Chapter 6

The Pre-Islamic, Islamic and Christian Religions

Galvão incorrectly described the early Moluccans as having no religion, when in fact in the period before the adoption of Islam, and later Christianity, they held a complex set of beliefs which involved ancestor worship, belief in the ability of spiritual manifestations to directly affect the course of human lives and the concomitant need to appease both the spirits of ancestors and those wandering spirits by way of sacrifice and ritual. While this in itself is a fascinating and much neglected area of study, it does not fall within the scope of this thesis to explore the subject in detail. Rather, the knowledge we do have of these will be discussed from the descriptions left by limited primary and secondary source material, briefly to present an idea of the workings of the religion and its relevance to the islanders, and then as a kind of yard-stick with which to measure the success or not of the two new and contending religions.[1] The Banda Islands are virtually unrepresented in the following discussion, which is concentrated on the Moluccas (including the Moro region) and Amboina.[2]

Common to all societies before the advent of the 'world religions' was the need to explain or understand the many natural phenomena over

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1 In a recent work J.G. Casparis and I.W. Mabbett discuss Southeast Asian religion and popular beliefs to c.1500, but their discussion neglects the eastern archipelago entirely, concentrating on the 'higher' civilisations in Java, Malaya and mainland Southeast Asia. A second article in this work by B. Watson Andaya devotes less than one paragraph to the pre-Islamic religion of the Moluccas. See J.G. Casparis & I.W. Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia Before c.1500' and B.Watson Andaya, 'Religious Developments in Southeast Asia, c.1500-1800' in N. Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol.I, From Early Times to c.1800*, Cambridge, 1992

2 Amboina has been included in this discussion due to the amount of detailed material available on its pre-Islamic beliefs. Galvão outlines these for the Moluccas proper, but it is felt that a fuller picture, applicable to the Moluccas, can be found in a brief study on Amboina.

which humans had no control. This need was fulfilled, to a large degree, by the belief in supernatural entities or forces. Although the nature of these forces are diverse, they generally fall into three groups: major deities, ancestral spirits and non-human spirits. All of these were represented in the religious make-up of both the Moluccans and Ambonese, which was characterised by a prevailing belief in the omnipresence of spirits, or *nitus*, both good and evil. Every day men and women had to contend with these supernatural beings and forces. Naturally, ways of dealing with these had to be developed, hence the rise of ritual and the position of shaman, the mediator between human and spirit. The totality of these beliefs was neatly described by Galvão when he recorded:

> They used to have neither law nor king nor religion. They worshipped the celestial bodies, the sun and the moon and the stars.... They had no knowledge at all of the first Creator.... Nor had they moral discipline, religion, or priests, except for a few who were said to have visited the other world. These performed the ceremonies, spoke with the gods, and gave answers.[3]

In the Moluccas Galvão noted that in the ancient culture of the people the dead were not interred as such, but were laid in wooden praus which were then put on props or in trees. The skulls of the dead were kept in the relatives' home. Further, he noted that they worshipped

> idols they made to honor their fathers and forefathers. And these were made of wood or stone, with faces of men, dogs, cats, and other animals towards which they were more inclined.[4]

According to Valentyn the 'oldest religion' was still practised in his time in Papua and islands in the north.[5] He described the islanders as believing in a 'protecting' deity. These must have been embodied in the idols of which Galvão spoke. This protecting spirit, or tribal ancestor, was worshipped in the Moro region either in human form (as a warrior) or in the form of a snake, bird or some unusual object.[6] Such idols were also found on the island of Ceram and its neighbours in the time of Francis Xavier's visit. Here each village had its own protecting deity. The people of Titawai village worshipped Riama Atu in the form of a snake, the god

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3 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, pp.75-77
4 *Ibid.*, p.77
5 Valentyn, *Molukse Zaaken, op.cit.*, pp.377-379
6 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.176

Morie was worshipped in the village of Sila in the shape of a piece of driftwood.[7] All of the deities were offered sacrificial gifts - rice, textiles, flowers.

While this form of religion is unlikely to have found its roots in Java, some similarity exists between the superstitions of the pre-Hindu Javanese religion[8] and elements of the animist religion of eastern-island Indonesia. Crawfurd names several of the early Javanese entities as *Banaspati*, evil spirits which inhabit large trees and wander at night; *Barkasahan*, evil genii which wander continuously; *Dammit*, good genii in human form, protectors of houses and villages; *Wewe*, malignant spirits in the form of huge females who carry off infants; and *Dadungawu*, patrons of hunters, protectors of wild animals.

In Amboina evil spirits filled the air and dwelled in tall trees, stones and caves, and these earth-bound sites were considered *pamali* - they could not be disturbed for fear of incurring the wrath of the resident spirit.[9] These *nitus* were the souls of persons who had died a violent death or had died far from their homelands. They could be appeased with offerings of gifts such as precious corals or red cloths. Other *nitus*, of a less fearsome nature, were those who stayed about their graves and their homes, "where the inalienable possessions of their ancestors were kept". These were also made offerings - bowls of *sirih pinang*, sago, the wing of a white cock, red cloth, oil, or other gifts. The offerings were made in little houses that were dotted throughout the forests of Amboina, and were offered as a gesture of thanks for the safe and successful enterprises undertaken by the people.

Similar modes of worship were followed by the Moros.[10] Each village had an open-sided temple, and houses in the village each had special places for the family's protecting deity. In the forest surrounding the villages, small spirit houses, *salabé*, could be found. The Moros recognised Gikimoi, a supreme god, but did not sacrifice to it. They also worshipped trees, stones and rocks, and built dwellings in their plantations for the spirits who would chase thieves away.[11]

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7 *Ibid.*, pp.103-104

8 Crawfurd, *A History, op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.225-231. Crawfurd saw Buddhism as "undoubtedly the prevailing religion of the ancient Javanese".

9 This discussion of religion on Amboina comes from Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, pp.89-92

10 *Ibid.*, p.176

11 *Loc.cit.*

Illness was also thought to be brought on by the influence of the spirits, and if a cure was beyond the powers of the villagers, a magician was summoned. He conversed with the spirits while in a trance and they revealed to him what the nature of the illness was and how to purge it from the body.[12] The spirits' identities were generally not disclosed, but it was recorded that the ghosts of the kings of Soja, Kilang and Nusanawi were often called upon in this manner, perhaps indicating that even death was not perceived to be strong enough to separate them from their duties to their subjects, or perhaps that a king's intervention was a guarantee of success. Such talents were not only the province of men, nor were they confined to Amboina or the Moluccan region. In Malacca in 1545 the teenage son of a wealthy Portuguese resident had fallen gravely ill. His mother, a Javanese woman, had summoned the aid of native women experienced in the healing arts, but to no avail. She then brought in a woman named Niay (madam) Maluco. The woman was renowned as a skilled sorceress, but her remedy actually worsened his condition rather than improving it. What became of her is not said, but the son, after showing signs of possession, was cured by the fortuitous intervention of Francis Xavier.[13]

Another feature of this religion were the evil spirits known as the *swangis*. These were old men and women who could transform themselves into witches, after which they engaged in what could be termed a 'spiritual cannibalism'. They were believed to eat the hearts and entrails of the living, so causing their deaths. So dreadful were these spirits that even the dead were not out of their reach and so their bodies were watched over by armed relatives.[14] They manifested themselves in various places, being able to move freely from island to island. In the Banda group an entire island was possessed by these spirits. Located some thirteen miles northwest of Gunong Api, it was known as Pulo Swangi, or 'Sorcery' or 'Spirit Island', and was avoided by sailors.[15] *Swangis* were identified by magicians or sorcerers when they were in a trance, and the unfortunate person so named was slain immediately. The people of Ternate were described as having a "universal belief" in *swangis*; in

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12 *Ibid.*, p.92, fn.276

13 *Ibid.*, p.29. Schurhammer says the woman's "origins were in the Moluccas".

