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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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# Spice War

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

## Proefschrift

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*Cover image: attack on Asaudi, 1655. Detail from image of the conquest of Erang in the Brussels manuscript copy of Bor,* Amboinse oorlogen. *Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982.*

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Dissertation writing has a wholly undeserved reputation of being a lonely enterprise. Rather, it has been my experience that, much like it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to finish a dissertation, and I am indebted to so many generous and inspiring people that I can't possibly thank all of them adequately here.

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Simon Ferdinand edited the bulk of the final text, making it much better. Armand Haye made the wonderful reference maps. Chia, of Hasanuddin University, translated Makasar military manuals into Indonesian for me. Louie Buana translated the summary into Indonesian.

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shared visit to London, during which we combined our research with discussing and sharing insights and findings, stands out as particularly fun and productive. The great influence these exchanges had will speak from what follows.

My visits to Indonesia vastly enriched my understanding of the topic in all its aspects. For South Sulawesi, my thanks go out to Horst Liebner, for his hospitality and all his advice; Campbell Macknight, who took me on a hunt for 17th century relics and monuments; as well as David Bulbeck and Ian Caldwell. On Java, the hospitality and helpfulness of Simon Kemper and Hannah Iskandar included letting me stay in their house and making several trips - our visit to Gresik and Giri, in particular, has made an indelible impression on me. Before I first went to Ambon, ornithologist Kees Heij brought me into contact with Father Kees Böhm (MSC.), Liz and Avin, who all truly went to great lengths to help me. To my great regret, Father Böhm passed away in 2021 - I hope the Rumphius Library in Ambon, to which he was so dedicated, will accept the copy I will be sending them. Muhammad Al Mujabuddawat shared archaeological insights into the indigenous forts, and the people of Morela took me up to Kapahaha and shared their stories about its history and legacy. On Ternate, my thanks go out to Riswan and Irwan.

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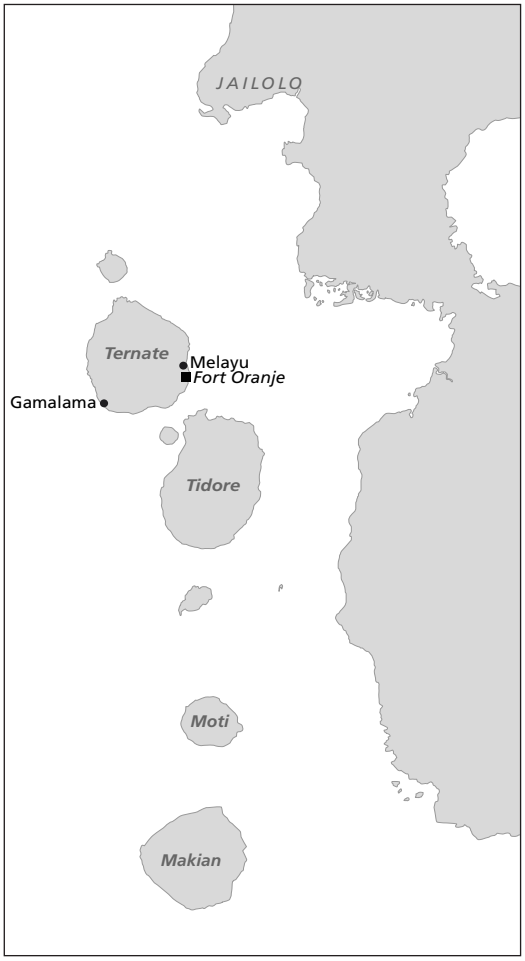
# Maps

## Note on maps

The maps in this dissertation aim to provide insight specifically into the regions, islands, settlements, geographical features etc. discussed in the text. They do not provide a complete geographical or political overview of these regions. For more complete overviews, refer to the source works mentioned below.

All maps were made by Armand Haye, Amsterdam. For the settlements and political layout of the Ambon region, I primarily relied on the maps in Georg Rumphius (Chris van Fraassen e.a. eds.) *De Ambonse eilanden onder de VOC: zoals opgetekend in De Ambonse landbeschrijving.* Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2002, as well as Gerrit Knaap. *Kruidnagelen en christenen: de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon 1656-1696.* Dordrecht: Foris, 1987. For North Maluku I mainly made use of the maps in Chris van Fraassen '*Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische archipel: van soa-organisatie en vierdeling: een studie van traditionele samenleving en cultuur in Indonesië.'* PhD. Diss, Leiden University, 1987. For South Sulawesi and Buton I mainly relied on Leonard Andaya. *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: a History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981; David Bulbeck. *'The Landscape Of The Makassar War.'* Canberra Anthropology, 13:1 (1990): 78-99; and Jennifer Gaynor. *Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia: Submerged Genealogies and the Legacy of Coastal Capture.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016. In some cases I relied on seventeenth-century maps to locate a specific settlement or polity, mostly by making use of the Atlas of Mutual Heritage (atlasofmutualheritage.nl). The geological and climatological maps in chapter I were primarily based on Kathryn Monk e.a. *The Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; as well as as well as Robert Parthesius. *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: the Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia 1595-1660.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010.

Map 1 The eastern archipelago




Map 2 Ternate, Tidore and surroundings

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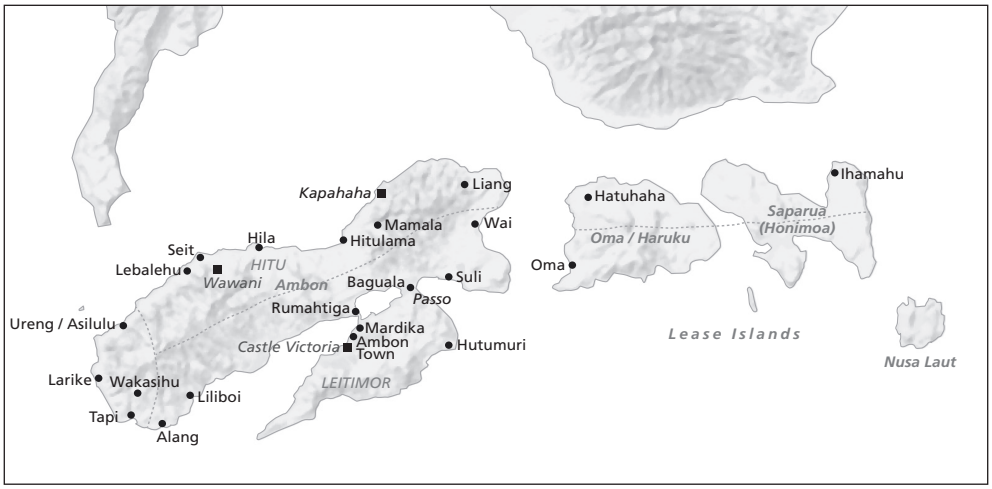


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## Note on images

The conflicts described in this dissertation are richly documented in image - too richly, in fact, to include all the relevant maps and drawings - the Gijsels archives in Karlsruhe and the manuscript copies of Livinus Bor, Amboinse oorlogen, in particular, contain a wealth of additional material. Nor does a dissertation allow for including them at a sufficient size. Virtually all images, however, can be found online through the Atlas of Mutual Heritage, atlasofmutualheritage.nl, which contains, among other things, the complete Gijsels and Bor images, at high resolution.

# Introduction

In October 1651, Commissioner Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn was in the thick of one of the biggest crises yet faced by his employer, the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, henceforth the VOC). Ten months previously, he had been sent to the small volcanic island of Ternate in what is now eastern Indonesia. His purpose was to reinstate its Sultan, who nominally ruled many of the clove-producing regions of the eastern archipelago. The Sultan's cooperation with the VOC was crucial for the Company's control over these areas and its efforts towards exclusive access to clove production and trade. The Company's policies, however, had also generated discontent and opposition among Ternaten ranks, as had become painfully clear in recent months. The Ternaten nobility had revolted against the Sultan, whom they deemed too amenable to the Company, and proclaimed his brother Sultan instead.

Despite leading a sizeable military force, de Vlaming's initial attempts to restore the old Sultan met with little success. Just as his campaign was getting underway, news reached him of a connected, but even bigger crisis in the Ambon Islands, some 500 kilometres to the south. Eight of the Company's fortified outposts in the region, nominally part of the domains of the Ternaten Sultan, had been overrun in a massive and well-organised surprise attack. Their garrisons had been mostly killed and the few survivors taken prisoner. With his well-armed fleet already in the area, De Vlaming was now confronted with the task of restoring Company control in the region. Given that his forces were not intended nor prepared to handle a full-blown war in the Ambon Islands, he could only do so much, however.

Now it was October and de Vlaming was sailing back to Batavia in October to report to his superiors. The region was still in turmoil and the twin crises far from resolved, yet De Vlaming was startlingly upbeat. As he wrote in his report to the Governor-General and Council in Batavia, these crises, in spite of being an existential threat to the Company's interests in the region, also provided a golden opportunity 'to do what could otherwise never have been legally done.'[1] He was talking about destroying clove trees. The way he saw it, there was an excess of those, leading to overproduction. What is more, some clove trees were growing in areas over which the Company had never been able to exert much control. The revolt therefore had a silver lining. De Vlaming's subsequent efforts to regain

1 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 7v.

the Company's ascendancy in the region and destroy 'excess' clove trees would ultimately last five years, and are now known as the Great Hoamoal (or Ambon) War (1651-1656).[2]

The fact that a high official of the VOC was happy about a massive revolt against his employer because it presented an opportunity to eradicate clove trees might be taken to suggest that some things had gone badly wrong in the lead-up to these events. Indeed, half a century earlier the VOC had been welcomed into these regions. Representatives of both the Ternaten leadership and the state of Hitu in the Ambon area had actively sought out the VOC's assistance against the Spanish and Portuguese. The Dutch had genuinely considered themselves allies to these states against their mutual enemies – albeit also opportunistically.[3] The Company's military assistance had come with a price tag: both the Sultan of Ternate and Hitu's political leaders signed treaties promising to deliver cloves from their domain exclusively to the Company. To put it mildly, these treaties gave rise to a range of conflicting interests and divergent expectations that sent relations into a destructive downward spiral over the subsequent decades. They ultimately led to a series of bitter and bloody wars in the region. By 1656, when the dust of the Great Hoamoal War had settled, little was left of the constellation of states and thriving trade networks that had characterised the region when the Dutch first arrived, and a particularly restrictive colonial order was imposed on both the Ambon region and Ternate.

In this dissertation I tell the story of how that happened. Earlier studies have addressed aspects and episodes of these conflicts, most prominently those by Gerrit Knaap, but also Jennifer Gaynor, Adam Clulow, Arend de Roever, Chris van Fraassen, Leonard Andaya and others. Nevertheless, as of yet there has been no sustained study of this period as a whole.[4] In addition, although these were

2 In this dissertation I will refer to the conflict as the Great Hoamoal War, as the peninsula of Hoamoal was the main (though crucially, far from the only) theatre of conflict. As to its demarcation, I here employ the dating of the conflict from Georgius Rumphius. 'De Ambonsche Historie.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 64 (1910): II, 99-100, who has the conflict end when news of a peace agreement with Makassar reached the Ambon region, although this is arguably arbitrary: fighting in Hoamoal itself had ceased the year before, and conflict elsewhere in the Ambon region would continue for another two years.

3 For the latter see Martine J. van Ittersum. *Profit and Principle : Hugo Grotius, Natural Rights Theories and the Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies, 1595-1615*. Leiden: Brill, 2006: Ch. 2.

4 The conflicts on Ambon, and the connections between Ambon and Ternate, have

some of the largest and most consequential conflicts in the early history of the VOC, there is comparatively little awareness of them among either historians or the wider public.

This relative lack of awareness presents a particularly stark contrast in relation

been researched most prominently by Gerrit Knaap. After his dissertation Gerrit Knaap. *Kruidnagelen en christenen : de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon 1656-1696*. Dordrecht: Foris, 1987, an investigation of the society in the Ambon Islands in the wake of these conflicts, he dedicated a number of subsequent publications to the nature of warfare in the region in general, and some specific crises. Id., 'Crisis and Failure: War and Revolt in the Ambon Islands, 1636–1637.' *Cakalele* 3 (1992): 1–26. Id., 'De Ambonse eilanden tussen twee mogendheden; De VOC en Ternate, 1605–1656.' In *Hof en Handel; Aziatische vorsten en de VOC 1620–1720*, red. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten en Peter Rietbergen, 35–58. Leiden: KITLV, 2004. Id., 'The Governor-General and the Sultan: An Attempt to Restructure a Divided Amboina in 1638.' *Itinerario* 29, no. 1 (2005): 79–100. Id., 'Headhunting, Carnage and Armed Peace in Amboina, 1500–1700.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46, no. 2 (2003): 165–92. Id., 'Kora-kora en kruitdamp; De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in oorlog en vrede in Ambon.' In *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie tussen Oorlog and diplomatie*, red. Gerrit Knaap en Ger Teitler, 257–80. Leiden: KITLV, 2002. Id., 'Robbers and Traders: Papuan Piracy in the Seventeenth Century.' *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute Singapore, 2018. 147–177. Id., Knaap, Gerrit J. 'The Saniri Tiga Air (Seram); An Account of Its 'discovery' and Interpretation Between About 1675 and 1950.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 149.2 (1993): 250–273. Knaap, Gerrit, Henk den Heijer and Michiel de Jong. *Oorlogen overzee. Militair optreden door compagnie en staat buiten Europa, 1595–1814*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2015 places these conflicts within the wider context of warfare by the VOC.
Jennifer Gaynor. *Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia: Submerged Genealogies and the Legacy of Coastal Capture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016. Clulow, Adam. *Amboina, 1623 : Fear and Conspiracy on the Edge of Empire*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016, esp. the final chapter and the epilogue. Arend de Roever. *De jacht op sandelhout : de VOC en de tweedeling van Timor in de zeventiende eeuw*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002. Fraassen, Ch.F. van. 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische archipel : van soa-organisatie en vierdeling: een studie van traditionele samenleving en cultuur in Indonesië' PhD. Diss, Leiden University, 1987 remains an invaluable resource, as do some of his later publications, most prominently the article Id. 'Ternate and its dependencies.' In L.E. Visser ed. *Halmahera and Beyond : Social Science Research in the Moluccas*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994: 23-34. Leonard Andaya, esp. *The World of Maluku : Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1993. Even though Van Fraassen and Andaya disagreed substantially on the nature of Maluku society and its early modern history, I have found both books extremely valuable. I gratefully build on all this material in this dissertation. Note that some of these authors have also been instrumental in providing an unusual and underutilized wealth of source publications, to be discussed separately below.

to the war over the Banda Islands and their nutmeg. In the public debate about the legacy of colonialism which has flared up in recent years in the Netherlands and worldwide, Governor-General Coen's conquest and subsequent depopulation of the island of Banda Lontor in 1621 has become a major focal point. It is perhaps not surprising that this episode of early Dutch colonial history is often presented as an illustration of the ruthlessness of the VOC's endeavour to establish a spice monopoly, due to its gruesome and relatively straightforward nature. The episode can be found in school books and popular histories, but is also a favourite example in works on capitalism, genocide, or the links between the two.[5] The acclaimed author Amitav Ghosh, a prominent voice in public debate on climate change, has recently used the depopulation of the Banda Islands as a parable for the present western worldview and how it wreaks havoc on the planet.[6] It also continues to bring its architect, Coen, to the forefront of public debate about the Dutch colonial past.[7] The bloody conquest of Banda, however, was only one early episode in the complicated and drawn-out conflicts over access to the spices

5 Popular histories: Giles Milton. *Nathaniel's Nutmeg : How One Man's Resolve Changed the World*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999 (many subsequent reprints). Willem Oosterbeek. *Nootmuskaat: de geschiedenis van een wonderbaarlijk nootje*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2017. Books about capitalism: Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson. *Why Nations Fail : the Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. London: Profile Books, 2013: 249pp. Books about genocide: Mark Levine. *Genocide in the age of the nation-state,* II, *The rise of the west and the coming of genocide*. London: Tauris & Co 2005, 243; Michael J. Kelly, *Prosecuting corporations for genocide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016: 18, citing it as the earliest documented case of corporate genocide.

6 Amitav Ghosh. *The nutmeg's curse: parables for a planet in crisis*. John Murray, 2021.

7 While calls to rename, for instance, the Coentunnel in Amsterdam have been made for years, and the last school named after J.P. Coen changed its name in 2018, Coen and his legacy were recently brought to the forefront of Dutch public debate again in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement. It focused particularly on a statue of Coen still standing in the historic centre of his birthplace, the town of Hoorn. The statue and town were the site of demonstrations over the summer of 2020, and the discussion about the statue, Coen and his legacy continued into 2021, when the Banda massacre, 400 years ago that year, was remembered in various exhibitions and events both in the Netherlands and in Banda itself. At the time of writing, debate about what to do with the statue is ongoing. For one news article on the matter: Tonny van der Mee, 'Voor de Molukse gemeenschap staat Coen voor geweld' in: *AD,* 22 June 2020, available online through https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/beelden-onder-vuur-voor-molukse-gemeenschap-staat-j-p-coen-voor-geweld~a4f94c1c/?cb=49cf01d36b66d465dd731716ae920567.

from the region. As the Company was imposing a new colonial order over the depopulated Banda islands, the conflicts over cloves were only just beginning.

### Ternate, Makassar, and the struggle for the eastern archipelago

Although these conflicts warrant further attention in their own right, investigating them also sheds light on aspects of early colonial conflicts more generally, from the kinds of warfare they entailed to their political dynamics. To start with the latter: existing scholarship about the conflicts in the eastern archipelago in this period has tended to have a very local focus, which has left underexplored both the geographical breadth and intricate political dynamics of the struggle for access to spices, which extended throughout the eastern archipelago.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, the relationship between the VOC and the Ternaten sultan became strained and fractious, as did the relationship between the sultan and his dependencies on other islands. The sultan's policies alienated local leaders in his extensive domains, causing them to cast around for other political affiliations. These could be European, the clearest and best-studied example being the English. The role of Southeast Asian political centres, however, was of far more consequence. In the period covered by this study, the new rising power in the region was Makassar.

Makassar was the name of a city and trading port, but in European sources is often conflated with the state of which it was the seat of government: the Gowa-Tallo state. [8] During the seventeenth century, in tandem with the tightening

8 What I here call 'the Gowa-Tallo state' consisted at its core of the Sultanate of Gowa and the state of Tallo located just to its north, which enjoyed a very close relationship at the time (sources from Gowa and Tallo often used the phrase 'only one people but two rulers'). Large swaths of South Sulawesi were affiliated with this state, of which Gowa and Tallo formed the centre. Although one must be careful not to overstate the scope and time of their political integration (see e.g William Cummings. 'Only One People but Two Rulers.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 155.1 (1999): 97-120), this integration did reach its apex in our period of study. Whereas I seek to be more specific where possible, I feel that in some cases it is justified to refer to them jointly as the Gowa-Tallo state. The spelling I employ follows standard practice among South Sulawesi specialists: the city of Makassar, the Makasar and Bugis people, the Makasars, the Bugis. I thank Campbell Macknight for many valuable suggestions, including but not limited to the terminology and spelling employed here.
For a brief history of Gowa, Tallo, and Makassar, see William Cummings. *A Chain of Kings: the Makassarese Chronicles of Gowa and Talloq*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007: 1-8; Anthony Reid. 'The Rise of Makassar.' *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs* Vol. 17 (1983): 100-125; Leonard Y. Andaya. *The Heritage of Arung Palakka : a History of South*

of the VOC's grip on Maluku, Makassar became a key site for European and Asian traders seeking to purchase spices and trade in other high-value goods. The VOC proved unable to prevent Makassar-based traders from accessing the Maluku spices and to impose its will on Gowa-Tallo itself, which became a formidable state over the course of the seventeenth century.

Traditionally, much has been made of the continuous rivalry between Ternate and neighbouring Tidore. Leonard Andaya, for instance, interprets their rivalry as a perennial dualism essential to Maluku culture.[9] At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, an emerging rivalry between Gowa-Tallo and Ternate was becoming increasingly clear and consequential. In my view, the interplay between the spice wars and the VOC's conflicts with Gowa-Tallo is crucial for our understanding of these conflicts. Although existing scholarship has largely treated them as distinct struggles, these wars were so intertwined that one can hardly separate them from one another.[10]

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*Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981, esp. Ch. 1. A good introduction to the forts along its coast is David Bulbeck. 'Construction history and significance of the Makassar fortifications', in: Kathryn Robinson and Mukhlis Paeni (eds.) *Living Through Histories: Culture, History and Social Life in South Sulawesi* Canberra: Australian National University, Jakarta: National Archives of Indonesia, 1996: 67-106.

9 Andaya, *World of Maluku*, Ch. 3 and 4.

10 The study of the eastern archipelago has for a good part been the domain of area studies specialists with an often strongly anthropological outlook. One consequence has been that studies tend to be highly regionalized, focusing on a specific island or small region. There is a strong tradition of South Sulawesi regional specialists, and an equally strong regional specialization within the study of the Maluku.
Works on Maluku: Andaya, *The World of Maluku;* Des Alwi. *Sejarah Maluku : Banda Naira, Ternate, Tidore dan Ambon*. Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 2005. Ternate and Tidore: Willard Hanna and Des Alwi. *Turbulent Times Past in Ternate and Tidore*. Banda Naira: Yayasan Warisan dan Budaya Banda Naira, 1990. Chris van Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel.' There is a particularly strong Dutch historiographical tradition on Ambon from the late 1970s onwards, which partly developed in the wake of increasing tensions between the Dutch government and the Dutch Malukan community. The subsequent emancipation movement saw the founding of the Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, which published a treasure trove of publications, including: Ridjali., Hans Straver e.a. ed. *Historie van Hitu : een Ambonse geschiedenis uit de zeventiende eeuw*. Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2004. Georg Rumphius, Chris van Fraassen e.a. eds., *De Ambonse eilanden onder de VOC : zoals opgetekend in De Ambonse landbeschrijving*. Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2002.
Historically, much work on Makassar came from Leiden University and the KITLV, including authors such as Ligtvoet, Noorduyn, Cense, Matthes, Tol, and, more

The work of Leonard Andaya presents a particularly insightful example of the tendency among historians to attempt to disentangle these conflicts. His study *The Heritage of Arung Palakka* was dedicated largely to the interaction between the VOC, the Gowa-Tallo state, and the Bugis. Andaya mentions Gowa-Tallo's overseas power, remarking that it exerted political influence outside Sulawesi proper, including in the islands of Maluku. However, this power subsequently hardly features in his analysis, which leads his study to present the power dynamics of Gowa-Tallo as a largely internal South Sulawesi affair.[11] Andaya's tendency to differentiate the overlapping political spheres of the eastern archipelago can be seen from the other direction in another of his major works: *The World of Maluku,* an extensive analysis of the politics and culture of the Maluku region. In this work, Andaya occasionally pays lip service to the fact that non-European external actors had political, economic, and cultural influence in Maluku and that Makassar was prominent among them. Nevertheless, his general thesis in the book emphasises the specificities and uniqueness of the cultural sphere that he calls the 'world of Maluku.'[12] Interestingly, the former work inspired him to write the latter, for '[o]ne couldn't fully understand what was happening in Makassar without knowing the situation in Maluku.'[13] Although I fully agree with that proposition, I feel that Andaya has opted not to showcase this interconnectedness in these two works. Instead of taking an integrated political and cultural view of the eastern archipelago as a whole, they emphasise Makassar's and Maluku's distinct situations and cultural dynamics.

### 'Even-handed freedom for all' or 'considerations of state'?

To be sure, there is also a wealth of work demonstrating the interconnectedness of Southeast Asia in general and the eastern archipelago in particular. For example, Roy Ellen's *On the edge of the Banda Zone*, which reconstructs the cultural and economic networks connecting eastern Seram to the region at large, is particularly relevant to this study. So is the seminal work Anthony Reid, who takes

recently, Wellen and Sutherland. In addition, there is a strong Australian tradition of research into South Sulawesi, mostly based at Australian National University, with authors such as Macknight, Bulbeck, and Anthony Reid, who developed many of his ideas and wrote his seminal work *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* there.

11 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, esp.45-48.

12 Andaya, *World of Maluku,* esp. introduction, Ch. 3

13 Kathryn Wellen and Ariel C. Lopez. 'Traversing the Malay–Indonesian World: an interview with Leonard Andaya.' *Itinerario* 38.1 (2014): 7–12, esp. 10.

a keen interest in Makassar but also integrates it into a view of the entire region.

What such works have in common, though, is an emphasis on cultural practices and economic ties, often over very long time scales, which leads them to present a largely apolitical, Braudelian view of the region. [14] This is apparent, for instance, in Reid's assessment of the character of trade in Makassar, which he features as a prime example of the kind of cosmopolitan trading port that defined the late stage of what he terms the 'Age of Commerce' in Southeast Asia. According to Reid, this period came to an end over the course of the seventeenth century, in no small part because VOC policy destroyed the open, cosmopolitan system on which it rested. In his monumental work *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, as well as much of his subsequent scholarship, Reid tends to present Makassar as a *bandar*, a free port town. For Reid, it was Makassar's *bandar* character that put it at odds with the controlling and monopolising VOC: 'Makassar's prosperity depended on being a spice port open to all comers, at a time when the VOC was asserting every means to assert a monopoly over both clove and nutmeg… To the VOC's demand for monopoly Makassar insisted on even-handed freedom for all.'[15]

Although these works and approaches have been invaluable to our understanding of the region and narrating its history on its own terms, they obscure aspects of the issue of power.[16] Whereas Reid mostly focuses on the VOC's power to impose a restrictive system over archipelagic Southeast Asia, the region had its

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14 For an inventory, with some well-placed critical remarks, of the influence of Braudel on writing the history of Southeast Asia, see Heather Sutherland, 'Southeast Asian History and the Mediterranean Analogy.' *Journal of Southeast Asian studies (Singapore)* 34.1 (2003): 1–20.

15 Quote from Anthony Reid. *A History of Southeast Asia : Critical Crossroads*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015, p. 136. also see Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce,* II, passim, and, most recently, Anthony Reid. 'Early Modernity as Cosmopolis: Some suggestions from Southeast Asia', in Sven Trakulhun and Ralph Weber (eds.), *Delimiting modernities: conceptual challenges and regional responses*. London: Lexington Books, 2015, pp. 123-142. Some of his articles specifically on Makasar do spare some attention to Makasar politics, both 'domestic' and 'foreign', e.g.; Reid, 'The rise of Makassar' and id., 'A great seventeenth century Indonesian family: Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makasar' in Reid (ed.) *Charting the shape of early modern Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000, pp. 126-154.

16 Sebastian Conrad. *What Is Global History?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 224, in analysing some of global history's pitfalls, remarks specifically and perhaps somewhat maliciously, that fetishizing connectedness brings with it the risk of neglecting the issue of power.

fair share of expanding powers as well, which played a crucial role in the dynamics of the Spice Wars.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many seventeenth-century VOC officials were, by contrast, very preoccupied with matters of power; they were therefore also absorbed in the political and military ambitions of states such as Ternate and Gowa-Tallo, and their interaction. Older works of history, many of which take cues more directly from colonial sources and adhere to a more military and political perspective, remark on the political rivalry between Ternate and Gowa, these states' expansionism, and the implications of this for the VOC.[17] Although it is to be welcomed that historical analysis in this area has moved beyond the traditional approach of such VOC-centred studies, it may be that in jettisoning earlier scholars' concern with the political dynamics of the region's history, recent work might have thrown the baby out with the bathwater.

Makassar and Ternate were both political centres of states forged by military expansion. The clashes between their overlapping areas of influence, which resulted in rivalry over subjects and access to trade, supplies, and sea routes, are crucial to understanding how the region developed in the seventeenth century. As I aim to show in this dissertation, the category of 'spice traders' from Makassar often overlapped with the war fleets that Gowa sent to make vassals, demand tribute, and provide military assistance throughout the eastern archipelago. This was powerfully and succinctly encapsulated in an observation made by an employee of the English East India Company (henceforth the EIC), who wrote in January 1636 that 'the clove traders of Macassar have on the Island of Amboyna given the Dutch a great overthrow, where they say were slayne 400 Dutch soldiers, with whose arms and buffcoats Macasser seemes to glitter.'[18] Early modern trade went hand in hand with violence, existing political affiliations, and consid-

17 To pick a few examples F.W. Stapel,. *Het Bongaais Verdrag.* Groningen: Wolters, 1922 often mentions Gowan expansion and specific conflicts with Ternate in the 70 pages he dedicates to the years up to the Makassar War. D.K. Bassett, 'English trade in Celebes, 1613-1667.' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* , Vol. 31, No. 1 (181) (May, 1958): 1-39 also dedicates substantial attention to Gowa's expansion into Maluku, although not giving any explicit attention to the role of Ternate. Works based on extensive source publications, such as H.T. Colenbrander (ed.) *Jan Pietersz. Coen: Bescheiden Omtrent Zijn Bedrijf in Indië* . VI, *Levensbeschrijving.* The Hague: Nijhoff, 1934, and the introductions to P.A. Tiele, and J.E. Heeres. *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel.* 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1886 similarly occasionally remark upon the expansion of Makassar and its conflicts with Ternate.

18 Bantam presidency to court of directors, 31 Jan 1636, in: IOR E/3/15, fol. 153.

erations of state and power. This applied not only to European trade, but that of their Asian competitors too.[19]

In exploring this history, I aim to strike a balance between two imperatives. On the one hand, I want to show something of the eastern archipelago's vibrant existing state system and trade networks on their own terms. On the other, I mean to recognise how European's rivalries and interests were deeply entangled with this these during the seventeenth century. Insights from scholars such as Jennifer Gaynor, who astutely observes that the Spice Wars were driven not only by European interests, but also by the rivalry between Makassar and Ternate, which 'competed for coastal dominance, maritime superiority and influence in the central and eastern archipelago,' are important.[20] Nevertheless, historians should not push such insights so far as to end up overstating distinctions between local and European political considerations and military ambitions. The fact that a lot went on that Company officials did not see or understand should not be taken to suggest that there was some fundamental dichotomy between the Europeans in the region and the indigenous population in terms of their interests,

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19 What we are missing by limiting ourselves to such a-political approaches is well-illustrated if we look at, for example, James J. Fox. 'Re-Considering Eastern Indonesia.' *Asian Journal of Social Science* 39.2 (2011): 131–149 , which traces the historical roots of the current coherence and administrative divisions of eastern Indonesia, through the colonial period, back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although starting with a quote from Pigafetta, dating from the very first years of European involvement in the region, he then proceeds to skip the intervening century-and-a-half. I would contend that it is precisely that period that would shape the eastern archipelago for centuries to come.

Looking at this particular period might also create fresh insight into whether the eastern archipelago is a coherent region at all. Fox, op. cit., 131, for instance, has not been the only one remarking that 'the diversity of its island environments, its importance in the course of human migration, its linguistic and demographic diversity, its involvement in the organisation of world trade and the historical development of its many diverse social traditions all pose a challenge to any general characterisation of Eastern Indonesia as a distinctive region.' Other students of the region have voiced similar concerns, such as the Andayas, who in a recent handbook also noted historians' difficulty to 'approach the eastern archipelago as a coherent region' for similar reasons, and offered up looking at the connecting function of the sea throughout the region as a partial solution to this methodological problem. Barbara Andaya and Leoard Andaya. *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400-1830.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 112. Another partial solution would be to explore its political dynamics in the early seventeenth century, which form a clear and distinct integrated whole.

20 Gaynor, *Intertidal History,* 65.

worldviews, and ways of operating.[21] I join Martine van Ittersum in noting the aptness for the eastern archipelago of what Tamar Herzog wrote about the early modern Americas: 'It is a mistake to portray imperial rivalry between European powers as somehow separate from confrontations between European powers and natives, and from conflicts among different native groups. These processes influenced each other and have to be studied in tandem.'[22]

As I aim to demonstrate in what follows, for all their differences, Ternate, Gowa, the VOC, and other European powers in the region were largely involved in the same struggle, in which commerce, politics, and war were intertwined for all participants. Agency and initiative were rather evenly distributed in this conflict. Particularly as time wore on, the various players also learned to understand each other's motives, tactics, and goals to a considerable degree.

## 'Doubts and a thousand fears': VOC policy in the Spice Wars

This is not to say that the Dutch always fully grasped what was going on around them. Faced with resistance to their monopoly policies, their incomplete grasp of what was unfolding in the polities surrounding them, and what they perceived as a hostile and forbidding environment, Company officials felt constantly threatened and anxious.

In *Amboina 1623: Fear and Conspiracy on the Edge of Empire,* Adam Clulow delves into the almost four-centuries-old cold case known as the Amboina Massacre or Amboina trial. In the events in question, which took place in Amboina in 1623, the Dutch hastily tried and beheaded twenty-one supposed conspirators (some English, some Japanese). Adam Clulow puts fear and anxiety at the centre

21 Gaynor writes, for instance, that the Dutch were 'not aware, it seems, that [Makassar and its allies] had their own motives for waging war, regardless of European rivalries' in the mid-seventeenth century, and that VOC officials were wrong in believing that the Makasars were also 'egged on by the Portuguese'. (p. 77-78.) Perhaps the clearest example, however, is when she speculates that the fortification efforts underway in 1660 at Makassar, in the wake of the surprise attack described above, might be due to fear of a Bugis-Buton-Ternate invasion, rather than fear of the Dutch, (p. 84) which is an unsustainable assertion. Similar considerations could be made with regard to Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* which also rests on a premise of the encounter of two separate and to some degree incommensurable cultural spheres.

22 Here quoted from Martine van Ittersum. 'Debating Natural Law in the Banda Islands: A Case Study in Anglo-Dutch Imperial Competition in the East Indies, 1609–1621.' *History of European Ideas* 42, no. 4 (2016): 459–501, 463, who applied the same quote to her study of the dynamics there.

of his analysis, showing how these emotions shaped how Van Speult and his subordinates handled the case. This early example of Dutch colonial anxiety was not an outlier, he claims; rather, fear, rumour, and paranoia were crucial factors in the events that played out subsequently in the Ambon region and early Dutch colonialism more generally. Although this constitutes neither a defence of the Company's often brutal policies nor an invitation to pity Company officials as victims of colonialism in their own way, Clulow suggests that constant feelings of anxiety fed into Company officials' decisions. Accordingly, they help explain the remarkable violence and brutality of the interactions between the Company and indigenous inhabitants of the eastern archipelago.[23]

To be sure, Van Speult was not the last governor of Ambon to exhibit signs of anxiety and paranoia during his tenure. These emotions permeate his successors' correspondence. As I go on to show, some of them felt 'blind […] and unable to come to a sound judgement' in the face of the intricate tangle of polities around them. Indeed, many were plagued by 'a thousand torments' and thought the Ambon region 'the most difficult governorate in all of the Indies.' Their lack of grip on developments in the region often convinced them that Maluku's various Muslim polities were all conspiring to drive the Dutch from the region, regardless of whether they were officially VOC allies, and 'that we should surely assume that they have numerous secret schemes.'[24]

At times, this seems to have paralysed Company officials. In many cases, though, their anxiety, distrust, and frustration appear to have been crucial in shaping their increasingly extreme ideas about how to deal with the situation. As early as 1626, Company officials called for 'extreme measures,' including the depopulation of entire regions in the same way that the Dutch had depopulated Banda. From the 1630s onwards, these ideas increasingly translated into extreme policies.

## Landscape, environment, and the conduct of war

The anxiety that the VOC felt when looking out across the sea- and landscape of the eastern archipelago was not just caused by its limited grasp of the region's political dynamics. The region also presented outside powers seeking to impose

23 Clulow, *Amboina 1623*, esp. 1-26, 174-200.

24 First two quotes from governor Philip Lucasz: see chapter V, paragraph 'Kaicili Ali's long stay in the Ambon Islands'. Last two quotes from governor Artus Gijsels, see chapter VII, paragraph 'A war enthusiast in Batavia'.

their will with particularly forbidding terrain. Intense geological and volcanic activity in the area created a landscape of islands which tended to be extremely inaccessible directly beyond the coast. Coral platforms, elevated from the seabed by the tectonic forces that have shaped the region, constituted daunting natural fortifications. Wooden villages were easily abandoned and easily rebuilt, their population able to disappear quickly into a given island's interior.

All this meant that the population of the region was remarkably resilient to the VOC's strategies of control and warfare. I aim to demonstrate how this led the VOC to rely increasingly on local allies and their tactics. Ultimately, though, they resorted to targeting the very environment that made the region so forbidding for them. Having begun by destroying clove trees, they progressively extended this tactic to all trees and other plants that could sustain human populations.

This is relevant to wider scholarship on warfare between Asian and European powers. Many contributions in this field are still heavily influenced by the paradigm established by Geoffrey Parker's 1988 book *The Military Revolution*, which proposed that Europe had developed a military edge over the rest of the world as early as the sixteenth century, enabling it to project its power overseas. Although Parker's original 'West vs. the rest' dichotomy has steadily given way to a much more detailed picture of various military developments around the world and their reciprocal influences on each other, the factors that he identified as crucial (including military drill, the broadside sailing vessel, gunpowder technology, and developments in fortification such as the *trace italienne*) still feature heavily in recent thinking about the global balance of military power in the early modern period.[25] When it comes to assessing the Spice Wars' military dynamics, such factors have some explanatory value, but they do not readily provide a framework for what I consider the crucial factors in the conflict: the prohibitive role of the landscape in employing European tactics, the increasing reliance on local allies and tactics, and the struggle for resources. The Spice Wars, all in all, were first and foremost environmental wars, giving occasion to reconsider the way in

25 E.g. Sun Laichen, 'Military Technology Transfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (c. 1390–1527).' *Journal of Southeast Asia Studies* 34:3 (2003): 495–517. Tonio Andrade. *Lost Colony: the untold story of China's first great victory over the West*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. Id. *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016.

which early modern historians have thought about wars between Europeans and non-Europeans.[26]

This study, then, aims to show the evolution of the seventeenth century spice wars as they were shaped by the physical land- and seascape of the Ambon islands, and the political dynamics of the region at large, from the arrival of the first Dutch ships in the eastern archipelago until the durable imposition of colonial control over Ambon, Hoamoal and the adjacent islands by 1656. While the Ambon region was the centre of gravity of these conflicts, one of the aspects this study highlights is their wider regional dynamic. The involvement of Makassar and other powers from beyond the region proper, the perennial cat-and-mouse game between Asian traders and the VOC, and the fact that Company troops increasingly targeted enemy staging areas and supply points throughout the region towards the end of the conflict, furthermore expanded the geographical scope of the conflict as it progressed. As a consequence, much of the eastern archipelago, i.e. Sulawesi with its smaller adjacent islands as well as the entire area nowadays known as Maluku, will play a role in this dissertation.

While complicated and wide-ranging, these conflicts also constitute an extremely dramatic story, which has been only partially told. I also certainly hope to bring it to life. The incredibly rich source material makes it possible to occasionally come very close to the harrowing jungle warfare, the burning villages and the appalling amount of bloodshed that characterized the conflict.[27] Additional-

26 As I will elaborate on in subsequent chapters, the recent book Emmanuel Kreike. *Scorched Earth : Environmental Warfare as a Crime Against Humanity and Nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princteton University Press, 2021, making a case for considering the central role of the environment in such conflicts even within an early modern context, especially resonates with my own research, and I have thankfully integrated his framework and terminology into my dissertation towards its final stages.

27 In addition to the VOC Archives kept in the Nationaal Archief in the Hague and the India Office Records kept in the British Library in London, specific mention must be made of the private papers of Artus Gijsels, now kept in the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe and the two manuscript copies of Bor's *Amboinse Oorlogen* kept in the respective Royal Libraries of the Netherlands and Belgium, located in The Hague and Brussels.
In addition, the topic is especially well-provisioned with extensive source publications, through the efforts of Gerrit Knaap, Chris van Fraassen, Hans Straver and others, which in my view remain very much underrecognized and underutilized. The most relevant to the present study are the *Memories van overgave* by the respective governors of Ambon, available online through http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vocambon; Rumphius's 'Ambonse landbeschrijving', published as Rumphius (Chris van Fraassen

ly, it allows us to get to know the protagonists and their motivations in remarkable detail. Due to the constraints of the source material, we are best informed about those employed by the Company, such as governor Gijsels, who turned from the most outspoken opponent of stringent monopoly policies to their most fanatic enforcer yet, or Livinus Bor who wrote an extravagant glorification of the Great Hoamoal War but all the same, appears to have been haunted by what he experienced for the rest of his days. Fortunately, through a combination of both the surviving indigenous sources and European descriptions we do get to know some of the protagonists from Makassar and Maluku as well, such as *Kapitan Hitu* Tepil, who tried to the last to mediate between the Company and various indigenous polities when relations started deteriorating, Imam Rijali, who wrote a history of Hitu in the seventeenth century through which we also get to know his own actions and experiences, or Karaeng Pattingalloang, the chancellor of Gowa who never ceased to surprise European observers by being intimidatingly well-informed on everything from Christian theology to contemporary global political developments.

Before getting around to them, however let us first have a look at the stage where this dramatic conflict took place: the eastern archipelago, which is not only an interesting region for reasons of history, but also for its geological and biological characteristics.

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and Hans Straver eds.), *De Ambonse eilanden onder de VOC,* and the wonderful source publication of the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*: Ridjali (Straver e.a. eds.), *Historie van Hitu*. With respect to Makassar, Cummings, *A Chain of Kings* and Cummings, *The Makassar Annals* have similarly proven invaluable.

# I. First of all, the volcanoes

In touring around the eastern archipelago's physical characteristics, this chapter provides an opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the large and complicated island world in which the Spice Wars were waged. More importantly, it also aims to look at the region through an environmental lens, showing how the physical characteristics of land and sea, and the settlement patterns and subsistence strategies, were extremely consequential for the wars' political and military dynamics.

The region's physical and ecological makeup is in many respects unique and has long fascinated naturalists. We therefore have some excellent guides, both contemporary with the Spice Wars and from later periods, for this exploration of land- and seascape, climate and environment. Rumphius is perhaps the most important of these and merits some introduction. Coming to the region as a soldier during the Great Hoamoal War (and therefore having first-hand experience of the conflict), he later combined his work as a VOC merchant with writing many studies about the region. Rumphius was certainly interested in history and politics; indeed, he wrote one of the three roughly contemporary histories of the Spice Wars which I use throughout this dissertation. Yet he was first and foremost a naturalist, dedicating most of his work to the plant and animal life, as well as the natural phenomena and curiosities, of Ambon and the surrounding region. Later scientists fascinated by the region include the nineteenth-century naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, who, although less famous than his contemporary Charles Darwin, was one of the founders of evolutionary theory. Wallace came to his understanding of evolution on the basis of his observations in eastern Indonesia, and was the first to grasp some of the processes that shaped the region and its ecology. As both Rumphius and Wallace realised, the region was unique in many respects. As we will see, this also meant that the region presented some unique problems to those trying to control it.

In addition, this chapter draws on a rich array of ideas, concepts and insights from the booming field of environmental history and its precursors – from Braudel, who built his study of the Mediterranean upon the foundational observation that 'mountains come first'; through Alfred Crosby, who, in his landmark study *Ecological Imperialism*, showed how ecological factors aided Europeans' imperial efforts in certain regions but not others; to studies of specific examples of the interplay between ecology and colonialism, including McNeil's *Mosquito Empires*, which showed how outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever were a defining factor in the colonisation of the Americas, having been caused by the ecological

change brought by the development of plantation economies. James C. Scott has dedicated much of his scholarly work to the strategies that states employ to exert power over their subjects and people's strategies for resisting that power. He has highlighted the extent to which landscape and human ecology determine a region's level of susceptibility to centralised power and outside appropriation. Scott's work provides a very useful lens through which to look at the land- and seascape of the eastern archipelago and how it influenced the dynamics of the Spice Wars. Emmanuel Kreike's *Scorched Earth* also provides conceptual tools on the relation between environment, human society and warfare that are acutely relevant to the topic at hand. As Kreike points out, descriptions of the effects of war often make a false distinction between nature and human infrastructure. In human terms, there is no essential difference between destroying fields and irrigation works (or denying access to them by deporting or driving off the population), and devastating a less clearly cultivated environment upon which a population relies for hunting, gathering, and/or shifting cultivation. Moreover, there is no coherent way to draw the distinction, for the specific composition of species and soil types in what western observers perceived as a wild landscape, were often actually the result of longterm interactions between that environment and its human inhabitants. Kreike therefore chooses a term that does not entail such distinctions. He speaks of a population's *environmental infrastructure* and calls its destruction *environcide.* As I hope to make clear below, these concepts applies very well to our present study.[28]

## Deep water, shaky ground

As we saw in the introduction, specialists of the history and culture of insular Southeast Asia have often been hesitant to consider the eastern archipelago a distinct region, for it is so linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse. Biologists, biogeographers, and geologists have fewer reservations in this regard: to

28 Braudel, *The Mediterranean,* I; Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*; McNeil, *Mosquito Empires*; James C. Scott, *The art of not being governed* (among others); Emmanuel Kreike, *Scorched Earth: environmental warfare as a crime against humanity and nature* (Princeton 2021). For archipelagic Southeast Asia and the Indonesian archipelago, many works by e.g. David Henley and Peter Boomgaard take an environmental approach, e.g. H. Schulte Nordholt and D. Henley eds. *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia; A Longue Durée Perspective*. Leiden: Brill, 2015; Peter Boomgaard. *A World of Water : Rain, Rivers and Seas in Southeast Asian Histories*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007; Id., *Southeast Asia: An Environmental History*. Santa Barbara, Cal.: Abc-Clio, 2006.

them, the distinctive character of the area between Borneo on the one hand and New Guinea and Australia on the other is obvious.

In some of these disciplines, the region is labelled Wallacea, after the nineteenth-century naturalist Wallace introduced above. When travelling through the Indonesian archipelago in the 1850s and 60s, Wallace noticed a sudden change in the natural environment as he crossed the Makassar Strait from Borneo to Sulawesi. He surmised that this difference was related to the sudden increase in ocean depth. Sea levels, he speculated, might have been periodically lower in the past; during such periods, Borneo would have been connected to the Eurasian landmass, whereas Sulawesi would have remained separate. This would explain why species had developed in markedly different ways there. The border between the two regions became known as Wallace's Line. Nowadays, we know that Wallace's hunch was correct and understand the plate tectonics underlying the species distribution that Wallace and his later colleagues noticed.[29] Western Indonesia is on the Eurasian Plate and would have been connected to the Eurasian landmass during ice ages, when sea levels were lower. Australia and New Guinea, for their part, are both on the Indo-Australian Plate and also formed one landmass when sea levels were lower in the past. Broadly speaking, Wallacea is the tectonically turbulent island world of smaller oceanic plates in between.[30]

Even within the Indonesian archipelago – one of the most geologically active regions in the world – Wallacea stands out for its geological turbulence and complexity. The two main forces shaping the region at large converge here. Firstly, it is part of the Pacific Rim, the subduction zone spanning the perimeter of the Pacific Plate, which is also known as the 'Ring of Fire' because it strings together the most geologically unstable regions on the planet. Secondly, the Indo-Australian Plate comes in from the south at high speed (in geological terms, anyway), being subducted under the Eurasian plate and the small oceanic plates surrounding it. [31]

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29 In the east, Wallacea is demarcated by what is called Lydekker's line. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the English naturalist Lydekker described the biogeographical boundary between, on the one hand, New Guinea and Australia and, on the other, Maluku and Nusa Tenggara. The region between Wallace's Line and Lydekker's line is what we nowadays call Wallacea.

30 Technically, this term is mostly used by biogeographers, paleontologists and the like, while geologists speak of the Molucca Sea Collision Zone. The two terms, however, largely describe the same area, and the tectonics and species distribution of the region are closely related.

31 At present, Australia moves north about 7 centimetres per year, which is enough to

Though not yet aware of the underlying plate tectonics, early modern inhabitants of and visitors to the region certainly noticed the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and landslides that this distinctive geology caused – and continues to cause. Perhaps the most recent reminder of the region's turbulence came in September 2018, when a large earthquake hit the Minahasa Peninsula on Sulawesi, triggering a tsunami that wreaked havoc on the town of Palu. The events caused thousands of deaths and drove tens of thousands from their homes.[32]

Seventeenth-century observers documented very similar events. Rumphius, for instance, described his experience of an especially violent earthquake on Ambon, and the tsunami that followed it, in vivid detail. After giving an account of the various smaller shocks and other odd natural phenomena preceding the main shock, he described how

> on 17 February 1674, on a Saturday evening, at around half past seven, under a beautiful moon and calm weather, our whole Province […] was subjected to such terrible shocks that most people were convinced that Judgment Day had come. The bells in Victoria Castle on Leitimor tolled all by themselves, and the people who were standing around talking to each other, fell against one another or toppled over as the earth heaved up and down like the sea. 75 Chinese pedaks, or small stone buildings, as well as a large House (also made of stone) crashed down, and were reduced to rubble, killing 79 people, among them the wife of merchant G.F. [sic] Rumphius, along with her youngest daughter.[33]

Having drily noted the death of his own wife and daughter, Rumphius then recorded what happened in various places along the coast. A total of 2.322 people

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warrant regular corrections of such things as GPS coordinates. The last such correction happened in late 2016, when GPS coordinates were adjusted about 1,5 meters to compensate for the continent's movement since the previous correction in 1994.

32 The event was widely covered, but for one background news article giving attention both to the seismology and the human effects of this event, see Feliz Solomon, 'Amid the Ruins of Sulawesi, Earthquake Survivors Take Stock' in *Time,* October 2018, available online at: https://time.com/5422959/indonesia-sulawesi-earthquake-tsunami-survivors-aftermath/ (last accessed June 2019).

33 Georg Rumphius, W.E Buijze and M. Beekman eds., *Waerachtigh verhael, van de schrickelijcke aerdbevinge, nu onlanghs eenigen tyd herwaerts, ende voornaementlijck op den 17. February des Jaers 1674 voorgevallen, in en ontrent de Eylanden van Amboina* etc. S.l.: Buijze, 1998 [orig.

died as a result of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, and whole villages were swept out to sea.[34] Most of the garrison of Fort Amsterdam ran outside following the earthquake only to be caught out by the tsunami, which came in so high that it touched the roof of the three-storey blockhouse. Only some soldiers who had been trapped upstairs survived. 1.461 people were killed in Hila alone, the former site of the village being strewn with corpses up to 200 meters inland. Huge cracks and bangs were heard from the mountains, entire cliffs came tumbling down, and huge landslides occurred, changing the course of some rivers. Several coastal areas disappeared entirely beneath the waves and whole swathes of clove plantations and jungle were levelled.

For his part, Valentijn described the thrills of living on the volcanic island of Ternate (though not first-hand; he was also based in Ambon):

> Of old, this mountain, after the nature of all such mountains (which sometimes burn more, sometimes less, and sometimes just in their entrails), tends to sometimes show fire, which one sees most clearly at night; sometimes only heavy steam and smoke; sometimes it throws only white ash; sometimes some pieces of pumice; and sometimes entire rocks and cliffs, with terrifying crackles and rumbles. It thus endangers the lives of both the indigenous and the European population, not only because of its flames reaching to the heavens…, but also, after its flames stop, its sulphuric smoke poisoned the air to such a degree that people became sick and soon died.[35]

Periods of high volcanic activity, Valentijn added, made it difficult to find a governor for Maluku, for no one particularly liked the prospect of suffocating in sulphuric smoke. At the time Valentijn was writing these words, however, the volcano had been relatively quiet for a few decades, after an active period in the 1670s and 80s. The mountain sides, some of which had been cleared of vegeta-

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1675], p. 51. Rumphius published the pamphlet anonymously, but is almost certainly the author.

34 The Dutch had forced the entire population of the region to move to the coast at the conclusion of the Spice Wars, which must have significantly exacerbated the human toll of this disaster.

35 François Valentijn. *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën, vervattende een naaukeurige en uitvoerige verhandelinge van Nederlands mogentheyd in die gewesten, benevens eene wydlustige beschryvinge der Moluccos, Amboina, Banda, Timor, en Solor* etc. Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2002 [orig. 1724-1729]. Book I.2, p. 5.

tion by the lava streams, had turned green again.[36] These quiet periods, however, never last: Gamalama, as Ternate's volcano is known, erupted violently again on several occasions in the 1770s and then again, after another long calm period, in the 1980s and 90s.[37]

In the seventeenth century, the region's indigenous and European inhabitants both tended to interpret such events as supernatural rather than natural phenomena. In 1615, when the Dutch were waging war in the Banda Islands and aggressively thwarting English attempts to trade there, the Gunung Api violently erupted. This led an English Company official to observe that 'Surely the Lord is offended with them, for from the top of Gonnepe [Guning Api…], which continually burneth, many times flies great stones into the castle with such force that once or twice the Hollanders have been in mind to forsake it all.'[38] The inhabitants of Seram and the surrounding islands generally considered earthquakes bad omens. The Dutch were little different: preachers generally interpreted earthquakes as God admonishing the population to better their ways. As Rumphius remarked, bad earthquakes were sometimes taken to herald the End of Days. Even the foreshocks of the 1674 earthquake led the Reverend Albertus Struys, stationed at Haruku, slightly to the east of Ambon, to wonder whether

> these earthquakes from the north, [as well as several other natural phenomena all observed in the north] would not mean anything? I cannot imagine they do not. I trust that we will soon hear of big changes (not only in our church, but more importantly among those of the Antichrist), such as occurred in the days of Babel, Tyrus, etc.[39]

When the earthquake did hit four weeks later, it prompted Struys to write a

36 Ibid. The subsequent pages, 6-10, rather vividly describe an expedition up to the caldera in 1686.

37 For a list of historic eruptions, see the website of the global volcanism program of the Smithsonian Institution, at https://volcano.si.edu/volcano.cfm?vn=268060. Note that my remark applies only to large eruptions (VEI scale 3) – smaller eruptions occur almost continuously at this volcano, as well as others in North Maluku.

38 John Skinner to Adam Denton, 12 July 1615, in: F.C. Danvers and W. Foster. *Letters Received by the East India Company from Its Servants in the East*. London: S. Low, Marston, 1896–1902, vol III, p. 135.

39 Struys to the Church Council in Ambon, 22 January 1674. H.E. Niemeijer, Th. van den End, and G. J. Schutte. *Bronnen betreffende Kerk en School in de gouvernementen Ambon, Ternate en Banda ten tijde van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1605-1791. Vierde*

follow-up letter to the Church Council that was so full of efflorescent Biblical language as to elude summary.[40] It concluded with the claim that 'we are now in the time of the seventh trumpet and vial', which is to say that the Apocalypse was already well under way.[41] For his part, Rumphius had a more mechanistic explanation for the earthquakes – although it differs significantly from our present understanding. In his Description of the Land of Ambon, he wrote that 'in general, earthquakes occur in Ambon when, after a long period of heat and sunshine, there are heavy rainfalls lasting one or two days. Then, the pores of the earth become clogged, and the vapours that have been shut in become active'.[42]

### The geology of the eastern archipelago

The eastern archipelago was, and is, shaped by these tectonic forces. Many of the islands were created by the volcanism occurring behind subduction zones, where magma is able to work its way up between the tectonic plates. The Sunda Islands, which form the southern boundary of the region under study in this dissertation, are principally volcanic. The result of the subduction of the Indo-Australian Plate, they form part of an arc of islands that also includes Sumatra, Java, and Bali. (One of these islands, Sumbawa, was the setting of the largest eruption of the historical period: the Tambora volcano erupted in 1815, blowing such a large amount of volcanic ash into the stratosphere that it blocked sunlight worldwide, causing temperatures to plummet abruptly. The subsequent year would become known as 'the year without a summer'.) The Banda Islands, with their active volcano the Gunung Api, are on the far end of this same arc.

Important to our study are the 'four mountains' of Maluku (i.e. the cone-shaped volcanic islands of Makian, Moti, Ternate, and Tidore). The result of a small subduction zone where the Moluccan Sea Plate disappears beneath Halmahera, they form a string along the west coast of Halmahera. Although its origin is unknown, the name Maluku most likely had a meaning akin to 'mountain.' In its narrowest usage, it denotes the four early modern sultanates of Ternate, Tidore, Jailolo, and Bacan. Tradition has it that the sultans of the latter two sultan

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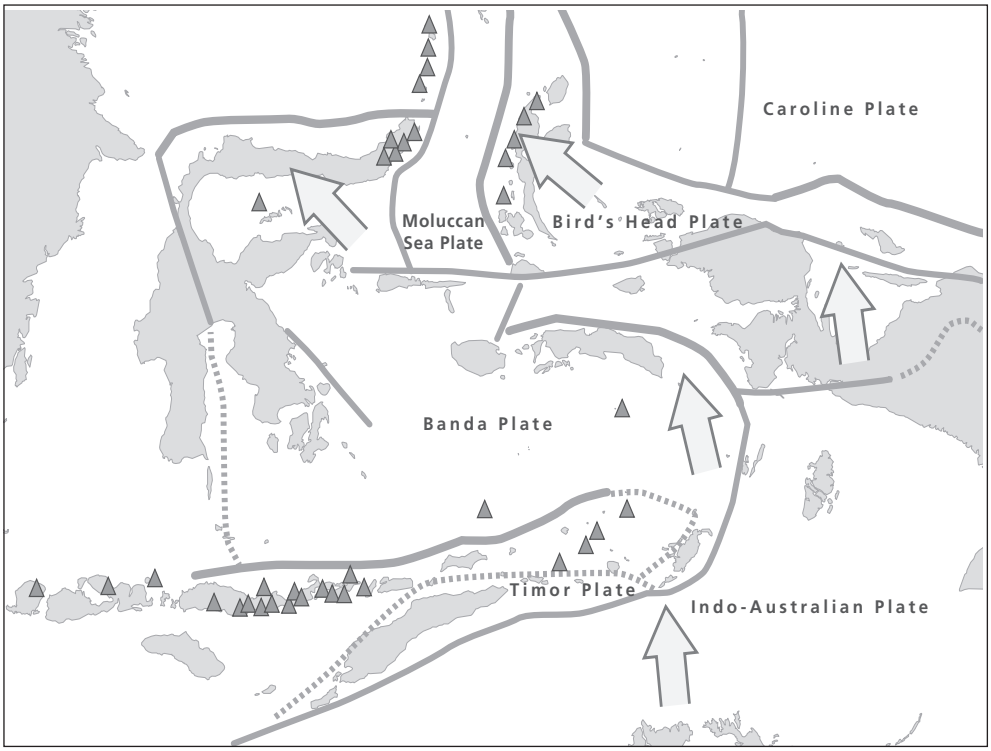
*deel, Inleiding, bijlagen en registersgebiedskaarten, illustraties.* Amsterdam: Huygens ING (KNAW), 2018. Vol. 1.1, document 186, p. 425.

40 Struys to the Church Council in Ambon, 20 February 1674. In: Niemeijer e.a. eds., *Bronnen betreffende Kerk en School,* 1.1, document 188.

41 Ibid., esp. p. 428. This refers to two passages from Revelation, involving an unprecedented earthquake, specifically, Revelation 11:15-19 and 16:17-21.

42 Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden,* p. 17.




Map 1.1 Plates, fault lines and volcanoes of the eastern archipelago.

ates originally resided on the islands of Moti and Makian, meaning that each of the four sultanates is associated with one of the four volcanic islands. The name and notion of Maluku, therefore, are inherently associated with volcanoes.[43]

Many of the larger islands in the region are not primarily volcanic but form part of continental fragments: tectonic pieces that have broken off the Indo-Australian Plate as it submerges beneath Eurasia.[44] These pieces include the Sula and Banggai islands, Timor and Sumba, and, most importantly for our study, much

43 Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 16-27. It should be noted that Company officials often used the term 'Moluccos' simply as a synonym for Ternate, which was the most powerful of the sultanates in the seventeenth century, and the seat of their own governor of the region.

44 Kathryn Monk e.a. *The Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 7-45. For a more recent assessment of plate tectonics as a force of history, and how much work remains to be done in this regard, see Anthony Reid. 'History and Seismology in the Ring of Fire; Punctuating the Indonesian Past.' In , H. Schulte Nordholt and D Henley eds. *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia; A Longue Durée Perspective*. Leiden: Brill, 2015, pp 62–77.

of Seram, Buru, Ambon, and the surrounding islands. The VOC called this latter region the Amboina Quarter; in this dissertation, I will usually refer to it as the Ambon Islands.

Many islands were formed by a combination of such geological processes, rather than one or the other.[45] The two most obvious examples of this have a very similar irregular shape, a testament to their complex geological history. One is the island of Halmahera, directly to the east of the 'four mountains' of Maluku. The other, which is more central to our study, is Sulawesi, by far the largest island in the region.

Broadly speaking, much of Sulawesi is an amalgamation of various continental fragments broken away from the Indo-Australian Plate.[46] The easternmost part of North Sulawesi, around Manado, was formed by volcanism caused by a subduction zone directly to its east. (In this respect, it is not unlike the volcanos of North Maluku, directly on the other side of the small Moluccan Sea Plate.) The area now called South Sulawesi is a very different story. Originally volcanic, it formed some sixty million years ago on the *Eurasian* Plate, from which it was then cut off as a rift formed, separating the region from what is now Borneo. It then drifted east, eventually colliding with continental fragments from the Indo-Australian Plate to form the present-day island.

The landmass of South Sulawesi is older than much of the rest of the region. The landscape of the peninsula is more settled, especially towards the south. Particularly along the west coast, its central mountain ranges are rimmed with extensive alluvial plains composed of basic and often clayish soils.[47]

This relatively flat, settled, and fertile landscape contrasts sharply with much

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45 There are some geological processes that I gloss over, so as not to overcomplicate things. For example, some islands, including Kei and Tanimbar in the far southeast of the present-day province of Maluku, are the result of uplifting and accumulation of lighter marine sediments, which, rather than being dragged down with the oceanic plate, are skimmed off at the subduction zone and settle on its far side. Kathryn Monk e.a. *The Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku,* pp. 17-19, 39-41.

46 Some such recent insights in R. Hall, M.A. Cottam and M.E.J. Wilson eds. *The SE Asian Gateway: History and Tectonics of the Australia–Asia Collision.* Geological Society of London Special Publication No. 355, 2011.

47 Robert Hall. 'Sundaland and Wallacea: geology, plate tectonics and paleogeography.' In David Gower e.a., *Biotic Evolution and Environmental Change in Southeast Asia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 32–78. E.C.J. Mohr. *De bodem der tropen in het algemeen, en die van Nederlandsch-Indië in het bijzonder.* Amsterdam, 1933-1938. Vol II.2 (1935), 269-291.

of the rest of eastern Indonesia, the geological history of which was generally more turbulent and brief. Although this history is still not fully charted, it is clear that as recently as ten million years ago, most of the islands that now make up Maluku did not yet exist. Since that time, many of the islands have emerged from the sea and disappeared beneath the waves again, only to resurface later. In most of the region, this has resulted in land being steep and irregular. As Rumphius said of the Ambon islands:

> A rough, uncivilised and melancholy population inhabits a rough, wild and mountainous land, where one can find everything one associates with true wilderness, such as steep and wooded mountains, terrifying cliffs, deep and dark valleys in which rivers come falling down from high up with a great roar, frightening caves and disorderly and impenetrable scrubland.[48]

As we will see, such environmental characteristics would have a strong bearing on the human ecology of the eastern archipelago's various regions.

### Coral, cloves, rice: the environment of the eastern archipelago

The eastern archipelago lies at the heart of the Coral Triangle, some of its reefs harbouring the highest biodiversity anywhere in the world. Today, divers come to the region from far and wide to explore the otherworldly underwater landscape and plethora of wondrous creatures that inhabit it. Even from a boat on the surface, Alfred Russel Wallace was spellbound as he crossed Ambon Bay in December 1859:

> Passing up the harbour, in appearance like a fine river, the clearness of the water afforded me one of the most astonishing and beautiful sights I have ever beheld. The bottom was absolutely hidden by a continuous series of corals, sponges, actiniae, and other marine productions of magnificent dimensions, varied forms, and brilliant colours. The depth varied from about twenty to fifty feet, and the bottom was very uneven, rocks and chasms and little hills and valleys, offering a variety of stations for the growth of these animal forests. In and out among them, moved numbers of blue and red and yellow fishes, spotted and banded and striped in the most striking manner, while great orange or rosy transparent medusa floated along near the surface.

48 Rumphius, *Ambonse Eilanden,* 16.

> It was a sight to gaze at for hours, and no description can do justice to its surpassing beauty and interest. For once, the reality exceeded the most glowing accounts I had ever read of the wonders of a coral sea.[49]

More prosaically, this rich marine life was also an important source of food; shallow-water fishing traditionally provides an important part of the diet of inhabitants of the region.

The reefs also had implications for the practicalities of navigation and warfare. In the Ambon Islands, for instance, the prevalence of reefs just off the coast made shallower and smaller ships the better choice in many circumstances. (The same, we might add, applied when it came to conducting operations in the mangroves that were to be found in many of the region's bays and estuaries.) In the long run, the rich coral life in the sea also left its mark on adjacent landmasses: given that the region is so geologically active, many coastal areas in the islands are composed of coral limestone, even at relatively high elevations. Often, the limestone is still clearly recognisable as a coral reef that had been lifted from the seabed. This was not lost on Rumphius, who dedicated a chapter of his *Rarity Cabinet* to a type of clam shell that was found embedded in the rock throughout the Ambon islands, even at high altitudes. Tantalisingly, he entertained the thought that the frequent earthquakes in the region might have created new mountains from the seabed. Ultimately, however, he concluded this was unlikely and settled for the more traditional explanation that they had been deposited there by the Great Flood.[50]

Maluku's irregular and mountainous landscapes were not well suited to per-

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49 Alfred Russel Wallace. *The Malay Archipelago*. London: Auckland: The Floating Press [orig. 1869], pp. 328-329. Wallace concludes with the remark that '[t]here is perhaps no spot in the world richer in marine productions, corals, shells and fishes, than the harbour of Amboyna.' It should be noted that, one-and-a-half century later, this is certainly no longer the case: little coral remains in the Ambon harbour. More generally, we have lost about half the world's coral reefs over the past decades due to pollution, damage due to (over)fishing including dynamite and cyanide fishing, and climate change. We stand to lose the remaining half in the coming decades. It is an arresting thought that a process which has shaped the islands of Maluku for as long as they have existed, is now under direct threat from human activity.

50 G.E. Rumphius. *D'Amboinsche rariteitkamer, behelzende eene beschryvinge van allerhande zoo weeke als harde schaalvisschen, te weeten raare krabben, kreeften, en diergelyke zeedieren, als mede allerhande hoorntjes en schulpen, die men in d'Amboinsche zee vindt* etc. Amsterdam: Francois Halma, 1705, 134pp.

manent intensive agriculture. Accordingly, the thick forests covering the islands and their coasts were the main source of staple foods. In spite of Rumphius' claims to the contrary cited earlier, these forests should not be thought of as wild and pristine: their human inhabitants have long been moulding them to their needs, constantly reshaping the jungle through their swidden cultivation practices.

Of the trees that grow in these forests, the sago palm or *Metroxylon Sagu* was perhaps the most important to the region's human inhabitants. Indeed, it was the main source of carbohydrates in many areas of Maluku and the Ambon islands. Growing wild in marshes and estuaries, the sago palm stores its energy in its tree trunk in the form of starch. To extract this starch, a tree is cut down and split open, and its 'marrow' removed and beaten into a coarse powder with an adze. This powder is then rinsed to flush the starch out of the tree's woody fibres of the tree, sieved, kneaded, and wrung to remove the excess water. The resulting mass can be kept in large baskets or *tumang* (in which it must be kept moist) and is used to cook a variety of foods, most typically *papeda* or sago porridge. Alternatively, it can be baked into small dry loaves, *lempeng*, which keep extremely well and were therefore the staple of choice for military expeditions.[51] All in all, sago provides a very labour-efficient source of food.

Although sago grows wild in many bays and estuaries, human communities have actively maintained sago forests; some of the waste products of the sago extraction process were left in the marshy jungle, fertilising the soil. Further, shoots were deliberately planted where trees had been cut. They soon developed into new sago trees, which grow to full size in about fifteen years.[52] In addition,

51 Waste products were also used to some purpose, most prominently in building. The dried leaves form the basic material for *atap,* still generally used as roof covering, and the branches were split in two halves and used for walls. Unfortunately, *atap* burns quite easily, and, as we will be seeing, arson became a common weapon in the conflicts that are the topic of this thesis. What could not be used was left in the sago forest and served as fertilizer. Germen Boelens e.a. *Natuur en samenleving van de Molukken.* Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2001, pp. 60-61, 156-157; Monk e.a., *Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku,* pp. 687-690; Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen,* p. 173.

52 The sago tree is most rich in starch by the end of this cycle, just before it blooms, usually after about 15 years, and tends to be cut then. Cutting before the tree blooms and produces seed is not a substantial threat to durable production, as the trees also grow out of underground root systems and, as stated, shoots were planted where trees had been cut. Boelens e.a., *Natuur en samenleving,* pp. 60-61, 156-157; Gerrit Knaap. 'De komst van de kruidnagel: economische geschiedenis van Ambon tot omstreeks

sago trees were introduced into suitable areas where they were not already growing wild.

The sago-rich local diet was supplemented by many other kinds of food, which linked ways of producing food production straddling the border between swidden agriculture and foraging. Typically, a patch of forest was cleared and planted with a combination of crops, including roots such as taro and yam, but also grains such as rice. (Locally, the practice is generally called *ladang* cultivation.) Plants and trees such as banana and coconut were also introduced. Although the root crops exhausted the soil after just a few seasons, the patch continued producing bananas and/or coconuts for up to several decades. In addition, as the forest began overtaking the area once again, the inhabitants took care to plant shoots of kenari, breadfruit, and durian trees, for example. Respectively, these produce a type of nut; what is technically a large fruit but is mostly eaten and cooked as a staple; and the thorny 'king of fruits', famous for its taste and infamous for its smell.[53] The kenari and durian trees in particular become huge, towering jungle trees with impressive buttress roots. Appearances notwithstanding, their prevalence in the forests of Maluku is largely the result of human intervention. In short, when the jungle reclaimed a certain area following a period of cultivation, it became much richer in species useful to humans.[54] Evidence for the history of such subsistence strategies before the early modern period is sparse, particularly in the eastern archipelago. Where it is available, though, archaeological and linguistic evidence indicates that sago and forms of swidden cultivation have been present in eastern Indonesia for millennia. Although the early modern age did see the introduction of some new crops, such as cassava and maize, these were incorporated into existing subsistence strategies.[55]

The clove tree, of singular importance to the conflicts that are the topic of this dissertation, increasingly formed an exception to this pattern. Cloves are the unripe, as yet unopened flower buds of this tree and owe their distinct flavour

1650' in: In: G. Knaap, R. Chauvel & C. van Fraassen eds., *Van Tjengkeh tot kruidnagel*. Amsterdam: Stichting Werkgroep Inheemse Volken, 1987, pp. 3-14.

53 I grudgingly forego Wallace's lyrical description this time, although it is certainly worthwhile: Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago,* pp. 46-47.

54 Boelens e.a., *Natuur en samenleving,* pp. 158-159, 188-193, 216-219.

55 Peter Bellwood. *First Islanders : Prehistory and Human Migration in Island Southeast Asia*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons inc., 2017, pp. 276-297; Boelens e.a., *Natuur en samenleving,* 156-159.

Fig 1.1 Cloves on a branch of the clove trees as depicted in a manuscript copy of Rumphius' *Kruid-boek.* B depicts the clove ready for harvesting, just before the flowers blossom. C. shows them in bloom. D. shows the so-called 'moernagelen', literally, mother cloves, which are the fruits (with their seeds) that form if the flower buds are not harvested. Collection Leiden University, BPL 314, part 2, fol. 6a (detail).

primarily to the fact that they are particularly rich in eugenol.[56] The tree produces this substance as a means of defence, for it has strong insecticidal, antiseptic, and antifungal properties. Indeed, eugenol is found in many other plant species,

56 The name for the substance actually derives from the now obsolete Linnean name for the clove tree, *Eugenia caryophyllata*.

including spices such as nutmeg and cinnamon. The clove, however, is the undisputed champion when it comes to eugenol content. Eugenol not only gives cloves their flavour, but is also effective as a preservative and, in large enough amounts, has a painkilling and sedative effect. With good reason, it is the object of much recent pharmaceutical research.[57]

The useful properties of cloves were not lost on their consumers in the early modern age. Myriad beneficial properties were attributed to them – not all of which are borne out by more recent research. One sixteenth century source stated that

> some sprinkle clove powder on the head against headaches due to the common cold. They strengthen the liver, stomach and the heart; they are beneficial in the digestion of food, help the urine along, and stem diarrhoea. They preserve eyesight when put into the eyes. When four drammes [c. 7 grammes] are drunk with milk, they promote the work of Venus.[58]

In his *Kruid-boek*, Rumphius declined to go into the use of cloves in Europe in any detail, but did remark that the Creator apparently made them, not for the 'wild inhabitants' of the eastern archipelago itself, but for the European and northern world. Somewhat confusingly, he then immediately noted that they were also popular throughout Asia, where they were put to various uses and found a ready market.[59] In China, for instance, they were used as an ingredient in various types of incense, and were referred to in documents as far back as the

57 For an accessible synthesis of such research, see D.F. Cortés-Rojas, C.R. de Souza, W.P. Oliveira. 'Clove (Syzygium aromaticum): a precious spice.'in: *Asian Pac J Trop Biomed.* 2014 Feb 4(2): 90-96.

58 Jan Huyghen van Linschoten. *Itinerario, Voyage Ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten, Naer Oost Ofte Portugaels Indien : Inhoudende Een Corte Beschryvinge Der Selver Landen Ende Zee-Custen* etc. Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596, 90. Van Linschoten attributes the information to his fellow citizen of Enkhuizen, Bernard Paludanus, but he, in turn, was certainly drawing on Cristóbal Acosta. *Tractado de las drogas, y medicinas de las Indias Orientales, con sus plantas debuxadas al bino ...Christoval Acosta.* Burgos: Martín de Victoria, 1578, cap. 3, pp. 32-33, which has the same information. Some of these attributed properties probably owe more to the place of cloves in the Galenic system than to any experience. As cloves were considered to be a 'hot' and 'dry' spice, they were supposed to drive off fluids, and were associated with masculinity and libido.

59 G.E. Rumphius e.a. *Het Amboinsche kruid-boek. Dat is, Beschryving van de meest bekende boomen, heesters, kruiden, land- en water-planten, die men in Amboina, en de omleggende eylanden vind* etc. Amsterdam: Meinard Uytwerf, 1741-1750, vol, II, pp. 7-9.

Han Period (25-220 CE).[60] More generally, there had been a market for cloves in India, the Middle East, and Europe for centuries. The earliest purported (but contested) archaeological discovery of cloves was made at a site in Syria that could be dated to 1721 BCE.[61] Demand for cloves was nothing new, then, but the market for them rapidly expanded with the worldwide economic boom of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It would appear that cultivation practices kept pace with increasing demand. Whereas clove trees might have initially grown wild and been gathered in the forest, by the time the first surviving eyewitness accounts were written in the sixteenth century, they had become permanently and systematically cultivated cash crops. As opposed to many of the foodstuffs described above, these trees were grown in dedicated groves. These were interspersed with high trees (usually *kenari*) to provide the light shade that the clove trees preferred, but kept free of other vegetation. The soil in the groves was turned over once a year and kept clear of undergrowth This both optimised the growing conditions and facilitated the harvest, during which many cloves fell to the ground and had to be found and picked up. The harvest in particular was an extremely labour-intensive period, in which the entire crop had to be brought in and processed in short order. Galvao described the harvest in North Maluku in 1544:

> As soon as the clove begins to ripen, they harvest it; for if they let it attain ripeness, it becomes woody and falls without being of any use. The harvesters climb up the trees and take with them a rope and a pole. They throw the rope down, and those who are standing there tie a basket to it, and it is hoisted up. And they fasten it with some cord around their shoulders, and thus it stays on their back. They pick the clove with their hands, breaking the ends

60 Xu, Guanmian, 'Junks to Mare Clausum: China-Maluku Connections in the Spice Wars, 1607–1622', *Itinerario* 44 (2020): 196–225 .

61 Dating was possible because the excavated house was destroyed by a fire, which fortuitously baked some clay tablets in it. One of these mentions the ruling king. The original archaeological report making the claim is Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn K. Buccellati. 'Terqa: the first eight seasons'. *Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 33:2 (1984): 47–67. I thank Peter Lape, Matthew Spriggs and Tom Hoogervorst for an enlightening email correspondence (January 2022) making clear that we should not take this identification of the find at face value. For a general assessment of the consumption and significance of cloves in Asia and Europe before the arrival of the Portuguese in Asia, see R.A. Donkin. *Between East and West the Moluccas and the Traffic in Spices up to the Arrival of Europeans*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003.

> of the boughs bearing it, and throw it into the *saloi* [basket]. Where their hands cannot reach, they substitute the pole for it; and when the basket is filled they send it back down by the rope. They bring it to their houses, and they put it to dry on mats in the sun or on reeds in the smoke as [one does with] chestnuts.[62]

The growing market not only led to more systematic cultivation but also to the spread of cultivation through the region. Having possibility originated specifically in Makian, and present in many of the volcanic islands of North Maluku by the early sixteenth century, it was spreading to Western Seram and the Ambon and Lease islands just as the Portuguese first arrived in the region.[63] As we will explore at length in this dissertation, cloves would end up being a rather mixed blessing for the inhabitants of these regions.

### Settlement patterns in Maluku

By the sixteenth century, the populations of Ternate and Tidore tended to live in villages close to the coast, as they were strongly oriented towards seaborne trade in spices, and at the centre of a larger maritime domain. Lore has it that before the Ternaten court moved to Gamalama, directly on the south coast, it was situated at Foramadiahi, a village high up the southern slopes of the volcano.[64] If this story suggests a historical migration down towards the coast as the state formed and turned towards trade and the sea, then the process had already run its course when the Portuguese first described the region. When they arrived, most of the villages were situated directly on the shoreline. Some were sited on

62 Antonio Galvão[?] (Hubert Jacobs ed.) *A Treatise on the Moluccas (c. 1544) : Probably the Preliminary Version of António Galváo 's Lost Historia Das Molucas*. Rome : Jesuit Historical Institute, 1971, pp. 136-139.

63 Rumphius writes that the people of Kambelo, Western Seram, were the first to bring 'mother cloves' (clove seeds, which will form in unharvested flowers) to their region, and soon found that the clove tree thrived there. Hitu soon followed suit. Leitimor and the Lease Islands only followed in the seventeenth century, when the VOC enforced a policy to that effect – see below, chapter II and chapter V, paragraph 'Feigned friends?'. Rumphius, *Kruid-boek,* II, 4.

64 Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 11-12. In 2019, this idea is still generally subscribed to by the inhabitants of the village and by the inhabitants of Ternate at large. The fact that important Sultans such as Baabullah were buried on the slopes above the village, testifies to the significance the village had even in the sixteenth century. Personal communication with my guide Irvan, and the people of the village, March 2019.

slightly higher and more easily defensible positions, but these were usually still very close to the shore.[65]

In the Ambon Islands, settlements tended to be slightly further from the shore. Typically, they were situated on defensible locations uphill, not least to provide some protection against the amphibious headhunting and slaving raids that were the staple of statecraft and the martial culture in the islands. The development of clove production and trade in the region over the course of the sixteenth century did not yet bring around any dramatic change in this regard. Whereas Kambelo and Lesidi, which were probably the first settlements in the Ambon Islands to get involved in clove cultivation and trade, were situated directly on the shoreline by the early seventeenth century, most communities remained further uphill. The landscape provided high and defensible positions that were still relatively close to the shore (often in the form of the elevated coral platforms mentioned earlier). The greater ease in trade and fishing that moving down to the shoreline would have allowed, therefore, would not have been worth the increased exposure to attack, whether posed by old political rivals or new European and Asian interlopers.[66]

### A different path: environment and settlement patterns in South Sulawesi

As we have seen, South Sulawesi's landscape and geology differed somewhat from the rest of the eastern archipelago. Its clayish, slightly basic alluvial soils on relatively flat coastal land interspersed with rivers made it very well suited to irrigated rice cultivation. So did its climate, combining enough precipitation with a sufficient dry season to allow the rice to ripen. The development of permanent and irrigated rice cultivation in South Sulawesi is now assumed to date back to the thirteenth century and to have sustained the kingdoms in the region that

65 It seems quite likely, however, that the villages of Ternate had always been near the shore and oriented towards the sea. Areas further inland, both in Ternate and throughout Maluku and the Ambon Islands, were generally considered the domain of the Alfurs, the indigenous population of the region with a distinct ethnicity and culture. The village and town-dwelling population of the coastal regions of Ternate, like, for that matter that of other polities in the region such as Hitu, considered themselves to be later arrivals, as testified by origin stories throughout the region. For more on this, see next chapter. Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 83-84. Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* pp. 32-25, 89-103.

66 Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen,* 23-24.

preceded the rise of Gowa-Tallo.[67] As Gowa-Tallo formed and rose in the course of the sixteenth century, wet rice cultivation flourished along the south and west coasts. Both Dutch and Gowan sources testify to the irrigation works that the court initiated. One example of this was in Maros. After being conquered by Gowa's ruler Tunijalloq in the late sixteenth century, the plains were shared out amongst the Gowan nobility, who developed agriculture on them, so that the region 'yearly produced an incredible amount of paddy rice'.[68] The result was so striking that it invariably drew comments from the first Dutch visitors to the region. For instance, in 1607 Paulus van Solt described the area around Makassar as 'a wonderful region for rice, which grows here in abundance, as is easy to see when sailing past the land […] It is a joy to behold, as one hardly sees an area that is uncultivated'.[69]

The large rice surplus that this area produced allowed the population to grow. By the seventeenth century, the coastal regions of South Sulawesi were among the most densely populated areas of the archipelago. Hand in hand with this development, the Bugis and Makasar states in these coastal lowlands started aggregating into larger polities (as will be explored in more detail later). The rice surplus also facilitated urban development: Makassar became an important hub in international overseas trade. Finally, it provided something akin to a cash crop for the people of South Sulawesi: its rice was generally considered to be of supreme quality, and made an excellent trade good to exchange for the spices of Maluku and the Ambon and Banda islands.[70] As the region's economy became more involved in lowland irrigated rice cultivation and international trade, the

67 David Bulbeck and Ian Caldwell. *Land of Iron : the Historical Archaeology of Luwu and the Cenrana Valley : Results of the Origin of Complex Society in South Sulawesi Project (OXIS).* Canberra: Australian National University, 2000, 13-14, 100-107.

68 Speelman, Cornelis Janszoon. *Notitie dienende voor eenen corten tijt en tot nader last van de Hooge Regeeringe op Batavia, tot naarrigtinge van de Onderkoopman Jan van den Oppijnen, bij provisie gesteldt tot Opperhooft en Commandant in 't Casteel Rotterdam, op Maccasser, en van den Capitain Jan Fransz; als hoofd over de Militie, mitsgaders die van den Raadt, anno 1669.* Typed copy, 1949. Collection KITLV Leiden, inv. no. D H 802, vol. I, p. 11. Cummings, *Chain of Kings,* 88, also credits Karaeng Matoaya, the ruler of Tallo (r. 1593 - 1623) with building irrigation works.

69 Isaac Commelin. *Begin ende voortgangh, van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie. : Vervattende de voornaemste reysen, by de inwoonderen der selver provincien derwaerts gedaen* etc. Amsterdam: Jan Jansz., 1646, 12th voyage, p. 82.

70 Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce,* II, pp. 24-25. Campbell Macknight,. 'The Rise of Agriculture in South Sulawesi before 1600.' *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs* Vol. 17 (1983): 92-116.

rulers of Gowa physically moved down to the coast and the capital of Makassar developed right on the shoreline.

### Landscape, environment, and the art of not being governed

Thus, by the dawn of the early modern period the region's different environments had given rise to different economies and societies. It might be interesting to consider them in relation to James C. Scott's thought experiment, in which he imagines the landscape that would be most resilient to centralised state power and outside appropriation:

> In place of a flat, relatively frictionless alluvial plain, you would conjure up a rugged landscape where the 'friction of terrain' was forbiddingly high. In place of concentrated grain crops that ripen simultaneously, you would prefer shifting, diverse, dispersed root crops of uneven maturation.[71]

We might start by noting that the coastal areas of South Sulawesi are just the kind of region where one would expect a strong central state. Applying the thought experiment to Maluku and the Ambon and Banda islands is less straightforward. Societies on very small islands would not be shielded from centralised powers by forbidding landscapes and subsistence strategies, particularly if the outside power trying to impose its will disposed of a strong maritime force. This goes especially for insular societies whose economies are highly dependent on overseas trade, such as the Banda Islands or Ternate.

The larger islands in the region, however, have many of the characteristics that Scott associates with resilience in the face of the imposition of state power and outside appropriation. The landscape of much of the Ambon region, for example, was extremely forbidding for outsiders. The subsistence strategies of its inhabitants, with their combination of swidden cultivation and foraging, closely correspond to what Scott calls 'escape agriculture', right down to the staple foods they relied on.[72] Even if these subsistence strategies did not arise specifically to 'escape' centralised power (as Scott contends for his own case studies in uphill mainland Southeast Asia), they frustrated imperialism all the same. As a labour-intensive and marketable cash crop, with a predictable harvest season

71 James C Scott. *The art of not being governed: an anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 178.

72 Scott, *The art of not being governed,* 187-207.

and grown in dedicated groves, the cultivation of cloves was a marked exception. Nevertheless, trying to establish control over the cultivation and trade of even this crop would prove prohibitively difficult.

This was due to the region's long and rugged coastlines, as well as what one Dutch official described as the 'difficult passage through the mountains, and the other unbeaten paths'.[73]

### Monsoon islands: navigation, trade and the climate of the eastern archipelago

The climate of all of the eastern archipelago is largely dictated by the monsoon winds. As the Asiatic landmass heats up during the summer in the northern hemisphere, it creates a large low-pressure area, drawing in air from the oceans around it. In the northern hemisphere winter, the Asian landmass cools down severely, and a low-pressure area instead forms over the southern Indian Ocean and, specifically, Australia, as it heats up during the southern hemisphere summer.[74]

As a consequence, during what are the summer months of the northern hemisphere, the wind blows from the south and southeast throughout eastern Indonesia, whereas in the northern hemisphere winter months, they blow from the north to northeast. In practical terms, this means that from Java or south Sulawesi, one could only sail to the Ambon islands from about October to April, whereas returning was only possible from May until September. The route usually took the ships across the Gulf of Bone, through the Buton Strait and then on to Ambon. For the VOC, Ambon sometimes served as a waystation to Banda and Ternate, and the route to these islands was the most monsoon-affected of all the VOC's shipping routes.[75]

The rhythm of the monsoon therefore determined traffic and communication between Maluku and the more westerly regions at every level. It meant that ships from Makassar or Java could only set sail from October onwards. As the

73 Lucasz, 'Sommier verbael…', 23 May 1631, printed in: Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave*, pp. 77-93, esp. 81.

74 For a slightly more elaborate summary, see Monk, *Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku,* pp. 69-85; Anthony J. Whitten. *The Ecology of Sulawesi.* Hongkong: Periplus Editions, 2002, pp. 21-29.

75 Robert Parthesius. *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: the Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia 1595-1660.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010, pp. 52-54.

Map 1.2 Prevailing winds over the eastern archipelago. The dark arrows below indicate the prevailing winds from c. April to September, while the lighter ones above indicate those from October to March.

cloves in Ambon and Western Seram were also harvested and dried during that period, the dry season in this area, spice traders had an interesting conundrum to figure out: leaving for Maluku in October meant they would have the first pick of the new harvest, but it would have them stuck there until the turning of the monsoon around March.[76] Arriving late would allow them to return more quickly, but might mean they would find the entire harvest already sold.

In the Ambon islands, these dry months therefore saw great activity. As they set in, the monsoon brought traders and armies alike from the west. As the attempts of various powers to control the spice trade became more aggressive in the course of the period studied here, it also became the military campaign season, as

76 Note that this only applies to Western Seram, Ambon and the Lease islands; in North Maluku, the dry season, and with it the clove harvest season, starts about a month earlier. For some comparative climate statistics: Monk e.a., *Geology of Maluku and Nusa Tenggara*, 72-73.

European and Asian powers alike used the dry and relatively disease-free months to secure as large a part of the harvest as possible by any means necessary. As the monsoon turned and the rains set in, ships tended to depart again, and things quieted down until the next dry season.[77]

## Concluding remarks

This chapter aimed to familiarize the reader with the region in which the Spice Wars took place, and was largely organised around its physical characteristics, including climate, ecology and geology. As these factors were of crucial importance at every level, from state formation processes and trade patterns to the practicalities of specific campaigns in the course of the spice wars, they will remain a recurrent theme throughout the dissertation. The landscape and environment of the region were a determining factor in their resilience to outside powers. In subsequent chapters, we will explore this in more detail, and see the difficulties that, for instance, Ternate and the VOC experienced when trying to exert such control. As we will see, the latter, in its frustration about its failures in this regard, would ultimately resort to what can only be described as a war with the environment itself.

First, however, we will look at the state formation processes, and the fabric of society, in the region in the sixteenth century, thus exploring not only the physical, but also the political and societal backdrop to the seventeenth century Spice Wars.

77 We see this same rhythm reflected in, for instance, the letters being sent to and from Batavia: the governor-general was able to talk to Ambon, Ternate and Makassar roughly from November to March; the various governors in the eastern archipelago were able to answer from late April to early October. This rhythm is evident in any large body of VOC correspondence; for seeing it at a glance, the tables of contents of Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, II and VII will serve. Note that Coen experimented in June 1616 with reaching Ternate by using an alternate route, but failed to get his letters through. In a pinch, it was possible to get ships through by taking a long detour north, as Coen did twice in June and July 1620.

# II. The eastern archipelago in the sixteenth century

After familiarizing ourselves with the natural and human environment that made up the eastern archipelago, this chapter aims to make another brief tour around the region, this time to familiarize ourselves with some of its political, economic and, to a lesser degree, cultural and religious characteristic as these stood and developed over the sixteenth century. It is emphatically not an attempt to give any kind of complete overview, but mainly tries to provide a conceptual basis for the subsequent study of the Spice Wars. It therefore limits itself to regions, characteristics and developments most acutely relevant to our understanding of these conflicts.[78]

### Banda and the others

Any consideration of spice trade and statecraft in the sixteenth century eastern archipelago must begin with a brief stop at the Banda Islands. The small group of islands, a good 100 kilometres south of Seram, was not only the sole area producing nutmeg and mace, but also a major regional trade entrepôt. Easily reached from major port cities further west, easily recognized from the sea by its volcano and with a large safe anchorage between the central group of islands, Banda was firmly embedded in Asian maritime trade networks by the early sixteenth century. When two Portuguese vessels, trying to locate the spice islands from recently-conquered Melaka, made their appearance there in 1512, they were surprised to find the islands welcoming and accustomed to international traders, with established trading practices and a population 'much taken to conducting business.'[79] The first two Portuguese ships spent a month buying nutmeg and mace. To their delight they were also able to buy a junk to replace an indigenous-built vessel they had lost earlier, and left the islands 'most contented'.[80]

The Bandanese were also traders in their own right, both within the eastern archipelago and beyond. In addition to trading with communities in, for example, Seram, Aru and Kei for various necessities, including staple foods such as sago, the Bandanese bought cloves produced in the various clove-producing

78 For a somewhat similar tour of the region, but with different purposes and therefore different emphasis, see e.g. Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 47-112.

79 João de Barros and Diogo do Couto. *Da Asia de João de Barros e Diogo de Couto ; decada 1-12. Nova ed.* Lisboa: Carlos, 1778, Dec III, Cap. VI, 587.

80 Ibid., 589.

regions to their north. As these regions were more difficult to reach from the west, had less well-established relations with long-distance traders and did not engage in long-distance trade of their own, the Bandanese were happy to serve as middlemen, paying for the cloves with cloth, gold, ivory and other luxury goods obtained from the long distance trade, and subsequently shipping them to Banda to sell. Furthermore, the Bandanese also participated in this long-distance trade themselves, sailing their own vessels to places like Tuban and Gresik on the Javanese coast, Melaka, and, later in the sixteenth century, Makassar. All the while, the elite of orangkaya ruling the various Bandanese communities was able to retain its political independence, both of the Portuguese and local expanding powers such as Ternate, throughout the sixteenth century.[81]

Other polities were making efforts to share in, or emulate, Bandanese commercial success. One way to do so was to introduce cloves to one's region, or extend its cultivation, and thus profit from the expanding world market. As the Portuguese made their way into the region, many polities also attempted to establish relations with them – not only as a potential customer for their spices, but also as a powerful potential ally. The Portuguese crew of the junk bought in Banda described above was to experience this first-hand. During the voyage back from Banda to Melaka, it lost sight of the other two ships and was stranded on the uninhabited Lucipara Islands. These Portuguese, led by Francisco Serrão, made their escape by attracting the attention of a passing Malay perahu, apparently lured by the potential loot to be obtained - the earliest Portuguese source describing the episode calls them *ladrões*, i.e. thieves or robbers. As these supposed robbers came ashore, the Portuguese lay in ambush, captured them and subsequently forced them to bring them to the nearest inhabited land. This ruse landed them at the settlement of Asilulu, on Ambon's northwest coast.[82]

The Portuguese were popular: a community on Western Seram immediately demanded that the inhabitants of Asilulu turn over their Portuguese guests or face the consequences. The leaders at Asilulu decided to ask the Portuguese to help them teach this rival community a lesson. The Portuguese obliged and with their assistance, the unnamed community on Western Seram was crushingly

81 John Villiers. 'The Cash-Crop Economy and State Formation in the Spice Islands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.' In: J. Kathirithamby and J. Villiers eds. *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity : Rise and Demise*. Singapore: Singapore University Press [etc.], pp. 83-106, esp. 83-95; Ellen, *On the edge of the Banda Zone,* esp. 54-89.

82 Barros, *Da Asia* 5 (Dec III, Cap. VI), 590-591.

defeated. This joint victory laid the basis for subsequent Portuguese involvement on the island of Ambon.

Meanwhile, the sultanates further north had also learned of the arrival of the Portuguese. Both the sultans of Ternate and Tidore rushed a fleet of kora-kora down to Ambon to invite the Portuguese to their island. The Ternatans were first to arrive, and Serrão accepted their invitation all too happily, as reaching the North Maluku had been one of the original goals of the expedition.[83]

Both in Ambon and in Ternate, the Portuguese were thus hailed not only as traders but also as allies. This put its mark on subsequent relations – whereas in Banda, the Portuguese do not appear to ever have established a permanent presence or gained political influence worth mentioning, they decidedly did so in both Ambon and Ternate. Their presence there would turn out to be a somewhat of a mixed blessing.

## Ternate and the Maluku sultanates

With Serrão, we travel some 600 kilometres to the north, to what was considered Maluku proper at the time: the sultanates of what we would today call North Maluku. This region was home to the sultanates of Ternate, Tidore, Jailolo and Bacan. The most powerful and consequential of these were Ternate and Tidore, two continually rivalrous states centred in two adjacent small islands *(See plate 2, below)*, but both with political power far beyond these islands at their core, as large areas throughout Maluku, as well as some areas of Sulawesi, were at some point vassals of one or the other. These sultanates, Ternate in particular, were also trade destinations in their own right, as, in the early sixteenth century, the region was still the exclusive producer of cloves.[84]

With Serrão's arrival in Ternate, the Portuguese immediately became tied up with the political rivalry between Ternate and Tidore. The race of the two rivalling sultans to court the favours of the Portuguese, with Ternate winning

83 Ibid., 593pp. For a serviceable overview of these events in Dutch, based on Barros, see P.A. Tiele, 'De Europeëers in den Maleischen Archipel, Eerste gedeelte.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 25 (1877), esp. 355-361.

84 Much of what follows heavily relies on Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 1993, Ch. 4. Footnotes have been placed where a specific reference was useful, or where other sources were used. For a recent source publication giving further texture to these episodes from the Spanish perspective: Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, (Glen F. Dille ed.) *Spanish and Portuguese Conflict in the Spice Islands : the Loaysa Expedition to the Moluccas 1525-1535 : from Book XX of the General and Natural History of the Indies.* Hakluyt Society, series III, vol. 38. London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2021.

the day, appears to have sprung from the hopes that the Portuguese would be an asset in the conflict, and that an alliance with them would raise the sultan's own standing and power. The Ternaten Sultan Abu Lais wrote a letter to the Portuguese king, inviting him to come and buy not only cloves, but also nutmeg and mace in Ternate. The sultan would also welcome Portuguese soldiers and weapons, and would allow them to build a fort in his domains. Nine years later, Tidore, along with Jailolo, tried to make a similar arrangement with the Spaniards when the two remaining ships of Magellan's expedition, sent out specifically to contest the Portuguese claims to the Spice Islands, passed through the region. From the very beginning, European competition for access to the spices was entwined with political rivalries between the states in Maluku.

For the time being it was the alliance between the Portuguese and Ternate that stuck. In 1522, the Portuguese, startled into action by the appearance of the Spanish ships, sent a contingent of Portuguese under Antonio de Brito to Ternate to begin building a fort on the southern coast of Ternate. They completed its construction in 1523. The following year the Ternatens and their newfound European allies successfully attacked Tidore, burning down the capital Mareku. The Spanish presence in the archipelago, meanwhile, was too intermittent and fleeting for them to substantially help their Malukan allies. In spite of some limited Spanish help to Jailolo,[85] the Portuguese conquered it in 1534, captured the sultan and, after his suspiciously untimely death, installed a new one that was loyal to them. In 1551 Jailolo, after renewed conflict with Ternate and the Portuguese, would become entirely subservient to Ternate.

The alliance therefore really did help to make Ternate into the most powerful of the Maluku sultanates. Portuguese traders, like their Muslim counterparts, also brought wealth, some in the form of cloth, iron, and luxury goods, to Ternate, reinforcing the position and status of the ruling class in the process. It has been suggested that the clove trade, with the income it provided and the organization that was required to meet Portuguese demands for timing and preparation of the harvest, accelerated the state formation process underway in the islands.[86] However, this all came at a significant cost. Relationships between the Ternatens and the Portuguese soon turned sour. De Brito's successor, Dom Jorge de

85 Some Spanish survivors of the Saavedra expedition, which had stranded in Jailolo in 1528, had remained there and apparently helped the sultan with weapons, training and fort building. Andaya, *World of Maluku*, 121-122.

86 Villiers, 'Cash-crop economy and state formation', p. 101. Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 1993, pp.55-57.

Menese, managed to alienate the ruling class within a very short period of time with his heavy-handed policies, which included keeping the sultan hostage in the Portuguese fort and executing various Ternaten high officials he suspected of conspiring against him. Under the leadership of the sultan's mother, the Ternatens started starving the fort of food supplies, only lifting the blockade when Menese was replaced as Captain of Ternate in 1530.

Menese's captaincy was the start of increasing Portuguese involvement in Ternaten politics, and Ternaten resistance against this. Subsequent decades saw frequent conflict, and the exile or even death of sultans at the hands of the Portuguese. On one occasion the Ternaten leaders swore to 'destroy all the spice and fruit trees on the islands' so that the Portuguese would have no further interest in the area. [87] Meanwhile, Christianity was taking hold in many areas that the sultan of Ternate laid claim to. The latter usually happened not only on the initiative of Portuguese missionaries, but on that of the population of these areas, who, among many motivations, sometimes saw it as a means of weakening Ternaten control over them.[88] The Muslim Ternaten sultans rightly felt that this was undermining their power.

Things came to a head after 1570 when Sultan Hairun was killed by the Portuguese. His son and successor, Babullah, then resolved to drive the Portuguese from Ternate altogether – and would turn out to be a lot more successful than his predecessors. He managed to unite a Muslim coalition against the Portuguese, and proceeded to starve them into submission in their fort. He meanwhile campaigned around Maluku, driving out the Portuguese and forcing Christian communities to convert to Islam. In 1575, after what had amounted to a five year siege and with no prospect of help from the ailing Portuguese empire, the Portuguese surrendered the fort and were evicted to Ambon. The Portuguese presence in Ternate came to an end. The experience had, however, not made alliances with Europeans lose their appeal. Interestingly, Tidore would open its doors to the Portuguese soon after. Ternate, for its part, was soon courting the new European powers coming to Maluku. When Francis Drake sailed through the area in 1579,

87 Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 1993, p. 124.

88 This local agency in the spread of Christianity is demonstrated in Baker, Brett. 'Indigenous-Driven Mission: Reconstructing Religious Change in Sixteenth-Century Maluku.' PhD. Diss, Australian National University, 2014. Baker also points out that interest in Christianity not only stemmed from the elite considerations of political and economic power I emphasize here (although these certainly played a role), but also from individual religious choices.

Fig 2.1 The Ternaten capital of Gamalama, as depicted in Van Neck's published journal about the second Dutch expedition to Asia (1601). This print was made on the basis of Van Warwijck's visit to Ternate, 1599. A are Van Warwijck's two ships. C. are the king's warships. G. shows the old Portuguese fort, now turned into the royal palace. M. shows another fortified Portuguese building. O shows a tower 'with one gun'. Collection Universiteit van Amsterdam, O 60 641, p. 40.

he had initially intended to sail to Tidore. A Ternaten approached the ships and implored Drake to come to Ternate instead, as he would find a warm welcome there and the Portuguese were in Tidore now, where the English had nothing to expect but deceit and treachery. Drake obliged, setting sail for Ternate instead.[89]

Babullah meanwhile started reasserting and extending his power, sending a fleet to the western Ambon islands in 1576, and setting out with a fleet himself in 1580, first to North Sulawesi, and then to Southeast Sulawesi. The campaign

89 Francis Fletcher e.a. *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* etc. London: Printed [by G. Miller] for Nicholas Bourne and are to be sold at his shop at the Royall Exchange, 1628, p.85. It is worth noting that Portugal and England were allies at the time.

ended at Selayar, just below South Sulawesi, where a treaty was allegedly made with the Gowan ruler.[90]

Sultan Babullah was now free of the Portuguese and presided over a self-confident and cosmopolitan Southeast Asian court. The report of Francis Drake's visit to Ternate illustrates this very nicely – not only were Drake and his crew impressed by the opulence and state of the court, they also took note of the cosmopolitan character of the sultan's retinue, which included four 'Romans, or strangers [Rumi?], who lay as lidgiers [agents or representatives] there to keepe continuall traffique with this people; there were also two Turkes and one Italian as lidgiers; and last of all, one Spaniard who, being freed out of the hands of the Portugals in the recovering of the iland, served him now in stead of a souldier.'[91]

Drake was less impressed with the state of defence – the sultan had taken up residence in the old Portuguese fort, but Drake's men did not 'find it to be a place of any great force; two onely cannons there they saw, and those at that present moment untraversable because unmounted.'[92] Six years later, however, the Ternate court had apparently improved dramatically on this point. In 1585 the Spanish, now allied with the Portuguese since the Iberian Union of 1580, made an attempt to conquer Ternate, sending a fleet from Manila. The Spaniards and a host of local allies, however, found a significantly reinforced fort, with an added ring of walls, new bulwarks and towers, mounted with guns captured from the Portuguese. Spanish sources also describe how some twenty Turkish gunners participated in the defence, using bombs and grenades against the attacking Spaniards. In the end, the Spanish broke off their attack.[93]

Thus, at the end of the sixteenth century, Ternate had become militarily

90 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 1993, p. 134. Andaya bases himself heavily on Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* here, and Valentijn's information seems to come from local lore, so that the reliability of this information is somewhat uncertain. It must be noted that the Gowa Chronicle (Cummings, *A Chain of Kings,* p. 41) makes no mention of this treaty, although it does mention Maluku in the information about diplomatic contacts built up by this ruler: 'It was also this *karaeng* [Tunijalloq, r.1565-1590] who befriended the Javanese, crossed over to Karasanga, to Johor, crossed over to Melaka, crossed over to Pahang, crossed over to Balambangang, crossed over to Patani, crossed over to Banjar, went east to Maluku'.; Ibid, p. 41.

91 Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake,* 90-91. Incidentally, on Ternate they also met with a Chinese who claimed to have been exiled from the Chinese court and would only be allowed to return when he had discovered some worthwhile information.

92 Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake, 1628*, p. 92.

93 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 1993, p.137.

strong, independent of the Iberian powers, and expanding to include an ever greater number of vassals throughout the eastern archipelago. Various areas of Sulawesi had come within the Ternaten sphere of influence – some areas on its north coast, but also the islands of Southeast Sulawesi, including the sultanate of Buton. Closer to home, they included the populous Sula and Banggai Islands, important to the Ternaten realm as a whole as they provided an abundance of sago and other staple foods.[94] Furthermore, its vassals included some regions of the western Ambon islands – the western peninsula of Seram, called Hoamoal, had a Ternaten governor or kimelaha, as did the island of Buru, directly to its west.[95]

### An island divided: Ambon

While little is known with certainty about the political structure of Maluku before the arrival of the Portuguese, we do know that the dynasties of North Maluku traced their lineages back for several centuries before that time, and that state formation processes, spurred on by clove exports, had been underway there for an extended period of time. In Ambon, Seram and the smaller surrounding islands in what we would today consider Central Maluku, by contrast, polities were typically still limited to village federations. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, as clove cultivation entered the region, both Portugal and Ternate increasingly built up a sphere of influence, and local power structures started to aggregate and integrate. By the late sixteenth century, then, the region constituted a complicated patchwork of states, local political affiliations and foreign influence.

The island of Ambon consists of two peninsulas – a larger northern one and a smaller southern one, joined together by a land-bridge towards the east side still known as the Passo. As the Portuguese were welcomed into Asilulu, the various communities of the northern peninsula were in the process of integrating into what would become the state of Hitu.

The *Hikyat Tanah Hitu*, a seventeenth century history of Hitu written by the Hituese imam and nobleman Rijali, recounts how four groups of migrants arrived in the islands from various other parts of the archipelago – Seram, Java, Jailolo (in North Maluku) and Gorom (an island and local trade hub off eastern Seram, to be discussed below), and each staked their claim to part of the area

94 Andaya, *The world of Maluku,* pp. 85-90.

95 The Dutch often referred to these kimelaha as 'stadhouders'.

around the Hitu Bay and established a *negeri*, a town community, there. Their leaders resolved to merge into one larger community which they would jointly rule, the four groups each represented by a leader called *perdana* (literally: first). The leader of each group was given a ringing title: the *perdana Totohatu* for those from Seram, the *perdana Tanihitumesen* for those from Java, the *perdana Nusatapi* for those from Jailolo, the *perdana Patih Tuban* for those from Gorom. In the wake of these events, more village federations on Hitu joined or were subsumed under the various *perdana*, and the four original groups of migrants were joined by three local polities, adding up to be seven federations of villages known as *uli*. This gave Hitu (which means seven) its name.[96]

While Rijali's account of the founding of Hitu would have stemmed from an oral tradition, rendering it into an origin story with all the associated motifs and literary tropes, we can accept the underlying notion that groups of migrants arrived in the region and were able to set themselves up as rulers around the Bay of Hitu. These developments have been tentatively dated to the early sixteenth century. The influence of the *perdanas* subsequently spread over the rest of the peninsula, and a hierarchical structure of rule developed in its wake. A raja was subsequently also installed, but this seems to have been prompted by the notion that a state worth taking seriously needed a king of some sort, and had little bearing on where real power rested. The raja remained largely ceremonial, and actual power remained with the four *perdanas.*

The success of the four *perdanas* at building a state seems to have gone hand in hand with two simultaneous developments: the spread of Islam and the introduction of cloves. Rijali recounts how the leader of the migrants from Gorom visited Tuban on east Java, learned about Islam and brought it to Hitu. His later title, *perdana Patih Tuban*, recalled this accomplishment.

Just around the same time, the first attempts at planting clove trees must have been undertaken. Like Islam, these also seem to have arrived in Hitu some two decades into the sixteenth century, and both would tie the emerging state into wider cultural, economic and political networks in the region. As the first clove harvests would have come in slightly over a decade later, they would have increasingly contributed to the economic and political power of the *perdanas* and their families. Not only did the *perdanas* tax the clove harvests; also, as a Muslim elite that originally came from abroad, they maintained the foreign trade relations. Thus, in a pattern that was common throughout Southeast Asia, the political

96 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* pp. 32-33, 89-98.

leaders were also a merchant elite. Clove production, Islam, foreign trade and state formation processes were thus all mutually reinforcing.[97]

All this did not, however, reinforce the emerging state's relationship with the Portuguese. Initially, as we have seen, the latter had been welcomed both as traders and as allies. Indeed, they periodically assisted the Hituese against rivalling Seramese communities in subsequent years, and were allowed to build a trading post slightly east of Hitulama. To facilitate the contact, Djamilu, the first *perdana Nusatapi,* who had received the Portuguese after their arrival on the north coast, was given the additional title Kapitan Hitu, was tasked with maintaining relations with the Portuguese, and had the privilege of receiving the customary gifts that each Portuguese vessel had to present for them to anchor and trade in Hitu.[98]

Soon enough, however, the Portuguese made themselves unpopular. While both the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* and Portuguese sources mention episodes of drunk Portuguese misbehaviour as among the causes, more structural forces were also at play, including the advent of Islam and its wider political consequences. As Portuguese relations with their other supposed ally, Ternate, turned sour from the late 1520s onwards, Hitu increasingly became suspicious of the Portuguese, and became part of the camp of Ternate's Muslim allies. The *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* mentions a pact between Ternate and Hitu, dating back to the time that Islam first came to Hitu, and its early state formation process.[99] In 1537, the Portuguese were shown the door, and escorted out of Hituese territory. They resettled on the other side of the peninsula, on the north coast of the Bay of Ambon, welcomed by the local population, which adhered to the region's traditional animist and polytheistic beliefs and was under threat from Hitu. The inhabitants soon started converting to Catholicism, cementing the newfound alliance in terms of religion as well. The Portuguese, who subsequently moved across the bay in 1576 and built their main fortification in what is now Kota Ambon, set themselves up as the ruling elite of the southern peninsula and some parts of the adjacent

97 Ibid., 32-35; Villiers, 'Cash-crop economy and Sate formation', pp. 98-101.

98 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* pp. 110-111.

