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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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X. A FAILED GAMBIT (1638-1643)

From late 1638 onwards, Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu sent embassy after embassy to Makassar, pleading for assistance. While some of the literature on the Ambon Islands briefly mentions them, the topic remains largely unexplored, including one particularly interesting aspect: these embassies came right in the wake of the peace agreement between Gowa and the VOC.⁶⁶⁵ The efforts from the Amboina Quarter to get Gowa to intervene there would be the litmus test for the new-found understanding between it and the Company for the next few years.

Ultimately, the treaty would not prove prohibitive to Gowan intervention in the region. The Makasars were happy to see how far they could push the clause about vessels caught in 'unfree waters' not being a cause for war, that had been included in the treaty on Gowan initiative. They would use it as a cover for their most concerted intervention yet in what would remain an extremely fractious and unstable region. Calling in Makasar aid, however, was also the ultimate bid Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu were able to make, coming at a huge price however things would turn out.

EMBASSIES TO MAKASSAR

Due to the internal discord in Hitu, governor Ottens was kept well-informed about what Kakiali was up to by the latter's detractors, particularly the perdana Tanihitumesen. In November 1638, Ottens knew, Kakili sent out his first embassy to Makassar: two vessels carrying 70 men, representing all the communities of Hitu, and led by Patiwani, who also spoke on behalf of kimelaha Luhu. They brought 10 bahar of cloves as a gift to the sultan.⁶⁶⁶

The delegates returned in April of the next year, on board a fleet of seventeen Makasar spice traders. The region was immediately awash in rumours that a

665 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 168-187 briefly describes all four embassies, with Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, II.2, 125-129 doing so even more briefly. Rijali was the head of the second embassy to Makassar and describes the embassies in the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, albeit summarily. The introduction to the published version gives some more background information. Rijali, *Historie van Hitu*, 57 and 185-189. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen*, 22, briefly mentions them. The literature on Makassar, interestingly, remains almost entirely quiet about them, with Feddersen, *Principled Pragmatism*, 13, basing himself on Knaap, only briefly mentioning them and Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 34-40, apparently entirely unaware of their existence, only mentioning their ultimate effect: the Makasar military intervention of 1642.

666 Ottens to Governor-General 15 April 1639, in VOC 1129, p. 680-725, esp. 682.

force of 3000 Makasars was on its way to turn the tide of the war, but Ottens, soon learning the details of the exchange in Makassar, knew this was not the case. The sultan had received the delegates, who had complained about how the Dutch went about enforcing their pretended monopoly, isolating the inhabitants from other Muslim nations and wreaking havoc on all those who still trading with them. They had come to 'fall before the sultan's feet' and ask for his assistance, also 'for our religion's sake.' The sultan's answer, however, had been rather measured: he informed the delegates that he was unwilling to break his recent peace with the Dutch and that, incidentally, the Makasar spice traders visiting the Ambon region had not been treated so well over recent years. If the delegates were serious about their request, he was happy to overlook all this, but in that case, they should really accept him as their lawful ruler and start paying tribute, in 'gold and young men.' The spice traders returning the delegates were armed as always, but, the sultan had emphasized, went to the region to 'seek their fortune' and not to fight the Dutch in his name. He gave the delegates letters for Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu stating as much, but, as a sign of good will, also sent two small cannon, some muskets and 'a bamboo filled with sand, as a sign of his military might, should they want to use it.'⁶⁶⁷

Ottens, while not yet greatly concerned, did send off a letter to Hendrick Kerkringh, the new Dutch senior merchant in Makassar. While the Dutch were not allowed to have a permanent presence in Makassar as part of the peace treaty, they did have a lodge assigned to them, which they could use during the trade season, from the beginning of the year to around September.⁶⁶⁸ Most of the year, therefore, there was actually a VOC presence in Makassar. Hendrick Kerkringh spent his time trying to corner the sandalwood trade, settling disputes with Makasar dignitaries outraged that their shipments of sandalwood had been taken by the VOC off Timor,⁶⁶⁹ and walking the tightrope of buying up as many cloves as possible to keep them out of the hands of European compet-

667 Ottens to Governor-General 15 May 1639, in VOC 1129, p. 726-736. Quotes from p. 727-728. 'Military power' is a translation of 'macht van volck.'

668 The treaty specified that the Dutch could use the lodge so long as Dutch ships were present, but in practice, Kerkringh could stay the entire trading season, even if no Dutch ships were anchored off the roads. He and his successors tended to arrive between November and February, when the ships could sail east from Batavia, and stay until around September, when the personnel could hitch a ride on the ships returning from Ambon.

669 De Roever, *Sandelhout*, 232-237.



Fig 10.1 The city of Makasar, c. 1638, as depicted in a watercolour by Johannes Vingboons made around 1665. The heavily fortified royal complex of Somba Opu sits squarely in the center of the city. The surrounding quarters feature, among other things, 'F. The quarter where the Portuguese mestizos have their residences, G. the quarter of the Gujaratis, [...] K. The Danish lodge, formerly occupied by the Dutch, L. the English lodge, M. The north side of the city, inhabited by both Makasars and many other nations, N. The new bazar or market on the south side of the city, which also has houses built onto it.' Collection Nationaal Archief, VELH0619.96.

itors, but trying to stay short of driving up their price too much, which would encourage the smuggling. He also duly kept tabs on everything that was going on, informing Batavia of the comings and goings of free traders, the English and Portuguese, and the number of vessels leaving for, or arriving from, the eastern archipelago. He was, however, understandably less tuned-in than his colleagues in Ambon, and seems to have entirely missed this first embassy by Patiwani. Duly warned, he kept an eye out for further diplomatic activity from Hitu and Hoamoal.⁶⁷⁰ This would turn out to be justified. Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu were undeterred by the sultan's initial lukewarm response. Ottens received word that Patiwani had been welcomed back into Wawani a hero, and that plans were immediately made to send another delegation, with their reply to the sultan, next October.⁶⁷¹ That delegation was sent out as planned, and led by none other than Imam Rijali.

