

1 Scramble for the spices

Makassar's role in European and Asian Competition in the Eastern Archipelago up to 1616

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Abstract

In the course of the 17th century the trade entrepôt of Makassar, and the state of Gowa-Tallo of which it was the capital, repeatedly clashed with the VOC over access to the Moluccan spices. This chapter investigates the early evolution of this conflict, highlighting the consequential role that the VOC's alliance with Ternate had for this relationship. Makassar has often been presented as merely an open trading port, or *bandar*, juxtaposed against the VOC's aggressive attempts to control the spice trade. This chapter tries to nuance this view by highlighting the active political and military role Gowa-Tallo played in the Moluccas.

After introducing the rise of both Ternate and Gowa-Tallo in the 16th century, the chapter follows the involvement of the various European colonial powers in the Moluccas just as Gowa-Tallo and Ternate were increasingly becoming rivals around the turn of the 17th century. It then argues that the VOC's alliance with Ternate against Spain and its allies was an important negative factor in its relationship with Gowa-Tallo, up to the years 1615 and 1616, when open hostilities between the two first broke out.

Keywords: Spice trade, Moluccas, Ternate, Makassar, East India Companies

In the course of the seventeenth century, the trade entrepôt of Makassar on South Sulawesi became a key site for European and Asian traders seeking to purchase spices and to trade in other high-value goods. They did so in defiance of Dutch East India Company policies aimed at monopolising the trade in cloves and nutmegs from the Moluccas. The VOC did not hesitate

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to enforce its monopolistic aspirations in the Moluccas with violence, but Makassar proved remarkably resilient to these efforts. That it was so successful in resisting Dutch intrusions stemmed from a combination of factors. Makassar was not merely a trade entrepôt; it was also the main political centre of South Sulawesi. The port city was the seat of government of the kingdom of Gowa, which, jointly with the neighbouring kingdom of Tallo, stood at the head of a wider federation of principalities.¹ This federation encompassed not only large parts of South Sulawesi, but also areas on other islands. Gowa fielded formidable armies and was defended by extensive fortifications. It also had an expansive diplomatic reach. The diplomatic connections of Gowa and Tallo reached from the Moluccas to Mecca, including ties with the English and Danish East India Companies and the Portuguese. These networks provided Makassar with political strength and manoeuvrability. Finally, Makassar's extensive international trading contacts provided an influx of technology and knowledge of all kinds, which were adopted with remarkable ease.²

For decades, scholars have been intrigued by this military strength, as demonstrated in several large confrontations with the VOC from the 1650s onwards, which make Makassar and the Gowa-Tallo state useful case studies in wider debates on global military history.³ These military confrontations ultimately came to a dramatic conclusion in the Makassar War of 1666–1669 when the VOC and a host of local allies under the leadership of

1 A note on terminology and spelling: In many European sources, the trade entrepôt of Makassar is conflated with the sultanate of Gowa, of which it was also the political centre. This chapter attempts to clearly distinguish between these two. The state of Tallo, located just north of Gowa, as explained below, enjoyed a very close relationship with Gowa at the time (sources from Gowa and Tallo often used the phrase 'only one people but two rulers'), and although one must be careful not to overstate the scope and duration of their political integration (see e.g. Cummings, 'One people but two rulers'), this integration did reach its apex in the early seventeenth century – the young sultan of Gowa, Ala'uddin, was under the tutelage of the senior karaeng of Tallo, Matoaya, during this period, the latter being credited with the achievements of both states in the Gowa and Tallo chronicles. So, whereas I seek to distinguish between the two states 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 must thank Campbell Macknight for many valuable suggestions, including but not limited to the terminology and spelling employed here.

2 For a brief history of Gowa, Tallo, and Makassar, see Cummings, *A Chain of Kings*, pp. 1–8; Reid, 'The rise of Makassar' pp. 100–125; Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, esp. Ch. 1. A good introduction to the forts along its coast is Bulbeck, 'Construction history', pp. 67–106.

3 E.g. in Parker, *The Military Revolution*; Parker, 'The artillery fortress'; Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare*; Andaya, 'De militaire alliantie'; Den Heijer, Knaap, and De Jong, *Oorlog en overzee*.

the charismatic Bugis nobleman Arung Palakka definitively broke Gowan political power over the entrepôt.

By the time of the Makassar War, the VOC and Gowa-Tallo had been in a state of intermittent conflict for more than five decades. Open conflict had first erupted in 1615. Prior to this point, the VOC had actually maintained a lodge in Makassar, alongside many other European trading nations, who refrained from carrying their violent rivalries directly into Makassar itself. But in April 1615, the VOC lodge was abandoned. Before their departure, the Dutch tried to take a number of Gowan dignitaries hostage, killing several in the scuffle and capturing the assistant *shahbandar* and a blood relative of the Gowan sultan alive. In December 1616, the citizens of Makassar avenged themselves when the VOC vessel *Eendracht*, which had arrived directly from the Netherlands and was unaware of the developments of the past two years, arrived at the Makassar roads, and lost sixteen of its crew members when one of their launches was fired at from the shore and stormed. These two incidents ushered in a kind of cold war between the VOC and Makassar, which erupted into armed conflict in 1633–1637, and again throughout the 1650s and 1660s.

But what prompted the conflict in the first place? This is a crucial question but one that much of the literature tends to skip over by not venturing far beyond the basic observation that the conflict stemmed from the question of access to spices from the Moluccas and the right to trade them. F.W. Stapel's 1933 study of the conflict describes the causes as coming down to:

Similar goals and interests. The Makasars and the Dutch had both traditionally been seafaring nations and traders; both sought to expand their sphere of influence, with force and boldness if necessary. [...] The Company claimed for itself the largest possible share in the spices from Ambon, Banda and the Moluccas; Makassar's trade largely consisted of precisely the purchase and sale of those same spices.⁴

To this basic conclusion he adds the 'open door policy' of the sultan, which allowed free trade in spices at Makassar, whereas the VOC, by contrast, tried to keep these spices from falling into the hands of other Europeans.

