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FADED IMAGES OF OLD TIDORE IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST SERAM: A VIEW FROM THE PERIPHERY

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Introduction¹

Some published accounts—generally, but not exclusively, older ones—describe the activities of Ternate and Tidore with respect to their historic peripheries in terms of boundaries, territories, and conquest, and speak of entire “islands” being “subject” to these centers of power.² The prevailing view seems to have been of two polities dividing up Maluku into spheres of influence, Ternate to the west and Tidore to the east. And although we now know that such language says as much about the political discourse of outside European observers as it does about the indigenous protagonists, and that the relationship was more complex than earlier generations of historians once thought, it is still tempting to succumb to these kinds of certainties. As Villiers (1990: 97) has pointed out, it really is difficult to establish just how far, if at all, the suzerainty of Ternate and Tidore went beyond (the occasional) exacting of tribute

¹Since 1980, I have been engaged on a research program entitled “Change and the social organisation of regional trading networks in the Moluccas.” This has involved fieldwork during 1981 and 1986 in Kei, Banda, and (mostly) in archipelagic southeast Seram. This research has been funded by a Nuffield Foundation Fellowship and awards from the British Academy (British Institute in South East Asia) and the University of Kent at Canterbury. Complementary archival and library research has been conducted in the Netherlands (1984) under the aegis of a Visiting Fellowship at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) at Wassenaar, with additional funding by the British Council. This article is a short footnote to a monograph that is presently scheduled to be completed by 1994–95.

²The literature that displays this stance is considerable. For a sampler, see Crofton (1936: 21, 53, 64), Ricklefs (1981: 22), Vlekke (1965: 95, 98).

and taxes from specific local rulers of other islands, and the levying of armed men and war fleets. If such matters are in doubt for the islands of what is now northern Maluku—in the immediate vicinity of Ternate and Tidore—it is even more difficult to be certain about the “far periphery” of Seram and New Guinea.

This study begins by attempting to assess what little historical data we do have for Tidore influence over one part of this periphery, other than the claims made by Tidorans themselves or by those through whom their voices are filtered. It then examines the evidence available from my own ethnographic and historical research for the views of those on this part of the periphery concerning Tidore. From this, I try to distill some general observations about the appropriateness of exemplary center and symbolic dualist models for understanding what was really taking place on the periphery. The part of the Tidore periphery upon which I focus is what I have described elsewhere as archipelagic southeast Seram. In this context, this means the islands around Seram Laut, Gorom, Pulau Panjang, Manowoko, and the mainland coast between Waru to the north and Tobo to the west.

The Evidence for Tidore Suzerainty

Immediately prior to the first European accounts in the sixteenth century, archipelagic southeast Seram appears to have been culturally and linguistically unified, but composed of a large number of autonomous stratified polities headed by rulers (*matlen*). In terms of the conventional model, these lay within the Tidore sphere of influence, but the data we have points to a more complicated situation. During the few centuries preceding the arrival of the Portuguese in 1512, Ternate had been extending its influence along the south coast of Seram from the west, and Tidore along the east coast from the north. By the first half of the seventeenth century Ternate was claiming the whole of the south coast as far as (and including) Keffing (Ellen 1986: 58). Tidore too had claims on Keffing, though we do not know to what extent these refer to a period contemporaneous with the Ternate claims. In addition, close ties are reported between Tidore and Kilbawar, Waru, Kian, Rarakit, Guliguli, Kilmuri, Geser, Seram Laut, and Gorom, and even with Watubela and Teor to the south of Gorom (see Katoppo 1984 [1957]: 27). In order to exact tribute and exert influence, both Ternate and Tidore conferred titles. We know, for example, that the *matlen* of Kianlaut was granted the title