14 *Ibid.*, p.92

15 W.H. Davenport Adams, *The Eastern Archipelago*, London, 1880 p.288; Cortesao, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.205, fn.1

Tidore twenty-one people, including a judge, were slain, while the rajah of Gilolo had 136 people killed, all having been identified as *swangi*.[16]

II

A survey of the spread of Islam into the Southeast Asian region shows that from its birth in the seventh century the dissemination of the religion had been connected to a significant degree with the eastwards advance of Islamic traders from the major trading areas of the Middle East - Arabs from Egypt, Yemen, Oman and Iraq, Turks and Persians.[17] Concentrating their trading activities in the western Indonesian region, initially the kingdom of Srivijaya, they soon came into contact with merchants from the island of Java. The process of conversion of specific Javanese populations evolved over several centuries until, with the fall of the last Hindu kingdom, Majapahit, in the fifteenth century, Islam was the dominant religion of the western archipelago. The victory of Islam over Hinduism in the western archipelago, particularly Java, coincided with its first contacts with the Spice Islands of the eastern archipelago. This in itself is indicative of the trading connections already established between those islands, notably Ternate in the Moluccas, and the northern Javanese ports, particularly Gresik.

The religious connection between the northern Javanese ports and the Spice Islands is seen to have been centred around Gresik, primarily due to its established trading connections with the region.[18] The strong link between these two places is emphasised by the fact that in the sixteenth century members of the Ternatan royal family lived and studied in the religious complex of Giri, located near the port of Gresik. By implication, the form of Islam that was carried both by these returning royal members and the trading community was the mystic Islam prevalent in Java. Within the Moluccas themselves, however, Galvão noted how they "boast of having descended from that race [the Javanese]

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16 Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, pp.92, fn.277, 146

17 Arasaratnam, S., 'Islamic Merchant Communities of the Indian Subcontinent in Southeast Asia', Sixth Sri Lanka Endowment Fund Lecture, Kuala Lumpur, 1989, p.2

18 I.L. Rowe, *Trade and Society in Gresisk - From the Earliest Times to 1625*, unpublished Masters thesis, UNE, 1991, pp.241-242

.... But I have been in Java, and, according to what they told me, the Moluccan people became Muslims before them".[19]

In seeking the earliest possible establishment of Islam in the region the obvious starting point is the Moluccans' legends of their own conversion. As with the Sumatran ports, the northern Javanese ports and Malacca, each of which had legends explaining the introduction of Islam into their realms, so the Moluccas had their own. In fact, like Pasai and Gresik, they had several legends. The true account no doubt lies somewhere therein. In brief, they are as follows:

A high-ranking noblewoman arrived on Ternate in a ship of Arab, Persian or Javanese origin.[20] The then *kolano* of Ternate, Tidore Vongue, married her, and "for her sake they became Muslims."

The second account tells that this *kolano*, and others (presumably his immediate family and/or courtiers), already an adherent of the faith, wished to be confirmed in his new religion and also desired to see "foreign manners and countries". He visited Malacca and then returned home via the Java route. In Java he had married a woman related to all the kings of that country. They both returned to Ternate, whereupon all the populace accepted the new religion, "for the sake of the new wife."[21]

The first of these tales may indicate an extension and strengthening of Javanese-Moluccan trade relations. This is highly probable, if the long-established relationship between the Moluccan *kolanos* and women from outside their realm is considered. Although the identity of the noble-woman is unknown, the marriage of the Ternatan *kolano* to this woman may be seen to have been a business alliance, of sorts. The Javanese family to whom this woman was related, assuming she came from a highly-placed merchant family or one from the lesser nobility, would gain an advantageous position re: the Ternatan clove trade. Their offer of marriage would necessarily draw the Moluccan kolano into the wider family of Islam, but would have originated from commercial motives rather than being a religious initiative. In return the *kolano* would have the dual benefit of an assured, and possibly widened, market for his

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19 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.105

20 *Ibid.*, p.83, says the noblewoman arrived "in these ships", thus it is not clear from which country the ships had journeyed.

21 Both accounts are taken from Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, pp.83-85. He says "This is what I could find out of their past, because they have no chronicles nor [written] history and they keep no archives. As far as I understood from them, they commit their past to memory by way of aphorisms, songs, and rhyming ballads, of which they are very fond."

produce, and also the support of Javanese blood and spiritual allies if the need arose for him to reinforce his standing in the Moluccan community.

The second account offers something more tangible, though in a limited sense. The *kolano,* having travelled to various parts of Southeast Asia, returned home with a Javanese wife (a woman of high-standing, possibly a princess) who, as he, was a Muslim. Rather than introducing the religion, as in the first account, she brought with her particular elements of Javanese culture - the kris, gongs, Javanese court ceremonial, Malayan dress styles, Javanese titles, Chinese cash and Arabic script.[22] These new 'cultural acquisitions' appear to have been confined to the ruling elite, as those humbler pleasures enjoyed by every Javanese peasant - cock-fighting and the *wayang* theatre - are not listed as past-times of the Moluccans. For their entertainment the Ternatans engaged in dancing the *lego-lego,* watching boat races, playing *sepak raga* ("kick basket")[23], bowls, chess and "odd and even" with dice.[24] The point here is that as the cultural fashions of Java did not penetrate deeply into the general population, nor did Islam gain an immediate following among them.

A third account holds that in Ternatan tradition the second foreign ship to visit its shores came from Java, and that its passenger body was comprised of Javanese, Malay, Arabs and Persians. The merchants of the latter two nationalities were responsible for bringing the teachings of the Prophet to the Moluccas.[25]

Also in Ternatan tradition, a Muslim visitor to the region was a man called Maulana Hussein. He came from Java to Ternate in the reign of King Marhum. Maulana Hussein impressed the people of Ternate and the *kolano* with his ability to read the Quran and write Arab texts.[26]

Galvão concluded with the remark that "thus it happened that the first Moorish king here was the king of Ternate, which would have taken place more or less in the year 1460; and after that the others were converted."[27] It is interesting to note that, according to the second account, the Ternatan *kolano* sailed first to Malacca and then to Java. One would presume that already existing trading connections with the latter would

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22 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.147

23 Reid, *Lands Below, op.cit.*, p.199

24 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.147-149. See Chapter 3.

25 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, 147

26 H. J. de Graaf, 'Southeast Asia and Islam to the Eighteenth Century' in *The Cambridge History of Islam,* Vol.2, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.135

27 Galvâo, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.85

make it the obvious first port of call. The journey to Malacca would have found the *kolano* there in the reign of Sultan Ala'u'din. One could wonder if the visit to Malacca was not more of a political or economic nature rather than a spiritual journey. If the *kolano* desired to visit particular religious sites in the Indonesian archipelago, he could do no better than to visit Giri, recognised and revered as a stronghold of the Islamic faith in that region. Even Pasai should have been recognised above Malacca as being of particular religious significance. Malacca may well have been a point of dissemination of Islam within the archipelago, but that port surely should be considered to have built its reputation on its trade rather than its religious propagation, and the emphasis should lay there. Such a visit may, of course, have been driven by commercial motives. Unfortunately the only two sources which refer to this visit do not make any reference to the purpose of the visit. Galvão is quite silent on the point, and the other source, the *Sejarah Melayu*, has the Moluccan *kolano* doing little more than playing *sepak raga*, football.[28] How long Tidore Vongue remained in Malacca is unknown, but it was sufficient time for him to become a great favourite of the sultan, and for the Malaccans to compose a poem about some of his exploits there:

> My lord of Maluka borrowed a horse;
> From the Maulana he borrowed it;
> Of our young men he's the life and soul;
> Yet he's mature in wisdom and wit![29]

This is a telling piece in two ways. First, that the *kolano* was indeed well thought of. As well as his wisdom, wit and what can only be interpreted as his entertainment value, the *Sejarah Melayu* also comments on his skill and great strength. All of these qualities were fitting for a *kolano*, if not a sultan. The second point of interest is that Tidore Vongue was on good terms with the Maulana, an Islamic holy man. Although there is no indication that the Moluccan ruler made any commitment to the Islamic religion before his later conversion, according to this source, he was at least acquainted with it in Malacca, and apparently in a positive manner.

