Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia

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Chapter Twenty

South Sulawesi Chronicles and Their Possible Models

Campbell C. Macknight

This paper is concerned with a problem in intellectual history.[1] How are we to explain the appearance of a true historical consciousness in the indigenous historiography of South Sulawesi in Indonesia? In particular, can this phenomenon be attributed to European influence, which in this case would most probably mean Portuguese influence? Before proceeding with the detail of this question, however, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the more general issue.

For more than a century, writing about the past of the Indonesian archipelago has been more than usually taken up with the general question of external stimulus and indigenous initiative. At the apogee of European colonial power in the first half of this century, the active principle and organizing logic in the archipelago's immediate past seemed to derive from the European presence, just as for an earlier period, Indian inspiration appeared to have been essential to the main lines of social and cultural development. The swing of the pendulum away from an emphasis on external stimulus begins with the work of van Leur in the very late colonial period and it is no accident that his ideas found such ready acceptance among scholars, both local and from elsewhere, working in a post-colonial world. There is more to this, however, than merely reading the past in the light of the present. Now, more than half a century after van Leur's death, the historian of early Southeast Asia can access not only a greater bulk of source material, but also new kinds of evidence. To take examples of the first, I need hardly remind the reader of the value of Tomé Pires' *Suma Oriental*, published the year after van Leur's death, or of the many new sources made available by Father Jacobs; but such sources fall into the same categories as those well-known to

earlier historians. My concern in this paper is with a kind of evidence not readily available earlier, or insofar as it was, not incorporated into analytical histories, and with a question which seems not to have been considered until recently. The question is but one small example of the new paradigm of Southeast Asian history in which the social or cultural reality of the past is the first issue, irrespective of the claim and counter-claim of external stimulus and indigenous initiative.

The nature of writing, and especially writing of an historical nature, in South Sulawesi needs some introduction. The two major languages of the province are Bugis and Makasar, both clearly members of the Austronesian linguistic family, and related in much the same way as Spanish and Portuguese in the Iberian peninsula. Each is found in several dialects, but each is itself a distinct language. Three systems of writing have been applied to these languages: our Latin alphabet since the nineteenth century, though there is still no agreed orthography; the Arabic–Malay script, though it is significant that this is only used to a very minor extent; and most importantly here, several versions of scripts based on the Indic model. There is considerable debate concerning the relationship of the several variants of these rather inefficient scripts and no certainty at all on the precise derivation of the earliest, but these difficulties need not concern us here. What is helpful is the recent demonstration by Ian Caldwell that the introduction of effective writing must date to, roughly, the fourteenth century and we will return to the reasons for this below. Originally, the medium of writing was the leaf of the lontar palm, thin strips of which were sewn end-to-end to make a very long ribbon which was then rolled up and stored on a device remarkably like a modern cassette tape. No early examples of these survive and there has been no thorough investigation to test the presumption that it was the European presence from the early seventeenth century which led to the use not only of paper as the medium of writing, but also to succcessive lines on a page in place of the single continuous line on a palm-leaf ribbon.

For present purposes, we need only consider manuscript materials; and indeed printed books using a local script, other than scholarly editions of manuscript sources, are relatively few and almost all associated with the European colonial power or Christian mission. The content of a manuscript codex can be various though there is often a general character, such as customary law and maxims for proper behaviour, literary works of various kinds, including translations from Malay or Persian orginals, Muslim religious and theological items, and so on. One special category consists of transcriptions of episodes from the great epic saga of La Galigo,

quite clearly the product of oral composition though much more work needs to be done to establish the circumstances of committing the texts to writing. The chief interest for our purposes here, however, is the materials relating in one way or another to the record of the past; genealogies, diaries, short episodes, treaty texts which needed preservation and, finally, the so-called chronicles.

It is important to note here that, although this material is in manuscript, there are often a dozen or more versions of particular items available in various collections. This strongly suggests that it is possible to speak of a particular 'work' in the sense that all the versions go back to a text held in the mind of its author as a creative unit. (It is another matter to assume that an editor can reconstruct that archetype, but we need not linger over editorial policies). Frustratingly, there is no convention of identifying authorial responsibility, giving the date of composition, or even assigning any particular name to most works.

