prepared an armada’ ‘[w]ith these same people who had come,’ adding almost as an afterthought that ‘other Portuguese’ had also been included.

Importantly, the Treatise also indirectly reveals that these visiting chiefs from Moro were largely responsible for Galvão’s having selected a priest to serve as captain of this particular armada. The cleric had been chosen not only because he was the man ‘to be the captain of a good squadron’ but also because ‘he had to go there, forced to administer the water of baptism [forçado ha dar aguoa do bautismo].’ The text offers really only one possibility when it comes to trying to determine the source of this compulsion: the visiting Moro chiefs consisted of some recently baptised Christians and

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113 As the editor of the Treatise pointed out, the phrasing here is actually unclear, calling Morotia ‘islands beyond Moro [ilhas aalem do Moro]’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 300). This description sounds more like one fitting Morotai, which name therefore the author possibly meant to write.
114 Ibid. 300.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.

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others who had come to the fort ‘to become such.' And so, with the war ended, the usual pattern of conversion in Maluku during the sixteenth century emerged once again. Indigenous chiefs, interested in embracing Christianity—quite possibly because some of them had already been baptised once before—must have earlier travelled to Ternate to receive the sacrament of Christian conversion. Then these same converts returned, bringing with them other rulers whose purpose in travelling was to secure baptism for themselves and, most likely, for their people as well. Consequently, they must have been the ones who ‘forced’ the situation, leading Galvão to send a priest to the area to administer baptism. Understanding the true nature of the situation, one could even hypothesise that these chiefs shared vivid stories about the ‘rebel’ captain and the threat he supposedly posed to the fort in part because they knew that such information would further compel the Portuguese to send a fleet to Moro—something Galvão might not have been willing to do at this point simply to provide the services of a priest—though this possibility must remain speculative. Regardless, the Moro chiefs succeeded beautifully in getting what they wanted. They formed the core of an armada captained by a priest who, after he had overseen the slaying of their enemy, ‘rebaptised many who had been Christian [and] christened many new ones’ in their lands. The people of Moro did not submit to this rite as a consequence of the Portuguese having ‘pacified the land’; rather, the Portuguese ended up pacifying the land in large part because people from

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119 Ibid.
120 The text mentions that this return occurred after the situation in Maluku was ‘more calm’ and António Galvão had sent ‘to provide themselves with foodstuffs’ but does not make it clear whether any causal relationship is to be understood or if this comment merely establishes a particular timeframe (ibid. 300). Regardless, it would appear that the recently baptised chiefs who returned to Ternate after this event must have travelled there the first time before any Portuguese ships had sailed to Moro in search of provisions. 121 Ironically, Schurhammer claimed that the priest/captain from this expedition had ‘won back many apostates’ (Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 128). This phrasing makes it sound as though the Portuguese were in a struggle to re-impose their religion on reluctant former Christians. There was indeed a struggle, as suggested by the use of the word ‘forced’ in this narrative, but the struggle was on the part of the Moro people to compel a priest to travel back to their lands; in this regard, they ‘won.’ 122 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 458. 123 Ibid.
Moro had actively sought the rite of Christian conversion in Ternate, successfully
drawing Christian influence—and Portuguese military might—back into their villages.
What has repeatedly been seen as evidence of European-driven mission was in actuality a
response to indigenous initiative.

Very few details exist from which to construct a reliable narrative of the spread of
Christianity in Moro during the next decade or so, but the few details which are available
suggest that cycles of conversion and apostasy similar to those discussed above continued
to characterise the religious landscape: the peoples of Moro actively, often aggressively,
adopted the new religion, and on occasion some of them just as aggressively cast it off, in
some cases to take it up again when circumstances changed. The common thread
throughout this tangled and patchy narrative, however, remains the fact that it was
indigenous actors who ultimately controlled and directed the spread of Christianity in the
Moro area.

The re-Christianisation of Moro which began at the insistence of the people during
the captaincy of António Galvão (1536-1539) seems to have accelerated during the time
of his successor, Jorge de Castro (1539-1544). Rebelo recorded that, ‘[w]hilst Dom Jorge
de Castro was captain, they were finally able to baptise throughout Moro, from Bissoa
onward.’124 This village of Bissoa, located near the northernmost tip of Halmahera
(called Cape Bissoa) before one rounded the point into Moro proper, had not been so
friendly to Christians a few years earlier. In fact, when Tristão de Ataíde first received
word of trouble during the earlier Moro rebellion, he had

sent an armed sampan in which certain Portuguese travelled to transport
foodstuffs. And when these were there in a village called Bissoa, they were
all killed by the natives, who captured the sampan along with all its artillery
and all the arms which it had been carrying. And the same was done to

124 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 399.
other Portuguese who were travelling from Moro to Ternate in another ship. Consequently, one gets the sense from Rebelo’s short statement above that conversion had truly become widespread in Moro, extending geographically to the limits of the cultural area and reaching peoples who had clearly been antagonistic before. Nevertheless, as had happened during the first florescence of Christianity in the area, the situation eventually deteriorated for some of the new converts.

Rebelo provided this assessment of what occurred:

As the devil was opposed to this work, he ordained, by means of the little doctrine which they still had and our bad example and the fort’s tribulations, for them to rebel on the side of the Jailolo, and, burning the churches, they handed over to him [the King of Jailolo] some Portuguese, whom he caused to be impaled on the beach.

In typical fashion, some of these ‘rebels’ seem to have returned to the faith at a later, unspecified point in time, but similar cycles of apostasy and rebellion occurred during one or possibly both of Bernaldim de Sousa’s captaincies (1547-1549, 1550-1552): ‘Whilst Bernaldim de Sousa was captain, they [the people of Moro] rebelled again in favour of this same Jailolo, and they killed three Portuguese whom they had; and they burnt the churches.’

As was the case with the first Moro rebellion, these later cycles of apostasy occurred during periods of political upheaval and intense persecution. As indicated by the statements from Rebelo above—that former Christians rebelled on the side of Jailolo—King Katarabumi once again drove much of the instability in Moro as he waged an almost continuous war against the Portuguese from the beginning of Jorge de Castro’s captaincy until Jailolo was finally destroyed in March 1551. As part of this war, Jailolo and its surrogates resumed intense

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126 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 399.
127 Ibid.
persecution of the Moro Christians. In this Jailolo was once again supported by Castilians, this time in the form of an expedition under the command of Ruy López de Villalobos, which had arrived in Sugala, a ‘village of renegades which supported Jailolo,’ in 1544.128 These persecutions were so great that, by November 1543, Castro sent Gemes Lobo, the Portuguese fleet commander, to the area ‘with two pinnaces and with 60 men to support the Christians of Moro.’129 These men the captain had commanded to ‘destroy a village or two which made war against the Christians of Moro.’130 Rebelo (who had arrived in Maluku only a short time earlier131 and who was actually a soldier in this fleet132) noted that this village was Galela, located on ‘a large and deep freshwater lake’ of the same name,133 the inhabitants of which Castro identified as Muslims.134 One can presume that other Muslim and formerly Christian villages like Galela and Sugala also engaged in attacks on Christians.135 In fact, Francis Xavier, who would arrive in the area during the time period under consideration, suggested that the Moro he experienced was characterised by endemic warfare.136 Adding to this state of chaos were the inland Tobarus, allies of Jailolo, which formed another source of difficulty for the Moro Christians, most likely, as had happened earlier, at Katarabumi’s urging. Xavier described them as ‘heathens, who obtain all their happiness in killing those they can, and they say that many times they kill their

130 Ibid. 393-394.
131 Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 150.
133 Ibid. 426-427.
135 Though he was writing specifically about trouble with Galela, Rebelo’s comment that ‘some Christian villages’ had ‘certain neighbours, renegades and Muslims,’ who were waging war on them suggests what was likely a common pattern (Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 426).
own children or wives when they do not find anyone to kill. These,’ he added, ‘kill many Christians.’ One of the purposes of all this persecution, perhaps even the main purpose, was to intimidate Christian converts into denying their new faith. Rebelo recorded that the King of Jailolo ‘had committed much evil against our people, battling against the villages of Moro, making them Muslims when they were Christians.’ In short, the external forces which converged on the Moro Christians during the 1540s were nearly identical to those which they had experienced during the first Moro rebellion in the middle of the 1530s.

Nevertheless, evidence exists that once again Christian converts and those interested in Christianity remained in charge of their religious identities. In fact, it seems that the people of Moro were more successfully defiant in the face of persecution this time than they had been a decade earlier. Whereas Katarabumi had previously been able to conquer all of the Christian villages in the area, requiring them at least to deny their religious identities vocally and thus effectively checking the spread of the foreign faith, during the persecutions which rained down upon Moro in the 1540s, the local Christians seem to have held their own quite well. As mentioned above, some villages did ‘rebel on the side of the Jailolo…, burning the churches.’ In addition, some villages surrendered under pressure. One of these was Tolo, which Katarabumi ‘troubled, with promises on one hand and travails and wars on the other, until it surrendered and most of the people with it,’ but it is important to note that, once again, responses to outside pressure varied, and clearly not all of the people in Tolo relinquished their religious identities. As had happened in the past, those who did not probably

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137 Ibid. 37.
138 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 231.
139 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 399.
140 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 336, emphasis added.
retreated inland to await a change in the political situation. Moreover, many Christian villages successfully maintained their Christian identity throughout this period. Mamuya was one of these. The village remained sufficiently independent, in fact, that in 1548 Francisco Palha reported that Dom João of Mamuya had been successfully assisting many other villages in Moro from succumbing to the pressure to surrender and become Muslim.\textsuperscript{141} In addition, when Gemes Lobo sailed to Moro to attack Galela, he had with him two pinnaces, one of which he left anchored in Mamuya ‘with guards,’ and then he took with him ‘the remaining Portuguese and many local Christians’ to besiege the Muslim stronghold.\textsuperscript{142} Clearly Mamuya, and probably other Christian villages in the vicinity, were able to supply a large number of fighting men.

In fact, there is every indication that the number of Christians in Moro remained quite large during this time and most likely must have been growing. In 1547, in the midst of all of the fighting and persecution, Baltasar Veloso estimated that there were ‘more than 40,000’ Christians in the area.\textsuperscript{143} Veloso had lived in Maluku since 1525, was married to a local Christian, and, as Schurhammer explained, ‘[n]o one knew the language, the land, its inhabitants or their customs better than he’;\textsuperscript{144} consequently, this estimate carries a fair weight of reliability. Though Xavier did not repeat—or correct—this figure of 40,000 Christians, the following year he reported that he had visited ‘many Christian villages’ in the islands of Moro, so many that it had required three months for him to visit them

\textsuperscript{141} Palha, “Carta de Francisco Palha a El-Rei D. João III: Goa, 20 de Novembro de 1548.” 574.
\textsuperscript{142} Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 426.
\textsuperscript{144} Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 151.
Clearly, when Rebelo recorded that baptisms were occurring ‘throughout Moro’ during Jorge de Castro’s captaincy, this must have been an accurate assessment. It is unclear when the secular priest sent by Galvão at the head of an armada visited Moro, but it could not have been sooner than 1537; therefore, relying on Veloso’s 1547 estimate, the number of Christians in the area increased from almost none—anyone who had denied the faith during the first Moro rebellion had to be re-baptised to be considered Christian—to 40,000 in a decade or less, an average of around 4,000 converts per year. Considering that the Jesuit, Juan de Beira, later recorded having once baptised ‘more than 5,000 souls in one day and more than 15,000 souls in one week’ in the Moro area, one need not suppose that conversions in Moro occurred evenly over the course of these ten years; there may well have been periods of intensive conversion. Nevertheless, it appears from Rebelo’s comment that many of the 40,000 Christians estimated to have been in Moro at this time converted during the captaincy of Jorge de Castro (1539-1544). This means that, at the very same time that Katarabumi was directing anti-Christian persecutions in Moro and some former converts were apostatising and ‘burning the churches,’ some of the people of Moro must have been requesting and receiving enough visits from one or more secular priests in Ternate to supply baptism to tens of thousands of converts.

146 Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 399.
149 Gonçalves claimed that Xavier himself ‘christened between 20,000 and 25,000 souls’ in Moro (Gonçalves, “Apostolado de Francisco Xavier nas Molucas.” 506). No corroborating support for this claim exists in any of the Jesuit’s own letters. The only christenings Xavier reported performing in Moro were those of ‘many infants who needed baptising’ (Xavier, “Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to his Fellow Jesuits in Rome. Cochin, January 20, 1548.” 36). Based on Veloso’s estimate that the Moro Christians numbered only 40,000 at this time, Gonçalves’s numbers here must be seen as wild exaggerations. Clearly, most of these 40,000 converts had been baptised before the Jesuit’s arrival. On this point, Xavier reported that the
This presents a much more complex picture than simply seeing consecutive waves of conversion and apostasy and suggests, once again, the degree to which the people of Moro and not outside forces controlled the spread of Christianity throughout the area since both conversion and apostasy were occurring at the same time and in the face of roughly identical circumstances. This point can be further illustrated by briefly considering one specific example, the village of Tolo. As mentioned above, at some point around August 1549 Tolo had surrendered to Jailolo, though not all of the villagers supported these events. Sometime before this, however, Christian Tolo had experienced an apostasy of another kind. In a letter written to the King of Portugal in 1547, Baltasar Veloso claimed that the Christians of Moro were being overwhelmed by Muslims ‘without their having any support from this fort.’ He then demonstrated his point with the following anecdote, which clarifies what Rebelo may have meant when he ascribed the decision of some to turn away from Christianity to ‘our bad behaviour’: ‘Jordão de Freitas [Captain of Maluku from 1544-1547] sent one of his relatives there, to look for foodstuffs, and he went to stay in a place which is called Tolo, which would have 4,000 Christian souls; and his company with them was such that 1,000 of those who had been Christian converted to Islam.’ Thus, on at least two different occasions, the people of Tolo were faced with identical circumstances and yet made very different choices, some maintaining their Christian identity,

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150 Writing in February 1550, Juan de Beira noted that Jailolo had captured Tolo ‘[a]bout six months ago’ (Beira, "Fr. Juan de Beira SJ to the Frs. Ignatius Loyola SJ, Rome, and Simão Rodrigues SJ, Portugal. Maluku [Ternate], February 13, 1550." 78).
151 Veloso, "Carta de Baltasar Veloso a El-Rei: Molucas, 20 de Março de 1547." 520.
152 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 399.
153 Veloso, "Carta de Baltasar Veloso a El-Rei: Molucas, 20 de Março de 1547." 520.
others abandoning it, and still others adopting a different identity as Muslims. In every situation, however, the engine driving religious change in Moro was the indigenous peoples themselves.

That the people of Moro and not the Portuguese directed the spread of Christianity in the area can also be seen from what occurred after the fall of Jailolo. Because of the trouble which King Katarabumi had caused to both the Portuguese and the indigenous Christians, the former had attempted to capture Jailolo twice before, in 1539 and in 1545, but to no avail. Finally, Captain Bernaldim de Sousa (1547-1549, 1550-1552) succeeded in laying a successful siege against Jailolo, which surrendered toward the end of March 1551.

Thereafter Katarabumi no longer bore the title of a king and was required to pay tribute to the Portuguese fort. Rebelo’s perception of these events led him to claim that Sousa was responsible for the fact that ‘the lost credit of the Portuguese reputation was restored in those parts’ and, focussing on the role played by the Portuguese captain, that ‘thus he also restored the Christianity of Moro.’ In reality, though Sousa’s conquest of Jailolo clearly opened up the way for the ‘restoration’ of Christianity in Moro, the actual driving force lay elsewhere. Soon after Katarabumi’s defeat, Juan de Beira, a Jesuit priest, travelled to Moro, to the village of Tolo, which, as discussed above, had earlier apostatised under pressure from Jailolo. ‘As soon as I arrived at the village,’ Beira reported,

‘the ruler [Dom Tristão de Ataíde] came to me, and thus everyone came to me with very great delight from the mountains where they had been

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154 Schurhammer, Francis Xavier, 164.
155 Rebelo claimed that this siege began on 28 December 1550 (Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 241). Fróis stated that it lasted for three months (Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by order of Fr. Baltasar Dias SJ, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Malacca, November 19, 1556.” 187). Consequently, Jailolo must have surrendered around the end of March 1551.
157 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 263.
concealed and afflicted, and day and night they would not let me sleep because of their songs of delight, both great and small. They made me a very tall house close to the church.\textsuperscript{158}

These people from Tolo formed a part of the 15,000 which Beira baptised in a single week, the remainder being people from the surrounding area ‘who had been heathens.’\textsuperscript{159} The people from Tolo and environs were not the only ones who actively took advantage of having a priest in the area, however. Beira recorded that

others from other islands then came to me and wanted to be Christians, and they spoke diverse languages; and, as I was alone, I summoned the companions [four additional Jesuits who were then in Ternate], both for those who were local as well as for those who were coming from many regions, who \textit{were coming to volunteer to be Christians}.\textsuperscript{160}

People from across the entire Moro region—as indicated by the diversity of the languages spoken—when they learnt that the main persecutor of the Christians had been defeated and that a priest was available, flocked to Tolo, inundating Beira and necessitating the summoning of additional clerics. By 1561, Rebelo was able to claim that Rau and Morotai were ‘totally peopled by Christians’ and that ‘[on] the other side of the point of Bissoa [meaning Morotia] the coast is heavily populated with large and good villages along the beach, and nearly all of them are Christian.’\textsuperscript{161} Ten years after the fall of Jailolo, the people of Moro had almost entirely embraced Christianity—not because Bernaldim de Sousa or any other Portuguese had ‘restored’ it, not even because they had been targeted for conversion, but because once again they had actively sought out opportunities to convert. Despite the establishment of a Jesuit mission in Maluku after Xavier’s visit in 1546-1547, mission work flourished in Moro only when people in the area

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid. 110.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. 110, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{161} Rebelo, ”Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 331.
demanded it. One further example will reinforce this point. Sometime in the mid 1550s, the Jesuit, Afonso de Castro, notified a fellow member of the Society who was in Moro, Nicolau Nunes, of two villages in the area which were requesting the visit of a priest. ‘Previously these people had been enemies of the Christians and had waged very cruel war against them, and abhorred the Portuguese in a great way and had no communication with them.’\footnote{Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by order of Fr. Baltasar Dias SJ, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Malacca, November 19, 1556.” 198-199.} Now, however, they had independently made the decision to convert. Drawn by their requests, Nunes travelled there to teach them, and then ‘one month later Brother Melchior de Figueredo went there, and he baptised both villages with great contentment in the Lord.’\footnote{Ibid. 199.} Without doubt, these indigenous actors were the true directors of the Moro mission, mapping the spread of Christianity with their demands.

The spread of Christianity in Moro remained an indigenous-driven phenomenon even when, on occasion, villages were conquered militarily by the Europeans and their allies from other areas of the Maluku archipelago. Two examples from the 1540s illustrate the reality of this claim where the defeated people were, on the one hand, Muslims and, on the other hand, apostate Christians. In the first case, the Portuguese simply did not try to impose a new religious identity on those they conquered. In the latter case, they did somewhat, but this attempt was completely ineffectual. Military defeat did not create a population pliant enough to accept Christianity against the will of the people. Even if the Europeans had wanted to force their religion on the indigenous people—something virtually never attempted—it simply could not be done.

The first example concerns the conquest of Galela, which has already been discussed briefly above. In short, Galela was a Muslim village which had been engaged
in persecuting the local Christians. Consequently, when Captain Jorge de Castro sent Gemes Lobo, the Portuguese fleet commander, to the Moro area in November 1543 so that the Castilians who were rumoured to be near Mindanao would ‘find it all occupied with our ships’ in case they ‘might go visit there,’ he also instructed the Portuguese to ‘destroy a village or two which had been making war against the Christians of Moro’ in order ‘to sustain the people of Moro who were vested with us.’ Having first visited the Christian villages of Tolo and Mamuya, Lobo then turned to attacking Galela and two neighbouring villages. This initial assault, which was launched with a few Portuguese and ‘many local Christians,’ failed; indigenous forces and their Portuguese allies managed to enter the village, ‘but the Muslims cast them out,’ inflicting a number of wounds. Twenty-seven injured Portuguese, including Gabriel Rebelo, the future historian, were sent back to the fort whilst Lobo waited for reinforcements from Ternate. Castro claimed that he then sent men who were feared by the people of Galela, and this alone was enough to turn the tide; still suffering from the first assault and facing a second one by ‘the principal persons from the fort,’ the people ‘emptied the village and two others, all of which were burnt’ by the Portuguese and the local Christians.

What happened next is extremely significant. Castro recorded that Gemes Lobo sent some wounded men to the fort in a pinnace and then fell sick due to an illness that affected ‘all of the people’ at that time of year. Rebelo reported simply that the reinforcements returned to the fort, and ‘Gemes Lobo still remained in the same pinnace,
awaiting the arrival of the Castilians.'\footnote{Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 203-204.} Importantly, no further interactions with the people of Galela are mentioned. Having punished them by torching their village, the Portuguese left them alone. If the popular image of the Portuguese in the East, ‘with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other,’\footnote{Visser, Onder Portugeesch-Spaansche Vlag. 28.} held true here, this would have been the perfect opportunity to attempt to impose Christianity on a dispirited and defeated population, but, not only did this not happen in Galela following its destruction toward the end of 1543, it did not happen anywhere else. The ‘rebel’ Muslim villages which earlier surrendered to João Freire and Kaicil Rade, for example, did not have Christianity forced upon them, either. In fact, a thorough review of all relevant primary source materials reveals that at no time during the period of Portuguese presence did any Muslim or heathen villages experience an attempt at forced Christianisation by the Portuguese, even when the people had experienced military defeat—and, as in the case of Galela, even when they were known persecutors of Christian converts.

In contrast to everything which has been written above about the spread of Christianity in Moro, the Portuguese did indeed try to impose Christianity on a village of apostate Christians. Tolo, as briefly mentioned earlier, had surrendered to Muslim Jailolo around August 1549, though not all of Tolo’s inhabitants had agreed with this decision.\footnote{Rebelo recorded that Tolo had ‘surrendered and most of the people with it’ (Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 336). Though he never explained what happened to the people who did not surrender, they may have fled to an interior stronghold, or, as will be discussed in chapter five, relocated to a more Christian-friendly village.} Rebelo recorded that, because it was the largest and one of the best-defended villages in the entire Maluku region and the main village in Moro, King Katarabumi of Jailolo had plied Tolo ‘with promises on one hand and trouble and wars on the other’ until he had secured its surrender.\footnote{Ibid. 336.} According to Juan de Beira, amongst the trouble Katarabumi had caused the people of Tolo before their surrender was capturing a ‘chief ruler of the...
Christians along with his wife and children. Presumably this was Dom Tristão de Ataíde, the village’s chief. As was typically the case, the portion of the people who then surrendered to Jailolo also renounced the Christian faith, being identified by Beira both as ‘bad Christians’ and, with even greater clarity, as ‘Christians who had apostatised.’ Thereafter King Katarabumi made Tolo his chief stronghold in the Moro area, ‘fortifying it with palisades and artillery in the weak places.’ Snares of various kinds were used to block the roads into the village, and, in addition to assistance from the Muslims of Jailolo, the apostates of Tolo ‘had with them also many other people who had come from the mountains to help them’—possibly the much-feared Tobarus infamous for targeting Christians on their war raids—all of which led them to consider themselves ‘very secure from the Portuguese and protected thus from all other people.

Nevertheless, Christovão de Sá, the Portuguese captain in Ternate, sent a joint European/indigenous force to reclaim the village sometime in 1550.

King Hairun of Ternate, who had travelled as part of the armada and who considered formerly Christian Tolo to be one of his vassal villages, led the attempt to win back at least the political allegiance of the apostates. According to Rebelo, ‘he went to speak with those inside, demanding that they return to the Portuguese and to him, and that they would forgive them, and other things of this sort, for they had love and forgiveness.’ Those inside the heavily fortified village did not respond favourably, however: ‘they replied, both to him and to the Portuguese, very haughtily and

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181 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 402.
183 Sá served as Captain of Maluku from 1549 until 1550. Tolo apostatised in 1549, but, because Beira’s letter which was written in February 1550 makes no mention of the assault against the village, we can assume that it had not happened yet.
184 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 336.
discourteously, that they did not want to, showing them their backsides, because of which the king left from there very annoyed because he could not fight with them and revenge their offence.\textsuperscript{185} Rebelo—who was in Maluku at this time and may well have been one of the Portuguese soldiers sent as part of this military force—placed his narrative emphasis on Hairun’s words, but he also indicated that at least some Portuguese had accompanied the king during his attempt to convince the people of Tolo to return. That these Europeans did not remain silent is implied by the fact that the people of Tolo ‘replied, both to [Hairun] and to the Portuguese.’\textsuperscript{186} As further evidence, Luís Fróis recorded that Sá had specifically sent the Portuguese to the Tolo ‘to demand that they return.’\textsuperscript{187} Indeed, Juan de Beira—who did not sail to Tolo with this armada but who was there before difficulties broke out in 1549\textsuperscript{188} and was the first Jesuit to return to the village two years later\textsuperscript{189}—insisted that the Portuguese who accompanied King Hairun had their own agenda, making demands for a reconciliation of a more spiritual nature: ‘As soon as the Portuguese arrived close to their village, they ordered them to become Christians again [les requirieron que se tornasen christianos].’\textsuperscript{190} Unsurprisingly, this request was also flatly rejected by the apostates:

they responded that they did not want to, and that they had arms and forces to resist them. The Christians [meaning the Portuguese] replied (because in truth they had few forces in comparison to the apostates) that they did not have greater arms than faith and the truth which was God, which would assist them: to which nevertheless they repeated that they did not want to be Christians.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. 109.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid. 108.
\textsuperscript{191} Beira, “Fr. Juan de Beira SJ to the Jesuits of Coimbra. Cochin, February 7, 1553.” 126-127.
This was the sole occasion recorded in any sixteenth-century text in which Europeans attempted to impose Christianity on people in the Moro area, and it clearly was not much of a success.

Interestingly, it appears that this lacklustre attempt to reclaim the apostate village of Moro may not have been entirely European driven, either. Beira’s accounts make it seem so by attributing Captain Christovão de Sá as the actor behind the creation of the armada: ‘the captain of Maluku sent there a captain with some Portuguese, and the King of Maluku with many people.’ Rebelo’s accounts, however, reveal a more complex situation. After mentioning that most of the people in Tolo had surrendered the village to the King of Jailolo, Rebelo identified the person who first planned to sail to Tolo: ‘Seeing this [the surrender of Tolo], the King of Ternate asked Christovão de Sá, he being captain, for permission to go wage war on them, which he did not give him because of bad counsel.’ This must have surprised Hairun because he had already formed an armada specifically for this enterprise, an armada which he then proceeded to disband. Afterward, however, the Portuguese captain ‘changed his mind and asked the king to go, and for this he gave him one Luis Paiva, with 25 men, to help him.’ This annoyed Hairun, and ‘he accepted the voyage grudgingly because they had not done it for him when he had wanted’ and because, with his original armada disbanded, he had to sail with what few vessels he could pull together in a short time and a very small number of Portuguese soldiers to assist him. Clearly, both the Portuguese captain and the King of Ternate played important roles in eventually sending an armada to reclaim apostate Tolo, but in every instance—the decision to make the attempt, the assembling of the armada—King Hairun’s actions preceded and informed Christovão de Sá’s. In addition, the 26

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193 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 336.
194 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 402.
195 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 336.
196 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II.” 402.
Portuguese who accompanied the king—some of whom would demand that the former Christians in Tolo return to the faith—were there to aid Hairun and his men, not the other way around. Consequently, the armada which sailed from Ternate to Tolo must be seen as an indigenous enterprise, one conceived, constructed, commanded, and primarily carried out by indigenous actors. Ironically, then, when the Europeans attempted to impose Christianity on the people of Tolo, they did so more as aides than as actors.

As already mentioned, the demand that the apostates re-embrace Christianity was completely ineffectual, and, due to Tolo’s strong defences and the armada’s relative weakness, no one was in a position to even try to enforce it. This balance of power in Tolo quickly altered, however. Rebelo recorded that, having been rebuffed and treated rudely, the men of the armada withdrew to a small island where they could prepare some food. The Portuguese were just getting ready to grill a goat which they had brought when ‘much ash began to fall on them, because of which they were forced to flee from there with the poor billygoat intact and grill it further away, and they went almost the whole day without eating.’¹⁹⁷ Mt Mamuya, which lay almost due west of Tolo, had begun to erupt, an event which lasted ‘for three continual days.’¹⁹⁸ The village of Tolo and its defences were devastated:

This knocked down many of their houses and many of the fruit and palm trees; it covered their village such that, where there had been many large boulders in the roads, because of which it had been very difficult to travel, everything became level and flat like the palm of one’s hand, without a boulder or rock in sight, or any indication of where they had been, because all of the spaces had been filled in, and more than filled in; some wanted to say that all of the houses had fallen down except for some which had belonged to Fathers from the Society.¹⁹⁹

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¹⁹⁷ Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 336-337.
¹⁹⁸ Ibid. 337.
¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Beira confirmed this last point: ‘A thing which was very worthy of wonder was that, all the houses and trees having fallen with this earthquake and tempest, the only thing remaining standing was a very poor house in which the Fathers and Brothers of our Society used to lodge, which was in a high place close to the church, which they had earlier knocked down, cutting apart its images’ (Beira, “Fr. Juan de Beira SJ to the Jesuits of Coimbra. Cochin, February 7, 1553.” 127).
After the eruption and the accompanying earthquakes had ended, ‘the king, being aware of the miracle without believing in its cause, was persuaded by the Portuguese to go and attack the village,’ which, despite the destruction, was still protected by its stockades and ‘defended by those from Jailolo and by natives.’

Hairun ordered Luís Paíva and one of his brothers to lead the attack on one part of the stronghold whilst he and about 500 men attacked a second part. The walls were breached, and the king captured the village, ‘in which there would have been about 1,500 fighting men, not counting those who were assisting.’ From this point forward, Hairun and his forces from Ternate took the upper hand, and ‘they killed and captured many [though] they did not take any spoils because the village had been destroyed.’

The Portuguese, it would seem, were finally in a position where they could impose their will on the defeated apostates of Tolo, forcibly re-Christianising them according to their earlier demand. In fact, in Rebelo’s opinion, it should not even have required force; the former Christians, by their own logic, should have willingly returned to the faith ‘because, as they see it, they will obey the victors, because this is their principle, to ally themselves with the most powerful.’ It did not work this way, however. As Rebelo reported, ‘[t]hey were defeated but not contrite, and they considered what had happened [the eruption] as a consequence of their sins without confessing them or even repenting of them.’

Rather than return to Christianity, the people of Tolo chose to retreat into the jungle, denying the Portuguese any opportunity to try to re-impose Christianity upon them—though it should be pointed out that no contemporary text suggests that the Europeans had any actual plans to do so beyond making the initial

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200 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 338.
201 Ibid.
202 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 403.
203 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I." 338.
204 Ibid.
205 Ibid.
206 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 404.
demand. Even complete military defeat was insufficient to create a people pliant enough to embrace Christianity against their will.

