5 The Bugis-Makassar Seafarers

Pirates or Entrepreneurs?

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Abstract
The essay focuses on Bugis and Makassar seafarers of South Sulawesi through two cases. The first is Lombok and Sumbawa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, where landless Makassarese aristocrats fought or allied with various groups to create a political platform. The second case is the seascape around Timor, further to the east, where a socially different type of maritime enterprise evolved, entailing both commercial activities and raiding of vulnerable small-scale island societies. While Dutch writers termed all these seafarers "pirates," this fails to capture the range of their socio-political roles. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the Dutch East India Company contributed to the rise of piratical activity through colonial advances on Sulawesi in the 1660s.

Keywords: Bugis, Makassar, Eastern Indonesia, representations, VOC

Introduction

The image of piracy has largely been shaped by a few early European descriptions, such as Exquemelin's *History of the Buccaneers of America* (1678) and Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724), which oscillated between the romantic and the abhorrent. These pirates are placed outside of the norms of society, entering an internalized system of modes of behaviour, however violent and turbulent. While less publicized, seaborne raiding in Southeast Asia has also been emblematic in the form of "Malay pirates," for example via Salgari's novels about Sandokan. Such literary references, and the fact that the Malays were primarily confronted by British ships and therefore found their way into works in English, tends to overshadow

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other groups active in maritime violence. In fact, acts of seaborne robbery have been known in maritime Southeast Asia since the Middle Ages, and remain an intermittent problem for commercial shipping to this day.

What we conventionally term piracy covers a broad spectrum of activities, from acts condoned or encouraged by states, to robberies outside any legal framework or state interest. Yet, such a broad definition does not help us to understand the complexity of Bugis-Makassarese non-state raiding ("piracy") in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Often, the "criminal" nature of the pursuit is contingent on the perspective; raiders tied to a minor archipelagic ruler in the precolonial era may have claimed political and religious legitimacy, while being regarded as sheer piracy by European authorities.[1] Early accounts of maritime Southeast Asia, like the famous *Suma Oriental* of Tomé Pires (c. 1512), stress that the coastal polities of Sumatra and Sulawesi were bent on raiding in addition to their commercial pursuit, thus sponsoring "corsairs" tied to a littoral ruler.[2] The small scale and non-bureaucratic structure of many Southeast Asian kingdoms meant that the distinction between what maritime violence was inside or outside customary norms was vague, sometimes irrelevant. Historians have lately argued that the nautical skills and networks of seaborne groups made them attractive allies to land-based polities; alliances that could oscillate between partnership, clientship, and dependency. Moreover, attention to maritime-oriented connections and networks may qualify traditional historiographical focus on European expansion in Southeast Asia.[3] An examination of this archipelagic aspect of history highlights the importance of concurrent experiences and concepts of piracy. Bugis-Makassarese piracy was unlike that described by Johnson and Exquemelin in many ways, and the concept of piracy in itself is not exactly covered by local terminologies.[4] It was the product of a volatile intermixing of devastating war, weaponized religion, and aristocratic ambitions, in an archipelago offering multiple opportunities for trade and profit, and where already fraught geopolitical

1 Stefan Eklöf Amirell, "Civilizing Pirates: Nineteenth-Century British Ideas about Piracy, Race and Civilization in the Malay Archipelago," *HumaNetten*, 41 (2018).

2 Tomé Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan*, ed. and transl. by Armando Cortesão, Vol. I–II (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944), 221.

3 Jennifer Gaynor, *Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia: Submerged Genealogy & the Legacy of Coastal* Capture (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2016), 7.

4 Carl Trocki refers to the distinction between raiders tied to Malay political systems, and those operating beyond these, the true seaborne outlaws or *perompak*. See Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore 1784–1885* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 68. The standard term for pirate in modern Indonesian is *bajak laut*, sea robber. The Makassarese terminology will be discussed below.

tensions were catalyzed by the colonial aspirations of the Dutch East India Company (VOC).

In this respect, the seaborne activities of the Bugis-Makassar peoples of South Sulawesi offer a fascinating case study. The two closely related groups are known in dated sources since the sixteenth century when they appear as highly mobile seafarers, politically divided into a number of medium-sized kingdoms: Gowa; Tallo'; Luwu'; Boné; Wajo'; Soppeng; Tanete; and a few more. Historiographical tradition suggests that these realms emerged in about the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, more or less at the beginning of Southeast Asia's age of commerce (to use the well-known term coined by Anthony Reid).[5] The kingdoms generally consisted of a coastline and a food-producing inland, and the distance from the sea was nowhere greater than 40 kilometres.[6] Geographically, South Sulawesi was well-placed, somewhere near the centre of maritime Southeast Asia, with feasible access to Kalimantan, Java, and eastern Indonesia. Historical records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveal an enormous range of Bugis-Makassarese seaborne activities, from Arakan in the north-west to the islands off Papua in the east.[7]

