FROM STRANGER KING TO STRANGER SHAIKH: AUSTRONESIAN SYMBOLISM AND ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE*

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In this paper, I argue that the phenomenon of the "stranger king" as it has been described by Sahlins is a particular symbolic expression of a more general, even universal, requirement for the existence of ordered social life (Sahlins 1985). This is the need for institutions that can rise above the conflicts and factionalism generated by everyday life in order to prevent them from destroying the social framework altogether. Such institutions must be reproduced by practices that *estrange* them from factional divisions. These practices are very close to what Durkheim identified as the rituals that confer a sacred quality on certain objects, persons and doctrines so that they will be revered by the whole society (Durkheim [1915] 1995).

Among the social institutions that can serve in such a transcendental role are divine kings, scripturally based legal codes, and impersonal bureaucracies. In a volume on the symbolism of pre-Islamic kingship in South Sulawesi, I argue that the essence of what Weber called "traditional authority" lies in the symbolic links that are constructed in myth and in ritual between cyclical *cosmological* phenomena and local socio-political hierarchies. In the case of the Makassar, these hierarchies were headed by a king or queen who traced their origins to the gods of the Upper- or Underworld (Gibson 2005). In another volume on Islamic kingship in Southeast Asia, I suggest that Weber's concept

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of "charismatic authority" should be reserved for situations in which local rulers associate themselves with *cosmopolitan* religious doctrines and practices that claim to be universally and eternally valid, but that must be interpreted and implemented in an infinite number of concrete times and places (Weber [1922] 1963; Gibson 2007). This has been the case among the Makassar ever since the conversion of their kings to Islam in 1605. In both volumes, I show that traditional and charismatic forms of authority have coexisted with what Weber calls "rational-legal" or bureaucratic authority in Island Southeast Asia at least since the appearance of the Dutch United East India Company (VOC) in the seventeenth century. Bureaucratic authority is associated with what I call "documentary knowledge", a form of knowledge in which depersonalised office-holders generate abstract, explicit information for the use of the impersonal corporate or state bureaucracies they serve.

These definitions are relevant for the purposes of this paper because all three forms of authority serve to "estrange" political authorities from their subjects, and to facilitate the performance of the sacral, mercantile and juridical functions of kingship identified by David Henley (2004). For the purposes of my argument, I will redefine these three functions as the cosmological-sacral function, the diplomatic-mercantile function and the cosmopolitan-juridical function. This list of royal functions is by no means exhaustive. It neglects, in particular, the functions of kingship in organising and redirecting collective violence from internal kin-based feuding to external raiding and warfare.

Although Henley lists the three functions of kingship in no particular order, I would suggest that the sacral function has a certain logical priority, and probably a

temporal one as well in the case of "pristine states". That is, sacral kingship can be generated and reproduced through mythological, ritual and social practices that have a purely local origin. The diplomatic functions of kingship imply the development of a regional political culture within which regular interactions with other kingdoms can take place. Finally, as diplomatic and mercantile relationships with the other states in a region intensify, a cosmopolitan "high culture" may develop whose norms and values begin to diverge from the local customs of each kingdom. This cosmopolitan culture prepares the way for the integration of the culturally diverse societies composing a regional "world economy" into a "world empire", whose rulers may impose an abstract and explicit legal code derived from a "world religion".

The sacred legal codes of Buddhism, Roman Catholicism and Islam outlived the world empires in which they were first implemented, and spread into new regions that had never been part of the original empires (Tambiah 1976; Kantorowicz 1958; Fowden 1993). Hindu-Buddhist *dharma*, Roman Catholic natural and divine law, and Islamic *shariah* all came to express a cosmological order that existed independently of the will of the particular kings who enforced them. This meant that those learned in the divine law could exercise a form of charismatic authority distinct from the traditional or bureaucratic authority of the king and other holders of political office.