Rijali himself, somewhat surprisingly, is rather reticent about the embassies. He limits himself to a brief description of what seems to be a conflation of the various embassies, noting that 'after some time, envoys from Hitu and Kambelo went with the orangkaya kimelaha to make their appearance before the ruler of Makassar, and request his aid for the religion of the Messenger of God.' He leaves it at that, and then goes right back to the events in the Ambon region itself.⁶⁷²

His own reticence notwithstanding, other sources make clear that Rijali spent a long and interesting time in Makassar. In June, the old sultan of Makassar, Ala'Uddin, had died. The new sultan, Malikussaid, had been designated to succeed him in July, but only acceded to the throne in December. Rijali would have been present in Makassar as the various ceremonies affirming Malikussaid

670 Ottens' letter to Kerckringh: 19 Mey 1639, in VOC 1129, 845-847. Kerckringh's reply does not apparently survive, but his letter to Batavia, dated 24 April 1639, makes no mention of the arrival of a delegation from Hitu. He does mention the departure of some 12 vessels from Makassar to Ambon in February and March, but seems unaware that these carried a Hituese delegation. VOC 1131, fol. 1299-1305.

671 Ottens to Governor-General, 9 June 1639, in VOC 1129, 740.

672 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 185. Late 1639 and all of 1640 are also poorly documented in the VOC archives. Two volumes of the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*, VOC 1132 and 1133, are missing, leading to a gap in the correspondence from both Ambon and Makassar, spanning from late 1639 to early 1641. As the *Dagh-register Batavia* is also missing for much of the same period (the volumes from 1638 and 1639 are missing, and the one describing 1640 only picks up in September), and the Generale Missiven do not apparently mention the embassies to Makassar throughout 1640, the following relies largely on Rumphius.

as the new ruler took place there. Rijali made his appearance at the Gowan court, presenting not only a large gift of cloves, but also a bowl of Hituese soil, symbolizing the surrender of Hitu to his rule. Apparently, he also told the sultan about the present situation in Hitu, and the fall-out among the various Hituese factions. This was understandably a matter of concern to the new ruler, as Rijali was therefore not in a position to speak for all of Hitu when he came to offer it up to the sultan. Less than thrilled about being presented a region that was basically in a state of civil war, Malikussaid decided to send an envoy of his own to Hitu to assess the situation, while Rijali himself was kept in Makassar for now, ending up staying there for a full year.⁶⁷³

THE WORLD CLOVE MARKET AND SHIFTING ALLEGIANCES IN HOAMOAL

Meanwhile, in the Ambon islands, after several years of undecided conflict, the support for kimelaha Luhu was steadily waning. July 1640 in particular was a turning point. In the wake of a successful hongi campaign to Boano, which had crushed an uprising against the Dutch-allied sengaji and had been a real boost to the VOC's prestige in the region, kimelaha Luhu and governor Ottens met in the Bend of Kaibobo to negotiate. A cousin of kimelaha Luhu named Majira had set up the meeting, and had ostensibly pressed his uncle to try and come to an understanding with the Dutch. While kimelaha Luhu was apparently ready to sue for peace, he was not ready to agree to Ottens' demand of allowing the building of a VOC redoubt at Kambelo, and the negotiations ultimately went nowhere.⁶⁷⁴

This seems to have hailed the rise to prominence of this Majira, who was more willing to cooperate with the Dutch. As many of the Hoamoalese communities were 'tired of the war', and therefore disappointed at kimelaha Luhu's failure to make peace, many of the Hoamoalese orangkaya turned to his young cousin instead, drinking a *matakau* together to seal the new arrangements. Majira promptly went to the castle to present his credentials as the new leader of these communities. When Ottens, wary of some kind of double-dealing, suggested that, in that case, he and his new followers might prove their sincerity by organising a headhunting raid against the settlement of Loki on Hoamoal's east coast, Majira promptly obliged. With the help of their newfound ally, it seemed, the Dutch were slowly but steadily gaining control of Hoamoal, while kimelaha Luhu's influence was crumbling. With Boano subdued and most of the Hoamo-

673 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 181.

674 *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1640-1641, 50-53 (9 October 1640).

alese communities throwing in their lot with Majira, the only areas still loyal to kimelaha Luhu were Kambelo and Erang on the west coast, and Loki on the east coast.⁶⁷⁵ After years of struggle to gain some control over the region, such control now suddenly dropped into the Company's lap.