Maulana Hussein, the Arab whose reading and writing skills aroused the curiosity of the Ternatans, appears in Valentyn's work as a merchant from Java.[30] As a merchant in the clove trade, he arrived in

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28 C.C. Brown (trans.), *Sejarah Melayu, or Malay Annals*, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, pp.107-108. It does say he was very good at the game.

29 *Ibid.*, p.108

30 Valentyn, *Molukse Zaaken, op.cit.*, p.378

Ternate to do business in 1465. In the course of his stay on the island, he would have read from the Quran. No doubt his curious mutterings and daily ritual appeared strange to the Ternatans, and they expressed interest in his activities to the extent that some of them would try to copy his writings. With this expression of interest the canny Arab told the people that only those who were followers of the Prophet could understand the writings and the spoken word, thus the people learnt the creed and were converted.

A difficulty with Valentyn's account is that the Maulana was said to have remained on Ternate until shortly after the *kolano's* death, that is, to 1486. This means he was there for twenty-one years, an impossibly long period for any merchant to be absent from his business. Valentyn does not say whether or not the Maulana engaged in any business during his long sojourn on Ternate, but this is a possibility if he kept contact with other Javanese merchants who visited the island. He may have been sent to Ternate to act as an agent for an employer in one of Java's port cities which had Moluccan connections, and, being a devout Muslim, naturally carried out his daily prayers which, as seen above, aroused curiosity in the Ternatans. A third possibility is that he was not in fact a merchant, but a Javanese Muslim who went to Ternate with the clear intention of converting the population. "Maulana" is generally recognised as an Islamic title meaning spiritual or religious leader. In this context, Maulana Husein can certainly be seen as a religious propagator.

From the four accounts recorded, a number of common threads can be drawn. The Javanese noblewoman, Tidore Vongue's journey and his marriage, the trading ship with four merchant nationalities which came from Java, and Maulana Hussein's arrival, all show Java to be the country of origin of the Muslim visitors to the Moluccas. This tie was strengthened during the reign of Tidore Vongue, who took the name Zain-al-Abidin upon his conversion to Islam. Pires and Galvão both place the adoption of Islam in the Moluccas as being between the years 1460 and 1465.[31] Valentyn also places it in the same period, although he does qualify the *kolano's* conversion to Islam as being late in his reign.[32] While these are European versions of the native legends, Galvão's, at least, is based on accounts told to him by the Ternatans themselves. This presents

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31 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.217; Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.83

32 Valentyn, *Molukse Zaaken*, p.378

a strong case for the mid-fifteenth century as being the period of Moluccan conversion to Islam, though not the period of initial contact.

Islam's initial appearance may well have been earlier, indeed, Valentyn says that Arab and Malays had been to the Moluccas in 1348 and 1350.[33] This brings us back to the earlier-mentioned tradition among the Spice Islanders that their islands had been visited by Muslim traders since the middle of the fourteenth century. According to this tradition Momolat Cheya (1350-57), the twelfth *kolano* of Ternate, had direct contact with an Arab Muslim who advised him in the art of shipbuilding. If this was so, there should be a degree of similarity or a blending of traditional styles between the Moluccan vessels and the Arab ships of the period. Some similarities do exist. Galvão noted the existence of boats with sewn planks in the Moluccas,[34] as did Rebello,[35] and this feature was named by Hourani as one of the "outstanding features" of the medieval Arabian ship, along with the fore and aft set of the sail.[36] Moluccan boats also exhibit this feature. According to Galvão, they also had ribs, a feature not found in the medieval Arab ship.[37] While there does appear to be evidence of some Arabic influence, two things should be borne in mind. Sewn planked boats, of differing designs, were used in Africa, India, island Oceana, the Americas and possibly China, as well as Arabia and Indonesia,[38] and so to claim an 'Arab influence' on the existence of sewn boats is unwise. Also, in Galvão's description, he mentions five main types of vessels built in the Moluccas, the *djuanga, lakafuna, korakora, kalulus* and small *perahus*, all of which were not sailed, but propelled by oars.[39] He names other vessels, also oar-propelled.[40] The type of ship described to Molomat Cheya by his Arab visitor was most probably an ocean-going vessel, hence it required sails rather than oars.

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33 *Loc.cit.*

34 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.157

35 Rebello, cited in P. -Y. Mangin, 'The Southeast Asian Ship: An Historical Approach' in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol.XI, No.2, 1980, p.269, fn.14

36 G.F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Khayats, Beirut, 1963, p.88

37 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.157; Hournai, *op.cit.*, p.91. Hourani notes that ocean-going vessels must have had ribs, otherwise the structure of the hull would be too weak to withstand the vigours of ocean voyaging.

38 S. McGrail, *The Ship: Rafts, Boats and Ships from Prehistoric Times to the Medieval Era*, London, 1981, pp.44-81

39 Galvão. *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.161. Galvão says the *djuanga* were the most important and resembled royal galleys.

40 *Ibid.*, p.163

Having recounted the legends of the introduction of Islam into the Moluccas, an attempt will be made to determine the extent to which the Islamic influence permeated the lives of the Moluccans. The physical evidence will be examined to indicate the depth of their religious conviction. In what ways did Ternate, as the dominant power in the Moluccas, reflect its adherence to Islam? Also, what features of the Moluccan towns illustrated their acceptance of this new religion?

The central feature of any Islamic town was the mosque. Mosques conformed to a general design;[41] the interior housed the *mihrab* (altar), the pulpit and stairs on the right and the lectern stood opposite. The mosque had a court and at least one fountain which was used for ablutions before prayer. While the religious edifices of pre-Islamic Southeast Asia were built from brick and/or stone, mosques tended to be constructed from wood and thatch, although the mosques of Malacca and Acheh had foundations and outer walls of stone and mortar.[42] It is known from Galvão's account that Ternate had "fine mosques with no image in them, but with a big drum hung up outside it" which was used to call the faithful to prayer.[43] Early seventeenth century woodcuts based on descriptions in Dutch travel accounts show that the Ternatan mosques was quite similar to those found in western Java.[44]

The Moluccan mosques followed the style found in port towns such as Malacca, Demak and Gresik, that is, exhibiting a tiered pagoda-style roof rather than the typical dome and minaret. This was the typical style for Javanese mosques built in the period 1400 to 1700, the square building and tiered roof not being replaced by the dome and minaret until post-1700, in colonial times.[45] The Ternatan mosque in Gama Lamo was constructed on thirty six very thick poles which were roughly twice the height of a man. To this height it was filled with stones and clay, the same materials used in the construction of the Portuguese fort, Galvão noted.[46] Atop of this stony foundation was the first floor, made from tightly jointed beams and *lantai*, or split bamboo. Successively above this were three four-sided