99 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* p. 36, 103pp. Dating this pact is problematic: the passage mentions the Ternaten Sultan Zainal Abidin, who ruled until 1512 and supposedly travelled to Java in the late fifteenth century, where, according to Rijali, he would have met the later perdana Patih Tuban and come to a pact with Hitu, later confirmed in Hitu itself. Zainal Abidin's travels, however, cannot be reconciled with the timeline of the formation of Hitu as we know it, which started only later.

islands, ruling over an increasingly Christian population. Ambon was thus divided into a Muslim state encompassing most of the northern peninsula, and a Portuguese-ruled Christan region encompassing the southern one.[100]

The details of the subsequent military conflict between the Portuguese and the Hituese are beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is significant that it started with a large Portuguese punitive expedition along the Hituese coast, which served as a staging area for Bandanese, Makasar, Javanese West-Seramese and Hituese vessels shipping weapons to Ternate to exchange them for cloves. The Muslim networks in the region remained important in subsequent decades: the Hituese could count on incidental support from northeast Java, the Ternaten territories on Western Seram and, by the late sixteenth century, Banda. The tide of the conflict swayed wildly, with the Portuguese sometimes conquering most of Hitu, forcing much of its population to flee, and the Hituese, in turn, almost driving the Portuguese from Ambon altogether on more than one occasion. The increasing mutual support among the Muslim states of the region was not lost on the Iberians: a letter by the Jesuit Antonio Marta written in the early 1590s, musing on the possibilities of a Spanish conquest of the region, noted with concern how all the Muslims in the region were now apparently coordinating their efforts against the 'Christians'. During a recent siege of the Portuguese castle at Ambon (presumably the one in 1591), Bandanese and Seramese vessels and warriors had joined the ranks of the Hituese and the Hoamoalese Ternatens. Marta was concerned the Portuguese might not be able to hold onto Ambon at all if things continued down this road.[101]

## Cloves and kimelaha: Hoamoal and the surrounding islands

The 'Hoamoalese Ternatens' that Marta mentioned were just to the north, across the water from Hitu. Hoamoal was the peninsula on the far west of the large island of Seram, and it was one of the regions that Ternate expanded into in the course of the sixteenth century.

The region is known by many names. It is often referred to as Western Seram or Small Seram – or sometimes, particularly in earlier Portuguese sources, simply as Seram, as it was, to them, apparently the only part of the island worth being

100 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* I, 36-38.

101 Letter by Antonio Marta, quoted in Bartolomé Juan Leonardo de Argensola. *Conquista de la Islas Malucas: al Rey Felipe Tercero, nuestro señor.* Zaragoza: Imprenta del Hospicio Provincial, 1891, pp. 189-190. Also see Tiele, 'De Europeeërs in den Maleischen Archipel', V (1881), p. 190.

aware of. The peninsula was sometimes also referred to as Luhu, actually the residence of the kimelaha on its east coast and therefore its main political centre. Also, it was sometimes referred to as Veranula or Varnula, which means Greater Banda – a name sometimes also given to Seram as a whole, and expressive of the proximity and the ties between Banda and Seram.[102]

Compared to Hitu, we are much less informed about the history of Hoamoal in the sixteenth century. There is no source on its history comparable to Rijali's history, although the latter gives us occasional insights into Hoamoal as well, and much of the knowledge and tradition of the region would have been lost as its entire population was ultimately driven from the peninsula by the VOC. It is clear, however, that the region was going through very similar developments as Hitu in the early sixteenth century. Cloves were introduced: according to Rumphius, the people of Kambelo, at the west coast of Hoamoal, were the first to do so, secretly taking so-called *moernagels* (literally: mother cloves, the fruits, with their seeds, that form if the flower buds are not harvested but left on the tree), and bringing them to their own region. As tradition had it, the seeds were planted in the mountainous interior near Kambelo and came up successfully, after which clove cultivation spread throughout the peninsula. In the early Dutch period, a couple of very old clove trees inland from Kambelo were alleged to be the living testimony to that history.[103]

Kambelo and nearby Lesidi subsequently became a trade destination in their own right, and by the time the Dutch first arrived in the region, these were the only settlements directly on the coast, rather than up on a fortified hill. The easy access to the sea apparently compensated for the increased vulnerability to the seaborne raids that were so common to the warfare and statecraft of the region, and the trade income and their relations with foreign traders would have given them the means to take additional defensive measures.[104] Rumphius recounts how Malay, Javanese and Makasar people settled in Kambelo, and we may surmise that Islam would also have come to the peninsula with them.[105]

The spread of Islam would only have been accelerated by the escalating ri-

102 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 39.

103 Rumphius, *Kruid-boek,* II, 4.

104 This was certainly the case by the early seventeenth century, when Kambelo boasted an impressive system of fortifications, and, during the trade season, could also rely on the visiting traders to aid in the defence if the need arose: see below, chapter V, paragraph 'a stand-off', and chapter IX, paragraph 'the meeting of two rulers'.

105 Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden,* 125-133.

valries between the Portuguese and their various Muslim opponents. Hoamoal was drawn into these conflicts, as fleeing Hituese temporarily resettled there, and as the Ternaten court increased its involvement in the region – remarkably enough, to keep it out of the sphere of influence of its supposed ally, the Portuguese.[106] The sultans of Ternate had already been trying to increase their hold over the Ambon region in previous decades and seem to have considered the region as rightfully belonging to their sphere of influence. In 1558, the sultan sent a high-ranking noble from the Ternaten Tomagola family, named Laulata, there to assist and protect those opposing the Portuguese. Laulata fought the Portuguese ferociously and also managed to establish himself as a ruler in his own right, turning the abovementioned settlement of Luhu into his residence and becoming the first kimelaha, governor of the Ternaten sultan, on the peninsula. In 1563, his struggle against the Portuguese was even briefly joined by Babullah, the later sultan of Ternate. After Laulata's death, another member of the Tomagola family was sent as the new kimelaha. Like his predecessor, he seems to have been able to operate relatively autonomously from the Ternaten sultan, building up his own power base in the peninsula. Both, however, certainly took their task of opposing the Portuguese very seriously. For the latter, we might glean his martial reputation from the name by which he is remembered: Rubohongi, 'destroyer of fleets'. His military exploits are recorded both in Portuguese sources and in the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*. After his death, the function of kimelaha would remain hereditary within the Tomagola family,[107] which also supplied the separate kimelaha of the nearby island of Buru. [108]

By the end of the sixteenth century, then, Hoamoal was formally under indirect rule from Ternate, whereas Hitu was an independent state with its own system of rule. In practice, however, we should not overemphasize the distinction, as they often found themselves in very similar positions within the power dynamics of the region. The kimelaha of Hoamoal, as we have seen, were quite content with their relative autonomy. The increasing clove production in the

106 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 119; Tiele, 'De Europeeërs in den Maleischen Archipel', IV (1880), pp. 400-450.

107 Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', I, 42-45; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* pp. 40-42, 121-129.

108 The kimelaha of Buru will not feature very strongly in this dissertation, and less is apparently known about them, both in Dutch and indigenous sources of this period. For some of the members of the Tomagola family occupying the position, see Fraassen, Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel', II, 82pp.

region gave them a strong financial base of their own, and in order for their rule to retain its legitimacy, the interests of the local population and its elite were far more crucial to them than the will of the Ternaten sultan, whenever these conflicted. In practice, then, this made the kimelaha an entrenched local power fiercely defending its position when Ternaten central rule was strong, and for all practical purposes independent whenever it was weak.

The relation between Ternate and Hitu, for its part, had a formal basis in the pact between them, briefly discussed above. Opinions seem to have differed on what this pact amounted to. On the one hand, Hitu, like many polities in the region, considered its affiliation with the sultan of Ternate to be an important source of prestige.[109] Rijali therefore proudly stated that Hitu was added to the nine *soa*, the political units of the sultanate of Ternate, and became the tenth, a notion echoed in later Hituese oral tradition, implying that Hitu was formally a part of the realms of the sultan. [110] On the other hand, the Hituese clearly preferred their affiliation to the sultan of Ternate to remain symbolic. Whenever Ternatens attempted to gain actual political control over Hitu, as they would on several occasions in the course of the seventeenth century Hituese leaders fiercely defended their autonomy.[111]

### Local political structures, alliances and rivalries: *ulisiwa* and *ulilima*

As state formation processes got underway in the region, and outsiders were trying to impose their power onto it, the consequent conflicts and power blocks interacted with older political structures, affiliations and rivalries in the region. If we are to make sense of such political dynamics, we should familiarize ourselves with the most important of these.

Already briefly mentioned above was the *negeri*, the town or village community. It is important to emphasize that the term is different from our notion of a town, as it indicated the community and the political unit, rather than a demarcated settlement and its location. A *negeri* could consist of several smaller

109 Passages throughout Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu* make this clear, for instance p. 105 and 179pp.

110 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 36, 105.

111 For the two clearest examples, see below chapter, V, paragraph 'Kaicili Ali's long stay in the Ambon Islands' and chapter IX throughout. For the complicated relation between Ternate's claims in the region and the actual political power it had, see Fraassen, 'Ternate and its dependencies'.

settlements, or, conversely, several *negeri* could be clustered together in one strategic location, effectively forming one town.[112] Also, in the mobile and dynamic human geography of the region, *negeri* could move, and many of them did so more than once in the course of their documented history. Some of the *negeri* in the region, for example, seem to have moved ever closer to the coast as the clove trade took off in the course of the sixteenth century. In the course of this dissertation, we will also see how the VOC, in its efforts to control the region, would use this relatively mobile character of *negeri* by forcing them to move to the coast.[113]

In the Ambon region, these *negeri* were organised into *uli,* village federations. These could, in turn, be part of larger political units, as in the case of Hitu, where a total of thirty *negeri*, organised into a total of seven *uli,* formed the entire Hituese state.[114]

The political units of the region at large tended to be divided into two rival factions, one associated with the number 'five', and the other with the number 'nine'. In Ambon, western Seram and the surrounding islands, the *uli* considered themselves either *ulilima* ('federation of five') or *ulisiwa* ('federation of nine'). This did not mean that the federation necessarily consisted of that number of *negeri*, but, rather, signalled that the community considered itself a member of that side in a dualistic order that pervaded the entire region. Depending on region and context, the distinction revolved around other political units, with the Bandanese often speaking of the *urlima* and the *ursia*, and the polities of the interior of Seram speaking of the *patalima* and *patasiwa*. Whatever the exact form the division took, it tended to divide regions and islands. The northern pen-

112 This, for instance, was the case with Ihamahu, which consisted of no less than eight *negeri* sharing the highly defensible coral platform of Ulapalu on the island of Saparua. Rumphius, *Ambonse eilanden,* 107-112.

113 Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen,* 7-10. One example of this mobile character of *negeri* seems to be preserved in the lore surrounding the Wapauwe old mosque in Kaitetu, on the Hituese coast, allegedly the oldest mosque in its original state in all of Indonesia. It is told that the mosque was originally built in the fifteenth century up in the hills at Wawani, but floated to a new location of its own accord when the community subsequently moved in 1614 as a result of tensions with the Dutch. In the wake of the Hitu and Ambon Wars, as the VOC redrew the political map of the region, the mosque was moved twice more, to finally end up at its present location near the shore. Information received from my guides Liz and Avin when visiting Hitu , 21 February 2019.

114 Rumphius, *Ambonse eilanden*, 26.

insula of Ambon, for instance, was largely *ulilima*, while its southern peninsula was largely *ulisiwa*. In the Lease islands, the distinction was even clearer, with Haruku and Saparua both neatly divided into an *ulilima* northern half and an *ulisiwa* southern half.[115]

The division predates and to some degree eludes the later rivalries between, say, Ternatens and Portuguese or Muslims and Christians in the region. In their attempts to make sense of the dualistic factionalism, early Dutch observers tended to compare it with bitter factional conflicts in medieval Europe, such as the Hook and Cod Wars in Holland or the wars between the Guelphs and Ghibellines in northern Italy.[116] While these provided a sensible point of reference, we actually understand the social and political origins of those conflicts a lot better than those of the *lima* and the *siwa*, which, many existing hypotheses notwithstanding, remain somewhat of a mystery.[117]

What is clear, however, is that new political and cultural distinctions subsequently interacted with, and in some cases, mapped onto, these existing affiliations and rivalries. Many of the communities which first became involved in international clove trade and converted to Islam, such as Hitu, counted themselves among the *ulilima*. This goes some way to explain why, after Hitu got into conflict with the Portuguese, the latter were welcomed into the rival *ulisiwa* communities on the south side of the island, and why they were able start converting the population and set up a system of colonial rule there. The kimelaha of Hoamoal, for their part, ruled over a largely *ulilima* territory which, in addition to a shared religion and common interests, undergirded their alliance with Hitu against the

115 Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel', II, 462-469.

116 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* II.2, 31.

117 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* II.2, 31, already ventured the hypothesis that the *ulilima* originated in the allies and followers of the sultan of Ternate, and the *ulisiwa* in the followers of the sultan of Tidore. Apart from the fact that this did not match the existing divisions, this was an inversion of cause and effect, as the distinction and rivalry between *ulisiwa* and *ulilima* seems to have predated Ternaten and Tidorese involvement in the region. 20th century ethnographic research subsequently added a number of hypotheses. This dissertation is not the place to dive into them, but see Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel', II, 460-514 (which also contains a virtually complete reconstruction of the various area that were *siwa* or *lima* throughout Central and South Maluku), and Valerio Valeri. 'Reciprocal Centers : the Siwa-Lima System in the Central Moluccas.' In Maybury-Lewis e.a. eds. *The Attraction of Opposites : Thought and Society in the Dualistic Mode.* Ann Arbor, Mich.: The University of Michigan Press, 1989, pp. 117-142.

Portuguese. The factional division was therefore an important factor in how religions spread, colonial rule took shape, and alliances and rivalries formed.[118]

The affiliation with either the *lima* or the *siwa* transcended the local level and also undergirded more long-distance relationships – for instance, between Bandanese communities and their trading partners in eastern Seram or the Aru and Kei Islands.[119] Even where communities had no previous direct contacts, identification as either *siwa* or *lima* was a strong factor in determining who was friend and who was foe.[120]

While the antagonisms between *ulilima* and *ulisiwa* were therefore a substantial factor in the power dynamics of the region, it is also important to emphasize that they were not all-determining, and that they were a living and dynamic system, more complex than can be adequately described here. While *siwa* and *lima* were dominant, other forms of organisation, although rarer, also existed, such as the *uliteru* and *ulifito* (federations of three resp. seven).[121] In addition, the generalisation that the *ulilima* tended to be Muslims involved in long-distance trade, and *ulisiwa* therefore tended to ally themselves with the Europeans and to be receptive to Christianity, only works for the Ambon region, and even there only as a very general rule. The diversions from this pattern are too many to list, but a few prominent ones are Kambelo and Lesidi, which were the first clove exporters in the region and Muslim but *ulisiwa*; the villages on the west coast of the Hitu peninsula, which were Muslim but *ulisiwa*, and not part of the Hituese state; and various clusters of *negeri* on Leitimor, which were Christian, and an integral part of the area ruled by the Portuguese and later the VOC, but still identified as *ulilima*. Although being *ulilima* or *ulisiwa* was, by all accounts, a heartfelt part of a community's identity, on rare occasions, communities switched from one to the other. Furthermore, when circumstances dictated it, rival *ulisiwa* and *ulilima* communities were often willing to bridge their factional divides and cooperate against a common enemy. In the course of the seventeenth century, the VOC would give ample occasion for the latter to occur.[122]

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118 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* passim, esp. 42-43; Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische archipel', II, 495-512

119 Ellen, *Into the Banda Zone,* 84-85.

120 See below, chapter VII, 'Revenge against the fruit trees' for an example.

121 Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen*, 10; Ellen, *Into the Banda Zone,* 83-84.

122 There are several characteristics of the region's political structure I ignore here, including the *pela* village alliances and the institution of the Saniri Tiga Air through which the Alfurs of Western Seram resolved certain disputes. Although both insti-

### Beyond the European eye: Seram and further east

The regions discussed above, where European powers were actively involved throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, feature relatively prominently in European sources. The rest of the region, which was also part of the political, cultural and economic landscape of the eastern archipelago, was, by comparison, obscured from view in early European sources, and, as a consequence, from much of European historiography. Recent historical and anthropological work has tried to counter this imbalance by reconstructing indigenous networks of trade and political affiliation in which Europeans played no significant role.[123] Familiarizing ourselves with some of these will also help make sense of the Spice Wars and the European role in them.

The first of these regions to be discussed is Seram, the largest island in Central Maluku, of which Hoamoal is a small western peninsula. Beyond the land bridge connecting Hoamoal to the rest of island, the main landmass stretches east for 300 kilometres. The conflicts described in this dissertation would gradually extend Dutch knowledge of, and influence over, the coastal regions of the island, but its mountainous and heavily forested interior remained *terra incognita* to the VOC until well after the conclusion of the Spice Wars. This region was home to various peoples collectively known as the Alifuru or Alfurs.

The term Alfur was used throughout the eastern archipelago to refer to what were considered the 'wild' peoples of this inaccessible interior of the larger islands, not only on Seram but also on parts of Sulawesi, Buru and Halmahera. Around Seram and Ambon, they are now often considered the original inhabitants and, by implication, the carriers and guardians of the original culture of the region. The distinction between the inhabitants of the coasts and the 'Alfurs' of the interior is geographical and cultural rather than ethnic: the Alfurs distinguished themselves from the coastal communities by their way of life, relatively

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tutions appear to have had their roots in the period discussed in this dissertation, this has only been inferred from later evidence and their influence on the conflicts I describe cannot be ascertained. Explaining them here would therefore not add to the understanding of what follows. For *pela* alliances, see Dieter Bartels. *Guarding the Invisible Mountain : Intervillage Alliances, Religious Syncretism and Ethnic Identity Among Ambonese Christians and Moslems in the Moluccas.* Ann Arbor, Mich., 1981. For the Saniri Tiga Air, see Knaap, 'The Saniri Tiga Air'.

123 For a historiographic overview, see Heather Sutherland. *Seaways and Gatekeepers : Trade and State in the Eastern Archipelagos of Southeast Asia, c. 1600 - c. 1906*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2021., esp. pp. 1-34. For an excellent example relevant to our topic: Ellen, *On the edge of the Banda zone*.

isolated as they were from the influence of seaborne trade and migration, and, as a consequence, from that of Islam and Christianity.[124]

The first incidental visits of VOC employees to the interior regions of Seram only took place from the 1670s onwards, well after the conclusion of the Spice Wars, and real efforts to understand Alfur culture, society and cosmology would only gather steam in the early 20th century.[125] However, the VOC became aware of their existence, and their potential as an ally, much earlier than that. Governor-General Jan Pietersz. Coen, for instance, wrote this about them when on Ambon in 1621:

> The mountains of Seram are populated with a certain people which are collectively called Alfurs or *boeren*.[126] They feel that there is a God, but have little knowledge of religion and practice very strange superstition. These people are plagued by the Moors living by the sea, and wage war over this in their way. The principal kings of the aforementioned Alfurs, which are those of Sahulahu, Sumite, Wasia and Liang, have made their acquaintance with us and put themselves under the rule and protection of the High and Mighty Lords of the States-General. […] We believe that the evil, pride, dissimulation and cunning of the Moors will, in time, be punished and bridled all the better and the easier with the help of these aforementioned Alfurs.[127]

Whereas Coen interpreted these locals antagonisms to be between evil 'Moors' and their various adversaries, it bears mentioning that the various peoples of the Seramese interior also identified as either *lima* or *siwa*. The peoples of the

124 Maarten Manse. 'Promise, Pretence and Pragmatism: Governance and Taxation in Colonial Indonesia, 1870-1940.' PhD. Diss Leiden University, 2021, pp. 299-304; Dieter Bartels. *In de schaduw van de berg Nunusaku : een cultuur-historische verhandeling over de bevolking van de Midden-Molukken*. Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Edukatie Molukkers, 1994, p. 29, 35-38.

125 For a brief overview of these contacts, see Knaap, 'The Saniri Tiga Air (Seram)'.

126 The Alfurs are often referred to as *boeren* in early Dutch accounts, for reasons unclear, as the word means farmers, which is not exactly the most obvious distinctive feature of their lifestyle.

127 Coen and Council to Directors, 16 Nov. 1621, quoted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, 296. Interestingly, Rumphius only dates the contacts to the governorship of Lucasz (i.e. 1630), a good nine years later. The letter continues to explain that the Alfurs had requested the building of a Dutch redoubt at Koak, a small peninsula near present-day Amahai on Seram's south coast. Coen had recommended that Van Speult should indeed build it.

westernmost part of Seram's main landmass counted themselves among the latter, and it was specifically their leaders who first approached the VOC to form an alliance.[128] An actual alliance with the Alfur leaders of Sumite and Sahulahu would subsequently take shape from the 1630s onwards. Company officials, noting that the Alfur headhunting bands were extremely successful in isolating settlements from their surroundings, and that the Alfurs of this region enjoyed a ferocious reputation among the coastal inhabitants, would thankfully call on the Alfurs not only to fight known *ulilima* rivals to their east and west, but would also occasionally employ them on other islands – with the VOC and their allies providing seaborne transport, the Alfurs were more than happy to fight *ulilima* in regions they had never visited before.[129]

The rest of the island of Seram, including the islands directly to their east, consisted of several large regions alternately identifying as either *siwa* or *lima*. The distinction had a strong bearing on the VOC's later allies and enemies, as the VOC initially tended to count the *lima* communities along the Seramese coast among its enemies, and the allies it made tended to be *siwa*.[130]

The far eastern end of Seram and the islands to its immediate east, including

128 Sumite and Sahulahu were two of the three main Alfur 'kingdoms' of this western region at the time. Wasia had its own raja but was also a dependency of Sahulahu. Liang was a minor independent *ulisiwa* polity towards the east of this region. The third major *ulisiwa* kingdom of the region was was Sisiulu, slightly further north – not mentioned by Coen, it would also become an ally to the VOC in the conflicts from the 1630s onwards. Important to note is that these polities might not have been all that prominent in the early 1620s and 1630s, but that their alliance to the VOC subsequently gave them prestige and increased influence, facilitating their rise to power. This specific region would become intensely studied in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the Dutch colonial state tried to gain control over Seram, leading to sustained contact with the inhabitants of its interior for the first time. In its wake, ethnographers rushed to study what they considered an unspoilt primordial society, in danger of disappearing in the face colonialism. See Knaap, 'The Saniri Tiga Air'; Manse, 'Promise, Pretense and Pragmatism', Ch. 7; Valeri, 'Reciprocal Centers'; Johan Philip Duyvendak. *Het Kakean-genootschap van Seran*. S.l.: s.n., 1926.

129 See below, chapters VII, paragraph 'Revenge against the fruit trees' and XI, paragraph 'Remember Kapahaha!'

130 The settlements of Tobo and Werinama and the island of Seram Laut, for instance, which governor Gijsels attacked in the years 1631-1633 were all *lima*; the Alfurs who came to assist him against Tobo were *siwa,* as was the community of Keffing on the far eastern side of Seram which offered the VOC its services during and in the wake of the attack on Seram Laut. See below, chapter VII, paragraph 'To the far side of Seram.'

Seram Laut, Gorom and Geser, were an important node in the local trade networks of the region. More peripheral to the view of sixteenth and seventeenth European visitors, this region was a crucial producer and thoroughfare of goods. It formed a link between Banda and various sago-producing regions, with the nutmeg from the Bandanese monoculture being traded for the much-needed staple food that Banda itself hardly produced. Sandalwood, iron, textiles and gold reached the region from further west; gold also came from New Guinea, as did Papuan slaves, medicinal massoia bark and birds of paradise, to name some of the goods that found their way through this local trade hub.[131]

While somewhat out of the way of European influence, the eastern side of Seram and its trade networks would also certainly feel the impact of the VOC's policies, as did the islands further east, such as those of Aru and Kei. As the VOC made its mark, the trade changed, refugees found their way through the established economic and cultural networks, and the region would, as we will be seeing, eventually be caught up in the wars themselves.

### Connections to the west: Northeast Java and Melaka

While the cultural, political and economic networks of Maluku stretched east beyond the European horizon, it was its relations towards the west that tied Maluku into the great trade system of the Indian Ocean basin. In these long-distance relations, like those within Maluku itself, trade, political protection and cultural and religious influence tended to be intertwined.

Northeast Java was one of the regions which maintained early contacts with Maluku. As already mentioned above, Hituese tradition has it that Islam was introduced to Hitu from Tuban, an important trading centre of which the ruling family converted to Islam in the fifteenth century and which was subsequently instrumental in the further spread of Islam in Java and beyond - the prince who, according to lore, was the first to convert, is one of the nine *Wali Sanga*, the legendary Islamic saints who spread Islamic teaching over Java and beyond. Tuban, then, was an important hub in the trade networks that connected Maluku with the Indian Ocean World, Islam being among its exports.

The centre of gravity of Javanese-Malukan contacts subsequently shifted to Gresik and Giri. These twin towns, both of which are also associated with a *Wali Sanga*, would become ever more important both as a trading partner, an ally, and a religious centre. Gresik, along with several other smaller port towns in the area,

131 Ellen, *On the edge of the Banda Zone,* pp. 1-89.

Map 2.1 Map of archipelagic Southeast Asia, showing Maluku's main political, religious and economic contacts in the wider region.

came under political and religious influence of the nearby hill town of Giri in the mid-sixteenth century. Giri was the home of an important Muslim religious leader and his followers, and Gresik became its gateway to the islands further east, once again combining the role of a port in the spice trade with a function as an important spiritual centre. The relationship also had a political dimension, as Giri and Hitu became allies against the Portuguese: the Javanese vessels and warriors periodically coming to the aid of Hituese in the course of the second half of the sixteenth century were sent by the lord of Giri. Through the religious networks of which Giri was the centre, it would remain influential in the region even as its political power waned in the course of the seventeenth century.[132]

Much further away in every respect, but of similarly great importance to the

132 Simon C. Kemper. 'The White Heron Called by the Muezzin: Shrines, Sufis and Warlords in Early Modern Java.' In Michael R. Feener and Joshua Gedacht. *Challenging Cosmopolitanism: coercion, mobility and displacement in Islamic Asia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018, pp. 81-120, esp. 91-94.

region, was the large entrepôt port of Melaka. The sea strait between Sumatra and Malaysia that still bears its name was the main sea lane connecting the China Seas with the Indian Ocean. Melaka's strategic location at an excellent harbour along this strait connected it to all the major Asian markets, facilitating its rise to become the major Southeast Asian trade entrepôt from the early fifteenth century onwards. The sultans who ruled Melaka made every effort to support and facilitate the trade, so that by the second half of the fifteenth century, 'from below the wind to above the wind Melaka became famous as a very great city', as an indigenous history, the *Sejarah Melayu*, phrased it.[133] While its role as a major trade entrepôt gave the city an eminently cosmopolitan character, its own indigenous Malay population was actively involved in the trade, and counted the eastern archipelago among its destinations. As we have seen, the Bandanese themselves also undertook the journey to this major port themselves to sell their nutmeg and mace there.[134]

As already touched upon above, the Portuguese took Melaka after a bloody siege in 1511. Almost as soon as the smoke had cleared, they went looking for the spice-producing regions from there themselves, and it is illustrative of the earlier existing contacts that a Melaka merchant served as their guide. As discussed above, they were initially hailed as both welcome traders and valuable allies throughout the region, their conquest of Melaka first and foremost interpreted as proof of their military prowess. Melaka would remain important to Maluku as a trading partner, although now primarily as a Portuguese base of power and trade. If anything, it became more prominent as a source of political and religious influence than it had been – that is, of Portuguese influence and Christianity.

Although Melaka remained an important and cosmopolitan trading city under the Portuguese, it would never return to its former prominence. The Portuguese initially resolved to rid the city of its entire Muslim population. While this policy was ultimately unsuccessful, it did initially prompt an exodus of its Malay population, which resettled in other regions, including Johor and Aceh, bringing along their trading expertise and contacts.[135] Some of them would eventually

133 Quoted from Andaya & Andaya, *A history of early modern Southeast Asia,* pp. 102-103.

134 M.A.P. Roelofsz. *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago Between 1500 and About 1630*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962, pp. 60-88, 93-100.

135 Roelofsz, *Asian trade and European influence,* pp. 136-172. Leonard Andaya. *Leaves of the Same Tree : Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

settle in Makassar, a town that was a relative late-comer among Southeast Asian trade entrepôts, but of which the influence on the subsequent history of Maluku cannot be overstated.

### The rise of Makassar

The emergence of Makassar as a trade entrepôt dates back to the mid-sixteenth century, when the principality of Gowa, which had an economy based on wet rice agriculture, expanded to incorporate various surrounding polities. In the 1530s it defeated various neighbouring states, including Tallo, which was an important trading port at the time. Rather than turning it into a vassal, Gowa formed a union with Tallo, laying the foundations for the dual kingdom it would remain until 1669. Under the rule of Karaeng Tunipalangga (r. 1547-1565), they made vassals of most of the polities on South Sulawesi's west coast.[136]

With the increase of the importance of trade to this emerging state, its political centre moved to the coast and the entrepôt that we know as Makassar started taking shape. During the rule of Tunipalangga, the office of *shahbandar*, already created under his predecessor as part of the duties of one minister, became a separate position. Tunipalangga also gave written guarantees of freedom and rights to the Malay community which settled there during his reign: a Malay captain called Nakhoda Bonang is mentioned in the Gowan court chronicles as coming to the court bearing gifts, and asking for permission to settle in Makassar, setting several conditions that would protect their possessions and livelihood there. The Karaeng agreed.[137] The next important Karaeng, Tunijalloq (r. 1565-1590), built a mosque for the Malay community, years before the rulers of Gowa and Tallo would themselves convert to Islam.[138] Tunijalloq, according to the court chronicles, also made active efforts to build up diplomatic ties in the late sixteenth century: in Maluku and Timor, as well as with Mataram, Banjarmasin and Johore.[139] In the same period, Portuguese private traders from Melaka

136 *Karaeng* is the Makasar word for ruler. Its Bugis equivalent is *Arung* (as in Arung Palakka.) After their conversion to Islam, the rulers of Gowa and Tallo would be referred to as Sultans.

137 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings,* 2007, p.34; W. Cummings. 'The Melaka Malay Diaspora in Makassar, c. 1500-1669.' *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Vol. 71, No. 1 (1998): 107-122, esp. pp.107-110.

138 Tunijalloq was not his direct successor, but almost – in 1565 Tunibatta ascended to the throne, then immediately went to war against Bone, and got himself killed. His rule lasted only 40 days.

139 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings,* 2007, p. 41.

became regular visitors to the Makassar roadstead.[140] Makassar became a particularly attractive trading town from which to sail to Maluku, not only because trade goods from further west, including textiles from India, were amply available there, but also because its hinterland produced great amounts of high quality rice. Both found a ready market in Maluku.

Islam and Christianity, which had dominated most of the other main trade centres in the region  for decades or more, now also generated an interest in Makassar both among the general population and the political elite, which resulted in the rulers of Gowa and Tallo converting to Islam around 1605.[141] While it has been convincingly argued that the choice for Islam was the outcome of heartfelt theological and spiritual inquiry by the rulers,[142] the conversion also certainly did not hurt the political and economic rise of Gowa and Tallo. It would have given further impetus to their diplomatic contacts and Makassar's rise as an international trading port, providing a basis for more intensive contacts with other Muslim regions throughout the archipelago, including Maluku, while also tying the state into the Islamic networks spanning the Indian Ocean and beyond. It also gave Gowa-Tallo's further expansion a strong impetus, as the conversion signalled the beginning of what are called the 'Wars of Islamisation' on South Sulawesi, in which the forces of Gowa and Tallo conquered the main Bugis states in the peninsula and imposed the new religion on them. Islam thus also functioned as an engine of further expansion and consolidation of the power of the Gowa-Tallo state within South Sulawesi.[143]

At the conclusion of these wars of Islamisation, all the polities in the coastal plains of South Sulawesi had become affiliated to the Gowa-Tallo state. The expansion, however, was not limited to the mainland of South Sulawesi. Gowa-Tallo had also been expanding overseas. By the late sixteenth century, it commanded an impressive navy and used it to gain political influence over areas of Sumbawa,

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140 Maria do Carmo Mira Borges. *Os Portugueses e o Sultanato de Macaçar no Século XVII.* Cascais: Câmara Municipal de Cascais, 2005, pp.62-63.

141 The sources are somewhat ambiguous about the exact moment that this occurred. Noorduyn, who has dedicated an article to both the motivations for the rulers of Gowa and Talloq to convert to Islam and the moment this conversion occurred, holds it to be 1605, rather than the other likely possibility, 1603. J. Noorduyn. 'De islamisering van Makassar.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 112.3 (1956): 247-266, esp. 252pp.

142 Jacobus Noorduyn, 'De Islamisering van Makassar'.

143 Reid 'A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian Family', p.139; Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka,* p.33.

among others. By the early seventeenth century, as the Gowa-Tallo state was consolidating its hold over South Sulawesi, it strived to bring several areas on the north coast of Sulawesi, around Manado, under its protection.[144] To its east, it sought to turn the sultanate of Buton into its vassal.[145] These attempts at further expansion made its sphere of influence collide with that of Ternate, which, as we have seen, was also expanding into these same territories. Gowa-Tallo and Ternate were therefore increasingly becoming rivals from the late sixteenth century onwards.

## Concluding remarks

This chapter aimed to lay out the main polities and political structures relevant to understanding the Spice Wars. In doing so, it has also sketched the rather substantial developments in the region in the course of the sixteenth century, both due to the expanding world market for cloves, nutmeg and mace, and to the entry of the Spanish and Portuguese into Asia.

In the early sixteenth century, Banda and the sultanates of North Maluku were the main spice exporting centres in the region. As the demand for spices grew, however, the cultivation of cloves, in particular, spread rapidly to Central Maluku, where it was introduced to the west coast of Hoamoal and to Hitu early in the sixteenth century. Both in regions where it was introduced and where cultivation had been established before, this increased market for spices seems to have gone hand in hand with increased political, cultural and religious contact with the outside world, and with an intensification of state formation processes, as the increased wealth and influence of local elites also translated to political power, and smaller polities began to integrate and aggregate. Hitu is perhaps the clearest and best-documented example: there, clove production, Islam, foreign trade and state formation processes all reinforced each other to give rise to the Hituese state in the early sixteenth century.

The clove trade also drew expanding powers, both Asian and European, hoping to get a piece of the pie. Ternate increased its influence over Central Malu-

144 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 1993, pp. 84-85.

145 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings,* 2007, p. 88, which sums up the conquests under Karaeng Matoaya (r. 1593-1623). Between several places in South Sulawesi and many names I do not recognize with certainty, he mentions e.g. Buton, Wowoni (another island below Southeast Sulawesi), Sula (the Sula Islands east of Sulawesi, which would also be a bone of contention between the two in the course of the seventeenth century) and several places on Sumbawa.

ku; Portugal gained political control in Ternate and part of the Ambon region from its new local stronghold in Melaka. The increased trade also gave rise to new powers outside the region, who subsequently joined in the jostle for trade and influence. This included Gresik and Giri, which together formed both an important trade entrepôt and religious and political centre. As Islam established itself throughout the region, it increasingly served to unite the various Muslim polities against the Portuguese, who were driven from Ternate by 1575, and were hanging on by their fingernails in the Ambon region by the close of the century.

As the sixteenth century drew to a close, a new rising power started making its influence felt in the region: Gowa-Tallo, the state of which the rising trade entrepôt of Makassar was the capital, extended its influence beyond Sulawesi towards the east, setting it on a collision course with Ternate, which was also asserting itself throughout the region with renewed vigour after the expulsion of the Portuguese.

Then, new European powers also made their appearance in the region.

# III. Ternate, Makassar and the Europeans (1599-1616)

As already touched upon in the last chapter, the English and Spanish ventured into the eastern archipelago in the late 1570s and the 1580s. The Dutch followed in the 1590s. Much like in the early sixteenth century, with the first Portuguese and (abortive) Spanish entry into the region, the contacts they made would become inextricably entangled with existing power structures and rivalries. This chapter describes this process up to 1616, with particular emphasis on the development of one rivalry which would be of particular consequence for the Spice Wars: that between Ternate and Makassar, or, more accurately, the sultanate of Gowa of which Makassar was the capital. Among other things, this rivalry, which emerged just as new European powers were entering the region, would also draw in the various Europeans who tried to get a foothold in the spice trade.[146]

## Enter the Dutch

Dutch attempts to build up their own trade network in Asia were partly prompted by the Iberian Union after 1580, making trade with Portugal harder as it was now ruled by a king with whom the Dutch Republic was at war. However, even without it, the ailing Portuguese empire had already been failing to supply northern Europe with enough pepper and other Asian goods, leading to rising prices, and creating a market for other suppliers.[147] The first Dutch fleets setting out to Asia were looking for a profit rather than a fight, trying various alternative routes to those of the Portuguese in the hopes of avoiding conflict.

In contrast to the first Dutch expedition to ever reach Asia, which did not make it beyond Java and Madura, the second Dutch expedition did reach Maluku, and was actively invited to Ternate when calling at Ambon. When two ships under the leadership of Wybrant van Warwijck arrived at Ternate, he found that the sultan was more than willing to sell cloves to the Dutch, but that he was also

146 Much of this chapter was already published as part of Tristan Mostert, 'Scramble for the spices: Makassar's role in European and Asian Competition in the Eastern Archipelago up to 1616' in: Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert (eds.), *The Dutch and English East India Companies: Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018, pp. 25-54. It has been updated and extended to reflect some progressive insight and includes more information about the Ambon region.

147 Gaastra, Femme, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2009, p. 15.

intensely keen on an alliance against the Portuguese, very much hoping that some Dutchmen would stay at Ternate, and very interested to see demonstrations of the fire power of the Dutch ships.[148]

One of the men on this second expedition also wrote the first somewhat elaborate Dutch description we have of Makassar, and was involved in the first diplomatic contacts. In 1601, Augustijn Stalpaert van der Wiele, one of twenty men who had been left on the Banda islands by this expedition, compiled a report about various trading ports throughout Asia, in which he gave comparatively generous attention to Makassar. He described it as an important trading city, where most merchants bound for the Spice Islands would call, in order to sell textiles, provision their ships and buy the high-quality rice, which was available in abundance and for which one would always find a ready market in the Spice Islands. 'You will also be freed from the Portuguese here', Stalpaert van der Wiele wrote home, 'who come here every year to conduct quite some trade, but who do not have any fortification here, and come here in junks, not in ships.'[149] He then described how he and his colleagues had already opened up relations with the ruler of Makassar by sending him a letter and an appropriate gift. The ruler had replied that the Dutch should certainly come and trade, but as he was aware they were at war with the Portuguese and wanted to avoid trouble, he would prefer them to send no more than eight men, whose protection he would guarantee. The exact moment the Dutch sent their first merchant to Makassar is unclear, but it would seem that around 1605, Claes Luersen moved from Banda to Makassar to reside there permanently.[150]

By that time, the conflict between the Dutch and the Portuguese had taken on a different character. In 1602 the VOC was founded, uniting the various smaller companies that had equipped the first expeditions to Asia under one

148 Commelin, *Begin ende voortgangh*, vol. I, 7th voyage ['Tweede schipvaert'], pp. 28-41

149 The report is partly printed in J.K.J. de Jonge. *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië: verzameling van onuitgegeven stukken uit het oud-koloniaal archief.* The Hague: Nijhoff, 1862-1888, vol. III, p.156. The full report, which includes long lists of types of textiles that were in vogue in Makassar, with an indication of the price they would yield, can be found in G. P. Rouffaer and H. H. Juynboll eds. *De batik-kunst in Nederlandsch-Indië en haar geschiedenis.* Publicaties van's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum. Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1914, XI–XXV.

150 This, in any case, is compellingly argued in Noorduyn, 'Islamisering', 260, as the first known Makasar merchant, Claes Luersen, was still in Banda until 1605. Of course it is possible that someone else occupied the function before that time, or that the merchants were travelling up and down from Banda.

umbrella organization. Both its permanence and its founding charter, which allowed the VOC to conduct politics and defend itself in the name of the Dutch Republic, made it possible for it to develop a political and military strategy in Asia, and it immediately started doing so. In 1603, in response to various reports of incidents with the Portuguese throughout Asia, the VOC directors decided to take to a more aggressive policy. At the end of 1603, Steven van der Hagen was sent to Asia as the first VOC admiral, with a heavily armed fleet and orders to do all possible damage to the Portuguese and Spanish. In Bantam he met with several representatives of Hitu, who asked for his help against the Portuguese.

The Hituese had already established contacts with the *Oude Compagnie*, one of the VOC's predecessors, in 1600, concluding what was the first agreement explicitly offering military support in exchange for clove deliveries. Not much had come of their military cooperation, as a Portuguese expedition drove the Dutch from the island soon after and put the Hituese in an even more difficult position than before, many of them fleeing to Hoamoal and Banda. From there, the *perdana Nusatapi* of that time, Tepil, sent delegates with a letter to Bantam to call in the help of the Dutch.

Van der Hagen was more than happy to oblige. In February 1605, he sailed into the bay of Ambon with ten ships. Faced with not only the Company fleet at sea but also with the Hituese on land, and noticing that the supposed Christian Ambonese allies of the Portuguese had absconded to the mountains, the Portuguese captain of the fort decided to simply surrender.[151] In commemoration of this easy victory, the Dutch would later rename the fort *Victoria*. This conquest was the beginning of the VOC as a territorial power – the southern half of the island of Ambon, as well as the *ulisiwa* regions of the Lease islands to their east, had been directly under Portuguese control and had a predominantly Christian population. The VOC had now replaced the Portuguese as ruler of these areas. In addition, it inherited the town which had sprung up around the castle over the previous three decades. Whereas most of the Indo-Portuguese and mestizo population of the town was unwilling to swear loyalty to the VOC and was evicted to Melaka, a handful remained – as did the *orang merdeka,* or Mardijker, population in the town and the nearby village of Mardika. This group had its origin in free Christian Asians originally from outside Ambon, many of them freed slaves who had also provided military services for the Portuguese.[152]

151 Tiele, *Europeërs,* VI, 226-228.

152 Knaap and Den Heijer, *Oorlogen overzee*, 60; Knaap, 'A City of Migrants'. The Mardijker

Hitu, for its part, concluded a treaty with the VOC in which it recognized it as ally and protector and promised to exclusively sell its cloves to the Company. A price agreement, fixing the price of cloves at 60 reals per bahar, would be made in subsequent negotiations a few years later. The abovementioned Tepil, who had established contacts with the Dutch, was also the *perdana* Nusatapi, and therefore Kapitan Hitu. While there had been little in terms of friendly relations to maintain with the Portuguese over the previous decades, this function would be reinvigorated by newfound friendship between the VOC and Hitu.

### Spanish-Dutch rivalry in Maluku

The increasing Dutch presence in the region at the cost of the Portuguese, however, prompted the Spanish to take action. In early 1606, a Spanish fleet of five large ships and several dozen smaller vessels, carrying over 1400 Iberian troops, set sail from the Philippines towards Maluku under the leadership of Pedro de Acuña. Rallying the allied sultanate of Tidore to his cause, he proceeded to attack Ternate. This time, the Spanish managed to conquer the old Portuguese fort on the south coast. Acuña left a garrison of 600 soldiers in the fort on Ternate, another 50 on Tidore, and established Spanish outposts on the other main islands of the North Maluku before returning to Manila in May. He brought the most important members of the Ternaten royal house with him to live in exile there.[153] North Maluku was, it would seem, now under Spanish control.

In the wake of this conquest, many leading Ternatens fled to Jailolo, and worked from there to build a coalition against the Spanish. They turned to the English and Dutch for help. Kaicili Ali, nephew of the now-exiled Sultan Said, was sent out to confer with the Dutch. After almost a year of fruitlessly looking for a VOC official with the authority to help him, he was finally able to sit down with VOC admiral Cornelis Matelief de Jonge. The latter was at the head of an impressive fleet which had just laid siege to Portuguese Melaka, but was now anchored off Ambon in April 1607. Kaicili Ali asked for his help in driving the Spaniards from Ternate, and Matelief gladly obliged, setting sail for Ternate from there on the 3rd of May.[154]

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population would continue to grow as freed Makasar prisoners of war and later freed slaves would also become part of this group.

153 O.H. K. Spate. *Monopolists and Freebooters*. The Pacific since Magellan vol. II. London: Croom Helm, 1983, pp.11-12; Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 1993, pp.152-153; Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, I, 215.

154 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, I, 216-217.

Having arrived there, Matelief met with the new Ternaten sultan Muzaffar, the twelve year old son of the old sultan, who is described in European sources describe as sickly and indolent. He had managed to avoid being taken to Manila, and was under the tutelage of kimelaha Hidayat, who was not present at the meeting. Matelief soon discovered that it would be impossible to take the Spanish fort with his fleet and the limited number of warriors that the Ternatens would be able to muster. Instead, he sailed around the island and built a Dutch fort at Melayu on the east coast.[155] In subsequent years, the VOC would fortify much of the northeast of the island, whereas the Spaniards entrenched themselves on the southwestern half. The fort, initially named fort Melayu, would eventually be rechristened Fort Oranje, and would become the headquarters of the VOC in Asia until the founding of Batavia in 1619.

### The VOC alliance with Ternate

Their home island thus divided, the Ternaten royal family and nobility threw in their lot with the Dutch, whom they considered to be allies, and built up their new capital around the Dutch fort in Melayu on the east coast. The treaty that had been concluded between the new sultan Muzaffar and the VOC meanwhile stipulated that the sultan of Ternate recognized the Dutch state to be its 'protector', and also gave the VOC a monopoly on buying the cloves from the Ternaten territories.[156] This included the various areas in the Ambon islands that were ruled by the Ternaten stewards, and the monopoly there was reconfirmed in a separate treaty with them two years later.[157] Tidore, conversely, threw in its lot with the Spanish, and North Maluku would be the scene of intermittent fighting between the two blocks for the next decades. [158]

Aside from the building up of the spice monopoly, of which the conquest of Ambon and the treaty with Ternate constituted the first serious steps, the VOC now had an alliance with, and a certain degree of power over, a sultan in the

155 Leo Akveld, *Machtsstrijd om Malakka: reis van VOC-admiraal Matelief naar Oost-Azië, 1605-1608*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2013, p.168.

156 J.E. Heeres, 'Corpus diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum: verzameling van politieke contracten en verdere verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilegebrieven aan hen verleend, enz.', vol I. *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land en Volkenkunde* (1907), pp.50-53.

157 Knaap, 'De Ambonse eilanden tussen twee mogendheden', pp.51-52.

158 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, 1993, pp.152-156; Knaap and Den Heijer, *Oorlogen overzee,* pp.61-67.

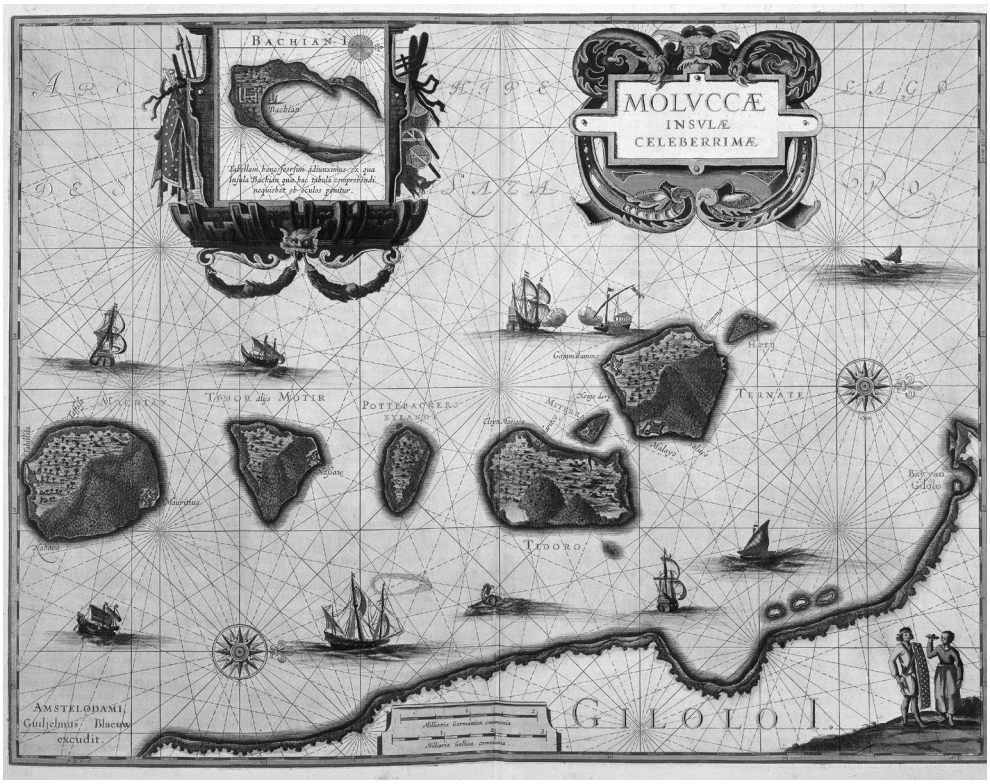



Fig 3.1 The islands of Ternate and Tidore off the coast of Halmahera (here called Gilolo, i.e. Jailolo, the name of the sultanate situated there). North is right. To the far right, we see Ternate, with the now Spanish fort of Gamalama on the left, and the Dutch fort at Melayu slightly below it. On Tidore we see fort Marieko, originally built by the Spaniards but conquered by the VOC in 1613; the other islands further left have various other Spanish and Dutch forts. This map was used in many of the Blaeu atlases and dates to c. 1635. Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem, collection Austrian National Library, Van der Hem 43:53.

eastern archipelago. This was of consequence for how it could operate politically in various ways.

For one, the VOC's alliance with, and its role of 'protector' of, Ternate meant that it now also had a stake in various vassalages, conflicts and alliances that Ternate already had. In 1613, for example, the VOC had to deal with the effects of its alliance in various places. In this year, the VOC concluded a treaty with what they called the kingdom of Buton – the sultanate of Wolio, which included the islands of Buton, Muna, Kabaena and the Tukang Besi islands (nowadays better-known as Wakatobi). The sultanate had been among the areas brought

under Ternaten influence by the campaigns of sultan Babullah in 1580, and still fell in the Ternaten sphere of influence in 1613.

In the treaty, the Company promised to protect the small kingdom against invasion, specifically mentioning 'the king of Makassar' as the main threat. The ruler declared that he had called the Dutch to his kingdom 'to wage offensive and defensive war against the enemies of the mighty king of Ternate, with whom our friendship shall continue as of old'.[159] The VOC built two small fortifications on Buton and stationed a garrison there. When, two years later, it was decided to lift the permanent presence at Buton, the ruler uttered his surprise, because when his kingdom would fall to 'the enemy' (presumably Gowa-Tallo), it would be a shame to both the Dutch and to Ternate, of which he was the loyal servant.[160]

Similarly, the VOC conquered the Portuguese fort on Solor in 1613, and found that, whereas the population proclaimed allegiance to the sultan of Ternate, Gowa-Tallo was actively engaged in collecting tribute there. The VOC brought an end to this, sending away the ships from Makassar. In early 1614, Adriaan van den Velde, the Dutch commander on Solor, informed the governor-general that he had written to the ruler of Gowa, explaining 'that it was not their intention to divert, or draw away from his obedience, any of his subjects, but that, as friends and allies of the king of Ternate, they could not but bring them back under his rule'.[161] He added, however, that they had not received a reply, and that he feared Gowa-Tallo might try and collect the tribute by force and join forces with the Portuguese. The alliance with the sultan of Ternate, and the way it played out in practice, therefore appear to have been a strong negative factor in the Company's relationship with Gowa-Tallo.

On the other hand, the alliance with a local sultan was in itself a political tool that the VOC soon learned to value and use. Being a trading company from a European republic, operating in a world where diplomacy was typically conducted between kings, the VOC had no real experience with, or standing in, Asian politics. In its early years VOC officials tried to work around this by presenting

159 Heeres, *Corpus Diplomaticum*, I (1907), pp.105-108. In addition, however, the sultan (who was described by Coen as a recent usurper of the throne) also sought out the VOC as a sort of guarantor to his succession, which was a departure from established custom in Buton. Schoorl, Pim, 'Islam, macht en ontwikkeling in het sultanaat Buton.' In L.B. Venema and Edien Bartels eds. *Islam en macht : een historisch-antropologisch perspectief.* Assen: Van Gorcum, 1987, pp. 52-65, esp. 56-58.

160 Coen to directors, 22 Oct 1615, printed in: Colenbrander ed., *Jan Pietersz. Coen,* I, p.120.

161 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, I, p.95.

themselves as representatives of the 'King of Holland', in some cases bringing images and diplomatic letters of Stadholder Maurice of Orange, with mixed results.[162] In the eastern archipelago, it now had another option: it could conduct 'diplomacy by proxy' through the sultan of Ternate. As we shall see below, it did so with enthusiasm as it was trying to establish a monopoly over the spices from this region.

### The developing role of Makassar in the European spice trade

In 1607, the Dutch factory near Makassar (which was initially located not in Makassar proper but in Tallo, just to the north) had been temporarily abandoned, not because of conflicts with the ruler, but because Claes Luersen, the merchant mentioned earlier, had been cooking the books and, in the eyes of the visiting fleet under Jacques l'Hermite and Paulus van Solt, had been a little been too friendly with the Spanish.[163] The ruler of Tallo[164] professed his sadness at seeing them go, and implored them to come back soon – he would make sure that they could buy all the mace they wanted, and added that gold noble coins[165] were particularly in demand in Makassar. His remark was not entirely idle, as the ruler had a trade agent permanently stationed at the Banda islands, and was a consequential trader there.[166]

The Portuguese, who were entirely forced out of Maluku in this period, in-

162 The various strategies the VOC used to be able to operate diplomatically in Japan were analysed in Adam Clulow. *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch encounter with Tokugawa Japan*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. For the attempts to present the Stadholder as their king, see op. cit., 31-39.

163 He had, for instance, been adding debts of local rulers that did not in fact exist. When Paulus van Solt travelled around the area to inform about these debts, and it became clear that there were none, he remarked that falsely accusing local rulers of being in debt would have been a very dangerous job, if it were not for the fact that the Makasars were such 'kind and friendly people'. Commelin, *Begin ende voortgangh van de Vereenighde,* vol. II, 13th voyage (under Steven van der Hagen), pp.81-82. Commelin does not mention Luersen by name, but various VOC-documents, including a mention of Van Solt's 'examinatie' of him in VOC 1053 (unfoliated), do.

164 This would have been Karaeng Matoaya (r. 1593 to 1623). The description in Commelin gives the impression that the first Dutch lodge was actually in Tallo, rather than in Gowan-ruled Makassar. What is certain is that the new merchant Samuel Denijs, who arrived in 1609, constructed a new lodge in Makassar itself.

165 'Rozenobels'

166 Commelin, *Begin ende voortgangh van de Vereenighde*, vol. II, 13th voyage (under Steven van der Hagen), p.82.

creasingly bought their spices in Makassar. The trading policy of the VOC in Makassar was, however, a different one. It preferred to buy the spices in Maluku directly, particularly as its monopoly was slowly taking shape in the wake of the conquest of Ambon, the treaty with Ternate, and, in 1609, a treaty with many of the *orangkaya* in the Banda Islands, concluded under pressure in the wake of a military campaign which had brought the island of Banda Neira fully under Company control. Makassar was prominent among several port towns where it would buy the rice that was brought to Maluku as a trade good, with which the spices were then bought - under trading conditions and for prices that the Dutch were increasingly trying to control through treaties.

The new VOC merchant Samuel Denijs, who arrived in Makassar in 1609, was, however, not extremely successful in executing this policy. His correspondence from the years 1610-1612 paints a tragicomic picture of successive failures and setbacks. The price of the rice that he was supposed to send to Maluku happened to be unusually high in these years, because of bad harvests, the abovementioned Wars of Islamisation, and, after the conclusion of these wars, a prohibition on the export of rice as the sultan needed it prevent famine among the Bugis 'who he has recently subjugated, who have become Muslim, and who were nearly starving'.[167] The letters also betray a total dependence on local shipping and trade that stands in stark contrast to the great monopolistic ambitions that the VOC was developing in Maluku. The provision of Ambon and Banda from Makassar took place exclusively in local vessels. Denijs was entirely dependent on local captains planning to sail there and, for want of VOC ships providing him with fresh capital, on local credit, his creditors including Karaeng Matoaya of Tallo. Most of the cargoes of rice, arrack, salted buffalo meat and fish he was able to send off never reached their destination: in 1610, five junks carrying provisions for Banda and Ambon were all turned back by the monsoon, and part of the cargo was spoiled by seawater getting into the hold. In 1611, another junk bound for Ternate was shipwrecked on a reef, and the entire cargo was lost.[168] Meanwhile, he had to stand idly by as the Portuguese, arriving from Melaka each year, were dumping large amounts of textiles onto the Makassar market for low prices, bringing down the value of his own trade goods, and buying the spices that both

167 Letter of Samuel Denijs to Jacques l'Hermite in Bantam, 19 October 1610, in: VOC 1053, Makassar folder (unfol.).

168 Letter of Samuel Denijs to the Directors in the Netherlands, 12 July 1612, in: VOC 1053, Makassar folder (unfol.)

Makasar and Javanese ships were bringing in, which sometimes sold for a lower price than what the VOC paid in Maluku itself. Denijs had no instructions to buy these up himself, and in any case he did not have sufficient means to do so.[169] In addition, the rulers of Gowa and Tallo were demanding all sorts of diplomatic gifts from the Company, including a small gun for the Gowan royal ship, krises, various textiles and porcelain. Two *bahar* of mace, which Claes Luersen had accepted from the sultan of Gowa, and in exchange for which he was to deliver chainmail armour and a small gun, but which had apparently gone missing, were a continuing annoyance to the court and a worry to Denijs.[170]

In July 1613, the English opened a factory in Makassar, which soon developed into the base of operations for their own trade in the Spice Islands. Their use of the Makassar roadstead was very similar to that of the Dutch: they mostly bought rice there, selling it for spices in Maluku.[171]

Trading in Maluku, however, was already becoming ever more difficult for the English even before they built their lodge in Makassar, as VOC control in Maluku increased and the VOC increasingly asserted the right to be the sole buyer, forcing the *orangkaya* on the Banda islands into concluding trade treaties with them and using their influence over Ternate to increase their grip on areas like Hoamoal. The people living there, unhappy with the increasing Dutch control that was the consequence of being vassals of Ternate, also clandestinely sold spices to the English.[172] In 1615, the people at the village of Kambelo invited the English to build a lodge there – the Dutch, upon noticing this, approached with a ship and started firing on the village. Kambelo had a fortification, and the inhabitants approached the English, telling them that they would give the fort, along with 'the whole island' to the English, if they would but help against the Dutch. [173] The peace between England and the Republic tied the hands of both European companies, but things nearly devolved into an open fight on this occasion. The English sent some of their men into the fort, betting that the Dutch

169 Ibid.

170 This is a recurring topic throughout the letters, but handily summarized in Hendrik Brouwer to Directors in the Netherlands, 27 June 1612 in: VOC 1053, Bantam folder (unfol.). I thank independent historian Menno Leenstra for his help locating some of these early archival references to Makassar.

171 Bassett, 'English trade in Celebes 1663, 1954, pp.1-4.

172 E.g. in 1613, as described in: John Jourdain, William Foster ed. *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617 : Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, and the Malay Archipelago*. Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1905, pp.247-273.

173 Foster, *Letters Received,* III, p.134.

would not then dare attack it. Some shots were exchanged; the Dutch issued an ultimatum. In the end the English decided they could not win, retreated from the castle and abandoned their new lodge. The incident, however, bears testament to the fact that not all areas affiliated with Ternate were too happy with the increasing Dutch control, and were trying to turn elsewhere for political protection. The English ship with which this expedition had been undertaken, the *Concord*, then returned to Makassar, where, to their surprise, the crew found the Dutch lodge abandoned and the English one guarded by only one man. While they had been away, things had escalated at the Makassar roads.

### European rivalry at the Makassar roadstead

'Arriving here at Macasser I find our people to be run away, all but one lame man who, more honester than the rest, stayed […]', a surprised George Ball wrote to Bantam, the day after arriving before Makassar on the 23rd of June, 1615. [174] Although his letter is rather brief and vague about what had happened, it does mention that the English factor had been a little too close with the Dutch, had sided with them against the Spanish, and the English were also complicit in the killing and abduction of several Makasar dignitaries, so that the sultan now wished for the English to leave entirely.

A letter by director-general Jan Pietersz. Coen, written several months after the incident, gives more details about the eruption of violence between the various Europeans. In April 1615, a small flotilla of Spanish ships had attacked the VOC-ship *Enkhuizen* as it approached the Makassar roadstead.[175] The ship repelled the attack with difficulty, losing 11 men in the process. Fearing more Spanish aggression, and worried that the sultan, who had been away from the city when the attack happened, was no longer willing or able to protect them,

174 Foster, *Letters Received,* III, p.287.

175 Interestingly, George Ball might have been partly responsible for the incident in the first place. On its way out from Makassar, the *Concord* had taken a small Spanish frigate on the 18th of February. The Spaniards had subsequently been seeking compensation from the English through Sultan Ala'uddin of Gowa. When the sultan proved unwilling to get involved and subsequently left town, the Spanish apparently decided to get their compensation single-handedly by attacking the Dutch and English lodges. (In spite of the escalating situation in Maluku, the Dutch and English were technically still on friendly terms.) Right around that time, the *Enkhuizen* came in sight, and the Spaniards, who wanted to avoid the ship making contact with the lodges, immediately launched an improvised attack. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, pp.120-122; Foster, *Letters Received,* III, p.286.

the Dutch decided to abandon their lodge, as did the English, who were given passage on the Dutch ship. As preparations to leave were made, the crew of the ship tried to take a number of Makasar dignitaries, who had come on board in the wake of the attack, hostage, to be used as collateral for the outstanding debts that local dignitaries had with the VOC. A skirmish broke out, in which nine of these dignitaries, including one of the sultan's sons, died. Two others, the assistant *shahbandar* and another member of the royal family, were captured alive. They were taken along as the ship departed from Makassar.[176]

George Ball found that the sultan had not taken the incident lightly and was now resolved to ban 'all Christians' from Makassar. It took all of Ball's negotiation skills to convince him otherwise for the English, but in the end he was allowed to once again leave George Cockayne as a factor in Makassar.[177] The latter wrote to his superiors two months later that the sultan was mobilizing his defences in anticipation of an all-out war with the VOC, and that:

> all the whole land is making… bricks for two castles this summer to be finished; in the armoury is laid ready 10000 lances, 10000 cresses with bucklers to them, spaces [a type of lance] as many, pieces 2422: 800 quoyanes of rice [roughly one million kilograms] for store; all this is to entertain the Flemings.[178]

## Diplomacy by proxy, escalating conflict

The governor-general and council, however, had already decided to retreat from Makassar before the incident ever took place, for reasons that had little to do with fear of Spanish aggression. Before word of the incident had reached Governor-general Reynst, he had already sent out commissioners to close the lodge, and to request from the sultan that he cease all trade with the Spice Islands. This

176 Coen to directors, 22 Oct. 1615, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, pp.121-122. The hostages would ultimately be released by the end of 1616, without making any attempt to use them as leverage for the outstanding debts.

177 Foster, *Letters Received,* III, pp.286-289. Interestingly, another English letter (John Skinner in Makassar to Adam Denton, 12 July 1615) reports that this also applied to the Portuguese, who 'are commanded hence and are the most part gone…' (Foster, *Letters Received,* III, p.134.) Later, they were evidently also allowed back in, and in the longer term would turn out to be the largest beneficiaries of the conflict between the VOC and Makassar. Cf. Borges, *Os Portugueses e o Sultanato de Macaçar*, pp.82-83.

178 Foster, *Letters Received,* III, pp.151-152.

decision was closely connected to the evolving monopoly policy in Maluku.

In August 1613, the governor-general had appointed Hans de Hase as Inspector-General, and given him the task of making a financial and general inspection round of all the VOC's posts. The reports and advice he would submit in the course of his commission might be considered the first documents clearly stating that the VOC had already become overstretched, and they would be pivotal in the formulation of the policy of concentrating on Maluku.

De Hase started with a tour of Maluku, and did not like what he found: he considered the Malukan posts severely understaffed and undersupplied. After continuing on to the other posts of the eastern archipelago in December 1613, he found most of them unprofitable and useless, noting, for instance, that the freshly-conquered Fort Henricus on Solor would probably not be able to become profitable because the VOC had been unable to completely remove the Portuguese from the area. Continuing to Buton, he noted that there was 'absolutely nothing to trade there, and the two bastions have only been established to please the king', who for reasons he did not divulge, he incidentally also considered 'the biggest liar of all the Oriental kings'.[179] Being first and foremost a financial inspector and seeing no point in a trading post for political purposes, he recommended closing the lodge as soon as possible.

Moving on to Makassar, he found that Samuel Denijs had died, that the lodge was in complete disorder and that the ledgers were 'in complete disarray'[180], so that, like Van Solt seven years earlier, he had to inform himself from the Company's debtors themselves how much they owed, as it could not be discovered from the books. He left a new merchant, who he hoped would 'take better care', but also recommended the lodge be closed. Not only was it 'a money drain, rather than the breadbasket it is reputed to be', but also because junks from Makassar were sailing to Maluku, Banda in particular, 'but we do not dare attack these junks due to our lodge in Makassar.'[181] He came to similar conclusions with respect to Gresik, which was similarly sending out junks to Banda and where the Company also had an unprofitable lodge. [182]

De Hase's recommendations were heard, and the lodges in Buton, Makassar and Gresik, as well as Fort Henricus on Solor, were all abandoned in the course

179 Hans de Hase to Directors, 12 August 1614, in: VOC 1057, fol. 65r and v.

180 Ibid., fol. 65v.

181 By the time that letter arrived, the High Government had, however, already gone ahead and closed these lodges. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, p.315.

182 See above, chapter II, paragraph 'Connections to the West'.

of 1615. The commissioners sent to close the lodge at Makassar, unaware of what had happened there, found the VOC lodge already abandoned. All that was left for them to do was bring across the request to no longer trade with Maluku. In a return letter to them, the sultan somewhat famously replied: 'God made the land and the sea, divided the land among the people, and gave the sea in common. It has never been heard that anyone has been prohibited from navigating the sea. If you would do it, you would take the bread out of the mouths of people. I am a poor king'.[183]

The incident in April 1615 would therefore seem merely to have hastened the breakdown of the relationship with Makassar. The break itself would have been an inevitable consequence of various policies the VOC had put into effect in that period, aimed at concentrating the Company's resources on Maluku, and freeing its hands to take a more aggressive stance there.

Meanwhile, the Dutch were making ample use of their Ternaten ally to maintain and strengthen their grip on the spice-producing regions. In the same letter in which Cockayne informed his superiors of the military preparations, he also informed them that he had heard the Dutch were now attempting to get western Seram back under their control by using the authority of the sultan of Ternate, and referring the conflict to him.[184] Indeed, the Dutch were using Ternaten representatives to resolve the matter, and the people of the Banda island of Ai had now sued for peace by sending representatives to the Ternaten sultan.[185]

For their part, Sultan Ala'uddin and chancellor Matoaya do not appear to have been intent on a further escalation of conflict with the Dutch. When reports went around Makassar that VOC ships were on their way in August 1615, the English factor George Cockayne wrote to his superior in Bantam that, even though the sultan was fortifying the coast in anticipation of a possible conflict with the Dutch, '[t]he King says that at their arrival here he will send them their house and pagarr [factory stock] upon rafts to them, but not a man come to land. He will do them all the good he can, but the commonalty will not be pacified but would willingly have them come to land and put them all to the sword.'[186] Cockayne added that the court had asked for his opinion, which he had wisely kept to himself, although he privately felt 'they have all the reason in the world

183 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, p.122.
184 Foster, *Letters Received,* III, 1897, pp.150-153.
185 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* 1919, p.120.
186 ' George Cokayne to John Jourdan at Bantam, Sambarrppa, this 17th August anno 1615', in: Foster, *Letters Reveived,* III, 151.

to make clear work with as many as they can of them, for their proceedings is in blood and so they must continue' – clearly, it was not just the Makasars who were growing very annoyed with the Dutch. The feeling was mutual: in early 1616, the VOC sent a warning letter informing the English they would keep them from Maluku with violence if necessary.[187]

Notwithstanding the sultan's desire not to escalate things further, it soon became apparent that the incident of 1615 was not forgotten. In December 1616, the VOC ship *Eendracht* arrived before Makassar. On its way from the Cape to Batavia, this ship had gone too far east, becoming the first European ship to land at the west coast of Australia.[188] Then turning north, it ended up in Makassar, as yet unaware of the events of the last one-and-a-half years. The junior merchant was sent ashore in a launch, accompanied by a small crew, to go to the Dutch lodge. They found only the English. Meanwhile word of the arrival of a Dutch ship spread through Makassar, and the Gowan sultan personally came to the shore with some 2000 armed men. He allowed the Dutch to leave but made clear that they should not come back. The crew rowed away and, afraid the sultan would still change his mind, hid in one of the English ships anchored offshore, before rowing back to the *Eendracht*, which was anchored further out, under cover of darkness. Before they found the *Eendracht* the next day, however, another boat had already been sent ashore to look for them. This time, the Makasars shot on sight and then stormed the boat, killing all its sixteen crewmembers.[189]

## Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have tried to give a detailed answer to the question why conflict broke out between the VOC and Gowa-Tallo in 1615 and 1616, giving specific attention to the role of the political interaction between various polities in Maluku, in which the sultanate of Ternate was of great importance. The fact that, in the early seventeenth century, Gowa and Tallo became a militarily strong and prestigious Muslim dual kingdom, in competition with other Muslim states

187 E.g. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* 1919, p.147; Ibid., pp.74-75.

188 They also left what is believed to have been the first European object on the Australian coast: a tin pewter dish in which they inscribed the details of their visit to the coast. This dish is now in the Rijksmuseum collection (inv. nr. NG-NM-825).

189 J.W. IJzerman, 'Het schip 'De Eendracht' voor Makasser in december 1616' in: *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 78.1/2 (1922): 343–372. An appendix to the article contains the report of Joannes Steins, the junior merchant in charge of the first launch.

further east, was of great consequence for the relationships between Gowa-Tallo and the VOC. As the VOC became the 'protector' of Ternate on paper in 1607, and increasingly started acting the role in subsequent years, this already set it on a path towards rivalry with Gowa and Tallo.

Of course, the relationship with Ternate was intimately connected to the monopoly policy elsewhere. Ternate itself was a clove-producing region, indirectly ruled the western areas of the Ambon Islands and was an ally in making war on the spice-producing areas not controlled by the Dutch (like Spanish Ternate and Tidore). The alliance with the Ternaten sultan also gave the Dutch a way of having more political influence in the eastern archipelago by conducting 'diplomacy by proxy'. Ternate, all in all, was indispensable to the Company's monopoly policy. In the period leading up to 1615, when the VOC also started a policy of keeping other Asian traders, such as those from Makassar and Javanese ports like Gresik, out of Maluku, and aware it could not have it both ways, it decided to abandon its lodges there. Breaking off the trade relationship with Makassar was therefore a conscious decision on the part of the VOC – the incident of 1615 merely accelerated the process.

The emphasis on Makassar's role as a cosmopolitan *bandar* in much of the existing literature therefore only tells part of the story. Whereas the rulers of the Gowa and Tallo did try to have Makassar remain an open port based on early modern notions of free trade, they were also at the head of an expanding empire, not just an open market place. Trade was politics, not just for the Europeans but also for Gowa and Tallo, and spices were secured through existing networks that were political as much as economic. Additionally, it acts to obscure the chronology and causality of events. Although spices were certainly being traded in Makassar in the early seventeenth century, it was at the time mainly a rice port, where various traders, including Europeans, would buy rice before going to the Spice Islands to trade there themselves. Only after the watershed events of the 1615 and 1616 would the market for spices in Makassar increase so much that the city became the main non-Company spice port in the Archipelago for both Asian and European traders.

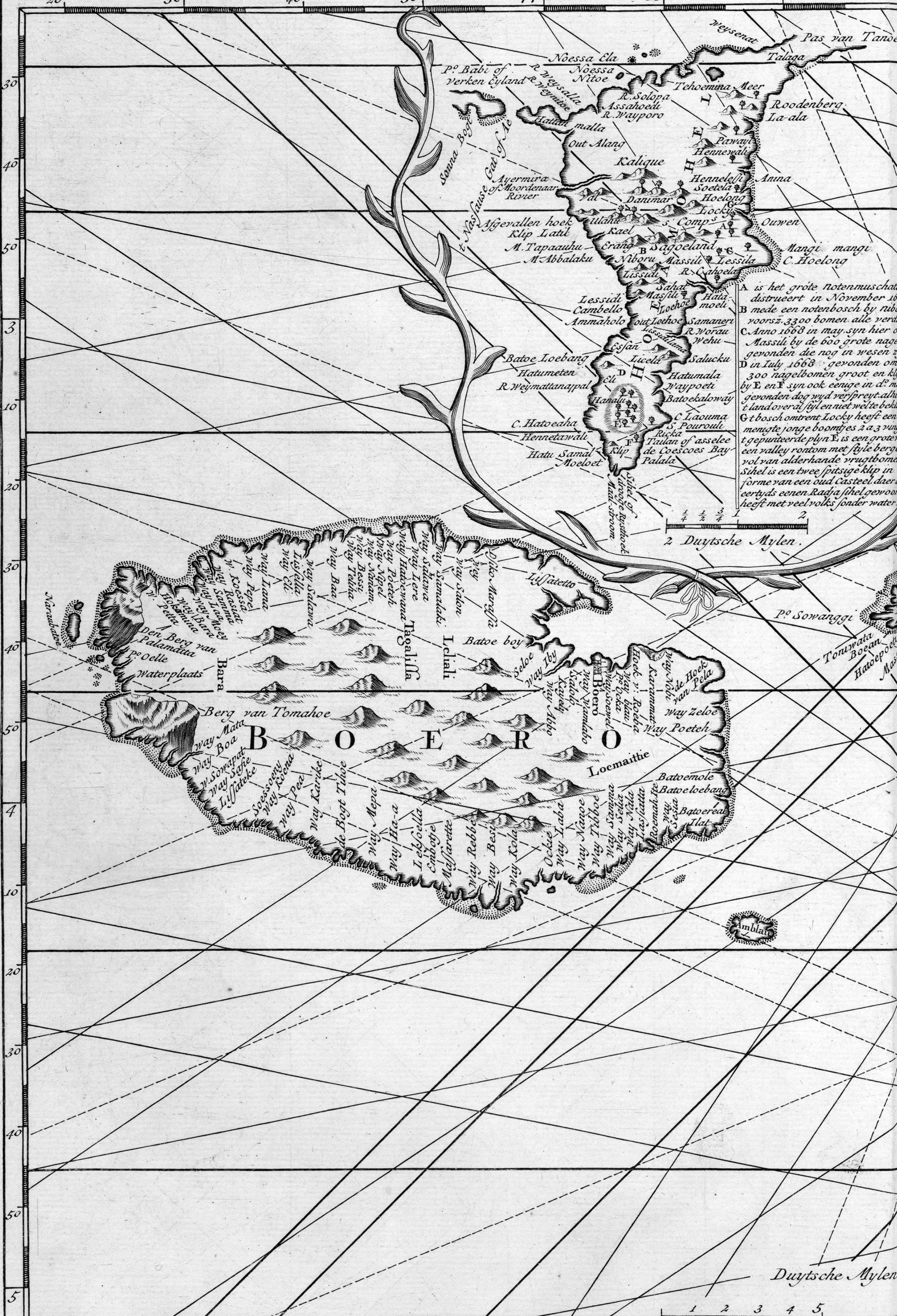
# IV. Escalation in Ambon (1616-1625)

As established in the last chapter, the VOC's alliance with Ternate, in which it provided military aid in exchange for exclusive clove deliveries from the sultan's domains, and subsequent attempts to enforce these and other monopoly provisions throughout the eastern archipelago, significantly contributed to the outbreak of hostilities with Gowa in 1615. This chapter shifts the focus to the Ambon Islands, where the Hituese had hailed the VOC as a friend and ally when it took the Portuguese fort there and replaced the Portuguese as de facto rulers of the islands' Christian regions in 1605. The Company had made itself less popular with the leaders of the Hoamoal Peninsula, which was formally part of the domains of the Ternaten sultan, for enforcing its treaty with Ternate there, with its exclusive deliveries and relatively low prices.

Within the ranks of the VOC itself, the same period saw the emergence of a difference of opinion as to Company strategy in the eastern archipelago. The main protagonists in the controversy were Laurens Reael, who favoured fostering good relations with the sultan of Ternate and other local leaders, and Jan Pietersz. Coen, who had less faith in local rulers' good intentions and wanted the VOC to be able to enforce its will in the eastern archipelago as elsewhere. This conflict has been the topic of a great amount of earlier scholarship: many colonial historians gratefully seized upon the early high-profile clash over the Company's approach, which they took as dramatic material for compelling character-driven histories and biographies. Antoinette Meilink-Roelofsz, for instance, depicted Reael and some of his likeminded colleagues as humane, culturally sensitive, and religiously tolerant, with Coen cast in the role of the stern, calculating, and hawkish Calvinist, with insidious 'Italian wiles.'[190] More recently, Martine van Ittersum has argued that we should not overemphasise the importance of this controversy: Coen and Reael, with their respective supporters, had very similar ideas about the course the Company should pursue in, for instance, the Banda islands.[191] By reviewing the controversy in the context of wider developments in the eastern archipelago over this period, I aim to show that, character and reli-

190 Meilink-Roelofsz, M.A.P., 'Steven van der Haghen.' In Akveld, L.M. *Vier eeuwen varen : kapiteins, kapers, kooplieden en geleerden*. Bussum: De Boer, 1973. Id, 'The Private Papers of Artus Gijsels as Source for the History of East Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian history* 10 (1969): 540–559, esp. 543-547. Also see Jur van Goor, *Jan Pieterszoon Coen: koopman-koning in Azië*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2015, esp. pp. 345-359.

191 Martine van Ittersum, 'Debating Natural Law in the Banda Islands', esp. p.484.


Pas van Tanoe
Weysenat
Talaga
Noessa Ela
Noessa Nitoe
Po. Babi of Verken Eyland
R. Weysalla
R. Weynitoe
R. Solopa
Assahoedi
R. Wayporo
Tehoemina Meer
Roodenberg
La-ala
Hatan malla
Out Alang
Paway
Hennewali
Kalique
Sanna Bogt
t Nassause Gat of Ae
Ayermira of Moordenaar Rivier
Hennelessi
Soetela
Hoelong
Anina
Val
Danimar
Locky
Comps
Ouwen
Afgevallen hoek
Klip Latil
Kael
M. Tapaauhu
M. Abbalaku
Erang
Sagoeland
Niboru
Massili
Lessila
R. Cahoela
Lissidi
Mangi mangi
C. Hoelong
Sahat
Massili
Loehoe
Hata-moeli
Lessidi
Cambello
Ammaholo
Out Loehoe
Samaneri
R. Worau
Wehu
Essan
Lissiallama
Liceda
Salucku
Batoe Loebang
Hatumeten
R. Weymattanappal
Hatumala
Waypoeti
Batoekaloway
Eli
Hanalu
C. Hatoeaha
Hennetawali
C. Laouma
S. Pourouli
Ricka
Tailan of asselee
de Coescoes Bay
Hatu Samal
Moeloet
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Palala
Sihel of droge Rysthoek
Mall stroom
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Sihel is een twee spitsige klip in...
forme van een oud Casteel daer...
eertyds eenen Radja sihel gewoo...
heeft met veel volks sonder water...
1/4 1/2 3/4 1 2
2 Duytsche Mylen.
Lissatetto
Po. Sowanggi
Naraubatte
Den Berg van Palamatta
Po. Oelle
Waterplaats
Bara
Tagalissa
Leliali
Batoe boy
Seloe
Way Iby
Boero
de Hoek van Pela
Way Zeloe
Way Poeteh
Torawata
Boean
Hatoepoet...
Berg van Tomahoe
way Mata
way Boa
w. Sowapat
Way Saste
Lissateke
B O E R O
Loemaittie
Batoemole
Batoe loebang
Batoereal
Tlat
Soessoeny
way Koena
way Pea
way Karike
de Bogt Tihoe
way Mepa
way Ha-a
Lekssella
Emboetje
Massarette
way Rebbe
way Besi
way Kola
Ockie
way Laba
way Nanoe
Amblau
Duytsche Mylen
1 2 3 4 5

Noessa Barang
Kay hoetoe
Keli Loeha
Samar
Bonoa
Berghuet
Toppers hoedje of Noessa Kamoe
Noessa Ela
Hatoeatta
Pas van Tanoeng
Popoloewi
Somoeri
Hoelong
Noessa Ela
Noessa Lima
Roemah Ela
Hatoenoeroe
Waumatta
Loema way
Koli
Loema Peloe
Mani
Wassua
Waymatta
Soemet
Paunoessa
Poelo Babi
Kelang
Maniapa
Cammalla
Po Toebian
Noessa Cassa
Hoek van Lucela
Lebalehoe
Drie Gebroeders
AMBOINA
HITOE
CEYLON
Hoek v. Alang
Hoek van Noessanwel
Hoetoemoeri
Kilang
Galghoek
Bowano Beli
Honimoa
Hatawano
Hawaka
Moelana
Noella Laoet
15 in een Graad.

gious beliefs aside, there was a real issue at the core of the controversy. What is more, the dispute's outcome was a key contributing factor in the deterioration of the Company's relationships with the various polities in the eastern archipelago.

A major factor in this deterioration was the impact of the conflict in Banda, culminating in the islands' wholesale depopulation. In his recent work *Amboina, 1623: Fear and Conspiracy at the Edge of Empire*, Adam Clulow reconstructs the circumstances under which the Dutch tried and executed a number of their own Japanese mercenaries, as well as the majority of the English merchants residing at Ambon. He argues that the atmosphere of anxiety and panic that led to the trial and so-called Amboina Massacre was due in no small part to the events in the Banda Islands two years previously.[192] This chapter will take up Clulow's argument, showing how Banda not only contributed to the Amboina Massacre but, in combination with the VOC's wider policies in this period, escalated the tensions around Ambon into full-blown military conflict by 1625.

## Internal discord: the Coen-Reael controversy

In June 1616, after the death of governor-general Gerard Reynst, the High Government provisionally elected Laurens Reael as his successor, pending approval from the directors in the Netherlands. Reael had been the governor of Maluku, Ambon, and Banda, and remained stationed in Ternate.

Just two years previously, however, the VOC directors had created another powerful VOC position: that of director-general. On the assumption that the governor-general should remain stationed in Maluku and that his function would mostly go on being a military one for the foreseeable future, they envisioned a powerful official, of almost equal stature as the governor-general him-

192 Clulow, *Amboina 1623,* esp. Ch. 1.

Fig 4.1 (Previous pages) Map of the western Ambon Islands. Buru, which was ruled by a kimelaha of its own, is the large island on the left. Ambon proper is the island to the lower right consisting of two parts connected by an isthmus. The southern part, Leitimor, stood under direct VOC rule. The northern part, Hitu, was an independent state. North of that we see Hoamoal, which is a peninsula of Seram (and is sometimes also called Western or Small Seram.) Tensions between its kimelaha and the VOC escalated in this period. The inset, which also shows Hoamoal, traces a later campaign on these islands. Map from Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën.

Fig 4.2. The island of Ambon and surroundings as depicted on an anonymous painting made c. 1617 in the Netherlands. The painting shows a much inflated Fort Victoria and surrounding town. In the surrounding region the various settlements, most of them on hilltops, are depicted and named. The painting was commissioned by former governor of Ambon Frederik de Houtman for the East India House in Amsterdam, where it was to be a testimony to the VOC's accomplishments on the island, just as its relations there started deteriorating as a consequence of the Company's increasingly heavy-handed policies. Collection Rijksmuseum, inv. nr. SK-A-4482.

self, to be stationed more centrally, in Bantam. His task would be more administrative: overseeing trade and the VOC's bookkeeping. Although such a function had already been conceived in 1609, the first person to fill it was Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who thus became the second most powerful VOC official in 1614.

Jan Pieterszoon Coen had his own ideas about the policy that the VOC should pursue. As he had made clear in his *Discoers*, a document outlining his own vision of the Company which he had sent to the directors in the Netherlands, he had little faith in Southeast Asian rulers, not least the sultan of Ternate. He believed that a spice monopoly would never be achieved when it depended on cooperation with them, unless the VOC had sufficient military power to enforce its will if need be.[193] Mindful of the fact that the VOC was first and foremost a trading company and that he was responsible for trade and accounting, Coen agreed with Hans de Hase's suggestions to close unprofitable posts, reinforce key forts in Maluku, and use naval power to stop junks trading there, even if this involved sacrificing the relationships with the rulers of Gresik and Gowa. Secure in his powerful position in Bantam, he felt no inclination to cooperate with Reaels' attempts to restore the Company's relationship with Gowa. 'Coming to a lifeless friendship with Makassar would not be so bad,' he wrote in a letter to the directors, 'but all the same it would not at all be advisable to once again open a lodge there.'[194]

Of course, Reael did not share this perspective. He believed that too strict a monopoly policy would be counterproductive, for it would antagonise the sultan of Ternate, with whom he had been careful to cultivate a good relationship, and make it more difficult for the sultan to control the kimelaha in the Ambon Islands. In addition, Reael had his doubts as to whether the VOC was justified in pursuing such a policy vis-à-vis its European competitors and strong enough militarily to do so.[195] By implication, he also queried the wisdom of the VOC's retreat from Makassar and Gresik, if for no other reason than that they really needed more rice in Maluku 'if we mean to have sole possession of the trade.'[196] In August 1616, therefore, he sent a letter by ship to Makassar, 'on the initiative

193 The *Discoers*, dated 1 January 1614, is published in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen* VI, 451-474, esp. 462-464. For analysis, see Jur van Goor, *Jan Pietersz Coen,* esp. 174-180.

194 Coen to directors, 10 October 1616, in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 226.

195 For an overview of the conflict between Coen and Reael, see Van Goor, *Jan Pietersz. Coen,* esp. 349-359.

196 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 175.

of the Hon. [Governor-General Reael], but in the name of the king of Ternate,'[197] In an attempt to restore the relationship, he meanwhile ordered Coen to send an appropriate gift to the Gowan sultan, should any opportunity for rapprochement present itself. The sultan, being in no mood for such rapprochement at the time, did not accept the letter.

The killing of the *Eendracht*'s crew in December 1616, described in the last chapter, settled the matter in favour of Coen's point of view for the time being. Coen was the first to mention the incident to the directors, in a letter dated August 1617, sending them a copy of the ship's journal. Aside from writing that sixteen crew members had been 'most brutally massacred,' Coen characterised the event somewhat drily as an accident, arising from the crew's ignorance of recent developments in Makassar. Interestingly, Coen directed most of his wrath surrounding the incident at the English, suspecting their assistance to the crew to have been nothing short of a 'Judas kiss.' The suspicion seems to have been informed by his developing dislike and distrust of the EIC rather than the first-hand accounts of the incident.[198] In Coen's eyes, however, the attack on the *Eendracht* did provide a rationale for instructing every fleet departing from Bantam to do all possible damage to any Makasar ships they might run into.[199]

Just a couple of months later, Coen learned that he was to become the new governor-general. Word had arrived from the directors in the Netherlands that they preferred him over Laurens Reael, and had accepted the latter's resignation. Although it would take some time before Coen could be officially sworn in by his predecessor, from May 1618 onwards he was aware that he would become the governor -general and increasingly started plotting his own course.

Meanwhile, the conflict between the EIC and VOC was escalating. The EIC had continued trading in Ambon and Banda, and thus continued running into the VOC there. Soon, various confrontations in Maluku and Bantam devolved into a full-blown war in the archipelago. An EIC fleet of eleven ships from Europe led by Thomas Dale arrived in front of Bantam in late 1618 and dealt the

197 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, I, 225. It is worth pointing out that this was an additional attempt at diplomacy by proxy, making use of the higher diplomatic standing of the sultan of Ternate.

198 Coen to directors, 22 August 1617, in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 261. He repeats the accusation in Coen to A. Soury in Jambi, 2 December 1617, where he states: 'Daer wort tot Bantam gesseyt, dat den coninck van Macassar door d'Engelssen tot soo een enorme moort gebracht wesen soude.' Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, II, 308.

199 Stapel, *Bongaais verdrag,* 19n2.

first blow by taking a VOC vessel. Dale then continued to Jayakarta, where the *pangeran* and the English were laying siege to the VOC lodge. The Dutch had started fortifying the lodge earlier that year, in contravention of earlier agreements, and the situation had devolved into a siege of the warehouse-turned-fort. Coen was in Jayakarta commanding the defence when the English fleet appeared. He boarded one of the seven VOC vessels present to engage the English, but, finding himself outgunned, ultimately retreated to Ternate, where he began assembling a fleet to mount a counterattack against both the EIC and *pangeran* of Jayakarta. While in Ternate, he met with Reael and the office of governor-general was officially transferred from one to the other.

### Tightening the noose

As argued in the last chapter, an important driving force behind the emerging conflict between the VOC and Gowa-Tallo was the VOC's treaty and alliance with Ternate. This treaty was necessary for both parties: the Dutch and Ternate had a shared interest in waging war against Spain and its allies in the region. For the Dutch, the alliance was also a crucial asset in its attempts to establish a spice monopoly. However, the alliance also had unexpected side effects for the Company: as Ternate and Gowa-Tallo were increasingly coming into conflict in this period, the VOC was implicated in the rivalry. In addition, the VOC antagonised many of the inhabitants of the Ambon Islands by using its treaty with the Ternaten sultan to strengthen its grip over clove production there.

As described in chapter II, the two positions of kimelaha in the Ambon Islands were given to members of the noble Ternaten Tomagola family, as a means for the Ternaten court to control its burgeoning overseas possessions. However, such positions in regions far removed from Ternate itself also came with risks. In order to maintain their power and legitimacy, successive kimelaha were sometimes tempted or forced to consider local interests rather than those of the sultan of Ternate. This was especially true in the early seventeenth century. First, the Spanish invasion of Ternate led to a complete severance of contact with and support from the sultan. Then, the VOC tried to enforce its spice monopoly through its treaty with Sultan Muzaffar, who was generally considered a rather weak ruler. Cooperating with this policy was not at all in the kimelaha's interests, as he relied on the goodwill of his vassals, needed their tribute for his income, and made money through his own involvement in clove trade. The VOC's attempts to become the sole buyer of cloves, and at fixed prices at that, had the potential to drive a wedge between the sultan of Ternate and the kimelaha of Hoamoal,

with the latter becoming entrenched local leaders to an even bigger degree than before.[200]

In the early years, the monopoly was merely intended to prevent European competitors from buying spices and introducing them into the European market. However, following de Hase's advice, and with the backing of the directors in the Netherlands, Coen began instituting a much more far-reaching monopoly policy, even before he became governor-general. Even when Asian traders were not buying spices, they were undercutting VOC trade in Maluku by selling textiles, which were paid for in money, draining cash out of the region. Coen's policy was therefore to discourage Asian trade in Maluku altogether. Given that the VOC still depended on rice being shipped there and did not have the vessels to ensure a sufficient flow of goods to and fro, the Company turned its eyes to European private traders. These traders, Company officials imagined, might become a kind of glorified shuttling service between VOC-posts in Maluku and its newly founded *rendezvous* on Java. Meanwhile, VOC ships were to patrol Malukan waters to both pursue the war with the Spanish and hunt for Asian traders.[201]

To those tasked with implementing such policies, it was abundantly clear that they were stirring up bad feelings among the inhabitants of the region, particularly on Hoamoal. Steven van der Hagen, who was governor of Ambon in 1617 and early 1618, had been a declared opponent of such a strict monopoly policy even before he took up the position. Relaying the sentiments of the local inhabitants, he wrote that 'the junks have to arrive here as they have always done; we cannot go without them, as they bring rice, salt and many things we need.' The people of Hoamoal, he added, would ten times sooner be rid of the Dutch than go without the junk trade.[202] Ultimately, however, he had no choice but to execute his orders.

A year later, he reported on how the policy worked out in practice. He had had a ship patrol the waters off the coast of Hitu to hunt for Makasar and other Asian junks. Soon enough, the people of Luhu and Kambelo got wind of this

200 Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen,* 10-11; Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 157-159; Knaap, 'Twee mogendheden', 51-54.

201 The blueprint for the new policy is found in the instructions for Governor-General and council 27 August 1617 in: J. A. van der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, 1602-1811, I. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1885, 28 pp, especially 45-50 (articles 55 through 75). With thanks to Victor Xu who first pointed this out to me.

202 Steven van der Hagen to directors, 26 May 1617, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, 206pp, quote at 215-216.

and went to the Dutch merchant at Luhu to seek redress. The merchant pretended that the ship was only there to guard against English ships, but they were not fooled, warning the merchant that they would burn the Dutch lodges down if the ship dared board any junks seeking to trade in the Ambon Islands. To further illustrate the point, Van der Hagen sent along two translated letters from the sultan of Ternate to his various kimelaha, in which he had asked them not to allow anyone but the Dutch to buy any cloves in their respective regions. He also emphasised, though, that the treaty he had made with Matelieff concerned cloves only and that Matelieff had promised him that Muslim traders shipping other goods would be left unharmed.[203] The new policy, Van der Hagen was trying to hammer home, fell outside the bounds of the agreement and was damaging the VOC's relationship with both Ternate and the inhabitants of the Ambon region.

A similar incident occurred around the same time on Buru, the westernmost of the Ambon Islands. In 1618, the VOC ship *Neptunus* spotted a Makasar junk just south of the island and, in line with its instructions, went in pursuit. In an attempt to get away, the Makasar junk sailed to the shore. The *Neptunus* deployed boats and finally captured it on the beach, confiscating the rice and the textiles it was transporting. Several of the Makasar crew managed to escape to Luhu, however. Soon enough, armed men started massing in front of the Dutch lodge there, demanding restitution of the textiles and threatening to burn the lodge.[204]

Some of the inhabitants of Hoamoal were growing disaffected with the sultan of Ternate as a result of these policies and seemed to be casting around for alternative sources of political protection. For instance, several Hoamoal towns, including Kambelo and Lesidi, were apparently plotting to switch their allegiance to Tidore, which was allied with Spain at the time. For its part, Luhu sent a delegate to Makassar to invite the Makasar traders back to the region.[205] The new VOC policies met with so much resistance that they threatened to unravel the entire political foundations on which the VOC's control over the clove-producing regions was built.

### 'God does not bless such usury'

Meanwhile, the major detractors of these policies were all returning to Europe.

203 Ibid., 229-232.

204 Van Speult to Coen, 4th of June 1618 in Colenbrander, *Coen*, VII, 326pp; Coen to directors in Ibid., I, 365-366.

205 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 365-366; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, introduction, p. 48.

Reael left in 1619. Van der Hagen was relieved as governor of Ambon that same year and returned to Europe a few months later. The last outspoken opponent of Coen's policies to remain in Asia was Artus Gijsels, who stayed on until 1620 as second-in-command to the governor of Ambon – but then likewise repatriated. Subsequently *en route* to the Netherlands, Gijsels wrote two extensive reports on the Ambon region, which remain important sources on its culture and society, but also provide us with some of the sharpest criticism of Coen's policies that have been preserved in writing:

> This measure of keeping out the junks might be good and serviceable for the Company… but that does not make it proper, and it is cause for much hatred… When I first arrived in Ambon, a *last* [about 1250 kilograms] of rice could be bought for 20 reals or less from the foreign traders, whereas we now ask 50 or 60 reals for it… The textiles that people used to pay 10 reals for, are now sold for 30 or 40, etcetera. The inhabitants can also make the reckoning that the absence of junks is harmful for them. All in all, we are not as justified as we might like to pretend.[206]

The VOC's policy, Gijsels pointed out, also put pressure on the Company's alliance with Ternate because it was unwarranted by the treaties concluded between them. Had the Company built up good relationships with the rice-producing regions in the archipelago, it could have easily competed with local traders, using its larger and less labour-intensive ships to push them out of the market. Instead, it had opted to use force, which would encourage illicit trade wherever and whenever the Dutch were not looking. 'One thing is certain,' he concluded, 'God does not bless such usury.'[207]

Gijsels' words, however, had little practical effect on Company policy. His Amboina writings were not meant as official reports for the Company directors and there is no indication that they took any notice of them. His descriptions of the region were not published at the time and seem to have circulated in hand-

206 Artus Gijsels. 'Verhael van enige oorlogen in Indië' in: *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht* 27 (1871): 497-535, p. 507.

207 Ibid, p. 509. On the other hand, we are warned against seeing Gijsels as a champion of indigenous interests more generally, as right on the next page, he, like Reael, considered the Bandanese in particular a 'heap of scoundrels', impossible to work with, and therefore considered the war against them 'necessary'. Ibid., 510pp.

written copies among the elite in the Netherlands.[208] The practices he denounced would remain at the core of Company policy in Maluku.

When Coen subsequently decided to mount a massive military campaign in the Banda Islands to secure the nutmeg monopoly, none of Coen's detractors remained in Asia. Back in Europe, however, some of them would be appalled when they heard how things unfolded, even when they themselves had also considered a military campaign in the islands unavoidable.[209] In addition, and more immediately relevant to our topic, Coen's policies would serve to further destabilise the region at large.

### Reverberations from Banda

As briefly described in the previous chapter, hostilities had broken out in the Banda islands twelve years earlier, after the Dutch had started building a fort on the island of Neira without the local orangkaya's permission. The orangkaya had retaliated by ambushing and killing the Dutch commander and his escort. The subsequent conflicts, alternated with rounds of negotiation, had resulted in the Company conquering the islands of Neira and Ai, as well as a series of ever more extortionate treaties, under which the population of much of the region was obliged to sell its nutmeg only to the Company. The English had meanwhile settled at Run, one of the smaller outlying islands. In practice, the VOC had no say on the largest island, Lontor, nor on smaller and more remote Rosengain. In fact, many of the inhabitants of these islands had also entered into treaties with the English and nutmeg continued to find its way to both English and Asian traders. Coen decided to settle the matter by subjugating the group of islands with overwhelming military force. He left Batavia for the Banda islands in the final days of 1620, bringing the largest military force the VOC had thus far ever assembled: fifteen large ships carrying 1655 men, and thirty-nine small *tingan*

208 His writings have partially been preserved as part of the archive of Anthony van Hilten, secretary to the *Staten van Utrecht*. The archive contains a somewhat bewildering mix of documents related to his official capacity and others. Through inheritance it ended up in the private collection J.C. Martens van Sevenhoven, whose heirs largely bequeathed it to the Utrechts Archief. See A.C.F. Koch e.a. eds, *Nederlandse historische bronnen 1*. Den Haag 1979, Martinus Nijhoff, 51pp.

209 One of the anonymous pamphlets circulating in the Netherlands in the wake of Coen's campaign, decrying the depopulation of the islands and the gruesome execution of their leaders, is also generally ascribed to Artus Gijsels: see P.A. Leupe ed. 'Beschrijvinge van de Eijlanden Banda' etc. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 3.1 (1855): 73-141.

sailing vessels.

The escalating conflict between the VOC and Bandanese had wider repercussions for the political constellation of the eastern archipelago. This is best illustrated by the difficult position in which it put Hitu. The Hituese, it bears repeating, were the VOC's oldest ally in the region and had actively invited the VOC to Ambon to drive out the Portuguese.[210] However, they also had old political ties to Banda. In 1590, for instance, many Bandanese communities had come to Hitu's aid in a concerted campaign against the Portuguese. Two of Hitu's allies, then, were now embroiled in a fierce conflict with one another.

Coen's fleet made a stopover at Ambon. Arriving in early 1621, he convened a general assembly (*landdag*) of the various rulers of Ambon to be held later that year, after his return from Banda. The assembly was meant to reaffirm the various rulers' allegiance to the VOC and Ternate and to resolve the tensions arising from the VOC's monopolistic policies. As it became clear to the region's inhabitants that the massive fleet would be heading out to subjugate Banda, the dilemma facing the Hituese became acute:

> The Kapitan Hitu spoke: 'What can we do for the land of Banda? For they came to our aid when we were at war with the Franks [i.e. the Portuguese]. We cannot help them now by force of arms. We have helped them with food, but that is not enough.'[211]

The Hituese orangkaya then decided to make a last-ditch attempt at mediation. Tepil, the Kapitan Hitu, presented himself to Coen with his three sons, offering to go along on the expedition and aid in negotiations. Coen replied that he had enough experience of the 'treacherous agreements' the Bandanese made

210 In fact, the alliance even predated the VOC. In 1600, two years before the VOC would even be founded, the *Oude Compagnie*, one of its predecessors, concluded what was the first agreement explicitly offering military support in exchange for clove deliveries. While no written version of the agreement survives and the expedition journal and the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* give different accounts of its exact provisions (the journal speaks of exclusive delivery at a fixed price, the Hikayat of a set amount of cloves for every ship or fortification the Dutch took), they both agree that it concerned a deal in which the Dutch would provide military assistance which would be reimbursed with cloves. Not much, however, came of their military cooperation, as a Portuguese expedition drove the Dutch from the island soon after. *Corpus Diplomaticum,* treaty V (Ambon, treaty of September 1600), 13; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 131.

211 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 149.

and was not interested in making another. Yet Tepil insisted until Coen finally 'agreed that he could sail along on his own behalf, but certainly not on ours.'[212] Hence, a Hituese delegation of twenty-five people went along on the ships.

As the Company's imposing war fleet lay at anchor in the Banda Islands, making final preparations for the attack, the Kapitan Hitu went to Lontor several times to meet with the orangkaya. Coen only briefly remarks that the latter were unwilling to submit to the Company's demand that they allow the Company to establish a fort on the island and that peace could therefore not be reached. The *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* is rather more elaborate. It relates how the Kapitan Hitu first emphasised to the orangkaya that the Bandanese were justified in their resistance, but pleaded with them to go to war only if they were absolutely ready for it in terms of their defences, arms, and provisions. After due deliberation, the orangkaya ultimately sent word that they saw no other option but to go to war and that they were prepared. Seeing that both the Company and orangkaya were set on war, the Kapitan Hitu threw his hands up. Coen started preparing for the attack.[213]

When Company troops, after some days of intense fighting, were able to take the southwestern half of Lontor, most of the Bandanese communities opted to surrender to the VOC. It soon turned out, however, that many of the Bandanese had actually retreated into Lontor's mountainous interior and fortified themselves there. Additionally, suspicions arose that the Bandanese leaders were conspiring to kill the Dutch in a surprise attack. Coen used the continued resistance and rumours as a justification for rounding up all orangkaya he could lay his hands on, forty-seven in total. They were tortured into confessing the plot. The remaining forty-four (three had died during the interrogations) were then brutally executed by the VOC's Japanese mercenaries. The VOC proceeded to depopulate the island, deporting those that it could. A major part of the population was still holed up in fortifications in the mountains, however, and the rainy season began making campaigning difficult. Rather than launching forays into the heart of the island, Company officials simply decided to wait out the rains, isolating Lontor's interior as best they could. When soldiers ultimately did

212 Coen to directors, 6 May 1621, excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, 272.

213 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 149-151. Rumphius, in his *Ambonsche Historie,* disdainfully remarks that, judging by the description of those negotiations in the Hikayat Tanah Hitu, 'we should be warned to bring guests like that on our campaigns.' (Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 44-45). It does seem, however, that the Kapitan Hitu was genuinely trying to avert the military confrontation.

move in after the rains had abated, it turned out that thousands of Bandanese had died of starvation and disease in their mountain hideouts. As the Company would learn only later, another sizeable portion of the population had been able to escape from the islands, finding new homes in places from Makassar to the Aru Islands. On the virtually depopulated islands, the Company implemented the so-called *perkenier* system, in which free citizens cultivated nutmeg with the help of slave labour.[214]

Coen witnessed some of the first effects of his actions at Banda immediately upon his return to Ambon with the better part of his fleet. On the one hand, he noted with some satisfaction that 'the fortunate victory at Banda has caused great fear in all the lands of Amboina and many more, and has rather increased the respect we enjoy.'[215] Many communities rushed to Coen's *landdag* to reaffirm their vassalage or friendship. On the other hand, though, Coen also noted that it had not exactly fostered trust. 'Apparently afraid to get the same treatment as the orangkaya of Banda,' the kimelaha, as well as the orangkaya of Luhu, Kambelo, and Lesidi, did not come to the *landdag* at all.[216] These were the most crucial local leaders involved in clove sales to foreign traders. If Coen's own assessment is correct, his actions in Banda inhibited further dialogue on this matter.

Once Coen had left the Ambon islands, along with his powerful and intimidating fleet, fear progressively gave way to suspicion and hostility. The atmosphere between the VOC and various leaders of the region turned positively gloomy over the course of 1622 and 1623. Part of the wave of refugees from the Banda islands washed up on the south coast of Seram. Van Speult witnessed its destabilising effects first-hand when he took a large hongi past Seram's south coast only to be confronted and surrounded by a fierce and well-organised combined Seramese-Bandanese fleet. The vessels under Van Speult's command eventually managed to break free, but he was forced to turn the fleet around and break off the expedition.[217] Closer to home, the VOC was driven from Manipa

214 The events on Banda are of great consequence to the wider developments in the region, but as they are relatively well-known and a huge topic in themselves, will be glossed over here. For my own brief assessments of these events see Tristan Mostert and Wim Manuhutu, '1621: violence and depopulation on and around Banda' (2021), *Pala,* online: https://pala.wfm.nl/1621-2/1621-article/?lang=en.

215 Coen to directors, 16 Nov 1621, excerpted in Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, esp. 297.

216 Coen (in Amboina) to Sonck and Van Gorcum (in Banda), 23 June 1621, in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* III, 61.

217 This expedition is described in Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, 312-316 and, in almost identical terms, in Van Speult's 'Ware afbeeldinge van 't Eylant Amboyna', printed

by Luhu and the Company evacuated the fortified lodge in Luhu itself, which was then burned to the ground by armed men. A Dutch carpenter who had gone out for lumber near Kambelo was found decapitated and mutilated.[218]

The events on Banda also affected the Company's relations with Gowa-Tallo. As outlined in the last chapter, the sultanate was involved in the Banda Islands economically and politically. Karaeng Matoaya, the chancellor of Gowa, for instance, had an agent permanently stationed there and the sizeable trade of nutmeg and cloves between the Banda Islands and Makassar was a principal reason for both the hostilities between the VOC and Makassar and the VOC's actions in the Banda Islands. The sultan of Gowa therefore took a personal interest in the events in Banda and sent vessels to pick up Bandanese refugees, relocating them to Makassar. In September 1624, Giovanni Maria Moretti, a Venetian freeburgher living in Batavia who also seems to have been a welcome guest at the Gowan court, informed the High Government in Batavia that some five hundred refugees from Banda were now living in Makassar.[219] In a letter written around the same time, Van Speult informed the directors that another thousand refugees had recently been picked up by Makasar ships from Ihamahu (on Saparua, one of the Lease Islands to Ambon's direct east).[220] The *memorie* that the governor-general and his council wrote for the new governor of Ambon, Jan van Gorcum, speaks of 1500 Bandanese being picked up off the coast of Seram by the Makasars. The Council members believed there was more to this Bandanese exodus to Makassar than charity alone.[221]

These impressions had their roots in information from Moretti, the Italian go-between. While describing the Bandanese refugees as poor people, welcomed and provided with rice by a magnanimous sultan, Moretti also mentioned that the Bandanese tried to move the Gowan sultan to join them in an attempt to

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in Pieter van Dam, F.W. Stapel e.a. eds. *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1927-1955, vol 2.1, 136-160, esp. 159-160.

218 Clulow, *Amboina 1623,* 46-49.

219 J.A. van der Chijs, H. T. Colenbrander and J. de Hullu eds. *Dagh-register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India*. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1887–1931, I (1624-1629), p. 79. (16 September 1624).

220 Van Speult to Pieter de Carpentier, 16 September 1624, in: Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, pp. 28-29.

221 Memorie from the High Government for Jan van Gorcum, 3 March 1625. In: VOC 852, fol 14v. .

reconquer the Bandanese island of Ai from the Dutch.[222] In subsequent years, Company employees periodically heard rumours of Makasar plans to throw them out of Banda with help of both the Bandanese and Portuguese.[223] Gowa's hospitality to the Bandanese, it would seem, was not only an act of kindness but also part of its efforts to retain access to the spice trade and expand its influence.

