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A SUPERABUNDANCE OF CENTERS: TERNATE AND THE CONTEST FOR NORTH SULAWESI

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When the newly inaugurated Sultan of Ternate Kaicili Sibori, made a royal visit to North Sulawesi in the dry season of 1675, he was received with great ceremony by his local vassals. In Manado, delegations from the mountain villages of what is now Minahasa brought tribute gifts of rice and meat for the sultan, inquiring whether he had any instructions for them. On the nearby island of Tagulandang, where the local chiefs greeted him with the *sembah* and kissed his feet, Sibori was told that a headhunting expedition had been launched to mark the death of his father and predecessor. At Tabukan on Greater Sangir, where he was to marry a local princess, the sultan was given a spectacular welcome by "a great number of men and women, drumming and singing to have seen their lord in person." When he asked each of the Sangirese raja for 100 men to take back with him to Ternate "in order to enlarge and people his kingdom," they agreed without complaint.[1]

Yet by the end of 1677, little more than two years after this visit, the rulers of Tagulandang and Sangir had all signed treaties repudiating Ternaten rule and declaring themselves vassals of the Dutch East India Company.[2] In the text of his particular contract with the VOC, the raja of Tabukan declared that he had "never maintained more than a close friendship with the Ternaten kings," even if at times, "making a virtue of necessity," he had been forced to behave as if he were their loyal vassal.[3] In 1679, the Minahasans who had honored Sibori at Manado in 1675 also placed themselves under direct Company rule.[4]

These events were historic in that they heralded a definitive end to Ternaten political influence in North Sulawesi. By 1681 the whole of the

[1]VOC 1310: 457, 458, 461, 468–469.
[2]Heeres & Stapel 1907–1955 III: 83–90, 105–110.
[3]Van der Aa 1867: 332.
[4]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 50–58.

peninsula from Gorontalo eastwards, as well as the Sangir archipelago, would have passed—permanently, as it turned out—under Dutch control. In itself, however, the kind of political about-face just described was unexceptional in seventeenth century North Sulawesi. Sudden switches of allegiance from one external patron to another had long been common practice among the local polities in the region. As a result, Ternaten dominance there had never been more than patchy and intermittent.

Politics in precolonial North Sulawesi tended to be fluid, violent, personal, and pragmatic. The events following the Ternaten royal visit of 1675 were typical in all these respects. By 1677, Kaicili Sibori had made himself unpopular in the region by rejecting his new Tabukan wife, by killing a Sangirese ruler whom he suspected of disloyalty, and by allowing his Malukan subjects to attack and plunder supposedly friendly coastal settlements on the North Sulawesi peninsula.[5] Under these circumstances, many of his vassals were glad to accept the alternative of Company rule when it was offered to them. Shortly before they did so, in fact, several Sangirese chiefs had already attempted to escape from Ternaten control by placing themselves under Spanish protection.[6]

Similar dynamics had operated time and again in the course of the seventeenth century, working alternately against Ternate and in its favor. The case of Manado is illustrative. In 1614 the raja of Manado—whose successors would be known in colonial times as the kings of Bolaang-Mongondow—appealed to the Spanish in Maluku for protection against the Ternatens, whom he accused of plundering his subjects' women and property.[7] Once established in Manado, however, the Spaniards in turn came into conflict with the raja, ultimately burning his capital and forcing him to flee southward along the coast. His response was to place himself once more under the protection of Ternate, which, with Dutch help, launched an expedition to expel the Spaniards from the area in 1644.[8] In 1660 Ternate was still aiding Manado in punitive action against Minahasan groups who sheltered occasional Spanish expeditions.[9] In

[5]Heeres & Stapel 1907–1955 III: 105; van der Aa 1867: 99, 162, 173–174, 245, 327.
[6]Van der Aa 1867: 236; Pastells 1936: clxxxii–clxxxviii.
[7]Correspondencia 1868: 223.
[8]*Dagh-Register 1643–1644*: 116–119.
[9]VOC 1233: 291–292.

1681 the Manadonese raja was described as "completely dependent" upon his Ternaten master.[10]

The reasons for the patchiness and instability of Ternaten control in North Sulawesi can be summarized in one word: competition. The westward expansion of Ternate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coincided with European—first Portuguese, later Spanish and Dutch—incursions into Sulawesi, and also with the rise and fall of the indigenous kingdom of Makassar in the south of the same island. North Sulawesi, then, was a periphery contested by a number of powerful centers. This dangerous situation was exacerbated by local competition between the many small polities within the region itself, who regularly attempted to involve external powers in their own mutual conflicts. Amid the resulting flux, Ternate was unable to establish a stable relationship with any of its supposed vassals in North Sulawesi. The following sections briefly examine how the problem of competition manifested itself in three areas of the Ternate–North Sulawesi relationship: military, economic, and cultural.

