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Spice War: Ternate, Makassar, the Dutch East India Company and the struggle for the Ambon Islands (c. 1600-1656)

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V. The man who would be king (1626-1631)

The Nassau Fleet campaign of 1625 might have temporarily intimidated the leaders of Hoamoal and Ternate into keeping a lower profile, but it had done little to foster trust and goodwill. This chapter describes the turbulent years that ensued. For all its complexity and unexpected twists and turns, this period did not see the restoration of any kind of durable working relationship between the VOC and inhabitants of Hoamoal, which had had repercussions for the wider political dynamics in the region.

In what follows, I will explore these power dynamics through the years up to 1631, primarily by following a Ternaten noble whose actions and motivations provide poignant insights into the broader history of the region in these years: Kaicili Ali, whom we have already met in chapter II, , as the prince who went to seek out the Dutch for help against the Spanish in 1607. He had since acquired fame as a prodigious warrior in his role of *kapita laut,*[249] head of the fleet (and, by implication, of the armed forces in general) of Ternate. In 1627 he made an unsuccessful bid for the Ternaten throne; his subsequent career would be deeply intertwined with the larger power dynamics of the eastern archipelago. Exploring his career and the wider developments within which it played out not only shows these dynamics at work, but also provides an opportunity to examine some specific military encounters between the Dutch and Makasar traders, as well as the VOC's evolving attitude to the Ambon region.

Two princes: competition for the Ternaten throne

In the wake of the 1625 campaign, the Company had been seeking to generate momentum among the Ternatens for resuming the war against Tidore and Spain. Although the Ternaten ruling elite paid lip service to this venture in late 1626, with an official declaration, nothing much came of it.[250] The Company itself

249 Kapita from Portuguese 'capitão', Laut being Malay for sea. The kapita laut was elected by the sultan and was virtually always a member of the royal family. Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 333-342.

250 In December 1626 the Dutch were directly involved in negotiations with the Ternaten nobles to build a coalition against Tidore. They did so without involvement of the sultan, who, as the Ternaten nobles formulated it, 'did not bother with this but spent his time with play and pleasure'. (Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 92-94). While not openly deposing Sultan Muzaffar (as Andaya, *World of Maluku*, 158, seems to suggest), they were apparently trying to sideline him.

was in no position to undertake anything against the Spanish; reinforcements from Batavia were not forthcoming and supplies of lead and powder were poor. Jacques Lefevre, governor of Maluku at the time, could not disguise his dismay when only a single ship arrived from Batavia in May 1627: 'The Ternatens were astonished by this – they did not doubt that your honour would come in person, with a sizeable force, as promised, to bring an end to all the differences both here and in Ambon.'[251] With rumours continually circulating about the imminent arrival of a great Spanish fleet, which would drive the Dutch from the region, the Ternatens were certainly not willing to go it alone. Yet, such a Spanish fleet also never materialised. With neither side in any position to act against the other, an uneasy stalemate held. Although relations between Tidore and Ternate were always complicated and suspicious, they were certainly not warlike at this time.[252]

Rather, Ternate was feeling the heat from Gowa, which was not only nibbling away at Ternaten power where it could, but was also trying to ingratiate itself with Ternate's other enemies. In May 1627, for example, the Ternatens intercepted a Makasar kora-kora *en route* to Tidore. It so happened that it was carrying a gift for the sultan of Tidore, accompanied by a letter telling him that should he ever need help, he need only let them know and they would come to his aid with twenty-five to thirty kora-kora. Around that time, Makasar fleets were also visiting the Gorontalo area on the north coast of Sulawesi, attempting to cow its inhabitants into paying tribute to Gowa rather than Ternate and accepting the former as their overlord.[253] And, most worrying to Governor Lefevre, envoys from Gowa were also reportedly in contact with Leliato, the kimelaha of Hoamoal, who seemed to slowly become more taken with Gowa than his Ternaten sovereign. Fearing where this might lead, Lefevre suggested to the Ternaten court that Leliato be recalled and replaced.[254]

Nothing came of his suggestion, as more important business was just then presenting itself to the Ternaten ruling class. Sultan Muzaffar became gravely ill and everyone started jockeying for position in anticipation of the transition

251 Lefevre to the Governor-General, 16 august 1627, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1120. Complaints about supplies and soldiers are to be found throughout this letter.

252 See Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, for some examples of the intricacies of Ternate-Tidore relations in that period.

253 Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 118-119.

254 Governor Lefebvre to Governor-General, 16 August 1627, printed in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1121-1122.

of power to a successor. Although Muzaffar had three sons, they were all young children. Traditionally, the brothers and nephews of the old sultan were eligible as well and, in practice, at least as likely to succeed him.[255] To all intents and purposes, Ternate was an elective monarchy; after the death of a sultan, the Ternaten Council of the Realm, comprising the sultan's four main advisors and the heads of the Ternaten communities (*soas*), would meet and decide on the most suitable successor.[256]

Muzaffar, who has generally been described as sickly, unpredictable, indolent, and not particularly interested in ruling, had been a relatively malleable ally to the VOC. Lefevre was intent on ensuring that his successor would be someone the Dutch knew and could work with. His hopes were set on Kaicili Ali, a cousin of Sultan Said. Since he had sought out the Dutch in 1607 and brokered the original alliance between the VOC and Ternate, he had been a very important mediator between the two parties.

But the Dutch were not the only ones with skin in the game. The Spanish saw the impending succession as a chance to regain political control of Ternate. They still held captive the former Sultan Said, who had been taken in 1606 and shipped to Manila, where he remained alive and well. They also held several of his family members, including his cousin Hamzah, who was Kaicili Ali's half-brother.[257]

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255 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I, 99, states that the brothers and nephews even had preference over the children of the late sultan. For the known successions up to the one described here, this indeed seems to have been more common: see Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 13-19.

256 Council of the Realm is my translation of *Rijksraad* – Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', does not mention the original Ternaten name of this council, but does describe that the Rijksraad would usually consist of the four main advisors to the sultan, i.e. the kapita laut, the gogogu, the hukum Sangaji and the hukum Soa Sio (the latter two being the intermediaries between the gogogu and the heads of the soas, chosen by the sultan from among the elite of the relevant group. Ternaten society was divided into four main groups, among which the Sangaji and the Soa Sio were held in the highest esteem. Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 333-344. The succession of 1627 as described in Dutch sources generally corresponds closely to his description, but mentions only one *hukum* – as Fraassen's analysis mostly concerns the period from the 1650s onwards, it is possible that there was only one at the time. Cf. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1127.

257 Although from different mothers, both were sons of Kaicili Tolu, who had been a half-brother of Sultan Baabullah. This made both of them cousins of Sultan Said, and first cousins once removed from Muzaffar. Hamza and Ali were, respectively, the third and fourth out of Tolu's four children. According to Fraassen, the first three

Captured during the Spanish conquest, Hamzah had been educated by Jesuits and baptized, his Christian name being Don Pedro de Acunha. The Spanish now hurriedly shipped him to Spanish Ternate, hoping that he would succeed to the throne, Ternate would have a Catholic ruler, and the kingdom might then join forces with the Spanish against the Dutch. They allowed their champion for the succession full freedom of movement in Ternate, and Hamzah held meetings with high-ranking Ternatens to ingratiate himself with the political elite.

To the Ternatens, Hamzah seems to have presented himself in a different light. Among the Ternaten upper class, there was still much support for freeing and restoring Sultan Said. Hamzah seems to have tried to establish himself as the mediator who might broker his return, making preparations to go back to Manila to intercede with the Spanish in this matter. Muzaffar's condition worsened, however, and Hamzah decided that it was unwise to leave.[258]

Muzaffar drew his last breath on the 16th of June 1627 and was buried four days later with all the splendour and ceremony befitting a sultan. As part of a large procession of nobles, soldiers, and servants, 150 people carried a structure containing his remains, which was covered with splendid textiles and flew a Dutch and Ternaten flag, to the grave. After prayers had been offered for the dead sultan, the highest-ranking nobles took the coffin from the structure and carried the sultan to his final resting place. As he was lowered into the grave, twelve cannon shots were fired from the Dutch fort.[259] The burial completed, the game was on for the succession. Two days later, the Ternaten nobility gathered to choose a new sultan.

This was the first time that the Dutch were so closely involved in a transition of power in Ternate and they did not as yet have a clearly defined role. Everyone agreed that they should have an advisory function. The governor, however, was not present at the meeting of the Council of the Realm and gathered with his own

children had all been born out of the same mother, whose name is unknown but who is identified as either hailing from the Soa Jiko or the Soa Marsaoli. Ali's mother hailed from Tomalow on Tidore, and was therefore considered to be of slightly lower rank. Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 15-19.

258 Some sources report his condition probably worsened due to poison, and Valentijn holds that it was Hamzah who administered it, 'in keeping with his Castilian lessons,' as he had no intention to restore Said and would rather have the throne for himself. Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, I, 255. On the other hand, the Ternatens believed that it was Ali who had poisoned the sultan for the same reasons. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, VII.2, 1132.

259 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 119-120.

council in the castle. A kimelaha named Limuri acted as a messenger between these two councils. He announced to the Dutch that there were four candidates: Muzaffar's oldest son (who was four years old at the time), the old sultan's *gogogu* or chancellor [260] (who had been on rather good terms with the Dutch, but was old and infirm), and the two princely half-brothers, Ali and Hamzah. Lefevre and his council discussed whether it would be wise to keep their cards to their chest or pronounce a favourite at this stage. Seeing no objections to the latter, they informed the kimelaha that Ali was their preferred candidate but the *gogogu* was also suitable. The Dutch advised that, should the Ternaten council decide to pronounce the young son of Muzaffar the new sultan, the *gogogu* and Kaicili Ali should serve as wardens until he came of age. Wisely, they did not mention Hamzah. The kimelaha hurried away to the Ternaten council to make his report.

The kimelaha returned the next day with news that must have worried Lefevre and his council. The Ternaten council, he informed them, was of a different inclination. Would they be welcome that night to elucidate their position?

That night, the thirteen members of the Ternaten council appeared at the castle. They told Lefevre and his council that they were strongly inclined to elect Hamzah. Besides the fact that Hamzah was of slightly higher birth than Ali through his mother, they did not fully trust that Ali had Ternate's best interests at heart. In addition, they feared that if they did not elect Hamzah, he would go to Manila and then return to Ternate with a Spanish fleet at his back. Having lately only sent one or two ships to Maluku each year, the Dutch would be powerless against such a force.[261] Clearly, the Ternatens had grown weary of the ability and willingness of their 'ally and protector' to assist and protect them.

