The World of Maluku

Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period

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In the writings of the ancient Greeks there are statements about the effects of the environment on the character of the inhabitants. The most influential of the many ideas regarding this view is the doctrine of the four elements or four "roots" originally described in the fifth century B.C. With some revisions, including the addition of ether by Aristotle, the elements of earth, air, water, and fire became the basis of Greek science and medieval interpretations of nature. These elements had their counterparts in the human body in the "humors," and good health depended upon the maintenance of proper proportions of the humors. It was believed that the environment could affect the humors, and temperature was most often cited as the cause of the imbalance. Climate was therefore regarded as one of the prime reasons for instability in individuals and even in whole societies, with extremes in temperature disturbing the mind and soul. There were those who even saw a direct causal relationship between savagery in nature and savagery in humans. This view of the effect of the elements and humors on humans prevailed in certain fields of scientific thinking well into the eighteenth century. European climatic descriptions of Maluku with its excessive heat, its monsoon rains, and its treacherous currents affected by seasonal winds were routinely listed alongside the volatility and untrustworthiness of the local people as further confirmation of the wisdom of the Greek sages.

A second influential theory on the relationship between peoples and the environment has been termed "astrological ethnology." Claudius Ptolemy's second century work, *Tetrabiblos*, is a good example of this position. His views arose from the general belief among the Greeks that the globe was divided into two uninhabited polar zones; two temperate zones, the northern and southern, with the northern one the location of the *oikumen*; and an equatorial zone believed to be incapable of sustaining life because of the heat. Ptolemy divides the inhabited world into four quarters which are correlated with the four triangles in the zodiac. He proceeds to demonstrate how each quarter is subject to certain astrological influences thus affecting whole regions and peoples. In this way he explains the characteristics of certain peoples who inhabit specific parts of the then inhabited world.

While these theories current in Greek and Roman times sought to explain the differences of various cultures and peoples in the known world, they also provided a general framework for understanding the unknown world. Since Homeric times there existed tales of fabulous races, animals, and plants living in lands and climes far beyond the borders of the Greek "civilized" world. The Greeks conceptualized their wonder and fear of the unknown through their belief in monstrous races, satyrs, centaurs, sirens, and harpies. The various environmental and astrological theories domesticated these distant and unknown areas.
and made them less threatening to the ancient peoples. Although tales of unusual creatures and plants continued to be included in reports from the civilized center, they were always discussed within a reassuring and controlled intellectual framework.

One of the themes which came to characterize the reports of the monstrous races was their location in India. Herodotus was responsible for the Western conception of monsters in India, though he himself based his account on others. Then about the fourth century B.C. Ktesias from Knidos, who had been a royal physician in the court of the Persian king for seventeen years, published his Persica and Indica which continued the traditions of monsters and added a few others to the list. India was said to be populated by pygmies who fought with the cranes; by the sciopodes or people with a single large foot with which they moved with great speed and shielded themselves from the heat of the sun; by the cynocephali who were men with dogs' heads who communicated by barking; by those without heads but with their faces between their shoulders; by people with eight fingers and toes whose hair was white until they reached the age of thirty and then turned black; by people with ears so large that they covered their arms to the elbows and their entire back; by giants, satyrs, martikhora (an animal with a man's face, the body of a lion, and the tail of a scorpion), unicorns, and griffins which guarded the gold. In addition the cocks, goats, and sheep of India were said to be of an extraordinary size.

Although Alexander the Great's incursions into India in 326-324 B.C. extended the geographic knowledge of the ancient world, the descriptions of the people encountered in the campaign continued the tradition of marvelous beings and gave rise in the Middle Ages to the Alexander cycle of romances. The new knowledge was not ignored, but conventions demanded the inclusion of established lore of the East. It was an exercise in reassurance to the public both of the account's authenticity as well as of the already determined place of these new/old cultures within a well-ordered universe. The Greek Megasthenes, who was sent by the heir to Alexander's Asian empire in 303 B.C. as an ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, founder of the great Mauryan dynasty in Pataliputra on the Ganges, described the social and political institutions and the customs of the people he had visited. He nevertheless continued to refer to the older tradition of "marvels" of India and even added some of his own. He described, for example, people whose heels were in front while the instep and toes were turned backwards. These people would later appear in literature as the antipodes or "opposite-footers." In addition there were wildmen who had no mouths and subsisted on the smells of roasted flesh and the aroma of fruit and flowers; people who lived a thousand years; others with no nostrils and with the upper part of their mouth protruding far over the lower lip; and those who had dog's ears and a single eye in the middle of their forehead. These fabulous creatures were not solely from the fertile imagination of Megasthenes himself, for he admitted that many of the stories of these unique beings were borrowed from the Indian epics.

The Greek traditions of India and the unknown East persisted during Roman times, and Pliny's Historia Naturalis (completed in A.D. 77) became one of the main sources for the medieval lore of monsters. He accepted all the stories of fabulous beings of previous writers and particularly those of Ktesias. But the more important influence on the medieval writers was Caius Julius Solinus, whose Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium, written in the third century A.D., was a collection of fabulous tales of creatures and plants of the East which was based principally on Pliny. This book became very popular and was consulted by medieval encyclopedists and chroniclers. Relying on Solinus, Isidore wrote his chapter "De Portentis" in his encyclopedic work, the Etymologiae, in the sixth century. These were among the most important writers to have consolidated the ancient Greek tradition of monsters and marvels which continued to adorn travel accounts through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

In the description of these monstrous races, not only are they unlike the humans living in the center of the world, but they are also characterized by features which are found wanting in the "measures of humans." Their diet is characterized by one major food which is viewed as "exotic." They are therefore referred as the Fish-Eaters, Root-Eaters, Elephant-Eaters, Dog-Milkers, and the like. They utter sounds unlike that of civilized humans in the center, or they bark like the dog-headed cynocephali. They live in caves, mountains, deserts, rivers, and woods, and not in cities. They wear clothing which is foreign to that worn by civilized humans, often dressing only with animal skins or going naked. There was a strong belief in the troglodytes, who "have a language of their own which they speak in a whistle" and who were caught and used as servants "in many places in the East Indies." These monstrous characteristics were applied by early European observers to the Malukans, who were sago-eaters, spoke with unfamiliar sounds, lived in huts in their jungle gardens, and wore only narrow barkcloth to cover their genitalia.