More recent scholarship has continued this focus on the 'open door policy'. Anthony Reid's work on Southeast Asia, for example, often features Makassar as a prime example of the kind of cosmopolitan trading port that was such a crucial component of what he termed the Age of Commerce in

4 Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, pp. 15-16.

Southeast Asia. In Reid's analysis, this period came to an end in the course of the seventeenth century, in no small part because VOC policy destroyed the cosmopolitan and open system that lay at its heart. In the Braudelian approach that underpinned his monumental work *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, and which pervades much of his subsequent scholarship as well, Makassar is mainly presented as a *bandar*, an open and cosmopolitan port town, and it was this *bandar* character that, according to Reid, put it at odds with the controlling and monopolising VOC.⁵ As he summarised:

Makassar's prosperity depended on being a spice port open to all comers, at a time when the VOC was using 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.⁶

But Makassar was more than just an open trading city. It was also the political centre of a regional power that interacted not only with its neighbours in South Sulawesi but with states throughout the Archipelago.⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, moreover, the Gowa-Tallo state was expanding its influence over the spice-producing regions of the eastern archipelago, rivalling other states that did so. This meant that it came into conflict with the VOC not simply because it had opened its markets but rather because it was trying to expand its own political power.

There is a growing literature on how the VOC used diplomacy and violence as essential tools to achieve its trade goals.⁸ In its efforts to get a foothold in the spice trade and, soon after, to become the sole buyer of these spices, the VOC concluded the bulk of its earliest treaties with a range of island polities in the Moluccas. The Company also made its first territorial conquests there.⁹

5 Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*. More recently; Reid, 'Early Modernity as Cosmopolis'. Although some of his earlier articles, specifically on Makassar, do give some attention to politics, both 'domestic' and 'foreign', e.g. Reid, 'The Rise of Makassar' and Reid, 'A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian family'.

6 Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia*, p. 136.

7 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*. This study focused on developments within South Sulawesi and particularly the role of Arung Palakka, the Buginese ally of the Dutch whose role was pivotal in defeating Makassar in 1666-1669. Although he does dedicate a few remarks to Gowan expansion overseas and the struggle for access to the spice trade, these hardly feature in his analysis of the conflict.

8 A call for this kind of approach was made in the inaugural lecture of Blussé, '*Tussen geveinsde vrunden en verklaarde vijanden*'. It has been taken up by a range of works, including Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*.

9 Heeres, *Corpus diplomaticum*.

While the VOC would come to exert a dominant influence, it was initially only the latest party to join the wider geopolitical struggle centred on Moluccan spices. This was a struggle that had a dynamic all of its own. In its attempt to get a hold over the clove-producing regions of the Moluccas, the VOC alliance with Ternate, concluded in 1607, was of particular importance. The sultan of Ternate was nominally the head of state over a great many of the islands, and the VOC could use him as an instrument to strengthen its grip on these regions. This alliance came attached, however, to a set of related consequences within the political constellation of the eastern archipelago, not all of them tied directly to the spice trade, or necessarily beneficial to the VOC.

This chapter will explore the role that the VOC's evolving political and military strategy in the Moluccas had in shaping its relationship with Gowa and Tallo in the period leading up to the first open hostilities in 1615 and 1616. My focus is on the unintended consequences that the VOC's alliance with Ternate had for this relationship. In the process, I aim to highlight a factor that has received little attention but that was crucial in the evolution of the conflict between Gowa-Tallo and the VOC. As the VOC became the 'protector' of Ternate on paper in 1607, and increasingly started taking on this role in subsequent years, this also set the organisation on a path towards rivalry with the Gowa-Tallo state. In drawing attention to the influence of the VOC's relations with Ternate on conflicts with Gowa-Tallo, this chapter aims to move the debate beyond a standard binary that sees VOC as the aggressive interloper determined to monopolise the spice trade pitted against an open port city like Makassar. Rather, I argue that the advent of the VOC did not represent a decisive break with older patterns and suggest that scholars should pay more attention to how Europeans were folded into pre-existing rivalries and tensions. This chapter starts by exploring the rise of Ternate and Makassar, and then continues to trace their developing rivalry and the way the VOC became involved in it.

Ternate and the kingdoms of the Northern Moluccas

Today, the term Moluccas, or Maluku, is used to denote the islands to the east of Sulawesi, up to Papua in the east and Timor in the south. In the early modern period, however, the term applied to what we would now call the Northern Moluccas: the island of Halmahera and the smaller islands directly surrounding it (see Map 1, Southeast Asia). Whereas the political unit of the southern regions of the Moluccas, including the Ambon and Banda islands, was typically the village or a federation of villages, the Northern Moluccas

were home to the kingdoms or sultanates of Ternate, Tidore, Gilolo, and Bacan. The most powerful and influential of these were Ternate and Tidore, two states in constant rivalry that were centred in two adjacent small islands (see Figure 2, below), but both with political power that extended far beyond these islands at their core, as large areas throughout the Moluccas, as well as some areas of Sulawesi, were at some point vassals of one or the other.¹⁰

The first European involvement in the Moluccas immediately became tied up with this political rivalry between Ternate and Tidore. In 1512, a small group of Portuguese that had originally been part of the first Portuguese trading expedition to Banda, was shipwrecked on the Lucipara islands.¹¹ Rescued by Ambonese fishermen, they were soon invited to the island of Ternate by the sultan, who appears to have hoped that the Portuguese would be an asset in Ternate's conflicts with Tidore, and that an alliance with them would raise his own standing and power. He wrote a letter to the Portuguese king, inviting him to come and buy cloves, nutmeg and mace in Ternate – the island was the original habitat of the clove tree and had trade relations throughout the Moluccas. 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 Gilolo, tried to make a similar arrangement with the Spanish when the two remaining ships of Magellan's expedition, sent out specifically to contest the Portuguese claims to the Spice Islands, passed through the Moluccas. From the very beginning, European competition for access to the spices was thus entwined with political rivalries between the states in the Moluccas.

