



The Theatrical Peace: Honour, Protocol and Diplomacy in the Balance of Power between the United East India Company and Ternate c. 1750¹

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In the course of the year 1750, few at the court of Ternate can have failed to see that the aged, ailing Sultan of Ternate, Safiudin Kaitjil Radja Laut looked back on thirty-seven years of subordination to no fewer than twelve Dutch Governors with very mixed feelings.² The more his health deteriorated, the more petulant the old man's behaviour became, especially in the way he dealt with the servants of the VOC. The two European guards who escorted the sultan during his last sailing trips around his beloved clove island complained that they had to spend long nights in the open air, while during the day they were obliged to brave the blazing sun. In short, whole days at a time they were exposed to the very worst fevers any Dutchman could imagine. On the other sight, with eternity beckoning, Radja Laut had himself sailed around his island more frequently than usual while he lazed under a parasol, accompanied by four or so of his concubines to give him a relaxing massage every so often.³ Although the Sultan's restlessness was sometimes interspersed with bouts of somnolence, these fits of listlessness did not deter him from giving vent to his aggravation with the Dutch. If a short list of wishes of the Governor of Ternate was presented to him, without bothering to comment on it he answered with a testy '*ada baik*' (so be it).⁴ When a few Company representatives presented him complaints by his rival the Sultan of Tidore about the misconduct of the Ternatan Alfuros, all he muttered was '*cassie tobak*' (offer tobacco), while he laughed at a Moluccan boy sitting next to his throne who was as white as a Dutchman.⁵ When the Company delegates, who regarded such situations as 'a comedy or raillery', asked the sultan whether they would have to walk out of the *keraton* (palace) empty-handed, the old man answered with a smile, waved his hand about a little, and replied: *Salamat* (Go in peace).⁶

These striking details about the final days of sultan Radja Laut speak volumes about his irritation with the colonial rule of the VOC. Nevertheless, it seems that the relationship with the Dutch had not always been as bad as this, at least not from the viewpoint of the VOC. In 1750, the Governor of Ternate had made a report about this sultan in which he said, 'we have not the slightest comment on his conduct, since he is still beneficent towards the

² They were: 1710-1715 David van Petersom, 1715-1720 Jacob Bottendorp, 1720 Cornelis Hasselaar (commissioner), 1720-1723 Antony Heinsius, 1723-1724 Jacob Cloeck, 1724-1728 Joan Happon, 1728-1731 Jacob Christiaan Pielat, 1731-1735 Elias de Haeze, 1734 Johannes Bernard (commissioner), 1735-1737 Paulus Rouwenhoff, 1737-1739 Martinus Storm, 1739-1744 Marten Lelyvelt, 1744-1750 Gerard van Brandwijk van Blokland, 1750-1754 Johan Elias van Mijlendonk.

³ Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI), Ternate 54, *dagregister*, 21, 22, 26 October 1750.

⁴ ANRI Ternate 54, *dagregister*, 30 November 1750.

⁵ He will have been an albino.

⁶ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 1, 2 January 1750.

Honourable Company'.⁷ However, a review of the political rows between castle and *keraton* throughout the entire period of Radja Laut's reign throws up enough bones of contention to realize that this apparently calm first half of the eighteenth century offers little substance to bolster the patriarchal image of 'little Father Company' and its two Moluccan sons – Ternate and Tidore. The factual reality of political intrigues, manipulations, mutual mistrust and forced *hormat* or homage clearly underlines the feudal relationship.

The way in which Sultan Radja Laut ascended the throne, and the way in which he was succeeded, are just two examples of this. When Sultan Kaitjili Tolokko died in 1714, he left three legitimate sons. The second son enjoyed the esteem of the chief officers of state in the Sultanate, but was disposed to make peace with Tidore. The third son was unfit to rule, besides also showing an inclination to look kindly on Tidore, which was at odds with the divide-and-rule policy of the VOC. However, his eldest son, Radja Laut, was described as 'the best natured'.⁸ When Radja Laut himself passed away, the Political Council once again debated the succession in similar terms. In the eyes of the Company, one of the candidates to succeed him, Prince Sjah Mardan (alias Swammerdam) was 'not of questionable conduct'. However, he had a not inconsiderable following among the inhabitants of Ternate and the Political Council feared that they would not be awed enough by the weak military presence to give the favourite, Prince Kaitjili Ajan Sjah (alias Outshoorn), a helping hand to mount the throne.

Despite these misgivings, Ajan Sjah did accede to the throne with the assistance of the Company. Under the terms of the treaty of 1683, the VOC held the right to appoint. However, this is not the same as saying that the installation of 'good-natured' sultans was sufficient to ensure the stability and loyalty of the Ternatan court. The anti-VOC factions at the court, even the sultan himself, were not loath to try to throw off the yoke of the VOC as soon as any other European power presented the opportunity to make such an attempt. On 17 February 1796 (only a few weeks after the English had captured Ambon), when a rumour that an English squadron was cruising in the neighbourhood of Ternate began to circulate, the Ternatan sultan, Patra Kaitjili Aharal, distributed weapons among his people preparatory to making an assault on Fort Orange. He even went as far as launching his *kora-kora*

⁷ ANRI Ternate 87, secret missive of the Political Council, 8 August 1750. Referring to the Sultan in 1723, Governor Antony Heinsius said that he 'was not ill-natured and was favourably disposed to do the bidding of the Honourable Company ... as long as this is enjoined upon him'. Nationaal Archief (NA) VOC 1995, fols. 112-62, *memorie van overgave* Antony Heinsius, 23 May 1723.

⁸ W.Ph. Coolhaas (Ed.), *Generale Missiven van gouverneurs-generaal en raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Vol. 3 ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1979 [Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Grote Serie 125] 1979, p. 171.

fleet and going to welcome the English. This was a miscalculation, because, after they had captured Ambon the English first set course for Banda, not for Ternate! Sultan Aharal's plan cost him dear; he was arrested and put on a ship bound for Batavia – a voyage he would not survive.⁹

The VOC as Overlord

Hence the relationship between the government and the *kraton* was to a large degree influenced by the appointment of a compliant sultan who accepted that the relationship was that between an overlord and his vassal. In contemporary Moluccan terminology this was described in terms of the relationship between a father and his son. For instance, we find these words literally reproduced in the letters the Moluccan rulers sent the Supreme Government in Batavia. In my opinion, the use of this terminology is an indication not of the complete acceptance of the VOC as 'father and overlord'¹⁰ but of the compulsory form of *hormat* imposed by the feudal relationship. The relationship had been forged after the failed Ternatan revolt in 1679 and the subsequent complete subjugation of Ternate to Dutch rule. After the Ternatan freedom fighters had been defeated, the Sultan was sent to Batavia as a prisoner. There, on 7 July 1683, he was forced to sign a contract. Under the terms of this contract, Ternate became a 'vassal state' of the Company, and all the regions which had been stated to belong to Ternate under the terms of the Treaty of Bungaya became the property of the Company – 'in perpetuity'.¹¹ From that moment the position of the sultan was no more than that of a vassal, and the VOC had the right to appoint his successor, a right not restricted to the Ternatan ruler, but extending to all its subordinate rulers which had once resorted under Ternatan authority, from Sula to Sangihe.

Ternate as a Base for Military Operations

At this moment it is still barely possible to form a good picture of the significance of the VOC as feudal ruler of a very large part of the archipelago of Eastern Indonesia. In the late seventeenth century, Ternate had become a political and diplomatic centre which commanded the loyalty of scores of

⁹ ANRI Ternate 89, enclosure missive of the Political Council, 20 May 1796.

¹⁰ L.Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku; Eastern Indonesia in the early modern Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 191.