Despite the strange tales of the East persisted, the explanation for the existence of marvels varied to suit certain dominant theories of the world at the time. During the period of the ancient Greeks, the creation of these beings was a way of dealing with fear of the unknown. In the patristic period between the first and sixth centuries A.D., the wondrous tales of the East had to be reconciled with the authority of the Bible. The most authoritative and ingenious explanation for the monstrous races was given by St. Augustine, who suggested that God may have created
these races so that humankind would not think that such a birth among them was a failure and an imperfection of God’s work. His arguments were accepted by all the writers of the Middle Ages, and Isidore reaffirmed this view in the Etymologiae by stating that monstreries were not against nature. Nevertheless, the fear of the unnatural, the deformed, the less than human saw these monsters being placed at the fringes of the known world in the East, beyond the jurisdiction and responsibility of “true” humans. The prevalence of these views colored the European perception of Asian societies and hindered any relationship of equality.

One of the most popular works in the Middle Ages, which reinforced a belief in such traditional tales, was The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. He claimed to be an English knight who had served the Sultan of Egypt and the Great Khan of Cathay during his travels between 1322 and 1356. By 1400 this work had been translated into every European language including Latin, and by 1500 the number of extant manuscripts was vast. It was so valued, especially as a repository of information about the East, that it was incorporated into a number of important compendia. With the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, Mandeville’s Travels reached a wide audience since most of the printed copies were inexpensive paper editions and there existed a network of informal book borrowing among the general populace.

So dominant were the traditions of the Classical and the Christian world on the medieval mind that mapmakers reflected the fascination with the fantastic. With a few notable exceptions, medieval maps were more works of art than of information and preferred to ignore new geographic knowledge rather than upset their schematic designs based on received wisdom. Mandeville’s Travels was used as a source in the preparation of the Catalan Atlas in 1375, the Andrea Bianco map of 1434, and the “Behaim” globe of Nuremberg in 1492. These were the chief maps which many explorers of the Renaissance brought with them in the voyages to the East. It may not be pure coincidence that right up to the end of the sixteenth century there appears to have been a direct correlation between the major voyages of exploration and the frequency with which editions of Mandeville’s Travels were issued. Columbus relied on it as one of his principal sources, and Mandeville’s ideas of circumnavigation constituted one of the influences affecting Columbus’s decision to sail westward to Cathay from Spain. It appears that Columbus and other explorers were so familiar with the Travels that it contributed to their preconceptions and interpretations of the “discoveries.”

While it is difficult to determine precisely why the Travels achieved such great popularity, it is possible to see that it followed certain conventions which contributed to its success. The medieval and Renaissance assumption that all writing must have a serious moral intent was evident in this work. It stressed the medieval ideal in travel literature of combining pleasure with instruction, hence the inclusion of certain entertaining fabulous tales to stress a moral lesson. Moreover, the Travels relied on previous works for the marvels of the East, very much in keeping with the medieval convention of reworking “olde feeldes” for “newe corne” and the use of “olde bookes” for “newe science.” Thus the stories of fabulous beings and a fantastic natural world, which would have been transmitted through the centuries in the works of Herodotus, Pliny, Solinus, and others, found their way into the Travels and helped to mold the medieval and Renaissance manner of perceiving the East.

When European explorers and missionaries appeared on the Asian scene and reported what they saw, they did so in a way dictated by conventions of the time. They interpreted things within a moral framework, or inserted tales from other works as their own experience in order to emphasize a moral stance. Interspersed with prosaic accounts of daily life and labors of a new people were more lurid, fabulous tales of yore to satisfy the medieval and Renaissance demand for entertaining and oftentimes titillating descriptions of “monstrous” races. Later travelers, who actually were in places claimed to have been visited by Mandeville, used the Travels to provide more, and most likely entertaining, detail to their own accounts. The desire to satisfy the demand for “lust and lore” in travel literature dictated the manner in which the East was reported to the European medieval and Renaissance person. Münster’s popular Cosmographia was published in 1544 and was intended to supplant Mandeville’s Travels. However, the latter work was so popular and deeply rooted in European perception of other cultures that Münster incorporated Mandeville’s marvels and his publishers simply used Mandeville’s woodcut illustrations. The marvellous had become an essential feature in Europe’s representation of the new societies encountered abroad and enabled it to deal emotionally and intellectually with the vast unknown being unfolded.

Despite the popular perceptions of the East being the region of marvels, there were individuals who had long assimilated the information slowly seeping to the West since Alexander the Great’s Indian campaign in the fourth century B.C. In the first century A.D. an anonymous Greek wrote the Peripius of the Erythraea Ocean, which was a manual covering the Indian Ocean as well as the lands and coasts beyond. For the first time the Malay Peninsula is mentioned as the Islands of Chryse, while China is called the region of Thion and said to be located at the very end of the East. In the first half of the second century A.D. Ptolemy compiled a geographical treatise which was the most important work on geography until the account of Marco Polo. In dealing with the East he
attributed his information to “those that had sailed from there and had spent a long time in traversing those parts.” In common with other geographers of his day, Ptolemy believed that the lands in the East were joined ultimately to the east coast of Africa, making the Indian Ocean a major inland sea.\footnote{21}