In the initial phase 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 soldiers under the command of Antonio de Brito to Ternate to begin building a fort on its southern coast. They completed construction in 1523. The following year the Ternatans and their European allies successfully attacked Tidore, burning down the capital Mareku. The Spanish presence in the archipelago, meanwhile, was too intermittent and weak for them to substantially help their Moluccan partners. In spite of limited Spanish help to Gilolo, the Portuguese conquered it in 1534, capturing the sultan and, after his suspiciously untimely death,

10 Much of what follows heavily relies on Andaya, *The World of Maluku*. Footnotes have been placed where a specific reference was useful, or where other sources were used.

11 The Lucipara islands are a small group to the west of Banda; the Portuguese were shipwrecked here on their return voyage.

installing a new one that was loyal to them.¹² In 1551, Gilolo, after renewed conflict with Ternate and the Portuguese, would become entirely subservient to Ternate.

Despite these initial successes, the Ternatan alliance with the Portuguese turned out to be a mixed blessing. As the conflicts referenced above show, the Portuguese were a formidable ally, and their support helped Ternate become the most powerful of the Moluccan 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. In addition, Leonard Andaya has argued that the clove trade, with the income it provided and the organisation that was required to meet Portuguese demands for timing and preparation of the harvest, accelerated the state-formation process underway in the islands.¹³ But relations between the Ternatans and the Portuguese soon turned sour. De Brito's successor, Dom Jorge de Meneses, managed to alienate the ruling class within a very short period with his policies, which included keeping the sultan hostage in the Portuguese fort and executing various Ternatan high officials he suspected of conspiring against him. Under the leadership of the sultan's mother, the Ternatans started starving the fort of food supplies, only lifting the blockade when Meneses was replaced as Captain of Ternate in 1530.

The Meneses captaincy was the start of increasing Portuguese involvement in Ternatan politics, and a resultant surge of Ternatan resistance against this. Subsequent decades saw frequent conflict, and the exile or even death of a number of sultans at the hands of the Portuguese. On one occasion the Ternatan 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.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Christianity was taking hold in many areas of the archipelago that the sultan of Ternate laid claim to. The latter usually happened not on the initiative of Portuguese missionaries but that of the population of these areas, who, among other motivations, sometimes saw Christianity as a means of weakening Ternatan control over them.¹⁵ The Muslim Ternatan sultans rightly felt that this served to undermine their power.

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

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

15 This local agency in the spread of Christianity is convincingly demonstrated in Baker, 'Indigenous-driven mission.' Baker also points out that interest in Christianity did not only stem from the elite considerations of political and economic power I emphasise here (although

Things came to a head after 1570 when Sultan Hairun was killed by the Portuguese (and, according to several sources, subsequently cut to pieces and salted in a barrel).¹⁶ His son and successor, Babullah, resolved to drive the Portuguese from Ternate altogether. In this, he would prove to be far 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. Babullah, moreover, campaigned around the Moluccas, 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 empire, the Portuguese surrendered the fort and were evicted to Ambon. With this surrender, the Portuguese presence in Ternate came to an end. Despite this experience, Europeans remained potentially valuable allies. Interestingly, Tidore would open its doors to the Portuguese soon after. Ternate, for its part, was soon courting new European arrivals in the Moluccas. When Francis Drake sailed through the area in 1579, he had initially intended to sail to Tidore. A Ternatan approached the ships and implored Drake to come to Ternate instead, as he would find a warm welcome there. In contrast, Drake was warned that the Portuguese were in Tidore and that the English could expect nothing there but deceit and treachery. Drake obliged, setting sail for Ternate instead.¹⁷

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 ended at Selayar, just below South Sulawesi, where a treaty was apparently made with the Gowa Karaeng.¹⁸ Sultan Babullah was now

these certainly played a role), but also from individual religious choices. Of course, these two are not mutually exclusive, as I shall also be arguing below for the conversion to Islam of the elite of Gowa and Tallo.

16 For example, Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*; Commelin, *Begin ende voortgangh van de Vereenighde*, pp. 28-41. In the latter van Warwijck tells the Ternatan Sultan Said that the (Spanish) king of the Portuguese (referring to Philip II, the news of whose death shortly before had not yet reached the Indies) had had their Prince (referring to William of Orange) assassinated. The sultan then answers that one of his ancestors had also been killed, and chopped to pieces and salted, in the name of the king of Portugal.

17 Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, p. 85.

18 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, p. 134. Andaya bases himself heavily on Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* here, and Valentijn's information largely came from Ternatan 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

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 – 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:

foure [...] 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.¹⁹

Drake was less impressed with the state of Ternate's defences – 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.'²⁰ 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 Spanish 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 20 Turkish gunners participated in the defence, using bombs and grenades against the attacking forces. In the end, the Spanish were forced to break off their attack.²¹

Thus, by the end of the sixteenth century, Ternate had become a formidable military power, independent of the Iberian powers, and one that was expanding to include an ever greater number of vassals throughout the eastern archipelago. With an eye to subsequent developments in the seventeenth century, it is worth pointing out that in this period its vassals included the western Ambon islands, where the western peninsula of Seram, Hoamoal, had a Ternatan steward or *kimelaha*,²² as did the island of Buru,

Johor, crossed over to Melaka, crossed over to Pahang, crossed over to Balambangan, crossed over to Patani, crossed over to Banjar, went east to Maluku.'

19 Fletcher, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, pp. 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.

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

21 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, p. 137.

22 The Dutch referred to them as 'stadhouders'.

Figure 1 The Ternatan capital of Gammalamma. This print was made on the basis of van Warwijck’s 1599 visit to Ternate. We see van Warwijck’s two ships (A) and the sultan’s warships (C). The old Portuguese fort, now turned into the royal palace, is indicated G. M indicates another fortified Portuguese building. O indicates a tower ‘with one gun’.