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41 The following description comes from A. Guillaume, *Islam*, Harmondsworth, 1956, p.68

42 Reid, *Lands Below , op.cit.*, p.67

43 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.87

44 A picture of the Ternatan mosque can be found in Chapter 1, Picture 2.

45 Rowe, *Gresik, op.cit.*, p.37, fn.16.

46 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.289

roofs (as that of Gresik), each resting on four high poles. The woodwork in the entire complex was highly decorated with carved foliage and festoons.[47] An old Dutch itinerary, *Historische Reizen*, written by Abraham Bogaert, described the Ternatan mosque as having a five-tiered roof, but only three of the roofs had corresponding floors.[48] At some stage in the seventeenth century, or possibly late sixteenth, the mosque must have acquired the two additional tiers, for Schurhammer's account of Xavier's visit would have reported it had it been otherwise in 1546. The two new tiers, supported by one central pole, brought the number of tiers to five, and this being in accordance with the rank of Sultan.[49] Why these two additional tiers were not added at the time when the Ternatan *kolano* Zain-al-Abidin first assumed the title of Sultan is not clear, other than that the new sultan was occupied with other, more pressing matters at the time. Possible reasons for the later addition may have included a desire on the sultan's part to remind his subjects, and neighbouring *kolanos*, of his pre-eminent rank in the Moluccan region, or it may have served as a rallying point for the Moluccan Muslims in the face of their Christian adversaries. The 'big drum' which was observed by Galvão, was used to summon followers to prayer five times a day. According to van Neck, this drum hung on a chair which was covered in a white cloth.[50] The drum is a feature still found in the mosques of small Western Javanese villages.[51] The Ternatan mosque was also reported as having a drum which served as a warning or call to arms. At its sound all Ternatan men, rich or poor, had to leave their homes, armed with whatever weapons were available to them.[52]

Apart from the tiered roof, the Southeast Asian mosque differed from that of the Middle East in that the main building was square and had wooden pillars supporting the roof. Many mosques also had an eastward facing verandah and were surrounded by a masonry wall.[53] There is some debate concerning the origin of the tiered roof of the Southeast Asian mosque; that is, whether this style owed its origins to the Hindu influence

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47 *Ibid.*, p.289, Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.146

48 de Graaf, H.J. and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, No.12, 1984, p.150. The date of Bogaert's itinerary is not recorded.

49 *Loc.cit.*

50 van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.34

51 de Graaf & Pigeaud, *op.cit.*, p.151

52 van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.50

53 This description comes from Reid, *Land Below, op.cit.*, p.67

on Javanese religious architecture (the roof being a representation of Mount Meru), or whether it represented the preference of the Chinese Muslims living in the northern Javanese port towns.[54] Chinese influence may be a factor in the similarity between Southeast Asian mosques, but the success of this style, as emphasised by the common design of mosques in a range of Southeast Asian locations, "would not have been accepted throughout the Archipelago in the sixteenth century unless it had successfully incorporated older religious and architectural patterns."[55]

There are varying opinions as to the depth of genuine conversion among the people of the Moluccas. The population itself has to be divided into two groups, falling into 'spiritual' converts and what could be termed 'economic/political' converts. According to Pires more than three quarters of the Moluccan population were heathen,[56] indicating that Islam had not at that time penetrated the general community. It is highly probable that, as in other Southeast Asian coastal ports such as Malacca, Gresik, Pasai or Demak, in the Moluccas Islam was confined to the coastal environs for a considerable time before penetrating further inland.

With regard to royalty, Pires observed that "The kings of the islands are Mohammedans, but not very deeply involved in the sect."[57] While this may be accounted for by the fact that Islam was a relatively newly established religious force in the region, it also indicates that the adoption of Islam by the Moluccan *kolanos* may not have been an entirely 'spiritual' experience. Few rulers could afford to adopt a new religion purely for spiritual fulfilment, and well-known examples of other Southeast Asian rulers illustrate the economic benefits which accompanied Islamic conversion.[58] However, genuine conversion must have occurred. In 1599 Van Neck was witness to a religious ceremony in which the Ternatan *kolano* was the main participant, going to offer a sacrifice in the mosque. He says the king attended "church" regularly. The following is Van Neck's commentary on the event:

> The King of Ternate going to the Temple to offer sacrifice,
> before whom goeth a young boye with a sworde on his shoulder,

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54 *Ibid.*, pp.67-68

55 *Ibid.*, p.68

56 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, p.213. Pires does not define 'heathen', but in this context it means non-Islamic.

57 *Loc.cit.*

58 Malacca is an excellent example of economic motives, literally marrying religious ideals for mutual benefit.

> carrying a booke in the other hand, then followe a certaine number of the Kings men of warre, after whom commeth one bearing a franckensence-pot or vessell, and is followed by the King, ouer whose head is borne a Tyfefol or canopie, then come others of his souldiers or men of warre, with their Ensigne displayed, being now come before the Musquita or Temple, they wash their hands and feete (to which ende certaine water-pots full of faire water are prepared) that done, they enter into their said Musquites, where they spreade a white cloth on the grounde, and falling on their knees, knitting their hands together, doe often lay their faces on the grounde, mumbling certaine wordes or prayers to themselves.[59]

The solemnity of this particular ceremony was lost on van Neck, as he concluded his observation with the comment "their order is such, that it would make a man laugh to see them."[60] A similar ceremony held in Java is described by Crawfurd as celebrating the birth and death of the prophet, held on the twelfth day of the month of *Rabbi ul awal.*[61] In the Javanese ceremony the chiefs and governors of the provinces appeared with their retinues at court fully armed and, once the king had joined them, they proceeded to the mosque where the king reviewed all the troops present. Crawfurd noted that "Every part of the ceremony puts Mahommedan decorum at defiance." Such was the gaiety of the costumes and the bearing of those participating in the ceremony that Crawfurd had a similar reaction to Van Neck, commenting that the "absurd solemnity of some of the figures, and the extravagant and wild gestures of the others, afford to the stranger a trial too severe for the most determined gravity."[62]

The Moluccans, like the Javanese, closely followed the precepts of Islam. Summoned by the drum, they prayed five times a day, before sunrise, after midday, before sunset, at dusk, and between dusk and midnight.[63] They observed Friday as a day of rest, much like the Jewish sabbath. They also observed the month of Ramadan, the month in which the Quran was revealed, during which "they fast every day of it, and before the sky is dotted with stars they do not take a bite of all those things they

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59 van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.50
60 *Loc.cit.*
61 Crawfurd, *A History, op.cit.*, Vol.III, p.261
62 *Ibid.*, p.263-264
63 *Fajr, zuhr, 'asr, maghrib* and *'isha.*

usually eat during the unforbidden times."[64] At the conclusion of Ramadan, (or *puasa,* in Malay) a great feast was held, during which the people "light many candles and ... make them float on the sea, where they go burning during the whole night".[65] From van Neck's account it can be seen that the Ternatans conformed to the traditional Islamic prayer ritual, which can still be seen in much the same form today. The acts of praying and fasting were (and still are) two of five 'Pillars of Faith' around which the convert was to live his life. The others were the act of almsgiving, the *hajj,* the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca, commanded in the Quran itself, and profession of faith in Allah - 'Allah is god and Mohammed is his apostle.' There is no indication that the sixteenth century Moluccan converts involved themselves more deeply than to observe the first two 'pillars' discussed.

