Headhunting, History, and Exchange in Upland Sulawesi

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Malallengko toibirin
tomatilampe bambana
lembum matil langkam borin

Watch out you on the horizon
you low on the foot of our land
the blackened hawk is heading there

A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE rice harvest of 1985, drums, song, and loud cries echoed through the headwaters of the Salu Mambi, celebrating the ambush of seven victims in regions downstream. Several bands of headhunters had returned with their bloodless trophies to renew the fertility of their terraces and the prosperity of their households. If such forays appear to be troubling anachronisms in Indonesia's aging New Order, they also display the surprising tenacity of those mythical realities that shape local history. What makes these annual headhunts so unusual and so instructive is the absence of real violence: no enemy actually is slain, no human head is taken. Instead, a village sends out a cohort of weaponless headhunters to get a surrogate head—usually a coconut bought in a nearby market town. Upon the cohort's return, the community launches into a weeklong ceremony of music, feasting, and speechmaking

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to honor the headhunters and to glorify the village. Yet the ceremony also commemorates the past, especially with songs and liturgical chants that depict scenes from the ritual headhunts of an earlier era. In short, what takes place is not a headhunt, but something staged to look like one.

If these villagers don't fit our lurid image of the headhunter, they nonetheless have something to show us. In staging a ritual about ritual, they reveal themselves as self-conscious historians and sociologists whose ideas and enactments can shed light on the region's past and present. In this article, I will show how the commemorative headhunt relies on a distinctly upland understanding of highland-lowland ethnic relations in the precolonial period (i.e., prior to 1906), an understanding grounded in cosmography and ideas about siblingship. A second and related concern is to suggest—if only speculatively—how trade and labor exchanges during the precolonial and early colonial periods provided an important context for the headhunters' violent practices and thereby lent them shape, purpose, and intelligibility. Further still, I want to emphasize the historical character of headhunting rituals. Headhunting practices *have* changed over time, most significantly in the decision to use a skull-shaped surrogate in place of a severed head. Yet, in spite of the changes that have taken place in these rites—or perhaps because of them—headhunting ritual today plays an important role in structuring local history, in giving the past a plot that is in some way relevant to contemporary conditions and interests.

In calling attention to these three themes, I want to push discussion of Salu Mambi headhunting beyond the case at hand and briefly touch upon issues that shape our basic understanding of social and religious life in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region. Since this specific ritual tradition played a part in highland-lowland ethnic relations, it is worth considering Salu Mambi headhunting in light of an ethnographic distinction that long has framed our portraits of insular and mainland Southeast Asia (Burling 1965; H. Geertz 1963; Leach 1954; and Wolters 1982). The highland-lowland distinction has been used widely to contrast "hill tribes" and hierarchical coastal polities. Whether an Indic principality shaped by Hindu-Buddhist influences (Errington 1989; Geertz 1980; Tambiah 1985; Wolters 1982) or an Islamic sultanate (Andaya and Andaya 1982; Andaya 1984; Hefner 1985), the historic lowland "state" appears politically and culturally dominant in relation to the mountain communities lying at its periphery. Generally speaking, hill communities remained linguistically and ethnically distinct from lowland groups, politically organized around "men of prowess" (Atkinson 1989; Wolters 1982), and committed to "pagan" religions. Because contact between the upland communities and coastal polities was quite variable, we are left with the problem of determining the degree to which the mountain peoples were subordinated by the lowlanders and discovering how highland groups negotiated, resisted, or accepted their relations with the coastal courts. Inasmuch as mountain communities usually fall outside the orbit of court histories (Errington 1989; Wolters 1982; but cf. Milner 1982), oral narratives and ritual performances from the hill tribe regions offer some of the more important clues for answering these questions. As I will show in this article, headhunting ritual was a way for at least one group of highlanders to contest their subordinate status.

Because Salu Mambi headhunting mediated the reciprocal relations between the mountains and coast, I think it important to discuss this form of ritual violence in light of interethnic exchange patterns and local views toward the past. The theme of exchange is, of course, a longstanding one in our analytic understanding of Southeast Asian headhunting traditions (de Josselin de Jong 1936; Downs 1955; McKinley

1976). Over and against analyses that found powerful soul-stuff (Kruyt 1906) or fertile seed (Freeman 1979) in a severed head, exchange theorists argue that a head and headhunting have value by virtue of their place in the reciprocal relations between groups. In the structure of exchange, a severed head becomes a means of redressing social and cosmological imbalances between rival groups. Even in cases where practices are driven by grief, anger, and catharsis, such as those found among the Ilongot in Northern Luzon (M. Rosaldo 1977, 1980; R. Rosaldo 1980, 1984, 1987) cycles of reciprocal violence and feuding appear to encompass headtaking. Salu Mambi headhunting ritual is no exception. I want to emphasize, however, that the headhunting complex was not a hermetic system limited to the antagonistic exchange of victims and souls. It unfolded within and commented upon the patterns of trade and labor exchange that kept mountain and coast interdependent.

More recent treatment of Southeast Asian headhunting has featured a concern for history. To take the Ilongot case once more, Renato Rosaldo (1980) has shown how headhunting works as a central moving force in the improvisation of social life and in the shaping of historical consciousness. Headhunting, as part of a broader pattern of feuding, often motivates marriage and residential moves. At the same time, it serves as a focal episode in personal and collaborative memories of the past. Janet Hoskins, meanwhile, has pushed the analysis of history and headhunting in a fresh, illuminating direction (1987). Hoskins argues that "history" has become a new genre of authoritative discourse at local and national levels in Indonesia. National history turns Wona Kaka, a Sumbanese headhunter of the early twentieth century, into a heroic figure in the national resistance to the Dutch colonial order. Yet, in the historical view of some Sumbanese, he symbolizes local resistance to encroachment and absorption by any outsiders, Dutch or Indonesian. As a result, the two histories compete with one another, each trying to claim this headhunter as its own heroic figure by "reinventing" his past and his heroism. In this approach, headhunting is neither applied cosmology nor a formative episode in the reproduction of the social order. It is the proving ground for heroic figures crucial to the ideological control of the past. In a later companion study aimed at the historical transformation of "things" (1989), Hoskins examines the history of a severed head, tracing changes in its identity and value as it moves through eras of exchange, alliance, and trade between rival groups.

The work of Hoskins and Rosaldo is especially significant because it restores dimensions of time and process to our analytic portraits of headhunting without sacrificing the insights of exchange theory. The discussion that follows will share their concern for history. My approach differs, however, in its focus on an enduring tradition of headhunting ritual and the way it recalls and mediates a vision of the past. In these terms, the ongoing tradition of headhunting ritual is a way to put historiographic strategies into practice for the purpose of understanding, rationalizing, and legitimizing the present in terms of the past, and the past in terms of the present (cf. Smith 1978; Williams 1977). While many factors come into play in shaping local views toward the past, I want to suggest that the "historical work" of Salu Mambi headhunting ritual cannot be divorced from the politics of religion in contemporary Indonesia.

There is little question that the Indonesian state has redefined and transformed local religion (Atkinson 1983; Kipp and Rodgers 1987; Volkman 1985) and with it, the terms by which ethnic identity is maintained or asserted. The government acknowledges monotheistic world religions only and presses its citizens to adhere to one of these sanctioned faiths, called *agama*. Most traditional religions are accorded

the status of *adat* (or custom), and their adherents are deemed to lack religion.[1] As Atkinson points out in a discussion of the Wana of eastern Sulawesi (1983), "pagan" hill tribes are left with the problem of constructing their ritual practices in light of the nationalist *agama/adat* distinction, a process that often unfolds as a form of interethnic exchange with dominant neighboring societies (who are usually Muslim or Christian). In the context of the *agama/adat* distinction, religion should transcend ethnic differences, even if in practice it often serves as an ethnic marker. At the same time, the traditional religious practices that comprise *adat* become key expressions of ethnic culture and identity.