This happened so abruptly that it merits taking pause and wondering about its deeper causes. While the inhabitants of the region were certainly justified in being tired of the war, which had been raging on and off since 1625, this does not explain the abrupt waning of the deep antipathy which the Company's activities had generated over the previous decades. We may speculate that internal political developments in Hoamoal would have played a role, but the sources remain quiet on the wider effects of Hamzah's 1638 visit, or the background to Majira's sudden appearance on the scene. We are, however, in a position to consider the influence of another development: the economics beneath the conflict. It bears reminding that it was the extreme profitability of cloves, a result of the huge arbitrage potential that the Dutch themselves had created with their exclusive contracts and fixed low prices, that was the foundation for the large and clearly affluent towns that Gijsels had marvelled at before destroying them; had bought the favour of visiting Ternaten officials; had kept well-armed fleets of traders from Java and Makassar coming; and had fuelled both the willingness and ability of the leaders of the region to stand up to the Company. From the second half of the 1630s onwards, however, the price of cloves was dropping worldwide.

Whereas the VOC had fixed the price for those under contract to exclusively deliver to them at or around 60 rials, the price in Makassar was often 300 rials in the early 1630s. By 1639, when the VOC was once again trading in Makassar, it hovered around 200, and in 1641, when the VOC's Danish and English competitors in Makassar were both temporarily strapped for cash, it dropped to 100, with cloves on the Makasar market still remaining unsold.⁶⁷⁶ Over the same period, the VOC became more successful in chasing down and destroying the

675 Ibid., 53-55. Hitu, it should be noted, presents a more mixed view over this same period: see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 180-184.

676 The contracts with Hitu, Hoamoal and Ternate set the price at 60; Makian had a worse deal, getting only 50, which was cause for much chagrin and discussion during Van Diemen's visit. See VOC 11126, fol. 463r-v. (18 June 1638.) Prices of over 300 rials: Knaap ed., *Memories van Overgave*, 107. Prices in Makassar in 1639: Kerkringh, invoices of the cloves loaded onto the ships *Buren* and *Son*, May 1639 in: VOC 1131, p. 1310-1314. Prices in Makassar in 1641 and plight of VOC's European competitors: Van Diemen and Council to directors, 12 december 1641, quoted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, III, 13.

Makasar ships in the Ambon region – also because fewer were apparently taking the risk due to the lower prices. In spite of his military campaigns elsewhere, Van Diemen was still able to send out enough ships to Amboina to keep the pressure on. In 1640, for instance, only seven Makasar junks were reported in the islands, and the VOC ships were able to catch and destroy all of them.⁶⁷⁷ Hendrick Kerkringh, from his post in Makassar, also noted that relatively small quantities of cloves came onto the market, and that a bigger share of what did, actually came from Spanish Ternate, rather than the Ambon islands.⁶⁷⁸

Lower prices in Makassar kept pace with lower prices in Europe over the same period. This was the result of deliberate policy of the Company directors, who, partly in response to Brouwer's exasperated plea of 1634, started paying out dividends to their shareholders in cloves from 1635 onwards, in what constituted a deliberate effort to flood the market and drive down prices. It worked: Dutch market prices went down sharply, with prices in, for instance, London, responding.⁶⁷⁹ This, in turn, would have influenced the prices that the English and Danes would have been able to pay in Makassar. It seems, therefore, that Brouwer's plea, and the directors' subsequent policy with regard to clove sales, actually went a long way to reaching the Company's goals in the eastern archipelago.

677 *Dagh-Register*, 1640-1641, 47-49 (9 October 1640).

678 Kerkring, 'Corte Remonstrantie' (24 September 1638), in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 335-337, esp. 336; Kerkringh to Van Ottens, 18 and 27 Oct. 1638, in VOC: 1131, fol 1308r – 1309r.

679 Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic trade*, 94-95, notes how the price immediately dropped from 5.40 fl. to 3.28 fl. per pond over the course of 1635, and then continued to drop down to 2.41 fl. per pond by 1642. Pim de Zwart. *Globalization and the Colonial Origins of the Great Divergence: Intercontinental Trade and Living Standards in the Dutch East India Company's Commercial Empire, c. 1600-1800*. Leiden: Brill, 2016, p. 64, shows the same drop. Bassett, 'English trade in Celebes', 12-15, notes a similar drop in London over exactly the same period, but contends that this is probably the result of the English still able to secure large amounts of cloves in Asia, in spite of Kerkringh's reports to the contrary. This seems unlikely, both in the light of what we know about developments in Makassar and in Europe, and it seems far more likely that the price was responding to the prices on the European mainland as a result of the VOC flooding the market. In March 1641, the directors reminded Van Diemen that 'we have distributed such a great capital in cloves to our shareholders, to dissuade the foreign traders from [this trade] due to the low prices in Europe.' Directors to Van Diemen, 15 March 1641, in: VOC 316, fol. 330v.

