Ubiquitous but Elusive: The Chinese of Makassar in VOC Times

Gabrielle von Kispal-van Deijk
(Munich)

After the Dutch East-India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* – hereafter called the VOC) had conquered the southwestern tip of the island of Sulawesi (or Celebes) and its port-city of Makassar[1] in 1669, a census revealed a small group of about twenty Chinese amongst its population. This almost negligible presence at the beginning of the VOC rule was to grow into a powerful merchant class that played an important if not crucial role in the re-establishment of Makassar as a regional trade center in the eastern Indonesian archipelago during the régime of the VOC, which lasted from the middle of the seventeenth until the end of the eighteenth century. This era happened to coincide with a fairly peaceful period in China when Chinese seaborne trade flourished, only interrupted by the evacuation policy that began in the 1660s[2] and a single trading ban between 1717 and 1727.

In attempting to trace the origins and development of Chinese activities within the trading structure of Makassar and the eastern Malayan archipelago one has to rely on contemporary Western documents as indigenous sources are few and focused on the native population of the region[3], and local Chinese written material is virtually non-existent.[4] Although the

1 Makassar was renamed Ujung Pandang in 1971, but reverted to its former name in 1999 in an attempt to revitalize the region economically.

2 The Great Evacuation (遷界令; alternatively 遷海令) at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) required the mass departure of the population from the coastal areas of China in order to suppress the anti-Qing movement begun by loyalists of the defeated Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shandong were affected to varying degrees. The ban was lifted in 1669.

3 For historiography of the region before the conquest by the VOC in 1669, see William P. Cummings (tr. and ed.), *A Chain of Kings: The Makassarese Chronicles of Gowa and Talloq*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 33 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007), and, by the same author, *The Makassar Annals 1545–1751*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 35 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011).

4 It seems that much was destroyed by the Chinese themselves during the riots of 1965 that heralded a period of severe repression during which possession of such documents was extremely dangerous. Many Chinese citizens even had their family names changed into Indonesian ones for fear of reprisals. Iconographic traces were wiped out as well when Makassar's oldest surviving, mid-eighteenth century temple was destroyed in the riots of 1997, and the ancient cemetery was demolished in favor of urban

Chinese overseas trading institutions, *yang hang* or "ocean guilds", sent dozens of ships annually to Southeast Asian destinations, elaborate reports on their activities, comparable to European records, are not available.[5] If ever they existed, they seem to have been irretrievably lost.

Currently, the only systematic source on the early Chinese in Makassar is the harbourmasters' register of that port that supplies useful shipping statistics even if, regrettably, colorful details are lacking. All other archival sources impart anecdotal information only, and whereas the stories they tell are fascinating at times they fail to supply the sound base required for well-founded historical conclusions.

Therefore, what emerges is but a kaleidoscopic picture: fragmented images of sojourning merchants and seafaring traders, settled craftsmen and market gardeners, serious businessmen and cheating scoundrels, some true to Chinese culture and beliefs and some conformed to local language and religion.

From China to the Spice Islands

Two major sea routes led from China to Southeast Asia, a western and an eastern one. The western and oldest route hugged the Chinese coast to Hainan and on to the southern point of present day Vietnam, whence it branched out to various destinations around the former Gulf of Siam, now Gulf of Thailand, to Northwest Borneo, leading eventually to the Indian Ocean and to the islands of Java and Sumatra. This route had been in use since earliest times and comprised ports like Guangzhou in modern Guangdong. Under the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368), the Minnan area (modern Fujian) gained in importance, and a good share of China's external trade went through the port of Quanzhou. The latter's rise may be associated with the gradual emergence of a second sea route, an "eastern trade artery", which led from Quanzhou past Southwest Taiwan and Northwest Luzon to the Sulu and Celebes Seas from where it reached down to the Moluccas, i.e. the Northern Moluccas, Ambon and the Banda Islands. Political unrest in continental Southeast Asia and on Java in Mongol times

development. Currently, the majority of Makassar's Chinese does not speak their native language and feels little connection to Chinese culture. On the lack of Chinese written sources, see Leonard Blussé, "Batavia, 1619–1740. The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 12 (1981), pp. 159–178, see pp. 162–163. On iconographic sources, see Claudine Salmon, "Women's Status as Reflected in Chinese Epigraphs from Insulinde, Sixteenth-Twentieth Centuries", *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 157–194.

5 The only surviving correspondence appears to be the forty letters written by several *yang hang* merchants between 1790 and 1810 and found in the library of Leiden University. Until now only seven of these letters, written by a single merchant to the VOC authorities in Batavia, have been published. See Leonard Blussé, "The Vicissitudes of Maritime Trade. Letters from the Ocean Hang Merchant, Li Kunhe, to the Dutch Authorities in Batavia, 1803–1809", in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Sojourners and Settlers. Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996), pp. 148–163.

appears to have contributed to a temporary shift of trading activities to the eastern sea lane.[6] Yuan records, especially Wang Dayuan's 汪大淵 famous *Daoyi zhilüe* 島夷誌略 (c. 1350), reflect a growing knowledge of locations along this route, including the earliest descriptions available worldwide of the Sulu Islands, the Moluccan world, Northeast Sulawesi, and even Timor. Wang Dayuan also records the importance of cloves and the distribution of textiles from Hainan and Champa in these eastern regions.[7] Archaeological finds of Chinese ceramics in the Philippines sustain the impression that certain sections of the eastern route saw lively trading.

At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and following the conquest of the province of Fujian, then the home base of influential Islamic merchant groups, many Muslim families left China possibly for destinations along the eastern route. Others appear to have founded diaspora settlements along the western "corridor" in places like Tuban and Gresik on Java. The Ming rulers banned private seaborne trade whilst official exchange with Southeast Asia was mostly restricted to the traditional western route. In 1567, when the ban was eased, the eastern route regained its former importance. That period saw a swift rise in the silk-for-silver trade, involving merchants from Japan, Fujian, Guangdong, Macau and other places. Crucial in this respect was the growth of Manila as it attracted migrants from Fujian to Luzon, some of whom became active within the Philippine trade networks, especially around Mindanao and other Muslim areas, and maintained ties with Sulawesi and the Moluccan world.[8]

Chinese geographical works of the Ming period endorse this picture. The *Shunfeng xiangsong* 順風相送, parts of which may originate from the sixteenth century, describes a "voyage" from Quanzou to Dongjiala 東加蠟, which – according to an interpretation – is Donggala on the east coast of Sulawesi; this could be the earliest Chinese reference to a passage through the Makassar Strait. Zhang Xie's 張燮 *Dongxiyang kao* 東西洋考 (1617/18)

6 For the sea routes and early Chinese trade to the eastern Malaysian regions, see various studies in Roderich Ptak, *China's Seaborne Trade with South and Southeast Asia, 1200–1750* and *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang. Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trade, c. 1000–1600* (both Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 1999 and 2004 respectively). For the Indian Ocean, recently Tansen Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks to Southern Asia, 1200–1450", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49 (2006), pp. 421–553. On Quanzhou, see Angela Schottenhammer (ed.), *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 2001), and her *Das Songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel. Unerwartete Konsequenzen des zentralstaatlichen Zugriffs auf den Reichtum einer Küstenregion* (Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002).

7 For earlier Chinese sources with references to the "eastern world", see Ptak, "Jottings on Chinese Sailing Routes to Southeast Asia, Especially on the Eastern Route in Ming Times", reprinted in his *China, the Portuguese*, pp. 115–124. For cloves, see his "China and the Trade in Cloves ca. 960–1435", reprinted in *China's Seaborne Trade*.