All this would not have been possible without a pronounced boat-building tradition, with specialized craftsmen coming from particular localities. The characteristic South Sulawesi type of ship was the *paduwakang*, which existed in a shorter and a longer, elongated type. The latter, which interests us here, was a warship that had sails as well as rowers. The ships were typically about eighteen metres in length and were often constructed in timber-rich southeast Kalimantan under the supervision of Bugis-Makassarese ship architects. The Makassarese oared warships of the seventeenth century were even longer, some 26–40 metres. The reach of their maritime activities was also enabled by a convergent set of navigating techniques, where the position of the sun and stars, the maritime environment, and the winds were used to determine the ship's position.[8]

5 Ian Caldwell, "Power, State and Society among the Pre-Islamic Bugis," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 151, no. 3 (1996): 417–418.

6 Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*: *A History of South Sulawesi* (*Celebes*) *in the Seventeenth Century* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1981); Christian Pelras, *The Bugis* (Oxford/Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

7 For Arakan, see Sebastien Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique*, 1629–1643, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1927), 379; for Papua, A. Haga, *Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea en de Papoesche eilanden. Historische bijdrage 1500–1883* (Batavia: W. Bruining, 1884),vol. I, 253.

8 Pelras, *The Bugis*, 257–264.

There were, therefore, a number of factors in Bugis-Makassar culture and geography that could easily translate into overseas economic and political activities. A politically expansive phase started in the early seventeenth century when Islam was introduced in South Sulawesi. With religion as its defining political ideology, the Makassar realm, consisting of the double kingdoms of Gowa and Tallo', extended its suzerainty over Sulawesi, East Kalimantan, Lombok, Sumbawa, and some spots in Timor and Maluku. In the decades around the mid-seventeenth century, Makassar was therefore one of the major realms in maritime Southeast Asia, along with Aceh, Mataram, Ternate, and the VOC.[9]

Often, this suzerainty amounted to little more than the payment of tributes, but sometimes it involved harsher conditions and forced labour. The rapid and violent construction of the realm led to revolts among the subjugated Bugis kingdoms, and the eventual collusion between the VOC and a fugitive Bugis prince, Arung Palakka of Boné. Makassar was eventually defeated by the coalition in 1667 and 1669, and the losers were forced to sign the Bungaya Treaty, which regulated affairs in Sulawesi and beyond.[10] The city of Makassar became an important VOC stronghold, while much of Sulawesi came under the suzerainty of the Dutch and Boné. However, destructive warfare ruined the living conditions for large groups of Bugis and Makassarese, as well as creating intense dissatisfaction among the local aristocracies.[11] Moreover, the stipulations of the treaty denied the Makassarese much of their former commercial network, for example to the Spice Islands in the east.

With the wars of the late 1660s, the stage was set for a comprehensive diaspora that took Bugis-Makassar people to as diverse places as Siam, Poulo Condor, Aceh, and Australia. The forced nature of the diaspora created preconditions for a wide range of overseas activities, from peaceful commerce to service as mercenaries to outright piracy. In this chapter, I will look at two geographical cases where Bugis-Makassar people undertook piratical activities, and ask how such activities correlated with other types of activities, such as commerce or service as auxiliaries. The first case is Lombok and Sumbawa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These two islands were brought under Makassarese suzerainty in

9 John Villiers, "Makassar: The Rise and fall of an East Indonesian Maritime Trading State, 1512–1669," in *The South-East Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise*, ed. by J. Kathitithamby-Wells and John Villiers (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), 152–155.

10 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 100–116.

11 Kathryn Anderson Wellen, *The Open Door: Early Modern Wajorese Statecraft and Diaspora* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 30–38.

the early seventeenth century (perhaps only partly in the case of Lombok).[12] The six Muslim petty kingdoms of Sumbawa were formally brought under the dependency of the VOC after 1669, while Lombok was left outside the Dutch orbit and soon became a bone of contention between the Hindu Balinese and the West Sumbawans.[13] The other case is the seascape around Timor, further to the east, a small-scale or even stateless and low-technology area that partly came under nominal VOC suzerainty between the 1613 and 1653, and partly under Portuguese domination in the same period.[14] Here, I follow the occurrence of maritime raiding after 1669 to the late eighteenth century. For the purpose of this chapter, I focus on seaborne robbery beyond the prerogatives of land-based polities. This approximates the traditional European understanding of "piracy," and was understood as such by European observers (in Dutch reports, *zeerovers*, etc.), although, as mentioned, it is not exactly paralleled by indigenous terms. The approximate Makassarese terms are (*tau-*) *belo* and *serang*, while robber in general is *gorra*, *bango*, or *lanong*.[15] Some of these appear to derive from raiding maritime peoples (Tobelo, Ceram, Ilanun), which indicates a propensity to associate outsiders with violent crime and highlights the ambiguities in finding a conceptual correspondence. Geographically, I compare an area with intense food production and Hindu-Javanese and Islamic cultural influences, with a dry and relatively resource-scarce area, characterized by small-scale and genealogically defined communities mostly practising ancestral religions. What range of activities by the Bugis-Makassar seafarers can be traced in the material, and how did forms of cooperation alternate with outright "piracy"?