### The rise of the Makasar spice hunters

Whereas the events on Banda might have secured the nutmeg trade for the VOC, their destabilising effect on the wider region contributed to its slipping control over clove production and trade. The various Dutch governors in Ambon noticed an increasing number of junks visiting the Ambon Islands, with much of the spices finding their way to Makassar. In May 1624, for example, a worried Van Speult described to the directors how the Makasars were at Lesidi with some twenty junks and more than five hundred men, who were armed 'not only with their blow darts but also with small cannon and muskets.' They had sworn on the Quran that they would come to the aid of Lesidi should the VOC attack it. All of the cloves from Luhu were brought there and sold to the Makasars. The kimelaha, of course, denied everything.[224] The Makasars were not the only ones: the region was brimming with the vessels of 'Papouwers,'[225] too swift to be overtaken, as well as ships from Tidore. Van Speult did not have the resources to effectively control the region's long and complicated coastlines. In an attempt to catch these cloves *en route* to Makassar, their most important market, the VOC started patrolling for returning junks at the Buton Strait and what they called the Boquerones, the straight between Selayar and Southern Sulawesi. This only had a limited effect.

Adding to the VOC's difficulties was the fact that the Ternaten sultan, Muzaffar, had concluded truces with Tidore and the Spanish in 1623 without consulting the VOC, to its great chagrin. At the time, the High Government in

222 *Dagh-register Batavia*, I, p. 80 (16 september 1624).

223 Crijn van Raemsburgh (governor of Banda) to governor-general, 10 june 1630, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 165-166.

224 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 15.

225 At the time, this term referred to the pirates in the region in general, including the inhabitants of the islands of what is today West Papua, although Papouwers were also living on the northern and eastern coasts of Seram itself. See Anthonie Haga. *Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea en de Papoesche eilanden : historische bijdrage, ±1500-1883*. Batavia : Bruining ; The Hague: Nijhoff, 1884, Ch. 1-2; Knaap, 'Robbers and traders: Papuan piracy in the seventeenth century'.

Batavia, involved in a campaign on the Chinese coast, could not spare any ships for the war in Maluku. Coen had even ordered the demolition of various VOC forts throughout Maluku so as to remedy the overstretch of the Company's military forces. This would have left many areas under Ternaten control defenceless and the Ternatan governor, De Houtman, deemed the order so unwise that he decided to ignore it for the time being. In any case, less than satisfied by the VOC's willingness and ability to assist them in fighting Tidore and Spain, the Ternaten sultan and his Chancellor Kaicili Ali made truces with both parties, ignoring the wishes of their European ally. This would also open yet another hole in the purported spice monopoly: in January 1624, Governor-General Pieter de Carpentier (who had succeeded Coen) informed the directors in the Netherlands that traders from Tidore were secretly buying Ternaten cloves and subsequently selling them to Melakans, Makasars, Javanese, and others.[226]

To top it all off, there were the other Europeans. As we have seen, tensions between the Dutch and English companies had escalated into open warfare in the archipelago in 1618. Back in Europe, the governments of both England and the Dutch Republic, who were at peace, rushed to end this conflict in 1619, forcing their respective companies to abide by the Treaty of Defence, which forced the companies to share in the spice trade. The English would pay a third of the cost of maintaining the forts and garrisons in Maluku; in return, they were allowed to buy a third of the annual crop of spices. Coen was extremely unhappy with the arrangement and did everything possible to hinder English trade short of actually breaching the treaty.

Under these generally precarious circumstances, Company personnel in the Ambon region became extremely suspicious of the English there. One of the VOC's own Japanese mercenaries asking some suspicious questions while on the walls of the castle, quickly led Company officials to be convinced that the English and the Japanese mercenaries were conspiring to eradicate the Dutch and take over the castle. It resulted in a panicked and swift trial, leading to the summary execution of ten Englishmen, as well as ten of the VOC's own Japanese mercenaries. This incident, which would be remembered as the Amboina Massacre, was the final nail in the coffin of the arrangements under the treaty: by this time, the English were already withdrawing from the Company's posts and had given up attempting to buy spices directly in Maluku.[227] Instead, they focused

226 Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* I, 347pp, esp. 355.

227 Clulow, *Amboina 1623,* 96-114; D.K. Bassett, 'The 'Amboyna Massacre' of 1623.' *Journal*

on procuring them in Makassar, to which end they entered into an official agreement with the Gowan sultan in 1624.[228] The Danish East India Company also made its appearance at the Makassar roads, sending its first ships to Makassar in 1623 and opening a lodge in 1625.[229] Given that the Portuguese also remained steady customers, European demand for spices was rising sharply in Makassar.

As a result, the fleets leaving Makassar for the east became larger and ever more organised. During his audience with the governor-general in 1624, Moretti gave this very detailed description of the preparations for the next fleet, which was probably harrowing to VOC officials:

> All the Malay and other foreign merchants, six hundred strong in all, are preparing to sail to Amboyna and surrounding regions again with the onset of the western monsoon, mostly with small craft. They will bring as much capital as they can gather, in rice but mostly in cash, their appetites whetted by last year's profits, and filled with hope that they can do even better this year. With this, the king would send two chiefs along who would preside over all of them, with express orders that if the inhabitants of Amboyna or surrounding area require any help or assistance, they will give it to the best of their ability, trying to set up the communities in the area against us… They mostly go armed with blowpipes and poisoned darts, with which they claim they will do us great damage.[230]

In this description, the best one we have of what would become known as spice hunting fleets in subsequent years, it is interesting to note the active role of the sultan of Gowa, who sent people to preside over the fleet and join forces with the local population against the VOC. Clearly, this went beyond what we would consider 'smuggling' in a narrow sense: the rulers of Gowa were already a party to the struggle for control of the Ambon islands.

All in all, things were looking bleak by 1625. Relations between the VOC and Ternate were deteriorating. Ternaten control over the kimelaha of Hoamoal was slipping and Hoamoal's inhabitants were selling their spices to anyone but

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*of Southeast Asian history* 1.2 (1960): 1–19.

228 John Villiers. 'One of the Especiallest Flowers in our Garden: The English Factory at Makassar, 1613-1667'. In: *Archipel.* 39 (1990): 159-178, esp. 164.

229 Stephan Diller. *Die Dänen in Indien, Südostasien und China (1620-1845).* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999, p. 248.

230 *Dagh-register Batavia,* I, pp. 78-79 (16 September 1624).

the VOC. In particular, Makasar fleets were becoming ever greater in size and ever more organised, as well as openly professing their willingness to use force, if necessary, to protect their trade and their friends on Hoamoal. The result was that cloves poured out of areas that were supposed to be under Company control, finding their way towards a booming market in Makassar. Far from enjoying a monopoly, the VOC received too few cloves even for its intra-Asian trade, with shipments to the Netherlands drying up altogether.[231] It was clear that the VOC had significantly overplayed its hand in Maluku.

Faced with this mess, and seeing that their alliance with Ternate was not going to get them out of it, the governor-general and his council in Batavia gave the go-ahead for more drastic measures. They allowed Van Speult and his successor, Jan van Gorcum, to undertake 'something great against this faithless bunch, if a noteworthy force could be brought together in Amboina.'[232] Of course, there was no such force in the eastern archipelago at the time, as VOC forces were already spread too thin as things stood. However, just as the High Government was committing these words to paper, a major military force was sailing into Maluku from unexpected quarters.

### The Nassau Fleet and the beginning of the Ambon Wars

In the early hours of the 6th of March, the twelve ships of the so-called *Nassause Vloot*, the Nassau Fleet, dropped anchor within sight of Fort Oranje in Ternate.[233] As part of a joint operation by the VOC and States-General, the heavily armed fleet had left the Dutch Republic some two years earlier with instructions to do all possible harm to the Spanish in the Pacific. The fleet had crossed the Atlantic and sailed into the Pacific by going south of Tierra del Fuego, where it was supposed to mount surprise attacks on Spanish settlements and ships, particularly silver transports, making alliances with the indigenous population in

231 E.g. Pieter de Carpentier to directors, 3 January 1624, in *Bouwstoffen,* I, 355pp. For the general flow of cloves in these years, and the shortages from 1625 onwards, see Kristof Glamann. *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620 - 1740*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981, 91pp.

232 High Government to Herman van Speult, 4 March, 1625 in: VOC 1085, fol. 40-43, quote at fol. 40.

233 The 6th according to the VOC officials, but the crew itself had reckoned it to be the 5th. Time difference due to intercontinental travel was already an issue in the seventeenth century – the Nassau Fleet had lost a day sailing west, whereas the VOC sailed east. The discrepancy was discovered and resolved at the Ternate roads. W. Voorbeijtel Cannenburg. *De reis om de wereld van de Nassausche vloot, 1623-1626*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, p. 100.

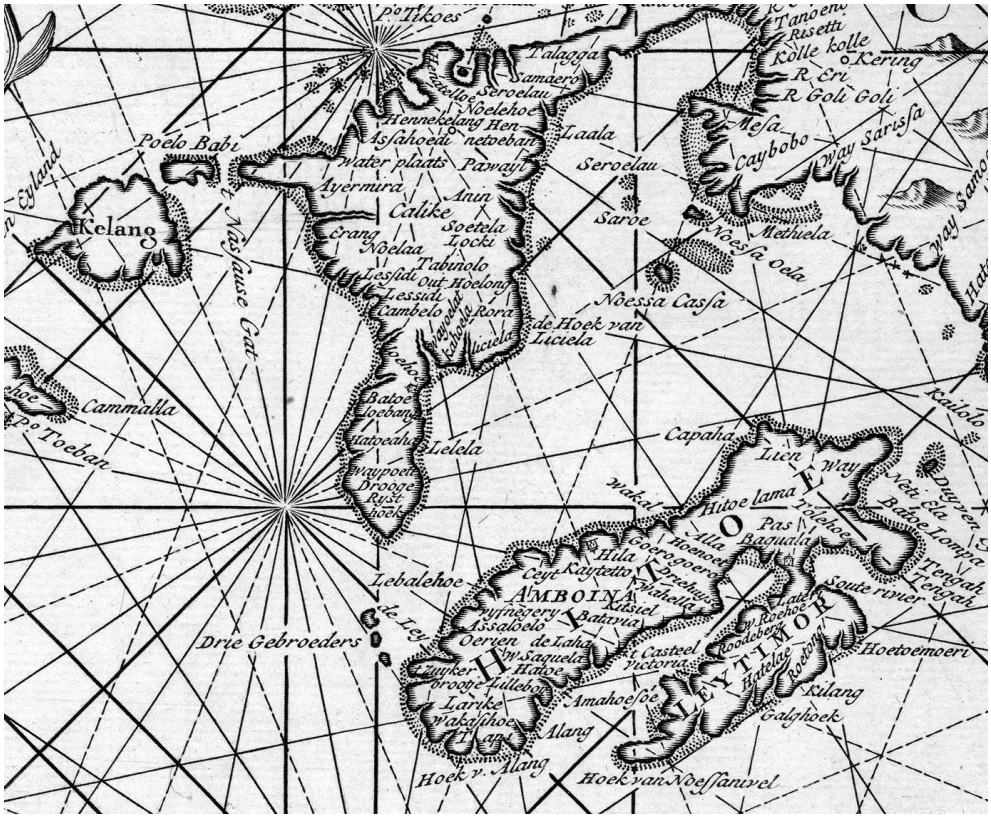


Fig 4.3 Detail of the map from Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* (fig 4.1) showing the various places visited by the campaign. Hitu (Hitoe) and Leitimor, together forming the island of Ambon, can be seen at the lower right. Above, we see Hoamoal. Halfway on its east coast, we see Lusiala (Liciela) and Luhu (Loehoe), the area where the kimelaha family resided. On the west side of Hoamoal, we see Lesidi (Lessidi) and Kambelo (Cambelo), the centre of power on the west coast, which traded intensively with Makasar fleets. To the northwest, there is the island of Kelang, where these traders made a stand against VOC forces.

the process. Arriving in Asia after crossing the Pacific, the force was to try and disrupt the Chinese junk trade to Manila and then continue to Maluku, where it was to put itself at the service of VOC officials and see what further action could be taken against the Spanish presence there.[234]

The fleet had been successful in capturing or destroying several Spanish ships, arriving before Melayu on Ternate twelve ships strong, one more than it

234 Ibid., 105-115.

had left the Republic with.[235] All the same, its exploits along the South American coast had not lived up to its organisers' great expectations. The admiral, Jacques l'Hermite, had died of dysentery off South America. What is more, the crossing of the Pacific had been blighted by rampant disease and had all but exhausted the fleet's supplies. The fleet council had therefore abandoned the plan to sail to the Philippines, heading straight for Maluku instead. The fleet arrived with some 1200 of its original 1600 crew members still alive.[236]

Jacques Lefebvre, governor of Ternate, attempted to use this sudden windfall of military power to convince the Ternaten sultan and his advisors to resume their war with Spain and Tidore. They responded rather warily, first trying to find out more about the VOC's intentions. Although they appeared unwilling to break their truce with Tidore, they were interested in conquering those parts of Ternate occupied by the Spanish.

The governor and admiral of the fleet soon decided that it could be put to better use elsewhere. Not only was the Ternaten sultan's attitude to the proposed campaign rather lukewarm, but dislodging the Spanish from Ternate would require a great effort and the island would have trouble resupplying and maintaining this large fleet. Ultimately, the fleet assisted in executing earlier plans to demolish two of the VOC's forts: Fort Kalimata on the southeast coast of Ternate and Fort Nassau on Motir. The Ternaten sultan was dismayed by the demolition of the latter fort in particular, complaining that the Company 'was clipping the wings under which they could hide… and the night or the morning when the enemy would come for them, they would be forced to flee.'[237] All the same, the fort was demolished, after which the fleet continued to Ambon, arriving before Castle Victoria on the 4th of April. Once there, Van Speult and his designated successor Van Gorcum knew what to do with the military force that had recently arrived. They immediately started making plans to use the fleet in a large campaign against the kimelaha of Hoamoal.

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235 Gheen Huygen Schapenham (who had succeeded L'Hermite as admiral) to High Government, Apil 1625, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 34-38. For an assessment of the fleet's successes and failures, see A. Doedens, Henk Looijesteijn, and Willem van Brederode. *Op jacht naar Spaans zilver : het scheepsjournaal van Willem van Brederode, kapitein der mariniers in de Nassause vloot (1623-1626).* Hilversum: Verloren, 2008, pp. 87-94.

236 Gheen Huygen Schapenham to High Government, Apil 1625, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 34-38, esp. 37.

237 Lefebvre to Governor-General De Carpentier, 26 March 1625, in: *Bouwstoffen* II, 38-44, esp. 43.

Fig 4.4 A kora-kora as depicted by Johannes Vingboons in the Atlas Blaeu – Van der Hem (c. 1665). The outrigger is a particularly distinctive feature of the kora-kora. Larger examples of these vessels, such as that depicted here, had sails and an elevated platform. Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem, collection Austrian National Library, Van der Hem 40:16.

By the 14th of May, the part of the fleet assembled for the campaign was ready to set sail. It consisted of three large ships from the Nassau Fleet and three sloops, manned by 700 of the fleet's crew, supplemented by 150 soldiers lifted from Fort Victoria's garrison. Several other ships had already sailed ahead to Kambelo and Luhu. Pretending to be there to trade, they would join the main force later. Both Van Speult, Van Gorcum, and the new admiral of the Nassau Fleet, Gheen Huygen Schapenham, went along to lead the force.

In addition, there were some twenty kora-kora, manned with the VOC's Ambonese vassals. Kora-kora had long prows and outriggers. A typical specimen of the early seventeenth century would be between twenty-four and thirty meters long and manned by some fifty to ninety men. Although most would have been armed with a shield and sword or pike, there was usually also a handful of men armed with muskets on board. Each kora-kora would typically have two or three swivel guns.

Kora-kora had been the staple of Ambonese warfare before European involvement in the region, and were used for headhunting raids on neighbouring coastal villages. As state formation processes aggregated political power in the islands into ever-larger units, various villages' kora-kora joined together into fleets, or *hongi*. We might consider these the Ambonese version of the kinds of fleets of state that were so typical of the eastern archipelago as a whole. Under the leadership of the orangkaya or village headmen, hongi would periodically patrol the coast to reinforce a village federation's control of the area and raid opposing villages. Accordingly, they were an instrument of power. The Portuguese incorporated the practice when they arrived in the region, presiding over a hongi of their own made up of their vassals in the area around their fort in Ambon. The VOC continued the practice after it had taken Ambon from the Portuguese: Steven van der Hagen, the conqueror of Ambon, reported that the VOC's vassals and allies could muster some thirty or forty kora-kora. Its first hongi set out in 1607.[238]

Other rulers in the Ambon islands similarly used hongi to maintain and extend their control. In 1620, for example, governor Van Speult went out to Kambelo to confront kimelaha Sabaddin, who had amassed a hongi of some thirty kora-kora and fifty lighter vessels there in preparation for a tour. Van Speult admonished the kimelaha that he should not do anything that would be contrary to the wishes of, and treaties with, the Ternaten sultan, of whom he was, after all, supposed to be a loyal subject. After this exchange, Van Speult returned to Ambon to amass his own hongi. In his report about all this to the governor-general, he chided his predecessors for not having done this more often, for in neglecting this matter they had allowed the kimelaha to extend his power in the first place. What is more, on his subsequent tour, Van Speult would discover that several of the kora-kora that used to answer the VOC's call had now joined the kimelaha's hongi. These fleets were thus both a yardstick and instrument of power for the various rival political powers in the islands.[239]

In some ways, the fleet assembled in the Bay of Ambon was therefore a continuation of existing practices of warfare in the Ambon islands. This time, however, Van Speult and his successor also had a massive European force at their disposal and could set their ambitions accordingly. This expedition was to attack the kimelaha's residence, Luhu, burn the villages under his control throughout

238 Knaap, 'Kora-kora en kruitdamp', 259-262.

239 Herman van Speult to Governor-General Coen, 4 mei 1620, in *Bouwstoffen* I, 255-266.

the region and kill every last clove tree in Hoamoal. For the most part, the latter was achieved by what the Dutch called *'schillen'* (literally peeling): ringbarking the tree, that is, cutting the bark all around its trunk, which would kill it. This military muscle-flexing was intended to 'punish' the inhabitants of Hoamoal for their 'insolence,' and restore the Company's reputation. The killing of the clove trees was to simply remove the economic incentive for Makasar, Javanese, and other traders to visit the region.

Before heading to the east coast of Hoamoal, the fleet first stopped at Hitu. Much like it had in trying to mediate in Banda in 1621, Hitu once again found itself forced to perform a precarious balancing act between VOC-ruled Ambon and Hoamoal, the two rival powers to its north and south.[240] For this reason, Kapitan Hitu had little interest in participating in the expedition and was relieved when Van Speult excused him from getting involved, for he already had a sufficient force.

On the 17th of May, the fleet arrived before Luhu, where it met up with the ship *Hoop*. Having gone ahead under the pretext of buying cloves, it had managed to take four 'Ternatens' captive through subterfuge. Upon arrival, these four were interrogated about the state of various strongholds in Hoamoal. One of the captives, a confidant of the kimelaha named Manta, was waterboarded. He disclosed information about the defences of the stronghold of Lusiela just northeast of Luhu, which he estimated possessed some 100 muskets and some four large guns. Furthermore, he confessed that a member of the Ternaten ruling elite, in cooperation with the Papouwers mentioned earlier, had captured six Dutch soldiers and twelve slaves when these had been patrolling the west coast of Hoamoal in a small vessel, to check for Makasar junks.[241]

After revealing the purpose of the expedition to the crews and Ambonese allies on the 18th and having the latter's orangkaya swear an oath to faithfully participate in the coming campaign, the attack on Luhu commenced in the morning of the 19th. First, the ships fired a barrage of some 100 shots at the strongholds. Under the cover of this artillery fire, twelve companies of around seventy European soldiers each rowed to shore, followed by the kora-kora, which landed about 1000 Ambonese warriors. The troops conquered the various villages near the coast and started ascending the mountain towards the main strong-

240 Knaap, 'Tussen twee mogendheden'.46-51.

241 Unless otherwise stated, this paragraph relies entirely on the report of this campaign as printed in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 48-74.

hold. The kimelaha's troops offered only light resistance before retreating into the fort itself.

Unfortunately, no image of the fort is known to exist, but the report of the campaign described it as 'exceedingly strong' and the inhabitants of Luhu as 'feared due to their bravery.' The town and its surroundings could muster some 2500 men.[242] The expedition leaders were all the more surprised, then, to find the fort abandoned when the VOC forces and their allies first charged it. The Ambonese hunted around fifteen heads during and after the attack, and only four or five Company soldiers had been wounded. In the following days, the entire surrounding area was scoured, with villages burned and clove trees ringbarked, as was the area around Lusiela, slightly further up the coast. Smaller forces were detached from the main force to the area around Wae Puteh to the south, as well as Laala and Loki to the northeast, where they meted out similar treatment. Laala, which had had a better relationship with the VOC than the surrounding areas, was not destroyed. Instead, its inhabitants were given to understand that the conflict was with their overlord, the kimelaha, and that they were to move outside his area of control to either Kaibobo on the opposite coast or around Castle Victoria on Ambon. They opted for the former destination and the empty village was set alight a few days later. Here we see an early example of the VOC's policy of seeking to simply depopulate areas under the kimelaha's control, thus undermining his power, which would become a central part of their strategy in subsequent conflicts. Loki, for its part, did not wait for the VOC troops to arrive: when they turned up, the village was already ablaze and the population had gone.

Meanwhile, the expedition leaders considered how to proceed. On the 25th they first arrived at Lusiela, which had a stronghold in which the kimelaha turned out to reside at the time, rather than at Luhu. Although it had initially been bombarded by their ships, the commanders had been hesitant to attempt to conquer it and had first scoured its surroundings. They were still deliberating on whether to take the fort on the 4th of June. Their considerations are revealing, offering glimpses into their strategy and concerns about where they might expect the most resistance. As their waterboarded captive had informed them, the fort was well defended. In attempting to take it, the VOC would likely incur significant casualties. In addition, at some point the defenders would most likely abandon the fort and make their way to the west side of Hoamoal, where

242 Van Speult's 1625 report in Pieter van Dam, *Beschryvinge,* 2.1, p., 151-152.

the VOC still had to deal with the area around Lesidi and Kambelo, the former of which, it is worth recalling, the Makasars had sworn to defend. Van Speult therefore considered it prudent to leave the fort be; all the clove trees in the area had been destroyed anyway. The other two commanders, however, felt that not conquering the fort, which was defended by heavy guns that had been captured from the VOC, would be to their 'disreputation.' The matter came to a vote and it was decided to attack the fort anyway.

Kapitan Hitu had apparently also gotten wind of this plan and tried to intervene. He begged the VOC to conclude its campaign without trying to conquer Lusiela and to leave the settlements on the west coast unharmed. The poor people of Hoamoal, he argued, had already suffered enough, now that many of their clove trees and villages had been destroyed. His pleas were ignored.

The attack was to take place the next day, on the 5th.of June. A reconnaissance mission that morning, however, made clear that storming the fort would be difficult. The reconnaissance party, which came under heavy fire, estimated that it would take two or three days just to get the necessary cannon ashore and that it would be difficult for a large force even to approach the fort, now that the rainy season had started. Any attempt to do so might hazard the larger plan of destroying all the clove trees in Hoamoal. Van Gorcum and Huygen Schapenham changed their minds. Instead of taking the fort, it was decided to burn the settlement along the shore, including the many vessels beached there. The plan was put into effect the next day: some seventy to eighty vessels were burned, including one small Makasar junk that happened to be on the coast. The Ambonese in the fort continually fired on the Dutch and their allies, but 'invariably shot wide or short, although it was clear that they did not have a lack of lead and powder.'

The next morning, the fleet, now four large ships strong, set sail to the west coast. Along the way, a detachment stopped to destroy the remaining clove trees at Wae Puteh and one of the ships made a detour past Hitu to get rice. Two days later, the fleet lay reconvened before Kambelo, now also reinforced by the ship *Arend*, which had already been waiting there.

Although the VOC had been forced to abandon its small fortifications in Luhu and Manipa over the last two precarious years, it still maintained a fortified outpost in Kambelo. It had been an unnerving period for the garrison there, however. It was here that the carpenter had been headhunted two years previously. They were significantly outnumbered: whereas the garrison had consisted of fifty men in September 1624, the area around Kambelo and Lesidi could muster

some 1000 armed men.[243] In addition, five or six hundred Makasars had reportedly sworn to defend Lesidi against the Dutch the year before. It was not without reason, then, that the expedition leaders had expected fierce fighting here. To their surprise, however, resistance was rather light and over the subsequent five days the VOC forces and their allies put Lesidi, Kambelo, Erang, and the surrounding villages to the torch and ringbarked clove trees without significant opposition.

On the 16th of June, however, Van Speult ran into serious opposition where he had not expected it. That day, he took the kora-kora to carry a large contingent of VOC soldiers to the south coast of island of Kelang, just to the northeast of Lesidi and Kambelo. A boatbuilding centre, this island was under Lesidi's political control. Van Speult expected the inhabitants of the coast to have brought their boats to Kelang and two Makasar junks to have fled here. Destroying all the vessels beached on the island, as well as the settlement, he calculated, would therefore seriously cripple the maritime capabilities of the inhabitants of the region.[244]

Even before his force arrived on shore, the kora-kora were fired at by Makasar arquebusiers hiding 'behind the trees and the cliffs.' Van Speult decided that it was too late in the day to land and the fleet anchored off the settlement, out of the arquebuses' range. The next morning, the soldiers landed and started making their way to the village along two separate routes. Near the village, the road was littered with thousands of caltrops, and the defenders charged one of the companies, led by a captain Carstensz. He managed to repel the attack, but it became clear that 'the going was getting tough' and Van Speult noticed that his Ambonese allies were shrinking from the fight. The troops made their way to the village, where they found a 'little fort' with a stone foundation and earth-filled double palisade. From inside the fort, the VOC forces were steadily shot at with muskets.

The soldiers were unable to charge the little fort because caltrops had been strewn on the ground 'as densely as grass.' Casualties due to fire from the fort and

243 According to the 1625 report by Van Speult, as reproduced in Pieter van Dam, *Beschryvinge*, 2.1, p. 150.

244 For the geography of the island, see Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden,* 210-215. Note that although the settlement that the troops attacked is referred to as the 'negrij van Kelang', its location does not seem to correspond with the settlement of Kelang as it is indicated on the map in op. cit., 211. The description of the attack implies that the settlement was slightly inland and close to the river on the south side of the island.

the caltrops were mounting and after about an hour of fighting without having made much progress, Van Speult decided to hack a way through the bush to see if they could approach the fort from the rear, circumventing the caltrops. The constable, however, informed him that they were running out of ammunition. Van Speult saw no other option but to retreat. Back on the beach, the Company soldiers counted their casualties: nine of their number had been killed and thirty wounded by musket fire, spears, arrows, caltrops, and poisonous blow-darts which had 'been falling like snowballs.' The expedition leaders had the impression that the fort had been defended by some 200 men, mostly 'Makasars and Malays.'

Van Speult decided to take his loss and leave the fort be. A group of soldiers was sent to see if any ships were hiding up the nearby river, which was their reason for coming to Kelang in the first place. It seems that their plans had been anticipated, however: other than the occasional bullet whizzing by, fired by invisible gunmen hiding in the undergrowth, there was nothing to find.

By the 24th, the entire fleet had returned to the Bay of Ambon. The Company had suffered ninety dead and 130 wounded; there is no record of the loss of life on the side of the 'Ternatens,' but an estimated 65.000 clove trees had been ring-barked or otherwise destroyed. Staggering though this might be, it was later estimated that this was only about half of the total number of clove trees growing on Hoamoal.[245] Despite the unprecedented military force at its disposal, the VOC had been unable to take the kimelaha's stronghold in Lusiela. What is more, it had been stymied by unexpectedly strong resistance on the island of Kelang, where a small fortress manned by 'Makasars and Malays' had forced the VOC forces to retreat. Although the campaign journal does not go into much detail about these 'Makasars and Malays,' it is compelling to link the mention of this force with Moretti's account of the armed fleet sailing from Makassar. According to Moretti, their two Makasar chiefs were instructed to help the villages there to the best of their ability and try to set them up against the VOC.

For all its setbacks, the campaign had made quite the impression, however. In its wake, the sultan of Ternate and his advisors attempted to restore their relationship with the VOC and mediate its conflict with the kimelaha of Hoamoal.

245 The estimate comes from two envoys to Hoamoal from the sultan of Ternate, who had no apparent reason to minimize or exaggerate the destruction, as they were trying to get the kimelaha of Luhu to resume deliveries to the VOC again. Van Gorcum to Pieter de Carpentier, 26 juli 1626, in *Bouwstoffen* II, 110-111

The kimelaha himself was less than amenable to these attempts; the campaign had evidently done little to foster trust between him and the Company. Looking back on the period, Rumphius would later muse that although the clove trees had grown back within some ten years, 'an unforgiving hatred of this nation towards our own has since remained … so that one might well consider this 1625th year as the starting point of all subsequent revolts.'[246]

## Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have seen how the VOC, which had used its alliance with Ternate as a vehicle for controlling the spice trade, embarked upon policies that were commercially overambitious and militarily and politically untenable from 1617 onwards. Backed by the directors in the Netherlands, Jan Pieterszoon Coen was able to execute his ideas about Company policy, as a consequence of which the Company began exceeding the provisions of its treaty with Ternate, not least by trying to force other traders out of the islands, regardless of what they were trading. Not primarily interested in the alliance with Ternate, Coen was also intent on concentrating the VOC's forces in fewer places and could not always spare the forces necessary for its war against Tidore and Spain, and the enforcement of its policies.

Consequently, Ternate was increasingly alienated from the VOC and the inhabitants of Hoamoal, including their Ternaten kimelaha, became disaffected with both the VOC and the Ternaten sultan. For its part, the VOC did not yet have the military and naval power to enforce its own policies. The structure on which its privileged access to cloves was built started unravelling as a consequence.

In this unravelling, the interwovenness of trade and political affiliation once again becomes apparent. When some of the leaders in Hoamoal decided to switch their loyalty to Tidore, their spices also flowed there. More importantly for our current considerations, Gowa was also in the game. The Makasar fleets visiting Hoamoal in this period became increasingly large and well-organised and were led by high-ranking Makasars appointed by the Gowan sultan. What is more, they proved willing to defend Hoamoalese communities in both word and deed, as the VOC discovered at the island of Kelang in 1625.[247] Put differently,

246 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 52.

247 Note that I use the term Hoamoalese to denote the inhabitants of Hoamoal, and in some cases by extension, those of the islands to its immediate west, i.e. Kelang, Ma-

we might say that Gowa started sending its own hongi of sorts to the Ambon islands in this period, which traded not only in cloves but also in political and military protection.

The Nassau Fleet, appearing as a *deus ex machina* in the eastern archipelago in 1625, seemed to have saved the VOC in the short run. The campaign on Hoamoal appears to have intimidated the sultan of Ternate and, to a lesser degree, kimelaha of Hoamoal, into continued cooperation with the VOC. All the same, it is striking not only that the campaign left the kimelaha's headquarters at the time unharmed, but also that the VOC suffered an unexpected defeat on the island of Kelang. This defeat was inflicted by what has every appearance of being the very Makasar force that Moretti had described as being prepared a few months earlier. Whether the campaign was a good strategy in the long run is debatable: as soon as the Nassau Fleet sailed away, the VOC was once again left with a far more expansive strategy than it had ships and men to enforce, to say nothing of the untold damage the campaign had done to the Company's relations with the inhabitants of Hoamoal.

All in all, the troubles in the eastern archipelago were far from over, as VOC officials were only too aware. Despite a provisional truce being reached between the VOC and kimelaha of Hoamoal in 1626, in December of that year the governor-general wrote to the directors in the Netherlands expressing the view that killing clove trees alone would not be enough to obtain control of the trade. That would require 'extreme measures… those of Luhu, Kambelo, Lusiela, Lesidi, Erang and all their faithless Moorish followers should be utterly eradicated and expelled, all their clove and fruit trees extirpated, the land devastated and turned over to the Alfurs.'[248] Although the Company as yet lacked the armed forces to execute such schemes, the plan to depopulate Hoamoal was already on the table.

nipa and Boano. The term is not common in the seventeenth century sources, which tend to use the 'Ambonese' as an umbrella term for the inhabitants of the region at large. As that term begets misunderstanding between the inhabitants of Ambon proper and those of the 'Ambon quarter' at large, I will use 'Hoamoalese' where appropriate to avoid such confusion.

248 General Letter of De Carpentier e.a. 26 dec. 1626, in W.P. Coolhaas, W. P., J. van Goor, J. E. Schooneveld-Oosterling and H. K. s' Jacob eds. *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960–2007, vol. I, p. 235.

# 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]

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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.

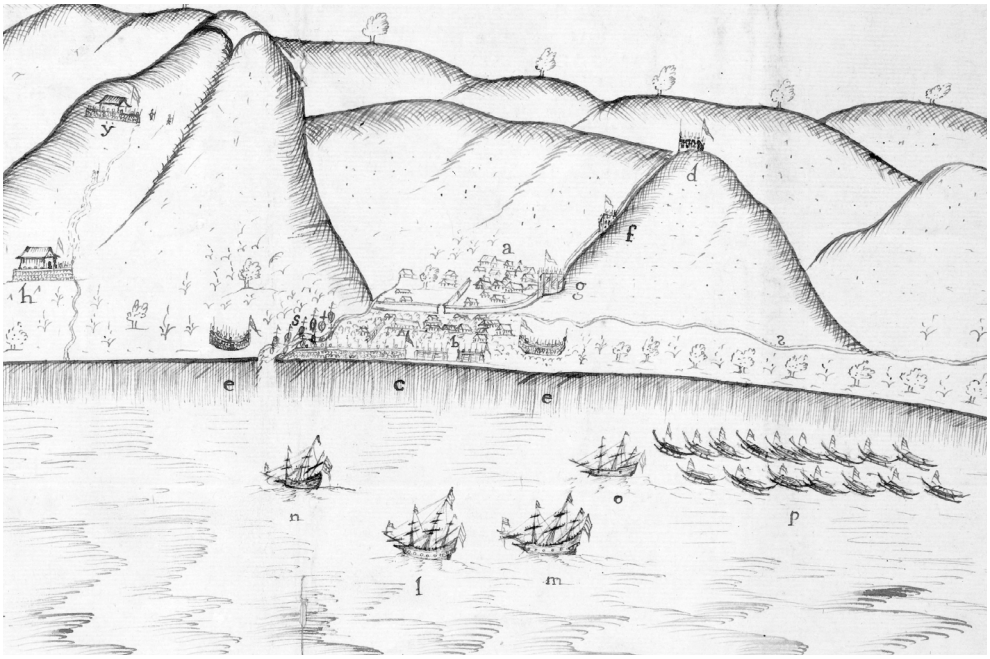


Fig 5.2 Detail from a drawing titled *Korte ontwerpingh ende afbeelding der negerij Cambelle* (Quick plan and depiction of the town of Kambelo). E marks the 'two stone batteries' on either side of the town, c the front wall between them. On the left side of the village, at s, we see the Makasar ships 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.

# VI. Between war and diplomacy around Sulawesi (1617-1632)

As the Company got mired in its wars around Ambon, it was also still at war with Gowa. This war, it bears reminding, was largely a result of the Company's attempts to obtain and enforce a spice monopoly – the Company's alliance with Ternate had put pressure on the relationship with Gowa, its desire to be able to enforce its monopoly pretensions with violence had been a major factor in the decision to abandon its lodge in Makassar. The eruption of violence in 1615 described in chapter III, while caused by a clash with the Spanish, seems to have merely accelerated what would inevitably have been the outcome of the VOC's strategies and choices.

While the war around Ambon was fought ferociously, the simultaneous and related conflict with Gowa soon became more of a cold war – after some initial clashes in the aftermath of 1615 and 1616, no actual fighting occurred off Makassar, and the Company and the Gowan court took care to keep open channels of negotiation, both through unofficial go-betweens and continued official diplomatic contact. This chapter will investigate these efforts, and the factors complicating them, against a background of wider political developments in the eastern archipelago.

These efforts are interesting to investigate not only because the conflict with Gowa and those around Ambon were sides of the same coin, so that the history of the Spice Wars would remain incomplete without them. Additionally, diplomatic contacts between Gowa and the Company have been an important case study to many authors interested in early modern diplomacy in Southeast Asia. Most of these have focused either on the conception of treaties, or specific cases of 'high' diplomacy resulting in a treaty.[342] While the sources on the

342 Leonard Andaya, 'Treaty Conceptions and Misconceptions; A Case Study from South Sulawesi.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 134.2 (1978): 275–295, for instance, points to the differences in the cultural notions of the nature of a treaty between Europeans and indigenous parties, specifically looking at South Sulawesi from the Bungaya Treaty of 1667 onwards. It concludes that these differing conceptions resulted in structural misunderstandings. Much of his later work reasons along similar lines. By contrast, Carl Feddersen, 'Principled Pragmatism : VOC Interaction with Makassar 1637-68, and the Nature of Company Diplomacy.' PhD. Diss., Leiden University 2016, investigating the processes that resulted in the treaties between the VOC and Makassar from 1637s up to and including the Bungaya Treaty, comes to entirely different conclusions: he contends that both European and indigenous parties to such treaties

largely unofficial diplomatic contacts of the period under study here provide comparatively little detail on the negotiations themselves, they do provide valuable additional insight into the dynamics of such diplomacy: the low-level diplomacy aimed at sending out feelers for the reestablishment of relations, with its middle-men, its intelligence efforts, and its unofficial channels, add elements to the picture that have in recent years been recognized as crucial to our understanding of diplomatic history.[343]

Additionally, the chapter will make excursions to the other side of Sulawesi – the Buton sultanate, which had been an ally of the Company since 1613. The importance of Buton, and the Buton Strait along which it was situated, as a vital strategic bottleneck on the route between the spice-producing regions and major trade entrepôts such as Makassar, which also made it a major bone of contention in the rivalry between Gowa, Ternate and the VOC, has gone under-recognized in literature on the eastern archipelago, the work of Pim Schoorl and Jennifer Gaynor being the welcome exceptions.[344] This chapter aims to give further substance to their insights. The interconnectedness of Makassar, Buton and the spice-producing regions further east is prosaically demonstrated by the fact that it was often the same Company fleets, either traveling to or from Ambon or Ternate, that called at both Makassar and Buton for diplomatic purposes.

### Gowan overtures and continued Dutch aggression

After the hostilities of 1615 and 1616, Gowa soon started making overtures to the VOC to reach a peace agreement again. Coen's first brief mention of a request from Makassar to negotiate dates to December 1617.[345] Another such overture, described in more detail, followed in September 1618, when Coen mentioned how a Gujarati named 'Mamet' had arrived at Jayakarta from Makassar, and had advised him that the sultan would be very willing to come to some agreement again. Coen, however, was already invested in a more aggressive strategy at the

learned from each other, were responsive to each other's diplomatic and legal traditions, and were very much willing and able to take advantage of this understanding. He thus paints such diplomacy and treaty-making as a much more level playing field.

343 See e.g. Guido van Meersbergen, 'Diplomacy in a provincial setting: The East India Companies in seventeenth-century Bengal and Orissa', in: Mostert and Clulow eds., *The Dutch and English East India Companies,* 56-78, for historiographic context and an example of such an approach.

344 Gaynor, *Intertidal Histories,* esp. Ch. 3; Schoorl, 'Het eeuwige verbond'.

345 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 297.

time, and wrote to the directors that 'although the rice from there would be very welcome at this time, a peace treaty with that king would be far more damaging in other matters; it would therefore be best if the vile murder committed by them would be properly punished.'[346] Just a few lines below, he concluded his letter with a more general remark that the treason by 'these kings' (meaning Asian rulers in general, and those of Bantam, Jayakarta and Gowa in particular) would continue, and that he would therefore need more troops and ships, concluding with his somewhat famous remarks: 'Do not despair, do not spare your enemies, there is nothing in the world which can hinder or hurt us, as God is with us.'[347] These words would become an oft-used quote in a variety of contexts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which makes it worth pointing out that Coen wrote them specifically to argue for a more aggressive strategy towards the various Asian rulers of the region.[348] As if to illustrate the point, he sent out a punitive expedition one week later.[349] After wreaking havoc in Japara, that expedition continued to Makassar, but no description of its actions there survives.

Just a couple of months later, Coen was in Ambon, assembling a fleet to

346 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 398.

347 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 399.

348 To name but two examples, the words 'dispereert niet' are still visible above the entrance to the Tropeninsituut in Amsterdam, originally built as the Colonial Institute, an initiative of various colonial entrepreneurs and officials, and completed in 1926. Slightly less consciously colonial was the use of these words by Dutch Queen Wilhelmina, who found them apt in her first speech from exile in London, in the wake of the German occupation of the Netherlands in 1940.

349 The instructions for the expedition specify it should first visit Japara, where the VOC lodge had been plundered by Mataram forces, with several VOC employees killed, and then continue to Makassar, to do 'all possible damage' there, and indiscriminately attack all and any ships present, paying no heed to their port of origin. The sultan should then be informed that this was 'punishment and revenge for the great murder committed on those of the ship *Eendracht*, and the people on Banggai' (which were contested between Ternate and Gowa, and where two VOC employees had been killed by Makasars two months earlier.) Any Makasar ships encountered elsewhere should also be pursued. (Colenbrander, *Bescheiden,* I, 372; ibid, II, 484.) The expedition duly wreaked havoc in Japara, and continued to Makassar, although no description of its actions there survives. It does seem to have taken place, as a letter from the English factory in Makassar, September 25, 1619, mentions two Dutch fleets having made 'incursions into these roads' – presumably the one by Martensz and then the subsequent one by Reael described below. Thomas Staverton to EIC, in: W. Noël Sainsbury. *Calendar of State Papers : Colonial Series : East Indies, China and Japan 1513-1634 : Preserved in H.M. Public Record Office etc.* London: Longman, 1862-1892, vol. III (1617-1621), letter 746.

relieve the Company's besieged post in Jayakarta, which would ultimately result in its conquest and the foundation of Batavia. Wanting to make good use of this great force now that he had it, he sent part of it past Makassar, in order to see 'whether we could gain any advantage there.'[350] After the original prospective commander of this flotilla died, Coen replaced him, oh irony, with Laurens Reael, the former governor-general who had been so opposed to conflict with Makassar. Reael duly sailed to Makassar with four ships, where he took a small Portuguese junk loaded with nutmeg and sappanwood, left various empty Javanese junks alone, and unsuccessfully tried to take a Portuguese frigate moored just under the walls of a newly finished 'closed fort'.[351]

### Low-level envoys and Venetian go-betweens

It was only in 1621, after the conquest and depopulation of Banda, that governor-general Coen first attempted to come to a peace agreement with the sultan of Gowa. Before departing the eastern archipelago for Batavia, he left the new governor of Ambon with instructions to send an envoy to Makassar, to see if any kind of agreement could be made, and if the sultan of Gowa could be brought to send some ambassadors of his own to Batavia.[352] His motives for sending a representative to Makassar just then are not obvious from the sources, but we may infer that the operation in Banda had taken away one of the VOC's reasons for retreating from Makassar in the first place: their involvement in Banda and their ongoing trade there. For the Gowan court, on the other hand, what the VOC had done in Banda would remain an important factor in their hostility towards the Dutch, presumably diminishing Gowan willingness to make peace.[353]

In August 1621, Van Speult's envoy, called Jan Joosten, arrived before Makassar. He had formerly been a translator and had only recently been employed in Amboina in the rank of *koopman.* His instructions seem to have been limited to delivering a letter written by Van Speult; he was not qualified to engage in negotiations himself. Through mediation of the English, he announced his arrival to sultan Ala'uddin of Gowa who, however, would not receive him until conferring with the *karaeng* of Tallo, who was many years his senior and his advisor. The

350 Coen, I, 454.

351 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 458.

352 Orders for Van Speult as the new governor of Ambon, 23 June 1621, in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* III, esp. p. 68.

353 For the effect of the depopulation of Banda on Makassar, see above, chapter III, paragraph 'Reverberations from Banda'.

sultan stated that his lands had always been open to the Dutch and that he had never sought war with them. He underlined his good intentions by presenting the Dutch embassy two buffaloes, 150 chickens and some 'baubles.'

The next day, Jan Joosten was once again called to the court, and asked whether he had anything to say besides the content of the letter. Joosten replied that he would only like to request that the sultan send 'two or three' ambassadors to the governor-general in Batavia. The sultan replied that as much as he would like to, he was afraid that the ambassadors might make some mistake due to a lack of experience with the language, and that he would rather settle things in a letter, expressing his regret that Joosten was not qualified to make peace, or they could have settled it there and then. In any case, the Dutch were very welcome to return and then conclude the peace.[354]

For Coen, this 'lame excuse'[355] for not sending envoys was a deal-breaker. In any case, he was still wondering whether peace would not 'hamper rather than serve the Company', and decided nothing for the moment.

With Coen, we may wonder why Ada'uddin, while outwardly seeking a peace agreement, refused to send envoys to Batavia on a pretext that indeed has the hallmarks of an excuse. A partial answer seems to be provided by Giovanni Maria Moretti, the Venetian we already came across earlier, who would be the next protagonist in the diplomatic contact between the Gowan court and the Company. From 1624 to 1626, he ran various errands for the VOC to Makassar, in the role of unofficial envoy, spy and even privateer.[356] In September 1624, we find him testifying in the Batavia *Dagh-register* about a recent visit to Makassar. He explained how the Gowan sultan had expressed his desire for peace with the Dutch,

> '[to which Moretti] answered that if His Majesty would send a high-ranking person to the Dutch General in an embassy, his Majesty would not have to doubt that this would be well received, and that peace would be made. The King, however, held that this would greatly disagree with his honour, and

354 Jan Joosten's report published as a supplement to in IJzerman, 'Het schip 'De Eendracht' voor Makasser.', 369pp.

355 'flauw excuse'. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, 653.

356 *Dagh-register Batavia,* I (1624-1629), pp. 77-78, 179-81, 183-84, 225-26, 230-31 describe his various exploits. His cooperation with the Dutch apparently also made him a target of the English and Portuguese, who imprisoned him in Makassar, but Moretti eventually made it back to Batavia.

> said that if Prince Maurice was around somewhere, he might send [an embassy] to him as if it were to his brother, but he would not demean himself by sending someone to the General, who was merely the head of merchants, and that all the business of the Dutch in India was done by merchants.'[357]

This was a more general problem that the VOC had been grappling with since its founding: a trading company from a Republic did not operate easily in diplomatic traditions where diplomacy was conceived as something conducted between kings. In its early years, it had often deliberately created the impression that its ambassadors were acting on behalf of Stadholder Maurits – VOC officials would bring prints with his image,[358] informing Asian rulers that this was their 'king', and in some cases the Stadholder would play along by supplying the Company with his letters.[359] By 1624, however, the VOC, which had by now established its power in Batavia and was becoming a military and political force of consequence in Asia, was confident it could conduct diplomacy on its own, and that Batavia would be taken seriously as a court in its own right. Clearly, not all Asian heads of state were immediately buying into it.[360]

When Coen was considering how to proceed with Makassar after the Joosten embassy, the main concern he voiced was not the spice trade per se, but the fact that 'that [sultan] of Makassar greatly aspires to a great state. Time and time again, he is attacking the surrounding lands.'[361] Recently, while the VOC and EIC were waging their war and Coen was occupied trying to found his *rendezvous*, an overseas campaign apparently led by Ala'uddin himself, managed to bring several areas on present-day Sumbawa, including Bima, under its influence.[362] Not much later, the VOC also received calls for assistance from, among others, the king of Bali, fearing Makasar expansion into his territory.[363] Buton also continually feared annexation by Gowa-Tallo, and the Banggai and Sula

357 *Dagh-register Batavia,* I, 16 sept 1624, p. 80.
358 Pauline Lunsingh-Scheurleer. 'Uitwisseling van staatsieportretten op Ceylon in 1602.' In: Lodewijk Wagenaar ed., *Aan de overkant: ontmoetingen in dienst van de VOC en WIC (1600-1800)*, Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015, pp. 165-197, esp. 173-176.
359 Clulow, *the Company and the Shogun*, pp. 31-39.
360 The spectacular way in which this backfired in Japan was recently analyzed in Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun,* pp. 59-94.
361 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* I, pp. 653.
362 Cummings, *The Makassar Annals,* pp. 7-8, 36.
363 Artus Gijsels (Ambon) to Coen, 14 August 1620 in: Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen,* VII, 625.

Islands east of Sulawesi were a continual a bone of contention between Ternate and Makassar. Although the VOC certainly found the spices being traded at Makassar a major problem, it was at least as concerned with the initiative and agency of Makasar traders to get them there, with the active support of the rulers of Gowa and Tallo. Trade and politics went hand in hand in this matter: junks from Makasar buying up spices in Maluku were inextricably intertwined with the political expansion of Gowa-Tallo.

### 1625: the Nassau Fleet at Buton and Makassar

The first high-ranking Company official to come to Makassar to negotiate since the outbreak of hostilities was none other than Herman van Speult, the governor of Ambon until just recently. In the wake of the 1625 campaign of the Nassau Fleet, which had eradicated such a great number of clove trees, Van Speult and his successor Van Gorcum were confident that they had changed the game with regard to Makassar as well. In his first official letter as the new governor, Van Gorcum wrote that 'the Makasar, who we believe will now see that his designs are frustrated and that no cloves can be had from his followers, will most likely be inclined to something else, and will abandon the grand design he had devised with the Ternaten [kimelaha].' The time might therefore be right for another round of negotiations in Makassar. He and Van Speult decided that the latter would depart on the ships of the Nassau Fleet, which would then call at Makassar so that Van Speult could negotiate there. Additionally, Van Speult had recently received a request for assistance from the sultan of Buton, as the latter was expecting a Gowan attack with the next western monsoon. On his way to Makassar with the fleet, Van Speult also made a call there.

We have already seen how Buton had allied itself to the VOC in the wake of the VOC's alliance with Ternate, in opposition to Makassar, which at the time sought to bring Buton under its own influence. The VOC had built two small fortifications and stationed a garrison to safeguard it against Makasar attack, but on the recommendation of Hans de Hase, who noted that there was nothing to trade on Buton, the VOC had retreated all its personnel from the island two years later.

Trade goods or not, Buton would turn out to be a place of which the VOC could not simply wash its hands. In addition to being situated right on the frontier between the Ternaten and Gowan spheres of influence, it lay at a strategically crucial location, as the main sailing routes from Java and Makassar to Maluku passed through or near its territory – the Buton Strait, which was guarded by

the Butonese capital, and the Straits of Tiworo north of the island of Muna. The littoral region along the latter was inhabited by Sama communities and constituted a political entity of its own. Both were bones of contention between Ternate and Gowa – in the early seventeenth century, the Sama communities living in Tiworo were loyal to the sultan of Gowa. The Straits of Tiworo were hard to navigate for large European ships, and not charted or used by the Europeans, but they were well-known and friendly territory for the Makasar fleets – the recent study by Jennifer Gaynor introduces the term 'hinterseas' to describe these inhabited littoral regions and their importance to their political overlords. In effect, therefore, the VOC and the fleets from Makassar both had their own sailing routes to Maluku. For the VOC, losing Buton to Gowa would have left both routes in Gowan hands.[364]

As the VOC now thought it was opportune to come to a peace agreement with Gowa, it was in a difficult position with regard to the calls for help from Buton. Its solution was apparently to try and include Buton in the peace they intended to make with Gowa, by acting as a go-between. After the sultan of Buton had received Van Speult 'in a most friendly way', Van Speult informed him of the intention to come to a peace agreement with Gowa, which 'they wanted to announce up front to [the sultan of Buton] as true and sincere friends, so that he could direct his affairs accordingly.'[365] The sultan then stated his resolve to 'be enemies with whomever were our enemies, and be friends with whomever we wanted to make a friendship with.'[366] Van Speult suggested that, in that case, the sultan might send an envoy with the fleet, so that Buton could become a party in the negotiations and the VOC might intercede on its behalf. The sultan thought that was a great suggestion and immediately arranged for an envoy to go along.

Arriving before Makassar with nine ships from the Nassau Fleet, Van Speult sent a letter written in Spanish ashore, stating that he had called at Makassar 'in passing', and wanted to see whether they might negotiate in person to end the 'bloodshed'. The sultan communicated his willingness to negotiate, hostages were exchanged, and Van Speult was brought ashore in the sultan's barge. He,

364 Gaynor, *Intertidal history*, esp. 14-17; Schoorl, *Power, ideology and change,* esp. 1. As to the strategic role of the Buton Strait: although it is possible to reach the Ambon region by going over the open seas south of Buton, the sheltered, deep and easy-to-navigate Buton Strait was much preferred. Personal correspondence with Horst Liebner, 25-28 June 2018; Parthesius, *Dutch ships in tropical waters,* 52-54.

365 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, p. 84.

366 Ibid.

the sultan and their respective entourages met in a *baileu* (meeting house) at the shore, with a 20-man strong Makasar armed guard present. The latter struck Van Speult as being present 'out of fear rather than to give a proper welcome.'[367]

The first thing Van Speult emphasized when talking to the sultan was that he had *not* come on the orders of the governor-general, but simply to see whether it would be possible to bring the bloodshed to an end, thus communicating the status of the coming negotiations to the sultan. He proceeded to state the VOC's conditions: first, that all the debts still owed to the Company should be properly settled,[368] and second, that the sultan should make sure his subjects would no longer sail to Hitu, Luhu, Lesidi, Kambelo or Eram to buy cloves there, as these rightfully belonged to the Company and the cost of buying cloves there had been driven up so much by Makasar activities, that the VOC had seen itself forced to cut down the clove trees in those regions. Of course, if the sultan wished to resume friendship, he would be welcome to send his subjects to come and trade at Castle Victoria in Ambon, but when found in any other place, they would be treated as enemies.

The sultan replied that he had never been the guarantor of the VOC's debts and did not consider himself in the least responsible, but that the settlement of debts could of course be arranged insofar the debtors were still alive and around. As to the spice trade in the western Ambon islands, he simply professed his complete innocence and denied any involvement: the Makasars only conducted overland trade. He could only assume it was the Malays who were involved in this trade, but he could not really prevent them from doing so, as they could go wherever they liked as soon as they were at sea. All the same, the sultan said it would please him to once again have peace and friendship with the VOC, and he had never denied them access to his land.

Van Speult then announced that he had brought envoys from Buton, as Buton and the VOC were longtime allies, and he wanted to intercede on its behalf and prevent bloodshed, 'as it behooved reasonable people do.'[369] This was not at all to the liking of the sultan, who retorted that the sultan of Buton had been a real annoyance to him, that he had no intention of talking to Butonese envoys,

367 Ibid., p. 85.

368 The report mentions them as amounting to 20.000 bahar, which strikes me as an error, and we should probably read 'realen' or 'mas'.

369 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II., p. 86.

and that, if the Butonese wanted to negotiate with him, they might send their own envoys without any intercessions by anyone else.

This concluded the negotiations. The sultan presented the Dutch with two *last* (some 6000 pounds) of rice and three buffaloes. Van Speult presented him with two small bronze cannon (*dragontgens*)[370], together weighing 500 pounds, with which the sultan seemed most pleased. The return gift of the sultan consisted of a 'piece of cloth and a rotan walking stick' for the governor-general – the accompanying letter accounted for this meagre gift by stating that Makassar was a small and poor town, 'like a chicken coop', and the sultan himself like 'a man from the woods'.[371] Van Speult sailed on to Batavia to make his report.

While the negotiations had been outwardly promising, it is worth pointing out that they took place with nine of the heavily armed warships of the Nassau Fleet riding at anchor in the background – a fact that was clearly not lost on the sultan and his people, as the description of these events in the Makassar Annals is limited to the remark that 'nine ships arrived.'[372] Regardless, Governor-General De Carpentier was optimistic about the prospect of peace with Gowa. In his subsequent general letter to the directors, he called it 'very useful and appropriate', and hoped it would increase trade with Batavia. He would even be happy to allow the Makasars to buy cloves, if they did so at Castle Victoria for a fixed price, and expected that, now that the Nassau Fleet had destroyed so many clove trees in Hoamoal, they would be compelled to do so anyway.[373]

His optimism turned out to be unwarranted. The next year, traders from Makassar once again visited the Amboina region in large numbers, and Ala'uddin and Matoaya personally went on a military campaign to Buton, Solor, Sumbawa, Bima and other islands, to the concern of the sultans of Buton and Ternate and to Company officials, as described in earlier chapters. After returning from his campaign, the sultan had the Venetian Giovanni Maria Moretti inquire in Batavia whether the Company was still willing to make peace, but no action on

370 These were most likely *draakstukken* (dragon pieces), anti-personnel guns with a conically shaped powder chamber. The weight of 250 pounds each likely indicates a caliber of 3 pounds. This is a surprising gift, as the *draakstuk* was a relatively state-of-the art weapon at the time. Personal correspondence with John Verbeeck, Nov. 2017.

371 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 87.

372 Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 39.

373 Carpentier and Council to directors, 27 October 1625 in VOC 1085, esp. fol. 23v. Note that this bit is not included in the published transcriptions.

behalf of the Company followed.[374] Carpentier had apparently lost the impression that a formal peace with Gowa would be realistic, or beneficial to the Company, and relations with Makassar remained in limbo. For Gowa, this would turn out to be just as well: as we have seen, the clove traders from Makassar would keep coming to the Ambon region over subsequent years, and the Gowan sultanate also felt no inhibitions about expanding its influence at the cost of that of the main ally of the Company in the eastern archipelago, the sultan of Ternate.

### Haggling over cannon and castaways: Antonio Caen in Makassar and Buton, 1632

Even as the contacts between the Makasar traders and the Company became ever more warlike in subsequent years, the Company did maintain a modicum of diplomatic contact with the rulers of Gowa and Tallo, which, as before, took place both through middlemen, including free traders but also officials from other European Companies, and the occasional official envoy. The Danish company, for example, became especially successful in Makassar in these years, giving the English company such fierce competition as to raise eyebrows with English officials in Bantam.[375] The interaction between the English, Danes and Dutch, trade rivals in Asia, but officially on good terms back in Europe, was a mix of hostility and suspicion on the one hand, and cordiality on the other. The Danish company was an especially interesting case as many of its leading figures were in fact Dutchmen, who had worked for the VOC before going to Copenhagen and putting their experience to use in Danish service.[376] 'General' Roeland Crappé, *de facto* head of the Danish Company, was one of them. On one of his regular calls at Batavia, in April 1631, he returned the twenty six survivors of the shipwreck of the *Suratte* mentioned earlier, who had been picked up by Makasar vessels and brought to Makassar after their ship had foundered off Kabaena. Crappé had paid their rather hefty ransom after due correspondence with the Dutch governor-general, conducted through English ships, and was subsequently reimbursed by the Dutch.[377] The occasion of his visit was also used to make prepa-

374 *Dagh-Register Batavia,* I, 278 (31 August 1626).

375 Bantam to Makassar factory, 29 December 1632, as summarized in IOR G/10/1, p 55.

376 For some short biographical notes on him, see Diller, *Die Dänen,* passim, esp. 28; Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 'The Coromandel Trade of the Danish East India Company, 1618-1649.' *The Scandinavian economic history review* 37.1 (1989): 41–56, esp. p. 44.

377 *Daghregister Batavia*, 1631-1634, 13 (25 April 1631); Specx to Crappé, 21 November 1630, in: VOC 855.

rations for a prisoner exchange with the Portuguese which was to take place at Makassar – in spite of the Company clashing with Makasar vessels throughout the archipelago, Makassar, with its extensive Portuguese community yet with a leadership able to enforce peace between rivalrous Europeans within the city, was still the eminent neutral ground for such an exchange.

In March of the next year, veteran VOC official Antony Caen was sent to Makassar for this purpose.[378] Although his instructions, and the letters he brought along for the sultans of Gowa and Buton, have all survived, his report about the journey and the return letters have not, and his trip has left surprisingly little mark on the Dutch East India Company records. Fortunately, he was accompanied by a lay pastoral worker (*ziekentrooster)* named Seygers van Rechteren, who was keeping a travelogue, later to be published back home. Although Van Rechteren was by all appearances not particularly interested in the political details of the trip, his descriptions nonetheless give life and texture to our understanding of the embassy.

The ship *Buren* approached the Makassar roadstead on the 4th of April 1632, and fired a massive 38 gun salute that thundered over the roadstead. The Dutch flag and a white flag were hoisted at the stern to signal peaceful intentions: as Van Rechteren noted with some understatement, 'we were not on good terms with Makassar, due to the clove trade in the Ambon islands etc.'[379] All the same, the interactions with the Makasars would turn out to be cordial enough – within the hour, two young princes and a few high nobles came on board. The two princes remained on board as hostages when, that evening, Anthony Caen, accompanied by an eight man retinue including Van Rechteren, rowed towards the shore. Roeland Crappé cordially received them to the Danish lodge. The 40 or so Dutch prisoners, who had already been brought there, were overjoyed to see them.

From the Danish lodge, Caen and his retinue went to the palace of the sultan of Gowa later that evening. Van Rechteren was amazed at the sight. The palace was raised up on wooden beams, as was common in Southeast Asia, but Van

378 For a very short outline of Caen's turbulent career, see W. Ph. Coolhaas. 'Gegevens over Antonio van Diemen.' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 103.1 (1946): 469–546, esp. 469-470. This rather curious article starts with the observation that the biography of Caen, 'dien anderen Antonio', is far more worth writing than that of Van Diemen, illustrating the point by enumerating some of the exciting things Caen had done (junior merchant at Jakarta and Banda, ambassador to various destinations, privateer…) to then grudgingly return to Van Diemen.

379 Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh,* II, 20th journey, p. 38.

Rechteren had never seen such a building on this massive scale. The beams were some five meters high, and carried a huge palace, with wall panels of intricately carved guilded woodwork in the shape of leaves. Inside, amidst a retinue of some one hundred servants, concubines and nobles (the latter all armed with intricately ornamented crisses), was Sultan Ala'uddin, sitting on a mat, surrounded by velvet cushions, clean-shaven, wearing a gold-threaded sarong which left his rather stout upper body bare. Van Rechteren estimated him to be in his late 50s.[380] Caen, Van Rechteren and Crappé were invited to sit down with the sultan and chew sirih together - Van Rechteren explained to his intended European readership that this was a bit akin to sharing a glass of wine with a guest.

Caen had been furnished with two Chinese parasols, half a picul (a good sixty pounds) of Japanese copper, and a piece of yellow fabric to present to the rulers, and he would have received gifts in return. The letter of the governor-general would also have been presented and presumably read. Unfortunately, Van Rechteren tells us nothing about all this – which is particularly unfortunate as the letter contained a rather shameless request, rather in character with stereotypes of Dutch merchants. In addition to some friendly words about the sultan and an attempt to smear the Spanish and Portuguese by alluding to some intercepted letters in which they were apparently plotting against Makassar, it argued that the ransom of 3059 ½ pieces that had been paid for the release of their shipwrecked crew earlier, had been rather too excessive, considering that the Company and the sultan were not really enemies after all. The governor-general politely asked for the ransom to be returned, and while he was at it, for the five cannon the Makasars had salvaged from the vessel as well, as this would greatly benefit the relations between the Company and the sultan. The sultan's response was not recorded, but the Dutch did not get their cannon or their ransom back.

Caen had also been instructed to tactfully broach the topic of the trade to Ambon. With the Makasar trade there so badly thwarted the previous season, this might be an opportune time to bring it up. Caen was to point out that if the sultan would but make an effort to halt this trade in cloves that rightfully belonged to the Company, nothing would stand in the way of the restoration of the old friendship between the sultan and the Company. The Company would very much welcome it if the sultan could send some official envoys to Batavia to discuss this. If, on the other hand, the trade would continue, it was bound to lead to open war between Gowa and the VOC in the future.

380 Ala'uddin was 46 years of age at the time.

Van Rechteren's descriptions remain silent on all this. Instead, quite a different detail of the audience apparently stuck in his mind: as they were sitting there, a young prince, who he estimated to be about 22 years old, sat down with him, and upon learning that he was a man of God, struck up a conversation. The two amicably discussed the stories of the Old Testament, about which the young man turned out to be very well-informed. Surmising that the Makasars were Muslims, Van Rechteren argued that the Dutch Reformed religion was the one true faith. The young man rather seemed to enjoy sparring about religion, and asked whether the Reverend might not procure a Bible in the original Hebrew back in Batavia, and send it to him. Van Rechteren promised to do so, 'as I noted he was studious and sharp-minded', and for now presented him with a Malay translation of some of the Psalms.[381] The young prince remains unnamed, but his interest in discussing religion and collecting books seems rather compellingly in character with what we know of Karaeng Pattingalloang, who would become the chancellor of Gowa seven years later. This either means that Van Rechteren was a rather poor judge of age, as Pattingalloang was 32 years old at the time, or that this was another prince with similar interests, which would then appear to have been more widespread at the courts of Gowa and Tallo than other sources would have us believe.[382]

The day after the audience, as Caen, Van Rechteren and others were staying at the Danish lodge, a group of the sultan's servants arrived to present Van Rechteren with a gift, which had been promised to him the previous day. Caen, who apparently knew what would follow, started laughing as soon as he saw them approaching. The seven or eight servants all lined up and solemnly presented Van Rechteren with a small basket, each one telling him in Malay 'The king of Makassar presents you with this gift' before laying the basket at his feet. When they had left and Van Rechteren opened the gifts, he found that he had been presented with items worth a grand total of 50 *stuivers*, to the great hilarity of the others already familiar with this custom, who told them that this was in fact quite generous already.

The ship stayed in Makassar for ten more days. Caen was supposed to gather intelligence about such things as the market prices of cloves in Makassar, the number of junks that had left for Ambon that season, and news about the situa-

381 Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh,* II, 20th journey, p. 39.

382 For more on Pattingalloang and existing scholarship about him, see XIII, paragraph 'Affairs of state'.

tion in other Asian regions including Sukadana, Banjarmasin, Solor and Macau, and the market prices of various goods there. He learned, among other things, that after the events of last season, only three junks had left for the Ambon islands from Makassar, two of which had been forced to return because of adverse winds, but that all the same, 400 bahar of cloves had recently arrived on the Makassar market by way of a Portuguese ship from north Maluku. These had largely been bought up by the Danes and the English.[383]

Van Rechteren meanwhile had his own interests. The Reverend's descriptions of Makassar touched upon such subjects as the dress of the men and women and the prevalence and acceptance of 'sodomy', but he also showed himself particularly impressed by the three royal galleys of the sultan, each of them built to accommodate 500 or 600 rowers alone, made of what Van Rechteren described as ivory and ebony, and intricately decorated from bow to stern. The sultan, he learned, could raise a vast army within a matter of six hours, mostly armed with pikes and poisoned blow-darts, the latter being a weapon not to be underestimated and also used to execute criminals. Van Rechteren noted the four round bulwarks on the west side of Somba Opu, which were defended with heavy guns, gifts by Europeans coming to Makassar to trade or negotiate, and including some guns the Dutch had presented to the rulers in better days. The constable-major in charge of these guns was a renegade Englishman who had converted to Islam and was now living in luxury in Makassar – prompting the pastor to muse on 'what worldly splendour and money may bring about, that a Christian might be brought to the Islamic, or heathen, faith.'[384]

The ship set sail from Makassar on the 15th, and arrived before Buton five days later. In addition to making a courtesy call with the sultan, after all one of the oldest Dutch allies in the eastern archipelago, the purpose of the visit was rather prosaic: Caen had been instructed to buy wood here. In Batavia, a new church was being built as the old one had gone up in flames during the siege of the city by Mataram, and Buton produced heavy teak perfect for building. Caen also brought a letter and some gifts to the sultan, both lending some meagre moral and material support for the sultan in his anxiety about an imminent

383 *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1631-1634, 78 (22 May 1632).

384 Ibid., 40. Regarding the forts, Bulbeck, 'Construction history' and Bulbeck and Caldwell, 'The indigenous fortifications on South Sulawesi' hold the four round bastions on Somba Opu to have been built in this form in 1631. I have been unable to convincingly trace the renegade Englishman back to EIC sources, but he is mentioned in other Dutch sources: see *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1637, 280-284.

attack from Makassar. He presented the sultan with a barrel of gunpowder, one hundred pounds of lead, and three muskets. The governor-general's letter informed the sultan that not only would another fleet under the leadership of Anthonissen, nine ships this time, soon head out to Amboina and make a call at Buton, but that the *Buren* would remain at the Buton roads throughout the western monsoon, and would be able to assist the sultan in case of any trouble. Van Rechteren did not apparently join Caen in his visit to the sultan, providing us with no details of the audience, but one cannot imagine that the gift, or the assistance of the *Buren* would have been much comfort to the sultan, particularly as 'throughout the western monsoon', in this case, meant only ten days – the ship had arrived on the 20th of April, and would leave again on the first of May. Things certainly must have looked bleak to Sultan La Elangi, the ruler who had minted the alliance with the Company almost two decades earlier, and was by now 'an old man with a white beard'[385], faced with growing Makasar influence in the wider region and at his own court, and with a rather unforthcoming European ally.

The *Buren* had, however, arrived just in time to witness the arrival of some other reinforcements to Buton. On the 23rd of April, the large kora-kora of Kaicili Ali rowed into view. After staying in the Ambon islands until November 1630, where his influence had steadily waned, he had then left for the Sula Islands, which had by then been brought back under Ternaten control. There, apparently once again acting in line with Sultan Hamzah, he had mustered a new fleet, reconquered Banggai,[386] made his way to Tobungku, and retaken it from the control of Gowa-Tallo. He now arrived in Buton to further strengthen the earlier reinforcements from Ternate, sent there to keep Buton out of Gowan control.

Kaicili Ali's kora-kora paid respect to the Dutch vessel, rowing around the Dutch ship three times, while gongs, flutes, drums and voices sounded. The *kapita Laut* then came aboard the Dutch ship, and was hospitably received. Van Rechteren was invited into the great cabin, and both Caen and Kaicili Ali boasted about the latter's prowess in battle, impressing upon Van Rechteren that he could jump over a man while decapitating him on the go. Afterwards, Kaicili

385 Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh,* II, 20th journey, p. 41.

386 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'.

rowed to shore, to assist in Buton's defense, but also to use it as a base from which to negotiate with the sultan of Gowa.[387]

Caen and Van Rechteren were probably the last Dutchmen to speak with Kaicili Ali, as he died in Buton soon after. As always, rumours of poison made the rounds, the supposed source this time being a jar of preserves sent to him as a gift from Gowa.[388]

## Concluding remarks

While the early sources on diplomatic contact between Gowa and the Company discussed in this chapter are relatively poor in details about the negotiations themselves, they do highlight the interesting ballet of middlemen, cautious initiative, and considerations of rank and precedence that characterized such low-level diplomatic feelers, meant to retain some kind of working relationship and investigate the possibility of ending the hostilities. Over the course of the chapter, we have seen the Gowan court and the Company headquarters in Batavia relay messages through foreign merchants, both Asian and European. We have seen how rank and prestige were major concerns, with the first contacts established through unofficial channels, Van Speult emphasizing that he was *not* sent by the governor-general, both parties insisting that the other one send an official delegation first, and, most saliently, the sultan of Gowa refusing to send an official delegation to 'merely the head of merchants.' Over the period described, the two parties did reach a kind of working relationship and the tacit mutual recognition that, at the very least, they were no longer in open war. They stopped short, however, of coming to a formal peace agreement and the re-establishment of trade relations, as the resolve to do so was never mutual at any given time, and the wider interests of both parties would have made coming to such an agreement exceedingly difficult.

Seygers van Rechteren's description adds another interesting dimension to established scholarship. While remaining curiously silent on the actual substance of negotiations, he is meanwhile able to paint a vivid picture of the social dimensions of such diplomacy – the customs, the role of other Europeans as go-betweens, the socialising both with them and with people at the Gowan Court,

387 He also wrote a lengthy letter to the governor-general, now lost, which apparently explained his recent actions both in Ambon and since then, which Caen brought back to Batavia. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 79; *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1631-1634, 78 (entry of 22 May).

388 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 79.

give texture and atmosphere to such diplomatic interactions found in few other sources.

A final element in the history of the eastern archipelago that this chapter has aimed to highlight is the crucial role of Buton. While Gowa attempted to increase its influence over many regions originally part of Ternate's sphere of influence, Buton was particularly crucial, due to its location at the main sailing routes to and from the spice-producing regions. As the Company was militarily preoccupied elsewhere, its willingness and ability to assist the Butonese sultan tended to be limited. Unable to reach a peace agreement with Gowa itself, the Company was particularly ill-equipped to broker a deal between to Asian sultanates, as was made clear to Van Speult in 1625 in no uncertain terms. Although Gowa's subsequent 'conquest' of Buton in 1626 did not apparently bring the sultanate under its control, the threat of this happening loomed large throughout the period, and would continue to do so as the conflict heated up throughout the region in subsequent years.

# VII. The War on Trees (1631-1634)

In Ambon, Company efforts to halt foreign trade and become the sole buyer of cloves continued unabated. From 1631 onwards, this task was up to the new governor, Artus Gijsels, who might be remembered from earlier chapters as the early Ambon *afficionado* who wrote various reports and, it is believed, several of the anonymous pamphlets of the early 1620s decrying company policy in the region. His writings remain important sources on the early history of the region, and contain some of the most poignant criticism of the monopolistic policies of the VOC in this early period. His pamphlets had not really affected Company policy though. By the time he returned to Asia, the 'usury' he had denounced in them had become solidly established practice.

Interestingly, Gijsels' own position on the matter would also change radically during his governorship: having once been an eloquent opponent of the VOC's policies in the region, he was to become perhaps their most fanatic enforcer yet. His personal archive contains a virtually complete set of reports on the campaigns he organised in order to do so. They describe in remarkable detail the appalling amount of force that was used to maintain Dutch control over the clove trade. Gijsels personally oversaw a significant number of the campaigns fought for this purpose. For instance, he spent a full third of the year 1633 on a kora-kora, sailing from one fight to the next. In his personal letters he airs a developing hatred for the Muslim inhabitants of the region, which certainly tallies with some of the disturbing details we find in his campaign reports.[389]

Gijsels' methods differed sharply from those of his predecessor. Whereas Lucasz had developed a strategy of attacking the foreign traders specifically, Gijsels aimed to ruin those villages that had dealings with foreign traders. Although Gijsels claimed that he was interested only in the traders, not in 'shedding the innocent blood' of the local population, he shed it generously nonetheless. Making unprecedented use of the *hongi*, he went headhunting, besieging and burning villages and towns that had dealings with Malay, Javanese, and Makasar traders or otherwise acted contrary to his wishes. In practice, the local population often proved elusive. Making use of the natural defences provided by the landscape,

389 For a general survey of the Gijsels archive and a more general assessment of Gijsels' career and character, see M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz. 'The Private Papers of Artus Gijsels as Source for the History of East Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian history* 10 (1969): 540–559.

they could often simply disappear into the forest when the VOC and its local allies appeared. Gijsels therefore went after their livelihoods: in addition to burning villages and vessels and destroying spice trees, he also increasingly made an effort to eradicate all trees that had any value as a food source, in what Rumphius would later aptly call a 'war on trees'.[390] It is therefore during Gijsels' governorship, and in the documents that it generated, that we most clearly see the VOC developing a local type of warfare aimed primarily at destroying what Emmanuel Kreike has termed environmental infrastructure.[391]

### Mopping up

In May 1631, just after Gijsels took office, some high-ranking VOC officials in Amboina, including *fiscaal* Joan Ottens, were still convinced of the soundness of the strategy that Lucasz had followed over the previous year. In his correspondence, Ottens stated that an expeditionary fleet such as that commanded by Anthonissen should be sent out yearly. At the same time, he took care to emphasise that this force should only be used to go after the traders: moving inland to destroy clove trees had only had an adverse effect in the past and it would be a dangerous game now. As Ottens was putting these thoughts down on paper, however, his superior Gijsels was writing up his own ideas on the matter. According to him, Hitu and the areas under direct Company control produced enough to satisfy the yearly amount required by the directors. (Based on experiences that were, by now, more than a decade old, Gijsels initially put a lot more stock in Hitu as an ally than his predecessor had, and did not consider them hostile.) Destroying the clove trees outside these areas, it followed, made a lot of economic sense.[392]

All the same, his first few expeditions were aimed at finishing what Lucasz had started. In June, he sent out about a dozen kora-kora and two VOC yachts on an expedition to Western Seram. They were to hunt for any remaining spice traders, as well as Papuan ships that were reportedly active in the area, buying cloves, raiding villages, taking captives, and trying to ransom them. The Papuans proved elusive and the fleet only managed to capture one small kora-kora of unknown origin and a Malay sampan loaded with cloves, which was thought to

390 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 97.
391 Kreike, *Scorched Earth,* introduction.
392 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1631, and Ottens to Specx, 22 May 1631, partially quoted in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 185-189.

come from Makassar. (The headhunting tendency of their Ambonese allies made it difficult to be sure in this case, as there was no-one left alive to interrogate).[393] Most of the expedition was spent chasing rumours and battling terrible weather, for the season had turned windy and rainy.[394]

Almost as soon as this fleet returned, Gijsels sent the two yachts out again. Along with two smaller vessels, they were to head for the Buton Strait and catch any returning spice traders that had managed to elude Lucasz' expeditions of the previous months. As virtually all shipping between Maluku and the western archipelago went through the northern mouth of the Buton Strait, this was the perfect bottleneck at which to control it.[395] On the 12th of July, four days after departure, the ships took position near a small island at the northern mouth of the Strait. They planned to patrol the area until the turning of the monsoon some three months later. Given that the Company had previously sent out similar fleets to catch spice traders in the Buton Strait and the Boquerones, it is worth describing its activities in more detail.

The report of the expedition paints a vivid picture of a precarious and violent three months. In setting themselves up, the Dutch sent a small contingent of men to collect water and firewood. These were immediately attacked by a group of men, who emerged from the forest, 'about twenty in number, with naked bodies, wearing nothing but a small loincloth to cover their manhood, using large and long swords and throwing spears freshly cut out of green wood'.[396] One sailor was hacked to death and decapitated. Noticing that something was amiss, the large ships fired their cannon and the assailants retreated. The Dutch were perplexed by this encounter, for they had visited this same spot several times over the last few years without running into trouble and they had no idea who had attacked them.

The next few weeks were spent spotting and chasing Asian vessels. These were not only spice traders: the Dutch saw a number of Makasar war vessels conveying

393 In case of the small kora-kora, one heavily wounded survivor claimed the ship had come from Boano, the island just north of Hoamoal, but judging by the sleek shape of the craft and the number of throwing spears on board, Westerman and Ottens were not so sure.

394 This expedition was commanded by Westerman and Ottens. See 'Journael van gedaene tochten', Badische Landesbibliothek, collection Artus Gijsels, K. 476, fol. 3-6.

395 Westerman was appointed commander of the fleet. See 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 7-12.

396 'Journael van gedaente tochten', fol. 7r

troops back from Banggai , which Kaicili Ali had retaken by then. They also learned about the developments there through some of their captives and the people living along the Strait.[397] The Dutch were usually only able to take a ship after it had been beached and the crews had escaped inland. The latter sometimes set fire to their vessels before taking off. Indeed, in the wake of one such incident, 'burned cloves, which had been washed out of the junk by the high tide, were drifting all around our ships and washing up on the beaches'.[398] On another occasion, four junks happened on the Dutch ships in the dead of night, the two flotillas only noticing each other once the junks were already sailing between the anchored Dutch ships. Shouting and confusion ensued, with the Company crews opening fire with their cannon and the crews of the junks reciprocating with their muskets. The Dutch ships lifted anchor to pursue the junks, but these escaped into the darkness.[399]

Over the three months that the ships spent in the Strait, they spotted some eighteen vessels and were able to capture ten. The expedition ended at the town of Buton on the 24th of October, where one of the yachts, *Mocha*, was sent on to Batavia with all the captured cloves as well as the governor's letters. The remaining three ships awaited the turning of the monsoon and set sail for Ambon on the 15th of November.[400]

### Uli, Alfurs, and uphill battles: the siege of Tobo

Before these ships had even returned, Gijsels had already turned his attention to two villages on the south coast of Seram. This was not a clove-producing area; the expedition was meant to protect the production of nutmeg on the Banda islands. Several villages along the south coast of Seram, as well as on the Aru and Kei Islands, still housed significant numbers of Bandanese refugees and served as staging areas for raids on the Banda Islands. Gijsels' commission specifically mentioned these villages and instructed him to destroy their dwellings and ves-

397 One Chinese, who willingly gave himself up to the Dutch as he was unable to keep up with his Makasar companions due to a 'painful and rotten leg', was particularly helpful, as were the inhabitants of the village of Koroni, who were friendly to the Dutch, and informed them that thirteen such vessels had already come through the Strait before they had arrived. 'Journael van gedaente tochten',fol. 8r.

398 'Journael van gedaente tochten', fol. 8v.

399 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 8v-9r.

400 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 9r.

sels in order to keep Banda safe.[401] As the monsoon turned, bringing dry and more reliable weather, Gijsels personally set out from Ambon, assembled the *hongi*, and moved against the villages of Tobo and Werinama.

Gijsels was quite familiar with indigenous warfare in the islands – in fact, his descriptions of it in his *Grondig Verhaal van Amboyna*, written around 1621, remain one of our main sources on this topic.[402] In the book, he elaborately describes the seaborne headhunting raids that rival villages would visit upon one another, covering the divination practices preceding raids, the raids themselves (during which men, women, and children alike were fair game), and the festivities, rituals, and ceremonies that followed a kora-kora's return. Not sparing his readers the gory details, he described how heads were displayed on a stone near the *baileu* 'until the maggots crawled out of them' and how the raiders would sometimes bring back live captives. As the ship approached its village, the prisoners were

> tied and painted white. It also occurs that, if they have a bad war with each other, they put the captives at the front of the kora-kora, and then behead them as soon as the kora-kora touches the shoreline, throwing the body overboard and bringing the head onto land with the others.[403]

Gijsels goes on to describe how a king or lord could also call upon the villages to come out with their kora-kora to make war. They would then be obliged to join him without receiving any recompense, being responsible for their own weapons and provisions. Gijsels was impressed with the craftsmanship of the kora-kora and the weapons that the Ambonese wielded. Every kora-kora tended to have three Javanese-made swivel guns, which Gijsels described as being of abominable quality, and European-made muskets and halberds had also found their way to the Ambonese. Still, he was more impressed by their *assegai* (throwing spears), which were made out of wood, reed, and iron. He deemed them 'extremely nasty weapons'.[404]

Of course, the VOC had already started making use of the hongi during Gijsels' first stay in the Ambon Islands. Judging by his detailed descriptions,

401 Memorie for Artus Gijsels as the new governor of Ambon, 28 feb 1631, in: VOC 856 (unfol.), 12th unfoliated page.
402 See Knaap, 'Headhunting, Carnage and Armed Peace', esp. 169pp.
403 Gijsels, 'Grondig Verhaal van Amboyna', 432.
404 Ibid., 431-444, esp. 437.

Gijsels had some first-hand experience with it as well. Now, as governor, he was able to call the hongi together himself for the first time. The fleet set out from Castle Victoria on the 10th of November. Along the way, it made calls and sent out messengers, demanding that the various communities send their *kora-kora* to join the fleet. Eventually, the fleet grew to fifteen vessels.

In addition to being a fighting force, the hongi was also an instrument of displaying and confirming political power. As Gijsels made his way east, villages along the route rushed to present him with *hormat*: gifts meant to signal their deference. Although the *hormat* often consisted of livestock, fish, fruits, coconuts, and other useful foodstuffs for the campaign, some were more symbolic. As the fleet called at Hitu, for example, it was presented with an ornate arrangement of flowers.[405]

Meanwhile, it would seem that Gijsels' attitude towards Hitu was hardening, despite having been positive at the start of his governorship. While there, Gijsels told Hituese officials that the target of the expedition was Ihamahu. Aware that the villages they were now moving against were *ulilima,* and therefore part of the same league of polities as Hitu itself, he suspected that they might try to send a warning and was therefore deliberately spreading misinformation. The rivalries between *ulisiwa* and *ulilima* also worked to the VOC's advantage, however. As the Dutch progressed eastward, they passed *ulisiwa* villages with whom they otherwise had little contact. These included the village of Haya, which belonged to the *uslisiva* despite being Muslim. When Haya's orangkaya learned that the Dutch were moving against Tobo, he and his people joined the campaign, adding two vessels to the fleet and sending word to Tamilau, a nearby allied village. The people of Tamilau, in their turn, sent word to the Alfur polities in the interior, who also had an axe to grind with some of these *ulilima* coastal settlements.

Over the preceding years, various VOC officials had gradually warmed to the idea that the Alfurs of Seram might make formidable allies. In his 1627 report, Seys had already written that the Alfurs might be very valuable, even though they neither lived in clove-producing regions nor had ships with which to participate in the hongi fleets. What is more, they were excellent head-hunters, whose raiding parties could survive in the jungle for months and had a fearsome reputation throughout the region. Seys had contended that friendly relations should be maintained with these 'heathen' kingdoms, not least because the roughly three-thousand men belonging to these polities could be used as a

405 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 14r-v.

'scourge against the rebels'.[406] The interest in an alliance seemed to be mutual: just before Gijsels had become governor, the rajas of the Alfur kingdoms of Sahulahu and Sumite had opened relations with the Dutch, offering their services for the struggle against their mutual enemies.[407] Now, Gijsels could take them up on their offer.

It would take the Alfurs a few days to reach the coast. Meanwhile, the hongi, which by now consisted of fifteen vessels, approached Tobo. In the early hours of the 21st of November, Gijsels halted just short of the village to allow some straggling vessels to catch up and had the fleet row to shore. It arrived below the walls of Tobo at daybreak, to the dismay of the inhabitants, 'who were all woken up, startled, and apparently not entirely rested yet'.[408] In an attempt to negotiate with the Toboese, Gijsels made his way to the fortified village accompanied by 200 of his European soldiers and a host of Ambonese. However, chaos immediately ensued. The inhabitants shouted 'Sobat Ihu, sobat ihu!' (You are our lord, you are our lord!) Gijsels responded by asking them to come down from their fort, if that was the case. However, the Ambonese troops and the Toboese were shouting at one another, drowning out the attempt at negotiation. The Ambonese started taunting the village inhabitants by approaching the walls; the Toboese shot some arrows at them. Gijsels' troops responded by firing their muskets. The opportunity for negotiation having thus gone up in smoke, Gijsels prepared to storm the village.[409]

As we can see in the drawing included in Gijsels' report, Tobo was situated on a small coral platform near the coast, strategically located on a tiny outcrop from the shoreline. Obscured from view in the drawing is the river flowing immediately to the west of the platform, impeding any attack on the village from that side. The village could therefore only be feasibly approached from the east. Gijsels' drawing shows us the sharp, eroded coral limestone so typical of the

406 'geessel van de gerevolteerden'. Seys, 'Verhael van den tegenwoordigen staet inde quartieren van Amboyna ende omleggende plaetsen' etc, in: Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgangh*, II, voyage 15, p. 136.

407 Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden,* 197. Lucasz to Specx, 6 sept 1630, in VOC 1100, fol. 397v, mentions a visit of the 'king of the Alfurs', without further specification. The same visit is mentioned in Gijsels' instructions (28 feb 1631, VOC 856, 12th unfoliated page) and he had been specifically advised to further the relations with them and make use of their offer.

408 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 19r.

409 Ibid.

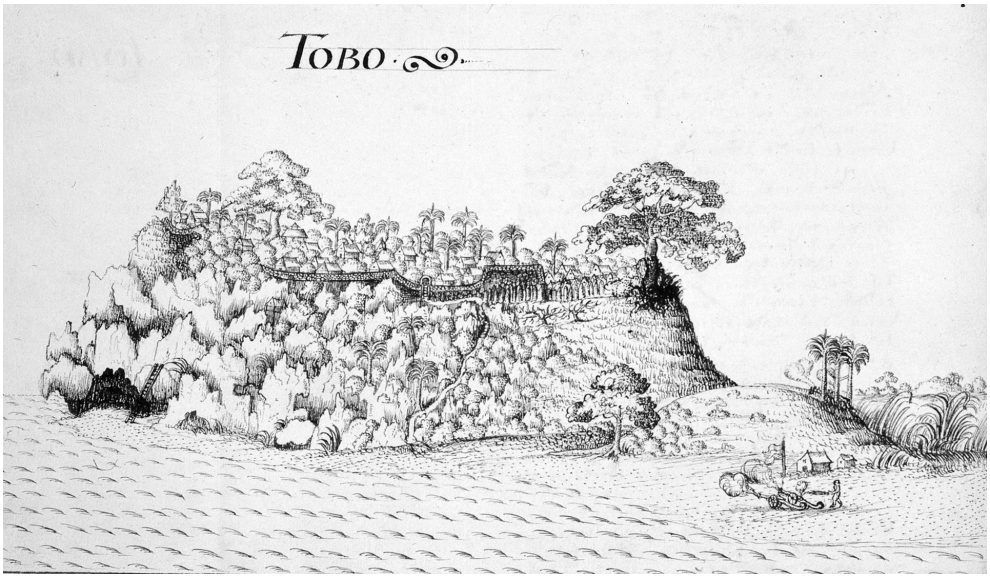



Fig 7.1 The village of Tobo. This anonymous drawing features some episodes from the siege, including the two cannon firing at the town, the siege ladder set against the rocks on the left side of the platform, and muskets being fired up at the town from the low hill in the background. Badische Landesbibliothek, K476, fol. 18.

region, which provided an excellent natural fortification. In addition, the settlement was defended by a wall following the contours of the platform.

The entire force landed. Two cannons were brought ashore and immediately opened fire on the settlement. The besieged responded by firing arrows and (sparingly) muskets, as well as throwing rocks, at anyone who came within range. After about an hour, Gijsels ordered attacks at several places aiming to take the village by storm. Although he had brought one siege ladder, most of the attackers simply clambered up the rocks. Meanwhile, he created 'false alarms' in an attempt to conceal where the real attacks were taking place. The besieged were not fooled; the soldiers and warriors climbing up the platform were subjected to such a hail of stones that they were forced to retreat. One of the Dutch officials, Joan Ottens, was hit on the head by a stone, such that he fell down and 'his skull lay bare'.[410]

His attempt to take the settlement having been stymied, Gijsels started preparing for a siege. He ordered the three forces he had stationed to the west, north, and east of the platform to strike camp, and had a broad path cut through the

410 Ibid.

vegetation between them. He had the kora-kora brought ashore, mostly to signal to the besieged that they were not going anywhere. Now aware that Tobo was better defended than he had expected, Gijsels sent one of the *orembay* rowing vessels to Banda for additional supplies.

Gijsels was worried. It seemed that Tobo was virtually unassailable and its inhabitants, well aware of this, would probably try to hold out to the last. According to his own report, Gijsels decided to lay siege anyway, as he expected reinforcements, in the form of some two-thousand Alfurs, to arrive from the Seram uplands in the coming days.

Sure enough, the next day around noon, 1180 Alfurs came marching down from the highlands. Led by the orangkaya from Ribut Hatumeten and Tamilahu,[411] they carried red banners and were armed with swords, shields, spears, and the occasional musket. Painted in dyes made from sago and coconut, Gijsels found them frightening to behold. He was impressed: whereas the Ambonese had struggled to bring some of the kora-kora on land, the Alfurs immediately set to work lifting them onto the high shoreline and quickly succeeded. That night, such a racket was heard from the camp they made that 'it was as if the forest was full of demons'. Not only had their arrival boosted the total number of besiegers to about three thousand; Gijsels had learned from one of their orangkaya that the Alfurs were particularly eager to take revenge on Tobo, which had previously been involved in attacks on them. Gijsels was happy to boost their morale even further: he and his companions unabashedly told the Alfurs that the Dutch were *ulisiwa* too! Upon being asked whether the Prince of Holland was therefore also *ulisiwa* and ate pork, they answered in the affirmative, which, according to Gijsels, seemed to please the Alfurs mightily. Their alliance seemed to be off to a good start.[412]

Over the next few days, the Dutch started erecting wooden siege works around the settlement. They also made various attempts to set Tobo on fire, both by using the cannon to lob fireballs over the walls, and having the Alfurs climb up the rocks to torch the buildings. None of these attempts were successful. All the same, the besieged called for negotiations almost every day. The first request came in the morning on the 23rd, after the Toboese had apparently gotten wind

411 Ribut was a village resorting under Hatumeten, and situated slightly inland from there, a good deal to the west from Tobo. Tumalehu was much nearer, and resorted under the Alfur kingdom of Sumite. Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden,* pp. 178, 199-200.

412 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 20r; Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in: *Bouwstoffen,* II, 196.

of the Alfurs' arrival. (Gijsels got the impression that the Toboese were far more scared of the Alfurs than of his own forces.) In any case, the negotiations went nowhere: claiming that their most prominent orangkaya were away, the Toboese felt they could not submit to the VOC's demands. At best, the negotiations gave them a few hours of respite from Dutch musket and cannon fire.[413]

Meanwhile, the Alfurs were making forays into the forests. On the 28th, they found a small inland village named Batolahu, which was affiliated with Tobo and was still occupied. The Alfurs immediately returned to the camp to make their report and then started preparing for a raid. Many of the Ambonese participated in the raiding party, which returned by the evening. The Dutch learned that their Ambonese allies had retreated after one of their orangkaya had been badly wounded. The Alfurs, for their part, brought back two captured children, two severed heads, and several limbs that they had cut from their victims. They proceeded to chop the latter up, mix them with vegetables, and cook the resulting mix in pieces of bamboo. A lively feast ensued, with *tifa* drums, dancing, and other merriments. Slightly disgusted with what was for dinner, Gijsels tried to rebuke the Alfurs for their 'horribly barbaric ways', but they were unfazed: their victims had got what they deserved for their earlier attacks on Ribut Hatumeten.[414]

In any case Gijsels was happy to use the raid and its aftermath to put further pressure on the besieged. The next day, he informed the Toboese that unless they surrendered now, there would be no quarter and they would all go the way of the inhabitants of Batolahu. (It seems the Dutch tactfully avoided mentioning that the attack had actually been largely repelled.) After days of cannon fire aimed at breaking morale rather than Tobo's defences, the prospect of being cut up apparently became too much for the besieged, who promised to come down.

The next day, the Dutch and the orangkaya of Tobo met on the shore below the village. A treaty was drawn up in which the inhabitants of Tobo pledged allegiance to the Dutch States-General and the Prince of Orange. They were required to send two children of prominent orangkaya to Castle Victoria as hostages and appear there with one or two vessels at least once a year. They promised to return runaway slaves in return for a reward. As subjects of the Dutch governor, the inhabitants were now free to sail to Ambon and Banda. Most importantly, the Toboese were no longer allowed to make war on any Dutch ally. Indeed, they

413 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 19v-21r.
414 'Journael van gedaene tochten' fol. 20v-21r.

were not to make war at all without explicit Dutch permission.[415] To seal the new agreement, a *matakau* was drunk. The latter was a ritual where an important oath was confirmed by drinking an alcoholic beverage by representatives of the two parties, which had been imbued with power by dipping weapons and other potent objects into the drink. Both parties then called upon higher powers to bring curse and doom down on them should they ever break their oath.[416] Furthermore, a Dutch flag was brought into the village.

As he would later write to Batavia, Gijsels felt that this was the best possible outcome under the circumstances. Considering Tobo's unexpected strength and the fact that a heavy rain shower had recently replenished their water supplies, he felt that a treaty was preferable to 'banging our heads against the wall' any longer.[417] Not all of their allies agreed: the Alfurs had come down to Tobo to wreak their revenge on its population, and were thoroughly annoyed that the opportunity had been snatched away from them. As the treaty was concluded, the inhabitants of Tobo could see smoke rising from the forest: Batolahu and another village were on fire. Four hundred newly arrived Alfurs, who later claimed that they had yet to hear about the treaty, had overrun the villages and burned them down. Gijsels could only profusely apologise to the outraged Toboese.[418]

The next day, the 1st of December, the Dutch organised a farewell feast to celebrate the conclusion of the treaty, after which the hongi and the Alfur allies went their separate ways. Arriving below Werinama the next day, and seeing that it was similarly perched on a high and extremely defensible position, Gijsels immediately abandoned his plans to attack it. The hongi continued on its way back to Ambon, calling at various villages to receive *hormat* and meet with various orangkaya. On the 7th of December, Gijsels was back at Castle Victoria. Despite

415 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, treaty CIV (30 November 1631), 252-254.

416 For one description of a *matakau,* see Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* IIIa, I, 10-11. Note that the exact performance of the ritual could differ: whereas Valentijn mentions various pre-gunpowder weapons, 17th century descriptions also mention bullets. Sometimes, drops of blood of the two parties went into the drink as well. Also note that Valentijn presents the ritual as something from ancient heathen times, which is incorrect: it was the staple of political bonds in Central Maluku, including those involving Muslims or Christians, throughout our period of study. For this reason, Company officials partook in *matakaus* quite regularly. The word means something akin to taboo or interdiction, and was also used more broadly for other forms of ritual protection.

417 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in: *Bouwstoffen,* II, 198.

418 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in: *Bouwstoffen,* II, 198; 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 21v-22r.

running into more serious opposition than expected, the Dutch and their allies had shown themselves to be a power to be reckoned with on the coast of Seram.

Although the siege of Tobo only lasted nine days, Gijsels had nonetheless been rather taken aback by the strength of the fortified towns along the Seramese coast. As it turned out, they were not the lightly defended places that had been described to him. That being said, he had had his first taste of cooperating with the Alfurs, who promised to be formidable allies. His policy also seems to have entailed getting himself involved in local rivalries to a far greater degree than any of his predecessors had. To further the Company's policies, he presented these divisions within a framework of existing rivalries between *ulisiwa* and *ulilima*, which had worked out rather well for him in this campaign. But this approach also had inherent risks. Playing up *ulilima/ulisiwa* antagonisms, and putting the Dutch firmly in the *ulisiwa* camp, might go to the detriment of their relationship with the *ulilima* inhabitants of Hoamoal and their kimelaha, not to mention their supposed allies in Hitu. Getting involved in the rivalries and rounds of mutual retaliation that characterised interactions amongst these groups might exacerbate tensions at a time when the Dutch were already embroiled in many conflicts in the region. In the short run, it would lead Gijsels to besiege a fortified town that presented a greater challenge than Tobo.

### 'Revenge against the fruit trees'

The Dutch East India Company had a rather complicated relationship with Ihamahu, a fortified Muslim town situated on the north side of Saparua. In 1621, during the large *landdag* meeting that was held in the wake of Coen's visit, Ihamahu had pledged allegiance to the VOC. Since then, however, it had been able to treat the Company with a large measure of indifference, never, for instance, sending kora-kora to join the Company's hongi fleets. Whereas the southern parts of the Lease Islands were *ulisiwa*, Christian and under Company rule, the northern parts were none of these things. Ihamahu, in particular, was in a position to sail its own course, 'aloof on its impregnable mountain',[419] the coral platform of Ulapalu, the best natural fortification one could wish for. As such, the town had recently become a refuge for people fleeing villages under Dutch control. Even some Christians had fled there, citing ill-treatment at the hands of their leaders. Ihamahu kept any Dutch delegates trying to negotiate their return at arm's length, to Gijsels' great frustration.

419 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 82.

This also made the town a great potential ally to those ill-disposed towards the Dutch. It would seem that the previous year's attack on Tobo was driving the Muslim communities closer together against what they saw as a common enemy. Kimelaha Luhu, who, we may remember, had been brought in to replace a thoroughly anti-Dutch colleague, had not warmed to the Dutch over the previous three years and took great offence to Gijsels' attack on Tobo. In the wake of the siege, he made his way to Ihamahu, aching to win its support in wresting the Lease Islands from Dutch control. He apparently received a warm welcome there and started off by forcing the Christians who had fled to Ihamahu to convert to Islam and swear off the Dutch. Their oath was subsequently sealed by collecting a Christian head in a raid on the nearby village of Itawaka. According to Gijsels, the kimelaha also gave his followers throughout the islands permission to capture and forcibly convert Christians in this manner. The kimelaha then brought together an impressive hongi, which Gijsels estimated consisted of 23 or 24 vessels (more than the Company could muster at the time), including ships from Ihamahu. Although it does not seem to have done much damage elsewhere, this *hongi* did burn down the same nearby village of Itawaka. For good measure, the expedition cut down some sago and coconut trees, as well as 360 clove trees owned by a local orangkaya called Pati Nai. The kimelaha knew whom to target: Pati Nai had been instrumental in brokering the Alfurs' arrival before Tobo.[420]

Gijsels felt that he had to curb this emerging threat in the Lease Islands urgently– but how? Ihamahu was unassailable and, in the opinion of Gijsels and his colleagues, might only be brought to surrender if it were starved out in a protracted siege. However, Gijsels thought he might try something different. If the kimelaha was going to fight this war by cutting down trees, so would he. Gijsels and his council resolved to send out an expedition to 'do all possible damage to the clove, coconut, sago and fruit trees of the people of Iha, as well as their vessels'.[421]

As in previous years, an expedition fleet under the command of Adriaan Anthonissen had been sent from Batavia to assist in the hunt for Asian clove traders and other military exploits. It had arrived late and in any case there were apparently few Makasar traders in the area. Anthonissen and Gijsels therefore decided

420 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in VOC 1105, fol. 12r-13v. (This bit is not included in Bouwstoffen.)

421 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 199.

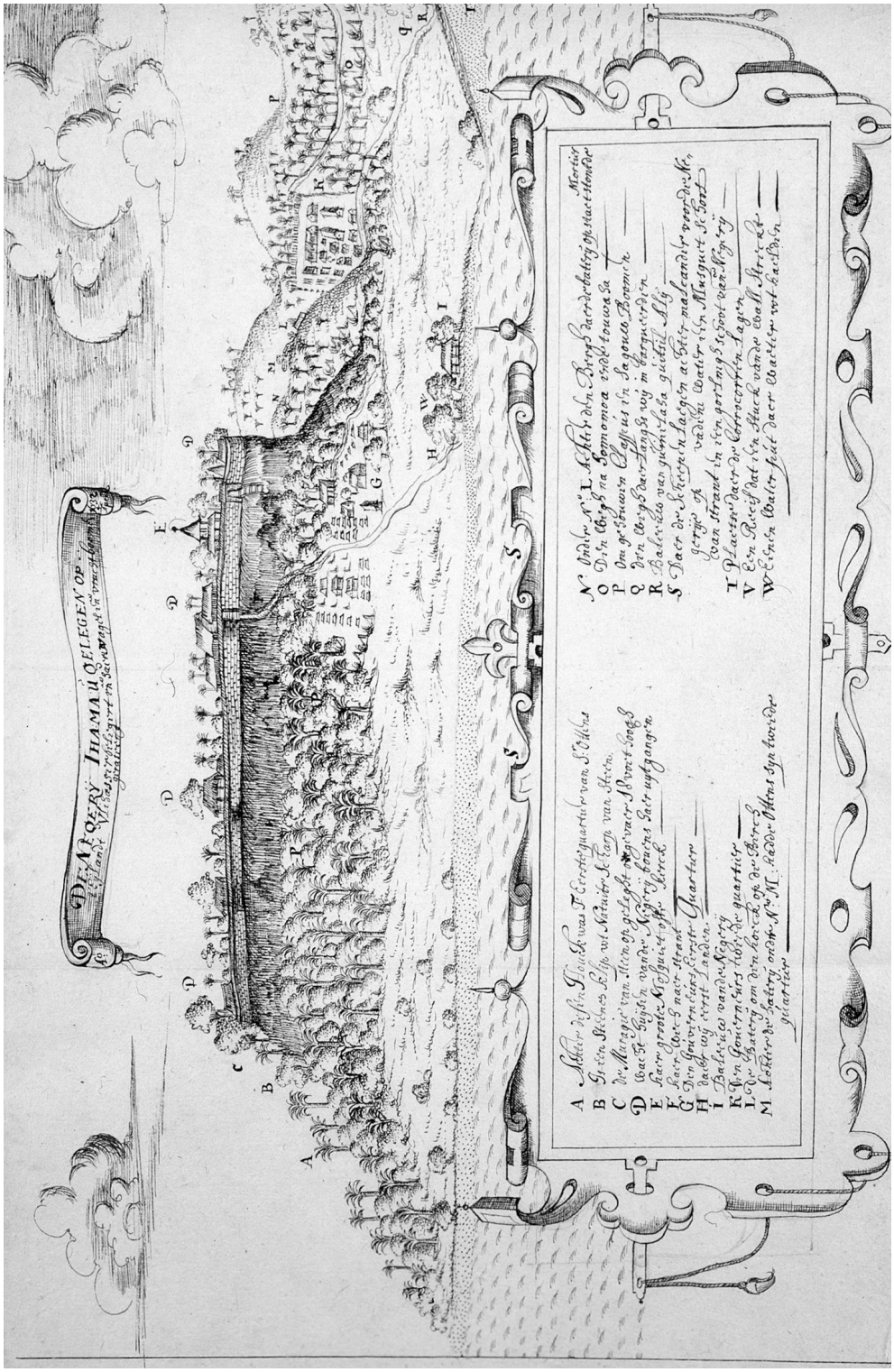
that the fleet could be used in the attack on Ihamahu, in addition to the *hongi*, which was once again assembled.

The Dutch ships left ahead of the hongi: given that the western monsoon had already passed and the rainy season was beginning, they would have to struggle with the wind. Whereas it would still have been easy to sail east a month or so earlier, the winds were now unsteady and becoming less favourable. In these circumstances, the kora-kora and uranbay had a clear advantage over the large sailing ships in that they had rowers. The European sailing ships, generally considered so superior in maritime warfare, were unwieldy and impractical when deployed in this island world in the wrong season. The first ships of the hongi – three kora-kora and one uranbay (a large war canoe), hailing from the villages closest to Kota Ambon, left from in front of the Dutch castle on the 8th of April, 1632. Two Dutch sloops and a launch rowed alongside them. As usual, as the fleet made its way around Ambon, it sent out messengers calling on various allied and tributary villages to ready their kora-kora and uranbay and join the fleet. The military campaign also once again doubled as an inspection tour, with Gijsels calling at places such as Ureng, where a new lodge was being built. When it arrived before Ihamahu in the early morning of the 13th of April, the hongi had grown to eleven kora-kora, two uranbay, and two sloops. More kora-kora would arrive over the next few days, eventually bringing the total number to sixteen. The total force assembled for the attack on Ihamahu counted 700 European soldiers and 2000 local allies.[422]

In a meeting of the officers and orangkaya on Gijsels' kora-kora, plans for the following day were made. It was decided that one of the yachts, the *Mocha*, would immediately be sent back to Ambon to fetch sago. Although the kora-kora had a lot of advantages in these circumstances, cargo capacity was not one of them, and the large crews of rowers consumed supplies rapidly. Normally, this

422 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 26r-v.

Fig. 7.2 (Next page) Anonymous pen drawing of the fortified town of Ihamahu on the island of Saparua during a siege by VOC forces and their local allies. Notable features mentioned in the legend in include the stone wall (C), described as 'some 18 feet high'; the batteries built on a hill adjacent to the town (L and N); and a treeless patch described as 'cut down coconut and sago trees' (P). From the private archive of governor Gijsels, now in the Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, inv. nr. K476, fol. 27.



forced kora-kora to stop and replenish supplies quite frequently. The crews knew where they could find sago and fish and would simply stop there for a day or two to replenish themselves before continuing an expedition. However, this could become problematic in situations involving large concentrations of ships and manpower. In this case, the larger VOC vessels could run the supplies.

The next day, the eight companies of European soldiers and the Ambonese allies landed on the beach below the fortified hill. The well located nearby was secured and camps were established at various locations at the foot of the hill to isolate the town from its water supply and from the coast. After only about two hours, representatives from the town came down to parlay. Gijsels explained why they were here and that if they did not pledge their allegiance to the VOC and surrender the defectors, revenge would be taken on their fruit trees. The representatives went back up to make their report and confer. Gijsels told them to hurry. [423]

When the delegates had not returned after one-and-a-half hours, Gijsels proceeded to cut down the fruit-bearing trees close to his quarters. The next day, a large combined European-Ambonese force again went out to cut down trees; a total of 230 axes were distributed for the purpose. The lumberjack force went out whenever the weather permitted, and Gijsels incidentally provided some numbers relating to their exploits. The discovery of a garden of clove trees, for instance, merited a mention in the records for the 28th of April, when an estimated 1200 or 1300 clove trees were ringbarked and 'several thousands' of coconut palms were eradicated by either being chopped down outright or having their crown cut out. On the 29th of April, two companies of soldiers (i.e. some 150) and a good 300 local allies went out and eradicated some 800 clove trees.[424] The siege would ultimately last for a month and on all but seven days Gijsels' journal explicitly mentions that a force was sent into the woods to cut down trees. This gives us some impression of the havoc the Dutch were wreaking on the forests and groves, and, by implication, the economic wellbeing of the inhabitants of Ihamahu. The besieged, aware of this and still able to enter and leave the town at will, attempted to waylay these parties of tree killers, managing to headhunt several individuals over the course of the siege. Most of those who died on the side of the Company and its allies were ambushed and headhunted when straying from the camp.

Meanwhile, the rest of the force tried to besiege Ihamahu as best they could.

423 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 28r.
424 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 28r, 31r-32.