Collection Universiteit van Amsterdam, O 60 641, p. 40.

directly to its west. The smaller islands around them also fell under the stewardship of either of the two *kimelaha*. In addition, various areas of Sulawesi had come within the Ternatan sphere of influence – some areas on its north coast, but also the islands of Southeast Sulawesi, including the small island kingdom of Buton. The areas claimed by Ternate by the late sixteenth century even included the island of Selayar – much more to the west, and right below South Sulawesi. That, of course, was the area where, during that same period, another Southeast Asian state was thriving and expanding.

The parallel 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 a number of surrounding polities. In the 1530s it defeated its neighbouring states, including Tallo, which was an important trading port at the time. Rather than being forcibly transformed into a vassal, Tallo was joined in union with Gowa, laying the foundations for a dual kingdom, a political system that would endure until 1669. Under the rule of Karaeng Tunipalangga (r. 1547–1565), Gowa-Tallo made vassals of most of the polities on South Sulawesi's west coast.²³

As trade increased, its political centre moved to the coast, creating the entrepôt that we know as Makassar. During the rule of Tunipalangga, the office of *shahbandar*, already created under his predecessor but 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: a Malay captain called Nakhoda Bonang is mentioned in the Gowa 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.²⁴ The next important Karaeng, Tunijalloq²⁵ (r. 1565–1590), built a mosque for the Malay community, years before the rulers of Gowa and Tallo would themselves convert to Islam. Tunijalloq, according to the court chronicles, also made active efforts to build up diplomatic ties in the late sixteenth century: in the Moluccas and Timor, as well as with Mataram, Banjarmasin and Johor.²⁶ In the same period, Portuguese private traders from Melaka became regular visitors to Makassar's harbour.²⁷ Islam and Christianity, meanwhile, also generated 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 1605.²⁸

23 *Karaeng* is the Makasar word for ruler. Its Buginese equivalent is *Arung* (as in Arung Palakka). After their conversion to Islam, the rulers of Gowa would style themselves as sultans, but the rulers of Tallo would still be referred to as *karaeng*.

24 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings*, p. 34; Cummings, 'The Melaka Malay diaspora', pp. 107–110.

25 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.

26 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings*, p. 41.

27 Borges, *Os Portugueses e o Sultanato de Macaçar no Século XVII*, pp. 62–63.

28 The sources are somewhat ambiguous about the exact moment that this occurred. Jacobus Noorduy, who has dedicated an article to both the motivations for the rulers of Gowa and Tallo

In his examination of religious development, Jacobus Noorduyn has argued that the conversion of the karaengs of Gowa and Tallo in this period, and, in its wake, of the entire state, were the outcome of a period of theological inquiry by the rulers, rather than the consequence of any kind of political or economic opportunism.²⁹ Regardless, conversion provided further impetus to diplomatic contacts and spurred Makassar's rise as an international trading port, providing a basis for more intensive contacts with other Muslim polities throughout the archipelago, and tying the state into the Islamic networks spanning the Indian Ocean and beyond.³⁰ 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, during which the Gowa-Tallo alliance converted the Bugis states at the east coast of South Sulawesi by military means, and simultaneously brought them into their sphere of influence. Islam thus functioned as an engine of further expansion and consolidation of the power of the Gowa-Tallo state within South Sulawesi.³¹

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. This expansion, however, was not limited to the mainland of South Sulawesi. Gowa-Tallo had also been expanding further afield. By the late sixteenth century, it commanded an impressive navy, using it to expand to Sumbawa and other polities. Around the turn of the 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.³² To its southeast, it sought to turn the island kingdom of Buton into its vassal.³³ These attempts at further expansion set

to convert to Islam and the moment this conversion occurred, holds it to be 1605, rather than the other likely possibility, 1603. Noorduyn, 'De Islamisering van Makassar,' p. 252.

29 Ibid.

30 One might imagine that the rulers of Gowa and Tallo, for instance, would have observed with interest the developments in Ternate, where contacts with the greater Muslim world also translated into military power. Gowa-Tallo would also develop a large Gujarati trading community in the course of the seventeenth century, develop diplomatic contacts with other Muslim states like Mataram and Aceh, and, as we shall see, politically expand into Muslim areas of the Southern Moluccas.

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

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

33 Cummings, *A Chain of Kings*, p. 88, which sums up the conquests under Karaeng Matoaya (r. 1593-1623). Among several places in South Sulawesi and many names I do not recognise with certainty, he mentions e.g. Buton, Wowoni (another island below Southeast Sulawesi), Sula (most

it on a collision course with Ternate, which had recently expanded into these same territories. Gowa-Tallo and Ternate were therefore increasingly fierce rivals, just at the moment that new European powers were entering the eastern archipelago.

The northern European Companies and Spain

As we have seen, the English and Spanish made their first push into the eastern archipelago in the late 1570s and 1580s, with the Dutch following in the 1590s. The first Dutch expedition to reach Asia did not make it beyond Java and Madura. Rather it was the second Dutch expedition that finally reached the Moluccas, after being invited by Ternate when it had called at Ambon. When two ships under the leadership of Wybrant van Warwijck arrived at Ternate, he found the sultan willing to sell cloves to the Dutch, but also keen to secure the Dutch as an ally against the Portuguese. In fact, the sultan was clear that he wanted some of van Warwijck's crew to remain at Ternate, and was very interested to see demonstrations of the firepower of Dutch ships.³⁴

One of the men involved in this second expedition wrote the first detailed Dutch description we have of Makassar, and was involved in the first diplomatic contacts. In 1601, Augustijn Stalpaert van der Wiele, one of 20 men who had been left on the Banda islands by this expedition, compiled a report about various trading ports throughout Asia, including 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 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 free of the Portuguese here,' Stalpaert van der Wiele wrote home, 'who do 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.'³⁵ 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

likely 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.