The Military Contest

According to the earliest dated evidence for Ternaten expansion in North Sulawesi, Sultan Hairun prepared a war fleet in 1563 to force Islam upon groups there that had petitioned the Portuguese in Ternate to baptize them as Christians.[11] If this Jesuit missionary report can be believed, then, the process began with violence or the threat of violence, and in competition with a rival power in Maluku. Both violence and competition are certainly confirmed as aspects of the expansion by later sources. Perhaps the most striking examples concern the kingdom of Siau, on the island of the same name in the Sangir archipelago.

Within three years of the establishment of a Portuguese Jesuit mission post on Siau in 1584, the island had been attacked and pillaged by Ternate.[12] In 1593 the raja of Siau responded to the Ternaten menace by sailing to Manila and swearing fealty to the king of Spain, receiving in return the protection of a small Spanish garrison.[13] In 1605 the newly

[10]*Dagh-Register 1681*: 586.
[11]Jacobs 1974–1984 I: 412.
[12]Jacobs 1974–1984 II: 263; Wessels 1933: 384.
[13]Wessels 1933: 392–393.

formed VOC drove the Portuguese out of Maluku, and in the following year the Spanish, alarmed at this Dutch success, sent a strong force from the Philippines and established their own fort on Ternate island not far from that of the Company. Siau now became a regular staging post on the Spanish supply route to Maluku, and as such a military target not only for Ternate, but also for the Dutch, with whom the Ternatens concluded a formal alliance in 1607.

In 1612 Ternate and the VOC raided several Siau villages in a joint expedition, and in 1614 they returned to conquer the island outright.[14] In 1615 the Company made a notorious attempt to ship the whole population to Banda as forced labor for the Dutch nutmeg plantations there, but within a few years the kingdom was reestablished and came once more under Spanish control.[15] During the Dutch attempt to "extirpate" all clove trees from North Maluku after 1652, the spice continued to be grown on Spanish Siau. In 1677 the VOC restored its clove monopoly and Ternate settled its century-old score with Siau when a joint Ternaten–Dutch expedition conquered the island for the second and last time, driving the Spanish permanently from North Sulawesi.[16] Fearful of further Ternaten retribution, the captive Siau king then pleaded to become a Company vassal, to which Kaicili Sibori, satisfied with his revenge and under pressure from the Company, had already agreed.[17]

Siau, Manado, and Minahasa were not the only targets of Ternaten coercion in North Sulawesi. A list of subject territories of Ternate reproduced in Argensola's *Conquista de las Islas Malucas*, and probably dating from 1591, already includes the whole of the peninsula from Tolitoli and Tomini eastward, plus Sangir.[18] Each locality on the list is accompanied by an estimate of the number of fighting men at its disposal. Argensola describes the Ternaten state system at one point as a tyrannical empire, and elsewhere as an "alliance" in the sense of a protection racket in which the "protection" is mainly against the allies themselves: "who in these islands is obedient to Maluku, is spared the rabid depre-

[14]Van Dijk 1862: 216–217; Tiele 1877–1886 VIII: 271, 293; Wessels 1935: 100–102.
[15]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 I: 132–163; Wessels 1935: 103–106.
[16]Van der Aa 1867.
[17]Van der Aa 1867: 188, 209.
[18]Argensola 1609: 82; Jacobs 1974–1984 II: 304.

dations of the league."[19] The military character of Ternaten power in North Sulawesi is confirmed by a Dutch document from 1627 in which it is noted that Limboto, one of the most important local powers on the peninsula, paid its tribute not directly to the sultan of Ternate but to his kapita laut or naval commander Kaicili Ali, in the manner of a military fiefdom.[20]

The risks involved in defying Ternate grew all the more formidable once the VOC added its ships, guns, and trained soldiers to the korakora fleets and warrior bands of the sultan and his retainers. When part of Sangir "deserted" to Siau and the Spanish in 1624, a Ternaten–Dutch punitive expedition came close to capturing some 5,000 Sangirese prisoners before the accidental loss of its supply ship forced it to withdraw.[21] A similar expedition against Gorontalo in 1647 succeeded in taking the enemy stronghold and killed, according to a Dutch report, as many as 4,000 local people.[22] These early expeditions, however, remained Ternaten rather than Dutch initiatives. The VOC agreed to participate in the Sangir campaign only with the greatest reluctance, while the governor who approved Dutch involvement in the Gorontalo expedition was officially reprimanded by his superiors in Batavia. Even when the Company began to dominate its Ternaten ally later in the century, Dutch military action never became a necessary condition for alliance success in North Sulawesi. The conquest of Siau in 1677, although masterminded by the VOC, was actually achieved entirely by the Ternatens and their local vassals without a shot being fired by the accompanying Dutch forces.[23]