Initially, Gijsels set up camp just west of the town, near the beach. Another camp, under the command of Joan Ottens, was set up immediately to the north of the town. These two camps were mostly used as reconnaissance bases, however. Soon, after the trees and boats hidden onshore in their immediate vicinity had been destroyed, both camps were moved to the south of the city. This not only cut Ihamahu off from land routes to the rest of the island, but also established the attackers on higher terrain. Ihamahu was the highest point in a wide area and could not be hit by the VOC's cannon, either from the ships or from the shore. The slightly higher terrain to the south and southwest of the city had several small hills, which allowed the Dutch to set up a battery and attempt to fire into the town.

Their first attempts were less than impressive. After the hill was fortified and a single *steenstuk* was hoisted aloft there on the 20th of April, the constable attempted to fire several grenades and firebombs into the town. However, none of the projectiles made it over the walls. Gijsels ordered the battery to cease firing after a couple of shots. A *prinsenstuk* was brought up the next day. That evening it fired six balls that did make it into the town and 'caused great screaming'.[425] The Dutch sent two more cannonballs over the walls towards midnight. Another *prinsenstuk* was hoisted up the hill two days later and used to fire both barshot and regular cannonballs into Ihamahu. After this, the besiegers would sometimes fire a couple of cannonballs in the evenings. Interestingly, it seems that they used the cannon, not for any kind of sustained assault or to attempt to breach the walls, but largely to break morale. They were not particularly successful in this: during most of the barrages the besieged remained silent and the Dutch had the impression that the population had simply moved to the north side of the town, out of reach of the guns. For their part, the besieged were able to hit the Dutch positions with their swivel guns and muskets. In this way, they managed to wound and kill several Dutchmen, particularly before the siege works were completed.

Gijsels had one additional trump card. By the end of April, Alfurs began arriving from the mainland of Seram, having been shipped over by the Company's allies. By the 30th of April, a good 300 of these Alfurs had assembled near Ihamahu and set up camp near Gijsels' own. Gijsels believed that Alfurs had never previously come out to fight in the smaller islands. It was his impression that the inhabitants were more frightened of these 300 Alfurs than they would

425 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 30r.

have been if he had brought a thousand European soldiers.[426] In addition to their psychological effect, the Alfurs served a clear practical purpose in that they were exceedingly proficient in hunting down and destroying the raiding parties that were sent out from Ihamahu to ambush the Dutch and their allies. Gijsels paid them a *parang* for each hunted head they brought back.

In the end, Ihamahu lived up to its reputation for impregnability. The Dutch and their allies were becoming exhausted more quickly than the besieged, debilitated as they were by the diseases that inevitably came with the rainy season. What is more, Anthonissen's ships were supposed to return to Batavia with the turning of the monsoon. On the 4th of May, Gijsels called the officers together. He had all of them subscribe to a written resolution, which detailed his reasons for breaking off the siege. The allies' desire to return home was not listed, although this might well have played a role, if other campaigns are any indication. Indeed, being called away on long hongi expeditions was difficult for the men, who also had duties in their own communities.[427] In any case, that night, under cover of a barrage of grenades fired into Ihamahu, most of the munition and supplies were loaded back onto the ships. The next morning, the quarters were burned down and the troops boarded their vessels once more. The hongi dispersed. Now sailing with the wind, without stopping at villages along the way, Gijsels was back in Castle Victoria the next day.

Even though Ihamahu had not surrendered, Gijsels was mighty pleased with the results of the campaign. The goal of the expedition, after all, had not been to conquer the town, but to mete out punishment to its trees and vessels. In that, the expedition had been spectacularly successful. 'They will no longer be able to use their gardens', Gijsels gleefully wrote to the governor-general shortly after his return. 'Everything around the town has been consumed and cut down. I believe that when the townspeople come down, they will sit and weep together, wailing in such a way as has never been heard in Ambon before. This Iha used to be the pleasure garden of all of Amboyna and the most beautiful land that could be

426 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 32r; Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 200-201.

427 Gijsels was making unprecedented use of the hongi system, and the Ambonese already started to complain about the burden that this put on them, not only because it took the men away for protracted periods, but also because in case of the loss of a kora-kora, the community itself was liable to have a new one made. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 89.

found, covered with valleys and forests such that it was a pleasure to behold'.[428] Gijsels did have a hunch that the Christian villages closest to Iha might be the targets of retaliation. Accordingly, he took care to leave them with a couple of soldiers, who could be missed until the next dry season.

All in all, Gijsels felt that he had found a way to strike the inhabitants of the Amboyna Quarter where it hurt. Scorched-earth tactics, which aimed at the inhabitants' trees and vessels, would become the staple of his subsequent campaigns.

### Assessing Gijsels' evolving strategy: indigenous forts and environmental warfare

Surprisingly little research exists about indigenous forts in the Ambon Islands and most of the extant literature gives the impression that they did not amount to much.[429] This impression is reinforced by the surviving archaeological remains, which consist mostly of Dutch fortifications. By the end of the conflicts that are the topic of this study, the Dutch ordered the inhabitants to come down from their hillforts, which, in some cases, were also demolished. Dutch fortifications, by contrast, remained in use, often well into the nineteenth century or even beyond: Castle Victoria in Ambon, for instance, remains a military base to this very day.[430] Paradoxically, some of the Dutch forts in the region have now become a form of local heritage. Having been heavily restored, forts such as Duurstede on Saparua and Amsterdam on Ambon are now advertised as tourist attractions. Nearby indigenous forts, such as Benteng Kapahaha in Hitu and the old Ihamahu fortifications, are only remembered by the communities living right below them. Interestingly, the locations of these forts often have a strong cultural significance for these communities and some of the sites within them are still considered *kramat,* sacred.[431] In other cases, however, the cultural connection to such sites was severed at the end of the Great Hoamoal War, when entire

428 Gijsels to Specx, 23 May 1632, in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 201.

429 E.g. Knaap, 'Headhunting, carnage and armed peace in Amboina, 1500-1700', 178pp. Cf. Michael Charney. *Southeast Asian Warfare, 1300-1900*. Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 73-74, which asserts that, on the contrary, most warfare in Southeast Asia was siege warfare. I subscribe to his view and contend that it also applied to the Ambon region.

430 The early modern forts investigated as part of the Forts in Indonesia project were all incorporated into the Atlas of Mutual Heritage. For a quick overview of some of their histories, see atlasofmutualheritage.nl.

431 Personal visits to Ihamahu and Benteng Kapahaha, February 2019.

communities were forcibly resettled. It is only very recently that the forts have garnered attention from the local archaeological service: since 2018, the young archaeologist Muhammad Al Mujabuddawat has been surveying some of them, his interest having been piqued by some of the same drawings from the Gijsels archive that appear in this chapter.[432]

The presently available evidence and scholarship, while not allowing for a detailed history of the evolution of these fortifications, nonetheless paints a compelling general picture. As regards the wider region, various recent publications have suggested that there was a spree of fortification from the sixteenth century onwards. Many scholars believe it was caused by developing rivalries over access to the region amongst both Europeans and emerging local powers such as Makassar and Ternate, as well as the proliferation of gunpowder weapons. Although the forts were built in response to changes in the region and adopted know-how from other regions, in some ways they were simply an extension of existing building traditions.[433] European sources from the mid-sixteenth century concerning Ambon and Banda already noted that their populations maintained mountain hideouts, 'which in time of war serve as fortresses and are so difficult of ascent that to reach them one needs in many places to use one's hands to clamber up as much as one's feet'.[434]

Perhaps unsurprisingly in a region where intervillage warfare and headhunting were endemic, hilltop forts seem to have been common throughout the east-

432 I met Mujab, as he is colloquially called, in February 2019 in the Balai Arkeologi Maluku, and we were both amazed that we had grown fascinated by the same topic at the same time, each in our separate ways. Mujab was kind enough to share his preliminary research report about the surveys he conducted at seven of these forts, from which I thankfully draw in this section. M. Mujabuddawat, 'Laporan Penelitian Arkeologi Menelusuri Jejak Benteng Tradisional di Pulau Seram dan Kepulauan Ambon Lease.' Ambon: Balai Arkeologi Maluku, unpublished 2018. I was able to return the favour by providing him with a number of seventeenth century images he was as yet unaware of.

433 Sue O'Connor, Andrew McWilliam, and Sally Brockwell eds., *Forts and Fortification in Wallacea: Archaeological and Ethnohistoric Investigations*, Terra Australis 53 (Acton: ANU Press, 2020), esp. Chs. 1, 6-10 and 12; Antoinette Schapper, 'Build the wall: village fortification, its timing and triggers in Southern Maluku, Indonesia,' *Indonesia and the Malay World* 47, no. 138 (2019): 220–51; M. Mujabuddawat, Laporan Penelitian etc., passim.

434 Quoted from John Villiers, John. 'Trade and Society in the Banda Islands in the Sixteenth Century.' *Modern Asian studies* 15.4 (1981): 723–750, esp. pp. 727-728. Villiers additionally refers to a similar statement about Banda from Pires' *Suma Oriental,* written in the 1510s.

ern archipelago well before the early modern period. They subsequently proliferated and were adapted in response to gunpowder weapons and the encroachment of European and local powers. For instance, when the Dutch started wreaking havoc in Banda, which had had a great deal of direct contact with the wider archipelago in the early modern period, they were confronted with hilltop fortifications and fortified coastal towns with 'curtain walls and bastions flanking each other', defended with guns.[435] As we have seen, the Ternatens were able to use, extend, and improve upon existing Portuguese fortifications in the late sixteenth century. The Ambon Islands were certainly no exception.[436]

Judging by the descriptions and drawings, as well as the archaeological evidence, Ihamahu and Tobo had no bastions and the outer wall simply followed the edge of the platform. The former's walls were defended with swivel guns and muskets, rather than heavy ordnance; the latter with stones and arrows. Despite this, the VOC had real trouble conquering them with anything resembling European siege tactics. The same could be said of the VOC's broadside sailing vessels in the Ihamahu campaign. These ships proved cumbersome and were unable to use their cannon profitably because the town was simply too high up. The only way in which they could make themselves useful in the siege was by running supplies and blockading the coast.

Instead, Gijsels relied almost entirely on local allies and local tactics. In what we might consider a good example of culturally informed warfare, he drew on existing antagonisms by presenting the Dutch as *ulisiwa*; made use of the Alfurs of Seram's ferocious reputation and guerrilla tactics; and relied heavily on the hongi system.

Importantly, the tactic of destroying all tree and plant life that could sustain the human population, which would become the mainstay of Gijsels' campaigns and many of the subsequent conflicts, was not without precedence in the region. Indeed, Gijsels' approach was preceded by kimelaha Luhu's attack on Itiwaka, which also targeted clove, coconut, and sago trees. Of course, the VOC was no stranger to cutting down trees as part of its campaigns in the region, but the 1625 campaign specifically targeted clove trees (although the Dutch soldiers also occasionally cut down coconut groves when they came across them). It seems

435 J.A. van der Chijs. *De vestiging van het Nederlandsche gezag over de Banda-eilanden, (1599-1621)*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1886, p. 127.

436 Also see the description of the stand-off at Kambelo in 1615, where an indigenous fort stood up to the Dutch: above, chapter V, paragraph 'A standoff'.

that the kimelaha's attack prompted Gijsels not only to dust off this tactic, but also to broaden it to deliberately target every type of tree and plant that could sustain the human population. It is important to realise that this Ambonese version of the scorched earth tactic seems to have come about due to a process of mutual interadoption, rather than being introduced by the VOC.[437]

That being said: the VOC certainly took the tactic to unprecedented extremes, not only at the siege of Ihamahu, but throughout the region in the following years. Gijsels' governorship was so rife with violence, and this violence has been so extensively documented, that a complete assessment or chronological narration are unfeasible here. Although the remainder of this chapter will look at some campaigns in detail, it will mostly describe the wider context within which we should see them.

### A war enthusiast in Batavia

After his attack on Ihamahu, Gijsels stuck to his orders from Batavia and limited himself to attacks on trading vessels over the next few months. On occasion, these spilt over into raids to punish those settlements that had been welcoming to foreign traders. Asaudi was raided on the 23rd of August, for instance, with its livestock, supplies and trade goods taken. This expedition also took nine junks and conquered a makeshift fortification that the traders had erected on the island of Kelang. By contrast, a subsequent smaller expedition to Hoamoal and Buru, pursuing rumours of more traders arriving with the new monsoon, came up almost empty. It took only two kora-kora from North Seram, which were out raiding, but no traders were seen or caught.

Meanwhile, Gijsels had rapidly earned Governor-General Specx's disapproval. Gijsels deemed his predecessor Philip Lucasz an incompetent weakling and told the governor-general as much in his letters. He himself had big plans for the Ambon Islands and immediately to work executing them. They included refitting some of the VOC vessels to be more suited for warfare in the Ambon Islands, digging out the moat of Victoria Castle, and renovating fortifications such as the one at Hitu, all of which projects demanded money and manpower.

437 In addition, it would seem that in executing raids on each other, the various communities of Banda also cut down each other's nutmeg trees in the late sixteenth century. This kind of economic and environmental warfare, it seems, was not new to the region. See Peter Vanderford Lape. 'Contact and Conflict in the Banda Islands, Eastern Indonesia 11th-17th Centuries.' PhD. Diss. Brown University, Rhode Island, 2000, 66-67.

Specx felt that Gijsels was in way over his head. As he aptly summarised it in his general letter to the directors in Holland: 'Gijsels is impertinently complaining about various things… but we fear that compared to his own policies, those of Lucasz will compare rather favourably. He has initiated more changes than we believe he can satisfactorily complete, and is spending way too much'.[438]

In addition to apologising profusely and defending his policies, Gijsels continued to try and convince Specx that merely going after the junks was insufficient. The brisk attitude with which he had started his governorship was, however, rapidly melting away. Gijsels painted an alarming picture of the political situation in the islands, which recalled the pessimistic letters of his predecessors. Kimelaha Luhu had reportedly been betrothed to the daughter of the Kapitan Hitu. The Hituese were sheltering some of the Papuan raiders who had escaped from the VOC's campaign of the previous months and refused to turn them over. The Hoamoalese were ignoring written instructions from the Ternatan sultan to stop trading with the Makasars. Indeed, they flat-out denied that the sultan had demanded any such thing. At the same time, the kimelaha was sending gifts to the Alfur rulers to wean them from their alliance to the Dutch. (The gifts, Gijsels was relieved to report, had been refused.) All in all, Amboina was 'the most difficult governorate in all of the Indies', and the entire situation occasioned in Gijsels continuous 'doubts and a thousand fears'. Surely, all these 'Moors' had resolved to drive the Dutch from the region altogether, 'so that we should surely assume that they have numerous secret schemes'.[439] Barely one-and-a-half years into his governorship, Gijsels had become just as desperate and paranoid as his predecessors.

From Gijsels' perspective, the state of affairs in the islands called for extreme measures. To him, it was 'clear to see that from now on no other means should be used but the ultimate remedy, which is none other than to attack their cloves or their trees themselves. I therefore wish to maintain, contrary to the opinion

438 Specx, van der Burgh and Gardenijs to directors, 6 Jan 1632, published in *Generale Missiven*, I, 315. Some one-and-a-half years of the *Uitgaand Briefboek* of this period, from 1 March 1631 to 11 November 1632, have not been preserved, so that we cannot read the rebuke Specx gave Gijsels (unfortunately, as Specx was quite good at writing strongly-worded rebukes as we saw in the last chapter). We can, however, infer much of its contents from Gijsels' profuse apologies and defense of his policy in his letter of 23 May 1632, in VOC 1105, 5r –8r.

439 The original Dutch 'dienvolgende wij ons vastelijck ende seecker moeten inbeelden dat sij verscheijde secrete concepten hebben', breathes an atmosphere of paranoia that is lost in my translation. Gijsels to Specx, 10 September 1632, VOC 1105, 52v.

of many, that we will not find redress in patrolling with yachts and burning junks'.[440] He felt that such a campaign against the trees might best be aimed at the area around Kambelo, Lesidi, and Erangh. Although it would be difficult, costly, and last for at least two campaign seasons, it would certainly prove worthwhile.

Of course, Gijsels had not made a terribly good first impression on Governor-General Specx, who was none too happy with Gijsels' assertive (and costly) governing style. Specx had never been confirmed in his capacity as governor-general by the directors in the Netherlands, however. As it turned out, the directors preferred a different candidate. Just as Gijsels was writing down his plans for a sustained campaign of clove eradication, Specx was succeeded in Batavia by Hendrik Brouwer.

The latter was far more receptive to Gijsels' pleas.[441] He sent Anthonissen out to Ambon once again with a fleet of five yachts, with orders that had been lifted straight from Gijsels' letters. Gijsels and Anthonissen were not only to hunt for foreign ships, but also see to an attack on Seram Laut. This island lay all the way on the eastern side of Seram, in an area that the Dutch rarely visited. A local informant had told the Dutch that the Javanese and Makasar traders, in their perennial cat-and-mouse game with the Dutch patrols, had moved their main operation there. The traders had sailed to Seram Laut undetected during the western monsoon and were now awaiting the turning of the monsoon, which usually coincided with the end of the campaign season, before coming to western Seram to buy cloves. This news was doubly alarming to the VOC, for Seram Laut was also a good staging area for attacks on the Banda Islands.

Brouwer's instructions did not end there. If time permitted, Gijsels and Anthonissen were also to use the fleet to attack several villages on the coast of Western Seram, specifically those north of Kambelo that had not been touched by the 1625 campaign. The villages that Brouwer specified came right out of Gijsels' earlier letter. Gijsels was to destroy the clove trees in their vicinity, and should avoid coming to any kind of reconciliation with the inhabitants too readily as this would get in the way of his tree eradication efforts. Brouwer subsequently

440 'Extreme middelen' in Gijsels to Specx, 10 September 1632, VOC 1105, 52v. Subsequent quote from same letter, printed in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 206.

441 Once again, the letters to Gijsels have not been preserved, but Brouwer e.a. to directors, 1 December 1632, in: *Generale Missiven*, I, 357pp, combined with e.g. the orders for the Anthonissen fleet in VOC 856, fol 1r-2r, give us the necessary details about what they entailed.

defended this policy to the Gentlemen XVII back home by stating that there were currently 'more than too many cloves in the world anyway'.[442]

Gijsels went straight to work, but set his own priorities. On the 28th of February, he sent out the hongi to join Anthonissen's fleet, which had already left for the coast of Western Seram. The combined force would ultimately include seven yachts, four sloops and twenty-nine kora-kora. Gijsels was aware that his new policies would likely invite retaliation and that the kimelaha was also on the move with a hongi of his own. Accordingly, he evacuated the VOC lodge at Luhu before making straight for the islands west of Hoamoal. Masavoy, on Manipa, was the first target: it was burned and two junks hidden near the town were destroyed.

The fleet then went on to Kelang, a large and well-fortified town and shipbuilding centre situated on the island of the same name. Although Kelang was situated in a valley between two hills, and therefore more accessible than some of the hill settlements, the town was nonetheless formidable. It was here that the soldiers of the Nassau Fleet had suffered a reversal seven years previously. During this new assault, the initial defence was once again fierce; Makasar (poisonous) darts, as well as bullets from muskets and swivel guns, rained down on the Dutch attackers, resulting in several casualties. In the end, however, Gijsels managed to storm the town and the defenders abandoned the impressive stone walls surprisingly quickly. The Dutch and their allies took the town at the cost of four dead and some fifteen wounded. This came as a surprise, for Kelang was considered one of the most heavily fortified settlements in the region. Indeed, the attackers could attest to its defensibility, protected as it was by high stone walls with ramparts.[443]

Once inside, the Dutch marvelled at the size and beauty of the place, with its large central square lined with coconut palms and five or six large, well-made *baileus*. One was particularly impressive: 'recently made and extraordinarily large, [it was] made out of beautiful and good wood, about as long, wide and high as the church of Amboina. The roof was as much as three feet thick, and we could not have built such a *baileu* near the castle for 20.000 reals'.[444] In addition,

442 Brouwer e.a. to directors, 1 December 1632, in: *Generale Missiven*, I, 359. Furthermore, he was also instructed to attack Ihamahu again, should they still give any trouble.

443 The journal first mentions 4 dead, then 15 slightly further down. It is my impression that the latter number is a mistake, and the author mistakenly wrote down the number of wounded.

444 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 53r.

the Dutch found six unfinished kora-kora and a great number of smaller craft. This was the main reason that they had targeted the town: boatbuilding was a specialised skill in the region (as opposed to housebuilding, for instance) and Kelang was the main boatbuilding centre for the *ulilima* towns affiliated with the kimelaha. It was also known to supply replacement ships to foreign traders who had lost their craft to a Dutch patrol. The Dutch put the entire town and everything in it to the torch. The finished boats and kora-kora found outside the town were either destroyed or taken along with the fleet.

Two days later, while *en route* back to the coast of Hoamoal again, Gijsels invited all the officers and orangkaya to a feast on the ship *Leeuwinne*. He presented ten of the orangkaya with a Dutch sword, both as a reward for the successful attack on Kelang and to motivate them for what would transpire over the next few days. The next important target was Erang, on the coast of Hoamoal. An important producer of cloves, the town was known to sell its entire harvest to the Makasar and Javanese traders and had escaped the attention of the Nassau Fleet seven years earlier. After a few days of heavy rain, which made any kind of military action impossible, the attack began. Three of the large VOC yachts had been sent to Kambelo and Lesidi with minimal crews so as to create the impression that the attack would fall there. Covered by this diversion, the main force landed unopposed on the beaches of Erang in the early hours of the 16th of March.

Erang was situated on a hilltop that could be reached by two paths. Accordingly, Gijsels split his troops into two forces to climb them. Both forces encountered several fortifications. One was described as made out of wood filled with earth and having two demilunes (semi-circular bulwarks), 'from which [the defenders] would have been able to inflict great violence on us, had they not lacked the courage'.[445] The defenders only took a dozen or so pot shots at the Dutch-Ambonese force before abandoning the fortification as the Dutch returned fire. The Dutch pursued the fleeing defenders, passing two similar defensive works, which had also been abandoned, and reached the town unopposed. As soon as the Gijsels' force entered, the few people who were still there rushed out into the hills. Even without any defenders, the town's high position proved daunting to the Dutch soldiers, several of whom fainted on their way up.

Some of the defenders showed themselves from a small fortification sited higher up in the hills, out of range of the Company's gunfire. Carrying a blood flag, they shouted at the Dutch. Gijsels responded in kind by triumphantly pa-

445 'Journael van gedaene tochten' fol. 57r.

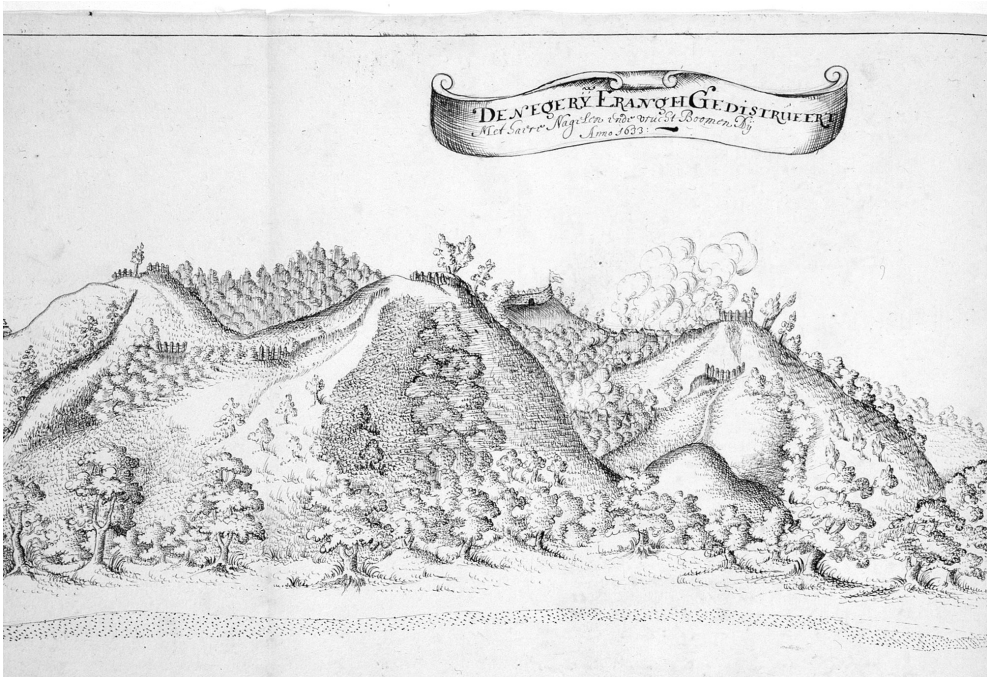



Fig 7.3. *De negerij Erangh gedistrueert met haer nagelen ende vrucht boomen Adij Anno 1633.* Anonymous drawing from Gijsels' expedition log, showing the various fortifications defending the two roads to Erangh. The town itself is shown going up in smoke just below the banderole. Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, inv. nr. K476, fol. 56.

rading his troops on the highest part of the settlement. He then got about his business and searched the town, discovering some seventy-five bags of cloves, two swivel guns, and some other loot, which was brought down to the ships. He then had Erang and everything in it put to the torch.

That, however, was only a prelude to the attack's main objective: now that the town and its defenders were out of the way, the force took to the task of destroying the abundance of clove trees in the area. The expedition log notes with some annoyance how the large and old clove trees grew right up to the shoreline, which the Nassau Fleet, which had sailed closely along this coast seven years ago, could only have deliberately overlooked. The next three days were spent cutting and ringbarking the trees. The work was only interrupted by bad weather and the sago supplies running low. After a three-day resupply mission to a sago forest near Asaudi, the force returned to Erang and spent another four days eradicating clove and fruit trees.

On the 26th of March, Gijsels brought his entire force ashore again and

marched them into the hills in an attempt to destroy the villages of Tulon and Tabinato, which lay higher up and further inland. This would ensure that they could safely destroy the remaining clove trees in the wider area. This proved more difficult than anticipated: although Gijsels' troops were able to drive the defenders from several smaller fortifications, he did not feel that he could press on to confront the remaining fortifications and villages. One clove plantation, it turned out, was defended by a fortification hidden in the forest; the Dutch suffered two dead and eight wounded and had to retire, leaving the trees unharmed. The dead were buried the next day – a Sunday – in a hidden location to make sure they were not dug up and beheaded.

Another, more accessible clove plantation was found and destroyed the following day, but Gijsels began to sense that he had done about as much as he could. His forces had been on the move for a month and progress was slow and difficult due to the terrain, persistent resistance, and his allies' dwindling supplies. Rather than try to destroy the remaining villages and the surrounding plantations, groves, and orchards, he felt it was probably sensible to return to the castle and prepare for the next big expedition he had been instructed to undertake. On the 29th, he called together the officers and orangkaya and, after long deliberations, had them subscribe to a resolution to that effect. It noted that the mission had been somewhat successful, given that around Erang alone they had 'cut, ringbarked and razed […]around 5000 clove and 900 nutmeg trees, 400 coconut palms and much other fruitbearing vegetation all the way up to Hulon and Tabialo'. Despite the force being 'resolved to continue to the end… nothing more of note can be achieved here and [the governor-general] has strongly recommended us to undertake the expedition to Seram Laut, in order to secure our state in Banda.'[446]

And so the entire fleet set out for the Hituese coast the next day, in bad, windy weather that endangered the kora-kora. Without even returning to the bay of Ambon, preparations for the new expedition were made on the spot as soon as the vessels reached Hitu. Messengers and soldiers marched up and down the overland road from Hitu to Ambon, captured cloves were unloaded, and supplies brought on board.

The kimelaha had not been idle in the meantime. There had been reports that he was out and about with a hongi of his own, seventeen vessels strong. Indeed, the threat posed by this fleet had loomed in the background throughout

446 'Journael van gedaene tochten', 60v.

the recent expedition. It now turned out that, rather than strike at the Dutch force directly, the kimelaha had opted for a different tactic. On the 31st of March, Gijsels learned that he had attacked Wai, a Christian village under Dutch rule situated on the far eastern side of Ambon, extremely close to the Dutch base of power. Making his way there the next day, Gijsels found the village burned and got the full story. Two days earlier, an hour before dawn, four of the kimelaha's kora-kora had rowed up to Wai undetected and then attacked shouting 'Kimelaha, kimelaha! The governor has torched our towns and taken our kora-kora, now we will slay you all!' In a matter of half an hour, they had killed thirteen people, taken as many as forty-three captive, and torched the town. Gijsels was under the impression that they had been able to do so by bringing a couple of Alfurs of their own. Combined with the fact that Alfur support for the past campaign had not materialised despite being requested, this left him with a gnawing suspicion that the kimelaha might have driven a wedge in their alliance with the Company after all.[447]

A VOC yacht riding at anchor before Wai, which had been left there specifically to prevent such an attack, had noted that something was going on, fired its cannon into the darkness, and subsequently given chase to the kora-kora, but to no avail. While Gijsels was off fighting his war on trees, the kimelaha had been able to retaliate right in his backyard.

### To the far side of Seram

In fact, Gijsels had also aimed to attack villages (in his case, those under the kimelaha) while their men were away on the hongi, for this would incite the men to return to defend their homes.[448] Clearly, two could play that game and before his new expedition could take off, Gijsels had to allow some of the orangkaya to return home. He took some additional defensive measures, sending some of the kora-kora off with extra soldiers for the Dutch posts on the Lease Islands and ordering a VOC yacht to patrol the waters between Hitu and Seram.

All the same, the expedition fleet was formidable. In addition to the hongi, it eventually consisted of ten yachts (two of which had come from Banda) and some additional sloops and other smaller vessels. It carried nine companies of European soldiers (probably at least 500 men) and what must have amounted

447 Letter to governor-general, 25 May 1633, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 240-241.

448 'Journael van gedaene tochten', 50v.

to some 2000 local allies. Gijsels planted the rumour that they were going to attack Werinama, the fortified town that they had made plans to take two years ago. The force then made its way east – we might imagine with some reluctance amongst the local allies, who were likely concerned for their homes and families, and annoyed at having to campaign for such an unprecedentedly long time.

The island of Seram is the largest in the Amboina Quarter, stretching more than 300 kilometres from west to east. Dutch knowledge of the coast became more sketchy beyond Tobo.[449] Seram Laut, a little way out at sea from the easternmost point of Seram, was another 100 kilometres from there. Although the hongi received *hormats* and stopped to meet local orangkaya over the first two weeks, the expedition took on a different character as it made its way into less familiar territory. As the ships passed Tobo in the hours before dawn, great fires were burning there; presumably to warn the surrounding villages. Later that day, the hongi met up with the yachts, which had sailed ahead. Treaty or not, the large fleet understandably had the inhabitants of the coastal areas worried. When the combined fleet passed Kilbon slightly further east, they found that although its inhabitants had left a *hormat* of some food and a white flag on the shore, they themselves had fled the town for the mountains. The food was picked up and the fleet continued on its way.

On the morning of the 19th of April, Seram Laut came into view. Landing on it proved difficult, though. The island was surrounded by coral reefs on all sides, and the only approach for anything larger than the smallest vessels was on the west side, where the heavily fortified main settlements were located. The yachts and kora-kora therefore had to anchor quite far off the island, halfway between Seram Laut and Geser, a smaller, uninhabited island slightly to the west.

The inhabitants of Seram Laut immediately sent a boat with four delegates, flying a white flag. It turned out that they were old acquaintances; representatives of the island had come to Castle Victoria two years earlier, receiving a trading pass. The delegates told Gijsels of their surprise at the force's arrival; as far as they knew, they were friends with the Dutch. Gijsels noted that Kilwaru, a heavily fortified settlement built on a sandy peninsula on the west side of the island, was flying a Dutch flag to illustrate the point.[450] Unimpressed, he replied that they

449 Van Speult had also taken a hongi along Seram's south coast in 1622, all the way to Guli-Guli, but he had not made the crossing to Seram Laut, and in any case, the expedition had yielded little detailed information about the coast.

450 Such flags were handed out to communities putting themselves under Dutch protection through a treaty, as we saw above at the end of the siege of Tobo.

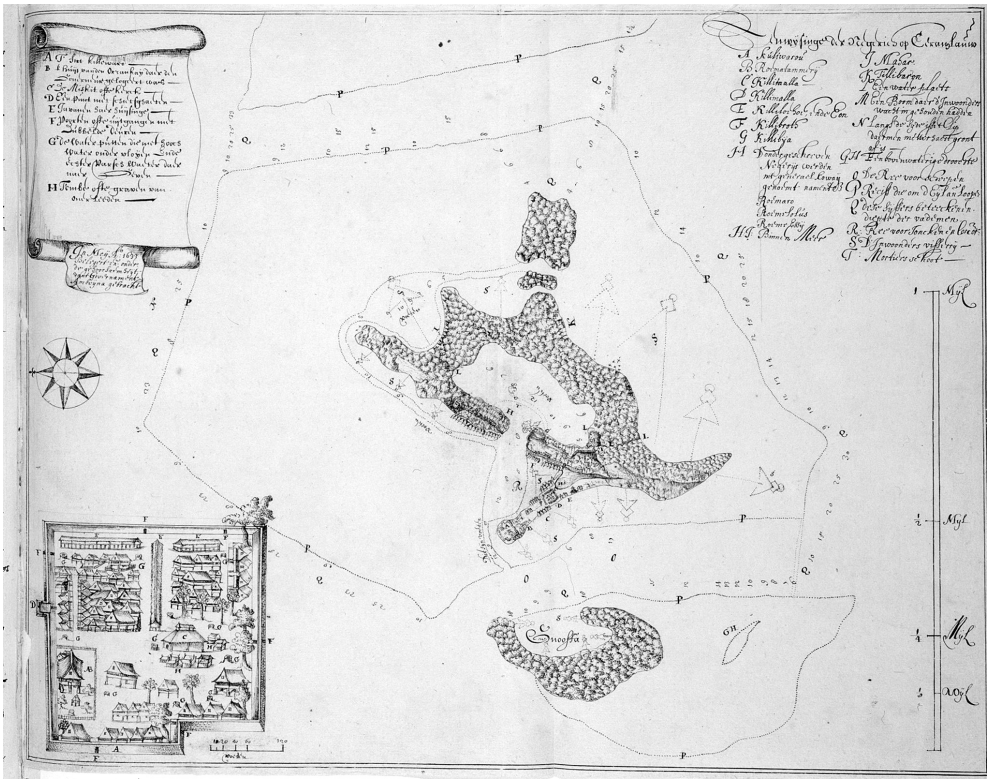


Fig 7.4 Map of the island of Seram Laut. To the lower left, an inset shows Kilwaru, the main settlement, and its fortifications. Each side of the town was about a hundred meters long, the northeastern side sporting a 'bastion with loopholes'. In the west (below) is the island of Geser (here called Gnoffa). Above Geser, we see the sandy peninsula with Kilwaru at its furthest end. To its east (i.e. above it) we see the rest of the island, with extensive fortifications on the hills flanking the entrance to the bay. Kilwaru exists to this day but is no longer linked to the main island, for the connecting land has since disappeared beneath the waves. The eastern half of the island (i.e. the upper part) has been drawn rather sketchily; it is much larger in reality. Karlsruhe, inv. nr. K476, fol. 69.

had come because of the foreign traders. Instead of sending the delegates back, he arrested them for interrogation.

His new captives informed him about the various settlements on the island and their defences. The island as a whole boasted some 3000 men capable of bearing arms and there were some 100 muskets and ten cannon. Seven Javanese junks, as well as one from Selayar (the island just south of Sulawesi, under Makasar control), were presently at the island, as was a sampan from Luhu,

which had brought cloves to sell to the traders. Having learned all this, Gijsels locked the delegates up on board one of the yachts. Meanwhile, additional reconnaissance with two sloops had established that Seram Saut had a large inlet whose mouth was defended by various stone fortifications. A square fort on the outer end of the sandy peninsula, its walls eleven-foot wide and eighteen-foot high, was especially daunting. All in all, Gijsels found the defences 'quite different from how they had been described to us by various people, and truly not a kitten to be handled without gloves'.[451]

By this time, both the traders and the inhabitants had brought all their vessels to safety in the inlet. As it was getting late, it was decided any kind of offensive would be postponed until the next day. Gijsels had the fleet spread out around the entire island to form a blockade and prevent any of the vessels from escaping.

To Gijsels' surprise, the next morning the entire force was able to land close to Kilwaru without facing any opposition. The entire sandy peninsula, with all its settlements, had been abandoned, with the inhabitants taking refuge in the fortifications higher up on the island. The Dutch forces occupied the various posts and structures on the small peninsula, which were all fortified to some degree. Kilwaru, which lay on the far end of the peninsula, was a veritable fortress. The Dutch noted that some of the other fortifications were in poor condition, showing signs of rushed and incomplete repairs. They brought cannon ashore, installing some near the mouth of the inlet both to prevent ships from moving freely through the bay and to fire at the fortifications higher up on the island, wearing the enemy down.[452]

As the guns were being hoisted into position, a rowing boat emerged from the inlet flying an improvised white flag. Its occupant, a man named Modim, came to negotiate. Not only did he bring a 'golden snake' to present to the governor; he also had a copy of a treaty between the inhabitants of Seram Laut and Governor Van Speult, made in December 1624. Indeed, several of the settlements along Seram's south coast had come to Castle Victoria at that time, making a treaty with Van Speult to establish friendly relations following a period of turmoil pre-

451 Gijsels to governor-general, 25 May 1633, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 242.

452 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 70r. The phrasing is interesting because it fits the general pattern of these campaigns of not using guns to breach the enemy's walls, but to merely use them to exert pressure on the occupants of a fortification by causing casualties, fires, and panic.

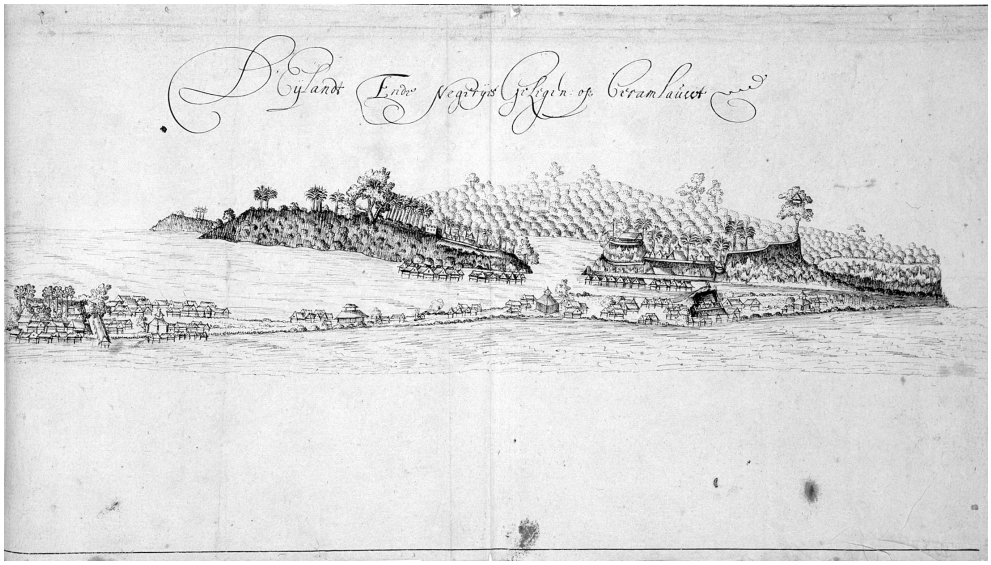


Fig 7.5 Bird's eye view of Seram Laut, showing the sandy peninsula with Kilwaru (visible on the left) and the other settlements. Several fortifications with right angles and rudimentary bastions dot the peninsula. The low hills behind on the main landmass are also extensively fortified to guard the inlet of the bay. These defensive structures, by contrast, are built with round walls following the contours of the landscape. They include an observation post in a very tall tree to the right. Karlsruhe, inv. nr. K476, fol 74.

cipitated by the Bandanese refugees.[453] In practice, contacts had been sparse since then. All the same, here was a Seram Laut representative brandishing a copy of a treaty with one of Gijsels' predecessors, insisting that Seram Laut and the Company were friends. Gijsels retorted that they were here because of the inhabitants' dealings with the foreign traders. If they were truly friends, he continued, they should come down from their forts and turn over the foreign traders and their weapons. Modim went back to the orangkaya, still in possession of the golden snake, which Gijsels had not accepted, accompanied by a VOC official named Roelof Gerrits. The two were back soon enough with the orangkaya's reply: they could only come down if the Dutch would go back to their ships. As things stood, the Javanese and Makasar traders threatened to run amok in the town should the inhabitants dare surrender to the Dutch.

453 The text of the treaty is included in *Corpus Diplomaticum*, p. 300, treaty LXXXIII (23 December 1624).

With the inhabitants unwilling (or rather, unable) to surrender, it came down to a siege. The low hill beyond the flat peninsula, which the Dutch had conquered, featured a fortification at both its foot and summit. The Dutch decided to breach the walls of the higher fortifications using their artillery and succeeded in doing so in a matter of hours. Its defenders abandoned the position. Gijsels had the reinforcements from Banda as well as some of the Mardijkers move around and climb the hill to take the abandoned fort. The defenders in the fort below now had the enemy both to their rear, up on the hill, and in front, on the sandy peninsula. Threatened from two sides, it soon fell too. The Dutch and their local allies now controlled the south side of the inlet entirely. The VOC's guns were trained on the fortifications on the other side of the water and launches with soldiers were sent out to fire at the houses built on poles in the shallow water below them.

Right around that time, Modim, the negotiator, appeared in a boat for a second time. In the confusion (or so the Dutch report took care to emphasise), he was shot, and he died that evening. Modim had brought the golden snake to offer Gijsels once again. Gijsels later retrieved it from a sailor who had stolen it after Modium was shot. Another *perahu* appeared, with two white flags, bringing two women and a man. They brought lavish gifts: more golden snakes, a *pinang* vessel, two women's gowns, and a white shroud. The latter two items were not gifts per se; rather more morbidly, they were meant for the burial of the negotiators should they too be shot.[454] They professed their willingness to come down from their fortifications, but once again told the VOC that they were not allowed to do so by the Makasar and Javanese traders. If the VOC would only cease fire and rein in its local allies (who were raiding and headhunting in the interior of the island) they would be happy to negotiate. This was agreed and the negotiations were set to take place on the coast of the inlet later that day.

Things would not, however, go as the Dutch hoped. The most senior VOC officials arrived at the agreed-upon time – Gijsels in his large *kora-kora*, Ottens, and Anthonissen in a launch. As soon as they dropped anchor, they were

454 For identification of these items, see Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* II, 1, 167 for the *pinang* vessel, 168 for the gowns ('oeti-oeti'). 170-171 describes various types of jewellery and mentions 'golden snakes', which, among other things, were used as hair ornaments, and of which Valentijn mentions that one only finds them among 'the first rulers of these lands.' (170). Their apparent royal status, and the fact that they are often offered in negotiations, suggests that they might have a symbolic significance, recognizing the recipient as a ruler, but I have been unable to confirm this.

treated to a hail of musket fire, arrows, spears, and stones. They cut the anchor ropes, rowed for their lives, and were fortunate to get away with only one man wounded. The shooting and fighting resumed, with Gijsels, angry, ordering his smaller vessels to raid the inlet and capture or destroy all the inhabitants' vessels. According to the report, an improbable number of craft were taken: six large kora-kora; seven junks and sampans; some forty uranbays; and 160 small vessels. Some of the vessels were taken from right beneath the walls of the remaining enemy forts. Meanwhile, the Ambonese allies returned from the interior with some seventeen hunted heads and around fifty captives. Interestingly, Gijsels and the other officers were rather displeased: these raids had apparently continued after the inhabitants had agreed to negotiate and Gijsels suspected that this might have been why the planned negotiations ended in bloodshed earlier that day. He berated the allies, telling them that targeting innocent women and children was unbecoming for self-professed Christians and that they should not take off on their own the next day.

Attempts at renewed negotiations over the next few days came to nothing; the foreign traders simply would not allow the local inhabitants to surrender, effectively keeping them hostage. Gijsels therefore kept on bombarding the fortifications, meaning to take them by storm. On the 23rd, guided by a prisoner who had professed his willingness to help the Dutch in exchange for his freedom and that of his family, the Dutch landed on the far side of the inlet and climbed up to the fort with all nine companies of European soldiers. Interrogations of prisoners had revealed that the besieged were out of gunpowder, but determined to fight the Dutch to the last all the same.

The VOC forces encountered some resistance on their way up, but managed to drive the defenders back and soon reached the main fortification. Once there, however, the fighting became much fiercer. Even though the defenders hardly fired their muskets and guns, confirming the suspicion they were out of gunpowder, they treated the VOC soldiers to such a hailstorm of stones, arrows, poisoned darts, and spears, that the latter retreated after about an hour of skirmishing. Fourteen of the attackers died and more than thirty were wounded. Quite a number of these causalities, it later turned out, had been caused by the VOC soldiers' own musket fire, misdirected in the confusion of the attack.

Gijsels simply continued the siege. On their side of the inlet, the VOC's forces hoisted ever-more cannon up to the conquered hillfort. There was a half *kartouwe*, typically used to fire twenty-four-pound cannonballs, as well as the regular guns, which lobbed grenades and firebombs over the walls. The Ambonese

allies freely roamed the interior of the island again, making it difficult for the besieged to escape or procure supplies. Now that negotiation had failed, Gijsels' Christian objections to targeting women and children seem to have vanished. Over the next couple of days, the number of captives taken by the allies would eventually tally up to around 350.[455] When the Dutch guns managed to set the settlement ablaze on the 27th of April, Gijsels attempted to bring the besieged to the negotiating table again. They agreed to meet for negotiations the next day, if the Dutch would but stop firing.

The orangkaya of Seram Laut and the main VOC officials met the next morning at the coast of the bay, where the path up to the besieged settlement began. According to his own report, Gijsels started by repeating his old mantra that the Dutch were not inclined to shed innocent blood. A new treaty was drawn up, in which the inhabitants submitted to the authority of the prince of Orange. Gijsels immediately added, however, that the inhabitants of Seram Laut would have to pay for their transgressions with an indemnity of fifty pounds of gold and 200 slaves. The orangkaya were apparently under enough pressure to submit to this demand, although they stressed that it would take time to fulfil these demands for their slaves were now scattered through the island. Gijsels had none of this, retorting that they had more than enough slaves. After further deliberation over the payment, the orangkaya of Seram Laut delivered a first, symbolic gift. In a procession carrying ten white flags, they brought the Dutch a *pinang* vessel filled with earth dug from the island and packed between two white cloths. They also presented three ornamented boxes and two lori parrots. Preparations were made for a *matakau* to be held.

The inhabitants were clearly struggling to fulfil the indemnity, however. On the day of the negotiations, they only managed to deliver eleven slaves, 'all of them young children', whom the Dutch took to their ships.[456] Although the inhabitants presented some 'gold chains of small value' the next day, they told the Dutch that it would be very difficult for them to meet the demands. Gijsels told them that they had agreed to the indemnity and must fulfil it in its entirety. To illustrate this point, he started firing the guns at the settlement again the next morning. A white flag was immediately raised over the settlement and the orangkaya asked if the Dutch would settle for half the number of slaves for now and accept some of the orangkaya's children as hostages to guarantee delivery of

455 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 75v.
456 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 75r.

the remaining half in the future. Gijsels accepted. Seventy-nine additional slaves and the equivalent of twenty-one pounds of gold were delivered over the next few days. Slowly realising that 'all in all, gold was not as plentiful here as some people had thought', Gijsels allowed the people to pay some of the indemnity in wood and *atap*, which could be put to good use in Banda. The rest would be paid later.[457]

Gijsels was also procuring slaves in another way: his Ambonese and Seramese allies took a total of 350 captives during the course of the siege. Gijsels convinced the allied orangkaya that his own soldiers, having borne the brunt of the fighting and been ordered not to partake in the raids, should be allotted half this human war booty.[458]

Meanwhile, further interrogations of the prisoners extensively confirmed that the Makasar and Javanese traders had rounded up all the women and children when the fleet had appeared. They had used the captives as collateral to force the inhabitants to fight and intended to stab them all to death and then run amok against the Dutch, if worst came to worst.[459] This echoes similar claims made during the standoff at Kambelo three years earlier and provides us with a valuable insight into the impact of the conflict on the general population of the region. Ever fearful of secret Muslim alliances and schemes, Gijsels and other high-ranking VOC personnel had assumed that the population of Seram Laut were in cahoots with traders from Makassar and Java. Rather, they seem to have been caught between two fires. Having become a party to this conflict, the population found itself stuck between traders threatening to kill them if they surrendered and the VOC making every effort to kill them as long as they held out. This double-bind resulted in an untold number of deaths, the loss of all the island's seagoing vessels, at least 450 people enslaved, and the additional loss of a significant amount of wealth in the form of gold.

Gijsels' forces prepared to depart. The task of drawing up the treaty with Seram Laut was left for later; for now Gijsels had other business to attend to. He first wished to confer with the governor-general and hoped to mount an attack on Werinama. Moreover, word reached him from Ambon that the hongi of the kimelaha was still on the move and had been spotted near Ambelau. By the 6th,

457 Four more pounds of gold were to be brought to Castle Victoria within six months, the other half of the indemnity could be paid the next monsoon. Ultimately, the rest of the debt would be annulled. Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen* II, 267-268.

458 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 76r.

459 'Journael van gedaene tochten' fol. 75r.

Gijsels' ships had set sail. The contingent from Banda was to return there, while the rest of the fleet made its way to Werinama. Gijsels took the opportunity to cement relations with Keffing, an *ulisiwa* village on the mainland that had offered to help the Dutch in the aftermath of the campaign.[460] Gijsels marvelled at its fortifications, which were larger than those of Fort Victoria in Ambon. Built with coral stone and boasting three bastions, the fortifications were, however, open on one side where the settlement was protected by impenetrable mangrove and swampland. As the fleet made its way back west, Gijsels inventoried the villages, attending especially to their allegiances and strength. At every stop, the population was admonished to deliver any runaway slaves from Banda to Castle Victoria.

When the ships arrived before Werinama on the 11th of May, the force discovered that the town was deserted, the population and orangkaya having taken refuge in the mountains. The next day, the orangkaya came down to surrender, symbolically presenting a bowl filled with earth to the Dutch. Gijsels demanded they pay an indemnity of fifty slaves, whom the orangkaya promised to bring to the castle later. Hostages were delivered into Dutch custody and Gijsels had the orangkaya swear not to do the bidding of either the kimelaha or Kapitan Hitu (at this point he clearly had little faith in the VOC's oldest ally in the islands). They were to heed his orders only.

With the departure from Werinama, the campaign drew to a close. The various kora-kora of the hongi scattered and Gijsels had returned to Passo, at the eastern end of Ambon, by the 19th of May, along with many soldiers who had fallen ill during the campaign. He learned that the kimelaha had put the last one-and-a-half months to good use, attacking *ulisiwa* settlements, kidnapping more than sixty people, and killing Dutchmen where he could – out at sea or collecting firewood. Just before Gijsels returned from his expedition, Kimelaha Leliato had commanded a fleet of ten kora-kora to attack Alang and Liliboi, two Christian villages situated on the northern entrance of the Bay of Ambon, but had been repulsed by the defenders. The main body of the Gijsels' fleet had apparently just missed them as they made their way into Ambon Bay in bad

460 The people of Keffing, startled by the large fleet, had fled into the mountains when the fleet came out to Seram Laut, but had later been convinced to come back down by Pati Nai, who was sent to the mainland from the siege for that purpose.

weather. Two Dutch officials accidentally ran into his fleet shortly afterwards, however, making a narrow escape.[461]

Gijsels' efforts to hunt down the traders, wherever they moved their operations, seemed to be having little effect. While he was still at Seram Laut, he had received word from Castle Victoria that twenty junks had appeared from behind Buru, right when the Dutch were 'at their weakest'.[462] Six more arrived soon after, bringing 300 men armed with Japanese muskets. Word had it that they had established contact with the kimelaha, who was more than happy to allow them to trade, as long as half of the vessels would stay to assist him against the Dutch, with whom he had no intention of making peace. The traders then proceeded to Kelang to buy cloves and fortified their position there. Given the monsoon, an epidemic raging in Ambon, and the exhausting expedition to which he had just subjected his soldiers and allies, Gijsels felt powerless to do anything about this.[463] He could only express his 'amazement […] that these traders, in spite of the great damage they suffered both in ships and their goods, just kept on coming back', which led him to believe that they were directly sponsored by the Danes, English, and Portuguese. [464]

For Gijsels this was all the more confirmation that there was only one cure for this whole mess: continuing the eradication of all the clove trees in the areas in the kimelaha's sphere of influence. This required more ships and more soldiers. He readily admitted that, even with adequate means, this task would never be easy, for the mountains were inaccessible, roads bad, and the forests 'vast, rough and entirely inhospitable'.[465] Precisely for this reason, he insisted on the necessity to cultivate good relations with the Alfurs: 'The principal difficulty is that we lack guides and good black soldiers, who handle themselves in the forest far better than the Dutch, as the latter are badly encumbered with their heavy muskets, bandoleers and long sidearms, and will often collapse on the road with exhaustion as a result'.[466]

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461 Joan Ottens and Antonio van den Heuvel.

462 Letter to governor-general, 25 May 1633, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, 245; 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 76r.

463 Letter to governor-general, 12 June 1633, in VOC 1108, 671r-v.

464 Letter to governor-general, 25 May 1633, in VOC 1105, 628v-629r.

465 Letter to governor-General, 12 June 1633, VOC 1108, 673v-673r.

466 Letter to governor-General, 12 June 1633, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 247. The full letter also gives more explanation about the failure of Alfur support to materialize. As it turned out, Alfurs from Samit and Saulau had in fact come to Hoamoal, but had missed the Dutch. VOC 1108, 673r-v.

In the meantime, Kimelaha Leliato, expecting that Gijsels' amphibious tree-cutting expeditions would become a recurrent practice, fortified his domains, evacuating smaller villages around the Bend of Kaibobo to his larger settlements at Loki and Lusiela. New clove trees were only planted inland and the roads leading to these areas were made impassable.[467] The war on trees was not over yet.

### Gerard Advance and other critics

Not everyone within the ranks of VOC officials in Ambon agreed with Gijsels' tactics. His most vocal opponent, Joan Ottens, by now the *opperkoopman* of Hitu and Luhu, tactfully but persistently expressed his objections in his letters to Batavia. This was a delicate matter, for Ottens was outright contradicting the opinions of his direct superior. On one occasion, he found a creative way of tackling this problem by writing a remonstrance in the form of two separate letters, which discussed the matter from the perspective of two fictitious colleagues: a merchant called Gerard Advance, and a military officer called Captain Awe.[468]

Gerard Advance wrote the first letter. After giving an overview of the developments of the past few years, he roundly admitted that the kimelaha and his followers had acted 'faithlessly and shamefully'. What to do? Some, he said, proposed eradicating every last clove tree in the kimelaha's domains. These people, wrote Advance, should be reminded that, whereas the wars of the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews were profitable, yielding money and land, the present conflicts in the Ambon Quarter were costly. The only prudent thing, he argued, was to go after the foreign traders, which would hurt precisely those who were involved in the illegal trade. He reminded the reader of the great success of 1631, when the Dutch had conquered so many of the foreign trading vessels and stranded and ruined so many traders, that the foreign merchants could not possibly continue their activities if the Dutch kept up the pressure over a few more seasons. He also pointed out that if only the Dutch would, like the foreign traders, bring a richer array of wares to the island (including sugar, salt, pepper, opium, several types of textiles, and, most importantly, slaves), they would re-

467 Letter to governor-General, 12 June 1633, partly published in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 246.

468 'Geraert Avance' and 'Cappitteijn Ontsagh'.

move much of the impulse to trade with the outsiders and turn a nice profit in the process.[469]

As to military matters, he gladly yielded to his friend Captain Awe, who started off thunderously by asking whether, if failure to mete out due punishment gave rise to tyranny, the Company was getting exactly what it deserved in Amboyna? Of course it was! In regard to what Advance had said, Awe asked: should the Company, for a little profit in trade, suffer all the insults that it had in the islands? Would that lead anywhere? Of course not. He then proposed his own solution: open war with the kimelaha throughout the islands, and the destruction of every last clove tree in his domains. He subsequently imagined how such a campaign should be set up, totting up the impressive amount of ships and manpower it would require. Although Awe admitted that the venture would not be easy, the end justified the means. He topped off his letter with a generous dose of belligerent rhetoric. The real sting, it turned out, was in the tail: Captain Awe concluded by stating that he would leave the question of what should happen *after* such a campaign for another time and that his plan might still seem a little sketchy here and there. But given that his speech was rather slow, he would like to be excused from the duty of further elaboration for now.[470]

Although some people in Batavia might have chuckled over Ottens' remonstrance, it had little immediate effect. He wrote it in September 1632, right around the time that Brouwer stepped up as governor-general. As we have seen, the latter turned out to be even more of a war enthusiast with respect to Amboina than Gijsels himself.[471] Soon, however, Brouwer would lend a more receptive ear to another of Gijsels' critics.

At his departure from the Netherlands, Brouwer had been instructed to send out commissioners-general to the various Company trading posts. He duly did so upon his arrival in Batavia, sending Antonio van den Heuvel to Banda, Ambon, and Ternate to check the state of affairs in Company business there.

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469 Ottens, 'Slecht vertoogh ende remonstrantie…' in: VOC 1105, fol. 39v – 47r, esp. 39v-43r.

470 Ibid., esp. 43v-47r.

471 The directors in the Netherlands, for their part, tended to follow the judgment of the *Generale Missive* in most local matters to a surprising degree. Whereas, in October 1632, they had followed Specx's judgment about Gijsels' policies being less than satisfactory, and stated that the Company could not possibly hope to eradicate the clove trees everywhere, in September of the next year, following Brouwer's judgment, they fully endorsed this same policy. See letter of Gentlemen XVII to Governor-General, 7 October 1632 in: VOC 315 (unfol.) and: Ibid, 19 Sept 1633, in: VOC 316 (unfol.)

Van den Heuvel arrived in Ambon in mid-February, catching Gijsels just as he was preparing to leave on his hongi expedition to Hoamoal.[472] When Gijsels left, Van den Heuvel had ample time to form his own opinion about how things stood in the Amboyna Quarter. After going to Banda, briefly investigating the situation there, he returned to the coast of Seram, bringing two yachts with 200 additional troops for the attack on Seram Laut, experiencing the attack first-hand.[473] He then went to Ambon with the returning fleet, spending an additional month in and around Ambon before continuing on to Ternate with Ottens, who was to become the new president there, on the 19th of June.

No substantial documentation survives of Van den Heuvel's activities while on and around Ambon, but his final verdict on the situation was abundantly clear: on the 30th of August he submitted an absolutely damning report about Gijsels' policies. To begin with, he was very unimpressed by the support the local population was able to give in the wars in the islands. He remarked, for instance, that although the hongi was good for transporting European soldiers, local warriors could not be relied on, for they lacked the courage to attack and were only capable of 'looting, plundering and kidnapping once our soldiers have done the real work of defeating or chasing away the enemy, as I have seen with my own eyes'.[474]

He was particularly scathing about the Alfurs and the stock that Gijsels put in them, noting that the Alfur enthusiasts within Company ranks had been 'deceived by the faithlessness that is innate to all the Indian nations'; even though the Alfurs had been wooed with gifts, they had failed to show up during the Hoamoal campaign of early 1633. Some had apparently even switched sides and joined the kimelaha. What astounded Van den Heuvel the most, though, was that 'the abovementioned enthusiasts [*voorstellers*]… have never undertaken to have the regions, villages and homes of these Alfurs visited and inspected, so as to take stock of them in a well-founded manner'. Van den Heuvel had personally

472 Valentijn gives 10 March, and concludes that he arrived while Gijsels was already away. This is incorrect: Gijsels received Van den Heuvel's commission letter in a council meeting of 12 February, well before departing with the hongi. Resolutions of 12 February in VOC 1108, fol. 725r; Cf. Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, II.2, 93.

473 Rumphius remarks that, even during the attack on Seram Laut, Van den Heuvel was already highly critical of Gijsels' handling of the attack. I have been unable to find this confirmed in any archival sources. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 96-97.

474 Van den Heuvel, 'Den voortreffelijken, aansienlijcken ende vermaerden staet van Amboina…', 30 August 1633, published in Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave,* p. 95.

spoken to two of the Alfur rulers on their visit to Castle Victoria. They struck him as 'beggars rather than kings' and he was rather unimpressed with their excuses about why they had not come to the aid of the Dutch in March. To Van den Heuvel, the huge numbers of warriors – perhaps 10.000 – that Gijsels had mentioned in earlier letters seemed rather fanciful. Not only did he very much doubt that the Alfurs knew or could know their own numbers, given that they were scattered and unorganised. What is more, he noted what we might call differences in the concept of war between the VOC and the Alfurs. Rather than fielding organised armies and massed troops of any sort, the Alfurs' usual mode of warfare was the headhunting raid, undertaken with small bands, which was concluded once a few heads had been collected. All in all, the alliance with the Alfurs struck Van den Heuvel as a 'vain illusion', the grand designs that had been supposed possible with their help mere 'smoke in the wind'. Although the VOC should certainly remain friendly with the Alfurs' to prevent them from siding with the kimelaha, all in all he was rather sceptical about the prospect of the Alfurs winning the VOC any wars.[475]

Van den Heuvel's criticisms of Gijsels' policies did not end there. Along with several (unnamed) Company officials he had talked to in Ambon, he felt that the general policy of trying to win the monopoly by destroying the clove plantations in Hoamoal was entirely impracticable:

> The mountains are too steep, the inhabitants and the clove trees too many, the roads to the clove trees impassable and the settlements naturally strong and defended by an intrepid and resilient people, who are well-provided with cannon, swivel guns, muskets and other ammunitions of war. They protect their property and their clove plantations with amazing courage, and can do us great harm when we come to strike them, all the more so now that they have been alerted and warned that more such strikes are to expected in the future.[476]

In his eyes, the alternative strategy of going after the ships of the foreign traders was also doomed to fail: after all the successes, cloves were still flowing away to

475 Van den Heuvel, 'Den voortreffelijken, aansienlijcken ende vermaerden staet van Amboina…', 96-100.

476 Van den Heuvel, 'Den voortreffelijken, aansienlijcken ende vermaerden staet van Amboina…', 103.

Makassar and Java, and foreign traders whose ships had been destroyed could simply buy new ones in the islands. Once again, the fundamentals of the situation had to do with geography: 'The sea is too wide, they are more knowledgeable about how to navigate it than we are, they can be secretly warned about the number and whereabouts of our patrolling yachts from all corners. Also, the difficulties of the changing winds and currents are too great, so that we gain no advantage by patrolling'.[477] All this led Van den Heuvel to muse that it would have been better to remain at peace with the kimelaha. Appeasing him with a better assortment of trade goods (including a wider variety of textiles but also slaves) would also have provided an additional source of income for the Company. As Van den Heuvel was aware, however, that ship had sailed.[478]

Instead, Van den Heuvel proposed his own set of measures that would help solve this problem. One was to concentrate on attacking settlements on eastern Seram and build a redoubt there, for the threat that eastern Seram represented to Banda was a far more acute problem than the kimelaha. Another was to tackle the source of the problem and blockade Makassar every trade season. By ensuring that the Makasar fleets were unable to reach the Amboyna Quarter in the first place, the Dutch could avoid the wild goose chase of pursuing them through the labyrinth of islands and creeks of the Amboyna Quarter.

Another of his suggestions might strike us as more surprising: Van den Heuvel proscribed going after the VOC's 'secret enemy' first, by mounting a surprise attack on Hitu.

### A change of power in Hitu

To understand Van den Heuvel's recommendation in its proper context, we need to back up and look at developments in Hitu. As we have seen, despite remembering Hitu fondly as the local ally from his first stint in the Ambon islands, Gijsels soon lost faith in them after becoming governor. Before long, he shared his predecessors' opinion that the Hituese were secretly selling their cloves to the foreign traders and were in cahoots with the kimelaha. In April 1633, the old Kapitan Hitu, Tepil, had finally passed away while Gijsels was on campaign in Seram Laut. With his death, the eastern archipelago had lost what the *Hikayat*

477 Ibid.

478 Van den Heuvel does continue to make a short inventory of best practices, should the Company still want to opt for a policy of extirpation or destroying the foreign ships. Ibid, 103-104.

*Tanah Hitu* described as 'he who reconciled the conflicts that occurred, be they in the land of Hitu or the land of Ambon, or among Muslims or Christians'.[479] This was the same Kapitan Hitu who had invited the Company to Ambon almost thirty years before. Soon discovering that the Dutch were rather unmanageable allies, Hitu had found itself mediating in their escalating conflicts with the various Muslim polities of the region. This had earned Tepil scorn and distrust from both sides and the conflicts had intensified all the same.

Tepil had never properly arranged the succession for the various roles he exercised, above all those of *perdana* (head) of the Nusatapi family and Kapitan Hitu. He had outlived both his eldest sons and, in any case, succession by the eldest son was not a foregone conclusion in Hitu.[480] Hence, when Gijsels returned from Seram Laut in May, he found that the scramble for Tepil's titles was already in full swing. The succession struggle for the title of Kapitan Hitu was both of the most immediate relevance to the Dutch and that over which they could exert the most influence. Kakiali, Tepil's third son, was no stranger to the Dutch, given that he already wielded a great deal of political responsibility in the capacity of *hukum* (magistrate). He immediately tried to enlist the support of the Dutch in succeeding his father as Kapitan Hitu. Acting on Gijsels' behalf, Evert Hulft tried to make Kakiali promise that he would join the Dutch in waging war on the kimelaha, but Kakiali was wiser than to agree to that. As already mentioned, Kakiali's sister was rumoured to be betrothed to the kimelaha.[481] The prospect of a marriage bond between the families of what was ostensibly still their ally and what was by now their sworn enemy was worrisome to the Dutch. All the same, Gijsels apparently preferred the devil he knew and soon decided to support Kakiali's claim, albeit without much enthusiasm: 'We do not trust him any more than the others', he wrote, 'so that we shall hope to have chosen the lesser of many evils'.[482]

With that in mind, Gijsels and Van den Heuvel, who was then wrapping up his affairs, went to Hitu in mid-June. There, they met the other *perdanas* for several days, finally getting them to approve Kakiali as the new Kapitan Hitu. They also made use of the occasion to reaffirm the treaty with the Hituese.[483] Gijsels

479 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 166-167.

480 For a slightly more elaborate explanation of the Hituese state and Tepil's various offices, see Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 60-61.

481 Gijsels to Governor-General Brouwer, 26 May 1633, in: VOC 1108, fol. 629v.

482 Gijsels to Governor-General Brouwer, 15 June 1633, in: VOC 1108, fol. 675v.

483 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, CVII, treaty of 17 June 1633, 258pp.

made another futile attempt to win Kakiali for the war against the kimelaha. Although he told Kakiali in no uncertain terms that he would strongly disapprove of the marriage between his sister and the kimelaha, he had little hope that his objections would be heeded.

While the Dutch delegation was on its way back, they learned that two Dutch sailors had just been headhunted in the jungle near Hila. Rumour had it that the perpetrators were Luhunese, but they were never caught. The timing was not lost on the Dutch. The incident was interpreted as a bad omen at best, but many suspected that Kakiali himself had orchestrated the attack as a bloody inauguration of his reign.[484]

It is worth dwelling on Tepil's death and succession as a telling example of a 'changing of the guard' that had been taking place in the eastern archipelago more generally. The deaths Sultan Muzaffar in 1627 and Kaicili Ali in 1631 might be considered the beginning of a change in the leadership of the various polities of eastern Indonesia, as they were the first among a great many rulers and nobles who had sealed the original treaties with the Dutch, but were now passing away in quick succession. Tepil was not the only Dutch ally of the first hour to die in 1633: La Elangi of Buton, who had allied Buton to the VOC, would follow later that year. Although all of them had certainly had complicated relations with the Dutch over the past decades, they were now making way for a generation of rulers who were a lot less willing to give the Dutch any kind of benefit of the doubt. Kakiali was certainly no exception.

### A change of power in Ambon

Kakiali's accession to his new function of Kapitan Hitu would have been the last events Van den Heuvel experienced first-hand before departing for Ternate. He was certainly under the impression that Kakiali had 'confirmed and sealed the new treaties with the blood of our soldiers'.[485] More generally, Van den Heuvel listed all the old grievances against Hitu: they were selling off the better part of their cloves to the foreign traders. They were secretly in cahoots with the kimelaha, the inhabitants of Boano, and other enemies of the Company. What is more, they had raided *ulisiwa* settlements loyal to the Dutch and had then hidden

484 Gijsels to Governor-General Brouwer, 25 June 1633, in: VOC 1108, fol. 682v-383r; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 96.

485 Van den Heuvel, 'Den voortreffelijken, aansienlijcken ende vermaerden staet van Amboina…', 106.

behind their alliance with them, saying they had permission from the governor. All in all, Van den Heuvel felt that the so-called alliance with Hitu did the company more harm than good. By giving it up and turning on them, 'the Company would be liberated from being mortally wounded, day and night, by a harmful snake on the inside of its own body'.[486]

How to bring about the fall of Hitu, then? Van den Heuvel had it all figured out. With the VOC's forces at the ready, Kakiali, the *perdanas*, and other orangkaya of Hitu should be called to Castle Victoria under the pretence of some important meeting. Once they were all there, they should all be arrested or killed, and the Dutch and their allies should immediately move on the various Hituese settlements along the coast. Once these were destroyed, they should move inland, destroying Hituese gardens and settlements, and wreaking enough havoc to make the entire population flee to Hoamoal. Although the operation would be difficult and might take two years to complete, Van den Heuvel still felt it was worth the trouble. The campaign would certainly not threaten the supply of cloves (in any case, these were being overproduced) and it would probably yield ample cloves as war booty. Once the Company was rid of this 'venomous viper feeding from her bosom', the kimelaha would be weakened and more amenable and accordingly the situation in the Amboyna Quarter would become much more manageable.[487]

The question of where Van den Heuvel got his ideas and why he was so critical of Gijsels' policies is intriguing. His ideas about the futility of destroying the cloves in Hoamoal, and claim that good trade relations with the kimelaha would have been far preferable to the present war, seem to echo those of Ottens. The call for Hitu's destruction, however, cannot be found in Ottens' writings - if the latter felt that way about the region in which he was senior merchant, he never expressed it in his surviving letters to Batavia. The notion that Hitu was a Dutch ally in name only was nothing new, however; even the idea that politics in the region would become much more stable and manageable if Hitu were removed from the picture had been around for quite a while. Indeed, an earlier commissioner to the islands, Gillis Seys, advocated this position in 1627, albeit as something for the future.[488] Van den Heuvel now proposed it as a concrete policy to be acted upon in the present.

486 Ibid.
487 Ibid., 106-107.
488 See above, chapter V, paragraph 'feigned friends?'

What is more, once back in Batavia, Van den Heuvel apparently started lobbying to have Gijsels replaced and be appointed as governor of Ambon himself. We can only guess at his reasons: as Rumphius muses, 'it would seem the Governor had some malicious friends at the Castle, or some factional strife was involved'.[489] It also seems that Van den Heuvel himself was something of an agitator: he had been fired from his post in Batavia on accusations of slander three years earlier and would ultimately end his own career by slandering the Council of the Indies.[490]

As yet oblivious to Van den Heuvel pulling the rug out from under him back in Batavia, Gijsels undeterredly pursued his own policies. He sent Hulft, his second-in-command, to Seram's north coast to cement relations with the Alfurs living there. He made plans to build a fort at the land bridge connecting Seram to Hoamoal so that the Alfurs could safely and easily join his campaigns in the area. Although several dozen foreign trading vessels were visiting the region once again, Gijsels was unable to act to deter them due to the raging epidemic and the necessity of giving his allies a break after almost three months of uninterrupted campaigning. He requested the smallest types of mortars from Batavia, 'because with [large] cannon, one can do little against those settlements situated high up which are still holding out', and linseed oil for firebombs, which had worked so marvellously in previous sieges. He tried to convince the governor-general of the great benefits of sago as campaign rations – perhaps was he interested in receiving some for use elsewhere in Asia? And could he please send armour for the soldiers with enough arm room to fire a musket? Frontal armour would suffice to protect the men against arrows, spears, and poisoned darts, no need for the heavy backplate. And some gifts for the Ambonese orangkaya would certainly help ensure that they continued feeling appreciated – 'bare metal morion helmets, or something like that' would do. Gijsels, all these requests notwithstanding, meanwhile sought to become less dependent on Batavia. Responding to the persistent complaints that he was spending too much money (a view that Brouwer had also come around to by now), he suggested that if the garrison could be enlarged just a little and he could occasionally make use of the return ships which

489 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 97.

490 For a tragicomic assessment of the career and character of Van den Heuvel and some of his contemporaries, see Leonard Blussé, 'Spitsvinnighe warvogels: vier juristen en de totstandkoming van de eerste politiewetten in Nederlands-Indië' in: J. Thomas Lindblad and Willem van der Molen eds., *Macht en majesteit: opstellen voor Cees Fasseur,* Semaian 22. Leiden:Universiteit Leiden, 2001, pp. 147-168.

came to Ambon anyway, he could manage with two yachts, two sloops, and his local allies, 'without whom we can achieve absolutely nothing here (even though there are some who believe that we could do without them)'.[491]

Then, as soon as circumstances allowed, Gijsels returned to the offensive with a vengeance. He spent the first two weeks of September campaigning around both sides of the bend of Kaibobo (the bay separating Seram from Hoamoal), burning villages loyal to the kimelaha (including several Alfur villages), taking or destroying newly built ships along the coast at Kaibobo (another boat-building centre used by the kimelaha), and cutting and ringbarking coconut groves and clove plantations.[492] Gijsels went out again in the last week of October, this time to Hoamoal's west coast. He aimed, amongst other things, to take some prisoners at Asaudi who might then be exchanged for the several dozen people from Wai still held by the kimelaha. As the fleet made its way to its destination, large fires were seen burning on various beaches and hilltops – Hoamoal's inhabitants were warning the settlements further up. Gijsels noted with concern that such fires were also burning in Hitu.

When the Dutch made it to Asaudi, which is situated directly along the coast, it was deserted, its population having retreated to the fortified settlement of Henatelo in the mountains. Gijsels pursued them into the interior and besieged the settlement. It would become one of the most horrifying sieges of the period. The Dutch built siege works and brought cannon up into the mountains, using them to lob firebombs and grenades into the town. As the rock on which the settlement was perched did not have a water supply, they closed it off to the surrounding region as well as they could. As Gijsels learned from prisoners in the course of the siege, Henatelo was not only filled with people from Asaudi, but overflowing with refugees from elsewhere too. These included, for instance, people from Serulau on the east coast, which he had destroyed during the previous month's campaign – a poignant illustration that, regardless of whether Gijsels' policies made sense from an economic point of view, the population of Hoamoal was certainly suffering as a result of his attritional tactics.

Ten days into the siege, reports reached Gijsels that perhaps half of the besieged had died of thirst. The sound of children wailing, as well as occasional

491 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 97-99. Gijsels to Governor-General, 25 September 1633, in VOC 1108, esp. 691r-697r. Quote at 691r. The remark about 'some who believe…' would appear to be a deliberate jab at Van den Heuvel.

492 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 93-102.

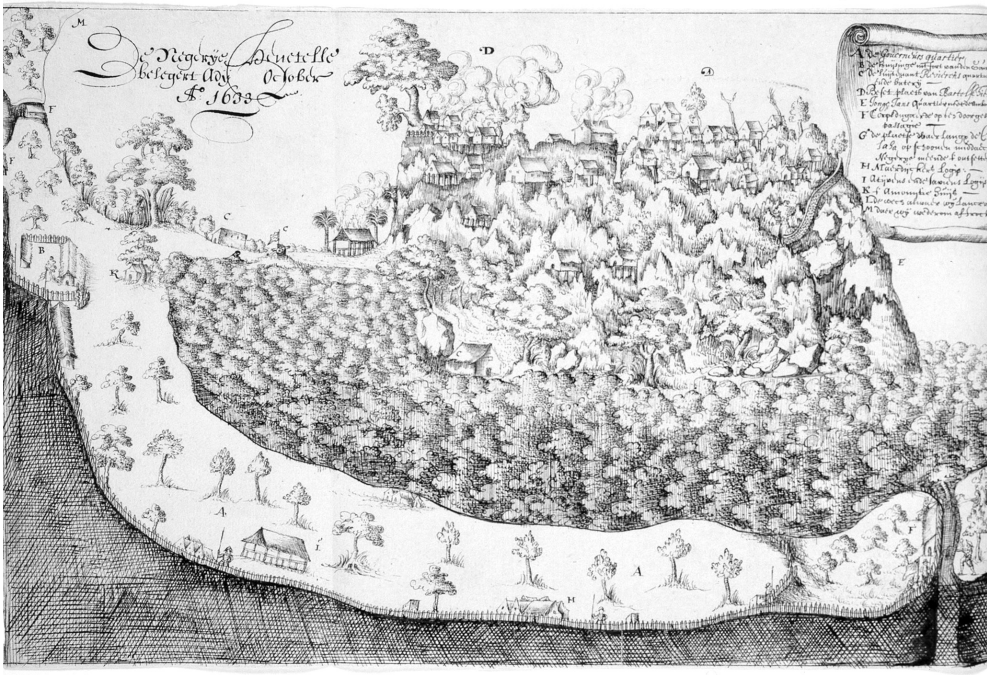

Fig. 7.6 The siege of Henatelo. Note the various quarters and siege works erected by Company troops all along a perimeter around the town, which is perched on the rocks and fortified with walls. The town is aflame, having been bombarded with Company firebombs. Karlsruhe, inv. nr. K476, fol 105.

violent outbursts amongst the besieged, made abundantly clear that the situation in the settlement was dire and morale was crumbling.

All the same, the besieged did not surrender, for an army of the kimelaha some 300 men strong was moving through the hills behind the Dutch lines, flying red and white flags, shouting encouragements to the besieged, looking for an opportunity. On the 7th of November, this army occupied and fortified the path down to the coast, cutting the Dutch off from their line of retreat and the sago forests on which they relied. Although the Dutch attempted to drive them away from both the fleet and their siege works around the town, they were repulsed with a ferocity that amazed them. Torrential rain started pouring down, making it difficult for the Dutch to use their firearms, and quenching the thirst of the besieged. Gijsels tried to rally the men for a last desperate storm attack on Henatelo, but now the morale of his own troops and allies was failing, and they openly defied his orders. He saw no other option but to retreat. His troops had to fight their way back to the fleet under constant attack from the kimelaha's troops

and the defenders, who had taken heart following the recent turn of events. The fleet made its way back to Ambon, though not before briefly touring the bays and estuaries north of Asaudi to look for hidden kora-kora in which some of the kimelaha's troops might have landed, and making a final effort to burn Asaudi down to the last building. Along the way, it halted at Lesidi-Lama, which had been selling too many of its cloves to the foreign traders for Gijsels' liking. The settlement, which was deserted, was burned and some 4.000 large clove trees ringbarked.[493]

Upon his return, Gijsels, already worried by the fires he had seen lit on Hitu, started receiving signs that trouble was brewing there. In December, a member of the Tanihitumesen family from Hitulama, as well as representatives from Luhu on the opposite coast, came to ask Gijsels whether he would please build a fort in their settlement. Apparently, this was to protect them against Kakiali, who was acting in an autocratic fashion, defying the representative character of the Hitu government and antagonising the other Hitu officials. Unwilling to go into detail at first, the representatives of the Tanihitumesen family ultimately told Gijsels that Kakiali, along with the kimelaha, had been sending gifts to both the Lord of Giri (on Java's east coast, see chapter XXX) and the sultan of Gowa. The former had received two *bahar* of cloves; the latter a *payung* with golden ornaments, accompanied by an official letter in a silver box. They claimed that the letter requested his aid in the coming war against the Dutch.[494] Although Gijsels was incredulous at first, he investigated the matter further and soon became convinced that Kakiali was in fact preparing for war. In any case, he was certainly bringing internal Hituese politics to a head. As a consequence, Gijsels promised to build the requested fortifications and started shoring up relations with those communities that were alarmed by Kakiali's attitude and opposed to war with the Dutch – most prominently the followers of the perdana Tanihitumesen. Regardless of Kakiali's true intentions with regard to the Dutch,

493 'Journael van gedaene tochten', fol. 103-113.

494 Saliently, the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* confirms that a delegation was sent to Makassar, but denies that its purpose was to plan an attack against the Dutch, and chides Gijsels for believing these accusations without properly investigating them. As Rijali wrote the *Hikayat* in Makassar for the Gowan chancellor, and was working closely with Kakiali in 1633, it seems unlikely that he would be mistaken or hiding the truth. Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 167.

mutual antagonisms and suspicions quickly unravelled what was left of their working relationship.[495]

Back in Batavia, Van den Heuvel was meanwhile making his final moves in bringing about Gijsels' downfall. In addition to his damning report, he had, for good measure, also accused Gijsels of fraud and private trade.[496] If his aim was to get Gijsels recalled, this was an inspired choice: not only had Governor-General Brouwer been specifically instructed to crack down on private trade, but he took the matter very personally.[497] On the 15th of December, Brouwer and his Council wrote to the directors back home that 'we have decided to recall vice-governor Gijsels this year, so as to hold him to account for the many, extraordinary, gross, unbearable counts of private trade and selfish greed of which he is accused'.[498] Although Van den Heuvel had ostensibly requested to go back home with his wife and was set to become the vice-commander of the return fleet, they had been able to convince him to stay on a little longer and replace Gijsels as governor. Given the circumstances, one suspects that he took little convincing. Brouwer harboured concerns that Van den Heuvel was 'subject to many human defects and impertinences', but hoped that he would be able to keep these in check in his new capacity as governor.

And so Van den Heuvel was sent back out to Ambon in February 1634, arriving there on the 4th of May after a long stay at Makassar and Buton. He officially replaced Gijsels on the 8th. Finding that relations with Kapitan Hitu had much worsened since he had departed Ambon, he considered his earlier analysis and suggestions vindicated, and was now in a position to act on them.

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495 Gijsels' *Memorie van Overgave* of May 1634, in Knaap ed., *Memories van Overgave,* esp. 112pp.

496 Interestingly, the most elaborate enumeration of his supposed misdeeds is to be found in a letter from Brouwer to Gijsels himself, which shows that the accusations were far more extensive than just private sale of the '1000 pairs of silk stockings' [sijde cousens] that we find mentioned elsewhere. In addition, he had supposedly been selling textiles, gold and silver jewelry, copperware, had paid the tolls of the sultan of Ternate in textiles from his own private stock (letting the value flow into his own pockets from the Company coffers), ran a scheme in which he personally profited from the production of arrack in Ambon, and had falsely declared all kinds of expenses. Brouwer, Van Diemen Vlak en Van der Burgh to Gijsels, 31 January 1634, in: VOC 1114, fol. 203v-214v, esp. fol. 209r and v.

497 For a good sketch of Brouwer and his attitude to both private trade and war, see Menno Witteveen. *Antonio van Diemen: de opkomst van de VOC in Azië.* Amsterdam: Pallas, 2011, pp. 137-145.

498 General letter by Brouwer e.a.,15 December 1633, in: VOC 1108, p. 103.

It would not quite work out the way he had imagined.

## Concluding remarks

All the governors of Ambon from the 1620s onwards faced the same impossible conundrum of having to enforce a clove monopoly in a large region that they were unable to control, and each tried to solve this problem in his own way. Van Speult, suddenly finding himself with a large force at his disposal, was the first to decide to take the fight into Hoamoal, destroying settlements and cutting down clove trees. Lucasz, like his predecessor Van Gorcum, was unsuccessful in making the subsequent peace work. Instead, he opted for patrolling the seas and hunting down the ships of foreign traders. Although this was spectacularly successful at times, it did not keep the traders from coming. Gijsels, in turn, took the strategy of the Nassau Fleet back out of the drawer, waging open war on the kimelaha, and anyone else dealing with the foreign traders. On the basis of the unprecedentedly rich documentation in Gijsels' private archive, this chapter has moved away from the big picture of the spice wars to give greater texture to the conflict, as well as to provide new insights into the everyday practices through which they were fought.

Based on these insights, it is my impression that Knaap's assertion that 'the great majority of these villages was not fortified' is due for revision.[499] Rather, the Ambon Islands seem to have part of a fortification spree that took shape throughout the eastern archipelago in this period. In all likelihood, many of the forts in the area predated the arrival of the Dutch, but fort-building was certainly spurred on by their arrival and the consequent conflicts in the region. Gijsels ran into fortifications wherever he turned, even when campaigning in areas thus far outside the Company's sphere of influence. He was often impressed with these indigenous fortresses, describing them in European terms as having ramparts, demilunes, bastions, and redoubts. Even those sites that lacked these features were usually situated to make the most of natural defences that abound in the region. If anything, the Dutch were often surprised by how easily the defenders surrendered their otherwise daunting fortifications, 'from which they would have been able to inflict great violence on us, had they not lacked the courage', as Gijsels remarked in his reports on more than one occasion. But perhaps courage is not quite the right word, for warfare in the region was traditionally all about hunting heads and enslaving people. The VOC's campaigns also became ever

499 Gerrit Knaap. 'Headhunting, carnage and armed peace',. 178 pp.

more 'indigenous' in this regard. In the light of this, it would seem sensible for the population of a given settlement to disappear into the shelter of the interior when there was a threat of being overrun.

Indeed, we see a quick and dramatic 'indigenisation' of the VOC's tactics and strategies in these years. Knaap's claim that 'in its campaigns the VOC made full use of naval artillery as well as of siege methods developed in Europe', and his remarks to the effect that the Dutch could transpose the lessons they had learned in the Eighty Years' War to Ambon, does not seem to hold up for Gijsels' campaigns.[500] Rather, we have seen that most of the indigenous forts (the Makasar forts of subsequent campaigns are a different story and will be discussed at length below) were beyond the reach of naval artillery; the large Dutch sailing vessels were impractical and cumbersome; and traditional European siege methods did not work when besieging coral platforms surrounded by jungle. We therefore see Gijsels rethinking – and in many cases indigenising – his strategies over the course of his governorship. He increasingly relied on the kora-kora rather than European ships. He used his understanding of local antagonisms to enlist indigenous support, most prominently that of the Alfurs of Seram's interior. Not only did these have an appreciable psychological effect on the Company's enemies, but their headhunting parties proved perfectly suited to cutting off the supply lines to besieged settlements. Most importantly, after coming to the realisation that the regional landscape and environment were perhaps his main obstacles, Gijsels concentrated his efforts on those. He destroyed not only the clove trees that were at the core of the conflict, but also other trees and plants providing sustenance to the inhabitants of the region, cutting and otherwise eradicating sago and coconut palms and 'other fruits of the soil'. The tactics employed by Gijsels therefore constitute a prime example of what Immanuel Kreike has recently termed environcide, while the process of interadoption by which they came about also demonstrates that there was nothing inherently European or innovative about these tactics – except, perhaps, for the massive scale and sustained way in which the VOC started applying them.

Honing in on the grim day-to-day unfolding of the conflicts has, I hope, also served to bring its human aspects into view. Gijsels and his contemporaries might have deliberated endlessly over whether the campaigns were good economic policy, but it is abundantly clear that they visited an incredible amount of suffering on the region's population. Entire areas saw their sources of food and

500 Ibid., 189.

income utterly destroyed; large towns, many boasting monumental buildings, were put to the torch; the people of Seram Laut were caught between well-armed traders from Java and Makassar, who threatened to kill them, and the Dutch and their allies, who actually killed and enslaved them; and the besieged settlement of Henatelo overflowed with refugees dying of thirst in droves.

Although the Dutch were neither capable of, nor interested in, recording the number of casualties they inflicted, Gijsels kept records of the number of trees he eradicated and seagoing vessels he destroyed. These provide at least some means of quantifying the damage he wrought. The records relating to the amount of clove and nutmeg trees cut are most detailed: the campaign reports on which this chapter is largely based record the destruction of a total of 22.000 fully grown clove trees and an additional 800 nutmeg trees. These data are incomplete; the results of the tree-cutting expedition in Ihamahu, for instance, were only recorded incidentally and the records of later campaigns also contain unquantifiable phrases such as 'countless young clove trees'. Nonetheless, they provide a rough indication of the total economic damage. A conservative estimate of their average annual yield of 39.600 kilograms (slightly over 145 *bahar*) of cloves, as well as 1.440 kilograms (some 5 *bahar*) of nutmeg and mace.[501] This destruction came in addition to the 65.000 clove trees that the Nassau Fleet had reportedly already destroyed in 1625, given that newly planted clove trees can take at least ten years to start yielding cloves. Even though the various production estimates here are imprecise and likely on the conservative side, we are still left with the conclusion that in the 1620s and 1630s in the Ambon region alone, the VOC destroyed over one-third of total global clove production capacity.[502]

501 It should be noted that these numbers are imprecise. Traditionally, the annual yield of a clove tree is supposed to be one *barot,* slightly over 5,4 kilograms. If we use the tables contained in Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen,* 231-239, we find that around 1673, some 171.000 fruit-yielding trees produced around 305.000 kilograms of cloves in an average year, just about 1,8 kilograms per tree. (A much lower number than the *barot*, and lower still than the number provided by Boelens e.a., *Natuur en Samenleving,* 66-67, which gives present-day yield as 15 kilograms of cloves per tree.) Making a sensible estimate is complicated by the fact that clove trees become more productive with age. The trees destroyed on Hoamoal in the campaigns between 1625 and 1633 would generally have been older and therefore more productive than the recently planted ones on Ambon and the Lease islands which effectively replaced them in the course of the seventeenth century, so that yield per tree would have been lower c. 1670. Still, to err on the side of caution, we will here take the 1,8 kilograms per tree as the basis for our calculations.

502 Once again assuming an average yield of 1,8 kilograms per tree, the 87.000 destroyed

The people to which Gijsels was accountable were less directly interested in keeping meticulous records on the destruction of food crops than clove trees. As a consequence, the data on those is more sketchy. The sources seldom record numbers; far more often, they simply remark that a coconut grove, sago forest, or 'other fruitbearing wood' was destroyed, without further specifics. Additionally, the violence displaced great numbers of people. Large numbers of seagoing vessels (both large and small) were destroyed, ostensibly to stop the clove trade, but this would also have had a significant impact on regional communities' ability to fish, produce sago, and transport food. Gijsels was deliberately, and successfully, targeting environmental infrastructure, disrupting the ability of sustain themselves in various, cumulative ways. Which would have had a significant and long-term impact on the people of the region.

trees recorded would represent an annual average yield of 156 metric tons. Cf. David Bulbeck, e.a. *Southeast Asian Exports Since the 14th Century : Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998, esp. table 2.8, which estimates total clove sales to the Netherlands to be some 200 metric tons in the 1630s, and the entire world supply some 400 metric tons.

# VIII. Revolt (1634-1637)

Since open hostilities with Makassar had commenced in 1616, the spice wars had been largely fought around Seram and in the Lease Islands, despite being subject to various power dynamics in the wider region. In 1634, this would change. Just as the Dutch decided to make open war against Gowa, some of their former alliances in the region were collapsing in a cascade that would ultimately pit even the Company's Christian subjects and allies in the Ambon region against them. Although aspects of this tumultuous period have been studied, they have often been considered from a limited regional perspective.[503] Taking a wider view allows us to see how developments in various areas interlock, forming one large regional conflict in which the VOC, its allies, and its enemies all participated.

### Old enemies, old friends: Makassar and Buton

In Batavia in late 1634, Van den Heuvel was able to convince the governor-general and other members of the Council of the Indies of the soundness of his proposal that the Company should blockade Makassar. In their letter to the directors of 15 December 1634, they announced their decision to send a blockading fleet there with the turning of the monsoon. In this way, what had been a low-level conflict over the past eighteen years escalated into a full-blown war.

The Council's reasoning on this decision came straight out of Van den Heuvel's earlier report.[504] That said, recent developments had made the need to take action all the more urgent: Makasar and Malay traders had reportedly been bragging that the kimelaha had sent an envoy to Makassar and that the sultan had promised to send forty war vessels to their aid. Judging by the *Makassar Annals*, this was more than just hearsay: they report how an 'envoy from Maluku named Uthman' came to Makassar in August 1633 and stayed some three weeks. Two

503 The crisis on and around Ambon, for instance, is the subject of Knaap, 'War and revolt'. Schoorl, 'Het eeuwigdurende verbond' gives an overview of events at Buton. Stapel, *Het Bongaais verdrag,* 26-34, gives a brief account of the blockades of Makassar.

504 Van den Heuvel, a Council of the Indies himself, actually co-wrote and co-signed this particular General Letter.
Brouwer, Van Diemen, Vlack, Van der Burch and Van den Heuvel to Directors, 15 dec. 1633, in: *Generale Missiven*, I, 393-432, esp. 402pp. In a somewhat bewildering insight into the way in which the General Letter came about, the passages about Ambon do not seem to have been notably influenced by Van den Heuvel's report but seem to rely on Gijsels' own letters, and largely follow his judgement, in the same general letter that announced his replacement.

days before his departure, a royal banner was 'ritually bloodied' – a ceremony performed in preparation for war.[505] Makasar fleets were also once again raiding in the Buton Strait. Earlier that year, Sultan La Elangi of Buton had died and been succeeded by his eldest son La Balawo. Although he was partial to the VOC, La Balawo was considered a weak ruler and detested by a Makassar-backed court faction. Makasar fleets kept the pressure on.[506] By blockading Makassar, the VOC hoped to address the root of all these problems.

The blockading fleet, which comprised six ships commanded by Gijsbert van Lodensteyn, left Batavia on the 10th of January 1634. Sailing via Banjarmasin on Borneo, where it used force in an unsuccessful attempt to drive the Makasars out of the pepper trade, the fleet arrived before Makassar on the night of the 12th of February. As it turned out, they were a bit late: Van Lodensteyn had hoped to preempt the entire trading season, but soon learned that two Portuguese ships had already arrived at Makassar, bringing two cast-iron cannon, forty chests full of muskets, and 4.000 pounds of gunpowder. Worse still, the sultan had already got wind of the Dutch fleet three weeks in advance. Accordingly, twelve junks (one of which had been outfitted by the sultan himself and reportedly carried trade goods valued at no less than 70.000 or 80.000 reals of eight) had hurriedly left for the Ambon islands. The prisoners who divulged this information also told the Dutch that several more trading junks were waiting in the rivers and some thirty swift rowing vessels, outfitted by the sultan and armed for war, were apparently bound for Hoamoal. Sure enough, the rumours Company officials had heard seemed to be well-founded.[507]

To make matters worse, these vessels then managed to run the blockade. On the 15th of March, they made a dash for open water, keeping out of reach of the VOC ships by taking advantage of the early morning offshore wind and shallow waters behind the coastal reefs. The Dutch vainly fired some cannonballs after

505 Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 44. In spite of the Annals stating 'Maluku' rather than Luhu Hoamoal or another name specific to Western Seram, the timing makes it more than likely that this refers to the kimelaha's envoy. Cummings' interpretation of the ritual bloodying of the banner being an unrelated event and having to do with the coming Dutch blockade, which had not even been decided upon at that time, seems unlikely. Of course the plot slightly thickens because Hitu had reportedly also sent an envoy of its own around that time, purportedly only to present the credentials of the new Kapitan Hitu – see last chapter.

506 General letter by Brouwer e.a., 15 dec. 1633, in: *Generale Missiven*, I, pp. 393-432, esp. pp. 404-405; Schoorl, 'Het 'eeuwige' verbond', pp. 30-31.

507 *Dagh-register Batavia,* II, p. 312 (27 May 1634).

them. Worried about the havoc that the fleet might wreak in the Ambon quarter, Van Lodensteyn called the fleet's council together. They resolved to lift the blockade to pursue the Makasar ships, which they hoped to catch before they went through the Buton Strait. When the Dutch fleet arrived there one week later, however, the Makasar ships were nowhere to be found. Lodensteyn decided to wait and see if any more Makasar warships turned up. None did. Attempting to continue on to Amboina as ordered, Lodensteyn's fleet was then confronted with unseasonably strong easterly winds. Only some ships made it through the Strait; Lodensteyn himself had to fall back to Buton with six of the yachts and two sloops. After tarrying there for some time, he finally decided to sail back to Makassar and continue the blockade.[508]

Even if Lodensteyn was unable to catch any Makasar ships in the Buton Strait, they were there all the same, as one VOC ship discovered. Although the *Batavia* had been sent out to join the blockade in early March, it seems to have been in a poor condition to sail, and did not make it to Makasar ending up at Buton instead. On 30 March, just a couple of days after Van den Heuvel sailed further up the Strait, it found a fleet of 'some 200 or 300' Makasar vessels of all sizes roaming about. The crew learned that the fleet 'had plundered and conquered the land of Buton and made the king their tributary and vassal'. Worried that the Makasars were also planning to attack their ship, its crew decided to try and evade the fleet and simply sailed back to Batavia, bringing these bad tidings with them.[509] Indeed, the *Makassar Annals* confirm that Buton's allegiance shifted around this time. They report how on 8 March 1634, 'a manuscript arrived from Buton commemorating their oath at Bau-Bau'.[510] Although the sources do not specify who wrote the manuscript in question, it is certain that Sultan La Balawo was deposed later that year. He was succeeded by Sultan La Buke of the Kumbewaha family, who belonged to a faction more well-disposed to Makass-

508 Governor-General Brouwer to Directors, 15 August 1634, printed in Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, pp. 254-255.

509 *Dagh-register Batavia*, II, 295-296 (28 April 1634.) Interestingly, Van den Heuvel had an audience with the sultan of Buton only a couple of days earlier. The Sultan, who had hidden outside Baubau, leaving the rule of the town to the brother of the late Sultan as a stewart, returned to the kraton to receive him and complained about the incessant Makasar attacks. (Van den Heuvel to Brouwer, 30 May 1634, VOC 1114, esp. fol. 311v-312r.) It is interesting to note that neither he nor Lodensteyn seems to have noticed that Buton had already reconfirmed its vassalage to Makassar.

510 Cummings, *Makassar Annals*, 47. The original oath, presumably, is the one of 1626 described above

ar.[511] The VOC thus lost an important ally in a crucial location and Ternate one of its tributaries.

For all the mishaps, the blockade at least succeeded in catching traders and blocking trade to Makassar. Before its wild goose chase to Buton, the fleet had caught several trading junks and pursued a small Portuguese vessel. Ultimately, its crew saw no choice but to abandon ship and ignite the powder chamber. After the Dutch ships returned from Buton, news of the renewed blockade seemed to have spread, for fewer ships ran into it. Interestingly, though, a small Japanese craft was caught in July. Its crew told the Dutch that they believed they would be left alone given that they were Japanese. Upon his return in September, Lodensteyn reported that, to his knowledge, no cloves had been brought into Makassar that year and he had learned that some forty trading junks had been penned in by the blockade.[512]

Importantly, the blockade did not apply to the Danes and English, who, as official European allies, were free to sail to and from Makassar at will. Of course, this was to the detriment of its effectiveness. In any case, the English were thoroughly unimpressed with the blockade. Their records scarcely mention it and indicate that the rhythms of trade and the selling and gifting of weapons seem to have continued more or less as usual.[513]

The sultan of Gowa was less dismissive of the blockade. Lodensteyn learned from the Danes that the sultan had mobilised 40.000 troops and that some 17.000 labourers were busy improving and extending Makassar's already impressive defences. The sultan had even acted against the so-called 'English island', a small island situated right in front of the Makassar roads, which threatened to become a real liability if the Dutch occupied and fortified it. To avert this eventuality, he had it forcefully evacuated, dug up, and thrown into the sea.[514] Large

511 Schoorl, Het 'eeuwige' verbond, 31. Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, lxvii and, following his judgment, Stapel, *Bongaais verdrag,* 28, claim that the Makasars stayed their attacks on Buton out of fear of the Dutch blockade in late 1633 and early 1634. I have not been able to find this in the documents, and it seems unlikely, considering that the vessels roaming around Buton must have already been there at the start of the VOC's blockade.

512 *Dagh-Register Batavia*, II, p. 383 (5 september 1634).

513 IOR G/10/1, 60-63.

514 The 'English island' is indicated in a map from the Gijsels collection, as being roughly opposite the European lodges towards the north of Makassar. See Badische Landesbibliothek K. 478, fol. 29 (available online through atlasofmutualheritage.nl.) The Makassar Annals confirm its demolition in late May 1634 and identify it as Laelae. The

fleets of war galleys waited in the rivers, ready to come to the aid of returning Makasar ships if necessary.[515] Although the sources paint an ambiguous picture of how effective the blockade was during that first year, it clearly had Makassar up in arms.

### 'That Hituese rascal' arrested

A month after the fleet set sail for Makassar, Van den Heuvel left for his new post. His instructions stipulated that he should first join the blockade of Makassar and inform himself as to its operation and effectiveness. After that, he was to continue to Ambon, stopping at Buton to pay the sultan a visit on the way.

Although his fellow council members were clearly enthusiastic about his idea of blockading Makassar, Van den Heuvel's orders give the impression that not all the proposals in his report were so well-received. More than once, the instructions state that 'as you consistently took part in our council meetings […] there is no need to give long and broad accounts of our reasons here'.[516] Those meetings must have been the scene of heated discussions: in many cases Van den Heuvel's instructions flew in the face of the suggestions that he put forward in his report. Indeed, they often seemed more in line with Gijsels' policies. For instance, Van den Heuvel was instructed to continue extirpating cloves in areas that the VOC could not control. What is more, he was told to carry on nurturing good relations not only with the Company's subjects in Ambon and Lease, but also with the Alfurs, whose friendship and assistance were deemed valuable assets 'even if their power should be but one fourth of what Gijsels boasts it to be'.[517] As to the Hituese: although they could not be trusted, maintaining their friendship was in Company's interest for now, if only 'to avoid having a powerful enemy on Ambonese soil'.[518]

The governor-general and Council were certainly unhappy about how the new Kapitan Hitu, Kakiali, had been appointed; they had been presented with a *fait accompli* and were also concerned that Kakiali did not seem to have the backing of all the Hituese families. Kakiali asked the VOC to endorse him in

island has since come back from oblivion and is to be found right across from Pantai Losari.

515 *Dagh-Register Batavia,* II, 13 July 1634, pp. 353-354.

516 Instructions for Antonie van den Heuvel, 15 February 1634, in: VOC 1114, fol. 214v pp, this quote from 215r.

517 Ibid, 221r.

518 Ibid., 222v.

his new capacity, but the governor-general and Council chose to withhold their approval until 'he had been able to prove himself faithful and friendly to the Company'.[519] The instructions certainly did not encourage Van den Heuvel to act on his own earlier suggestions that Kakiali should simply be arrested and Hitu annexed. Rather, they impressed upon him that he was to cultivate the few good relationships that the Company still enjoyed in the islands, refrain from doing anything rash, and wait to see how the blockade of Makassar would affect the situation. His orders even contained a glimmer of optimism regarding a new envoy from the sultan of Ternate who had arrived in the islands towards the end of Gijsels' governorship and claimed to be willing to take the two kimelahas back to Ternate under certain conditions.

These pleas for prudence were lost on Van den Heuvel. After going to Makassar to see how the blockade was proceeding, joining the chase after the war vessels that broke through, visiting the new sultan of Buton, and fighting the early and vehement monsoon, he finally arrived at Castle Victoria on the 27th of April. He did not like what he found:

> Upon my arrival here, due to the bad proceedings of the Ternaten kimelahas Luhu and Leliato, as well as the perfidious actions of the Sadaha [the envoy from Ternate] and the new kimelaha Fakiri, and furthermore and specifically the conspiracies, treacheries and horrible machinations of that Hituese rascal, the haughty Kakiali, I found the state of Amboina to be in very dire straits.

Although Van den Heuvel does not come across as someone who would make many friends in the islands, it is only fair to point out that the situation had indeed dramatically deteriorated in the months before his arrival. An envoy from Ternate had arrived in the region in January. He carried a letter from the sultan, explaining that the visit aimed to ease the various tensions that had arisen, take kimelahas Leliato and Luhu back to Ternate to account for their actions, and ensure that foreign traders stayed out of the region. In negotiations that followed, however, the envoy started making additional demands. Most prominently, he proposed that most of the region – including the northern half of Ambon, the Lease Islands, and all of Seram – should be 'restituted' to the sultan of Ternate. Gijsels could obviously not agree to this, and he was left to wonder whether the sultan was double-dealing or the envoy who had been 'corrupted' by the

519 Ibid., 224v.

kimelaha.[520] In addition, forty-three Makasar war junks arrived in the islands around this time. They carried 2.000 well-armed men and even twenty 'white Portuguese', who built fortifications for themselves in Kambelo.[521] It was Gijsels' impression that the Makasars, the two kimelaha, and Kapitan Hitu were all preparing an attack on the VOC-controlled part of Ambon. Kakiali had his belongings transported to the mountains, where he built new fortifications, and Gijsels mobilised the VOC's troops. The entire region seemed to be headed for war.

Van den Heuvel had his own preferred remedy for the situation and went straight to work. In the first days after his arrival, he persuaded the Council of Amboina to agree that he should go out to Hitu and duly left on the 8th of May. He hoped he could deceive Kakiali, by playing the guileless and ill-informed new governor, who was unaware of the recent troubles. Acting surprised that his 'old brother' Kakiali did not come out to greet him, Van den Heuvel hoped, might do the trick of getting him on board his ship.

Van den Heuvel's letter describing the events contain histrionic passages, in which he describes undertaking this difficult and risky mission with a heavy heart. He was doubtless aware that arresting Kakiali directly contradicted his instructions and might cost him his career if things went awry. The letter is vague as to how the arrest proceeded; Van den Heuvel remarks only that he went out to Hitu on the 8th of May and made the arrest on the 20th.

Other sources fill in the gap, though, informing us that Van den Heuvel went to Hila to convene a general meeting of the Hituese leaders, to which Kakiali was invited. He initially refused to come, which led Van den Heuvel to suppose that the new Kapitan Hitu was unpopular with many of the Hituese leaders. He took particular care to reinforce the VOC's relations with the orangkaya on Hitu's east side. They were loyal to the perdana Tanihitumesen, whose family was

520 General letter by Brouwer e.a., August 1634. This part is not included in the published version or Tiele-Heeres, so see VOC 1111, fol. 39r.

521 It is tempting to suppose that these are the same war vessels that ran the blockade at Makassar, but they are probably not. There is no letter of Gijsels detailing these events (one imagines he informed the Council personally after his return to Batavia), and the general letter and dagh-register are frustratingly sparing with dates about this episode. All the same, the context implies these ships arrived somewhere in mid-March – too early for those ships to have already reached Hoamoal. Not that it ultimately matters – large Makasar warfleets were roaming both the north coast of Sulawesi and the Buton Strait at the time, and vessels had also departed to the Ambon region before the arrival of the blockade. General letter of 15 August 1634, published in Tiele Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, pp. 256-257.

the old rival of the Nusatapi, from whose ranks the Kapitan Hitu traditionally came, and constituted the main opposition to Kakiali. The Ternaten envoy was also present and Van den Heuvel, in response to the envoy's earlier demand to 'restore' much of the region to Ternate, made a show of asking the various Ambonese leaders whether they had ever been vassals of the Ternaten sultan. They all laughingly denied that they had. When Van den Heuvel insisted that Kakiali should join the meeting, he finally showed up but, apparently smelling a rat, brought 250 warriors with him.

Van den Heuvel's chance came when the negotiation circus subsequently crossed to Lesiela on Hoamoal. Kakiali, Van den Heuvel, and the Ternaten envoy travelled there with their respective hongi to negotiate with the two kimelaha over the situation in Hoamoal. Van den Heuvel had the good fortune to arrive there at exactly the same time as Kakiali and his associates, and cordially invited him on board his kora-kora. This time Kakiali took the bait, whereupon he and his three accompanying orangkaya were promptly arrested. Van den Heuvel had hoped to proceed quietly – according to Rumphius, he might have wanted to repeat the same trick with the Ternaten envoy and the two kimelaha. The other Hituese kora-kora noticed the scuffle, however. They raised the alarm and hurried back to Hitu, with Van den Heuvel's hongi in hot pursuit and firing on them. Needless to say, this also concluded the negotiations with the envoy from the sultan, who subsequently left the two kimelaha to rule, captured the Luhunese orangkaya who remained loyal to the Dutch, whom he brought back with him to Ternate as hostages.[522]

Van den Heuvel omitted these rather crucial details from his initial reports to Batavia, presumably concerned that blowing up the negotiations with the Ternaten envoy, arresting Kakiali, and ending up in a naval skirmish with Hitu was not, to put it mildly, entirely in line with his instructions. Still, he relished the prospect of holding a great public trial before the entire Amboina Council, in which Kakiali would be arraigned for a long list of offences related to conspiring to attack the Company with the other Muslim polities of the region; directly trading with Makassar and enlisting their help against the Dutch; and ordering the death of the two Dutch soldiers and several inhabitants of the village of

522 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 112pp. As a sidenote, it is interesting to notice that Tiele-Heeres simply skips all the letters by Van den Heuvel, noting that Rumphius and Valentijn basically relay the same information. This is emphatically incorrect: Rumphius and Valentijn are significantly *more* informative than Van den Heuvel's letters, for reasons discussed below.

Elpaputih the previous year. And Van den Heuvel congratulated himself on his bold and decisive action, and its resounding success:

> By removing that harmful character, we have brought about the Company's greatest conceivable good fortune and advantage in securing and confirming its state in these quarters, as well as damaging and diminishing the kimelaha and his adherents, for which praise be to God Almighty alone.[523]

Following Kakiali's arrest, Van den Heuvel drank a *matakau* with the various Hituese leaders to confirm a new treaty. It stipulated that the function of Kapitan Hitu was abolished; Hitu would fall under the direct control of the Governor of Amboina (although the perdanas and the raja would remain in place); the inhabitants of Hitu would be free but not forced to become Christian; and effectively the Hituese would share the same duties and rights as the Ambonese under direct Company rule.[524] Van den Heuvel felt that, for all practical purposes, he had brought Hitu under the VOC's control.