This point reinforces the assertion that in all cases the spread of Christianity in Moro remained an indigenous-directed phenomenon. Conversions occurred when, where, and how local populations determined. The eventual re-Christianisation of Tolo underscores this point. Having demonstrated that they could not be forced into resuming a Christian identity, the apostates in Tolo made it rather clear upon what condition they might change their minds. Writing six years after the fact but basing his assessment on what two Jesuits who had laboured in Tolo had told him, Luís Fróis explained that the ‘obstinacy’ of the apostates had been ‘because they saw the Muslim King of Jailolo, who had treated them tyrannically and persecuted them, still standing and not destroyed.’ In short, the people of Moro had originally begun embracing Christianity only after they had asked for and received an assurance from Tristão de Ataíde that they would be protected from their enemies, and they still expected the Portuguese to fulfil the promise the captain had made. Sensing this reality, Juan de Beira, after mentioning Jailolo’s persecution of Christians and specifically the capture of Tolo’s chief, had predicted in 1550 that Katarabumi’s eventual defeat would cause ‘many who left due to fear [to] come to our faith.’ For that reason, according to Rebelo, the apostates ‘remained alone, sheltered in the jungle’ until after the Portuguese had successfully fulfilled this implicit demand, capturing Jailolo toward the end of March 1551 and reducing King Katarabumi to a Portuguese vassal. Shortly after this time, Juan de Beira, returned to Tolo. The condition for reconversion which the apostates had placed upon the Portuguese having

207 The Jesuits were Juan de Beira and Nicolau Nunes. See Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by order of Fr. Baltasar Dias SJ, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Malacca, November 19, 1556.” 184.
208 Ibid. 193.
been met, Beira’s description of what then happened in Tolo makes it abundantly clear who actually directed the Jesuit mission: those who the previous year had thwarted all attempts to get them to return to Christianity came to me with very great delight from the mountains where they had been concealed and afflicted, and day and night they would not let me sleep because of their songs of delight, both great and small. They made me a very tall house close to the church. … Very many were converted, both they and many others who had been heathens: more than 5,000 souls in one day and more than 15,000 souls in one week.\textsuperscript{212}

The people who came to request baptism were so numerous that ‘it seemed thus to the ruler and to everyone that many Fathers from our Congregation would be needed,’ and so, at the request of Dom Tristão de Ataíde, the chief of Tolo, Beira travelled to India ‘to summon Fathers.’\textsuperscript{213}

Like the initial wave of conversion in Moro, the widespread adoption of Christianity which occurred throughout the region during the decade of relative peace and stability subsequent to the fall of Jailolo did not happen because Jesuit missionaries were already in the area; the missionaries came because people who were already converting had sent for them. The situation had not been much different, however, during the intervening eighteen years of chaos. Conversions, when they took place, were the result of people actively seeking to embrace the new faith, not the consequence of colonial power or intimidation. Similarly, when Christianity as a social movement struggled, though this contraction may well have been in response to powerful outside forces, local Christians demonstrated the control they maintained over their religious identities by picking from amongst a range of strategies. Some genuinely apostatised, though many of them later changed their minds. Some merely pretended to apostatise until the situation improved. Others probably waited it out before picking a side. Some died in defence of


\textsuperscript{213} Ibid. 110.
the faith. Others fled into mountain strongholds. Some actually chose to convert in the midst of dangerous political upheavals. Ironically, events which have been perceived as demonstrations of European control over the processes of conversion—such as the fleet which António Galvão sent to Moro with a priest as its captain—were in reality responses to indigenous initiatives. The Portuguese destruction of Jailolo in 1551 can also be seen in this light. The Europeans undoubtedly had their own reasons for wanting to see an end to King Katarabumi’s power in the region, but a major one was the desire to satisfy Moro’s Christians. Bernaldim de Sousa and his soldiers did not defeat King Katarabumi and his people so that the Jesuits could go evangelise a people who had been impressed by a demonstration of Portuguese military might; rather, the renegade Christians of Moro had by their actions demanded Katarabumi’s defeat as a condition of their willingness to continue in the faith, and the Portuguese felt obligated to comply.

Rebelo stated that the fall of Jailolo had restored the military reputation of the Portuguese and had also restored Christianity in Moro (Rebelo, “Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto I.” 263).
Previous chapters have demonstrated how conversion to Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku began in each affected area as a consequence of indigenous initiative and how the processes of religious change continued to be controlled by local populations even in the face of difficult social and political conflicts. The introduction of European missionaries into the region did nothing to alter this basic pattern of indigenous-controlled Christianisation which had been in place since before their arrival. Though the Society members never saw it this way, the Maluku Jesuit Mission was at best an appendage to a nameless, comparatively unstructured, but much larger local mission effort which, because it was not of their making, remained outside their direct control. As a consequence, European missionaries were alternately overwhelmed by demands for their services or almost completely ignored, depending on the shifting tides of local circumstances. When in demand, they found themselves serving at the direction of indigenous Christians and would-be converts who quite clearly saw the missionaries as having come to assist them. A chronological overview of Christianisation in sixteenth-century Ambon illustrates these points.

European contact with the peoples of Ambon dated to the very first Portuguese expedition to Maluku—the island having been the first stop in the region of António de Abreu and Francisco Serrão in 1512—but this location became important to the Portuguese not as a target for mission activity but rather as the gathering spot and subsequent departure point for their ships. Dependent on the annual monsoon, vessels could make the journey from Maluku to Malacca (and points beyond) only once per year.
around the middle of May, and Ambon Island was in the perfect location to catch these important winds. Ships from both northern and southern Maluku would therefore converge on Ambon during February each year and ‘hibernate’ until the monsoonal change arrived. Initially, the Portuguese would congregate off the north coast of Ambon’s Hitu Peninsula, near the Muslim village of Hitu, but this location proved dangerous because of a lack of safe anchorages. Ambon, however, possessed a much safer location for ships to congregate, a deep and sheltered bay which extended far into the centre of the island, effectively splitting it into two peninsulas, Hitu on the north and Leitimor on the south. The Hituese considered themselves vassals of the Portuguese king and even had on their beach a very tall padrão or stone monument ‘on which was carved the arms of the kings of Portugal.’ Consequently, they ‘revealed to the Portuguese that port on the other coast, the Cove by name, a port secure from all the winds, in which ten galleons could be together, with their launches on shore, secure.’ Their ships now safely utilising Ambon Bay, the Portuguese came into contact with a number of heathen villages along the inner coast. By all accounts, people from these villages became the very first indigenous Christians in Ambon.

Most accounts state that these first conversions occurred during the captaincy of António Galvão (1536-1540). Sebastião Gonçalves noted that, ‘during the time of António Galvão, captain of Ternate and a man of great zeal and virtue, Christianity began to flourish in Ambon.’ Likewise, the Treatise, presumed to have been composed by Galvão himself, includes in a list of those who converted to Christianity during this time.

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2 Jacobs, “General Introduction.” 8*.
3 Ibid. 9*.
4 Hitu was the most powerful polity in Ambon and shared close ties both with Ternate and with one or more Islamic sultanates on Java’s north coast (Heuken, "Catholic Converts in the Moluccas." 32).
5 Wessels, De geschiedenis der R.K. missie in Amboina. 4.
6 “A Capitania de Amboino.” 195.
7 Ibid. 195-196.
‘the Ambonese which are 70 or 80 leagues to the south’ of Ternate.\(^9\) The first conversions in Ambon which Castanheda mentioned occurred after Galvão had sent a joint Portuguese/indigenous military fleet to the area in order to halt the arrival of an armada of junks from Java and elsewhere which had sailed to Maluku in order to buy cloves in exchange for firearms.\(^\text{10}\) Generally, later historians have relied upon Castanheda’s account in their narratives.\(^\text{11}\)

There is strong indication, however, that conversion in Ambon began more than a decade earlier, during the captaincy of António de Brito (1522-1525), and therefore even before the first conversions in Moro under Tristão de Ataíde (1533-1536). This claim comes from the *Relação dos Feitos Eroicos*, a history composed by an unknown author who resided in Ambon during the captaincy of Sancho de Vasconcelos (1572-1591\(^\text{12}\))—a work which remained virtually unknown until its publication in the 1950s. The *Relação* records that, when the people of Hitu showed the Portuguese the existence of Ambon Bay, they ‘gave’ to the Europeans two vassal villages on the bay, Hatiwi and Tawiri, ‘for the servicing and management of their galleons.’\(^\text{13}\) Then, ‘because the Portuguese continued to hibernate there for three or four months, these people of Hatiwi and Tawiri developed great friendship with them, and they became Christians, and they no longer wanted to recognise the Hituese as their superiors.’\(^\text{14}\) The author of the *Relação* gave no further information about how exactly these people came to be Christian, but examples from elsewhere—as well as the fact that there were no missionaries in Ambon at this point, and the only lay priests in the area would have been secular clergy passing through

\(^9\) *A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 298.
\(^\text{10}\) Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*. Volume 8. 459.
\(^\text{12}\) Unlike the ‘Captains of Maluku’ in Ternate and later Tidore who typically served for only three years, Vasconcelos functioned as the Captain of Ambon for nearly 20 years (Villiers, “The Estado de India in South East Asia.” 176, note 129).
\(^\text{13}\) *A Capitania de Amboino.* 196.
\(^\text{14}\) Ibid.
aboard ship—suggests that the people of Hatiwi and Tawiri came to embrace Christian identities as a consequence of growing familiarity with the religion and its practitioners. This process may have been influenced by the fact that Portuguese men who repeatedly found themselves in Ambon married local women.\(^\text{15}\)

Though the Relação supplies no date for when these first conversions must have occurred, it does indicate that it could have been no later than during the captaincy of António de Brito. Specifically, the text relates how the Hituese requested Brito\(^\text{16}\) to send military aid to assist them when threatened by an armada from Seram.\(^\text{17}\) The approximately 20 Portuguese sent in response succeeded in first helping and then offending the people of Hitu, who consequently severed all ties with the Portuguese crown and instead made themselves vassals to the Queen of Jepara.\(^\text{18}\) With the political situation altered, Hitu desired the return of its former vassals on Ambon Bay,

and they sent a message to the people of Hatiwi and Tawiri, who had been supplying the Portuguese with all their needs, telling them that they should give them obedience without delay because they were their vassals, and thus also they should no longer serve the Portuguese, who were Christians, and no longer allow them on their beaches.\(^\text{19}\)

Conversion to Christianity had clearly already occurred in these two villages before this event because ‘the people of Hatiwi and Tawiri responded that they had lived with the Portuguese for many years, and that they were already Christians, that they must never abandon them, that they would even fulfil everything with their lives, and sacrifice them, for the sake of the Portuguese.\(^\text{20}\) Though this series of events may perhaps have wrapped

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) The name actually appears as Foão de Brito, but, as no other Captain of Maluku was called anything even remotely close to this, António de Brito must have been meant.

\(^{17}\) The very large island north and east of Ambon.

\(^{18}\) "A Capitania de Amboino." 197-199. Jepara was an important Islamic trading port on the north coast of Java and an avowed enemy of the Portuguese. Its ruler had led an expedition against Portuguese Malacca in 1513 (M.C. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, 45). The sixteenth-century Queen of Jepara was Ratu Kalinyamat, but the reference to her here is anachronistic since she did not begin her rule until 1549.

\(^{19}\) "A Capitania de Amboino." 200.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
up after Brito had finished his captaincy, it clearly started during his time in Maluku, and therefore, at the very latest, at least some people in the Ambonese villages of Hatiwi and Tawiri had come to identify themselves as Christians sometime before 1525.

Understanding this foundation of early Christian presence and assimilation along the north coast of Ambon Bay in the early 1520s provides valuable context for the event in the late 1530s which most authors imply was the beginning of Christian conversion in Ambon. The most detailed retelling of this event comes from Castanheda. According to his chronicle, the background to conversion was a skirmish between ‘a large armada of junks from Java, Banda, Macassar, and Ambon,’ which intended to sail north in hopes of trading arms for cloves, and another one, captained by Diogo Lopes de Azevedo, which Captain Galvão sent to intercept the former.\(^{21}\) Azevedo, assisted by 40 Portuguese and 400 indigenous fighting men from both Ternate and Tidore, happened upon his target in Ambon and vanquished it, killing many and putting the rest to flight. Afterward, ‘he sailed along the coast [of Ambon] with his armada, and he established treaties throughout it, and those who did not want one willingly he caused to receive it by force.’\(^{22}\) Sometime after this display of military might, people from ‘three main villages which are called Hatiwi, Amantelo, and Nusaniwi,’ all located along Ambon Bay, approached Azevedo and asked ‘with great insistence’ to be christened, which request the Portuguese captain caused to be fulfilled.\(^{23}\) Based on the juxtaposition of events, this request for christening appears as a direct consequence of Portuguese military subjugation. Placed back into context, however, one can see the actions of people who were already friendly with the Portuguese and already familiar with Christianity, having lived in proximity to Europeans and local Christian converts for more than ten years. A portion of Hatiwi had

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\(^{22}\) Ibid. 459.

\(^{23}\) Ibid. The *História* also makes reference to this fleet, which, according to its very brief account, was sent to Ambon to ‘pacify’ it (*A Treatise on the Moluccas*. 274).
already embraced the faith. Here then emerges the standard pattern of conversion in Maluku, with informed indigenous actors appropriating Christian identities and demanding baptism ‘with great insistence.’

As was the case everywhere else in the region, it was these early conversions which drew the first Catholic priests into the Ambon area. In fact, it was specifically because of the Ambonese Christians that the first Jesuit missionary felt compelled to travel to Maluku and there establish the Jesuit mission. Francis Xavier, the founder of the mission, had originally planned to sail to Macassar, drawn by rumours which he had heard concerning the conversions of the Kings of Suppa and Siang. When he got to Malacca, however, he discovered that ‘the news from there [Macassar] was not as good as we had thought’ and therefore concluded at the end of 1545 to instead ‘go to Ambon, where there are many Christians and much disposition for more conversions.’ In a very real way, then, the Society of Jesus did not select Maluku as a field of endeavour, nor did it target the people of Maluku for conversion; had there been no Christians in Ambon already, the co-founder of the Society would never have travelled there, and there would have been no Maluku Jesuit Mission. Instead, when Xavier arrived, he found that Christianity had spread so much in Ambon that there were already seven Christian villages in the island, each one of which he visited. He must have been adequately impressed because, after spending more than three months there, he concluded that, based

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24 During the time of Jordão de Freitas (1544-1547), this captain sent a vicar named Ruy Vaz to serve the Ambon Christians, but he never actually arrived, being shipwrecked on the way (Schurhammer, Francis Xavier, 72).
25 See chapter two for a discussion of the conversion of these two kings.
26 This claim of bad news relating to the Christians in Macassar seems odd. As late as 1548, the Christian King of Suppa was still wondering why the Portuguese had not sent him the priests whom António Paiva had promised him (Manuel Pinto, "Emmanuelis Pinto ad Episcopum Goanum," in Selectae Indiarum Epistolae. Florence: Typographia a Ss. Conceptione, 1887. 41).
on the disposition of the land, he had hopes ‘that this entire island will become Christian.’ As a result, Xavier wrote before departing Ambon to summon additional Jesuits who might open up a mission, the first lot of them arriving the following year. Once again, the indigenous people of Maluku had succeeded in attracting Catholic priests into their lands.

Significantly, the nature of Xavier’s visit to Ambon underscores the degree to which conversion to Christianity in the island remained an indigenous enterprise. Specifically, in his letters the only people whom he reported having baptised were the children of Christians who had gone without christening ‘due to the lack of Fathers.’ After having visited the seven Christian villages and having baptised their children, Xavier spent no time whatsoever attempting to preach to any of the island’s non-Christians. Instead, he returned to the Portuguese anchorage and spent the bulk of his three months in Ambon working with the Europeans who had arrived there in seven Portuguese ships, ‘preaching on Sundays and feast days, in continual confessions, and in making friendships and visiting the ships.’ Tellingly, the only indigenous people whom the most-famous Jesuit missionary ever to visit Ambon seems to have had much contact with were those who had already embraced Christianity.

From this earliest period, then, one can see the basic pattern of Christianisation in Ambon taking shape: on their own, indigenous peoples actively sought out opportunities to interact with the new faith and then aggressively appropriated Christian identities by demanding baptism. These new Christians repeatedly drew Catholic priests into their villages. Once there, the priests primarily served the needs of these converts, instructing

30 Xavier, "Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to his Fellow Jesuits in Rome. Cochin, January 20, 1548." 41.
31 Ibid. 34. See also: Xavier, "Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to the Jesuits in Europe. Ambon, May 10, 1546." 7.
Xavier, "Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to the Jesuits in India. Ambon, May 10, 1546." 16.
them, baptising their children, performing other sacraments, and advocating on their behalves. They would also travel out when possible to christen those who asked for it. Christianity continued to spread not through the direct actions of these missionaries—the Jesuits could not even maintain a constant presence in the island and, even when they were around, there were never more than a few of them, primarily confined to three or four main villages—but rather as other people became acquainted with the faith, mainly through interactions with local Christians. As was the case in Moro, political and military pressures influenced this process, times of extreme persecution seeing widespread apostasy and few or no conversions, times of peace and security seeing the restoration of Christian communities and waves of conversion which often overwhelmed any missionaries labouring in the area. Through all of this, the Jesuits served at the direction, and mercy, of the local populations.

During the first decade of Jesuit presence in Ambon (1546-1556), very few details of what was happening seem to have made it into any official letters or reports. The small amount of information which exists, however, clearly supports the pattern described above. For example, three years after his own sojourn in Ambon, Xavier reported that Nuno Ribeiro was ‘in a reasonably safe village populated by Christians,’ amongst whom he was having reasonable success.³³ If he was aware of any new conversions with which Ribeiro may have assisted, Xavier chose not to mention them, focussing instead on the priest’s labours with those who were already converted. That Ribeiro had indeed been performing baptisms in Ambon was confirmed by a 1550 report of his death, in which it was mentioned that he had ‘baptised 2,086 souls’ before dying, presumably from

poison.\textsuperscript{34} This increase in the number of Christians in Ambon succeeded in drawing additional clerics into the island. In 1554, Nicolau Nunes reported that António Fernandes was on his way to Ambon specifically ‘because many villages there are converted.’\textsuperscript{35} Fernandes arrived in the island on 22 February of the same year,\textsuperscript{36} accompanied by Vicente Pereira, a man hoping someday to be accepted into the Society of Jesus, as his sole European companion.\textsuperscript{37} Though a small number of Jesuits had passed through Ambon on their way to Malacca in the four-and-a-half years since the demise of Ribeiro, Fernandes was the first Jesuit to be stationed there since the former’s death and the first to set foot on the island during the previous two years.\textsuperscript{38} Nevertheless, he quickly discovered that, in Ambon, as in the rest of Maluku, the spread of Christianity did not really depend on the presence of a European missionary. He also learnt where his orders were to come from.

Having been in the island for only six days, Fernandes made an intriguing and rather revealing comment in his report: ‘They gave me news today that in a land near this one many want to become Christians, and it is necessary to baptise them because it is a large number of people.’\textsuperscript{39} ‘They,’ of course, were the Christians of Ambon amongst whom the Jesuit and his companion were living, and they clearly understood it to be their role to tell their newly arrived missionary where he needed to go, what labour he needed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Francisco Pérez, “Fr. Francisco Pérez SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Malacca, November 24, 1550,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 84.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 155.
\end{itemize}
to perform, and why they expected him to do it. The fact that the people in the other village had been prepared to embrace the new faith specifically during a time period when there was not a single cleric resident anywhere in the area coupled with the fact that the news was relayed to Fernandes by the local Christians strongly indicates that the local mission had been operating quite smoothly despite the absence of a priest. Whatever preaching or teaching these would-be converts had needed had been readily available to them since their village was located ‘amongst Christians.’

In Ambon for less than a week, Fernandes found himself in the midst of a mission over which he had little control: ‘I would also christen many others which I alone cannot sustain.’

Two weeks later, the Jesuit departed to fulfil the charge which had been laid upon him, travelling ‘upon the request of the people of the villages which wanted to become Christian.’ As reported by his companion, however, Fernandes did not make it. En route, their vessel sank, and the Brother drowned. Pereira, however, survived and was cast upon a rock, so wounded that, for the next three days, he had to crawl on all fours. He eventually was discovered by an Alifuru, ‘one of those who live in the jungle,’ who conducted him to a Christian village located on the coast. These people, Pereira insisted, were no ‘different to Portuguese who have been Christians their whole lives.’ Despite not yet being a missionary himself, he also commented on the missionary situation in Ambon: because he lacked any authority, he could not baptise, but he was

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
43 Broadly speaking, ‘Alifuru’ refers to an inhabitant of the mountainous interior of one of the islands in the Maluku region (Andaya, The World of Maluku, 65).
45 Ibid.
busy teaching the catechism; therefore, ‘I know to say to you that they cry and call for Fathers to teach them and baptise them.’

The next Jesuit to visit Ambon also discovered—though in a different way—the degree to which the spread of Christianity in the area was outside his control. Father Afonso de Castro arrived in the island early in 1555, replacing the drowned Fernandes. The situation he walked into, however, could hardly have been more different according to his account of it. Where the earlier Brother had been inundated within days of arrival with demands for baptism (and clear instructions from the local Christians that he provide the same), Castro, writing after having been in Ambon for three months, mentioned not a single request for baptism. In fact, the report of his labours makes no mention whatsoever of any potential converts in the island except the infant children of the Christians, and even these convert parents—30 villages of them, he claimed—seem rather different in Castro’s descriptions to those encountered the previous year by Fernandes and Pereira. Pereira, for example, described the Christians who took care of him after the shipwreck and the drowning of Fernandes as being distraught at his (and, quite likely, their) misfortune, raising a ‘lamentation’ and bringing him silk cloth to cover himself with and a chicken to eat, and he insisted, as already mentioned above, that they were indistinguishable from lifelong European Christians. Castro’s description of the local Christians makes them seem distant and surly by contrast. They were, he concluded, ‘evil and bad natured’ and therefore needed the constant supervision of a cleric. Because he could not be with all of them all the time, they then chose to ‘return to their vomit and live as heathens’ behind his back. The only ‘fruit’ he could make with

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46 Ibid.
them was baptising their infants because ‘nothing else can be done,’ and even then Castro did not indicate whether Christian parents had even sought out this service from him. These adults, after all, had ‘neither the ability nor the talent for the word of God to be sown in them.’\footnote{Ibid. 171.} ‘The harvest,’ he concluded, instead of being great, ‘is thus so full of tares.’\footnote{Ibid. 172.}

It is difficult to know why exactly the situation in Ambon seems to have changed so much in less than one year. Quite possibly, Castro was simply more negative in his assessment of it. Tellingly, his report does come across as mostly one large complaint. For example, he bemoaned the fact that he was alone in the island and too distant from any other Jesuits. This situation meant he was unable to engage in confession, leaving him feeling ‘very disconsolate.’\footnote{Ibid.} He was also not terribly impressed with the layout of the land: ‘The native places where the Christians live are very far inland and very far from the sea; they are very difficult to travel to, for the land is very harsh and so much so that shoes do not help.’\footnote{Ibid.} In addition, he complained that the island had no Portuguese military aid despite the fact that a Javanese fleet had come to the land to help a local Muslim figure ‘against the Christians, so that he might make them withdraw into apostasy.’\footnote{Ibid. 173.} Significantly, however, only one year earlier Fernandes had noted the exact same or very similar difficulties. He asked the rector of the Jesuit college in Goa, to whom he addressed his report, to consider the undesirability of having to go a whole year ‘without confessing and without communication from those of the society’ and pled with

him, ‘By the wounds of Christ, may you provide (me) with companions.’\textsuperscript{55} Though he did not specifically mention the inaccessibility of the Christian villages, Fernandes did mention other complications of living in the island, where only ‘God Our Lord knows the privations which we suffer here, beyond our labours.’\textsuperscript{56} Inadequate food seems to have been a distinct and constant problem ‘because, if we have to eat dinner, we do not sup (later)…, and there is a good deal of hunger because of the few provisions which come from Maluku.’\textsuperscript{57} In addition, Fernandes seems to have found the security situation no better than Castro did, reporting that in the island there were ‘many Muslims who destroy, kill, and capture them [the Christians], and they sell them [as slaves] and, when no one buys them, they cast them into the sea with stones about their necks, and they set their villages on fire.’\textsuperscript{58} The situation was so bad, he reported, that ‘the Christians cannot leave their houses as far as the beach, nor can I do securely enough that which I should because, being alone, I run the risk of their killing me every day.’\textsuperscript{59} Lastly, though more hopeful in his assessment of the situation than his replacement would be, Fernandes likewise found little Christian doctrine or practice amongst the converts in Ambon: ‘Here I found the churches destroyed, because after the death of Father Ribeiro no one came to this land to teach them. I am determined now to install in every village men and bailiffs to teach the doctrine.’\textsuperscript{60}

Since the actual details supplied by the two Jesuits only one year apart actually seem so similar, it appears likely that many of the differences in their descriptions can be attributed to differences in attitude. Castro, for example, appears pessimistic even when

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. 153.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. 154.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid. 155-156.
expressing what he may have understood to be requisite hopefulness: despite all the difficulties which he reported, he found himself

trusting, nonetheless, that, with the toil of many labourers expending their burning desires and fervours in a vineyard so rocky and so full of discord, our Lord will illuminate with the light of his grace the gloomy darkness of the hearts of these poor creatures of his, redeemed with his most precious blood, so that they may be made participants of the truth of the faith and also of eternal glory.61

Fernandes, on the other hand, appears genuinely optimistic in the face of nearly identical difficulties: ‘I feel that, by the goodness of God, much fruit will be made, and thus I will go forth sustaining until companions come that we may all grasp all there is to do. May Our Lord confirm us in his love.’62 Differences in attitude, however, cannot explain the single most glaring difference between the two missionaries’ letters. The simple fact remains that, where Fernandes reported being inundated with people who, beyond any efforts of his own, were requesting the sacrament of Christian conversion, Castro made no mention whatsoever of any people in Ambon who were willing to be baptised, either through his own efforts or through their own volition, except infants whose parents were already Christian. Despite his negative assessment that the local people had ‘neither the ability nor the talent for the word of God to be sown in them,’63 he surely would have made mention if any of these ill-prepared people had requested baptism, if only to inform the recipient of his report that he had felt it necessary to turn down the request.

The only conclusion, therefore, is that the situation relating to the local mission was different in early 1555 to what it had been in early 1554. For some reason or reasons, the numerous people who the year before had been clamouring for conversion—and whose desires, because of Fernandes’s drowning, had remained unfulfilled at that time—were no longer clamouring during Castro’s time in the island. Moreover, the local

Christians who had been insisting that the Jesuit Brother baptise their neighbours seem not only not to have been giving such orders to the Father who was sent to replace him but not really to have been paying him much heed at all. In short, where Pereira had found himself in the midst of people who ‘cry and call for Fathers to teach them and baptise them’ after the death of his travelling companion, one year later Castro heard no cries for baptism, no calls from the local Christians to be taught any doctrine. It is impossible to know exactly how to account for this change, of course. It may simply have been that Castro’s dislike for Ambon was so obvious from early on that it had put the island’s people off. In addition, as will be discussed, threats to physical wellbeing tended in large measure to alter local enthusiasm for Christianity amongst both heathens and converts, and it may have been that the Javanese fleet which Castro mentioned was in Ambon to assist the local Muslims in intimidating the Christian villages had helped to destroy any previous passion for converting. There may well have been other or additional reasons with which the Jesuit Father was unaware and which therefore did not leave any traces in his correspondence.

In any case, the simple fact remains that conversion in Ambon remained an indigenous-driven process. When Fernandes and Pereira arrived in the island, people were already prepared to accept baptism, the local Christians were aware of—and quite likely had been involved in—this situation, and therefore all parties involved could immediately make their respective requests. The Jesuit Brother and his companion had done nothing to create this situation and did little to contribute to it. Likewise, it seems that, when Castro arrived in the island, people who had previously been disposed to convert no longer felt so disposed. This alteration in the situation had once again

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64 Pereira, "Vicente Pereira to the Rector of the College, Goa. Ambon, March 29, 1554." 158.
65 See pages 197-199 for a discussion of how unenthusiastic Franciscan friars caused such a negative reaction in Ambon with their complaints that they were essentially driven from the island by the local people.
occurred outside anything which Castro may have consciously done, being the reality he
encountered upon his arrival in the island or at least the response he received from the
beginning of his stay there. Moreover, after three months in Ambon, he gave absolutely
no indication that he had done anything to change the situation or that there was anything
he could do. As was the case elsewhere in the Maluku region, indigenous actors, not
European missionaries, controlled the spread of Christianity throughout Ambon by
actively seeking out opportunities to convert or, as they did in the first part of 1555, by
just as actively ignoring those same opportunities, even when they had arrived in the
person of a previously much-desired Jesuit priest.

Remarkably, the mission situation in Ambon had altered dramatically by the first
part of the following year, and people in the island were once again clamouring for
baptism. As suggested above, it seems probable that this change of events was at least
partially informed by a change in the security situation for Christian converts. Having
witnessed local Muslims and Javanese allies intimidating the Ambonese Christians,
Afonso de Castro had written to the Portuguese captain in Ternate asking him to provide
aid for these converts. To this end, Jorge de Eça, a Portuguese naval captain who was
‘hibernating’ in the Bay of Ambon at this time, sent a frigate to Ternate, carrying the
Father’s plea and adding to it one of his own. In reply, the King of Ternate had supplied
three galleys and sent them to fight against the Javanese.66 The outcome of this military
encounter seems to have been in the favour of the Ternatans since no later Jesuit letters
make any more mention of this particular Javanese fleet. With a large part of the physical
threat withdrawn from the Christian villages—and possibly due to other unknown causes
as well, such as Castro’s departure—conversion in Ambon once again picked up.

Castro left the island sometime in 1555, and, since no surviving text records any
details of the remainder of his sojourn there, there is no way of knowing if he was around
to witness this change, but Father Juan de Beira and Brother Nicolau Nunes were. These
two Jesuits had left Ternate early in 1556 and travelled to Ambon to await the monsoon
which would conduct them to Malacca and eventually on to Goa, where they planned to
make a personal plea for more missionaries based on the numerous requests for
conversion which were occurring in Moro and other areas of Maluku at that time. In
Malacca, they were interviewed by Luís Fróis, whose superior had commanded him to
obtain information from them in order to provide the Jesuits in Portugal ‘some notice of
the Christians which are there.’ 67 According to Fróis’s report of what the two Jesuits
from Maluku had told him, indigenous-driven mission in Ambon was again at full
throttle. Specifically, during the approximately three months that they had spent in the
island, they had been overwhelmed, like Fernandes before them, with requests for
baptism. Consequently, Nunes had ‘christened one of the largest villages in these parts of
Ambon, and with it another smaller village.’ 68 The combined population of these villages
was ‘close to 1,300 souls, all their names written on a roll so that they are not forgotten;
and one vespers of an Apostle he baptised from morning until night, which would be close
to 700 souls, and he would have baptised more, except that, since he himself was writing
down the names, it did not give him time for more.’ 69 Once again, these were not
converts whom Nunes or Beira had sought out; rather, upon arriving in Ambon, they had
been confronted by a ‘multitude of people who asked…for baptism,’ 70 some of whom
may even have been those whom Fernandes was travelling to christen two years earlier.
Nunes did not even have to travel to these people, moreover. According to the account he

68 Ibid. 203. There are no clues in the account which might help to identify these villages.
69 Ibid. 204.
70 Ibid. 203.
left with Fróis, many of them came to him. In fact, just as he and Beira were about to depart for Malacca, ‘he received news of other people coming to him; and because he did not have time and the ship could not wait, he did not baptise them.’\textsuperscript{71} These people who flocked to where the Jesuits were to obtain baptism were in addition to ‘others from many diverse villages who were asking for the same thing.’\textsuperscript{72} The indigenous mission in Ambon was again fully operational. After ignoring a priest who had been in their midst for much of 1555, the local people now actively sought for and obtained baptism from clerics who had not been sent to them but who were merely passing through.

For the next three-and-a-half decades, religious change in Ambon followed this same pattern, periods of aggressive conversion alternating with periods when conversions dried up and local Christians withdrew from the faith or just became uninterested and uncooperative—all phenomena which remained firmly outside the control of the Jesuit missionaries and independent of their efforts. Virtually all the European clerics could do was to respond to whatever situation they found on the ground at any particular time, baptising and teaching when the desire and the demand existed, trying to encourage those already baptised when the local Christians allowed this, often doing nothing at all. Their attempts to alter the situation consisted primarily of nearly endless appeals to Portuguese authorities for a large enough military presence in Ambon to protect the Christians from persecution and to create a safe enough environment that others could rationally consider converting. When these appeals failed, as they often did, on occasion the Jesuits also engaged directly in attempts to defend and protect the Amboinese Christians, serving as night watchmen in the Christian villages, for example, and lending a hand in the construction of defences.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
After the very brief stay of Beira and Nunes, the next Jesuit to visit Ambon was Fernão de Osório, who, like the two before him, was merely passing through on his way to Malacca in 1559. He arrived at a time when the local processes of Christianisation were at a low point due to a war between Christians and Muslims which had been raging since 1558. Hatiwi, the village where he resided during his stay, had been under siege for three months and, before that, ‘had been fighting with all Ambon…and this all because they did not want to become Muslims.’ Unsurprisingly, Osório’s brief account makes no mention whatsoever of people flocking to him or asking for baptism. In fact, he does not mention performing a single christening, not even of any children who may have been born in Hatiwi to Christian parents in the three years since the sojourn of Beira and Nunes. Writing from Bacan two years later, the Jesuit’s memories of what he had experienced during the few months he had spent in Ambon consisted not of any mission work or of conversions but of running through the jungles, ‘fleeing from more than 1,000 men with swords and shields.’ With no local mission operating, there was simply nothing for Osório to do.

