

# Introduction

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## THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

The Indonesian archipelago, which lies north of Australia and south of mainland Southeast Asia, has been a nexus for the circulation of goods and ideas from all over the world for millennia. Beginning in the first millennium, traders and religious figures from East, South, and West Asia planted the seeds of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and even some sects of Christianity there. The Portuguese brought European Catholic missionaries with them to the archipelago in the mid-sixteenth century, and Protestant missionary activity increased from the nineteenth century on.

As David Hollinger points out in his contribution to this collection, colonial Christian missionaries were once held in high esteem by the populations of colonizing countries; as the deleterious effects of colonization on indigenous peoples and cultures became clear in the mid-twentieth century, however, the entire colonial missionary project (of “civilizing” third-world communities) lost its luster. Anthropologists—and ethnomusicologists—have conventionally maligned the documentary work of Christian missionaries, assuming that their catechismal motivations eliminated any chance of producing valid ethnographic data. The pioneer ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst, for example, was brutal in his assessment of Dutch missionaries’ deleterious effects on the music of Nias: “The songs and dances of Nias were utterly eradicated; indeed the performing of the ancient songs and choral dances was made punishable, by exclusion from Holy Communion. In this manner the culture of Nias was first systematically violated and destroyed in order to then sow the seeds of Christianity.”<sup>1</sup>

As the medical anthropologist Sjaak van der Geest pointed out in 1990, however, an anthropologist and a missionary share many traits: they are both guests

in foreign lands, they gather and trade ethnographic knowledge, and they both participate in the colonial enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Missionaries and anthropologists are “brothers under the skin,” as Geest characterizes their relationship—riffing, perhaps, on Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The Ladies,” which crudely suggests that all women, from prostitutes to nobility, share the same exploitative aims when it comes to their relationships with men.<sup>3</sup> Local populations generally see little difference between an anthropologist and a missionary. “Both appropriate a culture by understanding it in terms of their own beliefs,” Geest notes. Both are ethnocentric, and both bring about cultural changes. “Anthropologists see themselves as an exception to their own definition, as human anomalies. Their relativism presents itself as a poorly reflected religion.”<sup>4</sup> He further identifies several ways in which missionaries might have gathered more complete information. Missionaries spend longer times in communities than do anthropologists, and missionaries try to become more closely integrated. They often are more successful at learning local languages and cataloguing local customs, and they are more inclined to accept the kind of transcendental experiences that a commitment to science might lead an anthropologist to disregard.

The essays in this collection are a first attempt to scrutinize this exceptional trove of historical information. Many of the essays lend support to a realization that Christian missionaries and ethnographers/anthropologists are cut from the same cloth and that missionary activity (Christian or not) often provides a fresh lens through which to consider the history of the Indonesian archipelago. The movement of religions, traders, religious adherents, and missionaries from the outside, across both geographical space and through time, reveal new historical connections and insights that may confound conventional understandings of the region.

The region’s history stretches back long before the arrival of the Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century and long before the European colonial project had begun several centuries earlier. But it is difficult to escape European hegemony in the globalized world of the twenty-first century—even when considering a place as far geographically from the so-called West.

Currently, this archipelago encompasses the modern-day nation of Indonesia, as well as Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, parts of Malaysia, and most of the Philippines. Geographically, the entire region is unified by a common environment, characterized by “water and forest,” heavy rainfall, and hot temperatures.<sup>5</sup> With regard to human culture, the archipelago is profoundly diverse; it is home to hundreds of related yet distinct ethnic and language groups. Modern understandings of these places are inevitably colored by the legacy of European colonialism, the arbitrary boundaries of which influenced the current division of the area into a few nation-states. Thus, this volume’s geographic designation for the region—“the Indonesian archipelago”—is, from the outset, problematic.

