CHAPTER THREE

TIDORE AND THE RISE OF PRINCE NUKU

Organization and leadership of the Sultanate

Unfortunately, no detailed contemporary description of the structure of the Tidore Sultanate exists. Nevertheless, some information gleaned from scattered sources leads us to assume that it was quite similar to that of its near neighbour Ternate. At this juncture it is essential to comprehend the concept of leadership in North Maluku, expressed in the term *bobato*. *Bobato* is a general term used to distinguish leaders or heads in North Maluku from the Sultan as the highest ruler.1 Distancing himself from the view taken by Leirissa, Andaya2 writes: ‘The *bobatos* were heads of socio-political units or *soa* aggregated into residential sections within the sultan’s or the *sangaji’s* domain. Politically, at the very highest rung was the sultan as religious and political leader of the kingdom, followed by the *sangaji* and other *kolano* who governed their own traditional domains, then the *bobato* as heads of *soa* within these lands.’ I am inclined to use Leirissa’s definition of *bobato* as a general term which embraced *sangaji*, *kolano*, *jogugu* and others. *Bobato* were not only important in the organization of political, economic and everyday life (*secular bobato*) but also in religious life (*religious bobato*).3 Religious *bobato* could be found at all levels of society under the authority of the Sultan, but only among the Muslim population. Although no *bobato* were known among the Alifuru, the indigenous inland people, they nevertheless controlled the political and economic relations of the Alifuru with the outside world, particularly in the Sultanates of Tidore and Ternate. Willer, as referred to by Leirissa, claims that the Alifuru of Halmahera were more integrated into the North Maluku political system than were those of Seram (Central Maluku). The best yardstick by which to measure this degree of integration was the involvement of the Alifuru in the *hongi* or extirpation expeditions organized by Tidore and Ternate.4

In the Ternate state structure, there were two kinds of *bobato* or ‘state dignitaries’. Serving the Sultan, a *bobato* was certainly an official of the state but his function was also to represent the interests of his *bala* or ‘common people’. These were the *bobato dunia* or secular *bobato* who composed the group of the four main chiefs (*dopolo ngaruha*) at whose head was the *gogugu* or *jogugu*. Next to him in rank were the *kapiten laut*, the *hukum soasio*, and *hukum sangaji*.5 The *jogugu* and *kapiten laut* were
the two most powerful positions after that of the Sultan. The former performed the function of chief minister or chief executive, while the latter performed the duties of sea lord, who had command over the fleet and other maritime matters. It stands to reason that in a kingdom extending over a vast area of sea territory, the kapiten laut was a very important authority. These four chiefs were chosen by the Sultan. Chris van Fraassen argues that in appointing these officials, the Sultan could not always promote his own interests and impose his preference. They were usually chosen from the ordinary people but royal family members could also be appointed jogugu or kapiten laut. These appointees also observed their own social norms and interests in various contexts when they dealt with the Portuguese or later with the Dutch.

The Sultan himself also employed an utsusan (an ambassador), whose main function was to supervise the collection of tribute as a spokesperson in the various outer districts. Other functionaries were: the juru tulis (scribe); the miantu (head of the dano, that is the princes); the ngosa (messenger); soreba (bearers of the royal sword, sirih set and other regalia); and the marinyo and kabo (guards) at whose head was the marinyo kie. To distinguish him from the other juru tulis, the Sultan’s personal scribe was called the sekretaris. The Sultan’s troops (baru-baru) were led by the following royal military officers (in descending order): mayor, kapiten, letnan, alferis, ajudan, serieti, and korporal. The Sultan’s sons were also granted military ranks: kapiten ngofa and letnan ngofa. These princely officers also participated in such important state deliberations as the signing of treaties, forming a commission in conjunction with the four major functionaries (kapiten laut, jogugu, hukum, and sekretaris) under the aegis of the Sultan himself.

In Tidore, the leadership of the state was fairly similar to that of Ternate. The distinction lay in the terms for titles in the Tidoran language. To give some examples, the Ternatan jogugu was called jojau in Tidore; ngofamanjira in Ternate became famanyira in Tidore; kimelaha became gimalaha. The state council in Tidore was composed of thirty-one members, including the four principal officers (jojau, kapiten laut, hukum sangaji, hukum soa-sio) and twenty-seven (three times nine) bobato. The composition may have differed slightly from that of Ternate, but the number followed the indigenous principle of four and nine which lay at the foundation of the pattern of government structure. Among the foreigners, groups were formed under leaders with such titles as Kapiten Makasar or Kapiten or Letnan Cina. The Kapiten Makasar also exercised control over non-Makassarese migrant groups. As in Ternate, the category of bobato was divided into two groups (secular and religious) on the basis of the kalima malofo or in Arabic Kalimat’ush-shahadat. The authority of the religious bobato was based on the Confession of Faith ashadu