¹¹ J.E. Heeres (Ed.), *Corpus diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, Vol. 3, 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff [Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 91] 1934, pp. 304-21; C.F. van van Fraassen, *Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische archipel; Van soa-organisatie en vierdeling; Een studie van traditionele samenleving en cultuur in Indonesië*. Two volumes [Ph.D. dissertation Leiden University] 1999, p. 49.

regional and local rulers. What military capability did the VOC have on Ternate?

The centre of military operations was Fort Orange on the island of Ternate, situated only 400 metres away from the sultans' palace. In the eighteenth century, the military strength of this fort fluctuated from 125 to 200 men. If we do form too exaggerated a view of the operational efficiency of the men (in 1750 we are speaking of a small number of 'old, ailing and infirm soldiers', 11 sailors and 5 musketeers), the fort could be considered to have been well armed. The dreary life of the men consisted largely of sentry duty and regularly turning over and drying in the sun of the large quantities of gunpowder which were stored in the four big powder magazines. In the eighteenth century, the VOC relied heavily on the Ternatan auxiliaries of the sultan. Without the Ternatan *kora-kora* and the well-armed Alfuros, expeditions against rebellious elements would have been precarious adventures.

Fort Orange was a good base from which to patrol the far-flung seas of the region hunting for pirates and illegal (that is to say operating without a VOC pass) trading vessels. The government of Ternate had a small fleet of well-armed shallows and indigenous *pencalang*. In 1725, for instance, the government had six shallows and four *pencalang*.¹² On average the length of the former vessels varied from 65 to 75 feet and they carried a crew of between fifteen and twenty-five men. As said, they were well-armed, carrying roughly ten iron cannon or smaller pieces of metal ordnance such as *kamerbussen* and *prinsenkukjes*. Moreover, they were usually well supplied with snaplocks, pistols, backswords and hand grenades, which would ensure that these vessels could put up a fairly stiff resistance against attacks by pirate ships from such places as Mindanao and the islands in the vicinity of Papua. Every so often in the far-flung areas of North Celebes and the Moluccas these patrol ships successfully attacked a fleet of pirates or *bajak lant*. Although it was possible to keep a reasonably good eye on parts of the coastal area, it was not enough to keep a thorough eye on the indigenous trading network.

The third way in which the area could be dominated was to construct small redoubts or military posts. There was Fort Barneveld on Labuha (Bacan), a few posts on Makian, but those in North Celebes (Manado, Gorontalo, Parigi) and in the Sangihe-Talaud Archipelago did not amount to much militarily: usually one sergeant as commander of the post, supported by a dozen fairly sickly soldiers. Consequently, such posts could not hold out long against serious indigenous assaults, and were in fact kept going by the local rulers, who benefited from an alliance with the Company. Swarms of pirates

¹² NA VOC 2019, fols 43-55.

and marauding Papuans, Mandarese and Buginese made the area extremely unsafe and a Company flag on the beach served to deter attackers. Hence, the VOC used these posts principally to encourage the petty trade of the local rajas, 'kings', in marine products, wax, coconut oil and the like, and to combat the illegal production of cloves.

Interests, Contracts and Debts

The most important goal of the Company in the Moluccas was the extirpation of spice-bearing trees, especially cloves. As early as the seventeenth century, the cultivation of this 'pernicious crop', as it was stigmatized by the VOC on Ternate, had been moved to the government of Ambon. To prevent any indigenous 'contraband trade', the VOC regularly organized extirpation expeditions to the areas which were under the authority of Sultans. The Moluccan rulers had already committed themselves to the clove monopoly by signing contracts, in exchange for an annual sum from the Company coffers, known as *recognitiepenningen*. As this gesture robbed the Moluccan rulers of their principal source of income, and the *recognitiepenningen* were insufficient to make up the lost revenue, the Company also acted as a pawnbroker. The sultans and their relatives had little difficulty in obtaining generous loans but thereby manoeuvred themselves into a financial stranglehold. This debt relationship allowed the VOC the possibility to exert extra pressure on the Moluccan rulers to collaborate in the extirpation campaigns, during which a few VOC soldiers accompanied by a team of native oarsmen went into the forests in search of clove tress.

As a rule, the threat of deducting the repayment of the extra loans from the annual *recognitiepenningen* was efficacious. Although debt relationships were common in Southeast Asian trade and government, the Dutch mania for accounting and obsession with bookkeeping, in conjunction with the policy of keeping rulers short of funds, were an extremely humiliating experience for the rulers. Without the Company coffers, the sultans could not maintain their power basis – after all in their turn they also had to pay their subjects and armies, not to mention occasionally throwing a sop to the grumbling court nobility -, but it was demeaning to have to continually ask for money, and once again feel the grip of the stranglehold.

As said, in such a kid-glove patron-client relationship, to the outside world the Company was *Bapak Kumpeni*, but this was no more than a forced *hormat*, a courtesy title, behind which enormous resentment seethed. The Ternatan rulers were not able to cast off the iron grip, even though the Company held itself as aloof as possible from indigenous administrative matters. Governor Jacob Christaen Pielat thought that when all said and done the Company was indifferent to the way in which the Sultan lived with his subjects, 'as long as he takes care of the concerns and true interests of the Company, conform

with the successive contracts'. After all, there would be no end to it, 'if one were to redress all the sickening goings-on of this court'.¹³ In such a situation, with the castle and the *keraton* within cannon shot of each other, the Company servants, the sultans and the courtiers were saddled with one another. However, because of this reciprocal dependency it was essential to the separate parties to have themselves seen and heard in public, in order to draw emphatic attention to their own cultural and political legitimacy.

Raison d'état, *Prevention of Conflicts and the Diplomatic Culture*

In a nutshell, the stable relationship between the VOC and the Sultanate in the eighteenth century was the outcome of the feudal subjugation of the Sultanate in 1683, the political manipulations and the military threat of the location of Fort Orange, and naturally behind it loomed the military might of Batavia, at what was virtually a stone's throw from the *keraton*. The whole situation was intensified by the effective divide-and-rule policy applied to the two arch-rivals, the two island Sultanates of Ternate and Tidore. Furthermore, as and when the occasion arose, the VOC could present itself as the mediator in ethnic conflicts, especially those between the Alfuro subject to Ternate and to Tidore, who were locked in a dogged border conflict in the hamlet of Dodinga. The stability was also boosted by the debt relationship between the VOC and the sultans.

But how significant were the cultural dimensions in the reciprocal relations, both formal and personal, between the sultans and the Dutch power-holders? The long-lasting co-operation between the castle and the *keraton* has to be interpreted in the context of a politico-cultural climate in which the ritual expressions of the colonial state emphasized which was the dominant power and which the foisted ideology. So far historians have not devoted much theoretical consideration to this facet of imperial history, but a few attempts have been made. According to Van Kemseke (in the footsteps of Hedley Bull), international political culture is characterized by an 'intellectual and moral climate'. The former consists of ideas, expectations or goals, the latter of the system of the criteria and values applied. The essence is that diplomacy can no longer be isolated from the culture which produces it.¹⁴ The chief characteristic of the *ancien régime* was a strong normative system with a rich, locally and nationally determined tradition of public accolades and protocol. The idea of 'honour' was especially important. The French concept of *honneur* was far more than just a distinction in rank, either in dress or in writing. It also referred to the avoidance of shame, *honte*, made

¹³ ANRI Ternate 74, fol. 24; *memorie van overgave* J.C. Pielat, 9 June 1731.