'THESE LANDS WILL BE UTTERLY LOST'

Kimelaha Luhu and Kakiali, however, remained undaunted by the economic and political tide turning against them. They had bet on Makassar coming to their aid, and were feeling they were making progress in the negotiations. In late October, they sent a third delegation to Makassar. Kakiali sent Imam Tawole, who was to emphasize the dire straits the Muslims of the region had found themselves in, and to impress upon the sultan the need for Makasar intervention in the name of Islam. Kimelaha Luhu decided to go to Makassar in person.⁶⁸⁰

This was cause for alarm among the orangkaya of Lesidi, Luhu, Boano and others allied to the Dutch. When word that kimelaha Luhu had left for Makasar made the rounds, they expected that Makasar intervention in the region would surely follow. They immediately sent off two delegates with a letter to Sultan Hamzah, summing up the various threats and troubles they were facing, and particularly the threat of Makasar intervention. They impressed upon the sultan that if he did not return to the region with a large military force, the consequences might be dire: 'if your Highness will not appear here in person within three months, your Highness need no longer take account of these lands, as they will be utterly lost and fall into the hands of the Makasars.'⁶⁸¹

While the letter, and its loud and alarmist delivery by the delegates, caused no small amount of 'dismay and commotion' among the Ternaten officials, Hamzah and Ternaten governor Antonio Caen, after giving it some thought, did not actually put a whole lot of stock in the prediction that Makasar forces would try and wrest the region from Company control. In their estimation, 'the king of Makassar was better-versed in affairs of state than to risk his own kingdom... and lightly dissolve the recent bond with the Dutch, on account of the a transfer of power being offered by a renegade servant such as kimelaha Luhu.'⁶⁸² The sultan decided to stay in Ternate, excusing himself in a letter to his subjects.⁶⁸³

680 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 182-183.

681 Quoted in *Dagh-register Batavia*, 160-1641, 324-326 (23 May 1641). Note that the letter was originally sent somewhere in late 1640, and had arrived in Ternate 3 December 1640.

682 Caen to Van Diemen, 20 April 1641, excerpted in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, III, 25-35. Quote on p 26-27.

683 Quoted in *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1640-1641, 326-327 (23 May 1641). The letter was written in December 1640. Hamzah excused himself by stating that he had requested that the governor-general come to Ternate with a large fleet, and how would it look if the latter actually did, only to find the sultan and his forces gone? He added the formal point that the letter had not been accompanied by representatives of all those that

Similarly unconcerned, but increasingly annoyed, was governor-general Van Diemen. In 1639, in a letter congratulating Malikussaid as the new sultan of Gowa, he had already impressed upon him 'to pay no heed to the envoys of Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu, and not give them audiences, as they are bad, evil and unjust people who we will soon deal with by fire and sword.'⁶⁸⁴ By early 1641 he was fed up with the continuing diplomatic contact. 'This is a matter of great consequence and calamity', he wrote to the sultan.⁶⁸⁵ He requested that he not only refrain from receiving or aiding any such delegates, but that he arrest them and deliver them straight to the Company. While retaining a friendly and differential tone to the sultan himself, he was rather more fierce in his instructions to Kerkringh on the matter. 'Discretely make clear to the king and the princes that it is not to our liking that he keeps secret contacts and such great correspondence with these traitors, and that this is not at all proper among friends and allies,' he instructed.⁶⁸⁶ The sultan wrote back that he was disinclined to arrest kimelaha Luhu, and had escorted him back to the Ambon region, along with the other delegates, 'as he is an important person in own land... and with respect to the Muslim laws.' He privately assured Kerkringh, however, that he had refused their request for military aid.⁶⁸⁷

That was not the impression in Ambon. Even before the return of the delegates, Kakiali had started building lodgings for the Makasar forces he expected, and in February, he openly besieged Ureng, which had sided with the Company the year before, prompting the VOC and its allies to come to its aid. This marked a clear departure from his earlier attempts to at least do nothing that would provoke a military response from the Company. Adding to the VOC's concern was that Kakiali was apparently assisted by a force of Butonese which had recently made its appearance in Hitu, led by a man simply called Kaicili Buton by the Hituese.⁶⁸⁸ Then, in April, the delegates, not only including kimelaha Luhu but also Rijali, arrived back, on a fleet of twenty Makasar junks. While VOC vessels

had written and signed it i.e. the sengaji of Lesidi, the three soas of Luhu, the perdana Tanihitumesen and the sengaji of Boano, as was a customary way of affirming the letter's credentials.

684 Van Diemen to Sultan Malukussaid, 14 December 1639, in: VOC 863, p. 678-681. Quote on p. 680.

685 Van Diemen to Sultan Malukussaid, 7 February 1641, in: VOC 865, p. 9-12, esp. p. 10.

686 Instructions for Hendrick Kerkringh, in VOC 865, p. 2-9, esp. p. 5.

687 Assurance to Kerkringh in: *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1640-1641, 280-282 (11 May 1641).

Letter from Sultan Malikussaid to Van Diemen: op cit., 383-384 (3 August 1641.)

688 Letter from Ambon (author unspecified, but by Ottens and/or Domkens), received in

and flotillas of *kora-kora* successfully caught and destroyed most of these vessels soon after they arrived, some 150 Makasars did settle into the lodgings below Wawani and assisted Kakiali in his subsequent military exploits. They went on the rampage against the VOC-allied villages in the vicinity, enslaving some of the population to be taken back to Makassar as war booty. They threatened the larger settlement of Hila, informing its orangkaya that they would meet the same fate if they did not join Kakiali. In August, they mounted a surprise attack on Larike, which was burned down before anyone had a chance to respond.⁶⁸⁹