Alliance and Enmity in Sumbawa and Lombok

Conditions in Sumbawa were fairly unsettled after the Bungaya Treaty, and it took some years before all the six kingdoms had signed contracts with

12 Hans Hägerdal, "From Batuparang to Ayudhya: Bali and the Outside World, 1636–1656," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde* 15, no. 1 (1998): 70–71.

13 *Idem*, *Held's History of Sumbawa* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 17–18; J. Noorduyn, *Bima en Sumbawa. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de sultanaten Bima en Sumbawa door A. Ligtvoet en G. P. Rouffaer* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1987), 10, 15.

14 See especially Arend de Roever, *De jacht op sandelhout. De VOC en de tweedeling van Timor in de zeventiende eeuw* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002).

15 B. F. Matthes, *Makassaarsch-Hollandsch woordenboek* (Amsterdam: Muller, 1859), 212, 800, 850.

the VOC. Treaties were an important part of the Company's attempts to regulate trade and ensure monopolies in the Indies, and were never intended to be concluded between equals; rather, they left the local aristocracies as subordinated allies.[16] However, the territories in Sumbawa did not always adhere in practice to the stipulations, but often colluded with Makassarese aristocrats operating beyond the control of the Company. This made for a highly volatile situation of unstable and ever-changing alliances in Sumbawan and, by implication, Lombok waters.[17]

The main protagonists here were two Makassarese princes of the blood, Karaeng Pamolikang (d. 1704) and Karaeng Jarannika (d. 1700). We meet Karaeng Jarannika on various occasions in the 1660s and 1670s, as one of the more prominent chiefs of the King of Gowa, and a person who drew suspicion in the eyes of the VOC as being an unreliable element. In 1674, he was involved in a scheme with two other princes to attack Bima in East Sumbawa with their seaborne retainers. The reason was allegedly a matter of honour: the Sultan of Bima had supposedly ordered the digging up and burning of the corpse of the King of Tallo' (the junior "twin kingdom" of Makassar) who had died on Sumbawa the year before. To the outsider, this looks very much like a loose pretext for legitimizing acts of piracy, but similar motives are found in other contexts among Makassarese aristocrats and refer to the traditional virtues of *siri*, dignity, and *pesse*, communal empathy.[18]

This time the threat evaporated, but Sumbawa continued to be disturbed by the interference of Makassarese aristocrats operating counter to Dutch interests. The confused situation was further complicated by warrior-bands from Karangasem on Bali, an emerging Hindu kingdom that found room for eastward expansion after the sudden fall of Makassar. Politically disunited Lombok was an attractive object of conquest for the mountainous East Balinese kingdom due to its vast rice-producing potential. The main kingdom Selaparang in East Lombok was defeated in 1676–1678, an event that later tradition plausibly attributes to internal squabbles among Lombok aristocrats. The somewhat unusual situation emerged with a Hindu minority ruling a Muslim majority, though belonging to a strongly localized brand

16 Martine van Ittersum, "Empire by Treaty? The Role of Written Documents in European Overseas Expansion, 1500–1800," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia*, ed. by. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 153.

17 Hägerdal, *Held's History of Sumbawa*, 115–119.

18 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 15–16.

of Islam.[19] Whether religious sentiment played a role is not known, but Karaeng Jarannika and his men undertook an expedition to Selaparang in the following year in order to confront the Balinese. Formally, it was an effort to assist the Sumbawan king, who was related to the rulers of Selaparang and had claims of overlordship of Lombok. While West Sumbawa had a contract with the VOC, the action was not endorsed by the Company, which dryly noted that Karaeng Jarannika failed and received a good hiding (*eenige lustige slagen*) from his Hindu adversaries. Back in West Sumbawa, he was nevertheless prestigious enough to marry the mother of the young sultan, herself a Selaparang princess.[20] This was in line with the traditional strategy of the South Sulawesi elites to approach the centre of a polity via marriage.[21]

An opportunity to actually perform raids on behalf of the Company offered itself in 1695 when one of the local Sumbawan kingdoms, Tambora, started a quest to dominate the island by violent means. From their base in Makassar, the Dutch authorities and their close ally Arung Palakka decided to act against the disobedient vassal. In September 1695, the Sulawesi forces were assembled in a splendid oath-giving ceremony in preparation for the expedition, where Karaeng Jarannika played the role of field commander for the Makassarese auxiliaries.[22] It was at this time, apparently, that Jarannika started to cooperate with his distant relative Karaeng Pamolikang, an elderly warrior. The expedition was successful since the auxiliaries were able to deplete the forces of Tambora, whose king surrendered to Jarannika on the Company's behalf in 1697.[23]

So far, the pattern might be similar to that of the Malay world, where violent conduct by seaborne groups could be seen as perfectly legitimate as long as they were tied to a polity.[24] However, the abnormal situation of a militarized aristocracy deprived of its normal means made for increasingly volatile behaviour. The following events show the vague borderline between

19 Hans Hägerdal, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Lombok and Bali in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001).