Under Sultan Baab Ullah (1570-1583), Ternate became the locus of the dissemination of Islam throughout the eastern archipelago, and Baab Ullah was considered the leading champion of Islam. This sultan combined his territorial conquests with this, by force and by treaties, according to Valentyn.[66] He drew into the Ternatan sphere of influence, or reaffirmed the loyalty of, Solor to the south, Sanghir to the north, Banda to the east and to the west, Makassar. In 1588, under his successor, Sultan Said, it was noted by the Spanish that Ternate was the source of Islamic missionary efforts which had successfully converted Magindanao.[67]

III

The introduction of Christianity to the Moluccan region coincided, of course, with the arrival of the Europeans. As both Portuguese and Spanish enterprises in Asia were carried out under papal auspices, it was natural that the Catholic church had an interest in the gathering of souls. In the work of the Portuguese especially, the anti-Islamic obsession can be discerned. They had entered Asia with the dual purpose of extending the Christian faith and of doing battle with the infidels, particularly by

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64 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.,* p.87

65 *Loc.cit.*

66 Valentyn, *Molukse Zaaken, op.cit.,* p.207

67 Bishop Salazar to Phillip II, in R. Nicholl, *Raja Bongsu of Sulu,* MBRAS, Monograph No.19, p.4

undermining or destroying their economic stranglehold on the valuable spices from further east. Fortunately, in the Spice Islands this ambition was neatly combined, as it was the infidels controlling the flow and distribution of spices, and an infidel ruling over what the Portuguese considered to be a heathen population. More often than not, however, the missionaries who carried Christianity to the islanders did so without the active help of their civil counterparts, these men being far too busy in accumulating their own personal, non-spiritual, fortune.

The presence and activities of such a person as Francis Xavier in the Moluccas necessarily sends one in search of evidence of his teachings and influence. His twentieth century biographer, Georg Schurhammer, S.J., has provided an extensive account of Xavier's travels and ministerings in Asia, with a considerable section devoted to the Spice Islands, excluding Banda.[68] This source has been examined for the facts, as far as are known, concerning Xavier's work in these islands, and from this can be discerned a picture, if only general, of the impact of Christianity on the islanders and their responses to it. This work also gives commendable detail on the activities of Xavier's less well-known brethren. A second work which deals admirably with the place of Christianity in Asia is that of Donald Lach.[69] This work covers the role of the Portuguese Padroado in Asia, and devotes some space in its work to the Spiceries. Although his emphasis is on the European perspective, and neglects the period before the arrival of Xavier, it is a valuable source on Christianity in the Spice Islands.

While Ternate and Tidore were the areas subjected to intensive European trading and militaristic activity, they were not the focus of missionary attention. A fortunate recipient of this was the Moro region, located to the north of the Moluccas. The explanation suggested for this is that this area was subject to the rule of either the Ternatan or Tidorese kolano, and were thus susceptible to the idea of independence from their demands and harassment when the possibility of foreign military assistance presented the opportunity. Conversion may have seemed a small price to pay to be free from the depredations exercised by the Muslim rulers on these subjects. These area was untouched by Islamic influence, and accordingly the Christian missionaries found themselves involved in a bitter struggle for the souls of their flocks. They were also forced to face the reality of what could be termed 'Moluccan spirituality', that is, the

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68 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit. passim.*

69 D. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol.I, Chicago, 1965

adoption of Christianity or Islam as suited the immediate needs of the subject people. On Ternate itself, Christianity of a different kind took hold among the population, especially after the conversion of some notables in the sultan's court. Here is, perhaps, the more spiritual conversion that the Christian missionaries may have hoped for, as many of the converts certainly received little other comfort.

The earliest contact that the Spice Islanders had with Christianity was with the shipwreck of Serrao in 1512. Serrao elected to take up residence in the Ternatan kingdom, and by all accounts became a councillor and firm friend of Sultan Bajang Ullah. One modern source claims that Bajang Ullah showed some interest in the religion, but this is not apparent in the sources.[70] From their initial contacts with the Portuguese Christians, the Ternatans could hardly have been impressed with the representatives of that religion. As early as 1522 some common soldiers had already aroused the enmity of the Muslims on Bachian for "committing many wrongs and injuries", and the clergy appointed by the church were hardly better representatives. The first missionaries in Ternate were Franciscans, who came with de Brito in 1522.[71] They established chapels in the new castle, but their proselytising success cannot be ascertained.

The first vicar appointed to Ternate was Fernão Lopes in 1532. He was described as not being "a good example of honesty", and a man who tried to stir up trouble for the Portuguese governor, Gonzalo Pereira.[72] Lopez actually supported the appointment of Vincent de Fonseca, co-conspirator in the murder of Pereira. He was replaced in 1534 by Simão Vaz. What degree of success these men had in converting the Ternatans is unknown; their main work was probably among the Portuguese, and it appears it was not confined to religious ministrations. Another religious appointment, Ruy Vaz, was caught dealing in cloves and had the fruits of this labour confiscated by Governor Galvão.[73]

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70 Watson-Andaya, *Religion, op.cit.*, p.528. It is more probable that the interest expressed in the Christian religion was directly related to the power and prestige that would acrue to the Ternatan sultan, rather than any deep theological inclination.

71 Abdurachman, *op.cit.*, p.172

72 Valentyn, *Zaaken, op.cit.*, p.184. Pereira endevoured to enforce the Crown's monopoly in cloves, an act which made him extremely unpopular with Portuguese and Ternatans alike. It is probable that Lopes was involved in some illicit trading himself.

73 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.352, fn.65

This governor was responsible for the first concerted efforts at converting the Ternatans. The number of conversions was considerable, and Galvão also had some success with Muslims of high standing and who were held in great esteem by the people. The conversion of one man, *kolano* Sabia, a member of the royal council, caused "a commotion ... both among the Moors and the Portuguese because all of them said that he should not be made a Christian, as the whole country would be lost". A second convert was a first cousin to the ruler of Gilolo, who took the name of António de Sá.[74] The resident Muslims became quite alarmed at Galvão's success, and tried to persuade the sultan to put a stop to it, particularly after the conversion of a *casize*, "an Arab, whom they reverenced almost as much as Mahomet, from whom he was descended, [left him] to follow Christ."[75] Galvão refused to cease his missionary efforts, and founded, at his own expense, a confraternity of the Misericordia and a seminary where reading, writing and the catechism was taught to the sons of the Ternatans and the Portuguese alike. From his governorship also dated the conversions of several of the prominent people of Makassar[76] and of Mindanao[77] and the establishment of Christian communities on Amboina.

According to Galvão's own account, he also induced the Ternatan sultan, Hairun, to accept Christianity, but this did not eventuate because of the arrival of his successor from Malacca.[78] While this does appear like a shining finale to an unblemished career, there is a possibility that Galvão's claims were true. He and the sultan had enjoyed a sound relationship, dating back from Galvão's first arrival on Ternate. Galvão released Hairun from his confinement in the castle, and later assisted the sultan in securing a princess of Tidore for a bride. Further, Galvão encouraged the people of Ternate to accept Hairun as their ruler,[79] even though they had asked him to rule them until Hairun's half-brother, Tabarija, returned from his exile in Goa. Hairun, however, did not accept Christianity, and in the years after Galvão's departure, became its implacable enemy.

In the years between Galvão's departure and the arrival of Francis Xavier (June, 1546), the fortunes of the Christians on Ternate and the

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74 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.297
75 y Sousa, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.431
76 *Ibid.*, p.430
77 *Ibid.*, p.431
78 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.299
79 Valentyn, *Zaaken, op.cit.*, p.198

surrounding islands had not prospered to the degree either man would have wished. The school which Galvão had established was no longer functioning, the appointed clergy were busy dealing in cloves, and consequently the level of ignorance of the Christian doctrine among the native Christians was high.