A significant development was the reinterpretation of biblical ideas of geography which prepared the European mind psychologically for exploration of the East. In the thirteenth century Albertus Magnus argued that the long-held view of the equatorial belt being unpopulated might not be true.\footnote{22} On the basis of Aristotle’s works Roger Bacon, a contemporary of Magnus, believed there was a short seaward passage to India going westward from Spain. The French churchman and geographer Cardinal Pierre d’Ailly went further than previous scholars by suggesting that there was an open Indian Ocean, that Africa was an island, and that the tropical zone was habitable. In his Imago Mundi he argued that only a seventh part of the globe was covered with water, which was a small stretch of sea running in a narrow band from pole to pole. He was convinced that there was only a short distance separating the west coast of Africa and the east coast of India, a view which supported the theory advanced by Roger Bacon in the previous century. In confirmation of this view he cited the presence of elephants in these two places.\footnote{23}

While the Catalan Atlas of 1375 relied upon the information brought back by travelers such as Marco Polo and Odoric de Pordenone, and while it provided the most complex geographical knowledge of the Middle Ages, it continued to incorporate aspects of popular mythical geography.\footnote{24} The recovery of the long-lost Geography of Ptolemy in the early years of the fifteenth century and its translation between 1406 and 1410 consolidated earlier ideas because of its tremendous popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, opposing views of the geography of the world were becoming more widely disseminated and respectable as a result of the travel accounts of the Polo brothers and others. An indication of this development was Pope Pius II’s Historia Rerum Ubique Gestarum, which was based largely on Ptolemy’s work, though he argued for the circumnavigation of Africa and believed that the information on the East brought back by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century was reliable.\footnote{25}

There developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a move to “collect” manners and customs of exotic places. Instead of attempting to find new categories and descriptions for the cultures encountered in distant areas of the globe, the European “collectors” preferred to adhere to certain monstrous characteristics and to accept the formula established by Herodotus for the analysis of other cultures. They gathered material on marital customs, funeral and religious rites, dress, dwelling, and diet. Exotic practices which lacked an equivalence with the known civilized worlds of the past and present were implicitly regarded as barbaric or savage. Even when similarities were found, often newly described societies were compared with an earlier stage of European development and hence provided “documentary evidence” of the inferiority of these societies. It was this European manner of observing the East which often obscured indigenous customs and activities by substituting conventional interpretations for observed phenomena.\footnote{26}

The depiction of those in the East as physically and spiritually marginal remained a vital part of Christian European literature. Inhabitants of this region were regarded frequently as objects and part of the European collection of curious fauna and flora, or at best as producers of wondrous works and deeds.\footnote{27} New knowledge in general did not undermine this perception but was itself translated to conform to the traditional Wonders of the East. To a considerable extent this dominant structure of reporting the East prevented an understanding of and sympathy with these cultures because they were simply cast as counter-images.\footnote{28} From the outset of the meeting of East and West, the latter had prefigured a relationship of oppositions and confrontations all in accordance with God’s Divine Plan.\footnote{29}

Only in the eighteenth century after the scientific and philosophical advances of the previous two hundred years did the educated populace begin to become more critical of traditional opinion and established authorities. The fabulous tales of the East still proved popular, but there was at least a school of thought which argued that the societies encountered on the opposite side of the world were not necessarily inferior to those of Christian Europe. Advancing such views was part of the general reorientation of eighteenth century thought toward religious relativism and questioning of the authority of the Church.\footnote{30} Although such ideas were present in Mandeville’s Travels and influenced the thinking of ordinary people, the Church had been swift in its punishment of such heresy.\footnote{31} By the eighteenth century, however, the Church too was adjusting to its greater knowledge of the complex and sophisticated religious beliefs which it had encountered in Asia.

The Christian Mission in Asia

In the patristic period there was the theory of a flat earth with Jerusalem in the center and the terrestrial paradise located in the East. A typical Beatus map, named after the Spanish priest Beatus at the end of the eighth century, depicts the Twelve Apostles located in that part of the globe where he is said to have preached. At the top, which marks the
East, was a vignette of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. The terrestrial paradise with its four westward-flowing rivers remained a constant and important component of the *mappar-mundi* of the Middle Ages. So potent was this image that in 1498 after his third voyage to the New World Columbus wrote to the king and queen of Spain: “There are great indications of this being the terrestrial paradise, for its site coincides with the opinion of the holy and wise theologians St. Isidore, Bede, Strabus, the master of scholastic history, St. Ambrose and Scotus, all of whom agree that the earthly paradise is in the east.”

The location in the East of both the terrestrial paradise and the monsters does not seem to have troubled Columbus nor many of his contemporaries. For the Church, however, the association of Eden and the East offered a spiritual challenge to restore the fallen creatures to the Christian faith. The Church’s mission was considerably enhanced by the widespread popularity of the Prester John legend. The story of a Christian king living in the East had long been a part of European oral tradition. In 1144 a bishop claimed to have met this Prester John who was said to be a Nestorian king of a country in the Far East, descended from Magian kings, and possessing fabulous wealth. Then came the famous forged Prester John letter which circulated in Europe around 1165, exciting the European Christian world fed by earlier stories of the East, travelers’ tales, and the popular legends of Alexander the Great. It was addressed to Immanuel I, Emperor of Byzantium, and contained a number of passages which confirmed an already established legend:

1. Prester John, who reign supreme, surpass in virtue, riches and power all creatures under heaven. Seventy kings are our tributaries. . . . For gold, silver, precious stones, animals of every kind, and the number of our people, we believe there is not our equal under heaven. . . . Every month we are served in rotation by seven kings, sixty-two dukes, and 265 counts and marquises. . . . And if we have chosen to be called by a lower name and inferior rank, it springs from humility. If indeed you can number the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea, then you may calculate the extent of our dominion and power.