Lefevre answered that this was precisely why Hamzah was unsuited for the throne: he had been 'Hispanicised' and was bound to the Spanish by oath! Regardless of whether Hamzah was sultan, the Spanish would not hesitate to attack Ternate if they had the means. As to the lack of Dutch reinforcements, Lefevre conceded that many Dutch ships and soldiers were currently occupied in trade and the fight against the Spanish and Portuguese across Asia, from Manila to the Red Sea. If Ternate would supply all the cloves to the Dutch without smuggling some them off, however, then it would certainly be financially justifiable to send

260 The sultan could appoint his own *gogogu*, but tradition was against appointing someone from the royal family itself. Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 333-342.

261 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1127-1131.

more ships to Ternate. Regarding Ali's trustworthiness, the Company had never had any complaints about him before. It was rather Hamzah whom they should mistrust, for he was in cahoots with the Spanish and still sending messengers back and forth to Spanish Ternate every day! What did they think was going to happen when he became sultan? The nobles briefly answered that they expected that, once Hamzah became sultan, he would serve Ternate as loyally as he served the Spanish now. He was of high Ternaten birth, after all, and could not possibly mean any harm to the state. On that note, they thanked the Dutch for their advice and took their leave. Kimelaha Limuri went back and forth between the councils a few more times, but the Ternaten council stood by its decision.

A few weeks later, on the 22nd of July, Hamzah was quite suddenly officially proclaimed the new sultan, without the Dutch being informed in advance, and without the *gogogu,* Kaicili Ali, or any of the Dutch being present. After being hailed as the new sultan by the council of nobles, he was brought to the Ternaten council house and presented to the people.

Upon hearing this, Lefevre immediately called for Kaicili Ali. Was it proper and customary for them to proclaim a new sultan like this, without consulting him, as was promised, and without Ali's consent and presence? Ali sighed and answered: 'What can I do, he is my own blood and brother.' He tried to reconcile Lefevre with the idea that Hamzah was sultan now and that they should both try to make the best of it. Lefevre smelt a rat; he had received reports that Hamzah, Ali, and the *gogogu* had had a night-time meeting just before Hamzah was proclaimed sultan and suspected that some kind of deal had been struck. Describing these events in a letter a month later, Lefevre was still furious at how the Ternatens had gotten away with electing a sultan who amounted to 'making the governor of Manila or Gamalama [the capital of Spanish Ternate] king here!'[262] There was little he could do under the circumstances, however.

At the end of the day, Hamzah had proven himself a canny political animal, skilfully navigating Ternate's complicated political landscape. Although the Dutch recognised this, having been duped, they framed it slightly differently. Looking back on the succession and the events that ensued in its wake, Francois Valentijn noted that although the name Hamzah is Arabic for 'strong and stern,' the man himself turned out to be 'cunning, disingenuous, and artful in his wiles,'[263] having learned well from his Spanish captors and educators 'all the

262 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1132.
263 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I, 255.

Castilian sly political ruses, being second to none of them in that regard, as he would amply make clear not only to them, but also to us, as soon as he had acquired the throne.'[264]

For now, however, Hamzah was also aware he had to find a *modus vivendi* with the Dutch. And perhaps things were not as bad as they seemed for the latter: feeling that Melayu was well worth foregoing mass for, Hamzah had converted to Islam before being elected, putting an end to Spanish dreams of a Catholic Ternaten ruler. A few days later, Lefevre finally met the new sultan in person: on the 3rd of August, Hamzah appeared with the entire Ternaten council and a sizeable retinue. He spoke soothing words, expressing his understanding that the Dutch, not knowing him, had been opposed to him becoming the new sultan. He wanted to assure them, however, that he did not look back fondly on his captivity in Manila and that 'he did not consider himself to be sultan,' unless he had the blessing and support of the Dutch.[265] Lefevre answered in a similarly soothing tone, saying that time would tell how he would rule. If Hamzah did well and upheld the treaties concluded with his predecessor, Lefevre went on, then he would happily recognise him as sultan and assist him in any way he could.

Hamzah took a keen interest in the treaties as soon as they were mentioned. He replied that he had never seen them and did not know their content. Eyes veered towards Kaicili Ali, who said that, to his astonishment, he had not found the treaties among the late sultan's papers. Attention turned back to Lefevre, who had the documents brought up. Most of them were available in both Ternaten and Dutch, and Hamzah took a genuine and specific interest in their content. Some time was spent going over them. Interestingly, Lefevre did not have a copy of the original 1607 treaty available to him. He did however have the subsequent treaty with admiral Wittert from 1609, which repeated most of the articles from 1607. As that was only available in Dutch, its contents were explained to the sultan.[266] Hamzah swore to uphold all of it, renew the treaties, and perhaps, if both sides agreed, add provisions in due course. He also requested translated copies of all the treaties if Muzaffar's own copies could not be found.

In this way, relations between Hamzah and the VOC thawed. Three cannon shots were fired from the castle and Lefevre congratulated Hamzah on now truly being sultan. Some opium was offered to the sultan and his retinue as gifts.

264 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I, 255.
265 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1140.
266 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1140.

Hamzah then took his leave, after which Kaicili Ali told Lefevre privately that he would do anything in his power to make sure Hamzah kept his promises.

Ali would not stay at the Ternaten court long enough to make good on his assurances, however. As time went by, it became ever clearer that the two half-brothers were not getting along. Having his former rival at court seemed to fill Hamzah with mistrust. He passed Ali over for new functions and the two increasingly came to dislike one another. In June of the next year, Ali volunteered for an assignment that would take him away from the court for an extended period: a tour along Ternate's tributary polities at the head of a large hongi. [267]

Gowa-Tallo's growing influence

The main goal of the expedition was to push back against Gowa-Tallo, which continued expanding its influence at Ternate's expense. In May 1628, Seys, who had just replaced Lefebvre as governor of Maluku, informed Batavia that a Makasar fleet of thirty kora-kora was tearing through the Sula and Banggai islands off northeastern Sulawesi. The island of Banggai (referred to as Gapi at the time) had already fallen and the latest news was that the fleet was now finishing its conquest of Taliabu and seemed intent on continuing on to Sula. The Ternatens expected that the Makasars had probably conquered all of the islands already and feared that the fleet might continue to Hoamoal. The Ternaten expedition was prepared to prevent this, sail to Hoamoal, and make short work of any Makasar influence there. After that, it was to continue west to Tobungku and on to Buton, which was desperate for assistance against the Makasars as well.

It would appear, though, that Gowa-Tallo had already conquered Buton: the joint kingdom had sent out a fleet, commanded by the two rulers themselves, in early 1626. The *Makassar Annals* proudly record the event: on the 1st of March 1626, 'east to Buton went Karaeng Matoaya with the karaeng [Ala'uddin] for the conquest of Buton; this conquest was the first.'[268] English East India Company personnel, reporting on the situation in Makassar in May of that year, also noted that the 'King of Makassar' was away on an expedition. Although the numbers they provide strike me as being improbably high, they give the impression that it was a huge operation: 'With 1900 Curry-Currees [kora kora] and prowes, well

267 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 53-54; Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I, 259.

268 Cummings, *Makassar Annals*, 39. The date in the text is '2 Jakr 1036', which Cummings has corrected to 1035, as, judging by the context and other evidence, 1036 is almost certainly a writing error. The fleet, the Annals inform us, then went on to conquer various places on Bima and returned to Makassar by 3 July.

furnished with Munition and 80.000 men, he hath taken Button, as the report goes.'[269] Various scholarly works, taking cues from Makasar sources, have taken this moment as the definitive Makasar conquest of Buton, implying that it would not return to the Ternaten sphere of influence until after the Makassar War of 1666–67.[270]

Intriguingly, however, it seems that Buton's Sultan La Elangi (r. 1613–33) was simply able to decide that he had not been conquered at all. The same ruler who had concluded Buton's original 1613 alliance with the VOC, La Elangi remained in power after his defeat at the hands of Makassar and soon renewed his calls for assistance from Ternate and the VOC.[271] This is less surprising than it might sound, perhaps, in that outright occupation and regime change were not part of the standard repertoire of statecraft in the eastern archipelago. It was entirely usual to leave the ruler of a newly subdued principality in power, as long as he showed his fealty to the new overlord. He might accept a flag, for instance, present some soil to indicate the region's submission, or swear an oath of loyalty, sometimes reinforced by rituals such as the *matakau*.[272] Within South Sulawesi

269 Letter from Batavia to Jambi, 10 June 1626 in: IOR E/3/11, letter 1229 (page numbered 120). It is my impression that the numbers mentioned are improbably high.

270 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 88, for instance, writes: 'In the first half of the seventeenth century it was under constant threat from Goa and was finally conquered in 1626. With the defeat of Goa by the Dutch East India Company and the signing of the Bungaya treaty in 1667, Butung became once again a part of Ternate's periphery.' In Andaya's case this is particularly remarkable, as his earlier book *The Heritage of Arung Palakka* gives attention to intervening Makasar sieges of Buton. Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 56, similarly marks the 1626 conquest as a turning point in Buton-VOC relationships.

271 In addition to the requests addressed at the sultan of Ternate discussed here, we have, for instance, Gillis Seys, who mentions his visit to Buton in December 1627, during which the sultan requested Dutch help against Makassar. Slightly later, in May 1630, Crijn van Raemburch, governor of Banda, visited the sultan of Buton, bringing presents. He was warmly received, and noted 400 Ternaten troops there, with more apparently on their way under the leadership of Kaicili Ali. The Sultan was confident that this would suffice to resist Makasar attack. Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 163. Also see below, Chapter VI. What is intriguing, however, is that none of them mention the massive Makasar military operation, and I have been unable to find a single reference to it in Dutch sources.