While the 150 warriors from Makassar certainly bolstered Kakiali's forces and confidence, they did not constitute the huge game-changing intervention that he and kimelaha Luhu had hoped and pleaded for. They had reason to believe, however, that this was just the start, and that the real force would arrive when the next western monsoon came through. Just to be sure, they sent out another embassy in late 1641, led by Tamalesi, the orankaya of Wakal, and another imam, named Mailoan.⁶⁹⁰ Company officials would only learn of this later on, as this time, the preparations were kept 'entirely secret'. Simon Domkens, the senior merchant who was the head of day-to-day affairs in Ambon after Ottens had unexpectedly died, was, however, sure that another embassy was in the making. Van Diemen, meanwhile, penned another letter to the sultan, expressing his regret that he had not heeded his request to arrest kimelaha Luhu. The latter, Van Diemen took care to emphasize, 'was a rebel against the Ternaten sultan, Hamzah, his lord and master, and not an important but a selfish person.' He insisted that, when the next embassy would make its appearance, the sultan would arrest and extradite its members. Also, just in case the sultan would get it into his head to actually intervene in Ambon, he told him that he was planning to send 'a mighty armada to the Amboina quarter this season, to bring the troubles there to an end, and to punish kimelaha Luhu, Kakiali and their associates as they deserve.'⁶⁹¹ This time, the sultan responded by coming to the Dutch lodge in person, followed by an entire suite including Pattingalloang, Burani and other high officials, to personally give the Dutch a lesson in proper diplomacy. They told Kerkringh that, while they had refused the delegates' offer of the crown over these lands, they would certainly not extradite them: 'This was an improper re-

Batavia 1 October 1640, as summarized in *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1640, p. 454. Kaicili Buton is reported to be from the family of the sultan of Buton there.

689 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 187.

690 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 187.

691 Van Diemen to Sultan Malukussaid, 18 November 1641, in VOC 865, p. 564-567.

quest, to simply capture an embassy from a free nation and then turn these over to another nation as prisoners.’ The officials delicately added that it was not their policy to lay down the law as to where their people could and could not trade, and reminded them of the provisions to that effect in the 1637 treaty before taking their leave. Meanwhile, the official denial notwithstanding, it was rumoured that the sultan was preparing 29 vessels, with 2000 men on board and heavily armed and stocked with ammunition, to sail to the Amboina Quarter.⁶⁹²

Van Diemen would only learn of that rumour later. In December 1641, while noting Gowa’s expansionist tendencies, particularly on and around Timor, and the clandestine support the sultan was giving to Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu, he felt it was ‘out of the question’ that Gowa would openly intervene in Amboina with a major military force, ‘as Dutch naval power is simply too formidable for them.’⁶⁹³ His announcement to Sultan Malikussaid that he would personally lead a ‘mighty armada’ to the region was apparently mere bluster. Just to be sure, though, he did send a few more ships than usual to the Amboina Quarter, and ordered Antonio Caen, who was to become the new governor of Amboina, to come down from Ternate with three ships.

MAKASSAR’S INTERVENTION

Caen was briskly fighting the war against the Spanish and Tidore, which had reignited there with a vengeance, when news of his new station reached him in late January. He duly made his way to Ambon, arriving there by the 21st of February. Even though no ‘mighty armada’ had been sent, there was a generous number of Company vessels in the region at the time, and his first act as governor was to send out no less than twelve of them to block hostile coasts and patrol the known staging areas of the foreign traders. What with the dwindling number of followers of kimelaha Luhu and Kakiali, he had enough ships to blockade every bit of hostile shore at Hitu and Hoamoal, and then some. Five ships were sent out to various places around the Hoamoal peninsula, both to blockade their enemies and protect allied communities like Lesidi; two to block the Hituese coast near Wawani; four to the various known staging areas of the foreign traders around Manipa and Buru; and two all the way to eastern Seram, where the foreign

692 Makassar to Antonio Caen in Ternate (unsigned), 28 December 1641, in: VOC 1138, p. 581r – 582r.

693 General letter of 12 December 1641, in *Bouwstoffen*, III, 14. He utters similar sentiments in his letter to Simon Domkens of 18 November 1641, in VOC 865, p. 576-579.

traders had apparently once again moved operations the previous year as the situation around Hoamoal became more difficult for them. Two weeks later, he convened the *landraad*, informing them that as 'the foreign traders were once again to be expected in the islands any day now', he would like to send out the *hongi* to patrol the waters. Arrangements were made to form four squadrons of five or six *kora-kora* each, with the rest remaining on standby to run errands in the region if necessary.⁶⁹⁴

Caen, it may be remembered, had taken no stock in the notion of a major Makasar military intervention in the region, so he must have been surprised when, less than two weeks later, reports came pouring in of dozens of Makasar vessels spotted at sea, making their way to the Hituese coast. Makassar really had come to the aid of Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu in force. Surprised or not, however, Caen was well-equipped to rise to the challenge, with a major force of ships and *kora-kora* already guarding the coasts of Hitu and Hoamoal.