That Ternate could rely upon local as well as Dutch military help in such a campaign may seem a paradox after what has been said about the violent nature of Ternaten expansion in North Sulawesi. Yet the active participation of local vassals was a recurrent feature of the whole expansion process. When Ternate first attacked Siau in 1587, for instance, it was already supported by Siau's neighbor Tagulandang, which also aided the Ternaten–Dutch expedition against Siau in 1612.[24] This reflects the

[19]Argensola 1609: 71, 83.
[20]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 II: 119; van Fraassen 1987 I: 529.
[21]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 II: 40–41, 44, 79; Wessels 1935: 106–107.
[22]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 III: 358–359, 388–390.
[23]Van der Aa 1867: 204–208.
[24]Jacobs 1974–1984 II: 263; Tiele 1877–1886 VIII: 271.

second type of competition, after that between external powers like Ternate and the Spanish, which helped determine the course of North Sulawesi's political history in this period: local struggles between indigenous groups and leaders.

The political geography of precolonial North Sulawesi, like its cultural geography, was complex and fragmented.[25] Two loose political systems could be discerned, one oriented toward the Gulf of Tomini and another covering the north coast and the Sangir archipelago. The former was dominated by the kingdoms of Gorontalo and Limboto, while the latter comprised a chain of smaller centers, each with its own datu or raja and its own local hinterland, extending along the outer or northern coast and the Sangir islands from Kaili to the southern tip of Mindanao. The leading families within each system were extensively intermarried, but neither network was ever consolidated into a single polity. In some interior parts of the peninsula, notably in Minahasa, lived tribal groups only loosely associated with the coastal raja.

A certain level of conflict among all these power centers was normal and endemic. In 1569, a Portuguese Jesuit described North Sulawesi as a "restless" area and attributed this to its division between "so many kings."[26] Seventeenth century observers wrote that the Sangirese were "habitually at odds with one another" and described Minahasa as a land of "parties, conflicts and feuds."[27] Such "restlessness" was necessitated, in fact, by the traditional practice of headhunting. When Talaud islanders told a Dutch official in 1825 that without war they could "enjoy no good fortune," they were stating a cultural truth which, two centuries earlier, had been valid for most of the region.[28] Human heads were required, and sought among neighboring groups, for a wide variety of ritual occasions, including funerals and other individual rites of passage, inaugurations of new settlements and structures, and propitiation ceremonies at times of sickness and poor harvests.[29] In these circumstances, the existence of kinship links between adjacent groups served less to ensure peace between them than to lend added bitterness to their inevitable conflicts.

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[25]Henley 1992: 44–56.
[26]Jacobs 1974–1984 I: 525.
[27]Colin 1663 I: 111; Hustaart 1656: 55.
[28]Van Delden 1844 II: 27.
[29]Brilman 1938: 80, 85; Padtbrugge 1866: 317–318; van Delden 1844 II: 27; Schouten-Patuleia 1993.

When Ternate or a European power offered to support one party in such a conflict in return for obedience and tribute, the temptation to accept was usually irresistable. Typically, the other party would then respond by seeking out a rival patron. In this way, patterns of dependency developed that reflected local animosities as much as imperial interests. In the Sangir archipelago, for instance, it was no accident that Tagulandang emerged as a staunch Ternaten vassal as soon as its nearest neighbor, Siau, fell under Spanish control. On Greater Sangir, a more intermittent European presence and a political geography fragmented even by North Sulawesi standards produced a kaleidoscope of changing allegiances, featuring flirtations with Makassar and even Tidore, a power rarely active west of Maluku.[30] In Minahasa, the long struggle between Spain and the Dutch–Ternaten alliance was intimately associated with hostilities among the Minahasan walak, or tribal communities, and with tensions between the tribesmen and the Manado raja.[31] Further west, a series of wars between Gorontalo and Limboto seems to have led to alternating episodes of violent intervention by Ternate and its greatest Indonesian rival, Makassar.[32] The Dutch-Ternaten expedition to Gorontalo in 1647 was also prompted by a local appeal, this time from one of the parties in an internal conflict within the Gorontalo royal family.[33]