272 Cf. Fraassen, 'Ternate and its dependencies'; J.W. Schoorl. 'Power, Ideology and Change in the Early State of Buton.' Fifth Dutch-Indonesian Historical Congress, held at Lage Vuursche, The Netherlands 23 - 27 June 1986, esp. 14-17. Fraassen also notes how dispute over areas was built into the system, as Ternate, for one, had the tendency to simply claim an area it had successfully raided as now part of its sphere of influence.

itself, new power relations were usually cemented with a treaty or oath, in which an earlier tributary relationship was renounced and replaced by another with the victorious state.[273] In fact, the *Makassar Annals* refer to an oath being reconfirmed in 1634, after La Elangi had passed away.[274]

It would seem that La Elangi, a long-time ally of the Dutch and Ternate, had no intention of becoming a vassal of Gowa. If he took such an oath, he appears to have conveniently forgotten about it as soon as the Makasar fleet had sailed out of sight. Breaking such an oath would have consequences, of course, and it was with good reason that Buton was now calling for assistance from its allies with renewed urgency. Ternate responded to the call. This was not only out of fear that Gowa-Tallo would conquer Buton once and for all, but also, according to Seys, because failing to come to La Elangi's aid, might lead to Buton coming directly under Dutch protection, and thus be lost to Ternate all the same.[275]

As the Ternaten fleet prepared to depart, Hamzah appeared at the governor's house to ask for the VOC's help. He asked whether they could spare two falconets and a bronze gun to arm the royal kora-kora? Seys denied this request. The sultan returned to ask whether they might then provide 100 muskets for the fleet? Once again, Seys denied the request, delicately adding that in the early years of their alliance, the Dutch had given and sold hundreds of muskets to the Ternatens, only for large numbers of them to be sold on to the Tidorese and other enemies of the Company. He could only help them with some lead and

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For the matakau, a ritual specific to the Ambon region, see below, chapter VII, paragraph 'Uli, Alfurs and uphill battles.'

273 For a recent synthesis of the role of oaths and treaties within the South Sulawesi state system, see Stephen Druce, 'The decentralized Austronesian polity: of Mandalas, Negaras, Galactics, and the South Sulawesi Kingdoms' in: *Suvannabhumi* 9:2 (December 2017): 7-34, esp. 19-23. Druce convincingly argues that some of the specific mechanisms of the interactions between the polities of South Sulawesi proper made for a somewhat more stable state system than seems to have existed further east.

274 I am here following the judgment of Ligtvoet, 'Beschrijving en geschiedenis van Boeton' in: *BKI* (26:1878), 1-112, esp. 34; Pim Schoorl, 'Het 'eeuwige' verbond tussen Buton en de VOC, 1613-1669' in: Harry Poeze e.a. eds. *Excursies in Celebes : een bundel bijdragen bij het afscheid van J. Noorduyn als directeur-secretaris van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1991, 21-61, esp.29-30. Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 47, only mentions an oath being reconfirmed in 1634, when La Elangi had been succeeded by Sultan La Balawo. The latter was more positively inclined towards Gowa and Tallo.

275 Gillis Seys to Governor-General, 29 March 1628, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 137.

powder. Outraged, Hamzah quarrelled with Seys: 'If you are unwilling to assist me in protecting my lands,' he snapped, 'then you can likewise not reap the fruits and profits from them!'[276]

After several delays in readying and provisioning the fleet, the Ternatens finally sailed for the Ambon Islands in August with some thirty vessels carrying 1.500 men. By that time, the Ternaten intervention and mediation might be considered urgent: not only were relations between kimelaha Leliato and the Company worse than ever before, but these also increasingly soured both parties' relationships with Hitu, the only neutral go-between in the islands.

Feigned friends?

In the wake of the Nassau Fleet campaign of 1625, the atmosphere between the Dutch and kimelaha Leliato was grim. With the aid of various high-ranking Ternaten envoys, the new governor of Ambon, Jan van Gorcum, tried to develop a working relationship with the kimelaha, but it was not easy.[277] The kimelaha demanded compensation for the destruction of the clove trees in his realm; the Dutch refused, telling him that he might start by selling cloves to the Dutch as agreed, instead of selling them off to smugglers. In the end, a treaty between the VOC and the various leaders of Hoamoal was agreed by July 1626, although it amounted to little more than a ceasefire and recapitulation of the monopoly provisions.[278] It mattered little in practice: although the kimelaha pledged to ensure that all the cloves gathered in his domains would be sold to the Dutch, Van Gorcum noticed that very few cloves were actually available when he travelled through the islands in June 1627 to buy them up. The inhabitants of Manipa told him bluntly that everything had been sold to Malays and Makasars on the orders of the kimelaha himself. There were even reports that Leliato was personally selling cloves to Makassar: he was the alleged owner of a large junk loaded with twenty *bahar* of cloves in the river at Lesidi, which was awaiting the right

276 Gillis Seys to Jacques Lefebvre, 22 May 1628, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 139. The remark is especially salient because it very closely echoes the phrasing of the treaties between the VOC and Ternate, and their reciprocal basis.

277 One of them is described as an uncle of the sultan going by the name of 'gnoffmaniere Byuno'. Ngofomanyira was one of the possible official titles of the head of a soa, see Fraassen, 'Ternate de Molukken en de Indonesische archipel', II, 416pp. I have not been able to relate the name Byuno to any known members of the Ternaten royal family. Another one was Sarafi, sangaji of Toloko. For him see Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 157.

278 Printed in *Corpus Diplomaticum*, I, 209-210.

moment to sail to Makassar.[279] When visiting Luhu the next year, Van Gorcum's successor, Philip Lucasz. caught six junks from Makassar and two from Java in the act. He was therefore able to report on their merchandise, which consisted of textiles from Coromandel and Patani, white rice, and many slaves. Most saliently, they carried a large shipment of gunpowder and other ammunition, contained in barrels marked with European letters and numbers that struck Company personnel as being either Danish or English. 'These are the fruits (in addition to them carrying off our cloves) we reap from our European allies and associated feigned friends,' Lucasz wrote grimly.[280] Like his predecessor, he noted the low prices at which all the merchandise was sold. In this way, the traders could undercut Dutch prices and then make up the difference through the high prices that cloves fetched in Makassar. In addition, eight more junks such as these were reported to have arrived in other places in the Ambon Islands.

In this period, Kambelo, which seems to have been operating relatively independently from the kimelaha, once again developed into the main clove entrepôt, at which cloves from Hoamoal and Hitu were brought to market. Lucasz attempted to put pressure on Kambelo by blockading it with two ships. What is more, he sent ship's master Frans Leenderts ashore to present the *kepati*, the ruler of the town, with two parangs (a Southeast Asian type of machete) and two axes, symbolically emphasising that the VOC would rather see the clove trees cut down or ringbarked than the cloves shipped off. As they approached the meeting house, one of the Dutch soldiers fired his musket for unclear reasons, hitting a Kambelese in the chest. A scuffle ensued, in which several men died on both sides before the remaining Dutchmen could make it back to the ship.[281] This was the most dramatic, but far from the only deadly incident in this period.[282]

There were also vehement ongoing conflicts over the borders of the areas controlled by the kimelaha and Dutch. The position of the Ternaten sultan and the kimelaha was that all the Muslim areas of the Ambon islands were historically Ternaten domains, including Hitu and the the Muslim parts of the Lease Islands, whereas the Company, as well as the Hituese themselves, considered Hitu independent, and the Company considered the Lease islands to be outside the area of

279 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1104-1109.
280 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1312-1313.
281 Lucasz to governor-general Coen, 11 May 1628, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1314-15.
282 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 95-105; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 54-55; Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1102.

Fig 5.1 Traditional ceremonial meeting house, known as a baileu or rumah adat. The baileu was used for official meetings and the reception of delegates. It was also where heads collected during headhunting raids were displayed. Many of the meetings between VOC representatives and local chiefs would have taken place in such houses. They remain in general use to this day; although its age is unknown, this baileu in Noloth, Saparua, is considered the oldest and best-preserved on the island. Photograph by the author.

influence of the Ternatens. Leliato tried to entice these regions to his side, both with intimidation and 'with artifice and with gifts,' sailing around the islands with a small hongi for this purpose.[283] The Dutch were unable to find and stop him with their own hongi, but took the opportunity to try and reinforce their existing alliances and allegiances. They found that Leliato was having some success and many of their former Muslim allies were drifting towards the kimelaha. The language in the Dutch letters from these years breathes an atmosphere of

283 Jan van Gorcum to governor-general, 26 July 1626, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 95-96; Journal of Jan van Gorcum, May 1626, in ibid., 105; Lucasz to governor-general, 11 May 1628, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1325-1326.

mutual anxiety and suspicion; Van Gorcum regularly noted his impression that 'this entire Moorish horde has made treaties and is allied to each other.'[284]

Hitu, the VOC's oldest ally in the region, was increasingly considered part and parcel of this 'Moorish horde.' Its position as the perennial mediator between the Company and surrounding Muslim polities had become increasingly precarious as relations soured in the region. It seems that both sides eyed Hitu with suspicion. As early as 1614, the kimelaha of Hoamoal called Kapitan Hitu 'a slave of the Hollanders.'[285] In the wake of the events of 1625, the Dutch, for their part, seemed to have doubts about their ally's sincerity. Governor Van Gorcum, for instance, suspected Hitu of deliberately inciting other polities against the Dutch, while simultaneously pretending to soothe these very conflicts and thus appear to be 'the good servant.'[286] An additional complicating factor was that Hitu was also a large producer of cloves and that it had become increasingly profitable for Hituese to sell their cloves through illicit channels on the coast of Hoamoal. It was Van Gorcum's impression that the Kapitan Hitu was not quite prepared to stop them.[287]

Commissioner Gillis Seys, who had been sent from Batavia to make a tour of inspection of the Ambon Islands in early 1627, was perhaps most extreme in the solution he preferred. By and large, his report on the 'present state in the Amboina Quarters,' reads like a military reconnaissance report.[288] Although he also takes an interest in clove production in the archipelago's various regions, Seys' report makes tallies of garrisons, comments on the state of various fortifications, and provides an inventory of allies and enemies throughout the islands and the number of able-bodied men each could muster. When it came to Dutch allies, Seys did not put much stock in Hitu. Echoing Van Gorcum's sentiment that it was secretly in cahoots with the other Muslim polities, he wrote that 'although we should pretend to be friends with Hitu, we should consider them to actually be our secret enemy, not to be trusted even slightly more than those of Luhu,

284 Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 97.

285 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, I, 14.

286 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 97. The particular case discussed here concerns Hatuaha, on the north coast of Haruku. Also see footnote on Ibid, 96, in which Heeres contends that the Ambon Journal shows that the accusation has no base.

287 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 105.

288 Gillis Seys, 'Verhael van den tegenwoordigen staet inde quartieren van Amboyna ende omleggende plaetsen' etc, in: Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh,* II, voyage 15, 130-150. I would like to thank Adam Clulow for the valuable discussions about this and other sources we had in London in April 2018.