The conversion of Southeast Asian kings to Islam and the introduction of the cosmopolitan moral and legal codes of the *shariah* estranged them from the customs and traditions of their subjects even more effectively than did the performance of the local rituals that link them to their deified royal ancestors. While bolstering the authority of the king over his local subjects, the introduction of the *shariah* also made it possible for any

young man of talent and ambition to estrange himself from his local customs and to travel half way around the world in search of cosmopolitan religious knowledge (*ilmu*). Those who mastered it could claim a form of charismatic authority upon their return that could undermine the pretensions of the king. Thus conversion to Islam thus turned out to be a two-edged sword for the kings of Southeast Asia: it exalted them still further above their local subjects, but it introduced a rival source of authority they could never fully control.

Traditional kingship and Austronesian cosmology in Island Southeast Asia

The relatively isolated kingdoms of the Pacific discussed by Sahlins provide us with some of the only documented cases of pristine states (Sahlins 1985). In Fiji and Hawaii, the distinction between king and people had to be continually regenerated through local symbolic means. It was only on the basis of this self-perpetuating symbolic, or "cultural", estrangement from his subjects that a local king could lay claim to the sort of impartial administration of justice that Henley sees as an advantageous attribute of stranger-kings.

But Polynesia is a poor model for the theorisation of social change in other parts of the world precisely because its societies were so isolated from one another and from societies belonging to different ethno-linguistic traditions. In the relatively densely spaced islands of the Philippines and Indonesia, the social and culture estrangement between ruler and subject was reproduced not only through local ritual practices, but also through the institution of regular long-distance exchanges of goods and marriage partners between distant royal houses. As the wealth, power and prestige of a polity waxed and waned within a region, so did the rank of its ruler. The rulers of polities that were relatively peripheral to the main centres of regional trade gave their daughters in marriage

to the higher-ranking sons of the rulers of more central polities. The exchange of princes and princesses between distant royal centres facilitated the exchange of both exogenous prestige goods such as gold and jewels and of raw materials essential for subsistence such as metal tools and rice.

The three functions of stranger-kings identified by Henley were thus mutually supporting. In the traditional political culture of Southeast Asia, the difference and detachment of kings from their subjects was continually reproduced through practices such as rituals of royal installation, intermarriage between distant royal houses, and the monopolisation of long-distance trade. The first mechanism linked the ruler vertically to a cosmological realm of supernatural powers; the second and third mechanisms linked him horizontally to a cosmopolitan realm in which a distinctive "high culture" tended to develop. It was his position at the intersection of these two axes that enabled the king to act as the source and guarantor of impartial justice.

The system as I have described it was characteristic of the coastal polities of western Austronesia for several millennia (Bellwood 1995: 105-107). In the second century BCE, Austronesian chiefdoms in the straits of Malacca appear to have expanded their interactions with non-Austronesian polities further west along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, eventually establishing enduring relationships with polities in South Asia. If an exotic Buddhist or Hindu prince could be recruited from India to serve as a resident son-in-law in a Southeast Asian court, his very presence would testify to the cosmopolitan reach of the local Austronesian king (Wisseman Christie 1995: 252-253).

Even in the absence of foreign princes, the more exotic the ritual and symbolism of a court appeared in the eyes of its local subjects, the greater would be its claim to

cosmopolitan prestige; and the more familiar the ritual and symbolism of a local court could appear to foreign merchants, the more chance it had of attracting the prestigious trade goods it need for redistribution to lesser centres. The hierarchy of centres of redistributive trade in the islands ensured that many of these ideas would be diffused from one centre to its peripheries into remote areas that never came into direct contact with migrants from India. It was only when rulers along the coasts of the Indian Ocean began to abandon Indic models of kingship in favor of Islam that royal marriage alliances began to extend westward to the Middle East. This facilitated the acceptance in island Southeast Asia of Islamic *shaykhs* and *ulama* as sources of mystical power and cosmopolitan law. I will return to this development below.