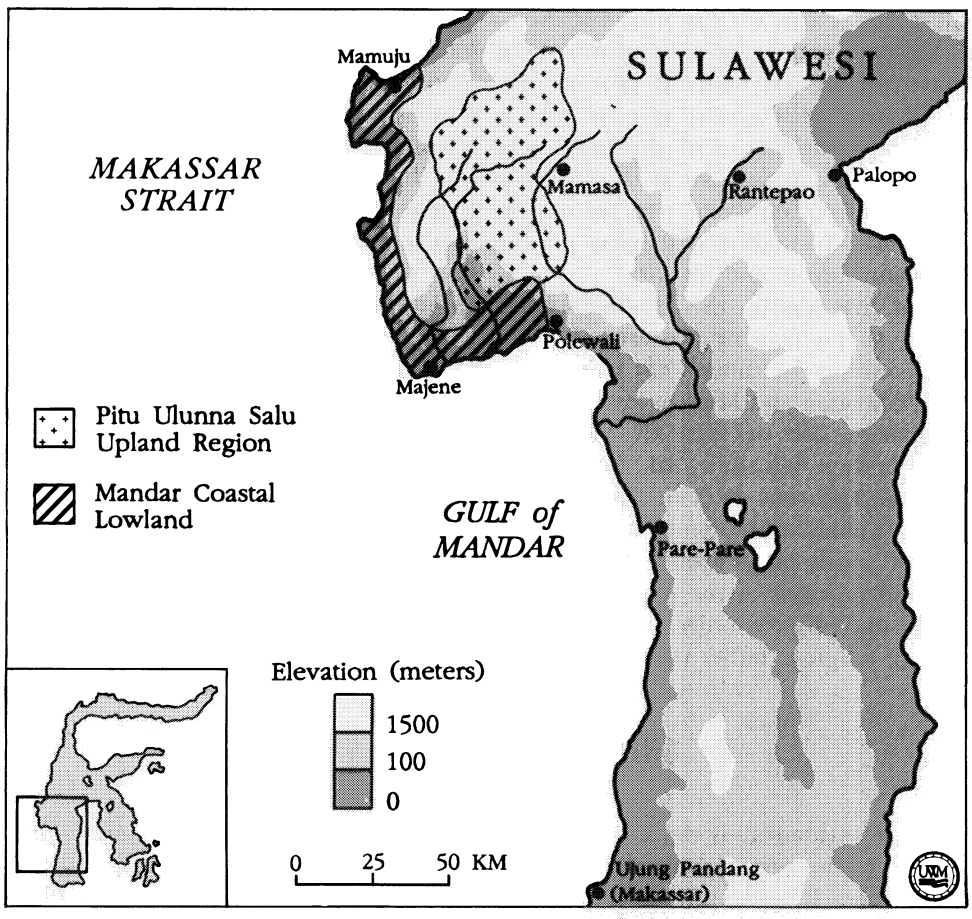
At first glance, the headhunters of the Salu Mambi may look as if they are trying to preserve or reassert a highland ethnic identity. But I think such an interpretation—although not wholly incorrect—falls a bit wide of the mark. Unlike their Christian and Muslim kin, those who adhere to ancestral ritual practice do so from deeply felt ties with the local past, their key source of moral understanding. As discussion will show, Salu Mambi headhunting is neither a revival nor a recently invented tradition. It is an ongoing effort to maintain cultural control of the past, an effort aimed at ratifying the moral legitimacy of a minority religious community in a religiously plural upland society. To the extent that the ritual recalls the highland-lowland relations of the precolonial past, it does so to perpetuate a village-based moral and religious order. In Salu Mambi headhunting, then, we can see ethnicity serving religion, rather than the reverse.[2]

Ethnographic Background

Ada' mappurondo is the ancestral religion of Pitu Ulunna Salu, an ethnic region located in the rugged hinterlands of Sulawesi's southwest coast (map 1), and the place where I lived and worked for a 30-month period between 1982 and 1985 (George 1989, 1990). Followers of *ada' mappurondo* do not maintain an autonomous territory or a unified regional polity, and rarely do they make up the religious majority in any given settlement. Their households are scattered throughout a dozen or more of the villages located along the headwaters of the Mambi and Hau rivers. Like their Christian and Muslim kin, most of the *mappurondo* villagers are farmers who tend rice terraces, swiddens, small garden plots, and coffee groves. Daily life revolves around the household, the household cluster (or hamlet), and the *hapu,* the network of relatives that makes up a person's bilateral kindred. Because of a preference for village endogamy and for marriages with second or third cousins, the *mappurondo* households in each village form a relatively close-knit group of kin who make up a cohesive moral and ritual polity. As a result, persons experience a deep sense of belonging to their birthplace and homestead, a kinship that extends not only to other people born in the village, but also to its paths, the shadows of the surrounding

[1]Some traditional religions, like that of the Sa'dan Toraja in South Sulawesi, have been given the status of *agama.* In that case, proponents of local religion were able to link their practices with Hinduism, and to demonstrate the benefits for tourism (Volkman 1985). Elsewhere in Indonesia, *adat* remains the subject of religious debate (e.g., Steedly 1987, 1988).

[2]Compare with Hefner on Java (1987), where we find politics serving religion, rather than religion serving politics; and with C. Geertz on Bali (1980), where we find power serving ritual pomp, rather than pomp serving power.



Map 1. The Pitu Ulunna Salu hinterlands and the Mandar coastal region, South Sulawesi.

hills, and even the "breathing" sound of the river running below it. The village and its lands thus promote a comforting image through which people recall a common history and a common way of life (cf. Halbwachs 1980; Yengoyan 1985).

Before the advent of Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Christianity in the twentieth, everyone in the Pitu Ulunna Salu region adhered to a common body of ancestral teachings and ritual practices. Since the arrival of these world religions, headwater society has fractured along religious lines. Muslims and Christians have turned their back on *mappurondo* rituals.[3] They refuse to take part in what they view as pagan custom and go so far as to prohibit marriage with anyone in the *mappurondo* fold. The Indonesian government, meanwhile, has not recognized *ada' mappurondo* as a legitimate religion. Instead, state policy has been to insist on monotheistic religion as a keystone of solid, progress-oriented citizenship. Thus, the modern hegemonic order not only ignores and debases *ada' mappurondo,* but aggressively supports the alternative ideologies and socio-economic formations that

[3]Muslims show little or no interest in selectively representing ancestral ritual as local or ethnic art. Christians, on the other hand, are more eager to aestheticize and "clean-up" *mappurondo* ceremonial practices for inclusion in a canon of regional music and dance.

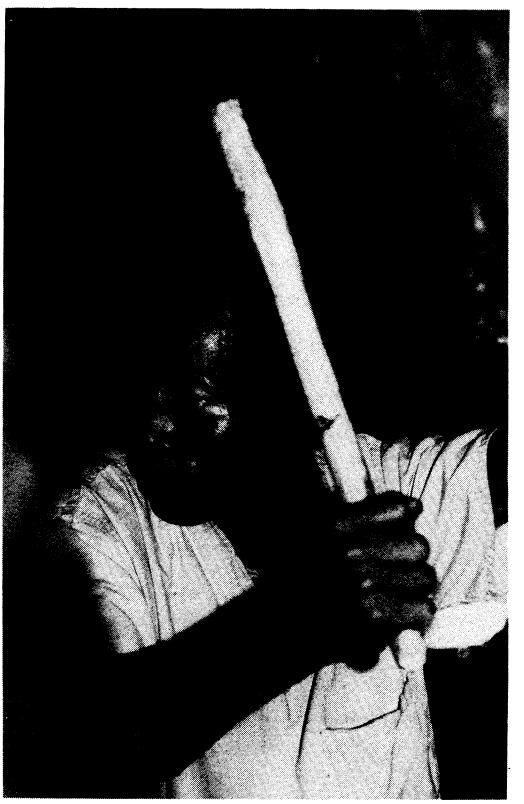
have lured villagers away from the path of their ancestors. As a result, it would not be wrong to think of *ada' mappurondo* as a residual tradition (Williams 1977) encumbered by both the erosion of the practicing community and the pressures of a changing economy. As of 1985, only 4,500 villagers—roughly 10 percent of the region's population—remained in the *mappurondo* community.

The point I want to emphasize is that followers of *ada' mappurondo* do not comprise an ethnic group, but, rather, a minority religious community with a distinct ideological focus and identity. The *mappurondo* community exists only insofar as it remains committed to a tradition of ritual performance. That is to say, being *mappurondo* entails a commitment not only to ancestral teachings and tabus, but also to ritual performance as such (cf. Hymes 1981:87); reproduction of the polity requires ritual performance. Struggling to remain the authoritative voice of local tradition, the *mappurondo* community appears anxious, confused, and at times divided over what to draw from the past and how to sustain it. Ritual tradition has become a cultural problem even as it is the necessary basis of *mappurondo* identity and polity. In this context, ritual performance is arguably the most crucial political act this religious community can undertake, especially in its effort to retain ideological control of the past.

Headhunting ritual is called *pangngae.* The *mappurondo* community in each village is obliged to hold this ceremony after every rice harvest, but it falls to men to organize and run it. In the two weeks prior to the headhunt, the last of the harvest rice has been put into barns, and the village as a whole has gone into a state of mourning for those who died during the year. Through the efforts of the man holding the title of *babalako,* a cohort of headhunters secretly meets at the edge of a hamlet and steals out of the village, weaponless, under the cover of darkness. Nowadays, the cohort is usually made up of several young boys, some teenagers and young adults, and one or two elders who act as cohort leaders. They remain out of the village and in hiding for up to ten days, during which time they barter for the coconut that will be treated as the victim's head, and find the right kind of bamboo for their *tambola,* a special flute peculiar to *pangngae* ceremonies. While the headhunters are away, women and close relatives of the year's deceased wait anxiously for the warriors' return, but are prohibited from any mention of *pangngae.* The cohort eventually returns in the dead of night and startles the village awake with shouts, cries, and low eerie pitches from the flutes. The villagers spill down to the terraces to greet the headhunters. As the leader of the cohort holds up the bag containing the surrogate head, people cry out, "*Bossi'! Bossi'!*"—"It stinks! It stinks!"—and then break into peals of laughter. The villagers sing and feast all night long. At daybreak, drumming erupts throughout the village (illustration 1) while the cohort of warriors visits each household that grieves for its dead. The warriors blow their *tambola* flutes three times, and in so doing, release the household from mourning (illustration 2).