And not just because it privileges the name of one of the region's nations in particular. The term *Indonesia* itself, derived from Greek words meaning "islands of India," is steeped in Western bias. As such, it conveys both the West's reverence for its own (dubious) cultural roots in ancient Greece and an orientalized essentialization of an expansive archipelago, covering thousands of miles, as merely an extension of India. The world maps that circulate in the "First World" reinforce this marginalization, typically relegating the archipelago to the lower right-hand corner. It was not only Europeans who marginalized the area, however.<sup>6</sup> For the seventeenth-century Persian diplomat ibn Muhammed Ibrahim, the archipelago was relegated to the "lands below the winds," so called because of the navigation difficulties resulting from different trade-wind patterns that troubled travel to the region.<sup>7</sup>

Yet this part of the world has significant claims to a position of importance throughout human history. *Homo erectus* fossils suggest that hominid populations inhabited the island of Java well more than a million years ago; some think *H. erectus* may even have arisen there.<sup>8</sup> *Homo sapiens* arrived in the archipelago as much as forty thousand years ago, when low sea levels provided land bridges. Additional waves of human migrations populated the area with a variety of prehistoric human groups over the millennia.<sup>9</sup>

Most existing populations were pushed to the margins of the area, however, during the Austronesian expansion of three to four thousand years ago, when peoples thought to have originated in present-day Taiwan used their seafaring skills to colonize the entire Pacific. Thus, the archipelago's human prehistory has a significant tilt toward Taiwan and the Pacific Ocean—the opposite direction from India—as a primary fountainhead. And languages and other cultural practices throughout the archipelago continue to reflect these Austronesian roots.

Many of the common technologies in use throughout the ancient archipelago, including diets emphasizing rice and fish and the exploitation of bamboo for buildings and tools, were a function of the common environment. Other lifeways common throughout the archipelago, such as betel chewing, cockfighting, and animistic concepts of the presence of spirits in inanimate objects, however, likely point toward common and persistent cultural roots.<sup>10</sup>

That is not to say there is no connection at all between India and other points to the west of the archipelago. There was significant contact back and forth between Sumatra, Java, and South Asia, including India and Africa, in what scholars now theorize as the Indian Ocean World.<sup>11</sup> Hinduism spread through a variety of mechanisms—Indian settlers intermarrying with local populations and ongoing economic and cultural exchanges—and became a religion of Javanese aristocrats. A slew of Hindu temple complexes, such as Prambanan near Yogyakarta, were built toward the end of the first millennium.

Buddhism also spread throughout Asia through missionary activity in the first millennium.<sup>12</sup> Less than fifty miles from Prambanan is the massive ninth-century

Buddhist monument called Borobudur. According to the historian Craig A. Lockard, local rulers in Southeast Asia mobilized Hindu and Buddhist notions of social hierarchy and the divinity of rulers to consolidate control over their emerging powerful polities. Often, Hinduism and Buddhism were blended with indigenous animist practices; a variety of powerful Hindu, Buddhist, and Hindu-Buddhist empires rose and fell before 1500.<sup>13</sup> Legacies of Indic ideas, including literacy, notions of social hierarchy, the epic stories of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and vocabulary from Sanskrit and other South Asian languages remain in evidence throughout the archipelago, side by side with traces of Austronesian practices.

Those same trade routes brought Islam to the archipelago. Islam proliferated widely from its origins in the Middle East, primarily through trade, educational exchange, military expansion, and the adoption of the religion by powerful political leaders. Indonesian Islam hearkens back to the *wali sanga* (nine saints), semi-legendary missionaries who propagated Islam in Java as early as the fourteenth century. Early Javanese approaches to Islam involved holdovers of pre-Islamic notions of ancestor worship, Hindu gods, and Indic ideas of the ruler as a cosmic “center.” The *wali sanga* purportedly embraced gamelan (tuned percussion orchestras) and wayang (puppet theatre) as tools of Islamic proselytization. Sufi approaches to Islam allowed more heterodoxy than more orthodox twentieth-century approaches.<sup>14</sup>

By the time European colonists arrived in the archipelago from Portugal, England, and Holland, the local governments were mostly powerful Islamic sultanates, except on the island of Bali, where some of the Hindu aristocrats managed to flee from Java, establish control, and resist Islam—and the Dutch—until the early twentieth century. The archipelago’s current political boundaries solidified after the end of the Japanese colonial occupation of the entire region during World War II. Some countries established their independence through revolution, others through diplomatic means; present-day boundaries reflect the legacy of European colonialism. In any case, dismissing the rich legacy of human habitation and the myriad polities and cultures of the archipelago as merely “Indian islands” diminishes the rich variety of peoples, languages, polities, and musical practices that have invigorated the region for millennia.