The incorporation of South Sulawesi into the Indian Ocean arena

In a recent monograph, I have discussed the logic of this regional system in reference to the Bugis and Makassar polities of South Sulawesi between about 1300 and 1600 C.E. (Gibson 2005). As elsewhere in the Austronesian world, Bugis and Makassar myths linked historically contingent forms of social power and authority to extremely stable conceptions of gender and cosmology. Royal origin myths and rituals portrayed the world as made up of a series of autonomous polities, each headed by a dynasty with a semi-divine origin. The Bugis and Makassar kings of South Sulawesi reproduced themselves both as sacral kings linked vertically to the heavens and the abyss, and as diplomatic kings linked horizontally to other kingdoms all around the Java Sea by ties of mercantile and marriage exchange.

Most Makassar polities arose on the coast as agrarian states whose rulers were also closely associated with long-distance trade. This association is evident in many

Makassar myths of royal origin, in which it is only the female ancestor of the local dynasty who descended from the heavens, while the male ancestor is portrayed as a foreign prince who crossed the seas from a distant royal centre on a magical boat. It was the union of these two figures that gave rise to the local dynasty. These myths map the cosmological opposition between the Middleworld and the Upper- and Underworlds onto the opposition between male and female, sea and land, trade and agriculture. The hierarchical relationship between central and peripheral polity is transformed into a complementary opposition between the diplomatic skill that produces prestige trade goods associated with the male principle and the mystical fertility that produces subsistence goods associated with the female principle (Gibson 2005: 138-141; compare Sahlins 1985: 82 for similar tales of the founding of Fiji and Rome).

These founding myths were reenacted in their most elaborate form upon the installation of a new king. The candidate was placed upon the sacred rock (*palantikan*) where the founding royal ancestors (*tomanurung*) first descended from the heavens, and is adorned with the royal regalia (*arajang* or *gaukang*) they left behind. A council (*hadat*), composed of office holders who represent the original local factions that invited the first *tomanurung* to become their king, administers an oath of office that reproduces this original social contract. Smaller scale versions of this ritual were performed annually during ritual cleansings of the regalia, which represent the sempiternal aspect of the royal office, as opposed the mortal individual who occupies it at any one time (Gibson 2005: 171-178).

Tales that closely resemble Makassar origin myths often appear in the literature on Indonesian myth as Tales of Panji. In these tales, opposite sex twins are separated at

birth and grow up in distant royal centres. The male twin undergoes many adventures in his quest to reunite with soul mate. He usually settles for a close substitute, however, such as a mother's sister's daughter who looks exactly like his twin. Ras argued that these tales are most plausibly read as charters for royal weddings between spouses from distant kingdoms. A similar mythology thus formed the symbolic framework for elaborate rites of royal installation and royal marriage that linked royal centres all around the Java Sea from the time of the Javanese empire of Kediri in the thirteenth century (Ras 1973). This is not to say that such myths and rituals diffused from a single Javanese centre, but that the Austronesian kinship and ranking systems common throughout the region facilitated the development of a regional system of royal marriages.

How deeply Hindu-Buddhist ideas about social organisation and religious devotion penetrated outside of literate court circles anywhere in Southeast Asia is an open question. In the case of South Sulawesi, exposure to these ideas came second hand by way of Java, a century or more after the Chola state of South India had gone into decline during the twelfth century. The Hindu Empire of Majapahit in Java temporarily expanded its sphere of influence as the both the Cholas and the early Ming Empire withdrew from maritime trade during the fourteenth century. But Majapahit itself went into decline at the end of the fourteenth century. For the Makassar, seeing the king as an avatar of Siva was little different than seeing him as the descendent of a local deity (Gibson 2005: 119-138, 157-158).