Kambelo and Lesidi.'[289] Things might actually be much easier, he mused, were Hitu taken out of the equation:

> It would be preferable if the entire island of Ambon would be brought under control of the Company. […] It would be a wonderful piece of work, as we could reap some five or six hundred *bahar* of cloves a year from there, but this Moorish spawn should be utterly eradicated, and new Christians should be brought in. Only then would we be better able to bridle those on Seram, and keep the foreign traders away from there, and make sure that all the cloves would be in our hands, and we could possess this land of Amboyna in peace.[290]

Seys contended that a thousand Company soldiers, aided by the Company's Ambonese allies, could probably pull this off in five or six months, although Luhu and Kambelo would likely come to Hitu's aid. The hardest part would be repopulating the island, probably under continuing opposition from the Ternatens and displaced Hituese themselves, who 'like those of Banda, would not be able to forget their old home.'[291] If anything, however, Seys' plan indicates that at least some VOC officials approved of the way the Company had acted in Banda, despite all the problems it had caused.

We might also consider Seys' ideas in the light of an emerging policy to bring clove production under the Company's direct control, independent from its 'feigned friends.' Few clove trees had originally grown in the areas under direct Dutch rule in Ambon and the Lease islands, but through Company planting initiatives, they had become increasingly numerous over the last few years. The trees planted were still young, but would probably start bearing cloves within four or five years, Seys reported. This policy was taken to a new level in 1627, when it was decided that every resident of Ambon should plant ten clove trees. Planting efforts were intensified once again in 1628. The Company saw the task of bringing clove production under its own control as ever more urgent, for, in Rumphius' words, 'they could foresee that before long, they were bound to be at war with Hitu and Luhu [i.e. Hoamoal].'[292]

289 Ibid., 138.
290 Ibid., 141-142.
291 Ibid.
292 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 64. Also see Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen,* 231-232; Commelin (Seys), *Begin ende Voortgangh,* II, voyage 15, 133.

At this stage, however, Seys considered the plan to conquer and repopulate Hitu too ambitious. There were too few 'new Christians' (i.e. Christian Ambonese) to adequately repopulate the area and holding it over a number of years with only VOC soldiers would place an unacceptable financial burden on the Company. The Company would therefore have to continue pretending to be on good terms with Hitu for now, Seys wrote grudgingly. In a subsequent letter to the directors, Coen similarly expressed his reluctance to engage in ambitious military action in the Ambon Islands at the present moment. In early 1628, he wrote that the increased size of the Ambon garrisons was costing the Company, yet had clearly done nothing to secure its hold over the cloves in the region. He doubted that 'resorting to arms' would remedy the situation and, perhaps slightly uncharacteristically, pursued a policy of 'appeasement, to settle all the misunderstandings and troubles that have arisen with those of Hitu, Luhu, Kambelo, Lesidi, Erang, and associates, with whom, as our old allies, we should be on terms of a new friendship.'[293]

Despite its increasingly precarious relationship with the Company, Hitu had meanwhile continued to try to act as a mediator between the VOC and the kimelaha. In June 1628, Kapitan Hitu Tepil suggested convoking a conference at Castle Victoria, to which Governor Lucasz cautiously agreed. Although he was suspicious about Tepil's intentions, he was nonetheless anxious to allay the tensions. Kapitan Hitu went out personally to invite the Hoamoalese leaders, but found that they so mistrusted the Dutch that they would not set foot in the castle. The venue for the negotiations was therefore changed to Hitu itself and on the 26th of July Lucasz convened there with the Kapitan Hitu, kimelaha, and various Hoamoalese leaders. In addition to redressing the massacre at Kambelo and the deaths of various other Company personnel, Lucasz was, as always, hoping to get the Hoamoalese to stop selling cloves to anyone but the Company. He singled out traders from Makassar, who, as enemies of Ternate and the Company, should be kept out no matter what they were trading. In addition, he hoped to come to a provisional settlement on the border issues.

The Hoamoalese stated they could not do without the Makasar traders, for they provided the region with many necessities, and that it would take an order from the sultan of Ternate to compel them to drive the traders away. As to the cloves, they would certainly be willing to sell all of them to the Company. Given that many of their trees had been destroyed in the 1625 campaign, which had

293 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* V, 67.

impoverished Hoamoal, the Hoamoalese asked that the Company slightly raise the clove price and sell its cloth a little more cheaply. With regard to the border disputes, they were in no position to decide anything. They contended that the Company was currently in possession of various areas that belonged to the sultan and that this issue would therefore have to be resolved between him and the governor-general. It was Lucasz impression, however, that despite the leaders all paying lip service to being the subjects of the Ternaten sultan, and deferring these decisions to him, for the most part they acted independently and served their own causes rather than his.[294]

In the end, then, these negotiations achieved little. For Lucasz, raising the clove price was out of the question and he told the Hoamoalese leaders as much, although he did make the gesture of promising some leeway with regard to cloth prices. Most points of debate had been effectively kept off the table by referring them to the sultan of Ternate, putting them beyond Hitu and the Company's ability to solve them. Lucasz could only hope that the sultan might come to the Ambon Islands at some point to straighten these points out. As he exasperatedly wrote to Governor-General Coen, however, he was not optimistic that this would happen any time soon.[295]

Lucasz was therefore rather startled when, on the 24th of September, a high-ranking Ternaten nobleman arrived before the castle in a kora-kora, handing him a bundle of letters from Seys and giving him notice that a large Ternaten fleet under Kaicili Ali's command was heading his way with broad authority to set things straight in the Ambon Islands.[296] The fleet was making slow progress: having departed late, it had to fight its way against the monsoon, in addition to being expected to give due attention to the various Hoamoal towns at which it

294 As to the murders: the Kambelo leaders considered what happened there an unfortunate incident rather than premeditated murder. This seems to be in line with what the Dutch themselves believed: in spite of their strong language addressed at Kambelo, Dutch documents make clear that they also believed that a Dutch soldier shot first, and without provocation. The discussion of another of the murders, of two Dutch citizens who were fishing off Boano, was evaded by the kimelaha with 'frivole praetgens'. Lucasz to governor-general, 10 September 1628, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1417-1418.

295 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII.2, 1421

296 The nobleman in question was kimelaha Tomaito Jawa, head of the Ternaten soa of Tomaito. For more on him and Tomaito, see Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 90-92.

called along the way. That said, it was currently already off Asaudi, on the north side of Hoamoal, and expected to arrive within days.

The governor scrambled to send out a welcoming committee-cum-reconnaissance mission and started preparing. Even though the letters must have made clear to him that Seys was aware of, and to some degree even involved in, the organisation of the expedition, the fact that twelve large Ternaten kora-kora and fifteen smaller vessels, carrying 1500 men, were now bearing down on him, made him slightly nervous. While preparing to receive Kaicili Ali hospitably and without any outward sign of mistrust, he did bring the villages around Castle Victoria under arms, just in case.[297] He also politely urged Governor-General Coen to come to Ambon in person for this occasion, as Kaicili Ali's visit presented an unprecedented opportunity to tackle various issues, and the governor-general's presence was 'required for the final decision on our proceedings in these quarters.'[298] Unfortunately, Lucasz's request would reach Coen at a bad time; Lucasz was as yet unaware that a huge army of the Javanese Mataram sultanate had besieged Batavia in August and Coen had his hands full defending the city.

On the evening of the 4th of October, Kaicili Ali's fleet anchored in front of the castle and it soon turned out that Lucasz's worries had been unfounded. Kaicili Ali seemed preoccupied with getting to Buton and he and Lucasz had a clear common enemy in the Makasars. On his way to Castle Victoria, Ali had ordered the various rulers in Hoamoal to arrest any Makasars and Bandanese who had taken up residence there and deliver them to the castle. He also brought a new nominee for kimelaha, to replace Leliato. A small earthquake had occurred at Asaudi while Kaicili Ali was there. Although the inhabitants considered this a bad omen, Lucasz was suddenly rather optimistic, closing his letter to Coen by stating that he had 'no doubt that things will turn out alright.'[299]

Kaicili Ali's long stay in the Ambon Islands

Kaicili Ali ostensibly intended to stay in the Ambon Islands only briefly, so as to be able to make it to Buton on the eastern monsoon. He therefore did not waste any time setting to work, rounding up the 'foreign traders' from Makassar and elsewhere in Hoamoal. Their goods seized, a good number of the traders were killed or sold into slavery. He also immediately called for another conference,

297 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1461-1462.
298 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1462.
299 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1465.

which convened at the castle the following week. The presence of a prince with the prestige of the sultanate, the power to speak on the sultan's behalf, and a fleet to back it up, made all the difference: a week later a treaty was reached and signed in the castle.[300]

The islands' leaders not only declared the earlier hostilities forgiven and forgotten and reconfirmed the Dutch monopoly on buying cloves at sixty reals per bahar. What is more, this treaty broke new ground in that those gathered pledged not to have any political or financial dealings with foreign traders, and villages that did were now liable to be destroyed. This amounted to a serious loss of autonomy for Hitu and Hoamoal. Ternate's interests ran parallel with those of the VOC on this issue: Ternate wanted to reinstate its political control over the peninsula and the VOC wanted the traders to stay away. Both parties had an interest in isolating the region from outside influence, then, and their combined momentum was enough to make it happen. The main threat to their goals was of course Makassar, which was consequently the object of two treaty articles. As enemies of Ternate, traders from Makassar were particularly unwelcome and should be pursued and killed. Should Makassar ever attempt an attack at either Hoamoal or Ambon, the kimelaha and governor would come to one another's defence.

The only thing that the treaty did not try to settle was the border conflict. On this point, it merely stated the intention to solve it with the approval of the sultan and governor-general, noting that that settlement, when reached, would be final, and that nobody would seek to subvert or convert the areas controlled by the other party afterwards.[301]

In spite of his initial haste, Kaicili Ali missed the monsoon and remained at Castle Victoria for another two months. After this, he visited Hitu and continued to Seram, visiting Hoamoal and undertaking an expedition all the way to Gulo Gulo at Seram's far southeast (the people there were officially vassals of Ternate, but had not paid tribute in thirty years).

No foreign traders were sighted in the islands over the next few months and cloves poured into Company warehouses. Rumour had it that Makassar had indeed come to the islands with a fleet of eighteen armed ships. Noticing the

300 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1613-1615.