Although the raja and representatives of each of the four major Hituese families signed the treaty, Van den Heuvel noted that some of the followers of the locked-up orangkaya had retreated to the mountain forts in Hitu's interior. Nevertheless, he was confident that, with the help of the Company's new subjects, these would soon see reason and return to their coastal settlements.[525]

His next letter was less cheerful. As he was writing it in mid-July, he could see the situation in Hitu quickly unravelling.

### 'Therefore, it is better if we fight them': fallout in Hitu

In the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, Rijali describes how, in the wake of Kakiali's arrest, the Hituese orangkaya were baffled by the antics of both the Company and the Ternaten envoy, who had captured the Luhunese leaders. They called a meeting at which the two kimelaha were present and to which Muslim *ulisiwa* communities were invited. The discussions over how they should proceed were apparently heated: some wanted to honour the new treaty with the Company and hope for

523 VOC 1114, fol. 309v.

524 Treaty of 28 May 1634, in: *Corpus Diplomaticum,* III, 262-266.

525 Van den Heuvel to Governor-General, 30 May 1634, in: VOC 1114, 309v. For the Nusatapi family, Baros, an uncle of Kakiali, signed. Along with another uncle, Bulan, he was a detractor of Kakiali's collision course with the Dutch, and had therefore fallen out with him.

the best, others to fight, and still others to refer the matter to the sultan of Ternate. In Rijali's account of the meeting, the kimelaha ultimately had the final word: 'The orangkaya are right, but the actions of the Hollanders are to the detriment of the religion of God's Messenger, and in contravention of the decisions of His Majesty, because they show no respect to his Majesty, Sultan Hamzah – victor thanks be to God, the King, shadow of God on earth. Therefore, it is better if we fight them'.[526] Although Rijali himself felt that war with the Company was unwise and reckless, most of the Hituese leaders agreed with the kimelaha. Arms and gunpowder were stockpiled.

Despite the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* being our only source about this meeting, we can probably safely accept the general gist of the account it provides: although Kakiali had not been popular with all the Hituese, his sudden arrest disrupted Hitu's established political structure and aroused such suspicion towards the Company's intentions that the Hituese could only turn to the kimelaha. The latter, unsurprisingly, advocated taking up arms against the Dutch.

All this became apparent precisely as Van den Heuvel was penning a letter to Batavia in mid-July. At the start of the letter, he admitted that the situation was not as favourable as he had hoped; none of the communities that had fled to the mountains had returned. There had been some skirmishes. Attempts to bring those who had retreated to the mountains down by force had been thwarted by monsoon rains. Still, Van den Heuvel stressed how much worse everything might have been with Kakiali still at large. Ironically, he hoped that the Alfurs might be of great help in the situation in Hitu, having personally visited Kamarian on Seram's southwest coast to talk to their leaders. Meanwhile, he had been able to extract confessions from Kakiali – using torture, if we are to go by Rumphius' assertion.[527]

Just as he concluded his letter, all manner of worrying news came pouring in, leading him to write a rather distressed post-scriptum. He had just learned that, before his departure, the Ternaten envoy had landed 400 well-armed 'Malays' on Hituese soil to assist the enemies of the Dutch in their struggle. 300 other fol-

526 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 171.

527 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 119. The transcripts of the interrogations, which were sent along to Batavia, are not present in the Nationaal Archief. As Rumphius had access to the documents in Ambon, and considering the Company's proceedings in similar cases (see e.g. Clulow, *Amboina, 1623*), this assertion seems plausible. For Van den Heuvel's own descriptions: Van den Heuvel to Governor-General, 15 July 1634, in: VOC 1114, 398v.

lowers of the kimelaha were also reported to have arrived on the island. The population of all the remaining Hituese settlements had fled to the mountain forts, some having sided against the Dutch, others simply afraid. 'That which we have always feared, has now come to pass', Van den Heuvel wrote, 'and all the Muslim settlements have deserted us'. He made special mention of the Hituese wife of Wouter van Seroijen, the resident at the Company's lodge in Ureng. When the lodge was evacuated, Van Seroijen's wife defected to the Hituese, taking 150 rials of eight, other valuables, and, perhaps worst of all, vital intelligence with her. Van den Heuvel beseeched the governor-general to send reinforcements and called upon higher powers for help, ordering weekly public prayer days 'to pray to God that he might turn his wrath away from these lands.'[528] It may be that Van den Heuvel had succeeded in making the political constellation in the islands simpler, but not in the way he had imagined. Rather, he had done exactly what his superiors had warned him to avoid at all cost: he had brought the Spice Wars to the shores of Ambon proper.

### 'All gone up in smoke': crisis management in Batavia

Back in Batavia, the bad news pouring in was not limited to Ambon. The ships that had been blockading Makassar returned to Batavia in early September, many of their crew sick and dying with beriberi and edema, including Gijsbert van Lodensteyn himself. Many suspected that there was more to the raging diseases than met the eye and that the Makasars had succeeded in poisoning the wells on the small islands in the Makassar Strait, where the Company ships went for their drinking water.[529]

Lodensteyn suggested that the next blockading fleet should leave as soon as possible, for Makasar ships could easily depart as soon as October or November and simply wait somewhere secure along the way before continuing to the Ambon region (the Tiworo Strait, for example, now had a Makasar fortress). In fact, the only real way to mount an effective blockade was to post ships year-round, keeping a little distance from the Makasar roads only from November up until late February, when bad weather and onshore winds made a closer blockade hazardous. He also recommended stationing at least one ship permanently in Buton.

528 Van den Heuvel to Governor-General, 15 July 1634, in: VOC 1114, 402r.

529 L.C.D. van Dijk and G.W. Vreede. *Nee'rlands vroegste betrekkingen met Borneo, den Solo-Archipel, Cambodja, Siam en Cochin-China : een nagelaten werk*. Amsterdam: J.H. Scheltema, 1862, 23n.

Two weeks later, the governor-general duly sent new ships to blockade Makassar, although they were first to detour all the way around Borneo. This time the fleet was commanded by Harmen Gerritsen; Van Lodensteyn was too sick and would die in Batavia shortly afterwards.[530] It soon became even clearer that the blockade was not doing much good. In December 1634, the governor-general and council gloomily wrote to the directors that Makasar trade and influence were only growing. The Portuguese and Spanish were selling lavish quantities of weapons to them, as well as to Tidore, 'in contravention of the old … laws of not being allowed to sell weapons to unbelievers… but the Pope has dispensed them from it'). Although the blockade had kept Portuguese ships out of Makassar, it had played into the hands of the Danes and the English, who could still sail to and fro at will and had no qualms about selling weapons and ammunition either. Cloves were still amply available in Makassar – the Gowans had simply built a road across the peninsula to its eastern side, where small boats were now unloading Makasar vessels along the shallow coast. As to the possibilities for mounting a blockade there, Brouwer and the Council of the Indies despondently wrote that 'the many creeks on the east side… make it almost impossible to occupy'.[531]

Perhaps worse still, by now it had dawned on Brouwer and the members of his council that 'the hoped-for great advantages of apprehending and locking up Kakiali have all gone up in smoke'. This not only applied to the Ambon region. Sultan Hamzah had been deeply offended by the turn things had taken whilst his envoy Sadaha had been in the islands, and made a point of emphasising the damage it had done to his faith in the Dutch.[532]

In exasperation, Brouwer, who was otherwise so combative, suggested that the problem might be unsolvable in Asia, but could be solved in Europe instead. Ultimately, the heart of the problem was cloves' huge arbitrage potential. Given that the Dutch were forcibly and artificially keeping their buying prices low whilst the prices were so high in Europe, other European powers in Makassar could actually pay three times what the Dutch offered and still turn a profit in

530 The detour was meant to investigate whether this provided a viable and less monsoon-dependent route to the eastern archipelago. Gerritsen's instructions, 17 sept 1634: VOC 859, p. 3-9. Reinforcements were sent out later that same month to join the fleet before Makassar. In April 1635, the blockade was further reinforced by ships under the command of Gerrit Thomasz Pool. Stapel, *Bongaais Verdrag,* 27-28.

531 General letter by Brouwer e.a., 27 December 1634, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 261-262.

532 Ibid., 265-266.

Europe. Meanwhile, the Company was sitting on an enormous hoard of cloves back in the Netherlands. Just lower prices in Europe, Brouwer tactfully suggested, and you pull out the rug from underneath the entire circus:

> It would reduce the trade of the Makasars to nothing; bridle the faithless clove smugglers; make us less hated with all our neighbours so that we would have fewer enemies; Batavia would be more inviting to the commerce of all foreigners so that even the Makasars themselves would come to us; we could reduce our naval forces and our garrisons; the need to build more new forts would cease.[533]

Meanwhile, evidence of Gijsels' private trade was not forthcoming. As Brouwer put it, 'Van den Heuvel has sent us a remarkable load of testimonies and declarations, containing, however, too much yarn and too little proof of substantial wrongdoings, which he seeks to demonstrate with curious phrasings rather than with substantial proof'.[534] In fact, Brouwer received more and more complaints about Van den Heuvel's own behaviour during his tour as commissioner, not to mention his rather underwhelming performance as governor of Amboina so far. Brouwer decided to recall him – ostensibly because he needed a trained jurist in the Council of Justice in Batavia, but more likely to prevent him from making an even bigger mess in the eastern archipelago.[535] He sent two people to replace him: Jochum Roelofsen van Deutecom had a largely military background, which Brouwer felt might come in handy, what with the present situation in the Amboina Quarter. Initially, however, Van Deutecom was to share command with Artus Gijsels, who was sent back out to Amboina, now in the capacity of commissioner to inspect the eastern quarters.

533 Ibid, 262-263. His words were, in fact, heeded: partly in response to his suggestion, the meeting of the directors resolved to pay dividends in cloves in 1635 and 1636, with the aim to bring down the market price. It worked: prices dropped sharply from 5,40 to 3,28 guilders per pound in 1635. See Van Dam, *Beschrijvinge,* 1.1, 420; Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade,* 95; Directors to Brouwer, 13 Sept. 1635, in VOC 316, specifically fol. 85r; copy resolutions of the directors, August 1635, point 8, in VOC 101, fol. 139r.

534 General letter of 17 December 1634, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 267.

535 Brouwer was stuck with Van den Heuvel because he had been instructed from the Netherlands to make him Council of the Indies, and could not gratuitously ignore those orders even in the face of Van den Heuvel's bungling. Blussé, 'Spitsvinnighe Warvogels', esp. 161-162.

### The plot on Ambon thickens

Van den Heuvel seems to have been at least temporarily humbled by the mess that he had on his hands. Under the leadership of the perdana Tanahitumesen, the easternmost Hituese settlements had remained loyal to the Company, as had the Muslim *ulisiwa* communities on the southwest side of the peninsula, who were officially subjects of the Company. Nevertheless, Van den Heuvel judged their loyalty 'brittle and cautious'[536] – if not because they were suspicious of the Company's intentions, then out of concern that the Company would not be able to protect them from their neighbours. The arrest of Kakiali also played into old rivalries between the four most prominent Hituese families. These tensions were only worsened by the old raja's death and conflict over the custody of his successor, who was still a minor. The situation devolved into what amounted to a civil war fought with outside allies. Those Hituese who had fled to the interior and resolved to fight the Dutch soon found a new leader in an orangkaya named Patiwani, of the Tuban family. They sought support from the kimelaha and their allies, attacking Hituese who remained loyal to the Dutch and trying to break their ranks by any means necessary, variously wooing, threatening, and assaulting them. Faced with these threats, settlements that had thrown in their lot with the Company looked to it for protection.

Given that not all of the Company's ships had been able to reach Ambon due to the abnormal monsoon that season, the VOC was spread very thin just at this moment of crisis. The kimelaha, meanwhile, were spreading rumours that Batavia had fallen to Mataram and the VOC had lost all its ships in fighting the Chinese.[537] That said, the VOC's remaining allies were loath to switch sides if they could avoid it, for they were all-too-aware of how the Ternatens and Malays were domineering and harassing the Hituese around Ureng and Asilulu who had thrown in their lot with them.[538]

That was small comfort to the Dutch, however. With barely enough troops to

536 Van den Heuvel to Brouwer, 28 July 1634, VOC 1114, specifically 409v.

537 The latter, interestingly, had at least some basis in fact: in October 1633, the VOC had suffered its worst naval defeat yet at Liaoluo Bay, where it lost four of its nine ships in an engagement with a Chinese fleet. It is interesting that this defeat was a moral boost to other enemies of the Company 3000 kilometres away. See Andrade, *Lost Colony,* 45-53.

538 Van den Heuvel states they were 'verheert ende vermeestert' (28 July 1634, VOC 1114, 408r.) Rumphius states they were 'getravaljeerd' (Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche historie', I, 119.)

protect the VOC's subjects and loyal Hituese against frequent attacks,[539] Van den Heuvel's hands were tied. The only way he could actually retake the offensive was by making use of the hongi once again. This was trickier than ever. Now openly working with the kimelaha and the Hituese under Patiwani, Ihamahu was able to prevent the villages on Saparua from sending their kora-kora to join the hongi.[540] As the kimelaha were once again out and about with their own hongi, Van den Heuvel had to excuse Suli and Wai from participating, so they would be able to defend against a possible sea raid like the one they had faced the year before.[541] For similar reasons, the rest of the Dutch subjects and allies were less than enthusiastic about taking part. Already fed up with the Company's over-reliance on the hongi, they were now more concerned than ever about what might happen whilst they were away.[542]

All the same, in mid-August Van den Heuvel brought the hongi together as well as he could and attempted to take the fight to the Hituese. After bad weather initially confined the fleet to Ambon Bay, it was able to make it out to the Hituese coast by the 25th, proceeding straight to Ureng. A last negotiation attempt went nowhere, so the VOC sent its troops and allies inland to collect the clove harvest and eradicate the trees. The Ambonese participants were apparently dragging their heels, unhappy with this business of clove harvesting in hostile territory and particularly annoyed they had to share their earnings with the 115 Company soldiers protecting them. They 'barely collected 20 bahar, where they could have easily collected 100', Van den Heuvel complained.[543] The entire force ascended the steep cliff to Ureng proper to cut the abundant clove trees there. It turned out, though, that the cliff was guarded by a brick fortification manned by several hundred Hituese firing swivel guns and muskets. Four Dutch soldiers were wounded in attempting to take the position; according to Van den Heuvel, the Ambonese allies beat a hasty and disorderly retreat, after which the

539 Throughout the year the rebels were attacking villages loyal to the VOC, trying to win them over to their side, fortifying positions to cut of various VOC-allied settlements from one another, etc. Especially worth mentioning is that the VOC had sent a force to their allies around Hitulama on the 19th of August, which was subsequently forced to retreat back to Ambon when faced with an overwhelming Hituese force. For an overview see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 119-122; Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 61; Dagh-register, II (1631-1634), 390 and 397pp.

540 Gijsels to Brouwer, 22 Aug 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 423.

541 Gijsels to Brouwer, 18 Sept 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 494v.

542 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 121.

543 Van den Heuvel to Brouwer, 18 Sept 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 490r.

outnumbered Dutch soldiers saw no option but to follow suit. Van den Heuvel saw no option but to abandon his campaign of harvesting and tree-eradication, not only because the Ambonese could not be induced to go back up to Ureng, but also because he worried that a defeat of VOC troops would tip the balance and cause the entire Hituese peninsula to abandon them.[544] The rest of the campaign was of a more diplomatic nature. Van den Heuvel tried to reason with the various communities along the coast, telling them how he had come to an agreement with Kakiali, whom he would happily release if the Hituese paid their debts to the Company, demolished and abandoned their mountain fortifications, and returned to the coast. To convince the local leaders, he even had a yacht bring Kakiali to Ureng so they could hear it from him. Many of the villages on the west coast still loyal to the Company welcomed this news, which convinced the inhabitants of Henahelu, near Ureng, to make their peace with the VOC. Nevertheless, the rebels under Patiwani would have none of it. Installed in their fortified headquarters in Wawani, they no longer cared about the Company or Kakiali, and openly considered the Dutch enemies. The villages on the east coast, for their part, they were loyal to the perdana Tanahitumesen and had never been well-disposed towards Kakiali. Hence, the Company found that its high-profile captive was largely irrelevant and their attempts to use him as leverage were not very effective.[545] Having achieved precious little, but concerned that he would also lose the goodwill and loyalty of the VOC's subjects and allies if he kept the hongi assembled for much longer, Van den Heuvel returned to the castle on the 23rd of September. Organising a big feast for the orangkaya who had participated, he lavished sums of money on them in recognition of their service.[546] The only small military success he was able to achieve over the subsequent months came in October, when he was able to land 300 Alfurs from Sumite on Hitu. Their headhunting made it very difficult for the rebel Hituese to keep the inland forts supplied for the month or so that the Alfurs were willing to stay. Although the Alfurs promised to send Van den Heuvel another group of warriors in December, they did not materialise. Van den Heuvel noted with concern that he could do nothing as Malay warriors of the kimelaha established a beachhead near Wawani. In January, the Ambelauese and Burunese killed off the Compa-

544 Van den Heuvel to Brouwer, 18 Sept 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 489v – 490v.
545 *Dagh-Register, II*, 1631-1634, 399-401; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 120-121.
546 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 121.

ny's small five-man garrison on Ambelau. To the attackers, it was abundantly clear that the Company could not retaliate.[547]

Aware that the governor-general and his fellow council members were probably none too impressed by his performance as governor, Van den Heuvel's letters became increasingly apologist. He took care to explain to Batavia that he really had had no choice but to arrest Kakiali and that he could not reasonably be expected to have altered how events had unfolded since then.[548] He wrote a letter of a different tone to the directors in the Netherlands, lashing out at supposed enemies in Batavia who wanted to tarnish his reputation.[549] In trying to absolve himself, however, he also gave some poignant insights into why the situation was so precarious:

> While, my lord, in former times, a small force of ours could achieve great things, back then these people were not equipped with sidearms, cannon, swivel guns and muskets, and not proficient in handling such weapons. Nowadays, on the other hand, the Hituese alone have more and better muskets than the General Company possesses in all of Amboina, and handle them far more skillfully [than they used to].[550]

Even allowing for some poetic license – Van den Heuvel was, after all, casting about for ways to defend his performance – his statement is consistent with what we know about developments in the region. Decades of exposure to firearms and the continuous influx of weapons and ammunition from Makassar and elsewhere were leaving their mark on warfare and with it the balance of power in the region.

### The failed siege of Lusiela

Before departing from Ambon in May the previous year, Gijsels had sneeringly told Van den Heuvel that he would see him again in eight months. As the seven-ship fleet returning him to Ambon dropped anchor on the 6th of January 1635, he must have felt some satisfaction. There was little time to gloat, however. After informing Van den Heuvel of their commission and setting some things in

547 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 122.
548 Van den Heuvel to Brouwer, 18 Sept 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 493v.
549 Van den Heuvel to directors, 17 Sept 1634 in VOC 1115, fol. 909-913.
550 Gijsels to Brouwer, 18 Sept 1634 in VOC 1114, fol. 495r.

order in Ambon, Gijsels and Van Deutecom quickly set about preparing for the campaign they had been tasked with. They should proceed to the headquarters of the two kimelaha in Lesiela, conquer it, and preferably capture the kimelaha. Given that capturing Kakiali clearly had not done the trick, the Company now once again focused on the kimelaha as the main troublemakers. A fast yacht was sent to Banda to draw an additional 150 soldiers from the garrison there, reinforcing the 400 that they had brought along from Batavia. The hongi had assembled by 17 January and, after some bad weather and various logistical matters, first sailed past Lesiela for reconnaissance by the 23rd. Gijsels and Van Deutecom had arrived quite early in the season and no foreign traders had yet arrived in the islands. All the same, they found that the kimelaha and their people were quite ready for them, for they came under heavy fire from muskets and large guns as they passed the coast. After some more ships arrived from Ambon, the entire force was assembled on the 28th. It comprised some 700 European soldiers, seven ships, and at least 1.600 Ambonese on more than eighteen kora-kora. The forces disembarked.

Van Deutecom and Gijsels' instructions specified that they should bring down Lesiela with a 'formal siege, ensconcements, the placement of heavy guns and the use of heavy grenades fired by the mortars, and not with a surprise attack', on the assumption that this would cause fewer casualties.[551] They duly set at their task, selecting a spot slightly south of the kimelaha's fortifications, clearing the vegetation there, and building a makeshift wooden fortification of their own. From this position, they slowly dug siege works along the shore in the direction of the lowest fortifications around Lesiela. Meanwhile, Gijsels went off to Sumite to inform the Alfurs of the siege and see if he could enlist their help.

Trying to besiege an uphill fortification from below on the shore, however, proved less than ideal. The vegetation around their provisional fort was dense, providing excellent cover for the kimelaha's troops to make constant hit-and-run attacks on soldiers trying to fetch drinking water or sago, or working on the Dutch siege works. Dutch counterattacks were stymied by both the forest, which shielded the defenders, and enemy fire, their opponents being amply equipped with muskets. These troops reportedly included some 400 Makasars and even a Castilian. With great difficulty, a battery was eventually erected and the Dutch started bringing up their *kartouwe* siege guns and mortars to fire stones, firebombs, and grenades into the enemy town and fortifications. This did not turn

551 Instructions for Van Deutecom, 4 December 1634, in: VOC 857, fol. 33r.

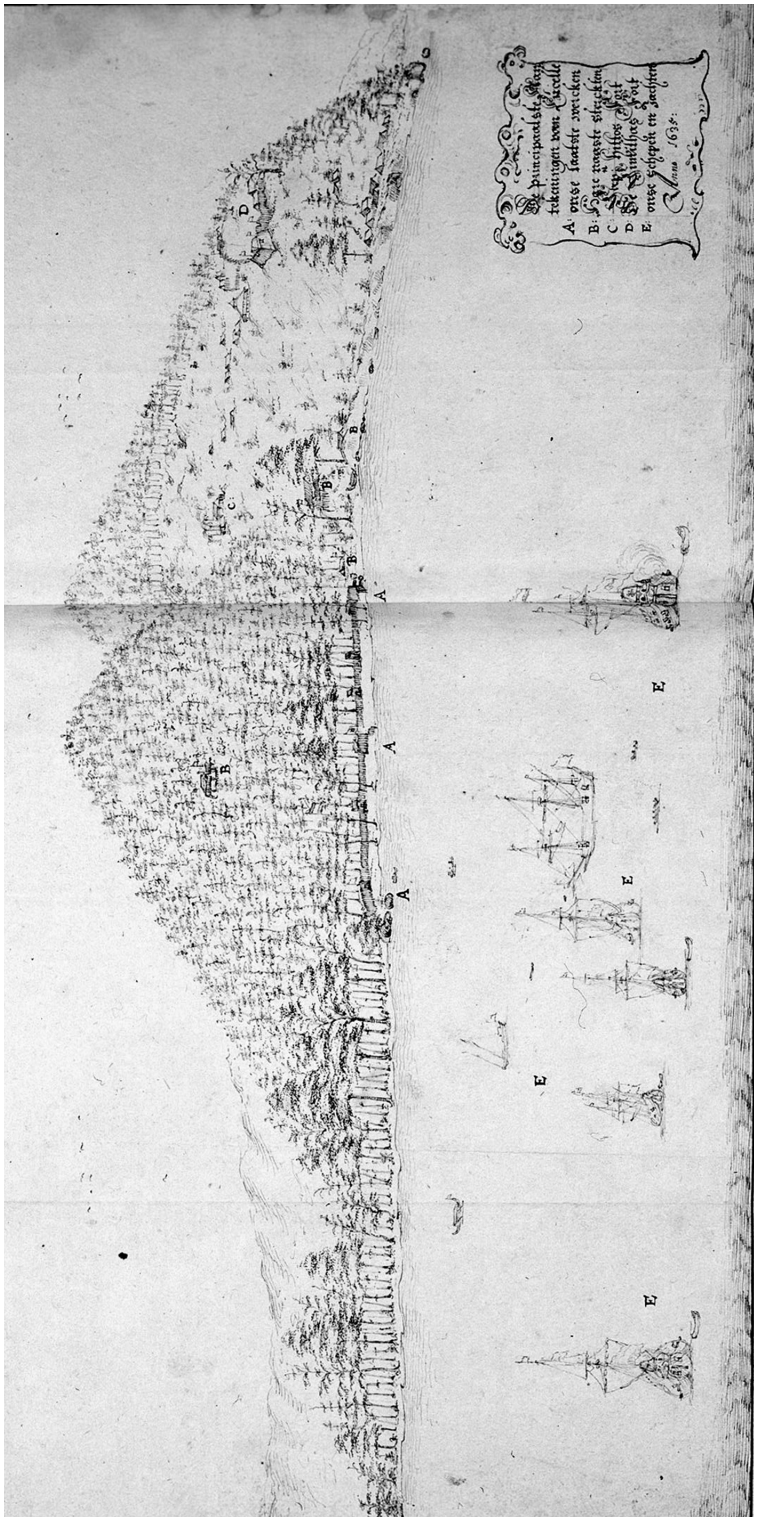


Fig 8.1 Siege of Lesiela, 1635. This drawing depicts the Dutch forts and siege works (A), which we see extending far to the north (right) from the original landing spot. These positions end in a battery, which fired on the various indigenous fortifications (B, C) and, most prominently, the kimelaha's fort (D) with limited success. In the dense forest behind the Dutch fortifications, the kimelaha's forces had complete freedom of movement. Detail from anonymous drawing in Badische Landesbibliothek, K477, fol. 19.

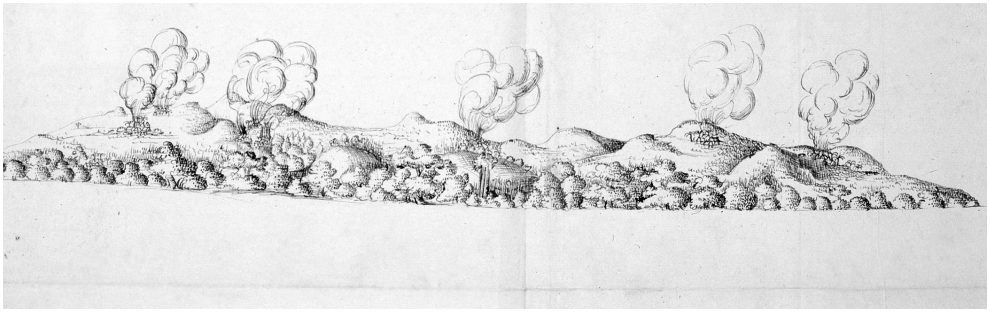

Fig 8.2 Burning villages around the Bend of Kaibobo, March 1635. Gijsels writes about how he destroyed a total of fifteen villages (four of which were previously unknown) and some 1.000 clove trees in the area. Detail of anonymous drawing in in Badische Landesbibliothek, K476, fol. 161.

the tables, however. The kimelaha's fortifications commanded the hill and hit the Dutch battery at least as often as the other way around. A stalemate ensued, which worked to the advantage of the kimelaha as time wore on. Already well-armed and supported by several hundred Makasar and Malay warriors at the outset of the attack, his ranks swelled with some two thousand followers in February as news of the siege spread.

The campaign dragged on into March and disease started spreading amongst the Company's troops and allies. Kept from returning to their villages to wither and die in the protracted siege, the Ambonese in particular became increasingly discontented. On the 17th of March, Gijsels and Van Deutecom decided that one yacht, the kora-kora, 120 soldiers, and most of the Ambonese would be sent on a different mission: to see to some unfinished business with the villages and clove trees around the bend of Kaibobo. Although it was ultimately extremely successful, this campaign further thinned the troops engaged in the siege.[552] The kimelaha took heart and started extending his own fortifications. Meanwhile, the season began turning. The coast became a lee shore, making it difficult to keep the fleet anchored before Lesiela. There was no sign of the Alfurs. Given that the Company forces had been unable to control access to Lesiela and were now increasingly closed in themselves, it started to look more and more as if the kimelaha was besieging them rather than the other way around. With morale low, the troops sick and dying, and the kimelaha advancing on his position, Van Deutecom decided to break off the siege on the last day of March. By the

552 Badische Landesbibliothek K476, fol. 158-165.

2nd of April, the entire force was on its way back to Castle Victoria.[553] Brouwer was furious when he heard about the outcome, noting how foolish it was to try and besiege the fortress from the shore below.[554] We may wonder, though, what other options the besiegers would have had, instructed to lay a formal siege and dependent on their ships for supplies and reinforcements, while the Seramese interior was the power base of the kimelaha. In the wake of the failed siege, stories circulated in Makassar about the 'great overthrow' that the Dutch had suffered in the Ambon islands.[555]

### One hongi too many

Until this point, Van Deutecom, Gijsels, and Van den Heuvel had officially formed a three-man council jointly responsible for Ambon. Only after Gijsels and Van Deutecom's return was the governorship of Ambon officially transferred. Van den Heuvel was sent back to Batavia. Gijsels commenced his tour as commissioner through Ambon and Banda, first stopping at Hitu to try and mend the situation there. On his own assessment, he was only partially and provisionally successful in doing so. One measure would certainly prove unhelpful in this respect: Gijsels single-handedly nominated the perdana Tanihitumesen as provisional Kapitan Hitu. This meant that the VOC would have at least a well-disposed Hituese representative to deal with as the crisis dragged on. Nevertheless, Gijsels' unilateral decision would only exacerbate antagonisms within Hitu and was widely perceived as an intervention in Hituese affairs that the Company had no right to make.[556]

553 Journal of the siege in: VOC 1118, fol. 236-259. It is interesting to note that Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 123pp, is uncharacteristically poor on detail here, and gets dates wrong. This applies to the governorship of Van Deutecom more generally, on which Rumphius is rather brief and also remarks that Van Deutecom 'hardly kept note of his first two years as governor, as he was a military man not raised with the pen' (Ibid., 124). This might indicate that Rumphius did not have access to the extensive journal Van Deutecom kept of his entire governorship: VOC 1124, fol. 100-240.

554 Brouwer to directors, 4 January 1636, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 280.

555 In January 1636 EIC officials in Bantam wrote to England that 'the clove traders of Macassar have on the Island of Amboyna given the Dutch a great overthrow, where they say were slayne 400 Dutch soldiers, with whose arms and buffcoats Macasser seemes to glitter.' Although some of the details seem to be off here (the island of Amboina rather than Seram, and the arms and armour obtained are not reflected in the Dutch sources), the siege of Lusiela is almost certainly the event referred to. Bantam presidency to court of directors, 31 Jan 1636, in: IOR E/3/15, fol. 153.

556 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 123-124.

After leaving Hitu, Gijsels sailed around the north and east side of Seram, stopping to shore up the relations with Seram Laut. Since his own campaign there two years previously, the region had become an important trading partner with Banda, mostly providing sago, given that Banda did not produce any staple foods. After this visit, Gijsels continued to Banda.

Van Deutecom now governed Ambon on his own. His instructions stipulated that he continue the earlier extirpation policies: destroying clove trees belonging to communities that did business with foreign traders. Meanwhile, he was to ensure that the Hituese under Patiwani were unable to coordinate or combine forces with the kimelaha, as well as to stop any clove traders that did make it to Hoamoal. He duly sent ships to patrol the coasts of Hitu and Hoamoal. For the continued extirpation of clove trees and suppression of the Hituese rebellion, he needed his indigenous subjects and allies, like his predecessors.

Van Deutecom assembled the hongi for the first time on the last day of August. He was to lead them on what should have been a great venture against Hatuhaha on the north coast of Haruku. In many respects, this settlement was to Haruku what Ihamahu was to Saparua: the centre of the independent Muslim northern half of the island. The VOC had once been more closely affiliated with Hatuhaha than with Ihamahu; Hatuhaha had signed a treaty with the VOC promising to participate in the hongi and deliver cloves exclusively to the Dutch. More recently, however, the relationship had become more complicated as a result of the various conflicts in the region, with Hatuhaha often opting to align with fellow Muslim communities.[557] Since the campaigns that culminated in the siege of Ihamahu two years earlier, mutual trust and goodwill between Hatuhaha and the Company had broken down completely. Hatuhaha's inhabitants had largely deserted the town proper and retreated to their inland strongholds. As far as Company officials were concerned, they were also selling their cloves to the wrong people.[558]

As a consequence, Hatuhaha was the target of Van Deutecom's first large campaign after the siege of Lesiela. He went all out: a day of fasting and prayer was organised. Around this time, he also received reports that a high ranking Ternaten official was held at Hatuhaha against his will, which provided an additional justification. The sultan of Ternate and the Company were still allies, after all; ostensibly, then, Van Deutecom' was merely campaigning to 'keep the King's

557 Treaty of 13 March 1609, in: *Corpus Diplomaticum*, I, 58-59.
558 Knaap 'War and Revolt', 5-6.

justice'. On the 30th of August, an impressive force of twenty-four kora-kora, four sloops and five yachts set out for Hatuhaha under the command of the governor himself.[559]

The situation they encountered was not what they had expected. As they made their way to Hatuhaha, the kora-kora from Haruku joined their fleet, bringing a letter from 'the envoy of the King of Ternate' who was apparently at Hatuhaha. Although the letter was in Arabic, which no one in the fleet could read, it was accompanied by 'a peace banner'. The people delivering the letter explained that Hatuhaha's leadership had no idea what they had done to anger the Company and that the letter called for negotiations.[560]

Arriving at Hatuhaha the next day, they indeed found an envoy from Ternate present. Far from being a prisoner, he claimed to be there in an attempt to resolve issues amongst all those places currently selling their cloves to foreign traders and to admonish them to sell to the Company from now on. The envoy pleaded with Van Deutecom, impressing upon him that it would be very counterproductive to make war with Hatuhaha at this time. Remarkably, some of the island's Christian inhabitants seconded his entreaties. The Christians living in Kariu were particularly insistent that Van Deutecom heed the envoy's call for restraint. Given that their village was situated very close to the Muslim communities, they expected to be the target of Hatuhaha's subsequent retribution. Nonplussed, Van Deutecom backed down.[561]

Subsequent events at Kapahaha, where the fleet moved next, were also characterized by a lack of opportunity for military action. Kapahaha was a mountain stronghold on the eastern side of Hitu, in the area largely controlled by the perdana Tanihitumesen, and the occupiers of the fort itself had also been on the side of the Company until recently. Now, however, they had now broken off contact with them.[562]

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559 Deutecom's journal, 22 and 23 August, in: VOC 1124, fol. 165v – 166v. The report originated with perdana Tanahitumesen, who was at Hatuhaha at the time, for reasons unclear to Deutecom (and to me). Also see Deutecom to Governor-General, 19 Sept. 1635, this section published in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 276-279, esp. 279.

560 Deutecom's journal, 1 Sept., in: VOC 1124, fol. 168r.

561 Ibid., 2 and 3 Sept, 168v- 169r. It is worth noting that the raja of Hatuhaha was apparently not present at the time, and drinking a matakau to confirm the newfound understanding was therefore postponed.

562 They were led by Telukibesi, who was of the Tanihitumesen family and had initially tended towards the Company, but as opposed to the perdana Tanahitumesen, had subsequently opted to take his distance from them, and appears to have attempted a

Acting against Kapahaha proved difficult, however, for it was situated on a formidable natural fortification. It was not possible to exact revenge on the clove trees situated downhill from the settlement because they belonged not to Kapahaha but to the Hituese allies of the Dutch. Accordingly, Van Deutecom the military man once again found himself enmeshed in stalling tactics negotiations that lasted for days. Eventually he received two hostages and a promise that the inhabitants of Kapahaha would come down to the coast after the clove harvest. Even further east along the coast, Liang was admonished for selling cloves to the kimehala during the initial phase of the revolt. Like the other settlements, however, it was otherwise left unharmed. Without having done much in terms of fighting, the hongi disbanded on the 10th of September.

It was reconvened on the last day of October. The kimelaha was out and about with a fleet of his own and Van Deutecom was concerned that it might visit or assist the Hituese. He sent out his allies to prevent this. As it turned out, the kimelaha's ships were not present at Hitu. Rather, they were active at Hutu-Haloi on the Seramese coast, as well as Hatuhaha and Ihamahu. Van Deutecom left two of his senior officers to lead the expedition to these places. Upon the kora-kora's return on the 16th of November, he was pleased to note that the Company's allies had managed to capture eight kora-kora and several other ships, and burn several more on the spot.[563]

Only two weeks later, he called together the hongi for a third time. First and foremost, he hoped to use it in its ceremonial capacity in a tour of the Christian regions of the Lease Islands. Such tours were always occasion for Christian marriages and baptisms in the presence of the governor himself. Part of the fleet, however, would subsequently move out to destroy a recently discovered nutmeg plantation towards eastern Seram.

As the fleet was gathering at Passo, the gateway to the Lease Islands on the east side of Ambon, Van Deutecom decided to give another small feast for the orangkaya, to acknowledge their service in the hongi. At the feast itself, though, he got a small taste of the discontent that was brewing amongst the Ambonese about the Company's all-too-frequent use of their services: the raja of Soja, a settlement in the interior of Leitimor, 'started his usual talk he is prone to when

middle course between Patiwani on the one hand, and the perdana Tanihitumesen on the other. See Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 141; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 63, 173.

563 Deutecom's Journal, 31 Oct – 16 Nov 1635, in VOC 1124 fol. 179r-181v.

drunk' and swore at the various former governors. He seems to have harboured particular resentment about the expedition to eastern Seram two years earlier, for he bemoaned the fact 'that when they were at Seram Laut at the time, they had been promised mountains of gold, but when the gold was distributed, they were not given their due part'.[564] Van Deutecom immediately dismissed the troublemaker from the meeting, but was mollified by the other orangkaya, who insisted that he not be punished in any way. He was, however, excused from partaking in this expedition.

In Van Deutecom's eyes, the subsequent expedition was a resounding success. Hundreds were baptised and dozens of marriages were concluded as the hongi made various calls on the three islands. By the 4th of December, the tour was completed, at least officially; whilst part of the fleet went back to Ambon with the governor, making as much of a racket and drawing as much attention as possible, thirteen kora-kora quietly stole off in a different direction under cover of darkness. They returned on the 22nd, having gone all the way to eastern Seram. They had located the nutmeg at Terfulo, destroyed some 1500 trees, and burnt down the nearby settlements of Kilmuri, Kilbon, and Selou. Thirty vessels found on the shore had been destroyed and no losses had been sustained. Van Deutecom duly organised a feast to thank the participants and seemed quite content with the outcome. If he was aware of any trouble, he did not record it in his journal.

### New enemies and elusive allies around Sulawesi

Meanwhile, the blockade of Makassar had continued over most of 1635. What its commanders – first Harman Gerritsz and then, following his death during the mission, Thomas Gerritsz. Pool – were up to in this period is not known in any detail. Although the *Makassar Annals* allude to a skirmish at Galesong (directly to the south of Makassar) in June,[565] the Dutch sources are curiously quiet.[566]

What is clear, though, is that Brouwer was not particularly impressed with the results of the blockade and that, by now, the directors in the Netherlands

564 Deutecom's Journal, 26 Nov 1635, in VOC 1124, fol. 183r.

565 Entry for 13 June 1635: 'the Dutch fired up at Galesong; the karaeng [Ala'uddin] overnighted at Bebaq [north of Galesong]'. Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 49.

566 1635 is a year for which the Dagh-Register Batavia has not have been preserved, and the Generale Missiven of late 1635 and early 1636, while filled with Brouwer's complaints about the policy towards Makassar, curiously does not contain any information about the final blockade.

had also communicated their displeasure about it. Just a few weeks before he was already set to return to Batavia, Pool was instructed to break off the blockade and continue to Borneo on a different mission.[567] The blockading fleet thus sailed away in mid-September of 1635. No new one would be sent out.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Brouwer and the directors in the Netherlands rapidly deteriorated due to mutual misunderstandings and differences of opinion over which strategy the Company should follow. The directors were thoroughly annoyed for a number of reasons, particularly because Brouwer had managed to get himself embroiled in simultaneous conflicts with Mataram, Bantam, and Makassar. They were not convinced that Makassar posed much of a threat. The directors had apparently given credence to the sultan's claims that only traders used his port, over which he had no control. In a thunderous passage in what was to be his last general letter, Brouwer hammered home the point that the realities of the situation were quite different:

> It is certain that the Makasar aspires to enlarge his state at the cost of the Dutch, spurred on and astutely advised by the Spanish, Portuguese, English and Danes. As a consequence, he is now so well established, that he is making all the Indian princes of the surrounding lands his tributaries. Buton, Buru, Sula, Banggai, Manado, Tobungku and various other places are now under his rule. All of Selayar, Calauro, Flores, Sumbawa and Bima are now his tributaries. He has taken the entire east coast of Borneo from the king of Martapura. The mighty Bugis of Sulawesi's interior are also his tributaries… In order to secure the clove trade for himself, he sends great assistance to kimelaha Luhu, hoping that this will propel him further still, and he is therefore the most harmful enemy the Company has in all of the Indies, the mighty giant among all its rivals and foes.[568]

While painting a harrowing picture of Gowa's increasing power, Brouwer also mentioned a people that the Company had apparently become aware of only

567 His instructions for this new mission, dated 5 September 1635, in: VOC 857, fol. 547r-v. The correspondence and journals with respect to it: VOC 1118, from fol. 491 onwards.

568 General letter of 4 January 1636, this passage included in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 281-282. I have taken the liberty of translating 'giant' where the original has 'Christoffel'. All geographical names modernized, except Calauro, which appears as a large island directly to the east of Selayar in 17th century maps. Such an island does not exist,

recently: the Bugis, one of the main ethnic groups of South Sulawesi. Several of their polities on the peninsula had a long history of conflict with Gowa. In the late sixteenth century, the main opposition to the expansion of Gowa's power over the peninsula had come from an alliance of the three main Bugis states named the *Tellumpocco*. It was ultimately defeated during Gowa's 'Wars of Islamisation' and the Bugis polities had all become part of the Gowa-Tallo state structure by 1611.[569]

Although ostensibly things had been peaceful since that time, VOC officials in Batavia noticed that something was brewing in South Sulawesi just as their conflict with Gowa was escalating. From 1634 onwards, increasing awareness of the Bugis led to the Dutch to wonder whether they might be willing to declare open war on Makassar, if offered assistance. The various fleets setting out to Makassar and Buton were therefore instructed to see if they could make contact with them.[570]

Van den Heuvel was the first to claim success. In April 1635, in his final letter as governor, he informed Governor-General Brouwer that his earlier efforts at Buton had borne fruit. The previous November, he had received word from Buton that envoys of 'the King of the Bugis' (presumably the *Arumpone*, the leader of Bone, the largest and most belligerent of the Bugis states) would like to come to an agreement on the possibility of joining forces against Makassar. He complained, however, that his fellow members on the secret council (i.e. Van Deutecom and Gijsels), would not allow him to stop at Buton on his way back to Batavia to see if he could make contact with the envoys.[571]

Gerrit Thomasz. Pool, who had risen through the ranks from ship's master to fleet commander over the course of the two successive blockades of Makassar, was then sent out to try. Having just returned from his earlier mission to Borneo, he sailed out from Batavia again in early January of 1636, with six yachts and various instructions. Pool was to first sail to Pulau Laut off the coast of Borneo and destroy any and all Makasar vessels he ran into. He was then to continue to Makassar itself, not to blockade it this time, but to exchange Portuguese captives

although the name might be connected to Kalao island, a small island to the southeast of Selayar.

569 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka,* Ch. I; J. Noorduyn. *Een achttiende-eeuwse kroniek van Wadjo : Buginese historiografie*. The Hague: Smits, 1955, pp. 73-117.

570 Van Dijk, *Borneo,* p. 28.

571 Van den Heuvel to Governor-General Brouwer, 27 April 1635, in: *Bowustoffen,* II, pp. 275-276.

for Dutch prisoners who had been taken in Buton and were presumed to have been subsequently brought to Makassar. As it turned out, the Dutch captives were not there and Pool had to limit himself to releasing the Portuguese in exchange for the agreed ransom. In the next leg of his mission, he was to continue to the east coast of the peninsula, where the Bugis supposedly resided, and see if he could come to an agreement with them.[572]

The fleet arrived before the coast on the 25th of February, dropping anchor and flying a white flag. Soon enough, the crew noticed a small armed force assembling on the shoreline. Contact was made and, after an exchange of hostages, a high-ranking envoy ventured to Pool's ship. It turned out they were at Bulo-Bulo, a Bugis polity directly to Bone's south. An envoy explained that Bulo-Bulo and Bone were currently at peace with Gowa, but that they would happily join the Dutch in fighting them if the latter could deliver weapons. In exchange, they would deliver several shiploads worth of rice every year. The envoy also said he would be happy to arrange a meeting with the *Arumpone*.[573]

The son of the *Arumpone* (or so the Dutch were informed) duly made his appearance on the shoreline with his retinue three days later. Pool sent his own delegation ashore: a commissioner named Steven Barentsz, accompanied by a merchant named Roelof Gerritsen and six more people. He cautioned Barentsz to be careful. Barentsz, however, was confident that these people meant no harm and did not want to provoke them. As soon as they had rowed ashore, Barentsz ordered that the weapons should be left behind under the boat.[574]

It turned out that Pool's warning was quite justified. As soon as the unarmed group approached the Bugis delegation, they were all massacred. Pool witnessed the killing from the deck of the yacht, but was unable to intervene or even to avenge the deaths, for the delegation melted away into the coconut groves on the shore, no major settlements were in the area, and the shallow coastal waters made it impossible to come in any closer with the yachts. Outraged, puzzled, but powerless, he left the coast and sailed on to Buton.[575]

Pool had no idea what had gone wrong, but in hindsight we can make an informed guess. It would seem that, with only limited knowledge of the Bugis at his disposal, Pool simply sought out the wrong crowd. Although Bugis, Bu-

572 Journal of Gerrit Thomas Pool, 24 January – 16 April 1636 in: VOC 1121, pp. 818-842.
573 Ibid., pp. 827-828.
574 Ibid., pp. 829-830.
575 Ibid., pp. 830-831.

lo-Bulo was actually rather concerned about Bonese expansionism (as were some of Bone's other Bugis neighbours). Accordingly, it was closely allied with Gowa through every subsequent conflict up to and including the Makassar War. Although it certainly seems possible that Bone was already considering expanding its power in the peninsula and had been feeling out Dutch support in good faith, Bulo-Bulo was not in on the game and apparently took the opportunity to nip this attempted alliance in the bud. The *Makassar Annals* drily note that 'the Dutch hoped to turn the people of Bulo-Bulo, and pledged that in 300 days and nights we [i.e. Gowa] would be attacked, but they were killed by the people of Bulo-Bulo'.[576]

Pool continued to Buton, where the prevailing attitude towards the Dutch had appreciably changed over the past few years. Even when Sultan La Balawo had still officially been on the throne (but anxiously spent most of his time outside Baubau), a freeburgher's yacht from Batavia had been attacked and plundered whilst anchored at Buton, apparently on the initiative of a local orangkaya. Many more attacks had followed since La Balawo had been deposed. On his way back to the Ambon region in 1635, Gijsels reported that the Butonese had intended to attack him. The Butonese took two more freeburgher's ships that year, one of which, called *Velsen*, had been wrecked on a reef at Wowoni (an island directly to the north of Buton) in late 1635. When its owner, a man named Van Vliet, rowed to Baubau for help, the Butonese sultan sent an official to the wrecksite – who then proceeded to massacre the survivors and take the weapons and cargo. Van Vliet himself was subsequently killed at Baubau.

Pool's task at Buton was to see if he could free the surviving Dutchmen who had been taken during these events and were still held there. Not trusting the sultan when he was invited ashore, Pool resorted to rather back-handed methods. As the ship was being resupplied by local people, he waited for a moment when a great many were on board, and then sprang his trap, killing thirty-six and capturing seventy-six alive. He then threatened to kill those too if the Dutch captives were not immediately released. This had the desired effect. The Dutch were brought to the shore and exchanged for the seventy-six Butonese hostages.

576 Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 50. For background information on the relation between Bulo-Bulo, Bone and Gowa, see David Bulbeck. 'The Landscape Of The Makassar War.'*Canberra Anthropology*, 13:1 (1990): 78-99, esp pp. 80-83; Andaya, *The heritage of Arung Palakka,* esp. pp. 85-86.

Pool continued on his way, stopping briefly at Ambon in the last days of March. He might have noticed that the situation there was also rather tense.[577]

### An empty church

Governor Van Deutecom had become aware that something was afoot on the 22nd of February. It was the eve of the commemoration of the conquest of Castle Victoria, thirty-one years earlier. A day of thanks and prayer was going to be held to mark the occasion. The Ambonese Christians were expected to attend service in the large church in Kota Ambon the following day. Instead, word reached Van Deutecom that night that the orangkaya of the Christian villages of Soya, Puta, and Amahusu had disappeared into the interior with some of their people. Come the next day, the church remained largely empty.

Bewildered, Van Deutecom decided to go ahead with at least some of the commemorations, firing five cannon shots from the walls of Castle Victoria, 'as we are told that this is done every year … and we did not want to diverge from the custom'.[578] But most of the day was spent trying to figure out what on earth was going on. To that end, Van Deutecom called a meeting of the orangkaya.

During this and several subsequent meetings held over the next few days, the orangkaya were more than happy to divulge why the Ambonese Christians had not come to church and some had taken to the hills. They told Van Deutecom bluntly that the people were afraid that the planned celebrations were a ruse and that whoever showed up in church would have been put in chains and deported to Batavia. One of the preachers, Jacobus Vertregt, had recently held a census amongst the Ambonese Christians. Although it seems that Vertregt took this initiative so as to be able to organise churches and schools more efficiently, in the Ambonese's eyes, the counting of their men, women, and children augured ill. As later inquiries brought to light, a whole plethora of rumours had been making the rounds: that the ship *Buren*, which had arrived in Ambon in late January, had brought casks full of chains, manacles, and nooses. That the Makasars, Danes, English, Portuguese, and their allies were on the verge of staging a massive assault on the Ambon region, from which the Dutch would be unable to protect

577 Ibid., pp. 831-842. Pool went on to Banda, and from there, was sent on an exploration of the region to the east. He would end up being hacked to pieces, with his own sabre, no less, by Papuans on New Guinea's south coast. The deep and narrow bay nearby, subsequently baptized 'murderer's river' by the Dutch, is the present-day Etna Bay. *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1636, pp. 225-226.

578 Deutecom's Journal, 23 Feb 1636, in VOC 1124, fol. 195r.

them. Even as Van Deutecom and the orangkaya were having these meetings, an increasing number of Ambonese Christians left their settlements and made their way into Leitimor's interior. The villages gradually emptied.[579]

The real breaking point was reached in early April. Despite the awkward situation of the population having largely absconded, Van Deutecom desperately attempted to see if he could still get the Ambonese to man their kora-kora for a tour of the hongi, on which the Company was still heavily reliant. At first, the orangkaya stated they would be willing to participate if Dutch crews were limited to an absolute minimum and even started readying some of their kora-kora. Then they thought better of it, however, and the kora-kora remained in the water unmanned. Aware that this constituted a definitive break with the Dutch, those communities who had fled now started fortifying themselves and blocking roads into the interior.[580]

Meanwhile, the trouble spread beyond Leitimor. The Muslim villages on Hitu's southwest coast that fell under the direct rule of Castle Victoria, which the Hituese had already pressured to abandon the Dutch in the preceding period, now did just that and threw in with the Hituese rebels. An exception was Larike, which was guarded by a Company blockhouse. This fortification was soon besieged by the Hituese and their allies from Hoamoal. The Christian villages in the Lease Islands, for their part, retired to their inland strongholds, with those on Haruku and Nussa Laut soon siding with the kimelaha, who jumped at the occasion. The blockhouse at Oma on Haruku was also besieged by the Company's former allies, who were joined by warriors from Hoamoal and commanded by kimelaha Leliato himself. He had Hoamoal all to himself at the time, given that kimelaha Luhu had heeded the sultan's call to return to Ternate to account for the kimelaha's behaviour and the rumours that they were in cahoots with Makassar.

With the Christian villages on Leitimor having abandoned the Company, most of those on Hitu siding with the Hituese rebels, and many of the Christians on the Lease Islands now openly hostile to the Company and siding with the kimelaha, the precarious system with which the Company had exercised control

579 Knaap, 'War and Revolt' lists the villages in the immediate vicinity of Kota Ambon whose population fled: Kilang, Ema, Urimesen, Soya and Halong. Slightly further away, Hutumuri, Wai and Suli similarly fled. Some villages did not participate in the flight, most prominently including Nusaniwe, Latuhalat, Hatiwe, Tawiri, Mardika and Baguale.

580 Knaap, 'War and Revolt', pp. 8-9.

over the region had now entirely collapsed. And Company officials did not even fully grasp how it happened. What had gone wrong? Arend Gardenijs, who had recently arrived as the new director in Ambon when the revolt started, was commissioned to investigate. His subsequent report is the fullest account we have of the origins and course of the revolt.

Interestingly, he started his investigation on the assumption that all these stories about the census and the associated rumours were a bunch of hogwash. He 'strongly suspected that something else was hidden underneath'.[581] Through speaking to those orangkaya who had not absconded or at least retained some level of contact with the Company, he unearthed all sorts of grievances. Most had to do with the hongi. Over the past few years, the hongi had become an ever-more important instrument in the incessant wars in the region, and was called upon not only too frequently but, in the eyes of the orangkaya, pointlessly too. Although Gardenijs does not provide details on this, recall that, traditionally, although a ruler did not compensate participants in the hongi, the latter were able to enslave captives, collect heads, and take loot. Over the past few years, the hongi had increasingly been employed to eradicate trees; simply sit by to exert the threat of force whilst governors conducted negotiations; and other activities of no immediate benefit to the orangkaya and their people.

These expeditions could last for weeks, the rowing often continuing day and night. The rowers were constantly wet and exhausted, to the detriment of their health. In addition, the expeditions' frequency kept the men from performing duties (such as tending gardens) back home. The orangkaya explained to Gardenijs that hongi obligations therefore caused rowers and their families economic hardship. In addition, as we have seen, when the men were away, the kimelaha tended to target undefended villages with a hongi of his own.

The worst point of injury, however, was how the men were treated on such expeditions. The Dutch officers were often harsh and rude, 'calling them dogs, beasts, black devils, pigs and more such unreasonable verbal abuse, kicking them, throwing shoes at them, hitting them with rattans, and, on several expeditions, kicking over their food with their feet and trampling on it'.[582] On the two most recent expeditions, some of the Company personnel had really crossed the line. The men had been made to row three days and nights straight, without even being given time to eat. The orangkaya of the villages of Wai and Baguala had

581 Gardenijs, 'Cort Verhael' in: Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave,* 142.
582 Ibid., 143.

been put in chains after their kora-kora had been unable to keep up for a short while. Secretary Pieter Melchiorzoon and *fiscaal* Cornelis Faber were named as being particularly cruel and rude, the former having hit one of the rowers on the head with a stick on the last expedition, causing a large wound. The frequent expeditions were bad enough; being insulted in this way made them unbearable.

On their return voyage from the last expedition to eastern Seram, some of the men on the hongi had discussed whether they should seek immediate retribution, killing those responsible and throwing them overboard. Cooler heads prevailed, however, and the aggrieved orangkaya bided their time. After their return, they started planning how to stand up to the Company, involving the Hituese in the process. Hearing of the trouble brewing, the kimelaha offered help to whoever defied the Company. The orangkaya of Ambon swore an oath to form a bloc against the Dutch governor, sealing it with a *matakau*.[583]

According to Gardenijs, the bad treatment meted out by the Dutch during the hongi was the only real reason that the Ambonese turned against the Company, whereas concerns about the census and rumours of deportation were merely 'idle talk, hogwash and frivolous embellished pretexts'.[584] One wonders whether this assessment is fully justified. It seems as likely that the census did raise concerns, for the Ambonese quite justifiably understood it to be an instrument of control. The census was initiated during a period of unprecedented political instability in Ambon: Hitu was still up in arms and a whole host of Hituese orangkaya, including the perdana Tanihitumesen, had travelled to Batavia in September of 1635 to intercede on Kakiali's behalf with the governor-general. According to Rumphius, the Christian orangkaya were also uneasy because of Kakiali's arrest – might they be next? It seems likely that the unravelling of the relationship with Hitu and consequent destabilisation of the region created a sense of insecurity in the Christian regions, although Gardenijs does not mention this as a specific grievance or concern.[585] As we have seen in previous chapters, rumours

583 Ibid.,144.

584 Ibid., 142.

585 Note though, that Rumphius states that Kakiali was deported to Batavia in September 1635, and that this specifically added to the unease of the Christian orangkaya. This is incorrect: Gijsels brought a host of Hituese orangkaya with him to Batavia to plead with the governor-general, but Kakiali remained in Ambon. It was only after the outbreak of the revolt that Kakiali was sent to Batavia, departing on the ship Leiden in late May, and arriving in Batavia on the 22nd of June 1636. Knaap, 'War and revolt', 5; Dagh-register Batavia, 22 June 1636, in *Dagh-register Batavia,* 1636 (published 1899), 145; Cf. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 125.

and anxieties could become powerful forces under such circumstances, and not just for the Dutch. (Also, at the risk of stating the obvious, mass deportation by the Company was not entirely unprecedented in the wider region.) Rather than there being one, 'real' reason hiding beneath a series of pretexts, then, it seems plausible that an entire cluster of anxieties and frustrations reached critical mass in early 1636.

The rest of the year was chaotic and precarious, with the Company fully on the defensive. Although some of the villages remained on good terms with the Company or soon came back into the fold, others remained hostile. It seems that most felt they were stuck between the Company and the kimelaha; by and large, they tried to remain safe whilst not committing to either party. As a consequence, many seem to have refrained from selling cloves to anyone, keeping them in storage until the conflict went one way or the other. The Dutch outposts at Oma and on Nusa Laut remained under siege. By the end of the year, the kimelaha once again went out with his hongi to put pressure on the Lease Islands and the Dutch outposts there. The Company was in no position to counter his efforts.[586]

All in all, the Company's fortunes in Ambon looked bleaker than ever as 1636 drew to a close. How to remedy the situation? Gardenijs had already given his view in his report a few months before:

> We hope that a sufficient force, with an extraordinarily experienced person, vested with great authority and absolute power, [will serve] to unreservedly quell and allay all the risen misunderstandings, the mutiny and the uprising of the Ambonese Christian subjects of the Dutch state; to punish some of the ringleaders to serve as a deterrent and example to the others; and to pardon the respective offences of the others and reconcile with them.[587]

As it turned out, the highest-ranking Company official in Asia was more than willing to act on this advice.

586 Knaap, 'War and revolt', 10-11. For more details on the course of the conflict in these months, also see Van Deutecom's journal in VOC 1124, fol. 100-240; *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1636, passim, esp. 134pp and 230pp.

587 Gardenijs, 'Cort Verhael' in: Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave,* 153.

### Van Diemen's intervention

Meanwhile, back in the Netherlands, the directors observed the situation in and around Ambon with annoyance. They had not even received news of Kakiali's arrest and its fallout as they were writing to Governor-General Brouwer in April 1635. Of far more immediate concern to them was the fact that the English continued introducing inordinate quantities of cloves into the European market. They could only conclude that the Company's efforts at eradication had not yet achieved the desired result. They recommended staying the course, ordering that its officials 'incessantly and unsparingly continue eradicating the clove trees in the various quarters, sniffing out every nook and cranny'.[588]

They also appointed a new commander in chief to execute this policy, their relationship with Brouwer having become untenable over the previous period. Given that Brouwer's term ended in 1635, the directors could simply decree from the Netherlands that he was to be succeeded by Antonio van Diemen, who was already serving in Batavia in the capacity of director-general.[589]

Van Diemen started his term in January 1636, with the directors instructing him to continue the extirpation. Brouwer advised the same, adding that doing so required that 'any military force that can be spared elsewhere should be employed in Amboina'.[590] In July, as the situation in Ambon steadily worsened, Gardenijs added his above recommendation that a 'sufficient force' be assembled, headed by someone 'vested with great authority and absolute power'.

But Van Diemen had no such force at his disposal during the first few months of 1636; unusual weather in the Netherlands had kept the VOC fleets from sailing out to Asia for months.[591] The so-called *Kermis* (Fair) Fleet of 1635, which

588 Directors to Governor-General, 21 April 1635, in VOC 316, fol. 67r. Also see Witteveen, *Antonio van Diemen*, 215, but note that the dates are slightly mixed up in this passage.

589 Witteveen, *Antonio van Diemen,* Ch.10 and 11.

590 Witteveen, *Antonio van Diemen,* 215-216.

591 See J. Bruijn, e.a. *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979-1987, outgoing voyages 461.6 (departure 2 May 1635) through 479.2 (departure 4 May 1636). The letter of the Amsterdam chamber dated 19 December notes that the previous letter was sent 'met de Schepen Harderwijck en Swol dewelcke door contrarie windt tot op dato niet en hebben connen uijtloopen', and that reinforcements and trade goods would be regrettably delayed as a consequence. The letter from 17 April of the next year notes that the ships carrying these letters had finally been able to set sail in January. VOC 316, esp. fol. 104r-v, 110r. Additionally, in the General letter of 28 dec 1636, Van Diemen complains that the soldiers and sailors were poorly fed while

usually set sail in late August and early September, was unable to venture into the North Sea at all. The Christmas Fleet did not make it out until mid-January. As a consequence, the ships informing Van Diemen of his appointment would be the last to reach Asia for some ten months. Van Diemen had to sit on his hands. From late July onwards, however, the delayed ships started arriving in quick succession, with the Easter fleet of 1636, which was able to set sail on schedule, hot on their heels. Things started to look up in November 1636 and the Council of the Indies decided to start preparing for a large expedition to Amboina. Heeding Gardenijs's advice, Van Diemen decided to lead it himself.[592]

The expeditionary force set out on the 30th of December, once many of the ships that had been sent out to Taiwan, Japan, and mainland Southeast Asia had returned. It consisted of seventeen ships carrying 2.070 people, of which 905 were European soldiers. Having learned the lessons of the attempted 'formal siege' of Lesiela two years earlier, Van Diemen intended to sail straight there, without making any calls along the way. Exploiting the element of surprise, he meant to take the town immediately by storm. Three weeks later, on the 19th of January, the fleet dropped anchor off Lesiela. From their ships, the Dutch noted that their arrival caused a lively bustle: it seemed that the inhabitants of the settlements around the fort were packing and fleeing into the interior.[593]

Early the next morning, the troops rowed to shore under sporadic fire from the fortifications. Local informants (including the perdana Tanihitumesen, who was returning to the Ambon region on the expedition fleet) had informed the Dutch of the various paths leading uphill.[594] The Company troops landed and

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the ships waited for months near Texel, leading to a higher death rate than normal. *Generale Missiven,* I, 555-556.

592 General letter of 28 December 1636, in: VOC 1119, p. 197-198. (Note that this passage is not fully recorded in the published version.) Artus Gijsels, it is interesting to note, eagerly offered his service for the expedition. Although Van Diemen did remark that his knowledge would be valuable, Gijsels, much to his apparent chagrin, was to stay in Batavia, together with fellow Council of the Indies and former governor of Ambon Philip Lucasz, to run things there while Van Diemen was away.

593 This and much of what follows based on Knaap, 'War and Revolt'. Gerrit Knaap was so kind to share with me parts of his main primary source for this article, the transcription of Van Diemen's journal of the expedition. The transcription was originally made by mrs. J. Steendijk-Kuypers, who rediscovered the manuscript in the Westfries Archief and transcribed it. The original manuscript can be found in the Westfries Archief, Oud Archief Enkhuizen, inv. nr. 1150. (Note that Knaap refers to it as inv. 399, but the archive has re-inventoried since then.)

594 The other informants were Abdulrahman, an orangkaya from Luhu who remained in

went straight up towards Lesiela. Although under increasingly heavy fire from the various smaller fortifications to the south, as well as the mosque and different houses near the main fort, the Company troops had the advantage of forest cover. Where possible and necessary, they fired back. After a difficult climb, the advance guard reached the main fortifications. According to Van Diemen's report, they comprised a relatively small ('yet very strong') fort of whitewashed coral stone, which was equipped with five loopholes for guns, and a larger fort further up. The two structures were connected by means of a curtain wall with ramparts. The entire length of the linked fortifications was defended with swivel guns, harquebuses, and some heavier cannon, which subjected the Company troops to heavy fire as they came into view.[595]

The advance guard immediately became embroiled in a furious firefight with defenders manning the smaller lower fort, as Company slaves in the main force brought up siege ladders. When the ladders were employed, the troops discovered that they were too high, making it easy for the defenders to push them back. Several ladders broke in the stalled attempt to scale the walls; most of the Company's casualties were suffered at this stage of the attack. The remaining ladders were cut to size on the spot, making them drastically more effective. Soon the defenders broke and ran, abandoning not only the smaller fort where the fighting had taken place, but also the larger one. In one morning Van Diemen had been able to conquer the fort, which had earlier withstood a two-month 'formal siege' and a reputation of being unassailable.

Of the Company troops, ten men had been killed and thirty-eight wounded, eight so heavy that they perished shortly afterwards. The number of dead on the kimelaha's side could not be ascertained, but the fleeing defenders left behind two bodies, which the Dutch found in the deserted fort. As the Dutch would learn from captives, two high-ranking Ternatens had also perished during the attack. Kimelaha Leliato had reportedly fled across Hoamoal towards Kambelo. The stocks of weapons and supplies found in and around the fort testify to the wider dynamics of the conflict: amongst the two dozen or so cannon and the mostly five- and six-pound cannonballs found inside, there was one 'large and good Makasar gun'. The twenty barrels of gunpowder found in a cave near the

league with the Company. Knaap, 'War and revolt', 11-12.

595 Enkhuizen 1150, 21-26. The manuscript mentions a 'portrait' of these fortifications, which, however, is not known to have survived, and the two separate but connected fortifications cannot be recognized in the drawing from Gijsels's earlier siege (see above.)

larger fort were marked with a letter 'g' and had their content noted down using English measurements. Furthermore, an impressive 33.500 pounds of cloves, which the defenders had also left behind, were distributed as booty amongst Company soldiers. [596]

Over the next few days, the fort was largely demolished and, as per usual, the surrounding clove plantations destroyed. Some 6.500 trees were axed, ring-barked, or otherwise destroyed. By the 27th, Van Diemen was ready to move out, leaving five ships and 400 soldiers at Lesiela to demolish the remaining sections of the fortification. He arrived before Victoria Castle three days later. To Van Deutecom, the arrival of the impressive fleet in the Bay of Ambon must have been a sight for sore eyes. Van Diemen had sent a sloop ahead to Ambon to inform him of his arrival. Following Van Diemen's instructions, Van Deutecom informed the various orangkaya that if they wanted to reconcile themselves with the Company, this would be the right moment to show their colours.[597]

Van Diemen spent most of February on Ambon. In Gerrit Knaap's words, he played 'the powerful but generous overlord' to the Christian orangkaya of Leitimor, trying to build up mutual trust once again. He was less conciliatory towards the Muslim settlements: on the 6th of February, Van Deutecom was sent out to western Hitu to punish those villages responsible for attacking Larike over the previous years. The fortifications at Wakasihu and Tapi, two of the Muslim settlements supposedly ruled by the Company, were taken and demolished. Hitu proper, however, was ignored for now.

On Leitimor, meanwhile, it took until the end of February before the Leitimorese orangkaya (who had frantically been discussing amongst themselves how to proceed) were persuaded to suspend their mistrust of the Dutch and come down to meet with the governor-general in person. On the 25th of February, they finally met with Van Diemen. After they had explained their grievances and reasons for breaking with the Company, Van Diemen issued a general pardon, stating that it was all 'buried in the darkness of the sea'. The details of how the mutual relationship would be shaped for years to come was kept for later; first, the situation in the rest of the islands needed to be restored and Van Diemen's

596 *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1637, 174 (6 May 1637).

597 The proceedings of Van Diemen on Ambon and in the Lease islands have been described more extensively and thoroughly elsewhere. I therefore describe these events in broad strokes here, and refer to Knaap, 'War and revolt' and Witteveen, *Antonio van Diemen,* Ch. 16 for more details. The following passages rely on these sources: specific references have been added where additional sources have been consulted.

fleet, manned with a thousand soldiers, left for Haruku the very next day. In the spirit of the newly restored relationship between the Leitimorese and the Company, three kora-kora immediately went along with Van Diemen's ten ships, with five more following suit after the necessary preparations.

Van Diemen's actions on Haruku followed much the same pattern as they had on Ambon. He reconciled with the Christian inhabitants by being generous and forgiving, even where they had taken up arms against the Company. He went on the offensive against the Muslims, however, only pardoning them after settling the score first. Several Muslim strongholds were taken, although Van Diemen's forces were repelled at Alaka, a formidable fort perched on an inaccessible hill, reportedly defended by a thousand men. (The element of surprise that had enabled Van Diemen to take Lesiela relatively easily was now lost.) Alfurs from Sumite, with whom the Company's relationship had also markedly improved with Van Diemen's arrival, were brought over from the Seram mainland. Some 400 of them were stalking the interior of the island by mid-March. Clove trees, coconut palms, and other economically useful trees were destroyed. By March 22nd, Hatuhaha sent a delegation asking for forgiveness and suing for peace.

The Christian villages in Saparua had not openly joined the revolt. In fact, some had actively resisted the kimelaha's attempts to expand his power there. Van Diemen could therefore afford to be amiable in his visit to Saparua, which was intended mainly to reaffirm the existing friendship. Having seen what had happened on Haruku and being presented with an ultimatum, the people of Ihamahu also rushed to make peace with the Company, which they did on April 7. In the following days, the Christian inhabitants of Nusa Laut (who had also taken up arms against the Company) did the same and were forgiven. Van Diemen then departed the islands, once again relegating further negotiations to the *landdag,* the large general meeting he was planning. After circling back to Lesiela to pick up the troops left there, he went to see what he could do about Hitu. He had Kakiali brought up and allowed him to speak to the rebel orangkaya. This appeared to have the desired effect: the orangkaya sent a delegation to meet with Van Diemen and promised to come to the great *landdag* that Van Diemen was preparing. In the meantime, Kakiali was taken back into Van Diemen's custody – his official release was to be a solemn occasion on the *landdag.*

A great general assembly of the various leaders of the region, the *landdag* was the first of its kind since 1621. Over several sessions, the grievances that led to the revolt of the Christians of Ambon and the Lease Islands were addressed.

Amongst many other responses, Van Diemen limited services on the hongi to a mere five weeks a year: a marked improvement on its all-too-frequent use over the past few years. Should the hongi be required for longer, the VOC would pay for its services. Instructions for VOC personnel were drawn up, forbidding the maltreatment of those serving on the hongi, in addition to other rules.

Delegates from Hitu were still not forthcoming, however. In their earlier meeting, the Hituese orangkaya had stressed that their main grievances were Kakiali's captivity and deportation, as well as the VOC's unilateral appointment of a new Kapitan Hitu. Accordingly, Van Diemen grudgingly released Kakiali to see whether this would break the stalemate. It did. Kakiali went up to Wawani and returned at the head of a delegation of 100 Hituese leaders eleven days later. In the subsequent meeting, Kakiali was reinstated as Kapitan Hitu and the old monopoly provisions were reaffirmed, as was Hitu's independence, which had practically been abolished in the earlier treaty drawn up by Van den Heuvel. The Hituese's status as friends, rather than subjects, of the sultan of Ternate was also reaffirmed. After three harrowing years of captivity, Kakiali was back in the saddle as Kapitan Hitu. (The perdana Tanihitumesen, who had been Kapitan Hitu in the meantime, was placated with a new title: *orangkaya tua* or senior orangkaya.) Thus, the Company's relationship with Hitu was restored – at least outwardly. Van Diemen would later write to the directors that although the Hituese's twisting and turning had tried his patience and done little to restore his faith in the alliance, he would 'punish these perfidious crooks in due time'.[598] If we are to go by Rumphius' assertion, Kakiali harboured similar feelings towards the Dutch, resolving to 'wash away the rust of the chain on his leg with Dutch blood'.[599] He too was biding his time.

### Things left unresolved in Hoamoal

With sufficient military force and the prestige that came with his position, Van Diemen had been able to restore the situation on Ambon and in the Lease Islands. He had been less successful with regard to Hoamoal, however. Although he had of course driven Leliato from Lesiela, thus dealing the kimelaha a significant moral blow, the latter was still at large and had not really been induced to any kind of *entente* with the Dutch.

In their attempts to effect a rapprochement with the kimelaha, the Dutch

598 Generale missive, 9 december 1637, in: *Generale Missiven,* I, 612.
599 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 149.

received some assistance from Ternate, where Sultan Hamzah, none too happy about Dutch policy towards him and his domains, had been following events in and around Ambon with particular ire. Although he seems to have been genuinely concerned about the overtures that the kimelaha were apparently making to the Makasars, he considered the Dutch less than helpful in maintaining control over the region. It seems that kimelaha Luhu, who heeded the call to return to Ternate in late 1635, was largely able to absolve himself and convince the sultan that the Company's policy in the region was the real problem. Hamzah was particularly incensed that the Company had had the nerve to single-handedly appoint a new Kapitan Hitu, for he increasingly felt that he had, or at least should have, sovereignty over all the Muslim areas in the Ambon islands.

Upon subsequently learning that Van Diemen was preparing to come to the Ambon region in person 'to punish the stubbornness there', Hamzah immediately sent his brother Kaicili Sibori there as an envoy. Kaicili Sibori was the Kapita Laut, the commander of the fleet of Ternate, an office that had earlier been held by Kaicili Ali.[600] In two letters, one to his subjects and another to the governor-general, Hamzah explained that Kaicili Sibori, unlike any of his earlier envoys, was fully empowered to act in the sultan's name, 'as if I myself had come in person'.[601]

Ostensibly concerned for his subjects, Hamzah impressed upon the governor-general that he should not punish the people on Hoamoal for the misdeeds of their leader (i.e. kimelaha Leliato), who was solely to blame. He implored the Dutch to desist from any course of action that might cause bloodshed, if Sibori delivered the message in time. Sibori would use his wide-ranging mandate to get the various rulers of Hoamoal to finally do his bidding and to recall Leliato to Ternate, for the sultan preferred to handle his unruly subordinate himself. Once Van Diemen had wrapped up his affairs in Ambon, he added delicately, it would be really nice if he could then come to Ternate with at least some of his force. The war against Spain was once again in full swing there and the sultan could certainly use a little more help from his supposed allies than he had been getting.[602] In a separate letter to kimelaha Leliato and the rulers of Seram, Hamzah told them they should heed everything Kaicili Sibori and the governor-general decid-

600 The exact family relation to the sultan is unclear. See Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, p. 446 and 451.

601 Dagh-register Batavia, 6 May 1637, in: *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1637, 189-190.

602 Both letters in: Dagh-register, 6 May 1637, in: *Dagh-Register,* 1637, 189-192.

ed. What is more, if they truly recognised him as their sultan, they were all to come to Ternate.

Kaicili Sibori arrived at Lesiela only after it had been taken and destroyed. Van Diemen found the envoy there in mid-April, when he returned to pick up his soldiers and complete the destruction of the fortresses. Whilst Van Diemen set affairs in order, Kaicili Sibori summoned Leliato to Luhu on the east coast to accept the letter from the sultan. Leliato was wary, however. Kaicili Sibori came to Luhu accompanied by some Dutch ships and Leliato suspected a ruse to arrest him. Another overture was subsequently made, but Leliato never actually accepted the letter. Kaicili Sibori then travelled to the *landdag,* helping straighten things out whilst tactfully evading Van Diemen's attempts to elicit a concrete statement on who ultimately held sovereignty over Hatuhaha and Ihamahu.[603]

Kimelaha Leliato, however, was apparently in no mood to listen to anyone's claims about sovereignty. Van Diemen, who still had other business to attend to in the eastern archipelago, decided not to pursue him to Kambelo and took a large part of his forces with him as he prepared to leave the Ambon region. Ultimately, it would take Hamzah personally coming to the Ambon region to resolve that situation, as we will see in the next chapter. Tragically, though, in resolving one conflict, he would reignite another.

### Buton: peace negotiations and a failed siege

After wrapping up affairs in Ambon, Van Diemen did not sail on to Ternate, Sultan Hamzah's passive-aggressive invitation notwithstanding. He still had some other business to attend to in the eastern archipelago. Aware that the conflicts with the kimelaha and with the sultan of Gowa were mutually reinforcing, and that it would therefore be virtually impossible to solve the problems in Ambon whilst the Company remained at war with the Gowan sultan and his tributaries, he set sail for Buton and Makassar to see if he could work out some kind of deal.[604]

The Butonese capital Baubau came into view on the 13th of June.[605] A group of Butonese appeared on the shore as the fleet anchored. Calling to the nearest ship, they asked whether the Dutch had come with such a large force to make

603 Knaap, 'War and Revolt', 18.

604 The journal of this part of the expedition is included entirely in *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1637, 272-279.

605 Note that Dutch sources did not generally used the name Baubau but referred to it as the town of Buton.

war or peace. The ship's master shouted back that the governor-general 'knew no better than that he had come to make peace with the King of Buton'. Soon enough, the Butonese planted a white flag on the shore to indicate where negotiations were to take place. A Dutch launch cautiously rowed out, hostages were exchanged, and a Butonese orangkaya came aboard the governor-general's ship, informing him that the sultan was very much inclined to make peace. Van Diemen replied that he was too, but not before justice had been done. In terms of the loss of life, he was more than ready to call it even. Before there could be any peace, however, the goods stolen from the various freeburghers' yachts would have to be restituted. This went especially for the cannon that the *Velsen* had carried, for these were only loaned to its owner so that the ship could defend itself and rightfully belonged to the 'Prince of Holland'. The envoy and his translator were then returned to the shore and the Dutch hostages were picked up. The latter reported that the Butonese had quietly been amassing some 500 or 600 warriors near the shoreline, where they waited in ambush.

As the rain poured the next morning, no white flag appeared on the Butonese shore. Instead, the Butonese were busy breaking down the houses directly on the shoreline. Some of the Dutch crew members claimed having seen a blood flag raised and then lowered again. Near noon, a white banner was finally raised and a launch was sent to the shore. It proceeded even more cautiously than on the day before. For a good half hour, its crew waited in vain before some Butonese appeared out of the undergrowth. Apparently surprised that the Dutch had still shown up to negotiate, they asked them what they wanted. The crew answered that they wanted to know the sultan's decision. Communication was difficult, though, because the translator through whom they had worked yesterday was absent 'on account of the rain'. After more waiting, the Butonese Kapita Laut, Sapati, who had led the Butonese delegation on the shore the evening before, finally appeared. He told them that, although the Butonese would have liked to make peace with the Dutch, they had no intention of restituting the spoils taken from the captured yachts. In fact, there was hardly anything they could return. The goods had been distributed, all but three of the cannon had been lost in the attempt to salvage them, and one of those had been sent to Makassar as a gift. The governor-general, he added, could do anything he saw fit in response, but the Butonese were not about to restitute anything or compensate the Dutch for the plundered goods. The Dutch delegation made its way back to the fleet.

Van Diemen responded immediately, firing a burst of cannon shot into a gathering of people on the shore whilst he set about preparing a landing. Soon,

some 400 troops disembarked and spent the rest of the afternoon destroying vessels and fish traps, and reconnoitring the area. The next day was also spent wreaking havoc along the shoreline and in reconnaissance.

All this laid the way for a full-scale attack on the town. The next morning, Van Diemen landed his full force: the 400 European soldiers he had at his disposal were reinforced with 180 armed sailors, one company of sixty Mardijkers and another of sixty Bandanese. This brought his total fighting force to 700 men. The strategy the Dutch followed was as straightforward as that executed at Lesiela several months earlier: straight up the hill to storm the town. The first three men who made it up the enemy walls were to be awarded considerable sums of money.

The town was formidably defended. Butonese tradition holds it that it was Sultan La Buke who had the Butonese kraton encircled by massive stone fortifications, at great cost to his people and him personally.[606] The impressive final result can be marvelled at to this day. A massive wall some 2.400 meters long runs along the ridge of an extremely defensible platform, with bastions of various shapes at regular intervals. Interestingly, a comprehensive history of what is still the largest fort in Indonesia remains to be written.[607]

While the sources do not indicate the extent to which these fortifications were finished in 1637, it is clear that they were too much for the Dutch force that day.[608] As the Company troops marched up, they met with no concerted opposition. On the other hand, the narrow paths, densely strewn with caltrops, as well

606 Schoorl, 'Het eeuwige verbond', 31.

607 Hasanuddin, 'Forts on Buton Island: centres of settlement, government and security in Southeast Sulawesi.' In: Sue O'Connor, Andrew McWilliam, and Sally Brockwell eds., *Forts and Fortification in Wallacea: Archaeological and Ethnohistoric Investigations*, Terra Australis 53, Acton: ANU Press, 2020, 187-210; 'Laporan penelitian ekskavasi Situs Tirtatayasa, Banten & Benteng Wolio, Buton.' NPO Association of Asian Cultural Properties Cooperation / Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Arkeologi Nasional, Indonesia, March 2007, esp. pp. 89–103. (Japanese and Indonesian, with English summary.) I thank Nadia Rinandi of the Pusat Dokumentasi Arsitektur (PDA) Jakarta for making this report available to me.

608 Butonese tradition also holds that La Buke would resign as Sultan as soon as the defences were completed. He did so in 1645. Schoorl, 'Het eeuwige verbond', 31. An earlier image of Buton, supposedly showing the situation in the 1630s, is included in Gijsels' personal archive in Badische Landesbibliothek, K478, but is too worn-down to make out the fortifications in any detail. Note that Hasanuddin, 'Forts on Buton Island', 187, states that the defensive works were *completed* in 1634, which strikes me as an error.

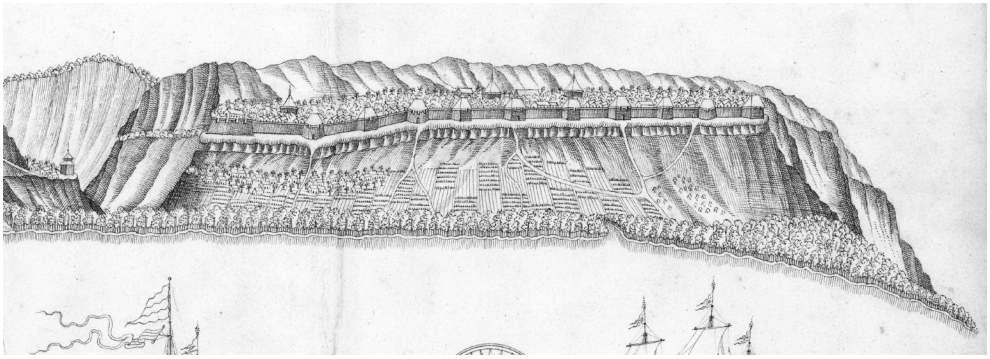

Fig 8.3 Bird's eye view of Baubau, (usually called the town of Buton in European sources), c. 1651. Pen drawing by Pierre du Bois, collection Nationaal Archief, The Hague, inv. nr. 4.VEL 1310.

as the fire from several small fortifications and an occasional charge by Butonese raiding parties, did not make the ascent easy. Upon finding themselves directly beneath the town, however, their hearts sank: 'Due to the awful steepness, they could see no way forward without suffering significant losses, as they could only make out two very devious and steep paths, above which the walls and the town were teeming with men'.[609]

While the officers deliberated on how to proceed, the Butonese mounted their first concerted counterattack. Emerging from the undergrowth and charging into the side of a column of armed sailors and Bandanese who were still making their way up the hill, the Butonese very nearly caused them to break and run. The officers saw no option but for the entire force to retreat back to the ships in as orderly a fashion as possible. Still under fire, the troops were back at the ships only two hours after the attack had begun. Van Diemen, who had stayed with the fleet, noted 'that the courage of our people was not as great now as before Lesiela'.[610] He decided simply to call off the attack and continue to Makassar.

## Concluding remarks

In the years 1634-1636, the system with which the Company tried to control the Ambon region and clove trade almost completely collapsed. After Kakiali's ascension and the subsequent escalation of tensions both within Hitu and between Hitu and the Company, the region seemed headed towards a crisis. Nevertheless, Van den Heuvel's subsequent mishandling of Kakiali's arrest and attempts to end

609 Dagh-register Batavia, 1637, 277.
610 Ibid.

Hituese independence made the situation that much worse. Later, the simultaneous blockade of Makassar, combined with several instances of unusual weather in both Asia and the Netherlands, forced Van den Heuvel and his successor Van Deutecom to handle the situation with little support from Batavia. This, in turn, forced them to rely heavily on the hongi in their attempts to deal with events in Hitu and the continuing conflict with the kimelaha, who were now openly coordinating their efforts with the Hituese under Patiwani. This strained relations with their own allies and subjects (which were already tense due to the escalating conflict with Hitu) to breaking point. In early 1636, they too literally took to the hills. It took a huge military intervention, led by the governor-general himself, to restore the VOC's control of the region.

Stepping back from Ambon to assume a broader vantage point shows how the crisis in Ambon region was inextricably intertwined with wider developments in the eastern archipelago in the eyes of the VOC, its allies, and its enemies. The decision to blockade Makassar was originally intended to improve the situation in Ambon. Apparently well-founded rumours that the sultan of Gowa had resolved to step up his involvement in Hoamoal made this seem all the more urgent. The fact that Makassar also continued expanding its power elsewhere in the region, bringing Buton into its sphere of influence by 1634, was of great concern to not only the Company but Ternate too. The Company required access to the Buton Strait to reach Ambon and Ternate and had always used it as a stopover and rendezvous as part of its activities in the region. For its part, Ternate saw its own sphere of influence decline, sending one envoy after another to the Ambon region to regain a modicum of control over Hoamoal.

Very much aware of the interconnectedness of Gowan expansion and the situation in the Ambon region, Van Diemen knew that the delicate peace he had just managed to bring about would not last if the Company remained at war with Gowa. As a consequence, his final goal before returning Batavia was to work out a peace deal with Makassar.

# IX. The art of the deal (1638)

As Van Diemen's ships approached Makassar on the 22nd of June, the city must have made an imposing sight. Over the last few years, the open war with the VOC had prompted the sultan to embark upon an ambitious project to extend and improve the city's already impressive fortifications, mobilizing great numbers of corvée labourers, and possibly enlisting Portuguese and English advice. Now clearly aimed at protecting the coast and the entrepôt from seaborne attack, these improvements included greatly reinforced walls around the Somba Opu castle and four round bulwarks on the seaside, mounted with heavy guns.

Unsurprisingly, Van Diemen's fleet was not met with a warm welcome: five blood flags were flying from the Makassar forts. Van Diemen himself had a white flag hoisted and fired a salute. The Makasars lowered their blood flags, but otherwise things remained quiet – the salute was not returned, no white flags were hoisted, no envoy sent. All that could be seen from the ships was a great many soldiers rushing into Somba Opu to defend it if necessary. Van Diemen, under the circumstances, was too wary to send anyone ashore, and thus found himself in an uneasy standoff.

An Acehnese embassy also visiting Makassar to present the credentials of the new Acehnese sultan, however, provided an opening the next day. Van Diemen sent a launch to the Acehnese vessel, and the Acehnese envoys agreed to act as go-betweens. Through them, it was established that both parties were willing to reach a peace treaty – Makassar had recently been ravaged by an epidemic and saw nothing to be gained from further conflict.[611]

After the initial overtures back and forth, the Dutch appointed Antonio Caen, one of the principal Company officials on this expedition, as their main envoy, not only because he spoke excellent Malay, but also because the Makasars knew him from his earlier visit as an envoy (see chapter VI) and he had apparently made a good impression. While Sultan Alauddin was present at the negotiations, the Dutch sources indicate the pivotal role in the negotiations of the 'Prince of Tallo', ostensibly merely there to translate but clearly also having substantive input into the negotiations.[612]

611 Feddersen, 'Principled Pragmatism', 270-275.

612 This could refer to Karaeng Kanjilo, but more likely it refers to Pattingalloang. The former (r. 1623-1641, still advised by his father until the latter's death in 1636) was the son of Karaeng Matoaya, and the older brother of the later chancellor of Gowa,

Fig 9.1 Somba Opu as depicted on a bird's eye view of Makassar by Johannes Vingboons, c. 1665, showing the bulwarks of Somba Opu on the sea side, with the northern part of the city, including the Danish and English lodges, to its left. This watercolour probably shows the Makassar roads as they would have appeared several decades before the image was created. Collection Nationaal Archief, inv nr. VELH 619.97.

In an interesting reversal of established notions about the role of treaties in Asian diplomacy in general, and Makassar in particular, it was Sultan Alauddin rather than Van Diemen who wanted to have an extensive written treaty detailing the provisions of the peace agreement. With the frequent changes of Governors-General, he told the Dutch, verbal arrangements would not be durable enough.[613]

The proactive and canny way in which the Makasars navigated these negotiations, and the implications this has for our ideas about European-Asian diplomacy and treaty making, have been discussed at length elsewhere.[614] For our purposes, the most important demand the Dutch made was that the Makasars would cease their navigation to the 'enemy' territories of Melaka and Western Seram. The Makasars made an interesting counterproposal: under the treaty, the VOC would be free to attack and seize Makasar ships if these were found in these 'unfree waters', without, however, this being a breach of the treaty and cause for war. They thus put the responsibility for enforcing this demand entirely

Pattingalloang. For the latter, see below, chapter XII, paragraph 'affairs of state'. Cummings, *Chain of Kings,* esp. 110.

613 Van Diemen and Council to Directors, 9 December 1637, quoted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, II, 324.

614 Feddersen, 'Principled Pragmatism', 235-324.

with the VOC. This provision was ultimately put into the treaty.[615] The VOC was furthermore once again allowed to trade in Makassar during the trading season, but had to leave its lodge unoccupied when its ships left, and was prohibited from making war on its enemies, European or otherwise, within the sultan's domain and on the Makassar roads.[616]

Van Diemen himself, although successful in bringing the conflict to an end, did not expect the treaty to last very long; and certainly not while the Ambon itself was still so fractious and unstable.[617] Van Diemen therefore also sought to make another deal: one with Sultan Hamzah, meant to definitively settle all the affairs in the Ambon region. He started preparing to head back out to Ambon in person almost as soon as he had returned to Batavia.

These negotiations have earlier been studied by Gerrit Knaap, who dedicated an article to these negotiations.[618] We will revisit them in some detail here, however, as they are crucial to understanding subsequent developments in the region, and therefore an integral part of the story that this dissertation tries to tell. That is not, however, because they were so successful. While both Hamzah and Van Diemen were mighty pleased when the negotiations were concluded, the new status quo they had agreed upon started unravelling before they had even left the islands.

## Quarrelling allies: Sultan Hamzah and the VOC

Sultan Hamzah, as we may remember, had originally been decried by the Dutch as an untrustworthy Spanish creature. In practice, he had turned out to be a keen politician sailing his own course, rather than bow to the will of either the Spanish or the Dutch. He managed to play the two European powers against each other while shoring up his relations with the court of Tidore, increasing his own influence and freeing his hands to see to his own centralizing policies.[619] Meanwhile, he hardly gave his Dutch allies an easy time of it. In letter after letter, he

615 Ibid., 279-280.

616 Van Diemen's report of the negotiations, including the final treaty, in *Dagh-register Batavia*, 1637, 280-284.

617 Van Diemen and Council to Directors, 9 December 1637, quoted in *Bouwstoffen*, II, 324.

618 Gerrit Knaap, 'The Governor-General and the Sultan: an attempt to restructure a divided Amboina in 1638', *Itinerario* 29 (2005): 79–100 .

619 For a general assessment of his style of rule and his centralizing policies, see Andaya, *World of Maluku,* 159-163.

aired his annoyance at Company demands concerning the war with the Spanish in the region, while the Company itself was always too preoccupied elsewhere. He noted with frustration that the escalating conflict with Makassar, which the Dutch could not be bothered to help him fight outside the Ambon Islands, was eating away at his domains: 'For how shall this be? When we were maintaining our state on our own, without the Hollanders, we flourished, and now that we are allied with the Hollanders our peoples and lands are taken from us by others.'[620] Should the Dutch persist in failing to hold up their end of the bargain and pawn him off with idle promises, he delicately reminded them on one occasion, he might also be able to procure weapons from the enemies and rivals of the company, be it the Spanish, Javanese, Malays or the Makasars.[621]

All the same, the Dutch had rather warmed up to Hamzah, as they found that having a strong-willed and capable ally certainly also had its upsides. Whereas his predecessor Muzaffar had been far more malleable to the wishes of the Dutch, he had also lacked real power over his own subjects. While, under Muzaffar, it had often basically been the Dutch holding the Ternaten domains together, Hamzah's heavy-handed centralizing policies turned the tables: now, subjects of the sultan often clamoured to the Dutch for protection from their overbearing sultan. This put the Dutch in the comfortable position of having an ally who kept his domains and subjects under control, with them being able to balance the sultan and his subjects against each other when it suited them.[622] In addition, this gave the Dutch some hope that Hamzah might actually be able to turn things around in the part of his outer domains they were most concerned with: the clove-producing regions on and around Hoamoal.

Hamzah had offered to come to the Amboina Quarter himself to set things straight there more than once – lastly in his letter to Van Diemen of May 1637 mentioned in the last chapter. Van Diemen was the first to take him up on his offer, inviting him to come to the Amboina Quarter early next year. Hamzah accepted on the condition that they would also come to an agreement with respect to those areas that the sultan felt were historically his domains. These basically comprised all of the Muslim areas of the Ambon Islands - included Hitu and the

620 Sultan Hamzah to Governor-General Brouwer, Hamzah, 11 July 1634, in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 251.

621 Sultan Hamzah to Governor-General Specx, 10 August 1631, in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 194.

622 For an enlightening example, see the attempted coup against Hamzah, and the way the Dutch navigated it, as described in Van Lodensteyn to Governor-General Jacques Specx, 7 April 1631 in *Bouwstoffen,* II, 189-192.

southern parts of the Lease Islands.[623] Hamzah apparently saw an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: shoring up his power over Hoamoal, where the overtuires of kimelaha Leliato towards Makassar were a genuine cause for concern, and expand his influence in the archipelago. Van Diemen, seeing the mutual benefit, was not ill-disposed towards such an arrangement.[624]

Thus, on the 20th of January 1638, Van Diemen once again sailed east at the head of a large fleet, to meet with the sultan of Ternate. It was to be a momentous occasion – not only had no Ternaten sultan visited the Ambon region in living memory; it was also the first meeting between a Ternaten sultan and a governor-general since Laurens Reael had used Ternate as his residence twenty years earlier.[625] The extant full journal of the expedition provides important insights, particularly into the motivations of the various parties involved in the scramble for control over the region.

### Waiting for the king

On his way out to the Ambon islands, Van Diemen first called at the Butonese capital again for another attempt at retribution. Trying to profit from the element of surprise this time, he immediately disembarked a force of 1225 men upon arrival on the 3rd of February. Making use of local guides, the troops tried a different approach up the hill, bringing siege ladders. The ultimate result of their effort, however, was much the same as before – the Company troops made it up until right beneath the walls of the town, but saw no way forward from there, and retreated. Van Diemen then exacted his revenge on the surroundings of the town, destroying small villages, coconut groves, vessels and fish fences further up the coast and on the islands in the strait. After several days of such raids, VOC troops briefly managed to set up a battery slightly to the east of the town, and in spite of heavy Butonese return fire, managed to lob a few mortars into the walled town. After that, they packed and left, and by the 10th, after a week of terrorizing

623 Neither of these letters has apparently survived, but their content is summarized in Van Diemen and Council to Directors, 9 December 1637, quoted in *Bouwstoffen*, II, 325-327.

624 Van Diemen and Council to Directors, 9 December 1637, quoted in *Bouwstoffen*, II, 326.

625 The only written reference to a visit of a Ternaten Sultan to the region is in the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*: see Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 42 and 117-118. This episode has been tentatively dated at 1545; the last meeting between a Sultan of Ternate and a Governor-General of the VOC was in 1618, when Governor-General Laurens Reael held residence in Ternate and had regular interactions with Sultan Muzaffar.

the Butonese coast, the fleet was on its way again.[626] It anchored in the Bay of Ambon two weeks later.[627]

There was as yet no sign of Sultan Hamzah. Van Diemen decided to make the best of his time: after conferring with governor Ottens and receiving delegates from the region for a few days, he sailed off to visit and inspect Banda. He was received with much pomp and ceremony there, took a grand tour through the islands, and had the good fortune of being there just as the English ship *Pearl* arrived in the islands from Makassar for another attempt at retaking the island of Run. The English commander, John Hunter, was bewildered to find his efforts curtailed by none other than the Dutch governor-general himself, and eventually left the islands empty-handed.[628] By the 10th of April, after spending a full month in Banda, Van Diemen was back in the Ambon Islands - at the Hituese coast, as adverse winds prevented the fleet from running into the Bay of Ambon.

Being at Hitu was just as well, as its status was high on the agenda of the upcoming meeting. But things looked worrisome. Before Van Diemen had left for Banda, most of the communities on Ambon and the Lease Islands had come to pay their respects and bring gifts to the governor-general. The Hituese perdanas, however, had initially stayed away, only making their appearance one week later – and then, according to Wouter van Seroijen, the Dutch resident at Ureng, only to see what they could learn about Dutch intentions. Kakiali had not been part of the delegation, sending his cordial greetings to the governor-general but regretfully unable to greet him in person as 'the fatigue from wearing a chain for so long prevented him from doing so.'[629] That, at least, left little to be desired in terms of clarity. More surprising, and in some ways more concerning to the Dutch, was that the perdana Tanihitumesen, the great ally of the Dutch who had been given the title of 'perdana tua' last year, had similarly been absent from that first delegation, only coming to visit the next day with a small retinue of his own. The relations between the Tanihitumesen family and the other three ruling

626 Full report of the campaign against Buton in VOC 1126, fol 385v – 395r.

627 For an overview of what had happened in the months before Van Diemen's arrival, see Knaap, ' The Governor-General and the Sultan', 81-84.

628 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 6 March – 8 April 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 403r-.416v. While he was in the islands, Van Diemen also saw a huge 24-foot python who had swallowed an enslaved woman whole and had subsequently been killed by VOC soldiers. (409r, 25 March.) Somewhat surprisingly, this was the only event in the entire expedition that the clerk deemed worthy of noting in the margin of the report.

629 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 5 March 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 402r.

families had soured to such a degree that they were no longer willing to form a delegation together. This worried Van Diemen, who remarked that the loyalty of the perdana Tanihitumesen was, perhaps, 'a little too fierce', putting internal relations within Hitu on edge and therefore hampering his efforts to come to an understanding with Kakiali.[630]

Now after his return, and upon receiving another Hituese delegation from which Kakiali was similarly absent on account of a 'bad foot', Van Diemen decided to send a delegation up to him, seeing what he could learn about Kakiali's disposition. The opportunity to have a good look at the Wawani fort, which 'was of great repute', was an added bonus. Wouter van Seroyen headed the delegation. After making it up to the fort, he was welcomed in by Kakiali, and somewhat surprised to discover that the latter did in fact have an infected wound to his foot. Kakiali was presented with some gifts, and, becoming less reserved, told Van Seroyen that, admittedly, there were some additional reasons for his continued absence. Bad rumours had been spread, most notably by the perdana Tanihitumesen, about him smuggling cloves and bringing a force of Alfurs to Hitu. His friends and allies had warned him that the Dutch would once again arrest him if he came down. And he was still aggrieved about the title of 'orangkaya tua' bestowed upon the perdana Tanihitumesen, a move which undermined his own position and which had not been up to the Company in the first place. Now that the Dutch had come up with gifts and shown their good will, however, he promised he would happily come down to them soon. On that reassuring note, the Dutch delegation took its leave, subsequently also informing the governor-general that the fort itself had not quite lived up to its reputation, being made of loose piled-up coral stone, and defended by only seven swivel guns.[631]

While Van Diemen tried to come to an understanding with Kakiali, Hamzah's continued absence was increasing tensions within the region. When word of his impending visit had first spread through the islands, Van Diemen and Ottens had had to send out instructions to their subjects and allies to curb their enthusiasm and please not yet ready their kora-kora until the sultan had actually arrived.[632] Leliato, for his part, had scrambled to prepare, having a large and monumental *baileu* built at Kambelo, and mustering his hongi. Now, more than one-and-a-half months later, the initial elation and startled surprise had

630 'al te heftich', Report of Van Diemen's visit, 6 March 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 402v.
631 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 26 April 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 422r-v.
632 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 5-6 March 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 402r-v.

made way for anxiety and a grim tension. Leliato, presumably on a hunch that the coming visit of his sultan and the governor-general might end badly for him, had started fortifying the coastline of Kambelo against a possible Dutch attack. Makasar and Javanese vessels had started coming in in the meantime, bolstering the forces of the kimelaha and bringing some 230 muskets, among other arms and ammunition.[633] The inhabitants of Lesidi and Luhu, the friends of the Dutch on the Hoamoal peninsula, began to despair of Sultan Hamzah still coming to the islands at all, and watched Leliato's fortification efforts with increasing concern.[634]

Then, however, word of Hamzah arrived. He had not been able to leave Ternate until late March, due to strong opposition in the Ternaten Council of the Realm against this whole venture. The fleet had subsequently faced adverse weather and various other setbacks, but eleven of the sultan's kora-kora, in the presence of one Dutch ship, were now off Manipa and making their way to Kambelo. Van Diemen directed his fleet north to meet him there.[635]

### The meeting of two rulers

The sultan kept the Dutch waiting for a few more days, which added to the tense and awkward situation. Van Diemen's fleet was already anchored off Kambelo, with the foreign traders still present, their vessels hoisted up behind the makeshift fortifications, and the kimelaha asking the Dutch to please refrain from coming ashore until the sultan was finally there.[636]

By the 4th of May, however, the sultan's hongi finally arrived before Kambelo, and the sultan promptly set up camp slightly to the north, where a house was

633 This, the Dutch were told, happened without the blessing of the sultan of Gowa, with whom the Dutch had recently concluded their peace treaty, but the 'Prince of Tallo', who had been so crucial in formulating that treaty, was in on it.

634 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 22 April 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 420r.

635 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 27 April 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 423r.

636 An attempt at contact over this period did allow the Dutch to have a look at the defenses that had been erected on shore to protect the vessels of the traders. These are described as a 3,5 feet high stone wall filled with earth and topped with sharp bamboos, flanked by two small bulwarks on the side. This sounds like the same basic layout as the makeshift fortifications Philip Lucasz found himself confronted with at Kambelo eight years earlier. (See above, chapter VII, paragraph 'A standoff.) The same entry also contains a list of the foreign vessels present, including the names of their captains. Report of Van Diemen's visit, 29 April 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 424r-.425v;

swiftly built for him. Salutes were fired from the Dutch ships, and later that day, the sultan, with an impressive retinue including the former sultan of Tidore and the sultan of Jailolo, was festively received on board Van Diemen's ship, presented with gifts of golden necklaces and Chinese gold, and led to the great cabin of the ship which had been adorned with tapestries for the occasion.[637]

As they sat down, the sultan told Van Diemen that he had long looked forward to this moment, but was unable to hide his concern that Van Diemen might use the occasion to kill or capture him. Van Diemen jovially told him that that was not why they had both come to the region. His Majesty, however, immediately announced that he was tired from the journey and wished to retire back to his camp. The real talking would have to wait until the next day. That evening, the Dutch witnessed from their ships how the people of Kambelo and Lesidi came parading to the sultan's quarters, carrying flags, bringing gifts, exercising with their weapons and performing the *cakalele*, the traditional Malukan martial dance.

Hamzah returned to the ship the next day, and he and Van Diemen got down to business. The governor-general started off with a long speech about the history of the conflict in the region – how the local leaders in Hoamoal had disregarded the contracts, and how Dutch attempts to enforce them had led to 'bloodshed on both sides', which had worked to the benefit of Makassar, eating away at Ternaten influence both in Hoamoal and elsewhere. So it was great that Hamzah was here to assert his power over the region and keep the foreign traders out – and what better place to start than the rabble currently holed up in Kambelo? Let's see to that immediately, Van Diemen briskly suggested. Let's call for the kimelaha and the captains of the foreign vessels to come on board here, immediately arrest them and burn their vessels! Hamzah, while in agreement about the root of the problem, was less enthusiastic about Van Diemen's proposed solution - arresting the lot on board Van Diemen's flagship might make the wrong impression on his subjects. He did, however, order the kimelaha to tear down the extra defences along the shoreline. By then, the kora-kora of the communities of Ambon and the Lease islands had also found their way to Kambelo to formally pay their respects to both the sultan and governor-general, and the next day was

637 At the time, Jailolo, a bone of contention between Tidore and Ternate, had become affiliated with Ternate. The former Sultan of Tidore was Ngarolamo, who had lost the throne to another contender, Gorontalo, and then taken refuge in Ternate with his family. His daughter was wed to Sultan Hamzah. Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 283pp.

duly spent with festivities and ceremony. Meanwhile, the Dutch noted that no effort to tear down the forts was actually underway.

By the 8th of May, it became increasingly obvious that Hamzah and Van Diemen had come to the meeting with rather different priorities. That morning, Hamzah sent two delegates and a translator, who informed Van Diemen that the sultan had no desire to come to the ship that day. That whole affair about the smugglers had surely been satisfactorily dealt with by now, and he would like to move on to discussing his claim to overlordship over parts of the region. For those talks, considering all the orangkaya involved, the cabin of the ship was certainly too small and they should be held on land, in his camp.

Van Diemen, outraged by this 'absurd and entirely unexpected message', sent a furious reply: absolutely nothing had been done about the foreign traders and other matters they had previously discussed, and he would not entertain any of the sultan's claims before this had been seen to.[638] The delegates relayed the rather brusque message, so embarrassed that, according to the Dutch officers who went along, they had the translator do most of the talking. While putting the sultan in a 'grim mood', it did have the intended effect: Hamzah immediately sent word to Leliato that if the coastal defences were not torn down right away, Hamzah would join forces with the Dutch and do it for him. Work on tearing them down started the same day, and two Dutch defectors were turned over the next, providing valuable information when interrogated. Most prominently, they informed Van Diemen that a great many foreign traders were actually hiding in the archipelago, shipping weapons and trade goods to Kambelo in smaller vessels. Among them, they reported, was a nachoda called Ince Seliman, who was bringing Leliato two iron cannon, a thousand cannonballs and the English gunpowder to go with it, with the compliments of the sultan of Gowa – which cannot have left Van Diemen very hopeful about the effect of the recent treaty. In fact, Leliato was currently so well-armed that the defectors expected he might be prepared to stand up to the Dutch and the sultan both, if the latter forced the situation with the traders.[639]

These traders, meanwhile, were still in Kambelo, and were turning out to be a difficult matter. While Van Diemen was eager to arrest the lot and burn their ships, Hamzah was concerned that such a course of action, particularly if it looked like the Dutch were doing it with his blessing, might alienate his own

638 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 8 May 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 431r-v.
639 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 9 May 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 432.

subjects from him, create 'general confusion' among them and be detrimental to their goals of regaining some control over the peninsula. As if to illustrate the point, the traders were once again threatening to run amok among the inhabitants of Kambelo if anything was undertaken against them. Van Diemen and Hamzah made a compromise: the traders could leave unharmed if they allowed their vessels to be searched for cloves and would obtain a pass from Van Diemen's flagship before departure. Nothing came of it. The traders, citing necessary repairs to their ships, and their people having partially retreated inland to the nearby fortified hill settlement of Masili, wanted a month respite before leaving. Only two small vessels dared to come to the Dutch fleet for a pass and left. The rest remained holed up in and around Kambelo. However Van Diemen tried, the foreign traders, a force of their own as always, did not budge. [640]

Van Diemen did use the tensions around this situation to pressure Hamzah into arresting both kimelaha. It actually worked: on the 12th of May, Hamzah reported that he had both kimelaha in his custody, and requested two companies of VOC soldiers to be brought to his camp to help ensure that no-one would try to bust them out.

By the 14th, Hamzah exasperatedly let Van Diemen know that the foreign traders continued to ignore his orders and that he now saw no other way of bringing them to heel than by military means. He had told the remaining women and children in Kambelo to evacuate inland to Masili. That was all Van Diemen needed to hear. He started preparing for an attack on Kambelo. Hamzah got cold feet almost immediately and tried to 'put a spoke in the wheel', telling van Diemen that there was still the risk of the traders causing bloodshed, which might lead to a general uprising of his people. Van Diemen, for his part, harboured the sneaking suspicion that this volte-face of the sultan had more to do with the traders having 'filled his pockets'. He ignored the sultan's pleas and continued his preparations.[641]

On the 16th, under continued protests from Hamzah, ten companies of Dutch soldiers, a hundred sailors with torches and other incendiary equipment, and an unnamed number of Mardijkers, Bandanese, Ambonese and slaves, landed at Kambelo. They occupied the town, established a perimeter and then, after a signal from the fleet, proceeded to put everything to the torch. Over 200 houses

640 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 12 May 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 437r-v.