In the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the number of foreign players in the North Sulawesi power game suddenly began to decline. In 1660 the Spanish were chased out of Minahasa for the last time, and three years later the threat of an attack on Manila by the Chinese warlord Koxinga led them to withdraw their forces from Maluku, leaving Siau as the only remaining Spanish post in the area.[34] In 1667 Makassar, which had gradually extended its power along the whole north coast and even out into the Sangir islands, was conquered by the Dutch and forced to relinquish all its claims in North Sulawesi.[35] This left the VOC–Ternaten alliance in a position of unprecedented power. The Company, however,

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[30]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 I: 352; van Dijk 1862: 274; Jacobs 1974–1984 III: 312; Hustaart 1656: 53.
[31]*Dagh-Register 1643–1644*: 116–119.
[32]Bastiaans 1938: 231–237; Riedel 1870: 107–108;
[33]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 III: 389.
[34]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 18; Andaya 1993: 155.
[35]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 II: 118–119, 281; Noorduyn 1983: 117–118; Stapel 1922: 242–243; Wessels 1935: 32, 111.

was now the dominant half of this alliance, and when Governor Padtbrugge decided to bring the whole of North Sulawesi under direct Dutch control in 1677, the malleable and unpopular young sultan Kaicili Sibori did nothing to oppose him.

The establishment of uncontested Dutch control in North Sulawesi ushered in a period of relative peace—or at least, one in which local conflicts carried less risk of escalation. Nevertheless, there were many in the region who would gladly have seen the old politics of competitive intervention continued. Gorontalo, after willingly exchanging Ternaten for Company suzerainty in 1678, quickly fell out with the Dutch when they attempted to limit its military power in the Gulf of Tomini.[36] As prisoner on board a Dutch ship in 1681, a Gorontalo ruler vainly threatened his captors with a return to the Ternaten fold.[37] The raja of Manado, Loloda, had been increasingly at odds with the Dutch since 1656, when they built a stronghold near his capital and began to usurp his authority in Minahasa just as the Spaniards had done.[38] After the VOC went so far as to conclude a treaty with the Minahasan chiefs over his head in January 1679, he joined in the rebellion against the Dutch launched at last by Kaicili Sibori of Ternate a few months later.[39] In 1681, however, the Company captured Sibori and put Loloda to flight.[40] In 1689 the latter made a vain attempt to seek support from an English trading expedition in Mindanao.[41] In the same year, a delegation from Siau arrived in the Philippines with a last plea for liberation from "Dutch tyranny"; a Spanish chronicler remarked that it was "easier to offer them sympathy for their Christian misery than to remedy it."[42]

The Economic Contest

The political and military contest for North Sulawesi, once begun, had its own internal dynamic. It was also underpinned, however, by the economic value of the region to the contenders. Commercial relations be-

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[36]Heeres & Stapel 1907–1955 III: 127–136; van der Aa 1867: 150–154.
[37]*Dagh-Register 1681*: 375.
[38]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 18, 26–29.
[39]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 50–58; Andaya 1993: 182.
[40]*Dagh-Register 1681*: 586; Andaya 1993: 185.
[41]Van Dam 1701 II(1): 49; Laarhoven 1989: 79.
[42]Murillo Velarde 1749: 358–359.

tween North Sulawesi and Ternate, for instance, were very old. Tomé Pires, writing soon after the first Portuguese ships reached Maluku in 1512, recorded that gold was already being brought to Ternate by traders from Siau.[43] The Spaniard Andres de Urdaneta, who lived in North Maluku from 1526 to 1535, wrote that the "Celebes"—meaning North Sulawesi, the Gulf of Tomini coast or the Sangir archipelago, since he deals separately with the other parts of Sulawesi and with Mindanao—sent gold to Maluku every year and were also suppliers of sandalwood.[44] Portuguese information from the same period adds turtleshell and wax to the list of products reaching Ternate from the Celebes, and mentions that these goods were exchanged there for Indian cloth.[45]

These Hispanic sources portray the early North Sulawesi–Ternate trade as a matter of purely commercial exchange. Given the nature of the exchange, however—products of the land for exotic imported manufactures—and given the politically and culturally "embedded" character of such trade in better-documented parts of traditional Indonesia, it seems likely that, in reality, rather more than pure economics was involved. Andaya describes just this kind of exchange, elaborated into public ceremony, as central to the original nature of lord–vassal relationships in North Maluku.[46] Within North Sulawesi itself, the local raja certainly continued to distribute imported goods in return for tribute in local products until well into the nineteenth century.[47] We may surmise, then, that the annual trading expeditions from North Sulawesi to Ternate in the early sixteenth century were already perceived—albeit perhaps more clearly by the people of Ternate than by those of Sulawesi—in terms of homage and tribute.