The works that are central to this discussion are, firstly the Makasar chronicle of Gowa[2] and the closely related chronicle of Tallo', and secondly the Bugis chronicle of Boné. There are many manuscript copies of these—and now some printed editions—and each of the works is distinguished further by signs of internal coherence and consistency. Though we will return to the question of their dating below, they all seem to date to the seventeenth century. There are also stylistic grounds for believing that they predate the comparable, but rather different, works dealing with other states, particularly the rich variety of historiography associated with Wajó. Taken as a whole, this historiographical tradition is remarkable in itself and quite distinctive within the archipelago. Its sober, restrained tone and straightforward prose are in marked contrast with the more elaborate narratives of many Javanese or Malay works dealing ostensibly with the past and, it must be said, other Makasar and Bugis genres in verse and apparently having a more literary intent.

In my view, the best evidence for dating these works arises from their structure. While demonstrably coherent as unified works overall, in a formal sense, they comprise a series of narratives dealing with the successive reigns of rulers. They end abruptly with the completed narrative of a particular ruler. The simplest solution to the question of dating is that each dates from the following reign. (I have an old school textbook which sets out English history in exactly the same way. It closes with the death of Queen Victoria and the proclamation of Edward VII as king. Above his portrait as frontispiece, a loyal pupil has written 'God Save the King' and the title page bears the date of 1903.)

The Gowa chronicle closes with the reign of Sultan Hasanuddin whose abdication in 1669 and death in the following year is recorded, along with the succession of his son, Sultan Amir Hamzah. By far the simplest conclusion on the dating of the chronicle is that it was composed within that next reign, that is, before Amir Hamzah's death at the age of only eighteen in 1674. Admittedly, the circumstances of the time were unsettled and difficult, to put it mildly. The Bugis leader, Arung Palakka, together with the considerable power of the Dutch East India Company, had just defeated the previously powerful state of Gowa and forcibly imposed the Treaty of Bungaya in November 1667. Further fighting led to the dramatic storming of the Somba Opu fortress in June 1669, though there is none of this in the chronicle! Desperate and gloomy times, however, do not prevent innovation and we might speculate that a time of defeat was just the occasion to assert the power of the past.[3]

The chronicle of Tallo' can be regarded as a kind of branch of the Gowa chronicle. It starts abruptly with the story of the quarrel between two sons of the sixth ruler of Gowa which led one, after various moves, to establish himself at Tallo', near the mouth of the next river to the north. This narrative has been quite remarkably borne out by David Bulbeck's archaeological survey of the area which shows significant shifts between sites in the late fifteenth century. Much of the chronicle is given over to the reigns of a succession of remarkable Tallo' rulers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It concludes with the death of the eighth ruler in 1641. In this case, it seems unlikely that the chronicle can be easily assigned to the reign of the succeeding ninth ruler, Sultan Mahmud, or as he is more commonly known, Karaeng Pattingalloang, from 1641 to 1654, if only on the ground of the close association of the Tallo' chronicle with the chronicle of Gowa, which seems to postdate 1669. It is also possible to suggest reasons for not proceeding to detail the ninth reign; thus it is noticeable that Karaeng Pattingngaloang, referred to by his death name, plays a major role in the Gowa chronicle since he was the highly influential adviser or chancellor to the fifteenth Gowa ruler, Sultan Mohammad Said (or Malikussaid). Perhaps it was thought that his career had been sufficiently covered for the joint work. That then brings us to the reign of the tenth ruler in Tallo', Sultan Harrunarasyid, from 1654 to about 1673, which overlaps the reign of Sultan Amir Hamzah of Gowa.[4]

The chronicle of Boné is clearly a distinct work, but there are echoes and reflections of the Gowa chronicle in particular. For example, the accounts of the sixteenth century wars between Boné and Gowa in the two chronicles read as almost mirror images of each other. Although

almost exactly the same length as the Gowa chronicle, the Boné work is more developed in its narrative and somewhat less concerned with genealogical materials. If one chronicle is to be put before the other, then I have no doubt that the work from Gowa is the earlier. The end of the Boné chronicle concerns the events at the beginning of 1667 which led eventually to the victory of Arung Palakka, with Dutch help, in his quarrel with Gowa, and this chronicle too avoids any treatment of the tumultuous next two and a half years. The suggestion that the Boné chronicle dates from the reign of Arung Palakka as ruler of Boné between 1672 and 1696 is confirmed by the special care the chronicler gives to prepare the reader for the accession of this ruler and by the selection, or omission, of data to suit one particular line of interpretation of the politics of the period.

In considering this suggestion of a close relationship between the various works, there is no difficulty in seeing how, at the relevant period, there was the closest possible contact between the two courts. For example, in early 1674 the Dutch were seriously concerned at the growing friendship between Gowa's young Sultan Amir Hamzah and Arung Palakka. By now the ruler of Boné, Arung Palakka, was based at Bontoala', only a kilometre or so inland from the Dutch fort on the coast and within easy reach of the Gowa court a little further to the south. The Gowa sultan visited Arung Palakka frequently.[5] My hunch is that the creation of the Boné chronicle may have been stimulated by, or some sort of riposte to, the Gowa chronicle.