Charismatic kingship and cosmopolitan law in the Indian Ocean

In most Indicised parts of Island Southeast Asia, the concept of *dharma* was replaced by the Islamic code of the *shariah* between about 1300 and 1600. The roots of

this shift lie in the sack of Baghdad in 1258 by the Mongols, which put an end to the Abbasid Caliphate as the symbolic centre of the Islamic world and sent a wave of Muslim refugees into India. But this catastrophe led to a renaissance of Islamic power and culture in the Sultanate of Delhi, a renaissance that reached the Indian Ocean during the fourteenth century when Delhi was in control of the ports of Gujarat (Abu Lughod 1989: 272). In the absence of a caliph in Baghdad to confer symbolic legitimacy on them, local sultans in India began to turn to charismatic Sufi *shaykhs*, many of whom claimed to have been granted divine authority over the welfare of mystical territories called *wilayat*. A complementary opposition between the temporal power of the sultan and the spiritual power of the *shaykh* became standard in South Asia (Digby 1986). It was also to become standard in Southeast Asia (Gibson 2007: 38-53).

The formation of an Islamic commonwealth in island Southeast Asia received another boost from the expansion of Chinese maritime trade during the first half of the fifteenth century. The third Ming ruler commissioned a Muslim eunuch, Zheng He, to lead a series of six naval expeditions between 1405 and 1433 to establish alternative maritime trade routes. On his third voyage (1409-1411), Zheng He recognised the Malay state of Melaka as the legitimate successor to China's earlier vassal in the South Seas, Srivijaya, and as the official port for all western vessels seeking to trade with China. The Ming emperors abruptly lost interest in maritime trade again in 1435, but Zheng He's expeditions left behind an enduring legacy in the form of large colonies of Chinese along the straits of Melaka and the north coast of Java (Manguin 1993). Islam became the state religion in many of these hybrid Chinese-Malay city-states. After the fifth ruler of Melaka made a definitive conversion to Islam in 1436, many other rulers of coastal ports

around the Java Sea followed suit during the second half of the fifteenth century.

The Sultan as Stranger King in South Sulawesi

From his analysis of ten myths of royal conversion to Islam, Russell Jones concluded "that the Islamic states in Indonesia (at least those outside Java) came about as the result of the adoption of Islam by previously existing states and not, for example, through the usurpation of the throne, or through the establishment of an Islamic state by foreigners on Indonesian soil; it was the religion which changed; the ruler and the state remained" (Jones 1979: 158).

The conversion of South Sulawesi began with the Bugis kingdom of Luwu' in February, 1605, but it was brought to completion under the leadership of the king of the Makassar state of Tallo', I Malinkaeng Karaeng Matowa Sultan Abdullah. Tallo' had formed a close alliance the kingdom of Gowa in 1535, with the king of Tallo' specialising in diplomatic and mercantile relations, and the king of Gowa in subsistence agriculture and warfare. During the second half of the sixteenth century, this dual kingdom used Portuguese firearms to defeat all its rivals on entire peninsula and to capture large numbers of slaves who were put to work building irrigation systems and fortifications (Gibson 2005: 146-156).

When the kings of Tallo' and Gowa decided to convert to Islam in 1605, they were thus in a position to claim the same sort of absolute temporal authority as was then being asserted by the Mughal Emperor Akbar and by the Muslim rulers of Aceh and Mataram in Indonesia. They also adopted the mystical doctrine of kingship that had developed in the courts of these rulers. According to this doctrine, a Muslim king should be regarded as an exemplar of Ibn al-Arabi's concept of the Perfect Man, a mystic who

has attained that complete knowledge of God for which God created the world in the first place. As such, the king served as the axis (*qutb*) or nail (*paku*) of the universe, serving as both the cosmological mediator between the divine and the terrestrial worlds, as well as the cosmopolitan enforcer of the universal *shariah* law (Lombard 1967: 158, Woodward 1989:155).

This conceptualisation of the ideal Islamic King as the most elevated mystic in his realm is apparent in the conversion myth of the king of Tallo'.