20 W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. Vol. IV: 1675–1685 (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1971), 273.

21 David Bulbeck, "The Politics of Marriage and the Marriage of Polities in Gowa, South Sulawesi, during the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Explorations in Austronesian Ethnography*, ed. By James J. Fox and Clifford Sather (Canberra: ANU Press, 2006).

22 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 292.

23 W. Ph. Coolhaas, *Generale missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. Vol. V: 1686–1698 (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1975), 737–739, 784, 838.

24 Trocki, *Prince of Pirates*, 68–69.

political activism and piracy. In the same year, Jarannika broke with the VOC by taking some Tamboran people aboard and sailing his flotilla to Manggarai in Flores, an area that was contested between Gowa and Bima and where the Dutch had nothing at all to say. The King of Gowa, as a Dutch vassal, tried to call him back but was conveniently ignored – in fact, the Dutch suspected that the king was not serious in his efforts. The year after this, Jarannika and Pamolikang sought refuge in Selaparang in Lombok, in spite of the previous enmity with the Balinese. The Dutch heard a rumour to the effect that Jarannika had been captured by his hosts, since he had boarded a vessel belonging to the Balinese ruler, and sincerely hoped that this would be true, "as he has deserved death, if only because of his latest work in the kingdom of Sumbawa, where he has pillaged four villages."[25]

The Dutch were disappointed, for the two cronies appeared in Sumbawan waters in full force in 1700. According to what the Company later heard, the close ally of the VOC in Sulawesi, Boné, had a hand in this. Boné was ruled by a nephew of Arung Palakka, who aimed to increase his influence on rice-producing Sumbawa by forming a strategic alliance with the sultan of the western kingdom. The court hesitated to receive the Bonese princess due to the enormous costs that such a marriage would involve in terms of bride-wealth and pomp. Boné therefore supposedly encouraged the two raiding princes to ravage the island, which they happily did. The Dutch reports relate how the locals received the "pirates" with the honours due to ruling princes, to no avail as the coastal areas were badly ravaged. A local Sumbawan potentate revealed to the Dutch that there was even more at stake. Jarannika entertained contacts with Surapati, a Balinese runaway slave who had carved out a little principality in East Java and who was the arch-enemy of the VOC.[26] The general idea, it was suggested, was to force the Sumbawan kingdoms in the alliance and then to "wage war together against Batavia."[27] This was truly alarming news for the Dutch.

It did go that far, however, for the locals eventually united with the courage of despair. A letter by a few Sumbawan lords details the dramatic end of the pirate expedition, which, interestingly, had features of a family enterprise and included wives and children:

25 W. Ph. Coolhaas, *Generale missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der VerenigdeOost-Indische Compagnie*. Vol. VI: 1698–1713 (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1976), 23.

26 Luc Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), 72–79.

27 Nationaal Archief, The Hague: Archive of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, access number 1.04.02 (hereafter VOC) 1637, letter from Tambora and Kalongkong to Batavia, 1700, fols. 84–85.

> In this time Karaeng Jarannika and Karaeng Pamolikang once again arrived to Kampu in order to strengthen their fortification. They asked Raja Kore to hand over all the Dompunese who were in his land. However, Raja Dompu would not allow it. For we had promised, all together, to fight the enemy in unison, so that Your Grace's men, Raja Tambora, Raja Dompu, Raja Kore, and Bumi Partiga [of Bima], took to the arms. There was mutual fighting, but Karaeng Jarannika and Karaeng Pamolikang were put to flight, retreating to their ships at night. However, Kare Kanjar and all the Makassarese with him, who had remained at Alas, were attacked by Tureli Barambon who got at them at Alas with some Tamborese and Dompunese. The men of Your Grace put trust in the power of the Company and overwhelmed their stockade where their wives and children had been left. Kare Kanjar and 30 of his men fell, and we also took 70 of their cannons, over which victory we felt a great joy in our hearts; for we were first like stones sunk in the sea, but now we are like the wood that floats on the waves.[28]

From this point onwards, the royal raiders ran out of luck, in part because of the notorious untrustworthiness of their chiefs. The defeated princes withdrew over the strait to Palaba in Lombok where the Balinese King of Karangasem received them: "this was no wonder since they were then all united and loyally assisted each other." However, the Byzantine intrigue that pervaded "Indonesian" politics at the time soon made the position of the pirates even more vulnerable. The Sumbawan rulers suggested to the Balinese king that he would do well to exterminate the rascals (*die schelmen moest uytroeyen*) in order to ingratiate himself with the VOC. The king decided to act quickly to deal with the troublesome guests. He invited the pirates to a feast with the spectacle of "mirror-fighting Balinese" – perhaps the well-known Baris dance where performers appear in rows with lances in their hands. At a given sign, the Balinese turned on the hapless Makassarese and impaled each one with two or three lances, an operation so swift that "not even a cat or dog could have escaped." Jarannika lost his life along with 151 retainers, while the sly Pamolikang had wisely remained in the pirate den and was able to set sail and sneak away in time.[29]