641 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 15 May 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 439v-440r. 'Filled his pockets' is actually 'de handen gevult.'

and 50 vessels were destroyed. Armed foreign traders and locals hurled protests and insults at the troops from the surrounding area, uttering their outrage that the Dutch got away with this under the eyes of the sultan, who had surely not ordered this attack. Whereas they did not attack 'except with the mouth', blood flags were flying from the indigenous forts further inland and tifa drums could be heard from them. By four in the afternoon, the town lay in ashes and the Company troops re-embarked.[642]

In the following days it would still come to open clashes, as the foreign traders came to vent their anger at the company troops still guarding the kimelaha onshore, taunting them until a group of soldiers had had enough and gave pursuit up the hill behind the sultan's camp. The ensuing confrontation escalated into a firefight, which prompted the Dutch to go fully on the offensive the next day, and attempt to fight their way up to the well-defended hill fortification of Masili, which proved almost unassailable. The Company troops then began to set up a battery to burn Masili to set it ablaze with firebombs, but this plan was stopped short: the fleet was moving out to Hitu for the negotiations about Hamzah's claims.

### The deal: on paper...

The day after the Company's destruction of Kambelo, Hamzah had sent a note to Van Diemen in which, in addition to uttering his disappointment about how things had gone down there, he asked if they could now please get on with discussing his claims to Hitu, Lease and other parts of the region. Van Diemen, who was, in turn, disappointed with the sultan, and was getting the impression that he had the upper hand, answered that he intended to move his fleet to Hitu, and that he would be happy to discuss any matters there. Making the crossing to Hitu in the increasingly rough seas was a problem for the sultan, whose vessels had been badly battered by the outward journey, but he agreed, if Van Diemen would please allow him a few days to patch up his fleet. Also, would Van Diemen mind if kimelaha Luhu was now released from his custody? Van Diemen replied that that would be fine if Leliato would be handed over to him for now. The latter was promptly delivered to Van Diemen's ship. Van Diemen set sail to Hitu the next day.[643]

642 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 15 May 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 439v-440r.

643 The short trip took several days due to adverse winds, and Van Diemen arrived on the 26th of May.

Van Diemen had a couple of days to see to the affairs in the region before Hamzah would catch up. His first priority was to make sure that Kakiali would actually come to the meeting. He sent another delegation up to Wawani. Playing both sides, he had Kakiali informed that Sultan Hamzah was going to make a claim to the overlordship of Hitu, and that if Kakiali felt this claim was unwarranted, he had better come down to the meeting. Kakiali told the delegate that they had, perhaps, fallen under the sultan of Ternate long ago, and were on good terms with him, but had been independent for as long as they could remember. Other Hituese orangkaya told the Dutch as much over the following days. The sultan's claim of having been the overlord of Hitu until 1605 certainly held no stock in their eyes.

On the 5th of June, the sultan arrived – on a fleet that was rather more impressive than the 11 battered kora-kora Van Diemen had left behind at Kambelo. In the meantime, kora-kora from the entire Ternaten realm had come in - from Sula, Banggai, Makian, Buru, and Hoamoal and the surrounding islands themselves – so that the fleet now consisted of 44 vessels, carrying 4000 men, of which 1500 were bearing arms. Hamzah was asserting his claim on the region with a show of might and power.[644]

The ceremony and festivities with which the sultan was welcomed to Hitu were not only noted in Dutch sources, but also extensively described by Rijali in the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, testifying to the weight of the occasion:

> Then, His Majesty departed [from Kambelo] to the land of Hitu with the Hollanders. All the communities came out to honour him. All this was done entirely according to the law and custom of the land: there were those who carried weapons and marched in line, there were those only walking along, there were those carrying fine foods, there were those carrying valuables. The royal parasol of His Majesty Sultan Hamzah – victor thanks to God, the King, Shadow of God on earth – was accompanied by music. All of the Ambon region assembled to pay their respect.[645]

Rijali's report of the subsequent meetings, however, remembers the outcome of

644 A full list of the vessels and their origins in: Report of Van Diemen's visit, 5 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 454v-455r.

645 Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 179-181. Note that 'communities' is a translation of *negeri*, and that 'laws and customs' is a translation of *adat*.

the negotiations rather differently than we know them. According to Rijali, the sultan, upon hearing that Kakiali could not attend the meeting, and that none of the participants had copies of the original treaties with the Dutch on hand, declared that under those circumstances, he could not come to a decision on any pact with Hitu, and left the region without having reached any kind of agreement.[646] Rijali's notion of a pact, rather than a tributary relationship, is in line with his general description of the relation between Hitu and Ternate as an alliance on equal footing.[647] That, however, was not how Hamzah saw it.

The first few days after the sultan's arrival were spent waiting for several more delegates from throughout the region. Not everyone was apparently willing to come. The Muslim communities of the Lease Islands, presumably aware of what the sultan was trying to do and less than thrilled, sent word that they would like to keep it at the agreements made last year, when, during the *landdag,* Kaicili Sibori had tactfully evaded any concrete statement on the status of Hatuhaha and Ihamahu.[648] Even more important to the legitimacy of the proceedings was, of course, Kakiali's presence. The latter had apparently only learned of kimelaha Leliato's arrest and captivity after the arrival of Sultan Hamzah. Understandably, this did not allay his mistrust of the intentions of Hamzah and the Dutch, and he sent word that he would only come down if Leliato was released. When Hamzah and Van Diemen subsequently sent a heavy Dutch-Hituese delegation up to him, threatening him with war unless he came down within two days, Kakiali, annoyed at what he considered a grave overreaction, told them alright, he would come down, but subsequently let the deadline pass. Hamzah and Van Diemen, rather than making good on their threat, decided to just go ahead without him.[649]

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646 Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 181-184. The word Rijali uses is 'perjanjian', which can also have the more narrow meaning of 'treaty'.

647 See the excellent analysis in the introduction to the Hikayat: Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 77.

648 He had stated that it was the wish of the sultan that these communities were obedient to the Governor of Ambon rather than the kimelaha. Knaap, 'Crisis and failure', 18. also see last chapter, paragraph 'Van Diemen's intervention'.

649 Saliently, the delegation consisted of the perdana's *except* for the perdana Tanihitumesen who, considering the discord between the two, feared for his head if he would go along. Some Dutch delegates were also present. Hamzah felt slighted afterwards, as the delegation had left without him being informed, which had robbed him of the chance to send someone from his own retinue along. Report of Van Diemen's visit, 9-10 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 457r-458r.

On the 12th, then, in a specially prepared pavilion near the VOC's redoubt at Hitu, the proceedings began in earnest. In the middle of a wooden enclosure, a newly built *baileu* gave room to the representatives. Around it, sheltered from the rain and sun by tent canvases spanned overhead, stood Dutch soldiers, their weapons at the ready. Under the palmleaf roof of the *baileu* gathered the governor-general and other VOC officials, the heads of the communities of Ambon and Lease, both the VOC's subjects and the rest, 'all except the Kapitan Hitu, those of Kapahaha, and those of Iha, Mahu and Hatuhaha.'[650] Then, Sultan Hamzah arrived, with all his dignitaries, and escorted by a thousand armed men. Everyone sat down. The proceedings could begin.

Sultan Hamzah spoke first, telling the gathered leaders that he had not only come to see to the issues with the foreign traders, but also to resolve the disputes over certain territories that existed between him and the Company. He yielded to kimelaha Luhu, who referred to the existing treaties, but told the meeting that, unfortunately, his own copy of the treaty with Van der Hagen was still in Ternate, and that Leliato's copy had been destroyed in the attack on Lesiela. Kakiali supposedly also had a copy, but he was not here.[651] While they were all there to solve a historic dispute, and acknowledged that the treaties should form the basis of such a solution, no copies were apparently at hand. [652]

So the sultan simply asked the Hituese perdanas. These, apparently shying away from open argument with His Majesty, professed their ignorance of the whole matter, and referred the question back to kimelaha Luhu. From there, the meeting apparently devolved into bickering over the exact divisions of the various spheres of influence along the Seramese coast. The representatives of Luhu and the other clove-producing polities on Hoamoal used the opportunity to make a case for a higher clove price, which Van Diemen parried with the usual argument about the costs of 'protecting' their allies by maintaining forts and garrisons – costs that the 'undercutters' from Makassar and Java did not have to make. The meeting was adjourned, to be resumed in two days. In the meantime, the sultan conferred with some of the local leaders to become better informed about the extent of his domains.

When the meeting reconvened, Hamzah had apparently learned what he

650 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 9-12 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 457r (description of the pavilion) and fol. 459r (first real day of the proceedings).

651 Rijali adds that Kakiali's copy had been lost during his captivity and the troubles in Hitu. Rijali, *Historie van Hitu*, 181-184.

652 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 12 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 458v-460v.

wanted to know, and confidently proclaimed himself ruler of Hitu. None of the Hituese leaders demurred. The sultan then went on to claim that the Muslim villages on Hitu's west side were also part of his domain. These villages were not part of Hitu but officially resorted under the rule of the Company. The sultan's claim was backed up by the *orangkaya* of Ureng, one of these communities, which, it may be remembered, had sided against the Dutch in the recent troubles in Hitu. Van Diemen, less squeamish about standing up to the sultan, would have none of it. Hitu's west corner had always resorted under the Dutch. The discussion became increasingly heated.

As this specific dispute dragged on into the next day, something unsettling happened. Just as a tropical rainstorm came pooring down, rendering the muskets of the Dutch soldiers unusable, some seven or eight hundred armed Ternatens came storming into the pavilion, dragging part of the flimsy wooden enclosure with them. The startled Dutch demanded to know what this was all about, but Hamzah immediately tried to set them at ease, telling the Dutch that this was merely his escort back to his kora-kora, and ordering the armed men to leave the pavilion. They hesitatingly did so, but then stormed right back in, tearing down more of the enclosure in the process. Hamzah, overseeing the situation, decided it was probably best to call it a day, and went back to his kora-kora, leading the men away. We may speculate that Hamzah, or someone, had resolved to use force if his claims to Hitu's west corner were ignored, and then thought better of it, but there is no way to tell. The Duch were completely in the dark about what had just happened, and no sources provide us with insights from the Ternaten side.[653]

The next day, no meeting was held, and the Hituese perdana used the opportunity to privately confer with Van Diemen, telling him that they were unhappy with how things had gone down: they did not historically fall under Ternate, but out of awe for the sultan, not to mention the considerable military force he had arrived with, had not dared to speak up in the meetings. Oh, that was a problem, Van Diemen told them. The deal was already done! How could he possibly renege on it, now that they themselves had accepted his claims while in session? Had they but spoken up, he would have been happy to assist them, but there was little he could do now.

This might give us pause to come to a more general assessment of what had happened. Even before sailing to the Ambon region, Van Diemen had informed

653 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 15 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 461v-462r.

the directors that he would be happy to restitute parts of the region to Ternate, to improve the working relationship with Hamzah and in recognition of his assistance with regard to the kimelaha and the foreign traders in Hoamoal. Even though he then found this assistance slightly underwhelming, his actions do seem to have been based on such a *quid pro quo* – discussing the status of Hitu was contingent upon arresting the kimelaha and getting rid of the foreign traders. When the status of Hitu was subsequently discussed, there was a general understanding among the participants of the meeting that the division between the Dutch and the Ternaten sphere of influence had been established in a treaty with Van der Hagen – but no one had thought to bring a copy.

The treaty they referred to is presumably the one concluded in February 1605 between Steven van der Hagen on the one hand, and the perdanas and Kapitan Hitu on the other, in the wake of the conquest of Portuguese-ruled Ambon.[654] That treaty contains no reference to Ternate at all, and Hitu is treated as a separate polity, which swears loyalty to the States-General and the Governor of Ambon in recognition of their help in getting rid of the Portuguese. Even if we cast our net wider and consider all the treaties involving either Ternate, Hitu or Hoamoal up to 1609, we do not find any clear references to Hitu being a Ternaten tributary. Rather, these treaties show that the Dutch had consistently treated Hitu as a separate and independent political entity.[655] If the sultan of Ternate was seeking proof of his claims, the treaties with the Dutch were the wrong place go

654 Included in *Corpus Diplomaticum,* XIV, 31-33. Note that the footnote there calls the Kapitan Hitu a representative of the sultan of Ternate, but its references concern either the post-1638 period or the period of the first Dutch expeditions to Asia, when the Dutch were indeed under the impression that Hitu was a tributary to Ternate.

655 *Corpus Diplomaticum,* V, VI (12-14) and XIV (31-33, already considered above) are the treaties with Hitu of 1600, 1601 and 1605, all of them treating Hitu as an independent polity. XXII, with Ternate (1607), 51-53, and its confirmation in a new treaty in 1609 (XXVIII, 61-65) lists the tributaries of Ternate without referring to Hitu. XXVI and XXVII, 58-61 (with the various polities of the island of Haruku, including Hatuhaha, 1609, and with Rumahkai, on Seram, respectively), likewise makes no reference of Ternate and instead assert that these polities had resorted under the Portuguese before and therefore now fell under the VOC. XXXII, 70-72 (1609), is especially insightful, as this treaty was concluded with both Hitu and the various polities of Hoamoal. It refers to the sultan of Ternate as being in the position of determining the clove price for all of these areas. Whereas a footnote in *Corpus Diplomaticum* (72n1) once again marks this as evidence that Hitu fell under the sultan, the more likely explanation is that Hitu and Ternate were allies and had historically coordinated in matters such as these. Cf. Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* esp. 36-44.

look for it. As discussed in chapter II, Hitu, while allied to Ternate and periodically working together with the sultan against the Portuguese, was certainly not a tributary the way that Hoamoal and the surrounding islands were.[656]

Whatever we may think of the fact that none of the indigenous participants to the negotiations apparently had a copy of the treaty at their disposal; it seems very unlikely that no copy of the treaty would have been available to Van Diemen and Ottens, and not bringing those up for the negotiations would thus have been a conscious choice. This reinforces the impression that, rather than this having any real historical or legal basis, this was simply power politics, a trade-off between Hamzah and Van Diemen.

In any case, the negotiations were nearing their conclusion. When the meeting reconvened on the 18th, Hamzah had apparently relinquished his claims on the villages on Hitu's west side. Several communities once again tried to renegotiate the clove price with Van Diemen, which the latter once again ignored. A golden *kris* with rubies was presented to the sultan by Van Diemen. Many more gifts for him and the other dignitaries that had come to the meeting were to follow over the next few days.[657]

A final small matter that Hamzah and Van Diemen discussed privately as the meeting was concluded, was what was to happen with Leliato. Sultan Hamzah asked Van Diemen to return Leliato to his custody, so he could put him on public trial in Ternate, as an example to his subjects and dignitaries. Van Diemen, however, had a counterproposal. He would like to take Leliato with him to Batavia, show him to the Council of the Indies and then send him on to Ternate if Hamzah so desired. This was acceptable to Hamzah. We may assume that some motives remained unuttered: Van Diemen would rather keep control of Leliato to make sure he did not end up being set free for one reason or another, to then find his way back to Hoamoal. Hamzah had to consider how it would look if Van Diemen took one of his high officials to Batavia and did his dirty work for him. Incidentally, Van Diemen would never actually send Leliato to Ternate - he would remain a prisoner in Batavia until 1643, when he was executed there with the blessing of the sultan.

By the 20th, of June, the text of the treaty was finalized. In it, Hamzah prom-

656 See e.g. Van Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', esp. Ch. 3; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* esp. pp. 36-44.

657 Report of Van Diemen's visit, 18-20 June 1638, in: VOC 1126, fol 463r-465r and 472r-473v contain various lists of the gifts.

ised to take all Ternaten dignitaries and their families back to Ternate, leaving none on Hoamoal. The foreign traders could only come with a pass and trade at the places where the Dutch had a fortification. The sultan's existing domains were confirmed, and added to them were Hitu, as well as Seram (without further specification), Ihamahu and Hatuhaha. The latter are interesting as their leaders had declined to join the meeting. The Dutch governor would be authorized to collect the sultan's tribute in the region, and then send it on to Ternate. Additionally, the sultan had an added yearly bonus of 4000 rials of eight to look forward to if the monopoly actually held, but would not receive it if the foreign traders kept coming, giving him a considerable financial stake in the matter. The treaty would later be ratified in Ternate, in the presence of the Council of the Realm. This, it is worth emphasizing, was purely a deal between Van Diemen and Hamzah; none of the political leaders of the regions now being put under Ternaten rule were signatories to it.[658]

### ... and in reality

Van Diemen, declining an invitation by Hamzah to join him in Ternate (but sending two ships there and promising more substantial reinforcements from now on), set sail to Batavia the next day. Hamzah, it would seem, was more than pleased with the agreement. Van Diemen himself was not too unhappy either, and later wrote the directors that they could 'rest assured with regard to the affairs in Ambon'. He hoped and trusted that, after the violence and destruction of the past few years had made the Dutch extremely hated in the region, a more moderate course would be possible from now on.[659]

It seems, however, Van Diemen's optimism and Hamzah's satisfaction were not as warranted as they thought. Hamzah, in particular, whose arrival in the islands had been such a source of prestige, so highly anticipated and celebrated, seems to have made a rather bad impression by his subsequent political manoeuvrings. The arrest and extradition of Leliato, the burning of Kambelo, and the way in which large swaths of the Ambon region had been ceded to the sultan

658 *Corpus Diplomaticum,* CXXVII, 316-324 contains the text, as does Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, II.2, 119-122 and VOC 1126, fol. 467r-471v, with slight variations between them. The report does not mention the contract being signed at the time, but just its 'overhandingh', with the actual siging later taking place in Ternate in the presence of the Council.

659 Van Diemen and Council to directors, 22 December 1638, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 344.

without their consent, had created no small amount of resentment in the islands. Hamzah learned this soon enough; staying on in the Ambon Islands after Van Diemen had left, he noticed that all his newly acquired tributaries resisted the new arrangements to some degree. Another attempt to get Kakiali to come down and confirm the new treaty failed. The communities around the bend of Kaibobo absconded to the mountains rather than pay the new tribute which the sultan tried to impose on them, and sought to make a pact against him with Ihamahu, which was also less than thrilled about the new arrangements. Perhaps more surprisingly to the sultan, his subjects in Hoamoal were also less than cooperative. As the sultan's hongi made its way back north in early August, he found that the inhabitants of Kambelo as well as the foreign traders were still holed up in Masili, unwilling to either come down to the sultan or let him come up. Among them was kimelaha Luhu, who was certainly not planning to come along to Ternate, and seems to have basically entrenched himself in Leliato's old position, belying Hamzah's earlier impression that he had him under control. The sultan, rather than appointing a rival kimelaha the way he had appointed kimelaha Luhu himself ten years ago, appointed four *hamda raja's*, lower functionaries, each responsible for one of the areas that remained loyal to him: Luhu, Manipa, Ambelau and Lesidi. Kimelaha Luhu, however, was in a position to look on with some indifference, as he remained the *de facto* ruler of much of Hoamoal. Governor Ottens, noting after Van Diemen's departure that things were not going the way they had imagined, asked Hamzah to stay on in the islands for a while longer and help him enforce all the new arrangements. But with most of the VOC ships and troops now gone, his own hongi already largely dispersed, and with other matters requiring his attention in and around Ternate, Hamzah saw nothing to be gained from staying any longer, and went back north.[660]

### The outcome

By late 1638, then, the developments in the region had largely reverted back to a depressingly familiar pattern. Kimelaha Luhu made hit-and-run attacks on places like Luhu and Lesidi, forcing the Dutch to reinforce their defences there. Kakiali remained engaged in what amounted to a low-level civil war with the perdana Tanihitumesen, but managed to stay just short of open war with the Dutch. The Dutch, making use of the *hongi,* kept attacking the settlements loyal to the kimelaha with varying success. In March 1639, a Dutch attack on

660 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 164-167.

Kambelo and Masili went disastrously, as the latter proved so unassailable and well-defended that the Dutch were driven off suffering 19 dead and 40 wounded. At other times, the Dutch booked some small victory against the kimelaha, but with neither party really able to defeat or dislodge the other, the region remained deadlocked in conflict.[661] Also depressingly familiar was the change in Van Diemen's attitude towards the region as news about all this reached Batavia. By late 1639, as he also learned that Hamzah, apparently now pandering to the anti-Dutch elements among the Ternaten dignitaries, was portraying the Dutch part in the proceedings of 1638 in the worst possible light, and to boot, had made peace with Tidore in an unprecedented move which bewildered the Dutch and Spanish alike, he lost the last vestiges of his original optimism. 'Not policy, but treachery, deceit and lies are the norm among this perfidious crowd', he bitterly wrote to the directors. [662] While he ached to resolve the matter by sending another large expeditionary force east, his hands were tied by the war against the Portuguese he was waging throughout Asia.[663]

## Concluding remarks

In his article about the meeting between Hamzah and Van Diemen, Gerrit Knaap concludes that the process leading up to the treaty 'bears a very rational character', in that both parties came to the negotiations with very clear objectives and were able to trade these off.[664] While in cold political terms we might consider the trade-off that they made rational, we might also call it naked power politics. The negotiations were pervaded by an atmosphere of mutual distrust, and leave the overall impression that Van Diemen was permitting Hamzah to make a major power grab in the region in exchange for his cooperation in securing the clove monopoly. While it was in the mutual interest of the two to establish firmer Company control over Hoamoal, the move to acknowledge Hamzah's claim on Hitu, the Muslim areas of the Lease Islands and 'Seram' went against the wishes of the inhabitants of these regions and also against how the Company had historically conceived of these regions. Hitu had always been considered a separate state by the VOC, as its earliest treaties concluded in the region make

661 I am here glossing over the exact developments in the conflict, but see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 167-184 for a general overview.

662 Van Diemen to directors, 18 December 1639, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* II, 388.

663 For an overview, see Knaap and Den Heijder, *Oorlogen Overzee,* 85-90; Witteveen, *Antonio van Diemen,* 253-274.

664 Knaap, 'The Governor-General and the Sultan', 97.

abundantly clear. That none of the Malukan participants in the negotiations had a copy of these treaties at hand whilst considering them the basis of such claims and the negotiations is one thing, but that Van Diemen and Ottens did not have access to them cannot have been anything but deliberate. The way in which the acknowledgement of Hamzah's overlordship over Hitu was subsequently pushed through, against the wishes of its orangkaya with their most prominent political leader, Kapitan Hitu, absent from the proceedings and with none of the areas in question being signatories to the treaty, could also be called cynical.

It also did not work. Many of the areas in question were averse of the agreement even before it was made, and saw their worries confirmed when Hamzah immediately banked on his new tributaries by levying heavy tributes throughout the region. The responses of his new supposed subjects varied from dragging their heels to outright armed resistance. Knaap concludes that we should consider the provisions of the treaty as a move towards a form of indirect rule where Sultan Hamzah was left to rule the Muslim areas and the Company concentrated on the Christian ones. It should be noted, though, that it was extremely unsuccessful, as Hamzah managed to alienate much of the Muslim region from him during his visit, but was unable and unwilling to durably effectuate any kind of real control.

In case of the two most consequential Muslim leaders in the region, Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu, this alienation took a very concrete form: they turned to Makassar for help. The sultan of Gowa had of course loomed in the background of the conflict as an alternate source of political protection for two decades, but Kakiali and kimelaha Luhu now raised the stakes. They openly offered up the rule of their domains to the sultan of Gowa.

# 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 precent, 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 Kerkringh: 19 Mey 1939, 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 Makssar, 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 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 Makassar 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]

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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 conevened 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 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 bahar 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.

# XI. Cured by iron (1643-1647)

'In the province of Amboina, nothing remains for us to do but to exterminate the faithless Kakiali and his associates', Van Diemen briskly wrote to the directors in December 1642.[712] As we may recall, Van Diemen took the matter quite personally. In spite of several other major military campaigns against the Portuguese still underway on Ceylon, and in spite of receiving considerably less than the rather generous number of 6000 men he had requested from Europe, he was still able to muster a sizeable fleet for this purpose.[713] Antonio Caen, who had insisted on returning to the Netherlands, was persuaded to command it, and went back out to Ambon commanding 10 ships and 8 sloops, manned with 500 soldiers and 650 sailors, on the 23rd of December. While Van Diemen would have liked to send more men (in fact, he admonished the directors for not sending him the reinforcements he had requested, 'or we could have made ourselves masters of Amboina and all of Spanish Ternate the next year'), it represented a sizeable force in addition to the total garrison of 466 soldiers and the 7 yachts already in the Ambon quarter – not to mention the local allies, whose ranks had rather swelled by the recent political shifts in the region.[714]

This campaign, combined with Demmer's heavy-handed, and, at times, outright devious style of governing, would finally ring the death knell of the independent Hituese state. Calling in Gowan intervention had been Kakiali's last trump card. Now that it had failed, the Company was moving in for the kill. Looking back on the period, Rumphius would remark that Demmer, like a good surgeon, followed the rules of medicine, 'curing by iron, and sharp corrosives, what could not be cured by art' – and that his successor would even have to resort to fire.[715] While this assessment begs the question whether the methods of some of his predecessors did not actually revolve around fire and iron as much as those of Demmer, it does point out an important shift in the power balance

712 Van Diemen to Directors, 12 December 1642, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 41.

713 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 42. The demand for 6000 men was, is should be added, unrealistically high. Over all of 1642, 3391 men, of whom, 1157 were soldiers, arrived in Batavia, which was above average. Even in periods of intense conflict, the amount of personnel sent tended to number somewhere in the 3000s or 4000s throughout the seventeenth century. For some comparative data, see D.A.S., I, 144 and 156; Tristan Mostert, 'Chain of Command: the military system of the Dutch East India Company, 1655-1663.' Mphil thesis Leiden University, 2007, pp. 41-46.

714 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 42.

715 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 199.

in the region. With Demmer's governorship, the Company started doing what some of its employees had phantasized about, or even attempted, in the preceding decades but never actually achieved: dismantling the existing political structures and bring the region under effective Company control.

### The attack on Wawani

On the 8th of November, Van Diemen had sent advance word to Ambon about the fleet he was assembling, ordering Demmer to also ready the hongi, and come out to meet the incoming fleet off Buru. The news reached Demmer at a delicate moment. He was just returning from a campaign with the Ambonese kora-kora, reinforcing the newfound understanding with his new allies and trying to block the Hituese coast and destroy any Makasar vessels hidden there. Crucially, he had also been able to make a peace agreement with Loki on Hoamoal's east coast, which had until recently been occupied by Makasar forces. The region around the settlement had been a major source of sago for the followers of Kakiali, who were therefore now cut off from their main food supply. The Ambonese kora-kora had only just returned from this tour, and a bumper crop of cloves was just about ready for harvesting, so the men were needed at home. Demmer, however, had his orders. He went ahead and advertised that all the subjects and allies of the Dutch should ready their kora-kora, on pain of being declared an enemy.[716] As the hongi gathered, he himself took three yachts to sail out and meet Caen's fleet, sighting it off Buru's northeast coast on the 18th of January. From there, they sailed to the Hituese coast together.[717]

They wanted to head straight to Wawani, but the weather got in the way. The Hituese coast was a lee shore at the time, which made staying there with the large and fully laden ships difficult and dangerous. By the last day of January, the three largest ships, carrying the bulk of the supplies, sailed into the bay to Victoria castle, while some of the smaller ships were sent off to hunt for any foreign vessels that might arrive in the area. Commander Frans Leendertsz Valck was left on the Hituese coast in charge of the remaining yachts and the hongi, which, with all the new Dutch allies, comprised 50 kora-kora. He was to use these forces as weather permitted and opportunities presented themselves. Over

716 Demmer to Governor-General and Council, 27 of April 1643, fols. 150-183, specifically 168v-169r.

717 Caen to Governor-General and Council, 27 of April 1643, in VOC 1142, fol. 186-198, specifically 186v. Note that Rumphius erroneously states that they met off Buton: Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 207.

the subsequent weeks, Valck and his soldiers and local allies would be burning villages, ambushing followers of Kakiali, and mostly, extirpating their clove trees. Interestingly, as the VOC's intention was to crush all remaining Hituese opposition and definitively end the foreign trade that very season, it was effectively destroying its own prospective production capacity. As cloves were deemed too plentiful anyway, and the trees would regrow within a few years, this was not considered problematic.[718]

Caen and Demmer, meanwhile, planned the final attack on Kakiali's stronghold at Wawani, and the surrounding fortifications occupied by Makasars and Butonese. As they learned from various defectors, the road leading up to Wawani was defended by three major fortifications at the time. Below at the shore was a massive elongated Makasar fort with two bulwarks. Although it would have been formidable when well-defended, the fort was only occupied by 200 Makasars by then, and all but five of its swivel guns were reportedly defunct, as were most of its muskets. The fort also held their means of escape: fourteen of their *pelong* vessels, along with six newly bought kora-kora. Further up the hill were several additional supporting fortifications, including a Butonese fortification commanded by Kaicili Buton. Perched on a cliff of what is still known as Gunung (Mount) Wawani, was Kakiali's own fort – large, rectangular, and defended with five swivel guns and some falconets. While all of these fortifications would have been formidable, both they and their defenders were reportedly in bad condition. By late April, when the wind had turned and the weather had improved, Caen and Demmer made their way to the coast below Wawani to make their final attack.[719]

After the arrival of the assembled fleet at Wawani, Caen gave the Makasars and Butonese one last chance to surrender. Aware that they were, in many respects, a force of their own and that their presence would prevent the Hituese from surrendering, he offered them a chance to leave unharmed within 24 hours, if they would allow their ships to be searched and would turn over any cloves in them, for which they would then even get the price that the Hituese also received. He sent a lieutenant ashore to relay the message. The Makasars did not accept the offer, informing the delegate that their leader was up in Wawani with a wounded leg, and that they were unqualified to decide on the matter. Caen then had the fleet open fire, firing away at the bulwarks with the regular cannon, blowing the palisades away and attempting to weaken the stone walls under them, while also

718 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 207-210.
719 Ibid., 209-210.

lobbing mortars and fireballs into the fortification. A storm attack was prepared, for which three squadrons, consisting of a total of 482 European soldiers, 286 sailors, and some 800 armed local allies and subjects, were formed.[720]

An additional plan was proposed by a lieutenant named Verheijden. He had been talking to a defector, who had pointed out a hill right behind the eastern bulwark from where one could command the entire Makasar fortress. The hill even had a small defensive structure, apparently meant to keep any attackers off, but it had been left unmanned. Verheijden proposed to quietly land a company of musketeers that night, occupy the hill, and fire into the fort from there. He got permission, and managed to quietly take the hill that night without any opposition.[721]

As the day broke, the Makasars, having been battered by cannon fire the previous day and facing overwhelmingly superior numbers and firepower, now also found an enemy company commanding a hill at their back. They were not going down without a fight, however, and made such a fierce sortie onto the hill that they drove the surprised Company musketeers back. Caen and Demmer immediately sent two additional companies of soldiers ashore to come to their aid, and also sent 8 boats filled with soldiers to the shore further west to make a feigned attack on the western bulwark, hoping to divert the Makasars from the hill. It worked; the Makasars broke off their attack to meet the new threat and tried to prevent the Dutch from landing, which resulted in a fierce firefight across the bay. Meanwhile, Caen and Demmer were able to reinforce the Company troops on the hill with some artillery, enabling the Dutch to target the Makasars in the fort with it. This, then, made the defense of the fort untenable. The remaining Makasars abandoned it and fled into the hills.[722]

After the conquest, Caen and Demmer visited the fort. As they were walking around, they marveled at its strength, and noted that their bombardment from the ships had not done as much damage as they had expected. Had the fort been properly manned, and had the hill at its back been defended, the Dutch would have had a wholly different kind of fight on their hands, they mused.[723]

It is worth dwelling on their musings. The attack on Wawani is one of the case studies Knaap uses in his overview of warfare in the Ambon Islands. To

720 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, esp. 226r-227v.
721 Ibid., 227v-228r.
722 Ibid., 228r-v.
723 Ibid., 228v-229r.

him, they represent an example of the usefulness of European warfare within the Ambonese context.[724] Looking at the specifics of the attack leads to a more qualified assessment.

In his description of the battle, Knaap remarks that it was rather unique for an indigenous fort to have been built directly on the shore. We have, of course, come across indigenous shoreline defenses before in this dissertation, for instance in Kambelo or Seram Laut. These coastal defenses were often, though not always, associated with foreign traders: at Kambelo, for instance, which was a trade- and sea-oriented settlement to begin with, the entire system of fortifications was near the shore, but those directly lining the beach tended to be the makeshift fortifications by Makasars and Malays, meant to protect their vessels and goods. This was also the case at Wawani. The fort was not, in a strict sense, indigenous. It was Makasar-built.

As a general rule, the various Makasar forts in the region served different purposes from the indigenous ones. The hilltop forts of the latter had their origin in providing protection against headhunting raids, and, evolving in response to European encroachment and the proliferation of gunpowder weapons, proved remarkably effective against European adversaries as well. Should one such hilltop fort fall, its defenders would flee into the hinterland and make their way to another, as we have seen throughout this dissertation. The Makasar forts, meant to protect the seagoing vessels and trade goods, served different purposes and also had their basis in a different fort-building practice. The town of Makassar was renowned for its massive and extensive shoreline defenses, meant to protect the large trading town and its court, and showing European inspiration and influence in their designs, with their seaside bulwarks and their massive walls filled with tamped earth. The shoreline forts the Makasars built in the Ambon region show a similar signature, although on a more modest scale: rectangular, sporting bastions, massively built.

Their Makasar defenders had a fighting style to match, and it is hard not to see the martial reputation of the Makasars vindicated in their sortie up the hill against massively superior numbers and firepower, threatening to drive the Dutch from their entrenched position regardless. Back in Makassar, with its massive resources and manpower, this helped make the sultanate a daunting military power. Here in Hitu, Makasar bravery could, however, also work to their disadvantage. Under the circumstances, it meant that they could actually be decisively

724 Knaap, 'Headhunting, carnage and armed peace', 175-179.

defeated in a confrontation, precisely because of what we might consider their bravery. The way of war of the indigenous inhabitants of the region, by contrast, often considered cowardly by the Dutch, relied much more strongly on having the landscape do the fighting for them. This turned them into an elusive adversary, and made them all but impossible to definitively defeat.

The road up to Wawani was beset with several more small fortifications, in addition to the larger Butonese one. In the afternoon and over the course of the next day, the troops under Caen and Demmer were able to conquer them all. The defenders tended to skirmish with the advancing Company troops and their allies for a while before abandoning their fortification and retreating further uphill. They did take care to set the warehouses full of cloves within them ablaze before fleeing. Particularly the last of the lesser fortifications the Company troops conquered was a rich prize. This palisaded position up on a cliff was conquered by using some iron cannon and swivel guns that the troops had found abandoned during their advance – a boon, as it would normally have been very difficult to bring cannon up into the hills. They were used to fire a barrage of grenades into the fort, surprising the defenders so much that they hastily abandoned what would otherwise have been an extremely defensible position. As they fled, they set ablaze some 12 warehouses, of which Caen would later learn that they had contained some 600 bahar of 'cloves as pure and fine as have ever been seen in living memory', in addition to a store of silks and other trade goods.[725] 600 bahar, it may be recalled, was more than the total amount that came onto the market in Makassar in some years. Caen was mighty pleased and expected that this would also seriously hurt the relationship between the Makasars and Kakiali. The troops considered keeping the conquered position and using it as a base for the final attack on Wawani, but as evening fell and they got the impression that the enemy was preparing a nightly counterattack, they instead demolished the palisade and retreated back to the ships, bringing the conquered cannon with them as best they could.[726]

The next morning, the 4th of May, the troops once again disembarked and started climbing back into the hills for the final attack on Wawani. Over the past

725 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, esp. fol. 229v.

726 Ibid. Downhill was, of course, easier than up, and the troops, not too concerned with damaging the cannon, pushed them off the cliffs and rolled them downhill where possible. All the same, it took until midnight until the cannon were down on the shore and could be brought on board.

two days, their clearing of the various fortifications on the mountainside, while tedious and tiring, had given them the impression that Wawani itself would not be too fiercely defended. This turned out to be mistaken. The defenders had now all congregated at Wawani, and had nowhere else to fall back to. They defended themselves with a desperate and grim determination. As the Company troops climbed up, the defenders fired at them from ambush at every turn. When they had finally fought their way up to Wawani, a fierce firefight ensued, lasting for some two hours and causing casualties on both sides. As the Company troops began to tire, Makasar troops stormed out of the fort for a 'desperate sortie', coming in so close so fast that the Company troops had no use for their muskets and it came down to hand to hand combat. While the Makasars were eventually driven back into the fort, the resolve of the Company troops to continue the attack against 'this invincible stronghold, in which over 500 of these rogues had congregated' was waning. Caen and Demmer decided to withdraw back to the ships for the moment.[727]

Then, somewhat surprisingly, they decided to break off the campaign altogether for now. Some ships were left to blockade the Hituese coast; the bulk of the fleet returned to Castle Victoria; the hongi was disbanded. In his letter describing the events, Caen explained the decision by pointing to the defensibility of Wawani, the number of casualties among his officers and the fatigue of his troops (he mentions 43 wounded and 8 dead on the Company side), as well as the desire to return to Castle Victoria and 'tend to other important matters.'[728] Caen made a point to emphasize what a major success the campaign as a whole had been, with the Makasar fort taken, the Makasar ships destroyed along with a huge store of cloves, and all of the Hituese coast now under control. With Wawani now the last hideout of Kakiali and his followers, Caen expected that famine and want would probably finish the job soon enough anyway. This would prove optimistic, and considering that Caen's instructions were to eradicate the Hituese resistance, and that he had been sent east at the head of an impressive fleet mainly for that purpose, it seems puzzling that he abandoned his attempts after an effective campaign of only three days.[729]

727 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, esp. fol. 230r.

728 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, quote on fol. 231r.

729 In late June, the troops remaining on the Hituese coast under commander Valck

### Executions, defections and assassinations

Governor-general Van Diemen, however, was not complaining, as the 'important matters' that Caen and Demmer tended to in the wake of the campaign, would deal the final blow to the old political order in the Amboina Quarter. Before Caen's arrival, Sultan Hamzah, after long correspondence with both Demmer and Van Diemen, had had himself convinced that it was best to confirm Majira as the new kimelaha, and to have Luhu and his family executed.[730] He had authorized Demmer to do the dirty work if he could. Kimelaha Luhu had of course recently become rather more amenable to the VOC, and as Demmer had expected he might have need of his knowledge and services in the campaign against Wawani, had kept this letter secret for the time being. Indeed, Luhu, working in tandem with Majira, had assisted in the campaigns preceding the attack on Wawani. Now that Caen and Demmer considered the war against Kakiali practically won, they called the various orangkaya of Hoamoal and the surrounding islands to Castle Victoria for a meeting.

They informed the gathered orangkaya that they were all expected in Ternate to bear witness to the confirmation of Majira as the new kimelaha. The sultan had requested that they come there in their kora-kora; but what with the rather heavy recent appeals on the hongi, Demmer and Caen were more than happy to excuse them of that obligation. They could instead hitch a ride on Caen's fleet, which was set to leave for Ternate soon. After the business of the meeting was ostensibly concluded, and the gathered orangkaya were treated to some betelnut and took their leave to return later in the day, kimelaha Luhu and his half-brother Akiwani, who had taken part in the meeting, were asked to remain in the room, to their visible alarm – kimelaha Luhu had long dreaded something like this might eventually happen.[731] But it could not be helped. Company soldiers,

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would make another attempt to conquer Wawani in a nightly surprise attack, but made a hasty retreat after being detected.

730 Sultan Hamzah to governor Demmer, no date, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 156-157.

731 For instance, to show his good will and take his distance from Hamzah, he had shared some letters sent by Hamzah to various dignitaries in the Ambon Islands over the previous decade, ostensibly confirming long-held Company suspicions of his double-dealing. While these letters did show that Hamzah had not always been as ill-disposed towards the foreign traders as he had made the Company believe, and that he was in fact holding correspondence with the leaders in the region outside Company knowledge, they were not enough to exculpate kimelaha Luhu in the eyes of the Company. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 203-204, briefly summarizes the letters.

who had been waiting in the gallery to make the arrest, filed into the room and apprehended the two. The other orangkaya were informed of the arrest later that day. Majira, as the new prospective kimelaha, was asked to assist in also rounding up Luhu's extended family and gathering his possessions before leaving for Ternate, 'to be considered all the more praiseworthy by His Majesty' Sultan Hamzah.[732] After some hesitation, he agreed. He would deliver several of Luhu's female relatives and some of his possessions into the Company's hands before leaving for Ternate.[733] The execution took place on the 16th of June; in addition to Luhu himself, his mother, sister, half-brother and one of the hamba raja's were beheaded in the courtyard of castle Victoria. After their bodies had been on display for a few hours, they were taken away to be buried at a spot near the Hituese shore.[734]

All the while, Demmer was receiving delegates from Hituese communities who came to sue for peace. In fact, many of these communities had already come to negotiate even before Caen's arrival, but Demmer had grown to consider such attempts mere stalling tactics, and had been refusing to meet with such delegates since last December. Now, with the campaign largely concluded, he was in more of a mood to receive them. Peace was made with Negerilima, Seit and other places along the western part of the Hituese north coast, but also the area around Kapahaha, ruled by Telukibesi, on the east side of Hitu, in the course of May. The communities were required to abide by the treaties and partake in the hongi. The various communities along the south and west coast of Hitu, the Muslim areas that had originally resorted under the VOC but had sided with Kakiali in the recent trouble, followed suit in mid-June. Demmer, however, was not inclined to show any mercy to the defenders of Wawani itself. Aware that they were in increasingly dire straits up there, and determined to bring them entirely to their knees, he sent their delegates away empty-handed every time.[735]

Some of the Hituese orangkaya arriving to sue for peace brought valuable

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Demmer to governor-General, 27 April 1643 in: VOC 1142, fol. 150-183, esp. 167r-v mentions that the letters were included in full in Demmer's journal.

732 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, quote on fol. 233v.

733 Ibid., fol. 238r-v.

734 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 216-217. Neither Demmer nor Caen describes the execution in any detail in their letters. The spot where they were buried was since washed away by the sea, Rumphius informs us.

735 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 207, 215-219.

information. The orangkaya of Lebalehu, for example, tried to make a good impression on Caen and Demmer by informing them that Kakiali's Makasar and Butonese allies, whose seagoing vessels had all been destroyed in the recent attack, were constructing two large sampans, hidden slightly inland near his settlement, right below Wawani. Kakiali, aware that the game was up, reportedly intended to go with them to Makassar. Caen and Demmer, resolved to prevent such an escape, immediately dispatched a large contingent of troops onto a flute ship, which sailed around Hitu, found the two sampans, and destroyed them.[736]

With their escape once again cut off, the hopelessness and misery of their situation moved more and more of Kakiali's followers to defect. Every new defector brought valuable information about the situation in Wawani.[737] It was also a defector who finally brought about Kakiali's death: in early August, a Spaniard called Francisco de Toira approached one of the ships blockading the Hituese coast, to surrender himself to the Dutch.

De Toira was, one could say, a veteran defector. He had originally come into Dutch service by defecting from his Spanish employers in Ternate. Having been subsequently stationed at Ureng on the Hituese coast some two years previously, he had thought it expedient to disappear into the hinterland and offer his services to Kakiali instead. Now that the game seemed to be up for Kakiali, he saw no other option but to defect back to the Dutch. All too aware that defection was punishable by death, especially for repeat offenders, he knew it would be difficult to get back into favour with them. Fortunately he had something tempting to offer.

Having been brought to Castle Victoria, De Toira informed Demmer that he was a personal confidant of Kakiali, and had recently accompanied him on a trip to Loien, right below Kapahaha, to request that they prepare a vessel for him in which he could make his way to Makassar. Kakiali had been making grand promises about returning at the head of a relief force of Makasars, Englishmen, Portuguese and others. As preparations for such a ship and its crew were being made, Kakiali had returned to Wawani. De Toira, however, had decided 'that

736 Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, esp. fol. 239r-v, describing the early days of June.

737 A Makasar arrival on the 11th of June, for instance, not only informed Caen and Demmer of the increasing famine in Wawani, but also presented them with an overview of the number of deaths, and the names of the high-ranking Makasar casualties, in the earlier attack. Caen to Governor-General Van Diemen, 11 June 1643, in: VOC 1142, fol. 225-242, esp. fol. 241r-v

Kakiali's actions as well as his poor circumstances no longer pleased him, and did not bode to end well'. Along with a Pampanger[738] who was of a similar inclination, he had decided to defect back to the Dutch, putting himself at their mercy, but hoping he could redeem himself in one way or another.

Demmer suggested that he might save his life by delivering Kakiali to him, or killing him. De Toira replied that the former would be tricky, but that he would happily have a go at the latter.

This was a terribly tempting thought to Demmer, although he also seemed to realize the moral implications of what he was about to do. In his letter detailing the episode, he spent almost an entire page laying out his various considerations – how it would remove Kakiali's pernicious influence from the world, eliminate the risk that he would escape, how it would almost certainly prevent the spilling of Dutch blood… In the end he decided that it was, perhaps, not too much of a misdeed 'that one villain should make the other pay for his treacherous deeds to save his own life.'[739] Demmer accepted, and promised De Toira an additional reward of 200 rials of eight, should he return successfully. De Toira was stealthily smuggled back out of Ambon town to avoid being seen there that same night.

The surviving accounts of what transpired once he made his way back to Wawani differ in their details, but not in their outcome: De Toira was able to find his way back into Wawani, dug a hole into Kakiali's sleeping quarters, and stabbed him to death on the night of the 16th of August. Kakiali was able to call out before dying, and de Toira had to flee for his life with some of Kakiali's followers hot on his heels. He made it back to the shore, where Dutch boats were lying ready to pick him up and transport him to the safety of a Dutch yacht.[740]

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738 Pampangers were Christians from the present-day Philippines who served as soldiers for the Spanish; this Pampanger would likely also have been a two-time defector.

739 Demmer and his council to Governor-General, 11 September 1643, in VOC 1142, fol. 249-266, quote on fol. 256r.

740 Demmer in VOC 1142, fol. 256r-v (letter to Batavia of 11 september) has him hiding in the forest for a few days before finding his way back in; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu*, 191, speaks of two Castilians executing the murder (apparently conflating the unnamed Pampanger and the De Toira himself – according to Dutch sources the Pampanger did defect but was not involved in the killing of Kakiali). Rijali, who was apparently present in Wawani at the time, also remarks that De Toira and his accomplice were simply let back into Wawani after claiming they had been lost in the forest. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 220-221, among other small differences from the other accounts, adds the salient details that De Toira executed the murder with Kakiali's own criss, and took several items with him, including his silver Pinang

'This, then, is the end of Kakiali, the end of and reward for his treacherous and pernicious acts, and the end, so we hope, and God willing, of the great and lengthy troubles', Demmer somewhat histrionically concluded.[741] He added that Kakiali's death had caused great dismay among the Hituese, and expected that it would break the resolve of the last resisting Hituese and dash the hopes of those ostensibly having submitted, but secretly still opposed to the Company. Indeed it did. Rijali describes how, as the Dutch fort and ships fired salutes in celebration, 'all the Hituese communities were seized by a feeling of powerlessness after this terrible loss.'[742]

### The dissolution of the old political order

Just when Demmer had set in motion the assassination of Kakiali, Caen's fleet returned from Ternate. Demmer sailed out and met him off the west coast of Hitu on the 16th of August. Unable to sail into the bay due to adverse winds, they eventually decided to join the blockading ships off Wawani, just as De Toira had returned there from his assassination mission. This gave Demmer and Caen the opportunity to get right on with it. De Toira had already informed Demmer that Wawani's remaining defenders were down to a handful of people from the earlier intervention forces with nowhere to go: about a 100 Makasars, 10 Malays and 40 Butonese, in bad condition due to the want and disease that had Wawani in its grip. With Kakiali dead, he suggested that a new attack on Wawani was bound to succeed. Demmer and Caen wasted no time, sending four companies of soldiers up the hills under cover of darkness. They attacked at daybreak on the 21st of August. This time, the resistance was desperate but feeble: apparently down to two working swivel guns, the defenders, mostly Makasars, used their poisonous blowdarts to keep the Dutch at bay. After an hour or so, the Company troops were able to force their way in, giving no quarter to whoever they still found inside. Some 40 defenders were killed outright; the rest fled into the forests and scattered into the hills, many of them perishing there in the wake of the conquest.[743]

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plate, a small halberd ('pardesaan'), the jewel ornamenting Kakiali's turban, and a ring which he cut from his finger.

741 Demmer and his council to Governor-General, 11 september 1643, in VOC 1142, fol. 249-266, quote on fol. 256v.

742 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 191.

743 Demmer and his council to Governor-General, 11 september 1643, in VOC 1142, fol. 249-266, esp. 257v; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 221-222.

Caen felt that with the conquest of Wawani, his job was done. Anxious to return to Batavia before the imminent turning of the monsoon, he left the region on the 12th of September with the better part of the fleet. This was somewhat to the chagrin of Demmer, who was left to tie up the loose ends by himself, with far fewer ships and men than before. [744] Undeterred, however, he wasted no time in consolidated the Company's control over Hitu. He pursued two related policies: changing the settlement patterns in Hitu, and dismantling its political structure.

As discussed, most of the settlements in the region at large were originally up in the hills rather than directly at the coast, which made them more resilient to attacks and outside control. In times of trouble, war and conflict, the inhabitants additionally tended to move further into the mountainous interior, to fortified hideouts of which Wawani and Kapahaha are the most prominent Hituese examples. As a consequence, in a development rather neatly in keeping with the analysis of James C. Scott, the Company had come to equate further uphill and inland with more resistant to their rule and influence. Over the preceding years, this had increasingly translated into the Company trying to convince its followers to move to the shoreline, and considering it an act of sedition to move back up into the interior, even if merely out of self-preservation.[745]

After the conquest of Wawani, this perception translated into policy on an unprecedented scale. As representatives of the various Hituese communities came down to negotiate with Demmer, who remained at the Hituese coast in early September, they were all ordered to move out of the hills and down to the coast. Some of the communities retained their own distinct settlements; many more congregated at existing settlements with a Dutch fortification, such as Seit, where a fort had recently been constructed, as well as Hila and Hitulama. When Demmer subsequently went around the region with the hongi in October, he saw to it that his orders were executed as intended; where the move to the coast was already completed, he sent groups of soldiers into the interior to burn the abandoned settlements; where the move was not yet completed, the communities

744 Demmer to Governor-General, 25 april 1644, in: VOC 1147, fol. 156-206, esp. fol. 156v; *Dagh-register Batavia, 1643-1644,* 88.

745 For some examples predating 1643 see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 182 (the people of Asaudi moving to the Dutch fort on the shore in 1640) and 205-206 (the inhabitants of Kaibobo being promised a schoolmaster if they would move down to the coast, and the inhabitants of Hutumuri, a Christian village on the east side of Leitimor, being ordered to relocate to a new location on the shoreline.) Also see above, chapter VIII.

were admonished and their progress inspected. The Hituese, their leaders dead, their outside allies gone, saw no other option but to comply. As this major migration to the coast took shape, the Hituese landscape suddenly looked a whole lot less complicated to the Company.[746]

This also applied to the political landscape, both in Hitu and Hoamoal. With Caen's fleet, Majira, had returned to Hoamoal, now officially sworn in. Sultan Hamzah, however, also authorized the governor of Ambon to rule the region in his name, drastically weakening the position of the kimelaha. He authorized Demmer to execute a good number of other 'traitors' in Hoamoal; many beheadings were to follow in the subsequent months. Additionally, one such order had been dispatched to Batavia, where the erstwhile kimelaha Leliato was brought from his cell and publicly beheaded on the 9th of November. Hamzah and Demmer, between them, were decapitating what was left of the resistance against Company control.

As no foreign traders had apparently come to the region to buy cloves over the past year, and the Dutch were otherwise also very pleased with Hamzah's recent cooperation, he received the yearly 4000 rials he had been promised by Van Diemen for the first time this year.[747] Indeed, with the recent changes in the region, the Dutch really did appear to have secured a clove monopoly for the time being. What little cloves arrived onto the market in Makassar came from the Spanish-held regions in North Maluku, which produced a modest amount - the Spanish, rather than hoisting their cloves across two-thirds of the globe over their trade route from Manila to Spanish America and then on to Europe, sold them in Makassar, buying, among other things, English gunpowder there. As a consequence, the English and Danes were able to secure negligible amounts of cloves from 1643 onwards – nowhere enough to be a threat to the Dutch hold over the European market.[748]

As news of the events percolated through to the Netherlands in the course of 1644, the directors were confident that they could change their market strategy in Europe accordingly. As we have seen, from 1635 onwards, dividends in cloves

746 Demmer to Governor-General Van Diemen, 25 April 1644, as summarized in *Dagh-Register Batavia,* 1643-1644, 88-97; Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 62-63. The most complete and insightful inventory of the changes in the Hituese communities and their locales is Rumphius, *De Ambonse eilanden onder de VOC,* 23-42.

747 Van Diemen to directors, 23 Dec 1644, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 184.

748 Some numbers and context in Bassett, 'English trade in Celebes', 19-23.

had regularly been paid out in order to flood the market and drive down prices. The last of such dividends in kind was paid out in November 1644; from then on, the shareholders had only hard currency to look forward to. European clove prices responded by veering back up.[749]

While both the Company and Sultan Hamzah were thus reaping the benefits of the newly attained monopoly, the people of Hoamoal, destitute after years of war, cut off from the foreign traders and now wholly dependent on the Dutch, did not exactly share in the pickings. To make matters worse, Hamzah then also made a point of levying a huge fine on his subjects for their open revolt in the wake of his 1638 visit, officially totaled at 73000 rials of eight. The inhabitants of the region, unable to resist under the circumstances, paid up mostly in goods, including a good number of small guns and other weapons, which the Company, unsurprisingly, did not mind. Although the paid goods were taxed at several times their true value by the delegates, so that the official height of the fine was mostly symbolic, the delegates still extracted a significant amount of material wealth, further adding to the destitution of the region which had been so affluent only a decade ago.[750]

As to the political order in Hitu: after Kakiali's death, both the perdana Tanihitumesen and Sultan Hamzah immediately started manoeuvring to have the now vacant position of Kapitan Hitu filled. The perdana Tanihitumesen fully excpected that he would be reinstated as Kapitan Hitu, and started looking for support among the Hituese the moment that Kakiali was dead. Demmer, however, immediately made it clear for anyone to hear that he had no intention of maintaining the old Hituese political order.[751]

The perdana Tanihitumesen did not immediately take this to heart. When Demmer heard that he had been meeting with a large group of orangkaya at Hitulama, apparently to win their support in order to be elected, he went there

749 Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade,* 95-96; Pim de Zwart, *Globalization and the colonial origins of the great divergence,* 64; Van Dam, *Beschrijvinge,* 1.I, p. 434-435 (listing the various payments of dividend).

750 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* 190 (Van Diemen and Council describing the levying of the fine, in General letter of 23 December 1644) and 204 (Hamzah to Demmer, 25 feb 1644, announcing the fine.)

751 By early 1644, he received clearance from Batavia to go ahead with this policy, as well as a letter from Sultan Hamzah recognizing the Company's ultimate authority. Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 204-210. Note that the sequence of events as described in Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 221pp., cannot be entirely reconciled with the VOC documents for this particular period.

in person and had both the perdana Tanihitumesen and Telukibesi called to the Dutch redoubt. He told them in no uncertain terms that they were absolutely not allowed to call together a meeting of any orangkaya without his consent, and that if Tanihitumesen imagined 'succeeding Kakiali as Kapitan Hitu…. he could entirely put that out of his mind for good.'[752] Demmer was going to abolish the old Hituese government entirely, not only the function of Kapitan Hitu but also the four perdana's, and if the perdana Tanihitumesen wanted to remain an orangkaya at all, he'd better cooperate. If perdana Tanihitumesen was outraged or dismayed, he was apparently able to hide it. He politely excused himself for the risen misunderstanding about his intentions.

Telukibesi, however, was not swallowing his pride. He was, it may be remembered, also a member of the Tanihitumesen family, not too enthusiastic about Kakiali's heavy-handed style of rule, but also unwilling to assist the Dutch in anything harmful to the integrity of the Hituese state. He had therefore often taken his distance from the perdana Tanhitumesen, and had steered a middle course throughout the past years of conflict. Now that worst had come to worst, he was not about to meekly cooperate with the dissolution of the Hituese state. Fortunately, he was the head of Kapahaha, the mountain fort towards the east of Hitu, even more unassailable than Wawani. He also happened to personally be a gifted maker of gunpowder, and knew where to find the necessary sulphur in the Hituese interior.[753] As most of the Hituese communities were coming down to the shoreline, he took to his hilltop stronghold.

Telukibesi remained absent from the various meetings Demmer held with the Hituese orangkaya, even when specifically called for. He likewise did not join the hongi as it set out in October, using the time to gather up the remaining Butonese and Makasars and provide them with whatever smaller seagoing vessels he could find. Most of them were thus able to finally depart from Hitu and make their way back home. He invited the various Hituese refugees from Wawani into

752 Demmer to Governor-General, 25 April 1644, in VOC 1147, fol. 156-206, quote on fol. 161r.

753 Company officials would only learn of this after the end of the siege from their interrogations. Surprised that so much of the European-made gunpowder from Makassar remained in the fort after three years of periodic skirmishing, they found out that Telukibesi had been producing his own gunpowder, sourcing the necessary ingredients from the surrounding area, teaching others the procedure, and saving the Makasar gunpowder for when worst came to worst. Demmer to Governor-General, 17 August 1646, in: Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 290-291.

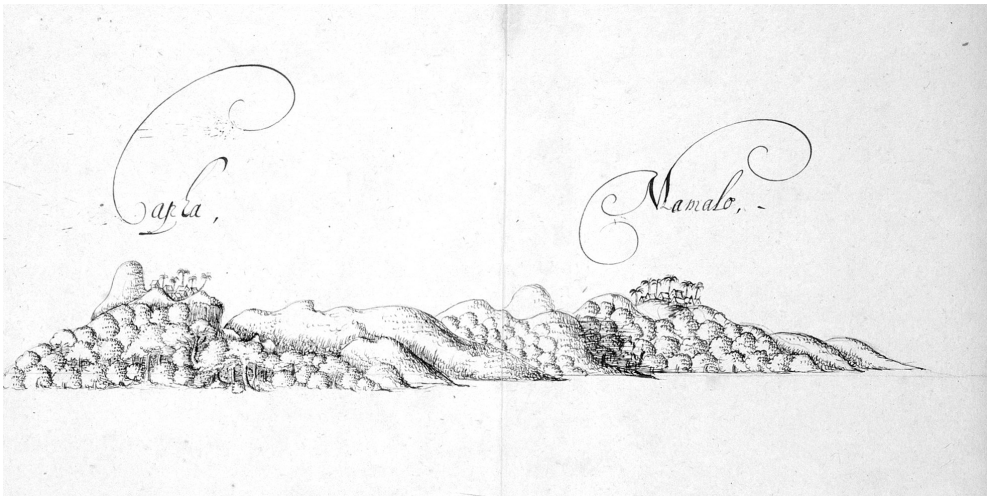


Fig 11.1 Kapahaha and Mamalo as depicted in an anonymous drawing, c. 1635. Note that this image dates from before Demmer's policy of moving everyone to the coast. Mamalo, on the right side, was forced down to the coast in 1643. Telukibesi, however, refused and instead entrenched himself uphill in Kapahaha, depicted on the left. Badische Landesbibliohtek, inv. K 477, fol 29-30.

Kapahaha, including such prominent figures as Rijali and Patiwani. When the hongi called at the settlements below Kapahaha, and Demmer used the opportunity to try and make contact, his overtures went unanswered.

Arriving back at Castle Victoria in mid-November, and hearing all the latest news about Telukibesi's recent activities, Demmer concluded that the war was not over yet. He resolved to attack Kapahaha as soon as the weather allowed.

### Remember Kapahaha!

Kapahaha would ultimately hold out for three more years. Its struggle against the Company is a story in itself, which has already been the subject of some scholarly scrutiny.[754] It is also remembered to this day by the people of Hitu. Particularly the people of Morela, still in the location where it settled in 1643, at the shoreline right below the remains of the fort, take pride in their role in this last-ditch resistance against the Dutch. The siege has become the subject of much local lore, and found its way into dramatic stories in colonial literature.[755]

754 E.g. Knaap, 'Headhunting, carnage and armed peace', esp. 179; Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 63-65, 201-205.

755 For a wonderful analysis of how the story of the siege of Kapahaha inspired nine-

The remains of the fort, up in the steep hills above Morela, are considered an important Hituese heritage site today.

When I climbed up to Benteng Kapahaha in March 2019, escorted by three Morelese, I was told a story of how the fort was ultimately conquered. The people of Morela were secretly helping the besieged by bringing rice over the hidden paths leading up into the hills. A traitor cut a hole into one of the bags of rice, which then left a trail leading up to the fort. The next day the Dutch troops, much like the Tom Thumb of European lore, could simply follow the rice grains to the fort, unexpectedly storming it.[756]

While the details of the story cannot be reconciled with what we know from contemporary sources, its themes strongly resonate with important aspects of the siege. Company troops really did have trouble finding a route up to the fort, which, while only a few hundred meters from the coast and only some 250 meters up from sea-level, is situated on a steep cliff, surrounded by a craggy, inhospitable and densely forested landscape. The three available paths leading up there are full of narrow passages and ridges that provide excellent natural fortifications, leading the defenders to boast that the Dutch would never be able to conquer the fort unless they grew wings.[757] The Company's first attempt to conquer Kapahaha by going around it and attacking it from the land side went nowhere, and the 200 Company soldiers led by Jacob Verheijden roamed the forests aimlessly before returning empty-handed. Instead, they resorted to their usual scorched earth tactics, destroying the clove trees and all edible plants and trees in the surrounding area. With a couple of makeshift fortifications at the coast and a permanent presence of ships holding guard, they expected to starve the defenders out soon enough.

This, however, proved more difficult than anticipated. While the Hituese had had little choice but to cooperate with Dutch demands, the abolition of the four perdanas, in particular, had created great resentment. In negotiations between the besieged and the Company in April 1644, it was brought forward as the

teenth-century colonial literature, which in turn fed back into local lore about the siege, see Hans Straver. *Vaders en Dochters: Molukse historie in de Nederlandse literatuur van de negentiende eeuw en haar weerklank in Indonesië*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2018, pp. 229-321.

756 This story was told to me by the assistant of the raja of Morela, en route to Kapahaha, on the 21st of February 2019. I wish to think him for sharing his knowledge, and my guide Avin for making the arrangements and translating on the many occasions that my Indonesian proved insufficient.

757 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 231.

main grievance of Telukibesi and his followers, and they would only come down if this decision was reversed. This demand predictably went unheeded. It seemed, however, that many Hituese quietly felt the same way, as the besieged had little trouble getting food or leaving and entering the fort. After sending out delegates to Seram, they were even able to organize provisioning expeditions to some of the villages there. In response, the Company implemented a fishing ban at Morela and Mamalo, and organized punitive raids on the villages at the Seramese coast. Latu, Hualoi, Rumahkai and Kamarian were all destroyed in late 1644 and early 1645. The state of Kapahaha, at this time, was such that, hearing of the attacks, they were even able to send a relief force of 70 warriors to Seram, led by Patiwani. The kora-kora carrying Patiwani himself, however, had a run-in with a Dutch-led urembai patrolling that part of the coast. A fierce skirmish ensued which left both Patiwani and the Dutch commander of the urembai dead. After Patiwani, who had jumped onto the urembai with his parang, was shot off the rear of the ship by a wounded Dutch musketeer, what remained of the urembai's crew made a run for it, disengaging the much larger and better-manned kora-kora.[758]

In order to starve out the besieged, the Company also took another tactic back out of the drawer: in October 1645, after several failed attempts at conquering Kapahaha or negotiating its surrender, Demmer took the hongi to Seram, picking up some seventy Alfurs from the kingdom of Sumit, the old allies of the Dutch. These were then deployed into the area around Kapahaha to hunt for people bringing food to the castle. The Alfurs heathunted through the forests around the fort for a month, leading to hunger and want among the besieged. In the wake of this month of headhunting, the besieged were able, and compelled, to organize another food-gathering expedition along the coast of Hitu and to Hoamoal. Additionally, there remained a lot of secret support for the besieged, and smuggled food supplies periodically made it into the fort, despite the Company's efforts to stop them. On the other hand, Hituese communities trying to take away Company suspicions about their loyalties, often sent out headhunting parties to the vicinity of the fort as well. In the long run, the supplies reaching Kapahaha were insufficient. As Rijali recalls, towards the end of the siege, 'as a divine tribulation, hunger and disease came, as all the other communities had become our enemies.'[759]

758 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 238-239; Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 199-201.

759 Rijali, *Historie van Hitu,* 203. With regard to the famine, it bears mentioning that a fair amount of sago was found in Kapahaha after it fell, but there was practically no fish

The final blow was, once again, brought about by a defector. 'A certain boy… announced he would show them a passage into Kapahaha', as Demmer later described, which, if all went well, would lead them into the fort undetected. The boy was happy to guide them up there in person. Demmer, aware that the besieged still had eyes and ears throughout Hitu, amassed a small expeditionary force in the Dutch fortified posts along the shoreline as quietly as he could, sending additional soldiers there in small groups. Captain Jacob Verheijden, who had been involved in attempts to conquer Kapahaha for the last three years, was to lead them.

In the late evening of the 24th of July, under cover of darkness, the column of 100 soldiers, supported by 60 sailors, set itself in motion into the forested hills. The operation had been planned to coincide with the full moon lighting their ascent, but the weather happened to be cloudy and rainy. In the utter darkness, on the small and craggy paths in the jungle, many lost their way and the column was separated. A severely thinned-out advance guard, led by an ensign, guided by the boy, and otherwise consisting of only some eight musketeers and a handful of grenadiers, eventually found itself right below two bulwarks guarding the entrance to Kapahaha as day broke. There was no sign of the rest of the Company force, but the impressive defensive works towering over them appeared unguarded. Then, an old woman spotted them, calling out 'Hollanda! Hollanda!' in alarm.[760] The ensign, aware that they had been detected and that the whole operation would have been in vain if they waited or retreated, felt that he had but one option. He and his small force rushed into Kapahaha, shooting as they went.

Entering the settlement beyond the walls, the Dutch troops caused great alarm among the unsuspecting inhabitants. Only very few of them were able to muster themselves and defend the fort; most fled immediately. Telukibesi's brother was among those who got shot as he rushed out to meet the attacking

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or other 'toespijs' (accompanying food.) Sago, while rich in carbohydrates, is extremely poor in vitamins and minerals, even for a staple. A diet exclusively made up of sago, even when having a sufficient energy value, would have led to a range of deficiency diseases, in turn making the besieged vulnerable to infectious disease. Demmer to Governor-General, 16 August 1646, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 290.

760 The detail of her specifically shouting 'Hollanda! Hollanda!' comes from Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 254. Rumphius largely seems to base himself on Demmer's description of the events, but has certain details that Demmer does not. This one is among them, and it seems possible that Rumphius got such details from other sources, such as oral accounts of the attack as they were later told in Ambon. With that disclaimer, I am happy to repeat the detail here.

Dutch. Two of Telukibesi's other brothers, one suffering from a leg wound and the other paralytic, were among the small group that got captured. Most of the inhabitants ran for their lives, jumping over the walls, sometimes with their children in their arms, and tumbling off the steep cliffs on which Kapahaha was perched. The Dutch soldiers later found a great number number of them in the forests down below, dead or too wounded to continue their flight.

Among those who did make it out unscathed were Telukibesi himself and our chronicler Rijali. The latter described what happened to those who had survived the tumble down the cliffs: 'Some of them died along the way, some of them died under the trees, unable to continue walking because they were famished. Some took their refuge in the forest, some in caves: wherever they went, they stayed there and died on the spot.' Yet others, as he described, were tired of running and hiding, and went into the one of the Hituese settlements. 'These were all delivered to the Governor.'[761]

Demmer was now in a position to be forgiving. He gave all the refugees from Kapahaha who had ended up in the Company's custody permission to leave, settle and get on with their lives. He himself remarks that 'they showed themselves to be glad, and, at least outwardly, thankful for this, as they had imagined nothing but how all them, great and small, would be held captive and enslaved.' While at Mamalo, Demmer also gathered the orangkaya of all of Ambon there, treating those of Hitu to a thunderous and threatening speech in the presence of the rest. From his interrogations of the prisoners, Demmer had taken away that the Hituese had been even more supportive and encouraging of the armed resistance at Kapahaha than was already his impression. He took no additional measures, however, only emphasizing that the name of the four perdana's should not be uttered in the island from now on.[762]

He did, however, hold a few highranking prisoners in his custody, including three of Telukibesi's brothers as well as Pati Tuban, one of the erstwhile perdana's, as colleteral for Telukibesi and Rijali, who were still at large. He forbid anyone in the Ambon Islands to hide or aid them on pain of death. Telukibesi remained at large for another month, but ultimately decided that he would 'rather die an orangkaya in his land, than to live ignominiously in exile elsewhere.'[763]

761 Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 203-205.

762 Demmer to Governor-General, 16 August 1646, in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 298-299.

763 Ibid., 302. Also note that Rumphius' incorrectly states that Demmer held all the Hituese orangkaya hostage in order to get his hands on Telukibesi ('De Ambonsche

He presented himself at Castle Victoria on the 19th of August, 'putting himself at the mercy of the Dutch.'[764] He was not to get any. Demmer's council condemned him to death, as the chief mutineer in the last war. On the 3rd of September, he was brought to the central square of the castle and beheaded. His family members and other high-ranking members of the resistance, rather than being released, were sent into exile in Batavia.

As to Rijali, his history ends with his account of how he aimlessly wandered the land of Hitu as a fugitive: 'I will not discuss his hardships, or the misdeeds that he was accused of', he writes of himself, but merely tells the reader how, afraid to go into any of the settlements, he 'wandered through forests and fields, going up one hill and down the other,' actively trying to keep away from the search parties that had been sent out for him, and finally meeting a former servant of perdana Patih Tuban, who kept him company for a while. At one harrowing occasion, the two happened upon a Dutchman walking his dog, but were not recognized, and simply passed each other on the road.

Rijali eventually took his chances and went into Hila, where a local dignitary and imam, who was sheltering several other refugees, assisted him. One of the refugees, incidentally, was still a toddler: one of Kakiali's sons was hidden here with his Papuan nurse. Torn about what to do with them, the others ultimately decided that taking a small child along on their flight was too much of a liability. With heavy hearts, they left them in Hila and continued on their way to look for a way off Hitu. Ultimately, the orangkaya of Hatunuku provided them with a boat with which they first crossed to Seram and then went to Kelang, which over the past years had become a hideout for Ternatans and Hoamoalese opposed to Majira and the newly established Dutch control over Hoamoal. When Demmer and Majira, with orders from Hamzah to back them up, came to Kelang to eliminate this last hotbed of sedition, forcing the renegades to move to Luhu, under the walls of the Dutch fort there, Rijali and two of his fellow Hituese refugees fled into the interior, once again finding themselves alone. As Rijali himself put it: 'I cannot describe his sorrow, only that he put his faith in God, the most holy.'

Ultimately, the Burunese kimelaha Hasi gave them passage to his own do-

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Historie', I, 258). While this resonates with notions from Morelese oral culture about how Telukibesi sacrificed himself for the greater good of Hitu (Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 64-65), it is not congruent with either the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* (Ridjali, *Historie van Hitu,* 205) or with the correspondence from Demmer.

764 'Op genade en ongenade overgegeven', as the expression went. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 259.

main, Buru. This large island comprising the westernmost part of the Ambon region, it bears reminding, had its own Ternatan kimelaha, and had, as yet, largely been spared the increasing Dutch influence in the region. Staying there for a while, out of sight of the Company, but increasingly aware that there was no point in staying around and undertake anything against Company control, Rijali and his fellow refugees ultimately made their way west, abandoning their home. After more harrowing adventures at the coast of Bone, Rijali and his fellow refugees ended up at Buton, where a Gowan dignitary arranged for their passage to Makassar. Rijali was received at court, and recounted the fate of Hitu, and his own adventures, to the sultan and his chancellor. He specifically points out that it was chancellor Pattingalloang who made sure he was given a home there. It was here, in exile, that he wrote his history of Hitu, most likely commissioned to do so by the same chancellor Pattingalloang.[765]

### An unusual peace

By the time Rijali would have arrived in Makassar, Governor-general Demmer felt his task in the Ambon Islands was more or less done, and he had asked the governor-general to send his replacement. Sure enough, some work still remained to consolidate the newly established Dutch control. For instance, Demmer continued his attempts to accomplish a complete move to the coast, and the destruction of all indigenous fortifications, throughout the region, also beyond Ambon proper. On Saparua, for instance, he tried to force the inhabitants of Ihamahu to abandon their unassailable coral platform. This was met with an understandable lack of enthusiasm, and in the end, a compromise was reached in which the defensive walls around the platform were thrown down, but the inhabitants could continue to live there. Additionally, there were some rearguard battles with Sultan Hamzah, who, among other things, felt that the Dutch move to abolish the Hituese government altogether was somewhat of an overreach of his acknowledgment of their power there.

There were also the abovementioned disaffected Ternatans still in the region, numbering about 300. Demmer wanted to be able to keep an eye on them, rather than seeing them pardoned and disappear to Ternate beyond his reach. With the

765 That is, in any case, what Rumphius tells us: Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 257-258. Given what we know about Pattingalloang's interests and predilections, this is more than plausible.

help of Majira and the blessings of the sultan, he was able to get them to move to Luhu in December 1646.

The newly found control over most parts of the region also came with its own challenges and responsibilities. Whereas Gijsels, more than a decade ago, had tried to employ the various antagonisms and rivalries in the region for the Company's purposes, Demmer now found himself soothing such conflicts as they kept on rearing their head under the umbrella of Company control.

Finally, the region beyond the Company's control now started to pose new challenges – particularly Buru, the large island at the far western side of the Ambon region, still largely outside the Dutch sphere of influence. As we saw, its kimelaha was very much determining his own agenda, having no qualms about aiding and sheltering Rijali, for instance. Burunese communities had lately tried to expand their influence into nearby Ambelau. Although Buru's coasts had, in the past, been visited and sometimes attacked by the Company and its allies as it was used as a waystation by foreign traders, the island as a whole, originally not a clove-producing region, had been largely disregarded by the Company. However, clove saplings had in fact been planted there, and by the late 1640s they started bearing fruit (or, more to the point, flower buds). The people of Buru had no intention to sell these to the Company, threatening to become a new leak in the monopoly.

This, however, all appeared rather manageable from a Company perspective, compared to the decades of crisis, bloodshed and paranoia that had gone before. As Demmer's successor, Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn, arrived in Ambon in April 1647, a 'peace and quiet reigned, such as the region had not seen under the previous eight governors', Rumphius noted.[766] Not dwelling on the Company's rather substantial role in turning the region into a bloody mess in the first place, he took his medical metaphor back out of the drawer and described Demmer as 'an experienced surgeon, who, by cutting and with strong corrosives, had taken the rotting flesh out of the corrupt body of Ambon.'[767] He also mused, however, that 'as always, some smoldering coals remained hidden under the ashes here and there.'[768]

766 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 265.
767 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 266.
768 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 259.

The policies of Demmer's successor would go a long way to fan these into the biggest blaze the eastern archipelago had seen yet.

# XII. The monopoly and its discontents (1647-1651)

Arnold de Vlaming's governorship was to receive relatively good press from contemporary authors. Rumphius qualified him as an 'experienced gentleman, not only in Latin, but also in affairs of state,'[769] praising him for the rigorous way in which he acted 'when seeing that the old scars started festering again.'[770] Livinus Bor, De Vlaming's secretary from 1650 onwards, writing his *Amboinse Oorlogen* as an impassioned defence and glorification of his superior's handling of the trouble that broke out in 1650, specifically made a point of absolving him of all responsibility of the outbreak of the war in the first place. Interestingly, the latter's arguments do suggest that such criticism was in fact making the rounds:

> I have heard that there are people who have made him out to be a driving cause behind the war, as though he had incited the natives to it by his severity. God help us, what shamelessness! What patent falsehoods![771]

Bor passionately countered the specific accusations: De Vlaming had *not* tried to stifle Islam ('Ask your religious leader if he was ever prohibited from speaking!'), he was innocent of the overuse of corvée labour and the malpractices in the buying of cloves, and if anything had tried to curb such practices among Company employees.[772]

The accounts by Bor and Rumphius leave us with an interesting problem, as the region was unusually peaceful when De Vlaming became governor of Ambon, and would explode into the largest and most concerted revolt against the

769 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 266.

770 Ibid.

771 Livinus Bor. *Amboinse oorlogen door Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn als superintendent, over d'oosterse gewesten oorlogaftig ten eind gebracht beschreven door L. Bor.* Delft: Arnold Bon, 1663, 50. At the end of the conflict, De Vlaming himself also mentioned that 'many evil rumours, not only here in the Indies but even in the fatherland, have circulated about me', for instance, that it was his own harsh rule that had caused the revolt. He mentioned his predecessor Demmer as being among his accusers, and announced that he hoped his nephew Cornelis de Vlaming van Oudshoorn, a prominent Amsterdam 'regent' who, for instance, was one of Amsterdam's four burgomasters for numerous terms, would help him clear his name back home. De Vlaming to governor-general, 30 Sept. 1655, in: VOC 1211, esp. 806pp.

772 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 50-54.

Company the region had ever seen, just months after he left. This chapter, then, tries to account for the causes of the outbreak of the Great Hoamoal War by exploring the period from the beginning of De Vlaming's governorship in 1647, to the large and concerted surprise attacks on the Company's outposts in Hoamoal in early 1651 that constituted the beginnings of the war.

### The challenges of an established monopoly

While De Vlaming inherited the Ambon Islands under firmer Company control than they had ever been, the attainment of the monopoly turned out to come with its own particular challenges. This was driven home to the governor during the harvest season of 1647, when the islands produced an unprecedented bumper crop of 2500 bahar of cloves – larger than any earlier harvest on record. It prompted Company officials to wonder about these records – was this really an unrivalled 'great season', or had they vastly underestimated the scale of production and smuggling before?[773]

To De Vlaming, that question was academic; the unexpectedly large harvest gave him more immediate problems. He only had 40.000 rials of eight at his disposal as the cloves started coming in. The treaties stipulated that he should buy them all, at 60 rials per bahar – initially putting him about 110.000 rials short. Over the next year, even as additional cash came in from Batavia, it took all of De Vlaming's creativity to keep the whole venture afloat. He borrowed money from private individuals and the orphan's chamber.[774] He paid partly in textiles to whoever was willing to accept this. He wrote out IOU's to several other suppliers.[775]

The situation seems to have startled him into making some decisions, and developing a range of policy ideas, aimed at avoiding such problems in the future. For one, he decided to collect outstanding debts in a somewhat curious way. The Company had had a number of debtors among the Hituese elite, many of whom were dead, missing or destitute after the turbulent past few years. De Vlaming held the Hituese population collectively responsible, retaining what amounted to six-and-a-quarter rial per bahar (or slightly over ten percent) of the price paid

773 Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council to Directors, 18 January 1649, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 360-361.

774 Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council, 30 April 1648, VOC 1167, fol. 225v.

775 Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council, 24 September 1648, VOC 1167, fol. 158r.

to Hituese suppliers, towards the settlement of the debt. While the Hituese were less than thrilled and considered the arrangement a tad peculiar, De Vlaming claimed he had been able to convince them of its fairness.[776]

Having already taken the liberty of implementing this measure, he furthermore ventured a number of suggestions to the governor-general and his council. He suggested increasing the weights used at the various Company lodges by some 5 percent, effectively cheating the local suppliers – the Company could use the extra income for such costs as the upkeep of school teachers and pastors. He would also like to equalize the value of the rial of eight between Batavia and Ambon, which would save the Company money at the cost of the Hituese. Finally, he also once again raised the spectre of overproduction. Should such abundant harvests become more common, which struck him as a distinct possibility, the Company would be obliged to buy up more cloves than it could hope to sell. He therefore suggested a cap on the amount of cloves that each community was allowed to sell to the Company each year, based on its population. This would not only discourage overproduction, but would also make the clove trade in Ambon more predictable for the company, nicely passing all the problems caused by the great fluctuations in the harvest onto the local population.[777] These measures, De Vlaming imagined, would keep the strongboxes in Castle Victoria better-stocked in the future, would prevent surprises like the 1647 harvest, and would hopefully also contribute to keeping the Company's global clove sales profitable.

Back in Batavia, however, De Vlaming's suggestions were met with outrage and alarm. In the eyes of Governor-general Van der Lijn, who had succeeded Van Diemen after the latter had died two years earlier, the Company should now do its utmost not to cause new disaffection after the recent conflicts and the hard-won peace. As his return letter hammered home, effectively cheating the population in various ways when buying up the cloves, tampering with the original contracts or the price, or capping the amount they could sell was, in his eyes and that of his council members, a recipe for disaster. Adding to the worries in Batavia was the apparent spread of corruption in the region. Abraham Pittavin, the resident at Hila, for instance, had turned out to use false weights and to

776 Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council, 30 April 1648, VOC 1167, fol. 232r.

777 The idea was not that the excess cloves would be destroyed, but that the community that produced them would store them, to offer them to the Company again the next year. Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council, 25 August 1648, VOC 1167, fol. 161r.

generally abuse the VOC's power over the Hituese to enrich himself and defraud the clove suppliers of their due payment. When complaints started adding up, De Vlaming had recalled Pittavin to the Castle to work there as secretary and fined him 2500 rials, the better part of which would be used to compensate the Hituese he had defrauded. Van der Lijn found this way too lenient, and ordered De Vlaming to set an example by properly trying Pittavin, who was ultimately sentenced to five years of exile on Rosengain in the Banda Islands. According to Van der Lijn, acting feebly on this sort of behaviour constituted another factor in the disenfranchisement of the people of the region, which might ultimately lead to alienation and renewed revolt.

Besides admonishing De Vlaming, Van der Lijn took some additional measures. He had new copper weights produced, with their weight imprinted on them both in Dutch and in Arabic lettering, ordering that all existing weights used at the various Company posts were replaced with these. Bills describing the exact procedure of weighing and paying both in Dutch and Malay, were to be posted with each of them.[778]

De Vlaming was a bit peeved and surprised, also because he took Van der Lijn's orders to imply a general objection against limiting production:

> With your Honour's permission, we know no better than that in former times, the Governors-General and his council members have more than once ordered to prevent all further planting of clove trees, as the Gentlemen were aware that Amboina alone would otherwise produce more than the entire world could consume within just a few years - as will happen now if things continue down this road.[779]

This, in turn, annoyed Van der Lijn, who wrote back that he had not actually written any such thing, and far be it from him to contradict his predecessors. He had merely pointed out that if any such measures were taken, they should not violate the treaties or established practice, as De Vlaming's earlier decisions and suggestions very much had.[780] Van der Lijn was, however, quite happy about

778 Governor-General van der Lijn and Council to governor De Vlaming, 21 November 1648, as reproduced in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 407-414.

779 Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General Van der Lijn, 27 April 1649, VOC 1173, fol 35v.

780 Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council to Governor De Vlaming, 14 Feb. 1650, VOC 874, fol. 19v.

the methods De Vlaming had employed further afield. A hongi sent out the year before had managed to get rid of several clove and nutmeg plantations along the Seramese coast, outside the area of effective Dutch control, not by brute force, but by 'sweet persuasion' – convincing the population to cut them down themselves and rewarding them with gifts afterwards.[781]

This was, perhaps, enough encouragement for De Vlaming to keep on brooding on production limitation schemes – also because another unusually bountiful clove harvest came in from late 1649 onwards, once again exhausting De Vlaming's reserves of money and putting him in just about as difficult a spot as two years ago.[782] So in May 1650, when Majira, along with the orangkaya of the entire region, were received at Castle Victoria with pomp and ceremony for a meeting, De Vlaming thought he might try to simply persuade them to voluntarily eradicate a number of trees.

His suggestion was met with irritation and sarcasm. Majira and the various orangkaya asked how the Company was so sure that the world market was only 1500 bahar – they were happy to keep the surplus and prove the Company wrong by selling it to someone else. Orangkaya from the Christian areas under direct Company rule reminded De Vlaming that he was bound by treaty to buy all the cloves of sufficient quality, and that finding a market for them elsewhere was the Company's problem. De Vlaming diplomatically dropped the matter; he had merely been floating an idea.[783]

The various orangkaya, however, might not have forgotten De Vlaming's

781 Governor-General Van der Lijn and Council to Governor De Vlaming, 14 Feb. 1650, VOC 874, fol. 21r-v.

782 Governor De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, VOC 1179B, 21 April 1650, fol. 442r-v; Cf. Reniers and Council to Gentlemen XVII, 10 December 1650, in *Generale Missiven,* II, 410. The actual size of the harvest does not seem to have been preserved either here or in any other of the usual places; see footnote below for further explanation.

783 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 289-290. It should be noted that for this meeting, and more generally for this crucial period, primary sources are scarce: the VOC papers sent to the Netherlands in late 1650 are terribly waterlogged, so that many sources from this period are damaged or missing altogether. This includes the part of the General letter of December 1650 dealing with the eastern archipelago, and many of the letters that would have been sent along with it. The Dagh-register Batavia for this year has not been preserved either. The proceedings of this meeting have, as a consequence, only been preserved in the writings of Rumphius and Valentijn, who had access to sources in Castle Victoria that are, by all appearances, no longer available today.

suggestion so lightly. They had reason to consider them part of a worrisome wider pattern – they were now dependent on the Company as the sole buyer of cloves, and all they had seen from De Vlaming on that front were schemes to limit production and lower payment. To some of them, these concerns were broader than just cloves: the Company had also come a long way towards monopolizing political power in the region. This particularly went at the cost of Ternaten power, and led to frustrations within Ternaten ranks.

### Resistance to political control: Ternate and its dependencies

In Ternate, Sultan Hamzah had died on 6 May 1648, after which the race was once again on for a successor. It just so happened that Antonio Caen, former governor of both Ternate and Ambon, was visiting Ternate as a commissioner, to check on the Ternaten governor of that time Wouter van Seroyen, who was considered corrupt and incompetent. This gave Caen, who was well-acquainted with Ternaten politics, the opportunity to try and influence the succession. The three most suitable candidates were the three sons of Muzaffar, the sultan who had come before Hamzah. When Muzaffar himself had died, these were all still young children, the eldest only four years old and barely eligible for the throne.[784] Now, they were all in their twenties. The eldest son of Muzaffar, named Tahubo, was the favourite candidate of the Company – in fact, he had been partly educated by Dutchmen and spoke Dutch. In him, the Company hoped to have an amenable, moderate and capable future ruler. His younger brother, Manilha, was the favourite of those members of the Ternaten nobility less well-disposed towards the Dutch, and had apparently been the favourite of Hamzah while he was still alive. Caen noted, however, that he had recently become weak-minded, perhaps due to poison, was therefore not actually capable of effectively ruling, and that those supporting him mostly did so to secure power for themselves. The third son, Kalamata, was a devout and studious Muslim, and as such, the favourite of the religious leaders.[785]

A lot had changed in the relation between the Company and Ternate since 1627. Whereas, during the last succession, the Dutch role was not very clear and the Ternaten Council of the Realm was ultimately able to pick a candidate not at

784 See above, chapter V, paragraph 'Two princes'.

785 Report by Antonio Caen, 1 July 1648, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 391-392.

all to the liking of the Company, Caen was able to entirely dominate the process this time. He personally convened the various leaders as soon as he heard about Hamzah's death, and informed them that a successor should be picked *before* Hamzah's burial, to avoid factionalism and bloodshed – a marked departure from established practice. He also immediately announced that Tahubo was, as far as he was concerned, the only suitable candidate, inviting the gathered dignitaries to speak freely if they disagreed. The only one who dared speak, after a long silence, was a man named Seramaholi, and rather than disagree, affirmed everything Caen had just said. Even after asking each dignitary individually, Caen got no dissenting voices, except for the remark that the representatives from Makian had not arrived yet, and they should really wait for them before reaching a final decision.

After the dignitaries from Makian had arrived five days later, two representatives of the Council of the Realm came to Caen to ask if they could now proceed with Hamzah's burial. Caen flat-out told them that they should first elect the new ruler, as agreed upon. The Councillors pleaded with him: there really was no ruse to elect someone else; they were even willing to serve as hostages to guarantee Hamzah's accession to the throne, but it would really go against what they considered proper to first joyfully elect a new sultan only to bury the old one afterwards. Caen finally gave in. The sultan was buried, and just a few days later, Tahubo was crowned as the new sultan, taking the ruling name of Mandarsyah. Caen made sure that the newly elected sultan immediately swore to uphold the treaties with the VOC, notwithstanding attempts of some Ternaten to prevent this. A few days later, this was reaffirmed when Mandarshay visited Castle Oranje and signed new copies of the treaties.

Mandarsyah's election and ascension to the throne presents a stark contrast to that of Hamzah twenty-one years earlier. During the latter, Company officials had mostly been onlookers, unable to prevent the Council of the Realm from electing a new sultan they strongly opposed to. This time, Caen was able to direct the whole thing from start to finish. The change is indicative of the wider shift in power in the region, as well as the Company's earlier heavy-handed methods in the Ambon region, as Caen himself was very much aware:

> We found the [Ternaten] leaders so meek... because they were all aware of the decapitation of the kimelahas Luhu, Leliato, and others; the unfortunate end of Kakiali, and the deportation and imprisonment of hukum Limuri, so that

> everyone is now mindful of his own head, and fears that when defying the Company, he might be treated in a similar way.[786]

Before Caen left, bringing the disgraced governor Seroyen with him to stand trial in Batavia, and leaving Jasper van den Bogaerde as the new governor, he also managed to convince Mandarsyah to take up the war against the Spanish and Tidorese again as soon as the 40 days of mourning for Hamzah was over, rather than picking fights further afield.[787] While this was encouraging, nothing much would come of it in the long run: just as these events unfolded in Ternate, Dutch and Spanish envoys were signing the Peace of Munster back in Europe, ending hostilities between the Dutch Republic and the Spanish crown. As news of the peace would subsequently reach Asia and the peace would take effect there, the Company, annoyed at now being robbed at the means to keep pressure on the Spanish-held areas (which also produced a small amount of cloves), and the chance of driving the Spanish from Maluku altogether, attempted to at least keep the war between Ternate and Tidore going in some form. The Ternaten leaders themselves, however, found this 'ridiculous' – how could they continue the war with Tidore, with which they were so 'intimately related', while their respective European allies were at peace?[788] Even the new sultan could not sell this idea, although he tried, and hostilities between the Ternate and Tidore ceased in early 1650.

In general, the young new sultan appears to have been more impressionable than his predecessor, as is nicely illustrated by the first visit Majira brought to his court. In April 1649 the kimelaha and a host of dignitaries from Hoamoal arrived from the Ambon islands to pay their respects to the new sultan. Majira used the opportunity to see if he could reinforce his position under the new

786 Report by Antonio Caen, 1 July 1648, as excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwtoffen,* III, 395.

787 Over the past period, Hamzah had been campaigning on the north coast of Sulawesi, most notably against Gorontalo, which was contested between Gowa and Ternate. He had even been able to enlist Company support from Seroyen in these campaigns, which was not in the interest of the Company at all; rather, it was a threat to its relations with the sultan of Gowa, who took strong exception to the Company partaking in attacks on areas it laid claim to. Report by Antonio Caen, 1 July 1648, as reproduced in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 388-390. For an overview of the struggle for control of North Sulawesi in the 16th and 17th centuries: David Henley, 'A superabundance of centers: Ternate and the contest for North Sulawesi', *Cakalele* 4 (1993): 39-60.

788 Governor Van den Boogaerde (Ternate) to Governor-General and Council, 26 May 1650, in VOC 1179B, 266r-269v.

leadership. Four years ago, shortly after confirming him as the new kimelaha, Hamzah had authorized Demmer, the Ambonese governor of that time, to represent the sultanate in the Ambon region.[789] This implied a significant reduction of the status and powers of the kimelaha himself, whose official function was just that. Majira, who had been able to rise to the position of kimelaha by working together with the Company, had thus seen his further rise stymied. While he was still cooperating with the Company to the latter's satisfaction, he was apparently more than willing to try and see if he could reverse this particular decision.

During his audience, Majira impressed upon the young sultan that the decision to grant the governor of Ambon such authority over his domains had been a mistake, that it had gone to the detriment of Ternaten authority. To illustrate the point, he enumerated what the Company had been doing with its powers: it controlled the Muslim settlements on Hitu's southwest coast, which rightfully belonged to the sultan! It was forcibly converting some Muslim hostages from Buru in Castle Victoria! It was also introducing Christianity to the animistic communities around the Bend of Kaibobo, and along Seram's south coast, which were the sultan's domains, flying right in the face of the earlier treaties![790] Majira was able to persuade the sultan to fire off a brief and heated letter to Governor De Vlaming, ordering him to cease the conversion of his subjects and informing him that he would not follow in the footsteps of his predecessor by making the governor of Ambon his official representative in the region.[791] Majira would once again have full authority over the sultanate's domains, with powers as absolute there as those the governor wielded over the Company's domains.[792]

Both De Vlaming and Van den Boogaerde tried to resolve the issue, taking some token measures to show that the kimelaha actually still held some power, but also explaining that no Burunese hostages had been forced to convert, and that the villages along Hitu's southwest coast had never been part of the sultan's

789 See above, Chapter XI, paragraph 'the dissolution of the old political order'.

790 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 276-277; Van den Boogaerde (Ternate) to Governor-General and Council, 16 May 1649, in: VOC 1173, fol. 112r-v.

791 Formally, this was necessary as Hamzah's commission to the governor of Ambon was not heritable to his successors. Governor-general Van der Lijn therefore requested that the sultan bestow the same honour on the governor of Ambon in the first letter he wrote to him after his inauguration. Governor-General Van der Lijn to Sultan Mandarsyah, 27 February 1649, in: VOC 873, fol. 12r-v.

792 This letter has been partially preserved, albeit very damaged: Sultan Mandarsyah (Ternate) to Governor De Vlaming (Ambon), 1 May 1649, in: VOC 1173, fol. 105r. Its content is also summarized in Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 277.

domains. They explained why, in their view, it was in everyone's best interest if the Company looked after the sultan's affairs. Soon enough, the sultan was persuaded to reverse his decision with regard to the governor of Ambon representing him, and let the other matters rest. When De Vlaming next met with Majira in September, the latter denied any wrongdoing: he had honestly told the sultan of the state of affairs in the Ambon Islands as he knew it, and if the sultan had misinterpreted him or overreacted, that was not his fault.[793]

One of the things Majira had told the sultan was actually on the mark: the VOC had been probing the various communities of Seram's south coast for their interest in Christianity, and had sent school teachers and preachers to those that seemed promising, which included Amahai, Makariki, Suahuku, Kaibobo, all towards the west of Seram's south coast, as well as Hulalihu, located in the Muslim area on Haruku. However, as De Vlaming explained, this was not in contravention of the treaties at all! The treaty between Hamzah and Van Diemen, for instance, only forbid the conversion of Muslims to Christianity, but said nothing of those communities with animist, polytheistic beliefs.[794]

Religion, it bears reminding, was deeply intertwined with political and cultural affiliation in the region, and had been a major factor in the various conflicts and rivalries there since the time of the Portuguese. Converting people to Christianity in those areas that the Company had officially recognized as Ternaten territory therefore had significant political connotations for all involved. Interestingly, the surviving Company correspondence on the matter does not discuss this beyond the observation that the kimelaha was apparently trying to prevent the conversions. Company officials merely talked devoutly about the desirability of 'bringing these poor people… the beatific knowledge of Christ', musing that this did not conflict with being loyal subjects to the Ternaten sultan. In the same breath, though, those officials mused that these non-Muslim areas were no good to the sultan anyway, and that he might as well cede their *de facto* rule to the Company. In February 1650, prompted by De Vlaming, Cornelis van der Lijn officially requested, 'if it please Your Highness, to put all the heathens living on the Seramese coast under our obedience, so that these may be kept in your power

793 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 279.
794 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 272-280;

and proper obedience all the better…'[795] Mandarsyah was persuaded to oblige, transferring *de facto* rule of these areas to the Company in May 1650.[796]

Sultan Mandarsyah, might not have personally minded his increasing dependence on the Company so much, as he was sharing in the benefits of established Company control. Under his predecessors, the Ambon region had been unruly and difficult, with its population, and even the sultan's own representatives, jealous of their autonomy, happy to ignore the wishes of the court or even to cast their eyes around for a new overlord. Now, the region was giving the Ternaten court far fewer headaches, the Company was collecting the sultan's tolls in the region, and it was paying 4000 rials a year in recognition of the sultan's cooperation in maintaining the monopoly.

Among the rest of the Ternaten leadership, however, this was breeding resentment. The Tomagola family in particular had a vested interest in the Ambon region in that the kimelaha ruling it had come from among its ranks. To them, the Ambon region had been an important and profitable power base, but Majira found himself in a position rather different from that of earlier kimelaha. The days when visiting traders from Java and Makassar paid sky-high prices for cloves were gone. Hoamoal was destitute after the wars of the late 1630s and early 1640s. Ternaten power in the region had waned since 1638, and the kimelaha's own standing and authority had been severely limited. His attempts to restore some of his powers after Mandarsyah's ascencion ended in disappointment. Meanwhile, De Vlaming's preoccupation with limiting clove production, and his brisk suggestion that the inhabitants voluntarily cut down some of their own clove trees, did not augur well for the future.

The kimelaha was not alone in minding the loss of Ternaten power to the Company. The cession of the rule of large parts of Seram and the Company's efforts to spread Christianity were particularly considered an affront by many of the Ternaten leaders. Only two months after Mandarsyah's decision to cede these regions, the Ternaten leadership tried to get rid of him.

### A coup in Ternate

The morning of the last day of July 1650, a Sunday, proceeded rather unusually

795 Governor-general Van der Lijn to Sultan Mandarsyah, 21 February 1650, in VOC 874, fol. 71r.

796 Governor Van den Boogaerde (Ternate) to Governor-General and Council (Batavia), 26 May 1650, in VOC 1179B, fol. 271r-v.

at Fort Oranje in Ternate. Four high-ranking Ternaten leaders made their appearance and briefly informed governor Van den Boogaerd that they no longer recognized Mandarsyah as their sultan, and intended to elect his younger brother Manilha in his place later that day.[797] A startled Van den Boogaerd uttered his surprise and told them to hold off any kind of royal election – it was not a matter to be taken lightly, he had never heard any complaints about Mandarsyah before, and would not simply allow this just like that. If they would please come back tomorrow, they could discuss the matter further.[798]

Interpreters were immediately sent to Mandarsyah to inquire what was going on. Sure enough, the sultan informed them, 'with his usual chagrin', that he had allowed the Ternaten leadership to go ahead and elect one of his younger brothers if they all hated him so much. Van den Boogaerde sent a return message admonishing him about this foolishness that would serve to his eternal shame and might bring about his utter ruin, but the damage was done. Two days later, 'the entire Ternaten leadership' carried Manilha through the streets of Melayu on a chair, a parasol held over his head, proclaiming him the new sultan.[799]

Things quickly escalated from there. Van den Boogaerd, afraid that Mandarsyah might be killed, hastily had him brought into the Company castle. The Ternaten leadership had people announce in the streets that the Dutch intended to kill the entire Ternaten leadership, and that whoever cared for their lives should move out and join them at Sula, a rocky defensible outcrop on the north coast of the island. Most of the population heeded the warning, and men, women and children packed their belongings and joined the Ternaten leaders there. Van den Boogaerd responded by pulling most of the soldiers back from the smaller fortifications around the island to reinforce Fort Oranje.

The Ternaten leaders were rather reticent about their specific grievances about Mandarsyah – all Van den Boogaerd learned was that the sultan had been rude to them and it was difficult to get an audience. He suspected, however, that both

797 Kaicili Musa, the royal chancellor, and Kaicili Saidi, the kapita laut. Both were of the Ternaten royal family (Fraassen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indische archipel', II, 14-20). Furthermore, the kimelaha Marsaoli, who was the leader of the *soa* Marsaoli. (Ibid., II, 40-58). Finally, Hukum Laulata, who was of the Tomagola family. Hukum was a position comparable to magistrate - he maintained contacts between the chancellor and the various leaders of the Ternaten *soa*.

798 Governor Van den Boogaerde to Governor-General, 17 August 1650, in VOC 1179B, 287r-v.

799 Governor Van den Boogaerde to Governor-General, 17 August 1650, in VOC 1179B, 288r-v.

the commission to De Vlaming to act as his representative and his recent cession of the non-Muslim regions of Seram were the main causes, in addition to the fact that Caen had driven through Mandarsyah's election two years previously. He also suspected that the Ternaten leadership had elected Manilha, who had, by all accounts, recently become weak-minded, so as to arrange things their way without opposition.

The timing of the coup was opportune. The yearly fleet with reinforcements to Ternate had foundered in its entirety on a reef at Kabaena, near the southeast of Sulawesi last March. The Ternaten governor was therefore starved for supplies and soldiers. The governors of Ambon and Banda had sent what supplies and soldiers they could spare in the wake of the shipwreck, but all the same, Van den Boogaerde was in no position to adequately respond to Mandarsyah's overthrow. All the same, he soon found back his resolve, also because he felt that more than just the Ternaten throne was at stake. 'If we allow this… then our control of the Ambon islands, which we have finally obtained after so many trouble… will also completely unravel again', he predicted.[800] That was not an option. As soon as reinforcements from Batavia arrived, he intended to restore Mandarsyah to power, and kill the instigators of this coup, even if it risked causing a war in Ternate.

In Batavia, efforts to send reinforcements got on their way as soon as the news reached them. A fleet of five ships, bringing 500 soldiers, was assembled. It was to be led by none other than Arnold de Vlaming, who happened to have arrived in Batavia in September, leaving his second-in-command Simon Cos to govern the Ambon region for the time being. One of the reasons De Vlaming had come back was his health – over the course of his governorship, he had been sick more often than not, incapable of leading the hongi in person most of the time, and sometimes too miserable even to see to his administrative duties. In spite of not yet having fully recovered, he had himself persuaded to lead it.

After its departure on the 24th of December, the fleet took an unusually long time to reach Ternate – it had some matters to attend to *en route*, such as a visit to Buton, which, after a new sultan had succeeded to the throne there in 1647, was once again on Ternate's and the Company's good side. During the recent shipwreck, the sultan had assisted the Dutch castaways, and had, in the estimation of the Company, been crucial in preventing the wrecks being plundered and

800 Governor Van den Boogaerde to Governor-General, 17 August 1650, in VOC 1179B, 292v

their crews murdered.[801] De Vlaming, in addition to thanking the sultan and presenting some gifts, also picked up some of the survivors there, who could go right back to work as he needed every man he could in his coming campaign.[802] The fleet continued on its way, with one ship sailing directly to Ambon, bringing the prospective new governor, Willem van der Beeck. De Vlaming himself transferred to the fastest ship in the fleet and sailed out ahead of the slower vessels towards North Maluku. Per his instructions, he meant to take stock of the situation before everyone was aware a major fleet was on its way.

He arrived before Makian, at the Dutch fort at Ngofakiaha, on 2 March. As it would turn out, he had plenty of time to inform himself, as the rest of the fleet was running into all kinds of delays and would only arrive on the 21st. He soon learned that getting Mandarsyah reinstated would not be easy: inviting the Makian leadership to the fort and discussing the present situation with them, they unabashedly told him that they would sooner have their heads cut off than recognizing Mandarsyah as their sultan again. Forswearing all Ternaten rule and putting themselves directly under the Company would actually have their preference.[803]

De Vlaming made his way to Melayu, meeting with the governor and the sultan, laying contact with the Spanish governor at Gamalama (also to make sure that he did not aid the rebels in any way), and sending off a letter to said rebels, who had since crossed the water to Halmahera and fortified themselves there in a strategic location. The only reply he had gotten was to the effect that unless the Company was willing to recognize Manilha as the new sultan, there was nothing to talk about. On the 21st of March, the other Company ships arrived, and De Vlaming decided to see if a well-armed fleet might change the rebels' minds. It did not. The site where they had ensconced themselves was well-chosen, as it was impossible to come in close with the ships and use the cannon. The shore was heavily fortified with barricades and strewn with caltrops. A Dutch attempt to land on the 28th of March was met with musket fire from the forest, and De Vlaming, realizing the situation was too risky, broke off the attack and returned to Makian with the fleet.[804]

There, with the fleet at his back and by uttering some threatening and indig-

801 Schoorl, 'Het eeuwide verbond', 38-40.
802 Journal De Vlaming, 16-21 January 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 73r-84v.
803 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 4 May 1651, as included in his journal, VOC 1186, fol. 224v.
804 Journal De Vlaming, 26-28 March 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 156v-158v.

nant words, he was finally able to make some headway into getting the Makian leadership to recognize Mandarsyah as their sultan again. By 2 April, the leadership of the islands of Makian and Moti was persuaded to swear an oath of loyalty to Mandarsyah.[805]

That was, of course, only the start of getting Mandarsyah fully reinstated. Most of the sultanate was still in revolt against him. Their entrenched position on Halmahera still held strong. De Vlaming's orders also stipulated that he should punish the rebels in absentia by seizing their possessions and, of course, cutting down their clove trees, 'as Amboina was providing the Company with more than enough of that spice'.[806] While De Vlaming would no doubt have relished that opportunity, he did not get around to it yet. Worrying news had just reached him from Ambon.[807]

### A surprise attack in the Ambon islands

In February, things had still appeared quiet in the Ambon region. Its inhabitants had shown no great interest in the upheavals at the Ternaten court. Majira had ostensibly been surprised and had personally assured resident Cos that he would remain loyal to Mandarsyah and the Company.[808] In the course of February, however, some worrying reports started reaching Cos. Letters from the rebels had been arriving in the region, asking the various communities to support the new sultan. Majira had reportedly been attending various meetings with the orangkaya in the islands. Some of the Muslim communities, and Majira himself, had been moving their possessions up to mountain strongholds.

During the first days of March, Cos personally went up to Luhu to discuss the matter. Majira was able to convince him that these rumours of impending revolt were unfounded, although he did have some concerns with the spread of Christianity along the Seramese coast, the effect that the revolt might have in the Ambon islands, and the Company's recent eagerness to cut down the clove trees, as he roundly told Cos. Cos tried to put Majira's mind at ease on all these

805 Included in Journal De Vlaming, 2 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 171v-172r.

806 Instructions for De Vlaming, 22 December 1650, in: VOC 1175, quote from fol. 356v.

807 Note that Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 4, incorrectly states that De Vlaming was able to end the revolt and reconcile Mandarsyah and Manilha again. Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I.II, 288-289, differs from Rumphius in this matter, (correctly) stating that De Vlaming left the islands without being able to end the revolt.

808 Letter from Simon Cos as summarized in Journal De Vlaming, 5 March 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 109v-111r.

matters. He returned to Castle Victoria under the impression that there was no cause for concern. [809]

That impression was unfounded. On 11 March, the attacks began, first around Kambelo and Lesidi. The Company fort at Lesidi fell outright to a surprise attack. At Kambelo, the Dutch soldiers and a local work crew outside the fort were attacked and killed. The Company lodge down on the shore was taken later after some fierce fighting, and the retreating Company personnel fled to Fort Hardenberg up on the hill above the town, where the Company personnel was effectively trapped. Two days later, another, much larger wave of surprise attacks washed through the islands. The Dutch strongholds at Laala, Nusatelo, Hatuhaha, Asaudi, Boano, Ambelau and Manipa all fell in short order. The garrisons there were as yet unaware of the what had transpired at Kambelo and Lesidi, and were therefore largely oblivious to the concerted effort to drive them from the region. The indigenous attackers were typically able to lure out part of the garrison or gain entrance to the fort by means of a subterfuge – at Laala, part of the garrison had been invited for a meal by the local leader; at Nusatelo, a group appeared with urgent news for the local sergeant, and rushed in to take the redoubt as soon as the gate was opened. The vast majority of the soldiers and other Europeans were killed, even after surrendering. A few were spared and brought to the kimelaha for questioning, and the attackers also took care to keep alive any constables they captured - the kimelaha expected he might have use for some capable gunners later, as he had also captured a generous number of Dutch guns in the attacks. All in all, eight Company fortifications were taken and overrun in those few days.[810]

Information about all of this came trickling into Castle Victoria over the next few days – slowly. The surprise attacks had been so successful that many of the captured outposts had not been able to send out any kind of message. When Cos sent off the yacht *Wolf* to Ternate to inform De Vlaming of these events, he was aware of the fall of Kambelo, Lesidi, Nusatelo and Laala, but could only speculate as to the others.[811] What he did know, however, was that he needed help, urgently.

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809 Cos to De Vlaming, March 1651, as paraphrased in Journal De Vlaming, 2 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 164r-168r; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 3-6.

810 The most comprehensive overview is Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, PAGINANRS.

811 Cos to De Vlaming, March 1651, as paraphrased in Journal De Vlaming, 2 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol.168r.

## Concluding remarks

Looking at the ostensibly peaceful years leading up to the outbreak of the Great Hoamoal War, it is hard to escape the impression that VOC policy, particularly as it was conceived in the Ambon region, greatly contributed to the resentment in both Ternate and Hoamoal that would ultimately cause the war to break out.

De Vlaming's schemes to arrange the clove trade so as to be even more disadvantageous to the population of the region, and the way in which local VOC officials already abused the power they had over the local population to enrich themselves, certainly did not contribute to the Company's popularity. These, however, most prominently affected the areas under direct Company control, Hitu in particular, which would remain outside the epicentre of the subsequent revolt. In any case, the governor-general in Batavia, seconded by the Council of the Indies of which two members were former governors of Ambon at the time, did not exactly approve of De Vlaming's policies, tried to make sure the corruption was properly countered, and nipped most of De Vlaming's initiatives in the bud.