sengaji by Tidore, and that Keffing was granted a *kimelaha* (village or district head) by Ternate (Abdurachman 1981; Ellen 1986: 58; Ellen 1992: 14–15). But these titles (or their near cognates) were common to both Ternate and Tidore, the inhabitants of both islands speaking closely related non-Austronesian languages (Laycock and Voorhoeve 1971; Wurm 1971). The terms appear in the literature in slightly different orthographic forms, and in some cases these may represent consistent dialectal differences, as between the two islands, or between the center and different parts of the periphery: *sengagi*, *sangagi*, *senhagi*; *kimelaha* or *kimalaha* on Ternate, *gimelaha* or *gimalaha* on Tidore. In some sources *sangagi* is equated with *obato* (Katoppo 1984 [1957]), a term for a kind of leader common to both Ternate and Tidore, and it was first suggested by Galvão that *sengagi* might be an honorific of Javanese origin (Villiers 1990: 97), awarded to both local Maluku chiefs and to the heads of more distant settlements who acknowledged the power of the center. The Portuguese translated these offices into feudal terms that would have been familiar in the Europe of the time, but it is likely that the holders of titles on the distant periphery of Maluku and the New Guinea coast differed in function from the nobility of Ternate and Tidore who were referred to in the same way: they were representatives of their respective rulers and agents for the purpose of collecting taxes rather than “warrior nobles” (Ellen 1992: 6; Villiers 1990: 97–98). In parts of archipelagic southeast Seram, the term *jou* is in current use, apparently of Ternatan derivation. The titles *jou patih*, *jou orang kaya*, and *jou raja* are used in Kilwaru, while the Raja of Kataloka on Gorom is constantly addressed as *jou*. The cognate term *jojau* is also found along the southwest coast of New Guinea (Ellen 1986: 54, 59). But it is difficult to establish whether in these cases it was introduced directly from Ternate, indirectly by absorption into a common currency of Moluccan titles, or as a result of Dutch encouragement and use, as is found with some other titles (Ellen 1986: 54).

Despite the undoubted, if intermittent, impact of Ternate and Tidore on the political affairs of archipelagic southeast Seram, there are persuasive reasons to suggest that, even before 1500, the area was itself an important center in economic and geopolitical terms (Boxer and Manguin 1979: 180 n. 14; Ellen 1987: 45–47; Fraassen 1976), controlling a crucial corridor through to New Guinea. Apart from what we can infer from the granting of titles, there is little evidence for Tidore interference

in trade or linguistic hegemony (which is clearly evident in parts of Halmahera). Indeed, the economic vitality of this area, combined with its independence from Tidore, is well reflected in the wide distribution of the Geser-Gorom language as a lingua franca in east Seram and along the coast of southwest Irian Jaya (Collins 1986; Loski and Loski 1989). By 1600, we know the area to have been pivotal in the trade in slaves, nutmeg, the bark of *Cryptocarya aromatica* (massoi) and other products of the oriental emporium, and when the Dutch sacked Banda in 1621, many Bandanese fled to the Seram Laut archipelago—a natural bolt hole—given the preexistence of close trading links. It was from here that local traders and those of Bandanese descent effectively rivalled the Dutch and other incomers (see Andaya 1991: 83; Knaap 1987).

Our perception of Ternate or Tidore as centers is closely bound up with the fact that they were centralized polities with sultans on the western Indonesian model, having absorbed a political culture influenced by a Javanese version of Islam. When outsiders dealt with these domains, they dealt with potentates on the grand scale, not with rulers of small villages. In some ways, the experience of Europeans with Banda gives a different impression of perceptions of native polities. But although in this respect we might imagine archipelagic southeast Seram of the late seventeenth century to have been like Banda, it differed in its particular political complexion and in its never having been in direct contact with the European world, although it was still a vital link in the early modern global system. The Dutch did not effectively control it until the nineteenth century. No single polity monopolized trade in the east Seram area. Instead we have what I have elsewhere characterized as a zone of shifting allegiances and power relations (Ellen 1987: 56).

Tidore was certainly involved in the politics of the region. Its rulers encouraged clandestine trade in east Seram during the seventeenth century, at the time when the Dutch were seeking to consolidate their monopoly in spices (Andaya 1991: 93). We know that the Dutch planted their flag at Ondor on Gorom in 1703, and thereafter supported the rival domain of Kataloka, which was at that time allied with Tidore against Ondor (events still celebrated in sung ritual verse). However, by 1806 Raja Besi of Kataloka was imprisoned in Fort Victoria, Ambon, where he later died and was buried near the Batu Merah mosque. He had allegedly refused to pay tribute to Tidore, who were at that time allied with the Dutch.