34 Commelin, *Begin ende voortganch van de Vereenighde*, pp. 28-41.

35 The report is partly printed in de Jonge, *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, p. 156; the original, which includes long lists of types of textiles that were in vogue in Makassar, with an indication of the price they would yield, is in VOC 7525, fol. 95. It has been preserved as one of the documents that were sent along on the fleet of Steven van der Haghen, departing for the Indies in 1603, of which copies were kept.

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 did send 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.³⁶

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 umbrella organisation. 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 involving 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 in command of a heavily armed fleet and with orders to do all possible damage to the Portuguese and Spanish. In Bantam he met with several representatives of the Ambonese polity of Hitu, who asked for his help against the Portuguese.³⁷ In February 1605, he sailed into the bay of Ambon with ten ships and took the fort without firing a shot. This conquest was the beginning of the VOC's emergence as a territorial power. The southern half of the island of Ambon, as well as areas on several neighbouring islands, had been directly under Portuguese control and had a predominantly Christian population. The VOC now replaced the Portuguese as ruler of these areas.³⁸

The increasing Dutch presence in the Moluccas at the expense of the Portuguese prompted the Spanish to take action. In early 1606, a Spanish fleet of five large ships and several dozen smaller vessels, carrying over 1,400 Iberian troops, set sail from the Philippines towards the Moluccas under the leadership of Pedro de Acuña. Rallying the sultanate of Tidore to his

36 This, in any case, is compellingly argued in Noorduyn, 'De Islamisering,' p. 260, as the first known Makassar 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.

37 Hitu was a polity that consisted of the northern half of the island of Ambon, whereas the Portuguese controlled the southern half. It was Muslim and independent, but was increasingly suffering from Portuguese military encroachment in the first years of the seventeenth century. As there had been contacts between the VOC and the Hituese before, the Hituese sent out representatives to find Dutch support, and found Steven van der Hagen.

38 Den Heijer, Knaap, and De Jong, *Oorlogen overzee*, p. 60.

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, and another 50 on Tidore, before returning to Manila in May.³⁹

The Ternatans, who had been in contact with various English and Dutch fleets over the past few years, turned to them for help. In April 1607, VOC admiral Cornelis Matelief de Jonge met with a Ternatan representative while his fleet was at Ambon. The representative asked for his help in driving the Spanish from Ternate. Matelief gladly obliged, setting sail for Ternate from Ambon on 3 May. Having arrived there, he met with the new Ternatan Sultan Muzaffar (the old one having been deported to Manila by the Spanish), but soon discovered that it would be impossible to take the Spanish fort with his fleet and the limited number of warriors that the sultan would be able to muster. Instead, he sailed around the island and built a fort, which would come to be called Oranje, at Melayu on the east coast.⁴⁰ In subsequent years, the VOC would fortify much of the northeast of the island, whereas the Spanish entrenched themselves on the southwestern half.

The VOC alliance with Ternate

Their home island thus divided, the Ternatan royal family and nobility threw in their lot with the Dutch and built up their new capital around the Dutch fort in Melayu on the east coast. A treaty concluded between the new sultan, Muzaffar, and the VOC stipulated that the sultan of Ternate should recognise the Dutch as his 'protector', and gave the VOC a monopoly on buying cloves from the Ternatan territories.⁴¹ This included parts of the Ambon islands that were ruled by the Ternatan stewards, and the monopoly there was reconfirmed in a separate treaty with them two years later.⁴² Tidore, conversely, allied itself with the Spanish, and the Northern Moluccas would be the scene of intermittent fighting between these rival coalitions for the next decades.⁴³

39 Spate, *Monopolists and Freebooters*, pp. 11-12; Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, pp. 152-153.

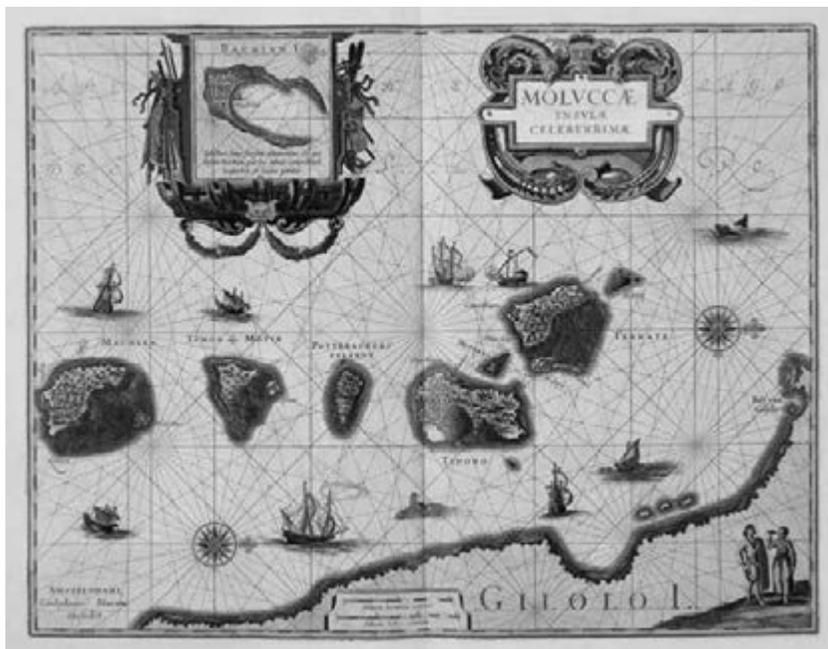
40 Akveld, *Machtsstrijd om Malakka*, p. 168.

41 Heeres, *Corpus diplomaticum*, pp. 50-53.

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

43 Andaya, *The World of Maluku*, pp. 152-156; Den Heijer, Knaap, and De Jong, *Oorloggen overzee*, pp. 61-67.

Figure 2 The islands of Ternate and Tidore off the coast of Halmahera (here called Gilolo Island). North is right. To the far right, we see Ternate, with the now Spanish fort of Gammamma 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.



Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, inv. 1049 B 13.