This was not the end of the affair, though. Pamolikang sought refuge with Surapati in East Java, but soon received news from the turbulent Lombok. The Balinese king quarrelled with his Muslim vassal of Selaparang over the

28 VOC 1637, letter from Tambora and Kalongkong to Batavia, 1700, fol. 86.

29 VOC 1663, relation by Datu Loka, 1700, fols. 91–92.

captive wife of Pamolikang, who happened to be a princess from Sumbawa. The Makassarese elite paid enormous attention to marriage alliances and the correct treatment of noblewomen, a circumstance that even disrupted political alliances at times.[30] As heated words turned into an outright rebellion against the Balinese, Pamolikang once again saw an opportunity to act and gathered sufficiently strong forces to attack the Balinese at Sokong in north-western Lombok in c. 1701. A Sumbawan witness gives an idea about the nature of the petty fighting in the region:

> [Pamolikang] gained in the first two attacks two paggers [stockades] from the Balinese, from which they retreated, employing a war stratagem. However, when they were to assault the third, and Pamolikang's son-in-law Karre Isa with some of his retainers (as the Balinese for the second time pretended to retreat) already were in there, then the most of the Balinese jumped out from the forests which had hid them around the place, and they thus encircled the aforementioned son-in-law [...] with 44 Makassarese and two prominent pongawas [chiefs] of Karaeng Pamolikang called Sapanjang and Karre Montoli, who now had to pay with their death. However, Pamolikang had escaped this dance with some of his people who had saved their life by running amuck. He was thus yet outside the pagger, and when he got wind of the Balinese he walked away right in time. Nevertheless, when he was called and asked for by his son[-in-law] to come to his help, he did not answer anything but: 'Ya my son, here each one must help himself; and show that you are a man, for that is the way of warfare'.[31]

The quotation indicates that the so-called pirates regarded their business as legitimate warfare, carried out with a pronounced code of conduct. Moreover, in spite of all his maverick enterprises, Pamolikang may have enjoyed secret support from the aristocracy of Gowa and Tallo'. At least this is how the Dutch understood the situation, as they pointed out that the request by the Gowa court to assist their brothers-in-faith in Selaparang was merely "a hidden way of corresponding with the old brigand Karaeng Pamolikang and so once again strengthen him in his robberies."[32] But the

30 Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Bugis-Makassar Diasporas," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 68, no. 1 (1995): 122–123; Bulbeck, "The Politics of Marriage and the Marriage of Polities."

31 VOC 1663, relation by Datu Loka, 1700, fols. 89–90.

32 Coolhaas, *Generale missiven*, VI, 222.

latter lived on borrowed time. When he once again attacked the Tambora kingdom with his seaborne raiders in 1704, the locals managed to surround and break into the house where he was staying. To be on the safe side, they shot Pamolikang with his own musket, conforming to a local belief that a man of great innate powers had to be killed with a personal object.[33] While Sumbawa had not seen the last of piracy, it entered a slightly more peaceful era, while Lombok would remain under Balinese domination until 1894.[34]

The persistent but ultimately unsuccessful enterprise of the Makassarese pirate princes warrants a few interesting observations. The porous line between state-condoned warfare and sheer piracy is striking. Fighting on behalf of the Dutch and its allies could immediately be followed by blatantly anti-VOC activities. Rapid changes of alliances made for clashes with a number of polities of any religion or ethnicity. In spite of the independent acts of the two princes, their ties to the VOC vassals in Gowa and Tallo' were never entirely broken. In the highly hierarchical system of Bugis-Makassar society, their aristocratic "white" blood carried with it an awe that combined with their apparent martial prowess. This can also be seen in the ambiguous stance of their Sumbawan victims; at one moment they would marry into local royalty and act as protectors, in the next they would ravage the coasts of the erstwhile allies. Their Muslim identity may have played a role in machinations against the Dutch and Balinese, but in both cases enmity alternated with alliance in a somewhat confusing way that seems to transcend religious borders. To the extent that we can trace the concrete aims of their acts – the material is usually Dutch with all its bias – they tried to secure bases from whence to build up a position of political power, such as West Sumbawa, Selaparang, and Manggarai. This is indicated by the open or clandestine alliances that shifted with great rapidity. In that way, they might classify as political entrepreneurs rather than pirates of the classical outlaw type. As pointed out by Leonard Andaya, Makassarese post-1669 migrations to other parts of Indonesia, such as Banten, Madura, Jambi, and Palembang, led to shifting alliances with local rulers where the Makassarese leaders took great care to guard their princely prerogatives in spite of being threadbare refugees.[35] On the other hand, the self-willed and untrustworthy (and thus piratical) pattern of behaviour eventually became self-defeating.