Such a system, however, could only remain free from tension while there was only one available source of the desired import goods. In some other parts of the Malukan periphery, notably the East Halmaheran and Papuan tributaries of Tidore, approximately this situation did prevail until a late date.[48] European and other foreign traders did not generally sail beyond Halmahera, so the center retained its natural monopoly on

[43]Cortesão 1944: 221–222.
[44]Navarrete 1825–1837 V: 437.
[45]Tiele 1877–1886 II: 39.
[46]Andaya 1993: 56–57.
[47]Van Delden 1844: 23; Steller 1866: 37; Wilken & Schwarz 1867: 296, 375.
[48]Andaya 1993: 99–110.

the exchange goods that they brought. North Sulawesi, by contrast, and thanks in the first place to its greater accessibility, quickly became a competitive market in which distribution monopolies could be maintained only by force.

Until the middle of the seventeenth century, North Sulawesi did not itself produce the precious spices which were the main object of foreign voyages to eastern Indonesia.[49] But because of its position astride two important early routes to the spice islands proper—from China and Luzon via Mindanao and from Malacca via Brunei and North Borneo—it was visited by foreign vessels even before the arrival of the Europeans. The northern tip of Minahasa is mentioned in a Chinese source from the fourteenth century, and if Cortesão is right in his interpretation of a toponym in the Suma Oriental, Manado had some direct trade with Malacca at the beginning of the sixteenth.[50] The first Europeans known to have traded in the area were the crew of a Spanish vessel that took on supplies on Talaud in 1528—although two years earlier, a number of Spaniards had become trade items themselves when they were enslaved by the local population after a shipwreck on Greater Sangir.[51]

Sporadic European commercial contacts with North Sulawesi continued throughout the sixteenth century. In 1563, for instance, it was reported that Portuguese cannon had found their way to Tolitoli on the northwestern corner of the peninsula.[52] In this light, Sultan Hairun's military expedition of the same year can be interpreted as a defensive reaction to Portuguese interference in a trade network previously focused upon Ternate. The real contest for economic domination in North Sulawesi, however, began with the establishment of Dutch and Spanish forts in North Maluku at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The garrisons of these forts regularly had problems obtaining local food supplies, and both the Dutch and the Spanish saw the fertile ricefields of Minahasa, across the Maluku Sea to the west, as a potential solution. The first VOC ship loaded rice at Manado in 1608, and by 1614 the Spanish, for whom this area was particularly attractive because of its proximity to Siau and the Philippine supply route, were doing so too.[53]

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[49]Hustaart 1656: 64–65; van der Aa 1867: 262.
[50]Ptak 1992: 45; Cortesão 1944: 222.
[51]Navarrete 1825–1837 V: 281–282, 408–409; de la Costa 1958: 9–11.
[52]Wessels 1933: 371.
[53]Van Dijk 1862: 268; Correspondencia 1868: 223.

Coconut oil was another commodity soon being imported from North Sulawesi by the European outposts in Maluku.[54] Later the VOC also developed an interest in a wider variety of North Sulawesi products, including damar and ebony as well as those which had been the mainstay of traditional exchange with Ternate—gold, turtleshell, and wax. Despite its alliance with Ternate, the Company purchased its goods directly from producers or collectors in Sulawesi, without Ternaten involvement. Finally, both the Spanish and the Dutch joined wholeheartedly in the contest for a typically Southeast Asian form of wealth that North Sulawesi also offered—human beings, to be bought or abducted as slaves.[55]

As a result of all this competition, the long-distance trade goods that were in demand in North Sulawesi—most importantly luxury textiles and European firearms—became widely available in North Sulawesi through several different channels. Ternate now had nothing unique to offer by way of economic patronage, and so its continuing demands for tribute in gold, slaves, wax and oil became correspondingly more difficult to enforce.[56] In the rare surviving text of a letter written to the Spanish governor in Maluku in 1616 by the ruler of Kaidipan, one of the small polities on the north coast of North Sulawesi, the raja asks for muskets, ammunition, a flag, and some Indian cloth in return for his loyalty and provisions from his land.[57] At this stage, then, the kind of economic complementarity that might have underpinned a traditional lord–vassal relationship still existed. But when the sultan of Ternate visited Tagulandang and Siau in 1675, his "vassals" were now in a position to include foreign manufactures in their gifts to him—gongs, porcelain, a musket, and a small cannon.[58] Any economic basis for a stable political relationship had disappeared.

The Cultural Contest

Closely connected with the contest for political and economic control of North Sulawesi was a struggle for cultural hegemony. Most obviously this meant a contest for converts between Islam and Christianity, the

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[54]*Dagh-Register 1640–41*: 330.
[55]Tiele & Heeres 1886–1895 II: 3, 40–41, 44, 78; Laarhoven 1989: 45.
[56]Van der Aa 1867: 155; Riedel 1869: 523.
[57]Correspondencia 1868: 221.
[58]VOC 1310: 458, 469.

former promoted by Ternate and Makassar, the latter by the Portuguese and Spaniards and—to a lesser extent—by the Dutch.