On the 21st of March, a total of 26 Makasar vessels landed on the Hituese coast; seventeen of them right beneath Wawani and another nine slightly further west, near Lebalehu. While the two VOC yachts patrolling the coast could not avoid the landing, they caught up soon after, giving the Makasars no time to unload their supplies, haul up their craft and construct their usual temporary fortifications. Caen noted he could hear the incessant bombardment from the two ships all the way in Castle Victoria. While one thousand Makasar warriors had successfully made landfall, their vessels were all destroyed, with all their supplies and ammunitions. This inauspicious start immediately soured relations between Kakiali and the Makasars, who were furious at the loss of their ships. Equally importantly, their foodstuffs had been destroyed. Due to the dwindling political support of Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu on Seram, the sago groves around Loki were Kakiali's only remaining substantial source of staple foods. Feeding an additional one thousand mouths would prove challenging, and the Makasars would soon sustain themselves by requisitioning or plundering their food from friend and foe alike.⁶⁹⁵

All the same, a thousand Makasar warriors drastically changed the power

694 Caen to Van Diemen and Council, 30 April 1642, in: VOC 1138, fol. 471-500, esp. 471-486v. The letter is elaborately summarized in *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1641-1642, 1-6 (Ambon), 30-38 (Ternate). Some communities, most notably those of Hitu's west side, were excused from participating as they were embroiled in the war with Kakiali and needed their men to defend themselves.

695 *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1641-1642, 7-8.

balance in the island, and seemed to confirm the earlier fears of the Company's allies. Their landing immediately caused widespread panic. Kakiali, seizing upon this, warned the inhabitants of Hila to either join him at Wawani or face the consequences. The alarmed inhabitants packed their belongings and moved to Hitulama, where the VOC redoubt offered some protection from the Makasar threat; the Dutch subsequently burned Hila down to make sure it was not used as a hideout.

Two days after the landing, the Makasars attacked Hitulama itself, burning part of the town and conquering the rest. Most of the population fled up into the mountains to Kapahaha, but the garrison of the VOC redoubt soon found itself besieged. It was able to beat off three storm attacks in the course of the day, but was getting dangerously low on powder and ammunition. It was only after nightfall that a soldier was able to sneak out into the darkness and make for Castle Victoria overland to call for help. After the soldier made his report, Caen took immediate action. He sent out two ships, which had freshly arrived from Batavia earlier that day, right back out to sail around Hitu and relieve the besieged. In the meantime, he sent a small force totaling only 35 Company soldiers, Ambonese allies and slaves into the night via the overland route with a stock of munition and gunpowder, on the off-chance that they could reach the redoubt.

As the small column of 35 people made it over the mountain range and descended towards Hitulama, it was in fact noticed by the besiegers – but in the darkness, it was mistaken for a much larger force. Rather unexpectedly, the besiegers, under the impression that they were about to be attacked from behind and find themselves stuck between this new force and the redoubt, beat a hasty retreat. The desperate bid to get some supplies to the besieged ended up breaking up the siege altogether. The small force made it into the redoubt unopposed. The hasty retreat might be partially explained by the blow that Makasar morale had already suffered in the course of the day, as it turned out the Makasars had taken a substantial number of casualties during their storm attacks. In the direction of Wawani, the forest was scattered with the dead bodies and the supplies that had been left behind in what must have been a disorderly retreat.⁶⁹⁶

More bad news for the Makasars came in over the next few days: another, smaller fleet of five Makasar vessels had apparently made for Kambelo, but had first been caught near Buru, where two vessels had been destroyed. The remaining three had made for Manipa, but the population there, apparently not too

696 *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1641-1642, 9-10.

happy with the prospect of having to play host to a Makasar force, kept them from landing by force of arms. The remaining three vessels eventually managed to make landfall elsewhere on Manipa, with the Dutch ships right on their heels. The crew fled into the interior, and the Dutch got hold of the vessels, finding 140 barrels of English gunpowder, a 100 pounds each, in the holds.

Caen had requested to be allowed to go back to the Netherlands before he had been hastily dispatched to the Ambon region, and his replacement as governor was therefore already underway, having left well before news of the recent Makasar intervention had reached Batavia. The new prospective governor, Gerard Demmer, had spent part of his earlier career in Banda, and had been *fiscaal* in Batavia before being promoted to Council of the Indies and sent to Ambon to become governor there. As he arrived there on the 23rd of March, he found himself in a rather more interesting situation than he might have expected. Under the circumstances, the two officials thought it best if Caen remained governor for a few more months before actually transferring command and going back home.

Over the next few months, the Makasars remained a force to be reckoned with, not only on Hitu but also on Hoamoal. Reports abounded of Makasar fleets having been spotted in the region, for instance, on Seram's north coast, and around eastern Seram. In early May, ten Makasar vessels were spotted off the Lease islands, having apparently come from the east, and three more landed on Hitu's north coast at Mamala, on the coast below Kapahaha. Once again, a VOC ship was right on top of it, and with help from the Hitulama garrison, was able to set fire to the vessels and their cargo of rice, sago and gunpowder.⁶⁹⁷ Once again, the Makasar crew was able to get away, moving inland and establishing a small fort on a hill near Kapahaha, where they received supplies and reinforcements from Kakiali.⁶⁹⁸

After that first failed attack on Hitulama, however, the Makasars on Hitu mostly stayed on the defensive, which made them a nuisance rather than a real threat. Caen and Demmer were increasingly unconcerned with them – so much

697 *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1641-1642, 14-15. The vessels also carried massoia bark, salt 'and other necessities', and were reported to have also brought packs with assorted textiles for the orangkaya, to be exchanged for cloves, bearing testimony to the degree to which war, political protection and trade were intertwined.