#### MISSIONARIES IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

According to Robert Ellwood’s pithy definition, missionaries are “people who attempt to convert other people to their religion.”<sup>15</sup> As we have seen, the missionization of the Indonesian archipelago by foreign representatives of world religions has been going on for thousands of years and implicates Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity among other religions. It is difficult in most cases to separate exclusively missionary activities from other sorts of cultural interventions

such as trade, invasion, and intermarriage. And it is misleading to imagine that each world religion is unitary; Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity are all characterized by multiple sects, some of which hold contradictory tenets. Thus, missionaries vary widely in their power, methods, and goals, as well as in their engagement with, opposition to, and sympathy for existing local cultures.

The essays by Kathy Foley (chapter 12) and Sumarsam (chapter 11) both touch on the legacy of Hindu and Buddhist influence in present-day Indonesian performing arts. Most of the essays in this collection, however, focus on the activities of Christian missionaries in the Indonesian archipelago. Although there is some evidence of Christian outposts in the archipelago as early as the seventh century CE, Christian missionary activity began in earnest only with European incursions into the area beginning in the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

Portuguese expeditions beyond Europe began in the early fifteenth century and expanded to the Indian Ocean World early in the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> We can only imagine the frustration of these explorers, feeling newly empowered after finally defeating the “Moors” (North African Muslims) at home, setting off on long sea voyages to conquer new territory, and having to compete with Muslim traders literally on the other side of the world. In the eastern parts of the archipelago, they competed not only with Muslim traders but with Spanish explorers as well. The main aim of the Spanish and the Portuguese was to corner the market on the spice trade, but as good Catholics, they also were compelled to spread Christianity. In 1540, the newly formed Society of Jesus (Jesuits) sent missionaries to the archipelago under the leadership of Francis Xavier. These initial efforts met with only limited success, but they were the beginning of the long-standing presence of Catholics—first the Jesuits, then other orders—in what is now eastern Indonesia.<sup>18</sup> Spanish missionaries had better luck in what is now the Philippines, which has maintained a staunchly Catholic majority since these early European incursions.

The 1529 Treaty of Zaragoza, in which the Spanish and the Portuguese agreed on a division of these new territories in Asia between them, stopped them from competing. Protestant European powers, however, ignored the treaty, and soon, Dutch and English ships made their own incursions into the so-called Spice Islands. As Protestants, they were much less invested in notions of converting the locals to Christianity; indeed, Dutch priorities were economic exploitation not religious conversion, and the Dutch (and the British) did not want to antagonize their Muslim trading partners by promoting Christian missionary activity.<sup>19</sup> On Java, in the early nineteenth century, there were some homegrown Christian communities founded by local individuals, but systematic missionary activity did not begin until the second half of that century.<sup>20</sup>

To summarize, the Indonesian archipelago has experienced millennia of missionary activity from a gamut of Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian sects, as

well as trade and colonizing interactions with actors from the greater Pacific, the Indian Ocean World, the Middle East, and Europe. Making sense of this enormous region's rich, multilayered history requires consideration of many issues from many different angles.

## MISSIONARIES AND MUSIC

This volume aims to corroborate documentation in assorted media from the Christian missions that took root in many parts of the East Indies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much of these data (including music-related manuscripts, recordings, photographs, films, and personal papers) are published here for the first time. This volume only scratches the surface of an enormous field; there is much more to consider, in terms of both hidden archives and theoretical approaches. *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Music in the Indonesian Archipelago* brings together historians, musicologists, literary scholars, and ethnomusicologists from around the world to contribute to broader efforts to decolonize the project of making music history.

