

## APPENDIX I

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### Types of *Lontara*: The Bugis-Makassar Manuscripts

*Lontara* are the traditional texts handwritten in the Bugis-Makassar language and script. According to most scholars (e.g. Matthes 1874; Cense 1951; Noorduyn 1961, 1965; Abidin 1971; Pelras 1985; Caldwell 1988), the word *lontara* is derived from Java or Bali and outside South Sulawesi. Matthes (1874) in particular believed that *lontara* is derived from the Javanese and Malay word *lontar*, itself being a ‘transposition’ of *rontal* – literally meaning ‘whose leaves could be written upon with a stylus’.<sup>1</sup> The script of *lontara* manuscripts used in South Sulawesi is called *urupu sulapa’ eppa’*, or square letters.

The *lontara* consist of several types according to their subject matter (Zainal Abidin 1971: 159–160). The first are *attoriolong*, telling of people of former times and containing historical facts. The second are the *lontara’ bilang* (also called *Kotika*). These are almanacs for determining auspicious and inauspicious dates and times of undertakings as well as diaries of the rulers of South Sulawesi kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> The third are the *lontara’ ada’* in Makassar, or *ade’* in Bugis, containing notes on *adat*, or customary law, namely *rapang* in Makassar areas and *latowa* in Bugis. The fourth type are the *lontara’ ulu ada* (Bugis) or *ulukanya* (Makassar) consisting of texts of treaties with surrounding empires or

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1 According to Matthes (1874), *lontar* was a ‘combination of the Javanese words *ron* (leaf) and *tal*, a particular kind of tree, *Borassus flabelliformis*. This tree is called *ta’* in Bugis, *tala’* in Makassar and *tala* in Sanskrit. According to Matthes again, *lontara’* meant first the leaf of the *lontar* tree and eventually any written work’ (cf. Abidin 1971).

2 According to Noorduyn (1965: 142) the only diary edited for academic use is that of the kings of Gowa and Tallo’, covering the period of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century.

with overseas countries. The fifth are called the *lontara' allopi-lopi*, collections of *adat* law recording shipping, weapons and other property. Finally, there are the *lontara' pangoriseng*, literally meaning the genealogies of the various rulers.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the many different kinds of *lontara'*, the largest contain notes regarding historical accounts. These notes are occasionally grouped together in small collections called *tolo'*. The *tolo'*, in older times, were usually chanted accompanied by a kind of violin called *keso-keso* in honour of the king's arrival. The *tolo'* tell of the enormity of famous warriors' struggles with enemy military; for example the *tolo'na Bone*, which recounts the opposition of the Bone kingdom to the Dutch in 1905 (Abidin 1971).

There is also another massive written chronicle called *I La Galigo*, which according to the Luwu' nobility (the cradle of South Sulawesi aristocracy) is also said to be a *lontara'* chronicle. Yet, as Abidin (1971: 161) has argued, the 'literary' *I La Galigo* is not similar to other *lontara'*. The content of the *I La Galigo* is derived from oral traditions, mostly containing mythical elements. The *I La Galigo* provides support for the belief that the early rulers and founders of the people of South Sulawesi descended from the sky, traditionally known as *Tomanurung*. This myth is then generally incorporated into every *lontara'* chronicle (Noorduyn 1965: 138).

Nevertheless, the myths were given less priority by the writers of *lontara'* than the material contained in *I La Galigo*. The authors and interpreters of *lontara'*, called *Palontara'* or official writers tended to provide historical facts, including the myth of *Tomanurung*, in a common-sense way (Noorduyn 1965). Zainal Abidin (1971) has suggested that we should not leave out the *I La Galigo* entirely, since it serves as the 'main source' of the history of Bugis before the 14th century.<sup>4</sup> In other words, *I La Galigo* provides the primary background to the writing of the *lontara'* which came into being in the following centuries.<sup>5</sup>

3 Abidin (1971: 160) also points out that the term *lontara'* applies as well to traditional manuals, such as those on agriculture, *lontara' pallaoruma*, and on medical lore, *lontara' pabbura*.