After a failed attempt by Osório to return to Ambon two years later with the Christian King of Bacan ‘to calm the land and support the Christians,’ the next Jesuit to visit the island was Pero Mascarenhas, newly arrived in Maluku from India in 1562.

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73 Francisco Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Ternate, March 9 1559," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 282. Osório did not actually make it to Malacca: ‘From Maluku we had no letters or messages last year from the Fathers and Brothers who are there, because the King’s ship did not come from there’ (Luís Fróis, "Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by Order of Fr. Francisco Rodrigues SJ, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Goa, December 1, 1560," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 314). Consequently, the Jesuit composed the short account of his time in Ambon in Ternate the following year.

74 Fernão de Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to [Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ], Goa. Ternate [February-May 1560],” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 310. See also note 54 above.


76 Ibid. 320-321. This fleet from Bacan was attacked and driven back from Ambon, Osório receiving a gunshot wound in the arm in the process.
After four years of fighting and intense persecution, there were apparently very few Christians left in the island who identified as such. Mascarenhas reported that he had been ‘received with much joy by the Christians, principally by Manuel [of Hatiwi] and by two or three other villages which had not apostatised.’ This apostasy, the Jesuit recorded, had been a choice made by the Christians who found themselves threatened ‘with death if they did not do it’; consequently, ‘[a]lmost all of the Christian villages became Muslim.’

The situation was once again about to change dramatically in Ambon, however, and Mascarenhas was there to witness it. Also newly arrived in Maluku this same year was Henrique de Sá, Portuguese captain of the fort in Ternate (1562-1564), Sá, it seems, decided something needed to be done in Ambon and began arresting high-profile figures who had been leading what were perceived as anti-Christian persecutions. In particular, he arrested Ratiputi, ruler of Nusaniwi (which 25 years earlier had been one of the earliest villages in Ambon whose people requested baptism), a non-Christian who had established himself as a king over several formerly Christian villages, having ‘caused many to renounce’ their faith, and who had repeatedly robbed the Christians in Hatiwi and elsewhere. Sá also arrested a man named Bauta, ‘who was a Christian and had reneged two or three times’; ‘he had been a ruler together with Ratiputi in Nusaniwi’ and was accused of having killed ‘one or two Portuguese.’ Lastly, Sá arrested António, Manuel of Hatiwi’s brother-in-law, who, with the help of two

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78 Ibid. 347.
79 Frade, “A Presença Portuguesa nas Ilhas de Maluco.” 233.
81 Ibid. 351.
82 Ibid. 350.
83 Ibid. 350-351.
‘corrupt’ Portuguese whom he had bribed, had attempted to shoot Manuel, the leading Christian figure in Ambon. All three of these men were to be exiled to India.

Significantly, though very much not surprisingly, the bold actions taken by the Portuguese captain were strongly influenced by the demands of the local Christians. Specifically, Mascarenhas recorded that Sá had arrested Ratiputi ‘at the request of the Christians who complained of the evils and thefts which he had committed against them.’ The captain, in fact, had first simply tried to smooth over the situation through a form of reconciliation. Having been informed of the looting which Ratiputi had committed in the faithful Christian villages, Sá had summoned both him and his accusers to a council where he had informed Ratiputi of the charges against him and ordered him to return whatever property he may have taken. The accused ‘responded that he had taken nothing and that, if there were any who might complain about him, he would give them whatever they asked for.’ This put the local Christians in a bind because they were convinced from past experience that, ‘upon the captain’s departure, they might pay double’ whatever had been returned to them. This situation helps explain the demand for Ratiputi to be apprehended, and, ‘as soon as they saw Henrique de Sá do a thing so unusual in Ambon, which was to arrest him and exact justice, they determined then to accuse him, and the villages which he had oppressed united and asked Henrique de Sá to make him pay back their things which he had taken.’

With three of the greatest persecutors of Christians imprisoned by the Portuguese—and the sentence of death by hanging having been levelled against

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84 These two Portuguese who had been ‘favouring the Muslims against the Christians’ were ‘António Hercules, an Augustinian who was in these parts, and his brother. They were killed by Portuguese whom they had targeted for assassination (ibid. 347).
86 Ibid. 351.
87 Ibid. 350.
88 Ibid. 351.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
Ratiputi\textsuperscript{91}—the mission situation in Ambon immediately and dramatically altered.

Characteristically, Mascarenhas’s report focuses on the most high profile of these changes: motivated by fear, according to the Jesuit, Ratiputi asked to be christened, as did others of the chiefs of Nusaniwi.\textsuperscript{92} These the Father ignored for seven or eight days, but they continued in their demands, so ‘he then determined to baptise them, seeing that this would benefit in every way.’\textsuperscript{93} The baptisms did not stop, however, with these justifiably fearful rulers. Mascarenhas recorded that many of the people of Nusaniwi also requested and received baptism, 1,500 of them in one day, being joined as well by people from neighbouring villages.\textsuperscript{94} Unsurprisingly, the Jesuit reported these conversions as though they inevitably followed from the baptisms of the chiefs of Nusaniwi—pointing out, for example, that the chiefs had asked that their people be baptised and also that the other conversions had occurred in villages ‘which were in subjection’ to Nusaniwi\textsuperscript{95}—but, as will be discussed below and also in great detail in chapter six, this simply would not have been the case. People in Nusaniwi and neighbouring villages, regardless of their motivations (and those who had been involved in the earlier persecutions may well have been motivated by fear like their chiefs were), in all likelihood made individual decisions to embrace a Christian identity. Regardless, demands for baptism were once again in fashion in Ambon, and, when Mascarenhas left after having baptised more than 1,500 people, two Jesuits who had arrived in Ambon with him, Francisco Rodrigues\textsuperscript{96} and

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid. 351-352.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid. 352.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid. 351-352.
\textsuperscript{96} Before arriving in Maluku, Rodrigues had been known as Francisco Vieira (Baltasar de Araújo, “Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate, February 24, 1563,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 381).
Diogo de Magalhães, stayed behind because ‘[a]t that time there remained still many to be baptised.’

Beyond the high-profile conversions of the chiefs of Nusaniwi and the subsequent christening of many of their people and allies, Mascarenhas noted other details in his report which suggest how dramatically a handful of arrests had altered the situation in Ambon for those who had been baptised before. For instance, though he never specifically discussed reconciliation for any renegade Christians in the island, it is clear from what he wrote that large numbers of former Christians returned to the faith after the persecutions had ceased. As already mentioned above, the Jesuit indicated that, when he had arrived in Ambon, only Hatiwi and ‘two or three other villages…had not apostatised.’ However, writing only two months later, Mascarenhas reported that Rodrigues and Magalhães were insufficient of themselves for the work in Ambon, not only because they were being swamped with demands for baptism, but also because they needed to ‘teach the doctrine to thirty-odd Christian villages,’ and elsewhere he reiterated that Ambon had ‘more than 30 Christian villages.’ Significantly, this is more than the number of Christian villages which had been reported by Afonso de Castro three years before the fighting between Christians and Muslims in Ambon had broken out. In addition, he revealed that these newly reconciled local Christians had begun making demands: ‘they bring their children very willingly to have them baptised, and not only do they provide them, but they come seeking someone to christen them for them.’ As a result of the local Christians having actively sought out the services of a priest, Rodrigues

98 Ibid. 346.
99 Ibid. 353.
100 Ibid. 354.
102 Mascarenhas, “Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to Fr. António de Quadros, Provincial, Goa. Ternate, April 16, 1562.” 353. This claim Mascarenhas made about the Christians of Maluku in general, but, as his next statement makes clear, it had specific application to the then situation in Ambon.
‘went to those villages to baptise the children of the Christians; he [had] already baptised more than 600.’\textsuperscript{103} In every regard, then, the people of Ambon continued to direct the processes of conversion and Christianisation in the island, once again actively drawing Jesuits into their villages to baptise them, to teach them, and to baptise their young children. By the end of the year, Baltasar da Costa could report that the pull of the Ambonese people had reached all the way to India, whence the Father Provincial was sending two more Jesuits to the island ‘to support the Christians of that land and to aid the many others who also want to convert.’\textsuperscript{104}

The official Jesuit report from Maluku one year after Mascarenhas and his companions had arrived in Ambon reveals that, with the situation in the island considerably more secure than it had been and Fathers Rodrigues and Magalhães present, indigenous-driven conversion continued apace—sometimes in a strikingly localised way. Toward the end of 1562, messengers from an unnamed village on the north coast of the island, close to the Muslim stronghold of Hitu and situated ‘amongst many other Muslim villages,’\textsuperscript{105} had arrived in Hatiwi in search of the Fathers and of baptism. Both Jesuits were then away from Hatiwi, ‘teaching the doctrine in other villages,’\textsuperscript{106} so these messengers made their appeal to Manuel, Hatiwi’s prominent Christian chief. Manuel, however, did not believe them to be sincere in their appeal. He suspected that ‘they wanted to lay a trap, assaulting on the way the Fathers and the people of Hatiwi who might go with them…, so they should scram.’\textsuperscript{107} The messengers, however, protested that they were actually already Christians, having ‘earlier been christened by a captain’\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. Mascarenhas here referred to Rodrigues by his original name of Vieira.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. 374.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid. 373.
\textsuperscript{108} See the section on Buru in chapter two for a fuller discussion on the occurrence of lay baptisms.
who had had contact with their village, ‘and because of the war, to save their lives, they had turned back, not knowing how much they would lose in this, for at that time they did not have anyone to encourage them, and moreover since, after they had been christened, no Father had gone there.’109 Now, having heard that other formerly Christian villages in Ambon were turning back and resuming Christian identities, they wanted to do the same thing. Manuel, being unfamiliar with these supposed Christians and having no way to verify the details of this story, remained unconvinced and demanded from them a large amount of goods as a pledge that they were telling the truth; consequently, ‘half went to look for goods so that they might have proof and half remained in Hatiwi, hoping that the Fathers…would come.’110 It was at this time that Francisco Rodrigues did indeed return to Hatiwi. Upon ‘speaking with them [and] seeing their good determination,’ he told them that he would fulfil their request to travel to their village and reconcile them.111 There he also baptised 80 children ‘five years and younger,’112 indicating that the previous lay baptisms had been performed about five years earlier or toward the end of 1557. The Father also assisted in re-erecting a cross in the village which ‘they had hidden in the jungle so that the Muslims could not commit any offence against it,’113 probably soon after war had broken out in 1558.

Every single detail of this narrative reinforces how thoroughly localised the processes of religious change were. Though no specifics are given, one can be reasonably certain that, in the first instance, the ship’s captain responsible for having baptised these people had not tried to force the matter. Rather, as was the case with António de Paiva in

109 Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo Antão in Lisbon. Ternate, February 15, 1563.” 373. This is another example—like the conversions of the Kings of Suppa and Siau and those of the people of Buru—of lay baptisms having been performed in the Maluku region.
110 Ibid. 373-374.
111 Ibid. 374.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
south Sulawesi, the Portuguese merchants in Kolongan and Buru, probably Gonçalo Veloso in Mamuya, and others, he had almost certainly found himself aggressively questioned on points of religious doctrine and, in the end, felt obligated to give in to demands for baptism. Then, despite having been christened, these people do not seem in any way to have come to the knowledge of the broader Christian community in Ambon, a likelihood reinforced by the fact that neither Manuel of Hatiwi nor the Jesuit Fathers were familiar with them or their situation. Surrounded by Muslim villages, unvisited and unsupported by clerics and by indigenous Christians who did not even know that they existed, they were truly on their own. Thereafter, they had apostatised—though ‘not with their hearts,’ they had assured Rodrigues— all on their own, and then they had determined to return, again all on their own. In the end, they, like so many others, sought out the services of a priest who, before he met them in Hatiwi, had never given them a single thought. These people in every way exemplify the reality of indigenous-driven mission in Ambon.

Conversion to Christianity in Ambon continued to occur in a rather dramatic fashion for a time—Manuel Gomes reported in May 1563 that ‘close to 10,000 souls’ had been christened in the Ambon area just in the past year and that many others were still making the request—but this situation was not to endure. Writing from the island less than one year later, Gomes had a very different story to share, one, he confessed, he ‘would have been happy had another written [it].’ Following the wave of conversion which he had described in his previous report, persecutions of Christians had reached a grim crescendo: Muslims were torching villages, capturing Christians and beheading

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114 Ibid.
them. Unsurprisingly, in the midst of these difficulties, the indigenous Christians once again asserted control over the clerics in their midst, ‘asking Father Francisco Rodrigues to send a Father or Brother to every one of their villages to console them in their trials.’ With only four Jesuits in Ambon, it was impossible, of course, to supply every Christian village with its own, but, in the end, ‘the Fathers and Brothers were placed in the Christian villages closest to the Muslims to guard them because the local people do not lose their sleep for anything.’ Consequently, Rodrigues remained in Hatiwi, assigning Father Fernando Álvares to Nusaniwi, Brother António Gonçalves to Liliboí, and Gomes to Kilang. There the Jesuits spent their nights keeping watch over the villagers and their days ‘teaching the catechism to the children and the adults.’

In each of these four villages, the Jesuits also baptised the children and visited nearby villages to do the same, a strong indication that the persecutions had not then been sufficient to cause the local Christians to turn against their adopted faith. Indeed, Gomes reported that they were ‘so firm that they do not want to abandon the faith of Jesus Christ Our Lord which they have received because of any trial or persecution which they receive from the Moors, and in all they seem happy and appear not to be enduring any trial because of them.’ The situation in some of the Christian villages was stable enough, in fact, that the local Christians were able to engage in rather significant building projects.

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117 Ibid. 441-442.
118 Ibid. 442.
119 Ibid. 441.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid. 445.
122 Ibid. 446.
123 Ibid. 452. Liliboí was located on the north coast of Ambon Bay though closer to the mouth than Hatiwi.
124 Ibid. 453. Kilang was located on the south coast of the Leitimor Peninsula.
125 Ibid. 441-442.
126 Ibid. 443.
In Hatiwi, Rodrigues oversaw the construction of a new church built of carved wood, the structure measuring twelve braças (26.4 metres) in length by four braças (8.8 metres) wide.\textsuperscript{127} Gonçalves likewise oversaw the construction of another ‘very beautiful church’ in Liliboi.\textsuperscript{128} Significantly, however, the persecutions do seem to have nearly stopped the flow of conversions. Where 10,000 had been christened in the year leading up to Gomes’s 1563 letter, the christenings he reported in 1564 are almost exclusively those of children born in Christian villages. The sole exception mentioned was the conversion of ‘900 souls’ from three different non-Christian villages which occurred in November 1563. Since Rodrigues performed these baptisms, and since he was based in Hatiwi, it seems likely that these converts felt that they were close enough to the security offered by that village to request baptism at a time when no one else in the entire island seems to have felt this was a good idea. With the security situation in Ambon continually worsening, there was nothing the Jesuits themselves could do to stir up any interest in conversion. They were, after all, too busy acting as nightwatchmen at the request of the local Christians.

The mission situation in Ambon, Gomes’s report makes perfectly clear, was directly correlated to the security situation: ‘And if it were the case that this land might sustain itself with having in it a zealous captain [who would defend the Christians],’ the Jesuit argued, ‘beyond there being many villages christened, they would also be the best that there are here in all these parts.’\textsuperscript{129} As it was, Ambon at the time had in it a captain who, despite the quantity of his zeal, was quite clearly lacking in manpower and means. For example, when this captain, António Pais, launched an armada to sail to nearby islands to protect the Christian villages there from being torched, he had no Portuguese

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. 446.  
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. 452.  
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. 443.
soldiers to leave behind to guard the fort; instead, this task was left to three Jesuits—Álvares, Gonçalves, Gomes—‘and some local people,’ with Father Rodrigues ‘a gunshot away’ guarding the Jesuit houses, aided again by ‘some local Christians.’

This situation started to look up when, sometime after Ash Wednesday (mid February), the Christian King of Bacan arrived in Ambon with some of his people. Immediately, ‘news of the king’s arrival in this land spread throughout all the villages,’ causing the Muslims who had been attacking the Christians to retreat into the jungles out of fear. As a consequence, once again ‘the Christians began to breathe and to flower.’ The King of Bacan’s purpose in travelling to Ambo was to join his forces to those of Pais so that together they might take the battle directly to the Muslim villages responsible for the persecutions of the Christians. Had this happened, it seems likely based on historical precedents that the four Jesuits then in Ambo would have been swamped yet again with indigenous demands for baptism.

As it was, just as the joint Portuguese-Bacan armada was ready to sail, Pais fell ill. Concerned, the captain handed over command of the armada to his visiting ally, but the King of Bacan refused to assume this responsibility:

the king had already had experience with the Portuguese being rebellious in similar circumstances, having arguments with his people in the dividing and taking of spoils, [so] he gave an excuse that in Seram he could not govern four Portuguese, how could he govern the 50 in that armada, each one of whom wanted to take his head?

The king and his men returned to their land, and, not many days later, Pais succumbed to his illness. This situation caused significant panic in the local Christians, who ‘went

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130 As Jacobs pointed out, this was a ‘simple wooden fortification, situated in Hatiwi’ (ibid. 442, note 442). The first proper fortress was not built in Ambo until 1569 (Hubert Jacobs, “Wanneer werd de stad Ambo gesticht?” Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 131, no. 4, 1975: 439-440).
132 Ibid. 443.
133 Ibid.
134 Not all Muslim villages in Ambo were at war with the Christians. Gomes’s letter, in fact, speaks specifically of ‘some Muslim villages, our friends’ (ibid. 444).
about like men out of their wits, crying, Where will we go to find a captain to protect our villages from the Muslims who want to torch them!" Gomes’s own assessment of the situation did not differ too much: ‘Therefore, my Brothers in Christ, commend this land greatly to Our Lord, because I tell you this truly, if some form of succour does not come to it, we run the risk of losing it.’ According to his report from the following year, the Jesuit’s prediction proved to be precisely prescient. With Pais dead, the enemies of the Ambon Christians waited for the Portuguese galleon which had been ‘hibernating’ in Ambon to depart for India and then attacked:

And thus they began to wage fierce war against all these Christian villages which are in these islands, killing as many as they could, destroying their palm groves, gardens, seed plots, and sago trees, which they mourned no less than the deaths of their parents and children whom they saw with their eyes every day, for they are a poor people and have nothing else with which to sustain themselves. Consequently, many Christian villages, in order to escape death, surrendered to them, giving them the goods which they had so that they might grant them their lives.

Help arrived from Ternate in the form of an armada, in which two additional Jesuits, Fathers Marcos Prancudo and Luís de Góis, came. The great excitement which this armada created amongst the local Christians and the handful of Portuguese who were in the island proved to be short lived. When the captain of the European forces realised that those persecuting the Christians were allied with the King of Ternate, he turned back from battle, not wanting to ‘aggravate’ Ternate’s ruler, thus ‘leaving the Portuguese more discredited,’ in Gomes’s estimation, ‘than they had been before.’ As a result, the anti-Christian forces were emboldened enough to attack ‘the village where the Fathers and Portuguese resided, and they burnt it, killing and capturing many, and this

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
139 Ibid. 470.
140 According to Gomes, there were only about 30 Portuguese left in Ambon at this time (ibid. 469).
in sight of our people without their being able to help.\textsuperscript{142} As matters deteriorated, the time came for the ‘hibernating’ ships to depart Ambon for Malacca, and the rest of the Portuguese in the island, overwhelmed, took the opportunity to embark for Ternate as well, leaving behind what the Jesuit estimated to be about 70,000\textsuperscript{143} Christians in Ambon itself and in the surrounding islands.\textsuperscript{144} Even the clerics themselves were forced to flee to Ternate, taking with them ‘some children whom they could shelter from this destruction.’\textsuperscript{145}

Overwhelmed and abandoned, the Christians of Ambon not only surrendered to their attackers but also ‘withdrew from the faith.’\textsuperscript{146} To do so was probably necessary to preserve their lives. According to Gomes, one Christian village which, before surrendering to a siege, had appealed to the Jesuits and ‘had taken a cross which they had and wrapped it in some black cloths and placed it in a cave as a sign of sentiment’ had so stirred up the wrath of their victors by these acts that all 600 people in the village were slaughtered, their enemies ‘first cutting off the muscles from their arms and legs and, before their eyes, roasting them and eating them as a sign of vengeance.’\textsuperscript{147} Strikingly, though literally at the mercy of their enemies, some Ambonese Christians still found a way to exercise their agency in matters of religious choice. Writing from Malacca at the end of 1566, Lourenço Peres recorded that, ‘[i]n days past, some 30 or 40 Christian souls

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. 471.
\textsuperscript{143} António de Quadros, the Father Provincial of Malacca, later reported that Luís de Góis had told him that 60,000 Christians had been abandoned in the Ambon area (Melchior Nunes Barreto, "Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto SJ, Viceprovincial of India, [to Fr. Diego Miron, Provincial of Portugal]. Cochin, shortly after January 21, 1566," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Jesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1974. 490).
\textsuperscript{144} Gomes, "Br. Manuel Gomes SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo, to the Jesuits [of St. Paul’s College, Goa]. Ternate, May 27, 1565.” 471.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} Nunes Barreto, "Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto SJ, Viceprovincial of India, [to Fr. Diego Miron, Provincial of Portugal]. Cochin, shortly after January 21, 1566.” 490.
\textsuperscript{147} Gomes, "Br. Manuel Gomes SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo, to the Jesuits [of St. Paul’s College, Goa]. Ternate, May 27, 1565.” 471. This account was repeated by Luís de Góis when he arrived in Malacca aboard the vessels which departed Ambon this same year (Nunes Barreto, "Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto SJ, Viceprovincial of India, [to Fr. Diego Miron, Provincial of Portugal]. Cochin, shortly after January 21, 1566.” 490).
arrived at this port, having escaped the persecution and great destruction which the Muslims wrought on the Christianity in Ambon.'\textsuperscript{148} It is impossible to know if any people from Ambon may have moved themselves to closer safe havens in order to facilitate their ability to live as Christians—no record-keeping Europeans would have been around to observe such behaviour—but at least one set of them had travelled nearly 3,000 kilometres to the security of Christian Malacca in order to do so.

Before too long, however, Christians in Ambon would once again be relatively secure in their own island, with aggressive requests for baptism again becoming the norm. As mentioned above, when the armada from Ternate arrived in the island in 1565, two Jesuits had travelled with it. Seeing firsthand the destruction that was occurring around them, Marcos Prancudo, then Superior of the Maluku Mission, determined to send his companion, Luís de Góis, to Malacca to advocate on behalf of the Ambonese Christians. In Malacca, Góis had given a report ‘of the great destruction which the Javanese together with the Muslims from Ternate and locally had wrought on all the Christian villages of Ambon’ to the Father Provincial there, António de Quadros.\textsuperscript{149} Quadros in turn determined to take this message to India, travelling aboard a royal trading vessel and arriving in Cochin on 21 January 1566.\textsuperscript{150} His request was straightforward: ‘to have the Lord Viceroy send as aid to Ambon a captain with 300 men to pacify the land and build in it a fort and cast the Javanese out of Ambon.’\textsuperscript{151} This appeal directly resulted in the commission of Gonçalo Pereira Marramaque as the fleet commander over an armada sent to ‘pacify’ the area, consisting of ‘four galleons…, six pinnaces, and a galiot,’ equipped

\textsuperscript{149} Nunes Barreto, "Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto SJ, Viceprovincial of India, [to Fr. Diego Miron, Provincial of Portugal]. Cochin, shortly after January 21, 1566." 489-490.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid. 489.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. 490.
with ‘600 Portuguese soldiers, not including the sailors.’ The armada departed Goa on 1 May 1566, but, due to delays and complicated by the loss of soldiers, did not arrive in Ambon until 1568.

The armada’s impact upon arrival, however, appears to have been dramatic. No reports from the Maluku Mission have survived from that year, but Nicolau Nunes, writing early in 1569, reminded those he was addressing in India and Portugal of the news which they should have received the previous year concerning ‘the happy successes which occurred in Ambon.’ With the arrival of Pereira and his forces in the region, the land had become ‘so quiet,’ he reported, ‘that all those islands request Christianity.’ The reality, of course, was a bit more complicated than Nunes’s brief report painted it. Writing from Ambon later that same year, Góis, who had returned to Maluku with the fleet commander, almost repeated Nunes’s assessment but clarified that, instead of everyone in the Ambon area, merely ‘most or nearly all are asking for baptism.’ The Jesuit then provided further clarification: requests for baptism after the arrival of Pereira on the scene were ‘so great that it seems impossible to count [them].’ Once again, the Jesuits in Maluku found themselves in the midst of a mission that was completely out of their control:

But we lack Fathers to catechise, teach, and instruct them in the matters of the faith, and for this reason we delay the baptism of many who request it. And to meet the needs and to help so many souls as have recently come and are waiting to come to a knowledge of their Creator, 30 of the Society in addition to those who are here would not suffice.

152 “A Capitania de Amboino.” 173.
153 Jacobs, “General Introduction.” 60*.
155 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid. 547.
Pero Mascarenhas, who had arrived in Ambon sometime after 6 March that same year, felt similarly overwhelmed. When he wrote his report on 3 August, there were only two Fathers and one Brother in the island—himself, Father Luís de Góis, and Brother Vicente Dias—yet he echoed his superior in claiming that, ‘without doubt, 30 from the Society would not be enough to be able to instruct’ those in Ambon and in immediately neighbouring islands who were requesting baptism. The Jesuit clearly tied this enthusiasm for conversion to the security situation in the island although things were actually still rather shaky. Earlier that year, the fleet commander had launched the construction of a Portuguese fort on the north coast of Ambon near Hitu, the very centre of anti-Christian antagonism. At the time that Mascarenhas wrote, this fortress was still under construction, but he noted that the sheer hope alone that the fort would provide protection was enough to cause the people to lose ‘all the fear which they had of the Javanese and Ternatans’ who had supported the Hituese and some other Ambon Muslims in the persecutions. This change in attitude had occurred despite the fact that the Javanese had not actually been cast out of the land yet (they and their allies from Hitu were holed up in mountain strongholds) and despite the rumour that Baab Ullah, the King of Ternate’s ‘heir,’ was then approaching Ambon with 40 korakora. Consequently, in the face of rather likely further complications, ‘many villages of Muslims and heathens did not cease to ask for baptism, both in this island and in many others, whom until now could not be helped nor do I know if they can be for there is no one who might instruct them, for those who request baptism are many and we are so

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159 Mascarenhas wrote a letter from Ternate on 6 March 1569 (Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569.” 544).
160 Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to the Fathers in Malacca and India. Ambon, August 3, 1569.” 554.
161 Ibid. 553.
162 Ibid. 550-551.
163 Ibid. 552.
With too few Jesuits to meet their demands for conversion, however, many of these would-be Christians found another outlet for furthering their own agendas. Mascarenhas recorded that initial work on the fort—the digging of the foundations and the cutting of timber—had not commenced until ‘the 20-somethingth of May’ but reported that, ‘when the 20-somethingth of July came, it was all enclosed with secured doors, where four very strong and large bulwarks had been made.’ This nearly incredible progress the Jesuit attributed to the many indigenous people who had volunteered to work on the construction project,

in which almost all of the villages of Ambon, both infidel and Christian, are occupied, all working with such diligence and joy as men who were predicting great treasure and goods which for them were being established in it, as it truly had to be their refuge, defence, and shield from their physical and spiritual enemies.

These ‘infidels’ who were labouring with such diligence on the fort were specifically those who were pestering the Jesuits with their requests for baptism. Delayed for a time in obtaining the recognised rite of conversion, they nonetheless contributed to what they saw as their security as future Christians.

It was not just those desiring conversion, however, who actively sought to exercise control over the Jesuits in Ambon. As they had in the past, indigenous Christians continued to direct the bulk of the work of Mascarenhas and his companions. For example, in addition to all the non-Christians who were asking the Jesuits to travel to their villages to instruct and baptise them, Christians themselves added to these requests. Though the walls of the new fort had only become somewhat secure toward the end of July, Mascarenhas reported near the beginning of August that, ‘for about two months there have been in this fort rulers of the Christian villages, asking for Fathers to go

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164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
instruct them. 167 Inevitably, these Christian chiefs were as unsuccessful as their non-Christian counterparts were in securing a Jesuit for their people, but this state of affairs did not stop the indigenous Christians from taking matters into their own hands. Since there were too few priests to visit all those who were requesting their services, the people simply went to where the Jesuits were. Mascarenhas reported that he could not possibly describe what was happening in Ambon in any detail due to a complete lack of time caused by the Christians who were flocking to the rising fort in search of his and his companions’ services:

Because those that present themselves here are so many that often there is no time for eating enough to stay alive, we being summoned now for confessions, then for making reconciliations, now to be with the sick and console them, and help those who are on the point of death to die well; now for many other physical and spiritual wants, in which the men nearly always occupy us, taking the Fathers as refuges and supports in their trials. And were I to tell this in detail, it would consume much time and paper. 168

By the following year, the new fort on the north coast of Ambon had been completed, and the demands of the local people—both explicit and implicit—had resulted in an increase of Jesuits in the area, with four priests and one Brother serving there. 169 Naturally, an increase in the number of clerics made it easier for them to fulfil the requests of the local people, but the increased security from the finished fort and its Portuguese military presence seems to have merely multiplied these demands. Writing from the island in 1570, Luís de Góis, still the Superior of the Maluku Mission, pointed out that Portuguese forces had successfully ‘punished’ those who had been leading the attacks against the Ambon Christians. Since they ‘were those who were upholding the religion of Mohammed in these parts and impeding the heathens from becoming Christians, threatening them with death,’ their destruction had opened up the gates for

167 Ibid. 553.
168 Ibid. 554-555.
even more people in the area to request baptism, including a number of people from the very villages which had engaged in the previous persecutions.\textsuperscript{170} Subtly underscoring the degree to which mission work in Ambon was indigenous-driven, the Jesuit noted that villages had been requesting baptism ‘without our preaching to them or declaring to them the matters of the faith.’\textsuperscript{171} Góis composed his account for the Father General of their Society, however, and therefore assured his superior in Rome that the Jesuits were being extremely cautious in these circumstances. Because they did not have enough personnel ‘to instruct a fifth part of those already baptised, let alone baptise others,’ they had been putting off most requests for conversion; consequently, ‘[t]his year only eight villages of Muslims and heathens were baptised.’\textsuperscript{172}

The reality, however, was that it was not so easy for the Jesuits to be careful with conversions in Ambon because they were not in control of what was occurring in the local mission. Writing from the island only three weeks after Góis did, Pero Mascarenhas presented his fellow Society members in Goa with a considerably higher figure to the one supplied to Rome. According to his report, the number of villages in the Ambon area ‘which were christened this year would be twelve or thirteen altogether,’ a careful review of his letter clearly indicating that the total was exactly thirteen, more than 50\% greater than those reported by Góis.\textsuperscript{173} In addition, Mascarenhas actually included a head count as well, one which clarifies that these had not been small villages: ‘8,000 souls were baptised, not counting the children of those who were already Christians, whose numbers may be judged from the great number of Christians which are here.’\textsuperscript{174} Still, this Jesuit also felt it necessary to insist that the members of the Society in Ambon were at least

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid. 585.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
trying to exercise some control over the local mission situation. ‘Many other villages ask to be baptised, but we do not do it,’ he insisted, ‘because we lack labourers, because we who are here are not sufficient to instruct in doctrine a sixth part of those who are already baptised.’