33 Compare Lalu Manca, *Sumbawa pada masa lalu* (*suatu tinjauan sejarah*) (Surabaya: Rinta, 1984), 136–137.

34 Coolhaas, *Generale missiven*, VI, 351; Manca, *Sumbawa pada masa lalu*, 137.

35 Andaya, "The Bugis-Makassar Diasporas," 121–125.

From Trepang-gathering to Piracy in the Timor Islands

It is interesting to compare the pirate fleets of Jarannika and Pamolikang with the more anonymous enterprises in eastern Indonesia. The pirate princes of Sulawesi went to Java, East Kalimantan, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, and western Flores, but usually no further than that. During the imperial era, Makassar made inroads in the sandal-rich Timor, most notably in 1641 when certain ports in the north-east were reduced to tributaries. Coastal sites on the nearby Alor Island likewise had to pay tribute. Similar to Sumbawa-Lombok, the sudden collapse of Makassarese state power created a power vacuum. The ethnically mixed Portuguese community (the Black Portuguese or Topasses) had hitherto kept a power base in Lifau in West Timor and Larantuka in Flores, but were now able to expand their influence to East Timor in 1668–1671, just in time to prevent the Dutch rivals from doing the same. But the Portuguese and Dutch communities in Timor were small and unable to police the vast waters.[36]

Makassarese seafarers are frequently mentioned after 1669 in the Dutch records from Kupang, the hub of VOC power in the Timor Islands. Their activities were part of a larger overall movement where they travelled eastwards, via the Tomini Gulf or Southeast Sulawesi, and effectively circumvented Dutch bases, especially gaining economic leverage in the eighteenth century.[37] Since the sources relatively seldom speak of Bugis, one suspects that the term Makassarese alludes, without distinction, to anyone coming from South Sulawesi. From the Dutch horizon, they usually act as troublemakers, being either "smugglers" who bring goods without VOC permits, or outright pirates. There are contrary indications that the sea migrants actually got on relatively well with the Portuguese, who anyway did not have the VOC's means to control trade prerogatives.[38] The fleets of ships appearing around the Timorese coasts were initially relatively small although they later became more substantial. In fact, they often seem to lack strategy; or rather, they adopt a strategy of flexibility, seeking opportunities for trade or robberies as they found them in the vulnerable societies of eastern Indonesia. In 1671, for example, it was reported that a single Makassarese ship had abducted 12–13 people in a coastal settlement

36 Hans Hägerdal, *Lords of the Land, Lords of the Sea: Conflict and Adaptation in Early Colonial Timor, 1600–1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), 162–173.

37 Leonard Y. Andaya, "Local Trade Networks in Maluku in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries," *Cakalele* 2, no. 2 (1991): 73–75.

38 VOC 1663, instructions by Joannes Focanus, 7 May 1702.

of VOC-affiliated Rote.[39] Some years later, in 1692, a chief from Sumba approached the VOC authorities in Timor and asked that the Company should step in as protectors over the stateless island, whose coasts had become prey for raiding from Makassarese and some other groups such as Malays, Bimanese, and Endenese – the latter being a mixture of local Florenese and migrants from Sulawesi.[40] An interesting variant is the appearance of a so-called Raja Tallo' in Alor with seven ships in 1702. Pretending to be the actual monarch of that realm, he gave the local raja an offer he could probably not refuse, to provide protection against unspecified benefits. In order to give weight to his words he took three hostages, then lifted anchor and sailed westwards before the Dutch had any chance to react.[41] As far as is known, the self-styled raja did not return; it is interesting, however, that the status of the Makassar royalty was sufficient to underpin a coup of this kind.

Eighteenth-century reports often complain about the increasing activities of Makassarese seafarers, whether violent or more commerce-oriented. This is substantiated by reports of rather large fleets, and an interesting combination of piracy and other activities. To quote a piece from 1737:

> The [Makassarese] use to travel to the Papuan Islands and also those around Banda every third or fourth year in order to find and boil trepang and obtain massoi.[42] Not so long ago, the Bandanese submitted several complaints about the Makassarese to the government. However, the Makassarese of old used this [pursuit] for their profit. They now arrive in such force in order not to be attacked and captured by the cruising pancalangs[43] and sloops of the Company in these eastern regions. In the time of the eastern winds they stay below the east coast of Timor where sometimes trepang may be found, staying until they are ready to deal with the further region. However, how much [i.e. little] these Makassarese should be trusted, and how they commit great robberies of humans on

39 VOC 1287, report, Kupang, 1671.

40 VOC 1531, dagregister Kupang, sub 17 December 1692.

41 VOC 1663, report, Kupang, 8 May 1702.

42 Trepang or tripang: any kind of edible sea cucumber, mainly used in the Chinese kitchen as a luxury dish. Massoi: bark from a tree found in Papua, used for medical purposes, such as essential oil; see *VOC-glossarium; Verklaringen van termen, verzameld uit de Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën die betrekking hebben op de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandsche Geschiedenis, 2000), 65–66, 118.