The letter continues in a similar vein describing a country which appeared to the European audience for which the forgery was intended as the closest thing to paradise on earth—the Eden in the East of earlier Christian writers. The invention of the printing press and the advances made in woodcut and engraving techniques contributed further to the popularity of the legend.

Inspired by this letter a number of attempts were made to establish contact, and various figures from Odoric of Pordenone to Marco Polo claimed to have found Prester John’s kingdom among certain Christian Turkish tribes in Central Asia. By the late fourteenth century European courts believed that Prester John’s kingdom lay in Ethiopia, identified as one of the “three Indians” within that ruler’s vast domains. The Portuguese court sent an embassy to the court of the ruler of Ethiopia in 1497 and was aware that, though a Christian ruler, he was far less powerful and his lands much poorer than the twelfth century letter had claimed. This knowledge, however, did not destroy the European desire to preserve this hope of a powerful, good, and wealthy Christian ruler in the East. The quest for Prester John’s kingdom—whether to benefit from its wealth, to acquire a powerful Christian ally against the Muslims, or to satisfy a need to believe in an ideal Christian ruler—became a readily identifiable goal which united the efforts of rulers, the Church, and ordinary people in the expansion eastward.

As word of the discoveries of new lands in the Americas and contact with non-Christian peoples in Asia reached Europe, there was great excitement in the Church. Franciscans in particular spoke of the resurrection of the Primitive Church of the pre-Constantine era, and it was the dedication and the poverty of the early Church which became the yardstick for their missionizing activities in the new lands. A yearning for the simplicity and innocence of humans before the fall of Adam was fulfilled by the discovery of many “primitives” in the New World and certain areas of Asia. Expectations were raised of offsetting the losses to the Reformation by converting large numbers of these newly discovered souls. For the Franciscans and other orders in the Church, these discoveries brought the challenge of adapting to new circumstances. The old missionizing experiences of the late Middle Ages were no longer considered to be appropriate in extending the faith. As a result of the Counter-Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Church had been revitalized and had viewed the discoveries as an opportunity to demonstrate to the peoples in the Americas and Asia that the Christian Church was something new and a worthy displacer of the older beliefs in those lands.

In its mission the Church was assisted by rulers who were strongly influenced by the apostolic idea of Christian kingship so prominent in the Middle Ages. The image of a missionary-king or an apostle-king whose duty it was to spread the gospel among the heathen was to encourage the establishment of national missionary endeavors. This development was a concomitant of the decline in the prestige of the papacy as a result of the Avignon experience, the Great Schism, and the intrigues of the Medici. Pope Calixtus III in 1456 granted the Padroado Real, or the royal patronage, to the Portuguese Crown. Through this Padroado the crown of Portugal was granted spiritual jurisdiction over an area which stretched from the island of Madeira, to the coast of Africa, on to India, and into the Far East. This precedent was reaffirmed in 1493 when Pope Alexander VI made it a duty of all
Catholic monarchs to provide missionaries in lands newly discovered or yet to be discovered. Spurred by this challenge the Spaniards sought and received their Patronato (or Patronazgo) Real from Pope Julius II in 1508. It was these two Iberian nations, then, which led the way in the proselytizing of Asia and the Americas.

According to the royal patronage, the papacy entrusted the task of conversion of the heathens to the Portuguese and Spanish rulers. They were authorized to build cathedrals, churches, monasteries, convents and hermitages within their patronages; to present to the Holy See a list of candidates for all colonial archbishoprics, bishoprics, and abbeys, as well as lower offices to the bishops concerned; and to administer ecclesiastical jurisdictions and revenues, and veto papal bulls and briefs not cleared properly through the respective Crown Chancery. In effect it meant that the Iberian monarchs had control over the transfer, promotion and removal of any cleric and could arbitrate in any dispute between themselves and between ecclesiastic and civil power. The nationally oriented mission eventually led to the exclusion of missionaries from other countries and the inevitable identification of missionary with the secular government. In Asia the Portuguese disputed Spanish claims to spiritual jurisdiction over Maluku and the Philippines. Eventually, however, they agreed to acknowledge Spain’s rights to the Philippines in return for Spain’s relinquishing all claims to Maluku.

The strength and the resources of the Iberian governments in the sixteenth century enabled the rapid and successful spread of the religion in the Americas and Asia. In the seventeenth century the papacy began to regret having relinquished so much power over foreign missions to the Iberian rulers, and it attempted to reassert itself through the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (the Congregation for Propagating the Faith) founded in 1622. It was powerless to prevent the continuation of the royal patronage, however, especially when the Iberian nations employed eminent canon and civil lawyers to defend their positions. In Spanish America and the Philippines, and in Portuguese Brazil, the Royal Patronage survived into the nineteenth century. In Asia, however, the Portuguese were challenged by the Propaganda Fide from 1622 and from the Missions Étrangères de Paris from 1658. The arrival of the Protestant missions in this century further weakened the earlier dominance of the Portuguese mission in Asia.

To adapt to an entirely new situation, the method of propagation of the Christian faith between 1500 and 1800 differed in important ways from the previous thousand years. The catechism, which was intended to instruct young children born of Christian parents, was now applied to heathens to prepare them for Christian baptism. Serious moral issues arose regarding the use of force in conversion, the propriety of commu-

The European missionaries, like the conquistadors, traders, and officials, were a product of the times and influenced by well-ingrained belief in the "marvels" of the East. However, their views were modified by the parallel tradition of the terrestrial paradise also located in the East and by the revitalization of the Church after the events of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Their enthusiasm and attempts to justify their activities colored their portrayal of conversion and their success in propagating the faith. Since they were encouraged in their letters not merely to inform but to edify, at times accuracy was sacrificed for the more important Christian message. Such was the case in many of the missions sent to Europe by the Jesuit missionaries in Maluku in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The National Enterprises

In addition to the general attitudes which European nations shared as part of their Classical and Christian cultural milieu, each individual nation had its own visions and concerns which affected its relationships with the East. By examining these features it is possible to detect the specific national logic which structured the reporting of Malukan events.