8 For a panorama of Southeast Asian trade, see e.g., George Bryan Souza, *The Survival of Empire. Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). The latest survey of the Chinese in Manila is Juan Gil's *Los Chinos en Manila, Siglos XVI y XVII* (Lisbon, Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2011).

suggests a steady increase of Chinese trade in the Celebes Sea, and thus in the direction of Makassar, and also offers additional information on the Sulu Islands and the Moluccas.[9]

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the chief products sought by the Chinese in maritime regions of Southeast Asia were sugar, birds' nests, sea slugs, pepper, tin, and timber. By the eighteenth century, the flourishing economy of South China also required rice from these regions. In exchange, traders brought Chinese goods such as silk, porcelain, tobacco, combs, fans, ceramics, and ironware to Southeast Asia.[10]

It must have been at around that time that more Chinese began to stay in the eastern half of the archipelago, either waiting for favorable winds, or with the intention to settle permanently in new sites where they sought to obtain products that would sell either in China or within the archipelago. The early presence of the Chinese in Makassar may well be related to that period.

Makassar under VOC Rule

In the sixteenth century international interest prompted the exploitation of the Moluccas since several "fine spices", i.e. cloves, nutmeg and mace[11], were grown only there at the time, and as a result Makassar was to develop into a major port. Situated on the estuary of the Gowa River, Makassar had long been the outlet of both Gowa and Talloq, neighboring, seafaring polities specializing in the cultivation of rice. Its sheltered harbour was perfectly located, close to the main trade routes linking the Moluccas with Java and the secondary sea-lanes connecting Indonesia's southern arc of islands with the Philippines and China.[12]

In the sixteenth century, the rulers of Gowa and Talloq seized the opportunity of the Portuguese conquest of Malacca (1511), which entailed the disruption of existing trading

9 On all particulars of the trade routes and Chinese sources for these see Ptak, "Jottings", pp. 107–113, 125. For the entry on Donggala, see e.g. J. V. Mills, "Chinese Navigators in Insulinde about A.D. 1500", *Archipel* 18 (1979), pp. 69–79.

10 Kwee Hui Kian, "Money and Credit in Chinese Mercantile Operations in Colonial and Precolonial Southeast Asia", in David Henley and Peter Boomgaard (eds.), *Credit and Debt in Indonesia, 860–1930. From Peonage to pawnshop, from Kongsi to Cooperative* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), pp. 124–143, see p. 125.

11 Many studies include references to early European descriptions of the cultivation of cloves and the clove trade in colonial times; for an excellent overview see: Gerrit J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen. De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon, 1656–1696*, KITLV 125 (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1987), pp. 229–251. For a detailed description of nutmeg and mace and the trade therein, the old monograph by Otto Warburg is still useful: *Die Muskatnuss, ihre Geschichte, Botanik, Kultur, Handel und Verwerthung, sowie ihre Verfälschungen und Surrogate; zugleich ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte der Banda-Inseln* (Leipzig, Engelmann, 1897).

12 On the early history of the Makassar region, see e.g. John Villiers, "Makassar: The Rise and Fall of an East Indonesian Maritime Trading State 1512–1669", in J. Kathirithamby Wells and Villiers (eds.), *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), pp. 143–159.

patterns, to transform their regional port into an entrepôt for international overseas trade, and a major spice trading center, aided by the skills and capital of refugee Malay and other traders. As such Makassar maintained close ties with its neighbors, the Moluccas, the Lesser Sunda Islands, Kalimantan and Java, trading rice and cloth for cloves, nutmeg and mace. Later the spice trade also attracted Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese to Makassar and it goes without saying that the Northern Europeans showed interest as well. The Dutch maintained a trading post there for a time as did the English and Danes.[13] In 1641, the Dutch conquest of Portuguese Malacca gave Makassar's trade a further boost since commercial relations with Spanish Manila and especially with Portuguese Macao flourished.[14]

Meanwhile, the VOC, having first concentrated on obtaining total control of spice supplies in Europe through annexation of the production areas in Asia, had succeeded in subjugating the Spice Islands within a short period of time: Ambon in 1605, the Northern Moluccas in 1607 and the Banda Islands in 1609. In 1619, it established "headquarters" in Batavia (modern Jakarta), and then shifted its aim to upholding its trade monopoly in spices and other commodities, such as Indian textiles[15], for which control of non-VOC shipping was essential. Such controls encompassed prohibitions, inspections and the channeling of navigation, moreover the issue of travel permits played an important role, which also explains why the VOC now turned its attention to Makassar – not because it was a spice producing area, but on account of its unique strategic location at the western and southern entrances of the Moluccan archipelago that made it ideally suited to prevent illegal spice trade.[16]

13 On the English trading post, see D. K. Bassett, "English Trade in Celebes, 1613–1667", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31 (1958), pp. 1–39; John Villiers, "One of the Especiallest Flowers in our Garden. The English Factory at Makassar 1613–1667", *Archipel* 39 (1990), pp. 159–178. On Danish trade in Asia, see Ole Feldbæk: "Den danske Asien-handel 1616–1807. Værdi og volumen" *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 15 (1990), pp. 104–136. More recently: Stephan Diller, *Die Dänen in Indien, Südostasien und China (1620–1845)*, South China and Maritime Asia 8 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999).

14 Heather Sutherland, "Eastern Emporium and Company Town. Trade and Society in Eighteenth-Century Makassar", in Frank Broeze (ed.), *Brides of the Sea. Port Cities of Asia from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1989), pp. 97–128, see pp. 100–102.

15 On textiles, see Kenneth R. Hall, "The Textile Industry in Southeast Asia, 1400–1800", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39 (1996), pp. 87–135; Ruurdje Laarhoven, *The Power of Cloth. The Textile Trade of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) 1600–1780*, 1994 (PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra); Robyn Maxwell, *Tradition, Trade and Transformation. Textiles of Southeast Asia* (Melbourne et al.: Oxford University Press, 1990).

16 Its goal attained, the VOC pursued a three-pronged policy to preserve its position: fix the retail prices in the Dutch Republic, exercise strict quantitative control on the production, and monopolize the trade. Production control was practiced particularly relentlessly and by 1670 clove cultivation was restricted to a few isolated islands in the Moluccas. In Banda, the only area where superior quality nutmeg and mace was produced, the Dutch wiped out the population and installed a plantation system to replace the local economy. For further details, see E. M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia. The Trade of the Dutch East India*

The VOC conquered Makassar in 1666–1669, and the peace treaty with the various states in South Sulawesi included the regulation of trade and shipping: all European nationals were expelled from Makassar and forbidden to trade there, and the VOC was granted the monopoly on trade in Indian cloth and Chinese wares (without specifying what these were) as well as absolute tax exemption. Furthermore, all citizens of Makassar had to apply for a VOC pass if they wanted to sail to Kalimantan, Java and the region around the Malacca Straits, whilst all trade with the Lesser Sunda Islands was prohibited, and Makassarese were not permitted to sail to the Moluccas, the Philippines and China.[17]

The local VOC authorities did not oppose free trade as such: they were well aware that it made a significant contribution to the prosperity of South Sulawesi. On one occasion, when Batavia raised the possibility of restricting private trade in general, the Governor of Makassar refused on a legal technicality, but promised to keep a tight control on incoming and outgoing shipping.[18] A direct consequence of this dispute was the harbourmasters' register that was kept in Makassar as of 1713 and that provides valuable information, to be discussed further on.

By the end of the seventeenth century a new regional trading network had come into existence; Burghers, i.e. non- or ex-VOC personnel, legally European, but often mestizo – the offspring of European men and Southeast Asian women – and Chinese sailed to Ambon and Banda, while Sulawesians mainly plied the routes to and from Java, Kalimantan and some of the Lesser Sunda Islands, since the VOC regarded them as *roofgierige vogels* (predatory birds) to be kept away from the Spice Islands. It seems that, in spite of the VOC conquest, Makassar's role as an entrepôt had definitely not come to an end. Because of its location seafaring merchants gave it preference over other ports as a location where to restock with victuals, and

Company during the Eighteenth Century (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2006), pp. 291–292; Gerrit J. Knaap, "De Ambonse eilanden tussen twee mogendheden: de VOC en Ternate, 1605–1665", in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Peter Rietbergen (eds.), *Hof en Handel: Aziatische vorsten en de VOC 1620–1720, opgedragen aan Jurrien van Goor* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), pp. 35–58.