¹⁴ P. van Kemseke, *Diplomatieke cultuur* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 2000) p. 10.

possible by public of tokens of respect: proof of honour as a consequence of the fulfilment of contracts, military gallantry and keeping promises.¹⁵

Research into the diplomatic relationships between Europeans and Asians presumes more than a good insight into European mentality and culture; it also supposes a thorough knowledge of Asian diplomatic culture. In this context, Leonard Blussé has rightly remarked that ritual and protocol masked loss of face.¹⁶ Certainly, in the Moluccas the VOC bestowed a great deal of attention on ritual expressions which were intended to display respect for Moluccan rulers publicly, thereby camouflaging at least some of the Moluccan discomfiture. Marks of honour, protocol, ritual and ceremonial, I would argue, contribute greatly to this conflict prevention. Hence some Moluccan political frustration with colonial rule was compensated. The outcome was a specific, local diplomatic culture in which various elements from the European and Moluccan politico-cultural contexts were discernible. The local diplomatic 'system of contact', imbued with a feudal relationship, formed the foundation of eighteenth-century colonialism.

A brief exploration of a few moments in the reign of sultan Radja Laut allows us to test the veracity of these assumptions empirically. The principal source of information about contacts both formal and personal between the power-holders in Fort Orange and the Ternatan sultan, his family and favourites are the *dagregisters* (officials journals) of Ternate. It is also important not to lose sight of the personal contacts. Eighteenth-century Ternatan reality was not one long, unbroken line of military repression and hard colonial oppression. The island was fairly isolated and the Governors often killed their time with rides in their coach, pleasure cruises in the Company *orembaai*, evening drinking get-togethers and birthday parties. The sultans were just as fond of showing the flag and sailing trips and enjoyed being carried around with an entourage of slaves. It is on these aspects of everyday Ternatan diplomatic culture that I shall concentrate in what follows.

The Annual Gifts

Each year the feudal relationship between the VOC and the Moluccan sultans was symbolized and ratified by the exchange of letters and gifts. The Supreme Government annually sent gifts and letters to the three Moluccan rulers of Ternate, Tidore and Bacan. It was customary for the Company gifts to be presented to the rulers by a delegation of several junior merchants, an occasion when vigilance was exerted to ensure that each received exactly the same. The usual gifts were Indian textiles or Persian velvets, but in 1739, as

¹⁵ W.M. Reddy, *The invisible code: Honor and sentiment in postrevolutionary France 1814-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 20-1.

¹⁶ L. Blussé, *Tussen geveinsde vrunden en verklaarde vijanden* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Adademie van Wetenschappen, 1999) p. 13.

well as textiles from Coromandel and Bengal, the Sultan of Tidore received a red, white and blue flag, apparently to adorn his *kora-kora*.¹⁷ Another interesting point is that in 1725, the ruler of Bacan was given rolls of black broad-cloth with gold trimmings and a bunch of plumes. White feathers only, says the document, because red and green could not be procured in Batavia. Besides these gifts, there was a chopping knife in a silver-mounted scabbard and a snaphance.¹⁸ The gifts from Batavia indicate that, the Supreme Government paid attention to the desires of the rulers. Nevertheless, the 1725 gift is evidence that the Supreme Government in Batavia set great store by the fact that even in such an isolated place as Labuha the ruler wore European attire.

The gifts which the High Government received every year from the Moluccan rulers to accompany their letters generally consisted of a few slaves, men, women and children, plus a score or so parrots and birds of paradise. The contract of 1683 enshrined that the sultan and his officers of state promised 'in the quality of a vassal to the Company to be liegeman of and pay homage to the Governor-General and Councillors of the Indies, as well as their letters, with 2 male slaves, 2 female slaves, 10 cockatoos and 10 red-pollled lorikeets' (Coolhaas 1968:315). As a rule these gifts were assessed at between 150 and 200 rix-dollars.¹⁹ What really mattered was neither the number of slaves²⁰ nor the money. These gifts embodied a symbolic value, that of role of tributary and vassalage. In the accompanying letter, which had to be delivered to Fort Orange by a special embassy from the Moluccan court in question, the sultan should express himself humbly as befitted a subject. If the annual gift happened to be absent, Batavia immediately showed its displeasure, as it did, for instance in 1782 when the Sultan of Tidore had neglected to add 'the tokens of homage' stipulated in contract, to the annual gift. The Tidorese court delegates were expected to hand over the annual letter and the gifts to the Governor in an appropriate manner. The Governor had to observe the rules of protocol just as strictly. The Tidorese prime minister and a few envoys were awaited in the castle where they would receive the letter and gifts from Batavia in the council chamber to the accompaniment of a three cannon salute from the main bulwark.²¹ On the one hand the exchange of gifts between the VOC and the Moluccan rulers

¹⁷ NA VOC 2500, fol. 479, *dagregister* 6 January 1739.

¹⁸ NA VOC 2029, fols 137v.-140v., letter from Sultan Kaitjili Paduka Siri Sultan and the *Bobatos* of Bacan to Batavia, received 7 October 1725.

¹⁹ NA VOC 2500, fols 447, 452, *dagregister* 26 September, 2 October 1739.

²⁰ The Moluccan rulers kept large numbers of slaves, for their personal use as well as those who were designated 'property of the state'. For instance, in 1787 the *Penghulu* of Bacan noted 67 slaves as state property (26 men and 41 women); ANRI Ternate 85, report of Delegate G. Rouselet, 10 July 1787.

²¹ ANRI Ternate 23, fol. 387, minutes of the Political Council, 6 Mey 1782.

was a sign of the tributary obligation of vassals to their feudal overlord, *Bapak Kumpeni*, but it was also a way of maintaining diplomatic relations and a confirmation of the status of the indigenous rulers.

Protocol and Honour

Although in its capacity of overlord the VOC had appropriated complete sovereignty, manifested in the obligation to pay tribute, the Governors paid meticulous attention to observing the proper protocol. The VOC did not want to intervene directly in the indigenous administration, lawmaking or the maintenance of law and order by the indigenous leaders.²² But this required a reciprocal gesture: the public recognition of the indigenous leadership.

Public accolades paid to the Sultans in the Moluccas had a rich tradition. Very early in the piece, Antony Caen had remarked that, ‘whenever contracts were signed, on such an occasion the Moors should usually be saluted with an abundance of shots from the Company cannon’.²³ Governor Padtbrugge noted that the Moluccan rulers were extremely sensitive to the proper use of parasols or sunshades on their vessels. Only the ruler of Ternate, who was considered the main ruler of the four original Moluccan kingdoms, could carry four parasols on his vessel. The royal *kora-kora* of Ternate also enjoyed a right to have her oars wielded in particular way, namely, ‘that when they raise their oars out of the water, the oarsmen in the bow and the stern on the King’s *kora-kora* raise the oars with the top of the blade pointing upwards and to turn them around, the others may not follow their example, or this would give grounds for confiscation’. Non-observance of the protocol such as the temporary ban on the beating of the drum or *tifa*, as they sailed past each other’s seat was regarded by the Moluccan rulers as a grievous insult.²⁴ When the Europeans entered the Moluccan world, they had expressly taken into account the prevailing political and protocolar customs.

The VOC could not avoid the subtle customs and ritual usages through which the precarious political relationships in the Moluccas had been expressed from time immemorial. Whenever a Governor wished to hold talks with the Moluccan kings of Ternate, Tidore or Bacan, a complicated protocol was observed. New Governors had to familiarize themselves as quickly as possible with the protocol. For instance, Governor Pielat instructed his successor, Elias de Haeze, meticulously in the protocol to be observed when

²² The 1683 contract guaranteed the ‘unhindered administration of justice, both civil and criminal’; only criminal deeds perpetrated by the high-ranking officials and the regional Governors had to be punished with the knowledge of the Company; Coolhaas, *Generale Missiven*, Vol. 3, p. 311.

²³ NA VOC 1170, fol. 761v, report by Commissioner Antony Caen, July 1648.