The arrival of the Portuguese in Maluku in 1511–1512 was the culmination of an ambitious program of exploration which had begun in the early fifteenth century. Portugal’s overseas expansion became a great collective endeavor shaping the vision of its people and the attitudes which they adopted toward the new lands. A significant aspect of
this overseas enterprise was Portugal’s long-standing struggle with Islam. Between A.D. 711 and 718 the Moors crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and became the masters of Portugal until they were finally expelled at the end of the thirteenth century. The struggle resumed with the Portuguese invasion of North Africa in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Many of the Portuguese commanders who later served in Asia received their training in this Moroccan campaign where little quarter was given, prisoners were routinely slaughtered, and corpses were frequently mutilated. The Portuguese transferred many of their attitudes and tactics from North Africa onto the Asian scene, and instinctively attributed any social, moral, and intellectual deficiencies among the Asian Muslims to the teachings of Islam.

Along with the contempt, suspicion, and cruelty exhibited by the Portuguese in Asia, there was a self-interested pragmatism which was also a product of their experience with the Moors. Throughout the wars, trade between the two parties was rarely interrupted. The brutality of battle mingled with commercial profit as each side engaged in the lucrative practice of ransoming prisoners. By the twelfth century this practice was well established, and the institution of the elfague, or “broker of prisoners,” was created. An ordinance of 1388 even regulated how prisoners seized on land and sea were to be divided among the king, the admiral, and those of the royal fleet. The Portuguese in Maluku continued the tradition of engaging in trade with their Muslim enemies in the midst of war and ransoming prisoners, a practice common also among the Malukans.

In the ongoing struggle against the Moors, the existence of the Padrão Real in theory encouraged the cooperation of religious and secular authorities in promoting Christian conversion. In 1545 King João III urged the rapid but peaceful conversion of both Muslim and heathen. The response was dramatic as reports began to arrive of mass conversions in the new lands. The leading figure in this process was Father Francis Xavier, whose reports from Maluku describe large-scale baptisms after only the most cursory of instructions in the faith and without the customary rites and trial period. Xavier justified his methods to his superiors by citing biblical authority that “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” After each baptism Xavier presented the new convert with a Christian name and a set of European clothes to mark the new life. Xavier’s successful methods were imitated by fellow Jesuits who hoped to demonstrate the dynamism of Catholicism, which was expanding rapidly in areas outside Europe.

Despite the desire for converts, the Jesuits were nevertheless restrained by ingrained prejudices fostered in the European view of peoples inhabiting the “periphery.” A leading Jesuit figure stated bluntly in 1575 that no dark-skinned natives should be admitted to the Society of Jesus since they were “naturally” inclined to wrongdoing and motivated by base instincts. For many, color came to be a convenient symbol to distinguish the center from the periphery, the human from the “monsters.” The moral and intellectual decay was explained by the nature of Islam, the antithesis to Christianity. In addition to Portugal’s experience with Islam, another distinguishing feature of the vast Portuguese national enterprise was the influence of the fidalguia, or nobility. The overseas expansion provided an opportunity to serve God and to attain glory on the battlefield, an important badge associated with fidalgo status. With the capture of the Moorish city of Ceuta in North Africa in 1415 and the transferal of the battleground to Moorish soil, the fidalguia prospered and thrust up a growing list of heroes for the national pantheon. The Amadís de Gaula, a romance where chivalry was supreme and ordinary soldiers behaved like supermen, served as the martial ideal for the Portuguese commanders. It is believed to have been recited among the Portuguese long before it was first published in 1508, and it is referred to directly in Galvão’s Treatise on Maluku published in 1544. A century after its publication, fifty new works on chivalry appeared in Spain and Portugal. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the popularity of this genre of works earned the denunciation of churchmen and moralists who attributed to them much of the delinquent behavior of the populace. But the older romances continued to be printed and circulated. The royal courts and the noble households reveled in the romances, where the harsh realities of warfare and political intrigue were transformed into acts of chivalry. It is the same atmosphere which is conveyed in the chronicles dedicated to the deeds of these heroic sons of Lusus on distant shores.

The goals of the fidalguia in Asia were threefold: to pursue the war against Islam; to raise or resuscitate the standing of their family by achievement on the battlefield or outstanding service to the king in Asia; and to enrich themselves and assure the preservation of the status and lifestyle of their family. The fidalguia reported their activities with these goals in mind, transforming minor skirmishes with the local inhabitants into full-fledged battles, informal gatherings with native chiefs into royal audiences, the occasional Islamic teachers and their followers into hordes of Muslim fanatics, and mundane activities into an arena of confrontation where intentions and acts were constantly being assessed and honor upheld. The chroniclers were very much influenced by the concerns and the code of the fidalguia in framing the story of the Portuguese in Asia.

In short, Portuguese attitudes and activities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were based on a general Christian European tradition and shaped by Portugal’s major national enterprise: the overseas
expansion. Within this all-encompassing endeavor the struggle with Islam and the glory of the fidalguia were dominant themes which informed Portuguese views of the new worlds encountered. Since the sources for the history of Maluku in the sixteenth century are principally those of the Portuguese, it is with this knowledge that their commentaries on Malukan society, politics, religion, wars, and racial characteristics should be read.