The really striking feature of these chronicles and the matter which I am primarily concerned to explain is the sense of historical consciousness. By this I mean explicit acknowledgement by an author that a process of selection between available data is being made in order to meet a particular purpose. There is also a good deal of selection which is not explicit, but nevertheless obviously made with a very definite end in mind. Moreover, in the Boné work, the chronicler takes great care to distance himself from certain legendary materials which he felt bound to include.

The great purpose of the chroniclers was to set down a statement of the status of the rulers and the ruling group more generally. There is more to these works than indicated in the name, *pattorioloang* in Makasar or *attoriolong* in Bugis, which is applied to them. This means merely 'something about former people' with no indication of what it was about the past that was important. At the outset of the Gowa chronicle, however, there is a justification for the work in the danger that posterity might either esteem 'us', that is the people of the present, too highly or

too little; above all it is proper ranking in relation to others that matters. The chronicle of Boné is even more direct in what amounts to a title; the work concerns 'the land of Boné and the ruling of Boné'.

This theme of the importance of ascriptive status lies at the heart of the cultural complex shared by people speaking Austronesian languages and appears in many other works across the archipelago. Teeuw, in a paper specifically concerned with the concept of 'Indonesia as a field of study', distinguishes a genre which he calls 'genealogical narrative texts'.[6] His South Sulawesi example is the Wajo' tradition, but he could equally well have used the works with which we are concerned here. This demonstration of the broad similarities between attempts by groups with related cultures to deal with accounting for the past is most instructive and, I am sure, reflects an underlying cultural link. What it does not do, however, is account for each particular case and Teeuw does not assume any common awareness among the authors of works in his genre of each other's creations. Furthermore, as Postel points out in her comments on Teeuw's paper, there is value too, in identifying the differences between related traditions.[7]

Our concern here is with a specific case within the general cultural pattern described by Teeuw. How did it happen in South Sulawesi in the seventeenth century that this purpose of asserting status was to be served by such sophisticated and, in some respects, modern works? There are two approaches to this problem: the first and simpler is to look at the materials available to the chronicler; the second is to consider possible models.

By far the most important source of material for these works was genealogy. The most convincing explanation of the adoption of writing itself in these societies is the benefit conferred by having a more definite and detailed record of genealogical relationships, and by the middle of the seventeenth century, there was something over two centuries of such record. There is therefore already in the society a record, of a certain kind, of the past. It is worth noting, moreover, that genealogies are necessarily concerned with a certain kind of progression and never without focus, either by laying out the descendants of a particular person or couple, or by tracing back the ancestors of an individual. Within the manuscript tradition, there are many examples of unelaborated genealogies, and Caldwell in his thesis has edited several. Large sections of the three works under consideration here consist of genealogical information, though especially in the case of the Boné chronicle, this is carefully selected with an eye to its significance in the overall story. We are only

told of the relationships of which we need to know in order to understand what is yet to come.

The second source of content for the chronicles lies in stories which explain a name or phrase. Frequently these are the death names of individuals which are commonly used in the chronicles as the most convenient and least dangerous forms by which to refer to powerful people. Thus the sixth ruler of Boné in the middle of the sixteenth century was La Ulio, but more commonly known as Boté'é, 'the Fat', who, as the chronicle explains, required more than seven interchanging bearers. His death name, Matinroé rItterung, 'he who sleeps at Itterung', derives from his murder by a nephew run amuck at this village. The complex story of his abdication, and the circumstances which led to the nephew's action, are set out in detail.

Such material might be seen in the simpler cases as no more than the elaboration of names on a list. Similarly, the enumeration of villages conquered or brought into association by a particular ruler may reflect lists of vassals of which we have many later examples. Especially in the Boné chronicle, however, much of the information recorded goes far beyond such relatively straightforward derivation. There are short passages of narrative which may come from written versions of particular episodes or might be explained as fragments of orally transmitted tradition. In the latter parts of the chronicles particularly, there is considerable material ostensibly in direct speech. In both the Gowa and Tallo' chronicles, several dates are given in full detail which would seem to indicate access to the court diary which records much detail from about 1630.

In general, then, there is no great difficulty in seeing the kinds of source material which a chronicler had available for the construction of his work, even if we cannot identify the origin of every element in the final result. The availability of materials is, however, only half the story; it is also important to consider possible models of historical consciousness, that is the concept of a selective or even analytical account of the past. The idea of there being more than one such model is particularly important and we should try to look as widely as possible at the intellectual world of the time.