Seven evenings later, the entire village convenes in the home of an elder to taunt and tease the head (illustration 3) and to reenact the headhunt in song and dance. The following morning, the hamlets throb with drumming and the singing resumes. The *babalako* offers the surrogate head to the spirits, and each headhunter receives an enormous gift of food, tobacco, and betel nut. At the close of the ceremony, each warrior, and any other man so moved, delivers a speech dedicating himself to the village and *mappurondo* tradition (illustration 4). As a final mark of the ritual's success and efficacy, a woman dances and swoons in a trance.

Pangngae has several purposes. As may be clear already, it brings an end to public mourning for the deceased. Second, it opens the season of household rituals

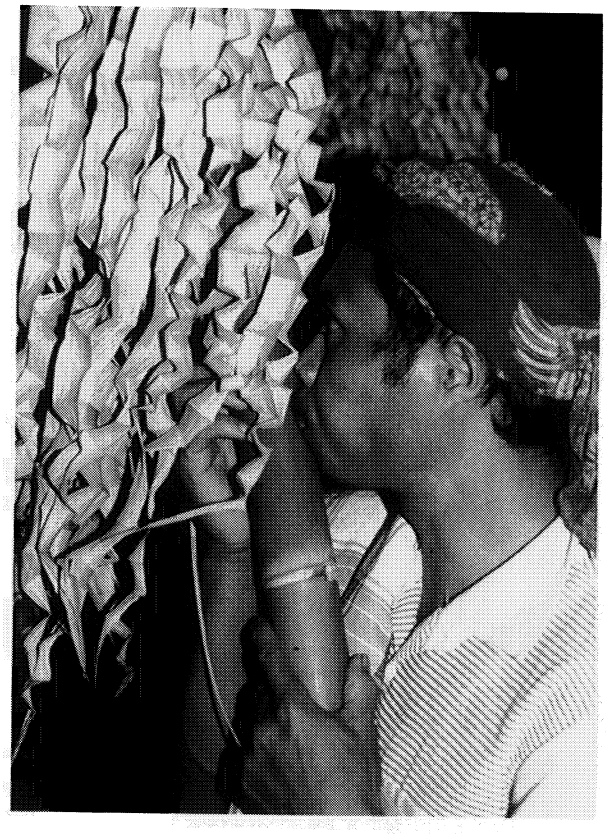


Photograph by Kenneth M. George

Ill. 1. As the sun rises each morning of the headhunt, villagers lower drums from the rafters of their households and unleash the exuberant rhythms of *pabuno,* "killer with a spear."

that are held under the authority of women. Third, the ritual confirms the political maturity of young headhunters—it turns boys into men. Finally, commemoration itself is a reason for holding the ritual. As such, the ritual fulfills sacred obligations, exalts masculine virtues, celebrates and assures village prosperity, and glorifies village tradition. In this busy intersection of ritual purposes, we also find currents of envy, desire, happiness, and nostalgia (cf. R. Rosaldo 1984). These purposes and dispositions do not come together coincidentally, but emerge through and gain moral cogency from an overriding concern in sustaining *mappurondo* tradition and village polity. Without the commemorative headhunt, *mappurondo* households do not meet together as a community. In fact, without *pangngae,* no other rituals—except for mortuary rites—may take place.

Among *mappurondo* rituals, *pangngae* goes the farthest in calling attention to local tradition and in shaping historical consciousness. It is true, of course, that all ritual must repeat the past, if only as a reference point for emerging practices. But the headhunt staged in *pangngae* has special significance for mediating local history. When the warriors slip out of the village, they step into the social and political terrain of the past, a terrain depicted in ritual drama, lyric, and narrative. They find their victim back in time, before the coming of the Dutch and the birth of the Indonesian order. Thus, ritual representation is such that today's headhunters are consubstantial with the heroic figures of another era.



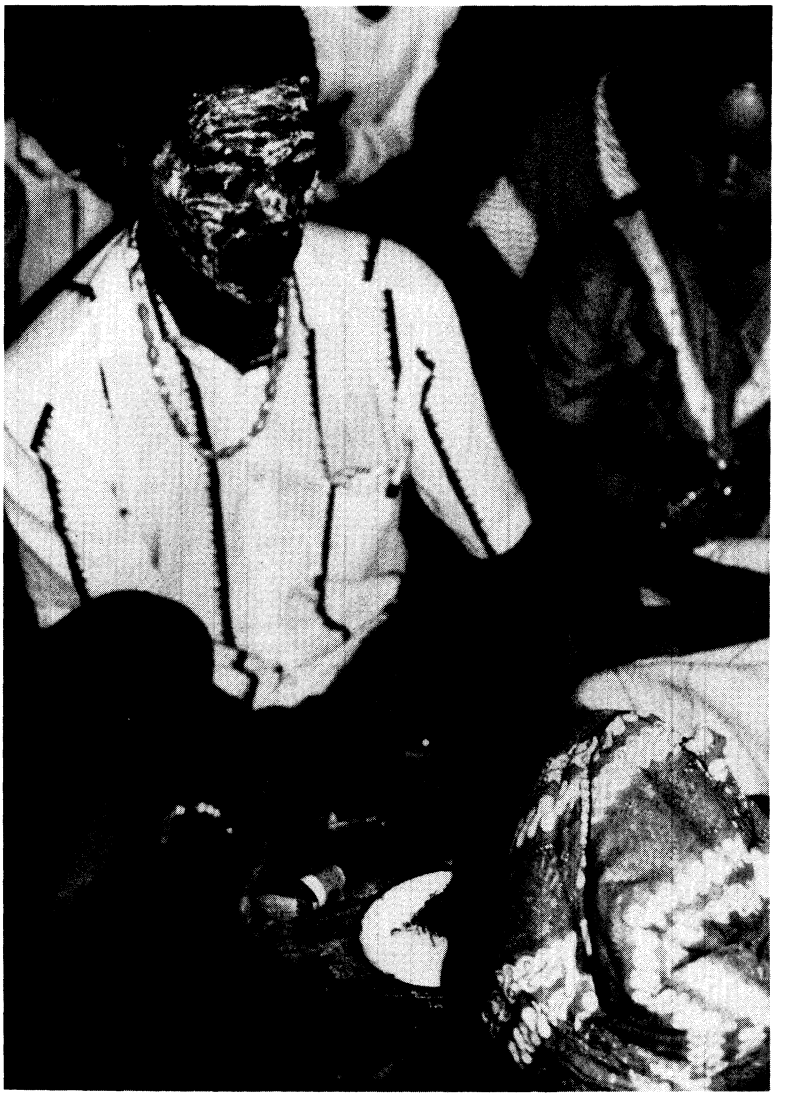
Photograph by Kenneth M. George

Ill. 2. While away on his journey, each headhunter prepares a *tambola,* a bamboo flute decorated with plaited sugar palm leaves. The "voice" of the *tambola* releases the village from mourning.

Collapsing the present with an imagined or remembered past gives headhunting ritual special historiographic value. First of all, it is a way for villagers to "stage" history around sacred acts of violence, and thereby shape a positive, authoritative, and memorable past for village society (cf. Vance 1979). Indeed, villagers are able to discover and celebrate their moral value and heroic virtue in commemoration of the headhunt. While the commemorative ceremony leads persons to think about local history and tradition, its performative force also elicits sentiments and attitudes that help sustain the village polity. More problematic is the question of how a commemorative headhunt mediates current political relations between the *mappurondo* community and the outside world. If it is true that *pangngae* tries to recapture a bygone era in which the uplands had opportunity to resist encompassment and domination by lowland ethnic groups, then today's ritual does not so much constitute an allegorical discourse of struggle against the contemporary order as a practical discourse of retreat into the past.