European missionaries produced documentation in a variety of media. There is voluminous correspondence between missionaries in the field and their home mission societies, which provide a wealth of quotidian information along with occasionally exceptional descriptions of musical activities. Missionaries created a wealth of materials for use by their local communities for worship, including hymn books and the like. Some of the best linguistic work, in the form of grammars and dictionaries of local languages, were created by missionaries. In addition, some missionaries experimented with new technologies such as sound recording and film. The present volume crafts a multitude of possible historical narratives to interrogate how histories motivate, or justify, present-day musical ideologies and activities. By putting all these sources into dialogue with one another (and with what verifiable facts exist), our goal is not to establish one "true" history—embracing or debunking previous attempts at retelling the past—but rather to reframe these as multiple historical narratives embedded within past and present musical ideologies and activities. It is worth emphasizing that the essays in this volume engage with only a fraction of the relevant materials that exist; there is much, much more to study.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS VOLUME

The first three parts of the book are organized more or less in historical order, beginning with the early modern period. Part 4 reexamines the interactions between missionaries and those with a more anthropological approach, especially the Dutch ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst. Part 5 takes a broader view of missionization by considering how non-Christian religions were spread in the archipelago.

The final part examines more broadly some of the various technologies that have been used first to spread, and then to preserve, musical activities, including the legacy of pre-Christian missionaries.

### *Part I. Early Modern Music History in Indonesia*

The first section of the book deals with the music of the early modern period. In chapter 1, David Irving gives an overview of the early years of colonial domination and its influence on the music and culture of the Indonesian archipelago, concentrating particularly on Portuguese and Iberian sources in the Moluccas. The Portuguese arrived in the early sixteenth century, followed by the Spanish in 1666 and then the Dutch. The orders active in this area were not only Jesuits but also Augustinians, Franciscans, and Dominicans. It is surprising how much information on music is available. Sources from the mid-sixteenth century confirm that the Jesuits had established schools in the Moluccas. Irving describes numerous mentions of the students singing chant or polyphony. The texts also include descriptions of local music and ceremonies as well as the use of musical instruments. Particularly interesting are the accounts of musical hybridity and cross-cultural influences. For example, there are reports of the singing of *cantigas* (songs) accompanied by local instruments.

In chapter 2, Estelle Joubert and David Irving discuss a little known music treatise published in 1792 in Batavia by Jan Frans Gratiaen (born 1727 in Bruges, died 1788 in Sri Lanka) titled “Arguments on Useful Musical Topics for the Investigation of Connoisseurs, for the Delight of the Practised, and for the Education of Music Lovers.” The major question raised by this document is why this basic theory text was published in Batavia, a place normally not associated with Western music. Although the text was written for the upper classes, as it discusses topics such as aesthetics, genres, theory, and history, the authors show that enslaved people were involved in the performance of Western music. It is remarkable that almost the entire treatise has been copied from an earlier treatise by another theorist, Jacob Wilhelm Lustig (1706–96) without any reference to him.

### *Part II. Missionaries and Local Music in the Nineteenth Century*

Nineteenth-century missionaries were rarely sympathetic to non-Western music. Usually, the Protestants introduced Western chorales and the Catholics Gregorian chant without even considering the possibility that local music might be appropriate for the Christian service. Very few missionaries had any appreciation for local music. They regularly described it using terms such as *screaming* and *howling*. And when it came to the singing of Western songs, they usually complained that the local population was “unmusical” because they could not sing in tune. This, however, was definitely not the case with several nineteenth-century missionaries in Java. Some introduced local music into the service, and others included

fascinating accounts of Javanese music that anticipated the research of twentieth-century ethnomusicologists.

In chapter 3, Henry Spiller identifies a missionary active in East Java between 1858 and 1861 who not only appreciated Javanese music but also gave detailed descriptions of what he heard. In both published and unpublished writings, the Dutch missionary Henrik Smeding (1833–91) gives accounts of gamelan music that also include a description of the construction of the instruments, the tunings, and the playing style. Most notable are his remarks on the vocal basis of gamelan, which he describes as “declamatory,” by which he means free rhythm. Note, though, that Smeding never advocates the use of the Javanese style of solo singing (*tembang*) for the Christian service. But in contrast to other missionaries of the period, the reason is not that he considers it “sinful.” Rather, he feels that the aesthetic requirements of *tembang* would not be fulfilled in the Christian service.