43 Large Malay sailing vessel; *VOC-glossarium*, 86.

> various islands under the pretext of looking for trepang, is seen from time to time, and therefore carefulness is a good thing.[44]

In this and other pieces, we see how the fleets have swelled over the decades, to sizes of up to 40 vessels that even discouraged Dutch intervention. No less than 80 Makassarese ships are said to have passed Maubara in Portuguese Timor in April–May 1728.[45] As apparent from the quotation, the acquisition of slaves as well as trepang, edible sea cucumber, were propelling the activities. The demand for trepang increased greatly over the century, as it ultimately found its way to wealthy Chinese people in China or Southeast Asia. In fact, the quest for trepang brought the seafarers over vast bodies of water, to northern Australia, from at least the early eighteenth century.[46] Slaves were widely used in Southeast Asian ports, and a few plantation regimes, such as Banda, and were indiscriminately employed by Muslims, Christians, and others. The fragmented nature of eastern Indonesian societies together with faltering VOC surveillance made for excellent opportunities for slaving piracy.[47] While the Dutch never completely gave up their ambition to police these waters, the pirate-entrepreneurs were rarely caught red-handed.[48]

There is, moreover, evidence that piratical activities were even organized across ethnic-religious lines. This is seen from a report referring to events in 1752. In October of that year, three ships with Makassarese and European crews approached the Alor Islands. Landing at Pandai in the northern part of Pantar Island, they slew the local raja, plundered the settlement, and eventually set the houses on fire. The marauders then proceeded to Barnusa on the same island but were less lucky this time. The inhabitants fought back and forced the crews to return to their ships, leaving some cannons and five men on shore. The enraged population immediately massacred the five pirates.[49] As often is the case with colonial reports about places far from the trading posts, there is not much detail, and we do not even know the nationality of the Europeans. Once again, the vulnerable position of

44 VOC 8330, dagregister Kupang, sub 24 June 1737.

45 W. Ph. Coolhaas, *Generale misiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. Vol. VIII: 1725–1729 (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1985), 191.

46 Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 24, 98–102; C. C. Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976).

47 Rodney Needham, *Sumba and the Slave Trade* (Monash: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1983).

48 VOC 3553, report, Kupang, 1779.

49 VOC 8346, missive, Kupang, 14 September 1753, fols. 58–59.

islands where VOC control was vague or non-existent would have made them tempting targets for temporary constellations of raiders.

At the same time, we should not assume that the Makassarese without VOC permits were necessarily violence-prone. While there are several examples of raiding and threats, the vast majority of the VOC reports point to peaceful activities. In fact, the Sulawesi seafarers were obviously functional since they carried on trading in regions where the Company lacked an incentive. A report from Kupang in 1750 admits that any attempt to improve Company trade in the Timor Islands was fruitless, since foreign keels managed the commerce. Apart from the Portuguese from Macau, a lot of Makassarese ships provided Alor, Solor, Flores, and Sumba with goods –probably mostly textiles from other parts of Asia. They even began to trade under the Portuguese flag in the dangerous waters of South Timor.[50]

This rather ambivalent image of Makassarese activities is strengthened by indigenous Timorese sources. Our contemporary material is largely Dutch or Portuguese, but a substantial body of indigenous traditions have been recorded since the nineteenth century in various parts of the island. In contrast with historiographic traditions from Bali and Lombok for example, the Makassarese occur frequently in these traditions. The foreigners are often known as Lubu Lubu Makassar, which possibly combines the Makassarese with Luwu', the oldest and most venerable Bugis kingdom and an early centre of iron technology. The stories depict the Makassarese rather differently. They tend to differ in the details from spokesman to spokesman, but West Timorese tradition often speaks of fighting between Makassarese intruders and local groups. The Portuguese are sometimes drawn into the story, either siding with or fighting against the Makassarese. The vague and detemporalized setting makes it hard to know if any historically known events are alluded to; the stories may represent the collective memory of Timorese contacts with the Bugis-Makassar seafarers during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. East Timorese tradition, by contrast, usually portrays the contacts as peaceful; the Makassarese came for trade, not war or proselytizing.[51] This is fairly compatible with contemporary accounts of the eighteenth century, which emphasize the regular Makassarese trade in slaves, beeswax, and sandalwood in the waters

50 VOC 8343, report, Kupang, 15 September 1750, fols. 60–61.

51 This observation is in the first place drawn from the unpublished voluminous collection of Timorese oral stories by the late Peter Spillett, *The Pre-Colonial History of the Island of Timor Together With Some Notes on the Makassan Influence in the Island*. (Darwin: Museum and Art Gallery of the North Territory, 1999).