Discordant Histories

It is important to ask whether the noisy, exuberant claims of the upland headhunters converge with two alien histories—that of a colonial power and that



Photograph by Kenneth M. George

Ill. 3. The *babalako* offers areca, betel, lime, and tobacco to the surrogate head, here perched on a makeshift centerpost and swathed in a headcloth. After honoring their victim as a guest, villagers will taunt the head with song. The face of the *babalako* is caked with rice paste, intended to lighten and refine his complexion for the final ceremonies of *pangngae.*

of the headhunters' victims. The mystery is this: The documentary record is silent about headhunting in the Pitu Ulunna Salu region save for a remark about a supposed "headbarn" in one of the upland villages (Kruyt 1942:550, citing correspondence with Bikker). The ritual appears not to have troubled Dutch civil authorities and missionaries. Complicating the picture is the fact that the Mandar, the coastal people against whom upland headhunting raids are directed, have no idea that they have lost heads, past or present, real or "symbolic," to the uplanders. The *mappurondo* community, meanwhile, claims that its tradition of annual headhunting ritual is

Ill. 4. Assuming a traditional oratorical pose, an elder stamps across the floor and delivers an impassioned speech. He recalls the words and deeds of deceased kin and pledges himself to the village and *mappurondo* tradition.

unbroken, stretching back well before the arrival of the Dutch in 1906. They also insist that their ancestors took both real and surrogate heads from the Mandar. If the claims of the uplanders are true, why do victims and colonial authorities fail to mention headhunting? My feeling is that if we can unravel this mystery—if we can reconcile these discordant, competing histories—we can better understand the dynamics of past and present headhunting practices in Pitu Ulunna Salu.

Ethnographic reports from Sulawesi make it clear that headhunting practices were common throughout the island's mountainous interior prior to Dutch administration.[4] In most cases, headtaking had its basis in ritual rather than in warfare or feuding as such, a pattern that suggests that claims linking headhunting to warfare and expansionism (Vayda 1969) are not applicable throughout all of insular Southeast Asia. To be sure, regional tensions and intercultural polemics played a part in shaping headhunting traditions. Yet, in my view, the headhunters found more powerful motivations in ritual themes and obligations that linked such violence

[4]For evidence from the southeastern peninsula, see Kennedy 1935; J. Kruyt 1924; Schuurmans 1934; from the eastern peninsula and central mountain region, see Adriani and Kruyt 1950; Atkinson 1989; Dormeier 1947; Downs 1955; A. C. Kruyt 1930; and from the western and northern mountain regions, see Kennedy 1935 and A. C. Kruyt 1938. Key accounts and commentaries for the so-called "Southern Toraja" region are by Bigalke 1981; Goslings 1933; A. C. Kruyt 1923, 1942; Nooy-Palm 1986; Tangdilintin 1980; Volkman 1985.

to grief, eroticism, envy, prosperity, and the reproduction of the social body. In the context of ritual, these concerns made headhunting purposeful, intelligible, and right. They spelled out the headhunter's obligations and fueled a desire to kill. That headhunting was a form of sacred violence may also be the reason the practice was so entrenched in the central mountain region. Indeed, the remarks of Dutch commentators elsewhere in the mountains (Goslings 1933) suggest that ritualized headhunting was not easily halted or erased. The post-suppression trade in skull fragments is good evidence that the rituals associated with headtaking remained crucial in local ceremonial life. Even then, actual headtaking occurred from time to time. De Jongh's report (1923) on the Karama River area, for instance, made note of two headhunting cases adjudicated by the Native Tribunal at Mamuju in 1920. Another writer felt that courts set up by the Dutch could do little to restrain headtaking. He left it to "time, the Civil Administration, and the Mission" to bring about an end to the practice (Goslings 1933:68).

Given what is known about the island as a whole, and about the central mountain region in particular, it would be exceptional if Pitu Ulunna Salu *did not* have a tradition of ritualized headtaking. Insofar as the neighboring polities in Galumpang, Seko, Rongkong, Sa'dan, and Mamasa all practiced some form of headhunting, it is difficult to imagine that Pitu Ulunna Salu did not also practice this form of violence.

The silence of the colonial record on Pitu Ulunna Salu headhunting simply may reflect a lack of familiarity with the remote hinterland. While a post was temporarily set up and occupied within the Salu Mambi region shortly after the Dutch penetrated the mountains, civil and military authorities by 1920 had shifted their offices to the larger posts at Mamuju and Mamasa, forty kilometers away. These officials were chiefly interested in security and economic development and subsequently recorded events and conditions with a bearing on those issues. *Pangngae* goes unnoticed in these reports by civil and military personnel. I think it safe to argue, then, that the annual rituals did not disturb the region or otherwise pose problems for the authorities. This comes as no surprise, for elders today insist that when peaceful conditions prevail *pangngae* calls for surrogate heads. The search for a surrogate, rather than a real head, would hardly elicit the attention of the relatively few authorities in the region, especially under the enforced calm of the period.

On the other hand, missionaries were surely ready to seek out, confront, and subvert cultural practices that would impede the conversion of local peoples (cf. Bigalke 1981; Volkman 1985). Given the mission program, it is difficult to imagine that Christians would have refrained from taking steps against any headtaking activity, real or symbolic. Still, I think it important to ask whether the Dutch missions largely overlooked or ignored the annual rites of *pangngae.*

In contrast to efforts in the Sa'dan and northern mountain regions, mission penetration of the Pitu Ulunna Salu communities was extremely shallow and uneven. Initial mission work commenced in 1912 under the aegis of the Indische Protestantsche Kerk (the Indies Protestant Church) but amounted to little more than mass baptisms by an itinerant missionary from the Bugis coastal town of Pare-Pare (Krüger 1966). A few Ambonese teachers later opened two Christian schools in the Salu Mambi district (*Atlas* 1925). Some elders told me that in one village bordering on the Mamasa Toraja region, these teachers gathered up and crushed trophy skulls kept from earlier times. Whether they did so with the hope of putting a halt to ongoing ritual practices or, more generally, of erasing "pagan signs" needs to be resolved. Yet, no one recalls a mission or administrative campaign to end *pangngae.* It was perhaps enough for these Ambonese teachers to destroy the outward signs and traces

of a violent local past, and leave ritual practice undisturbed. Whatever the case, the principal mission effort centered on the Toraja settlements around Mamasa, the site of the new administrative and military post. Conversions in the Pitu Ulunna Salu district were infrequent, and published figures on the number of Christians in the area (*Atlas* 1925) amount to estimates of those highlanders splattered with holy water.

The Protestantsche Kerk was unable to sustain its mission in the uplands, and so, in 1927, surrendered the evangelical field to the pietistic Christliche Gereformeerd Kerk (Christian Reformed Church), the church that was to oversee the area until 1942. Only two Dutch missionaries from this church ever entered Pitu Ulunna Salu. The first, A. Bikker, mentioned seeing near Tabulahan in 1929 a "headbarn" [trans. mine] in which twenty skulls were kept (correspondence cited in Kruyt 1942:550). Bikker's work, however, focused primarily on the Mamasa Toraja region and I have found no references to headhunting in any of his published reports, including those that do touch upon ritual life at Pitu Ulunna Salu. The second missionary, M. Geleynse, assigned to Pitu Ulunna Salu in 1930, took brief residence in the village of Lasodehata (currently Rantepalado), where *pangngae* still is performed today, but left no published reports. In fact, Geleynse quickly opted to oversee this district from Mela'bo, a Mamasa Toraja village thirty kilometers from the Salu Mambi settlements. For these missionaries, *pangngae* does not seem to have been a critical, or even a noteworthy, practice.

In sum, the mission intrusion into the villages along the Salu Mambi was quite limited throughout the colonial period (1906–42). Evangelical efforts centered on the Mamasa Toraja, reflecting on one hand, an interest in converting the peoples living near the principal Dutch post in the region, and on the other, a concession to Islam, which by 1906 had already gained a foothold in some of the villages along the Salu Mambi. Christian converts were few. Of those baptized, many simply continued *mappurondo* practices without any pretense of being Christian.[5] Thus, Pitu Ulunna Salu was not only an administrative backwater, but a religious one as well. Neither missionary nor civil officer was present to gaze at *pangngae.*

Meanwhile, elders throughout the headwater villages claim that *pangngae* has taken place annually and without disruption since the dawn of their own history (roughly sixteen generations ago), and that neither the mission nor the civil administration took steps to directly suppress the ritual. The failure of the Dutch to put a check to *pangngae* may seem especially strange when we consider their longstanding policy to eradicate headhunting. Again, we need to bear in mind the claims of villagers that Pitu Ulunna Salu had already stopped trafficking in real heads *before* the arrival of the Dutch, having reverted (as the locals would have it) to the ritual search for surrogate skulls. The ritual was no longer violent and did nothing to disrupt regional order. But I further want to suggest that *pangngae* masked itself in the colonial era, that it did not seem to be headhunting to the few colonial or mission authorities in the area. In fact, it may have appeared to them as little more than a "kind of harvest ritual," the way contemporary Christians describe this particular *mappurondo* rite. The custom of using surrogate heads probably helped cloak *pangngae* from the view of the Dutch. Yet *pangngae* was doubly masked: Not only is it missing from the commentaries of local colonial authorities, but it also

[5]The few converts who seriously adopted Christianity were school-aged youths; they would later form the local civil and religious leadership in the post-independence period. The Christian community remained very small until 1970, when the institutional and political reach of the New Order set off an explosive growth in the rate of conversions.

has no place in the historic memory of its traditional victims—the lowland Mandar. Why did the violence linking upland headhunter and coastal victim become disguised?