The weakness of the data in favor of regular political and economic contact between Tidore and archipelagic southeast Seram is underlined by the circumstantial (but highly pertinent) geographical evidence. Topography, tradewinds, and currents do not make regular voyages between southeast Seram and Tidore feasible. Moreover, the distance between the two places is approximately 630 kilometers, 390 kilometers more than the distance between Tidore and Minahasa in north Sulawesi. Of the reported sailing vessels leaving Geser in 1985, 14 had come from Banda, 12 were bound for Banda, and 39 were based in Banda but plying other routes. Of all the embarkation points and destinations, Ternate appears only once, and Tidore not at all.³ From my own field data (1981 and 1986) most small trading movements were within the archipelago. If outside, they were to Banda, Ambon, and Irian. Movement north was rare, although some east Seram people travel as far north as Misool during the east monsoon to collect *Trochus* shell (lola). Data on marriage patterns and migration collected in 1986 present a similar picture. Out of 652 individuals surveyed, 12 were born in Banda, and 6 had other Bandanese connections, 5 were born in Ambon, and 18 were resident there, but not one person was born in or had marital or kinship links with either Ternate or Tidore. Thus, in terms of objective geographic and economic properties, archipelagic southeast Seram might seem an unlikely candidate for close linkage with Tidore. Its natural focus has always been Banda. It is therefore not surprising to discover that with the emergence of Dutch colonial control in the nineteenth century, east Seram and its environs became part of the residency of Banda.

Contemporary Views of Tidore

Tidore features little in the lives of the present-day inhabitants of archipelagic southeast Seram. As we have just seen, economic transfers, marriage, and traditional alliances are slight to nonexistent. Those who have been schooled—both during the Dutch period and since independence—will have picked up diluted and modified versions of the standard histories referred to at the beginning of this paper. But if we examine the oral traditions and documents still available, indeed still being produced

³Daftar Kapal yang Keluar Masuk di Pelabuhan Geser Januari–Desember 1985. I am grateful to the Syahbandar of Geser, Husni Sabban, who provided this information to me in April 1986.

locally, in villages and at subdistrict level, the picture that emerges is one in which local affairs dominate, and in which east Seramese polities are situated directly within a national historical and political discourse that virtually bypasses Ternate and Tidore. Where references are made to places beyond east Seram, and not obviously belonging to a national Indonesian historical discourse (as with Ambon and Jakarta), they are likely to be to Banda and New Guinea, rather than to Ternate and Tidore.

Following the Dutch sacking of Banda in 1621, many Bandanese fled to archipelagic southeast Seram, and trading and community contact with Banda since then has been strong. This is reflected in family names (such as Kosongat and Soleman), and in the attempts made by those tracing Bandanese descent or affiliation to confirm their links with Banda in the form of written documents. These are letters of authentication (*surat pengasihian*), in Malay or Indonesian, from villages on Banda in reply to requests from southeast Seram villages for confirmation of a link, or clarification of some disputed matter of tradition. A major preoccupation in this connection is the existence of a common symbolic linkage, in the form of membership of Uli (or Ur) Fito [seven], Siwa [nine] and—especially—Lima [five]. In 1986, I collected a copy of a letter of this kind between Namasawar and the Raja of Kelu (on the island of Keffing), dated 18 January 1890.⁴ Such letters now exist only in typed form, probably having been copied in the 1950s or 1960s, which is some measure of the importance still attached to them. There are also the more substantial *warta* [communications], running to four sides of typed foolscap. I have a copy of one of these dated 5 October 1926, again from Namasawar, to the rajas of Kelu and Tobo (on the south coast of Seram) and the Orang Kaya of Kiltai (on Kilwaru). Occasionally, similar documents appear in Dutch as *korte beschrijving* [short descriptions]. I have a copy of one of these, undated, consisting of two sides of typed foolscap, which explains the Lima, Siwa, and Fito affiliations of Banda villages and their links with southeast Seram. Geser, it explains, is mostly Siwa, though with some Fito; on Keffing, only the Soleman clan (that is, those persons tracing their patrilineal ancestry to the Bandanese domain of Selamon) is Lima, while the rest are Siwa. This suggests that, in the minds of those living in southeast Seram settlements, a concern

⁴Soerat pengasihian dari kampung Namasawar bagi Moesawiroei, radja Kailoe Mandahar Koeloepon Boi Lilesele.

with these particular geosymbolic affinities, and with the historic center at Banda, has for some time overridden any sense of affinity with Tidore. What is more, the Portuguese feature more significantly in the contemporary oral histories of Keffing than does Tidore, their high profile being reflected in the frequency with which the name is mentioned, in the description of ruins as the “Portuguese fort,” and in the assertion that the name of the clan hitherto providing the ruler, Kastella, is of Portuguese origin.