Some Philippine historians have argued that, in the case of Mindanao, Ternaten authority in the seventeenth century actually rested upon an Islamic foundation. In this view, the Magindanao sultanate aligned itself with Ternate and not with the Christian Spanish because, thanks partly to Ternaten religious teachers, it was a Muslim country.[59] At first glance, there is some reason to take religion almost as seriously as a factor in the contest for North Sulawesi. Long before the definitive Dutch takeover, it was customary that, while Muslims defeated or captured in Sulawesi by the Dutch–Ternaten alliance belonged to the sultanate, any baptized Christians became subjects of the Company.[60] Nor was there any lack of what appeared to be religious violence. Tagulandang Muslims, for example, martyred three Franciscan missionaries in two separate incidents during the early seventeenth century, and Minahasan pagans killed a fourth.[61]

On close inspection, however, religious affiliation in North Sulawesi at this period is almost always open to interpretation as a function rather than a determinant of political allegiance. Tagulandang, for instance, was an established enemy of Siau and its Spanish protectors, and therefore also of their faith and its missionaries. When a Catholic group on the west coast of Sangir offered to submit to the VOC in 1614, but at the same time refused to accept Ternaten control for ostensibly religious reasons, the Dutch noted that its local enemies on the east coast happened to be Muslims and vassals of Ternate.[62] In the previous year the same group had apparently appealed to Muslim Makassar for support against Ternaten Tagulandang.[63]

As a rule, each change of patron also meant a change of formal religion. Manado, if we take the relevant European sources at face value, was Christianized, Islamized, Christianized and Islamized again in the period from 1563 to 1644.[64] The people of Tagulandang, Muslim fanatics in early seventeenth-century accounts, went over quietly to the Dutch Re-

[59]Laarhoven 1989: 16–17, 38–40.
[60]Van Dijk 1862: 217.
[61]Stokking 1931: 529, 537, 553.
[62]Van Dijk 1862: 218.
[63]Wessels 1935: 101.
[64]Wessels 1933: 372; Wessels 1935: 87, 93; *Dagh-Register 1643–1644*: 118.

formed Church after their transfer from Ternaten to VOC protection. By the end of the century, Tagulandang was said to consist "entirely of Christians."[65] Needless to say, doctrinal differences seldom played a role in such conversions. In 1675 a Dutch officer watched the sultan of Ternate "convert" a Sangirese king from Catholicism to Islam by placing a turban on his head.[66] Two years later, it was the turn of the Dutch to distribute the headgear when chiefs from Tabukan exchanged their turbans for European hats to mark their passage from Ternaten to Company overlordship and at the same time from Islam to Christianity.[67]

The modern reader is tempted to conclude from such evidence that formal religion, like clothing, was simply a badge or symbol of political affiliation. A seventeenth-century Dutch writer, however, was closer to the mark when he gibed that "the hood makes here the monk, the baptism makes here the Christian."[68] Sign and signified were not fully differentiated, dress and ritual were believed to have cosmic implications in themselves. The object of attempts to manipulate the cosmos by means of changes in ritual behavior, on the other hand, was usually very practical. A Sangir raja summed this up neatly in 1677 when he explained to the Dutch that "since he was not aware of any disturbance or deprivation in his villages, he did not think it necessary to change his religion."[69]

While the established folk religions generally continued to deal with domestic realms such as agriculture, the world religions were associated mainly with external power politics. And just as indigenous religious practice was in large part a magical technology for ensuring good harvests, the symbols and rituals of Christianity or Islam were expected to ensure success in relations with the outside world. In practice this meant military power and association with a powerful patron, so that the choice of religion was usually a pragmatic affair. When a Sangirese ambassador to Manila in 1639 was asked why he and his people sought conversion to Christianity, he replied that he had "observed many times that the truest and most powerful god was that of the Christians, because of the many and famous battles which they had always won against the heretics and

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[65]Van Dam 1701 II (1): 56.
[66]VOC 1310: 462.
[67]Van der Aa 1867: 212.
[68]Van Dijk 1862: 217.
[69]Van Dam 1701 II (1): 64; van der Aa 1867: 238.

Moors of these islands."[70] Because religion was expected above all to be efficacious, it remained inseparable from—but at the same time (at least in subjective terms) no simple expression of—politics.