301 For the full treaty, which also provided for the building of a trading house on Hoamoal, arbitration of conflicts, punishment of unruly villages and the exchange of defectors, see *Corpus Diplomaticum*, I, 217-225.

sizeable Ternaten force now present in the region, it had opted to hide, waiting in the river mouths at the south side of Buru for the turning of the monsoon, when they could make their escape back to Makassar. Upon hearing this, Lucasz brought together a hongi of eighteen kora-kora, with Kaicili Ali eventually supplying three additional ships, and headed for Buru. The Makasar fleet, however, seems to have gotten wind of this and moved further west. Pursing it was considered too risky and the hongi turned back. After some pressure from Lucasz, Kaicili Ali also appointed his new nominee, kimelaha Luhu, to replace Leliato, who, according to both Ternate and the Company, had been rather too receptive to Makasar overtures.[302] Lucasz had every reason to be content with how Kaicili Ali's presence in the islands was turning out.

Not everyone was happy, however. Hitu, for example, soon had to face the consequences of their loss of autonomy in the new treaty. An embassy from the Lord of Giri on Java, the important religious leader who had historically exerted a great deal of influence in Maluku, arrived in a small junk. Lucasz got wind of this and promptly sent someone up there to demand that the vessel come to the castle. When the Hituese refused, the five people in the junk were arrested and brought up all the same. Kapitan Hitu demanded their release, for these were not traders but ambassadors, whom he therefore considered exempt from the prohibitions. Lucasz was of a different inclination, releasing the ambassadors a couple of days later on the strict condition that no others would be admitted.[303]

The leaders and inhabitants of Hoamoal were also quite unhappy. They had not only enjoyed their level of independence before Kaicili Ali's arrival, but were now also supposed to provide for the upkeep of the fleet, Ali, and his entourage. Feeding a 1500-man army and maintaining Ali's grandeur put considerable additional pressure on Hoamoal. Ali was busily accepting gifts, exacting tribute, requisitioning weapons for his fleet, and laying claim to the produce of orchards and vegetable gardens in the region. As Valentijn's slightly malicious later summary put it, he was 'exhausting his subjects and filling his pockets.'[304] Lucasz himself noted this too with apparent amusement. 'The land of Amboina will probably remember for a long time that Kaicili Ali was here with his armada,' he quipped in a letter written in May 1629, when Kaicili Ali was still in the islands. Their 'actions have made the Ternatens so odious that those who, before

302 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 1619-1620.
303 Ibid., 1619.
304 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, I, 262.

they arrived, were infatuated with their apparent grandeur and, under the guise of religion, were prepared to devote themselves to them, have now turned away and would rather be subject to our Christian government (although against their custom and law) than to the Ternaten unreasonableness.'[305] Not that Lucasz was complaining: Kaicili Ali had helped achieve many of the Company's goals very quickly, while 'we are now seen as the good knight and they [i.e. Kaicili Ali and his troops] as the bad one.'[306]

However, Kaicili Ali slowly became unpopular with everyone else too, the Dutch becoming first puzzled, and then annoyed by his behaviour. In July 1629, Lucasz sent a letter to Kaicili Ali, repeatedly calling him a 'good friend,' but expressing his surprise that the newly appointed Kimelaha Luhu was staying with Ali in Manipa, rather than going to his post at Luhu. Incidentally, he also wondered why Ali was still in the islands at all – had he not been planning to go to the Banggai Islands to drive out the Makasars for four months already? Kaicili Ali's reply came promptly, even more profuse in politeness and pleasantries, but with no substantive answer to Lucasz's questions.[307] Meanwhile, his attempt to ingratiate himself with the family of the Kapitan Hitu with gifts, apparently in an attempt to arrange a marriage with the granddaughter of the Kapitan Hitu, did not suggest that Kaicili Ali was planning to go anywhere.[308]

It was not only Lucasz who grew suspicious and annoyed: in September, a high-ranking Ternatan nobleman arrived on behalf of Sultan Hamzah to berate Kaicili Ali for his behaviour.[309] Both Lucasz and Hamzah were under the strong impression that Ali, glad to be away from Hamzah's court and to have found a power base of his own in the Ambon Islands, was trying to set himself up as a ruler in the region.[310]

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305 Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 147.

306 Ibid.

307 Lucasz to Kaicili Ali, 27 July 1629, and his reply, Dul-Hijja 14 [August 4th], in: VOC 1098, 169-171. The letter states that it was Kimelaha Luhu's wish to remain with Ali until the latter had moved on to Buru from Manipa, but gives no further explanation.

308 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 358.

309 This noblmane, Kalimbata, had apparently lived in Hoamoal from 1618 at the latest, until 1629, serving as a tax and toll collector. See Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 394.

310 For Lucasz's concerns: Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 358. For the concerns of Hamzah and the kimelaha: see Lodensteyn, governor of Ternate, to governor-general Specx, 9 August 1632, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 211-214.

Ali's new power base, however, seemed to be melting away just as he was attempting to consolidate it. His retinue was dispersing, the ships of his fleet returning home. Lucasz gave no details on this point, but some of the factors at play can be inferred. Kaicili Ali's hongi, like the indigenous fleets the Dutch used for their campaigns, would have consisted of levies from the individual Ternaten communities. This means that it would have had a limited lifespan, for these communities could not miss their orangkaya and other men indefinitely. Kaicili Ali would have been under mounting pressure to let them return as his stay in the Ambon Islands wore on. The fact that he had fallen into some disfavour with the sultan would not have helped him retain his following. The region's inhabitants, jealous of their relative autonomy and none too pleased with Kaicili Ali's actions over the past year, were not interested in stepping up to the plate. His marriage proposal to the Hituese princess was brusquely refused: Hitu had been walking a tightrope so as to preserve its precarious autonomy, and not about to marry itself into the influence of a new would-be local strongman.

With the waning of Kaicili Ali's influence, much of what the Company had achieved through his presence began slipping away too, as Lucasz desperately noted in his correspondence. Malay and Makasar junks were appearing in the islands again. In January 1630, when Lucasz learned that two such ships were in Kambelo, he ordered four kora-kora with forty soldiers to come up from the castle and seize or destroy them. Arriving at Kambelo, this force found three Makasar ships, emptied of their cargo and pulled ashore. Company soldiers landed to put the ships to the torch, but the Makasar crews came out to defend their vessels. Shots were fired. The Company soldiers killed several Makasars, but the latter retreated into the bush and shot at the pursuing Dutch with their arquebuses from cover, 'with almost every shot hitting target.'[311] With four dead and three wounded soldiers, the Dutch were forced to retreat.

This called for retaliation, but the meagre reinforcements arriving in Ambon that month left Lucasz in a poor position to do anything about it: given that Batavia had once again been besieged by Mataram in the previous months, and Coen had suddenly sickened and died during the siege, things were a little chaotic there. Only three small ships had been sent to Ambon. To make matters worse, one of them, the *Suratte,* had foundered on the island of Kabaena on the way.[312] The remaining two vessels brought few supplies and no new soldiers, and

311 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 353r.

312 Kabaena lies south of Southeast Sulawesi, to the west of Buton. See Lucasz to Specx,

one was leaking so badly that Lucasz was forced to bring it onshore. Lucasz sent the only remaining serviceable ship out to the coast of Hoamoal to hunt for more Makasar vessels, while considering other measures to 'preserve our justice and curb this cancer.' A sharp northern wind soon prevented him from sending out kora-kora or sloops, 'so that, with great pain, by a lack of means, we had to suffer these undercutters, one after the other, coming in.'[313]

Meanwhile, Lucasz sent out delegates to Kimelaha Luhu and Kaicili Ali to see if they could curb foreign trade through diplomatic means. The envoys learned, however, that Kaicili Ali had actually provided several Malay and Makasar vessels with letters of protection in exchange for a fee. The Malays were here not to buy cloves, he claimed, but only to wait for the turn of the monsoon. With regard to the Makasars, he was leaving them alone for now. This was because he had sent an envoy named Kalimbata to Makassar to negotiate the return of all the areas that Makassar had taken, and he was unwilling to jeopardise the talks.

Lucasz had not been informed of this envoy being sent. Not only was that a violation of the 1607 treaty, but he was not sure whether the envoy was acting on behalf of the sultan or Ali, what Ali's intentions were, and whether Kaicili Ali's diplomatic efforts had not actually encouraged the Makasar ships suddenly to return with a vengeance. All of these power games, which were playing out without the Company understanding their details, made Lucasz nervous. He felt 'blind in these matters, and unable to come to a sound judgement, as they often only wrongly tell us what they feel is necessary for us to know.' [314]

In any case, Ali washed his hands of all responsibility: as he wrote, kimelaha Luhu was now supposed to manage the sultan's affairs in the islands He himself had certainly done his part.[315] Whatever his intentions were now, the days in which Ali's interests coincided with those of the Dutch were clearly over.

A standoff

Meanwhile, Lucasz received reports that the traders and the inhabitants of Kambelo were preparing for a fight in anticipation of the return of the Dutch. Sixteen

1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 352v. Note that Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie' I, 73 erroneously states it stranded at Kambelo.

313 Ibid., 354r.

314 Letter of Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 352r.

315 Letters of Kaicili Ali to kimelaha Luhu and Governor Lucasz, March 1630, in: VOC 1100, 369-371. Lucasz' thoughts on Ali's intentions and the embassy to Makassar in: Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol 352-354.

junks had visited Kambelo and Lesidi over the course of 1629. The town was now 'extraordinarily well-stocked with men, but especially various kinds of muskets, powder and ammunition,' an assistant to the Dutch having counted 343 muskets among the Makasars alone, with the Kambelese population owning many more.[316] Most appeared to be English-made.[317] Two Dutch envoys reconnoitering Kambelo under the guise of negotiations in mid-March, noted that 'both the foreigners and the inhabitants were now equipped with steady fortifications, so that to their judgment no advantage could be gained there except with a generous force, all the more so because they showed themselves to be fully prepared to defend their fortifications and their goods.'[318]

The next month, however, an at least somewhat generous force temporarily materialised in the islands. This was because Ambon was regularly used as a way station for fleets to Ternate and Banda.[319] In late March, the new governor of Banda, Van Lodensteijn, passed through the islands with two ships, *Zeeburg* and *Medemblik.* Given that the season in which one could safely sail on to Banda had passed, he planned to stay in Ambon for a while. Then, in late April, the ship *Edam* came from Banda with an additional fifty soldiers and the ship *Ter Goes* arrived bringing thirty relieved soldiers from Ternate. Unexpectedly, Lucasz could now muster several ships and a force of 400 European soldiers. In a meeting with the senior officers of the ships, everyone agreed to partake in an attack Kambelo. On the 1st of May, the ships *Zeeburg, Ter Goes, Kemphaan*, and *Mocha* set sail. At the same time, a fleet of kora-kora was ordered to assemble off Hitu, where the full force would convene. By the 6th of May, the fleet, which now comprised eighteen kora-kora in addition to the four VOC ships, continued to Kambelo, anchoring off the town on the evening of the 10th and intending to land the next day.