I should say at this point that what follows is somewhat speculative and preliminary. Despite the efforts of a good many scholars, there is still much more to be said about the political and intellectual world of Makasar in the seventeenth century.

The most obvious models, at least to our eyes, are European. Significant European contact with South Sulawesi was comparatively late. There had been several Portuguese visits to the coast north of Gowa in

the middle of the sixteenth century, but no permanent or at least regular presence was established in Makasar until the early seventeenth century. This seems to be associated with the trade by Malays from Malacca which goes well back into the sixteenth century, but the origins of this chapter of Portuguese contact are obscure. As the Tallo' chronicle notes, the Portuguese were already there when the English established themselves in 1613, to be followed by the Danes, French and, in a troubled relationship, the Dutch. By the mid-1620s, there were up to 500 Portuguese ashore[8] and over the next forty years court circles became intimately familiar with Portuguese and other European materials of all kinds. The degree of this familiarity can be judged by the fact that by 1646 when he met with the missionary, Alexander of Rhodes, Karaeng Pattingngaloang spoke Portuguese like a native speaker and could read with ease both Portuguese and Spanish.[9] His son Karaeng Karunrung, who played a major role in the affairs of Gowa after the death of his father in 1654, seems to have been equally gifted linguistically, and in 1667 negotiations between the Dutch and the Makasar court were carried on in Portuguese because 'Malay was understood by the whole government and Portuguese by the greater part.'[10]

An important point in considering possible cultural exchange, as opposed to trade and diplomatic bargaining, is to ask what kind of European sources might have been available. Alexander of Rhodes says that Karaeng Pattingngaloang 'had read with curiosity all the chronicles of our European kings',[11] in addition to the abundant evidence of his interest in mathematics, cartography and scientific knowledge. By far the most obvious model of historical narrative, however, lies in the Bible. Most of the descriptions of attempted conversions concentrate on discussion and argument, but it is hard to conceive of any extended experience or observation of Christianity which would not involve some attention to gospel narrative, to say nothing of other books. There is no shortage of cases where the attempt at Christian mission has involved far more than the missionaries themselves intended or realized. While I cannot point to any internal evidence of actual influence, it is worth noting the important role of descent in some Biblical narratives, such as the opening chapters of both Matthew and Luke. There are many examples too in the Bible, of narrative focussed on demonstrating some particular point; again the Gospels are the clearest, but by no means the only cases.

The European model was not necessarily confined to books or other imported reading material. A major activity of all the more important Europeans in South Sulawesi in the seventeenth century was writing letters, reports, journals and occasionally more extended pieces, all of

which involved to some extent a narrative account of events. Two examples are worth mentioning. In June 1664, Francisco Vieira, the Portuguese merchant adventurer, composed in Makasar a report on recent events on the China coast and in Timor. Although the content is of no special significance to South Sulawesi, it does show that such materials were being produced by a European with excellent contacts in the court of Sultan Hasanuddin.[12] The second example is the very extensive report on all aspects of South Sulawesi put together by Cornelis Speelman, the commander of the Dutch forces in the Makasar War, which he had ready to present to the authorities in Batavia by 17 February 1670.[13] This report certainly involved a very great deal of consultation with senior Makasar and Bugis figures on both the past and the present circumstances of South Sulawesi as a whole.

It would be far too simple, however, to restrict the range of possible influence to European sources. The official conversion of Gowa to Islam dates from 1605 and there had been Malay Muslims there well before that. Islam is hardly less dependant on narrative than Christianity is, and whatever the state of religious knowledge may have been at the beginning, as time went by, senior court figures were clearly familiar with Muslim literature in the widest sense. The Tallo' chronicle records that Karaeng Matoaya, Sultan Abdullah, the first Muslim ruler of Tallo' who died in 1636, was not only devout, but expert in reading *kitab* or religious literature. The Gowa chronicle likewise notes that Sultan Mohammad Said, slightly later, was expert in Arabic texts as well as Makasar writing.

The clearest demonstration of the level of familiarity with materials in an essentially Muslim tradition is the well-known *Sya'ir Perang Men gkasar* or Rhymed Chronicle of the Makasar War, composed by Enci' Amin, the Malay secretary to Sultan Hasanuddin, between July 1669 and June 1670. Admittedly, the *sya'ir* is in Malay verse, rather than Makasar prose, but it does provide an excellent example of stirring narrative designed to show the merit of the Gowa ruler and his courtiers. Enci' Amin was also, as his editor argues, well-versed in Islamic, specifically Sufi, literature[14] and this serves as another reminder of the wider intellectual contacts of Makasar at this time.