²⁴ ANRI Ternate 67, *memorie van overgave* Robertus Padtbrugge, 1682, consulted in typescript in ANRI, pp. 20-1.

the sultan was invited and received for a meeting at the castle. He wrote that two delegates (usually members of the Political Council) with an escort of a sergeant, a corporal and twelve soldiers, would first invite the Ternatan sultan to discuss matters of state. When the time appointed for the meeting arrived, those ships lying in the roadstead had to fly flags and pennants. Then the senior merchant and captain were dispatched to greet the king, while a company of forty-eight to seventy-two grenadiers plus three officers were drawn up in a row stretching from the Governor's residence to close to the castle gate. The Governor's bodyguard was present fully armed in the lower and upper reception rooms. As soon as the king had passed the sea bulwark (on the right-hand side of the entrance gate), three cannon shots were fired. When he actually arrived at the gate itself, the sultan was greeted by the beating of the grenadiers' march.²⁵

There were also welcome ceremonies for small kingdoms in North Celebes or the Northern Isles (Siau-Sangihe-Talaud Archipelago), but they had to be content with much less. There was a regular stream of newly chosen kings, accompanied by a few of their officers of state, who came to Ternate to swear the oath of allegiance to the Governor. Although their reception in the impressive castle was a great honour, their long voyage often ended very simply with a cup of tea. When Ismaël Jacobsz. of Siau arrived on Ternate, he and three of his officers of state were fetched from their lodgings by a standard bearer and the chief police clerk and they passed through a double rank of armed soldiers in the courtyard of the castle. The drum remained silent, naturally, because he had not yet sworn the oath of allegiance. When he had done this in the upper reception room of the castle, the king was paid the 'usual compliments' and given a 'suitable address', after that he was presented with the raja staff, 'and after the said petty king had taken several cups of tea with preserves', he could return to his lodgings, this time accompanied by the beating of the drum and a three-gun salute.²⁶

Sometimes there were hiccoughs in the protocol, and the way in which the castle reacted to a misunderstanding shows just how sensitive the Moluccan rulers were to the proper observance of the protocolar courtesies. Governor Pielat had the fright of his life in 1730, when a *kora-kora* with an open parasol on her awning, flying a pennant above the flag – a characteristic of a royal vessel – was sighted sailing past the castle around 10 o'clock in the morning. The master-at-arms fired the usual three-gun salute presuming that the sultan of Tidore was passing. However, it was the Tidorese Princess Tagalaja who was being taken past, on her way to visit a tea-party given by Widow Hollemans on Ternate. When Pielat learned that the *kora-kora* had not been

²⁵ ANRI Ternate 74, fol. 100; *memorie van overgave* J.C. Pielat, 9 June 1731.

²⁶ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 25 March 1753.

carrying a ruler, he immediately dispatched an envoy to the Ternatean court to learn if there were rules governing such an incident. The answer from the *keraton* was ‘that such actions were not customary among the Moluccans, and no one might sail as the king with an open parasol and a pennant above the flag, certainly no woman’, but the Company was forgiven its ignorance. The Governor then informed the permanent Tidorese representative on Ternate, Prince Tidori Wongi, about what had happened. The Prince replied that they had done the right thing in welcoming a Tidorese princess in the proper manner, but not necessarily with a cannon salute. The princess was told discreetly that the gun-salute had not been intended for her. She showed her understanding but, in her turn, called upon – apparently as compensation – Dutch assistance in recapturing twenty of her slaves who had fled and were now in Makian, a request which she repeated a day later, with a fitting present, a small Papuan slave.²⁷ To prevent any such incidents in the future, which could easily lead to mounting tension between Ternate and Tidore, the sultan of Ternate usually informed the castle beforehand of any sailing trips he was planning to make so that both parties would be sure that the cannon on the sea bulwarks of the castle and at the military post Voorburg would be fired in the proper manner.²⁸

As a matter of fact, the kings in North Celebes, especially the Ternatan vassals in the Gulf of Tomini, were also expected to be honoured with the proper pomp and circumstance, and with the observance of the correct rank. In 1731, the Political Council ordered Junior Merchant Han Nebben to go to Gorontalo to check whether the kings of Gornontalo, Limboto, Attingola and Bulanga had not deviated from the established pattern. The nub of the problem was that the kings of the two former regions were quarrelling with the latter two about the right to carry a parasol, but the biggest bone of contention was the use of trumpets, with which the ‘petty potentates’ did their best to make an impression on each other. To ensure there was no escalation in the quarrel between the ‘petty gulf kings’, the Political Council was unwilling to sell the king of Bulanga a trumpet, ‘because nowhere can we discover that the petty kings of Celebes had previously used a trumpet’.²⁹ It is revealing that even when a raja in the periphery was concerned the honours pertaining to the diplomatic culture were followed to the letter.

Vivat Oranje! And Public Presentations

The honours shown to the Moluccan rulers were embedded in the local culture which prescribed that status should be manifested in signs of homage,

²⁷ NA VOC 2191, fols 474-80, *dagregister*, 16 September 1730.

²⁸ NA VOC 2191, fols 486-7, 547, *dagregister*, 29 June 1730, 24 December 1730.

²⁹ NA VOC 2191, fols 781-2, letter to Junior Merchant Nebben in Gornontalo, 7 May 1731.

an idea which was well understood in the eighteenth-century Republic. Given this situation, it is not surprising that Ternate was regularly the stage of typically Dutch revelry, to mark such occasions as anniversaries in the House of Orange. Even though at the end of the Second Stadtholderless Period (1702-1747) Ternate was no more than a remote corner, Orange anniversaries appeared on the calendar fairly rapidly. The birthday of William IV was being celebrated in the Company garden as early as 1749. The Moluccan *dagregisters* describe how proceeding commenced with the Governor receiving the congratulations of those of the highest rank. When this had been finished, everyone was seated at table according to their rank and quality and a goblet was passed around 'with great meeriment'. A hearty meal was enjoyed and when this was finished, to aid the digestion, there was a small dance to the pleasant music played by a slave orchestra consisting of a trumpet, oboe, bass and violins.

The sultans of Tidore and Bacan were usually absent from these sedate celebrations of ordinary Orange birthdays, even from the installation of a new Governor. However none of the three rulers could afford to be absent from the proclamation of the new Prince of Orange ('the Supreme Governor-General') and the concomitant public celebrations. Exceptionally during this inauguration, the three sultans and the chief officials of the realms of Ternate and Tidore were all present, as well as the rajas of Taruna (Sangihe) and Parigi. On Sunday 20 June 1751, the Reverend Mr Witchenhoff preached a 'suitable sermon' to the inner circle, after which everybody sat down according to rank and station to a stately meal, which was ushered in by a modest twenty-one gun salute. The public proclamation took place on Monday. At day break, the Moluccan *dagregisters* report, the people could see that all the Company and civilian ships decked out with an abundance of flags and pennants. As early as six o'clock, there was a salute of forty shots from the heavy cannon, followed by twenty-three from the lighter ordnance. An hour later, the garrison was on parade, and all the councillors were present in the fort at half past eight. As the protocol decreed, the Sultans and their officers of state were welcomed at ten o'clock and seated at table according to their rank. The Reverend Mr Witchenhoff was seated to one side as 'pedagogue' to keep an wary eye on the two most important Ternatan princes, Ajan Sjah or 'Prins Outshoorn' and Sjah Mardan or 'Prins Swammerdam'. The Governor opened proceedings by making a declaration. Then the secretary of the Political Council read out the oath of allegiance, whereupon the Governor asked those present if they were willing to accept the governance of the Prince of Orange as Supreme Governor-General. When he had done this, the Company servants and the indigenous princes 'with many signs of affection, promised and confirmed by applause they accepted [this], and would abide by it'. This done, the most highly placed

among them proceeded to the balcony, from where they could view the ranked companies of the civil militia as well as those of the Macassarese, Ternatan and Tidorese (all wearing orange cockades on their hats and turbans). Once again the Governor read the oath of allegiance, which was endorsed by a general shout of joy of “Ajaa” and a threefold shouting of “Vivat Oranje”. Three discharges from the muskets, alternated with shots from the heavy cannon, followed by the roar of the heavy ordnance both on the ships and at the castle closed the public part of the ceremony. Thereafter everyone claimed a glass of wine or ‘some other pleasant morning drink’ and, while they ‘chatted’ as they passed the time until half-past one when

... each took his place according to his rank at a magnificent Table, laden with Dutch and Moorish dishes, where as much as appetite would permit, on which between the wine glasses and the beer flutes, as well as the goblets filled with various distinguished wines appropriate to this day were readily emptied, until everybody left the table with his appetite satisfied and, to help the digestion of the dishes took his pleasure in dancing.