In the early hours of the next morning, however, a boat carrying a white flag approached the fleet, calling out for Jacob Patacca. This was the senior merchant who had earlier been sent to Kimelaha Luhu and Kaicili Ali as an envoy. Lucasz obliged, sending Patacca out to meet the boat, which turned out to contain two Ternatens claiming to have been sent by Kaicili Ali. They informed Patacca that

316 Ibid., 354v.
317 This observation from his later letter of 26 september 1630, in VOC 1100, fol. 390r.
318 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 355r.
319 Parthesius, *Dutch ships in tropical waters,* 52pp.

Kimelaha Luhu was on his way to Kambelo now. Would the Dutch please stay their hand until he arrived and the matter could be talked over?

The kimelaha did arrive in Kambelo by noon and the Dutch sent a sloop to the shore carrying four envoys and six members of the Ambonese *Landraad*. The kimelaha and a group of orangkaya were waiting on the beach and helped them ashore. The kimelaha first emphasised that it was not he but Kaicili Ali who had given some of the traders letters of protection. Otherwise, he had little else to ask but to spare Kambelo, promising that no more foreign traders would be allowed there, and stressing that the Kambelese would agree with any reasonable condition. Patacca went back to the ships to confer with Lucasz, before returning swiftly to convey his answer: they were not here to shed innocent Kambelese blood but to drive the Makasars away. The Company would stay its hand if the Makasars left Kambelo without cloves. Kimelaha Luhu went off to talk to the Makasars and Patacca returned to the ships for the night.

The next day, Patacca rowed back to the beach, negotiations continued, and the kimelaha told him that the Makasars would be happy to leave. They did not trust the Dutch to keep their word, however, lying just outside Kambelo as they were with a massive fleet. Under the circumstances, they would rather fight to the death in their fortifications or run amok in the town, jeopardising Kambelo's women and children. As Patacca was preparing to return to the ship, Kimelaha Luhu, 'tears running down his cheeks,' impressed the gravity of the situation on him and the wider consequences that armed conflict here would have.

The council and *Landraad* conferred about the situation and both were inclined to come to a peaceful solution. Not only was Kambelo so well fortified that conquering it would involve a substantial loss of life on the Company's side; they were also concerned that they might precipitate an all-out conflict with the population of Hoamoal at large, which they were in no position to handle at this moment. In the end, it was decided that the fleet would manoeuvre out of the way of the Makasar ships, creating a safe route (or 'golden bridge,' as the Dutch expression had it at the time) out of Kambelo. Patacca went over to Kambelo to convey the decision and white flags were promptly hoisted above the various fortifications. The next day, the Company fleet moved aside and the Makasar ships sailed out of the islands.

Perhaps a bit worried (rightly, as it turned out) that the governor-general and his council would be slightly underwhelmed by his handling of the situation, Lucasz went out of his way to argue that the Company could not have risked wider conflict. He also described in detail the impressive defences that had been

erected around Kambelo. He even provided a bird's eye view to illustrate the situation. Even if Lucasz had a vested interest in presenting these defences as being particularly imposing, his description and the drawing of them provide valuable insights into the kinds of defences that Kambelese and Makasars seem to have been able to erect in just two months. Lucasz was ostensibly impressed. He emphasised that the defences were such that his ships' cannon would have been of little use against them, meaning that they could only have got at the Makasar ships by landing soldiers. With 600 or 700 defenders in Kambelo, the outcome of such an assault would have been far from certain and would certainly lead to significant casualties for the Company:

> Your Honour would not believe how well they had secured themselves against attack. They had drawn two massive lines from one mountain to the other, the one in front being seven feet high and nine feet thick, and the inner one in front of the village nine feet high and ten feet thick, made of piled-up stone, and well provided with palisades. At the foot of each of the mountains they had a battery that covered both the inside and outside of the front line. In between were the vessels, filled entirely with water. Furthermore they had littered the entire valley, but especially the wild areas and the brushwood, with caltrops as well as traps made of reed. In addition, their defensive works were positioned so far onto the beach, that not even six feet remained, on which our men would have had to land and put themselves in order. For their retreat, they had five redoubts, wooden palisades and bulwarks on both mountains, as I invite Your Honour to examine on the plan accompanying this. All in all, they had done everything feasible to defend themselves.[320]

It is interesting to consider this drawing and accompanying descriptions, even if we allow for some hyperbole on Lucasz's part. For one, they provide another occasion to speculate on the character of the Makasar fleets. Taking their cue from VOC documents, many authors have described them as 'spice hunters,' which implies that they were primarily traders. We should note, though, that they were not only incredibly well-armed, but were also very effective at building fortifications. All of this implies a level of military organisation that does not seem consistent with the notion of enterprising and autonomous individual traders operating from a free port. Rather, it again recalls Moretti's descriptions of how

320 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 361.

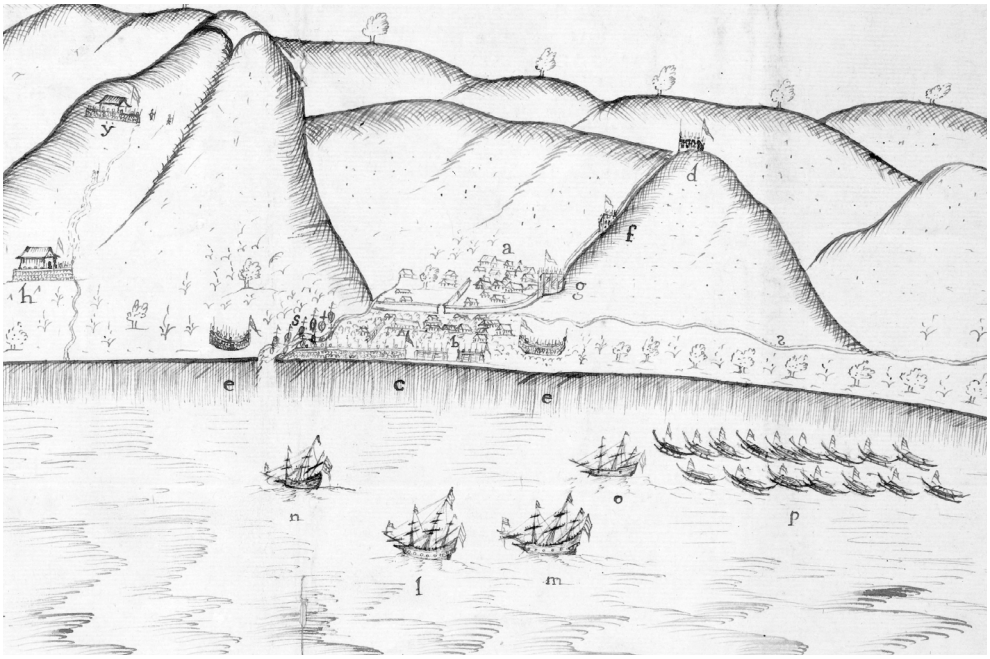

Fig 5.2 Detail from a drawing titled *Korte ontwerpingh ende afbeelding der negerij Cambelle* (Quick plan and depiction of the town of Kambelo). E marks the 'two stone batteries' on either side of the town, c the front wall between them. On the left side of the village, at s, we see the Makasar ships pulled up onshore. Immediately behind the wall, b marks the 'Makasar quarter'; Kambelo proper is further from the shore, behind the inner wall, which is also covered by the battery marked g. Various other batteries and points of rendezvous are indicated higher up. Among them is h, the former house of Kimelaha Leliato, which is depicted as a fortified position. Collection Nationaal Archief, inv. 4.VEL 1346.

the sultan sent along leaders on such fleets to assist the local population against the Company. We should also consider the context in which the various Makasar fleets roamed the eastern archipelago during these years. First and foremost, they exacted tribute and tried to assimilate areas into the Makasar sphere of influence by way of conquest, intimidation, or diplomacy, usually at Ternate's expense. To be sure, the Makasar fleets also came to Hoamoal to trade, but Ambon was no exception to the general political economy of the eastern archipelago: here, trade was tied up with political affiliation. Finally, Lucasz's description of Makasars building fortifications in front of a Hoamoalese town also underlines how these areas were connected not only politically and economically, but also in terms of military know-how. To some degree, this cuts against the image of Maluku as a

backwater when it came to military development.[321]

As Lucasz gloomily wrote, this failed expedition had been just one of the 'thousand torments' bothering him every day. His senior merchant having unexpectedly sickened and died in the wake of the expedition, he was swamped with work. To keep up his garrisons' strength and prevent them from starving, he was precariously juggling the scarce rice and soldiers amongst Ambon, Ternate, and Hoamoal. What is more, he had to report a bloody and unexpected attack on the crew of a Dutch vessel visiting Tanimbar (an island a good way east of Seram that was also coming under Makasar influence at the time) and had to deal with raids being launched on Banda from the coast of Seram by a combination of Seramese locals, Bandanese refugees, and Papuan raiders. 'I once read in a work by some Romish writer that the inhabitants of Sicily are reputed to be the most treacherous, but strongly suspect that that author had not visited these islands here,' he wrote sarcastically. Like many of his predecessors, he noted pessimistically that Company policy in the islands would never succeed without the use of force. The Makasar traders were not only paying twenty-five per cent more for cloves than the Company price stipulated in the treaties, but reciprocally 'committed' to regional clove producers 'by the mutual bond of having the same religion.' In any case, Lucasz was fed up with it all. Concluding his letter, he reminded the governor-general that his contract was almost up, noted with concern that he had heard nothing about his replacement, and informed him that, after eighteen years of serving the Company – 'the best of my life' – he was hoping to be back in Batavia in time for the next return fleet, aching to go home.[322]

Incidentally, Sultan Hamzah was also troubled by the reversal of affairs in the Ambon Islands. In late August 1630, he dispatched an envoy there to enquire how conflict had once again erupted so soon after things had been settled with the Dutch. He also wanted to know whether it was the rulers themselves, the Dutch, or Kaicili Ali who had been the cause of this. In any case, in an accompanying letter, he demanded that the orangkaya of Ternate's vassals promptly inform the envoy 'whether you are willing to obey me as loyal subjects, or you

321 E.g. as recently put forward by Gerrit Knaap. 'Military capability and state in Southeast Asia's Pacific Rimland.' In Michael Charney and Kathryn Wellen eds. *Warring Societies of Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia : Local Cultures of Conflict Within a Regional Context*. Copenhagen: Nias Press, 2018, pp. 183-200.