17 The war between the VOC and the state of Bone on one side and the states of Gowa and Talloq on the other side is well researched; see F. W.Stapel, *Het Bongaais verdrag* (Groningen: Wolters, 1922), pp. 93–191 and F. W. Stapel, *Cornelis Speelman* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1936); Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawsi (Celebes) in the 17th Century*, KITLV 91 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 73–117.

18 Various decrees attest to these restrictions: In 1632, free trade was still allowed between Batavia and Banda, Ambon and Makassar. In 1650, Malays and Javanese were only allowed to trade in Ambon and Banda if they resided in Batavia, as this was to be reserved for Burghers and Chinese. In 1677 vessels smaller than 30 *last* (1 *last* = 2 tons) were refused passes to Banda and Ambon in order to prevent spice smuggling. From 1697 till the end of the century various restrictions are issued on trade routes: traders to Banda and Ambon could not stop in any harbor on their return, residents of Banda and Ambon were forbidden to trade with Batavia etc.; see J. A. van der Chijs (ed.), *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek* 1605–1811 (hereafter: *PB*), 12 vols. (Batavia: Landschdrukkerij, 1887–1897; online: http://www.archive.org/details/nederlandschind04chijgoog), I, p. 280; II, pp. 160, 581; III, pp. 35, 36, 138, 262, 342.

meet other merchants to trade their commodities against pepper, wax, tortoiseshell, slaves, sandalwood, and gold, as well as, occasionally and illegally, cloves.[19]

The Early Chinese in Makassar

Dutch sources include few references to the early Chinese presence in Makassar, and there is no evidence of Chinese shipping to Sulawesi until the early seventeenth century. We do not know exactly when and whence the first Chinese came to Makassar, and their activities remain vague. Even the number of Chinese residents in the years prior to the VOC conquest is unknown. A pictorial ground plan in a 1638 secret atlas of the VOC fails to show the Chinese compound, the *Kampong Cina*, although it did exist at that time.

It is possible that the number of resident Chinese was at an all-time low then owing to maritime trade having been interrupted by the turmoil in South China, where Ming loyalists were fighting Qing armies after the fall of the Ming Dynasty in 1644. Dutch colonial sources describe brisk Chinese shipping throughout Southeast Asia and the Indonesian archipelago until the late 1630s. At that time Batavia's direct trade with China declined, certainly due to difficulties in China and the serious differences between the Zheng family and the VOC in the Taiwan Strait.[20]

It was not until 1656 that a letter from the small Jesuit Mission in Makassar to their headquarters mentions Chinese traders (albeit without quantifying). That letter describes the sorry plight of the fathers, who had turned to trade to provide in their livelihood and did not find it easy to compete against the Chinese and European merchants.[21] Further evidence of a Chinese presence can be found in a memorandum of 1669, written to the Governor-General of the VOC in Batavia by Cornelis Speelman, the conqueror of Makassar. In his

19 *Generale Missiven* 1610–1795 (hereafter *GM*), various editors, 13 vols. (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1960–2007; online: http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/generalemissiven/#page=0&size=800&accessor=toc&source=1), I, p. 402; II, p. 302. For the dispute on Makassar's status of entrepôt, see Heather Sutherland, "Trade, Court and Company: Makassar in the Later Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries", in Locher-Scholler/Rietbergen (eds.), *Hof en Handel*, pp. 85–112, here p. 87; Leonard Blussé, "Chinese Century. The Eighteenth Century in the China Sea Region", *Archipel* 58 (1999), pp. 107–129.

20 Sutherland, "Eastern Emporium" p. 100. *GM*, I and II, passim. For a recent overview of Chinese trade in Batavia, see Leonard Blussé, "Junks to Java. Chinese Shipping to the Nanyang in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century", in Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (eds.), *Chinese Circulations. Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 221–258, and Marie Sybille de Vienne, *Les Chinois en Insulinde. Échanges et sociétés marchandes au XVIIe siècle d'après les sources de la V.O.C.* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2008).

21 Hubert Jacobs (ed.), *The Jesuit Makassar Documents 1615–1682,* Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu 134 (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1988), p. 145 (Makassar to Nagasaki, 1656). Unfortunately, this letter contains no details at all on the Chinese inhabitants of Makassar.

report on the population, he mentions 19 Chinese citizens, some long-time residents and a number of recent arrivals, by name (men only). The memorandum describes the Chinese as "the most useful inhabitants": the qualification for this epithet being not only the support and assistance extended to the VOC by some of them, but also their general ability to supply vegetables and other fresh victuals even in the worst of times.[22]

It was also Cornelis Speelman who decreed that the town plan should follow the pattern of many Asian cities of the time, and include a well-fortified fort, *kampongs* or native quarters, with "each nation under its own headman", and a "merchant town with houses of foreigners and strangers".[23] In 1671 Vlaardingen, a compound built near the VOC fort Rotterdam, was a merchant town inhabited by Chinese, "Moors" and other merchants. It looked probably much the same as in 1724, when it was described as: "just a small market town with only one unpaved street, I think the Chinese street, and two or three smaller ones where the Dutch Burghers, some Chinese under their headman, some Makassarese and other natives live and which can be closed and guarded by the Chinese and the Burgher watch. The VOC employees all live in the fort."[24]

By all accounts, although there is evidence of some spice smuggling, the Chinese of Makassar seem to have been a law-abiding people, and those who sailed to and fro in Makassar's harbour must have been trusted most of the time, as practically all mail deliveries recorded in the *Daghregisters* arrived and were sent through Chinese ships. What is more there is practically no evidence of complaints, as was often the case in other VOC settlements.[25]

Nevertheless, in 1672, the Makassar Chinese were forbidden to trade in the Moluccas in order to prevent spice smuggling. Permits were granted to VOC vessels and to residents of Batavia only, while traders from Ambon and Banda were no longer allowed to stop over in Makassar. If this was unavoidable, due to adverse weather conditions or for other pressing reasons, they had to moor right in front of the VOC fort. But in spite of all these restrictions the end of the seventeenth century offers a glimpse of things to come. In 1692, a vessel from

22 NA, Aanwinsten 1524, 1926-I:10–11, ff. 707–708 and 704 (Cornelis Speelman aan Jan van Opynen, provisioneel Opperhooft in Makassar in 1670). Citations like this refer to the Netherlands National Archive in The Hague (*Nationaal Archief*), specifically to VOC matters, with the inventory and folio number.

23 NA, Aanswinsten 1524, ff. 704.

24 *GM*, III, p. 755. Also description by Francois Valentijn (1666–1727), Dutch vicar in Ambon; see François Valentijn, "Beschrijvinge van Macassar", in his *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, vol. 3-2 (Dordrecht/Amsterdam: Johannes van Braam en Gerard onder den Linden, 1726), p. 135.

25 *GM*, III, passim; for the distribution of the mail, see the *Daghregisters* published online http://obp.tanap.net/pdf/files/3DE594ABDCAA866AA0359FA4D66A9B3E.pdf. Also see *GM*, II, pp. 120, 136, for reports from the Governor of the Moluccas to the Governor-General in Batavia in 1641 on the gambling dens operated by Chinese, that corrupted and ruined the population; and *GM*, II, p. 404, for an example of a successful Chinese swindle involving falsified measures and soaking cloves in seawater to boost their weight.