698 *Ibid.*, 15. Demmer subsequently tried to pressure the head of Kapahaha, Telukibesi, to attack this Makassar stronghold and thus prove his loyalty, but Telukibesi was loth to openly choose sides under the circumstances.

so, that on the 21st of May, they left castle Victoria for a tour around Hoamoal, shoring up relationships and seeing where they could harm kimehala Luhu. From Lesidi, after being welcomed there by the local orangkaya and inspecting their fortification, they staged a mock attack on Kambelo from the sea side, which enabled another force to quietly approach from the landside and cut or ringbark no less than 4000 clove trees growing in the area. They continued their tour along Hoamoal's west coast and its adjacent islands, but soon saw themselves forced to move to the east coast instead, as word reached them of an attack on Laala. An apparently separate group of Makasars, also reported to number about a thousand, had reached Loki earlier, and joined kimelaha Luhu on a campaign.⁶⁹⁹ They had burned the town of Laala and its surrounding villages, sending the population fleeing towards the small Dutch fortification there, and soon laying siege to the garrison itself.⁷⁰⁰ When Demmer and Caen arrived on the 9th of June, other VOC ships patrolling the east coast were already on the scene and had sent the attackers fleeing. The two small nearby communities, who had seen themselves forced to switch sides to kimelaha Luhu in the face of his attack, were punished by the VOC forces and their allies: the villages were burned down, the clove trees, some 2000 of them, cut or ringbarked.⁷⁰¹

All in all, the initial panic notwithstanding, the Makasar intervention was going nowhere. By July, the orangkaya of Kambelo and the other remaining areas loyal to the kimelaha Luhu on the west side of Hoamoal were willing to negotiate, sending delegates to castle Victoria.⁷⁰² On the 20th of August, they agreed to abide by the treaty of 1638, to accept the sultan of Ternate as their ruler, to no longer associate themselves with either Kakiali or the kimelaha Luhu, to surrender their forts, arms and ammunition, and to allow the VOC to build warehouses and forts in their domains. This, then, left kimelaha Luhu effectively without followers outside Masili, where he was then residing, and Loki on the east coast, which was still occupied by the Makasars.

Demmer and Caen made immediate work of the now obtained permission

699 It seems reasonable to assume a connection to the fleet spotted on the north coast of Seram earlier, but no-one apparently reported their exact movements and the connection is not explicitly made in the VOC sources.

700 The fortification at Laala had been built only two years earlier, largely by, and on the initiative of, the local population, who had requested a garrison to protect them from kimelaha Luhu after joining Majira. See Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 182.

701 Dagh-register, 1641-42, 20-21.

702 Those other areas were Erang, Kelang, Hateputi, Asaudi, and Boano.

to build a fort at Kambelo, sailing there with two yachts two days after the treaty was signed. Upon arrival, most of the local fortifications were demolished; two directly on the shoreline, and one strategically situated on a hill a little further south, however, were occupied and reinforced. The fortification on the hill would later be turned into a full VOC blockhouse. Some of the Kambelese fortifications were still occupied by Makasars when the VOC ships arrived; after the first confrontation, however, these were hastily abandoned, their occupiers fleeing into the interior.

Kimelaha Luhu, still holed up just a little inland at Masili, would have been able to see how the Dutch were bringing Kambelo under their control, and were thus also cutting him off from making his way to Wawani, as the Dutch suspected he had planned. Demmer and Caen sent him a message that if he wanted to avoid his utter ruin, he had better come down and talk. Four days after their arrival, a visibly anxious and dejected kimelaha Luhu came down to Kambelo to swear his loyalty to the Dutch and the sultan of Ternate. 'God give that it may last long and will be acted out', Demmer and Caen wrote to Batavia.⁷⁰³ For now, it looked as if it did: when Company ships returned later that month to build the blockhouse to the south of Kambelo and see if they could get the population set up lime kilns there, the erstwhile kimelaha helped them with the latter project in the capacity of *maringo*, a kind of foreman.

Most of what was left of the Makasar forces was meanwhile packing and leaving. Rumours went around of seven Makasar vessels having left in August, taking surprisingly few cloves as the previous harvest had been meagre, but making big promises of returning the next season with an even bigger force. More Makasar vessels managed to leave from Hitu in September, bringing yet another delegation to request that the sultan return with another force next year. Some of the Makasars and Butonese on Hitu, however, stayed on in their fortifications along the coast and in the hills below Wawani and Kapahaha. Over the following months, governor Demmer would have the coast intensely patrolled to make sure that they did not receive any sago or other supplies.

FALL-OUT

In the wake of all this Van Diemen had to consider what to do about Makassar. It was abundantly clear that what had happened over the past year had little

703 Demmer to Governor-General and Council, 13 September 1642, in: VOC 1138, fol. 533-551, quote on 534r.

to do with free traders trying their luck, but was a serious attempt 'to bring Hitu and Kambelo, which... had been offered to him, under his protection'. Van Diemen was aware that the Makasar fleet had been headed by two Gowan *Karaeng*.⁷⁰⁴ Gowa was therefore pretty much waging open war on the Company in the Ambon islands, flaunting the peace treaty. Van Diemen was also aware, however, that the last war against Gowa had not exactly worked to the benefit of the Company, that he was already fighting a generous number of campaigns throughout Asia at the time, that very few cloves had actually reached Makassar the past season and that the Makasar military intervention in the Ambon region had terribly backfired. There seemed, all in all, little to be gained from renewed open hostilities with Gowa.