The Mountains, the Coast, and Regional Economy

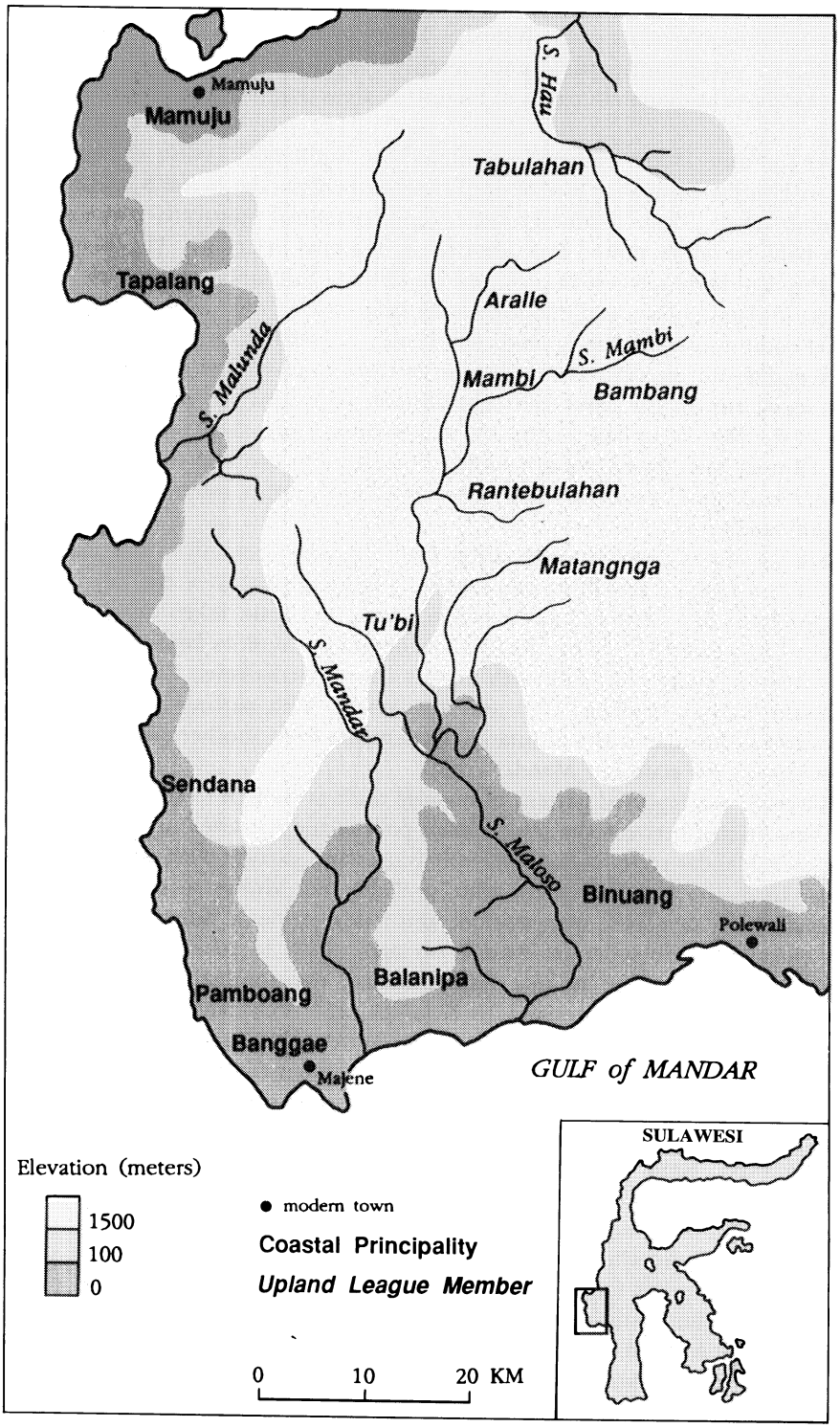
The Mandar, the coastal people living principally between Polewali and Mamuju, have a reputation as Sulawesi's finest, and perhaps fiercest, sailors. They are devoutly Muslim and deeply devoted to their pursuit of status, much like the Bugis, the largest and most influential ethnic group in South Sulawesi. Yet, in my experience, *siri'*, the keeping of dignity and face so often ascribed to the Bugis (Abidin 1983; Errington 1977, 1989), reaches more radical expression among the rivalrous and aggressive Mandar.

According to oral and written histories, the upstream and downstream communities established regional polities in their respective areas during the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, the period of Makassan expansion (Patunru 1983; Reid 1983c; Samar and Mandadung 1979). The upland communities (including Tabulahan, Aralle, Mambi, Bambang, Matangnga, Rantebulahan, and Tu'bi) formed a league called Pitu Ulunna Salu, or "the seven headwaters." The coastal federation (including the principalities of Balanipa, Binuang, Banggae, Pamboang, Sendana, Tapalang, and Mamuju) meanwhile took the name Pitu Ba'bana Binanga, or "the seven rivermouths" (map 2). Trade, armed incursions by the Bugis, and other regional concerns sometimes led these twin polities to act in concert. But, more often than not, the uplands and lowlands looked upon one another with suspicion. Above all, these polities were consumed with their own internal rivalries and power struggles (Sutherland 1983a; Yayasan n.d.). By 1872, both the upland league and the lowland federation had collapsed (Smit 1937; Sutherland 1983a).

Local and regional interests notwithstanding, the Mandar were caught up in the political and mercantile dynamics of Sulawesi and the archipelago as a whole (Amin 1963; Abidin 1982). Although a common ancestry linked the elite houses of the lowlands and the mountain region, the former were far more interested in consolidating and gaining prestige and power through marriage to Bugis, Makassan, and off-island nobility (DepDikBud n.d. [a-d] 1979, 1980; Patunru 1983; Sinrang n.d.; Sutherland 1983a; Yayasan n.d.). Social networks of this kind not only bolstered the prestige and authority of the Mandar rulers, but also enmeshed them in the political and commercial intrigues of the island. The same networks also promoted social stratification, the proliferation of political offices, and the Islamization of the elite in the early seventeenth century.[6]

The Mandar economy hinged on the slave trade and on the export of upland or ocean commodities. From the uplands came rattan, resin, corn, and fragrant woods. The coast, meanwhile, produced tortoise shell, tripang, dried and salted fish, copra, coconut, kapok, sago, oils, hides, and silk (Galestin 1936; Hoorweg 1911; Rijsdijk 1935; van Goor 1922; W. E. C. Veen 1933; Zeemansgijd, n.d.).

[6]Daetta, the fourth Mara'dia of Balanipa, was the first of the region's elite to enter Islam (DepDikBud, n.d.[d]). Islam appears to have prevailed in nominal fashion until the beginning of the 20th century, at which time reformist Islam began to purify and deepen local belief. For a persuasive discussion on how Islam influenced political life in South Sulawesi, see Andaya (1984).



Map 2. The hinterland and coastal communities that formed Pitu Ulunna Salu ("the seven headwaters") and Pitu Ba'bana Binanga ("the seven rivermouths").

Key imports were rice, salt, fabrics, weapons, opium, and ceramic goods. Although subject to the constraints of the Bungaya Treaty of 1667 (*ENI* 1918; Patunru 1983), the Mandar principalities were undoubtedly commercial rivals, each of which had access by rivers or mountain passes to hinterland areas that provided a flow of exportable goods.

At the time Dutch patrols first entered the highlands (1906), the communities of Pitu Ulunna Salu were economically interdependent with the Mandar coast (cf. Maurenbrecher 1947).[7] Although the uplands remained politically autonomous, the coast held far more power and prestige in regional relations. The Mandar states probably had little interest in placing Pitu Ulunna Salu under direct rule, especially because lowland politics and maritime trade held most of their attention. Furthermore, several communities in the uplands had begun converting to Islam in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The conversion of these communities to Islam strengthened their social ties to the coast and substantially weakened the mountain league. As long as the flow of upland goods and slaves passed into their ports, and as long as Pitu Ulunna Salu stayed a fragmented political body unallied to other powers, the Mandar had little reason to expend material and human resources in subjugating the highlands.

For all the uplanders, salt, dried fish, weapons, ceramics, and cloth (which figured as a favorite article in the transfer of bridewealth) were the key items to be brought back in exchange for the rattan, corn, and resin taken downstream. Oral accounts by uplanders indicate that the mountain communities kept up a longstanding trade in forest goods and labor with partner coastal settlements. Elders from northern mountain districts say that their ancestors traded with partner communities along the northern Mandar coast. Similarly, settlements from southern mountain districts claim ties to the southern Mandar coast.