More clearly at the basis of the revolt were the various policies which disenfranchised the Ternaten leadership in general, and kimelaha Majira in particular. Majira, who had become kimelaha by cooperating with the Company but had then found the power of his station much reduced, subsequently faced Company policies and plans nibbling away at what little power he had left, such as attempts to 'voluntarily' reduce clove production, and efforts to Christianize, and take away from his control, some of the non-Muslim areas in the region. Meanwhile, Mandarsyah, the new Ternaten sultan who was helped to the throne by heavy-handed Company intervention, seemed extremely amenable to the Company's policies and suggestions. He was ultimately unresponsive to Majira's attempts to regain some of his power, and readily transferred control of the non-Muslim regions of the Ambon islands.

This transfer of control and the attempts at conversion in these regions seem to have been a particular source of disaffection both in Ternate and in Hoamoal. Not only was it considered a violation of the deal with the Company; religion was intimately tied up with the identity and rivalries of the various communities in the region. As a consequence, such policies were considered an insult and raised concerns about the Company's intentions. As we will see below, Majira capitalized on such concerns, gathering support for his revolt by claiming that the Dutch meant to forcefully Christianize the entire region.

Bor's impassioned protests notwithstanding, those unnamed voices in Bata-

via putting the blame of the revolt on De Vlaming himself therefore did so with some justification. Ironically, he was now on the spot to try and restore Company control.

# XIII. The beginning of the Great Hoamoal War (1651-1652)

The Great Hoamoal War would set the entire eastern archipelago ablaze for five years, on a scale surpassing the earlier conflicts in the region. The conflict is richly documented but has only been superficially studied thus far, and the available source material therefore remains largely untapped.[812] Many authors who do write about it base themselves predominantly on the two published accounts of the war by Rumphius and Bor, already touched upon in the previous chapter. Both not only drew on the massive amounts of rich documentation the conflict generated, of which Bor himself already remarked that 'it would take the quickest of readers about a year' to go through them;[813] they could also write from experience, as both served under De Vlaming, who was to remain the commander of the Company forces throughout the conflict.[814]

While the material therefore allows for a very detailed history and analysis of the conflict, writing such a s history would be another book of and by itself, and this is not the place for it. Nor would such an analysis be necessary for the general thesis and analysis presented here: while pivotal for the subsequent political order in Maluku, the Great Hoamoal War followed the patterns of the earlier wars and power dynamics in crucial ways. The coming two chapters will therefore provide an outline of the conflict while highlighting such continuities, such as the use of deliberate ecological destruction, Makasar involvement, and the use of local allies and indigenous tactics.

## Interrogations and anxieties

De Vlaming dropped what he was doing as soon as he received Cos's letter in-

812 Notable exceptions are Jennifer Gaynor, *Intertidal history,* Ch. 3, which uses the specific archival documents pertaining to the attack De Vlaming's forces undertook in Tiworo in January 1655, and Arend de Roever, *De jacht op sandelhout,* 260-263, specifically investigating an expedition to Timor that was part of De Vlaming's campaign.

813 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* iiii. The remark is peculiar coming from him, as he would have written much of it in the first place, being De Vlaming's secretary. De Vlaming's dagh-registers alone span 1070 folia (VOC 1186, fol. 54-494; VOC 1193, fol. 308-434; VOC 1199, fol. 569-801; VOC 1205, fol. 761-1034), not including various books with outgoing missives, resolutions, interrogation reports etc. De Vlaming himself has cut his dagh-registers down to somewhat more manageable size in the form of several reports (VOC 1186 fol 1-51, VOC 1198, fol. 461-490, fol. VOC 1216, fol. 52-141).

814 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie'; Livinus Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen*.

forming him of the surprise attack on the Company outposts in Ambon. He sent the ship *Wolf* straight back to Ambon and sent the fastest ship in his own fleet after it the next day. While instructing governor Van den Boogaerde in Ternate how best to proceed in trying to stem the revolt against Mandarsyah, he readied another ship and gathered his forces. Four days after receiving Cos's call for help, he was on his way,[815] and another five days later, he arrived at Kambelo, where he was able to make his way to Fort Hardenberg with his troops. The fort had held out although its garrison was small and its supplies were dwindling. De Vlaming left some supplies and soldiers, and assisted in clearing the thicket around the fort, and with it, potential cover for attackers. These attackers were not far away: pot shots were continuously fired at the workers from the direction of Lesidi.[816]

Meanwhile, De Vlaming had sent word to Castle Victoria of his arrival, with instructions to meet him at Kambelo with the *hongi*. The new prospective governor Van der Beeck arrived with twenty kora-kora by the fifteenth of April, with two from Hitu standing to follow. They resolved to proceed to Lesidi and attack it.

The twenty-two kora-kora that comprised the fleet were those from the communities on Leitimor, Hitu and the Lease islands, none of which had ostensibly joined in the revolt. There were concerns and rumours, however, that some among the Company's subjects were secretly in league with the kimelaha, biding their time – particularly those of Ureng in Hitu. For this reason, two of the orangkaya from Ureng had been required to come along on the fleet, so that Van der Beeck and De Vlaming could question them on the matter. It did not come to that. In an unguarded moment, one of the two orangkaya, named Hatibe, grabbed a *parang,* jumped at the Company officer on the kora-kora and lashed out, but failed to deal a deadly blow, only giving the Dutchman a large cut across the face. The orangkaya then jumped overboard and swam for his life, with several Ambonese in pursuit. One of them managed to overtake the culprit just as he reached the shore, and decapitated him.

To De Vlaming, this incident confirmed the earlier suspicions about Ureng's loyalties. He had the culprit's nephew and slave, as well as the other orangkaya from Ureng, brought up. As they initially denied any knowledge or involvement, he had them separately interrogated, making use of strappado torture, whereby victims were hoisted up with a rope around their wrists while their arms were

815 Journal De Vlaming, 2 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol.168v-188r.
816 Journal De Vlaming, 10-14 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol.189r-194r.

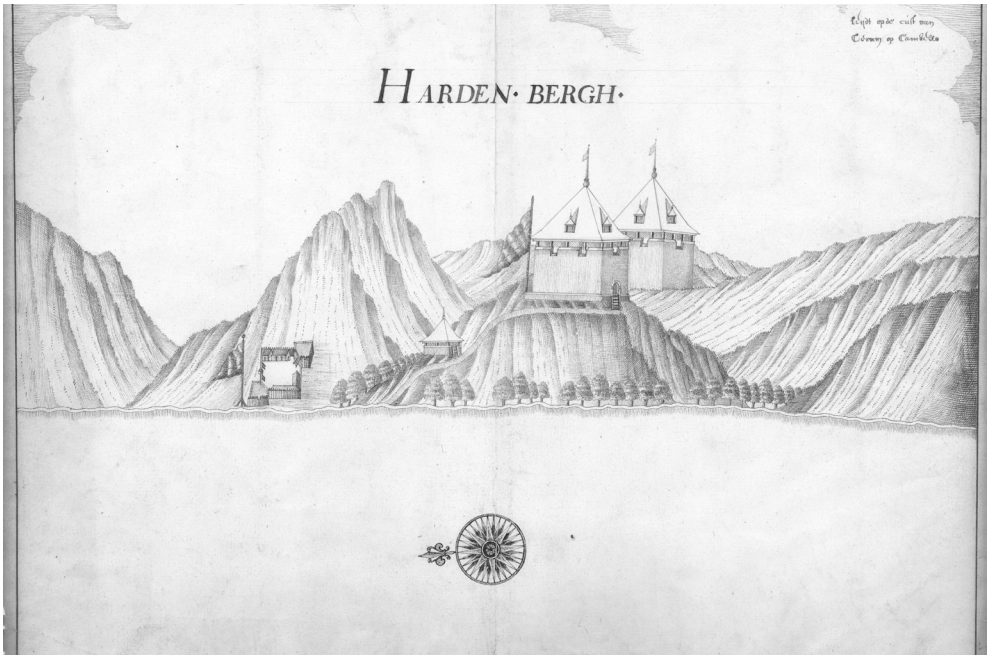


Fig 13.1 Fort Hardenberg, near Kambelo, as depicted in an anonymous 1651 drawing which originally belonged with Arnold de Vlaming's report. The fort, on its defensible elevated position, held out during and after the surprise attacks in 1651. It was ultimately abandoned later during the war, in January 1654, when it no longer served a clear purpose and its garrison was needed elsewhere. Anonymous drawing, Collection Nationaal Archief, 4.VEL 1349.

behind their backs, dislocating the shoulders. All three separately confessed that there had been contacts with kimelaha Majira previous to the surprise attacks, with the now-dead Hatibe being the main contact. They all denied that they had been meaning to attack the Company fort at Ureng, but they had intended to make for safety by returning to the site of their old village up in the hills. They also separately told their interrogators that Majira had circulated a letter among the various communities of Hitu, purportedly written by the new sultan of Ternate, to the effect that the Dutch meant to Christianize them all and enslave them 'as with the residents of Banda in former times', so that this was the time to stand up to them and oust them from these lands. The sultan claimed he had already enlisted support from Makassar, Buton and Sula.[817]

Perhaps at least as worrying to De Vlaming and Van der Beeck was that during the interrogations, the other orangkaya, named Lakotuli, also implicated

817 Ibid., 16 April, fol. 198r-199r.

the Christian communities on Ambon. The Dutch had already harboured suspicions about Joan Pais, an orangkaya at Hatiwe, the oldest Christian community in the islands, located right near Ambon town. He had been pre-emptively confined in Castle Victoria. Lakotuli told his interrogators that Pais, disaffected with Company rule, had been maintaining contact with the kimelaha, and had also been a central figure in secret meetings of the various Christian communities of Leitimor, who were also preparing to pack their belongings and abscond to the mountains. De Vlaming had heard enough. Shortly after the interrogations, Lakotuli was publicly 'cut to pieces' on the ship, and his head presented to De Vlaming, in a deliberate display of violence meant to strike fear into any other would-be traitors among the Company's subjects.[818]

As to his confessions, we are, of course, warned to take them at face value.[819] De Vlaming also had some doubts, albeit perhaps for other reasons: he was not ready to believe that the Company's subjects in the region were ready to betray them on a large scale, and suspected these allegations to be an attempt to drive a wedge between the Company and their subjects and allies. All the same, the notion had him worried. While he had been meaning to sail right on to some of the other posts that had fallen victim to the attacks, he decided to change his plans, first seeing to the security of Ambon itself.

Not, however, before finishing the business of destroying Lesidi. The morning after the interrogations and the execution, the indigenous troops landed, finding the place deserted and all the Company goods gone. The rest of the day was spent razing the town to the ground, burning the vessels left on the shore and destroying 'an innumerable number of fruit trees of various kinds'.[820]

Van der Beeck and De Vlaming subsequently made their way to Ambon, where they spent the next two months trying to inform themselves of the sentiments among their subjects and allies, trying to shore up relations with them, and having them swear renewed oaths to the Company, including new promises to never affiliate themselves with the kimelaha. The Hituese orangkaya were gathered on board and feasted. The hongi was called together for an inspection tour through the Lease Islands. Efforts to keep these areas affiliated with the Company kept the superintendent and the new governor, who was sworn in

818 Ibid., 16 April, fol. 200r.

819 For an extensive analysis of an instance where Company officials got their own suspicions and fears confirmed by inadvertently feeding them to suspects who were tortured during interrogation, see Clulow, *Amboina 1623*.

820 Journal De Vlaming, 17 April 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol.200r.

during this period, occupied until early June. Only then did De Vlaming move out to his next target: the island of Manipa, one of the places where a Company outpost had been overrun three months previously.[821]

### 'So that no humans can feed themselves there': environcide on Manipa and beyond

Rumphius and Valentijn write that Manipa was singled out first for reasons of revenge, as the attack on the fort there had been the most brutal, with the bodies of the dead mutilated, Captain Verheijden's sister killed, her two daughters taken away, with one of them surviving and eventually being presented to the Burunese kimelaha as a sort of war trophy.[822] Whereas all of this had in fact happened, it played no role in the decision. The officials in Castle Victoria did not even know the details of the attack yet, as they were yet to find survivors to tell the tale. Manipa was simply picked first because it was considered the most strategically sensible target, as a major clove producing area, a historic staging area of foreign traders, an important supplier of sago to Hoamoal, and a target that, as opposed to the main fortified centres on Hoamoal, the Company could hope to take on with its limited means.[823]

De Vlaming had been compelled to send several of the larger Company vessel back to Ternate and Batavia, but employed practically all of the naval power he had left for the expedition: six VOC ships and a host of smaller craft, carrying 300 European soldiers and 1000 Ambonese. On 12 June, the force arrived before Manipa, at the northeastern settlement called Luhu (not to be confused with the much larger settlement of the same name on Hoamoal.) They found it deserted, and applied their standard procedure of putting the town and all and any vessels to the torch. That evening, De Vlaming called together his senior officers for a meeting on how to proceed from there. It was then officially decided to first destroy all the settlements, to then not only destroy all the clove trees on the island, but also eradicate the extensive sago forests, and all and any fruit trees, to the very last of them.[824]

The troops set to work the next day, moving towards Tuban and Tumalehu

821 Ibid., 18 April – 10 June 1651, in VOC 1186, fol. 200v – 285r; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, pp. 15-17.

822 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, pp. 11-12, 17.

823 Resolution of 31 May at Castle Victoria, in Journal De Vlaming, VOC 1186, fol. 277v-280v.

824 Journal De Vlaming, 12 June 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 287r-290r.

on the opposite coast, which were also burned. The old Company fortification was near the latter settlement, and the troops found that the rebels had been thorough: it had been razed to the ground, and nothing much was left. Now, however, the rebels remained elusive, using the landscape to stay at arm's length, only occasionally making small forays to then melt back into the forest. Near Tuban, they did notice Manipese fortifying themselves on a hill, and took to the attack. It was here that the Company troops liberated a surgeon who had been at the redoubt when it was overrun, and had since been a captive. He was the first to tell the story of the atrocities that had happened in the fort in the wake of the attack. Saliently, the surgeon also recounted how the attackers at Manipa, who had numbered many thousands and came from various islands, had shouted, 'We'll teach you to try to change our religion and turn us into Christians, you Christian dogs!', and threatened to circumcise and forcibly convert the prisoners they had made - an indication that the perceived threat to their religion, with all its connotations of identity and political affiliation, was an important grievance to the inhabitants of the kimelaha-ruled regions.[825]

Eradicating all the sago, clove and fruit trees on the entire island proved such a huge task that De Vlaming called for reinforcements from the Company's allies and the civic militia in Ambon town to finish the job – so many people that he had trouble provisioning them. He ended up spending six weeks on the island, until, as he would later put it, he 'lost track of how many times he had crossed the island, over and over again.' Even when he himself departed for Castle Victoria on the 20th of July, he left Captain Verheijden there with three companies of soldiers to finish the job. The result: some ten or twelve thousand clove trees, and 'countless thousands' of sago, coconut, banana and other trees destroyed, in addition to the destruction of every last settlement and seagoing vessel. 'Therewith, the island has been razed and devastated such that no humans will be able to feed themselves there,' he would later note with satisfaction.[826]

Soon after, De Vlaming left for Banda to inspect it as per his instructions, major revolt or not, and after briefly returning to Ambon in October, sailed back to Batavia. Of course, all was not well in the Ambon islands and Ternate as he sailed away. Van den Boogaerde had been less than successful in appeasing the rebels in Ternate – even the communities at Makian, who De Vlaming thought he had brought back into the fold, had absconded to the mountains after he had

825 Journal De Vlaming, 19 June 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 294v-296r.
826 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 5r-v.

left. This had prompted De Vlaming to have Mandarsyah brought to Ambon and, from there, on to Batavia, fearing that if left in Ternate with the revolt raging on, 'out of desperation, he might choose a different path, distancing himself from the Company and going over to the side of the villains'.[827] While De Vlaming had been on Manipa with many of the Company's troops and allies, and just as Van der Beeck was having some additional fortifications built, the kimelaha had used the opportunity to send a fleet of fourteen kora-kora to attack the Hituese coast, killing and capturing dozens of people. It had been the first of a series of such attacks, keeping the inhabitants of Ambon in constant alarm.[828] What's more, De Vlaming was concerned that these attackers were also getting inside help from Hitu itself.

However, in spite of the eastern archipelago being up in flames like never before, De Vlaming was remarkably upbeat and optimistic as he made his way back west. As he wrote in his report to the governor-general and council, 'in our opinion, the Company can also reap benefits from this revolt that are valuable beyond estimation.'[829] He was talking, of course, about limiting clove production. While that had proven impossible to legally do during peace time, there was no obstacle to destroying all the cloves outside direct Company control now. He reckoned he had already destroyed a production capacity on the order of hundreds of bahar per year over the past few months (counting not only the trees on Manipa, but also some 15.000 trees that Verheijden had reportedly destroyed afterwards on Ambelau and Hoamoal's west coast). The war, in other words, was a blessing in disguise.

Of course, there was the problem that the clove trees would regrow, as they had in the past. The solution to that, De Vlaming proposed, was simply rendering all the clove-producing areas outside direct Company control uninhabitable

827 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 27v. Incidentally, De Vlaming's ships also carried two other people he wanted well out of the way of the Ambon region: the suspected traitor orangkaya Jan Paijs, as well as a new candidate kimelaha by the name of Tamin Amsara that had been sent to the Ambon region by Mandarsyah. De Vlaming, however, felt no inclination to confirm him in his new station, as there was no place for a kimelaha in his plans with the region.

828 Rumphius writes that, in the wake of the first attack on the Hituese coast, the various Ambnese communities took to the mountains. De Vlaming's reports and what little other correspondence survives from this year does not confirm this, and susbsequent events seem to indicate that the communities stayed at the coast. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, p. 17.

829 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 7v.

the way he had done at Manipa, so that the inhabitants would be compelled to leave and settle elsewhere. While this would be a complicated operation, he felt he could pull it off in a month or two if he would have some 1100 or 1200 European soldiers at his disposal.[830] De Vlaming, it appears, not only shared the ideas Artus Gijsels had already formulated some two decades previously, but also his unwarranted optimism with regard to the feasibility of such tactics.

While they were at it, De Vlaming proposed, they might as well extirpate all the cloves within their reach in North Maluku too. His solution here was even simpler: the Ternaten sultan received a stipend of 4000 rials a year for doing his part in maintaining the monopoly. Perhaps, if the stipend was raised to, say, 12000 rials, he might be persuaded to allow the eradication of cloves in his domains altogether. He urged that, with the sultan on his way to Batavia and currently in a rather delicate and dependent position, this would be the time to do so, resorting to Latin to hammer home the point: 'Fronte capillata, post est occasio calva' – grab opportunity by its hairlocks as it approaches, the back of its head is bald.[831]

There were, however, some more threats to the plans that De Vlaming envisioned. One of them was Makassar. Not only was it more than likely that a generous number of spice traders would once again swarm down on the Ambon region now that it had been thrown back into chaos, it was also very conceivable that the Gowan sultanate would use the opportunity to once again come to the kimelaha's aid and try to gain a modicum of political control over the region for itself. As we have seen, the kimelaha and the rival sultan in Ternate had already been loudly proclaiming that they had secured Makasar support. While that seemed to be bluster, some of the kimelaha's captives that had found their way back to the Dutch had reported that kimelaha Majira had already sent three letters to Makassar requesting such aid.[832] On his way back to Batavia, De Vlaming decided to do what he could to make sure such requests would fall on deaf ears.

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830 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 6v-10v. Interestingly, De Vlaming hoped that the people of the region would move outside the area of Company control as he did not want the VOC to have to bother ruling them. As to preventing them from starting to cultivate cloves wherever they would resettle, he somewhat curiously hoped to achieve this by subsequently making treaties to that effect with them.

831 Report De Vlaming, 25 October 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 29v.

832 This specific information had come from three slaves that had been captured by the followers of the kimelaha during the attack, but later found their way back to the Dutch fort at Kambelo that still held out. Journal De Vlaming, 11 June 1651, VOC 1186, fol. 286r-287v.

### 'Affairs of state': diplomacy in Makassar

Since the Makasar attempt to intervene in Hoamoal and Hitu in 1642, the entrepôt harbour of Makassar had gone through some interesting times. While other Europeans had still been bringing in textiles and hard currency in the hopes of securing a cargo of spices until at least 1647, and they were apparently trying to encourage Makassar-based traders sail to the Ambon region, virtually no traders were willing to risk it, as they were ' well aware that it will be hard for them to escape our continuous occupation, and will not be admitted by the region's inhabitants.'[833] The few who did try often returned empty-handed. What few cloves did make it onto the Makasar market came from the Spanish-held regions in North-Maluku, which the VOC was powerless to prevent now that it was at peace with the Spanish and its local allies. The amounts produced in the Spanish-held regions, however, was negligible, and not a serious threat to the Company monopoly in Europe. The centre of gravity of the Makasar trade had shifted accordingly, with the trade to Manila becoming more prominent, as well as the trade in sandalwood. The loss of the clove trade, however, was felt by indigenous and European traders alike.[834] De Vlaming wanted to do what he could to prevent that Makasar-based traders, let alone the rulers, would be compelled to re-join the scramble for the spices or respond to any calls for assistance.

De Vlaming's fleet arrived at Makassar on the evening of the seventh of October, and the official audience with the sultan subsequently took place two days later. De Vlaming's journal describes this audience, as well as the rest of the visit to Makassar, in detail, paying close attention to the spectacle and ceremony surrounding the reception of his embassy. He describes how they were accompanied from the Dutch lodge by the *shahbandar*, two translators and a large armed escort. De Vlaming had also brought a letter from Mandarsyah. This document from a fellow sultan received the highest honour in the procession. De Vlaming described how it

> was carried in a golden vessel, made in the shape of a kora-kora, with a naval ram in front and two dragon's heads. This vessel was carried by a small boy

833 Van der Lijn and Council to directors, 16 January 1649, excerpted in Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, 363.

834 Tiele-Heeres, *Bouwstoffen,* III, *passim,* esp. 333-334, 341, 358, 363 and 368 give a general impression of clove trade in Makassar in these years. For a more general assessment of economic developments in Makassar in the wake of 1642, see Bassett, 'English trade in Celebes', 12-23.

> dressed in a white robe reaching to the ground, who was seated in a sedan carried on two bars by men. On both sides walked a person with a parasol entirely made of embroidered silk. Then followed the King's gift, a roll of red damask covered with yellow armosin, ordered by us ourselves, carried on a silver basin, carried by a man over his head, this being a colour that is valued above all others by the Indian kings, so that no-one else may wear it.[835]

After that followed the VOC's gifts: red textiles, mace, nutmeg, cloves and Persian rosewater. Then followed sixteen VOC soldiers, and after that on horseback, De Vlaming himself, accompanied by the steward of Mandarsyah who had come to accompany the letter, and followed by the other merchants and officers.

Arriving in the court, De Vlaming mostly uttered diplomatic boilerplate, telling the sultan that he had come on behalf of the governor-general to kiss the sultan's hands, and thank him for the favour and friendship their state had enjoyed, humbly asking that this favour might continue so that the friendship might grow further. The only substantial thing he himself requested was that the specific favour they had enjoyed in the past few years, i.e. that a merchant might stay in the lodge outside the trading season, would also be granted this year. It was. The main reason for his visit, however, he did not convey himself. Instead, this was contained in the royal letter, which was read aloud in the court. In the letter, Mandarsyah requested that his fellow sultan of Makassar would not give heed to any requests for help from the rebels in Ambon and Ternate, and instead to arrest any envoys from there and hand them over to him. Sultan Malikussaid replied that no such envoys had come and that their requests would fall on deaf ears in Makassar.

The Company's grasp of the high status of a royal letter in Asian diplomacy, and the use of 'diplomacy by proxy' by the Company when engaging with Asian courts more generally, have been touched upon several times in this dissertation. It is interesting, however, to dwell upon the circumstances of this particular diplomatic engagement. Officially, Mandarsyah was sultan and therefore of higher status than De Vlaming, and his letter was accorded all the honours proper for a royal letter. The inhabitants of Hoamoal and the rebels in Ternate were officially his subjects, so that, formally speaking, he should make the request to pay no heed for their calls for assistance, rather than De Vlaming. The contrast between this formal hierarchy and protocol and the actual power relations, of course,

835 Journal De Vlaming, 10 October 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 482r:

could not be more stark. Sultan Mandarsyah, was, at the time of the audience, on one of the Company ships riding at anchor before the roadstead of Makassar, as the members of the Gowan court were well aware. He had lost all actual control over his domains and was now entirely dependent on the Company, which was shipping him to Batavia to make sure he did not do anything contrary to its wishes. In practice, De Vlaming was the architect of the entire diplomatic engagement, having dictated the content of the letter and having picked and procured the royal gifts.

The reading of the letter and Malikussaid's response concluded the official part of diplomacy, and the VOC-Ternate embassy took its leave of the sultan. Negotiations continued with a slightly lower profile the next day, however, when De Vlaming made a visit to the private residence of Pattingalloang.

We have already come across chancellor Pattingalloang as the man who likely commissioned Rijali to write his history of Hitu. Karaeng Pattinaglloang had become chancellor when Sultan Malikussaid of Gowa had ascended to the throne in 1639. The court chronicles inform us how Malikussaid, after the death of his father, would only accept the throne if Pattingalloang would become his *bicara-butta*, 'speaker of the land'.[836] In addition to being the Gowan chancellor, Pattingalloang would also become the ruler of Tallo from 1641 onwards.

Karaeng Pattingalloang is invariably praised in European sources as a sensible and prudent ruler, and is the Makasar official we know best from the European sources, as he was fluent in several languages and had a particularly active role in government and foreign policy, in addition to being an ardent collector of European books and curiosities.[837] De Vlaming's description of him is very much in line with that of other European reports:

836 William P. Cummings, *A chain of kings*, 45-47.

837 The chancellor had a good command of Latin, Spanish, and Portuguese, the latter so good that, in the words of the Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes, '[t]o hear him speak without seeing him one would take him for a native Portuguese.' Rhodes visited Makassar in 1646. Quoted in Reid, 'Great Indonesian family', 147, which also contains a general sketch of Pattingalloang based on European sources. Andaya, *Heritage*, 39 states that Pattingalloang was also fluent in English, French and Arabic. For information on Pattingalloang as a collector, see Reid, 'A great seventeenth century Indonesian family'; Tristan Mostert. 'Ick vertrouwe dat de werelt hem naer dien op twee polen keert': De VOC, de rijksbestuurder van Makassar en een uitzonderlijk grote globe. In: Lodewijk Wagenaar (ed.) *Aan de overkant: ontmoetingen in dienst van VOC en WIC (1600-1800)*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015, pp. 77-96.

> '[He is the one] on whom the entire government of this kingdom rests, and truly exceeds every other Indian I have met thus far, speaking Castilian and Portuguese so fluently that, hearing him speak while out of sight, one would take him for a native of either nation. He also, quite wondrously, has a knowledge of Latin, or at least to such an extent that he can read and understand the Bible in this language, and this with such specific knowledge that he can discuss the differences within the Christian religion such as the Popish, reformed and Martinic [=Lutheran] faiths. Besides this, he is very learned and has accurate knowledge of most of what has been published about events in Europe or the wider world.'[838]

De Vlaming had ample opportunity to experience the extent to which Pattingalloang was aware of global politics, and his report really adds to other descriptions of Pattingalloang in its detailed rendering of the discussions that followed. De Vlaming privately repeated a request publicly made the day before, that no ships from Makassar would sail to Maluku, as their trade would inevitably support the rebellion there. Pattingalloang answered that 'this was impossible, as Makassar was a *bandar*, or a trading port free and open to all merchants, and that they did not feel qualified or in the position to give orders or lay down the law to those coming from outside, and who often only stayed for some two or three weeks, as to where they could or could not sail'. However, he added he would see what he could do, as the friendship with the Company and the sultan of Ternate was dear to him.[839]

De Vlaming and Pattingalloang subsequently discussed European politics, about which Pattingalloang turned out to be remarkably well-informed. He inquired after such things as developments in the conflict between Spain on the one hand, and Portugal and France on the other, and the debts of the Spanish crown with Italian bankers and the possible effects this would have on this war. He seemed particularly interested in the truce between Portugal and the Dutch Republic, which had been agreed upon ten years earlier and which had officially expired a few months ago. News of whether the war had resumed had, however, not yet reached Asia. Pattingalloang was very much aware of the effect that renewed hostilities between the VOC and the Portuguese might have on Makassar, which was home to a large Portuguese population, having settled here largely in

838 Journal De Vlaming, 10 October 1651, in: VOC 1186, fol. 483v.
839 Ibid., fol. 484r.

the wake of the Dutch conquest of Melaka in 1641. De Vlaming answered that events in the western hemisphere (where Portugal had all but openly supported a revolt against the Dutch in Brazil) made it highly probable that war would once again break out, and that if no news of a prolongation of the peace would reach Batavia soon, the VOC intended to continue its conquests of Portuguese territories in Asia.[840]

Pattingalloang, apparently aware of what had happened in Brazil, replied that yes, the Portuguese had acted most unfaithfully towards the Dutch there, and added that it would be wise for the Portuguese to try and make peace with the Dutch Republic, as the Portuguese position in Asia had become extremely weak, and Macao had become very poor so that the Company might easily conquer it, 'although I cannot say that the Company should care all that much for Macao, as they have Taiwan and Japan and therefore open trade in those regions, and after [the fall of] Malakka, Macao has become worthless *[een dood effect]* to [the Portuguese], because they are now unable to trade between this city and Goa'. Pattingalloang also argued that the Dutch might not want to press Portugal too hard, and might want to make peace with Portugal rather than trying to fully take their right, as a weak Portugal might once again fall into Spain's hands, which might then once again become too powerful. '[S]ometimes, out of considerations of state, one has to do something, which one otherwise would have desisted from', concluded the chancellor.[841] Pattingalloang's questions about the relations between Spain, Portugal, France and the Netherlands, and his observations about the risk of Portugal once again falling into the hands of Spain should they be pressed too hard, betray not only his detailed and up-to-date knowledge of both Asian and European political affairs, but also an acute awareness of how these developments might influence the situation Makassar itself. Resumption of the war, after all, might bring Makassar, which housed a large Portuguese community but also traded with the VOC, in a difficult position. It is with good reason that Pattingalloang would prefer the two to remain at peace.

Pattingalloang then inquired after the state of affairs in Maluku – locations of forts, areas under Dutch control, numbers of ships and troops, the amount of spices produced – and De Vlaming largely answered him truthfully, 'as the resident had informed us that what he asked was principally already known to

840 Ibid., fol. 484v-485v.
841 Ibid., fol. 485v.

him'.[842] He did make a point, however, of slightly exaggerating the strength of the Company's forces, the whole reason of the visit, after all, being to discourage the Makasars from assisting or joining the rebels. Pattingalloang uttered his surprise over the huge troop strength the VOC kept in the region: after all, 'who could harm you there now? Nobody, neither Asians nor Europeans, because you are now so well and strongly established there, that no-one could disturb you in your possessions.'[843] De Vlaming answered that the VOC needed to have its troop strength anyway, and as long as there was no open war, it did not really matter where all these soldiers were stationed, 'to which, in order to keep them from sailing there and give them the impression that we did not care much about the rebellion, I added that in the period that those places need to be reinforced extraordinarily, that is from the month November until June, we could do so without any inconvenience to our other affairs or any remarkable costs, as we had no use for the personnel or the ships elsewhere', as most of the ships involved in the intra-Asian trade would only sail in June anyway.[844]

From there, the conversation drifted into the general nature of the military strength of the VOC compared to that of the Southeast Asian states: '[I]f we should come to lose any people here, we would not really lose anything but the time until new ones would arrive (and we could get as many as we wished right away, due to the general peace between the Christian princes)'[845] The Asian princes, by contrast, had to fight with their own people, often even their serfs ('lijffeigenen'), which could not be as easily replaced by recruitment. De Vlaming, all in all, apparently used every argument he could think of to emphasize the military strength of the VOC, thus hoping to dissuade Makassar from getting involved in the war in Maluku. Pattingalloang apparently went along in his reasoning, but added that 'all the same, sometimes some trouble or discomfort will still be inflicted on you, such as has happened right now in Ambon and Maluku, as Asians are restless by nature, particularly these eastern peoples, but it will always end to their disadvantage.'[846]

Subsequently discussing the VOC's attempts to limit clove production, the

842 Ibid., fol. 485v.
843 Ibid., fol. 486
844 Ibid.
845 Ibid., fol. 487r.
846 Ibid., fol. 487r. This remark is difficult to interpret, but fascinatingly, it strikes me as Pattingalloang feeding back a European stereotype about Southeast Asian peoples to De Vlaming.

chancellor was, at least outwardly, remarkably understanding of the VOC's policy, feeding back a standard Company statement to De Vlaming, saying that 'I do not believe the entire world can consume much more than 1000 *bahar* per year. Everything you buy up above that, might be counted in the same way as when you had simply thrown your money in the water'.[847] He also brought up, however, the small production in Spanish Ternate and Tidore. This, Pattingalloang said, might be a real problem for the VOC, because 'unless you get this [clove] trade under your lock and key the way you have with nutmeg and mace, I'm not sure whether the yearly expenditures you make for it can be made up for.'[848] But, he added, you Hollanders, having come this far already, will surely think of something. In making these statements, the chancellor showed a very full understanding of the VOC's policies in Maluku. His ostensibly understanding attitude in this matter is particularly interesting because Makassar was the main market for the Spanish cloves, and Makassar's trade had of course been hurt, and might be hurt more, by the Company's increasing control over clove production and trade.

Finally, Pattingalloang remarked upon the fact that the Dutch were now bringing the Ternaten sultan Mandarsyah to Batavia, 'undoubtedly not without reason', and asked them to greet him on behalf of 'this crown'. He observed that there still remained some differences between the two realms about the ownership of certain areas, but assured that 'we are not inclined to go to war with them, but hope, that God the Lord will make everything turn for the best.'[849]

These soothing words about Ternate concluded the meeting, and De Vlaming set sail the next day. Whether his efforts had anything to do with it remains an open question, but in the immediate wake of his visit, the Gowan sultanate would pay no heed to any requests for assistance from the Ambon region or North Maluku, and stay out of the conflict – for now.

### The siege of Loki and the scouring of Hoamoal

In the wake of his report and his return to Batavia, De Vlaming got pretty much everything he had asked for in his report. Governor-general Van der Lijn, with whom he had had a generous amount of disagreements, had recently been succeeded by Karel Reiniersz, who had apparently already lent a more receptive De

847 Ibid., fol. 487v.
848 Ibid.
849 Ibid.

Vlaming's arguments when the latter had come to Batavia the previous year.[850] By February 1652, De Vlaming was heading back out to the eastern archipelago with a fleet of 11 ships. The governor-general had been unable to fulfil his request for '1100 or 1200 European soldiers', only having some 800 at his disposal at the moment, but had otherwise sent De Vlaming on his way with *carte blanche* to do exactly as he pleased. Whereas VOC instructions for such huge expeditions were usually extremely detailed, with specific instructions for every possible eventuality, those for De Vlaming were remarkably open. 'We leave all this entirely to Your Honour's wisdom, knowledge and judgment… as we are well aware that matters of war, with their manifold unexpected turns, can hardly be confined or determined beforehand.'[851] He was allowed to keep most of his ships there until the very latest moment before the turning of the monsoon, and, if need be, could even stay over and keep his troops there for another season. The only specific instructions he did get came right out of his own earlier recommendations: 'Those who persist in their stubbornness… should be persecuted until not only the remainder or their cloves are ruined, but all their lands are razed and turned into wastelands.'[852]

To achieve this, De Vlaming also came armed with a new treaty between the governor-general and Sultan Mandarsyah, which the latter had been persuaded to sign while in Batavia, just as De Vlaming had suggested earlier. It stipulated that the Company could punish all those who had risen in rebellion against his Majesty, both in North Maluku and the Ambon region, by exterminating their cloves and forbidding them to ever start cultivating them again. If that should succeed, the sultan could expect his yearly stipend to be raised to 12000 rials, exactly as De Vlaming had suggested, with some additional smaller sums for The sultan's brother and other high-ranking Ternatens who had remained loyal, and who De Vlaming hoped to convince to eradicate their cloves 'voluntarily' in exchange for a fee. Importantly, the sultan had also agreed to the abolishment

850 E.g. directors to governor-general, 14 October 1651, in VOC 317, fol. 229r, which is the first reference to limiting clove production in Amboina in years. Also note that remarks such as those in L.P. van Putten, *Ambitie en onvermogen: Gouverneurs-generaal van Nederlands-Indië, 1610-1796*. Rotterdam: ILCO-productions, 2002, pp. 76-79, to the effect that governor Reiniersz had been instructed to limit clove production right at the start of his governor-generalship are not borne out by the sources.

851 Instructions for De Vlaming, February 1652 (date left open), in: VOC 118, fol. 588-603. Quote from fol. 591r.

852 Ibid., fol 590v.

of the function of kimelaha, with the Company henceforth being his sole representative in the region. [853]

While De Vlaming had been away, kimelaha Majira had made some attempts to extend his influence while the Company forces in the islands were temporarily reduced. He had also received some support from Ternate: some of the main rebels from there, most notably Ternaten *kapita laut* Kaicili Saidi, who had also been so important in the original coup, had made their way to Hoamoal, bringing ten well-armed kora-kora, to throw in their lot with kimelaha Majira. Governor Van der Beeck had gathered the hongi to await De Vlaming's fleet at Luhu, but as the latter had left Batavia much later than originally envisioned, the hongi waited and waited, using the intervening time to raid some of the area around Lusiela. After that, however, Van der Beeck had seen no choice but to once again disband it, as waiting in vain for too long caused unrest and discontent as always.[854]

De Vlaming finally arrived in the Ambon region in late March. His first order of business was to see whether the inhabitants of Buru were still on the Company's side. Landing on Buru's west coast, he found they were not, and proceeded to destroy all the settlements there. As the inhabitants had had the good sense to hide inland, the brief campaign mainly consisted of destroying the buildings and the fruit trees. He then proceeded to the coast of Hoamoal and, learning that the hongi had already disbanded, made for the Hituese coast.

Conferring with the governor, De Vlaming decided to first attack the kimelaha's headquarters at Loki, on Hoamoal's east coast, arriving there with his entire force on the 15th of April. Finding that it would be very difficult to storm and conquer it outright, a fortification was erected on the shore instead, isolating the kimelaha's uphill fortifications from the shore. Meanwhile, parties were sent into the forests around the area to destroy the sago trees and anything else that was edible. Captives were pressured into revealing paths up to the fort. As this siege of sorts was underway, most of the force was sent out to raid and destroy settlements, vessels, and fruit and clove trees throughout the region – first north of Loki, then on the opposite coast around Kaibobo, and then finally, on Hoamoal's west coast around Erang. Returning to Loki with the entire force by late June, he went up and attacked the kimelaha's fortifications in the dark early

853 Treaty between governor-General Reiniersz and Sultan Mandarsyah, 31 January 1652, Printed in *Corpus Diplomaticum,* II, 37-42.

854 For an overview see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, pp. 21-26.

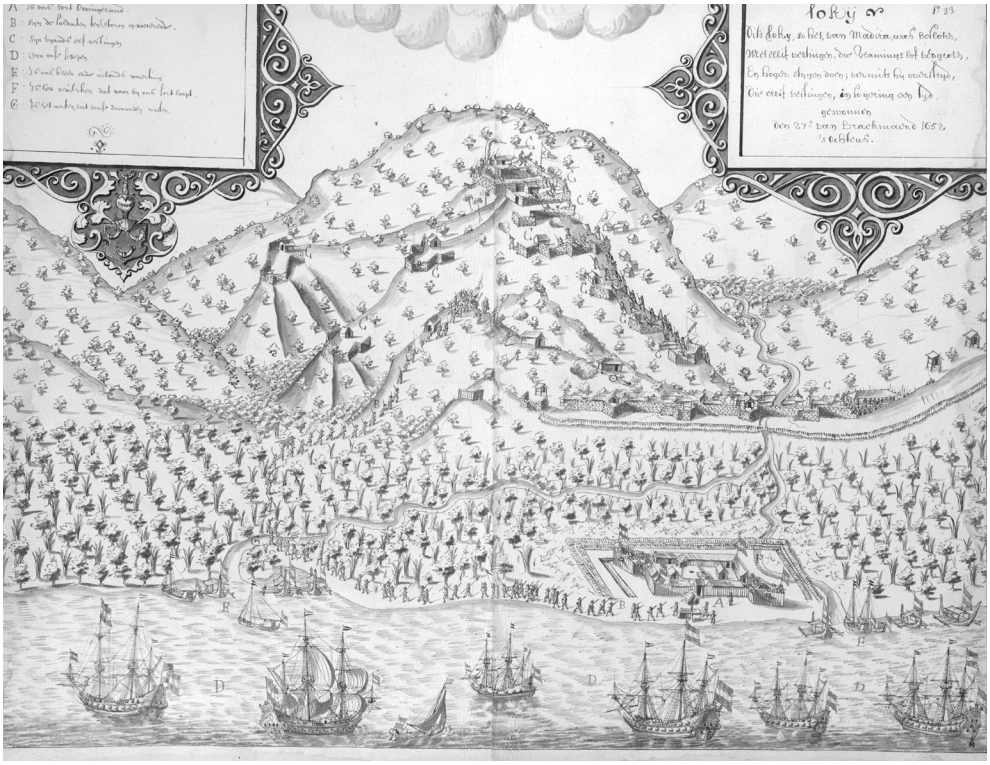

Fig 13.2 The conquest of Loki as depicted in the manuscript version of Bor's Amboinse oorlogen in the Royal Library in Brussels. Below on the shore we see the Dutch fortification built for the siege; to the left we see soldiers stealing up a hill overlooking the fortified settlement, bypassing the town's defences. In the village itself, we see Company troops surrounding a building, and towards the top, we see the various indigenous fortifications and the Company storm attack which took them all before their defences were readied. Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982, fol. 24. The anonymous maker of this pen drawing probably based himself on an original by Joan Van Nessel: cf. Nationaal Archief 4.VEL 1352 and 1353. Johannes Vingboons depicts the same attack in a watercolour: Austrian National Library, Van der Hem 40:15.

hours of the 30th of June – with a much diminished force as disease was rampant among the European soldiers. De Vlaming only had 400 healthy troops available for the attack, and was also sick himself once again.

The main fortification was supported by ten smaller ones around it, and conquering it looked to be a daunting task. The attackers had the advantage, however, that their main goal was to capture or kill kimelaha Majira and Kaicili Saidi, both of whom apparently felt secure enough to sleep in their houses in

the fortified village below, rather than in the fortification higher up. Company scouts had reconnoitred a path leading up to a tobacco garden right near the village, providing ample cover and bypassing the wall that defended the village on its lower side. De Vlaming hoped that they could simply sneak into the village, surround the houses and kill the leaders.

The plan almost worked out as envisioned, but not quite – the Company troops were spotted by guards on the walls just as they were quietly making their way through the sleeping village. 'Holanda, Holanda ada!', the guards cried, and started beating their tifa drums. De Vlaming's journal vividly describes how Majira jumped out, only partially dressed, and made a run for it together with his wife. He fell as he was shot at by the Dutch soldiers, but got back up and made it out of the village and into the forest. Apparently, this near escape became ever more miraculous in the telling later on, as Rumphius informs us that an entire line of musketeers fired on the kimelaha, but that he survived the volley because he had been hardened against injury by 'devilish arts'.[855]

The kimelaha was not the only one running: the entire village was in turmoil and trying to get away, most of them making their way up the hill where the fortifications were, and where the warriors of the kimelaha were now trying to prepare their defences. De Vlaming ordered an immediate storm attack up the hill to make sure the defences, which would be capable of driving the Company troops back out of the village, could not actually be readied. This was successful: all of the fortifications were overrun before an effective defence could be mounted. The Company took the entire hill without losing a single soldier.

In the wake of the attack, the Company troops, as always, went about destroying the clove trees in the region. Meanwhile, reports reached De Vlaming that Majira and Kaicili Saidi had moved their base of operations to the settlements further inland in Hoamoal, at Hulong and the mountains above Erang on the opposite coast. He therefore decided to mount an expedition through the interior of Hoamoal. While he would lead troops from Loki, basically following the refugees in their tracks, captain Verheijden would sail to Erang and move towards the troops in the other direction. The operation started on the 23rd of July, and over the next few days, Hulong, Tapinalo, Nulaha and Erang were destroyed and captured. Many of the followers of Majira and Kaicili Saidi were scattered throughout the forests; some were later caught and killed by Dutch patrols, some

855 Journal De Vlaming, 29-30 June 1652, in: VOC 1198, fol. 392v-396v; Cf. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, p. 31.

were found starved. Many of the communities on the peninsula subsequently rushed to try and reconcile themselves with the Company. This also gave occasion to once again start the kind of resettlement scheme it had earlier performed at Hitu: all these communities were ordered to move to Luhu, where some 1500 people subsequently resettled. The campaign on Hoamoal, and the ouster of Majira and Kaicili Saidi, had apparently made an impression elsewhere as well: when Company forces, only some 300 of them, subsequently made it to the virtually impregnable town of Ihamahu in September, the inhabitants of the town surrendered outright, delivering all their weapons and a number of hostages to the Company and promising to move down from their unassailable hillfort to the coast. [856]

Kimelaha Majira and Kaicili Saidi, however, were still at large. The latter found it prudent to make his way back to North Maluku for now and see if he could obtain reinforcements there. Majira and some of his following, for their part, made their way to Kelang, and from there to Manipa, where they established a fortification deep in the interior of the scarred island. Majira instructed his followers to hold out and wait for him there. As for him: he was going to get help.

856 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 91-108; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 33-39. The Company would subsequently try to get its population to move to the area around Luhu, just like those from Hoamoal who had surrendered. Unwilling to do this, the negeri of Iha and Mahu moved across the water to Seram, just west of Latu. Their region on Saparua was subsequently given over to Christian communities by the VOC. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 52, 55.

# XIV. A broader conflict (1652-1655)

The name 'Great Hoamoal War' suggests that it was primarily fought in and around Hoamoal, and, as we have seen in the last chapter, that is largely accurate for its first two years. Its second phase, however, would turn the entire eastern archipelago into a theatre of war. Not only would Makassar itself and Buton once again become pivotal in the conflict; it would also involve Bima, Timor and Sulawesi's east coast, would reach eastern Seram, and would bring Company ships and troops to places that, as far as De Vlaming was aware, had never visited by Company ships before. This, perhaps, makes this phase of the conflict the clearest illustration of the degree to which the wars in Ambons were tied up with the region at large.

### 'I Daeng ri Bulekang went east to Ambon': Makasar intervention

Even in the wake of De Vlaming's ostensibly successful visit to Makassar, and assurances from the Gowan court that they would stay out of the conflict, the possibility of Makasar intervention remained a nagging concern for VOC officials. As De Vlaming had gone back out to the Ambon region in February 1652, one of the ships in his fleet had therefore passed by Makassar to inform itself of the situation there. The news it brought news was only partially reassuring. While Sultan Malikussaid and Chancellor Pattingalloang were ostensibly committed to maintaining their peace with the Company, the ripples caused by the conflict around Ternate and Ambon also certainly reached Makassar's shores.

For instance, a small vessel bringing thirteen representatives of the people of Ambelau had come to Makassar to ask the sultan for help – the Dutch, so they explained, had converted their ruler, Sultan Mandarsyah, to Christianity and sought to convert all of them as well, and they needed help to stand up to them. Chancellor Pattingalloang had refused their request, but had also refused the Dutch request to turn the representatives over, and had sent them away, complete with the four *bahar* of cloves they had brought with them. A vessel from Seram Laut had also arrived, with a request for advice – they had been approached by kimelaha Majira to join his cause, what should they do? Pattingalloang later reassured the Dutch resident that he had told them to stay neutral, although there was no way to be sure. Meanwhile, some of the large spice traders of old, most prominently a Malay by the name of Paduka Raja, were clamouring for permission to once again sail out east with armed fleets. Pattingalloang had told them that, while they were free people, if they sailed for the Ambon region, they might

as well take their belongings with them as they would no longer be welcome in Makassar. No spice hunting fleets had ultimately sailed for the Ambon region.[857] All the same, it was clear that both from within and outside Makassar, there was mounting pressure on the Gowan court to intervene in the conflict.

One small boat, though, had actually sailed out from Makassar to the Ambon region, and had De Vlaming particularly worried. Last November, imam Rijali, the author of the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* now living in exile in Makassar, had reportedly sent out a small sampan, manned with some of his family members and fellow exiles, towards Buru. Later, as De Vlaming had arrived at Buru, he had learned from interrogated captives that the vessel had in fact arrived in the region, led by none other than Telisema, a son of the late Kapitan Hitu. Its crew consisted of more than forty men, who had gone around inquiring about the state of defence of various places in the Ambon region as well as the production of cloves. They were supposed to report back about all this, ostensibly in preparation for a possible Makasar intervention in the region.[858]

In the wake of all this, Majira arrived in Makassar for help, together with an envoy of Manilha. He apparently arrived when the Dutch resident had just left for Batavia at the end of the season, probably somewhere in October. Interestingly, the Gowan court itself subsequently informed Batavia of their arrival, delivering a letter by way of catholic missionaries. The letter, itself a sign of good will, apparently also alluded to punishing the Majira and the Ternaten envoy, reassuring the governor-general and council that the sultan was committed to keeping the peace with the Company. All the same, a delegation, led by Jacob Hustaert, was quickly assembled and dispatched to Makassar so see that Majira and the delegates were indeed properly 'punished', or delivered to the Company.[859]

When Hustaert arrived before Makassar on the first of February 1653, however, the facts on the ground had changed in the meantime. While no exact details are known, it is clear that, after the rather cool initial reception, Majira

857 Journal De Vlaming, 21 February 1652, in: VOC 1193, fol. 335r-336v.

858 Journal De Vlaming, 21 February resp. 23 March 1652, in: VOC 1193, fol. 336v-337r, 362v-363r; .

859 Governor-General Reiniersz to Sultan Malukussaid, 16 January 1653 in: VOC 876, p. 988-995; Instructions for Jacob Hustaert, 16 January 1653, in: VOC 876, p. 974-987. It should be noted that the delegation was also sent out to resolve a conflict over two ships owned by Francisco Vieira, which the VOC had captured after the war with the Portuguese had recently formally resumed. The exact sequence of events is difficult to establish as both the Dagh-register Batavia and some of the correspondence for this period is missing.

and the delegates were able to win the sultan and chancellor for their cause. The *Makassar Annals* note how on the 21st of November 1652, 'people mustered around the manuscript from Ternate', apparently a royal letter from Manilha whom the Makasar leadership now considered the true sultan. Eight days later, the *Annals* inform, 'I Daeng ri Bulekang', a naval commander, 'went east to Ambon'.[860] He had, Hustaert learned, done so at the head of a fleet of 30 vessels, bringing some 1500 armed men, as well as kimelaha Majira, and was to call at various Makasar tributaries around the coast of Sulawesi and Bima to levy more ships and troops, before continuing to the Ambon region. In addition, Malay clove traders had also once again set out to the region.[861]

As far as Hustaert was concerned, this, then, precluded any further need for negotiation. He refused to come to land, did not have resident Evert Buijs take up his position in the Dutch lodge again, and continued on to Buton. He did wonder how this could have happened – and felt that perhaps, the Portuguese were somehow to blame. The war with Portugal had recently resumed, and the Company had captured two ships of the Portuguese Francisco Vieira, which were apparently partly owned by Chancellor Pattingalloang. Had this soured relations? Had Vieira been inciting them?[862] While all of this might have played a role, we should be warned against interpreting the turn of events as solely an extension of developments between Europeans: the Gowan court could well have perceived these requests as its ultimate chance to get a foot back in the door in the Ambon region and its clove trade, and might also been genuinely compelled to come to the aid of fellow Muslims who felt they faced an existential threat from Christian adversaries.

In his final letter to Hustaert before the departure of the Company ships, Sultan Malukissaid took care to emphasize that the fleet and the traders leaving for Amboina were not in contravention of the 1637 treaty made with Van Diemen, and that, as far as he was concerned, they therefore did not constitute an

860 Cummings, *Makassar Annals*, 77. I Daeng ri Bulekang had been sent east at the head of a fleet several times before – his names comes up in relation to an attack on Buton in 1639 as well the Makasar intervention in 1642. (Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 55; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, p. 189.)While he remains otherwise elusive in Makasar documents, the scattered VOC references tend to describe him as admiral or head of the fleet. With thanks to Lance Nolde (California State University Channel Islands) for sharing some insights on this matter.

861 Dagh-register Batavia, 22 May 1653, 65-66.

862 Ibid.

act of war.[863] Even so, as Hustaert subsequently made it to Buton, it certainly looked like war to him: a worried Butonese sultan informed him that Gowa had threatened him, as well as all the polities around the coast, that they should break their bonds with the Company and send ships and men to join the fleet to Ambon, or face war with Gowa.[864]

All in all, this Makasar intervention in Ambon followed the pattern of its earlier intervention in 1642 in important ways. Initially, the Gowan court did not appear to be particularly eager to heed the calls for assistance, and did so only after repeated requests, as well as informing itself well of the situations in the islands. It required the personal visit of two high-ranking officials from the region, the kimelaha and a delegate of what Gowa would probably have come to consider the rightful Ternaten sultan, to finally convince them. In all probability, it also required a deal with Majira that was very beneficial to Gowa.[865] Much like in 1642, the Gowan court also once again tried to see how far it could push the provision in the 1637 treaty that Gowan ships caught in Ambon waters were not of and by itself a cause for war, even though their active involvement was clear for all to see. There was, however, also a crucial difference with the earlier intervention. Whereas the expeditionary force of 1642 was not strong enough to constitute a genuine threat to the Company in the Ambon region, suggesting that the attack was cut short or, in any case, never fully materialized as intended, this intervention would turn out to be more substantial and more sustained, causing an open war between the Company and Makassar and posing a far greater and more durable threat to the Company in the Ambon Islands.

### Stand-off at Asaudi

For now, however, De Vlaming was still oblivious to all that, and was briskly going about his campaign of punishment and destruction. He had gotten off to a rather unsettling start. Returning to the Hituese coast after the conquests at Hoamoal, he had proceeded to rather extravagantly execute a number of the orangkaya who had been involved in the attack on the Company post at Nusatelo, and since been found and arrested. He invited the Ambonese orangkaya to

863 Ibid., 67.

864 Ibid., 68.

865 No exact information has been handed down to us, but rumour in the Ambon region later had it that Majira had agreed that all areas that they would jointly conquer would henceforth be ruled by Gowa, with Majira himself only ruling those areas that already fell under his rule. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', I, 36.

witness the spectacle of retribution and violence:

> Some were thrown over the side off the ship with their hands bound, and whoever wanted to was free to beat them to death with sticks, roasting spits and swords... Soldiers, assisted by the sailors, eagerly hacked away, spurred on by feelings of righteous vengeance... Others, who had been the ringleaders, had their tongues cut out and their limb bones subsequently broken.[866]

That being dealt with, De Vlaming moved his campaigns of destruction beyond the Ambon region proper, mounting an expedition to the Sula Islands in October. While the Sula Islands, to the northwest of the Ambon region, had been a bone of contention between Ternate and Makassar over previous decades, they had as yet largely remained outside the scope of direct military action by the Company. They would, however, become an important theatre in the subsequent phase of the Hoamoal War. Most of the communities in the islands had joined the revolt in Ternate and supported that in the Ambon region. As the region was populous and a major producer of sago and other staple foods, De Vlaming saw this as an important potential power base for his enemies and mounted an expedition there, raiding settlements, destroying sago groves, and successfully arresting Sula's kimelaha and a number of dignitaries.

He then continued these campaigns of destruction closer to home. Some of his troops scoured Manipa again for any remaining patches of sago or other trees providing sustenance. These troops happened upon the fortifications in the interior which Majira had erected. An expeditionary force was promptly sent, which succeeded in conquering the fortifications, scattering Majira's followers through the scarred forests of the island, where food was sparse. De Vlaming also continued his efforts to win control over the island of Boano by intervening in a local power struggle there – which mainly led to most of the population fleeing.[867] Meanwhile, the trials and executions continued, albeit in a slightly less extravagant fashion than before. In January 1653, the first of a series of special war tribunals was held, which proceeded to try and execute a number of high-ranking *orangkaya* for their role in the revolt, including the kimelaha of the Sula Islands and his dignitaries, as well as a number of orangkaya from Ihamahu. [868]

866 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen*, 109-110.

867 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 40-47.

868 Normally, such trials were presided over by the *Landraad*. A special tribunal was neces-

While De Vlaming was, by then, aware that Majira had made for Makassar,[869] he was as yet oblivious to the latter's success in securing Makasar support. On 4 February, however, a ship from Batavia arrived, with news that Batavia was awash in rumours that Makassar was going to intervene in the Ambon region.[870] These rumours seemed to be confirmed just a few days later, when he learned that five Makasar vessels had arrived at Buru's south coast, and fortified themselves a little way up the Waysama river.

As soon as the news reached him, he assembled a force of 200 soldiers and went out there to destroy it. Sure enough, they found the Makasar fort, which was very much in character with what we know about Makasar fort-building in the region more generally: sturdily built, situated along a navigable river, and fiercely defended, with the Dutch suffering a number of dead and wounded during their first charge. However, it also had a characteristic weakness: situated along a navigable waterway, it was lower than some of the surrounding terrain. Company troops were able to occupy a nearby hill and fire into the fort from there, making it indefensible. The Makasars evacuated it and fled inland.[871]

These five vessels were only the first arrivals of a much larger force, as was brought home to De Vlaming just a few days later, in the form of a message from Hustaert. As soon as the latter had learned about the Makassar war fleet having departed in late November, he had sent his fastest ship directly to Ambon to inform De Vlaming and the governor, albeit without much hope that the ship would reach the Ambon Islands before the Makasar fleet itself. As it turned out,

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sary because many of the arrested dignitaries were Ternatens, and Sultan Mandarsyah found it unacceptable that the Ambonese orangkaya should try high-ranking Ternatens. The tribunal therefore only consisted of Company officials.
While all of the episodes mentioned are interesting and worthy of further study, I regretfully gloss over them here. For a slightly more extensive overview, see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 39-49.

869 He had learned this from the interrogation of a Burunese prisoner in October 1652: see Journal De Vlaming, 15 October 1652, in: VOC 1199, 575v-577r.

870 Journal De Vlaming, 4 February 1652, in: VOC 1199, fol. 655v-656r.

871 They initially took refuge in a nearby Burunese village. De Vlaming and Verheijden, hesitant to precipitate a war in this region of Buru as well, tried to negotiate with the inhabitants to see if they would be willing to deliver the Makasars to them. Their attempts initially looked promising, but the villagers turned out to have prepared an ambush from which Verheijden and his men made a narrow escape. Journal De Vlaming,17-27 Feb 1653, in VOC 1199, fol. 658r-665r.

it did, as the Makasar vessels had spent time levying more troops and vessels at the various Gowan tributaries.[872]

De Vlaming sent out ships to look out for the Makasar fleet. One of them soon reported back that a fleet led by the kimelaha himself was in the Sula Islands. De Vlaming was just preparing to head out there to meet it, when more reports came in from elsewhere: a large fleet had been spotted directly to the north of Buru. De Vlaming's ships, concerned that the Makasars might be headed for Hitu, tried to block their passage there. However, the Makasar vessels, some 40 in total, made their way to Hoamoal instead, sailing into the river mouth at Asaudi.

Company vessels only arrived at the scene some four days later, on 31 March, by which time the Makasars had fortified themselves. Seeing himself faced with the entrenched positions, and with only a small number of soldiers at his disposal, De Vlaming, much like Demmer ten years earlier, decided to try and see if he could simply persuade the Makasars to leave. He had them informed that, as they could see, there were no more cloves available at Hoamoal, what with the population having largely fled and most of the trees destroyed. The Company, however, would be happy to buy their rice from them to cover the loss, on the condition that they then went on their way. Also much like ten years before, the Makasars were not interested: the fleet's leader, I Daeng ri Bulekang, pointed out that they had not come to trade, but to see if their fellow Muslims, who were reportedly being forced to convert to Christianity, needed help. That answer was not to the liking of De Vlaming, who struck the white flag from his yacht, had the blood flag hoisted, and opened fire on the Makasar defences.

Such military muscle-flexing notwithstanding, De Vlaming felt he was ill-equipped to stand up to the Makasar force, well-entrenched and consisting of some 2000 men, even after some more Company reinforcements arrived on the scene over the next few days. He instead opted to isolate them by building three small fortifications of his own, keeping the Makasars holed up where they were. During the fort-building efforts over the next few days, some skirmishes with the Makasars took place, leading to casualties on both sides, and the destruction of one small Makasar fortification and seven of their vessels, but not to a major engagement. Satisfied that the Makasars were properly isolated for now, and hoping their provisions would run out in due time, De Vlaming left the

872 Journal De Vlaming, 28 February 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 665v – 667r.

area on 12 April, leaving major Verheijden in charge there.[873] Notwithstanding some subsequent attempts at negotiation, skirmishes and some reshuffling of the Dutch siege works, the situation around Asaudi would remain at a stand-off for the next months.

### Stuck in a hard place

De Vlaming, meanwhile, tried to go back to what he was doing before. After some more trials, convictions and executions in Castle Victoria, including the above-mentioned Christian orangkaya Joan Paijs, who was condemned to be quartered,[874] he prepared to go on campaign again. He meant to find and defeat Majira, who was suspected to be on his way at the head of another Makasar-sent fleet. He also wanted to see to matters in Ternate, where by then, the revolt against Mandarsyah had abated. After Kalamata, the third of the royal brothers who had joined the revolt earlier, switched his allegiance back to Mandarsyah, the support of Manilha had started unravelling. When Mandarsyah, governor Van den Boogaerde and the sultan of Bacan had appeared before the fort at Halmahera with two VOC yachts and twelve kora-kora in January, the rebels there had decided to surrender and negotiate. Two of the most prominent original instigators of the coup, however, Kaicili Saidi and hukum Laulata, had decided to abscond before it came to that. They were later to resurface in Hoamoal.[875]

De Vlaming's expedition faced a generous amount of misfortune. After sailing past Buru with its two yachts and two sloops, raiding the settlements along its west coast once more, the small flotilla continued to the Sula islands, but was faced with unseasonably adverse weather. De Vlaming, bent on continuing and making it to Ternate, decided to go on ahead with the two rowing sloops and the 100 or so soldiers, but the rough seas forced him to make landfall. He had lost sight of the yachts, which were ultimately forced back by the adverse winds. De Vlaming himself was pinned down where he was due to the rough seas, and thus forced to make a long and unplanned stopover in the Sula islands. Under the circumstances, nothing much came of looking for Majira, although

873 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 53-54; Journal De Vlaming, 31 March – 12 April 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 677v – 683r.

874 Paijs's supposed treason seems to have become somewhat of an obsession for Company officials over the preceding two years. They now found it satisfactorily proven that he had wanted to establish himself as the leader of the Christian areas of the Ambon region, that his Christianity was insincere, and that he had been colluding with Majira.

875 General letter of 19 January 1654, in *Generale Missiven,* II, 674.

De Vlaming did go out of his way to destroy an old and apparently abandoned clove plantation which was discovered there to his surprise. When De Vlaming and his soldiers ultimately made it to Ternate in Mid-August, two months after they had left from Ambon, they had been presumed dead.[876]

Getting down to business after finally arriving, De Vlaming pardoned many of those who had earlier joined the revolt against Mandarsyah, in an effort to come to some working relationship with the Ternaten elite again. His main goal, however, was to see if he could get the war with Tidore to resume, in spite of the peace between Spain and the Dutch Republic. In his estimation, the revolt in Ambon and the Makasar intervention made this imperative, as Tidore was taking advantage of the revolt in the Ambon region, extending its power, partly at the cost of Ternate, and had become a channel for illicit clove trade towards Makassar. All of this, he felt, was also a threat to the situation in the Ambon region. He was able to get the Ternatens to commit to resuming the war. De Vlaming hoped that Tidore might be conquered outright – the Spanish governor there, in an interesting and complicated gambit, was warned to leave well enough alone. Much to De Vlamings delight, he was also able also able to persuade the rulers of Bacan and Moti to have their cloves eradicated 'voluntarily' – although these regions had joined in the earlier revolt and he was therefore technically entitled to simply destroy the trees without compensation, he felt that under the circumstances, that was probably imprudent. The local leaders received one-time fees and yearly stipends for their cooperation.[877]

De Vlaming was very much aware that any war against Tidore would probably go nowhere unless the VOC was willing and able to really assist its ally this time. He had therefore intended to stay in Ternate for a while longer with what little soldiers he had. The situation in the Ambon region, however, got in the way of plans – before he had even arrived in Ternate after his long sojourn in Sula, a sloop from Ambon had brought word that Majira had appeared in the Ambon region with a fleet of twelve vessels not long after De Vlaming had left, and had established himself on Boano. In addition, the Company forces at Asaudi were worn so thin by death and disease, that it was becoming impossible to maintain

876 Journal De Vlaming, 17 June – 11 August 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 730-760.

877 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 59-62; Report De Vlaming, October 1653 in: VOC 1198, fol. 468-476.

the siege of the Makasars there.[878] He therefore grudgingly prepared a ship to sail to Ambon again only a week after his arrival.

Having hurried back to Asaudi, he found the situation slightly less critical, as governor Van der Beeck had meanwhile been able to procure 120 soldiers from Banda as emergency reinforcements, along with fresh provisions. This was, however, a stop-gap measure, as the garrisons at Banda were now severely diminished just at a time that Makassar once again became a threat to the region, and these soldiers therefore needed to be returned soon. Overseeing the situation, De Vlaming felt it was probably a good idea to make use of the last of the eastern monsoon to sail back to Batavia, to 'accurately inform your Honours of the situation here, not only in writing but also personally.'[879] Twelve days later, he was on his way.

In the report he prepared *en route*, nothing remained of the outright enthusiasm that he had felt two years earlier. While he had considered the war an invaluable opportunity at the time, he could now only see it as an unsolvable quandary and an outright threat to the Company's position in the eastern archipelago. The big game changer was, of course, the Makasar intervention. Even though he had been able to hole up their expeditionary force at Asaudi for now, Makasar involvement had dramatically widened the scope of the conflict and reinforced the ranks of the Company's enemies, while De Vlaming's own forces had been dwindling. At his departure from the Ambon region, only 745 soldiers remained there, including the 120 from Banda that would soon have to be sent back. As to the rest, the 'better part was unfit for any military exploit, yes scarcely able to be stationed in our fortifications and defend them', as poor provisions and two consecutive seasons of fighting had taken their toll.[880]

It was not just that the force at Asaudi tied up part of his preciously scarce and exhausted troops. Makassar intervention, he tried to hammer home throughout the report, had turned the entire eastern archipelago into an even bigger imbroglio than it already was. It had an impact on the balance in North Maluku as well, making it urgent to resume the war against Tidore. In addition, it threatened to unravel Ternaten control over many areas along Sulawesi's east side, most importantly Buton. Visiting it on his way to Makassar, he found the sultan shared his concerns, not only because of the threat of outright conquest by

878 Journal De Vlaming, 15 August 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 762r-763r.
879 Report by De Vlaming, [7] October 1653, in: VOC 1198, fol. 461-489.
880 Report by De Vlaming, [7] October 1653, in: VOC 1198, fol. 473r and 485v-486r.

Makassar, but also because the better part of his own elite was rather more taken to Makassar than the VOC, and apparently plotting to oust him and switch allegiance.[881]

De Vlaming also doubted that the Makasar force now holed up at Asaudi would be the last, and a call at Makassar on his way to Batavia did little to allay his worries. While his delegates were hospitably received, and Karaeng Pattingalloang tried to absolve himself of all responsibility of the expeditionary force at Asaudi, the sultan and chancellor declined to send delegates along to Batavia, and word in Makassar had it that a new expeditionary fleet was already in preparation, which would consist of over a hundred vessels carrying some five thousand armed men.[882] If this would turn out to be even nearly accurate, it would pose an unprecedented threat to the Company's position throughout the eastern archipelago.

De Vlaming therefore hoped to convince the governor-general and council to take some immediate concrete measures. First, he wanted the Company to ignore the Makasar smoke screens about the 1637 treaty and the court not being responsible, and recognize that the Company was now at war with Gowa. Second, he recommended to immediately dispatch all and any vessels they could spare to the area around Buton and perhaps even build a fort there, both to protect Buton from Makasar intervention and to try and prevent any Makasar fleets from reaching the Ambon region. And third, he needed troops – preferably some 1000 or 1200, but at the very least, 600, to undertake the necessary military action both around Ternate, Ambon, and beyond, and with which he meant to return to the eastern archipelago as soon as possible.[883]

### The struggle for sago

De Vlaming was back on his way to the eastern quarter one month after his arrival in Batavia, at the head of an impressive fleet of nine Company ships and four smaller vessels. The ships, however, carried only 500 soldiers. This was all that governor-general Johan Maatsuyker, who had succeeded Reiniersz after the latter's death in May 1653, could spare at the time, promising to send more

881 Journal De Vlaming, 30 September – 1 October 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 781v-782r.

882 Before heading there himself, De Vlaming had also sent Evert Buijs, the former resident at Makassar, there as his representative for negotiations in July. He was received in much the same way as De Vlaming himself on his subsequent visit in October. For a brief overview, see Stapel, *Bongaais verdrag,* 48-49.

883 Report by De Vlaming, [7] October 1653, in: VOC 1198, fol. 470v and 473v.

troops as they became available.[884]

Calling at Makassar, De Vlaming learned that a Makasar fleet, described as consisting of ninety vessels, had already set out. He wasted no time and made straight for Buton, fearing the Makasars might have already conquered it, but to his relief, found that they had had other priorities. As he arrived at Buton, part of the Makasar fleet, reportedly forty vessels, had already passed through the Tiworo Strait to the north, but had ignored the sultanate and continued its journey east. De Vlaming went straight on to Ambon himself, finding that the Makasar vessels had not yet been sighted in the islands when he arrived on 29 December.[885] During his absence, governor Van der Beeck had tried to strike a blow in the newly resumed war against Tidore by taking the hongi all the way to Raja Ampat– subjects of the sultan of Tidore, the Papuan inhabitants of these islands had been organising raids on the Ambon region as well. The campaign had been largely ineffective, however. Meanwhile, the low number of soldiers, added to the concern about the arrival of the Makasars, had prompted Van der Beeck to abandon and destroy the siege works at Asaudi and recall the troops to Ambon.[886] He was not alone in considering it a real possibility that Castle Victoria itself might be attacked, and scrambled to fortify the nearby hill of Batu Merah,

884 Instructions for De Vlaming, 7 November 1653, in: VOC 807, esp. fol. 452v. The war in Ambon was not the only military campaign that the Company had to fight – the war with the Portuguese had also resumed, and the Company was involved in a major campaign to wrest Ceylon from their control. While the directors were trying to ramp up the number of soldiers sent to Asia to facilitate the waging of these two simultaneous wars, their efforts were hindered by the Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654), which, while hardly ging the Company any trouble in Asia itself, hindered the shipping to and from Europe. Knaap and Den Heijer, *Oorlogen Overzee,* 91pp; Mostert, 'Chain of command', 42pp.
Incidentally, one of the soldiers on board the fleet was Rumphius, who in his own works tends to be reticent about his person and personal experiences, and who is tantalizingly elusive in the VOC documents of this period as well. All the same, he would have had first-hand experience of many of the subsequent events he describes in the *Ambonsche Historie.*

885 For a slightly more extensive overview, including an engagement between some of the slower Company ships and a Makasar flotilla, see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II*,* 65-69.

886 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II*,* 65. Of particular concern was the Batu Merah (red mountain) directly to the northeast of Ambon town, which De Vlaming had considered at particular risk of enemy occupation, which would be an immediate threat to Ambon town itself. Van der Beeck had therefore had a small fort erected there in November.

from which it would be possible to fire into the castle. De Vlaming, sharing such concerns, would subsequently initiate major repairs and renovations of the fort, employing large numbers of local corvee labourers to entirely revamp it over the following two years.[887]

Van der Beeck himself, meanwhile, had asked to be relieved of his duty as governor, not only to see to some personal matters but also because he did not feel up to the task of governor the Ambon region in the present circumstances, particularly during the periods that De Vlaming was away. His request was granted, but no successor was appointed for now: the governor-general and council felt that superintendent De Vlaming and senior merchant Simon Cos could probably handle the government of the region for now.[888]

The Makasar ships came in in several smaller batches over the course of January. Twenty vessels in the river at Rumaite, on Buru's southeast coast, were discovered first.[889] Another fleet of seventeen vessels, both Makasar and local, was subsequently sighted at Fukuweu, on Sula Bessi, one of the Sula Islands, in late January.[890] More vessels, 38 in total, were subsequently reported to have arrived at several places all around Buru, hiding in the various river mouths.

On the one hand, the scattered way in which the Makasar forces arrived meant that they were initially less of a threat. On the other, however, it made De Vlaming's strategy of containing them wherever they landed, untenable – he simply lacked the necessary ships to do so effectively.[891] While Company ships were able to prevent the Makasar vessels at Buru from making it to Asaudi by guarding the narrow passages around the nearby island of Pulau Babi, the Makasars could otherwise move through the region relatively unopposed. By early March, many had made their way to various places on Hoamoal and its immediately adjacent islands, with a substantial number having congregated up

887 Rumphius, 'De Ambonse Historie', II, pp. 65, 69, 74, 82, 94-95. V.I. van de Wall. *De Nederlandsche oudheden in de Molukken*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1928, pp. 129-174.

888 Governor-general and council Batavia to governor and council Ambon, 7 November 1653, in: VOC 877, esp. fol. 460.

889 Journal De Vlaming, 2 January 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 812.

890 Journal De Vlaming, 12 February 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 837r-v.

891 At Rumaite, the Makasars were able to run the blockade on the 25th of February. They made their way to Kajeli on Buru's east coast to join other Makasar ships, and made it to Hoamoal from there, running into the Air Merah. A blockade by Company ships there was soon lifted as the ships were needed elsewhere, which allowed the ships to make for Kahuli. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 70.

the Air Merah river on Hoamoal's west coast, where Company ships subsequently did try to close them in.

The dynamic between the Makasars and the Company in subsequent months would largely revolve around access to food – especially sago. Even the year before, hunger had been taking hold of the Makasars at Asaudi. Company troops had made every effort to destroy whatever food sources they could in the region at large. Vessels from Makassar, apart from the war fleets, had not been spotted around Hoamoal, so no additional rice had apparently been brought in. In the previous season, many of the communities in the region who had not surrendered to the Dutch, had come flocking to the protection of the Makasar forces and fortifications at Asaudi, so that, by now, it also housed a substantial number of men, women and children from the region itself.[892] Keeping this large concentration of people fed with the Company siege works right on their doorstep, had turned out to be difficult the previous year, and hunger had made itself felt by September 1653. Even though the Company force had retreated since then, the situation had not apparently much improved by March 1654. As De Vlaming learned from captives, both Majira and his Burunese colleague kimelaha Hasi, who were both in Asaudi at the time, were casting their eyes around for a nearby sago-producing area to move to with some of their following, to take some of the pressure off Asaudi.[893]

For their part, Company officials, in their attempts to destroy all and any food in the region, had the sago groves in the direct vicinity of Luhu destroyed. Luhu, it bears reminding, was where those Hoamoalese who had surrendered to the Company had been resettled. The Company also had defensive walls erected around the settlement on the land side, concerned that it would be vulnerable to attack.

892 One captive spoke of 1500 Makasars and 4000 additional local people. It should be noted, however, that the number of Makasars he mentioned is very high in comparison to some other numbers from the period. Journal De Vlaming, 10 September 1653, in: VOC 1199, fol. 773v. Cf. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 63, which implies a number of less than 1000 Makasars and Malays at Asaudi in October 1653.

893 Journal De Vlaming, 14 March 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 869v-870r. The areas they had apparently initially cast their eyes on were, according to the captives, Manipa and Luhu – which amused and surprised De Vlaming, as he had made every effort to destroy all food sources at Manipa over the past three years, and doubted they would find much. As to Luhu, the VOC was just then making an effort to destroy the sago in that area as well precisely for this reason. Cf. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 71.

Sure enough, on 27 March, some 1000 warriors led by none other than kimelaha Majira, marching overland over the old road from Kambelo, stormed Luhu in a fierce attack, washing over the new outer defences and coming right up to the Company fort, burning, capturing and killing as they went. The fort itself held and the Company's cannon were ultimately able to drive off the attackers, but the town was reduced to ashes. Even Livinus Bor, not otherwise ostensibly the epitome of compassion, described the scene as one 'that would have moved even a diamond heart.'[894] In the wake of the attack, the town of Luhu was effectively dissolved: although the Company would still maintain its fort there, the surviving town population was resettled to Ambon.[895]

Higher up along Hoamoal's east coast were some sago-producing areas that had thus far escaped the Company's campaigns of destruction. Makasar forces and ships, concerned about securing a steady food supply for themselves and those at Asaudi, now made their way there. In mid-April, officials in Castle Victoria first received reports of a combined Makasar-Ambon force established itself at Laala, and erecting fortifications there.

De Vlaming let them be for now, as he had his hands full with another project aimed at starving out Asaudi: he had ordered the construction of a series of wooden fortifications, connected by palisades, all the way across the land bridge connecting Hoamoal to the rest of Seram. To cover the four kilometres distance, eighteen small fortifications had been built with the help of local labour.[896] The defensive line effectively cut off those at Asaudi from any food supplies on the Seramese mainland, and, in particular, from the Alfur community at Tanuno, directly to the east of the land bridge, with which they had been in contact. It did, however, need to be permanently manned with at least 300 European soldiers, which were already in short supply.[897]

Around the same time, De Vlaming called off his blockades of the Air Merah river, and at Sula Bessi – while this would allow the Makasars more freedom of movement, his ships and men were simply needed elsewhere. He also decided to send word to Ternate, instructing governor to try and come to a truce with Tidore again – it did not look like he would be able to come and assist him there

894 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 223.

895 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 72.

896 Four kilometres is my estimate: the land bridge is slightly more than three kilometres as the crow flies on its narrowest point, but the exact location and shape of the line of forts has not been preserved.

897 Journal De Vlaming, 27 May 1754 in: VOC 1205, fol. 921r-922r.

this season; in fact, he could well use some soldiers from there in the Ambon region![898]

After the Company ships had lifted these blockades, many of the Makasar vessels seem to have either made their way to the east coast of Hoamoal or to Asaudi, leaving Hoamoal's west coast otherwise effectively deserted. While Makasars, and what Hoamoalese inhabitants still remained, came flocking to the safety of Asaudi, the fortifications there were also extended and improved.

On the east coast, Laala was meanwhile also becoming a true fort, and was likewise drawing in a larger population seeking its safety. In early July, De Vlaming learned that a combined Makasar-Ambonese force had also fortified another sago-producing area at the mouth of the Kahuli river, only slightly over three kilometres east of the Company fort at Luhu. De Vlaming felt that it was probably not gratuitously built so close to what was now the last Company stronghold on Hoamoal proper,[899] and felt that his enemies probably not only sought sago there, but also their new '*sedem belli*', seat of war.[900] Verheijden was instructed to assemble a force from the garrisons at Luhu and the defensive line up at the land bridge, and drive the Makasars away. The attack took place in late July. The Makasars had built a fortification on each side of the river, surrounded by alluvial plain - uncharacteristically flat terrain for Hoamoal, and precisely what made the area so rich in sago. Approaching the two fortifications both overland from Luhu and with several small seagoing craft, Verheijden was able to storm both of them, killing some 120 Makasar and Hoamoalese warriors; the rest, apparently only some sixty men, was able to get away. On the Company side, there were fourteen dead but as many as sixty wounded, including most of the officers.[901]

De Vlaming was meanwhile preparing a greater military campaign, meaning to finally force a breakthrough and win the war, by conquering Asaudi itself. He sent out orders to assemble the hongi. He gathered all the ships he had available, and scraped together all able-bodied European soldiers from the various garrisons. He ordered some additional troops to be sent from Banda and Ternate. He had even invited Sultan Mandarsyah join the campaign and bring some of his own kora-kora, to bolster both the strength and the prestige of the besieging

898 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 230; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 75.

899 De Vlaming had had the fort at Kambelo abandoned and demolished in January, as it was too vulnerable to a siege and no longer served any clear purpose now that the surrounding area was almost completely empty.

900 Journal De Vlaming, 2 July 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 938v.

901 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 75.

force. He had siege equipment prepared, and had a day of fasting and prayer held. By the 29th of August, his forces lay assembled at the Hituese coast, ready to make for Asaudi. They were truly impressive: 45 kora-kora, eight large ships and 15 smaller vessels, carrying some 750 armed Europeans, and an unnamed number of indigenous troops.[902]

Sultan Mandarsyah himself had not arrived yet as De Vlaming arrived before Asaudi on the 9th of September – which was just as well, as De Vlaming's resolve and confidence instantly evaporated once there. Inspecting the enemy fortifications from the heights of the small island of Nussanitu, just opposite Asaudi, he found them 'very different from how he had imagined them.'[903] What he saw was an intricate system of seven fortifications covering both the coast and the hills and cliffs around them, well-stocked with cannon. The salt marshes in the area further added to the defensibility of the fortifications. Any kind of landing was extremely hazardous, if not to say impossible.[904]

An attempt to negotiate with the Makasars was made the same day. They were once again offered free passage, and as far as De Vlaming was concerned they could 'take with them any Ambonese rebels as they liked' – he just wanted them out of the picture. The result, however, was much the same as with his many earlier negotiation attempts – the Makasars were not interested, and did not even allow De Vlaming's delegate to land.[905]

Annoyed, De Vlaming turned the fleet around and made for Hoamoal's east coast. He might not be able to evict the main Makasar force, but he might take their bread basket away from them.

### Laala: a 'proper siege'…

The fleet reassembled before Laala a week later, finding the river mouth there guarded by a massive and sprawling, if 'curiously shaped', fort.[906] A long rectangular fort with several square bastions guarded the sea side in a way character-

902 Preparations: Journal De Vlaming, 20 August – 6 September, in: VOC 1205, fol. 987-988. Numbers of ships from Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 76; number of soldiers from De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 16 September 1654, in: VOC 1204, p. 674

903 Journal De Vlaming, 9 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 993r-v.

904 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 76, provides a description which is more detailed than anything found in the journals and letters from De Vlaming – possibly because Rumphius was almost certainly there.

905 Journal De Vlaming, 9 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 993r-994r.

906 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 77 calls the fort 'van een wonderlijk fatsoen'.

istic of the Makasar forts in the region. What made the fort unusual was that on the land side, another rectangularly shaped piece had been built transversely onto it, with additional bastions to guard the walls there, so that the entire structure was shaped like a T. Curiously shaped or not, the fort was daunting, and was reportedly guarded by at least 300 Makasar and 300 Hoamoalese warriors. [907]

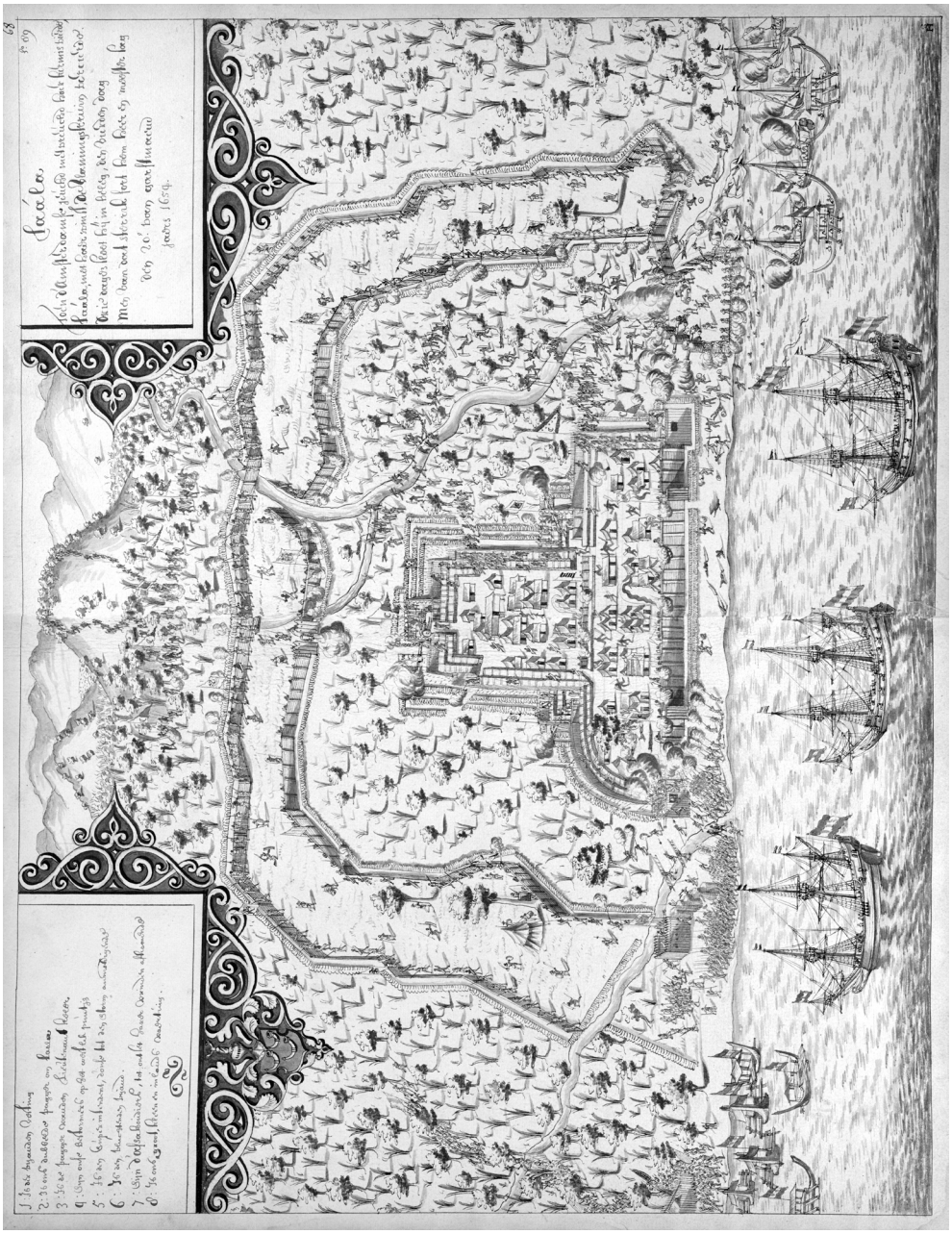
De Vlamings's troops landed on the 16th of September, set up camps around the fort, and cut down the undergrowth in their immediate vicinity. The first shouted interactions with the Makasars and Ambonese within the fort made clear that the latter had no intention of surrendering.[908]

Much like the Kahuli river mouth, this area was rich in sago because it was a flat alluvial plain – far less forbidding terrain than most of the Ambon region. In addition, with 750 European soldiers as well as an impressive (if unknown) number of local allies at his disposal, De Vlaming for once had numerical superiority over the besieged. Under the circumstances, he and his officers felt it was best to tackle the daunting fortifications and the zealous and well-prepared garrison not by an outright storm attack, but by first wearing down the enemy by means of a siege. While, over the course of the previous decades, the Company had conducted a number of sieges in the region, the siege of Laala would prove unusual in that the flat terrain and the large number of soldiers, warriors and

907 Runphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 77-79; Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 235-240, both give comparatively elaborate descriptions of this siege. Additionals details from VOC documents annotated below

908 Journal De Vlaming, 16 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 1002v-1003r.

Fig 14.1 (Next page) The siege of Laala, as depicted in the manuscript version of Bor's Amboinse Oorlogen in Brussels. In the middle, the T-shaped fort housing the settlement, surrounded by two lines of siege works on the land side and ships and kora-kora on the sea side. To the right, the battery on the east side from which Company artillery fired into the settlement. Above, a relief force from Asaudi marching down from the hills but unable to break through to the settlement. On the left, the storm attack on the bastion. Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982, fol. 68. The drawing would have been based on a now-lost original, but Cf. the drawing by Johannes Vingboons in Atlas Van der Hem 40:17, collection Austrian National Library, which has virtually the same composition except for the slightly different perspective.



workers available allowed for the use of what might have been considered proper siege tactics back in the Dutch Republic at the time.

On the day of the landing, a battery was erected on the northeast side of Laala. Over subsequent days, it was to be used mainly for firing mortars, firebombs and grenades into Laala, rather than breaching the defences. On the first night of bombardments, the besiegers saw the glow of the fire they had caused – apparently in a warehouse, as the air filled with the smell of burning cloves.[909] The construction of the siege works around the entire perimeter of the fort commenced the next day – a double line of wooden parapets behind a ditch, one facing towards the fort and the other facing outwards, as De Vlaming and his officers expected that a relief force from Asaudi was certain to arrive sooner or later.

Sure enough, the next day, the Company had to contend with several attacks. From the besieged town, a sortie was made towards the west on its as yet incomplete siege works. Company troops were able to drive them back with several musket volleys, the only casualty on the Company apparently the result of friendly fire. Right around the same time, a force from Asaudi was spotted coming down into the plain from the hills. Company soldiers went out to intercept them and succeeded in driving them back into the interior. When the same force was spotted coming down again the next day, De Vlaming no longer saw a point in sending out soldiers: the double line of siege works was, by then, completed, thanks to the massive amount of labour that the indigenous allies provided.[910]

How to proceed from there, though? Now that the besieged were completely isolated, the Company could simply send parties into the surrounding area to destroy the sago. This would take time, however, as the sago palms in the region were abundant. De Vlaming did not like the prospect of having so many of his precious few soldiers occupied in the siege for so long. Hoping that he had worn down the besieged enough by a few days of bombardment and fires, he decided to storm the town the next day.[911]

150 European soldiers were designated for the purpose. The officers who were to command the attack were assigned by lottery – as De Vlaming would later claim, there were too many enthusiastic volunteers. While a furious barrage on the wooden bastion on the southwest side of the fort forced the defenders to keep their heads down, the attackers moved in with siege ladders, and managed to

909 Journal De Vlaming, 17 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 1005r.
910 Journal De Vlaming, 18-19 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 1007v-1008r; 1009v.
911 Journal De Vlaming, 19 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 1010r-v.

conquer the bastion. They had hoped to use it as an elevated position from which to fire into the rest of the town, but as it turned out, the bastion was hollow save for narrow walkways, not providing the attackers much place to stand. As De Vlaming's journal put it, it was as if the attackers found themselves in a cellar – one which was vigorously attacked by the fort's defenders. To get out of their indefensible position, they stormed into the settlement, ending up in a fierce firefight around a nearby waringin tree. Soon, the defenders broke and ran.[912]

The only problem was that, with the siege works and the sea surrounding them on all sides, they had nowhere to run to.

### ...and improper conduct

In the immediate wake of the Great Hoamoal War, Livinus Bor would sit down at his new station in Batavia to write his history of the conflict. As we have seen, he tried to glorify the brave and capable handling of the war by his former commander, but also felt compelled to defend him against criticism which was apparently making the rounds in Batavia. Interspersing his narrative of the war itself are extensive passages addressing the question of whether the Company's conduct in the conflict was justified. Making use of the notion of 'just war' and measuring the Company's actions along that yardstick, Bor argued that it was permitted to destroy the livelihood of the enemy, and that, considering the circumstances, the Dutch had actually showed quite some restraint against the defenders and inhabitants of conquered towns and forts. The Company's actions had almost invariably been justifiable and proportional, and certainly always understandable.[913]

The conquest of Laala figured quite prominently in his reasoning. As the clearest example of some of the practices that the Company and its allies had developed in the course of the conflict, it took up a central place in his descriptions of, and justifications for, the conduct of the war.

To begin with, it appears that by the time Laala fell, taking prisoners was no longer on the Company's repertoire. Although I have found no detailed descriptions of the immediate aftermath of any of the conquests, it is telling that at Kahuli, only two prisoners were made, which are described as having been spared 'on account of their youth and innocence.' The rest of the garrison, De Vlaming

912 Journal De Vlaming, 9 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol. 1010v-1011r.
913 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 54-60.

informed his superiors, had been 'killed and cut to pieces.'[914] The passage seems to imply that even those who had surrendered or were found wounded were killed, although the phrasing is tantalizingly vague.

It is less doubtful what happened at Laala, however. The fleeing defenders ran straight into the muskets and spears of those still manning the siege works. Some tried to escape by swimming, while being fired at from the ships. In total, 700 men were killed and an estimated 60 got away swimming. Not a single man capable of bearing arms was taken prisoner. Squirming to reconcile these actions with the notion of just war, Bor inadvertently provided some details unknown from the Company sources. As he explained, when the main force moved into the fort, the 'soldiers started felling, as it was unsafe for us to leave even one arm-bearing person alive, because during our storm attack, those from Asaudi, some seven or eight banners strong, had come bearing down on our works.'[915] Elsewhere in his book, however, Bor, also divulged that, rather than a desperate measure under extreme circumstances, killing all the enemy men had become standard practice during the conflict. He explained that, while it is proper to stop killing once victory is secured, in this particular war, leaving rebels capable of bearing arms alive was 'dangerous, and one would certainly live to regret it.'[916] Besides, they were all guilty of the revolt anyway, from the highest to the lowest, and deserved no better.

Women and children, of course, were another matter, and Bor apparently felt a particular obligation to account for the death of one high-ranking woman who was at Laala when it fell: Majira's sister. Whereas De Vlaming also casually mentioned her as among the high-ranking dead, he did not feel that he needed to explain anything about the circumstances, and merely observed that they were 'all perfect scoundrels, whom I would have wished to have perished long before all these troubles.'[917] Bor, for his part, recognizing that killing women and children was not in line with the proper conduct of war, did feel a need to explain it, in the process informing us that she was 'killed *after being captured* at Laala' (my italics). The way he saw it, it was an eye for an eye: many women, including Verheijden's sister, had likewise been killed at Manipa and other Company posts,

914 'nedergemaeckt ende in stucken gehouden.' De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 16 September 1654, in: VOC 1204, p. 666.

915 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 57-58.

916 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 239-240.

917 Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 27 September 1654, in: VOC 1204, p 701.

after all – an argument that, one imagines, would have convinced few contemporary legal scholars.[918]

As to the rest of the women and children: all of these were taken by the soldiers as spoils of war, that is to say, they were enslaved. De Vlaming was aware of the 400 taken by his own soldiers, but added that his Ambonese allies had taken an unknown additional number.[919] Bor, in this case, did not see any need for justifications, except by remarking that it was meant to 'encourage the soldier to similar bravery in the future.'[920] Of course, slavery was a common practice in the Company's empire, and one sanctioned by contemporary European legal scholarship. Legal arguments aside, enslaving captives had long been a central aspect of indigenous warfare in the region, and one in which the Company had participated for at least two decades.[921]

Of course, over those same decades, the conflicts in the region had been characterized by deep mutual resentment, paranoia, headhunting, subterfuge, assassinations, executions and environmental destruction. Still, the image that emanates from the sources of how the war was conducted at this stage, with its brutal public executions, the slaying and often literal cutting to pieces of any male captives, and the casual enslavement of the rest of the population, seem to suggest that it had still managed to turn a corner towards a new shade of dark. It also gives occasion to consider Bor's book in a different light: while it initially reads like an unsavoury glorification of violence, the way in which he is far more preoccupied with violence perpetrated by the Company than by anything the Makasars and Hoamoalese were doing, hints at an internal struggle to make sense of some of these horrors he had been part of. After the fall of Laala, there would still be a few more.

### The wider war

In the wake of the conquest of Laala, once the hundreds of bodies scattered through what remained of the settlement had been burned or thrown into the sea, Sultan Mandarsyah, who had by then arrived in the region, visited its remnants, accompanied by his brother Kalamata and the sultan of Jailolo – 'to see', as Rumphius saw it, 'the trouble that sir De Vlaming went through to subdue

918 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 58.
919 Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 27 September 1654, in: VOC 1204, p 700.
920 Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 240.
921 See e.g. chapter VII, paragraph 'To the far side of Seram'.

their rebels.'[922] Finding the sago forests in the region even more extensive than expected, De Vlaming left soldiers and indigenous troops to undertake the tedious task of eradicating them all. He allowed the hongi to disband. As for him: he went on his way to Batavia by way of Buton and Makassar.

While such trips had of course been a recurring phenomenon, this one was of a slightly different nature. De Vlaming was convinced that the Makasars and Hoamoalese at Asaudi were now in an increasingly precarious situation. He had severely disrupted their food supply in the recent campaigns, and had recently learned from a defector that tensions within Asaudi itself were rising. The Hoamoalese, worn down by hunger and fatigue, were reportedly just about ready to sue for terms with the Company. This outraged the Makasar leaders, who had put so much effort into these campaigns but now saw their prize, direct control over parts of the region, threatened. Harsh threats and insults had been exchanged, with the Makasars threatening to just take what food they needed from their allies instead of paying for it, and the Hoamoalese accusing the Makasars of having just 'bummed about' (*gepannekoekt*) instead of seriously trying to conquer the region. Furious, the Makasars had deposed Majira and replaced him with his half-brother Labodi. [923]

All in all, De Vlaming was confident that the resistance at Asaudi would probably collapse of its own accord sooner rather than later – if he could make sure that the Makasars would be unable to send another fleet with soldiers and supplies there. Over the subsequent months, this became the central goal of his campaign, as he shifted focus to Buton as a strategic chokepoint, Makasar itself, and its various tributaries throughout the eastern archipelago.[924]

De Vlaming had brought Mandarsyah and his entourage, ships and troops with him to Buton, which, after all, was a subsidiary to Ternate. Mandarsyah was left there both to guard the place and see if he could bring the internal Butonese unrest, with so many nobles apparently plotting against the sultan, to an end. De Vlaming himself hoped to be back to assist him shortly, but for now, quickly continued to Makassar, which was, by then, blockaded by some Compa-

922 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', 80.

923 Journal De Vlaming, 18 September 1654, in: VOC 1205, fol 1008r-1009v.

924 Interestingly, this specific wider aspect and phase of the conflict has been relatively well-studied in comparison to the rest of the Great Hoamoal War, as part of various studies which focus on different regions, such as Solor, Timor, Buton and the Tiworo Strait. Hans Hagerdal, *Lords of the Land, lord of the Sea*; De Roever, *Sandelhout;* Schoorl, 'Het eeuwige verbond'; Jennifer Gaynor, *Intertidal histories*.

ny ships. He himself had dispatched three ships and two sloops from Amboina in early August, to sail to Timor, Solor and Bima, and finally to Makassar. Besides various other errands, it was to look out for Makasar activity at all its destinations. At Bima, also a tributary to Makassar, commander Gerrit Roos was to see if the local ruler could be convinced to abandon Makassar and ally itself with the Company instead. It was then to continue to Makassar and block the roadstead as best he could with his small fleet until De Vlaming himself arrived. The fleet had achieved precious little in this regard – in fact, a fleet of 40 Makasar vessels had recently visited Bima for provisions, undoubtedly to then 'sail to Amboina or Banda and torment the Dutch in their possessions there,' De Vlaming and Roos suspected. The ruler of Bima, bound to the royal family of Gowa by marriage, had not been receptive to the Company's overtures.[925] The blockade at Gowa had likewise not been particularly effective, due to the limited number of ships and the daunting system of Makasar forts providing cover directly along the coast. De Vlaming decided to break it up and instead sent Roos back to Bima with the better part of the ships, to blockade it, thus cutting Makassar off from one of its tributaries and potential staging and supply points. Roos was then to continue to Buton and build two small forts along the Strait, guarding it from passing Makasars and protecting the sultanate. De Vlaming himself headed to Batavia in two sloops.

As he sailed there and wrote his report as per usual, ordering his thoughts and making plans for the next season, he was, all in all, once again quite optimistic. Some good news was that Sultan Malikussaid and Chancellor Pattingalloang had both recently died in quick succession. As De Vlaming knew from first-hand experience, they had been intimidatingly well-informed and capable, and their successors were young and inexperienced. Hopefully this would lead to less effective government, or, even better, some coup or civil war.[926] It was, in that respect, a promising sign that while he had been at Buton, 'a fleet of ten junks… sent by the Bugis kings', had arrived there to inform about the alliance between Ternate, Buton and the VOC, and whether they might not join it, as they 'had long been tired of the overbearing rule of the Makasars.'[927]

925 Journal De Vlaming, 17 October 1654, in VOC 1205, fol. 1030. For the specifics of the marriage see Cummings, *Makassar Annals,* 66.

926 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 November 1654, in: VOC 1204, p. 746.

927 Quoted from Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 81. For further details, including the telling fact that these Bugis were the first to inform De Vlaming of the

As De Vlaming saw it, all these conflicts the Company was involved in were intimately connected, even beyond the eastern archipelago. He suspected that the Portuguese were supporting and encouraging the Makasar intervention in the Ambon region, not in the last place to divert Company resources away from their campaigns against the Portuguese in Ceylon and India. He was very much aware that Makasar intervention did not only hinge on Makassar itself, but also on its allies and tributaries in the region. The Sula islands to the Ambon region's northwest, the Bajo people along the Tiworo Strait near Buton, Timor and Bima towards the south, various polities and islands along Sulawesi's east coast… all did their part in providing passage, supplies and military power for the Makasars. If the Makasars were to be kept out of the Ambon islands, these regions were key to making that happen.

His ideas about how to proceed were all geared towards that goal. The Buton Strait should be permanently guarded with ships and fortifications. The Tiworo Strait should be raided, and the Company should try and conquer Makassar's various tributaries on Sulawesi's east coast and within the islands of Maluku – all of which were rightfully within the sphere of influence of Ternate anyway. An expeditionary force could be sent to Timor, to finally drive the Portuguese away from there, and to make sure that it was not used as a staging area, as De Vlaming was well aware that some of its communities were affiliated with Gowa. Bima should once again be blockaded. Should the new sultan of Makassar, pressured by all these measures, be willing to once again make peace, the Company should only do so on the condition that the Makasars 'should never again be allowed to show themselves east of Sulawesi.'[928] Until that time, the Company would have to be prepared to invest in a continuous military presence in the Buton Strait, at Bima and other places – but could perhaps, in due time, cut back on the garrisons in Banda, Ambon and Ternate, which would become a lot quieter and safer when the Makasars were kept at arm's length.[929]

Subsequently making his way back east in November after a brief stay in Batavia, De Vlaming was in a position to personally put his new strategy into

death of Pattingalloang, see Journal De Vlaming, 10 October 1654, in VOC 1205, fol. 1027r-1028v.

928 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 November 1654, in: VOC 1204, p. 742-743.

929 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 November 1654, in: VOC 1204, p. 735-748.

practice. Passing by Bima and arriving in Buton,[930] he found that commander Roos had by then built two Company forts on the shore below the Butonese capital, just as he had been ordered to. Less expected was the fact that the Butonese sultan, Mardan Ali, had meanwhile been deposed and was facing death by strangulation, with the blessing of the Ternaten sultan Mandarsyah. As it turned out, the Butonese sultan had not just been unpopular due to his affiliation with the Company; he had also been molesting the wives of some of the other Butonese leaders. De Vlaming found these actions by Mandarsyah rather rash and noted with some regret that the old sultan had been well-disposed towards the Company, as had some other Butonese leaders who were likewise evicted and in some cases killed during the change of power. The new sultan who Mandarsyah confirmed, Malik Sirullah, was, however, also well-disposed towards the Company and, it seemed, a whole lot less unpopular than his predecessor, so De Vlaming acquiesced.[931]

The sojourn at Buton was also used to target one of the staging areas of Makasar fleets bound for the east: Tiworo. In early January 1655, Roos and De Vlaming, their forces buttressed by the Ternatens still at Buton, staged an attack into the Tiworo Strait with their small craft, attacking the villages and the Makasar-built fort there. The attack came at a bad moment for the inhabitants there, as many of the men were away for war or hunting buffalo, and the Company's troops and allies were able to raid and plunder without much opposition. As per De Vlaming's usual conduct of the war, some 200 men were killed, and the women and children, some 300, were, as Bor formulated it, 'given to the soldiery as war booty.'[932] De Vlaming saw vindicated his assertion that Tiworo was an important staging area for Makasar fleets: some 50 vessels, loaded with rice, cloth and other provisions and trade goods, were pulled up on the riverbed near the fort. They were all immediately put to the torch, drawing the comment from Bor that the war booty would have been far greater still had the Company not been so hasty with its use of fire.[933]

Further vindication came just three days later, when an additional Makasar fleet of fifty vessels was spotted coming through the Tiworo Strait. The force

930 The stop in Bima was merely meant to see if the fleet under Roos was still there and whether there happened to be a Makassar fleet. As neither was the case, De Vlaming went on his way almost as soon as he had arrived there.

931 Schoorl, 'Het eeuwige verbond', 42-43.

932 Bor, *Amboinse Oorlogen,* 262.

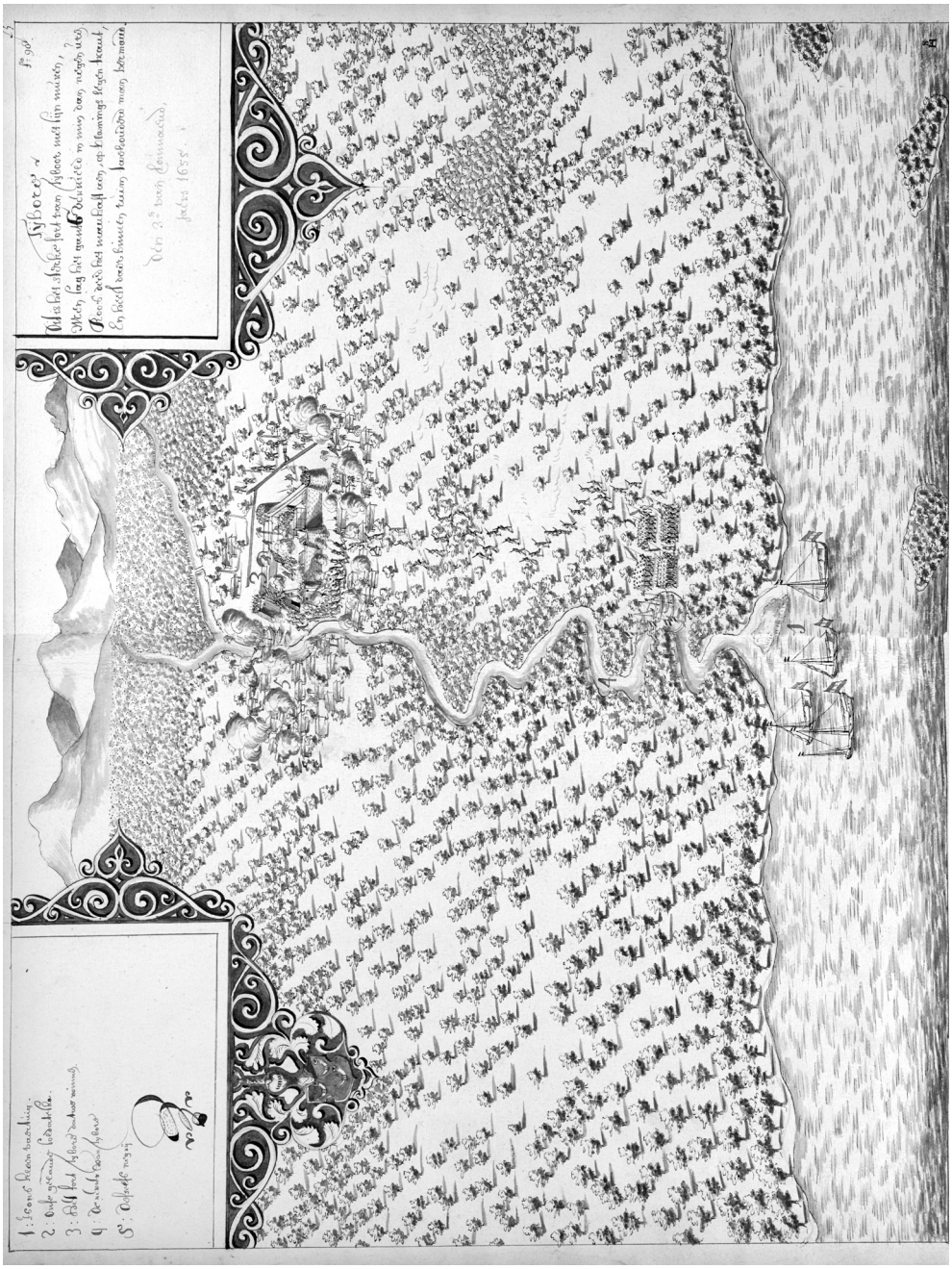
933 Gaynor, *Intertidal histories,* 71-76; Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 262.

was so strong that the Ternaten and Company vessels found it prudent not to engage and instead blocked the eastern exit of the Strait instead. It prompted De Vlaming to muse that, had the Makasars arrived only three days earlier, the Company would have had a whole different kind of fight on its hands.[934] The Makasar fleet proceeded to barricade the river and entrench itself there, and De Vlaming, who had intended to leave some vessels to patrol and block the northern entrance of the Buton Strait anyway, now had one extra reason to do so. He himself continued to see if he could dissolve or destroy Makasar power beyond the Strait, bringing Sultan Mandarsyah (the 'rightful ruler' of all these areas, after all), with him.