4 'Certainly this work must rank among the longest pieces of literature in the world – European scholars alone assembled about 6,000 folio pages of it (this does not include the large number of folio pages still dispersed within the Bugis community)'. Friedericy (1933) has said: 'Ethnologically, it is, without any doubt, the most valuable piece contained in the two chrestomathies of Matthes' (Kern 1954; Matthes 1864–1872: 416–537, notes 250–253; cf. Abidin 1971).

5 The *lontara'* chronicles only came into existence in the 17th century. Noorduyn has pointed out that 'the Indian origin of the script shows that the art of writing was known before the introduction of Islam in the early seventeenth century; for, had the Bugis or Makassar no system of writing at the time, they would surely have adopted the Jawi-Malay script' (1962: 31; cf. Caldwell 1988: 11). What is more, *lontara'* were widely used well into the 20th century by various other languages of Sulawesi: Mandar, Duri, Enrekang and Toraja, and also in Bima. See further Abidin 1971.

## Problems of utilising the *lontara'* as historical sources

The *lontara'* basically lack precisely documented sources of South Sulawesi history before the 17th century (see Abidin 1971). The content of the *lontara'* is therefore derived from oral traditions and the *I La Galigo* in the documenting of the previous events. These oral traditions, in fact, contain some mythical elements – *I La Galigo* contains myths expressed in poetical forms, which are passed on through one generation to another in time and space. Myth tends to dominate when a story is written down generations after the events and has survived as oral memory.

In that sense, the *lontara'* cannot conceal or cause a fading away of myths; for example, the legendary tale of the Tomanurung, the first ruler of the Makassar kingdom, is found in the chronicles (Abidin 1971: 166). Yet, the *lontara'* scribes tended to write 'the Tomanurung, whose origin is never known', instead of writing 'the one(s) who descended from the sky' as the authors of *I La Galigo* did.

Another historical myth found in the *lontara'*, and the main theme of this study, is the documentation of the Islamisation of South Sulawesi. According to the *Lontara' Bilang*, the diary of the kings of Gowa and Tallo', the first person who embraced Islam was the ruler of Tallo' and the chancellor of Gowa. However, some oral traditions, generally found in Luwu, state that it was a person called Tenriajeng, also known as I Assalang (the First) and Tenripau (Not-to-be-mentioned) who became the first local Muslim in South Sulawesi. Thus caution is recommended when utilising the *lontara'* in historical inquiry of South Sulawesi, because the sources adopted by the authors derived from oral traditions which may vary from one locality to another and contain myths.

From the above problems, we probably can see why the historian Soedjatmoko (1965) believed that 'for quite some time the Indonesian historian will be confronted with demands for corroborative evidence for existing myths or for new myths, as well as for a historiography to justify them. The strong disposition to mythologise and to see a moral significance between events that are not necessarily related at all,' according to this writer, are due to 'a historical attitude of Indonesian traditional culture and its continuing impact in an environment of self-activated revolutionary mass democracy'. The solution to the problem, as Soedjatmoko proposed, lies in 'faithful observance of the critical method in handling source materials, "meticulous attention" to detail' and 'the disciplining of historical imagination' (Soedjatmoko 1965: 405, 412).

Another solution is also applicable; namely, the use of 'backdating' first introduced by Crawford (1820; cf. Caldwell 1988). By using the royal genealogies and chronicles, Crawford, and later Ian Caldwell took a 'known and securely dated person late in genealogy and by "backdating", using a fixed number of years for each generation, a chronological framework could then be obtained for earlier individuals and events. The scattered information accompanying various individuals in these and other sources can then be placed within this framework' (Caldwell 1988: 164–165).<sup>6</sup>

A good example of the backdating method is provided by the well-documented conversion to Islam of the rulers of Gowa and Tallo' (1605 CE) and other major kingdoms in the first two decades of the 17th century. An article written by Noorduynd (1956) sets precisely the exact year at 1605 CE, which is officially used by most historians nowadays as the starting point of the conversion of South Sulawesi at large.

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6 'Genealogies provide a useful means for double checking the contents of the chronicles. If a discrepancy exists, obviously the historian must examine all the evidence even more closely. The importance of checking the genealogies can be seen in an example in Noorduynd's dissertation.' (Abidin 1971: 168–169).

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