Fuzhou, in the Chinese province of Fujian, sailed round the northern tip of Borneo to Makassar and returned to her port only after having traded all of her cargo.[26] This event heralded a return to Makassar's former status, i.e. the upsurge in overseas trade under the Qing in combination with political stability both in locally controlled and VOC controlled zones in Southwest Sulawesi created a favorable climate for commerce. As a result, by 1720, Makassar was re-emerging as a key port, with about 300 vessels putting in each year, equaling Kalimantan's Banjarmasin. Above all the increased trade in sea produce, initially with Batavia and later via the annual junk from Amoy (present day Xiamen in the province of Fujian)[27] directly with China, provided Makassar with the required transit trade to replace spices. Consequently, with increased prosperity local demand for import of consumer goods grew.[28]

Obviously the Chinese perceived Makassar as a place with interesting prospects and their numbers rose accordingly. In 1679 Vlaardingen was inhabited by 1384 "souls"[29] of which 50 adult Chinese (37 men and 17 women), but in 1683 their number had already risen to 82 adults (42 men, 40 women) and in 1730, out of a population totaling 2,970 souls, 310 were Chinese or *peranakan* (generally understood as culturally and probably also ethnically assimilated Chinese) with a gender ratio of 50:50.[30]

Chinese Society: Women, Tax Farmers and Others

In describing the population the VOC officials never differentiated within the category "Chinese", i.e. there is no information on place of origin, which in view of the myriad of Chinese languages and dialects as well as the internal strife between some of them might have influenced the homogeneity within the community. Neither is there any mention of factors as social hierarchy and distribution of income. One could surmise that in the time of the Amoy junk most Chinese came from Fujian or its surroundings, and the general prosperity must have increased progressively, but again this is no more than an unsubstantiated deduction.

One indication of the increasing complexity of society may be found in the way communal control was structured. As in all other VOC settlements, the Asian communities were

26 *GM*, V, p. 615. This occurrence is not commented upon in the *Generale Missiven* so that the ship's reasons for coming to the port of Makassar and the VOC's reasons for the extension of the trading permit are an unsolved mystery.

27 For details on Amoy's rise to preeminence in maritime trade, see Ng Chin-Keong, *Trade and Society. The Amoy Network on the China Coast 1683–1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983).

28 Sutherland, "Trade, Court", pp. 104–107.

29 In VOC documents population statistics are called "soul counts" with the status of women and slaves following the identity of their husband or master.

30 VOC 1364 and 1368, in Jürgen G. Nagel, *Der Schlüssel zu den Molukken. Makassar und die Handelsstrukturen des Malaiischen Archipels in 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Eine exemplarische Studie*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2003), p. 392; *GM*, VII, p. 755.

administered through headmen of their own ethnicity, who were appointed by the colonial government and given honorary titles such as *kapitein* (*kapitan* in Malay; *kabidan* in Chinese) and *luitenant*. Initially, a single captain handled all matters Chinese, but in 1730, as Chinese affairs became more complex with the growth of the trade in marine products, the VOC decided to appoint a lieutenant.[31]

As a rule, these officers were prosperous merchants with ties within the local community and with the VOC, which enabled them to further their own business interests. They collected various taxes, took the annual census, and settled disputes.[32] The captains of the Chinese are the only Chinese named regularly as individual merchants in VOC sources, but even so details are exceedingly rare. There is one exception, however, the case of a Chinese merchant who had died intestate in 1767. The VOC administered his estate that consisted of a brick and a bamboo house on Chinese Street, three ships, and various household and trade goods with a total value of c. 4,000 *rijksdaalders*[33]. The merchant in question had owned the taxation rights for markets in 1764 and 1765, and had held the import and export dues monopoly in 1765, in which he had invested 12,000 *rijksdaalders*, so it is fair to assume he was a relatively rich man.[34]

Initially, the *peranakan* might have had a bridging function between the Chinese and the Malay communities, possibly including the indigenes as well. However, commercial competition and ethnic power struggles prevailed by the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1750 the captain of the Chinese sent a formal letter of complaint to the Governor of the VOC stating that the present captain of the Malays was trying to assert authority over the *peranakan*, in violation of custom and VOC policy. This was, of course, not only about power: less people meant less manpower to provide labor and funds for the community, as well as fewer subjects to pay the taxes that helped support the captains. The Makassar government took the matter seriously and solved the problem of the mixed marriages by legalizing the statistical practice that wives follow the nationality of their husband.[35]

Customs were different among the Chinese community. A female slave (most popular were the light-skinned Balinese women[36]) could be "promoted" to concubine, which would

31 Heather Sutherland, "A Chino-Indonesian Commodity Chain. The Trade in Tortoiseshell in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in Tagliacozzo and Chang (eds.), *Chinese Circulations*, pp. 172–202, here p. 177.

32 On the VOC's officer system, see Mona Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia 1837–1942* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1996).

33 The *rijksdaalder* or rixdollar was the usual "money of account". For currencies of the Netherlands, see Hans Jacobi/Bert van Beek, *Geld van het Koninkrijk* (Amsterdam: Pampus Associates, 1988).

34 Sutherland, "Eastern Emporium", p. 119.

35 Sutherland, "Eastern Emporium", pp. 124–126.

36 Samuel Hull Wilcocke (tr. and ed.), *Voyages to the East-Indies; by the late John Splinter Stavorinus, Esq. Rear Admiral in the Service of the States-General*, vol. 2, *A Voyage to the Cape the Good Hope, Batavia,*

bring her the advantage of partial freedom, right of inheritance, and protection from abuse, though not conferring Chinese status. In order to become a real Chinese wife, a woman had to become a "Chinese lady" first, which meant being adopted by a Chinese family, thereby obtaining a Chinese surname with the suffix *-niang* 娘 (lady). Only then did she become eligible for a formal marriage according to Chinese rites. This procedure made it possible for men to marry "real" Chinese wives at a time when mainland women rarely emigrated. The children born from all these mixed unions were free, and they were considered to be Chinese and raised as such. In this way emerged a group of *peranakan* women, who adhered to Chinese customs (except for the foot binding that never took hold anywhere in Indonesia), and who engaged in trade either on behalf of their husband or independently. Neither did they hesitate to take a case to court, be it a petition for divorce, a complaint about abuse by men, or a suit regarding their own business,[37] a state of affairs that was unusual in China itself.

The VOC authorities took a pragmatic view of this "emancipation" and changed classifying Chinese wives as "dependents" as early as 1693 because it was contrary to the practice of daily life and "because it caused innumerable hardships and unfairness".[38] Given the difference with the subservient position of wives in China, the change in attitude that these Chinese men displayed when far from home is striking. Once more, no written material is available to solve this tantalizing riddle and one can only guess that Chinese men accepted these "emancipated" females for practical reasons, they being essentially business partners. Then again, this difference in social status between local wives and Chinese wives is also apparent in tombstone inscriptions and funerary rituals observed throughout Indonesia as early as the eighteenth century indicating an acceptance of the position of women as equals.[39]

Samarang, Macasser, Amboyna, and Surat. With Accounts of Those Places in the Years 1774 and 1775 (London: Robinson, 1798), p. 371. Another theory is that Balinese women, not being muslims, knew how to keep pigs and prepare pork, see Yuan Bingling, "Chinese Women in Jakarta During the Colonial Period", *Asian Culture* 26 (2002), pp. 53–67, here p. 57.

37 See Yuan Bingling, "Chinese Women", passim, and Leonard Blussé, "One Hundred Weddings and Many More Funerals a Year. Chinese Civil Society in Batavia at the End of the Eighteenth Century", in Blussé and Chen Menghong (eds.), *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia*, Sinica Leidensia 49 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003). Valentijn, *Oost-Indien*, p. 257, describes the position of these "Chinese" women and their customs in Ambon.