Overall, the reported pattern of historic trade is enough to suggest that pairings may have existed between the seven coastal polities and the seven upland communities, with each Mandar state having a reliable hinterland partner with which to exchange goods. In reality, trade patterns were probably not always so neat: seasonality in the availability of goods, competition, and feuds, to name but a few factors, could have encouraged uplanders to switch partners. Still, to take one example, it was hardly a matter of accident that Rantebulahan, the nominal leader of the upland league, should act as hinterland to Balanipa, the dominant polity of the coastal federation. In fact, the elite of both communities had convergent genealogies.

Slavery played a critical role in exchange throughout the upstream and downstream regions. For example, it is clear that the Mandar ports had a significant role in the export of slaves to Makassar, Pare-Pare, Kalimantan, and Batavia (Abeyasekere 1983; Bigalke 1981; Reid 1983a, 1983b; Sutherland 1983b). In addition, the Mandar were interested in obtaining slaves (and other dependents) to build substantial retinues of workers (cf. Macknight 1983). The mountain communities, meanwhile, had a different interest in the slave trade. Reciprocal labor exchanges between kin and limited opportunities for agricultural expansion meant that slaves could contribute little to the upland subsistence economy. Slaves were of value, however, because of the price they could fetch on the coast. Captives, debtors, and even junior relatives were traded to the Mandar for weapons, cloth, or cash. The Mandar, like their Bugis neighbors, did raid their hinterlands for slaves. But Hoorweg (1911) and

[7]Given what I can reconstruct from oral histories and written sources, the historic exchange system between the uplands and the coast basically conforms to the hypothetical model advanced by Bronson (1977).

Goslings (1933) indicate that sustained raiding rarely struck deeper than the swidden communities lying just beyond the periphery of Mandar lands.

Nothing is known about the beginnings of migratory labor in the region, but by the late nineteenth century it had become an important factor in the economic interchange between uplands and coast. For example, Hoorweg (1911:103–5) reports large numbers of mountain folk making the trip to Mamuju to work as coolies, to assist coastal partners in "vandalism," and to work dry rice fields. The trek was annual and routine, and enough to provoke Hoorweg to complain that it resulted in the underdevelopment of agriculture in the mountain region (1911:104).[8] As described by him, these migrant laborers exchanged their labor for cloth, household effects, and small amounts of cash. Yet, given the food shortages and sociopolitical turmoil that troubled the mountain communities from time to time, migrant labor probably allowed uplanders to get supplies of food in addition to giving them a way of getting prestige goods.

Hoorweg does not indicate when the migrants usually arrived. The traditional upland agricultural calendar finds men at work on rice terraces from July through September. October is devoted to clearing and planting gardens. Corn, another of the principal upland crops, usually goes into the ground in January, by which time the rice crop is almost ready for harvest. It would be unlikely, then, for men to journey down to the coast before late February, for to do so would run counter to their most effective subsistence strategy. (According to locals, women did not become migrant workers.) An exception, of course, would be landless householders, but the local need for labor probably would be sufficient to keep them home. Coastal fields, according to Hoorweg (1911:103), are planted in November. The next period in the cultivation of crops requiring intensive labor would be during harvest—about four to five months later, during March. It is in March, too, that the monsoon begins to swing to a westward direction and give favorable winds to Mandar sailors. In my reckoning, it seems likely that upland men would travel to the coast to find work at this time: The upland harvest was over, and the area's agricultural cycle required few labor inputs from males until July. At the same time, the coast could absorb the influx of manpower. March would also be a suitable time to carry forest products to the coast, especially if boats that had brought imported goods were readying to sail away with regional exports.

Upstream, Downstream, and Practical Cosmography

To the extent that contemporary historical views are a reliable index to the past, ideas about siblingship, social reciprocity, and cosmography must have colored upland relations with the Mandar. The cosmographic perspective began—and still begins—with a reading of moral and historical facts from the natural fact of the rivers. In the local imagination, river waters flow from their sacred sources in the skyworld—the realm of the *'debata* spirits—down through earthly terrain, onward to the ocean, and then finally drop to the region of the dead. Whatever lies closer to the source is more sacred and more authoritative than that which lies below. By the same token, upstream regions are "before" and "elder" in comparison to

[8]Hoorweg appears to have been unaware of the ritualized agricultural calendar at Pitu Ulunna Salu. A very rigid set of tabus limited communities to a single annual rice harvest.

downstream areas. Also, sacred knowledge and tradition have their birth in the headwaters, and flow "down" through time, person, and generation. The mountain settlements of Pitu Ulunna Salu, sitting as they do beside the headwaters that eventually empty into the sea along the Mandar coast, deemed themselves guardians of the prosperity of the region. Just as the rivers flowed from upstream to downstream, so too did authority, tradition, and well-being flow from the headwaters to the rivermouth.

Both the Mandar communities and Pitu Ulunna Salu had genealogies that ran back to an ancestral couple whose children and grandchildren settled the hinterlands and coast. According to upland recitations (and consonant with local cosmography), the junior siblings inhabited the lowlands while the senior siblings populated the highlands. Uplanders thus looked upon their trading partners as siblings, but claimed higher status and authority for themselves by virtue of their descent and their place in the "natural facts" of cosmography.

Cosmography and siblingship, taken as metaphor and fact, set the basic terms for reciprocity and exchange between the mountains and the coast. The uplanders' claim to higher status anticipated obedience and deference from their coastal kin. At the same time, the uplands—as senior sibling—carried the obligation to support and guard their coastal juniors, by sacrifice of their own interests if necessary. The perspective was decidedly hierarchic, but it helped frame the complementarity between upstream and downstream siblings, and served as an ideological vehicle for rendering economic exchange as the sharing of gifts and services. Complementarity and hierarchy notwithstanding, the sense of siblingship between mountain and coast also suggested that ineradicable strains and rivalries existed between the two, that envy as much as sharing could propel the relationship.

In a sense, upland ideology contained certain truths regarding exchange relations with the Mandar. Forest and swidden goods, critical to the coast's maritime trade, flowed from the uplands. The relative prosperity of the uplands—measured by goods brought down from the hills—assured the prosperity of the coast. In short, the elder siblings *were* taking care of the younger siblings; the headwaters *were* replenishing the rivermouths. Bearing in mind that uplanders swapped their humble products for prestige goods, the "younger sibling" from the coast was bestowing respect and honor on the upstream "elder sibling." One could argue that the Mandar were getting the better deal, and that the balance of economic exchange tilted in their favor. Yet, if upland ideology worked to mask distortions and asymmetries in exchange relations with the coast, it also served as a useful, if metaphoric, rendering of mutual interdependency.

Further still, the idiom of siblingship did not so much hide or mystify the realities of trade as act as their moral basis. If exchange is potentially dissociative and explosive in nature, then the imagined sibling bond between mountain and coast may have helped regulate the conflict generated in trade (cf. Foster 1977). In other words, the mythically predicated idiom of siblingship, rather than the exchange of goods *per se,* made the trade relationship between upstream and downstream reliable. Without denying that economic interests and needs motivated regional trade, the idiom of siblingship became the moral context in which exchange could succeed (or, for that matter, fail).

There is little evidence that the Mandar viewed their exchange relations with the Pitu Ulunna Salu uplands in the same ideological terms; indeed, some claim that the coast is "senior" to the upstream regions (Syah 1980:18). But as long as regional trade patterns conformed to, or were amenable to, the upland interpretation, contradictory or divergent Mandar attitudes may have posed few challenges to upland

thought. It appears that in their several centuries of exchange with an alien and potentially threatening coast, the mountain communities never scrapped the idiom of siblingship as their interpretive perspective on trade until the Bugis established upland markets in 1925.

Going to the Sea

The highlanders all agree that their ancestors sought Mandar victims when hunting heads for *pangngae*. Indeed, the discourse of contemporary ritual continues to portray the headhunters' victims as Mandar. For example, the antiphonal singing of *ma'denna* taunts the head to call to the Mandar nobility for help. Other songs tell of the panic among Mandar hamlets, the churning of their rivers, and the spilling of their seawater. And the *babalako* honors the head as a "grandchild" of the Mandar lord, Daeng Maressa. In short, *pangngae* is a time for the uplanders to bring acts of symbolic violence to fall upon their traditional trading partners.

The double masking of *pangngae* at the time of Dutch contact took place not only because the headhunters sought heads that were not heads, but also because the ritual was concealed in the ideology and practice of trade. Trade and ritual violence happened within one another's shadow, and thus headhunting dissolved before the eyes of colonial observer and coastal "victim" alike. The masking of *pangngae* is now deeply entrenched in local ritual tradition, even though the Mandar are no longer the principal trading partners of the uplanders. But contemporary evidence still affords a chance to understand why headhunting may have become cloaked.