One Ternatan conversion which could have had a resounding impact on the fate of the Christian religion in the Spice Islands was that of the Ternatan sultan, Tabarija. Arrested and sent to Goa in 1535 on a charge of treason by Governor de Ataide, Tabarija was there supported by Jurdão de Freitas. This future captain of Ternate and the Governor of India, Nuno da Cunha, both endeavoured to draw the Ternatan sultan to the Christian religion, and were finally successful in 1537. This conversion has often been represented as a 'true' spiritual conversion, with none of the politicking ascribed to Hairun's dalliance with Christianity. It is argued, however, that the time taken for Tabarija's conversion should be taken to indicate that this conversion was no less political than Hairun's would have been. Tabarija was in Goa for two years, daily intermixing with Portuguese Christians. His welfare, and that of his mother and the other Ternatans who had accompanied him, depended upon these men. Nor were the material benefits of such a conversion lost on the young sultan; immediately after his baptism he had silk clothes given to him, other necessaries and an increased income.[80] The baptism he underwent did not appear to have changed his natural inclinations, the Vicar General of India, Miguel Vaz, noted that even after baptism Tabarija's morals left much to be desired, and his patron, de Freitas had called him a *'bragante'*, a good-for-nothing.[81]

Tabarija's restoration to the Ternatan throne was also dependent on the Portuguese; another factor which should be considered when examining his conversion. With Portuguese support Tabarija could make a legitimate claim to the throne, supplant Hairun as sultan, and bolster his power in the region *vis-a-vis* Tidore at the same time. He began building a support base among the Portuguese, with de Freitas being granted extensive southern possessions, in perpetuity. Hairun's unpopularity with the Ternatans was no doubt known to the exiled sultan, and he must have entertained hopes of returning to Ternate to reclaim his kingdom, backed with the power of Portugal. Accordingly, Tabarija departed from

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80 Schurhammer, Vol.II, *op.cit.*, p.254

81 Vaz and de Freitas, cited in *ibid.*, p.255, fn.430

Goa with his mother and retinue and de Freitas in April, 1544. His object, according to Schurhammer, was to regain control of his kingdom and win his subjects over to the Christian faith.[82] This must have been an exciting time for the representatives of the clergy in the east as they anticipated the emergence of a Christian kingdom, in the prized Spice Islands, no less. Essentially, the scepticism which surrounds Hairun's possible conversion to Christianity could equally be applied to Tabarija, who had at least as much to gain by it. All hopes collapsed, however, with the unexpected death of Tabarija in Malacca, en route to Ternate, in June, 1545. De Freitas carried on to Ternate and claimed the kingdom for himself. This was short-lived, with the return of Hairun in 1547, and the re-institution of Muslim rule.

A genuine and notable conversion which ensued from Tabarija's Goa sojourn was that of his mother, Niachile Pokaraga. This woman was well-versed in the Islamic scriptures, but years of exposure to the Christian religion and religious debates with Xavier about the "true faith" swayed her, and upon her conversion she took the name Dona Isabel.[83] It was hoped that her conversion would encourage the people of Ternate and the surrounding islands to adopt the Christian religion. Although Niachile Pokaraga's conversion was, no doubt, genuine, it should also be considered that at the time that the decision was made de Freitas was in control of the country, and that Niachile Pokaraga was a witness to the covenant that Tabarija had signed, handing the kingdom over to de Freitas and the king of Portugal. At the time of her conversion there was no foreseeable change in this situation, and so, as well as spiritual comfort, the queen's conversion could also be interpreted as one safe-guarding her future welfare.

Upon his arrival in the island in June 1546, Xavier sought to rectify the poor standing of Christianity in Ternate by giving instructions to the Ternatan Christians for two hours each day. Schurhammer notes that in the public squares and in their homes these new Christians were soon singing the Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, *Confiteor*, and other prayers, "day and night".[84] The predisposition of the islanders to music and singing in general, and the questionable level of understanding attained by these new Christians, should serve to dampen only slightly

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82 Schurhammer, *ibid.*, p.496
83 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.159
84 *Ibid.*, p.153

Schurhammer's enthusiasm at Xavier's success. He admits himself that explanations of the Creed were written in verse for singing and learning by heart, and were frequently rhymed for easier learning.

Xavier's ministry on Ternate was broken by his journey to the Moro islands to Ternate's north, but on his return he resumed his work of conversion, confession and comfort. He encouraged marriage and moral living. His methods appear to have inclined more to persistence than anything else; a Gaspar Lopes noted that if Xavier "heard that there was one who was living an immoral life in the town, he invited himself to the man's noonday meal and continued to do so until he had converted him."[85] Xavier also had ongoing discussions with Hairun, arousing hopes that the sultan may again be persuaded to abandon Islam and follow the Christian religion. Such hopes came to nought, despite the interest Hairun expressed in having one of his sons educated in the Christian religion.

To the north of Ternate were Morotia and Morotai, territories of value to both contending religions. Situated on the northeastern peninsula of Gilolo and off that same coast, respectively, these two locations became a real arena of contest between Islam and Christianity. As noted earlier, the islands were divided between the rule of the kolanos of Ternate, Tidore and Gilolo, and were especially important as a source of rice, sago and meat. Once converted to Islam, the Moluccan kolanos set about conquering the independent and pagan Moro Islands, with Ternate being the most successful in this enterprise.[86] This state of affairs was not to last, however, as the kolanos of Gilolo and Tidore united and, with the aid of the remnants of Fray Garcia De Loaysa's crew on Gilolo, recaptured the Ternatan villages, which they held until Gilolo was captured by Tristão de Ataide in December, 1533.[87]

The nature of the conversion of the Moro villagers has two distinctive features. First was the connection of conversion with the idea

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85 Gaspar Lopes, cited in *ibid.*, p.195

86 Lach,Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.160. Schurhammer does not name specific areas of the islands in relation to its conquest by the trio of Moluccan kings. In his article 'The Jesuit Mission in Moro', 1546-1571 in E.K.M. Masinambow (ed.) *Halmahera dan Raja Ampat sebagai kesatuan majemuk*, Jakarta, 1987, pp.254-257, John Villiers notes that most of the region was under Ternaten control, but he too does not name the areas which fell under Tidorean and Giloloan control.

87 Schurhammer, *op.cit.*, p.160. Schurhammer does not provide a date for the recapture of the Ternaten villages, but the event fell between mid-1527 and late-1533.

of safety and support from their Portuguese patrons against the Muslims who constantly harassed them. The second concerned the nature and function of the religion, as understood by the Moros. The conversion of the Moro chiefs in 1533 was directly related to the depredations the Moro people suffered at the hands of the Muslim Moluccans, and in this sense it should be seen as politically rather than religiously motivated. They had first encountered the Christian religion in 1532 when some Franciscans visited the area, but this contact did not have any religious impact on the Moro chiefs. Shortly after this, some Moro auxiliaries assisted de Ataide's attack on Gilolo, and observed the success of the Portuguese there. When the Portuguese merchant, Goncalo Veloso, arrived in Mamojo in 1533, the Moro chiefs complained of their abuse at the hands of the Ternatan Muslims. It may have been that a combination of the above factors influenced the chiefs in seeking some form of foreign aid against their Muslim overlords, and the Portuguese had proven their strength, and ruthlessness, on many previous occasions. Veloso advised them to convert, in order to obtain both help and protection from the Portuguese.[88] Within months four of the leading chiefs of the Moros had done so, and their respective villagers also received Christ upon the arrival of Simão Vaz. The conversions were successful for both sides, as soon after a fleet of Ternatans arrived but were forced to return to Ternate without securing the expected provisions. The Portuguese had their souls and the Moros had their protection.