In chapter 4, Ben Arps describes nineteenth-century singing in Christian communities in Java. The vast majority of Dutch missionaries wanted their congregations to sing slow church songs if possible, exactly as they were sung in Amsterdam, and many voiced their dismay at the Javanese style of singing. But there were also local congregations, often strongly criticized by Dutch missionaries, such as the congregation of Coenraad Laurens Coolen, who sang hymns with a text translated from Dutch but with Javanese melodies. Similarly, there were numerous congregations in areas without the supervision of missionaries that followed Javanese spiritual traditions. Most noteworthy is the fact that there were several Dutch missionaries who argued early on for Javanese music in the service.

### *Part III. Local Church Music in the Twentieth Century*

In missionary societies around the world, the twentieth century is the period when some missionaries began to appreciate local music and occasionally even tried to introduce it into the service. The attitude of these missionaries is very much dependent on their home country, and David Hollinger describes significant differences between American and Dutch missionaries (chapter 5). It should be kept in mind that at the beginning of the twentieth century, missionaries were often graduates of top institutions in the United States and much admired there. To quote Hollinger, “Missionaries were in the vanguard, taking risks to advance what were understood as the finest features of American society, spreading them out to the wider world.” Of course, there were some missionaries who subscribed to what we call today racism and colonialism, but there were many others who supported nationalism and anticolonialism in the countries where they were working. Hollinger contrasts the American missionary Frank Laubach, active in the Philippines, with the important Dutch missionary Hendrick Kraemer, active in Indonesia. Laubach became one of the most important promoters of world-wide literacy (he considered this as doing Christ’s work), establishing many schools and publishing language primers in 312 languages. Kraemer, on the other hand, became a critic of American liberalism and did not approve of granting autonomy to Christian converts.



In chapter 6, Julia Byl writes about missionary activities in Sumatra, more specifically the public ritual ensemble of the Tobak Batak (the drums, gongs, and shawm of the *gondang sabangunan*) and the *ende*, which refers to unaccompanied sung poetry. The *gondang* (ritual instrumental music) was forbidden by the missionaries of the Rheinische Mission from 1870 until at least 1938, and yet it came back to take its place in kinship practices and religious beliefs. The *ende*, on the other hand, was not forbidden because it did not represent a threat to Christianity, but the missionaries certainly did not think it could compare in any way with their chorales. Byl argues that as a result of the introduction of harmonized chorales accompanied by harmonium and other instruments, the separation of *gondang* and text-based *ende* was no longer relevant. Instead, a new Tobak musical genre was created, which became the foremost vehicle for musical creativity in the twentieth century.

In chapter 7, Emilie Rook discusses Catholic *musik inkulturasi* and hymnals in Indonesia that were created after the Second Vatican Council. She shows how this inculturation combines both missionary and local music, with the local music gradually gaining predominance. This new musical identity goes hand in hand with political empowerment.

Philip Yampolsky's broader historical analysis, in chapter 8, of *lagu inkulturasi* complements the detailed ethnographic account of a specific context in Rook's essay. Yampolsky also probes the often contradictory claims by the creators that *lagu inkulturasi* both acknowledge tradition and are effective as liturgical expressions.

#### Part IV. Missionaries and Anthropologists

Part 4 deals with the relationship between missionaries and Jaap Kunst, the most important Dutch musicologist in Indonesia. Throughout this volume, we have seen that anthropologists would not have been able to do their work without the help and support of local missionaries who knew the languages well and had close contact with the local population. Yet Kunst often makes ambiguous statements about missionaries.

In chapter 9, Dustin Wiebe concentrates on Kunst's relationship with the Catholic missionary Piet Heerkens during and after a seven-week research trip to the island of Flores in the Dutch East Indies that resulted in his 1942 book *Music in Flores*. Kunst openly acknowledges that he could never have written this book without the help of Heerkens. Moreover, Kunst was instrumental in publishing Heerkens's manuscript *Lieder der Florinesen* in 1953 after Heerkens's death. This article demonstrates in fascinating detail how close the missionary and ethnomusicologist worked together.