Some telling clues lie in the terms villagers use for trade and headhunting. *Le'ba' le'bo'*, literally, "going to the sea," is the term used for trade journeys and the seeking of adventure in other lands. Villagers still use the phrase as the most popular euphemism for the headtaking journey of *pangngae*. In a sense, the term collapses distinctions between headhunting and trade, subsuming them under the broader conceptual category of journeys. Equally significant is the chant of the *babalako* when making an offering to the spirits who live along the headhunters' trail. Calling out the dwelling places of these spirits one by one, the specialist is, in effect, marking a route to the sea. These chants trace but one trail and name only one coastal settlement where a victim may be killed. Thus, the warriors from the upland community of Rantebulahan travel (in chant) to Tenggelan in the Mandar principality of Balanipa; those from Mambi head off to Tanisi below Tapalang; the villages of Bambang go to Abo in Sendana; and those from Tabulahan trek to Mamuju. In addition, the returning warriors always identify the home of their victim when responding to the ritualized greeting of a village elder:

Elder:	Cohort:
Oe toakakoa'?	*Oe ToTenggelan!*
Oe toakakoa'?	*Oe ToTenggelan!*
Oe toakakoa' itim?	*Oe ToTenggelan!*
Oe what are you?	Oe ones from Tenggelan!
Oe what are you?	Oe ones from Tenggelan!
Oe what are you there?	Oe ones from Tenggelan!

These invocations and greetings bear out the claims of elders that cohorts of upland men returned year after year to the same Mandar settlement to take a head. Indeed,

these ritual genres imply that the mountain communities tacitly coordinated their raids in a way that made sure that headhunters from Rantebulahan, for example, would not strike at Mamuju, the trading partner of Tabulahan.

Contemporary practices also suggest that the headhunting "season" may have coincided with the uplanders' annual trade journeys to the coast.[9] *Pangngae* takes place after the harvest rice has been put away in barns, usually between late February and early April. For warriors to leave their villages at this time on the 40 to 90 kilometer journey to Mandar territories means that they would arrive at the coast at the very time agriculture and commerce (marked, respectively, by the March harvest and the shifting monsoon) could absorb manpower. Returning from a headhunt, warriors invariably carried what they claimed to be stolen cloth, weapons, and porcelain. Even today, theft has a place in headhunting ritual: along with the surrogate head, a small pile of goods—said to be stolen from the victim—is offered to the spirits.

Coinciding with a critical moment in the labor and trade calendar on the coast, terminologically fused with trade journeys, and targeted at reliable coastal partners and patrons, *pangngae* must have figured importantly in regional exchange networks. Claiming to be out on a headhunt, upland men were actually bartering and laboring on the coast. Or, perhaps more accurately, while men were headhunting, they were also trading goods and labor.

It should be kept in mind that the uplanders of today insist there were points in history when Mandar victims were slain for their heads, just as they insist that current tradition prohibits the taking of real heads for the purposes of *pangngae.* Nearly all claim that feuding and retribution were the reasons for taking heads from the Mandar. As one elder explained it: "It was to strike back. Our grandfathers would go to the sea [to trade or work] and someone would be killed or enslaved." A youth from a different village had a different story: "At first, no one took a head. Then slavery and war appeared. Then people killed one another and taking heads became custom." However true explanations such as these may be, they divorce headtaking from its customary ritual frame, and link it to patterns of reciprocal violence. In other words, the accounts shift the moral perspective on headhunting from the vantage point of ritual necessity to that of revenge.

My language assistant gave me a broader historical account of headhunting practices. As he heard it from his father, *pangngae* at first called for a surrogate head and stolen goods to be offered up to the spirits. The custom then underwent change in the time of *kende' tata asu* ("crazy dog rises"), when slavery, wars, and feuding took place; hunting for real heads became the rule. Once peaceful relations were restored between the coast and the uplands, headhunters sought out a kind of tuber, *tullu bulam* ("egg of the moon"), as a surrogate head. More recently, the coconut, a product associated with the coast, has become the customary surrogate. This account keeps headhunting within the moral frame of ritual, but also indicates that regional strife was a trip mechanism whereby symbolic dramatizations of headtaking were "rescripted" to include very real killings.

I pressed several elders about the matter of actual killings and how the Mandar would respond. According to most, the Mandar knew full well when the raids and ambushes were to take place (especially as over eighty mountain settlements would be sending out cohorts of headhunters during a six- to eight-week period), but did

[9]A comparable situation may have obtained in parts of Borneo. Dr. Peter Kedit of the Sarawak Museum (pers. comm.) claims that Iban headhunting often took place in association with *bejalai,* journeys undertaken for profit or social prestige (cf. Freeman 1970).

not want to disturb a practice upon which regional prosperity depended. For this reason, the Mandar elite were said to have designated specific settlements where the uplanders could take heads. A Christian commentator of upland birth provides a similar explanation (Makatonan 1985:105), saying that the Mandar helped the uplanders seek a head because they, too, needed a human victim for their own ritual sacrifices. According to these upland formulations, the taking of real heads did not disrupt trade, especially in a time of violence, vendetta, and enslavement. In fact, the viewpoints presume that headhunting was in the interest of the victim's survivors.

The Mander could hardly agree unless they, too, subscribed to the same ideology as the uplanders. In my acquaintance with the coastal dwellers, I see only a few signs that the Mandar associated upstream regions with greater prestige and authority and with sources of prosperity. In fact, the Mandar of my acquaintance had difficulty imagining their ancestors surrendering a victim to the people of the headwaters under any circumstances. One acquaintance, for example, listened to my speculations about the uplanders' headhunting raids with some amusement. "That must have been long ago," he snorted, "and if they had tried that, we would have just cut them dead."

Still, headhunting may not have significantly disrupted regional order, an order that probably was more given over to turmoil than to calm. Judging by the upland accounts that found "reasonable cause" for taking real heads in regional patterns of vengeance and slavery, headhunting was merely symptomatic of intercultural tension. Still, the same accounts—ignoring, as they do, the ritual framework of *pangngae*—do not at the start provide "reasonable cause" for symbolic headtaking.

Even if headhunting rites gained purposefulness and intelligibility in light of Salu Mambi ideas about fertility, grief, masculinity, and village political life, they nonetheless put down roots in the volatile and ambivalent social relations of exchange between upstream and downstream. It follows, then, that the idioms that gave regional trade its moral context may also be the terms that provided a moral basis for headhunting. In other words, ideas about siblingship, reciprocity, and cosmography may offer important clues why uplanders wanted to take the heads of Mandar victims.

One man's story about the origin of headhunting may throw light upon the moral dynamics of the *pangngae.* As he told it, there were two brothers, the younger of whom went to live on the coast. Some time later, the younger brother on the coast beckoned to his older brother to come down from the headwaters. The younger one asked for help because everything had ceased growing in the lowlands. The older brother pledged to help by appealing to the spirits at the headwaters, but told his sibling that he needed gifts for an appropriate offering. After thinking over the matter that night, the younger brother told his wife to clear out the house and leave only tattered cloth and other damaged goods. When his brother came again the next day, the younger one told him to take everything that was in the house. The elder one carried the meager effects back to the headwaters and offered the prizes up to the spirits. In the meantime, the younger brother made offerings downstream. The spirits were pleased and restored prosperity to the coast. Thereafter, the elder came back yearly, took something from his younger sibling, and in this way guaranteed the prosperity of the coast. But the younger brother remained greedy and hoarded the fine belongings for himself. Unwilling to share the fruits of prosperity, he continued to leave the coarse or damaged goods for the elder brother. In time, descendents of the younger brother began to enslave the people of the headwaters. Slaves died in sacrifices to the spirits, and people began to kill one another upriver and downriver. It was then that Mandar heads were taken and offered to the spirits at the headwaters.

The narrative no doubt collapses myth and history. Yet, it is not as important to separate the elements of myth and history as it is to grasp the moral drama that fuses them together. The key to the story is the violation of the moral relationship that binds siblings to one another. The elder sibling is obliged to help his junior brother and does so. The younger one, meanwhile, owes his senior brother respect and honor. Yet the junior brother deceives his elder sibling, hoarding valuable goods to himself, and thus withholds the signs (and currency) of honor and prestige. Later on, descendants of the junior sibling enslave their "senior brothers" at the headwaters. Duped, humiliated, and subordinated by his junior, the enraged senior brother begins to take heads in reprisal.

While the story shows how the exchange of goods (and later, of slaves and heads) promotes prosperity and cosmological balance, the scenario is one of ambivalent, inverted brotherhood. Trade is the correct and desired expression of exchange, but because the inversion of the brothers-partners relationship upset the moral order, reciprocity must become manifest as the ritualized killing and looting of *pangngae.* In this sense, *pangngae* is a special variation on patterns noted by McKinley in his analysis of Southeast Asian headhunting (1976). He finds headhunting to be the means for making distant enemies friendly within the exchange of souls critical to cosmological balance. While headhunters in Pitu Ulunna Salu highlands also seek cosmological balance, they do so through the exchange of goods and by turning a distant junior "brother-gone-bad" into a proper sibling by resubordinating him through fatal ambush and placating ceremony.