38 Since then, Chinese women also acquired the right to manage their own property and to claim this right as from the age of 25. Citation from J. Th. Vermeulen, "Some Remarks about the Administration of Justice by the Compagnie in the 17th and 18th Century in Respect of the Chinese Community" (translation into English Y. S. Tan), *Journal of the South Seas Society* 12 (1956), pp. 7–8; for the edict, see *PB* III, p. 350

39 Valentijn, *Oost-Indien*, II, pp. 259–260, and the note on a specific funeral pp. 267–268. See also Salmon, "Women's Social Status".

Just as the captains functioned as political link between the VOC and the Asian communities, the *pachters* or tax farmers were the instrument for extracting profits from those sectors of the local economy claimed by the VOC. It was more practical to sell exploitation rights rather than attempt to manage and control them themselves. This tax farming, as it was called, meant buying a lease from the authorities that entitled to tax traders and travelers at ports, market places and other strategic sites. Other forms of revenue farming included leasing local monopoly rights to the sale of valuable products such as bird's nests, salt, sea cucumbers, and textiles.

The most valuable farm, customs duties, was a bone of contention between Makassar's Chinese elite and the captain of the Malays in the seventeenth century. Starting in 1745 the right to collect duties on incoming and outgoing vessels and their cargoes was auctioned, whereas it had previously been the prerogative of the harbourmaster. A few years later, a tax farm was introduced for markets. Initially, these farms were mostly controlled by the Captain of the Chinese; they likely formalized existing rights and compensated investments, as well as being an attempt to increase town revenue. Later, in the mid-1750s, more farms were added. The farmers' identities reflect their relative access to economic sources. The alcohol monopoly was in European hands until the 1770s when they were replaced by Chinese, who controlled also the gambling, slaughter and Chinese head tax collecting rights. The monopoly on running the markets was much more open, control shifting between Chinese, Malays and mestizos.[40] Revenue farming remained a key activity of Chinese and other foreign merchants until it was abolished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; harbourmaster- and toll gate tax farms were particularly sought after by Chinese merchants.[41]

All this increase in revenue, however, originated from the changes that took place in commerce round 1750 when the exchange of Indian textiles for Moluccan spices, once the core of Makassar's economy, was replaced by the exchange of Chinese commodities for East Indonesian sea products.

Chinese Trade: From Intermittent Shipping to Commercial Dominance

The only comprehensive source for seaborne trading activity in the eastern archipelago is the register of Makassar's non-VOC shipping and trade[42] kept by the Dutch harbourmasters since 1713, of which the years 1717–1734 and 1766–1797 were handed down to us. Knaap

40 Heather Sutherland, "The Makassar Malays. Adaptation and Identity c. 1660–1790", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32 (2001) pp. 397–421, here pp. 413–415.

41 Kwee, "Money and Credit", p. 125. On the harbormasters' farm, see See Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar* (Leiden: KITLV-Press, 2004), pp. 30–36, and VOC 1910, ff. 105–109.

42 On the organization of the port of Makassar, see Nagel, *Schlüssel*, pp. 407–414.

and Sutherland have analyzed the available data and added to them from archival and published sources; Nagel has done the same for a selected ten years.[43] The results enable us to get a glimpse of a complex web of overseas trading in and around Makassar.

Yet again, there are no hard data on the early years of Chinese trading in the seventeenth century. Makassar's most important trading partner at that time was Batavia, with cotton and tobacco being the principal commodities, while shipping rice to Ambon was the foremost export.[44] However, sailing without or with little cargo was rampant. In terms of preferred routes, the Chinese were strongest on the Moluccas route, their ships carrying about one third of the total volume, but over time they established a strong presence on the routes to Java. Towards the end of the century, they were strongest in the Lesser Sunda Islands and, of course, in the China trade, which they were to monopolize.[45] Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the main commodities traded by the Makassar Chinese were local produce like arrack from Batavia and cotton from Sumbawa, but by then the trade in marine products against Chinese wares had become dominant, and sailing without cargo was a thing of the past. There were three major marine products, i.e. agar-agar or seaweed, trepang[46] or sea slugs, and karet[47] or tortoise-shell. These were in fact transit products destined for the Chinese market, and obtained either through trade or by hunting and gathering mainly along the deserted coasts south of Makassar – this being done almost exclusively by indigenous fishermen.[48]

Initially, Makassar's trading contacts with mainland China were haphazard. According to documents in the archives of the British East India Company, a Chinese junk appeared in

43 Until then, this information was probably recorded in the *Daghregisters* that are lost to us. For further details on the harbormasters lists, see Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*; Nagel, *Schlüssel*, pp. 471–550.

44 For the history of tobacco in Southeast Asia, see Thomas O. Höllmann, *Tabak in Südostasien. Ein ethnograpisch-historischer Überblick* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988). On cotton and rice, see the remark by VOC Rear Admiral Stavorinus: "The chief production of the island of Celebes is rice, of which it yields more than a sufficiency to maintain its own inhabitants, though they are very numerous, but it is not as good as the Java rice. Much cotton is likewise produced, of which the inhabitants make women's dresses, which are held to be the finest of all India." Wilcocke, *Voyages by Stavorinus*, p. 180.

45 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, p. 61.

46 The animal called trepang in colonial literature is also known as sea slug, sea cucumber or *bêche de mer* and *hai shen* in Mandarin (the name is derived from the Malay *teripang* also spelled *tripang*) and belongs to the Holoturoidea of the Echinoderm family (*Phylum Echinodermata*); it was sought after as a stimulant in traditional Chinese medicine and had considerable commercial value. See J. C. Koningsberger, *Tripang en tripangvisscherij in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia: Kolff, 1904).

47 See also Roderich Ptak, "China and the Trade in Tortoiseshell, Sung to Ming Periods", in Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (eds.), *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400–1750* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1991), pp. 195–230, and Heather Sutherland, "Commodity Chain".

48 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, p. 98.

1614, "the first ever that came to this place", and sold its cargo (raw silk, silk fabrics and ceramics) at unusually low prices. Whether it was blown off course by monsoon winds, or if it was a trial run or a deal with an important trader in Makassar is unknown. In any case many years would pass before the next junk appeared in port as all private trade with China, although the restrictions at the Chinese end had been lifted by the fall of the Ming Dynasty, was regulated by official VOC policy: it was to be concentrated in Batavia, a situation the VOC took care to safeguard, if necessary with military force.[49]

Then, in 1692, the aforementioned junk arrived in Makassar's harbour from Fuzhou and in January 1746 after a fifty year gap, once more out of the blue, a junk arrived in Makassar directly from Amoy, skippered by a former Chinese resident of Makassar. Unfortunately, this skipper's reasons for sailing to Makassar have again not been recorded; as a former resident, he must have been well aware of the VOC regulations concerning trade with China. A direct Amoy-Makassar connection was unacceptable, and the local authorities should have had the ship and its cargo confiscated. The Governor of Makassar, however, decided against confiscation, in all probability on the pretext of claiming an emergency, but more likely because local Burghers and other merchants immediately requested permission to trade. Batavia retroactively approved Makassar's decision as long as certain taxes were levied (10% on Chinese tobacco and 5% on the rest of the merchandise). The skipper was instructed never to return to Makassar, if he wanted to trade in the southern seas then Batavia was the place to go to.[50]

Various edicts were issued: all junk trade to the east of Banka was banned and to be punished by confiscation of ship and cargo. All sea lanes were to be patrolled to enforce this edict. Should another junk arrive in Makassar, the reasons for having chosen this destination would be judged by the Council of Justice in Batavia and should the arguments be found wanting, the ship and its load were to be confiscated.[51] It never came to that, needless to say, and considerable pressure from Makassar's multi-ethnic trading community and local Sulawesian rulers led the local VOC authorities to gradually give way to exceptions to the rule, and junks came and traded intermittently in Makassar until the VOC ultimately changed its mind conclusively in 1753. At that time, the junks' commercial activities were no longer deemed detrimental to VOC trade, provided that taxes and excises were promptly paid. The trading of the Makassar Chinese represented an annual value of 3600 *rijksdaalders* and one junk per year received permission to trade in Makassar. VOC policy fluctuated over the years: no license was granted in 1749 and 1750 and in 1764 the junk trade to Makassar was prohibited

49 British Library London, OIOC, G/10/1, G. Cockrane (Makassar) to Gov. Thomas Smith (Banten), 16 July 1615, 2, cited in Nagel, *Schlüssel*, p. 251; for the protection of the China-Batavia trade, see Leonard Blussé, "No Boats to China. The Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern in the China Sea Trade, 1635–1690", *Modern Asian Studies* 30 (1996), pp. 51–77.