Events occurring elsewhere in the Moluccas impacted directly upon the success of the Portuguese in their efforts to Christianise the Moros. Portuguese excesses in Ternate, Tidore and Bachian had resulted in the four Moluccan rulers, led by Ternate's Sultan Dayal, forming a confederation with the aim of driving out the Portuguese.[89] The Moro region was also a focus of the Moluccans because of its traditional value as a source of food. There was no question of it being allowed to remain under Portuguese or Christian influence. Ternatan and Giloloan activities roused the Moro inhabitants to denounce their newly-found religion, and all reverted to Islam or the paganism they had followed before. The only

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88 *Ibid.*, p.161; Villiers, *Moro Mission, op.cit.*, p.247. Veloso did not, as Villiers claims, introduce Christianity, although he was instrumental in its introduction.

89 Valentyn, *Molukse Zaaken, op.cit.*, p.191 says that the plan was to starve the Portuguese in the castle, destroy all the clove trees and abandon the island themselves, or, if possible, to drive the Portuguese from the Moluccas entirely.

exception to this was the chief who had undergone conversion first, Dom João of Mamojo.

The speed with which the Moros denied their new religion brings into questions both their sincerity and their true understanding of its doctrine. It is possible to argue that the protection and strength offered by the Portuguese was the primary, if not the only, reason for the Moros' initial acceptance of Christianity. Obviously the staunch adherence of Dom João contradicts this, but one instance of loyalty does not negate the reversion of the thousands which the Portuguese claimed to have converted.

The Moro Christians were abandoned after this campaign until Xavier visited the area in September, 1546. He spent some time in the villages around Mamojo, and then sailed on to the Christian villages on Morotai. In a letter written to the Jesuits in Rome he says "I baptized many children who were to be baptized ... and I visited all the Christian villages."[90] He felt the islands were rich in "spiritual consolations", but little else. When he left the area, Xavier promised to send confreres to the people to further instruct them, and he also took a number of boys back with him to attend the College of St. Paul in Goa. The success Xavier had here among the Moros, after such a long period without any Christian contact, does point to high degree of acceptance of the faith, but not necessarily a deep understanding of it.

The pagan religion of the Moros still played a large role in their daily lives, and the new religion had to accommodate this. The 1556 letter written by the Jesuit Brother Luis Fróis reveals the compromises which his brothers had to make to ensure the general acceptance of Christianity.[91] The god of the Jesuits was expected to produce rain, and the missionaries were obliged to perform rites of blessing rice grains before planting.[92] They also had to conduct elaborate funeral ceremonies for native Christians, similar to those held for the pagans (see above). Fróis also reported that the Moros still had their individual gods, they still believed in divination, and they were still overwhelmingly superstitious. Holy water became

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90 Xavier, cited in Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.187

91 This letter is used extensively by Lach, Vol.I, *op.cit.* and Villiers, *Moro Mission, op,.cit.* Fróis received his information directly from Father Beira and Brother Nunes, both of whom had worked in the Moros.

92 Lach, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.615

both an antidote to poison and the guarantee of a good harvest if scattered over the rice crops.[93]

The rule of Hairun in Ternate posed an on-going problem for the Moro Christians. Although this sultan was fairly ambivalent towards Christianity throughout much of his reign, he nevertheless understood the Moros' conversion to be a threat to his own authority. By the 1560s the Jesuits on Moro and Ternate were notifying Goa of their successes. These combined with the increasing number of conversions on Amboina, and the earlier (1557) conversion of his son-in-law, the *kolano* of Bachian,[94] were seen by Hairun as an escalation in the power and influence of the Portuguese, and one he would not tolerate. The conversion of a cousin to the ruler of Tidore in 1564 further antagonised Hairun. He could not afford Tidore to become an ally of the Portuguese as well as Bachian. In the war which ensued between the opposing parties, savage attacks were made on the Moro Christians; in one village alone 300 Christians were murdered with incredible cruelty. Sources report that unborn children were ripped from their mothers' wombs because the women refused to apostatize.[95]

Despite the fact that Hairun himself was murdered by the Portuguese in 1570,[96] the Moro mission did not survive. It was attacked by Hairun's son and successor, Baab Ullah, and five Christian centres fell to the Muslims. Lach reflects that in the period 1571 to 1578 not one missionary letter from the Moluccas, the source of so much earlier information, is extant.[97] The sad epilogue to the Moro mission is related by Villiers.[98] Several hundred Christian Moros sailed for Ternate in the hope of receiving succour from their fellow Christians in the Portuguese castle. They were, however, driven away from the castle (itself under siege by Baab Ullah) whereupon many were taken prisoner by the Ternatans. They were forced to adopt Islam and were treated like prisoners.

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93 Fróis, cited in Villiers, *Moro Mission, op.,cit.*, pp.251-252

94 The sultan took the name John, having been baptised of July 1, the feast day of St. John, in Lach, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.617

95 Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.179, fn.211

96 Valentyn, *Zaaken, op.cit.*, p.206 says that the Portuguese lured Hairun to the castle and stabbed him, after which they chopped him into pieces and salted him, and that this was called in Ternate *Gassi Mahohoe*, or 'salty meal'.

97 Lach, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.622

98 Villiers, *Moro Mission, op.cit.*, p.255

IV

In the later religious adoptions of the Spice Islanders, Islam and Christianity, a strong element of the pre-existing pagan religion can be discerned. This is most clearly illustrated in the rituals surrounding the death of an enemy or a community member. Most of the accounts left from the sixteenth century concern the death of people in war, and are closely connected with the head-hunting practised by all the Spice Islanders. In the Banda Islands, the heads of the enemies were displayed on sticks, usually outside the shahbandars' house, or they were placed on a large stone under their sacred tree, "so anyone could see what happens to their enemies". After some time, the heads were wrapped in white cotton, put on a plate and then buried. Large quantities of incense were burned over the grave site.[99]

A death not connected with war received attention similar in some ways to a death resulting from war, although the enemy was not feasted, nor was he prayed over:[100]

> ... when a man dyeth, the women that are alyed in friendship or kindred, weeping and lamenting, call and cry to the dead corps very loude, thinking with such calling and mourning that the Course shall againe receive life: but seeing that it remayneth dead, without mourning they prepare a great Banquet, inviting all their friendes, and such as accompaned the dead corps to the funerall, which is carried upon mens shoulders ... but that they lay a white peece of Callikute over the dead ....[101]

After the procession had reached the grave site the body was interred. A shelter, described as a penthouse, was constructed over the site, and from this was suspended a lamp which burned continually for a night and a day. Incense, particularly frankincense, was also burned over the body for this period of time. The following day the mourners returned to the site to say prayers over the grave, "which maner of ceremonie they keepe and observe for many dayes."[102] Such a ceremony was to guarantee that the deceased would not revive, for the islanders believed that this would

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99 van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.21

100 This may be connected with the taboos concerning the head. If it was detached from the body the people had no fear of the deceased returning to life.

101 van Neck, *A Journall, op.cit.*, p.34

102 *Loc.cit.*

happen if the prayers were not said according to tradition and the ceremony not carried out properly.