In his publications and lectures, Jaap Kunst was frequently highly critical of missionaries. The missionaries of the Rheinische Mission on the island of Nias, whom Kunst claimed forbade the singing of local music, came in for particularly strong scorn. After a perusal of the archives of the Rheinische Mission in Wuppertal, Germany, Anna Maria Busse Berger shows that the picture is more

complicated (chapter 10). There were many missionaries who appreciated local music, one of whom became a friend and collaborator of Kunst's. It turns out that the first and second generation of indigenous Christians who became evangelists (or *panditas*) were the ones who were really opposed to local music.

#### *Part V. Technologies of Indoctrination*

The authors in part 5 examine the technologies of religious indoctrination stemming from the medieval Hindu-Javanese and Muslim polities that predate most of the Christian interventions of the previous sections.

Sumarsam, in chapter 11, examines ancient literary texts to illustrate how various histories and mythologies interact and also discourses on performing arts in old literary works—such as the nineteenth-century *Serat Tjengjini* and the eighteenth-century *Serat Cabolek*—to uncover links between present and past cultural performances. He pays special attention to tracing antinomian aspects in a court jester cum dancer/singer figure known as *canthang balung*.

In chapter 12, Kathy Foley outlines the development of wayang shadow puppetry from its pre-Majapahit origins to explain how the genre was and continues to be a powerful medium for religious experience and proselytization. In Foley's telling, the religions and the stories change, but the use of the art to spread or teach spiritual ideas remains constant. She points out that wayang among modern Javanese and Sundanese audiences continues to reference aspects of Hindu-Buddhism, the religious tradition in which it first evolved in the ninth century. Foley also addresses more recent postcolonial experiments within Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, and Islamic communities that continue to spur religious revivals in Indonesia.

#### *Part VI. Technologies of Preservation: Archives*

The complex histories of the phonogram archives are the subject of the part 6, the concluding section of the volume. Recordings in those archives were made by explorers, scholars, colonial administrators, and missionaries. How should we view them today? What do they tell us about the people who were recorded? Did they even understand what was going on? Would they approve of it now?

In chapter 13, Sebastian Klotz, scientific coordinator of the Lautarchiv in Berlin, provides a finely nuanced study of the background of the recordings made in New Guinea and Melanesia and asks fundamental questions about the role missionaries played in early recordings and their relationship with anthropologists. While few missionaries made recordings (and if they did, in contrast to anthropologists, they lacked protocol rules for how to make, process, collect and classify these recordings), they provided crucial help for anthropologists and scientists who made recordings for the phonogram archives. Moreover, Klotz shows how varied the interests of all participants in these cultural encounters were during the period of colonial globalization.

Barbara Titus, as director of the Jaap Kunst Archive in Amsterdam, is similarly interested in the history of the recordings there. A central topic of the volume's final chapter is the complex colonial history of the Netherlands in Indonesia and what it means for the recordings in the archive. The questions she addresses are fundamental: How were these recordings made, who was involved, and what does it mean for the people who had no say in the making of these recordings?

Readers can listen to select recordings described in this section on the companion SoundCloud website: <https://soundcloud.com/uc-press/sets/missionaries-anthropologists-and-music>

The current collection of essays builds on several streams of scholarly discourses variously related to Indonesian music history and theory, missionization/missionaries, and archival sources and research methods. The essays contribute to a small but growing body of research that specifically explores the contributions of mission archives to historical knowledge. *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Music in the Indonesian Archipelago* helps to provide a more complete picture of the influence of missions around the globe. We look forward to future scholarship along these lines.

## NOTES

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4. van der Geest, "Anthropologists and Missionaries," 593, 597.
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17. See “A Race between Islam and Christianity?,” chapter 2 in Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 9–21.
18. Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 19–20.
19. Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2008), 66.
20. Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 641, 713.