Around six o’clock the ordnance resounded once again from the fort and ships, as the majority ‘slowly wended their way home’.

On Wednesday there was a grand illumination in honour of the Prince of Orange. The Tidorese ruler was absent, reportedly on account of illness. To the astonishment of everybody, Sultan Radja Laut was accompanied by more than twenty ladies and various servants. Circumspect negotiations were called for. The upper reception room of the castle could not hold so many people. Would it be satisfactory were the ruler to be accompanied by four ladies and a few servants to carry his water, betel nut and tobacco? It was not long before the room was jam packed. The sultan was escorted to the balcony, where he and the Governor killed the time smoking a pipe and emptying a glass of wine, until a few score cannon shots heralded the illumination. The Company servants, the civilian population and the people of the *negorij* lit hundreds of small lamps and wax torches. Rows of small lamps led the way to a large illuminated crown, the symbolic representation of the Prince of Orange. Almost without exception the houses in the town were decorated as beautifully as possible and illuminated. Around eight o’ clock, the Governor took a stroll through the town, ‘where it was no less engaging to see that the houses and door-steps of all the Company servants, civilians, Macassarese and Chinese were bedizzened as much with flags of diverse colours, as they were with a myriad of lights’. The stroll completed, the guests went to the reception room of the castle where, they diverted themselves merrily with various dances accompanied by pleasant music’. But by now the elderly Sultan Radja Laut had begun to doze off, indicating that it was time for him

to wend his way home. The illuminations ended with the firing of cannons, whereupon everybody present seated themselves in order at the table to indulge in hours of feasting, until deep in the night the digestion of the dishes had to be stimulated by some more dances, and so forth. Finally, at seven o'clock the next morning, all the ordnance in the castle roared out once again.

The ceremonial reception of the sultans, the swearing of the oath of allegiance and the balcony scene were all invariable parts of the public proclamation of a new Governor-General. The sultans were expected to make a public declaration that they would continue their alliances under a new holder of the office and uphold the contracts as they had sworn to do. In 1753, when news reached Ternate that it had pleased the Prince of Orange and the Directors of the VOC (*de Heren Zeventien*) – at least this was the way in which it was presented to the Sultans – to appoint Jacob Mossel the new Governor-General, a public proclamation was immediately organized. After the Sultan of Tidore had also arrived at his customary lodgings – the pavilion in the Company garden – the sultans were fetched by coach. Once again the upper reception room at the Governor's residence was packed full. Everybody was seated according to his rank, including the four Ternatan princes who were given a place at the side. The oath was actually sworn in the upper chamber in an indirect manner. First the Governor read out a letter from the Supreme Government, then speaking in a general manner he asked if all present wished to abide by the alliance and their contracts, which the Sultans and the high officers of state present 'accepted by applauding and many fond protestations, and promised, after which with many signs of satisfaction wished each other good luck', after which they moved to the balcony. From there the speech was repeated to the people, whereupon a 'general cry of acclaim' and three cheers resounded in the castle courtyard. After salutes from the handguns, alternated by cannon salutes, it was time 'to congratulate heartily' the Governor, smoke a pipe of tobacco, drink a glass of wine, chat to each other and so on, until the table was ready at half-past one in the afternoon. Until eleven o'clock at night, when the rulers returned to their home or their lodgings by coach, the guests enjoyed themselves partaking of the many delicate dishes, downing many flutes of beer and goblets of wine and tripping the light fantastic to the melodies of a small chamber orchestra.³⁰

What has just been said reveals that public ceremonial occasions were more or less compulsory numbers for the indigenous princes and their chief officers of state. Although such a day was by no means unpleasant, the aim was the maintenance and confirmation of the feudal relationship. More often than not, either the sultan of Tidore or Bacan was absent, offering the pretext

³⁰ ANRI Ternate 54, *dagregister*, 6 August 1753.

of illness, family circumstances and suchlike. It was far more difficult for the sultan of Ternate to absent himself from such occasions, in view of the fact that he was the one who lived in the closest proximity to the castle.

'State Visits' and Informal Encounters

The short distance between the castle and the *kraton* offered the possibility of many informal encounters. Yet another indication that the relationship between the VOC and the Sultanate was good during the reign of Sultan Radja Laut. Tension did not always verge on boiling point, and whenever the Company servants were overcome with boredom, a diversion was organized. Among the most popular pursuits on free days were pleasure trips taken by the Governor and councillors on the Company *orembaai*. Sometimes the sultan joined them. When he did, the vessel first called at the *kraton* to pick up the Ternatan sultan, princes and the high officers of state. On one such an occasion in 1730, the whole island was circumnavigated, and in the afternoon the *orembaai* moored at the small settlement of Sasak, which was part of the estate of the bookkeeper Caspar Voges. The Governor entertained his guests liberally and various sorts of entertainment were provided.³¹ The day after the excursion, the Governor sent his interpreter to the *kraton* to thank the sultan for his company. Radja Laut was full of gratitude and declared that he 'had never had the honour of sailing around the Ternatan mountain in the company of the Governor of these Moluccas'. Two months later, Governor Joan Happon organized a lottery in the Company garden to which the Sultan and the Ternatan princes subscribed. Both the Company elite and the court nobility attended the draw, and the lottery ended with a stroll to the new Company shipyard and a meal in the fort, where the king and his entourage were 'heartily welcomed'.³² Other informal encounters were the 'private visits' of Sultan Outshoorn Ajan Sjah. One such visit was to the birthday party of Mrs Van Mijlendonk, at which the members of the Political Council and a few Ternatan nobles dined together and enjoyed some dancing.³³

Nevertheless, during such cheerful get-togethers an uneasy feeling must have stolen over the Ternatans. Such informal outings were a prime opportunity for the Dutch to rub Western customs albeit in a suitable manner under the noses of their Ternatan guests – especially the princes and princesses. On the evening of 31 December 1730, when Prince Outshoorn, a district or village head (*sengaji*) named Abdullah and Imam Mantjari appeared at the fort to wish the Governor a happy new year on the Sultan's behalf, in the course of a 'friendly chat' the Governor raised an important facet of the

³¹ NA VOC 2191, fols 504-5, *dagregister*, 26 October 1730.

³² NA VOC 2191 fol. 537, *dagregister*, 9 December 1730.

³³ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 17 June 1752.

intercourse: why did the prince not raise his glass in European company. The prince excused himself by referring to his 'indisposition', but Happon replied 'that the Company might well suffer as that very evening or the morrow the prince could become the next king showed so little inclination to adapt himself to the manners of the Company, so as to be more compatible with its Governor and minsters'. The *sengaji* and the iman were likewise reprimanded. It was their duty to see that the prince was properly instructed, and Abdullah especially should remember that the Company kept its eye on him more than on the other officers of state at the court, because his father, the indigenous public prosecutor (*bukum*) Halla, had been exiled to Banda in 1713 for 'the same haughtiness'. According to the Moluccan journal, these high-ranking Ternatans thanked the Governor 'for his instruction', but must have left the fort highly insulted.