Nor does Tidore seem to appear in origin myths or sung ritual verse (*kapata*), despite the otherwise classic narrative pattern of these latter, in which assorted outsiders are celebrated as establishing the legitimacy of the polity. Only occasionally and tangentially does Tidore appear in folk histories, and then only in some domains, and not at all in others. In some cases, its narrative role is almost incidental. For example, in an account of the arrival of Islam in east Seram given to me by the Raja of Warus-warus in February 1981, the first ulama to arrive among the Bati people of highland east Seram was one Suleiman from Ternate. In this account, it was Ternatans who first took Islam to Banda, and then to (east) Seram, where Suleiman took refuge in Bati villages to escape the Portuguese. It was because of this that the Bati are widely considered to have been the first who converted to Islam on Seram. Only with the arrival of the Dutch and the disappearance of the Portuguese, did the ulama descend from the mountains and take up residence in Kiandarat. The account ends with the statement that, at this time, Seram (meaning, of course, what I call archipelagic southeast Seram) and Irian were under the influence of Tidore. Thus, it is almost as if this is an afterthought, helpful only to a listener wishing to situate the account within a more widely shared history.

In some oral accounts, Tidore does occasionally have a structurally central, rather than merely incidental, purpose. Thus, the coralline remains of fortifications in the mangrove near Keffing, which today form part of the domain of Rumakat (Kwamur), were said by Achmad Kastella to date from the time of the Keffing war against Tidore. More helpful still are accounts that use Tidore to legitimate existing ruling dynasties, or to identify significant historical persons. Thus, at some point in the fairly distant past, the sultan of Tidore is claimed to have married the daughter of the Raja of Kataloka, historically the most extensive and powerful domain on the island of Gorom. As *mas kahwin*, the sultan of

Tidore gave Kataloka Usun, Buan, and Kulugoa. In Kataloka at the present time, marital and political alliance with Tidore is still important for the ruling dynasty: the marriage between the Sultan and the daughter of the raja of Kataloka, or that between Josehat (a woman from the Tidore court) and Tathat, brother of Raja Besi (Ellen 1992: 15), mentioned above. This account is not disputed, either, by the modern ruler of Ondor, a domain directly to the south and otherwise politically opposed to Kataloka in most things. But for Wattimena, the present Raja Kataloka—at least when we discussed the matter in March 1981—his domain was never under the political suzerainty of Tidore, only allied with it against the Dutch (Ellen 1992: 13), presumably at some time when it was not allied with the Dutch against Tidore, or in conflict with both Tidore and the Dutch (see above). Talk of alliance rather than subjection is of additional interest, because Raja Wattimena was prepared to say that Kataloka had once been subject to Majapahit.

By comparison, contemporary Ondor claims no such alliance with Tidore, and at the time of Bik's visit in 1800, Orang Kaya Abdul Mahiet was in the throes of assisting the English against Prince Ibrahim of Tidore (Bik 1928 [1824]). However, a note on a typed genealogy points out that one ruler of Ondor, named as "Sultan Uku" (Tawit-Derun, about twelve generations back), was the first *matlen* to be termed *raja*, because the Sultan of Tidore designated him as such. There can be little doubt that this is a reference to the Nuku who had been born on Tidore of royal descent, was a thorn in the flesh of the Dutch authorities, who was aided and abetted by the English, and who found refuge on Gorom between 1790 and 1792 (Katoppo 1984 [1957]: 295)⁵

When a mythic narrative is typed out on official paper bearing a date, the stamp of the Republic of Indonesia, and indicating duty paid (in 1976, 25 rupiah), it acquires a different status. Such documents are variously described as *sekelumit-sejarah* [partial history of ...], and

⁵Sila-sila keturunan Radja Ondor dari Rumaderun, typed and handwritten, n.d. This version was made about 1960–70 and is now in the possession of the present Raja, Mohammed Salleh. It appears to be a simplification of an entirely handwritten document produced by the father of the present Raja, Sjamsoedin, a copy of which I also have, and which bears a similar comment. This is entitled "Hikaajat (Riwajat) oesoel asal toeroenan Matleen atau Radja tanah dari Moerboekala hingga kini di Ataloka" [A tentative history of the descent of the matlen or raja since Moerboekala Ataloka].

sejarah singkat [concise history].⁶ I possess typed histories from Kiltai dated 6 December 1970, and signed by Raja H. Kastella for the Pemerintah Negara Kilwaru, on 24 October 1984, produced on the occasion of the appointment of Abdullah Kelian as Raja Kilwaru, which mention both Dutch and Portuguese, but not Tidore. I also have an undated typed history from Kataloka that, judging from the orthography, is from the late Dutch period.

