This book is the Indonesian translation of _The revolt of Prince Nuku: Cross-cultural alliance-making in Maluku, 1780–1810_ (2009), the published version of _Cross-cultural alliance-making and local resistance in Maluku during the revolt of Prince Nuku, c. 1780–1810_, Muridan Widjojo’s 2007 PhD dissertation at Leiden University. The three books do not differ much in content and the changes reflect the ways the works are pitched towards a reading public. Prince Nuku is the central figure in this account while the academic thesis is about cross-cultural alliance making between Maluku and Papua more than two centuries ago. The book title will appeal to an Indonesian readership where many know the national hero (pahlawan nasional) Nuku. During Indonesia’s New Order period Nuku was warmly welcomed to the ever-growing list of pahlawan after Elianus Katoppo ‘discovered’ him while conducting research on Papua in the 1950s. Indonesian national heroes typically resist Dutch ‘occupation’ and fight for kemerdekaan (sovereignty) but Widjojo shows that the dynamics of Nuku’s rebellion in the Moluccas are significantly more complex. It will likely enlighten Indonesian readers on regional politics as much as it impressed the examiners of the academic treatise. The first part of the book deals with Nuku’s environment and background and rebellion followed by a sketch of his alliance-making strategies, building on archival research in the Colonial Archives in The Hague. In the second part of the book Widjojo zooms in on the regional alliances of Nuku: Papuans, Halmaherans, East Seramese, and traders of the English East India Company (EIC).

The establishment of the VOC in the Moluccas was from the outset accompanied by violence and diplomacy to keep rival traders at bay. Local alliances, the destruction of clove trees in areas where VOC control was limited, and the decimation and evacuations of local communities were important elements in eventually unsustainable trade politics. There were regular conflicts between groups in the region over access to clove trees, collaborations with the VOC, and leadership. Nuku’s revolt embodies all these elements and is therefore well chosen as a topic for a study that seeks to emphasise the dynamics of rebellion. As prince of Tidore, Nuku began to challenge the hegemony and violence of the VOC in 1780, embarking on a twenty-year revolt, after which the VOC collapsed and the rebel prince became Sultan of Tidore. Nuku fought the VOC by applying their art of governance including the forging of region-wide coalitions, building alliances with foreign power who were keen to crush the Dutch monopoly,

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and bringing together a formidable navy of so-called *kora kora* boats with crews recruited mainly from Papua. Interestingly, Nuku also manipulated the Dutch fear of British intrusions by sending false letters via local infiltrators to the government in Ternate, Ambon, or Banda. By evoking rumours about imminent arrivals of the British he also motivated his followers. To heal the wounds of VOC’s rule-and-divide techniques Nuku was keen to unite the Moluccas and to that end he even managed to get the sultan of Ternate, Tidore’s archenemy, on board. In 1801 Nuku, with assistance of the British, finally managed to conquer the Dutch stronghold Fort Oranje on Ternate, but he never managed to secure full control over Ternate. His dream to unite the Moluccas and even form a Moluccan state did not come true. The Treaty of Amiens which temporarily ended hostilities between the French Republic and the United Kingdom and during which the Dutch negotiated international trade with the British, meant the return of Dutch power to the Moluccans and dissolved the treaty between Nuku and the British.

In a poorly developed provocative closing remark Widjojo suggests that while his study of Nuku shows that this historical figure transcends the popular idea of a *pahlawan*, Indonesian historiography can still learn from him. Widjojo writes that if Indonesian historians during the era of Soekarno’s presidency had understood better the long history of close alliances between Papua and the Moluccas, they would have been able to argue more forcefully against Dutch claims that Papuans are culturally so different that their territory should remain under Dutch rule. While this idea is hard to uphold, its basic intention makes sense. When Widjojo joined the TANAP (Towards A New Age of Partnership) program at Leiden University, he was keen to continue doing work on Papua, the region that he regularly visited as a researcher since 1993. He was soon to find out that in the eighteenth and nineteenth century materials in the Colonial Archives, ‘Papua’ can only be found under such headings as ‘Moluccas’ and ‘Tidore’. This forced him to look closely at what this connection is actually made of and the case of Nuku allowed him to show that coastal stretches of Papua have for a long-time been connected to the Moluccas in intricate ways. The Dutch historian A. Haga was among the first to elaborate on this connection in his major study entitled *Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea en de Papoeische Eilanden: Historische Bijdrage, ± 1500–1883* (1884). Reverend Freerk C. Kamma further contributed to our understanding of the relationships between Papua and Tidore in a series of articles in *Tijdschrift Indonesië* from 1947 to 1949. Widjojo adds to these and a number of more recent studies the perspective of rebellion, alliance-making from the vantage of Moluccan leaders, and insights into the ways in which older forms of Papuan ‘pirating’ and the enslavement of Papuans by Moluccan leaders evolved into alliances that were more about regional
politicking, organised resistance, and early state-building, and showing growing embodiment of mercenary practices rather than vassalage. Widjojo does this by taking a departure from the standard region, province, or even race centred histories to place alliance making at the centre of the inquiry. This book thus adds significantly to the scholarship on Eastern Indonesia and in particular the history of Papua in relation to the Moluccas and international powers.

Note: Muridan Satrio Widjojo passed away on 7 March 2014 in Depok after a long struggle fighting cancer.

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References