Details which Mascarenhas recorded concerning experiences over the previous year, however, confirm that, more often than not, he and the other Jesuits were truly at the mercy of the local populations in their labours. For example, he reported that about one year earlier one of the Fathers—from the level of detail supplied, it may well have been Mascarenhas, who elsewhere in the same letter wrote about himself in the third person—went to a very large but unnamed village in Ambon which had requested a priest to christen them, staying there ‘eight or ten days’ to fulfil the people’s requests. At the end of this time, the Jesuit prepared to leave because villages on nearby Saparua Island had sent messengers to summon him to come baptise them. When the people of the first village realised that the priest was preparing to depart, ‘they worked hard to prevent his leaving and asked him not to do it.’ The Father, of course, protested that he had to go to help other would-be converts and promised that he would soon return to visit them. What happened next can only be seen as a carefully negotiated handover between two sets of indigenous peoples, the Jesuit very much appearing more as a valuable object than as an agent of his own destiny:

And thus the chiefs of this village made a great speech to the rulers of the villages from the other island who had come to fetch the Father, commending him much to them and saying that they were delivering him to them healthy and well disposed and that they must return him to them in

175 Ibid.
176 Ibid. 596.
177 Along with Haruku and Nusalaut, Saparua belongs to the Lease island group located directly east of Ambon.
like manner because, if he sickened, they would have to pay them for him.  

Ironically but tellingly, before this Father could depart with his new but only temporary owners, ‘there arrived a ruler and the chiefs from a village on the same island [Ambon], and he asked the Father to go to his village to christen his people.’  

This embassy the Jesuit attempted to put off with excuses, but the visitors were not to be denied. When the Father had travelled to the first village, he had taken with him a number of Portuguese soldiers from Pereira’s armada because the land was in chaos and many villages were in rebellion.  

The embassy turned to these soldiers as instruments in their struggle. After their request for baptism had been turned down by the priest, the ruler managed to get the soldiers on his side, using ‘the Portuguese as mediators [and] not ceasing to weep.’  

Touched by this display, the Father ‘told him that he would be happy to go if his village were closer, but that it was three or four leagues by land, over great hills and rugged paths, which would cause much delay.’  

The visiting ruler, still not to be denied, was prepared for this excuse: ‘his people would carry him in a litter, and…there would be no delay for he had the people all ready.’  

Out of excuses, the Jesuit conceded to go, spending two days in the village and baptising the people. Much of the remainder of Mascarenhas’s letter is filled with reports of villages, both in Ambon and in nearby islands, which had acted forcefully to secure for themselves Christian identities through the rite of Christian conversion. For example, four unnamed villages in Ambon itself ‘for a year had been asking for the holy baptism

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179 Ibid. 599.  
180 Ibid.  
181 Ibid. 597.  
182 Ibid. 596.  
183 Ibid. 599.  
184 Ibid.  
185 Ibid.
with much insistence.\textsuperscript{186} When the opportunity finally presented itself, Luís de Góis sent
them a Father to teach and baptise them. In addition, a ‘large village, called Nusatelo,
along with another close to it which has no fewer people, had insisted for many days that
they be christened.’\textsuperscript{187} These demands too had been granted sometime during 1569-1570.
Mascarenhas pointed out that he did not know all the details concerning the conversions
of these villages but claimed that ‘all of them asked to be received into this fold of Christ
with much insistence.’\textsuperscript{188}

The Jesuit’s account also provides clues concerning just how forcefully and
skilfully indigenous Christians had sought to exercise control over their religious
identities even during the height of the previous persecutions. Some of the Christian
villages had been able to do so through military might. Specifically, ‘because they were
situated in strong locations, the Muslims never could invade them,’ and it was specifically
these villages which had ‘preserved the faith which they had received.’\textsuperscript{189} Some who did
not possess such strong defences turned to other strategies to protect their right to remain
Christians. A number of villages in neighbouring islands, though none in Ambon itself,
‘seeing that they could not defend with arms this faith which they had received, gave the
Moors so many goods with which they placated them, and they left them alone without
making them Moors like other villages.’\textsuperscript{190} The vast majority of the Christian villages in
the Ambon area, however, had neither the defences nor sufficient wealth in order to fend
off Muslim attacks.

In the face of physical force and threats, most of them had surrendered and at least
outwardly embraced Islam, but even then some of the Christians seem to have actively

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid. 606.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid. 607. Nusatelo was located near the northwest corner of the Hitu Peninsula.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. 610.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
plotted ways in which to control the Jesuits should any future opportunity present itself.

Mascarenhas wrote specifically about two villages in the island of Ambon whose people, seeing that they could placate the Moors with neither arms nor goods, forced by the threats which they made against them and terrorised by the deaths of some of their people whom these same Moors had killed, gave them obedience by becoming Moors, but, as proof and testimony of how they did it more out of force than by will, they took two crucifixes and an image which they had and guarded them in secret places so that the Moors might not discover them.\textsuperscript{191}

Interestingly, the Jesuit understood that this behaviour had been motivated not so much by actual devotion to these religious objects—though such devotion may well have existed—but specifically by the desire to possess and be able to provide sufficient ‘proof and testimony’ at a future time. Proofs, of course, imply an intended audience, and it appears that the Jesuits were the targets for these particular pieces of evidence. Thus, when Mascarenhas and at least one companion visited these villages, the people ‘showed them [the crucifixes and image] to us as evidence that the error which they had committed was out of fear and not for any other reason.’\textsuperscript{192} Worried that their forced apostasy might lose for them the services of priests should the security tide in Ambon once again turn, for the Christians in these two villages the religious objects which they had carefully hidden became one more tool they could use to attract the attention and secure the sympathy of the Jesuits. In the midst of intense persecution, the people had planned ways to try to guarantee that any future priests would be willing to reconcile them and to work in their villages. Based upon Mascarenhas’s response, the plan worked: ‘Blessed be the Lord who inspires such fervid desires for his honour and cult in people who such a short time ago were so foreign to his knowledge and love.’\textsuperscript{193}

Aggressive conversion to Christianity in Ambon was not to continue. Four months before Mascarenhas composed the account in which he spoke of how

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. 611.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
overwhelmed the Jesuits in the island were, an event had occurred in Ternate which would once again alter the course of the Ambon mission. On 28 February 1570, King Hairun of Ternate was assassinated whilst visiting the Portuguese fort in his island.\textsuperscript{194} At first, the Jesuits in Ambon predicted that this occurrence would only increase the number of people who were clamouring for Christianity because King Hairun had been ‘the greatest enemy of Christ and of his cross which we in these parts know,’ having supported and encouraged much of the anti-Christian persecution in the region ‘although he might dissimulate with his mouth.’\textsuperscript{195} Writing from Ambon not quite two weeks before Mascarenhas finished his report, Jerónimo Olmedo suggested that the initial chaos resulting from this murder would die down, and Christianity would ‘go forth with great growth’\textsuperscript{196} Less than one year later, Olmedo had changed his mind. Again writing from Ambon, he began by referencing ‘the trouble and unrest which these parts have experienced because of the death of the King of Ternate.’\textsuperscript{197} In particular, an armada from Ternate had sailed to the island and attacked the Portuguese fort near Hitu whilst Gonçalo Pereira Marramaque, the fleet commander, had been away. This later led to a naval battle between Pereira and the much-larger Ternatan armada, in which the latter’s fleet commander and more than 400 of his men had been killed.\textsuperscript{198} Sometime after this, however, the Portuguese fleet commander had sailed for Ternate, and, once he was gone, the real trouble started for the indigenous Christians. Another Ternatan armada had sailed into the waters of Ambon, this time captained by one Rubohongi, ‘father of the [fleet


\textsuperscript{195} Olmedo, "Fr. Jerónimo de Olmedo SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in Goa. Ambon, June 2, 1570." 589-590.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid. 592.

\textsuperscript{197} Olmedo, "Fr. Jerónimo de Olmedo SJ to the Jesuits of the College in Goa. Ambon, May 12, 1571." 618.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
commander] whom they had killed, and who had come to revenge his son’s death.\footnote{Ibid. 619.}

This armada launched a surprise assault on two Christian villages in the island, and ‘they burnt them and the crosses which were in them, and they took whatever they had from them with around 150 captives, most of them women and children.’\footnote{Ibid.} Father Marcos Prancudo, who must have provided Olmedo with the details, had been residing in one of these villages at the time of the assault but managed, along with other villagers, to escape into the jungle, where he remained unseen, although the Ternatans scoured the surrounding area ‘with many people, killing and capturing those whom they found.’\footnote{Ibid.}

Immediate responses to these attacks were mostly twofold. Some villages, according to Olmedo, quickly surrendered and renounced their Christianity, some of these even joining the Ternatans in attacking their neighbours. One of these villages, located in a nearby island, turned on Pero Mascarenhas, who had been labouring there, and attempted to kill him one morning. In his successful escape, he was assisted by two indigenous Christians, ‘one of whom was a native of this village, son of one of its chiefs,’ a fact which clarifies how individual the choices of conversion and apostasy remained, even within a single village.\footnote{Ibid. 620.} In contrast, other Christian villages determined to defend themselves from Muslim attacks. Because many of them were small, ‘they united one with another to better help each…, and they have defended each other, always doing damage to the Moors who have come to attack them.’\footnote{Ibid. 623.} Being a part of a small armada which the Portuguese had managed to muster to assist the Christian villages, Olmedo saw some of this ‘damage’ up close: ‘the Christians came to receive us with much joy, bringing the heads which that day they had cut off, of which they are very proud.’\footnote{Ibid.}
Unsurprisingly, as the security situation in Ambon further deteriorated, indigenous-driven mission also dried up, and, since there never really had been any other kind of mission, the Jesuits in the island quickly found themselves mostly out of work. For several years after Olmedo’s 1571 letter, no Jesuit reports from Maluku survived. 

More than three years later, however, Alessandro Valignano, who would later be posted as Visitor of the Maluku Mission, recorded that, though there were still three Jesuits in Ambon, ‘[t]hey are occupied more now in suffering than in doing, and are more involved in the matters of war than of devotion because, as they are under siege there, they have nothing to do but encourage and fortify those soldiers.’ Valignano made it sound as though the Jesuits in Ambon were incapacitated because they were holed up in the new fort which had by then been constructed, and they may have been for a time, but two years later Gomes Vaz reported that these three missionaries were actually ‘not in a distress like the others’ in the fort in Ternate and so went ‘about visiting the Christians…, consoling them and deterring them from leaving the faith which they have adopted.’

Clearly, by this time at least, the Jesuits in Ambon had the ability to travel outside the confines of the Portuguese stronghold. Still, there was very little for them to do. Without requests for visits from any non-Christians, they had no one to preach to, and even their work with the local Christians was greatly reduced since Vaz reported that the number of those who had not yet apostatised had dropped to only about 7,000 people.

Without indigenous initiative, there simply was not much mission left for the Jesuits. Consequently, when Valignano reported in 1577 that the Portuguese had been

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206 The Portuguese fortress had been moved from the north coast of Ambon, near Hitu, to the south coast of Ambon Bay, in Leitimor (Jacobs, "Wanneer werd de stad Ambon gesticht?" 446).


208 Ibid.
forced to surrender their fort in Ternate and that two of the Jesuits who had been there
had left Maluku and travelled to Goa,²⁰⁹ he added that there were still three members of
the Society in Ambon,²¹⁰ and they are enough for now because they have there nothing
to do.²¹¹ There had been four Jesuits in Ternate before the fall of the fort, and the two
who had not left for India ended up relocating themselves to Ambon, but Valignano then
decided to summon these two to India ‘because in Ambon they have no house to dwell in
nor anything to do or to eat.’²¹² The others he left in the island to look after the small
Christian population which still existed there, but the Jesuit Visitor frankly acknowledged
that, due to insecurity in the area, the numbers of Christians ‘not only cannot grow but
will diminish every day.’²¹³ It was not just the number of Christians which was
diminishing, though. Faced with Christian villages over which they had never been in
control, the Jesuits were losing whatever influence or persuasion they may have had in
the past. Thus, Valignano reported a short time later that the two Fathers and one Brother
who had been left in Ambon sometimes went to visit ‘a few other Christians in some
other islands close to Ambon,’ but these, he concluded, ‘cannot be governed and
instructed as they need to be.’²¹⁴ The surly and uncooperative local Christians described
by Afonso de Castro back in 1555 had returned to parts of the Ambon area, it seems, once
again demonstrating how much missionary labours even with self-professing Christians
depended on the agency and desires of the local populations.

²¹⁰ Fathers Pero Mascarenhas and Jerônimo Rodrigues and Brother António Gonçalves.
²¹³ Ibid.
Other Christians in Ambon, however, seem to have welcomed visits from the missionaries. Writing from Goa in 1579 but basing his account on the now-lost report which had come from Maluku the previous year, Lourenço Pinheiro reported that Father Marcos Prancudo had died near the beginning of 1578, having suffered ‘from a long illness which he got whilst going to visit the Christians in three villages, which are three or four leagues [16.65-22.2 km] from the fort in Ambon.’ These villages were located ‘in some very high mountains out of fear of the enemies.’ Apparently, relocating to mountain strongholds was one more strategy people in the island had used to maintain control over their religious lives. Pinheiro indicated that these Christians, those in the fort, and any others who may have lived in more accessible villages in the island would number more than 3,000. Significantly, they had once again given the Jesuits something to do: ‘These Christians truly flock [acodem] to the mass and to catechism, and they confess at Lent time, and some more often; they also receive communion.’ That they were ‘flocking’ is a subtle but clear indication that the people still directed the Jesuits’ labours; when they came, there was work to do. When they came in large numbers, the missionaries were once again busy. And, in fact, conversion in Ambon had started to pick up again, though those baptised were few in number, coming exclusively from villages which were already predominantly Christian.

There was more flocking to come during the next few years. Summarising the 1579 Jesuit report from Maluku, Manuel Teixeira indicated that a new settlement (the forerunner of the present-day Ambon City) had sprung up near the new fort, supporting

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216 Ibid.
217 Ibid. 50.
218 Ibid. 49.
219 The Ambon fortress then in existence was a stone one which the Portuguese had built during 1575-1576 (Jacobs, “Wanneer werd de stad Ambon gesticht?” 453-455). This fort, and the indigenous community which grew up around it, ‘laid the foundation for the city of Ambon’ (ibid. 450).
‘5,000 Christians who have come there from other parts.’\textsuperscript{220} Clearly, the fortress was not big enough to accommodate such a large number of local Christians, but that had not stopped them actively relocating themselves to an area where they felt safe to practice their religion and where they also could have access to the services of the Jesuits. The following year, a ceasefire was reached with Ternate which brought peace to Ambon and lifted much of the fear from the Christians, who had ‘lost many of their goods and many slaves’ during the fighting.\textsuperscript{221} Perhaps because of the greatly improved security situation, the Christian settlement outside the fort seems to have shrunk. Writing in 1581, Bernardino Ferrari, the newly arrived Superior of the Maluku Jesuit Mission, reported that there were only 3,000 people still living outside the Portuguese stronghold.\textsuperscript{222} Like their predecessors, however, these Christians were fully in charge of their religious situation and still knew how to use the Jesuits in order to get what they wanted. Ferrari had been in Ambon only a short time before the Christians outside the fort began making demands on him. In this case, they wanted their own churches. They had given the Jesuit Superior some excuse about not liking to use the church inside the fort out of shame ‘and for other reasons,’ but the main factor seems to have been so that they ‘could conveniently come to the mass and sermon.’\textsuperscript{223} In making this request, the indigenous Christians clearly held the upper hand. Ferrari reported that not even the Portuguese captain could compel them to use the already-existing church, ‘fearing some uprising’ if he tried; consequently, the Jesuit ‘negotiated with the captain for two churches to be built


\textsuperscript{223} Ibid. 100.
outside the fort.' Their demands having been met, the local Christians flocked to their new churches, attending both mass and catechism and going to confession so frequently ‘that it cannot satisfy them, and many have given up their concubines, and others have got married.'

Once again, the number of the Ambonese Christians began to grow. In 1581, Ferrari reported that Ambon itself included seven or eight Christian villages in addition to the settlement near the fort. Three years later, the Jesuit Superior recounted having visited 22 or 23 villages of Christians in Ambon and the Lease Islands, though there is not enough information in any of the Jesuit documents which would clarify with any reasonable surety how many villages were in each. The same lack of clarity complicates the number of Christian villages provided in the following year’s annual report, but the Christianising trend in the Ambon area at least becomes clear. Writing from Tidore, Pero Nunes, the new Superior of the Maluku Jesuit Mission, reported that, in Ambon and the Lease Islands, the Jesuits had ’33 Christian villages for which we are responsible,’ an increase of nearly 50 percent over the number given the previous year.

Unfortunately for the Ambon Christians, however, this revitalisation of the local mission was occurring at a time when the Jesuit presence in the area was diminishing due to death, illness, and few new arrivals. In the same report, Nunes pointed out that these Christian villages had not been visited by any clerics since Ferrari had done so more than a year earlier because the former Superior had sickened and died in the island, and illness

224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid. 103.
had indisposed the other resident Jesuit, Father Jerónimo Rodrigues.\textsuperscript{229} In fifteen years, Ambon had gone from having a surplus of Jesuits with nothing to do to having what Nunes described as a ‘scarcity of labourers.’\textsuperscript{230} This was a large problem because, at the same time that Ambon’s Jesuits were dying off, the security situation had stabilised, leaving the Christians ‘quiet and content because the captain of our fort has had some victories over our enemies.’\textsuperscript{231} Based on what had happened in the past, this meant that the island was ripe for even more conversions and for former Christians to return to the faith, but for this the people of Ambon needed priests. The Jesuits, however, were in no position to provide these priests. After the death of Ferrari, there were only five Society members left in the entire region. Gabriel da Cruz was in Labuha, Rogier Berwouts was in the island of Siau, and, as Superior, Pero Nunes was stationed in the Portuguese fort in Tidore with Brother António Gonçalves,\textsuperscript{232} leaving only the sickly Jerónimo Rodrigues for Ambon.\textsuperscript{233} Nunes was eager to travel to the island ‘if there is an opportunity to go,’ but this vague possibility was not what the local people wanted or needed.\textsuperscript{234}

What happened next provides tremendous evidence that mission work in Ambon, as it had been from the beginning, remained an indigenous-driven phenomenon. From the moment that Francis Xavier had set foot there, the island had been considered a part of the Jesuit mission, but it is important to remember that Xavier ended up in Ambon precisely because conversion to Christianity had already started there without him and before there was any such thing as a Maluku Jesuit Mission. Consequently, when it seemed that Society members were no longer in a position to help, the people of Ambon

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid. 161.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{232} ‘From 1584 on he [Gonçalves] was mostly stationed in Tidore’ (Jacobs, "General Introduction." 42*).
\textsuperscript{234} Ibid. 167-168.
actively went looking elsewhere. Writing in 1586 by order of his Superior, António Gonçalves informed the General of the Society in Rome that there were plans afoot to send Franciscan friars from Malacca to Ambon. This development the Jesuits in Tidore had been warned of in a letter from their fellows in Malacca, and the rumour had been confirmed by a letter which the secular priest assigned to the fort had received from his bishop.\textsuperscript{235} This news had upset the Jesuits ‘[s]ince to these parts of Maluku and Ambon, from the beginning until now, no friars from any religious order have come to engage in the conversion of the Christians’ and ‘past superiors did not consent for any vicars from these forts to go to visit any Christian village belonging to those under our protection…so that there could be no conflict between them and our Fathers.’\textsuperscript{236} The problem, however, was that the idea of sending Franciscans to Ambon did not belong to the Bishop of Malacca. He was merely complying with a request from the local Christians who, with blatant disregard for the rivalry which existed amongst the various religious orders, had ‘sent from Ambon to ask him for them, apparently because of the lack of our men.’\textsuperscript{237}

Due to Jesuit interference, the people of Ambon did not secure the services of the Franciscan friars just yet, but they did succeed in bringing a much-desired Jesuit priest into their land in the short term. In response to the news out of Malacca, at the end of December 1585 Pero Nunes discovered the necessary time and travelled to Ambon ‘to visit it.’\textsuperscript{238} He also ‘went there to prevent them having anything to do with this [the arrival of Franciscans]’ until the Jesuits might receive help and direction from the Society.\textsuperscript{239} This tactic worked for awhile, but the Jesuits, naturally, could not stop the people of Ambon making further requests. A Visitor of the Maluku Mission, Antonio


\textsuperscript{236} Ibid. 175-176.

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid. 176.

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid. 175.

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid. 176.
Marta, spent two months in the island in the first half of 1587. His report confirms that the Christian population of Ambon had surged during the previous ten years. Though the Christian villages were still only 34 in number, those who professed the faith had grown to ‘more than 25,000 souls.’ These locals, unlike ‘the Indians in the Philippines,’ were a ‘well inclined people who have no aversion to our religion…. In fact,’ the Jesuit Visitor reported, capturing an obvious trace of indigenous agency, ‘they ask that we build churches in their villages, being willing to do whatever we will ask.’ Writing less than one week later, Marta had somewhat altered downward his earlier estimate, reporting that the local Christians numbered only 22,000. These, he concluded, were ‘Christians in name only,’ not because he had been able to assess their individual faith and behaviour but simply ‘because they have neither priest nor church nor cross.’ The lack of these outward symbols of conversion—and whatever inner deficiencies it represented—could not be blamed on the indigenous people, however. They had actively desired and asked for ‘people to teach and instruct them…, but they were not heard.

Unfortunately for the people of Ambon, the Society of Jesus continued to do a rather poor job of hearing them. Marta had arrived in the island accompanied by Father Francisco da Cunha, and, when the Visitor had completed his visitation, he did the best he could by leaving the latter behind to try to meet the demands of the local populace. One priest for 22,000 Christians plus any who might want to convert would have been a

241 Ibid. 195.
243 Ibid. 212.
244 According to a 1588 report, the sickly and ineffectual Francisco Rodrigues had been sent back to India (Marta, "Fr. Antonio Marta, Visitor of Maluku, to Fr. Provincial in Goa. Report of Visitation. [Tidore, April], 1588. First via." 252). That his name does not appear in the 1587 list of Jesuits serving in Maluku indicates that he was already gone from Ambon by this time (Pero Nunes, "Fr. Pero Nunes, Superior, to Fr. Claudio Acquaviva, General, Rome. Ambon, June 5, 1587. First via," in Documenta Malucensia, ed.
stretch in the best of circumstances. Cunha did not find himself in the best of circumstances. After he had been in the island for an entire year, he had ‘almost completely given up hope of being able to learn the Malay language, without which almost no fruit can be made with the new converts.’

Because of this difficulty, he had done ‘very little’ beyond working with any Portuguese who needed his services, being unable to teach the catechism or to confess the local Christians. In 1592, five years after first arriving in Ambon, Cunha returned to Malacca ‘to recover from an illness.’

A year or so earlier, however, Ambon had finally received a new injection of much-needed Jesuits from India. Nevertheless, when they arrived, the security situation had once again reversed, and they ‘found the land at war because Rubohongi, captain general of the King of Ternate and Lord of Veranula, an island near to Ambon, our great and ancient enemy, had amassed an armada of 36 korakora…with which they came to attack us one month after our arrival.’ Consequently, when Antonio Marta—who had returned to Maluku as Superior of the mission—reported in 1593 that there were three Jesuits in Ambon—Lorenzo Masonio and João Rebelo being those who had arrived in Maluku and Ambon around the beginning of 1591 with António Pereira possibly being the third—he noted that they were residing in the fort and that their occupation, like that of the their fellow missionaries in the again-troubled Maluku region, was ‘helping the

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Portuguese who either live here or come temporarily to buy cloves,’ work with local
Christians amounting to ‘very little because the Moors from Ternate, our enemies,
confound everything with their arms.’

Though the Jesuit missionaries in Ambon clearly had very little to do in such an
insecure situation, in 1592 they used the excuse of being overworked to surrender their
claim over the area, finally allowing the Franciscans to take over missionary work in
Ambon as the local people had first requested seven years earlier. Lorenzo Masonio
insisted in his report that this change was designed to allow the priests in Ambon to be in
Tidore ‘because we do not have enough people for those Christians and for these.’

Considering that the Muslim King of Tidore did not allow any mission work in his
island and therefore that the only labour for the Jesuits there was in the Portuguese
community which surrounded the fort, Masonio’s explanation seems at best like some
kind of attempt at saving face. Whether they had simply given up on Ambon or whether
they were effectively booted out of the island remains unclear. In either case, early in
1593 discalced Franciscan friars from Malacca arrived ‘to be with these Christians in
Ambon,’ and the Jesuit Fathers prepared to depart.

The newly arrived missionaries, however, were about to discover that, like their
Jesuit predecessors, they were not in charge of the mission in Ambon. They had come to
the island at the bidding of the indigenous people, and the conditions of their tenure there,
following the normal pattern, remained indigenous-driven. Originally keen to take the

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250 Ibid. 341.
251 According to Masonio, the work the Jesuits in Ambon had accomplished with the local people during
1592-1593 included helping some old people learn prayers, getting 20 men to commit to monogamous
marriages, seeing ‘[s]ome general confessions’ and a ‘few of them’ taking communion, and teaching the
catechism to some children (Lorenzo Masonio, “Fr. Lorenzo Masonio SJ to Fr. Claudio Acquaviva,
General, Rome. Ambon, May 15, 1593. First via.,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs,
252 Ibid. 348.
General, Rome. Tidore, March 5, 1588.” 237.
First via.” 348.
assignment, they quickly changed their minds ‘when they saw the sterility of the land.’

Disappointed, ‘they constantly demonstrated very little desire’ to engage with the local people, and this did not sit well with those who had originally invited them. They thought that the friars were being ‘frivolous’ in their complaints and consequently began to murmur against them, further worsening whatever relations may have existed between the Ambonese and the new missionaries. Masonio obviously found great pleasure in reporting these developments and may well have exaggerated some of the tension which arose between the Franciscans and those they had come to serve, but what transpired next demonstrates that he must not have exaggerated much. When the time approached for the Jesuits to sail for Tidore, the local people ‘determined not to let us depart, desiring that we stay still. And thus all joined and united in one body, they came to our church, crying and complaining to us about how we could leave them during a time of such need.’

The fear expressed centred on security: without the Jesuits, the fort might be lost because some of the ‘natives’—presumably local Christians who had been put off by the Franciscans—would switch their political allegiance, resulting in a mass exodus of Portuguese to Malacca and Tidore, ‘leaving them no one to support them with the captain or to encourage them in the travails of war.’ Then, physically demonstrating their control over the Jesuits, the complainants ‘came to take the sails and rudder from the ship so that we could not depart.’ This open rejection of them was too much for the Franciscans. According to Masonio, if necessary ‘they would have bought an opportunity’ to flee the island, but instead the behaviour of the local people gave them an ‘opportunity to free themselves from the Christians and the promise they had given,’ and

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255 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid. 348-349.
258 Ibid. 349.
259 Ibid.
they departed mere months after arriving. Clearly, indigenous actors in Ambon had the ability not only to draw priests into their lands but also to drive unwanted priests out of their lands and to hold onto those who had intended to leave.

Having exercised control over which missionaries they wanted to serve in their island, the Christians of Ambon continued to control and direct the service of these missionaries. The same year that the Franciscan friars fled Ambon, the Jesuits in Maluku held a consultation on whether or not they should remain in the region considering the difficulties they were facing after more than two decades of war. In the beginning of the document which resulted from this consultation, an interesting assessment was made of the Ambonese Christians. According to Antonio Marta, they were like their counterparts in Labuha in that they could in no way be pressured by the priests because, ‘if one puts pressure on them, they flee into the jungle or become Muslims.’ As a consequence, even the indigenous Christians who lived ‘within the fort in Ambon…cannot be taught except as they desire it.’ Quite probably, no better summary could be written about the indigenous mission which operated in the island. From the very beginning, the people had been taught and baptised because they desired it. They had attracted priests into their lands because they desired it. And they had directed the labours and the service of the Jesuit missionaries according to their desires.

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260 Ibid. 349, emphasis added.
262 Ibid.
Central and southern Maluku, including Ambon and the nearby Lease island group, are famous in anthropological circles for a dualistic moiety system which once encompassed all societies in a specific area. Valerio Valeri called it the Siwa-Lima system ‘because one moiety is identified with the numerical index nine (siwa), and the other with the numerical index five (lima).’ These two broad groupings are understood to have constituted ‘genealogical units’ or clans to which each village belonged by descent. The two indexes were added to different words in different areas, with the names used in the Ambon area being Ulisiwa and Ulilima. (Uli can mean variously ‘sibling,’ ‘again and again,’ or ‘people.’) Apart from the numerical indexes, these two clan names carried other oppositional markers, with Ulilima often connected to the concept ‘autochthonous’ whilst Ulisiwa was linked to the idea of ‘immigrant.’ On most islands in this area, the traditional locations for Lima groups were on the coast, with Lima villages typically involved in trade, whilst Siwa groups were located more in inland areas or in locations which were not trade-intensive. Wessels insisted that these two clans had existed in Ambon ‘[f]rom time immemorial.’ They clearly existed in the sixteenth century because the unknown author of the Relação dos Feitos Eroicos, writing sometime during the captaincy of Sancho de Vasconcelos (1572-1591), made specific mention of them: ‘The people of these islands are divided into two lineages [geraçõis], namely

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1 The Lease islands are, from west to east, Haruku, Saparua, and Nusalaut.
5 Ibid. 118.
6 Wessels, De geschiedenis der R.K. missie in Amboina. 3.
Ulisiwa and Ulilima.\textsuperscript{7} Muslim Hitu was Ulilima, as was most of the rest of Ambon Island’s Hitu Peninsula.\textsuperscript{8} Only four villages located on the north coast of Ambon Bay, including Hatiwi and Tawiri, were identified as exceptions to this rule.\textsuperscript{9} Accordingly, the Ulisiwa held sway over Leitimur, though some villages there, such as Nusaniwi, identified as Ulilima.\textsuperscript{10} In the neighbouring Lease islands, villages were similarly divided in their identities and loyalties between these two clans.

The twofold division of society in Ambon and Lease becomes important when discussing religious change because, at least as early as the sixteenth century, issues of religious identity had begun to become entwined with this division. This entanglement arose principally from the fact that, when the Portuguese first arrived in the area, conversion to Islam had almost exclusively taken place in Ulilima villages.\textsuperscript{11} Consequently, the author of the Relação distinguished the Ulilima as being ‘of the Muslim caste’ in opposition to the Ulisiwa, who were pork eaters.\textsuperscript{12} As discussed in chapter four, the earliest villages in Ambon to Christianise, Hatiwi and Tawiri, were Ulisiwa populations which had developed close relations with the Portuguese during the time that they anchored their ships each year in Ambon Bay. By the time that the Relação was composed, it was accepted that Ulisiwa villages ‘commonly are very affectionate toward the Portuguese.’\textsuperscript{13} Of interest, though he unmistakably linked being Ulilima in identity with a village’s being Muslim, the author of the Relação did not link being Ulisiwa with being Christian. On the contrary, he specifically identified Ulisiwa villages as heathen.\textsuperscript{14} Nevertheless, as Valeri has pointed out, because some who were

\textsuperscript{7} “A Capitania de Amboino.” 194.
\textsuperscript{8} Wessels, De geschiedenis der R.K. missie in Amboina. 4.
\textsuperscript{9} “A Capitania de Amboino.” 195.
\textsuperscript{10} Abdurachman, Bunga Angin Portugis di Nusantara. 221.
\textsuperscript{11} Valeri, “Reciprocal Centers: The Siwa-Lima System in the Central Moluccas.” 118.
\textsuperscript{12} “A Capitania de Amboino.” 195.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
‘members of the nine-moiety cooperated with [the Portuguese] and even converted to Christianity, that religion became associated with the Siwa’ and these associations ‘conditioned the history of conversion in the central Moluccas.’¹⁵ Later historians and anthropologists have similarly come to see these two moieties as being linked to Islam on the one side and Christianity on the other.