50 NA, VOC 776, ff. 42–43; 2674, f. 30.

51 On restricting edicts, see *PB*, V, p. 323; *GM*, XI, p. 342; *PB*, V, p. 426. On permission for annual trade, *PB*, VI, p. 350. On the ban in 1764, *PB*, VII, p. 774.

again, but in 1768, the VOC reconsidered its decision at the request local rulers, at the same time increasing import and export taxes to 4000 *rijksdaalders*.[52] From then onwards, a junk called at the port of Makassar once a year. At the outset, the license for this trade was sold to the highest bidder, later to be given as part of his income to the Chinese captain in Batavia, who sold it for a substantial sum to Chinese merchants.[53]

Initially, the junk trade was plied by ships measuring approximately 170 *last*. Between 1774 and 1777, the junk was always the same, having a capacity of 170 *last*, but with a larger crew of some 125 to 135 hands. In addition to the crew, the vessel usually carried 10 to 30 passengers, most of them merchants accompanying their goods. The junks of the late 1780s had a capacity of 400 *last*, more than double the capacity of those in the 1770s, not so much to accommodate Makassar's imports, but they needed that space for the export of its marine produce. These ships were manned with crews varying between 161 and 215 hands.[54] The VOC Rear-Admiral Stavorinus, visiting Makassar in 1775, describes such a junk:

> The length of the junk, from the exterior of the stern, to the extreme point of the head, was, according to my computation one hundred and forty feet. The hull was separated into as many different divisions as there were merchants on board, each having a distinct place to stow his commodities in. […]and we saw the victuals dressed there, in a much cleaner and neater manner, than is practiced on board of European ships. At the stern were several tiers of little cabins, or huts, made of bamboos, as well for the officers of the vessel as for the merchants. Exactly in the middle between these, was the steerage, and in the center of it was a sort of chapel, in which their *joss*, or idol, was placed; they bring every year a new one with them from China, which is then placed in their temple, and the old one of the former year is taken away, and carried back to China; and they never begin to land any part of the cargo, until the image of this idol, which is made of gold and is about 4 inches high, has been sent on shore, they continually burn lights and incense, and in the evening some silver paper, before the idol.[55]

The shipping seasons in South Sulawesi and the Flores Sea were to a large extent determined by monsoons. Incoming traffic from Batavia arrived in March and outgoing left in April, while ships from China arrived in February and left again in June, driven by the monsoon winds of the South China Sea. Ships from the nearby southeast mostly came to Makassar in May and June, during the east monsoon. Consequently, small traders from practically every-

52 *PB*, VIII, p. 519. There are indications that direct China trade continued even when prohibited, which would account for discrepancies in the sources. For instance, Eerdmans notes that a license for an annual junk was granted in 1767, see A. J. A. F. Eerdmans, *Algemeene Geschiedenis van Celebes* (n. p., n. d.), pp. 368–369.

53 Wilcocke, *Voyages Stavorinus,* pp. 283–285; Blussé, "Trade to Batavia", p. 211.

54 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, p. 49.

55 Wilcocke, *Voyages Stavorinus*, pp. 283–285. The "idol" could refer to Mazu 媽祖, the Chinese deity of sailors.

where in the archipelago could connect to the Chinese vessel, whose arrival was the high point of the year.

Stavorinus describes the procedures on land:

> Every merchant, for there are several of them who come in such a junk, exposes his commodities for sale, in a large house, which is peculiarly adapted for that purpose. This house is the daily resort of a great number of people, particularly Makassarese, Bouginese and Wadjorese, so that the merchandise imported is speedily disposed of. The merchants take in return tripangs and Spanish dollars, both which render them good profit in China.[56]

Moreover, the annual junk usually stayed in port for several months and carried a large crew that had to be taken care of. Accordingly, a great number of people benefited: not only all those involved in the many transactions required to gather the outward cargo and to distribute the incoming goods, but also all the service providers, from food suppliers to owners of gambling dens, could look forward to doing brisk business.

A. J. van Schinne, harbourmaster of Makassar in 1814, describes this commercial hub as follows:

> Makassar is a place where the inhabitants are averse to agriculture but very fond of seafaring (I speak of the natives), and I believe that this same genius for seafaring in combination with the industry and profit seeking of the Chinese (who have been here since the earliest days) are the fundamental causes of the current trade situation. If two *wangkang* instead of one should come here, then the supply of trepang, birds' nests, tortoiseshell, wax and other articles would increase in proportion.[57]

In the first quarter of the century, one third of the total volume of private shipping was in Chinese hands, with only the indigenous traders and the Burghers having a larger share. But subsequently the volume of Chinese trade skyrocketed, until the Chinese skippers emerged as the most prominent group in the 1780s with an almost 50% share of volume (nearly 55% including *peranakan* Chinese): these years were the heyday of Makassar's China trade. It is not clear whether indigenous traders really lost out or whether they simply evaded registration (and taxation) and if so to what extent.[58]

However, at the very heart of the indigenous maritime expertise combined with Chinese trading skills is the junk that brought Makassar commercial prosperity and the function of a center of financial and commercial relations, the spin-off of which extended throughout the region.

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56 Wilcocke, *Voyages Stavorinus*, p. 285.

57 Heather Sutherland, "Trepang and Wankang. The China Trade of Eighteenth Century Makassar, c. 1720s–1840s", *Bijdragen KITLV* 156 (2000), pp. 451–471, here p. 453.

58 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, pp. 59–61.

Main Commodities: Sea- and Forest Products

Owing to the Chinese demand for agar-agar, trepang, and tortoise shell, these marine products soon became Makkassar's main commodities; at first they were shipped to Batavia, later on, by the Amoy junk directly to China. Contrary to agar-agar and trepang that were traded in bulk tortoise shell was traded in very small quantities only.

The agar-agar trade was substantial; Malays and VOC subjects brought it in from Bima, Sumbawa and Bugis. As much as 79% of the volume was bound for Batavia and the annual Amoy junk took on 20%, probably because it was already so heavily laden with other products that its skipper had to leave the lion's share of this product to Batavia-bound ships. The agar-agar trade to Batavia was dominated by Chinese skippers (73%); as a result Batavia remained an important intermediary port for Makassar's China trade and, although the amounts varied slightly, this remained so throughout the 1780s in spite of the substantial increase in tonnage of the annual junk.[59] Trepang was at first imported from Japan, but in the beginning of the eighteenth century the rising Chinese demand necessitated extra volume through imports from Southeast Asia, mostly from the ports of present day Vietnam.[60] Makassar's role then had been limited to that of feeder port to Batavia – and possibly other ports outside VOC control. After 1746, with the advent of the Amoy junk trade, trepang became Makassar's main commodity in the China trade. Trepang was an exceedingly complicated product, and its many varieties required different preparation processes, which only the Chinese mastered fully. Capital, shipping and marketing know-how (including grading and pricing the trepang) were all supplied by the Chinese networks, while the indigenous people and Dutch merchants invested in the trepang industry only by providing credit facilities. The VOC did not seek much active involvement; as of 1770, it was forbidden to transport trepang on VOC ships coming from Ambon or Banda, since its penetrating foul smell might contaminate the spices.[61]

To prevent excessive profiteering, it became customary for the trepang purchase price to be fixed in a meeting between the VOC harbourmaster and the Captain of the Chinese community, apparently in consultation with the junk captain and the farmer of customs, while prominent traders were also included at a certain point in time. The governor of

59 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders,* pp. 98–99.