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 eastern archipelago. This changed the way the organisation operated. For one, the VOC's alliance with, and its role as 'protector' of, Ternate meant that it had a stake in various vassalages, conflicts and alliances that Ternate already maintained. In 1613, for example, the VOC concluded a treaty with Buton, which fell in the Ternatan sphere of influence. 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'.⁴⁴ 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 (for reasons described below), the ruler expressed his surprise, because if his kingdom would fall to 'the enemy' (presumably Gowa-Tallo), it would be a source of shame for both the VOC and Ternate, of which he was the loyal servant.⁴⁵

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 this to an end, 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'.⁴⁶ He added, however, that they had not received a reply, and that he feared Gowa-Tallo might try to 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 had a negative effect on the VOC's relationship with Gowa-Tallo.

On the other hand, the alliance with a local sultan was in itself a political tool that the VOC quickly learned to use. As 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 themselves as representatives of the 'King of Holland', in some cases bringing images and diplomatic letters of Stadholder Maurice of Orange, with mixed results.⁴⁷ 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, the VOC did so with enthusiasm as it was trying to establish a monopoly over spices from this region.

44 Heeres, *Corpus diplomaticum*, pp. 105-108.

45 Coen to patria, 22 October 1615, printed in Colenbrander (ed.), *Jan Pietersz. Coen: bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië*, p. 120.

46 Tiele and Heeres, *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, p. 95.

47 VOC diplomacy and the various strategies used by the company in Japan were recently analysed in Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*. For the attempts to present the Stadholder as their king, see op. cit., 31-39. For similar attempts on Ceylon, see Lunsingh-Scheurleer, 'Uitwisseling van staatsieportretten op Ceylon in 1602,' pp. 165-200.

The developing role of Makassar in the European spice trade

In 1607, the Dutch factory near Makassar (which seems to have been 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 too friendly with the Spanish.⁴⁸ The ruler of Tallo⁴⁹ 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 coins⁵⁰ were particularly in demand in Makassar. His remark was not an idle one, as the ruler had a trade agent permanently stationed at the Banda islands, and was a consequential commercial presence there.⁵¹

The Portuguese, who were forced out of the Moluccas in this period, increasingly 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 the Moluccas 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 some of the *orangkayas* on Banda Neira. Makassar was prominent among several port towns where it would buy the rice that was brought to the Moluccas 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.

The new VOC merchant, Samuel Denijs, who arrived in Makassar in 1609, proved not especially effective in securing rice. His extant correspondence from 1610 to 1612 paints a tragicomic picture of successive failures and setbacks. The price of the rice that he was supposed to send to the Moluccas happened to be unusually high in these years, because of bad harvests and

48 He had, for instance, been adding debts of local rulers that did not exist. When Paulus van Solt travelled around the area to seek information 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 weren't for the fact that the Makasars were such 'kind and friendly people.' Commelin, *Begin ende voortganch van de Vereenighde*, pp. 81–82. Commelin does not mention Luersen by name, but various VOC documents do, including a mention of van Solt's 'examinatie' of him in VOC 1053 (unfoliated).

49 This would have been Karaeng Matoaya (r. 1593–1623). 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.

50 'Rozenobels'.

51 Commelin, *Begin ende voortganch*, p. 82.

the Wars of Islamisation mentioned above. After the conclusion of these wars by late 1610, Sultan Ala'uddin prohibited the export of rice in order to prevent famine among the Bugis, 'who he has recently subjugated, who have become Moorish, and who were nearly starving.'⁵² The letters also betray a total dependence on local shipping and trade that stands in stark contrast to the monopolistic ambitions that the VOC was developing in the Moluccas. The provision of Ambon and Banda with supplies from Makassar took place exclusively in local ships, and Denijs was dependent on local captains planning to sail there. In the absence of VOC ships providing him with fresh capital, he often had to rely 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 the (Northern) Moluccas was shipwrecked on a reef, and the entire cargo was lost.⁵³ Meanwhile, he had to stand idly by as the Portuguese, arriving from Melaka each year, dumped 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 Makasar and Javanese ships were bringing in, which sometimes sold for a better price than what the VOC paid in the Moluccas themselves. Denijs had no instructions to buy these up himself, and in any case did not have sufficient funds to do so.⁵⁴ In addition, the rulers of Gowa and Tallo demanded all sorts of diplomatic gifts from the Company, including a small gun for the Gowan royal ship, *kris* (Southeast Asian daggers), various textiles and porcelain. The fact that 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, had apparently gone missing, was a continuing annoyance to the court and a worry to Denijs.⁵⁵

In July 1613, the English opened a factory in Makassar, which soon developed into their base of operations for their own trade in the Spice

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

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

54 Ibid.

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

Islands. Their use of the Makassar harbour was very similar to that of the Dutch: they mostly bought rice there, selling it for spices in the Moluccas.⁵⁶

Trading in the Spice Islands, however, was becoming increasingly difficult for the English even before they built their lodge in Makassar, as VOC control in the Moluccas increased. The VOC increasingly asserted its right to be the sole buyer of spices, forcing the *orangkaya* on the Banda islands into concluding trade treaties with it and using its influence over Ternate to increase their grip on areas like Western Seram in the Ambon islands. The people living there, apparently unhappy with the increasing Dutch control that was the consequence of being vassals of Ternate, also clandestinely sold spices to the English.⁵⁷ In 1615, the villagers at Cambello invited the English to build a lodge there – the Dutch, upon noticing this, approached with a ship and started firing on the village. Cambello was defended by 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.⁵⁸ The incident shows that areas officially under Ternatan control chafed at increasing Dutch control, and attempted to turn elsewhere for political protection. All the same, the English eventually had to retreat on this occasion. The EIC was unable to stand up to the VOC’s increasingly aggressive stance, backed up with growing military power.

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, the facts on the ground had changed at Makassar.