Much of what has been said of the Portuguese can be applied equally well to the Spaniards. They, like the Portuguese, were imbued with the fervor of their great national enterprise and motivated by their papal grant of the Patronato Real. They, too, had their hidalguia which produced some of the most infamous and ruthless conquistadors of that age, and their relationship with Islam was a prominent element in their nation's history. By 1492 Granada, the last major Muslim kingdom in Spain, had fallen in the great Reconquista, the Reconquest of lands taken by the Moors in days past. Spain, like Portugal, then extended the struggle against the Muslims to North Africa, but with much less conviction. The Castilians regarded the Reconquista as an opportunity for booty, but the campaign became overshadowed by the prospects of advancement and riches in the New World and Asia. With the Castilian pro-aristocratic mentality they implemented the idea of the Reconquista, which in practice meant the conquest, the seizure, and the exploitation of the land for the benefit of the conquistador. The domain thus created came under some nobleman who used it to gain glory and riches for his family. Over these personal benefices were superimposed a bureaucracy which attempted to apply laws, organize defense, and collect taxes for the Spanish realm.\textsuperscript{9}

In the early sixteenth century the conquistador was supreme. He was usually from a poor noble family and saw that the possession of land and riches would improve his rank and social status. While the risk of death was always present, survival could mean improving one's material and social position in Spain.\textsuperscript{10} Toward the end of the sixteenth century and in subsequent years, however, there was less reliance on the conquistadors since the overseas territories came to be administered by officials of the central government. Castile systematically produced trained personnel who were recruited to staff the various councils. In the overseas colonies a type of government evolved which sought to meld the experience of the titled nobility, the army commanders, and the various lower nobility with those of the new bureaucrats who were graduates (licenciados) of Castile.\textsuperscript{11} The result was not always happy, and there arose in America and Asia a philosophical conflict between those who advocated the rule of the conquistador and those who defended the rule of law.

Great care was taken by the Spaniards to emphasize the legality of much of their action in dealing with societies in the Americas and Asia in order to allay criticism at home concerning the inconsistency of Spanish conquests with Christian ethics.\textsuperscript{32} They justified their right to rule upon "prior discovery and just conquest," which were reinforced by the papal bulls of 1493 granting Spain the "islands and mainlands... towards the West and South... with all their rights, jurisdictions and appurtenances," except those with Christian princes. In accordance with the doctrine of universal papal dominion a jurist in the Council of Castile was ordered in 1510 to draw up a policy known as the requerimiento calling on the people of the Americas (and later those in the Philippines and Maluku) to submit peacefully and receive the Christian faith. The long and complicated document was to be read aloud to the natives on all occasions before any military operations commenced.\textsuperscript{33} When the Spaniards returned to Cebu in the Philippines in 1565, they made the native chiefs request pardon for their fathers and grandfathers for killing Magellan and attacking his crew some fifty years before. The intention was not to punish them for their deeds, but to make them swear to a renewal of the oath of allegiance first made under Magellan. In this way the legalistic Spaniards could justify the use of force in the establishment of their colony,\textsuperscript{14} as indeed occurred in the conquest of Ternate and the wholesale exile of its government in 1606. The commander of the Philippine expedition, Miguel López de Legazpi, was instructed to take formal possession of any lands in the name of the king "in the presence of a Notary and witnesses, and [to] have the legal document drawn for the occasion sent back along with all the other information."\textsuperscript{35}

Spain's efforts to establish a permanent presence in Maluku had been a dismal failure. Its hopes had been raised by the arrival in Maluku of Magellan's crew in 1521 and their successful return to Spain. Although they brought with them only a small cargo of spices, it was enough to convince the court of the feasibility of sponsoring further voyages. A second expedition under García Jofre de Loaisa was sent in September 1525 but proved a disaster. A similar fate befell the third fleet under Alvaro de Saavedra in 1528, thus damping any further desire by the Spanish crown to become involved in costly ventures. It was the financial burden of Charles V's European wars, coupled with the abortive Spanish expeditions to the spice islands, which finally persuaded the Spanish ruler to sign the Saragossa Treaty of 1529 relinquishing his claim to Maluku for an agreed 500,000 cruzados from Portugal.\textsuperscript{36} Nevertheless, the Spaniards made one final attempt in 1542 under Ruy López de Villalobos to establish a permanent presence in Maluku, but this too failed. The only real success in Asia for the Spaniards was the expedition under Legazpi in 1564 which resulted in the
occupation of the Philippines. Almost total attention in Asia was devoted to the new colony, and Spain regained interest in Maluku affairs only after the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580. After that date Maluku became a remote outpost under Philippine administration and suffered from neglect by the Spanish authorities in Maluku until 1663, toward the end they became ineffective and only survived at the pleasure of the Dutch governor.17

The Spanish nobility who came to lead the troops and to man the garrisons in Maluku were instilled with the same desire for glory and riches as their Portuguese counterparts. Their campaigns and their accounts of them, though of minor importance in the larger Spanish world, were nevertheless resonant with heroes and glorious deeds. The special situation of Maluku, where the Spaniards were always the weaker of the European powers present, fostered the conquistador mentality. The Spanish official who represented the crown was the military commander, and it was the concerns of the conquistador in a hostile land which determined Spanish activity in Maluku. Although the Spanish Church was a significant force in the Philippines, in Maluku its role was muted. The application of the system of the Patronato/Padroado Real left evangelization and the maintenance of the Church in Maluku in the hands of the Portuguese even after the union in 1580. For the Spaniards, therefore, Maluku was regarded simply as a place where glory and riches could be attained on the battlefield. For the Castilian nobility, especially, this was a goal well worth the stigma of being exiled to the farthest ends of the Spanish empire. It was these qualities of the Spaniards in Maluku which colored their version of local events.