The conversion of I Malinkaeng

> On September 22 [1605] a great ship was seen approaching Tallo'. As it neared, it gradually shrank in size until it was only a map of the world. On it was seated a Minangkabau called Dato ri Bandang. When he came ashore, he began to pray in the Muslim manner. The king of Tallo' [I Malinkaeng] went down to see the visitor. As he neared the harbour, he saw a man standing on a flat white stone surrounded by four other men. The central figure asked the king where he was going. When the king told him he was going to see Dato ri Bandang, the man told him to give him greetings from the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet then used his saliva to write on his hands the following phrases in Arabic: "In the name of Allah the All-Merciful;" and "Peace be upon you, Allah's mercy and blessing be upon you!" Then the five figures disappeared and the King of Tallo' continued on his way.
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> When the king reached Dato-ri-Bandang, he asked him what god he worshipped. "My God is your God," answered Dato-ri-Bandang. The king requested instruction and in only a few hours he learned not only the profession of

> faith, but also the correct manner of prayer and the recitation of the Koran. When the instruction was completed, Datu-ri-Bandang showed him the Throne of Allah and the Tablet on which the deeds of men are recorded, and also the depths of Hell. The king then remembered to deliver the greetings of the Prophet Muhammad. When Dato-ri-Bandang saw the radiant words on the King's hands, he realised the King had been placed far above him, since he had himself never received an appearance from the Prophet.
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> Soon all the people of Tallo' and Gowa had embraced Islam, which then spread throughout Sulawesi. The grave of this first convert to Islam in South Sulawesi is in Kaluku-Bodowa in Tallo' and is an object of veneration to this day. (condensed from Matthes [1885] 1943: 387-390)

In this myth, the king represents the vertical, or cosmological, axis: he is both the descendent of the founding royal ancestor who descended onto a stone from the sky, and the one who is chosen for a direct encounter with a similarly descended Prophet Muhammad. It is a Sufi *shaykh* with magical powers who represents the horizontal, or cosmopolitan, axis; he arrives from the sea while sitting on a map of the world. The king is granted a charismatic, intuitive understanding of the new religion by the Prophet before he even meets the *shaykh*. He must rely on the stranger for instruction it the outer ritual and scriptural forms of Islam but then immediately acquires the ability to see through these forms to its mystical essence, represented by the Throne of Allah and the depths of Hell. The myth makes it clear that mystical knowledge is superior to scriptural knowledge, although both are required.

The Sufi Shaykh as Stranger King in South Sulawesi

Already in the Makassar conversion myth one can sense a potential rivalry between the traditional authority of the king, the charismatic authority of the *shaykh* and the rational authority of the '*alim.* With the introduction of the idea of the universally valid *shariah* law, a code that transcended all political boundaries and thus the authority of all local kings, a decisive transformation occurred in the polity. Those learned in the law came to constitute a potentially rival source of rational authority to the traditional authority claimed by the king. Both could assert a measure of the charismatic authority possessed by prophets who claimed to speak for the gods. But the *ulama* typically had a better claim to the cosmopolitan knowledge that was the basis of the *shariah*. Because of the central role played by oral commentary in the transmission of all Islamic knowledge, whether scriptural, legal or mystical, the quest for such knowledge meant that seekers had to travel all around the Islamic commonwealth to acquire it. The master-pupil relationship was the central mechanism in the reproduction of cosmopolitanism in classical Islamic societies. To be valid, all forms of sacred knowledge had to be accompanied by a pedigree (*isnad* or *silsila*) that linked the holder of such knowledge to its originator (Messick 1993; Azra 2004; Ho 2006).

During the seventeenth century, religious experts from the Arabian Sea began to present themselves in South Sulawesi as masters of both the cosmopolitan law (*shariah*) and of esoteric knowledge of the cosmos (*ilmu*). In peripheral realms all over the peninsula, they were routinely presented with local wives, and passed their knowledge on either to their sons or to their sons-in-law, who might also be eligible for local royal office. Everywhere the hereditary political offices headed by the *karaeng* (hereditary

lord) came to be doubled by a set of semi-hereditary religious offices headed by the *kali* (Arabic *qadi*).