Jan S. Aritonang, for example, explained that, ‘when the Gospel was preached by Portuguese missionaries in Ambon beginning in the 1520s, Ulisiwa populations which had generally remained heathen were inclined to choose to become Christian.’¹⁶ Paramita R. Abdurachman has suggested that the introduction of Islam and Christianity in Ambon changed the tension between Ulilima and Ulisiwa clans into a ‘conflict with a religious overtone,’ with Muslims on one side and ‘Christian villages, aided by the still heathen Alifuru,’ on the other.¹⁷ Adolf Heuken argued that adoption of one world religion by one clan ‘automatically’ caused the other clan to make the opposite choice.¹⁸ Hubert Jacobs, though more willing to see complications in the simple dichotomy between Islam/Ulilima and Christianity/Ulisiwa, still reached a similar conclusion: ‘Thus a situation slowly started to arise wherein Ulisiwa—not always but nevertheless overwhelmingly—came to mean pro-Portuguese and pro-Christian whilst Ulilima remained rather pro-Hitu and pro-Islam.’¹⁹ This basic pattern, as summed up by Jacobs, suggests that political alliance (Hitu vs the Portuguese), clan identity (Ulilima vs Ulisiwa), and religious identity (Muslim vs Christian or, at least, Christian-friendly heathen) became so intertwined in Ambon that knowing one of these facts about a village was enough in most cases to

¹⁶ Jan S. Aritonang, Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2004. 34. Note that the first Portuguese missionary did not arrive in Ambon until February 1545, though there had been conversions to Christianity since the earlier period. This is just one more example of a faulty European-centric approach to conversion in Maluku.
¹⁷ Abdurachman, Bunga Angin Portugis di Nusantara. 221.
¹⁹ Jacobs, “Wanneer werd de stad Ambon gesticht?” 433, note 413.
accurately identify the other two. By logical extension, then, belonging to an Ulilima village was enough to predispose, possibly even propel, a person toward Islam whilst belonging to an Ulisiwa village supposedly worked the same way in relation to Christianity. According to Aritonang, ‘[a]ll this background complexity and socio-cultural and religious context needs to be remembered if we are to understand the adoption by heathens of both Islam and Christianity en masse in Ambon and the surrounding area since the sixteenth century.’

Nevertheless, as already suggested by Jacobs above, a tiny number of exceptions to this general pattern must be admitted to: ‘Christian Ulilima and Muslim Ulisiwa villages, however, also occurred.’ One scholar, Cornelius Wessels, has argued that these exceptions existed on only one side of the divide. He claimed that Islam ultimately ‘found a following in the union of nine,’ creating an Ulisiwa patchwork that included not only Christians and heathens but also some Muslims, ‘something which was impossible for the union of five [Ulilima]—there was only room for Muslims.’

The reality, of course, is that there were exceptions on both sides, though scholars tend to identify very few of these. As Abdurachman has pointed out, Nusaniwi was an Ulilima village in Leitimor which adopted Christianity. Schurhammer claimed that the Ulisiwa village of Hutumuri was Muslim for a time, until adopting Christianity in 1570. The Relação itself seems to indicate that, at one point, many of the Ulilima villages in the Lease Islands had Christianised. Narrating the flight of the Portuguese from the Ambonese villages of Hatiwi and Tawiri after they had been attacked by enemies from Hitu, the chronicle describes Lease, whither the Portuguese fled, as having ‘many villages

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20 Aritonang, Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia. 34-35.
21 Jacobs, “Wanneer werd de stad Ambon gesticht?” 433, note 413.
22 Wessels, De geschiedenis der R.K. missie in Amboina. 3-4.
23 Abdurachman, Bunga Angin Portugis di Nusantara. 221.
24 Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 89, note 257.
belonging to Ulisiwa and Oliva people, all of whom were Christian.²⁵ As written, the term Oliva here means nothing but, considering its juxtaposition with ‘Ulisiwa,’ it seems possible that what the author of the text meant to write was ‘Ulilima.’ A much clearer example from the Relação, and also from the area of Lease, concerns the village of Ihamahu in Saparua Island: ‘This village of Ihamahu was very friendly to the Portuguese though it was Ulilima, and it had a church in which the Fathers from the Society of Jesus resided.’²⁶ Clearly, there had developed a rather significant Christian presence in Ihamahu.²⁷

Acknowledging these villages which constituted exceptions helps to correct a rather simplistic and therefore misleading pattern wherein clan identity is seen as having been unavoidably linked with religious identity. If lineage always predetermined religious choice, then there was not much choice or agency involved, really—in stark contrast to what has been argued from the very beginning of this work. In addition, identifying such situations as ‘exceptions’ simultaneously reinforces the underlying pattern and what it seems to suggest about indigenous agency. One sees villages such as Nusaniwi and Ihamahu as exceptional only if, as Jacobs indicated above, clan identity really did ‘overwhelmingly’ control religious identity much of the time. To most historians and other scholars, this very conclusion has been unavoidable. After all, the simple fact remains that the vast majority of Ulilima villages had embraced Islam, and most of the villages which Christianised at some point during the sixteenth century

²⁵ “A Capitania de Amboino.” 201.
²⁶ Ibid. 267.
²⁷ Sometime in 1569/1570, the village of Ihamahu ‘had sent to summon the Father [Pero Mascarenhas] because all of them desired to be christened.’ The situation was somewhat more complex than this initial statement suggests, however. Mascarenhas ‘was in this village for more than a month, for it is large and had many people and many cacizes [Islamic preachers], with whom he had some disputes, but in the end they surrendered and confessed and followed the truth of our holy faith’ (Mascarenhas, “Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits of the College in Goa. Ambon, June 15, 1570.” 603-604).
belonged to the Ulisiwa moiety. The threat this reality poses to conceptions of indigenous agency and religious choice should be obvious.

The problem, however, is that this approach focuses on the village as the unit of conversion instead of focussing on individual persons, a problem arising from the sixteenth-century source materials themselves and from an uncritical reliance on these documents’ emphasis on the village as the source of religious identity. It may be true that Ulilima villages tended to end up as Muslim villages whilst Christian villages most often came from the Ulisiwa, but the religious identity of a village actually had little to do with the multiple religious identities of the people who typically occupied that village. On this point, it may bear repeating that the Europeans in Maluku identified the religion of a village based primarily on the religion of its ruler. Accordingly, Siau was called a ‘Christian kingdom’ in the Jesuit correspondence even when, as pointed out in chapter two above, the sole Christian in the island was its king. As will be discussed in detail in chapter six, this practice rested upon the idea of *cuius regio, eius religio* [‘whose region, his religion’], which was codified in Europe in the 1555 Peace of Augsburg and which specified ‘that the faith of a people was controlled by and large by the desires of [their] prince.’

Consequently, it would be far more accurate to state that, when it came to village chiefs and other native rulers, the clan they belonged to may well have predisposed them to adopt one of the two new religions then spreading in the area. The reality for the people in these very villages, however, was considerably more complicated than that, demonstrating clearly that conversion remained the personal choice of individual agents. In between the numerous references to ‘Christian villages,’ ‘Muslim villages,’ and ‘heathen villages’ which fill the pages of European-produced documents, tell-tale traces are scattered throughout these sources, primarily in the Jesuit letters, which

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28 Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 400.
allow one to catch a glimpse of the religious hodgepodge which characterised most if not all villages in Ambon and Lease at some point during the sixteenth century.

For example, ‘Christian villages,’ even those which had been deemed Christian for decades, typically counted non-Christians, sometimes large numbers of them, amongst their populations. As discussed in chapter four, Hatiwi and its close neighbour, Tawiri, were the first two villages in Ambon Island to Christianise, the earliest baptisms there most probably occurring in the early 1520s. From that point forward, Hatiwi was considered a Christian village, and, from the time of Francis Xavier, it appears in the Jesuit documents as the central and most faithful Christian village in the entire Ambon area. Its chief during most of the period under consideration was a man named Manuel, who, according to his own account, had travelled as a youth ‘with a surplice and breviary, accompanying [Xavier] throughout the deserts of Ambon,’ where ‘the histories and doctrine which the Father had told him…had sunk so deep into his heart.’

His ‘constancy in the faith which he adopted’ was such that, even when he went years without any kind of military aid from the Portuguese or assistance from the Jesuits, he was a model of perseverance, Hatiwi being one of the few Christian villages which never once apostatised in the face of persecution, even when most other Christian villages did. In many ways, Manuel, it seems, was viewed by other Christians in Ambon as their de facto leader and defender. His reputation was such that, when the Christians from the village of Kilang in Leitimor found themselves ‘encompassed in a mountain, and the Moors telling them to surrender because there had already been no Portuguese or Christian who had not reneged [on their faith, they] replied that, whilst Manuel of Hatiwi might live,

they would not surrender. As the centre of the indigenous mission, the village of Hatiwi itself played an important role in the spread of Christianity in Ambon, frequently welcoming and defending converts. After a church had been constructed there in 1562, more than 200 Muslims and heathens ‘fled from their villages and came to live in Hatiwi, becoming Christians.’

At the time that these 200 Ambonese had relocated themselves to Hatiwi in order to embrace Christianity in a safe location, it had been the preeminent Christian village in the entire Ambon area for approximately 40 years; nevertheless, there were apparently still many people in Hatiwi itself who had not previously embraced Christianity. According to the account written by Brother Fernão de Osório, the two Jesuits who were then resident in Hatiwi, Francisco Rodrigues and Diogo de Magalhães, had christened not just these 200 baptism-seeking refugees who had travelled to the village but also a ‘great multitude’ of people who belonged to the village itself. It had been four decades after people in ‘Christian’ Hatiwi had first sought out conversion, and the village was still a source converts. If what was easily the most Christian village in the Ambon area maintained a religiously plural population, there should be no surprise that other Christian villages were also inhabited by people with a mixture of religious identities. Indeed, there are several hints in the Jesuit letters that this was the case. Summarising the annual report which had come from Maluku in 1578, during a time of intense persecution after the loss of the Portuguese fort in Ternate, Lourenço Pinheiro pointed out that the Jesuits in Ambon were ‘administering all the sacraments to the Portuguese and the local Christians’ but otherwise did not have much to do. They had baptised a very small number of converts, he reported, but there had not been many of these ‘[b]ecause the villages which

32 Ibid. 348.
34 Ibid.
are with our men are almost totally Christian.' Writing from the island nearly two decades later, António Pereira parenthetically pointed out that there were then villages in Ambon which were ‘entirely of Christians,’ a comment which makes sense only if other Christian villages had non-Christians living in them or if that had at least been the normal expectation. Even at this late date, however, it was common for villages in Ambon to support a mixture of religious identities. The official Jesuit report from 1599, for example, recorded that the Fathers in the island had recently come ‘upon a village of 200 persons, part Christian and part heathen, who all received the holy baptism.’

Despite being Ulilima as mentioned above, Nusaniwi, located on the southwest tip of the Leitimor Peninsula, was another area which had Christianised years before the arrival of the first missionary in Ambon. According to Castanheda’s account, it was one of ‘three main villages,’ along with Hatiwi and Amantelo, which had requested baptism during the captaincy of António Galvão (1536-1539). The Portuguese captain had sent Diogo Lopes de Azevedo to the island to attack a trading fleet which had come to the region intending to swap artillery and other weapons for cloves. Azevedo, assisted by 200 men from Tidore, successfully vanquished this fleet, after which he oversaw baptisms in the three aforementioned areas because they had requested it of him ‘with great insistence.’ Unlike Hatiwi, however, Nusaniwi does not seem to have maintained its Christian identity over the ensuing decades. By 1562, it was ruled over by a ‘Moor

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38 Technically, Nusaniwi was actually an ali or association of villages, including Eri, Silali, and Latuhalat (Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to Fr. António de Quadros, Provincial, Goa. Ternate, April 16, 1562." 350, note 317). In the Portuguese sources, however, it is always labelled and treated as a village.
40 Castanheda, Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India. Volume 8. 458-459.
named Ratiputi’ who had ‘done many evils to the Christians, burning and pulling down
the crosses.’

Having a Muslim ruler would have been sufficient for Nusaniwi to be
classed as a Muslim village, but it appears that Ratiputi was not the sole Muslim in the
location. According to Manuel Gomes, the people of Nusaniwi at this time had also
become Muslims, many of them having ‘two or three wives.’

Unsurprisingly, the religious situation was a bit more complicated than that, though. As discussed in detail in
chapter four, in 1562 the Ambonese Christians had pressured Henrique de Sá, the newly
arrived Portuguese Captain of Maluku (1562-1564), to arrest Ratiputi on charges of
having repeatedly robbed Christian villages. Arrested at the same time for having killed
some Portuguese was one Bauta, a man who previously ‘had been a ruler together with
Ratiputi in Nusaniwi’ before being cast out with Portuguese aid and seeking refuge in
Hatiwi. Significantly, Hatiwi was a logical place for Bauta to flee to because, despite
having been a ruler of Muslim Nusaniwi, he was a Christian. In Hatiwi, he cast himself at
the feet of Manuel, the village’s stalwart Christian ruler, and sought his pardon. To make
the situation more complicated, however, in the past Bauta had apostatised ‘two or three
times,’ apparently always returning to Christianity. When he fled to Hatiwi, he took 80
of ‘his people’ with him. Though it is impossible to know for sure, it seems possible that
some of Bauta’s people might have been Christians or Christian apostates as well. At the
very minimum, they were welcomed into a Christian village. If the example of Bauta is
any measure, the religious situation in Muslim Nusaniwi was far from straightforward.

It is fitting, therefore, that the religious situation in Christian Nusaniwi was also
not straightforward. More than two decades after the first people from the location had
demanded baptism, Nusaniwi again became a ‘Christian village’ in 1562. Before Captain Sá departed Ambon for the fort in Ternate, he had passed down the sentence of death by hanging on Ratiputi. ‘This caused him fear, and he asked them to christen him.’

The requests for baptism did not stop with one condemned ruler, though. For reasons unrecorded, ‘[t]he chiefs of the village of Nusaniwi gathered together also and asked the Father to christen them and all the people of their village.’

The unidentified Jesuit who received this request ‘pretended not to understand for seven or eight days, but they did not stop asking.’ In the end, he gave in and travelled to the location to baptise these chiefs and others. There this cleric engaged in behaviour the account of which provides additional clues concerning how mixed Nusaniwi’s religious landscape had been up to this point: ‘The first thing the Father did in Nusaniwi was to burn a mosque and demolish another very large one which they had commenced, and he disassembled a heathen temple which was in the same land.’

Clearly, Muslim Nusaniwi had supported a heathen population, and, as demonstrated above, at least one of its chiefs had been a Christian.

As stated above, this pattern of religious pluralism persisted after the arrival of the much-requested Jesuit. In particular, though the chiefs may have wished that ‘all the people of their village be baptised,’ this outcome simply did not materialise immediately. Admittedly, many of the people did embrace Christianity. According to Mascarenhas, more than 1,500 of them were baptised on Easter Sunday in 1562, followed by ‘the greater part of them’ eight days later, on the Day of the Ascension of Our Lady.

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46 Ibid. 351.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid. 351-352.
49 Ibid. 352.
50 Ibid.
Considering that, at the time, the population of Nusaniwi was around 4,000 people,\textsuperscript{51} Mascarenhas’s report in isolation makes it sound like virtually everyone adopted the new faith. That they did not can be seen from an account composed the following year. Sometime after the conversions mentioned above, a Ternatan-led armada began harassing Christian villages in the Ambon area. A village in Nusalaut, one of the Lease Islands, had actually been torched before the armada arrived in Nusaniwi and threatened to do the same there if the people did not re-embrace Islam. In response, the people began constructing defences and making weapons. They also asked that a Father be sent to them and that those in Nusaniwi who were not Christians ‘might be christened…and those who did not want to be might be expelled from the village.’\textsuperscript{52} Obviously, despite the impression of mass conversion given in the 1562 account, a large enough number of people in Nusaniwi had chosen not to embrace Christianity that they were considered to be an internal threat. Like its Muslim predecessor, Christian Nusaniwi had remained a place of mixed religious identities.

Included amongst those who had not wanted to convert earlier was the son of Ratiputi,\textsuperscript{53} who was still considered a ‘chief man in the land’ despite the fact that he had not become a Christian.\textsuperscript{54} Presumably he was a Muslim like his father had been.

Presented with an ultimatum by the Christian chiefs of Nusaniwi, he and about 120 others chose to convert rather than leave their home.\textsuperscript{55} The record is unclear whether these ten dozen persons were the only non-Christians left in Nusaniwi at this point. It is possible

\textsuperscript{53} Identified in the text as António de Abreu, his Christian name, Ratiputi had been exiled to India instead of being hanged (Mascarenhas, “Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to Fr. António de Quadros, Provincial, Goa. Ternate, April 16, 1562.” 353).
that they were, but it is equally possible that, following the common pattern discussed below, other non-Christians chose at this time to relocate to a different part of Ambon in order to maintain the religious identity of their choice, an option which clearly had been provided for within the ultimatum. Writing from Ternate, Baltasar de Araújo insisted that, in this way, Nusaniwi had become ‘entirely Christian [todo de christãos].’

Nevertheless, he indicated that the concern of the Christians had been specifically that ‘they were mixed with infidels,’ a term reserved for Muslims, not heathens.

The possibility therefore remains that pressure to convert or leave had been placed primarily on followers of Islam, with unconverted heathens who posed no political risk still tolerated in Nusaniwi. Either way, the situation wherein Christian rulers required those who did not want to convert to leave the area appears in the Jesuit records to have been something of an anomaly, no other accounts of any similar circumstances existing. Nevertheless, the conversion of Nusaniwi once again demonstrates that it was not at all unusual for so-called Christian—or, as will be discussed below, Muslim—villages in Ambon to contain a mixture of religious identities.

As the cases of Nusaniwi and Hatiwi also show, religious admixture was common in large part because conversion to Christianity tended to happen in a rather piecemeal fashion, with those who did not accept baptism at first often taking weeks, months, or even years before deciding to adopt the new religious identity of their village. Though sixteenth-century documents repeatedly refer to the christening of a village, giving the impression of a one-off event resulting in mass conversion, in reality religious change occurred one individual at a time, even when a group of individuals may have made such a decision simultaneously. Another clear and specific example of this process comes

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57 Ibid. 386.
from an unnamed Muslim village in Ambon which Christianised in 1569.58 According to Pero Mascarenhas, this village had sent a message ‘[a]t the beginning of summer…to ask for a Father to go christen them.’59 One of the Jesuits, possibly Mascarenhas himself, travelled there to perform these baptisms.60 From the descriptions in the Jesuit’s letter, one could easily conclude that the entire population of the village had immediately converted. The Portuguese visitors (the Father having taken an escort of soldiers with him) were greeted joyfully, with ‘dancing to drumming and celebrations’ continuing both day and night.61 This was especially true on the day when ‘all the village chiefs,’ presumably all Christian at this point, ‘carried on their shoulders’ a newly made cross which was then erected in the village, again ‘with great dances to drumming and celebrations by the locals and the Portuguese all along the way.’62 On this same day, the chiefs held a great banquet ‘to honour the cross,’ providing food for ‘the entire village.’63 For their part, the people, now presumably all Christians as well, set the area around the cross ablaze that night with pitch lamps. When the Jesuit preached ‘the matters of our holy faith,’ he did so ‘to all the men, who had gathered for this in a very large village baileu’ or village meeting house; there ‘they listened with so much devotion that they did not miss a word.’64 On first impression, an enthusiastic acceptance of Christianity seems to have spread universally throughout this village.

58 Pero Mascarenhas’s account of this village’s conversion in Christianity nowhere specifically states that the village had been previously Muslim; however, it states that the people had been blinded by cacizes or Islamic clerics, so one can reasonably conclude that the village had been Muslim, acknowledging, of course, that other religious identities may well have been present too (Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits of the College in Goa. Ambon, June 15, 1570." 597).
59 Ibid. 596.
60 There were four priests in Ambon at the time (ibid. 594-595). Mascarenhas did not make it clear which of these four travelled to the village. Because he often wrote about his experiences in the third person, it could have been he who did, but it may well have been one of the others.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. 597.
64 Ibid.
Nevertheless, Mascarenhas’s account also includes subtle signals—traces of indigenous agency—which remind one of the insufficiency of this impression. For example, the day after the Jesuit had been preaching to the men of the village in the baileu, ‘an esteemed man came to meet with the Father, to be christened.’\textsuperscript{65} Clearly, in what had become a visibly Christian village, this man was still not a Christian. Moreover, his personal meeting with the visiting cleric reinforces this man’s individuality. Moved by what he had heard the night before, he had arrived at a determination to convert and then went by himself to request baptism from the priest. The very brief mention of him in the Jesuit account is an important reminder that what may appear to have been mass conversion was of necessity a collection of individual choices, made by individual agents. In the beginning phases of a village’s conversion, many of the people may have acted in concert, but each made his or her own decision, and, as this man’s story points out, many of them chose not to participate until later, some not at all. The official ‘conversion’ of a village may have been a one-off event; the conversion of the individuals in that village inevitably happened piecemeal.

Unsurprisingly, others in this unnamed Christian village also remained unconverted. Included in Mascarenhas’s letter was a miraculous account of a healing which occurred after some young men had destroyed the tomb of a revered caciz or Islamic cleric. This tomb was located near the village’s cross, and so the visiting priest had one morning sent these young men, all of whom had embraced the new faith,\textsuperscript{66} to tear it down. Significantly, included in this group was an exception, ‘a leading youth, son of the village chief, which youth was not yet a Christian.’\textsuperscript{67} His existence once again reinforces the fact that conversion of a village was not a wholesale event. Though his friends, and probably even his father, had all been baptised, he had remained outside the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid. 598.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid. 597.
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faith. This fact becomes important to the retelling of the story because, at the commencement of the task of destruction, this unbaptised young man fell ill, his throat swelling ‘so much that he could not get any water down,’ whilst his Christian friends remained healthy. When the Jesuit was told of this, he went to the young man’s house, where many of the village’s rulers had gathered to mourn the victim’s pending death. There he consoled the family and well-wishers and baptised the young man, after which ‘[i]t pleased Our Lord to restore his health, which caused not a little admiration and amazement amongst all the people of the village, all of them praising God Our Lord.” It is important to note that, were it not for this significant turn of events, Mascarenhas may never have related the destruction of the caciz’s tomb, or, if he had, he probably would have made no mention that one amongst the group had not embraced the faith. One learns of this young man’s status as a non-Christian only because it ended up playing an important role in the narration of the miracle. This point highlights the degree to which other non-Christians living in Christian villages remained mostly hidden in the Jesuit accounts.

Had it not been for the miraculous healing of this young man and the teaching importance it assumed, other non-Christians in this unnamed village of Ambon probably would also have remained unmentioned in Mascarenhas’s text. After all, the statement that the miracle had led all the people of the village to praise the Christian God generates a rather strong impression yet again of a homogenously Christian population.

Nevertheless, the then-unbaptised young man’s close encounter with death served to highlight an important segment of this population—those who were similarly unconverted and who therefore were ‘scared by what had happened to the chief’s son.” These people had concluded, as the Jesuit himself had, that illness had befallen the young man because

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68 Ibid. 598.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
he dared offend the spirits connected with a potent structure without the protection of having been christened. This fear became an issue for these non-Christians because something of an eradication campaign seems to have arisen in the village, with ‘the newly baptised youths and children [going] out to break down the idols and tombs of the deceased throughout the village.’ Those who were unbaptised may have wished to join in by destroying their household ‘idols’ because their beliefs were in the process of changing, or they may simply have surrendered to the zeal of the new Christians in this regard; either way, they found themselves with objects in their homes which they did not dare to destroy themselves lest some illness or other evil befall them as it had the chief’s son. Consequently, when the idol-smashing youths came by, ‘the women and men who were not yet baptised called out to them, asking them to come into their houses and destroy the idols which they had inside for them, for they did not dare do it, not yet being baptised.’ The phrase ‘not yet baptised’ of course suggests that these villagers would soon join their Christian counterparts, and many of them may well have, though the possibility remains that many of them may also have remained outside the Christian fold despite living in a Christian village. In either case, their existence underscores the fact that religious change in a village tended to occur in a piecemeal fashion rather than all at once.

Although most of the evidence for religiously-mixed villages in sixteenth-century Ambon and Lease comes from Christian villages, it would be a mistake to conclude that the situation in Muslim villages necessarily differed much. Wessels, as mentioned above, did contend that Ulisiwa villages tolerated Christianity, heathenism, and Islam whilst Ulilima villages remained strictly Muslim in identity, but this assertion has already been shown to be false on the village level—for example, Nusaniwi, Ulilima by clan,

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Wessels, De geschiedenis der R.K. missie in Amboina. 3.
Christianised not once but twice—and it is therefore equally unlikely to have been true on the individual level. Lack of evidence for religious plurality in Muslim villages stems less from any real difference in situation and more from the fact that the Europeans who left behind written records of sixteenth-century Ambon spent nearly all of their time in Christian villages. Nevertheless, subtle hints do exist in the contemporary literature which suggest that Muslim villages, exactly like their Christian counterparts, were far from religiously homogenous.

For example, writing about the Christians of Ambon in 1563, Brother Fernão de Osório praised the zeal and courage of the new converts there, pointing out that ‘some, and not a few, Christians who were living in Moorish villages, seeing themselves harassed and assaulted by them so that they might become Moors, have left their gardens and their houses and have come with their children to live in Hatiwi and in other Christian villages.’ Increasing Muslim/Christian tensions in Ambon seem to have been pushing some Muslim villages at this time toward greater homogeneity (as was the case in newly Christian Nusaniwi), but clearly some Christians had been living in villages which officially identified with Islam. Christians living in Muslim villages, however, were not the only ones shifting their locations at this time. As already mentioned above, Osório in the same report indicated that recently about 200 people, both Muslims and heathens, ‘fled from their villages and came to live in Hatiwi, becoming Christians.’ From their European perspectives, the Jesuit missionaries inevitably saw those who abandoned their homes in order to seek a safe place to pursue Christian identities as valorous, but their behaviour actually reflects a defensive strategy which was commonly employed across Southeast Asian cultures. As Anthony Reid has pointed out, fleeing danger was a typical

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75 Ibid. 369.
response. In many cases, those who had fled would simply wait until the situation allowed them to return home. If the threat was too great or too long-lasting, however, it was not unknown for entire villages simply to pick up and relocate themselves. The perception that new land was infinitely available as well as the impermanence of dwellings and the portability of wealth (primarily precious metals and cloth) made it relatively easy for the people of Ambon and Lease to relocate themselves.

These details about people who left their homelands to pursue their religious choices are important in three ways. First, they demonstrate that some individuals who lived in Muslim and therefore most probably Ulilima villages embraced Christianity. Second, though the people mentioned in these passages had moved out of their villages in order to switch their religious identities, it suggests that, in less tense times, they may well have stayed put, contributing to a religiously diverse village setting. Third, by referencing heathens who also had to flee their homes in order to convert, it indirectly confirms that Muslim villages also supported heathen populations. (Recall that Muslim Nusaniwi, in addition to its two mosques, had contained a heathen ‘temple.’) Because heathen Ulisiwa villages were overwhelmingly tolerant of Christianity and, more importantly, supportive of the Portuguese presence in Ambon, heathens who had to relocate themselves to a Christian village in order to feel safe enough to convert must have been living in Muslim villages beforehand. The image which starts to emerge here therefore exactly resembles the religious hodgepodge found in Christian villages in Ambon and the Lease islands: despite a village’s official religious identification, it often contained pockets of people who had embraced or maintained other religious traditions. Clearly, there were both Christians and heathens in at least some Muslim villages.

76 Reid, *The Lands below the Winds*. 122.
77 Ibid. 123.
78 Ibid. 122.
One specific example of how religiously diverse Ambonese society in the sixteenth century often was comes from Hitu, the centre of Islam in the island and therefore the perceived head of the entire Ulilima moiety. In narrating the story, related above, of the village chief’s unbaptised son who was struck with illness upon helping his Christian friends tear down the tomb of an Islamic cleric, Pero Mascarenhas mentioned that the visiting Jesuit had learnt of the event from his interpreter, a ‘Christian lad…who had been baptised two years before’ but who also happened to be the ‘son of the village chief of Hitu.’\(^79\) Hubert Jacobs suggested\(^80\) that this young man may have been the same one mentioned very briefly in the Relação, an ‘Ambonese youth, Hituese by caste, named Pate Lima…, which is to say in his language, chief of five villages.’\(^81\) (It could also be interpreted as ‘Ulilima chief.’) During the time of Gonçalo Pereira Marramaque, this youth approached the fleet commander and ‘told him that he had come to be christened, and that he would always be a vassal of the King of Portugal.’\(^82\) Eventually, his people rebelled against him, being displeased with him ‘because he had been christened.’\(^83\) Whether these passages refer to the same young man or not, they and those from Mascarenhas’s letter confirm that Christian converts came from even the most stridently Muslim villages in Ambon.

Two final examples will serve to illustrate the complexity of the religious landscape in sixteenth-century Ambon and Lease. The first example comes from a 1566 letter written by Melchior Nunes Barreto and based upon the reports which he had received in India from his fellow Jesuits in Ambon and the rest of Maluku. According to his summary, ‘not many years ago’ some of the King of Ternate’s captains had attacked

\(^{80}\) Ibid. 598, note 596.
\(^{81}\) "A Capitania de Amboino." 356.
\(^{82}\) Ibid.
\(^{83}\) Ibid. See chapter six for a detailed discussion of the very real threat of rebellion faced by indigenous rulers who converted.
some Christian villages in the Ambon area, destroying them. The men from these villages whom they had captured they forced to marry Muslim women, and then they ‘divided them amongst the Moorish villages so that they could not preserve their Christianity.’ Occurrences such as this one clearly contributed to a very complex situation in which not only religious identities but clan identities became significantly jumbled together.

The second example comes from another unnamed village in Ambon, located somewhere along the coast near ‘a large point which inclined to the land with a great cliff.’ In 1562, Fathers Francisco Rodrigues and Diogo de Magalhães were shipwrecked off this point when ‘such a great tempest arose that their ship was swamped.’ The Jesuits had been travelling at this time because ‘two ships of Moorish robbers’ had been harassing the local Christian villages, and ‘it seemed good to Manuel [of Hatiwi] and to some Portuguese who were in Ambon to go with the Fathers to encourage the Christians and remove the fear which they had of the Moors.’ This small fleet consisted of three korakora, but, for some reason, the priests had departed a day ahead of the other two vessels, being thus unaccompanied when they were swamped by the storm. Some of the men with whom they had been travelling were swept into the sea and drowned at this time, but two Portuguese managed to get out of the half-sunk vessel and onto a rock topped with sharp and dangerous stones whilst the Jesuits remained in the korakora, ‘encouraging the Portuguese and the Christians to confess if they had committed any offence against God.’ Clearly, the expectation was for death.

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85 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
The Europeans who had escaped the vessel, however, had drawn the attention of some people on shore, and ‘the local people came running to kill the two Portuguese who had got out onto the rock.’\(^90\) No explanation is given in the account why murder was the obvious response to discovering two helpless Europeans, though it points out later that these particular Ambonese were Muslims. Moreover, based on their inhospitable behaviour, they may also have belonged to the Ulilima. The two stranded Portuguese ended up being spared when the locals also noticed the two Jesuits in the half-submerged korakora who had been waving at them to attract their attention. The presence of priests somehow changed the entire situation, and the people on shore ‘made a raft and went to rescue the Fathers and most of the people from the ship, and they raised their hands to heaven, giving thanks to God and saying that the calamity of the Fathers had been their salvation.’\(^91\) The survivors were then conducted to a nearby Christian village, where they were fed and cared for and where a disconsolate Manuel was thrilled and surprised to find them alive, having earlier seen the wreckage of their korakora in the water.

As mentioned above, those from the unnamed village who had rescued the Jesuits and their travelling companions were Muslims. This identification is important because, after the rescue, they ‘converted to our holy faith along with their entire village, considering it a mystery that they happened upon the Fathers there in that manner.’\(^92\) Interestingly, some in the village did not need the sacrament of baptism because they ‘had earlier been Christians and had lost their zeal [estavão esfriados] because of the wars’; these ‘were once again reconciled to our holy faith and offered their children for baptism, these being 60 in number.’\(^93\) This means that, at the time that the Jesuits were shipwrecked near this village, at minimum its population consisted of some Muslims and

\(^{90}\) Ibid.  
\(^{91}\) Ibid.  
\(^{92}\) Ibid.  
\(^{93}\) Ibid.
some who would have been considered apostate Christians. It also means that, at some point in the past, the village would have supported a partially Christian population mixed with either Muslims, heathens, or both (there is no way of knowing when the Muslims in the village had embraced Islam or whether there were any heathens there). Importantly, the conversion of this village appears to have happened in a typically piecemeal fashion. Despite reporting that the ‘entire village’ had embraced Christianity, Araújo nonetheless also recorded that ‘afterward more than 30 persons were baptised in the same village, amongst whom was the wife of the ruler of the land.’ Clear, at the time that the ‘entire village’ had converted, there was still a number of individuals in the village who had not, including the ruler’s wife. This means that, for a time, this newly (re)converted Christian village consisted of reconciled Christians, formerly Muslim Christians, and at least 30 village members of unknown religious identity, some of them prominent, who had not yet adopted Christianity. Moreover, if a village can be considered to have converted in its entirety when the ruler’s wife and several dozen other people have not yet embraced the faith, the possibility remains that, even after these 30 later baptisms, there were still non-Christians living in the village. The brief snapshot of this unnamed village in Araújo’s letter epitomises the hodgepodge of religious identities often found throughout Ambon and the Lease islands at any given point in time. Clearly, the religious landscape in a single village—whether Christian, Muslim, or heathen in its current identity—can never be assumed to have been either homogeneous or static.