Of all the Europeans it was the Dutch who had the longest and most durable impact on indigenous society in Maluku. Their expansion into Asia was part of a commercial and technological revolution which transformed the Low Countries from a colony of Spain to the leading European nation in the seventeenth century. From the late fourteenth century successful innovations in preserving herring and in the manufacture of large fishnets had laid the foundation for a major Dutch economic expansion. By the sixteenth century the new wealth enabled the Dutch to create a large merchant navy which dominated the Baltic trade, the carrying trade in Europe, and the much older river trade. This development was stimulated by the vast financial resources of the Calvinist merchants and industrialists from the Flemish cities who came with their capital and expertise to the north to escape Spanish persecution. It was they, with their long experience in the Portuguese and Spanish ventures, who initiated new commercial and trade opportunities between these nations and the northern Netherlands. The combination of capital and expertise also enabled the United Provinces of the Netherlands to play a leading role in commerce and industry in the seventeenth century.56

The readiness of the Dutch to invest in Asia at the end of the sixteenth century was a natural outcome of the economic expansion of the Netherlands. Asia was well known because of the participation of Dutch seamen in the Portuguese and Spanish Asian fleets and because of the long experience in the financing and operation of the Portuguese-Asian trade by wealthy merchants, industrialists, and financiers from Bruges, Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels.57 The first ship flying the Dutch flag sailed to Asia in 1595, and it was followed by a number of others in subsequent years. Initially the profits of the fleets sponsored by certain Dutch coastal towns participating in this so-called wilde vaarten or "free navigation" amounted to no more than two or three months' earnings from the herring fisheries. Nevertheless, the lure of the fabulous profits that could be made in the spice trade attracted competing groups which proved to be counterproductive. After much bargaining and compromising, the various local companies formed the United Chartered Dutch East India Company (VOC) in March 1602 and agreed to combine their resources and talents to promote Asian trade. The availability of vast reserves of capital was evident in the large initial investment of six million guilders in the newly formed Company.58

The VOC was the creation of the Dutch state but in many ways its very antithesis. The charter of the new Company granted it the privilege of exercising sovereign rights on behalf of the republic in its relations with Asian powers, but it came to encourage values which the new Dutch nation had come to reject. One such conflict was in the attitude toward the freedom of the seas. The Dutch nation prospered from its carrying trade, which cut across all possible divisions, as well as from its role in importing raw materials or semifinished items from one country and sending back finished products. It therefore employed its most brilliant advocate to argue the case for open seas. In March 1608, six years after the foundation of the Company, the States of Holland passed a secret resolution that they would never "in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, withdraw, surrender or renounce the freedom of the seas, everywhere and in all regions of the world."59 To have succumbed to pressures of mercantilism would have been disastrous to the Dutch economy. But in Asia the Company almost from its inception rejected the policy of open seas and free trade because it operated at a severe disadvantage to the already well-entrenched Portuguese and Asian trade networks. The only real chance the Dutch had of displacing them was by instituting a closed sea policy. The mare liberum argued by Hugo de Groot on behalf of the Dutch nation and the 1606 secret resolution of the States of Holland were conveniently forgotten in Asia.

A second striking difference between the Company and the Dutch
nation was in their self-perception and lifestyles. The United Provinces
had selected a republican form of government and extolled the virtues
of simplicity, thrift, cleanliness, and sobriety. It was not uncommon
to find leading statesmen and military leaders exercising a conspicuous
frugality, inspiring admiration from their compatriots and bemusement
from foreign observers. In Asia, however, the governor-general, the
Council of the Indies, plus all the major Company officials serving in
posts throughout the Dutch East empire, were wont to exercise the
rights and privileges of Asian potentates. In the Malay-Indonesian
archipelago, kings and princes came to offer friendship or obeisance to
the governor-general and the council, and were in turn regaled in a
style which befitted the Company’s status as an Asian power. The use of
golden parasols (the sign of Malay-Indonesian royalty), carriages, and
large retinues of slaves was commonplace among leading Company offi-
cials. The wealth from the Asian trade and the numerous opportunities
for venality and other forms of corruption contributed to the rapid
spread of wealth in Batavia. Married women in Batavia, whether
Dutch, Eurasian, or Asian, were accustomed to appear in public with
silks, satins, and jewels, and with a train of slaves. Frugality in the
East was a sign of poverty or stinginess, and the Company was quick to
dispel any such judgments on the part of its Asian neighbors. Its leaders
set a style and a standard of conduct which provided the norm for other
Company officials in distant posts. A certain amount of corruption,
greed, and debauchery was considered to be the natural concomitant of
this brand of life. Everyone from the captain down to the lowest officer
carried privately-owned commodities on Company ships, while ashore
the governors, directors, and merchants of a post all participated in
ventures also for their own personal gain. The most blatant abuses were
punished, but most “illegal” activities by Company personnel were left
unreported.

Because the VOC had evolved into a counterimage, or in Calvinist parlance an “Anti-Christ,” to God’s elect in the Netherlands, the tendency among contemporaries of the period and modern historians has been to see the servants of the Company as standing in direct contrast to upright society at home. Batavia was referred to at the time as “an honorable prison” by those in Amsterdam and The Hague, while an eminent twentieth century Dutch historian described the Company as “a good refuge for all libertines, bankrupts, failed students, cashiers, brokers, bailiffs, secret agents, and such-like rakes.” In the frequent conflicts between parents and adolescents in the seventeenth century, a radical solution was to banish the rebellious sons to the Company lands in the East Indies. A Leiden professor in 1678 referred to these lands as “a real sewer of a country into which flows all the garbage of Holland.” A recurrent criticism appearing in the missives written

by the Company directors in Amsterdam concerned the ignoble charac-
ter of those who served in Asia.

In condemning the activities of the VOC in Asia, Dutch historians have
been quick to emphasize the large non-Dutch element among its
employees: “From all the corners of Protestant Germany men eager for
adventure and gain came flocking; there were also Englishmen, and
especially Scotsmen, Frenchmen, Swiss, and Scandinavians. Flemings
and Brabanders were not lacking either.” In the Netherlands the pres-
ence of numerous foreigners was interpreted as a sign of the attractiv-
ess of the country, a land of freedom and opportunities. Holland itself
was described as “a cosmopolitan center, the focal point of divergent
trends of thought and culture.” But the judgment on the foreign ele-
ment in the Company in Asia is clearly negative. They remain outside
the official hierarchy and can penetrate the system only if they learn to
write Dutch. As good Dutch folk refused to immigrate to the East,
Dutch overseas communities became “an unfree society of hierarchi-
cally-bound officials, diluted here and there with dependent free
burgers, [a society which was] distressingly materialistic and gross.”