The spiritual contest between the two authorities began to turn in favor of the *shaykhs* when the temporal power of the kings was undermined a radically new form of power, the Dutch United East-India Company (VOC). The VOC was formed in 1602 when competing Dutch trading companies established a cartel to control the prices of spices imported from eastern Indonesia. The superiority of the naval power, global financial resources, and organisational structure of the VOC enabled it to subdue one Indonesian sultanate after another in the course of the seventeenth century. Gowa's turn came between 1666 and 1677, when the VOC succeeded in destroying all its fortifications in a series of campaigns and in installing a favorable ruler on the throne, Sultan Abd-al Jalil (Andaya 1981: 168-169; Bulbeck 1990).

One of Abd al-Jalil's first actions was to write to the *Shaykh al-Islam* of the sultanate of Banten in Java, Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqasari, begging him to return to his homeland and to serve as tutor to the crown prince. According to local tradition, Shaykh Yusuf grew up in the royal court of Gowa. He fell in love with a daughter of the sultan, Daeng Nisanga, but his suit was contemptuously rejected because of his low rank. Yusuf left for Mecca in 1644, making friends with the crown prince of Banten on the way. He did not return to Indonesia until around 1670, by which time his friend had been installed as Sultan Ageng of Banten. Ageng appointed Yusuf his *Shaykh al-Islam* and gave him one of his daughters in marriage (Djirong Basang 1981). Because of his earlier humiliation in Gowa, Shaykh Yusuf refused Sultan Abd al-Jalil's request that he return. He did, however, send a blind Makassar student of his, known as Tuan Rappang, to serve

as the *Shaykh al-Islam* of Gowa.

We are fortunate to have an account of conditions in Gowa during the era of Tuan Rappang as seen through the eyes of two young Makassar princes who were exiled to the court of Louis XIV of France (Pelras 1997, 1998). According to the Jesuit priest who interviewed the two princes, there were three "orders" of "Agguy", (*Hajji*) in Gowa. The first were the *labes*, the mosque officials in charge of the call to prayer. The second were the *santari*, or religious students who lived in the mosque and maintained and its library. They shaved their heads, wore a plain sarong of white linen and subsisted on daily donations of alms. The third were the *tuans*, lords, who received this title from the Grand Mufti in Mecca. The *tuan* who was closest to the king was "the Patriarch and Primate of the Kingdom; nor does he acknowledge any one above him, but the Grand Mufti of Mecca" (Gervaise 1701: 155). This must have been none other than Tuan Rappang. The *tuans* dressed in the Turkish style with long white robes, and wore turbans when leading prayers. As to the piety of the general population, "they are far more devout that all the other Mahometans; for they observe an infinite number of Ceremonies that are not in use among the Turks, nor among the Indian Mahometans; because they believe them to be practis'd at Mecca, which they look upon as the Centre of their Religion, and the Pattern which they ought to follow." (Gervaise 1701:133)

From this account, it is clear that by the 1680s the sultans of Banten and Gowa had been so weakened by the VOC that they deferred to cosmopolitan *shaykhs* like Tuan Rappang and Shaykh Yusuf, who helped impose the model of Islamic orthodoxy they had learned during their time in the Ottoman-dominated Hejaz. In 1682, the VOC installed an ally on the throne of Banten. Shaykh Yusuf was captured and exiled to Sri Lanka

where he withdrew into mysticism (van Bruinessen 1995: 182). The VOC still considered Yusuf such a threat, however, that in 1693 he was sent to the Cape of Good Hope, where he died 1699. In 1703 Sultan Abd al- Jalil requested the return of Yusuf's mortal remains. According to the Diary of the Kings of Gowa, Yusuf was re-entombed in Lakiung near the graves of the Karaengs of Gowa on April 5, 1705 (Ligtvoet 1880: 176).