The pragmatism and flexibility of cultural attitudes to power and authority in North Sulawesi, forged in a decentralized, headhunting society and elaborated by the violent experiences of the seventeenth century, made it difficult for Ternate or any other power to establish any stable kind of political legitimacy in the region. While the indigenous cultures were all acutely sensitive to status and hierarchy, they were also quick to recognize achieved status of various kinds, including that acquired by violent means. This was particularly true in Minahasa, where *keter* or "strength" was a leading cultural ideal.[71] Once the VOC had proved its strength by establishing itself as the uncontested master of Manado, Minahasans were prepared to credit it with the same oracular powers and the same right to dispense judgements and honorific titles that they must previously have accorded to the indigenous Manado raja.[72] Both inside and outside Minahasa, indigenous translators in Dutch and Spanish service also used the power derived from their nontraditional office to acquire considerable local prestige.[73]

This was, then, a competitive environment in which power constantly had to be demonstrated and could not be sustained by cultural means alone. It is interesting that only in Gorontalo, perhaps the most internally stable and hierarchically structured society in precolonial North Sulawesi, did a memory of Ternaten supremacy apparently outlive the end of Ternaten power in the region. In the nineteenth century, Ternate was remembered in Gorontalo as a former "older brother" of the local kingdom, and the Gorontalo raja still possessed a Ternaten shield among the royal regalia.[74] In the more fluid societies further east, the Ternaten sultans seem to have figured in later oral tradition only as friends or rivals—in other words, as equals.[75]

There is, nevertheless, evidence that Ternate did indeed enjoy a kind of limited cultural hegemony throughout North Sulawesi during the hey-

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[70]Pérez 1913–1914 V: 636.
[71]Schouten 1988.
[72]Van Dam 1701 II (1): 76–77; Godée Molsbergen 1928: 63–64.
[73]VOC 1345: 864; van Dam 1701 II (1): 76, 77.
[74]Bestuursvergadering 1890: 113–115.
[75]Elias [1973]: 72, 81; Wilken & Schwarz 1867: 300.

day of its political power. "Christian" as well as "Islamic" areas, for instance, borrowed from the Ternaten sultanate a range of titles for various kinds of leader or dignitary—bobato, hukum, jogugu, kapita laut, kimalaha, marsaoli, sangaji—and retained them long after the end of Ternaten political involvement in the region.[76] On the other hand, van Fraassen is undoubtedly right in suggesting that the survival of these terms into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was due at least in part to their continued official use by the Dutch, to whom they were more familiar than the various local terminologies.[77] Certainly the old local titles usually survived alongside the imported nomenclature.

More importantly, indigenous power structures do not seem to have been affected in any concrete way by this terminological borrowing. In North Sulawesi, the Ternaten names were applied to existing functions quite different from those of their apparent prototypes. In Ternate, for instance, the hukum were two very senior representatives of the sultan; in Minahasa, a multitude of tribal chiefs.[78] In Ternate, marsaoli referred to a descent group of which the head normally functioned as jogugu or first minister to the sultan; in Gorontalo, the four marsaoli were the heads of four separate descent groups, and none of them could become a jogugu.[79] Interestingly, the adoption of Ternaten titles in Gorontalo seems to have been almost simultaneous with the rejection of Ternaten overlordship in favor of that of the Company.[80] This raises the possibility that besides being superficial, the imitation of Ternaten customs was intended here not as an act of submission but as a claim to equality and a gesture of defiance. Minahasan cultural imitation of the Dutch in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was certainly to involve such a competitive dimension.

A final point under this cultural rubric concerns a recent suggestion by Andaya that the weakness of Ternaten control in North Sulawesi can partly be explained by the absence there of a mythological foundation for

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[76]Riedel 1870: 73; van Delden 1844 I: 7–8; Steller 1866: 32–33; Wilken & Schwarz 1867: 294; van Wouden 1941: 333.
[77]Van Fraassen 1987 I: 291.
[78]Van Fraassen 1987 I: 339–341; van Dam 1701 II (1): 77; Riedel 1872: 525–526.
[79]Van Fraassen 1987 I: 290–291.
[80]Riedel 1870: 108–109.

strong links with North Maluku.[81] In particular, Andaya notes, North Sulawesi did not figure in the politically important Bikusagara myth, in which the first rulers of Loloda, Bacan, Butung, Banggai, and the Papuas emerged from the same cluster of naga eggs.[82] In other words, it was excluded from the mythically defined "world of Maluku" of which the western part was regarded as belonging to Ternate and the eastern to Tidore.