60 For details on trepang in Chinese writings and their function in medicine and culinary use, see Dai Yifeng, "Food Culture and Overseas Trade. The Trepang Trade between China and Southeast Asia during the Qing Dynasty", in Y.H. Wu and Sydney C.H. Cheung (eds.), *The Globalization of Chinese Food* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2002), pp. 23–24. On fishing methods and fishing grounds, see C. C. MacKnight, *Voyage to Marège. Macassan Trepangers in Northern Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976).

61 Dai, "Food Culture", p. 27; *PB*, VIII, p. 672.

Makassar emphasized that the price had to be set by May at the latest, i.e. before the fleet returned and the volume and quality of the catch was known.[62] In this way, some sort of price stability could be guaranteed in spite of the junk's monopoly. If the trepang ships were late and missed the junk, they lost out as they then had to sell their catch via Batavia against a much lower price.

Forest products, edible birds' nests, rattan and bees wax, were also in great demand. Birds' nests[63] were a valuable and prized delicacy and were traded in small quantities directly to China, chiefly towards the end of the eighteenth century. Banda was the main area of supply. Locally harvested rattan, packed in bundles, left Makassar predominantly on board the annual junk to Amoy. Bees wax came from Buton and was shipped to Batavia (74%) and Semarang (19%), for the most part (75% of the volume) by Chinese skippers.[64] The following table shows the development of Makassar's total exports of sea- and forest products on the Amoy junk during the eighteenth century.[65]

Table

Annual average exports of marine and forest products in *pikul* rounded off	Agar-agar	Trepang	Tortoise shell	Birds' nests	Rattan in bundles	Bees wax
1720s	389	592	8	—	63	107
1760s	1,255	3,469	17	1	100	162
1770s	2,873	4,568	11	—	1,053	236
1780s	2,673	7,068	48	12	3,267	274

The share of Amoy in Makassar's total trade volume was 33% in the 1770s and 34% in the 1780s and its monetary value was also impressive. However, most imports of Chinese wares from elsewhere in the archipelago were made superfluous by the influx from China, and in that respect the Amoy junk was not a blessing for all Chinese, since it hurt private trade with

62 Sutherland, "Trepang", p. 468.

63 Birds' nests are not really a forest product as they were usually obtained from cliffs and caves on the sea in just a few areas of the region. For further details, see Leonard Blussé, "In Praise of Commodities: An Essay on the Cross-Cultural Trade in Edible Birds' Nests", in Ptak and Rothermund (eds.), *Emporia, Commodities,* pp. 317–335; Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, "Sacred Food from the Ancestors. Edible Bird Nest Harvesting among the Idahan" in Wu/Cheung (eds), *Chinese Food*, pp. 43–55; Claudine Salmon, "Le goût chinois pour les nids de salanganes et ses répercussions économiques en Indonésie", *Archipel* 76 (2008), pp. 251–290.

64 In the early 1700s rattan for packing and furniture was traded from Kalimantan through Makassar mainly by indigenous traders. By the end of the 1780s, rattan from Sulawesi was traded in bulk to Amoy by Chinese traders (92% of total volume). See Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, pp. 102–103.

65 For more details, see Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders,* p. 99, table 16; p. 103, table 17. One *pikul* is 62.5 kilograms. On the terminology of weights and measures see Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, pp. 175–179.

Batavia. However, the local Chinese skippers rapidly succeeded in adapting themselves, and their activities proliferated in the 1780s, extending to import of textiles, Javanese tobacco and salt, and acquiring a share in the slave trade to Batavia. Arrack imports recovered and cotton doubled. In terms of value, turnover was generally much higher than in the beginning of the century and there were considerable differences in the relative importance of categories.[66] Even though Makassar's total trading volume was just one-twentieth of Batavia's, the city had become an emporium with a vast trading network ranging from South China to North Australia and from Batavia to the Moluccas.

Although the networks were smaller than previously, they still connected to long-distance exchanges emanating from India, Europe, and increasingly China. Such trade required not only capital and credit but also financial stability and a legal system, all of which were ironically enough provided by the VOC's institutional development of finance and the administration of justice.

Finance and Justice

Before the arrival of the junk, leading local and Batavia Chinese would have formed *kongsi,* business associations or syndicates (the word being generically used for company later on), with the Amoy merchants, who might come from China with their own merchandise or act as agents for those who stayed behind in China, travelling under the authority of the *nachoda* or captain of the junk. The *kongsi* would coordinate the collection of local products and the distribution of the imported merchandise. As well as buying goods offered by locals, the junk merchants provided both commodities and cash advances to a range of traders. That way capital was made available for commercial ventures ranging from short-term ones, such as voyages to gather commodities while the vessel was in port, to longer term partnerships, running over a period of years[67]; thus Makassar's China trade was largely financed from Batavia.

For the Chinese in general, capital circulating within overseas Chinese networks was a natural source of funds; credit was underwritten by relations, supported by conventions and regulated by institutions. Chinese temples that had the advantage of otherworldly sanctions against defaulters, had long acted as pawnshops and banks, developing into well-established

66 Gerrit J. Knaap, "All About Money. Maritime Trade in Makassar and West Java around 1775", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49 (2006), pp. 482–508, see pp. 490–491.

67 Knaap/Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders*, pp. 74–75. For details on ownership, organization, numbers, size, cost, crew, and trade routes of Chinese shipping, see Ch'en Kuo-tung, "Shipping and Trade of Chinese Junks in Southeast Asia 1730–1830. A Survey", in Simon P. Ville and David M. Williams (eds.), *Management, Finance and Industrial Relations in Maritime Industries. Essays in International Maritime and Business History* (St. Johns: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1994); Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company. Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC* Batavia (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), pp. 114–120, and Blussé, "Chinese Century", p. 124.

sources of credit.[68] Less affluent traders often pooled resources by means of institutions as a *hui* 會 (literally meeting or gathering, generally used for smaller pools) that entailed shareholding, partnership, and collective management, just like a *kongsi*. Each member would hold one or more shares in the pooled capital, and profits would be divided accordingly. Richer participants, who had acquired more shares, received a larger part of the profits and higher dividends.[69]

Loans were generally granted against a security (land, slaves or jewelry), usually in combination with the undertaking of two guarantors, who would assume responsibility in case of default. Consequently, security depended on the guarantors remaining healthy and solvent, the property retaining its value and the debtor remaining accessible and subject to sanctions: an uncertain undertaking in a trading port with a highly mobile population. It is therefore not surprising that the VOC felt the need for financial legislation as early as 1676, and that the structure was in operation already in the 1680s.

Other sources of credit open to the Chinese were the two charitable institutions, that existed in practically all settlements, i.e. the *Weeskamer* (Orphan Chamber), that used orphans' estates as capital, and the *Diaconij* (Church Board of Deacons), that drew its income from pious benefactors' legacies and church collections. However, given the small population, Makassar's eighteenth century charitable institutions obtained most of their income from moneylending. From 1730 on we have a fairly clear picture of who the debtors of these institutions were and of the amount they had borrowed since the accounts were forwarded to Batavia.[70]

A list of "dubious debts" from 1731 indicates that loans to Chinese were virtually always made against pawned gold. In 1769, the Orphan Chamber had lent out 33,311 *rijksdaalders* of which almost one third to Chinese and the balance to the VOC itself, Europeans and Burghers, representing the capital of seventeen orphans.[71]. Loans to the Chinese were considerable in size, ranging from 150 to over 2000 *rijksdaalders*; in comparison, a bamboo house on a plot of land sold for 50 *rijksdaalders* and a good slave for 30. For other orphans

68 Heather Sutherland, "Money in Makassar. Credit and Debt in an Eighteenth Century VOC Settlement", in Henley and Boomgaard (eds.), *Credit and Debt*, pp. 102–123. On the temples, see Salmon, "Women's Status", p. 159.