Bureaucratic knowledge and military power in the Dutch Overseas Empire

During the seventeenth century, the VOC was engaged in creating a radically new kind of power. It was a mercantilist corporation run by a rational bureaucracy of interchangeable officials whose explicit aim was to produce maximum profits for the shareholders back home. During the eighteenth century, the VOC acquired a growing number of territories and its officials were expected to administer a growing number of subjects. Since VOC officials were rotated frequently throughout the East Indies, a means had to be found to pass on the knowledge they had accumulated about the complex marital and political relationships among the local elites, as well as of local laws and customs. A principle means of doing so were the *memorie van overgave*, memoranda of transfer, which summarised the chief political developments in an area for the benefit of the next official. The information contained in them had to be as explicit as possible, since their recipients might be entirely ignorant of the local situation.

The slave trade was the principal source of wealth for both the VOC and its officers in South Sulawesi throughout the eighteenth century. The central role of Makassar in the regional slave trade dated back to the constant warfare between the VOC and Gowa that lasted from 1666 until 1677. These wars generated a large volume of

captives who were sold as slaves. In 1676, 77% of the population of 1,400 in the European residential quarter of Vlaardingen in Makassar fell into the category of slave, debt bondsman or freed slave (*mardijker*). In the 1680s, ethnic Bugis and Makassar made up over 30% of all slaves in VOC possessions throughout Indonesia (Sutherland 1983).

As the military situation stabilised during the eighteenth century, Dutch officials in charge of these territories became the primary suppliers of the slaves exported from Makassar. They assumed the power previously enjoyed by local chiefs to enslave people as punishment for certain crimes or in cases where a miscreant was unable to pay a fine (Nederburgh 1888). VOC officials in South Sulawesi typically supplemented their meager salaries by trading slaves on the side. In addition to their crucial functions as cultural brokers and interpreters, the mestizo descendents of VOC employees and local women also became specialists in the slave trade. In 1730, 71% of the total population of Makassar was enslaved. The average male mestizo in Makassar owned ten slaves, while the average Chinese and European male owned only five (Sutherland 1983: 268-269).

Dutch power was based on depersonalised and interchangeable office holders, who were engaged in the single-minded pursuit of portable financial profits that could be repatriated to the share-holders back in the metropolis or pocketed for private gain. Dutch officials who refused to legitimate their relationships with local women failed to establish social relations with the extended families of their concubines. Having no place in the local social and political structures, the offspring of such unions made their living as culture-brokers and often became the least scrupulous agents of the slave trade.

During the eighteenth century, the Bugis and Makassar developed three different attitudes toward this alien sort of power. Arung Palakka represented one kind of attitude:

to treat the VOC as a morally neutral resource and ally with it when tactically expedient in order to bring down a local rival. This is how the VOC is portrayed in a popular Makassar epic, the *Sinrili' Tallumbatua* (Siradjuddin Bantang 1982; Andaya 1979; Gibson 2007: 129-134). Shaykh Yusuf represented a second kind of attitude: to fight it in the name of *jihad* when possible, or, when necessary, to withdraw into otherworldly mysticism. The third attitude is represented by another popular Makassar epic called the *Sinrili' Datu Museng*. This epic treats the agents of the VOC as the epitome of evil, and celebrates the decision of its hero to sacrifice his wife and to die in single combat against the VOC army rather than submit to the Governor's emasculating demand that he surrender his beloved and his weapons. The historical context in which this epic enfolds was an intricate power struggle in the 1760s between the lords of Taliwang and Cereweh in Sumbawa, a struggle that drew in the Balinese lords of Lombok, scattered bands of Bugis and Makassar "pirates" that had settled overseas, and a number of corrupt VOC officials who backed different factions depending on their interest in the slave trade. Over the next two centuries, the Epic of Datu Museng's life evolved into an elaborate allegory of the Sufi path to unity with the Creator (Matthes 1860; see Gibson 2007: 97-109 for a detailed analysis).

Conclusion

In Island Southeast Asia, sacral kingship, cosmopolitan law and bureaucratic rationality came into being successively but then coexisted with one another for centuries. These institutions were based on distinct sets of social practices each of which served to estrange political authorities from their subjects in a different way. Cosmological rituals placed the stranger king above the factional loyalties of his subjects.