History in this context really amounts to lists of rulers and mythology, what Barnes (1967: 105) has called—with an arresting prescience given later scholarly rhetoric—“genealogical narratives.” Although what we should no doubt distinguish as “pedigrees” (Barnes 1967: 103), have been written down from the earliest period of restricted literacy (there is evidence of earlier histories, of Urung for example, written in Jawi on barkcloth [cf Jaspan 1964]), all existing written genealogies (*sila-sila keturunan*, literally, ‘principles of descent’; sometimes *sejarah raja*) stem from the very recent past. I have records of three written genealogies (for Amarsekaru, Kataloka, and Ondor), but I suspect them to be much more widespread. That of Amarsekaru was compiled by the present raja and runs to 83 separate individuals over six generations; that of Ondor, 44 individuals over 10 generations; and that of Kataloka, in a recent copy of an earlier document by a local schoolteacher, more than 37 individuals over more than 34 generations. An older version compiled by Raja Mohammed Idris lists 64 individuals for Kataloka. The structure and content of these documents is intriguing, but cannot be further discussed here. The point to note is their existence, recency, and contemporary function. In some cases, modern genealogies are deliberately contrived to show significant lines of descent, but apart from the one reference to Nuku in the Ondor genealogy and the Gorom affinal links mentioned orally, but not featuring in written documents, I have been unable to locate references to Tidore in genealogical accounts. Given the significance attached to the acquisition of legitimacy from contact with outside sources of potency, one might have expected Tidore to feature more.

⁶Sejarah singkat tentang datangnya orang2 Portugis yang menjadi Raja di Kiltai, dated 6 December 1970, signed by H. Kastella.

Symbolic Geography and the Practicalities of Living

It is possible to trace back an intellectual pedigree for the discourse on sacred and (exemplary) symbolic centers to the work of Mircea Eliade, and to take on board a number of other distinguished contributors to the center-periphery debate along the way, as Leonard Andaya (1993) has done. However, the critical ideas are more usually associated, in a southeast Asian context, with the likes of Heine-Geldern (1956), Tambiah (1976), Geertz (e.g., 1980) and Anderson (1972). Of these authorities, it is Tambiah in particular who has argued that, although the centers historically provided symbols and a value system for the periphery, they were bound to be weak as political systems because their centripetality was achieved through ritual means rather than the “real exercise of power and control” (Tambiah 1976: 82). As Andaya (1993: 3) reminds us, “direct intrusions of the center into the periphery result in conflicts over competing traditions of meaning and authority.” This point is well taken for the periphery of the Tidore world, especially the Kepala Burung and the northern Irianese coast, with its quite different political culture (Ellen 1986: 57–61). There is some evidence to suggest, however, that it might also have been the case in a different way for archipelagic southeast Seram. Here, there is little evidence to suggest that the meaning of life was somehow enhanced by participation in the sacred reality of the center, or that Tidore systematically exercised power or maintained an effective administrative network (Andaya 1993: 19); only that there was some mutual benefit to be secured by entering into a loose arrangement underwritten by the kind of persuasive symbolic language that was the common currency of relationships between domains and between descent groups.

In trying to make sense of the role of such symbolic language and its impact on the perceptions and experiences of those in the east Seram periphery, we are bound to emphasize the dualistic character of representations of the relationship between Ternate and Tidore, and similar dualistic and nondualistic groupings of peoples known from archipelagic southeast Seram. This is to emphasize the Austronesian aspect of Malukan representations (Caldwell 1991: 115), with their “political moieties,” rather than their Indic “galactic” aspect (Valeri 1989: 136). In whatever way Ternate and Tidore fit into the dualistic notions current among the inhabitants of archipelagic southeast Seram on the eve of the European period, there can be little doubt that European perceptions and

political action served to reinforce the Ternate–Tidore opposition, as these powers allied themselves with one or another of the polities, using them as their proxies, whether Spanish or Portuguese, Dutch or English (see Vlekke 1965: 102). Thus, by the late eighteenth century, the Dutch required Tidore to closely and actively supervise its “territories,” and Tidore supported local leaders who were prepared to implement the center’s directives (Andaya 1993: 16). These events are reflected in the aforementioned oral and documentary evidence from Gorom.