322 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 1 June 1630, in: VOC 1100, fol. 357v, 361r, 362r, 365r.

want to place yourself under the crown of Makassar.'[323] Although Makassar's growing influence was a genuine concern and the sentiment expressed in the letter was therefore probably sincere, Hamzah's position was complicated. Sitting back while the Dutch, his supposed allies, attacked his subjects would also go to the detriment of his position on the region. Lucasz would later receive reports from the Kapitan Hitu that a second letter had also been sent (and kept away from Dutch eyes), in which Hamzah called on his subjects to defend themselves against Dutch violence.[324]

As for Kaicili Ali: he stayed on in the Ambon Islands until November 1630, his influence steadily waning, before finally leaving for the Sula Islands, which had by then been brought back under Ternaten control. Apparently acting in line with Sultan Hamzah's intentions once more, he mustered a new fleet there, reconquered Banggai,[325] made his way to Tobungku, and retook it from the control of Gowa-Tallo. From there, he continued to Buton with a fleet to protect it against Makasar attack.

A new strategy

Lucasz's earlier failure seems to have focused his mind. His final letter as governor is notably resolute, presenting a strategy for tackling the present problems. Making use of local Mardijkers as informants, he had been able to piece together a great deal about how the Makasars operated: approaching the Ambon islands from Buton, they usually assembled at the west side of Buru. They then progressed towards Hoamoal, sailing by night with little sail, hiding their junks by day in the vicinity of well-disposed villages. On a favourable night, they made the crossing to Hoamoal and immediately brought their junks ashore, unloading them before daybreak so that nothing of value remained in them. They placed their vessels such that if European soldiers approached them, they would be able to fire on them with muskets from the cover of the jungle. Thanks to his intelligence work, however, Lucasz had now pinpointed most of these hideouts.

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323 Sultan Hamzah to the rulers of Hoamoal, 24 August 1630, published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 162.

324 Lucasz, 'Sommier verbael…', 23 May 1631, printed in: Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave*, 77-93, esp. 80.

325 A fleet sent out from Ambon to the Buton Strait by Artus Gijsels in July 1631, to catch any junks that might still escape the Ambon Islands with cloves that season, actually sighted several Makasar vessels who were retreating from Banggai after Kaicili Ali had reconquered it. See below, chapter VII, paragraph 'Mopping up'.

To act on this information, he needed a few things. First and foremost, he would like the now-abandoned Company fort above Kambelo to be rebuilt and reoccupied. Doing so would turn Kambelo from a smuggler's nest into a rendezvous and safe harbour for Company fleets off the coast of Hoamoal. This would be much better than having to orchestrate everything from the Bay of Ambon (Lucasz reminded the governor-general of how his ships had been unable to act against the smugglers earlier, trapped in the bay by the wind). Should conflict again break out with the Kambelese themselves, the fortification could also be used to prevent the Kambelese from fishing; famine would certainly bring them 'to reason.'[326]

A fort at Kambelo would probably cause the Makasars to move their operation to the surrounding islands, such as Manipa, Boanoa, and Kelang. What Lucasz really needed, then, was an expeditionary force and he preferably needed it by November, when the clove harvest came in and the foreign traders would start to arrive. He had all the details worked out: he needed four or five light yachts that could also be rowed, for which purpose he was currently overhauling the *Mocha*, one of the light ships that had come to reinforce his position in January. Lucasz counted on Batavia to supply the rest. Each ship should also carry a *tingan,* a smaller craft of Javanese build, that could pursue enemy vessels where larger ships could not follow. The crew and soldiers manning these ships should be well-trained and well-armed, considering that the Makasars would probably be equipped with English muskets again. Lucasz also needed some fifteen or twenty 'dragon pieces' (a type of anti-personnel cannon) with which to equip the kora-kora.

With such a force, in combination with a fort at Kambelo, Lucasz envisioned giving the foreign traders such a hard time that they would probably stop trying after two or three years, which would leave only the Company to sell cloves to. Once a monopoly was thus established, the force could also be used in other places, such as South Seram, where Makasar preachers were spreading Islam and Bandanese refugees were organising raids on the new occupants of their former home. It could even be used further afield, in Aru, Kei, and Tanimbar, which were coming under Makasar influence and had reportedly been visited by a great number of Makasar junks.[327]

Governor-General Specx's response must have left Lucasz with mixed feel-

326 Lucasz to Governor-General Specx, 26 September 1630, in VOC 1100, fol. 390.
327 Ibid., fol. 391.

ings. The governor-general's letter reached him in early February 1631, delivered by a sloop that sailed ahead of a fleet of five yachts, manned with 400 seasoned soldiers armed to the teeth. The force was commanded by Adriaen Anthonissen, an experienced major who had proven his worth during the sieges of Batavia. It brought two heavy twenty-four-pounder cannon, able to batter enemy walls down, and a number of lighter artillery pieces to be used on the kora-kora or other lighter vessels. Specx wrote that this force, when combined with the garrisons' soldiers, Ambon's urban militia of the free citizens, and the Company's local allies, should be sufficient 'to bring down the Makasars and all those who might presume to involve themselves with them, and force them to do what they have been bound to by so many solemn contracts and oaths.'[328] Lucasz now had exactly the kind of force he had requested, though later than he had hoped.

Then again, Specx was not particularly pleased with Lucasz – did Lucasz think he was the only one short on ships and manpower? The situation in which the Company found itself had simply not allowed Specx to send more ships than he had. Indeed, there had been times over the past year that there was not a single Company ship in front of the Batavia roadstead. To illustrate the point, Specx sent along a copy of the inventory of its naval power, which the Company made periodically. And although Lucasz had not been the only one to complain about the soldiers he had sent, Specx could do little more than send on what the Company had been allocated from the Netherlands. In fact, Maluku got the best of the lot, whereas Batavia currently had to make do with 'rabble and scum.'[329] As to Lucasz's proposed solution of merely cruising for Makasar junks, that was certainly not going to do the trick, as had been amply evidenced by his predecessors' experiences. Specx believed that establishing a clove monopoly would also require the use of force against those in Kambelo and Lesidi itself.

On that note, Specx could, with some understatement, 'in no way approve' of the way Lucasz had handled the situation at Kambelo the previous year. He claimed that Lucasz's justifications for and descriptions of the situation had been 'fabricated in order to cover up your cowardice and your errors,' and expressed his astonishment that Lucasz had allowed himself to be 'palmed off so terribly

328 Governor-General Specx to Lucasz, 8 January 1631, in: VOC 855 (unfol., 6th and 7th page of the letter).

329 The original letter speaks of 'Croats, Hungarians, Frenchmen and Englishmen' Although the Company soldiers were an international lot, Specx seems to be speaking figuratively here, with Croats a slur for untrustworthy soldiers and employees more generally, and Hungarian also being used to denote something messy.

by Moorish chatter, allowing the Makasars and the inhabitants to keep their honour, their victory and their cloves, while we are left with the damage and disgrace.'[330] All things considered, Lucasz's actions would have emboldened rather than discouraged the Makasars. In no uncertain terms, Specx told him that doing nothing at all would have been preferable to showing up before Kambelo with this impressive force, only to then be too squeamish to do anything. The truth of Specx's assertion can be gleaned from English correspondence from late 1630, which states that the traders from Makasars had been able to 'force the trade,' returning to Makassar with 300 *bahar* of cloves. What is more, now that the Makasars had 'prevailed' against the Dutch, the English might expect to buy substantial amounts of cloves in Makassar from then onwards.[331]

All the same, Specx seemed rather taken by the idea of these expeditions, which he much preferred to rebuilding a Company fort at Kambelo. He agreed that expeditions might be conducted annually. Although it was off to a late start, this one would turn out to be even more of a spectacular success than he might have expected.

The ships, supplemented by a good number of kora-kora, scattered through the islands to hunt for Makasar junks in the second half of February. They discovered that the Makasar traders had indeed been encouraged by the previous year's events. The islands were swarming with them. Anthonissen's journal is filled with descriptions of run-ins with Makasar junks at sea. Often the Dutch chased them on shore, either capturing the ships there or having to give up the chase for want of small craft able to navigate the shallow reefs. Landings were made throughout the islands to burn Makasar junks hidden on shore, with the crews usually hiding in the jungle and firing at the Company soldiers from cover. The attack on Kambelo, which Specx had so firmly insisted upon, did not materialise, however. Two of the yachts, the sloop, and ten of the kora-kora converged on Kambelo on the 8th of March for this purpose. There was not a single Makasar junk in sight, however, and the inhabitants immediately put themselves 'under our obedience,'[332] bringing a gift to the ships and professing peace and friendship. This left Lucasz with no legitimate reason to attack the town. Apparently the inhabitants had been less emboldened by what had transpired the previous

330 Ibid., 3rd page.

331 William Hoare, president at Bantam, to Court of Directors, 6 December 1630, as rendered in IOR G/10/1, p. 46.

332 Journaal Adriaan Anthonissen, January-June 1631, in VOC 1102, esp. fol. 352r (entry of the 8th of March).

Fig 5.3 Portrait of Philip Lucasz, Rembrandt van Rijn, 1635. Despite making a rather poor impression on Specx in 1630 and his expressed wish to go back to the Dutch Republic, Lucasz was appointed to be Council of the Indies after returning to Batavia. He would stay on in VOC service for two more years, before going home as commander of the return fleet in 1633. This portrait is one of a pair (the pendant depicts his wife Petronella Buys, whom he married shortly after his return). It shows him proudly holding the gold medal that the VOC had recently awarded him for his services. Two years in the Dutch Republic apparently cured him of his earlier desire for a quiet life in the Netherlands: not long after sitting for this portrait, he re-joined the VOC, and would ultimately die in Asia in 1641. Collection The National Gallery, London.

year than the Makasar traders. The fleet split up and left to hunt for Makasar junks further west.

A few days later, however, Anthonissen discovered where the Makasars had moved their main operation. While part of the fleet patrolled the area around Buru and Manipa, thirteen junks were sighted at the town of Norililla on the northeast coast of Manipa. One of the yachts was immediately sent off to Kelang, to summon the ships to join in an attack.