It is precisely the reality of this religious plurality which rescues the concept of indigenous agency from the apparent stranglehold both of narratives of whole-village mass conversion and the claim of predictive clan identity. As already conceded above, it may be true that there was a very strong correlation in Ambon and the Lease islands

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94 Ibid.
between Ulilima villages and Islam on the one hand and Ulisiwa villages and Christianity on the other hand, but there was far less correlation between the stated religious identity of a village and the religious identities of the people dwelling in that village. Consequently, the assumed linkage between clan and religion for any one individual completely breaks down upon closer examination. A person living in a Christian Ulisiwa village may well have been a Christian, but that person could also have been a heathen or even a Muslim. Similarly, a person living in a Muslim Ulilima village may well have been a Muslim, but that person could also have been a heathen, a Christian, or even a lapsed Christian, as illustrated in the last example above. Moreover, if circumstances in a particular village necessitated it, those who preferred a religious choice different to the dominant one in their village simply could—and often did—relocate themselves to a village more supportive of this choice. In this way, villages over time may have tended toward greater religious homogeneity whilst at the same time they would have become more diverse in their clan identity, with Ulilima and Ulisiwa who shared a religion increasingly mixed up together. This would have been the case especially during times of increased tension between Muslims and Christians in the area.

In the end, then, the perceived entanglement between a village’s clan and its religious identity in sixteenth-century Ambon and Lease, first mentioned by the unknown author of the Relação in the sixteenth century, was not nearly as tight as either he or, especially, later commentators have made it appear. In the first instance, there was no perfectly predictable one-to-one correspondence between a village’s lineage and which of the two world religions the village ended up choosing to embrace, with exceptions on both sides of the Ulilima/Islam and Ulisiwa/Christianity divide. Not a few villages made multiple choices in succession. Beyond these exceptions, however, lay the even more important fact that individuals in these villages remained the agents of their own religious
identities. Because plurality of religious identification was common and therefore generally tolerated, the official affiliation of a village did not automatically determine the affiliation of its people. Even when circumstances of war and conflict caused village rulers to attempt to construct a more homogenous identity, individuals retained their agency, able to relocate themselves as necessary to more amenable surroundings, sometimes even invited or pressured to do so. In sixteenth-century Ambon and Lease, knowing which clan a particular village affiliated with simply did not allow one to know with any surety which religion a person who lived in that village espoused. Because of all the religiously motivated moving about, one did not even know with reasonable certainty which of the two competing moieties the person may have originally traced his or her descent from.
CHAPTER SIX

CONVERSION AND THE CONSTRAINTS ON CHRISTIAN RULERS
IN BACAN

The King of Bacan actively sought after and received baptism in 1557, adopting the Christian name of Dom João. António Vaz, the priest who had been sent to christen the young king, remained in the Bacan islands for four-and-a-half months before falling ill and returning to Ternate to recover in November. Jesuit enthusiasm and expectations surrounding Dom João’s conversion were such that Vaz was replaced immediately despite the fact that no other priest was actually available to be sent to the area at that time. Francisco Vieira, the newly arrived Superior of the Maluku Jesuit Mission, planned to assign Father Afonso de Castro there, but Castro, who had been labouring with the Moro Christians for more than a year, was busy transporting two newly arrived Jesuits to Moro and introducing them to their fields of labour. In the meantime, Vieira sent Fernão de Osório, a Jesuit Brother, to be with ‘the King of Bacan so that he might be disposed to receive Father Afonso with greater veneration, who within a month had to be here.’

Osório must have been dispatched with significant haste after Vaz’s return to Ternate. In his first extant report from Bacan, dated 1 January 1558, he mentioned both that he had tried writing ‘many days ago’ but could not send the letter and that he and King Dom João had learnt in Bacan about the decision of the Portuguese captain to imprison King Hairun of Ternate, an event which had occurred on 1 December. Clearly, the newly

christened King of Bacan had not been left alone for more than a few days in November. There may have been many reasons for the strong commitment shown to this new convert, but probably one of the most significant ones shows up near the end of Osório’s first report: ‘because we are now convinced that all will be converted to Christianity; because this king of ours has a plan to make these islands\(^4\) all Christian.’\(^5\)

The concept that the conversion of indigenous rulers to Christianity would inevitably lead to widespread conversion amongst the people in their sphere of influence did not originate with Fernão de Osório, however, or with the baptism of King Dom João of Bacan. Writing from Ambon early in his visit to Maluku in 1546, Francis Xavier, the founder of the Jesuit mission, expressed this very expectation. Two years earlier, King Hairun of Ternate had been arrested by Captain Jordão de Freitas and sent to India, where some hoped that he might convert to Christianity as had the previously exiled King of Ternate, Hairun’s half-brother Tabarija.\(^6\) Writing to his fellow Jesuits in India, Xavier expressed his belief that, ‘[i]f the king there should become Christian, I hope in God Our Lord that many will become Christian in these parts of Maluku.’\(^7\) The Jesuits clearly saw the earlier death of Tabarija, who had been christened Dom Manuel,\(^8\) as a tragic lost opportunity. With a Christian king ruling over Ternate, Catholicism should have swept over the surrounding region like a wave. Writing more than a decade after the converted

\(^4\) The reference here is probably to the islands of Bacan and not to the entire Maluku region. Sixteenth-century source materials provide no clarity concerning which islands exactly comprised the Kingdom of Bacan, but it seems to have included a number of them. Ironically, the island which today bears the name of Bacan does not seem to have belonged to the kingdom, though nearby islands did (ibid. 221, note 214). It is possible, however, that part of this island, specifically the northern half, may have been ruled over by the King of Bacan.


\(^6\) Tabarija and his mother, known only by her title of Nyacili Boki Raja, had been sent to Goa in 1535, where, two years later, he embraced Christianity. Upon returning to Maluku in 1545, he died in Malacca from poison, presumed by many to have been arranged by Hairun. Thereafter, Hairun was declared the rightful ruler of Ternate by the Portuguese governor in Goa and was returned to Ternate. See: Gonçalves, "Apostolado de Francisco Xavier nas Molucas." 498. Abdurachman, “‘Niachile Pokaraga’,” 587-589.

\(^7\) Xavier, “Fr. Francisco Xavier SJ to the Jesuits in India. Ambon, May 10, 1546.” 18.

ruler’s demise, Luís Fróis was still bemoaning what could have been, especially since, whilst Xavier was in Ternate, the mission founder had been instrumental in helping the dead king’s powerful and influential mother embrace Christianity: ‘It would not have been surprising with her for all Maluku to be Christian, but it did not happen because of the death of her son Dom Manuel, King of Maluku who converted in India and died here in Malacca.’

The Jesuit propensity for hoping that a ruler of Ternate would convert and subsequently bring all the people of Maluku into the fold did not die with Dom Manuel, however, nor did it fade when Hairun returned to Maluku as devout a Muslim as he had ever been. Attention merely turned to the next generation. In particular, King Hairun had told Xavier that he had plans to make one of his younger sons a Christian, an enticing bit of information which the ruler repeated to Juan de Beira early in 1549, affirming ‘that he wanted to fulfil what he had promised.’ The Jesuit Father was not content with this offer, however, setting his sights similarly on the son who would eventually be Hairun’s heir: ‘I also hope that the eldest son might become a Christian, he being prince and lord of the kingdom, and, upon his converting, it is certain that all of the kingdom and most of the islands would convert.’

In the following year, Beira was temporarily frustrated in his desires but not in the certainty of his expectations. Concerning the king’s promise to have one of his sons christened, the Jesuits had given up hope, ‘first because he [Hairun] delays with words, second because he is the one who treats the Christians worse than’ King Katarabumi of Jailolo, who was openly persecuting the converts in Moro.

Nevertheless, Beira still saw a future Christian King of Ternate generating widespread

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9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
conversion in the region. Perhaps subtly suggesting assassination, though possibly just rebellion or natural death, he assured Ignatius Loyola, the Society’s founder, ‘that, with that king gone and this son of his converted, a very large doorway will open by which many may enter the fold of the Lord.’

One year later, attention turned briefly to Jailolo. King Katarabumi, mentioned above as the great persecutor of the Moro Christians, took his turn as the next great hope for widespread conversion throughout the Maluku region. As discussed in chapter three, converts in the Moro area had repeatedly pressured the Portuguese to take action against this perpetual enemy of theirs, even refusing to resume a Christian identity after being freed militarily until Katarabumi had been dealt with. Consequently, Jailolo had been besieged unsuccessfully in both 1539 and 1545 and was finally forced to surrender in a siege which began on 28 December 1550 and lasted for three months. Only a few days thereafter, Nicau Nunes recorded that the deposed king had ‘offered himself to the captain to become a Christian.’ It is difficult to see this offer as anything more than a political ploy to buy time or protection for one who had repeatedly done everything in his power to quash the growth of Christianity elsewhere. After all, subsequent to presenting himself for baptism, Katarabumi had ‘postponed it for a time because of persuasion from some people from Ternate.’ In these political machinations, however, one can see how well the former king had picked up on the hopes and expectations of the Europeans, repeating them back to his captors as a means of boosting the importance of his offer and therefore of his very person: ‘He says that, if he were to become a Christian, so it would

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13 Ibid.
14 Schurhammer, Francis Xavier. 164.
happen with all Maluku that it would become Christian. This prognostication probably seemed credible to the Jesuit Brother because it matched his understanding of how things should work following the conversion of one who was ‘much feared in these parts’; consequently, he requested the Jesuits in India and Portugal to commend Katarabumi to God so that, ‘[n]ext year, with the help of the Lord, I will write good news of his conversion.’ Unfortunately for everyone involved, however, though the deposed king did indeed fulfil his promise to receive a Christian baptism, he died shortly thereafter, once again leaving the Jesuits bereft of their hope for an easy top-down Christianisation of Maluku.

Six years later, the King of Bacan, similarly moved by concern over the safety of his person, stepped into this vacuum with his aforementioned ‘plan to make these islands all Christian.’ King Dom João did not possess the wide-ranging influence of the King of Ternate or the former King of Jailolo, as the Jesuits soon discovered, and, after a time, a more tempered view of the power of Christian rulers began to emerge. In particular, the hope that a single king or chief could somehow bring the entire Maluku region to embrace Christianity was replaced by the hope that local rulers who converted could at least guarantee that the people over whom they governed would follow them into the religion of the Europeans. Thus, António de Quadros, writing from India in 1563, could pin his hopes on an unnamed ‘ruler or lord of the chiefs of Ambon’ who had been in Goa for a year. In India, possibly having travelled there specifically to investigate Christianity, he had embraced the new religion, becoming ‘a good Christian and excellent.’ He had returned to Maluku the previous September, where it was expected

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18 Ibid. 92.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid. 92, note 99.
that he would ‘do there much amongst his subjects who are still Moors.’

After some similarly unidentified chiefs were baptised in Seram and other islands, Marcos Prancudo assured the Jesuit General in Rome that there would be more conversions to follow since, ‘in these parts, once the village chief is christened, there is no difficulty with the others.’

Writing about the powerful and influential Kingdom of Tidore only three years later, Melchior Nunes Barreto pointed out that some of the ‘chiefs’ there had already been christened. These included a first cousin of the king, who had been baptised on 30 November 1563, receiving the name of Dom Rodrigo. ‘[T]he best counsellor and best captain whom the King of Tidore has’ and a man who had earlier led the war against the Portuguese fort, his conversion ‘greatly surprised everyone who knew it’ and apparently moved several other ‘chiefs’ in the island.

On 27 February of the following year, he was joined by six other rulers who likewise embraced Christianity. These were ‘very close relatives of the King of Tidore’ who had travelled to the Portuguese fort in Ternate to seek out baptism. Apparently, two of the king’s brothers had also been baptised at some point. By this time, none of the Europeans in Maluku seems to have harboured the hope that these prominent Christians would result in the conversion of the entire region, despite Tidore’s undeniable influence, but they still maintained a strong

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22 Ibid.
conviction that the kingdom itself would at least feel the impact. For example, Manuel Gomes expressed his hope that, through these Christian nobles, ‘God will accomplish much.’

Nunes Barreto, with considerably more boldness, declared that, if the situation were handled correctly, the rest of Tidore’s people would ‘easily convert, as I say, the chiefs already having done so.’

Similar hopes sprung up upon the conversion of the King of Siau in 1563. Christened Dom Jerónimo, the ruler was seen as being able to deliver to Christianity his entire island kingdom. Like King Katarabumi of Jailolo, the King of Siau understood these European expectations and therefore played an important role in reaffirming them. Shortly after his conversion, his island was visited by a Portuguese fleet which spent two months there awaiting the northwest monsoon which would take them to Ternate. During this period, the Christian king generously fed the hundred or so visitors and spent as much time with them as he could, even spending his nights sleeping on their korakora. Because he had been baptised in Manado, more than 100km to the south, no priest had visited his kingdom yet, but he was keen to secure one of his own. Consequently, he told the Portuguese that, ‘if a Father would come to his land, he [the Father] would have no need for anything but that he [the king] would immediately make him very good houses and a church and give him all his needs, and that all his people would be christened then and would keep the Christian customs’—a claim which was duly reported to Father Pero Mascarenhas in Ternate.

Five years later, Mascarenhas became the first priest who succeeded in visiting the island of Siau, as discussed in chapter two, after which the king took on an even larger

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33 See chapter two for more information concerning the conversion of the King of Siau.
role in the Jesuit imagination, becoming the key to conversion not only in his own island but throughout the north Sulawesi area. This shift in perception occurred when Mascarenhas took the opportunity during his Siau visit to travel along the coast of Sulawesi, meeting with the scattered Christians who had been baptised there by Diego de Magalhães in 1563. Dom Jerónimo chose to accompany the Jesuit Father throughout this time, significantly impressing the latter with how much influence he appeared to have outside his own realm. The King of Siau, Mascarenhas discovered, was ‘one of the most feared men in all Celebes’ and a rather committed missionary himself.35 Everywhere they travelled, according to the priest, the people, both Christians and heathens, ‘showed me much hospitality and honour, both because he [the king] was my companion and also because of the many great things which he said concerning the Fathers everywhere, saying that there was no other true religion than ours, and that he had examined it well.’36 Based on these experiences, Mascarenhas quickly concluded that, ‘[w]ithout doubt…this King of Siau, a Christian for such a short time, is one of the best which I have seen, and for this reason it seems to me that great fruit will be made, not only in all his land but in all of Celebes.’37 This hope that Dom Jerónimo would serve as the key to conversion not only in Siau but throughout north Sulawesi continued to be expressed for some time. The following year, for example, the King of Siau had travelled to Ternate to visit his son, known by then as Dom João, whom he had given to Pero Mascarenhas ‘to be raised here in our house in Ternate and to be indoctrinated.’38 The visit was not without some difficulties for the king, he being unaware until his arrival that King Hairun of Ternate had recently been assassinated and that the fort was then under siege, but he again affirmed his value in Jesuit eyes, bravely joining in with the Portuguese defence. ‘It is

35 Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Rector Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits in India. Ternate, March 6, 1569." 540.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid. 544.
hoped,' explained Jerónimo de Olmedo in a letter from Maluku written thereafter, ‘that by means of this king and with divine favour many Christians will be converted in Celebes, for he is the main one from those parts.’

For 25 years, the Jesuits in Maluku from Xavier onward consistently expressed their expectation that the conversion to Christianity of an indigenous ruler would inevitably lead to the conversion of the people over whom he ruled and quite possibly those with whom he had influence more broadly, all in an effortless top-down process. This attitude was informed in large part by the situation in Europe, where, from the fifteenth century, authorities had increasingly asserted ‘civil dominance over the Church.’ The Protestant Reformation and the advent of competing Christian faith groups had only strengthened this trend. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which ended the first major War of Religion, finally codified what by then had become the de facto reality in Europe: *cuius regio, eius religio*, ‘whose realm, his religion.’ This policy ‘allowed the temporal authority of each political unit to choose either Lutheranism or Catholicism for its realm,’ meaning that ‘the faith of a people was controlled by and large by the desires of the prince.’ Protestantism did not arrive in Maluku until the very end of the sixteenth century, but another ‘heretical’ faith, Islam, seems to have played a parallel role in the Jesuit imagination. Just as a Lutheran prince in the German lands had the right to prescribe public worship and therefore produced a Lutheran population, a Muslim king in Maluku created a Muslim kingdom. In a parallel manner, a Christian village chief immediately created what was known as a Christian village, as discussed in detail in chapter five, and it was presumed that the conversion of his people should therefore be a given as well.

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40 Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 402.
41 Ibid.: 400.
42 Ibid.
The only problem was that, in every single instance discussed in the beginning of this chapter (with the possible though unlikely exceptions of the unnamed Christian rulers in Ambon and Seram), conversions in the region did not follow the expected trajectory. Simply put, *cuius regio, eius religio* was not the rule in sixteenth-century Maluku. Despite being expressed repeatedly over the course of decades, European expectations that indigenous rulers could and should determine the religious allegiance and public worship of their subjects in no way matched the reality on the ground. The people of Maluku, as has already been touched upon briefly, quite quickly came to understand how the Jesuits and others thought conversion was supposed to work, learning to parrot back these hopes and expectations when it suited their interests, but promises by Christian rulers that they would bring all their people into the fold inevitably failed, and the Portuguese were never in a position to impose such a radical change to the status quo. Instead, a practical tolerance for religious plurality continued to characterise the social situation in the region, with indigenous rulers often unwilling and, in most cases, unable to force issues of religious choice when it came to their own people. As a result, conversion in Maluku in areas with Christian rulers almost exactly mirrored conversion elsewhere in the region, with interested parties embracing the new faith according to their own terms and on their own timetables. The case of the Christian King of Bacan perfectly illustrates this point.

By all accounts, Christianity first entered Bacan out of political expedience, but the narratives nonetheless reveal the familiar pattern of indigenous actors vigorously seeking for Christian influence and then adopting it on their own terms. The most detailed account of these beginnings comes from Luís Fróis, a Jesuit living in Goa in
1559. This report, however, actually originated with António Vaz, the Jesuit\textsuperscript{43} who had baptised the first people in Bacan and who at the time of writing was living in the Society’s college in Goa, he having been commissioned by the Father Provincial to relate what he knew to Fróis to be included in a letter to the Jesuits in Portugal. According to Fróis’s account, Christian influence was first drawn into Bacan by its young king\textsuperscript{44} who, in 1557, sent a prau ‘to ask the captain of Maluku, Dom Duarte de Eça, to send him a Father since he wanted to be a Christian, he along with six or seven of his rulers.’\textsuperscript{45} Eça was eager to comply with this request,\textsuperscript{46} and, ‘the same night that he received the message, he had the Father whom the king had requested embark.’\textsuperscript{47}

The Jesuit accounts all ascribe this desire for a priest and for baptism to an act of political expedience informed by familial entanglements with Ternate. According to

\textsuperscript{43} Though Vaz had been readmitted to the Society by the time that Fróis composed his letter, he had earlier been expelled from it in Maluku (Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by Order of Fr. Provincial António de Quadros, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Goa, November 14, 1559.” 289). At the time that he was sent to Bacan, he went not as a Jesuit but as the acting vicar of the fortress. See Luís Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Malacca, December 15, 1555,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Jesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1974. 180.

\textsuperscript{44} According to Fróis’s retelling of Vaz’s report, the King of Bacan would have been 24 or 23 years old in 1559, making him 22 or 23 years old when he made his request for a priest (Fróis, "Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by Order of Fr. Provincial António de Quadros, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Goa, November 14, 1559." 291). Writing nearly eight months after the king’s baptism, Francisco Vieira, newly arrived in Ternate, reported that he had heard the details of this conversion from a trustworthy captain. This account suggests that the young king had not actually become King of Bacan until after his baptism, his Muslim father having granted ‘the kingdom to his Christian son’ a few days before the elder’s death. Nevertheless, Vieira reported that the father himself, ‘seeing the danger of his destruction’ as a consequence of his daughter-in-law’s death, had considered becoming a Christian (Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to Father General, Diego Laínez, Rome. Ternate, February 13, 1558." 233). It is impossible to verify this account as virtually nothing is known with certainty about the kings of Bacan during the sixteenth century, not even their names; see A Treatise on the Moluccas. 249, note 243.

\textsuperscript{45} It is impossible to know why some requests for priests fell on deaf ears whilst this one was granted immediately. The Jesuits, of course, were keen to comply with all such requests but were limited by manpower and resources. It seems probable that the Portuguese captain’s response was motivated in part by political considerations. In addition to Ternate, Tidore, and Jailolo, Bacan was considered one of the ‘four pillars’ of Maluku, the traditional kingdoms which held sway over all other islands in the region (Andaya, The World of Maluku. 244). For contemporary references see, for example: Beira, "Fr. Juan de Beira SJ to the Jesuits of Coimbra. Cochin, February 7, 1553." 125. Valignano, "Fr. Alessandro Valignano, Visitor: First Summary of the Indian Jesuit Province. Malacca, November 22-December 8, 1577." 11. This made the King of Bacan a highly desirable target for conversion and political alliance, no less because, unlike most converts to Christianity in Maluku, he was not a neutral ‘heathen’ but a Muslim.

\textsuperscript{46} Fróis, “Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by Order of Fr. Provincial António de Quadros, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Goa, November 14, 1559.” 290.
Fróis, this king was both the King of Ternate’s nephew (son of his sister) and son-in-law (husband to his daughter). His wife having died on him during childbirth, the young king was worried about repercussions from Ternate since ‘the father-in-law was [already] angry with him because he had taken her to Bacan furtively without his permission,’ and, with her death, the king feared that Ternate ‘would make war on him.’ According to Francisco Vieira, such a situation, ‘according to the custom of these countries, could cause the father and son to be deprived of their entire kingdom, and their possessions besides, due to the King of Ternate’s accusing them of the death of his daughter.’ Consequently, ‘he decided to abandon the falseness of the religion of Mohammed in which he had been living and adopt the truth of our holy faith for his part, along with the friendship of the Portuguese.’

Only a few months after the King of Bacan’s baptism, Brother Fernão de Osório reported with great confidence that Dom João already had in place ‘a plan to make these islands all Christian.’ Even before Osório had arrived in Bacan, however, tremendous progress in this area was understood to be occurring. Francisco Vieira, the new Superior of the Maluku Mission, and five other Jesuits had arrived in Ternate from India in October 1557. The first news they heard upon entering the port ‘was that a Moorish king [Dom João]…had converted to our holy faith with his kingdom.’ This news was significant enough that about half of Vieira’s first official report, written four months later, focussed on what he had been able to learn concerning the spread of Christianity in

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48 Ibid.
49 As mentioned above, Vieira claimed that, at the time, Bacan was still ruled by the father of the young king and apparent heir.
50 Vieira, “Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to Father General, Diego Laínez, Rome. Ternate, February 13, 1558.” 233. Several decades earlier Galvão had reported that the Malukan rulers confiscated the possessions of those they deemed responsible for having caused illness or death. See A Treatise on the Moluccas. 181.
Bacan. Obtaining his information directly from a Portuguese ‘knight’ who had been in the islands when the king was christened, Vieira repeated Dom João’s promise ‘that he himself would bring his people to baptism,’ the king having assured the Europeans—to the satisfaction of their expectations, no doubt—that they would be ‘surprised’ at how prepared his people were to embrace Christianity. Moreover, the Jesuit Superior had seen evidence of this claimed enthusiasm in person when four envoys from Bacan arrived in Ternate. Included in their armada were ‘fifteen or 20 who were not yet baptised [who] requested with insistence that the captain have them baptised before they put to sea because they wanted to die for the Christian faith.’ With a committed Christian king in place, the complete Christianisation of Bacan, it seemed, was unstoppable. Coupled with the arrest of King Hairun of Ternate in December, ‘the recent conversion of this kingdom’ gave the Jesuit great hope for the future of the entire Maluku region, and he pleaded with the General Superior of his Society in Rome ‘to think about sending sufficient labourers.’

António Vaz, the priest who had been sent to Bacan to christen the young king, was similarly enthusiastic in his assessment of what he had experienced as Bacan opened itself to conversion. The king, he reported, had been baptised along with ‘all the people whom he had with him [com toda a gente que consigo tinha],’ including his ‘brother and other cousins and relatives.’ How many people exactly were ‘with the king’ in his initial embrace of Christianity was never made clear, but it sounds very much like a promising start to the complete conversion of the kingdom. What transpired afterward sounds even better in this regard. Vaz had stayed in Bacan for four-and-a-half months

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54 Ibid. 238.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid. 239.
visiting the islands and christening everyone [*fazendo cristãos todos*], this king going with him from village to village, bringing them to baptism, both men and women, children, male and female slaves, including also in this number a young daughter of the king, illegitimate, with her mother and three married sisters of the king and all the other most noble people who could be reached at that time.  

Apparently, King Dom João was doing exactly what a Christian king should: aggressively bringing his entire people into the faith. They in turn were doing exactly what the subjects of a good Christian king should by embracing the religious choice of their ruler. In fact, the only thing that prevented the conversion of every single individual in Bacan, the report suggests, was Vaz’s poor health: ‘there remained many in the kingdom who were not baptised because the Father fell ill with a dangerous sickness, because of which the king sent him to the fort in Maluku, remaining then alone.’

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, however, the King of Bacan did not remain alone for long. António Vaz left the islands during the first half of November, and Fernão de Osório was sent to replace him no later than the end of the same month. By all accounts, this Jesuit brother should have walked into a situation where, due to Dom João’s influence with and power over his people, the ‘many’ who had not been baptised due only to Vaz’s early departure from the islands were literally queuing up to receive the sacrament of Christian conversion. On the contrary, after a month or more in the islands, Osório reported that ‘[u]ntil now I have christened only fifteen people on two occasions. To the first ones, which were four, I gave the name Francisco…; the other eleven were christened on the Day of St Thomas,’ to whom I gave the name Thomas, most of them being

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Vaz had arrived in Bacan on 23 June 1557, meaning his four-and-a-half-month stay would have ended around 7 November (ibid. 290-291).
61 21 December.
Despite forming a majority of those whom the Jesuit had baptised, the children of Bacan do not generally seem to have been overly interested in the priest or his religion. In the main village where Osório was staying, he estimated that there would have been 300 of them, ‘but until now they are afraid of me.’ He hoped that continued interaction with them would be able to win these children over from their fears. Their parents Osório found even less approachable, whether by his own choosing or by their own: ‘I do nothing with the adults until now except to speak with them to get to know them.’ Writing to his Superior in Ternate, the Brother repeatedly stated that, though King Dom João would not allow it, he would like to travel back to the fort to confess ‘because I am doing nothing.’

Admittedly, Osório faced a number of impediments in Bacan. He had been sent to the islands only because a priest was not then available, and therefore it had not been the intention that he do any baptising at all, this duty belonging to Father Afonso de Castro, who was supposed to arrive soon. In addition, the Jesuit Brother was not conversant in Malay—a not-uncommon problem for less-experienced missionaries in Maluku—and was struggling to maintain the services of an interpreter on any day but Sunday, necessarily limiting his interactions with locals. Beyond these complications, like António Vaz before him, Osório found residing in Bacan to be detrimental to his health: ‘Here I break out with itching on my legs, which sometimes goes and sometimes returns; here I have been sick I do

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid. Note the Christian king’s control over the movements of the missionary.
66 Ibid. 222.
not know how many days with fever, and I do not know if I still have it.\textsuperscript{67} None of these situations, however, serves to explain why Osório had nothing to do in a Bacan which was supposedly filled with pliant people whose king was actively ‘bringing them to baptism’ in a top-down process of conversion. In simple fact, the only people Dom João had succeeded in bringing to baptism were the fifteen mentioned above, most of them children. Because Castro had been murdered before he could reach Bacan, Osório had been ‘forced’ by King Dom João to baptise these fifteen individuals—something he could well do as an extraordinary minister.\textsuperscript{68} The fact that he performed these baptisms clearly indicates that he could have performed others if the situation had required. Moreover, his health and language difficulties, as frustrating as they may have been to him personally, would have created no insurmountable obstacle to his christening any people eager to follow their king into the faith.\textsuperscript{69} The only reasonable conclusion is that virtually none were.

It is impossible to know precisely how to account for this state of affairs in light of the earlier reports out of Bacan. Based on later accounts, it seems probable that these first reports were at least somewhat exaggerated and overly optimistic, though the possibility remains that a genuine enthusiasm for conversion in the very beginning had quickly cooled. In either case, Osório’s first letter contains plenty of evidence which suggests that he encountered anything but enthusiasm for conversion during his first few months amongst the people of

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. 221.  
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{69} Five years later, Father Fernando Álvares baptised ‘close to 300 souls’ in the main village of Bacan despite the fact that ‘he did not know the language’ and therefore had to rely upon an interpreter (Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo Antão in Lisbon. Ternate, February 15, 1563.” 367-368).
Bacan despite King Dom João’s assumed coercive power over his subjects in this regard.

In actual fact, their king’s embrace of Christianity appears to have been a source of worry to many of the people in the islands. News of King Hairun’s arrest in Ternate and the retaliatory murder of Father Afonso de Castro seems either to have caused or maybe merely to have exacerbated the fear that the presence of Christianity in Bacan had made them a target. ‘As soon as this news arrived,’ according to Osório, ‘many people gathered together with the king.’

The Jesuit account focuses on what Dom João shared with his people on this occasion, Osório assuring his audience that the king’s speech was certain evidence that he was ‘a strong and good Christian.’ Specifically, having been told ‘that many korakora were coming against him to destroy him or make him become a Moor again,’ Dom João publicly defied the threat, claiming that he was prepared to die as a Christian. Just as important, however, was the question which the people had taken to their king to elicit this speech in the first place. They had gathered of their own accord and approached their ruler not so much as a show of support but out of concern. What would he do, they demanded to know, if their Christian defenders, the Portuguese, were all killed? Dom João himself may have been filled with pro-Christian bravado; many of his people were not.

More to the point, despite his promise that he would bring his people to baptism, Dom João was not enjoying much success in this regard with his worried subjects. Only one week after Fernão de Osório’s initial letter—and his confident report about the King of Bacan’s plan to make all the islands Christian—the Jesuit

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71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Brother was still optimistic about the future, but his statement of optimism simultaneously reveals clearly how little progress either he or the king was actually having with the people of Bacan: ‘The things which happen to me every day are so many that I cannot write them because the devil is so rooted in this land that there is no remedy for casting him out; consequently, I think that, since he grieves so much, great fruit will be made.’\(^7\)

Osório laid the blame for what was going wrong conversion-wise in Bacan squarely at the feet of the Christian king. Specifically, though the Jesuit had requested ‘many days ago’ that the king have some crosses made, he had done nothing to carry out this task until the Brother confronted him one morning and accused him of being more interested in great honours than in crosses.\(^7\) Dom João, inevitably aware of his people’s concerns about their safety and quite possibly their outright opposition to his plans for Christianising the kingdom, was attempting to act with an appropriate measure of caution in promoting Christianity, it seems. After all, there was already a large cross ‘at the king’s gate in a field and another at the entrance to the village and another at the end of the river.’\(^7\) The problem was that the king was simultaneously trying to satisfy a Jesuit who sincerely believed that a Christian ruler should be producing a kingdom full of Christian subjects, doing whatever was necessary to further this work, including in this case the very symbolic act of building and erecting even more crosses. To fulfil these demands, Dom João supplied Osório with two carpenters to construct a cross to be raised in a public place.


\(^7\) Ibid. 225.