It is important to remember, though, that archipelagic southeast Seram has a complex symbolic geography of its own. For a start, it has been drawn into the dominant Siwa–Lima scheme of the western part of central Maluku: west and central Seram, Ambon–Lease, Buru, and Banda (Fraassen 1987: part 2, app. 12). But given the strong desire of people in the core Siwa–Lima areas to apply the model to Maluku more generally, and the equally strong desire of scholars of a structuralist persuasion to go along with this, the implications for the situation in southeast Seram itself cannot always be accepted at their face value. Thus, polities that have been reported as “Lima territory” (e.g., Kilmuri), were also often part of other symbolical groupings that for the indigenous population had more immediate political consequences. Indeed, the polities of archipelagic southeast Seram have been connected through various alliances that may have shifted over time. For example, the Seri Tahun covering the area between Kwaos, Urung, and Keffing, and possibly other places; the Tutu Tolu [three] alliance encompassing Danama, Kilmoi, Kilbat, Gah, Warus-warus, Kiltai, and Kilwaru; the Tutu or Uli Fito or Hitu [seven] alliance connecting Kelu with Amar; and the Raja Empat alliance connecting Kilmuri, Sepa, Mengeli, and Werinama (not to be confused with the better documented Papuan Raja Ampat: Waigeu, Misool, Waigama, and Salawati). These alliances are not only known from the literature, but are also spoken of by contemporary peoples of the region in their oral histories, ritual, sung verse, and political rhetoric.

Finally, it is important to recognize that symbolic representations of center and periphery, or geographic dualism, do not necessarily translate into the concrete realities underlying political and economic systems or relations that match objective flows of material. Of course, symbolic alliances can have very real consequences and enter into the practicalities of living. They provided part of the moral glue, for example, that cemented relations between Keffing and Banda, and therefore main-

tained their trading infrastructure. Through dynastic marriages, they have also affected political and economic relations between other domains. But, on the whole, the symbolic character of relations with Tidore had negligible consequences for day-to-day affairs. My own published work to date on trade and environment in Maluku (Ellen 1979, 1984, 1987) has depended upon the recognition of centers and peripheries, but these are manifestly tangible things, underwritten by material movements of people, goods, and the rhythms of the “longue durée.” In this work, I have argued how trading networks might be understood as “nesting geographical spheres of exchange” (Ellen 1987: 36) with identifiable systemic properties, the outcome of ecological constraints impinging on particular levels of maritime technology, production cycles, ecological variation, and its concomitant human division of geographic labor—features that have proved to be remarkably stable over a long time span. The historic rise of the east Seramese polities, and the pivotal role they were to play in global trade, was a consequence of this constellation of factors, rather than their incorporation within the cosmography of Maluku.

My conclusion, therefore, is tentatively negative: that southeast Seram has probably never been more than precariously, temporarily, within the effective orbit of Tidore. Ironically, it was most obviously so during that period when European powers made use of it to bolster their own hegemony. In contemporary cosmographic schemes, Tidore does not appear to be of special significance, and images of its role as a center are today fast fading. The claim of Tidore to this part of the periphery has been exaggerated by the conceptual regularities employed by Tidore itself, by Malukan and nonnative others who were familiar with the idiom, in whose interests it was to present this as a concrete geopolitical reality, or who simply translated a symbolic idiom into a reality with which they were more conversant. This included European observers and actors, including well-meaning historians predisposed to favor the relative convenience of Indic models, on the one hand, and the familiar trappings of occidental states and empires, on the other.⁷ Tidore features in official Indonesian and provincial histories in much the same way that it features in the older standard histories of the Indies. In nonofficial

⁷On the temptation to allow such models to dictate the selection and interpretation of data on eastern Indonesia, and the perils of so doing, see Caldwell (1991).

local histories, oral and written, “official” and informal, Tidore appears mainly as a device to situate events, to legitimate certain ruling dynasties pursuing contemporary political ends, or to highlight the distinctiveness of individual polities.

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