European rivalry at the Makassar roads

‘Arriving here at Macasser I find our people to be run away, all but one lame man who, more honest than the rest, stayed [...],’ a surprised George Ball wrote to Bantam, the day after reaching Makassar on 23 June 1615.⁵⁹ Although his letter is not especially detailed, it explains that the English factor had become too close with the Dutch by siding with them against the Spanish, and that the English were also complicit in the killing and abduction of

56 Bassett, ‘English trade in Celebes’, pp. 1-4.

57 For example, in 1613, as described in Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, pp. 247-273.

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

59 *Ibid.*, p. 287.

several Makasar dignitaries, so that the sultan now wished for the English to leave entirely.

A letter by Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who would later become VOC Governor-General, gives more details about the eruption of violence between different groups of Europeans. In April 1615, a small flotilla of Spanish ships had attacked the VOC ship *Enkhuizen* as it approached the Makassar roads.⁶⁰ The ship repelled the attack with difficulty, losing eleven 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, 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 hostage a number of local dignitaries who had come on board in the wake of the attack. 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 blood relative of the king, were captured alive. They were taken along as the ship departed from Makassar.⁶¹

George Ball, the EIC merchant, 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 to exempt the English, and he was allowed to leave George Cockayne as a factor in Makassar.⁶² The latter wrote to his superiors two months later that the sultan was mobilising 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 10,000 lances, 10,000 cresses

60 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 18 February. The Spanish 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 the Moluccas, the Dutch and English were technically still on friendly terms.) Right around that time, the *Enkhuizen* came in sight, and the Spanish, who wanted to avoid the ship making contact with the lodges, immediately launched an improvised attack. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, pp. 120–122; Foster, *Letters Received*, III, p. 286.

61 Coen to directors, 22 October 1615, in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, pp. 121–122.

62 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.

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.⁶³

Diplomacy by proxy, escalating conflict

The Governor-General and Council, however, had already decided to retreat from Makassar even before the *Enkhuizen* episode 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 request that the sultan cease all trade with the Spice Islands. This decision was closely connected to the evolving monopoly policy in the Moluccas.

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 submitted in the course of his commission testify to how overstretched the VOC had already become. They would prove pivotal in a shift to concentrate on the Moluccas. De Hase started with a tour of the Moluccas. He did not like what he found, writing that the Moluccan posts were 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,' whom, for reasons he did not divulge, he considered 'the biggest liar of all the Oriental kings.'⁶⁴ Being first and foremost a financial inspector and seeing no point in a trading post for political purposes, he recommended the lodge be closed as soon as possible.

Moving on to Makassar, he found that Samuel Denijs had died, that the lodge was in disorder and the ledgers 'in complete disarray.'⁶⁵ The situation was so bad that, like van Solt seven years earlier, he had to enquire from the Company's debtors themselves how much they owed, as it could not be

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

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

65 Hans de Hase to Directors, 12 August 1614, VOC 1057, fol. 65v.

grasped 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,’ abandoning the lodge would also clear the way for attacking junks from Makassar, who were trading in the Moluccas, but which ‘we do not dare attack [...] due to our lodge.’⁶⁶ He came to similar conclusions with respect to Gresik on East Java, which was also unprofitable and was also sending its own junks to Banda.⁶⁷

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 of 1615. The commissioners sent to close the lodge at Makassar, unaware of what had happened there, found it already abandoned. All that was left for them to do was to deliver the VOC’s request to halt trading with the Moluccas. In a return letter to them, the sultan 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.’⁶⁸

All of this means that the VOC had already decided to withdraw from Makassar and the *Enkhuizen* incident served only to hasten the breakdown of the relationship with Gowa. The break itself would have been an inevitable consequence of policies the VOC put into effect in that period, aimed at concentrating the Company’s resources on the Moluccas, and freeing its hands to take a more aggressive stance there. While this was happening, the Dutch were making regular use of their Ternatan 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 mentioned that he had heard the Dutch were now attempting to get Western Seram back under their control by using the authority of the

66 Hans de Hase to Directors, 12 August 1614, VOC 1057. The Gentlemen XVII agreed, and made similar recommendations on 6 May 1615. By the time their letter arrived in Asia, the High Government had already gone ahead and closed these lodges. Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, p. 315.

67 In the early seventeenth century, Gresik, along with several other smaller port towns in the area, stood under the strong political and religious influence of the nearby hilltown of Giri. This latter town was the home of a Muslim religious leader and his followers, who were influential in the Southern Moluccas, with Gresik in a sense functioning as its port. The relation between Gresik and the Southern Moluccas therefore combined political and religious dimensions. For details see Kemper, ‘The White Heron,’ forthcoming (with thanks to the author for allowing me to read it ahead of publication).

68 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, p. 122.

sultan of Ternate and referring the conflict to him.⁶⁹ A letter by Coen to the Netherlands confirms that the Dutch were using Ternatan representatives to resolve the matter. The same letter also informed the directors that the people of the Banda island of Ai had now sued for peace by sending representatives to the Ternatan sultan.⁷⁰

The next year, two Dutch yachts visited Makassar, bringing a letter written 'on the initiative of the Hon. [Governor-General Reael], but in the name of the king of Ternate,' making use of the higher standing that a sultan would have in diplomacy with Makassar.⁷¹ No Dutch representatives dared come ashore and the sultan was in no mood to accept the letter, but it is telling that the VOC now tried to conduct diplomacy with the Gowan sultan through the sultan of Ternate. In this way, a European overseas organisation attempted to conduct diplomacy through a local proxy. It would continue to make use of the same template on subsequent occasions.⁷² The correspondence between the VOC and the EIC, meanwhile, did not require any proxy: in early 1616, the VOC sent a warning letter informing the English they would keep them from the Moluccas with violence if necessary.⁷³

VOC officials, who had hoped to use the two hostages from Makassar secured during the April 1615 conflict as a means of collecting outstanding debt in Makassar, released them by the end of 1616 but had no interest in reopening trade relations. 'Coming to a lifeless friendship [*doode vrientschap*] with Makassar would not be so bad, but all the same it would not at all be advisable to once again open a lodge there,' as Coen formulated it.⁷⁴ Right around the same time, however, it became apparent that the incident of 1615 had not been forgotten. In December 1616, the VOC ship *Eendracht* arrived at 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.⁷⁵ Then turning north, it ended up in Makassar, unaware of the events of

69 Foster, *Letters Received*, III, pp. 150-153.

70 Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, p. 120.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 225.