69 Leonard Blussé (包乐史) et al. (eds.), *Gong'an bu* 公案簿, several vols. (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2002), I, pp. 2–50 and 188–190; Ng, *Amoy Network*, pp. 100–102.

70 Over time protecting the population of Makassar became also an important factor. When a dispute between a VOC employee and the junk captain over bad debts arose, Makassar's governor concluded: "The Chinese merchants come here with the junk, do business with Christians and natives, and make various money loans that they use to purchase trepang, and other trade goods, and it can happen very easily that our inhabitants are ruined [...]. This is a matter that has to be settled here, not in China, bearing in mind that even if the Chinese do not stay here, they leave behind wives or concubines who buy up commodities for them or dispose of their Chinese goods." Sutherland, "Trepang", p. 457.

71 Sutherland, "Makassar Malays", p. 413.

their capital was given in usufruct to their relatives or to close family friends; this category included the children of two prominent Chinese.

Lending to Chinese was to increase explosively: in 1815, loans to twelve Chinese (including five Chinese women, but excluding *peranakan* Chinese) totaled 45% of the whole outstanding amount, in comparison with 16% to nine *peranakan* Chinese and 37% to Europeans (including Burghers). The increase in amount lent is also impressive in itself: in 1815 loans totaled more than eight times the 1736 amount. This surely reflects an increase in Chinese influence in Makassar's economy in the second half of the eighteenth century. Private moneylenders did exist, but just a few of them appear in the documents. One of them lent to established men from all communities, the other one to Asians only, but not to Chinese. Of course, the few existing records cannot be taken as representative for the whole private lending sector, but it seems likely that Chinese – and possible Indonesians too – preferred the VOC institutions because of their interest policies. In 1732 and 1733, the *Diaconij* lists show a rate of c. 12% and by the 1760s the general rate of interest for institutional debts seems to have been 0.75% per month (or a simple 9% p.a.), which was still the case in 1769. These rates do not seem to have been affected by the amount of the loan or by the ethnicity of the debtor, whereas the private moneylenders seem to have made distinctions based on risk assessment: their rates could vary from 6% for Europeans to 12% for Indonesians and Chinese. In any case, the interest percentages compare favorably to those charged in Batavia, where Chinese were charged a rate of between 16 and 30% in the beginning of the eighteenth century.[72]

In case of default the creditor could seek redress before the Dutch courts, which was one of the reasons why people of various communities took the trouble to register their loans with the Council of Justice, the court that heard civil and criminal cases, and were willing to pay the entailed fee. The security would then be listed as well as the names of the guarantors, the date of registration and the amount of the loan.[73] When disagreements occurred, both plaintiff and defendant could retain legal representatives, who seem to have been men qualified in law, proceedings were documented in detail and once a verdict was reached the court would do its best to ensure compliance. Costs were awarded against the losing party in order to avoid unnecessary litigation.

The Council of Justice did not only deal with disputes within the various communities in Makassar; their files display a range of civil cases which transcend geographical and ethnic borders. The Council even occasionally overruled intra-communal hierarchies and it always came into action when money was owed to VOC institutions.

Civil procedures such as the registration of wills were common practice. A case that survived in the VOC archives concerns a Makassar Chinese who left one son to whom he willed

72 Sutherland, "Money in Makassar", pp. 727–729.

73 See e.g. NA, VOC 1762, f. 127.

his house and his fortune consisting of gold, silver, money and slaves. A fellow Chinese was appointed the boy's guardian and given power of attorney, while two others were to arrange for the funeral – all against remuneration. The execution of the will was also documented, as the guardian requested permission to sell the house in order to cover a loan and take the little boy to his family in China.[74]

In criminal procedures both Makassar and mainland Chinese could and did address themselves to the VOC court. In 1787, a complex case, a disagreement between several Amoy traders concerning the repayment of a loan, demonstrates the intricate Chinese trade and credit arrangements as well as the obvious Chinese recognition of the VOC court's influence and authority. The persistence of the plaintiff to state his case in a VOC court instead of seeking redress in his own community, or in this case even in his own country, is remarkable. This may be explained by the number of highly placed Chinese involved in the affair that could have made for a loss of faith in Chinese justice. What is striking, however, is the willingness of Chinese inhabitants of Makassar who apparently felt safe to testify for the prosecution, both during and after the case was before the court, and risk the wrath of powerful merchants and the junk captain himself.[75]

Demise of the Amoy Connection

The preceding is a kaleidoscopic survey of the crucial role played by the Chinese of Makassar in the growth of the town's commercial fortunes. Their entrepreneurship helped Makassar revive its economy, largely fuelled by demand from China. This China connection in turn provided Chinese skippers and traders throughout the region with the opportunity to be linchpins in the internal economy of Southeast Asia. The data from the harbourmasters' register show that the "Chinese century", as this era of Chinese dominance in seaborne trade is often called, must have been a real phenomenon in Makassar.[76] In all likelihood, the Chinese community was multi-faceted: settlers and sojourners, assimilated and "real" Chinese, merchants and craftsmen, farmers and fishermen, affluent and less prosperous, and possibly

74 NA, VOC Overgekomen brieven en papieren 8269 ff. 90–93.

75 Sutherland, "Money in Makassar", pp. 105–118.

76 Knaap, "Money", p. 506. On the designation "Chinese century", see e.g. Eric Tagliacozzo, "A Sino-Southeast Asian Circuit. Ethnohistories of the Marine Goods Trade, in Tagliacozzi/Chang, *Chinese Circulations*, pp. 432–454; Blussé, "Chinese Century" and "Junks to Java"; and Sutherland, "Trade, Court". Other scholars would prefer to call the eighteenth century the first Chinese century and the twentieth century the second one; see e.g. Jonathan D. Spence and Annping Chin, *The Chinese Century. A Photographic History of the Last Hundred Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), and Alan Hunter, "The Chinese Century", in Alan Hunter, *Peace Studies in the Chinese Century. International Perspectives* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 1–15.

speaking different tongues. Nevertheless, they were incorporated in the VOC structured local society and made use of VOC institutions.

In the 1820s Makassar's central role waned. Singapore, founded in 1819, turned into a formidable competitor as it was a tax-free port, whereas Makassar's harbourmaster levied a 41% tax. Sulu that had been an entrepôt before Makassar assumed that role, regained its position in the China trade.[77] Moreover, Makassar lost its monopoly on the China trade in the eastern Indonesian archipelago when the ports of Ambon, Surabaya and Semarang were opened. The number of incoming junks grew smaller and carried lesser cargoes, and 1828 saw the last junk arriving from Amoy. In spite of this, the fishermen and small traders in the trepang trade were the ones to suffer the least: for them this just meant diverting their activities to other ports rather than a decline in the industry in general. In the following decade Makassar recovered much of her role as an entrepôt in the trepang trade.[78]

Over time, the Chinese population assimilated more and more, voluntarily or involuntarily, so much so that it might even be difficult to discern a Chinese presence in Makassar today.

77 James F. Warren, *The Sulu Zone. The World Capitalist Economy and the Historical Imagination*, Comparative Asian Studies 20 (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998); Knaap, "Makassar and West Java", p. 506. NA, VOC 3418: 176, 1773.

78 MacKnight, "Marège", p. 145.