His first stop was Tobungku, a polity on the east coast of Sulawesi just north of the Buton Strait, which we have already come across as a bone of contention between Gowa and Ternate over the past three decades. Arriving there, he found that its population had absconded to the mountains, already having learned about what had happened at Tiworo and worried that they might be treated in the same way. Contacts, however, were soon established. The exchange which subsequently took place is insightful with regard to the general nature of politics in the region. The leaders informed the Company that they were happy to return to friendship with the Company and the protection of Ternate. They had simply had no choice but to switch allegiance to the Makasars, as Ternate had failed to protect them and the Makasars had just kept on coming. As a peace offering, they delivered two Dutch sailors who had been captured by the Makasars in a confrontation in the Buton Strait earlier. Additionally, they offered to assist the fleet during the rest of the campaign by serving as guides higher up on the coast,

934 Gaynor, *Intertidal histories,* 76-77.

Fig 14.2 (Next page) The attack on the village and fort at Tiworo, 3 January 1655. Below, the small craft of the Company force in the Tiworo Strait. Slightly above, the soldiers, who approached the fort and settlement overland with the help of local guides. Above, the village, fort and vessels at Tiworo captured, burned and destroyed. Although no original on which this drawing was based is known, and its reliability is therefore uncertain, it is interesting to note that the fort, as depicted here, has a clear Makasar signature. Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982, fol. 75.



an area relatively unknown to the Company.[935] Thus, Tobungku switched its allegiance back to Ternate – for now. 'Although they have now publicly declared themselves to be enemies of the Makasars, it seems likely that, now that we have left, they will once again reconcile themselves with them, as they are the strongest', he subsequently mused to the governor-general.[936]

The rest of the tour through the region was less conciliatory – the *negeri* of Batui slightly further north, which was affiliated with the raja of Gapi and recognized the Makasars as its overlords, was destroyed outright, and the fields in the area, mostly producing yams, destroyed to prevent Makasar fleets from taking in provisions. Subsequently passing by the Banggai and Sula Islands, De Vlaming found to his surprise that he had been beaten to it – only a part of the Ternaten *hongi* had been at Buton, and the rest, led by Mandarsyah's *gogogu* or chancellor, had meanwhile also toured through the region to reassert Ternaten dominance. Gapi (now known as Peleng, the largest of the Banggai Islands), had been attacked, and the Sula Islands had been entirely brought back under Ternaten control.[937] While at Gapi, De Vlaming, to his consternation, did find a small cluster of 128 clove trees, which had never been known to grow here. He immediately eradicated them.[938]

All in all, the attempts to curb Makasar access to, influence in, and manpower and provisions from, the wider eastern archipelago seemed to be bearing some fruit. Even if this would prove to be temporary, it might be enough to break the resistance at Asaudi – if nothing else went wrong in the meantime.

### Fall-out within the Ternaten ranks

As De Vlaming arrived in the Ambon region on 22 February, he was confident that before long, he would be able to break the resistance at Asaudi, and with it, hopefully end the entire war. His first order of business was to cut them off even more. Last year, he had cut them off from a supply of food overland. Now, to isolate them entirely and also prevent the foraging expeditions they were periodically organising, he decided to once again blockade the shore in front of Asaudi. Five Company ships, accompanied by sixteen smaller vessels, took position, announcing their arrival by a fierce bombardment of the coast, which was able to

935 De Vlaming to Jacob Hustaert (Ternate), 2 February 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 109-110.
936 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 21 April 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 299.
937 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 21 April 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 300-301.
938 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 May 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 415.

destroy a number of Makasar vessels on the shore.[939]

All in all, De Vlaming felt he had those at Asaudi by the throat now. In April, however, just as he was preparing to move in for the final conquest, several unexpected events diverted his attention. Makasar ships had been sighted at Eastern Seram – De Vlaming speculated that, his efforts notwithstanding, a Makasar fleet had been able to reach the region via Timor or Solor after all. Their presence had also apparently persuaded some of the communities there to switch their allegiance, as a number of merchants from Ambon and Banda had been killed in several places there. Just two weeks later, he learned that the Makasar fleet still holed up in the Tiworo Strait had been able to slip past the blockade in a very thick fog, and that a sizeable number of Makasar vessels was therefore now at large east of the Buton Strait. The worst news, however, came from much closer – at Buru. There, another attempt to oust Mandarsyah from power was taking place.

In his continuing efforts to return various areas to Ternaten control, De Vlaming had invited Mandarsyah, who was still in the Sula Islands, to meet him at Buru, to see if kimelaha Hassi and his followers could likewise be brought back into the fold. Mandarsyah duly arrived in early April – but things did not go as expected. Mandarsyah's brother Kalamata, the devout Muslim, who was also still on the fleet, had been building a coalition to support his own claim to the throne. He apparently meant to use the sojourn for the negotiations at Kajeli, on the east side of Buru, to spring his trap and kill Mandarsyah outright. In his eagerness, however, Kalamata already killed a close associate of the sultan before getting around to Mandarsyah himself. The latter was warned of what had happened, and made a run for it with three small vessels, seeking refuge in Castle Victoria. The Ternatens in the fleet at Kajeli proceeded to proclaim Kalamata their sultan.[940] De Vlaming, who had promised Mandarsyah to meet him at Buru but had failed to do so, now quickly made his way to Kajeli.

In the exchange between the two that followed, both De Vlaming and Kalamata initially took a conciliatory tone. The latter stated that Mandarsyah's unpopularity was also due to a host of other reasons that had little to do with the Company or the present conflict, and that he himself would be loyal to the

939 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 May 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 439; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 85.

940 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* I.2, 315-317; De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 21 April 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 301-302.

Company if it was willing to recognize him as the new sultan. De Vlaming played along, stating that the Company, after all, was just a friend of the Ternatens, and far be it from him to choose their sultan for them. This has led some authors to state that De Vlaming, tired with Mandarsyah's unpopularity among the Ternaten leadership and all the problems that it caused, was just about ready to drop Mandarsyah, but was ultimately prevented from doing so by the harsh stance that Kalamata subsequently took – the latter ultimately told De Vlaming that there was little to negotiate about until Mandarsyah was delivered into his hands, no doubt so that he could finish the job. This was something De Vlaming could not agree to.[941]

De Vlaming's considerations as documented in his letters paint a slightly different picture. While De Vlaming roundly admitted that sultan Mandarsyah could be very rude and impatient with members of the Ternaten leadership, and that this certainly did not help his popularity, he felt that Mandarsyah's strong dependence on the Company was actually at the heart of the matter, just as it had been four years ago. Additionally, there was the future succession to consider. The year before, Mandarsyah had had a son, which, in clear recognition of his loyalty to his Dutch 'ally and protector', he had named Kaicili Amsterdam. His birth had, so De Vlaming believed, given more urgency to Kalamata's ambitions for the throne, as he felt that the Company would certainly want this son to succeed his father in time. De Vlaming, for his part, was bent on preserving Kaicili Amsterdam as a viable successor to the Ternaten throne. All this meant that allowing Kalamata to become sultan was out of the question to De Vlaming, and he 'was of firm intention … to do the utmost to maintain Mandarsyah in his station.' To do so, however, would require 'feigning, and outwardly show ourselves quite differently from our inner resolutions.'[942]

We have no sources documenting Kalamata's considerations, but regardless, he found himself on the same side as the enemies of the Company. He soon brought his fleet upriver at Kajeli, where ten Makasar vessels were also hiding, and barricaded himself there with them. As to kimelaha Hassi: the Company strongly suspected that he had been in on the plot all along, and that his earlier promise to swear loyalty to Mandarsyah, and turn over the Makasar vessels and their crews into the bargain, had been part of the ruse. In practice then, this

941 Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 165.

942 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 May 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 430-431.

latest attempted coup meant that Kalamata, and a good part of the Ternaten leadership and military forces, were now on the side of the Company's enemies. The besieged at Asaudi certainly felt that way, and responded to the news with cheering, and firing their guns in celebration.

De Vlaming, for his part, was deeply frustrated. 'If it were not for these new Makasar reinforcements, and this fall-out that the Ternatens have wreaked, we would, God willing, have seen our work here come to a good ending by now', he complained.[943] On the upside though, Kalamata's coup had not been entirely successful, as Mandarsyah was still alive. The Company now only had to make sure that it did not spark any unrest in Ternate itself. A small fort was built at the mouth of the river at Kajeli, and a Company ship was left there, to prevent anyone from leaving – Kalamata could pretend to be the Ternaten sultan up some river at Buru if we wanted. De Vlaming meant to make sure that no-one in North Maluku subscribed to his claim. He prepared to sail to Ternate, with Mandarsyah, and a sizable military force.

As annoyed as De Vlaming might have been, this *impromptu* expedition did come with a silver lining. In the opinion of both De Vlaming and the Ternaten governor Hustaert, the renewed Ternaten unrest made it both necessary and possible to eradicate all cloves at Makian – either by convincing the orangkaya to do so 'voltuntarily', or by doing it for them. With this, the clove extirpation policy of which De Vlaming had been the main architect would be completed in North Maluku.

### 'Now come to an end': clove eradication in North Maluku

In preparation for his expedition to Ternate, De Vlaming collected most of the soldiers from the ships at Asaudi, only leaving a small number, 'mostly crippled' there to maintain the blockade. He used the opportunity to see if he the besieged were now, perhaps, finally more willing to negotiate. They were not. An attempt to open secret separate negotiations with the Hoamoalese there, offering them amnesty in return for their surrender and their assistance against the Makasars, also got no response. De Vlaming speculated that the Hoamoalese probably smelled a rat, expecting that 'we would stop whistling once we had all the birds caught under our net, and would then settle the score once and for all.' He had to admit, though, that 'that was really not entirely unjustified or untrue', as there were those among the besieged he had every intention to 'horribly punish, to

943 De Vlaming to Govervor-General and Council, 6 May 1655, in: VOC 1211, p. 441.

fulfil Gods righteous punishment, and as an example to others' once he got his hands on them one way or the other.[944]

Efforts to put the besieged under further pressure had meanwhile continued. In late May, the hongi, led by Simon Cos, had sailed to various sago-producing areas on Seram's north coast where the besieged had reportedly been procuring food. The regions got the standard treatment of the destruction of their trees and vessels, while the crew restocked their own sago supplies into the bargain.[945] As it happened, De Vlaming himself unwittingly dealt a major blow against Makasar morale on the 26th of May while at Asaudi. That day he led a small military action up the river there to attempt and destroy Makasar vessels. This ultimately drew out a Makasar sortie, and led to a skirmish with some casualties on both sides. While this was a relatively minor encounter, De Vlaming would later learn that the highest Makasar commander at Asaudi, Karaeng Buta Tua, was among the dead.[946]

Otherwise, Asaudi would have to wait until after the expedition. On 3 June, De Vlaming sent sixty soldiers ahead in a yacht straight from the blockade to Ternate, to make sure there were enough soldiers there in case of any eventualities. After making some final preparations for his own departure at Castle Victoria, he followed two weeks later, on a fleet of five ships, seven smaller vessels, five hundred European soldiers and an additional five hundred Ambonese warriors.[947]

After stopping underway at the island of Obilatu, just east of Obi, to eradicate a cluster of some one thousand clove trees discovered there earlier, the fleet arrived at Makian on the 24th.[948] De Vlaming hoped to convince the orangkaya

944 De Vlaming to Hustaert (Ternate), in VOC 1211, 1 June 1655 in: VOC 1211, p. 526-527.

945 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 14 June 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 568-569.

946 De Vlaming does not mention the death of Karaeng Buta Tua, or even the skirmish, which seems to have been relatively minor, in his correspondence immediately following his sojourn at Asaudi. It is only two months later, after the fall of Asaudi, that he had apparently become aware of it. See e.g. De Vlaming to the sultan of Buton, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 686. Karaeng Buta Tua had come to Makassar as the head of the fleet of 1654. After his death, Daeng ri Bulekang would become the supreme Makasar commander in Asaudi.

947 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 643.

948 More strictly speaking, the fleet anchored on the coast of Halmahera just opposite Makian, and invited the Makianese orangkaya to come there.

to eradicate their cloves 'voluntarily'. While he felt he was more than justified to do it forcefully, as many of the Makian leaders were currently up the river at Kajeli with Kalamata, and therefore in revolt against their rightful sultan, he was juggling too many things at the time already, and much preferred simply striking a deal. The Makianese orangkaya, finding themselves negotiating on board of a sizeable and well-armed fleet, prudently agreed, and immediately named their price: 2500 rials of eight yearly. Should the latter surrender and reconcile themselves with the Company within the year, then the yearly stipend should be doubled to 5000. De Vlaming, not expecting that the situation at Kajeli would be solved through negotiation, and really loath to land his troops at Makian to do the work himself (in addition to him being anxious to tend to other business, Makian also had a rather miasmal reputation), agreed.

Even without the extra 2500 rials in case of reconciliation at Kajeli, this was quite a sum, and De Vlaming went out of his way to explain to the governor-general and council why he had agreed to it. His insights into the rationale and implications of this policy of extirpation, of which he was the original architect, are insightful. Besides all the usual arguments about not having to garrison these places as heavily anymore in the future, and the risks of smuggling now forever removed, he was also acutely aware of how these policies disenfranchised the leaders in the region, which he readily stated was part of the point:

> [Makian was always] a proud and brave nation, and could clearly always rely on its spices (desired by the entire world, as it were), which has now come to an end. From now on, these people can be ruled at our discretion, as we could, at the slightest reluctance, cease the aforementioned stipends, which is now their only means of support.[949]

Without the cloves, he added, Makian was just an unhealthy place with a dangerous volcano, to be 'shunned and despised'. It was therefore no longer any trouble for the Company, but the Company did owe it to the population to support them under that circumstance.[950]

An additional point to take pause at is that Makian was the island where, according to local tradition, clove cultivation had originated. The Makianese themselves, under the oversight of commissioners appointed by De Vlaming,

949 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 646.
950 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 649.

now set to work eradicating it from its purported original habitat, and with it, from most of North Maluku – but not all. Spanish Ternate and Tidore still produced a small amount, and, as Company officials increasingly learned over this period, clusters of clove trees were growing in places they had never even visited before.

De Vlaming himself continued to Ternate with the better part of the fleet, arriving there only two days later. In consultation with governor Hustaert, a ceremony was organised in Castle Oranje. The joint orangkaya from the region appeared before Mandarsyah and all professed their loyalty to him. As to six of them who Mandarsyah did not consider loyal and a threat to his position: he had them singled out and *krissed* that same day, with the tacit approval of De Vlaming and Hustaert.[951]

When news of the events at Kajeli had first reached Ternate, Hustaert had noted a lack of shock or surprise among the Ternaten leadership, which led him to suspect that many of them might have been in on it or, at the very least, did not exactly disapprove. However, with Kalamata holed up at Kajeli, and Mandarsyah alive and back in Ternate, readily executing detractors and with an intimidating Company fleet at his back, no-one felt any particular urgency to air their disaffection with Mandarsyah at this time. Confident that the latter's position was secure for now, and anxious to get back to the Ambon region, De Vlaming left again on the 5th of July. He picked up the rest of the fleet near Makian along the way, where the extirpation efforts were meanwhile making progress. By the 22nd, he was back in the Ambon region, and was happy to learn that in spite of the earlier reports, no Makasar fleets had arrived there. The situation within Asaudi had meanwhile become even more desperate. It was just about time, he felt, to storm Asaudi.

### The fall of Asaudi and the pursuit of the survivors

As Company officials were well aware, the besieged were by now on their last legs. Two years of efforts to cut them off from all and any supplies and reinforcements had taken their toll. No new Makasar reinforcements had made it to Asaudi this season, and the number of Makasars in Asaudi was now estimated to number only about one thousand – a fraction of the thousands that had reportedly arrived in the region over the previous two years. The relations between the

951 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 653-654.

Hoamoalese and the Makasars inside the fort had become difficult, with accusations and threats being exchanged. All the same, Asaudi, with its large number of defenders and extensive fortifications, was still a daunting target. So De Vlaming and his officers made their preparations carefully.

The only surviving bird's eye view of these fortifications and the attack, from one of the manuscript copies of Livinus Bor's *Amboinse oorlogen,* will help us better understand the fortifications, and the considerations of De Vlaming in organising his attack. This image would have been copied from a now-lost original, so that we should not overly rely on the image in terms of exact proportions and distances. Nevertheless, it corresponds to the present-day geography at Asaudi, and it significantly aids our understanding of the attack, and the defences it faced.[952]

As the bird's eye view shows, the entire coastline of Asaudi was guarded by a system of rectangular fortifications. The hills, both those along the coast to the immediate north of the bay and those inland towards the east, were likewise fortified, guarded by hilltop forts and some smaller lower fortifications towards the shore to prevent landings. Whereas we are not well-informed about the exact development of the forts, De Vlaming's journal provides the important insight that one of the hill-forts had been specifically built, and was occupied by, those who had earlier fled from the island of Boano.[953] The shape of the various forts as depicted, and this particular insight from the archive, seem to suggest that the fortifications at Asaudi largely followed the pattern we have come to know in the region at large: the rectangular forts along the shore would have been Makasar-built, while some of the Hoamoalese communities flocking to Asaudi appear to

952 While the drawing was probably made in the Netherlands, based on a now-lost original, and some of the other drawings in the same volume are problematic in that they clearly depict another episode than purported, what we do know is that De Vlaming did in fact have a map of the fortifications at Asaudi made. The letter of 9 August 1655 in which he informed the Governor-General and Council of the fall of Asaudi (surviving in copy in VOC 1211, p. 642-673) makes references to a map which had originally accompanied it (from p. 659 onwards, with the numbers referring to the map here left open). We furthermore know of the existence of such a map as De Vlaming, in a rather back-handed diplomatic gift, would later present a copy of it, along with the dagger of Malim Bugis, one of the high-ranking commanders on the Makasar fleets, to the Gowan court who had been killed in the wake of the fall of Asaudi. The gift was understandably refused. Valentijn *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën,* II.2, 201. Also note that an original, albeit badly damaged, map of the earlier blockade of Asaudi in 1653, from De Vlaming's reports, survives in the Nationaal Archief: 4.VEL 1351.

953 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 662.

have built their own fortifications, making use of the surrounding hills providing natural defences. The result was a system of fortifications which made it very difficult to land either in the bay itself or towards its immediate north. To the south, outside the bird's eye view towards the right, was a wetland area which made the approach from that side difficult as well.

De Vlaming's plan to tackle these defences had four main spearpoints. First, the small rocky island of Nussanitu just off the coast (marked F in the bird's eye view) was some 600 to 1000 meters from the various Makasar shoreline fortifications. De Vlaming had a battery set up there, which offered an elevated position from which it was possible to see and fire into the forts. Second, De Vlaming had his hopes set on the fortifications below what is nowadays called the Gunung Asaude, the high rock directly at the coast (marked E, towards the left of the bird's eye view.) The small fortifications at its foothill, if conquered, would likewise provide an elevated position from which to fire into the main Makasar forts. Third, the evening before the attack, the indigenous troops had been landed at the bay of Peisela just to the north of Asaudi. As soon as they heard the clamour of the main attack, they should march the roughly three-and-a-half kilometres overland to Asaudi, passing behind the fortified hills, and either make as much noise as they could or simply join in the attack from that side, creating a diversion and adding to the confusion among the besieged (marked G.).

Fourth, De Vlaming had prepared what we might call two instant forts, to be erected during the landing, right on the shore within range of the main Makasar fortifications. The landing troops there brought large screens of tarred canvas that had been prepared in advance. More than two meters high, they would obscure the Company musketeers from view, while a narrow strip cut out of them allowed the soldiers to aim and fire their muskets. The screens could be put up quickly with poles and a wooden framework. Behind them, wooden barrels would be placed to provide some cover for the gunners who would operate some small cannon from there. These makeshift fortifications, to be quickly erected as the troops landed in the dark before dawn, were to provide a base from which to subsequently storm the main fortifications.[954]

The plan was put into effect in the early hours of the 29th of July. Some fifty

954 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 658-659. John Verbeeck. *'Onder faveur van 't Canon': VOC-artillerie, 1602-1796: technologische vernieuwingen, logistiek en beleid*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2022, p. 71 remarks that the use of wooden barrels filled with earth was a regular siege VOC method, as a substitute for the use of gabions during sieges in Europe.

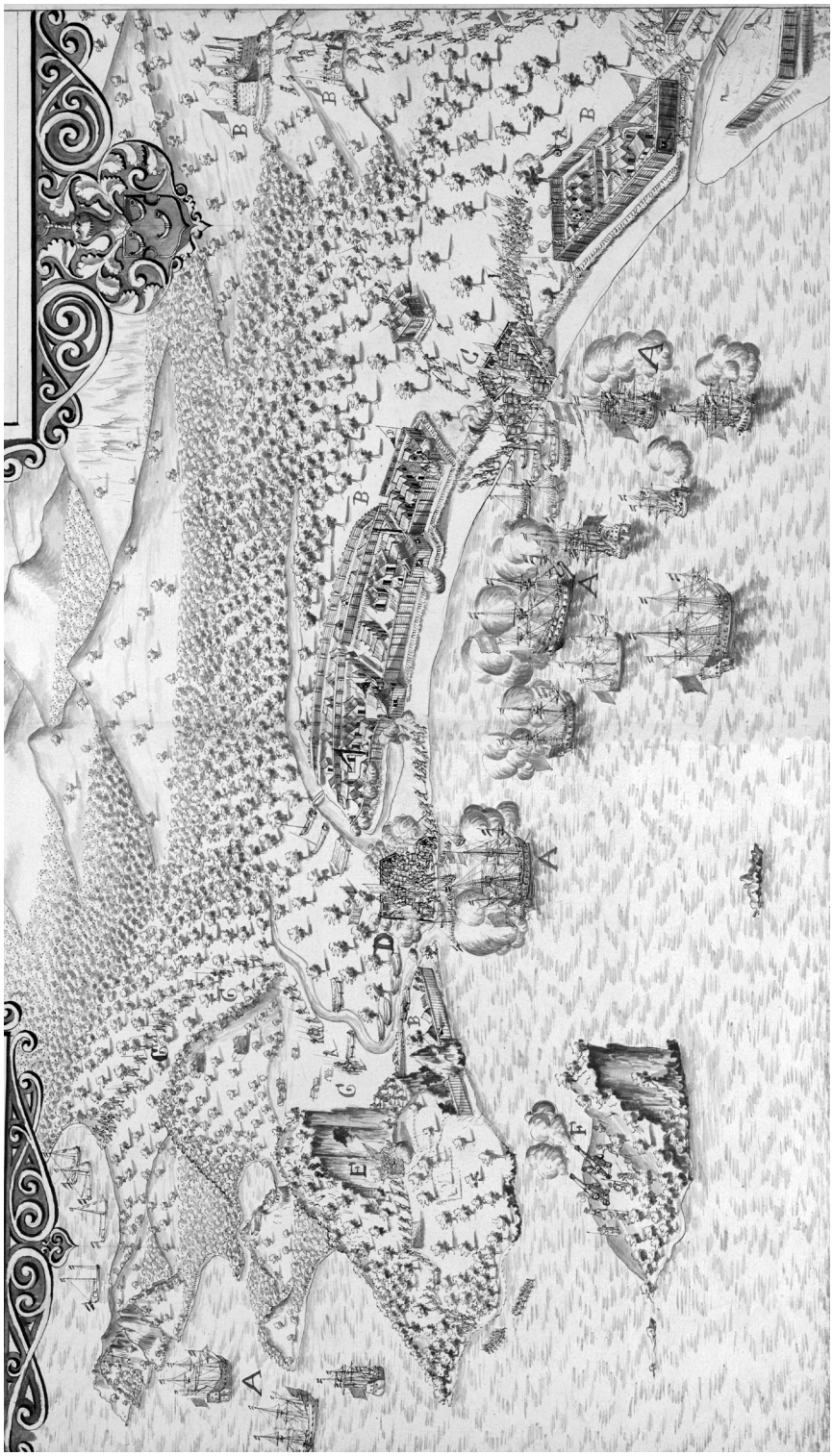


Fig 14.3 The coastline fortifications at Asaudi and the attack on them by the Company and their allies on 29 July 1655. Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982, fol. 82.

troops quietly made their way to the hill north of Asaudi in two sloops, while two groups of some 400 soldiers each quietly landed slightly further south to erect their makeshift fortifications. The surviving accounts make no mention of the latter being seriously challenged as they built up their makeshift siege works. The former, for their part, succeeded in capturing the small fortifications at the foot of the hill, which were hardly defended at all, before daybreak.

At dawn, then, the defenders not only found two siege works right at their doorsteps, but also found that the hill commanding the bay was now in the hands of Company troops – a fact that was delicately brought home to them, if we are to take Rumphius' word for it, by a Dutch trumpeter playing the *Wilhelmus*, the present-day Dutch national anthem, from there. De Vlaming himself had by then made his way to the southernmost of the two siege works, and commanded a storm attack on the southwestern Makasar fort. To the surprise of the attacking troops, the Makasar defence broke almost instantly, and the defenders made for the forts in the hills, with Company troops in pursuit. These forts likewise fell. Seeing this, the troops in the main Makasar fort just to the north, decided to abandon it before it was even stormed, likewise making for the hills. The indigenous troops, meanwhile marching to Asaudi through the interior, had a similar effect on the various hill fortifications in that area: they were all abandoned, with the exception of the one housing the people from Boano, which surrendered and sued for terms.[955]

Now, with the main seat of resistance broken, the people from Boano were not the only ones trying to once again come to terms with the Company. Just days after the conquest, the imam of Hulong came down to the Company troops at Asaudi to inform them that most of the defenders had made their way to a mountain hideout at Kalike, slightly to inland towards the south. He was happy to guide them to it. Another two weeks later, the people of Kelang approached and delivered the head of Majira's brother, kimelaha Dagga, who had been their ruler.[956] Even some Makasars came back out to Asaudi to surrender in the wake of the attack. The majority, however, had fled to Kalike, and De Vlaming went in pursuit with a force of some 700 men, half of the force European, half indigenous, in the hope of capturing it in a surprise attack. He was particularly keen

955 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 662-663.

956 De Vlaming to lieutenant Willem Brent, 21 August 1655, in: VOC 1211, fol. 708. De Vlaming, incidentally remarks that he would rather have gotten him alive to use as bait to draw out Majira.

on getting at Kaicili Ali, after all one of the original leaders of the coup against Mandarsyah, and a prominent leader of the fight against the Company in Hoamoal over the past years. The imam of Hulong assured De Vlaming that he was there and personally went along to assist in his capture.

Even though the troops managed to conquer Kalike in the early morning of 5 August, the attack was only a partial success. De Vlaming had hoped to kill or capture a great many Makasars and Hoamoalese, but all save about twenty were able to escape into the forest. He did succeed in capturing Kaicili Saidi, but in the struggle to overpower him, a Company soldier delivered him a heavy sword blow to the leg. By the time De Vlaming got to him, it was clear that Kaicili Saidi was bleeding out.

In his subsequent report to Batavia, De Vlaming made no secret of his annoyance that he had only caught Kaicili Ali as he was dying. He had hoped 'to catch him alive and well, to send him to his lord and King [i.e. Sultan Mandarsyah in Ternate], and serve as a vivid example there.' Feeling that simply bleeding out was too light a punishment for Saidi, he turned him over to his soldiers, who proceeded to 'hastily maltreat him such that he no longer looked like a human being, and finally, having been robbed of his head and several other body parts, threw him down from the mountain into a deep ravine', as he informed his superiors.[957]

If we are to take Bor's word for it, though, De Vlaming first took the opportunity to personally take out some feelings of vengeance in a way that he did not find necessary to report to Batavia. Arriving at the dying Ternaten prince, he mockingly asked him in Malay: 'Lord Kapitan Laut, are you asleep right now? How is that?', and stabbed him through the mouth three times with a pike, before turning him over to his soldiers to finish the job.[958]

### Inglorious end in Alfur territory

Over the next few days, Company troops scoured the surrounding region for survivors, finding and killing some 200 of them in the woods. De Vlaming then continued to the line of forts up at the land bridge: he had a hunch that the remaining Makasars and Hoamoalese, running out of places to run to in Hoamoal proper, would try to break through the line and make their way east

957 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 9 August 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 671-672.

958 'Jow Kapitan Laut, tidur sekarang? Bagaimana?' Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen,* 299.

to look for less hostile territory on Seram. To prevent them escaping beyond his reach, he instructed the officers to extend the palisades some way into sea itself, while he made for Hitu to collect some additional troops to garrison the forts. Just as he was away, however, his hunch was confirmed: on the night following 10 August, some 600 Makasars and Hoamoalese men but also women and children, did indeed make it past the defensive line at its southernmost fortification, called Zeeburg, wading and swimming. Company troops were able to kill some ten of them, but the rest made it through in the darkness. Discovering what had happened upon his return, De Vlaming was so furious that he had the officer responsible for keeping guard put into irons.[959]

But where were they headed? To keep out of the way of the Company, their most likely route would be some way through the interior and then to Seram's north coast. This would eventually bring them to Lisebata, a Muslim and *ulilima* settlement with a largely immigrant population, which had openly supported Majira in an earlier phase of the war.[960] It seemed a reasonable assumption that that was their destination for now. From the land bridge to Lisebata, it was some 50 kilometres as the crow flies.[961] However, the terrain that the 600 or so men, women and children would have to pass through, likely having to forage for food as they went, was craggy, mountainous and heavily forested. It was also the home region of the *ulisiwa* Alfurs allied to the Company.

As far as the sources inform us, Alfur involvement in the Hoamoal War had been relatively limited until now, certainly compared to some of the earlier periods. They had played a crucial role, however, around the land bridge. After the completion of line of forts there, the Alfurs of Tanuno, now cut off from the besieged at Asaudi with whom they had been doing business, had switched their allegiance to the Company. Joined by bands from other areas, they had been hunting down the Hoamoalese and Makasars, allowed and actively encouraged by the VOC to pass the line of fortifications into Hoamoal itself. The Company, as always, offered rewards and provided additional provisions. As a result, the besieged at Asaudi had 'scarcely dared to put one foot into the forest' during the

959 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 30 September 1655 in: VOC 1211, 801.

960 Rumphius, *Ambonse eilanden,* 154-161; Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 28.

961 Note that the community of Lisabata moved several times over the course of this period. While it was much further east in later times, at the time of the war it was near the present-day settlement of Subu, until 1667. Rumphius, *Ambonse eilanden,* 156.

last few months of the siege.[962] As he had been preparing for the final assault on Asaudi, De Vlaming had sent word to the line of fortifications to urge as many of the Alfurs to enter Hoamoal, to hunt down those who would inevitably flee into the interior after its fall.[963]

Now, those refugees had fled to the home turf of the Alfurs, not only chased by the latter's headhunting bands, but also by search parties sent out by the Company both over land and along the coast. Details of how the vast majority of them were ultimately killed or captured are frustratingly scarce in the preserved sources.[964] What is clear, however, is that they were caught by a combination of Company troops and Alfurs before they ever reached Lisabata.[965] By the 24th, they had all been killed or captured. Among the casualties were the three highest surviving Makasar military leaders and many of the orangkaya from Hoamoal and their family members, including Majira's wife.[966] De Vlaming estimated that, all in all, since the fall of Asaudi, some 1100 or 1200 refugees had been killed, and some 280 captured.[967]

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962 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 6 May 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 445-446. Also see ibid. p. 441, noting that some 50 heads had been hunted over the previous period.

963 De Vlaming to *vaandrig* Claes Bunten, 25 July 1655, in VOC 1211, p. 621-623.

964 Neither De Vlaming nor any high-ranking VOC officials were present, and De Vlaming only summarily noted how the entire group had been massacred. Bor and Rumphius are similarly brief on the matter. Rumphius mentions Hatupatola, just west of Lisabata, as the site where the survivors were massacred, Bor merely notes that it was 'near Lisebata'. A drawing in the Brussels manuscript copy of Bor, *Amboinse oorlogen* supposedly depicting the final skirmish should be viewed with extreme caution, as it is unlikely that a drawing or map was made at the battle and there is no similar drawing in the The Hague copy of the manuscript. It is therefore likely that this was an addition to the second manuscript, possibly made in the Netherlands and with an unknown amount of poetic license.

965 If they had arrived there, it might not have helped them much anyway. In the wake of the fall of Asaudi,,the people of Lisabata had sent a vessel there to make terms with the Company, and they were now in fact cooperating in the hunt for the survivors of the siege. De Vlaming to Simon Cos, 14 August 1655, in: VOC 1211, fol. 692-693.

966 De Vlaming mentions: I Daeng ri Bulekang, Malim Bugis and Karasela (the three highest remaining Makasar leaders), many of the 'pangauwen', i.e. leaders of the individual Makasar ships, the kipati of Kambelo and his wife, Majira's wife and another of his consorts, and 'many other leaders, both Ambonese and Makasar.' Made captive were Karaeng Tabiyei (brother of I Daeng ri Bulekang) and Daeng Mayena, (family member of Raja Lubu, 'one of the most prominent Bugis kings'). De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 30 September 1655 in: VOC 1211, 801-802.

967 Note, though, that De Vlaming himself considers this no more than a rough estimate.

The only leaders who escaped being killed or captured by the Dutch and their allies were those who had not been at Asaudi when it fell. Kalamata, still at Kajeli, eventually managed to escape from the island, and after some fruitless attempts to set up a new base of power in the Sula islands, ultimately found his way to Makassar. Majira, for his part, was also on Buru, further west at Waisama, and subsequently managed to entirely disappear off the radar for a while, to ultimately also resurface at Makassar. Both joined the ranks of the spice war exiles who had been arriving in Makassar for decades.[968]

### Concluding remarks

Much like many of the earlier conflicts in the region, the Hoamoal War was environmental in crucial ways. While De Vlaming's extensive documentation of the conflict lacks the rigorous book-keeping of the destruction of trees and crops that Gijsels employed two decades earlier, his reasoning and tactics about the conduct of the war were very similar, and it is clear that, over the five years that the conflict was fought, he was able to inflict massive amounts of damage both on clove and food production in the region. The crucial role of food production, and how it was tied up with the landscape of the region, is especially clearly illustrated by the struggle over access to sago between the Company and the coalition of forces opposing it. More than any of the earlier governors of the region, De Vlaming seems to have targeted sago-producing areas, even before his opponents specifically tried to secure and fortify them, and certainly after that.

What furthermore distinguishes the phase of the war described in this chapter is the scope of the use of such tactics. Whereas they had occasionally been employed outside the Ambon Islands over the course of the Spice Wars,[969] De Vlaming made bringing environmental destruction to what he considered important enemy supply points and staging areas outside the Dutch sphere of influence a central point of his strategy. Even before the Makasar intervention, he mounted an expedition to the Sula Islands to render them useless as a base for the Company's adversaries. After he had been able to provisionally contain the first wave Makasar intervention forces at Asaudi, his subsequent efforts to deny any further Makasar forces access to the region by blockading and attacking stra-

The irregular warfare in the forests, and, for instance, some of the Alfur bands loath to turn over the heads they hunted, made a reliable estimate difficult. De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 30 September 1655 in: VOC 1211, 803.

968 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 95-110.

969 For instance in Buton in 1638 (see chapter IX, paragraph 'Waiting for the king').

tegic staging areas, also involved a fair amount of destruction of food stores and crops. Fleets were sent to Seram's north coast, an area usually outside the scope of Company activities, to destroy the sago there.

We have seen the same wider scope in terms of the eradication of cloves, specifically. De Vlaming, with his broad sway of powers as superintendent over Maluku, Ambon and Banda, felt that the conflict provided both the opportunity, and created the necessity, for eradicating cloves from North Maluku, and was able to effectuate this over the course of the war, overwhelmingly by persuading the various polities of North Maluku to do so 'voluntarily' – although that is perhaps not quite the term. Whereas, on the one hand, the communities were offered stipends to compensate for the loss of income, De Vlaming also made clear that in case of refusal, it was more than prepared to do it for them by force – per the new treaty with Mandarsyah, and considering that the various polities in North Maluku were all involved in the revolt in one way or another, the Company had every right to. Pressured by this, and aware of the manner in which clove eradication was proceeding in the Ambon region, the leaders saw little choice but to oblige, and cloves were largely eradicated from North Maluku, their original habitat, over the course of only a few years. This extirpation of cloves in North Maluku has only been studied only superficially before, and this chapter has only added a few lines to what is still a sketchy picture. As a topic of great import, it certainly deserves further study in the future.

De Vlaming's tactics certainly made their mark - when the dust started to settle in the final months of 1655, the Company was, uniquely, facing a shortage of cloves. Hoamoal and its adjacent islands, which had been the theatre of one war after another over the last three decades, were not only robbed of their cloves trees and their sources of food like never before, but over the course of the war, had also been largely stripped of their population. De Vlaming and his fellow Company officials now moved to impose a new order over the islands to make sure they remained that way.

# Epilogue

The Spice Wars cannot meaningfully be said to have ended in September 1655. Elsewhere in the archipelago, there would be more bloody encounters with Makasar ships and troops in subsequent months, until on 28 December of that year, a delegation sent by Governor-General Maatsuyker concluded a treaty with Gowa. Rumphius has the Great Hoamoal War end in early 1656, when news of this treaty reached the Ambon region. The treaty was much to the chagrin of De Vlaming, who found it too premature. The way he saw it, only a total submission of Gowa would ever durably secure the exclusive trade and production of cloves for the Company. De Vlaming was not alone in considering the resulting treaty too lenient.[970] Indeed, it did not stop Makasar spice traders from once again trying their luck in the region in subsequent years, or from supporting those still opposed to Company control.

The latter were numerous. The various communities of Buru, Ambelau and Eastern Seram only made peace with the Company over the course of 1656 and 1657.[971] Those of Eastern Seram, unhappy with the peace provisions, were back at war with the Company almost as soon as the peace had been made. Meanwhile, apparent attempts from these regions to once again ask for Makasar aid and protection, and Gowa's insistence that the Company would agree to a treaty forbidding them to militarily intervene in these regions, were among the causes of renewed war between Gowa and the Company.[972] In January and February 1660, the bay of Ambon was the staging area for a massive Company fleet which then proceeded to attack Makassar, forcing Gowa to sign a new treaty in

970 Feddersen, 'Principled Pragmatism', 324-380, provides an elaborate analysis of the circumstances under which the treaty was concluded, and the disagreements between De Vlaming and Maatsuyker over it. An additional factor in De Vlamings chagrin was apparently more personal, as the treaty had been concluded by Willem van der Beeck, the former Ambon governor who had asked to be recalled from Ambon during the Great Hoamoal War. De Vlaming did not think highly of Van der Beeck and also wondered why someone else had been sent to conclude the peace if he was the superintendent of the Eastern Quarters.

971 This does not include all of Buru: kimelaha Hassi, for instance, was ensconced in the Burunese interior with his followers. He only came out to make terms with the Company in October 1658, after a Company campaign into the Burunese interior. Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 116-118.

972 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 127. For an elaborate analysis of the treaties with Gowa of 1655 and 1660, see Feddersen, 'Principled Pragmatism', 324-482.

which, among other things, the sultan agreed to stay out of Buton, the Ambon region and North Sulawesi.[973] Makassar would ultimately disappear from the picture altogether when the backbone of Gowan power was broken in the wake of the Makassar War (1666-1669), and Makassar effectively became a VOC colony.[974] Even without this strong outside sultanate to turn to, however, resentment against the monopoly regime and the effects of the extirpation in Maluku itself would continue to occasionally burst into armed revolt.[975]

For Hoamoal and the adjacent islands, the end of the war did see the establishment of a new colonial order which would define the region for more than a century to come.[976] This new colonial order entailed the dissolution of Hoamoal not only as a political power, but as a society, as its population was resettled and the fabric of its society deliberately erased. This epilogue will briefly touch upon the two main aspects of this new colonial order: this dissolution of Hoamoal's society and the maintenance of the clove monopoly.

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973 For this attack see Tristan Mostert. 'Suppliers, knowledge brokers and brothers in arms: Portuguese aspects of military innovation in Makassar.' In Andre Murteira, Helder Carvalhal, and Roger Lee de Jesus eds. *The First World Empire: Portugal, War and Military Revolution.* London: Routledge, 2021, pp. 186-205, esp. 196-200.

974 In the Bungaya Treaty (1667), concluded during the conflict, Gowa was forced to cede all the regions that Ternate historically considered to be part of its domains. In making this demand, the Company based itself, among other things, on a document listing these, drawn up by the Ternaten Sultan Mandarsyah in April 1665, (VOC 1254, fol. 1199). Andaya takes these 'historical claims' by the Ternaten Sultan at face value at several points in *The World of Maluku*, e.g. p. 136, but we would be wise to also consider them within the context of the power dynamics in the region and the Company's self interest in this matter. Cf. Van Fraassen, 'Ternate and its dependencies'.

975 For some examples see Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 182-239; Widjojo, Muridan. *The Revolt of Prince Nuku: Cross-Cultural Alliance-Making in Maluku, c.1780-1810.* Leiden: Brill, 2008.

976 Surprisingly, the abandonment of the policy of keeping Hoamoal empty seems to have escaped academic attention thusfar, but a cursory survey of published primary sources seems to show that the policy was gradually abandoned towards the end of the 18th century, when a settlement once again developed around the VOC fort at Luhu, and then collapsed altogether during the turbulent period between 1795 and 1815. See e.g. Expedition journal and description of Ambon and Banda by W.C. Lennon, 20 August 1796, appendix B, in: Chris van Fraassen, van, F.G Hoekstra and Jelle Gerbrandy. *Bronnen betreffende de Midden-Molukken 1796-1902.* Huygens ING, 2016, which documents the existence of a small but growing settlement at Luhu. Cf. Knaap ed., *Memories van overgave,* passim., which shows that as late as 1785, one still needed Company licenses to undertake a sago-gathering voyage to Luhu.

### 'An eternal wasteland': the depopulation of Hoamoal

In the wake of the war, the Company declared Hoamoal, the island of Kelang, and the better part of the island of Boano, an 'eternal wasteland' *[eeuwige woestijne]*, evicting its communities from their homelands. We should, however, not imagine a kind of forced mass exodus, for a very simple reason: in the wake of the war, the Hoamoal Peninsula was effectively already depopulated.

The records of both the war itself and its immediate aftermath do not readily provide any details of either flows of refugees or the number of people resettled. What is clear, however, is that very few people remained on the peninsula by the end of the war. Those who had surrendered to the Company by 1652, some 1500 people, had first been resettled at Luhu, and what remained of the population there after Majira's attack had already been moved off Hoamoal and resettled at Ambon.[977] The vast majority of those in opposition to the Company aggregated in Asaudi and, to a lesser degree, Laala, towards the end of the war, and as far as can be told from Dutch sources, the majority of them was ultimately killed or captured (and, more often than not, enslaved) by the end of the conflict. It is to be expected that part of the population had been able to flee elsewhere in the course of the conflict, but if they did so the Company failed to notice, so it does not readily emerge from the sources. The only such groups the Company was able to keep tabs on were leaders adrift with part of their following. Kalamata was most prominent among them, and we might note that he, at least, found nowhere to go, pursued as he was by the Company and Ternate, and ultimately retreated from the region altogether to Makassar.

Accordingly, the execution of the resettlement seems to have been a relatively minor affair – Rumphius notes how the operation was performed with a number of Hituese kora-kora and other smaller craft, started 3 March and was completed by the 30th.[978] The logistics and the number of people involved do not appear to have been recorded, but it is abundantly clear that little was left of the estimated population of more than 10.000 that the peninsula had housed only two decades previously.[979]

977 See above, chapter XIV, paragraph 'the struggle for sago'.

978 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 103-105. Interestingly, Rumphius is more elaborate on the point than any of the surviving source material from De Vlaming.

979 This number from Gerrit Knaap, *Kruidnagelen* II, 100, who extrapolates an estimated total population of 11183 from Gijsels' reports on the number of men capable of bearing arms that the various communities of the peninsula could muster. The same, it might be added, applied to the islands of Boano, Kelang and Manipa: whereas they

Once the operation was complete, the political landscape of the region had been drastically changed. Hoamoal was entirely empty of people: what had been left of the population had been resettled on Ambon – the Muslims in Hitu, and any animists and Christians in Leitimor. Care had been taken to unravel the structure of the communities into the tiniest possible pieces: the Hoamoalese were distributed among Ambonese households, and, as Rumphius phrased it, 'were scattered such that no two brothers came to be living together, so that they would not have the opportunity to ever secretly hold meetings with each other.'[980] De Vlaming himself put it even more grimly: the redistribution was meant to have them 'lose their own name all the further.'[981] For the same purpose, the orangkaya, both those from the peninsula and most of those from the adjacent islands, were all housed separately, right beneath the guns of Castle Victoria, at Batu Merah, the Red Rock, still a neighbourhood of Kota Ambon today. De Vlaming insisted, however, that it would be even safer to move them off the island altogether, to Batavia or Formosa. His advice was acted upon the next year, when the vast majority of the orangkaya and their families, 282 people in all, were shipped to Batavia.[982]

As to the communities of the adjacent islands, as well as the original community of Asaudi: these were to be resettled in a different location, on Manipa's south side, around the old location of the Company redoubt there.[983] De Vlaming considered it prudent to keep the area occupied as the island was extremely

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had housed an estimated 9765 people in 1634, the total number on Manipa and Boano (Kelang had also been declared an eternal wasteland) was only 3865 in 1671.
Note that some earlier authors (Collins, 'language death in Maluku', 251, who based himself on Keuning, 'Ambonnezen, Portugezen in Nederlanders', who in turn appears to have based himself on Bokemeyer, *Die Molukken*) state that the 1656 depopulation involved 12.000 people. While that would have been roughly the population of the peninsula two decades previously, the relocation of 1656 involved no more than a fraction of that number.

980 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 103-104.

981 Memorie by Arnold de Vlaming, 24 May 1656, in: Knaap e.a. eds., *Memories van overgave,* 192.

982 Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 111-112.

983 The fact that Asaudi got this different treatment does not seem to have been related to its prominent role in the Great Hoamoal War. While I have not found the reasoning behind the exact division explained in the sources, the decision would probably have been related to the fact that Asaudi had strong ties to Boano and Kelang, for instance equipping a kora-kora together with the negeri of Hatuputih on Kelang in the 1640s. Rumphius, *Ambonse eilanden,* 117-121.

Fig 15.1 The abandoned and overgrown remains of Fort Wantrouw in 2007. Reproduced by kind permission of photographer Syahruddin Mansyur.

fertile and could once again become an important source of foodstuffs. It was also historically a staging area of foreign traders, so that maintaining some presence there to keep an eye out seemed prudent.[984] Of course this was not left to what the Company considered to be the former rebels and smugglers themselves. Not only were their orangkaya likewise relocated separately, beneath the walls of Castle Victoria; at Manipa, a makeshift wooden fortification was quickly erected in the location of the old Company redoubt, which was soon replaced by a full blockhouse, guarding over these communities. It was given the rather telling name of Fort Distrust *[Wantrouw].*

As to Boano, one small exception was made to the general depopulation policy: the followers of orangkaya Tahalele, who had been a reliable ally to the Company since 1652, when he had approached de Vlaming to intervene in a power struggle over Boano, were allowed to stay, not only as a reward for their

984 Memorie by Arnold de Vlaming, 24 May 1656, in: Knaap e.a. eds., *Memories van overgave,* 192.

loyalty, but also because the Company could use someone keeping a watchful eye out on the somewhat secluded island.[985]

The Company hoped that the inhabitants of Manipa in particular would once again become producers of foodstuffs for the region at large. De Vlaming made the specific suggestion that, with some of the Company's other suppliers of rice being far from reliable for the future, the Manipese might try their hand at that, as this remained an important trade good in the Ambon region and they would always find a ready buyer in the Company.[986] They might not be used to cultivating rice, but they needed a new source of income anyway, as they, like the people at Boano, would certainly not be allowed to once again cultivate cloves.

### A precarious monopoly

De Vlaming had now been able to effectuate his proposed policy of limiting clove cultivation to the areas under direct Company control. Cloves had been largely eradicated from Hoamoal and the adjacent islands, as well as from those areas in North Maluku under Company control, and their cultivation was henceforth forbidden in these regions. Clove cultivation would be limited to the Lease Islands and Ambon proper. In fact, the war had limited the amount of clove trees so drastically that the Company, unprecedentedly, saw itself confronted with a clove shortage. During and immediately after conflict, total clove production averaged slightly over 350.000 pounds, i.e. some 640 bahar – less than half of what the Company estimated the ideal world supply to be.[987]

It is interesting to note that, now that the Company finally seemed to have achieved what so many Company officials had argued and strived for over the previous decades, high Company officials had serious anxieties about whether the policy would work, and whether it actually made any sense at all. One important reason for their concerns was that, as De Vlaming had widened the scope of the war over the previous years, Company fleets had kept on running into clusters of

985 Memorie by Arnold de Vlaming, 24 May 1656, in: Knaap e.a. eds., *Memories van overgave,* 192. The conflict over Boano is briefly mentioned aboce in chapter XIV, paragraph 'Stand-off at Asaudi'; for a slightly more elaborate description, see Rumphius, 'De Ambonsche Historie', II, 40-47.

986 De Vlaming to Governor-General and Council, 24 April 1656, in: VOC 1216, fol. 181v-182r. The letter as a whole makes numerous references to possible future problems with securing enough rice from Makassar, Java and other regions in the archipelago.

987 Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen,* 234-235.

clove trees in unknown places. Maatsuyker therefore warned against raising prices in Asia and Europe to keep clove profits up in compensation for the shortage, as it might easily undo everything they had worked for:

> Considering the trouble our competitors always went through in former times to participate [in the clove trade...], what might they do now, and what stone will they leave unturned, so to say, when they see what great profits can be made from said product? We should therefore consider whether it is wise for the Company to hike the price of cloves to such heights, thus giving such people occasion to go look for them where they were not found before and plant them in places where they never grew. Cloves have even been found on the island of Gapi... Who could believe that the land of Sulawesi, so close by, might not also be fertile for them? [988]

Maatsuyker worried that that might already have happened, as batches of cloves had periodically found their way to the market in Makassar, with the Company being entirely in the dark as to where they had come from. Furthermore, as opposed to De Vlaming, he felt that the commotion the Company was always making to keep others from cultivating cloves might well have an adverse effect, inciting other polities to start cultivating them. And if that happened on too large a scale, it might be the undoing of the Company altogether, because, as Maatsuyker literally underlined in his general letter, '*preventing this everywhere is utterly impossible*.'[989]

Indeed, the monopoly would remain precarious throughout its subsequent existence. Particularly in the 18th century, maintaining it would require the constant employment of *hongi* both in North Maluku and the Ambon region, scouring the region for clusters of trees and hidden stashes of cloves. On the Seramese mainland, the Company's Alfur allies were employed to point out clusters of clove trees, but the island was huge and almost impossible to effectively patrol.[990]

While this is not the place to treat this period in any detail, a nice anecdotal

988 General letter of 24 December 1655, in: *Generale missiven,* III, 4-5.

989 Ibid; for the underlined original see VOC 1209, fol. 15r.

990 See e.g. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen,* 147-159; Kreike, *Scorched Earth,* 270-276; Els Jacobs. *Merchant in Asia : the Trade of the Dutch East India Company During the Eighteenth Century*. Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2006, 15-20; Gerrit Knaap. 'Monopolie en monocultuur; Economische geschiedenis van Ambon van 1656 tot 1863.' In: G. Knaap, R. Chauvel & C. van Fraassen eds., *Van Tjengkeh tot kruidnagel.* Amsterdam:

Fig 15.2 The only known portrait of Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn, on the frontispiece of the Brussels manuscript copy of Bor's Ambonse oorlogen. The drawing is signed MP(?) towards the right. De Vlaming's age is mentioned as 43 below the portrait, which would date it to around 1661, some years after the conclusion of the Great Hoamoal War. De Vlaming had since also commanded troops in a conflict against Bantam and had become the president of the Batavian Council of Justice. In December 1661, presumably not long after this portrait was made, he would command the return fleet to the Netherlands. He died when the fleet was hit by a bad tropical storm off Ceylon, and four out the seven ships, including his, disappeared beneath the waves. Collection Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel, Ms. 17982.

Stichting Werkgroep Inheemse Volken, 1987, pp. 15-27; Muridan Widjojo, *The Revolt of Prince Nuku,* 27-46.

illustration of the challenges of the monopoly is provided by the circumstances under which a rival European power was first able to smuggle saplings out of the region and successfully cultivate them elsewhere: the French botanist Pierre Poivre. Arriving in Maluku with two ships in 1770 to look for saplings of clove and nutmeg, as part of his long-standing efforts to transplant these to Ile de France, Poivre first made for the island of Maju, a good 100 kilometres north-west of Ternate. According to his intelligence, the uninhabited island, while very close to the Company's centre of power in the region, was entirely disregarded and sported large numbers of spice trees. As it turned out, however, the island had just recently been visited by a hongi fleet and the trees there had now been thoroughly eradicated. Undaunted, the two French ships continued on their way. A Dutchman disaffected with the Company, who the French encountered on Seram's north coast, subsequently directed them to the island of Gebe, a local trade hub east of Halmahera which was a subsidiary of Tidore.[991] The inhabitants of Gebe, it turned out, were none too happy with Company rule in the region either, and readily offered to put themselves under the French crown. While they did not have any saplings on the island itself, they knew where to find them, and directed the Frenchmen to the coast of Patani, just towards the west on Halmahera, an island as large as Seram and therefore similarly resilient to Dutch oversight. The local inhabitants there sent parties inland to procure the saplings. Days later, they returned with some 400 nutmeg and 70 clove saplings, which the two French ships were ultimately able to safely take out of Dutch-controlled waters and to Ile de France. From there, Poivre distributed them to botanical gardens throughout the French colonial empire – a first nail in the coffin of the hold that the Dutch still had over the European spice market, even if that hold had been becoming ever less profitable.[992] Episodes such as these illustrated, to use the words of somewhat later Dutch critics of the spice monopoly, 'the impossibility inherent in trying to eradicate a crop which naturally grows so lavishly in the islands of Maluku, and for the better part in places utterly inaccessible to

991 For a brief description of Gebe and its political and economic position in the region, see Andaya, *The World of Maluku,* 99.

992 Willard Hanna and Des Alwi. *Turbulent Times in Past Ternate and Tidore*. Banda Naira: Yayasan Warisandan Budaya Banda Naira, 1990, 195-206. It should be noted that the subsequent British occupations of Ambon and Banda during the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars, during which a large number of saplings was also transported elsewhere, was ultimately more consequential.

the European. [They] prove beyond any doubt the futility of the former Dutch East India Company's efforts to eradicate these spices in the forbidden areas.'[993]

That, however, was not how De Vlaming saw it in the immediate aftermath of the Great Hoamoal War. In his report to his successor, he briskly made all manner of suggestions for future policy, including solving the present shortage by planting a million clove trees in the Ambon and Lease Islands as soon as the end of the drought then plaguing the island allowed it. It had come to his attention, though, that the wild deer roaming Ambon might be an obstacle to these efforts, as they tended to nibble on the saplings and rub their antlers against the young trees, damaging them. But of course De Vlaming knew just how to deal with that kind of thing. 'If this turns out to be the case, then these deer should be utterly eradicated. They would otherwise be a good source of provision in these meagre lands, but it is for the cloves, and not for the deer, that the Company holds residence in these lands.'[994]

993 Report about Maluku to Governor-General Van der Cappellen, by H.J. van de Graaff and G.F. Meijlan, 5 June 1821, in: Van Fraassen e.a. eds., *Bronnen betreffende de Midden-Molukken*.

994 Memorie by Arnold de Vlaming, 24 May 1656, in: Knaap e.a. eds., *Memories van overgave,* 200.

# XV. Conclusion

The deer were ultimately fine. De Vlaming's scheme to eradicate them was apparently never executed, as Valentijn, in his *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, reported on a healthy deer population on Ambon some decades later.[995] However, the colonial order and associated policy of limiting clove production, of which De Vlaming can be considered the main architect, would hold sway over the region for some two centuries in one form or another. This later period cannot be understood without the almost half-century of conflict and war which preceded it, and which has been the topic of this study. By telling the story of how the VOC imposed its colonial order and clove monopoly over the region in the period leading up to 1656, it is possible to address two general issues: the wider power dynamics of the eastern archipelago, and the conduct of war in the challenging physical environment that the Ambon region presented.

### The Spice Wars and wider power dynamics in the eastern archipelago

This study describes the spice wars within the wider power dynamics of the region at large. As the Company entered into alliances in the region as part of its efforts to secure exclusive access to spices, it entered into a vibrant existing political arena with its associated cultural, religious and economic networks. This shaped its relationships and policies in crucial ways.

These local considerations of state and power cannot be made into a separate category of analysis from European interests and policies for our period of study. Regional considerations over the acquisition of subjects, regions and tribute had already become entangled with, or even neatly mapped onto, European involvement and interest in the region in the early 16th century, when the Portuguese and Spanish jockeyed for control of the region and its spices. The subsequent rise of Gowa as a major power in the eastern archipelago is certainly no exception. We have seen how the expanding spheres of influence of Ternate and Gowa collided in the final decades of the 16th century, increasingly turning them into rivals in a contest not only for subjects and tributaries but also for access to trade routes and trade goods. When the Company allied itself to Ternate and sought to use this alliance as a vehicle to monopolize cloves from the Ternaten sphere of influence, it became part of this rivalry, finding itself protecting Ternaten tributaries such as Buton or seeing itself forced to take position in rival claims

995 Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indièn,* IIIa, 226.

on regions such as Solor. This strongly contributed to the outbreak of hostilities between Gowa and the Company in 1615.

Subsequent developments further demonstrate that there is no sensible way to disentangle the struggle for vassals, tribute and strategic areas from the struggle for access to trade goods such, including spices. The fleets setting out from Gowa to the Ambon region became increasingly organised and well-armed from the 1620s onwards, and traded not only in rice, cloth and cloves but also in political protection. The VOC-Ternate alliance and the efforts to obtain exclusive access to cloves were, perhaps at first sight slightly paradoxically, a major catalyst in both Gowa's political expansion and the rise of Makassar as a major trade entrepôt. They antagonized many of Ternate's tributaries while drawing both Asian and European traders to Makassar for cloves, who were willing to pay sky-rocketing prices. While Makassar was already on its way to become a consequential trade entrepôt, and would remain so after the VOC's effective attainment of a clove monopoly and even under its subsequent colonial rule from the late 1660s onwards, its rise to prominence in the 1620s and 1630s was due in no small part to the clove trade that was the result of the VOC's expansionist and restrictive policies.[996] Furthermore, while Makassar might have shown itself a cosmopolitan, free and open *bandar* to the Asian and European traders visiting it, this should not blind us to the fact that Gowa also had an expansionist empire which was instrumental in its continued access to cloves.

Gowa was willing to fight for continued access to the cloves, as the Company was to experience time and time again, from the Buton Strait to Seram Laut and beyond. Its rivalry to Ternate also made it the prime alternate source of political protection to those disaffected with Ternate and the Company. On two occasions, in the late 1630s and in the early 1650s, this culminated in political leaders in the Ambon region openly offering to accept the Gowan sultan as their overlord if he would but come to their aid with military force. In both cases, after some hesitation, the Gowan court responded to the call. Both military interventions ultimately failed, but all the same, they bear clear testimony to the

996 For the role of Makassar as a trade entrepôt, see Heather Sutherland. 'Trade in VOC Indonesia : the Case of Makassar.' In: Bernard Dahm ed., *Regions and regional developments in the Malay-Indonesian World* . European colloquium on Indonesian and Malay studies (ECIMS) 6. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992; Heather Sutherland, 'Eastern Emporium and Company Town : Trade and Society in Eighteenth Century Makassar.' In: Frank Broeze and Sinnappah Arasaratnam eds. *Brides of the Sea : Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries*. Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1989.

way in which Makassar's efforts to maintain access to cloves and Gowan political expansion were inextricably intertwined. In the final stage of the Great Hoamoal War, Arnold De Vlaming acted on this insight: realising that the success of the Gowan intervention hinged upon the support from its allies and tributaries throughout the region, he widened the scope of the conflict accordingly, attacking and blockading Gowan tributaries and staging areas from Bima and Timor to the Banggai Islands, aided by Ternaten fleets.

The Spice Wars, in other words, make no sense without investigating the European interests and policies in tandem with those of local powers such as Gowa-Tallo and Ternate. This also holds a historiographical lesson, in that, as noted in the introduction, much of the recent study of the eastern archipelago has tended to be either focussed very locally, or to have given wide bird's eye views of cultural and economic networks over long time spans. While such studies have been tremendously valuable to the progress of the field, they have tended to gloss over the specifics of regional power dynamics. These, however, are also crucial to our understanding of the history of the region, and we would be wise not to leave them lying untouched in the hands of earlier generations of historians from the colonial era.

It bears emphasizing, however, that while the VOC became part of existing power dynamics in the region, in some ways adapting to them and engaging with expanding local powers such as Gowa, this does not mean that it was just another of those powers vying for control. As this dissertation has also aimed to show, the VOC was a different beast in crucial ways – originally seeking a monopoly because it was a trading company driven by European mercantile considerations. The treaty regime it set up in order to obtain this monopoly and the ways it sought to enforce it – by severing existing economic and cultural ties, by attempting to destroy Bandanese society wholesale, by sustained environmental warfare and dismantling existing social and political structures – were unprecedented in the region, even when compared to earlier Iberian policies. While Gowa certainly was an expanding power in the eastern archipelago and a rival of Ternate before the arrival of the first Dutch ships, and this rivalry impacted the way the VOC's own relations in the region subsequently took shape, the VOC's policies dramatically destabilized the region and transformed the nature of its power dynamics, driving Gowa to step up its direct political involvement – and ultimately upending the entire existing political order. By 1656, after all, the VOC had imposed a particularly restrictive colonial regime on large swaths of Maluku, and would do the same in Makassar a good decade later.

A minor yet interesting additional observation to make is that as the Company's monopoly regime became more restrictive from the 1610s onwards, and the Company therefore met with an increasing amount of opposition, such regional power dynamics became a major source of distrust, frustration and anxiety for Company officials. Every governor of Ambon from Van der Hagen onwards found himself in an impossible situation as a consequence of the VOC's policies as formulated in Batavia and the Netherlands, which tasked him with not only maintaining the exclusive rights on purchasing cloves for a fixed price, but, increasingly, a host of additional measures such as keeping any and all Asian traders from the region. These backfired terribly in the late 1610s and early 1620s and, added to the effects of the violent conquest and depopulation of the Banda islands in the same period, bred great resentment and hostility towards the Company in a political and physical landscape that was patently not under its control.

Artus Gijsels personified this shift in atmosphere and attitude most clearly – his *Grondig Verhaal van Amboyna,* based on his experiences in the region in the 1610s, is testimony to great interest in the Ambon region in particular, and his *Verhael van enige oorlogen in Indië,* written *en route* to the Netherlands in 1620, just before Banda was ultimately conquered and depopulated, is nothing short of an indictment of the policy that Coen, with the blessings of the directors in the Netherlands, had been putting into effect over the past few years, and a defence of the interests of the people of the Ambon region. As he returned to the region as governor in 1631, he had, in a sense, been proven right, but now he himself was caught up in the spiral of fear and mistrust which had the region in its grip. Soon, plagued by 'doubts and a thousand fears', he imagined how 'the Moors' in the region were hatching 'numerous secret schemes', and used this as a justification for 'extreme measures' in his correspondence with Batavia, from where he was subsequently given the go-ahead to step up his clove eradication campaigns in the region and further escalate the conflict.

While we find such expressions of mistrust and anxiety in generous amounts in the Dutch source material, the material documenting the worries, anxieties and resentments on the Ambonese and Ternaten side is far more sparse. We have seen some clear expressions of exasperation and concern with Company actions in the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu,* for instance from Kapitan Hitu Tepil when faced with Company intentions to conquer Banda, or the meeting in the wake of the arrest of Kakiali. Mediated through Dutch observers, we also catch glimpses of the kinds of frustrations and anxieties that would have driven the conflict forward from the Ambonese and Ternaten side: Sultan Hamzah finding himself in

the great cabin of Van Diemen's ship suddenly giving utterance to a pang of concern that the governor-general might capture and kill him; the rumours going around among the Christian Ambonese that the Company was going to deport them all; Kakiali, quite justifiably unwilling to come down from Wawani for fear of his power and his life; Majira's success in playing on fears among the Muslim inhabitants of the region that the Company would take their religion away from them, and that they would all go the way of the Bandanese.

It is difficult to concretely ascertain the effect and role of distrust and anxiety as a force of history, certainly for such a drawn-out and large conflict. [997] If we are to take the word of some of the Ambonese governors for it, though, the conflict that the monopoly regime had unleashed in the region certainly bred anxiety and frustration in those tasked with maintaining the monopoly and fighting the wars. They considered Ambon the most difficult governorship in all of the Indies and invariably complained about the difficult and treacherous political and physical environment in which they had to operate. All in all, the Spice Wars were characterized by a destructive downward spiral of mutual distrust and frustration, set in motion by the monopoly policies as they took shape in the late 1610s, complicating older notions of the Company's 'rational use of violence'.[998]

### The Spice Wars and early modern colonial warfare

It was not only the political dynamics of the region that bred such anxieties. As this dissertation has argued, the conflict also presented the VOC with a unique and daunting set of military challenges. The world of islands, craggy coastlines, and inhospitable mountainous jungle made warfare and patrolling prohibitively difficult, rendering many established European tactics and strategies largely useless. The huge clove profits that Asian traders made in the region also led to an influx of military technology and know-how. Makasar vessels brought English and Japanese firearms, European gunpowder and Gowan fort-building. The latter complemented local fort-building practices which, as I have argued, had deep historical roots in the region but were given further impetus by the advance of gunpowder weapons and European encroachment. The Company's opponents

997 But for a more specific case study which is therefore able to bring the role of fear and anxiety into sharper focus, see Clulow, *Amboina 1623*.

998 This notion is most famously proposed in Niels Steensgaard. *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: the East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. For further discussion of the role of fear in early colonialism, see Clulow, *Amboina 1623,* esp. introduction and epilogue.

made remarkably effective use of muskets, firing them from the cover of the forest or from the small fortifications that characterized warfare in the region. All in all, in Ambon as in so many zones of conflict between Europeans and non-Europeans, the former's advantages were slight and relative.[999]

To be fair, the Company certainly enjoyed some military advantages in line with the military revolution arguments, such as its forts. While the surprise attack of 1651 was spectacularly and uniquely successful at driving the VOC from almost all of their fortifications in the region outside Ambon proper and the Lease Islands, conquering Castle Victoria was never attempted. A full-fledged European-style fortress with angled bastions, a good amount of artillery and a sizeable garrison, in an area surrounded by Christian Ambonese, was beyond the means and ambitions of the VOC's opponents in the region – vindicating insights into the decisive edge such forts had in the projection of European power.[1000] As a consequence, the Company, even if unable to project its power, could not be dislodged either. While VOC ships could be cumbersome and ineffective for waging war in this monsoon island world, they were still extremely valuable in military campaigns due to their large cargo capacity, their artillery and their virtual unassailability for local vessels. Company soldiers did often enjoy an advantage in terms of discipline over their opponents on Hitu and Hoamoal, with Company commanders often marvelling at the defensibility of local fortifications but uttering surprise about how soon they were abandoned, as their defenders 'would have been able to inflict great violence on us, had they not lacked the courage.' Additionally, while many governors of the Ambon region were permanently frustrated about the lack of military means at their disposal, in a genuine crisis, Batavia and other hubs in the VOC empire could come to the rescue. We saw this happen in 1637, when Van Diemen led an expeditionary force to the region, but also in 1631 and subsequent years with the fleets under Anthonissen, and in the course of the Great Hoamoal War, with the fleets and troops that De Vlaming brought. Such fleets could bring about a spectacular reversal of fortunes, as seen most prominently in 1631, 1637 and 1652.

While such factors did confer military advantages on the Company in military confrontations, they did not solve the quandary that enforcing the spice

999 For a more elaborate assessment of this debate, see Andrade, *Lost Colony,* pp. 14-15.

1000 E.g. by Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age,* esp. pp. 211-234; Geoffrey Parker. 'The artillery fortress as an engine of European overseas expansion' in: id., *Success is never final: empire war and faith in early modern Europe*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, pp. 192-221.

monopoly brought with it. In order to do that, the Company needed effective control of a vast region and its population. This was prohibitively difficult: as one observer noted, 'the mountains are too steep, the inhabitants and the clove trees too many, the roads to the clove trees impassable and the settlements naturally strong.' Patrolling the extensive coastlines of the region presented similar problems.

Faced with such difficulties, Company officials increasingly relied on local allies and tactics. Gijsels and his successors heavily relied on the indigenous fleets of kora-kora. They employed the Alfurs of Seram's interior, whose guerrilla tactics and ferocious reputation made them formidable allies. This increasing reliance on local tactics and troops was not just due to the limited numbers of soldiers and ships that Gijsels received from Batavia: as this dissertation has argued, in the island world of the Ambon region, with its coral reefs and platforms, jungles and inaccessible landscapes, such local tactics, troops and vessels were also simply more effective, providing solutions for military problems that the Company's European troops, ships and tactics did not. The enthusiasm with which the successive governors of Ambon employed the hongi would strain the system to the breaking point, its overuse being a major factor in the 1636 revolt, during which Company control over the Ambon region almost completely unravelled.

Over the first half of the seventeenth century, Company commanders in Ambon increasingly learned to fruitfully combine the use of their local troops and vessels with that of their European soldiers and ships – for instance, by employing their Alfur allies to make a siege even more effective, as their headhunting bands were very effective in cutting off the besieged from provisions and supplies. One of the clearer examples discussed in this dissertation is the siege of Ihamahu in 1632, where the *hongi*, European troops and ships and Alfur allies brought over from the Seramese mainland were all employed in specific ways to make the most of their strengths.

Ihamahu also illustrates something even more important to the Company's conduct of the war. In the decision-making process, the stated goals, the course and the outcome of the siege, it is clear that Company officials were increasingly conceiving the conflict as a resource war, and by implication, as an environmental war – and adapted their methods accordingly.

Taking 'revenge against the fruit trees' was not something alien or innovative in the region. As I argued in Chapter VII, it also appears to have been an important part of local war practices: as early as 1599, Dutch sources record how rival communities in the Banda Islands cut the other's nutmeg trees during raids, and

just before Gijsels' 1632 siege, the hongi of the kimelaha took revenge on the fruit and clove trees of the village of Itawaka. What *was* new to the region, however, was the massive scale and sustained way in which the Company came to use such tactics, as part of a range of tactics and strategies to target the livelihood and food supply of the region's inhabitants.

As early as the 1610s, some VOC officials, mostly in response to frustrated monopoly ambitions in the Banda islands, had started advocating extirpating both clove and nutmeg in those areas that the Dutch could not control. Some of them also suggested removing the inhabitants as well and the Company acted out that suggestion in Banda in 1621.[1001] As to trees, it was the clove that would be the main object of concerted extirpation campaigns. In 1625, governor Van Speult, faced with increasing opposition to Company policies in the region, and his forces suddenly boosted by the arrival of the Nassau Fleet, went on a campaign to extirpate cloves entirely from Hoamoal. While he fell short of this goal, his troops reported cutting some 65.000 of them, in addition to a smaller number of other economically valuable trees such as coconut palms.

From the early 1630s onwards, such tactics were broadened into full-fledged scorched earth tactics. Governor Gijsels, in particular, concentrated his efforts on destroying the livelihood of the inhabitants of the region: not only the clove trees, but 'all fruit-bearing wood' and seagoing vessels. The use of their indigenous subjects and allies was also increasingly geared towards that goal: the great amounts of local *corvée* labour the Company could call on was employed to cut trees, the Alfurs, as stated, employed to cut off supply lines to besieged settlements. Environmental warfare reached its apex during the Great Hoamoal War, when Arnold de Vlaming made a point of rendering areas such as Manipa entirely uninhabitable, and the destruction of sago forests and other sources of food became central to his strategy. His strategy came to extend into regions well outside the Company's usual area of influence, including Seram's north coast, the Sula and Banggai Islands, Tiworo and various regions along Sulawesi's east coast. Incidentally, De Vlaming took the opportunity to also force the inhabitants of North Maluku's clove-producing regions to eradicate their own cloves

1001 For my own brief inventory of such ideas see Mostert and Manuhutu, '1621: violence and depopulation on and around Banda' (2021) on the website Pala: https://pala.wfm.nl/1621-2/1621-article/?lang=en.

'voluntarily'. His efforts were so thorough that by the end of the war, there was a global shortage of cloves and a local lack of food.

While we might associate the notion of environmental warfare mostly with military conflicts of the industrial age, Emmanuel Kreike, in his book *Scorched Earth,* has recently argued that the environment is inherently part of every military conflict and that tactics of resource control and environmental destruction were therefore common aspects of warfare everywhere in the world. The eastern archipelago in the early 17th century is, perhaps, an exceptionally clear illustration, although we also need to recognize that this does not imply parity. Even though such tactics had been used locally before, the sustained way and massive scale on which the Company was able to employ them was truly something new in the region.

Such strategies, ultimately aimed at destroying the livelihood of the inhabitants, were aided by measures outside the Ambon region as well, for one by the patrols and blockades at strategic chokepoints such as the northern entrance of the Buton Strait, the area around the island of Selayar or, occasionally, the Makassar roadstead itself (albeit the latter without much success.) Of much more central importance, however, was that the Company was also able to influence the price of cloves on the world market. We have seen how at a crucial moment in 1634, an exasperated governor-general Brouwer, faced with unsuccessful blockades of Makassar and the unravelling of Company control in the Ambon region, suggested that the directors might try to lower prices in Europe, thus ultimately undercutting the rationale for the clove trade to Makassar. His words were heeded, and the Company started dumping large amounts of cloves onto the market by paying them out as dividends to their shareholders. It worked: prices in Amsterdam dropped abruptly the next year, with prices elsewhere in Europe responding. The European companies could therefore no longer pay such high prices in Makassar and still turn a profit. By 1641, the price of cloves had dropped to 100 rials per bahar on the Makassar market, down from 300 only a decade before, and cloves still remained unsold. As a consequence, the interest of Makassar-based traders in the Ambon region dropped substantially, with fewer traders willing to risk it. This, in turn, was of great consequence to the financial base of the kimelaha at Hoamoal and his followers, and might have been a strong contributing factor to the collapse of the power base of kimelaha Luhu. While the drop in clove prices as a result of the dividends was described in earlier literature, the exact goal was not. It was, in fact, an attempt by the world's first joint-stock company to win a war on the far side of the globe by driving down

the world market price of a specific commodity, brought about by dumping large amounts onto the market by way of its shareholders.

A final illustration of the prominent role of landscape and environment in the conflict is provided by the measures the Company took in areas it brought under its effective control: not only dismantling the political order but also by resettlement schemes. We have seen how, after its military defeat in 1643, the Hituese population was forced down from its defensible hilltop settlements and concentrated in areas around Company forts. During and in the immediate wake of the Great Hoamoal War an even more drastic resettlement scheme was enacted, in which the original population of Hoamoal was distributed over Ambon in a scheme intended to efface its society as completely as possible, with Hoamoal itself to remain 'an eternal wasteland'. The inhabitants of the nearby islands of Kelang, Boano and Manipa, for their part, were largely resettled around a Company fort on one of the islands, in a scheme more comparable to that also employed in Hitu a good decade earlier.

If we therefore wish to account for how the Company was ultimately able to project its control over the region, we should not primarily look for it in military drill, the broadside sailing vessel or gunpowder technology. Truly new and central were a combination of resource control and social engineering. The former came in the form of deliberate and sustained environmental destruction and other measures to deny access to food and economic resources, as well as employing the economic power afforded by its increasing hold over the world clove market against precisely the forces that same hold had unleashed. The latter came in the form of forcing communities to resettle along the coast and usually in areas guarded by a Company fort, while also dismantling the existing political order, providing for both a political and physical landscape the Company was able to more easily control.

This raises a number of issues about the nature of early modern colonial warfare and its continuity through time. While concepts such as strategic resettlement, social engineering and environmental and economic warfare are comparatively well-developed for colonial conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they were, until recently, not readily applied to early modern colonial conflicts.[1002] There is a dawning realisation that the character of colonial warfare

1002 Some recent work includes Tom Menger. "Press the Thumb onto the Eye': Moral Effect, Extreme Violence, and the Transimperial Notions of British, German, and Dutch Colonial Warfare, ca. 1890–1914.' *Itinerario* 46, no. 1 (2022): 84–108; Id.,

and violence might have been more continuous than we have tended to conceive of it. Recent works that take such an approach include Dierk Walter's *Colonial Violence*, which tries to assess colonial violence as a category from the sixteenth century onwards. Most relevant to the topic at hand is Kreike's *Scorched Earth,* already mentioned above, which demonstrates the continuities in the use of environmental warfare from the early modern period onwards. For all the developments in technology, the conduct of war and the colonial state, the Dutch empire's violent beginnings has more in common with its violent end than we used to think.[1003] Taking this to heart will help forward the study of early colonial conflicts, and early modern warfare in general, opening new avenues of inquiry and moving global military history beyond the focus on technology, drill and logistics that has long characterized it.

This under-recognized continuity does not only apply to specific forms of violence and warfare but, perhaps, also more generally, to the violent nature of Dutch colonialism in Asia itself – which brings us back to where we started. It was not so long ago that the Dutch East India Company tended to be described, both by scholars and in more popular literature, as primarily a trading operation. While recent decades have seen renewed interest in the Company as a military and political power, it is still generally conceived as qualitatively different from what are considered more imperialist colonial ventures, such as those by the Iberians in Central and South America, or those of the various European powers from the nineteenth century onwards. In this view of the Company, the events in Banda in 1621 have often taken the role of a dramatic but perhaps not wholly representative episode from its early history. Banda, however, was not an isolated event. It formed part and parcel of the wider dynamics of Company policy in the eastern archipelago – the Company's core area of operation at the time. As this dissertation has illustrated, coercive treaties, outright conquest, environmental warfare and depopulation would remain central in the Company's mode of op-

'Concealing Colonial Comparability: British Exceptionalism, Imperial Violence, and the Dynamiting of Cave Refuges in Southern Africa, 1879-1897.' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 50, no. 5 (2022): 860–89. For work on strategic resettlement in twentieth-century colonial conflicts see the various articles of Moritz Feichtinger, University of Basel.

1003 This phrasing is borrowed from one recent comparative study of the wars of decolonization: Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis eds. *Empire's Violent End: Comparing Dutch, British and French Wars of decolonization, 1945-1962*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022.

eration in the region for decades to follow, and as such, were more structural to how the early Company operated than they have thus far been recognized to be.

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# Summary

Whereas there is an increasing public and scholarly awareness of the violent depopulation of the Banda Islands by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the period 1609-1621, in its attempts to obtain exclusive access to nutmeg, the wider conflicts over exclusive access to cloves that characterized the region for many subsequent decades remain underexplored by comparison. In this dissertation, Tristan Mostert aims to show the evolution of these wider seventeenth century spice wars as they were shaped by the physical land- and seascape of the Ambon islands, and the political dynamics of the region at large, from the arrival of the first Dutch ships in the eastern archipelago until the durable imposition of colonial control over Ambon, Hoamoal and the adjacent islands by 1656.

The dissertation first introduces the complex island world in which the conflicts took place, both in terms of its physical environment of which the unique features would put their mark on the nature of warfare in the region, and the political environment that had taken shape in the region before the first arrival of Dutch ships there in 1599. It proceeds to explore the first contacts with the VOC and its precursors, specifically considering the wider effects of the first treaties concluded with Hitu, Banda, Ternate, and several of the latter's tributaries from 1605 onwards. Such treaties would be the cornerstone of the Company's monopoly policy, but also led to conflict in the Banda Islands and drew the Company into local power politics. Importantly, its alliance with Ternate, combined with the war it waged in Banda, brought the VOC into war with Gowa (Makassar), the upcoming power in South Sulawesi and emerging rival of Ternate, by 1615.

In the Ambon region, the escalating conflict in Banda and ever more stringent monopoly policies meanwhile bred increasing resentment against the Company's presence and regime, especially among the inhabitants of Hoamoal, a peninsula of the large island of Seram just north of Ambon, nominally ruled by the sultan of Ternate. This led to the first major military escalation of the conflict in the wake of the arrival of the Nassau Fleet, a Dutch war fleet originally intended to target Spanish colonial possessions around the Pacific, which found its way to the Ambon region in 1625. Herman van Speult, the VOC governor in Ambon, in response to a series of hostilities in the preceding years, used this windfall military power to hold a large campaign around Hoamoal and its adjacent islands, targeting settlements, vessels and, most importantly, clove trees - the first clear instance of economic and environmental warfare by the VOC in the islands.

While the campaign intimidated the leaders of Hoamoal in the short run, it fed mutual distrust and hostility, giving rise to further subsequent conflict.

The dissertation explores the subsequent period with a wider geographical scope, primarily through the lens of the career of Kaicili Ali, a Ternaten prince who, after his failed bid for the throne, tried to carve out a power base for himself in the Ambon region. His personal story poignantly illustrates the way in which the Company's attempts to control the cloves from the Ambon region were tied up with the wider power dynamics in the region, especially those between Makassar and Ternate. These wider power dynamics are also explored by discussing some specific diplomatic interactions between the VOC, Gowa and Buton in the period 1617-1632, when the Company was in a state of cold war with Makassar but tried to retain open channels of communication with it in various ways, while Buton, which was affiliated with Ternate and the Company, was under continuing threat from Gowa.

Mostert then shifts the focus back to the Ambon region by investigating the governorships of Philip Lucasz (1628-1631) and Artus Gijsels (1631-1634). Particularly under the latter's leadership, the Company once again went openly on the offensive against Hoamoal and some of the other Muslim polities in the region. The rich documentation of this period as preserved in Gijsels's personal archive gives us an especially insightful look into the evolution of the scorched earth tactics and the reliance on indigenous subjects, allies and tactics the VOC developed. This increasing reliance on indigenous support also came with inherent risks, however, as became clear over the period 1634-1637, when the Company's control of the region threatened to unravel entirely. In the wake of the death of Hituese political leader Tepil, and his succession as kapitan Hitu by his son Kakiali, relations with the Company turned sour. War between the Company and most of the communities that comprised Hitu soon followed, bringing crisis to the heart Company's sphere of influence, as Hitu was situated on the island of Ambon proper and was formerly the Company's oldest ally in the region. In the subsequent conflict, the Company found most of the Muslim communities in the region up in arms against it. In its subsequent attempts to regain control, the Company made such heavy use of the local hongi fleets that it alienated its own subjects and allies as well: they revolted in 1636. It took a massive military intervention from Batavia, led by Governor-General Van Diemen, for the Company to regain a modicum of control in the region. Van Diemen made a follow-up visit to the region in 1638, hoping to durably resolve tensions and secure the monopoly. Meeting with Sultan Hamzah of Ternate, he recognized the latter's claims

on large swaths of the Ambon region in exchange for his continued assistance in maintaining the Company's clove monopoly. While both leaders were apparently pleased with this deal, it backfired in that it managed to alienate many of the leaders in the region against them both, leading to renewed conflict.

The subsequent period saw the first direct and concerted intervention by Makasar fleets and armies in the region. Responding to sustained diplomatic efforts from two of the most prominent leaders in the Ambon region, Kakiali on Hitu and kimelaha Luhu on Hoamoal, the Gowan court sent a large war fleet in 1642, which intervened in both Hoamoal and Hitu but was ultimately unsuccessful. In the wake of the failed intervention, the Hoamoal peninsula was entirely brought under the control of Majira, a Ternaten representative ostensibly well-disposed to the Company. The Hituese state, for its part, was dismantled and its territory brought under Company rule. The last bastion of Hituese resistance, the mountain fort of Kapahaha, held out until 1646, but was also ultimately conquered.

By 1647, then, the region was under firmer Company control than it had ever been. 1651, however, would see the outbreak of the most concerted and well-organised revolt against the Company regime yet. The resentment that developed in the intervening years can be explained by Company policies to further disempower the leadership of the region both economically and politically, combined with Christian missionizing in Ternaten-ruled areas which, although small in scale, was cause for particular ire and concern. It led to a coup against the Ternaten Sultan Mandarsyah in 1650 and a massive revolt in the Ambon region led by Majira the next year. The subsequent military conflict is known as the Great Ambon or Great Hoamoal War (1651-1656), and can be considered the culmination of decades of conflict in the region, following established patterns in crucial ways. In the first two years of the war, the Company and its allies were able to regain some control over the region by a brutal campaign on Hoamoal which intimidated other polities into surrendering. Those opposed to the Company, however, once again enlisted Makasar help, leading to concerted Makasar intervention over the subsequent two years.

The VOC's commander during the campaign, Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn, increasingly recognizing that the success of the Makasar intervention hinged on Gowa's various tributaries, vassals and staging areas, widened the scope of his own military actions accordingly, bringing Company troops to areas they had never before visited and giving the conflict a wide regional character towards its bloody conclusion. The period is also another clear illustration of

the environmental character of the war, in that the campaigns largely revolved around access to, and destruction of, food sources. Company troops and their local allies were ultimately able to starve out and defeat the remaining opposition against them. While offshoots of the conflict would go on for years so that it has no clear end point, this dissertation ends its investigation of the conflict in 1655, when resistance on Hoamoal was broken, to then consider the subsequent establishment of a particularly restrictive colonial order over Ambon, Hoamoal and the adjacent islands.

Mostert concludes by addressing the two main spearpoints of the dissertation: the wider power dynamics of the eastern archipelago, and the conduct of war in the challenging physical environment that the Ambon region presented. He emphasizes that in order to understand these conflicts, we need to investigate the European interests and policies in tandem with those of expanding local empires such as Gowa-Tallo (Makassar) and Ternate, and argues that if we mean to understand how the VOC ultimately achieved its clove monopoly, we should not primarily look for it in military factors in the narrow sense, but in its resource control and social engineering, in the form of sustained environmental destruction, forced resettlement and the deliberate dismantling of local political structures.

# Samenvatting

Er is een toenemend bewustzijn van de gewelddadige ontvolking van de Banda-eilanden in de periode 1609-1621 door de VOC, in haar pogingen om exclusieve controle te krijgen over nootmuskaat. De bredere conflicten in de regio over kruidnagel, die nog decennia hierna doorgingen, blijven vooralsnog echter sterk onderbelicht. In dit proefschrift onderzoekt Tristan Mostert deze zeventiende-eeuwse specerijenoorlogen, en de invloed van zowel fysieke omgevingsfactoren als de politieke dynamiek van de regio, vanaf de aankomst van de eerste Nederlandse schepen in het gebied tot de vestiging van koloniale controle over Ambon, Hoamoal en de omliggende eilanden rond 1656.

Het proefschrift introduceert eerst de complexe eilandwereld waarin de conflicten plaatsvonden, zowel in termen van de fysieke omgeving, waarvan de unieke aard van grote invloed was op de oorlogvoering in het gebied, als het politieke landschap dat zich had ontwikkeld voor de aankomst van de eerste Nederlandse schepen in 1599. Het verkent vervolgens de eerste contacten met de VOC en haar voorgangers en geeft daarbij in het bijzonder aandacht aan de effecten van de verdragen die vanaf 1605 werden gesloten met Hitu, Banda, Ternate en verschillende van de hen onderhorige gebieden. Deze verdragen vormden een belangrijk fundament onder het monopoliebeleid van de VOC, maar leidden ook tot conflict in de Banda-eilanden en betrokken de Compagnie in lokale rivaliteit en machtsconflicten. Zo leidde haar bondgenootschap met Ternate, in combinatie met het conflict in Banda, in 1615 tot oorlog met Gowa (Makassar), een opkomende macht in Zuid-Sulawesi en een steeds belangrijker rivaal van Ternate.

In de Ambonse eilanden voedde het escalerende conflict in Banda en het steeds strengere monopoliebeleid ondertussen de weerzin tegen de VOC-aanwezigheid, met name onder de bewoners van Hoamoal, een schiereiland van het grote eiland Seram ten noorden van Ambon, dat nominaal onder bestuur stond van de sultan van Ternate. Dit leidde tot de eerste grote escalatie van het conflict in deze regio na de aankomst van de Nassause Vloot, een Nederlandse oorlogsvloot die oorspronkelijk was uitgezonden om Spaanse koloniale bezittingen rond de Stille Oceaan aan te vallen, en uiteindelijk in 1625 bij Ambon aankwam. De VOC-gouverneur van Ambon, Herman van Speult, besloot de vloot te gebruiken om te reageren op een eerdere serie vijandigheden in de voorafgaande periode, en een grote campagne te houden rond Hoamoal en de nabijgelegen eilanden. De campagne vernietigde nederzettingen, vaartuigen, en bovenal kruidnagelbomen

– de eerste gelegenheid waarbij de VOC bewuste vernietiging hiervan inzette als oorlogswapen. Hoewel de campagne de leiders van Hoamoal intimideerde, voedde deze uiteindelijk alleen maar het wederzijdse wantrouwen en de vijandigheid in de regio, met verder conflict tot gevolg.

Het proefschrift onderzoekt de hierop volgende periode vanuit een breder geografisch perspectief, met name aan de hand van de loopbaan van Kaicili Ali, een Ternataanse prins die, nadat hij had gefaald de troon te bemachtigen, een machtsbasis voor zichzelf probeerde op te bouwen in de Ambonse eilanden. Zijn persoonlijke verhaal laat treffend zien hoe het VOC-monopoliebeleid verstrengeld was met de bredere machtsdynamiek in de regio, vooral die tussen Makassar en Ternate. Deze machtsdynamiek wordt ook behandeld aan de hand van enkele specifieke diplomatieke contacten tussen de VOC, Gowa en Boeton in de periode 1617-1632, toen de Compagnie in een staat van koude oorlog was met Gowa maar ondertussen wel op verschillende manieren contact met het rijk probeerde te onderhouden. Boeton, dat gelieerd was aan Ternate en de Compagnie, stond ondertussen onder voortdurende bedreiging van Gowa.

Mostert richt daarna de aandacht weer op de regio Ambon en behandelt de gouverneursperiodes van Philip Lucasz (1628-1631) en Artus Gijsels (1631-1634). Onder Gijsels ging de Compagnie weer vol in het offensief tegen Hoamoal. De rijke documentatie van deze periode, die bewaard gebleven is in het privé-archief van Gijsels, geeft ons een uitzonderlijk inzichtelijk beeld van de ontwikkelingen van de tactieken van de verschroeide aarde en het toenemend gebruik van lokale onderdanen, bondgenoten en tactieken. Deze afhankelijkheid van inheemse steun bracht echter ook risico's met zich mee, zoals bleek toen de VOC in de periode 1634-1637 elke grip op het gebied dreigde te verliezen. Na de dood van de Hituese politieke leider Tepil, en zijn opvolging als kapitan Hitu door zijn zoon Kakiali, verslechterden de Hituese relaties met de VOC, hetgeen uiteindelijk leidde tot oorlog met de meeste van de Hituese gemeenschappen. Hiermee raakte het conflict aan de kern van de VOC-controle in het gebied, aangezien Hitu op Ambon zelf was gelegen en voorheen de oudste VOC-bondgenoot in de regio was geweest. In haar pogingen haar controle gewapenderhand te herstellen maakte de VOC zo zwaar gebruik van de lokale hongi-vloten dat dit stuitte op het verzet van de eigen onderdanen en bondgenoten; in 1636 kwamen ook zij in opstand. Pas na een grote militaire interventie vanuit Batavia, onder leiding van gouverneur-generaal Van Diemen, wist de VOC enige vorm van controle op het gebied te herwinnen. Van Diemen bezocht het jaar erop, in 1638, de regio opnieuw, in de hoop de ontstane spanningen blijvend weg te nemen en het mono-

polie veilig te stellen. Tijdens zijn ontmoeting met Sultan Hamzah van Ternate erkende hij de claim van laatstgenoemde op grote delen van de regio Ambon, in ruil voor diens blijvende steun in het handhaven van het specerijenmonopolie. Hoewel beide leiders naar zich laat aanzien tevreden waren over deze uitkomst, leidde deze tot afkeer in het gebied tegen hen beide, hetgeen opnieuw tot conflict leidde.

Hierop kwamen voor het eerst Makassaarse vloten en troepen naar het gebied voor gerichte en directe militaire interventie. Na langdurige diplomatieke inspanningen door twee van de belangrijkste leiders in de regio, Kakiali op Hitu en kimelaha Luhu op Hoamoal, stuurde Gowa in 1642 een substantiele oorlogsvloot naar het gebied, die zich zowel op Hoamoal als in Hitu deed gelden maar uiteindelijk geen succes had. Na deze mislukte Makassaarse interventie kwam Hoamoal geheel onder controle van Majira, een Ternataanse vertegenwoordig die een goede relatie met de VOC onderhield. De Hituese staat werd ondertussen veroverd, ontmanteld en onder VOC-heerschappij gebracht. De laatste Hituese verzetshaard, het bergfort Kapahaha, zette het verzet voort tot 1646 maar werd uiteindelijk ook veroverd.

In 1647 was de regio dan ook steviger onder VOC-controle dan ooit tevoren. In 1651 zou echter de grootste en best georganiseerde opstand tegen de VOC tot dan toe uitbreken. De afkeer van de VOC die zich in de tussenliggende periode ontwikkelde kan worden verklaard door beleid om de lokale leiders nog meer van hun macht te ontnemen op politiek en economisch gebied, in combinatie met zendingswerk in gebieden die officieel aan de sultan van Ternate behoorden. Vooral dat laatste wekte wrevel. Het leidde in 1650 tot een coup tegen de Ternataanse sultan Mandarsyah en het jaar erop tot een enorme opstand in de regio Ambon onder leiding van Majira. Het hierop volgende militaire conflict staat bekend als de Grote Ambonse of Grote Hoamoalse Oorlog (1651-1656), en kan worden beschouwd als de culminatie van de decennialange conflicten in de regio, die de al gevestigde patronen in deze conflicten ook op allerhande manieren volgde. Tijdens de eerste twee jaar van de oorlog slaagde de VOC erin enige controle te herwinnen door een brute campagne op Hoamoal die andere gemeenschappen in het gebied ertoe bracht zich over te geven. De tegenstanders van de Compagnie deden echter opnieuw een beroep op Makassar voor hulp, en de twee hierop volgende jaren stonden in het teken van hun militaire interventie.

De VOC-opperbevelhebber tijdens deze campagnes, Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn, zag allengs in dat het succes van de Makassaarse interventie afhing van de verschillende aan Gowa onderhorige gebieden, die dienden als steunpun-

ten. Hij vergrootte dan ook de reikwijdte van zijn eigen campagnes om juist deze gebieden aan te vallen. Zo werd tegen het bloedige einde van de oorlog een veel groter gebied in het conflict betrokken en werden Compagniestroepen ingezet ver buiten het gebruikelijke werkgebied van de VOC. De periode is tevens nog een duidelijk voorbeeld van milieu-oorlogvoering, aangezien de campagnes voor een belangrijk deel draaiden om toegang tot, en de vernietiging van, voedselbronnen. Compagniestroepen en hun lokale bondgenoten slaagden er uiteindelijk in het verzet tegen hen te breken door uithongeringstactieken. Hoewel kleinere uitlopers van het conflict nog jaren door zouden gaan en het daarom lastig is een duidelijk eindpunt van het conflict aan te wijzen, beëindigt het proefschrift de behandeling van het conflict in 1655, toen het verzet op Hoamoal werd gebroken, om daarna stil te staan bij de hieropvolgende vestiging van een bijzonder restrictief koloniaal regime over Ambon, Hoamoal en de aangrenzende eilanden.

Mostert gaat tenslotte in op de twee voornaamste aandachtspunten van het proefschrift: de bredere machtsdynamiek in de oostelijke archipel, en de problemen van oorlogvoering in de natuurlijke omgeving in het gebied. Hij benadrukt als we deze conflicten willen begrijpen, we het beleid van Europese koloniale machten moeten onderzoeken in samenhang met dat van lokale machten zoals Gowa-Tallo (Makassar) en Ternate, en stelt dat als we willen begrijpen hoe de VOC uiteindelijk haar kruidnagelmonopolie vestigde, we het antwoord niet moeten zoeken in militaire factoren in de enge zin van het woord, maar in haar beleid om natuurlijke hulpbronnen te vernietigen of de toegang ertoe te ontzetten, en haar bewuste strategie van het ontmantelen van bestaande politieke en maatschappelijke structuren.

# Ikhtisar (Indonesian summary)

Meningkatnya kesadaran publik dan akademik sehubungan dengan peristiwa depopulasi di Kepulauan Banda yang dilaksanakan secara kejam oleh Persatuan Perusahaan Hindia Timur (VOC, Kompeni) pada periode 1609-1621 sebagai upaya untuk mendapatkan akses eksklusif atas tanaman pala, masih belum menyajikan perbandingan dengan konflik-konflik yang lebih luas atas akses eksklusif terhadadap tanaman cengkeh yang menjadi karakteristik kawasan ini selama beberapa dekade selanjutnya. Lewat disertasinya, Tristan Mostert hendak memaparkan perkembangan atas perang rempah-rempah di abad ketujuh belas dalam konteks yang lebih luas, dikaitkan dengan bentang alam darat dan laut kepulauan Ambon, serta dinamika politik kawasan secara komprehensif, berawal dari kedatangan kapal-kapal pertama Belanda di kepulauan sebelah timur Indonesia hingga pemaksaan kendali kolonial yang berlangsung lama di Ambon, Hoamal dan pulau-pulau sekitar pada tahun 1656.

Pada permulaan disertasi ini dibahas dunia pulau yang kompleks di mana konflik-konflik tersebut terjadi, baik dalam hal lingkungan fisik yang karakteristiknya menjadi penanda sifat peperangan di wilayah itu, serta lingkungan politik yang telah terbentuk sebelum kedatangan Belanda pada tahun 1599. Pembahasan selanjutnya mengeksplorasi periode awal kedatangan kapal-kapal Belanda di kawasan tersebut, utamanya berfokus pada dampak atas perjanjian-perjanjian dengan Hitu, Banda, Ternate, serta berbagai negeri taklukkan Belanda sejak tahun 1605 dan seterusnya. Perjanjian-perjanjian semacam itu adalah landasan bagi kebijakan monopoli Kompeni yang menggiring munculnya konflik di Kepulauan Banda serta menyeret Kompeni ke dalam politik kekuasaan lokal. Persekutuan dengan Ternate serta perang yang dilancarkan oleh Kompeni di Banda menciptakan ketegangan antara Kompeni dengan Gowa (Makassar), sebuah kekuatan baru di Sulawesi Selatan sekaligus saingan Ternate yang muncul pada tahun 1615.

Peningkatan konflik di Banda dan kebijakan monopoli yang semakin ketat menimbulkan kebencian yang bertumbuh terhadap kehadiran dan rezim VOC di daerah Ambon, terutama di kalangan penduduk Hoamoal yang berlokasi di semenanjung pulau Seram di sebelah utara Ambon, yang sekedar nama diperintah oleh sultan Ternate. Hal ini menyebabkan ekskalasi militer besar pertama setelah kedatangan Armada Nassau, armada perang Belanda yang awalnya ditujukan untuk menyasar wilayah jajahan Spanyol di kawasan Pasifik, yang menemukan jalannya ke wilayah Ambon pada tahun 1625. Sebagai respon

atas serangkaian konflik di tahun-tahun sebelumnya, Gubernur VOC di Ambon mengerahkan kekuatan militer yang tak terduga ini dengan mengadakan penyerangan besar-besaran ke sekitar Hoamoal dan pulau-pulau yang berdekatan, menyasar pemukiman-pemukiman, kapal-kapa serta pohon-pohon cengkeh, contoh jelas pertama perang ekonomi dan lingkungan oleh Kompeni di Nusantara. Meskipun kampanye militer tersebut sukses mengintimidasi para pemimpin Hoamoal, peristiwa tersebut menimbulkan rasa saling tidak percaya serta permusuhan sehingga menyebabkan timbulnya konflik di kemudian hari.

Disertasi ini mengeksplorasi lebih lanjut periode berikutnya dengan cakupan geografis yang lebih luas dengan berfokus pada perspektif perjalanan karir Kaicili Ali, seorang pangeran Ternate yang setelah gagal dalam upayanya merebut takhta, mencoba membuat basis kekuatan untuk dirinya sendiri di wilayah Ambon. Kisah pribadinya secara tajam menggambarkan bagaimana upaya VOC untuk menguasai cengkeh di wilayah Ambon terikat dengan dinamika kekuatan yang lebih luas di kawasan tersebut, terutama sehubungan dengan Makassar dan Ternate. Dinamika kekuasaan yang lebih luas ini juga ditelusuri dengan membahas beberapa interaksi diplomatik khusus antara Kompeni, Gowa dan Buton pada periode 1617-1632, sewaktu Kompeni melancarkan perang dingin dengan Makassar namun berusaha tetap membuka saluran komunikasi lewat berbagai cara, sementara Buton, yang berafiliasi dengan Ternate dan Kompeni, terus mendapatkan ancaman dari Gowa.

Mostert kemudian mengalihkan fokusnya kembali ke daerah Ambon dengan menyelidiki masa kepemimpinan Philip Lucasz (1628-1631) dan Artus Gijsels (1631-1634) sebagai gubernur. Di bawah kepemimpinan dan inisiatifnya, VOC sekali lagi meluncurkan serangan terbuka terhadap Hoamoal dan beberapa wilayah Muslim lainnya. Arsip pribadi Gijsels menyediakan dokumentasi yang melimpah dari periode ini, memberikan perspekti mendalam terkait perkembangan strategi bumi hangus dan ketergantungan pada rakyat pribumi, sekutu, serta taktik-taktik yang dikembangkan oleh Kompeni. Ketergantungan yang meningkat terhadap bantuan dari masyarakat pribumi juga disertai dengan risiko. Selama periode 1634-1637, kendali Kompeni atas wilayah tersebut terancam runtuh seluruhnya. Setelah kematian seorang pemimpin politik Hitu bernama Tepil dan pengangkatan putranya bernama Kakiali sebagai kapitan Hitu, hubungan dengan Kompeni memburuk. Peperangan antara Kompeni dan sebagian besar komunitas yang membentuk Hitu segera terjadi, menimbulkan krisis dalam lingkup kekuasaan Kompeni, berhubung Hitu terletak tepat di pulau Ambon dan sebelumnya merupakan sekutu tertua Kompeni di wilayah

tersebut. Pada konflik selanjutnya, Kompeni mendapati sebagian besar komunitas Muslim di wilayah itu menentangnya. Sebagai upaya untuk mendapatkan kembali kuasa atas wilayah tersebut, Kompeni memanfaatkan armada hongi lokal sedemikian rupa sehingga mengasingkan subyek dan sekutunya sendiri: mereka memberontak pada tahun 1636. Diperlukan intervensi militer besar-besaran dari Batavia yang dipimpin oleh Gubernur Jenderal Van Diemen agar Kompeni kembali mendapatkan secuil kuasa atas wilayah tersebut. Van Diemen melakukan kunjungan lanjutan ke wilayah kepulauan timur pada tahun 1638, berharap dapat menyelesaikan ketegangan secara permanen dan mengamankan monopoli. Setelah bertemu Sultan Hamzah dari Ternete, dia mengakui klaim sultan atas sebagian besar wilayah Ambon sebagai imbalan atas bantuannya yang berkelanjutan dalam mempertahankan monopoli cengkeh VOC. Sementara kedua pemimpin tampaknya puas, kesepakatan tersebut menjadi bumerang karena membuat banyak pemimpin di wilayah itu terasing dari kedua belah pihak, sehingga memunculkan konflik baru.

Periode konflik yang menyusul setelahnya menjadi saksi mata atas keterlibatan langsung pertama dan terpadu oleh armada dan prajurit Makassar di wilayah tersebut. Sebagai tanggapan atas misi diplomatik berkelanjutan dari dua pemimpin utama di wilayah Ambon, Kakiali dari Hitu dan kimelaha Luhu dari Hoamoal, istana Gowa mengirim armada perang besar pada tahun 1642, yang kemudian mengintervensi Hoamoal dan Hitu namun akhirnya tidak berhasil. Setelah penyerangan yang gagal, semenanjung Hoamoal sepenuhnya berada di bawah kontrol Majira, seorang perwakilan Ternate yang seolah-olah bersikap baik kepada VOC. Negeri Hitu sebagian dipecah, wilayahnya berada di bawah kekuasaan VOC. Benteng pertahanan terakhir warga Hitu, benteng gunung Kapahaha, bertahan hingga tahun 1646, namun akhirnya juga ditaklukkan.

Kemudian pada tahun 1647, wilayah tersebut berada di bawah cengkraman VOC lebih kuat daripada sebelumnya. Tahun 1651 menjadi saksi atas pecahnya pemberontakan kepada Kompeni yang lebih terorganisir dengan baik. Kebencian yang berkembang di tahun-tahun selanjutnya dapat dijelaskan lewat kebijakan Kompeni yang semakin melemahkan kepemimpinan daerah baik secara ekonomi maupun politik, dikombinasikan dengan kegiatan misionaris Kristen berskala kecil di daerah-daerah yang dikuasai Ternate, menimbulkan kecemasan dan kekhawatiran. Hal tersebut menyebabkan kudeta kepada Sultan Mandarsyah dari Ternate pada tahun 1650 dan pemberontakan besar-besaran di daerah Ambon yang dipimpin oleh Majira tahun berikutnya. Konflik militer berikutnya dikenal sebagai Perang Ambon Besar atau Perang Hoamoal Besar

(1651-1656), dianggap sebagai puncak dari puluhan tahun konflik di wilayah tersebut, dengan mengikuti pola yang sudah ada secara krusial. Pada dua tahun pertama peperangan, Kompeni dan sekutunya dapat merebut kembali kendali atas wilayah tersebut melalui kampanye brutal di Hoamoal yang mengintimidasi negeri-negeri lain agar menyerah. Namun, pihak-pihak yang menentang Kompeni sekali lagi meminta bantuan kepada Makassar, menyebabkan keterlibatan Makassar di dua tahun selanjutnya. Komandan Kompeni selama kampanye, Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn yang menyadari bahwa keberhasilan intervensi Makassar bergantung pada berbagai daerah taklukkan, vasal dan kawasan gerak Gowa, memperluas cakupan aktifitas militernya sendiri dengan mengerahkan pasukan Kompeni ke daerah yang sebelumnya belum pernah mereka kunjungi sehingga memberikan nuansa kewilayahan yang lebih luas kepada konflik tersebut dengan akhir yang penuh pertumpahan darah. Periode ini juga menggambarkan dengan jelas karakter lingkungan dari perang tersebut, di mana sebagian besar kampanye militer berkutat pada akses terhadap sumber pangan. Pasukan Kompeni dan sekutu lokalnya pada akhirnya berhasil membuat kelaparan musuh dan mengalahkan oposisi yang tersisa.

Rentetan lanjutan dari konflik tersebut akan berlangsung selama bertahun-tahun serta tidak memiliki titik akhir yang jelas. Oleh karena itu, disertasi ini mengakhiri uraiannya tentang konflik di tahun 1655, ketika perlawanan terhadap Hoamoal dipatahkan, dengan mempertimbangkan pembentukan tatanan kolonial yang ketat terhadap Ambon, Hoamoal dan pulau-pulau yang berbatasan langsung dengannya. Mostert menyimpulkan pembahasan dengan dua ujung tombak disertasinya: dinamika kekuasaan yang lebih luas di kepulauan timur, serta pelaksanaan perang pada lingkungan fisik yang menantang seperti di kawasan Ambon. Dia menekankan bahwa untuk memahami konflik-konflik tersebut, kita perlu menyelidiki kepentingan dan kebijakan Eropa serta kerajaan lokal yang melakukan ekspansi seperti Gowa-Tallo (Makassar) dan Ternate, Ia berargumen bahwa jika kita bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana VOC pada akhirnya mencapai monopoli cengkeh, tidak mesti mencarinya melalui pemahaman militer dalam arti sempit, akan tetapi juga lewat pemahaman akan pengendalian atas sumber daya alam dan rekayasa sosialnya, dalam bentuk perusakan lingkungan yang berkelanjutan, pemindahan paksa dan pembongkaran struktur politik lokal yang disengaja.

# Curriculum Vitae

Tristan Mostert (1981) was born in The Hague and spent most of his childhood in Hoorn and Leeuwarden. After completing the Stedelijk Gymnasium in the latter town and spending a year hiking through Europe, he pursued a study in history – first at the University of Amsterdam at undergraduate level (2000-2004), then at Leiden University for a research master (2004-2007), during which he specialised in early modern colonial history, particularly in Asia. After earning his degree, he pursued a career in museums and education – as a historical researcher at the Bataviawerf, Lelystad, as a history teacher at the Open Schoolgemeenschap Bijlmer, as a junior curator and educator at the Rijksmuseum, and at various other museums and cultural institutions for shorter projects as an independent historian. Lured back to academia, he went on to pursue a Ph.D. in Leiden in 2014, which was generously funded by an NWO PhDs in the Humanities scholarship. He combined his academic work with ongoing outside projects, including the management of the Atlas of Mutual Heritage database, two book translations and membership of the editorial council of the Pala project at the Westfries Museum, dedicated to the history of Banda. His publications include *Silk thread: China and the Netherlands since 1600* (Van Tilt for Rijksmuseum 2015), co-authored with Jan van Campen, and *The Dutch and English East India Companies: Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia* (Amsterdam University Press 2018), co-edited with Adam Clulow. He is currently employed at Leiden University, teaching courses about general history and early modern colonialism, and is a member of the research workgroup investigating the House of Orange and colonialism.