72 A particularly well-documented example is the visit of commissioner Arnold de Vlamingh van Oudshoorn in 1651. In his diary and report, De Vlamingh describes in vivid detail the importance attached to the letter of a fellow sultan, his grasp of Southeast Asian diplomacy, and the way the VOC manages to make this work in its favour. Mostert, "'Ick vertrouwe, dat de werelt hem naer dien op twee polen keert'", pp. 87-88.

73 For example, Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, p. 147, also pp. 74-75.

74 Letter of 10 October 1616, in Colenbrander, *Bescheiden Coen*, p. 226.

75 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).

the last year and a half. The junior merchant was sent ashore in a launch, accompanied by a small crew, to go to the Dutch lodge, but found only the English. Meanwhile, word of the arrival of a Dutch ship spread through Makassar, and the Gowan sultan personally came to the beach with some two thousand 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 change his mind, hid in one of the English ships anchored offshore before rowing back to the *Eendracht* under cover of darkness. Before they reached 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 crew members.⁷⁶ Friendship, lifeless or otherwise, was not going to develop any time soon.

Conclusion

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, paying specific attention to the role of the political interaction between various polities in the Moluccas, in which the sultanate of Ternate was of great importance. The fact that, in the early seventeenth century, Gowa and Tallo became a military and diplomatic power, in competition with other Muslim states 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 to actively assume that 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 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 Ternatan sultan also gave the Dutch a way of exerting more political influence in the eastern archipelago by conducting ‘diplomacy by proxy’. Ternate, all in all, was indispensable to the Dutch 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 the Spice

76 J.W. IJzerman, ‘Het schip “De Eendracht” voor Makassar in december 1616,’ containing as an appendix the report of Joannes Steins, the junior merchant in charge of the first launch.

Islands, and aware it could not have it both ways, it decided to abandon its lodge there. Breaking off the trade relationship with Makassar was a conscious decision on the part of the VOC – the 1615 *Enkhuizen* incident merely accelerated the process.

The emphasis on Makassar as a *bandar* in much of the existing literature therefore only tells part of the story. Whereas the rulers of Gowa and Tallo did try to keep Makassar as an open port based on early modern notions of free trade, they stood at the head of an expanding empire, not just an open marketplace. 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.

Recognising Gowa-Tallo as one of the states in competition for power in, and access to, the eastern archipelago also helps us understand later developments in the conflict. The first major conflict between the VOC and Gowa-Tallo would be sparked in 1633 by the latter's siege of Buton. This was the consequence of the role of Ternate's ally and protector that the VOC had taken up in the existing political constellation of the eastern archipelago. In addition, Ternate, an influential court in the late sixteenth century, would have become less attractive in the marketplace of political patronage (particularly for spice-producing regions wary of Dutch encroachment) due to its role in the Dutch monopoly policies. This played out in the western Ambon islands, where the inhabitants, unhappy with increasing Dutch control, started looking for alternatives. As Tidore was tied up with the European rivalries as well, and Gresik, a Javanese centre of religious authority influential in the Spice Islands, was cut off in this period, Gowa-Tallo, with its strong military and increasing prestige, became an increasingly attractive alternate political and religious authority. It is therefore not surprising that in the course of subsequent conflicts, various territories in for example the western Ambon islands would seek to place themselves under Gowan protection. This would become a main cause of the war between the VOC and Gowa-Tallo that broke out simultaneously with a revolt in the Ambon islands in 1653–1656.⁷⁷

In these later events, the pattern that we have seen develop here would play out in various ways. The VOC could not achieve its policies in the Moluccas without the help of its allies, in this case first and foremost the sultan of Ternate. By playing a political role and making alliances, however, the organisation was pulled into a pre-existing geopolitical game in the Moluccas. Although the VOC soon became a very consequential and

77 Mostert, "Ick vertrouwe, dat de werelt", p. 86.

successful player in this game, it was not always able to set and change the rules.⁷⁸ Thus, its local alliances and political activities, while indispensable, came at a cost: they sucked the Dutch into local geopolitics, shaping their relationships and policies in ways they might not have foreseen or wished for. In the course of its subsequent history, as the VOC became a political player in other areas as well, similar patterns would recur.⁷⁹

The summary way in which the causes of the conflict between the VOC and the Gowa-Tallo state are often described tends to set up an overly simplistic binary between 'a spice port open to all comers' and the VOC using 'every means to assert a monopoly over both clove and nutmeg.'⁸⁰ Such binaries act 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 buy spices there directly. Only after the watershed events of the 1610s would the market for spices in Makassar increase so much that the city became the main non-Dutch spice port in the archipelago for both Asian and European traders. It is possible to go further, then, by arguing that at least up until the early 1640s VOC policies were responsible for the rise of Makassar, rather than its decline, as they inadvertently caused all the forces opposing the Dutch monopolies to concentrate there.

78 A similar point was recently made by Jennifer Gaynor, framing the Spice Wars as largely driven not by European interests but by the rivalry between Makassar and Ternate, as these 'competed for coastal dominance, maritime superiority and influence in the central and eastern archipelago'; Gaynor, *Intertidal History*, p. 65. I agree with the overall point, although Gaynor may be overstating it when she writes, for example, that the Dutch were 'not aware, it seems, that [Makassar and its allies] had their own motives for waging war, regardless of European rivalries' (p. 78, and very similarly p. 84, where she separates Ternatan and VOC military ambitions) in the mid-seventeenth century. This, in my opinion, separates to a too large degree European and local interests, which had become inextricably intertwined by then.

79 A surprisingly similar pattern, for example, developed one decade later in the Formosan plains, where the various villages also played various 'foreign powers' against each other in their rivalries. Andrade, 'The Mightiest Village.'

80 Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia*, p. 136.

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