of Portuguese Timor. While not piratical on the whole, these traders were fiercely independently minded and assaulted Europeans whenever they had the chance.[52]

Conclusions

I began this chapter by suggesting that Bugis-Makassarese piracy was similar to but also very different from the archetypal image of the contemporaneous piracy perpetrated by European crews in the Atlantic and Indian oceans and in the Caribbean. These were concurrent piracies; their common features belying distinctive characteristics. Yet, there is a further argument to be made for comparisons between our two cases, Sumbawa-Lombok and the Timor Islands. They offer obvious contrasts, indeed, two vastly different types of piracy. In the first instance, the operations were carried out by senior aristocrats, who seem to have kept a certain standing in the eyes of the local peoples in spite of all the pillaging and rupture of alliances. To an extent it might reinforce the idea that piracy was not necessarily a dishonourable pursuit in this time and place.[53] Karaeng Jarannika and Karaeng Pamolikang may have had an overall strategic aim in mind, to secure steady bases where they could operate independently of the Dutch overlords. In that way, they fall into a larger diasporic movement among enterprising Bugis-Makassar protagonists, who established dynasties or even polities in such diverse places as Aceh, Riau-Lingga, Selangor, and East Kalimantan.[54] In this case, however, their rash fickleness between political cooperation and sheer piracy eventually brought doom over themselves.

While their activities lasted for some three decades, the other case is a drawn-out process, a range of activities in the ill-policed eastern Indonesian waters, which were only curbed with the increasing efficiency of the Dutch colonial state, far into the nineteenth century. The seafarers involved here were usually not aristocrats and remained more anonymous in the historical records. Most probably, the voyages were organized in a similar way to those described by Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1817: every crew member received

52 Anne Lombard-Jourdan, "Un mémoire inédit de F.E. de Rosily sur l'île de Timor (1772)," *Archipel* 23 (1982): 97–98.

53 Anthony Reid, "Violence at Sea: Unpacking 'Piracy' in the Claims of States over Asian Seas," in *Elusive Pirates, Pervasive Smugglers: Violence and Clandestine Trade in the Greater China Seas*, ed. by Robert Antony (Hong Kong, 2010), 15–26.

54 Andaya, "The Bugis-Makassar Diasporas."

his stipulated share of the cargo according to their status and capacity.[55] While there was no lack of piratical or semi-piratical acts among the seafarers, we also see an interesting combination of peaceful entrepreneurship and slave-robbing, all completely beyond the monitoring capabilities of the colonial governance. Furthermore, the violent side of the matter should not be exaggerated: the informal network of commercial contacts with outlying places necessitated a degree of trust between buyers and sellers.

In seventeenth-century Europe, a common notion of a pirate (occurring in the most archetypical form in the West Indies) was a sea thief, an enemy of the human species. In a way, the pirate was not even an enemy proper, since pirates had no "commonwealth," no court, no treasury, no concord of citizens; rather, he was a freebooter outside of any law.[56] Here, again, the framework of concurrent concepts of piracy becomes useful. The VOC officials might have had such notions in mind when describing the troublemakers who passed review before their eyes, judging from invectives such as *zeerovers* (sea robbers, pirates), *rovers* (brigands), *schelmen* (rascals). Against this, it apparently weighed lightly when the court of Gowa, addressing the Dutch authorities, referred to the slain Karaeng Jarannika as *een voornaam Macassarees princekint* (a noble Makassarese princeling).[57] Nor did the Dutch know or care that the tribes of distant Timor kept stories of Makassarese, who brought the secret of iron to the island, or intermarried with the highest aristocracy, aside from their more violent approaches. In fact, the two types of Makassarese pirates were involved in a net of cultural affinities, migratory patterns, and economic exchange that did not entirely place them outside human "commonwealth."

Finally, it should be recalled that the two types of piracy had a common root. When the Dutch Company officials complained about the illicit acts of the Bugis-Makassar seafarers (and they frequently did), they were oblivious of the fact that they themselves had let the beasts out of the cage. Leonard Andaya and Kathy Wellen have described the enormous disruption and devastation brought about by the Makassar War.[58] Aristocrats lost their old lands and positions, while ordinary families were faced with starvation or large-scale violence. In these unsettled times, piracy was a way to fight and survive for another day. The dilemma is known from

55 Thomas Stamford Raffles, *History of Java*, 2 Vols. (London: Black, Parbury, and Allen, 1817), II, clxxxii–clxxxiii; Pelras, *The Bugis*, 267.

56 Daniel Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 113.

57 VOC 1663, dagregister Makassar, 1702, fols. 20–21.

58 Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 208–210; Wellen, *The Open Door*, 30–38.

many times and places, from Viking Age Scandinavia to modern Somalia, and should remind us that we do not need resort to inherent martial traditions to explain the seaborne violence that plagued the islands. Piracies occurred concurrently, involving different regions and populations and having similar but also vastly different experiences, giving rise to partly overlapping concepts.

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