The Sangir islands, Bolaang-Mongondow, and Gorontalo do seem to lack origin myths involving Maluku, and this absence is particularly striking in the case of Gorontalo, where another foreign group, the Bugis of Luwu, are indeed credited with a key role in the foundation of the local kingdom.[83] In Manado, however, a tradition persisted even in the nineteenth century that the first Manadonese had been an exiled raja of Bacan and his followers.[84] A recent Minahasan author also relates a similar story linking Manado with the kingdom of Loloda.[85] Bacan and Loloda, of course, not only belong to the five traditional "core" kingdoms of Maluku, but also figure in the Bikusagara myth itself. The Manadonese, moreover, seem to have been the most important warriors and traders in North Sulawesi during the sixteenth century, though they were completely displaced by the Dutch in the seventeenth. Clearly, then, mythical "raw materials" with the potential to help legitimate a stable relationship with Ternate did in fact exist in North Sulawesi, as in other parts of the Malukan periphery. Political and economic developments, however, prevented them from playing that role.

Epilogue

The transfer of North Sulawesi to Dutch control after 1677 did not mean the end of all contact with Ternate. The newly acquired territories remained part of the Malukan governorship of the VOC, itself based on Ternate and later to be known as the residency of Ternate. The Dutch even continued to deploy their own Ternaten personnel throughout the residency. In North Sulawesi, however, this practice often led to con-

[81]Andaya 1993: 112.
[82]Andaya 1993: 53.
[83]Bastiaans 1939: 30–31; Riedel 1870: 104.
[84]Graafland 1868: 385, 387.
[85]Supit 1986: 72.

tinued friction between the Ternatens and the indigenous popluation. In 1777, for instance, Ternaten korakora crews were placed in Minahasa to help protect its coasts against attacks by Magindanao slave raiders.[86] Their presence there was resented by many of the local people, who were obliged to provide for their maintenance.[87] Troops from Ternate were also used from time to time for unpopular internal security duties in Minahasa, and in 1809 they formed the bulk of the Dutch forces that crushed a major rebellion at Tondano.[88] In 1817 it was reported that, out of antipathy to Ternate, local rulers from North Sulawesi preferred to travel to Ambon for their formal Dutch investiture rather than to more accessible North Maluku.[89] Few outside Ternate itself, then, will have had any regrets when, on a visit to Manado in 1824, Governor General van der Capellen decided to detach North Sulawesi from the Ternate administration and make it a separate residency in its own right.[90]

This decision was related to changing economic circumstances. Throughout the eighteenth century, the main economic function of North Sulawesi as far as the Company was concerned had remained the supply of rice for local use and distribution in Ternate.[91] By 1824, however, this regional trade was being overshadowed by the export of Minahasan coffee for the international market. Introduced in 1796, coffee cultivation flourished in Minahasa and was placed under state control in 1822.[92] By the middle of the nineteenth century, it had put North Sulawesi far ahead of North Maluku in economic and political importance. In the wake of government coffee cultivation came Protestant missionaries who provided Minahasa with the best school system in nineteenth-century Indonesia, and thereby triggered a wave of emigration among literate young men in search of white-collar work elsewhere in the archipelago.[93]

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[86]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 131.
[87]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 151–152; Supit 1986: 156, 168.
[88]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 162, 169; Supit 1986: 172, 174.
[89]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 180–181.
[90]Olivier 1834–1837 I: 324–326.
[91]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 97, 105–106, 121, 141, 147, 173; van Delden 1844 II: 22.
[92]Godée Molsbergen 1928: 184.
[93]Henley 1992: 144–151.

Before long, Ternate too had been colonized, ironically, by Minahasan teachers and civil servants.[94]

In the end, the only field in which Ternate left a lasting—though largely unrecognized—legacy in North Sulawesi was that of language. The modern lingua franca of North and Central Sulawesi, Manado Malay, is a variant of the Malay dialect spoken in North Maluku and contains a great many words of Ternaten origin.[95] Exactly when it became established in North Sulawesi is not known. It may already have been developing in the period of Ternaten political power, or it may have evolved subsequently in Manado and other VOC outposts, with their polyglot and partly Malukan populations. Through Manado Malay—and in some cases perhaps also directly—Ternaten loanwords entered various indigenous languages of North Sulawesi too.[96] One result was that, more than two centuries after Minahasa renounced Ternaten and all other indigenous "royal" authority, Minahasan folktales still featured "kings" referred to not by the local term datu or the Indic raja, but as kolano, a title once borne by the sultans of Ternate.[97]

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[94]*Volkstelling* 1930 V: 176.

[95]Prentice 1989: 1–2; Watuseke & Watuseke-Politton 1981: 325.

[96]Prentice 1989: app. A; Watuseke 1956: 109–110.

[97]Schwarz 1908: 165; Schwarz 1907 I: 278–299; Watuseke 1956: 110; Watuseke 1972: 335.

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