Princesses were dealt with in a slightly more elegant manner, but they too were 'instructed' in European customs by the castle. When the time came to celebrate turn of the year 1730-1731, the Governor had a Dutch lady's bonnet delivered to Princess Gorontalo. The next day Governor Happon drove to the castle in his carriage to fetch the princess personally. When he arrived back, the wives of the senior merchants were assembled at the gate of the fort, not just to escort her to the upper reception room of the Governor's residence as protocol decreed, but of course to give the bonnet their approval. After this, two merchants fetched the Sultan, who was then also escorted along the drawn-up battalion to the upper reception room, from the *keraton*. When a three-gun salute had been fired, the exchange of new year's wishes took place. The company partied until half-past one in the morning 'with great pleasure'.³⁴

The examples which have been cited so far paint a telling picture. Anyone who seeks in the ceremonial and festive occasions spread over a large number of years will find them in these Bandanese and Ambonese journals. What do the Ternatan journals reveal about the intensity of the contacts between the castle and the *keraton*?

We can seek the most accurate information from the man who was best informed about the visits of senior and junior rulers: the steward of Fort Orange. He kept the accounts of the expenses for what was consumed and organized the purchase of the food and drink. Every so often, the bills for the meals and feasts were reimbursed from the Company coffers by the Political Council. The costs noted by the steward during the period September 1730 to June 1731 do indeed show that very large sums were involved, in the said ten months no less than 1111 rix-dollars. The council approved the expense and was of the opinion that it could not have been

³⁴ NA VOC 2191 fol. 561, *dagregister*, 9 January 1731.

done more economically 'without injuring the good name of the Company'. The sum covered thirty-five occasions on which the Company had expended costs: nine lunches or dinners with the princes of Tidore or Ternate, the reception and farewell of the kings and *bobato* of Attingola, Bulanga, Gorontalo and Limboto, the reception of the Sultan of Ternate and the delegates of the Sultan of Tidore when they came to present gifts and letters for Batavia. The public proclamation of Governor-General Diederick Durven on 12 May 1731 incurred great expense. On this occasion, the steward noted 361 rix-dollars for innumerable bottles Rhenish and French wine, wheat from the Cape for cakes, a whole cow, chickens, capons, geese and 'other titbits'. Scarcely a fortnight later came the proclamation of the new Governor, Elias de Haeze, which was once again toasted with glasses of wine.³⁵ But anyone glancing through the Moluccan journals sees that there was more time for relaxation and consequently more spent than the official accounts reveal. The actual sum paid out on representative costs can well have been at least just as high again, but the way in which this was calculated is difficult to say.

So far the actions of the government of Ternate have dominated the story. Of course, the Ternatan sultans were not just passive bystanders, but in their turn did their best to hold Moluccan identity and political culture in honour and, where possible, put on a public show. How did the *keraton* associate with the castle? Unfortunately for the most part the Ternatan journals leave us in the dark, at least during the lifetime of Sultan Radja Laut. It was only the impressive ceremonies surrounding his death and succession made it into the journals, and it turns out that it was the Ternatans who took the initiative.

The Funeral of Sultan Safiudin Kaitjili Radja Laut

During the first days of December 1751, the European guard reported that despite his illness, infirmity and severe bouts of hiccoughs the sultan had himself carried around restlessly through his *negorij*. His countenance was neglected, he had no appetite and he was also having trouble with his memory. Although the announcement on 5 December said that the ruler had slept well and enjoyed his breakfast, a few days later, on the ninth, came the news that Radja Laut had passed away at the age of seventy-one, after a reign of thirty-seven years. His long reign has given him a special place in Moluccan history. The preparations for and the execution of Safiudin's funeral allow us a rare glimpse of the magnificent burial ritual at the Ternatan court, which was in fact observed into the nineteenth century (Willer 1864).

³⁵ NA VOC 2191 fols 444-51, note of the Steward of Ternate.

The sultan was not buried within 24 hours as Islamic custom demanded. After the twelve separate princes and the *bukum* had issued the Governor a formal invitation, the funeral of Radja Laut was held on Monday 13 December 1751.³⁶ The Governor and councillors were fetched by high-ranking Ternatans: the prime minister or *jogugu*, Pati Saranga, two *bukum*, one *sengaji* and a village head or *kimalaba*. After a brief stop at the *kraton*, they witnessed the body being carried out of the palace accompanied by the keening of women and the droning recitations of a whole throng of Muslim clerics. The coffin was wrapped in a white shroud by the eldest prince and draped with various sorts of cloths of gold and sheets. Once outside the palace, the coffin was placed on a bier made of bamboo on which two ordinary and two silk parasols were placed. A silken canopy decorated with various ornaments and the royal arms – the double eagle covered the bier which was also hung about with heavy gold chains. When the coffin was in place, all the concubines and various house servants took their places either under the canopy, next to or on the bier. The women were dressed in mourning and had covered their heads with black cloths. At each of the four corners of the bier stood a male bearer carrying a standard on which were embroidered silver suns and moons. In front of the king's body sat a bowed person wearing a silver-gilt morion, around which a mourning turban had been wound. Also on the bier were various persons carrying the royal regalia: a gold gorget, a hereditary *keris* with gold mounts, a sword with a golden hilt, scabbard and seal, a cane with a gold knob, and a rectangular silver scone with a tobacco pipe and chain. While the bier was being got ready, Ternatan, Macassarese, civil militias and army companies marched by. They were followed by the king's six bodyguards, his trumpeter and the sultan's horse bedecked with a black cloth, led by two lieutenants. Then came a palanquin likewise covered with a black cloth, after which came the courtiers carrying some royal accoutrements.

The funeral cortege was very large. It was led by the Ternatan court musicians with their instruments, after whom came a throng of Muslim clerics clad in white. They were followed by the bier, encircled by some 250 bearers. Roughly another fifty bearers carried the parasols, standards and the royal regalia. One remarkable fact was the participation of the sultan's European guards and another that the bier was followed by six European undertaker's mutes, all dressed in mourning, their headgear bedecked with weepers. After them came a crowd of Chinese with white cloths on their heads. Bringing up the rear of the cortege walked the wives and concubines

³⁶ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister* 10-12 December 1751. This fragment also in F.S.A. de Clercq, *Bijdragen tot de kennis der residentie Ternate* (Leiden: Brill, 1890), pp. 346-50.

of the sultan, all in white with Sulanese hemp cloths wrapped around their waists as a token of their high birth.

The bier was first carried to the great mosque, where several ceremonies were performed. Then the funeral cortege wended its way to the royal cemetery, where the Governor and Councillors could take their places under a temporary awning which had been erected near the grave. The body was buried with great ceremonial, accompanied by salutes fired by the said companies.

At seven o' clock, when all the ceremonies had been completed, the Dutch guests made their way to the *kraton*, where wine and beer, biscuits and other cakes were served.

The First Inauguration of Sultan Outsboorn Ajan Sjah

A month elapsed between the death of Safiudin and the formal public proclamation of his successor, Outsboorn Ajan Sjah, in Fort Orange. This ceremony took place on 8 January 1752, after the Muslim scholars at the court had determined that this was an auspicious date. Several days were required to invite all the kings and viceroys of Banggai, Tambuko and Sula Besi and the subject areas on Halmahera.³⁷ As tradition dictated, various Ternatan officers of state were dispatched to the courts of Tidore and Bacan bearing a formal announcement and an invitation for the other rulers. The Company also sent two junior merchants to Tidore in the *orembaai* to extend an invitation to the sultan and his officers of state, but they were told that, 'the indisposition from which he had been suffering for some time', would not allow this ruler to undertake the voyage to Ternate personally, but several of his high-ranking courtiers would attend.³⁸

Before the sultan was escorted to the castle for the public proclamation, the secretary of the Political Council was given the order to break the seals on the chests containing the regalia and to check if all the items noted on the inventory were present.