By the 19th of March, three yachts, the sloop, fourteen kora-kora, and two *tingans* were gathered before the town. Seven companies of soldiers and sailors (usually comprising eighty men each), landed under cover of cannon fire from the ships. Although Anthonissen's journal does not give much detail, it does describe how the troops first attacked a stronghold containing the Makasar 'lodge.' They seem to have been able to take it without much difficulty, for the occupants fled to a nearby hill from which they could fire on the Company soldiers. While they exchanged musket fire with the VOC troops, the lodge was burned along with the thirteen junks, which were loaded with rice and textiles. The soldiers then went back to the ships, having suffered eight dead and twenty-six wounded in the skirmish.[333] Four days later, the entire fleet was back before Castle Victoria.

At just this time, Lucasz's successor, Artus Gijsels, arrived in Ambon.[334] Gijsels was no stranger to the region: we already came across him in chapter three, as the eighteen-year-old protégé of Reael in 1611. He made his career in Ambon, where, by 1618, he became second in command to Van Speult. Returning to the Netherlands in 1620 as commander of the return fleet, he compiled his extensive knowledge of the Amboyna quarter into a report which was also highly critical of Coen's policies. He once again signed up with the East India Company in October 1628, requesting to be stationed at his old post, Ambon. After an extremely long and ill-fated journey, he arrived in Batavia only in December 1630 along with his young family and four young Christian Ambonese dignitaries. Having

333 Ibid., 353v. Anthonissen reckoned there had been more casualties on the Makasar side.

334 His arrival back from the Netherlands must have been considered a godsend by Specx, who, with Lucasz insistence on being replaced and the senior merchant having recently died, was just then worried about experience and continuity of the remaining officials stationed at Ambon Specx was, for this same reason, also annoyed by Lucasz's decision to send his new senior merchant, Evert Hulft, back to Batavia for a new position. Specx sent Hulft, who also happened to be a personal friend of Gijsels, right back to Ambon to be reinstalled. Governor-General Specx to Lucasz, 8 January 1631, in: VOC 855 (unfol.).

travelled with him to the Netherlands ten years earlier, they were now returning after completing studies in theology.[335]

So far, the expedition had been massively successful, with twenty-one Makasar junks captured or destroyed. Upon receiving information that some Makasar vessels were still around in the islands, Lucasz and his appointed successor went back out with the fleet on the 7th of May. This time the force comprised two yachts, six smaller craft, and thirteen kora-kora, manned with 400 Europeans and a thousand Ambonese. Three days later, they destroyed three junks hoisted up on shore at Erang. Although the Company troops landed in full force, expecting a fierce fight, the opposition was limited to a couple of volleys being fired at them from the cover of the jungle. The next day looked to be more challenging, however: they would be going to Kelang, the island where Makasar fort had stymied Van Speult's campaign five years earlier. A Chinese informant had told them that thirty Makasar vessels had been hoisted up onto the riverbed and about a thousand Makasars had established an elevated fortified position there.

This time, the Company troops did not have to contend with fortifications on the shoreline itself. The Makasars who tried to prevent their landing were subdued by cannon fire from the ships and retreated into their fortifications further uphill. Anthonissen's impression was that this was an attempt to lure Company troops inland, into an area that was strewn with caltrops. Anthonissen, however, was not interested in getting involved in a siege. He only occupied those areas on the shore that allowed the troops safely to destroy all the vessels there. Nineteen were burned in total; they were not only junks but also larger vessels, including a locally-built kora-kora.[336] Their business completed, the troops re-embarked having suffered no casualties. On the way back, the fleet paid a visit to Lesidi. Extremely frightened by the appearance of the Dutch, the inhabitants knocked down their own defences around the trade lodge so as to give no cause for any kind of attack. Anthonissen was only interested in taking in water and the fleet sailed on. After quietly landing the Chinese informant who had assisted them in their attack on Kelang and paying him a handsome reward, it was back at Ambon Castle by the 13th of May.

Newly sworn in as the new governor ten days after their return, Gijsels was

335 Meilink-Roelofsz, 'The private papers of Artus Gijsels', esp. pp 544-50.

336 Kelang, it bears reminding, was a local boat-building centre. Journaal Adriaan Anthonissen, January-June 1631, in VOC 1102, esp. fol. 355r-356r (entry of the 11th of May).

rather ecstatic about the campaign's success. It would seem that the expedition had saved the Company's position in the clove trade by the bell. An incredible forty-three Makasar vessels had been destroyed or taken: significantly more than had ever been known to visit the islands in a single season. 'It is as if it has rained junks this year. It is to be assumed that the foreigners had expected to be able to make themselves masters of the field this year, and take all the cloves away from us.'[337] Even despite the recent victory, he still expected them to have gotten away with some 300 *bahar* (amounting to about a quarter of the total 1630 harvest). He was determined to stop it ever reaching the Makasar market.[338]

Although the expedition had been extremely successful, the Company's new policy posed a new challenge: given that the strategy of planting clove trees in areas under direct VOC control was beginning to bear fruit, the directors in the Netherlands were increasingly worried that total production would rise beyond 'what the entire world can consume.'[339] The officials in Ambon also recognised this problem, with Gijsels noting that 'within a couple of years we'll have to burn our own cloves' if things continued down this path, even if the Company successfully kept other Asian traders away.[340] The only way that they saw to lower production was moving into Hoamoal and cutting down trees, as Van Speult had done in 1625. Even if they could find a justification for this, achieving it would border on the impossible: such an operation would require immense manpower, the terrain was difficult and unknown, the Dutch did not know where the cloves were cultivated, and the Hoamoalese would immediately replant trees that were cut down. Lucasz reminded his successor that Van Speult's actions had so embittered the Hoamoalese and led to so much mutual hatred that they could largely be considered the cause of the present trouble.[341]

Concluding remarks

Kaicili Ali's turbulent and dramatic career from 1627 to 1631 is perhaps one of the clearest illustrations of the entangled character of the power dynamics in the eastern archipelago, with which the clove trade was intimately connected. We

337 Gijsels to Governor-General, 23 May 1631. This part quoted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 185pp.
338 Production estimate from Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen,* 233-234.
339 Specx to Lucasz, 8 January 1631, in: VOC 855 (unfol.)
340 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1631, in: Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, esp. p. 186.
341 Lucasz, 'Sommier verbael…', 23 May 1631, printed in: Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave*, pp. 77-93, esp. 81.

saw how Ali, in the wake of his coming up short in the rivalry for the Ternaten throne, joined forces with the VOC to fight Makasar influence in the Ambon region. He then abandoned this course of action, apparently in a bid to establish his power base in these islands, which was ultimately unsuccessful. He went on to fight the Makasars throughout the eastern archipelago, from Tobungku to the Banggai Islands, before finally going out to protect Ternate's vassal and tributary Buton against Makasar encroachment.

The interplay among the interests of Kaicili Ali, the sultan of Ternate, the VOC, and the various regions of the Ambon Islands (all with their own particular political affiliations) indicates the deeply political character of the conflicts over cloves. On the one hand, the Dutch had become an inextricable part of these tensions. On the other, though, they had neither full control nor a full understanding of them. This incomplete grasp of what was going on contributed to a siege mentality among VOC officials in the islands, as did their lack of manpower and ships and the generally grim tenor of Dutch relations with other polities in the Ambon Islands in the wake of the 1625 campaign. We have seen, for instance, how the Dutch worried that all of the Muslim inhabitants of the islands were secretly conspiring against them. In turn, these anxieties made the Dutch contemplate extreme measures against the perceived threat. We have seen them fantasising about completely depopulating Hitu (officially a Dutch ally but tacitly considered a 'feigned friend') and then repopulating the area with Christian Ambonese. As noted, their adversaries probably felt just as besieged, and with more justification. All the same, it was this mood of anxiety and distrust on the Company side that led its officials to entertain increasingly extreme ideas about how they might achieve their goals in the islands. Paradoxically, the success of their clove planting efforts, which meant that ever-larger volumes of cloves were produced under their direct control, only created more incentive for intervening in other clove producing regions. Indeed, production was slowly outstripping global demand, threatening to render unprofitable the monopoly to which the Company aspired. The only way to combat this possibility was to cut or ringbark trees in those areas beyond direct VOC control.

The period's consequences for the military balance in the area are extremely mixed. On the one hand, in the wake of the campaign by the Nassau Fleet, the Company's military power in Asia was still entirely inadequate to the task of fulfilling its towering monopoly ambitions. Lucasz's terrible few months after Kaicili Ali's support melted away is a colourful case in point. Lucasz could find little consolation in the relative European military advantage in terms of armed ships,

artillery forts, and logistics and organisation, which is now generally recognised among students of global military history. Indeed, he had to deal with a complex and fluid political situation, which he could not figure out. With insufficient reinforcements, he faced up against combined Makasar-Kambelese fortifications that he saw no way to tackle.

In this respect, the Anthonissen campaign stands out starkly on account of its extreme success. On the one hand, this victory might tempt us to conclude that, when the Dutch were willing and able to dedicate military resources to a concerted campaign, they seemed able to achieve their goals relatively easily. Five well-armed yachts manned with 400 soldiers, in addition to their sailing crews, were enough to decisively change the balance of power in the islands in the first half of 1631. The fleet took more than forty Makasar junks, intimidated the Hoamoalese into keeping a low profile, and would scare the Makasar traders from the islands for the next season. On the other hand, the circumstances surrounding the formation of the Anthonissen fleet are somewhat unique. It arrived unexpectedly to the foreign traders and it limited itself to destroying the Makasar junks. Limiting the campaign to actions at sea and coastal landings, the force consciously refrained from any kind of siege or inland action. (The one town for which they would have made an exception, Kambelo, managed to stay out of harm's way.) The expedition was also unique in that it operated almost entirely without the help of the Dutch allies' kora-kora and *urembay.* That being said, this was unlikely to have contributed to its success, given that the Dutch lacked the small craft necessary to follow trading junks into coastal areas over shallow reefs. Additionally, although no Ambonese vessels took part in these actions, it is worth pointing out that the expedition's success hinged largely on indigenous informants. Lucasz had only been able to identify the foreign traders' usual hideouts with the help of Mardijker spies; the greatest success of the Anthonissen campaign – the burning of nineteen vessels at Kelang – resulted directly from a Chinese informant exchanging information for a reward.

Ultimately, perhaps we should not give too much importance to the Company's improbable success in this one season of campaigning against the clove traders. In subsequent years, it would become abundantly clear that the Spice Wars were far from won.