He therefore limited his response to a mildly displeased yet circumspectly phrased letter, uttering his disappointment about Makasar actions in the Ambon region. He took care to emphasize that those actions had been a complete failure, that he had sent another 'immense force' to the Ambon region, and the Company therefore had nothing to fear from foreign enemies, 'whoever they may be'. Should the sultan persist in such deviousness, the Company would have to respond in kind, which would be calamitous for all involved. It would prefer, however, to remain at peace, so would the sultan please communicate his heartfelt intention to uphold the treaty?⁷⁰⁵ Adriaan van Zuytwijk, who had succeeded Hendrick Kerkringh as the senior merchant sent to Makassar every trade season, was later assured by both sultan and chancellor that they would, indeed, like to remain at peace with the Dutch. He reported that only five vessels had left for Amboina that season, only going out to pick up the remaining Makasar troops there.⁷⁰⁶

In any case, the debacle that the operation had turned into would not have enticed the Gowan court to pursue its attempts any further. Additionally, the brewing conflict with Bone was escalating at the time and would precipitate a full-blown war within South-Sulawesi later in 1643, which made it a particularly

704 Cummings, *The Makassar Annals*, 60, mentions the mustering of the troops and names the commanders as I Baliung and I Daeng Battu. Van Diemen calls the two commanders Demoliaen and Tomanucouw. (Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, III, 41.) Rumphius names the leaders of the fleet as Bondomenompa, Moliran and Mangappa (the brother of the king) and Daijn Boelekan. (Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 189.)

705 Van Diemen and Council to the sultan of Gowa, 16 February 1643, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, III, 161-162.

706 Van Zuytwijk to Caen, 6 March 1643, in: VOC 1142, p. 304-305.

inopportune moment for overseas military adventures.⁷⁰⁷ In the event, the few Makasar vessels sent out to pick up the remaining warriors at Hitu, would never arrive at their destination. The Makasars who had stayed on in Hitu, were on their own.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Trying to assess kimelaha Luhu's and Kakiali's insistence on staking everything on Makasar intervention, it looks like a desperate bid – risky, and yielding them little even if successful. Gowa had every intention to levy tribute. Although we lack trustworthy sources about the exact negotiations, word about the outcome of Rijali's visit had it that the sultan had demanded a yearly tribute of 1000 ba-har of cloves – the better part of total clove production in the region.⁷⁰⁸ Another interesting indication of the difficult nature of the relation is the fact that the two ambassadors who returned on board the large Makasar intervention fleet, did not make it back to Ambon alive. Both were killed en route by the Makasars, under unclear circumstances.⁷⁰⁹ All in all it seems that Gowa, if it had been successful, would have aspired to become an overbearing overlord in its own right, and was not making it a secret. It would therefore seem that kimelaha Luhu and Kakiali saw little other choice as their political and economic position deteriorated from mid-1640 onwards, finding themselves in such a deep hole that they saw no option but to keep digging.

More difficult to interpret are the Gowan motives for ultimately intervening in 1642. While the perhaps 2000 Makasars who fought in Hitu and Hoamoal certainly had a momentary impact on the military balance in the islands, and they certainly faced some terrible reversals that would have been difficult to foresee, it seems unlikely that the Gowan rulers believed that this campaign would be enough to really lay claim to these territories, in a region where the VOC had such a strong military presence, and in which it was so invested.⁷¹⁰ Possibly, the

707 Andaya, *The heritage of Arung Palakka*, 39-41, briefly describes the evolution of the conflict. Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 189, mentions the conflict with Bone as a specific reason for the Makasars not intervening in 1643. By the time the war with Bone was over, as we will be seeing below, both kimelaha Luhu and Kakiali would be dead and their original power base all but gone.

708 Letter of various leaders of the Ambon region to the sultan of Ternate, in: *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1640-1641, 325 (23 May 1641).

709 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 187.

710 As to the number of Makasar warriors: a letter by Van Diemen to Directors, 12 December 1642, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, III, 41, estimates it to be 1200. This estimate

attack was merely meant to establish a beach head as part of a envisioned longer campaign, or the attack simply never fully materialized as intended. The reports and rumours of Makasar activity at eastern Seram and the north coast seem suggestive of the latter.

By September, with kimelaha Luhu defeated, Kambelo fortified by the Company and most of the Makasars dead, gone or packing, Caen felt that the time had come to leave the governorate to Gerard Demmer, who had certainly had a fire baptism in the politics of the region over the past few months. He was sworn in on the 13th of September. While Hoamoal now seemed under the VOC's control, Kakiali and his power base remained a problem to be dealt with. Demmer intended to finish the job. In his first letter as governor, he requested from Batavia a sizeable armada to be sent the next season, either led by the governor-general himself or one of the Councils of the Indies, as early in the season as possible, to pre-empt any new Makasar fleet and have enough time before the onset of the rainy season to 'tremendously punish these faithless oath breakers for their treachery, as an example to others.'⁷¹¹ He would not be disappointed.

does not seem to account for the Makasar forces on Hoamoal, which appear to have been a separate force initially, so it might be on the low side.

711 Demmer to Governor-General and Council, 13 September 1642, in: VOC 1138, fol. 533-551, quote on 541v. The passage is also included almost entirely in *Dagh-Register Batavia*, 1641-1642, 27, with only the mention of the possible new Makasar fleet missing.