On 8 January the armed Company soldiers and a group of free-burgers drew themselves up in a double rank between the main gate and the Governor's residence. When they had done so, the Company clerks, the civilians and the Makassarese marched into the courtyard so as to form up in front of the Company shop, the counting house and the commercial warehouse.

The Political Council which had assembled in the upper reception room now delegated its second man, the senior merchant and public prosecutor, to fetch the Sultan from his *kraton* in the Company coach. With pennants flying

³⁷ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 20 December 1751.

³⁸ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister* 29 December 1751, 4 January 1752.

and to the beat of a drum, the Sultan and those of his entourage who were accompanying him were escorted to the Governor's residence, where he was welcomed to the assembly. While the formal matters were being discussed,³⁹ three companies of Ternatan soldiers marched into the courtyard of the castle. Two hours later, when the meeting had ended, the Governor led the new monarch onto the balcony in order to give an address to the people in which he called for recognition, honour and respect. After a general affirmation in the form of 'Jaa', all the companies fired three salutes with their muskets, each alternated by those loosed by the cannons. After these salutes, all the pieces of ordnance in the castle and the military posts of Tolukko and Voorburg were fired. The time had then come for congratulations and the first round of drinks.

Surprisingly enough, but appropriate in the context of the formal relationship between Ternate and Tidore, only then did the chief officers of state of Tidore enter the castle. Once they had passed along the double rank, they too were led onto the balcony, where they congratulated the new monarch in the name of the sultan of Tidore. This having been accomplished, all the sworn Company servants and the Ternatan courtiers relaxed together smoking pipes and imbibing a glass of wine. At half-past one, the ninety guests seated themselves at the table, which they sat for around four hours eating and drinking until all the ordnance was fired once again, 'and towards eight o' clock they diverted themselves with dancing and prancing'.⁴⁰ This is the way the VOC managed to organize the succession as expeditiously as possible and likewise give its guarantee for the indigenous administration. However, what did the Ternatans think about this succession?

The End of the Period of Mourning: the Second Inauguration

As far as the Ternatans were concerned, the real inauguration of the new sultan could take place only after the period of mourning prescribed by Islam had elapsed. When the time arrived, nearly a year after the death of Radja Laut, the *keraton* sent a delegation to the castle. It consisted of Prince Swaardecroon, the *jogugu*, Pati Saranga, *Hukum* Samaudi and the *salabakan* (prime minister of Sula Besi), to extend an invitation to the Governor and his daughters to come the *keraton* to smoke a pipe of tobacco and to pay their final respects to Radja Laut. The rest of the Councillors were loath to miss this solemn ceremony, and it was decided to go to the *keraton* in a group a few days after the invitation. There they were received by Sultan Ajan Sjah and

³⁹ The most important document was the 'Act of Allegiance', signed by the chief officers of the realm. See for the text ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 1 March 1752.

⁴⁰ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 8 January 1752.

conducted to a specially constructed platform, on which all the chief officers of state, the clergy, princes and princesses had assembled, passing through a guard of honour formed by a double rank of armed Ternatan militia men. Various dishes were prepared under a number of richly decorated temporary structures. When the Governor had seated himself, the Ternatan elite came to shake his hand and when they had done so the clergy recited prayers and dishes of sago were handed around. After this, the select company retired to the *keraton*, where the whole night was spent eating and drinking. During this feast, the Governor emphatically impressed on the Sultan that he was worried about the Alfuros, among whom it was the custom 'to go on a killing spree as soon as the mourning for their late ruler ended, on the pretext that they were giving their king guards in paradise'. It would be a wise move were the ruler to send all the Alfuros from Halmahera back to their own *negorijen*.⁴¹

A week later another delegation arrived from the *keraton* to inform the Governor of the fact that the councillors of state had decided 'according to ancient Moluccan custom to present their king publicly to his subjects in the Ternatan *negorij*'. Governor Van Mijlendonk who was completely unfamiliar with this custom asked the envoys suspiciously if the chief officers of state and other Ternatan leaders would have to swear an oath of allegiance to the new Sultan. He failed to get a straight answer, except that the monarch would be set on a palanquin in the cemetery of former Sultan Sibori Amsterdam (1675-1690) and borne through the *negorij* Soa Sio, and this occasion would also be marked 'by all sorts of amusing pastimes in the native fashion'.

Remarkably the Ternatans did not extend an invitation for the ritual to the Political Council. However, Van Mijlendonk appealed to the decision of Governor Van der Duyn in 1692 – the inauguration of Sultan Said Kaithili Tolokko (1692-1714) – in order to send two delegates to the ceremony, accompanied by an escort of one sergeant and twelve soldiers.⁴² Although the Company servants were courteously received, their report betrays that the inauguration of a Ternatan ruler was a discrete occasion reserved for Ternatans, something which had nothing to do with the Company. Although some elements of the inauguration ritual were derived from contemporary European military protocol, there was barely a reference to the Company on the occasion, but the close ties with the representatives from Tidore were stressed.

⁴¹ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 1-3 November 1752. Although the Sultan assured them that headhunting was no longer a current practice, later it seemed that the Alfuros had especially set their sights on the heads of Tidorese who lived on Ternate, in particular those Tidorese who had gardens near the old Spanish Fort Gamalama. See also *dagregister* 15 November 1752 and 7 July 1753.

⁴² ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 22 November 1752, enclosure 2.

On the basis of this evidence, we can assume that the investiture of Sultan Ajan Sjah in Fort Orange was fairly meaningless for the Ternatans. The acknowledgement of a new sultan was the business of the Ternatan court nobility, the chief officers of state and the people. To what extent the high officers of state were unhappy with the choice of Ajan Sjah forced upon them by the VOC is uncertain. The new sultan did have to redeem himself. In 1753 he visited the Governor 'in cognito' at dusk to ask for 2,500 rix-dollars from the Company coffers. The money was needed to buy the support of the Ternatan high officers of state. The visit ended not unpleasantly with 'all sorts of cake and the emptying of a few bottles of wine and beer', but by what he had done Ajan Sjah, just as his predecessors, had manoeuvred himself into a relationship of complete dependency.