\(^7\) Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ, Superior, Ternate. [Bacan], January 1, 1558." 223.
The cross-raising occurred the following morning on Epiphany, and, as described by Osório, it was a well attended and moving affair. The site for a church in Bacan had earlier been selected, but the structure still had not been built—possibly another compromise on the part of the king—therefore, the crowd of attendees gathered for the ceremony in a large bower where the Jesuit had prepared an altar, ‘all draped with branches and flowers.’ After Osório had preached a sermon, those assembled formed a solemn procession to the place where the cross was to be erected, an act that was performed by the king and followed by prayer. ‘May Your Reverence believe that it was with such devotion,’ the Brother assured his Superior in Ternate, ‘that it almost made me cry. Everyone was very consoled.’ With a little pressure from the resident Jesuit, things, it seemed, were beginning to turn around. Dom João, in fact, perhaps taking his cue from Osório’s earlier suggestion that he wasn’t doing enough to further the spread of Christianity, boldly commanded all of his people who were in attendance that, ‘under penalty of having their heads cut off, in the morning all would kneel on the ground in front of the cross and raise their hands.’

The problem was that Dom João did not have very many of his people in attendance. In fact, the king and ‘his foremost chiefs’ were the only Bacanese who had participated in the ceremony that morning; the rest of the crowd was comprised of ‘many Christians from Ternate’ with their wives and also the

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76 Ibid. 221.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 The presence in Bacan of these Christians from Ternate has no clear explanation. Were they in Bacan temporarily, or did they live there? Had they perhaps come to support King Dom João in his embrace of the new faith? Had they been resident in Bacan before the king’s request for baptism, and, if so, had they played a role in his decision to become a Christian?
Portuguese with their wives. Consequently, the king’s command was given not to his people broadly nor to those who were still Muslim but to a select group of local rulers, most or even all of whom were probably those who had been baptised alongside Dom João several months earlier. In this context, it seems likely that the king’s boldness had been meant more as a show for the Jesuit than anything else. Additional details which emerge from Osório’s account of the cross raising more clearly illustrate just how poorly Christianity was actually spreading in Bacan and therefore how little control Dom João had over the religious choices of his subject despite this show. Because this event occurred on Epiphany, the day celebrating the visitation of the Biblical Magi to the Baby Jesus, Osório took the opportunity after the erection of the cross to ask the king for some ‘presents’ since, according to Portuguese custom, ‘the princes grant generous favours on that day.’ The king responded by telling the Brother that he would grant him whatever he desired. After asking for sufficient wood to construct two more crosses, Osório then asked Dom João ‘to command his people [presumably the men who had already been baptised] that those who had children and wives should bring them to be baptised, and to command them to bring the children to be taught.’ Clearly, despite Dom João’s earlier assurances that he could bring his entire kingdom to conversion, he had not delivered more than a few of his ‘chiefs,’ some of his family members, and a handful of children, and the rulers who had followed their king into the new faith had apparently adopted Christianity alone. In fact, unlike the Christian women from Ternate and those married to the Portuguese, the wives of the Christian chiefs of Bacan had not even attended the cross raising. Nor had the

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82 Ibid. 226.
83 Ibid.
king himself enjoyed any greater success with his own family, apparently; the final
‘present’ requested by the Jesuit the same morning was that ‘His Highness might
come to the church on Sundays with all of his family [com todos os seus].’ The
king’s family members, like the rest of his subjects, had clearly maintained their
own agency when it came to matters of religious change and observance.

 Barely six months after the King of Bacan’s embrace of Christianity, the
basic pattern of conversion in the kingdom had already emerged; unsurprisingly, it
looked almost identical to conversion in other areas of Maluku. Aware of the
European expectation that Christian rulers should produce Christian subjects—and
quite probably motivated by his own desires in this regard—Dom João had
promised the Portuguese that he would deliver his entire kingdom over to the faith.
To this end, he had engaged in a number of public acts in support of the new
religion, including raising crosses and tearing down ‘with his own hands’ the
mosque in which he had earlier worshipped. He had also successfully
encouraged several family members and other rulers in his kingdom to be
baptised. Despite the king’s advocacy, however, those who became Christians in
Bacan did so the way others throughout the region did: on their own terms and
according to their own timetables. Many simply never converted. Christian
rulers, rather than being able to generate conversion in a resistance-free, top-down
process, often found themselves in a delicate balancing act between advocating for
the faith and alienating their own people, continually running the risk of losing the
allegiance of those over whom they governed. As will be discussed in more detail
below, force was simply out of the question. The end result in Bacan was that,
though King Dom João’s conversion did introduce Christianity into the islands,

84 Ibid.
making it a viable option for interested parties to pursue their own conversions, the new faith spread rather slowly at times and in an uneven manner. The presence of a Christian ruler certainly facilitated Christianisation; in no way did it guarantee it.

That conversion in an area governed by a Christian did not markedly differ from conversion elsewhere can be seen clearly in the behaviour of King Dom João’s own family members, those over whom he may have had the most influence. Though a number of them—including a brother, some cousins, the king’s illegitimate daughter and her mother, and three of the king’s sisters—had been baptised with him around the time of his own conversion, many of his family still had not embraced Christianity six months later; otherwise, Osório would have had no cause to ask that the king to start bringing all his family to Sunday mass with him. From this time forward, others of Dom João’s family members came to adopt the new faith, but they did so one or two at a time over the course of several years. An indeterminate number of his family never embraced Christianity. In this regard, the situation involving the king’s own father is instructive. According to Francisco Vieira, it was the father who had originally counselled his son to become a Christian. At some point thereafter the older man conferred the kingdom upon Dom João, making him the King of Bacan whom the Jesuits knew. Despite encouraging his son to embrace Christianity, however, the father himself never showed any interest in the faith; rather, ‘he remained in his bad sect [Islam]’ until he died a few days after surrendering the throne. One could argue that, given more time, the old King of Bacan may well have joined his son in the new faith, but the fact remains that, given what time he had, he never did. The man

who in many ways was responsible for introducing Christianity into Bacan chose to live out the remainder of his life as a Muslim.

Unlike her deceased husband, Dom João’s mother had plenty of opportunity to become a Christian; nevertheless, there is no indication in any contemporary accounts that she ever did. Instead, she maintained a vibrant Muslim identity which proved to be a source of frustration and opposition to the Jesuits who laboured in Bacan. When Fernando Álvares and Fernão de Osório arrived there in June 1562, five years after Dom João’s conversion to Christianity, the king’s mother, they noted, was still a Muslim. Moreover, it appears that her religious commitment extended far beyond the bounds of a private devotion.

According to Osório, she supported a personal cadre of cacizes or Islamic preachers, against whom Álvares had been ‘very zealous and fervent.’ She also maintained ‘her mosque’ in which the body of the former king had been interred.

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89 Writing in Spain in 1570, Vicente Tonda claimed that, whilst he was in the Maluku region as a fleet’s chaplain (1566-1586), he had ‘converted the Queen of Bacan with one of her sisters-in-law and other Moors who were there’ (Vicente Tonda, “Fr. Vicente Tonda, EX SJ to Fr. Francisco de Borja, General, Rome. Valencia, July 16, 1570,” in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 613). Jacobs understood this to be a reference to Dom João’s wife, but it could possibly be construed as a reference to his mother instead. Regardless, Tonda’s account is suspect on a number of levels. At the time that he composed it, he had been expelled from the Society, and his claims were made in support of his appeal to be re-admitted. In addition, no other Jesuit document from Maluku even mentions Tonda and his supposed mission work there. Last, in the same letter Tonda made another claim which seems to have no basis in reality, specifically that he ‘not only filled the office of priest but of captain, retaking with my industry the entire island [of Ambon] which was occupied by the enemies of our holy faith’ (ibid.). If this accomplishment was ‘pure bluff,’ as Jacobs labelled it, it may be wise not to place too much trust in the statement involving the supposed conversion of the Queen of Bacan, an event which likely would have been reported upon by other Jesuits regardless of which queen it may have been (Tonda, “Fr. Vicente Tonda, EX SJ to Fr. Francisco de Borja, General, Rome. Valencia, July 16, 1570.” 613, note 617).


Manuel Gomes’s claim that the Jesuits had had some success amongst ‘her people’ suggests that she was perhaps even viewed as the leader or at least the patron of Bacan’s Muslims after her son switched his religious allegiance. Her conversion to Christianity, had it ever occurred, would have been a matter of much importance that should have been widely reported. One can conclude, therefore, that the Christian King of Bacan’s mother, like her husband, lived and died as a Muslim.

Though he clearly could not control the religious choices of his parents, it seems logical that Dom João’s own children at least should have been easy for the king to bring into the Christian fold, but even here he faced complications outside his control. In the case of a young daughter, the King of Bacan actually felt obligated to try to delay her baptism due to fears stemming from political entanglements. As mentioned above, the king’s decision to embrace Christianity had been very strongly influenced by the death of his wife, a daughter of the King of Ternate, during childbirth. Not too long after this event, King Hairun had either forcibly taken the newborn from Bacan ‘or had required the King of Bacan

a local analogue in the common Southeast Asian practice of attempting to manipulate and appease the spirits of the dead in order to ‘cure illness, ensure fertility, increase power, safeguard the living,’ etc. (Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, 2 vols., vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993. 137, 166). Consequently, visits to the tombs of important Islamic figures became an important feature of Islam as it spread throughout island Southeast Asia (A.G. Muhaimin, “The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon: Ibadat and Adat among Javanese Muslims,” ANU E Press, 1995). With King Dom João’s permission, Fernando Álvares disinterred the old king’s bones from this tomb/mosque and ‘made the house into a church to Our Lady of the Conception’ (Araújo, "Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate, February 24, 1563." 384).

94 António Vaz arrived in Bacan on 23 June 1557, having been dispatched ‘the same night’ that Dom João’s request for a priest had arrived in Ternate (Fróis, "Scholastic Luís Fróis SJ, by Order of Fr. Provincial António de Quadros, to the Jesuits in Portugal. Goa, November 14, 1559." 290). It is impossible to know how many days or weeks earlier King Hairun’s daughter had died, but, if the then King of Bacan and his son were worried that they were going to lose their kingdom as a consequence, it may not have been much earlier. Writing in the first quarter of 1559, Francisco Vieira indicated that Dom João had been to the Portuguese fort in Ternate twice during the past year; it was during the second of these visits that the king was reunited with his daughter (Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Ternate, March 9 1559." 265-266, 269). The girl had been taken to Ternate ‘a year and some months earlier’ (ibid. 269). Hairun might have taken the girl before Dom João’s baptism, which may explain why she had not been christened then.
under threat (according to others) to hand her over. Later, the Jesuits and the vicar in the Portuguese fort in Ternate successfully convinced Hairun to return the girl to Dom João. Because the child had not been christened yet, the Jesuits wanted to perform this sacrament before she and her father returned to Bacan. This, however, the young king ‘did not want to happen here in front of the King of Ternate due to the fear which he still had of him.’ In the end the Jesuits got their way, christening the young child with the name of Constantia in an ornate and elaborately orchestrated ceremony, but clearly Dom João did not feel himself completely free to act independently in making religious choices for his own children, objections from other members of his extended family needing to be taken into consideration.

Similar concerns may also help to explain why two of Dom João’s sons were not baptised until 1562. No age is ever given for these boys, but it appears likely that at least one of them was not an infant at the time of their christening, and quite possibly neither of them was. Fernão de Osório, who had remained in Bacan from the time he was sent there in 1557 until the early part of 1562 and who therefore knew the family situation personally, called the boys ‘two strong sons’ at the time of their baptism, possibly indicating that neither of them was very young at all. More conclusively, though Dom João may have remarried after the passing of his first wife (contemporary sources are silent), he at least had not done so in March 1559 when Francisco Vieira wrote that the widowed king was ‘yet to take a wife’ but might consider ‘a daughter of a noble and esteemed

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95 Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Ternate, March 9 1559." 269.
96 Ibid. 270.
97 Ibid. 270-273.
99 Ibid. 368.
Portuguese. This suggests that both boys had been born before 1557, making the younger one at least six years old at the time that they were christened by Father Fernando Álvares in 1562. Dom João was between 24 and 25 years old at the time of his conversion and had been betrothed to the King of Ternate’s daughter since he was a youth, so it is quite possible that he had fathered two sons with his ‘legal’ wife before she died delivering their daughter. In such a scenario, these boys would have been grandsons of King Hairun of Ternate, and, as in the case of their sister, their baptisms may have been delayed out of fear of Hairun. If correct, this relationship with the most-feared ruler in the Maluku region most probably would have been mentioned by one of the Jesuit writers. Another distinct possibility is that these two boys were ‘illegitimate.’ In this case, however, they would almost certainly have been born before Dom João’s conversion as well; otherwise, the king would have lost his standing with the Jesuits. Again, this would have made both boys well past the age at which they should have been baptised from a Catholic point of view. A third possibility is that Dom João did in fact remarry sometime after March 1559 and then managed to father two sons before 1562, but this would still make at least one of them older.

100 Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Ternate, March 9 1559." 266.
102 Rebelo, "Informação sobre as Molucas. Texto II." 464.
103 A report from 1582 states that the ‘King of Bacan with his wife and children and all his vassals illuminated by the Holy Spirit generally received the holy Baptism with much fervour’ ("Livro das cidades e fortalezas que a coroa de Portugal tem nas partes da Índia, e das capitaniaes e mais cargos que nelas ha, e da importancia delles," in Studia 6, ed. Francisco Paulo Mendes da Luz (1960), f. 69v). The broad nature of this statement, however, coupled with the late date of its composition, does not require that every single one of Dom João’s children was baptised in 1557.
104 It was not unusual for Muslim and pagan rulers in Maluku to have numerous wives and concubines. When such a ruler became a Christian, the children from all but the first marriage were considered by the Jesuits to be illegitimate.
than an infant when they were christened unless, of course, the boys were infant twins—a possibility once again never mentioned in any of the sources.¹⁰⁵

In any scenario not involving hypothetical newborn twins, the baptism of both boys in 1562 suggests some kind of delay since infants ideally should be christened as soon as possible after birth to avoid the risk of dying without the sacrament and therefore going to hell.¹⁰⁶ This delay cannot be blamed upon lack of access to a cleric, either. From his own baptism in 1557 to the baptism of his sons five years later, King Dom João had only been without a resident Jesuit in his kingdom for a few months at most.¹⁰⁷ Assuming, therefore, that the Christian king was as keen to see his family members convert as he repeatedly told the missionaries he was, one can only conclude that these boys were not baptised on time due to pressure from others. As mentioned above, such pressure may have stemmed from the King of Ternate himself if these boys were indeed his grandsons. If instead they were children conceived with another wife or

¹⁰⁵ Lourenço Pinheiro mentioned only two sons for King Dom João of Bacan when, around 1577, he was killed by poisoning by King Hairun’s heir and successor, Baab Ullah: ‘Then the King of Ternate took the new kinglet [reizinho] and his brother and sisters…and carried them away to Ternate, where he is keeping them in the fort’ (Pinheiro, "Fr. Lourenço Pinheiro, secretary, to Fr. Everard Mercurian, General, Rome. Goa, November 14, 1579. Second via." 56). The terminology used here suggests that King Dom Henrique, as he was called, was still rather young at this point in time. In fact, a letter by the king himself, written nearly 30 years after the fact, suggests that he was around seven years old when he was imprisoned in Ternate, clearly making him at least eight years too young to have been one of the sons baptised in 1562 (ibid. note 31). That neither of the sons baptised in 1562 was considered Dom João’s heir suggests that the two boys were indeed illegitimate, but political tensions with Ternate could also explain why King Hairun’s grandsons may have been passed over. In short, it is impossible to know which of the scenarios presented above should be seen as most probable.

¹⁰⁶ This was the very argument the Jesuits used to force the baptism of Dom João’s young daughter in Ternate when he wished to have her christened back in Bacan, away from the influence of King Hairun: ‘We would not put up with this, although we knew he was frightened with cause, and pushed to have the child christened before she might run some risk’ (Vieira, “Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to the Jesuits in Portugal. Ternate, March 9 1559.” 270).

¹⁰⁷ As discussed above, Bacan was without a resident Jesuit for a few weeks in November 1557, between the departure of António Vaz and the arrival of Fernão de Osório. Osório was still in Bacan when the new Portuguese captain, Henrique de Sá, arrived in the Maluku area with six Jesuits in the early part of 1562, stopping by the kingdom en route to Ternate. Osório joined this armada, remaining in Ternate ‘until June, which was four months’ (Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancundo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo Antão in Lisbon. Ternate, February 15, 1563.” 365). In June, he returned to Bacan in the company of Fernando Álvares, one of the newly arrived missionaries; Álvares was the Jesuit who the same year baptised King Dom João’s two sons (Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancundo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo Antão in Lisbon. Ternate, February 15, 1563.” 366, 368).
concubine before Dom João’s conversion, a Muslim mother (or two different mothers) may well have resisted having the boys baptised. Pressure may also have arisen from other members of the king’s family who were still Muslim. Regardless of the actual scenario, these two baptisms in 1562 again reinforce the fact that the Christian King of Bacan could not even force the issue of conversion to Christianity for his own children.

With the conversion of Dom João’s own offspring not necessarily a given, it should come as no surprise that, as mentioned above, the king lacked the ability to compel other members of his extended family to embrace Christianity. Like his father and mother, an indeterminate number of them never had any interest in converting. Others who did eventually become Christians did so of their own accord, sometimes years after the new religion first entered the islands of Bacan. As an example, a full seven years after the king had embraced Christianity and promised the Jesuits that he would personally bring his people to do the same, one of Dom João’s own brothers persisted as a follower of Islam. To underscore the uneven and individual nature of conversion in Bacan, this Muslim father had a son who had become a Christian. Like his uncle, this boy was named Dom João. At some point the younger Dom João had left his family in Bacan and travelled to India to study in the Jesuit College of St Paul in Goa. It was only after he had returned to the islands that his father ‘was persuaded to be christened,’ receiving this sacrament in the Jesuit church in Ternate on 1 January 1565. Though the account is not clear on this point, it suggests that, if any family member was instrumental in helping the king’s brother eventually embrace Christianity, it was probably the Jesuit-educated son.

109 Ibid.
If it was indeed the younger Dom João who persuaded his father to become a Christian, he was not the only Bacanese youth engaged in evangelism. Other children in the kingdom played important roles in attempting to spread Christianity, their involvement underscoring the fact that King Dom João himself lacked the political power to impose the new religion on his subjects. In this regard, it seems that Fernão de Osório’s abovementioned plan to focus on the children of Bacan until they overcame their fear of him had worked rather well. A little more than one year later, Francisco Vieira—writing from Ternate but relying on what he had been told by ‘[t]hose who have come from there’—reported that many children in Bacan were singing the catechism in the streets and that ‘at night in the soa, which are the barrios amongst us, they gather to discuss it and teach it to those of their houses.’ This outreach by the youths, though apparently self initiated and self directed at first, was not ignored by the Jesuits. Consequently, in order to improve their effectiveness, children were ordained bailiffs in their soa or neighbourhoods, with their responsibility being specifically to ‘report to the Fathers those who do not want to participate.’ Clearly, despite King Dom João’s desires that all the people of Bacan embrace Christianity—not to mention his promise that he would bring them to conversion—a significant portion of the population simply had no interest in complying, not even when the actual ‘ministers’ were children belonging to their own households and neighbourhoods.

110 Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ, Superior, Ternate. [Bacan], January 1, 1558.” 220. One week later, Osório reported that the children were still ‘much afraid of this black robe,’ but he was having some success in luring them by feeding them sago for breakfast. ‘I nourish them and thus in this way I proceed with them, and afterward I will whip [açoutar, possibly meaning to discipline?] them’ (Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ, Superior, Ternate. [Bacan], January 8, 1558.” 226).


112 Ibid.
Even amongst those adults who had become Christians, compliance with
the joint Jesuit and royal plan for conversion was not always followed, either. In
addition to their official duty of reporting on those who didn’t want to learn the
catechism, the young bailiffs in Bacan had taken it upon themselves to be ‘active
and careful in bringing one another to baptism and giving notice of newborns to
the Fathers, raising the alarm if they do not come immediately.’\(^{113}\) Apparently,
Dom João was not the only Christian parent who, for whatever reason, was slow in
getting his own children christened and therefore generated some concern in this
regard. It is impossible to know why exactly Christian parents may have been
reluctant to have their newborns baptised, but it is possible that part of the problem
stemmed from mixed-faith families. As already mentioned above, when a cross
had been raised on Epiphany one year earlier, Dom João’s ‘foremost chiefs’ had
gathered for the event without the participation of their wives, and the king had
been asked ‘to command his people that those who had children and wives should
bring them to be baptised.’\(^{114}\) These events suggest that, at least at that time, a
pattern of conversion had emerged in Bacan wherein married men were more
likely to embrace Christianity than their wives and children. These non-Christian
mothers may well have played a major role in preventing, or at least delaying, the
christening of the children. Other factors such as those stemming from cultural
concerns may also have had their influence. In any case, the reality that Christian
parents in Bacan did not always feel compelled (or possibly even free) to have

\(^{113}\) Ibid. 269.
\(^{114}\) Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ, Superior, Ternate. [Bacan], January 8,
1558.” 226.
their infants baptised ‘on time’ highlights yet again how little power King Dom João had to force an agenda of conversion upon the people of his kingdom.\footnote{Writing in 1563, Manuel Gomes, whilst making a point about the efficacy of holy water in Bacan, mentioned ‘an esteemed Christian who had two children who had not been christened’ (Gomes, "Br. Manuel Gomes SJ, by order, to the Jesuits in Portugal and Europe. Ambon, May 20, 1563.” 398). Apparently, unchristened children were rather common in the kingdom.}

Unsurprisingly then, in the years following the King of Bacan’s embrace of Christianity in 1557, many Bacanese remained unconverted—a fact which the Jesuit authors came to accept and report, though always with the most positive spin possible. As already mentioned above, the news which in 1558 greeted the newly arrived Jesuits was that the entire Kingdom of Bacan had converted along with its king.\footnote{Vieira, "Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ to Father General, Diego Laínez, Rome. Ternate, February 13, 1558." 232-233, 239.} By 1561, word from Maluku as repeated by the Society in Europe was that King Dom João had embraced Christianity along ‘with many people of his kingdom.’\footnote{"Report on the Mission Work of the Jesuits in the East. [Évora, September 1561].", in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Jesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1974. 323.} Two years later, António de Quadros informed the Father General of the Society that the King of Bacan had converted a few years earlier ‘with the more part of his people.’\footnote{Quadros, "Fr. Provincial António de Quadros to Fr. General Diego Laínez, Rome. Cochin, January 18, 1563.” 361.} The following year, Manuel Gomes, writing from Ambon, mentioned in a general way that Dom João and ‘his people’ were Christian.\footnote{Gomes, "Br. Manuel Gomes SJ to the Jesuits in India. Hatiwi, April 15, 1564.” 443.} In 1576, after a further twelve years had passed, Nicolau Nunes indirectly revealed that the Christianisation of Bacan was still incomplete when he reported that the king was a Christian along ‘with almost his entire kingdom.’\footnote{Nunes, "Fr. Nicolau Nunes’ general survey of Maluku by request of Fr. Martim da Silva SJ, Goa. Goa, January 4, 1576.” 690.} Tellingly, despite the fact the Nunes had himself laboured in Bacan for approximately a year in the 1560s,\footnote{Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of São Roque, Lisbon. Ternate, February 10, 1564.” 418.} he admitted in the same letter that ‘the
number of these Christians [in Bacan]…I do not know.’ If he and the other Jesuits did not have an accurate grasp on how many Bacanese had actually embraced Christianity, how was it possible for Nunes to assert that nearly the entire kingdom had converted? The answer seems based more on assumption than on actual evidence: ‘but, as the king, who was one of the most ancient of the four kings of Maluku, was Christian, it could easily have been his entire kingdom.’

It should be noted that the reference to the King of Bacan’s ‘antiquity’ here pertains not to his personal age but to the fact that Bacan was considered one of the ‘four pillars of Maluku’ or the four kingdoms which historically had exercised the most power in the region. In other words, Dom João should have been powerful enough and influential enough, by virtue of ruling over such an important kingdom, to have caused the conversion of all his people. For the Jesuits in Maluku, old assumptions died hard.

Enough details emerge from the Jesuit texts, however, to provide a small idea of how un-Christian the Christian Kingdom of Bacan seems to have remained over time. Almost invariably, these details emerge from reports in which missionary successes are the focus, but the inevitable corollary of a sequence of missionary successes is the fact that there seems to have been a nearly inexhaustible supply of non-Christians amongst whom such successes could be found. For example, when Fernão de Osório, the same Jesuit Brother who had been resident in Bacan from 1557 until the early part of 1562, returned to the kingdom in June of the latter year in the company of Father Fernando Álvares, there was clearly a large and vibrant Muslim population in the islands. According

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123 Ibid.
124 Andaya, The World of Maluku. 90.
to the Brother, Álvares baptised ‘close to 300 souls’ during the five months he spent in the main village where the king also dwelt.\(^\text{125}\) He was also so ‘zealous and fervent’ that he caused others in the Muslim community to ‘have great fear of him.’\(^\text{126}\) The implication here is that there were multiple hundreds of non-Christians still living in King Dom João’s main village a full five years after the ruler had himself embraced the new faith. As mentioned earlier, the king’s mother seems to have played an important, possibly central, role in this Muslim community, it being considered her people.\(^\text{127}\) She also supported a cadre of Islamic teachers. Some of these, Osório happily reported, had found Álvares so threatening that they had ‘abandoned the king’s mother and sought refuge.’\(^\text{128}\) A later retelling of this occurrence by another Maluku missionary adds the detail that these cacizes had fled into the jungles where they had met other Muslims who assumed that the teachers had somehow earned the wrath of either the Christian king or his Muslim mother.\(^\text{129}\) The point of sharing the story, of course, was to convey how effectively Álvares had caused his rivals to lose ‘all hope of being listened to further in the land,’ but it also reveals unintentionally that, outside the religiously mixed main village of Christian Bacan, further Muslim populations existed in the same island; otherwise, the cacizes would not have been bumping into their co-religionists in the jungles.\(^\text{130}\)

Later reports also indirectly suggest, in the midst of celebrating successes in Bacan, that Christianity still had not become universal in the islands. For


\(^{126}\) Ibid. 367.


\(^{130}\) Ibid.
example, writing a report in 1570 to give some of his fellows ‘an account of what the Lord is working in the souls of those who dwell in this Kingdom of Bacan,’ Fernando Álvares mentioned that ‘[t]he people of these parts have great fear of some men whom they call suangi, which seem to be like sorcerers amongst us’; these persons had the ability, the people believed, to ‘bewitch them and cause them some illness.’ These illnesses could be cured by killing the offender and then anointing themselves with some of his blood. With obvious pride, Álvares reported that local belief in this murderous ‘superstition’ had become ‘much improved amongst the Christians.’ This statement only makes sense, however, if there was still a noticeable segment of the population which had not converted and against whose beliefs the supposedly less superstitious Christians could be held up as models of improvement. In other words, a situation could only be one way ‘amongst the Christians’ if it was another way amongst the local non-Christians. Thirteen years after King Dom João’s conversion officially turned Bacan into a Christian kingdom, those who had chosen to embrace Christianity

131 Fernando Álvares, "Fr. Fernando Álvares SJ, by order of Fr. Superior Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits of the Goa College. Bacan, April 20, 1570," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 576-577, 578. Many modern sources continue to equate the concept of suangi with a practitioner of sorcery or ‘witchcraft’ (Jelle Miedema, "The Water Demon and Related Mythic Figures: The Bird's Head Peninsula of Irian Jaya / Papua in Comparative Perspective," Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 156, no. 4, 2000: 761). Others describe the suangi as more of a supernatural figure, something akin to a demon or malevolent spirit (James Danandjaja, "A Comparative Study of Japanese and Indonesian Folklore," Southeast Asian Studies 33, no. 3, 1995: 494). The author of the Treatise, written earlier in the sixteenth century, offered this explanation: ‘When the kings, dukes, and ministers sicken, they command to be killed men whom they call suangi, which means ‘devils,’ because they say that they eat their hearts. They affirm that there are many of them, like the ancient werewolves and vampires of ours, and against them they have great night watches and fire around the houses of the princes and ministers, and the door of the palace is guarded, and for this people come from every village like prisoners to keep watch’ (A Treatise on the Moluccas. 180).


133 Ibid.
continued to share the land with Bacanese who had maintained Muslim and even heathen identities. 134

The above discussion may give the impression that not many people embraced Christianity in Bacan. Actually, despite the fact that, as indicated earlier, not even the Jesuits knew how many converts there were in the kingdom nearly two decades after the first conversions, the Christian community there appears to have grown both large and vibrant over time. Despite the lack of compulsion, individuals did embrace the new faith, often rather aggressively as in other parts of Maluku. For example, though Fernão de Osório complained in 1558 that he had only christened fifteen people in Bacan and therefore that he was ‘doing nothing,’ he also mentioned that ‘Christians who have been in another village’ had travelled to where he was. 135 These must have been amongst those who had been christened the previous year by António Vaz during the first months of conversion in the kingdom. Osório never mentioned why the people had come, but he did conclude that, as a consequence, ‘I have decided to hold practices for

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134 Jesuit reports from and about Bacan are almost unanimous in speaking of the non-Christian population of the kingdom as being Muslim. (It had, after all, been a Muslim kingdom before Dom João’s conversion altered its official identity to a Christian one.) One exception is a summary of other letters, in which mention is made of ‘numerous heathens [numerosi ethnicorum]’ who supposedly flocked to Fathers António Fernandes and Nicolau Nunes when they were in the kingdom, asking for baptism ‘with one voice’ ("Summary of Jesuit Letters from Maluku to Fr. General Diego Laínez, Rome," in Documenta Malucensia, ed. Hubert Jacobs, Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974. 428-429). As no contemporary documents written by those in Maluku confirm this event, it probably was a formulaic description written by a Society member far removed from the actual situation. Nevertheless, considering how religiously mixed even the most Christian village or kingdom in sixteenth-century Maluku often remained, it would not have been surprising if formerly Muslim Bacan had maintained pockets of heathens which persisted into its official Christian period. Writing after having spent seven years in the island, Fernando Álvares may have confirmed this supposition, though it is possible that the word parents here could refer more to ancestors than actual mothers and fathers: ‘The bearing of much fruit can be seen clearly in the children…. I labour to uproot from their hearts some errors and superstitions which their parents had as Moors and heathens and which are still sometimes found in them because they are not totally free of them’ (Álvares, "Fr. Fernando Álvares SJ, by order of Fr. Superior Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits of the Goa College. Bacan, April 20, 1570." 580).

the prayers because most know to speak Portuguese.”^{136} Based on this statement and on other patterns of behaviour common in sixteenth-century Maluku, it seems likely that the new Christians, upon hearing that there was a cleric in Bacan again, had travelled to the main village specifically to have access to him and to be taught further. Repeatedly, the Jesuits described the Christians in Bacan in very complimentary terms, often suggesting that they were amongst the most faithful converts in the Maluku region. For example, when Osório returned to Bacan in 1562 in the company of Father Fernando Álvares, he claimed that the devotion of the local Christians was great: ‘every Sunday and holy day they come loaded with branches and fragrant flowers to adorn the church, and much oil so that the lamp may burn.’^{137} In addition, they had so much faith in holy water that they were able to cure fevers by drinking it.^{138} Attempting to sway the Jesuits, a number of the Christians actively agitated to be allowed to engage in confession, ‘saying that their hearts cannot rest until confessing, that, for their salvation, it is very necessary, and they desire it so much that they asked the father if, although he did not know the language, they might confess via an interpreter.’^{139}

After having spent seven years in the islands, Álvares himself offered a similarly positive assessment of Bacan’s Christian community. Apparently having learnt their language, he praised the people for their undiminished desire to engage in the act of confession: ‘Many confess, and they show great affection for this and for the rest of the sacraments, and in truth I sometimes see in them so many tears

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136 Ibid. 220. The fact that these Christians already had familiarity with the Portuguese languages indicates a significant familiarity with Portuguese men, either sailors or traders, and therefore quite probably with their faith as well. As discussed in chapter two, this familiarity would help explain why these particular people had become amongst the area’s earliest converts.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid. 367.
and signs of contrition from their sins that they cause me admiration.’ They were models of devotion in their attendance at mass, in their observance of Holy Week, and in their reliance upon the healing effects of holy water. The Bacanese had ‘good sense,’ he insisted, ‘because of which they suit well the matters of the faith.’ Evidence of this observation could be found in how proactively they took the issue of their Christian education into their own hands: ‘They are men who ask many questions of the articles of faith, of death, judgment, hell, and heaven, desiring to be instructed and informed in these matters.’