Two songs from the ritual headhunt shed further light on the inverted moral order of the upstream-downstream exchange system. They concern prosperity, labor, and patronage. The first song is a warning to the Mandar:

Ketuo-tuoi tau	Should the people come to prosper
taru' kasimpoi sali	runners wind from the slatted floor
malallengko toibirin	watch out you on the horizon

The lyrics offer an image of increase: Wooden slats used to make floors in an upland home miraculously continue to grow, a sign of the headhunters' prosperity and power. But a second set of lyrics is sung in reply:

Naposarokam Bugi'	Made workers for the Bugis
natenakan ToMinanga	we're fed handouts by the Mandar
loe tama ri uai	it falls off into the waters

For the uplanders, one works for another under the terms of *saro.* Within the context of *saro,* a person works for a relative or friend at the request of the latter, generally receiving a meal and a token share of the harvest (or wage) in the course of the task. The friends or relatives are obliged, in turn, to work for the person who lent them a hand, and they, too, will receive a meal and shares. Failure to reciprocate does not indebt the friend or relative, but amounts to the arrogant claim that one's status is too high to permit one to work for another. In certain situations, this would offend the person who once lent aid. On the other hand, to work for another person without being able to call for labor in return marks a person as a social inferior. When this happens—because of meager landholdings, for example—the poorer person is not affronted, but humiliated because of his circumstances.

The song presents the latter case. The uplanders are made laborers for the coastal powers without hope of calling them to the hills to reciprocate under *saro* arrangements. The uplanders get handouts of food (*tena*) for their work, but do not have the chance

to give food to the Mandar in their fields back home in the mountains. These humiliating conditions provoke the stereotypic expression of futility heard in the last line of the song. The uplanders' chance to regain prestige and honor "falls off into the (river) waters" and is washed away. With it goes the chance to actually restore the relationship between senior and junior brothers to the moral ideal.

Even though the upland villagers resigned themselves to the fact that the Mandar had the greater means of power and prestige, they remained certain of their own place along the moral terrain that stretched over ideas about cosmography, siblingship, and reciprocity. *Pangngae* was less a facade for trading ventures than a complex moral statement or declaration that temporarily negated a more persistent skewing of correct relations between mountain and coast. The uplanders were willing, perhaps compelled, to deliver their gifts of labor and forest products to the coast. The humbling realities of regional power and commerce gave them little in return. The symbolic killing and looting of *pangngae* countered trade and labor exchange, and momentarily righted the conditions of upland interdependency with the Mandar. The people of the headwaters thus could recover their virtue and slake their envy by turning their partner-brothers into victims. *Pangngae* gave the uplanders a sense of survivorhood and with it a taste of power and control not ordinarily theirs. The irony is that the uplanders' survival, in a material sense, did not depend on ritualized headtaking, but upon their acquiescence in regional trade and labor.

Seen from the vantage point of some of the contemporary historical narratives and ritual practices of the *mappurondo* community, *pangngae* grapples with the incongruity between ideology and circumstances much in the way that Jonathan Z. Smith (1978, 1982) claims is characteristic of all ritual. In a sense, *pangngae* was—and, to a degree, still is—a way to enact or present an ideal vision of exchange relations that could be recalled and put into conscious tension against the real order of things. If the facts of regional exchange humbled the uplanders, *pangngae* was a counterfact that momentarily restored their virtue, authority, and status as seniors. The ritualized theft of heads and goods from the coast tilted the social relations of exchange in a direction most favorable to the mountain communities: The seizure of goods was a way to "make them ours"—appropriating the valuables without giving anything in return. At the same time, taking a head was a way to make the victim "ours"—a way to subjugate and incorporate the rival junior who was at once trading partner, sibling, and enemy.

Trophy and Transformation in the Myth of Resistance

A myriad of themes and ideas come together in *pangngae:* grief and mourning, envy, eroticism, fertility, and basic conceptions of masculinity all find articulation in the ritual headhunt. The annual headhunt also has a critical political dimension in that *mappurondo* villagers have staked the ritual reproduction of community, polity, and tradition upon its performance. At the same time, the mythic structure of this ritual encapsulates and mediates the history of upland resistance to forces that threaten them from without. Following Levi-Strauss (1966), it could be argued that the ritualized headhunt has the effect of chilling historical consciousness. Indeed, headhunting ritual compels history and social reality to follow after it. But as a mythic structure, headhunting must also chase after these realities, past and present, and come to terms with them. Thus, the ritualized drama of headhunting must

slip into a dialectic with sociohistorical circumstance (cf. Sahlins 1981, 1985), a dialectic that invites followers of *ada' mappurondo* to reflect upon their social, cultural, and historical being.

The moment when upland headhunters chose to take a surrogate instead of a severed head marked one of the most significant transformations in the history of headhunting ritual, as well as a crucial shift in the political relations between mountains and coast. Judging from the remarks of elders and the silence of the Dutch and the Mandar, surrogacy was already a common practice by the time the colonial administration set out to eradicate headhunting. As to the specific events and conditions that led to the use of surrogate heads, virtually nothing is known or remembered. Still, it is reasonable to assume that substituting tubers or coconuts for severed heads was but part of a new, bloodless resistance to forces that threatened to dominate the highlands.

It is hardly accidental that a coconut has become the principal surrogate. The formal similarities between a coconut and a skull are obvious to both a headhunter and an ethnographer. More significant, I think, is the fact that the coconut is a product associated with the coast. The palms do not thrive in the highlands, and as a result, the coconut is considered a prestige food. It seldom appears in daily cuisine (save among Muslims, who practice a "downstream" religion), but finds key use as a gift to a household hosting a wedding or prosperity rite. In the context of *pangngae,* however, the trophy coconut is never consumed or given away. It remains a trophy-offering from the coast. As such, the coconut continues to do the work of the severed head, signifying and restoring the ideal political and cosmological relations linking upstream and downstream.

No one mistakes the surrogate for anything other than it is—a stage prop—just as no one misreads its blatant symbolism. Forsaking the ambush of a coastal victim for the purchase of a coconut in an upland market, headhunters have made a concession to political realities that have brought them powerlessness and despair. Part of that concession involved reformulating their historical understanding of regional exchange. In this context, the stories that portray real beheadings as an unwelcome but, nonetheless, just transformation of innocent surrogacy give the uplanders the moral high ground in the region's past. Still, today's followers of *ada' mappurondo* are uneasy about the violent representations of *pangngae.* On the one hand, the ritual lets them discover and reflect upon the heroic virtues and sentiments necessary for the preservation of village polity and tradition. On the other hand, a real beheading would fill most villagers with dread. The sacred obligations of tradition, as presently interpreted, leave them stuck: Headhunting is good to think and bad to do.

It is worth mentioning that contemporary ritual practice suggests a symbolic avoidance or masking of their dilemma. When the warriors return to the village, they jubilantly hold aloft the trophy bag that contains the coconut. From the time the trophy is brought back to the village to the time it is placed as an offering to the spirits, out of view, in the eastern (or upstream) loft of an elder's house, it never comes out of the bag. The bag affords no glimpse of the prize within. It conceals what the trophy is—a coconut obtained through purchase—as well as what the trophy is not—a disfigured face stolen in ambush. In this way, no one can gaze upon the awful truth of the headhunters' violence *or* their humiliation in reciprocal relations with distant lands.

I have argued that the commemoration of the ritual headhunt is crucial to the reproduction of the *mappurondo* community in each upland village. Any community that fails to hold *pangngae* is, in effect, moribund. Its women cannot stage household prosperity rites; the bereaved cannot shake themselves loose from their grief and

anguish; and all fear that the spirits will abandon their guardianship of the rice crop. In short, the moral and political vitality of every *mappurondo* community has its roots in the headhunters' reenactment of the past. When a community can no longer look back upon the headhunt in ritual, it loses control of its past and surrenders its life in the present.

This effort to maintain cultural continuity with the past may itself be a form of resistance to the contemporary order. At the very least, the annual rites of *pangngae* help the *mappurondo* religious minority establish a distinct and highly localized cultural identity in the face of national sentiment and outlook. On occasion, the headhunters *have* stepped out of history to confront the contemporary order. In 1958, a time of island-wide rebellion, a cohort of warriors from an upland village ambushed a rebel military patrol and took a head. In 1985, singers from another village taunted the surrogate head to call for help from the Indonesian civil officers living on the coast. But by and large, the headhunters of today are eager to prove themselves good citizens; they wish to be included in all that is Indonesian. Unfortunately, they remain perplexed and isolated by the changes that have swept through the Sulawesi highlands. In particular, the bureaucratic order and the censorious attitudes of their Christian and Muslim neighbors deny them entry into the national mainstream. That *ada' mappurondo* goes unrecognized is perhaps the greatest source of frustration, anxiety, and despair for today's headhunters. Insofar as that is true, their current struggle for power and dignity may find covert expression in the predatory flight downstream and into the past.

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