This judgment by Pieter Geyl, the leading Dutch historian of sev-
enteenth century Netherlands, reflects the dominant attitude which the
Dutch have held toward the Company and its empire in Asia since the
formation of the VOC in 1602. Such a view is strongly colored by the
ingrained Dutch perception that their golden age in the seventeenth
century was created by God-fearing Dutch men and women who were
frugal, hardworking, innovative, sober, and counted among God’s
elite. The state itself, created in a republican form and dominated by a
merchant oligarchy, thrived on the fruits of trade. Acquisition of goods
was an honorable goal with the resulting prosperity demonstrating
God’s favor to his chosen people. By contrast, in the Company lands
these very same virtues were transformed into vices. It mattered little
that there were individuals who by their honest toil sought to better
their station. Their very presence in these distant Company lands was
sufficient condemnation.

Nor were the Dutch unique in this attitude. An English East India
Company official writing from Bantam in the early seventeenth century
echoed a similar dichotomy between home and abroad:

Many [Englishmen] are invited out by golden rewards but none stay, indeed it
were madness to do so. At home men are famous for doing nothing; here they
are infamous for their honest endeavors. At home is respect and reward; abroad
disrespect and heartbreak. . . . At home is content; abroad nothing so much as
griefs, cares, and displeasure. At home is safety; abroad no security. And, in a
word, at home all things are as a man may wish and here nothing answerable to
merit.”
Being very much products of long-held classical and medieval views, the Europeans believed that “abroad” (that is, the periphery) could not be anything but the antithesis of everything that was good at “home” (that is, the center). This prevailing attitude strongly influenced European perception of Maluku, located in one of the remotest corners of the East Indies.

**European Structuring of Maluku’s History**

The structuring of European knowledge of other cultures has a long and illustrious history. Dating from Greek and Roman times the distinction between the center and the periphery became not simply a geographical expression but also a moral and philosophical judgment. Those of the oikumene, the area inhabited by the Greeks and those like them, represented the center and true civilization. By this reasoning those inhabiting the periphery were by nature lacking in the proper measures of central/civilized human beings and hence were “barbarians.” India’s own traditions of strange and wondrous creatures contributed to Europe’s belief that the East, at the very periphery of God’s creation, harbored the monstrous races. Books appeared with illustrations of these fanciful beings. Even when European travelers visited the East, their accounts were peppered with references to the exotic habits and creatures that they allegedly encountered. Ironically, inclusion of such fables was a way of confirming to their European audience the veracity of their travels. Without mention of strange and fantastic tales, many would have doubted a traveler’s claim to have been to the East. Moreover, there was a blurring of the division between personal observation and received knowledge, with fact and fantasy coexisting as reality. Another reason for the persistence of the belief in God’s deformed creatures was the popularity of such accounts up to the eighteenth century. This tradition of identifying the periphery, with all its moral connotations and association with monstrous races, with the East did influence European attitudes and actions toward the indigenous population of Maluku in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

Another common European perception was the belief that good health among humans depended upon the proper proportion of the “humors” in the body. Extremes of heat or cold brought an imbalance of the humors, causing a disturbance in mind and soul which affected whole societies. The unrelenting heat of the tropics could thus be cited by Europeans for the “strange” and inexplicable behavior of the natives. Maluku was a place which gained a reputation for breeding a number of unsavory individuals, both European and native. While there is substance to the claim that many of the worst European ele-
Christian European views of the center and the periphery, as well as the national foibles and specific concerns of the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Dutch. Only by recognizing how the European information is intellectually organized is it then possible to extrapolate ideas and rescue nuggets of information in order to begin an interpretation of Maluku's history using an indigenous structure. The basis for such a structure, however, can only be determined by identifying the most significant concerns expressed in Malukan traditions.

CHAPTER TWO

The World of Maluku: The Center

The local perception of a unified world known as "Maluku" is a basic assumption which structures the history of the area in the early modern period. The Portuguese in the early sixteenth century recorded traditions emphasizing this unity, and nearly three hundred years later the Dutch suffered the consequences of ignoring such traditions. For the European the name "Maluku" itself was incomprehensible, let alone the perception of a unity involving such a vast and diverse area. In the mid-sixteenth century Francis Xavier was told that the word maluku meant "the head of a bull." He interpreted it to mean that Ternate, whose raja was referred to in one tradition as the king of Maluku, was the head of a large empire. The sixteenth century Portuguese chronicler Couto repeated Xavier's interpretation, stating that the word came from a local language (which he did not name) and meant "the head of something large." Drawing upon documents in the Spanish court archives, Argensola concurred with this interpretation. The fact that all the Iberian chroniclers and observers appear to have agreed that "maluku" meant "a head" may be traced to Xavier's original definition. Only in later centuries was there an attempt to provide an Islamic explanation, even though the name predated the arrival of Islam in Maluku in the late fifteenth century. One local historian, for example, argues that maluku was derived from the Arabic malik (pl. muluk), meaning "king."

The difficulty which the Europeans faced in obtaining a precise definition from the local inhabitants reflected the indigenous attitude toward the name. For them it was not the literal meaning of Maluku which mattered but rather its symbolic representation of the unity of the many islands and ethnic groups in the area. Their identification with Maluku was clearly and precisely presented in different local traditions which described their link to a specific island community and to a wider Maluku world. These cultural perceptions served as a map to guide and