Cosmopolitan legal codes were derived from scriptural religions and transmitted from master to pupil in distant settings. They placed the justice dispensed by "world rulers" and their ministers beyond the local customs of their subjects. Bureaucratic states accomplished many of the same effects by depersonalising both the holders of political office and the accumulation of documentary knowledge.

I would like to draw out some of the implications of this analysis for David Henley's argument that Dutch colonial officers served as the functional equivalents of stranger kings in northern Sulawesi. Henley argues that the stateless societies of northern Sulawesi welcomed officers of the VOC because they were able to provide impartial adjudication of disputes, and thus assumed the role of "stranger-kings" who were perceived by local peoples "as fulfilling useful functions among them" (Henley 2004: 131). While he admits that the imposition of compulsory labour service by Dutch officials in nineteenth century Minahasa undermined the "popular legitimacy" the colonial state derived from its "peacemaking and judicial functions", he goes on to suggest that the post-colonial state has enjoyed even less legitimacy among local people due to its "rapacity with respect to local resources" (Henley 2004: 132).

Henley's attribution of benign political functions to the colonial state leaves to one side the role of that state in organising warfare against autonomous states and stateless peoples in the region. Schouten notes that Minahasa provided more than 1,400 auxiliary troops, drawn from a population of 80,000, to help the new colonial state in the Java War of 1825-1830 (Schouten 1998: 76). Minahasa continued to provide a disproportionate number of soldiers to the Royal Army of the Netherlands East Indies throughout the nineteenth century, and many Minahasans saw action in the Aceh War of

1873 to 1903 (Schouten 1998: 122-123). The peoples of Java and Aceh thus paid the price of the peace the Dutch bureaucracy bestowed on the peoples of northern Sulawesi.

In light of this analysis, I would suggest that the ability of VOC officers to adjudicate disputes in northern Sulawesi was due to the same bureaucratic depersonalisation of power that that enabled their contemporaries in South Sulawesi to pursue the financial rewards of the slave trade so single-mindedly. With a superior military force behind them, agents of the VOC felt little need to maintain the legitimacy of their rule among their Makassar subjects. Upon closer examination, the irony of this juxtaposition of legitimacy in the north and illegitimacy in the south goes even deeper. As Henley notes, one of the reasons why the inhabitants of northern Sulawesi were so keen to invite the Dutch stranger kings in was the endemic slave raiding they suffered at the hands of Bugis and Tausug marauders. But this raiding was itself a secondary effect of the aggressive wars initiated throughout the archipelago by European mercantilists; by the injection of ever more sophisticated firearms into the local arena by rival European powers; and by the creation of an insatiable global market that fed off the products of unfree labour. Thus one cannot automatically use evidence of endemic violence during the period immediately after the incursion of the European companies to infer what tribal life was like in the absence of states (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992).

The colonial state appears in Henley's analysis like a perfectly neutral and well-oiled *deus ex machina* that provided local tribal societies with all of the benefits of a well-ordered polity, a machine that fell apart after independence. But it was precisely the carefully cultivated dependence of local people on stranger-*controleurs* that made political institutions so weak in the post-colonial period. Sukarno's "guided democracy"

from above and Suharto's "new order" were merely updated versions of the way the colonial state used its superior military force and not its local legitimacy to play the role of the stranger king. There is a down side to states having to depend not on their own subjects for support but on foreign colonial or neo-colonial military forces. The availability of such forces stifles the development of democratic institutions that enable states to dispense impartial justice without relying on stranger kings from above or from abroad. The most important of these institutions is a system of public schools designed to inculcate in all citizens the same sort of estrangement from local kinsmen, customs and traditional authorities, and of attachment to a higher social unit, the nation, that was achieved in pre-colonial times by rituals that attached subjects to their kings and Muslims to their God.

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