In the Moro region, similar practises were carried out. Behind the community hall, or *sabua*, a canopie was erected, under which lay the coffins of the dead warriors. Atop these coffins were the heads of the enemies they had slain. The heads, arms and legs of the enemy were strewn in front of the hall.[103] When a family member died, the kin underwent a period of mourning lasting forty days. During this time festivals of eating, drinking and dancing were continuously engaged in.[104]

When nobles died in Ternate, they were given "a very reverent and honorable funeral."[105] Following the burial, monthly and annual memorial services were celebrated. These were accompanied by banquets. Again, canopies were erected, with mint flowers and aromatic herbs perfuming them. As in Banda, these were lit at night. The graves were kept clean by hermits, and these were also watched over, probably to protect the deceased from the feared *swangis*.

Galvão says that to honour the deceased, relatives would shun public company for eight to ten days. They wore white *fisas*, the usual mourning cloth, and shave their heads and eyebrows. Most curious of the Ternatan customs is that in this period of mourning, "all that they may perform or carry has to be done in a way contrary to the usual." This is possibly in order to confuse the spirit of the deceased so it would not be able to return to its earthly home, and so in some ways is similar to the prayers of the Bandanese. If people came from other islands to pay their respects, they were not permitted to enter unless they also wore the traditional mourning attire. Finally, Galvão says that "When it is time to put off their mourning, they must first go and fight; for otherwise they cannot take it off."[106] The fighting required was not stated by Galvão, but is likely to have involved the symbolic gesture of head-hunting.

The sources from which the above accounts were taken are all from the sixteenth century. It is obvious, therefore, that these practises were still expected to be performed as late as 1599 when van Neck observed the Bandanese funeral rites. The strong pagan element is evident in each region, despite the islanders having encountered, within decades of each other, Islam and Christianity. The burial rites were very similar in their

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103 Rebello, cited in Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.175
104 Schurhammer, *ibid.*, p.175
105 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, pp.181-183
106 *Ibid.*, p.183

ceremony, and those cited above are not only representative of the Spice Islands, but are also representative of a century in which the islanders encountered, and consciously adopted, either the Islamic or Christian religion.

The importance of familiar spirits, indeed the inseparability of these and the lives of the islanders, is exemplified by the fact that in 1865 and again in 1896 the Christian islanders of Ceram, to the consternation and disappointment of their Protestant ministers, were known to slip out into the woods to make offerings to the *nitus* there. One minister lamented that "The worship of their ancestors seems to be ineradicable."[107] The superstition which was a part of the old beliefs was also long-lasting. In 1904, at Tobelo on Halmahera, the Protestant missionary found that his new converts were being taught magical sayings and formulae for cursing their enemies by his island-born catechist.[108] Elsewhere in the archipelago, some Christians steadfastly adhere to the 'ritual way' of their ancestors. In Celebes, for example, the Christian Torajas still bury their dead with the full traditional ceremony involving blood sacrifice, feasting and ritual purification.[109] In a population where over sixty per cent professed to be Christian, this was not seen to be unholy or 'primitive', but honourable. Moreover it was a duty of the living to respect their ancestors and to facilitate the journey of the spirit of the deceased in its effort to become an ancestor.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study of the religion of the Spice Islanders. The problem of when Islam was introduced into the Spice Islands cannot be determined with any certainty, but Moluccan legends indicate that Islam was known in the region before the conversion of Marhum or his son, Tidore Vongue, later Zain'al Abidin, in the mid fifteenth century, possibly as early as the thirteenth century. The basis of the early contact was trade, indicated by the numerous accounts of the merchant ships sailing with Islam among its cargo. The Moluccan rulers, too, actively sought Islam, shown by the journey of Tidore Vongue to Malacca and Java, and by his later sojourn at Giri, the Islamic stronghold in Java. Hairun's son, Baab Ullah became known as a great propagator of Islam throughout the eastern island

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107 Ruinen, cited in Schurhammer, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.103, fn.368

108 Schurhammer, *ibid.*, p.104

109 E. Chrystal, 'The Way of the Ancestors', from the BBC series *The Long Search*, 1977

region. Was the Moluccan acceptance of Islam commercially and/or politically motivated? Again, it is impossible to give a definitive answer. There were obvious benefits to be gained by adopting Islam, including Islamic trading connections at Gresik and Malacca. It has been argued that Islam was a legitimating factor for the centralised rule of the Ternatan *kolano*.[110] Islam was a uniting force against the aggression of the Portuguese, soon to be experienced in the Spice Islands as it had been in Malacca.

The question of conversion in a spiritual sense should also be addressed. The sources agree that in the early years of the sixteenth century, Islam had not taken a great hold on the island population. Pires cites that almost all the people in the Moluccas were heathen.[111] He says that they are not "deeply involved" in the sect, and Galvão adds that "they pay no attention to the precept of Mohammed".[112] Fifty years after the adoption of Islam, in both Ternate and Tidore only ten per cent of the population were Muslim. By the end of the sixteenth century a transformation appears to have taken place, although only one source has been sighted giving any indication of this. Van Neck says of the Moluccan Muslims that they avoided liquor.[113] Throughout that century a number of conversions had taken place which must be considered genuine, including those of the prominent men of the Ternatan court. They had nothing to gain from their act other than the enmity of Hairun. Likewise the conversion of the Queen Mother, Niachile Pokaraga, or Dona Isabel, should be considered genuine, even though other motives may have had some part to play.

Christianity also won political and genuine adherents in the Spice Islands. The Moro islanders were no doubt persuaded to accept Christianity for the protection it afforded them from their Moluccan overlords. Genuine cases of conversion were noted, Dom João of Mamojo, and the Ternatan converts mentioned above, but the rapid apostasy of the majority of Moros under pressure from the Muslims was more characteristic. It was, after all, a matter of self-preservation for a people whose essential religious beliefs had not really altered. The need for the Jesuits on Moro to conduct funeral ceremonies similar to the pagan

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110 Andaya, *op.cit.*, p.12, 15-16
111 Pires, *Suma Oriental, op.cit.*, pp.213-219
112 Galvão, *A Treatise, op.cit.*, p.145
113 van Neck, *Tweede Schipvaart, op.cit.*, p.38

rituals for their Christians has been noted above, as has their need to bless the spirits of the grains to ensure successful harvests.

It is suggested that the adoption of Islam or Christianity by the islanders in the eastern archipelago varied in its intensity from firm conviction to political and economic motivations to the thin veneer of religion for the sake of expediency of the moment. For the rulers Islam was an attractive and powerful tool, and it did evolve into the true religion of the powerful. Christianity was used as a safe-guard against this, the example of Hairun's son-in-law, the ruler of Bachian shows this. But Christianity, too, was adopted with genuine faith by several members of the Moluccan nobility. For the privileged group in society then, the adoption of these religions had several benefits. Between them they opened up the wider world of Islamic commerce and at the same time gave access to the wider family of Islam, they acted as a check and balance for each other in the Spice Islands, and they offered genuine spiritual comfort for those open to receive it.

These religions had less of an impact on the common people of the islands. The decision to adopt either creed was not a choice made by the individual, but rather by the village head, as in Moro and Amboina, or by the ruler, as in Ternate, Tidore and the other island kingdoms. When it was accepted by the individual, it was tempered by pre-existing beliefs that dominated the life of every islander. The ancestor worship and the belief in the omnipresence of an array of spirits guided the lives of the general population, and these were still deferred to by the nobility after the formal adoption of Islam or Christianity. The funeral rituals of the Moluccan nobility attest to this. In any discussion of the success or not of Islam and Christianity in the Spice Islands, the influence and pervasiveness of the pre-existing religion should not be discounted or ignored. In the sixteenth century the two world religions satisfied only the minority of the Spice Island inhabitants.