Moreover, Christianity had clearly spread beyond the main village of Bacan. This village was the only large one in an otherwise large land, Álvares explained, the rest of the villages being small and ‘separated by many islands which are some ten or twelve leagues [55.5-66.6km] away from each other.’ Christian converts, however, were to be found in many of these small and scattered villages, creating much labour for whoever instructs and nourishes them. If the visits are not frequent, many children die without baptism, and for them to be frequent, it is necessary to travel most of the time in vessels, enduring many trials, much hunger and rain and chills and many dangers of storms and robbers, who often come amongst these islands to make attacks.

Considering that the Jesuits who were stationed in Bacan clearly would have found it much easier and safer to spend all their time in the populous main village with the king and the other Christian chiefs, it may seem surprising that remote pockets of Christianity had sprung up throughout the surrounding islands. Some of these

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141 Ibid. 577-578, 579.
142 Ibid. 577.
143 Ibid. This comment reinforces the assertion in chapter two that the indigenous people of Maluku actively questioned the Europeans about matters of religious belief, both before and after conversion, expecting the foreigners to be a source of new ideas and information.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
scattered communities of converts probably dated back to the early days of Christianisation in Bacan, when King Dom João took António Vaz on a tour of the islands in his kingdom, ‘bringing them to baptism.’ In addition, it seems likely that, like the recent converts who had travelled to the main village to learn the prayers from Fernão de Osório toward the beginning of 1558, and like so many others who embraced Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku, some of these people scattered around the islands of Bacan had actively sought out opportunities to meet with the missionaries in the main village, their subsequent conversions being what then forced the Jesuits to engage in the arduous task of visiting the small, far-flung villages to which these new Christians had returned.

The reported strength of Bacan’s converts, however, does not alter the reality that they never comprised the kingdom’s entire population, and this situation underscores the fact that, despite his plan to make his kingdom entirely Christian, King Dom João lacked the political power to do so. Cuius regio, eius religio simply did not operate in Bacan. The king was able to advocate for Christianity, encouraging his people to embrace it, and many did. He could dismantle with his own hands the mosque wherein he had formerly worshipped and allow a Christian church to be constructed out of his own father’s Islamic tomb, and many of these same people flocked to church. He could raise crosses and even order a handful of his chiefs to adore them, and presumably they did so. He could personally support a nearly constant Jesuit presence in his

147 Fernando Álvares disinterred the old king’s bones and transformed the tomb ‘with the king considering it good’ (Araújo, ”Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate, February 24, 1563.” 384).
148 “They have much devotion to the mass for, not only on Sundays and holy days but also during the week, the king and a large part of his people hear it with so many signs of devotion that it surprises many Portuguese who are present” (Álvares, ”Fr. Fernando Álvares SJ, by order of Fr. Superior Luís de Góis, to the Jesuits of the Goa College. Bacan, April 20, 1570.” 577).
islands. But he could not bring even his own family members to baptism against their wills. Conversion in Bacan, rather than being the effortless top-down process the Jesuits in Maluku had always wished for, remained much the same as conversion anywhere else in the region. The presence and actions of a Christian king certainly enabled and promoted the spread of the new faith, but he could guarantee it.

Familiarity with indigenous patterns of kingship is central in understanding the constrained and tenuous position in which a Christian king in the Maluku region inevitably found himself. In short, as O.W. Wolters has pointed out for an earlier time period, a ruler in a traditional Southeast Asian context was a mediator, not an autocrat, ‘accessible and able to keep the peace and mobilize many disparate groups.’ Admittedly, this historical pattern had begun to moderate in the early Modern period, with wealth from the ‘trade boom of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries’ strengthening the control of some rulers in the broader region and the spread of Islam proving to be a ‘powerful weapon…in the extension of royal power.’ Nevertheless, accounts from sixteenth-century Maluku make it abundantly clear that political leadership in these islands remained overwhelmingly Southeast Asian in its character. Specifically, ‘kingship was precarious.’ This was true because a ruler’s right to rule did not rely upon lineage. According to Anthony Reid, ‘[a]lthough the ideology of a sacred line of succession from the ancestors was very strong, the flexibility of marriage, the frequency of adoption, and the reality of competition among potential successors

made lineage in a genealogical sense not the most crucial part of the system.  

Rather, the most important qualification was in being what Wolters has called being ‘men of prowess.’  

‘Prowess’ in this case refers in particular to ‘the fundamental Austronesian concept of semangat [soul-substance or spirit], which animated both the individual and the cosmos and linked the two.’  

Those who possessed an unusual amount of semangat ‘distinguished their performance from that of others in their generation and especially among their own kinsmen’ and therefore were promoted to leadership.  

The clearest evidence that any particular ‘man of prowess’ was indeed qualified to rule was to be found in his ability to attract and hold on to followers.  

As Reid has explained, ‘[i]n this part of the world where land was abundant, buildings impermanent, and property insecure, it was in followers that power and wealth were primarily expressed.’  

These followers felt that being close to a particular leader would result in both material benefits and in spiritual rewards.  

This meant that a ruler’s competence was judged in very practical terms upon his ability to actually deliver the expected benefits.  Prowess produced results.  Results produced followers.  And followers were evidence that a man was in a good position to lead.  This focus on practical outcomes reinforced the instability of a situation where, due to an uncertainty of succession based on lineage, kingship was already precarious.  Quite simply, ‘prowess’ could be lost.  

A decrease in followers for any reason was understood to stem from insufficient results, which could only mean that a decline in a ruler’s abilities must have

152 Reid, The Lands below the Winds. 120.  
153 Wolters, History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives. 18.  
154 Reid, Expansion and Crisis. 168.  
155 Wolters, History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives. 18.  
156 Ibid. 111-112.  
157 Reid, The Lands below the Winds. 120.  
158 Wolters, History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives. 19.
occurred. A man without sufficient prowess was not fit to lead. The key to maintaining power, therefore, was continually to satisfy the greatest possible number of one’s subordinates, balancing all of their competing demands. This was no easy process. Rulers were repeatedly subjected to a critical assessment of their performance; those found lacking faced rebellion or replacement and consequently ceased to rule.

Not all of his ‘subjects,’ however, were a king’s immediate followers; rather, he sat at the apex of a network of dependencies, each one headed by its own ‘man of prowess.’ Like the more urbanised trading ports which Reid described elsewhere in the Malay Archipelago in the sixteenth century, the Kingdom of Bacan inevitably would have contained a number of important people, each of whom would have had his own dependants comprising ‘close family, dependent relatives, slaves who might also act as concubines and bear children to the lord, and a variety of male and female followers.’ These ‘lords,’ as Reid has called them, appear as a king’s chiefs, ministers, nobles, or rulers in sixteenth-century Jesuit texts. Many of them would have been rivals in their own rights to the Bacanese throne, and Dom João’s skills as a ruler would have included, as Wolters has pointed out, dispossessing them of their claims to kingship, ‘[bringing] them under his personal influence, and [accommodating] them within a network of loyalties to himself.’ One way of accomplishing these objectives was specifically by including them in the ‘royal entourage,’ providing them with ‘prestigious posts’ and sharing with them genuine ‘administrative power.’ A ruler would have simultaneously felt a ‘continuing sense of indebtedness’ to these

159 Ibid. 29.
160 Ibid. 114.
161 Reid, The Lands below the Winds. 121.
162 Wolters, History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives. 29.
chiefs who supported him in his leadership role and would have been acutely aware that they maintained ‘their own manpower resources’ and therefore were potential threats to political stability.\textsuperscript{163}

The outcome was a loose political structure which the Europeans in sixteenth-century Southeast Asia, accustomed as they were to a more absolute conception of kingship, repeatedly found baffling.\textsuperscript{164} As Reid has indicated, the situation in the central Philippines was so unfamiliar that the Spanish there had difficulty detecting any political structure at all: ‘The inhabitants of these islands are not subjected to any law, king or lord…. He who owns most slaves, and the strongest, can obtain anything he pleases….’\textsuperscript{165} The situation in Bacan clearly did not appear so anarchic to the Jesuits, but there too they seem not to have grasped much of the political realities which confronted King Dom João, continually expecting him to be able to exercise more control over the people than he actually possessed.

One gets a sense of this clash between European expectations and indigenous realities in a 1565 report sent by Manuel Gomes to his fellow missionaries in India. In it, he recorded that the King of Bacan had recently been in Ternate to meet with Álvaro de Mendonça (1564-1567),\textsuperscript{166} the newly arrived Portuguese captain. It appears likely that the Jesuits had already got to Mendonça with their complaints about the king’s inadequacies since the outcome of the meeting was that Dom João had ‘made great promises to do everything the Father

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\textsuperscript{163} Ibid. 114.
\textsuperscript{164} Reid, \textit{The Lands below the Winds}. 120.
\textsuperscript{166} Frade, “A Presença Portuguesa nas Ilhas de Maluco.” 4.
\end{flushleft}
[in Bacan, Fernando Álvares,] might command.\textsuperscript{167} That the king had not been great at doing everything he had been commanded during the previous eight years is further implied in the cautious tone employed by the Jesuit Brother in his very next statement: ‘We hope that he will do it based on the signs that he has given.’\textsuperscript{168} Unsurprisingly given the European misreading of the local context, Gomes then characterised the king as one who lacked ‘rigour’ when it came to controlling his people’s behaviour; consequently, they were still doing things which were ‘contrary to the Church and contrary to what the Father has ordained for the welfare of their souls.’\textsuperscript{169} That Dom João’s lack of compulsion extended even to his own entourage can be seen from the Jesuit Brother’s comment that the king had only recently started trying to get ‘rigorous’ with ‘those nearest to him and his ministers.’\textsuperscript{170} The simple fact which neither Gomes nor his fellows seem to have grasped was that King Dom João simply was not in a position to be any more ‘rigorous’—not with his own household and dependants, less so with the semi-independent ‘ministers’ or chiefs who delivered to him the support of their own followers, and even less so with those other subjects themselves. He could be influential and persuasive within certain limits, but this authority was far more a process of diplomacy than of control.

One can see the evidence of this diplomatic process in the emphasis rulers placed on holding councils with their people before undertaking any actions which had the potential to impact the whole—including conversion to Christianity. Quite probably, before the young Dom João made the hasty decision to be baptised in response to the death of his wife, the King of Ternate’s daughter, he had already

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
taken council with an inner core of his entourage who had agreed to support him in his decision; for this reason, the message that reached the Portuguese fort in Ternate was that ‘he wanted to be a Christian, he along with six or seven of his rulers.’ 171 The Portuguese acted on this news without delay, the captain of the fort despatching Father António Vaz that very night. For the Europeans, the conversion of the king—and therefore of his kingdom—appeared to be a done deal based upon the content of this message. Consequently, when Vaz arrived in Bacan and discovered that there was still a lengthy diplomatic process to be gone through before the king could act on his decision to embrace Christianity, he saw this not as a consequence of the local political reality but as the work of the devil, who ‘greatly resented that morsel [and] tried to get the king to change his mind.’ 172 It was not so much that the king was considering a change of mind as it was that he still needed to arrive at a point where a critical mass of his people were comfortable with his determination to alter his religious identity. Consequently, he required the Father to provide him with arguments in support of Christianity, taking these to ‘councils with his people’ over the next week, only after which he then decided that he could securely proceed with baptism. 173

Perhaps because Vaz seems to have completely misunderstood and misinterpreted the nature of the ‘perplexity’ which caused the King of Bacan to feel it necessary to hold formal councils with his people, he provided no real details about what transpired during them. 174 One can obtain a glimpse into what may have been happening, however, and the reasons behind it by looking at a similar situation which happened in the Macassar area of south Sulawesi thirteen

172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
years earlier. As already discussed in chapter two, António de Paiva, a Portuguese sandalwood trader who had frequented Macassar and had learnt the local language, found himself in 1544 being interrogated on the subject of Christianity by two of the local kings, located in the cities of Siang and Suppa. The first of these kings was familiar with both Paiva and his faith from a lengthy visit two years earlier when the Portuguese trader had been nursed back to health in the king’s own house. Upon the European’s return to this kingdom, its ruler revealed that, for the intervening two years, he had harboured the desire to become a baptised Christian. Now that an opportunity for lay baptism had presented itself, he still wanted to act upon this desire but was worried specifically ‘because I fear my people will rebel and disobey me.’ Clearly, the King of Siang was in exactly the precarious position outlined above in relation to Southeast Asian rulers; he feared that his conversion could result in the loss of his right to rule.

In order to win the support of his subjects, the king naturally began with members of his entourage, asking Paiva to speak on the merits of Christianity ‘in front of these nobles of my house.’ It seems that in this way the king won over the support of at least most of his inner core since the following day he returned to the Portuguese junk ‘with many of his people’ where, after rehearsing back to Paiva much of the previous day’s sermon, he announced ‘that his intention was to become Christian, as he had already told me.’ The king was still worried, however, how the rest of the kingdom would react to his decision, fearing ‘that such suddenness in abandoning that manner of living which his ancestors had had since the creation of the world and which he now had would give his people

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175 Baker, "South Sulawesi in 1544," 65.
176 Ibid.
178 Ibid.: 66.
occasion to take him for a crazy man. Consequently, the ruler informed the Portuguese trader that his baptism would have to wait until he could further council with his people. One such opportunity presented itself the following day when Paiva was summoned to the king’s house specifically to provide information on the creation of the world for the king and ‘all his people who were present.’

During the course of this interview, the king referenced competing truth-claims which Muslim traders from the Malay Peninsula had been presenting to him and to his people and allowed the European to address these as well. At the end of this discussion, an event which both Paiva and the King of Siang understood to be a miracle occurred: though the land had been in a prolonged drought, the sky first clouded over and then broke open ‘with dreadful thunderclaps and gusts of wind and rain such that we could not hear, by which the roof of the king’s house overhead was totally bent back, rain falling on top of the king himself.’

Despite this dramatic event which seems to have further confirmed for the king the correctness of his personal decision to adopt Christianity, he still needed to get a critical mass of his people on his side, and so he planned a series of diplomatic consultations around his kingdom, three councils in total to be held in as many locations, originally planned to take place over the course of nine days. The process, however, did not prove to be as straightforward as he had apparently hoped. Eleven days later, Paiva gave up on waiting for the councils to finish and sailed to a safe anchorage in the port of Gowa. The delay had at least two causes. First, the king had found it necessary to add a fourth location to his roster of diplomatic efforts. Second, he encountered significant difficulty especially with

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179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.: 69.
181 Specifically, from Ujung Tanah, Pahang, and Patani (ibid.: 73).
the local *bissu* or traditional transvestite priests, who had been engaging in ‘tremendous debating over Christianity’ with him.\(^{183}\) Obtaining approval for his baptism from this important and influential class of his subjects required ‘the greatest possible labour,’ but the King of Siang dared not proceed without it, seeking diligently ‘the reconciliation he wanted to have with them.’\(^{184}\) In the end, the king’s diplomatic efforts paid off, and, about two weeks after he had begun his series of councils, he sent ambassadors to Paiva’s junk in Gowa with news ‘that he had concluded with his people, namely with the chiefs and with part of his priests, to be Christians.’\(^{185}\)

Though the King of Siang felt he finally had the support necessary to embrace Christianity without fear of launching a rebellion, it is important to note that this support was neither unanimous amongst the actual people of Siang nor guaranteed to continue indefinitely. In fact, as Paiva’s account makes perfectly clear, the support of ‘the people’ was really just approval from the king’s entourage of chiefs and a certain but unknown percentage of the indigenous priests. The chiefs, presumably, would not have lent their approval had they not felt relatively secure in regards to their own dependants. Once they and the king knew that they had broad enough support to proceed, they could do so. Broad support, however, did not equal universal support, and certain segments of the kingdom, seemingly those on the periphery, had not even been consulted. For this reason, the king found it necessary to keep up his diplomatic efforts even after his baptism. For example, he later ‘held a convocation and assembly of his leading men in a village of his father-in-law, which village is called Maguntor, and this was to publicly obtain pardon from the lords who, because their lands were far

\(^{183}\) Ibid.
\(^{184}\) Ibid.: 71.
\(^{185}\) Ibid.: 72.
away, had not been summoned..."¹⁸⁶ There the king asserted that he had made a good choice in embracing Christianity, and therefore ‘everyone had much reason to thank him,’ but his very visit was an act of mediation and diplomacy, designed to convince these subjects that he was still fit to rule over them and not the ‘crazy man’ he feared they would see him as.¹⁸⁷

Though the pre-baptism councils with his own people took about half the time, it seems likely that the King of Bacan’s diplomatic efforts would have been similar in nature and in intended outcome. Just like the King of Siang, he had announced his intention to be baptised to European Christians before actually managing to secure the agreement of his people. Thereafter, he held councils with his subjects which were no mere formalities, with genuine debate creating what Fróis identified as ‘perplexity...about the reasons which the Father was giving him.’¹⁸⁸ In the end, when he felt he had sufficient support to proceed, the King of Bacan was baptised, like his counterpart from Sulawesi, along with some central figures from his ruling entourage, including ‘his brother and other cousins and relatives.’¹⁸⁹ (For the King of Siang, it had been ‘25 or 30 of the most powerful in his kingdom...as also other people, nobles and those of his household.’¹⁹⁰) It is important to note that, as in Siang, a general willingness on the part of the people to endorse their king’s conversion was not necessarily an endorsement of the new faith itself. Satisfied that the ruler’s decision to change his religious identity would not result in any negative consequences for themselves, many people, inclined to pluralism in matters of faith, were willing to let the future Dom João go

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.: 80.
¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 291.
¹⁹⁰ Baker, “South Sulawesi in 1544,” 77-78.
his own way in this regard—though, inevitably, there were those who opposed the
decision and those who immediately joined him in conversion.

A short time later, when it first appeared that the king’s choice to become a
Christian might generate negative consequences for his people—specifically
when, after the arrest of King Hairun of Ternate and the retaliatory murder of
Father Afonso de Castro, Dom João had been told ‘that many korakora were
coming against him to destroy him or make him become a Muslim again’—the
people of Bacan seem to have begun questioning their earlier support. As
already mentioned above, upon receiving the news ‘many people gathered together
with the king’ to ask him what he would do if the Portuguese, they who had
become their protectors upon the ‘Christianisation’ of the kingdom, were no longer
able to protect them from anti-Christian violence. In the face of practical
difficulties, some of his subjects appear to have been ready to scale back or even
withdraw their support for the converted king. In a bold move which satisfied the
resident Jesuit immensely and which quite possibly was designed to assure the
populace that he would personally bear all the risk, Dom João declared publicly
that, if necessary, he was prepared to die but that ‘he would die a Christian.’
Almost 20 years later, he did just that.

Sometime after the Portuguese fort in Ternate fell to siege in 1775, the
King of Bacan ‘began to feel his misfortune and secretly entered into a
confederation with the King of Tidore and with the Sangaji of Makian, to whom
he promised to give his principal daughter.’ The goal shared by these three

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191 Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ to Fr. Francisco Vieira SJ, Superior, Ternate. [Bacan], January 1,
1558.” 219.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
14, 1579. Second via.” 56.
rulers was to launch an assault on Ternate. This plot somehow came to the awareness of Baab Ullah, the king, and, ‘it seeming to him that, whilst the King of Bacan lived...Maluku would not be secure,’ he arranged for him to be killed by poison.\footnote{Ibid.} Dom João’s heir, christened Dom Henrique, was then captured and taken to Ternate along with ‘his brother and sisters, and the children of the chiefs.’\footnote{Ibid. The youth is called a ‘kinglet [reizinho]’ at this point in time, suggesting he was quite young. According to Jacobs, he would have been around seven years old when his father was poisoned (note 33).} 

There is no indication of exactly how long the young king spent incarcerated in the former Portuguese fort in Ternate, but, by 1581, he was back in Bacan as its ruler. In that year, Bernardino Ferrari, the Superior of the Maluku Jesuits, wrote that he had left Pero Mascarenhas in Tidore (new Portuguese headquarters following the fall of the fort in Ternate) with orders to later sail to Bacan on a scheduled galleon ‘so that the King of Bacan...might be pardoned from apostasy.’\footnote{Ferrari, “Fr. Bernardino Ferrari, Superior, to Fr. Everard Mercurian, General, Rome. Ambon, May 12, 1581.” 99.} Apparently, he and at least some other Bacanese Christians had earlier renounced their faith but, according to the Superior, now wanted to return. Whether he truly desired to be pardoned or not is hard to determine since the choice to re-embrace the religious identity of his upbringing was not a straightforward matter for the young Dom Henrique. Like his father before him, he relied upon the support of his people in making such a decision, and, regardless of what Ferrari may have thought when he left his orders, the King of Bacan was in no position to become a Christian again. Instead of controlling the religious
identities of his people, Dom Henrique was largely controlled by their sentiments instead.

In fact, the young King of Bacan’s situation perfectly reflects the political realities faced by many would-be Christian rulers in the Maluku region. Writing only ten months later, Bernardino Ferrari had a much clearer view of the situation: the King of Bacan, he explained, though no longer allied with the Muslim King of Ternate, had ‘not abandoned the sect of Mohammed because no Portuguese armada’ had come to protect him and his people from the physical threats which would arise should he return to his earlier faith.198 Because they knew that they stood to lose much depending upon their ruler’s religious identity, the people of Bacan this time withheld their support, and the king ‘feared that, upon becoming Christian again, his people, both subjects and friends, might abandon him.’199 Dom Henrique’s right to rule was so precarious that he not only lacked the power to impose Christianity upon his ‘subjects’; in these circumstances, he simply could not risk embracing it himself.

As demonstrated by two different kings in Bacan, the Jesuit conviction that local rulers should be able to embrace Christianity at will and then oversee an effortless top-down conversion of their people proved to be little more than a fantasy in the Maluku region. These rulers—even the powerful King of Ternate—relied upon the support of their subjects to maintain their right to rule, and they therefore had to be more diplomats than despots. In areas of religion and religious choice, they may have spoken with bravado and confidence, but they also had to tread carefully. They could advocate and encourage, but force against their own subjects, unless it had the support of a critical mass

199 Ibid.
of others, was simply out of the question. As discussed at length in chapter one, most writers from the sixteenth century to the present have claimed that, to some extent, early conversion to Christianity in the Maluku region could be understood and even explained away as people blindly following their rulers. In actuality, though Christian rulers played important roles in indigenous-driven mission, religious change remained always an individual act.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION

The year 1562 was a good one for the indigenous-driven mission in Ambon. After three years without even a passing visit from a Jesuit missionary, six priests arrived there from India in the month of February, and two of them—Fathers Francisco Rodrigues and Diogo de Magalhães—had been instructed by the Rector to remain in Ambon ‘to perform the office of the Society.’ The missionaries had arrived in company of the new captain of the Portuguese fortress in Ternate, Henrique de Sá, and the captain’s brief visit to the island before proceeding on to the fort had also been good for Ambon’s Christians, whose numbers had dwindled until they occupied only three or four villages in total. As mentioned in chapter four, Sá took the unusual step of arresting several high-profile figures who had been leading anti-Christian persecutions. Afterward, the chiefs of Nusaniwi, an Ulilima village whose ruler was one of those arrested, requested and eventually received Christian baptism, along with a number of others in the village. In addition, a large number of Christians who had earlier apostatised returned to the faith, and people asking to convert began overwhelming the two resident Jesuits with their requests for christening. Two months after the European missionaries had arrived, Ambon had at least 30 villages which identified as Christian. By the end of the year, the Jesuit Father Provincial in India had despatched two more missionaries ‘to support the Christians of that land [Ambon].

1 Araújo, "Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate, February 24, 1563."
2 Mascarenhas, "Fr. Pero Mascarenhas SJ to Fr. António de Quadros, Provincial, Goa. Ternate, April 16, 1562." 346.
3 Ibid. 351.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid. 353, 354.
Early the following year, two Jesuits then in Ternate, Brothers Fernão de Osório and Baltasar de Araújo, both wrote letters to their fellow Society members in Europe relating, amongst other things, what they had learnt about recent events in Ambon from their colleagues who had been serving there, with the focus quite naturally on the labours of these two priests.7 Until the Portuguese ships which had been hibernating8 in the bay departed around the middle of May, Rodrigues and Magalhães spent most of their time with the sailors, listening to confessions and marrying some of them to their local concubines.9 They then moved to Hatiwi, the centre of Ambon’s Christian population, where they oversaw the construction of a church.10 Visits to Christian villages took them away from Hatiwi for a time. Afterward, Magalhães relocated himself to Nusaniwi because the Christians there had requested the presence of a Father ‘to encourage and strengthen them’ in the face of renewed threats of anti-Christian persecution.11 This strengthening was not just spiritual, with the Jesuit assisting in the building of defensive walls and the laying of caltrops.12

In the midst of this increasing concern on the part of Ambon’s Christians, an event occurred which epitomises the indigenous-driven quality of the mission which operated in the island and throughout the entire Maluku region during the sixteenth century. Manuel, the king of Hatiwi, wished to support his local co-religionists in the island and so planned something of an all-Christian fair to be held at a location on the south coast of the bay.13

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7 Osório, “Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo Antão in Lisbon. Ternate, February 15, 1563.” Araújo, “Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate, February 24, 1563.” The two accounts are very similar to each other but contain minor differences. The following narrative has been reconstructed utilising both of them.
8 Regardless of the time of year, the Portuguese referred to awaiting a monsoon as envernar, literally ‘to hibernate.’
10 Ibid. 369.
11 Ibid. 370.
13 The Portuguese word used in both texts is feira, literally a ‘fair.’
The purpose of the fair was ‘so that everyone together might encourage each another to
greater zeal and fervour for the faith.’\textsuperscript{14} To summon the participants, he sent his brother
and some chiefs from his village ‘to all the regions,’ notifying them of the date and
location for the fair.\textsuperscript{15} Araújo’s account suggests that Manuel included Father Rodrigues
in some of the planning, but both letters make it abundantly clear that the idea belonged
to the Christian king.\textsuperscript{16} On the appointed day, Manuel and the Christians from Hatiwi
departed across Ambon Bay first, with Rodrigues coming some time later in a prau filled
with children. Before actually landing, he waited behind a point of land near the fair site
until Father Magalhães arrived, also in a prau filled with children. The two vessels then
descended on the assembled Christians accompanied by the singing of the catechism and
the discharge of firearms. To ‘tease’ those at the fair who were not from Hatiwi, King
Manuel claimed that he did not recognise the vessels; consequently, the other participants
assumed they were under attack, an impression further substantiated by the fact that
Manuel had also hid some of his men on land ‘in the manner of an ambush.’\textsuperscript{17} This
practical joke worked in large part because the other Christians who were at the fair did
not know that the Fathers were coming.\textsuperscript{18}

When the praus reached land, the men from Hatiwi lifted both vessels into the air
and placed them onto dry ground. Then, with the children still singing the catechism, the
missionaries and their young companions joined the other Christians at an altar, upon
which they laid a cross which they had brought.\textsuperscript{19} The women of Hatiwi had caused this

\textsuperscript{14} Araújo, "Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate,
February 24, 1563." 386.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo
\textsuperscript{17} Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo
\textsuperscript{18} Araújo, "Br. Baltasar de Araújo SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits in Europe. Ternate,
February 24, 1563." 386.
\textsuperscript{19} Osório, "Br. Fernão de Osório SJ, by order of Fr. Prancudo SJ, to the Jesuits of the College of Santo
altar to be constructed, and these women then ‘arose and asked the Father to give them permission to come commend the altar to God so that the other newly converted Christians might learn from them, and so it might not seem difficult to them to know the doctrine, for they were Ambonese like themselves.’ Upon receiving this request, neither Jesuit had any idea what the women had just asked them permission for, so they sought assistance from a local man who had spent some time in the Jesuit college in Goa and who therefore understood both local and more orthodox practices. The man came to the altar reciting the litanies, with all the women responding. According to Araújo, ‘[i]t was a thing of much admiration and devotion, not only for the local Christians but even for the Fathers and the Portuguese who were there.’ Having witnessed this ceremony, women from other villages approached those from Hatiwi and asked them to come visit them so that they might be ‘better instructed in devotion and the method which they needed to follow in the church.’

After the commendation of this altar, each village sent one ‘honoured’ man to participate in a common speech to everyone assembled, ‘in which they promised to die as Christians and fight all together with any Moors whatsoever, that they would desire to fight alongside the Christians, and that they would all run to help a village where the Moors might fight.’ This speech greatly encouraged Manuel of Hatiwi, ‘seeing that all those who in years past had been at war with him were now ready to help him in what might be necessary, and he said that never in Ambon had anything like it been seen.’

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23 Ibid.
25 Ibid. 372.
No other accounts in the Jesuit letters provide such a compact and complete
glimpse into the situation and practices of the Christians in Ambon, or anywhere else in
Maluku. Manuel’s Christian fair perfectly illustrates the concept of indigenous-driven
mission outlined in this work. To begin, the entire event was planned and carried out by
the island’s local Christians, not by the Jesuits or by any other Europeans in the area. The
missionary Fathers did have a role to play, but Manuel had determined for them what that
role would be and then invited them to participate. They functioned as mere appendages
to the indigenous-led mission as indicated by the fact that the fair could have—and no
doubt would have—been held without them. In fact, the attendees from villages other
than Hatiwi must have been surprised by the staged arrival of the Jesuits precisely
because they were already accustomed to Christian proceedings which did not include
European missionaries. The altar which the women of Hatiwi had arranged to be
constructed provides evidence that the local mission had developed its own culture and
customs, ones which, though completely foreign to a pair of Jesuits who had been in the
island less than a year, had become sufficiently prevalent that an indigenous Christian
knew exactly how to proceed when the request came to commend the altar to God.

These accounts of the fair also clearly indicate how this local culture and the faith
from which it derived spread throughout the islands. The women of Hatiwi had actually
planned the commendation of the altar to be a teaching experience for the new converts in
attendance so that they too might learn more of what it meant to be Christians. For their
part, the recent converts obviously understood the normal channels by which information
about the new religion was available. They did not ask the priests to travel to their
villages to teach them more; they asked the local missionaries, women who had
demonstrated a superior familiarity with the faith and its localised rituals. The behaviour
of the Ambonese man who took over the commendation of the altar from the befuddled
priests reveals a significant level of comfort with assuming a role one would usually expect a European missionary to have fulfilled. Neither he nor the women of Hatiwi seem to have felt that they were in any way usurping positions or privileges which rightfully belonged to the Jesuit Fathers, nor did they let the confusion of the priests deter them from taking action. Moreover, though the fair had been planned and staged by a Christian king, it was not to Manuel that participants turned with their desires to learn more about Christianity. The king inevitably had impact on the local Christian communities, but it was the ordinary, nameless Christians who primarily provided information and ideas relating to the religion.

Lastly, Manuel’s Christian fair reinforces the power with which religious change in the Ambon area cut across clan identities and older rivalries. As discussed in chapter six, Nusaniwi belonged to the Ulilima moiety whilst Hatiwi was Ulisiwa. The king’s observation that many of those present had formerly been at war with him suggests that other members of the Ulilima were also present. A common embrace of a new faith, however, had created something he claimed he had never before seen in Ambon, with people whose previous identities had enjoined them to kill each other now united in a new identity: Christian. This willingness to forget past rivalries and absorb old rivals appeared earlier when the women of Hatiwi referred to their counterparts from other villages as ‘Ambonese just like themselves.’

Clearly, identity was not nearly so fixed—or so determinative—in the islands as some have claimed.

The image which emerges from a careful reading of the reports written about the Christian fair which took place on Ambon Bay in 1562 differs markedly from the representations of conversion and Christianity in sixteenth-century Maluku which can be

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found in the chronicles composed during that century and in the histories and academic works which have followed them in both time and content. The early chroniclers and their successors, inclined to view events through a European-centric lens, saw a situation where missionaries and colonial administrators, aided by powerful local rulers, created mass conversion by persuasion or even by force. Instead, indigenous people in Maluku were the real agents of religious change. They eagerly explored the new faith with any Christians they encountered, whether secular or of the Church, European or local. They actively sought out baptism as the rite of conversion, drawing priests into their villages and lands as they did so. They sought to resist force in issues of religious identity but also put pressure on the colonial apparatus to wield its power in support of them and their communities. Always in control of the processes of conversion, they managed and directed the labours of the European missionaries in their midst. Instead of behaving as a mindless mass preconditioned by clan identity or subject to the commands of local rulers, they exercised individual agency in matters of religious choice and religious change.


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