Conclusions

The VOC on Ternate had given a great deal of thought to paying the sultans public respect. Great care was taken to honour the existing practices, such as saluting royal vessels. On the other hand, the sultans were part of a far wider diplomatic and political culture to which the VOC aspired everywhere in public proclamations and celebrations linked to the House of Orange. On such occasions explicit attention was paid to the transference of western values and norms. The VOC occupied the peak of the political hierarchy and expressed this categorically in ceremonies and rituals. Although the Moluccan rulers rejected the western hegemony, European material culture, lifestyle and ideology also exerted a certain power of attraction on them. Public accolades accorded the sultan by the VOC underlined the legitimacy of the Moluccan kingdom. Nevertheless, the opportunistic use of ritual and protocol in the public sphere should not be confused with acceptance of western rule. The Moluccan kings never cease to place an emphasis on the legitimacy of the original Moluccan kingdoms and rulers, as is evident in the public investiture of the new Ternatan Sultan, Ajan Sjah. Generally speaking, it can be assumed that the investment made by the VOC in marks of honour, protocol and ceremonial contributed to stable relations in the Moluccas. The bulk of the gunpowder which John Company ever ignited in Fort Orange in the eighteenth century served no inimical purpose but was in the form of salutes for rulers who happened to sail by and formed a permanent part of the entertainment when 'these guests' – even the invariably critical Sultan of Tidore - were regaled, in the main with wine, tea, preserves and biscuits. In 1751, this Sultan was received in the upper reception room with all marks of honour and, during the political discussion, he mightily condemned the court of Ternate and the Company. The chronicler says that he displayed a 'hypocritical anxiety', and projected himself as 'a sanctimonious ruler' who was inflexible in his resolve not to budge. None the less, after the end of this

bickering, the programme of the reception in the upper room passed off so splendidly that as he was leaving the sultan of Tidore, several of his concubines and a goodly number of his officers of state, having drunk many glasses of wine and beer while the light ordnance fired salutes 'in this wise became so inebriated, that as he departed could not descend the staircase in the Governor's residence without the greatest danger of taking a tumble'.⁴³

Politically speaking, Ternate was dominated by a staged peace, but it should not be overlooked that the diplomatic culture to which all the parties subscribed left room for discussion, ceremonial, entertainment, exchange of courtesies, etiquette, as well as the many 'sophisticated toasts'.

⁴³ ANRI Ternate 52, *dagregister*, 15 October 1751.

Appendix

Description of the Investiture of Sultan Outsboorn Ajan Sjab of Ternate.

Source: ANRI, Arsip Ternate 52, *dagregister* 22 November 1752.

[At nine o'clock the Dutch delegates, Thornton and Wasbeek, proceeded to the court...], where we discovered all the high officials in white clerical garb with the others, and were welcomed into the palace by them as well as by *qimelaha* Marasoly and *sengahadje* Limatauw, [walking] over the fine, white linen cloth which covered the ground, until we were ushered before the king. After we had presented our compliments to the king and announced the purpose of our dispatch thither, the ruler placed us by his side on two appropriated armchairs. After sitting a brief while, the procession formed up in the following sections:

The king was dressed in priestly attire, with an underskirt of fine white linen, over which was a skirt of red *peau-de-soie*, above which by yet another of blue satin, and he was also swathed in a mantle of green velvet, embroidered with gold, adorned with gold buttons and jewels. At his side he wore the royal *keris* in a sheath with gold mounts, and on his head His Highness wore a white clerical turban of the finest quality linen, gorgeously ornamented with diamonds, gold and precious stones.

In front of the palace a litter stood ready, likewise festooned in linen, over which rose a silken canopy, and it was also garlanded with more swathes of cloth in diverse colours and adorned with a beaten silver eagle and gold and silver flowers, as well as being overlaid with a fine Dutch carpet on which stood an armchair draped with Chinese cloth embellished with gold flowers and [one of] green satin with golden tassels. On it were set an armchair and two other chairs.

Progressing between the two of us, the King was conducted to the litter over the white linen cloth, the priests intoning all the while. The four tips of his mantle were borne by four royal pages, and as he went, the king was strewn with rice, flowers, silver coins and other embellishments. After the high priest had said a prayer, the king sat down in his armchair on the litter and we were placed beside him. Two men stood behind the king carrying two open parasols and [three were] two others, each bearing a standard with silver suns and moons. Before him stood two men carrying silk and behind [him] another two with closed parasols. At each corner stood a royal servant with a silver dish in his hands, in which lay rice money and flowers, mixed together, the which was thrown to the crowd by the *goegoegoe* of Tidore and the others who had also mounted the litter. The king's uncle, Prince Joseph, with the chief judge, Heyroen, and yet other members of the royal family and servants clambered onto the litter and in the meanwhile were announced to the

bystanders by the judge, in Ternatan. The procession was organized as follows.

In the van marched a company of Ternatan militia, drums beating and Prince Swaardekroon's personal pennants flying.

Then came the regalia and the royal insignia, these being the same as those described in detail at the funeral of the previous deceased monarch.

After these was a throng of chanting priests.

Then came the king's musicians, playing the viol, oboe, the bass, bassoon, interspersed with the indigenous music of the *calintangs*.

Now it was the turn of the great men of the realm, walking two by two, followed the by royal bodyguard, with the sergeant and the soldiers we had supplied.

After these came the litter which was borne past to the accompaniment of hearty cheers by two to three hundred men, singing as they went. Along the way, rice, money and flowers were strewn among the crowd. Behind it, walked a few of the royal wives garbed in white, as well as other members of the entourage, and the rear was brought up by a company of Ternatan militia led by Din, the *Salabkan* of Xulla Besi (Sula Besi).

In this order, the procession marched past the temple (mosque) to the main square, where a countless throng of subjects of both sexes had sat down. At this point, the litter was borne by a double rank of native militia to a temporary structure which had been erected for the comfort of the lords, ladies and other spectators who had come there. Here, when the king had been set down, two *sadabaes*,⁴⁴ the one after the other, [standing] in front of the vehicle, addressed the King, pouring forth host of words of homage, and handed the *hukum*, Heyroen, who was standing on the litter, four lengths of green chintz, on a silver salver.

The *gugugu* of the Ternatan realm, Pattserana, then took placed himself in front of the litter and made a speech to the king in his own language, and while he was talking, the *hukum* handed the aforesaid four lengths of chintz to the bearers of the two silk and two ordinary parasols still present, who draped this sash-wise over their bodies, and opened their parasols. After Prince Swaedericroon had taken his place in front of the king, he gave a brief, impassioned address, the which was endorsed by three cheers from the subjects.

Thereupon, *Kimelaba* Marasoly climbed up onto the vehicle in front of the king, and after he had made a *sembah* and kissed the king's feet, read the same a paper, in the Ternatan language, to the which, the king and we had to listened (even though it lasted more than an quarter of an hour) on our feet. When this had been done, the king sat down, upon which all the chief men

⁴⁴ *Sadaba*: delegate; see Van Fraassen, *Ternate*, Vol. II p. 647.

of the realm and the such princes of the blood as Swammerdam, Captain Laut Xulla, Swaardekroon and others came to kiss either the hands or feet of the king on the litter, and to make a *sembah*, and once Iman Bey Jan had recited a long prayer in too loud a voice, and the aforesaid Kadir or the king's uncle, Prince Joseph, had commenced a psalm, the which all the priests completed, a threefold salvo was fired from the muskets beginning with the King's bodyguard, followed by the soldiers we had detached, and finally by the Ternatans, the which was concluded by a salvo of nine cannon shots. Then the litter was taken up again, and the King and those mentioned earlier were carried around the *negorij* of the Ternatans, where they were greeted with gestures of homage and great shouts [of acclaim] by subjects, men, women and children, seated along the wayside, and as said earlier grain, money and flowers were strewn [among them].

After the King had divested himself of his priestly garb, and had put on a camisole of cloth of gold, the time until around 2 o' clock was spent imbibing morning drinks and [indulging in] personal chats. [At 2] two long tables, each with a setting for some seventy places, were placed on the front gallery, at one of which the priests seated themselves, at the other the great officers of state. And we would be remiss here not to mention that such a table, also when other such arrangements are made, is reserved for the highest ranking emissaries of the King of Tidore, giving them pride of place, a place above their Ternatan counterparts.

The King had also had a table placed in the inner gallery of his residence, at which he sat down with us, the princes and princesses, item, the Tidorese, and the Ternatan *gugugu*. We were all solemnly greeted, and various appropriate, distinguished toasts were drunk, and when the meal had finished, the emissaries from the King of Tidore presented gifts consisting of both money and linen.

After we had spent the time up to around half-past five in private conversation, we took our leave expressing our gratitude to the ruler and the company, in order to make our humble report of our experiences to Your Excellency.