These contacts were not just to the Muslim world. Enci Amin was also at home with the secular literature deriving from the Indic world and there is even the suggestion that he may have seen some Javanese *wayang purwa* theatre.[15] It is not entirely fanciful to see something of the same connection in the account in the Boné chronicle of the thunder and lightning associated with the appearance of the legendary figures

who initiate the status of the ruling line. In the first case, the storm lasts for the conventional seven days. An immediate comparison is with the account of the natural signs marking the birth of Hayam Wuruk in the *Desawarnana*, but there is no need to suppose that that chronicler had read the Javanese work. This incident in the Boné chronicle follows a period of seven generations of lawlessness when there was no king. Again using a trope drawn from Indic sources, 'the people just ate each other like fish do.'

It must be admitted that we have not arrived at a definitive answer to the question with which we started, which was to explain the appearance of historical consciousness as exemplified in the South Sulawesi chronicles. It has, however, been possible to see something of the complexity of the problem and to explore a little of the intellectual world of one of the Asian cultures into which the Portuguese and other Europeans came in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What effect these new players may have had needs to be seen not just in itself, but in the wider context of other Asian influence and the possibility of local initiative and innovation. To the extent that dealing with this full complexity is seen as part of the historian's task, we can speak of a new paradigm in examining the consequences of Vasco da Gama's voyage five centuries ago.

Notes

[1]Because of the preliminary and rather speculative nature of this paper, I have not provided a full apparatus of references to previous work relevant to the topic. The paper arises from continuing work on an edition and translation of the Boné chronicle being undertaken with Dr Mukhlis.

[2]It seems wise in the context of this conference to use the modern Indonesian spelling of Gowa in this paper, rather than be strictly consistent with other transcriptions and write Goa. As far as I know, there is no link between the name Goa in India and the same name for the traditional state in South Sulawesi; the identity is pure chance.

[3]Wolhoff and Abdurrahim suggest a date in the eighteenth century but provide no evidence or discussion. See G.J. Wolhoff and Abdurrahim, *Sedjarah Goa*, Makassar, 1960, p. 5. Mukhlis claims that one version of the chronicle, probably that in question here, was composed by Karaeng Kanjilo in 1670, but he does not provide evidence for this. Mukhlis, *Struktur Birokrasi Kerajaan Gowa Jaman Pemerintahaan Sultan Hasanuddin (1653–1669)*, Sarjana thesis, Fakultas Sastra dan Kebudayaan, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 1975, p. 16.

[4]This dating of the chronicles to at least the late 1660s is strictly in conflict with Reid's suggestion that Karaeng Pattingalloang 'must also have had a role in the unique development of South Sulawesi historical writing'. A. Reid, 'A great seventeenth century Indonesian family: Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makassar', *Masyarakat Indonesia*, vol. 8,

no. 1, 1981, p. 23, since he had died in 1654. It does not, of course, discount the general effect of Karaeng Pattingngaloang's influence.

[5] L.Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century,* The Hague, 1981, p. 153.

[6] A. Teeuw, 'Indonesia as a "field of literary study": A case study: Genealogical narrative texts as an Indonesian literary genre', in de Josselin de Jong, *Unity in Diversity: Indonesia as a Field of Anthropological Study,* Dordrecht and Cinnaminson, 1984, pp. 38–59.

[7] E. Postel, 'Comment' on A. Teeuw's paper, in de Josselin de Jong, 1984, p. 62.

[8] C.R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo: A Portuguese Merchant-Adventurer in South East Asia, 1624–1667,* VKI 52, 's-Gravenhage, 1967, p. 3.

[9] Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo,* pp. 4–5; Reid, 'Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makassar', p. 21.

[10] C. Skinner, *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar: (The rhymed chronicle of the Macassar War) by Entji' Amin,* 's-Gravenhage, 1963, p. 27; Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka,* 1981, p. 100.

[11] Quoted in S. Hertz (transl.), *Rhodes of Viet Nam: The Travels and Missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and other Kingdoms of the Orient,* Westminster, Maryland, 1966, p. 208.

[12] Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo,* pp. 40, 83–91, 104.

[13] J. Noorduyn, 'De handelrelaties van het Makassaarse rijk volgens de Notitie van Cornelis Speelman uit 1670', *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen,* vol. 3, 1983, pp. 99-100.

[14] Skinner, *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar,* pp. 24–5.

[15] Ibid., pp. 25–6.