
Dengan mempertimbangkan catatan kritis ini, buku Maiden voyages merupakan buku yang wajib dibaca bagi mahasiswa, ilmuwan, aktivis budaya yang mendalami masalah gender, budaya lokal, politik ruang, identitas budaya, khususnya di wilayah Indonesia Timur, yang sudah sepatutnya lebih banyak mendapatkan perhatian kita semua.

--------------------------------


Sirtjo Koolhof
Radio Nederland Wereldomroep
sirtjo.koolhof@rnw.nl

“May I not be cursed, may I not be destroyed, as I name the ancient karaeng: those who recline on royal settles, those who rest on royal settles, those who are of the purest gold, the chain of kings. For it is feared they will be forgotten by our descendants, by those who follow us. Because if they are not known there are two dangers: either we will feel ourselves to be such karaeng or outsiders will say you here are merely common people”.

With these words the Chronicle of Gowa sets out the scope of is to follow this introduction. No more or less than a somewhat elaborated genealogy of the rulers and nobles of the kingdom, in order for them, their followers and others to know their due place in society, the realm and also in history. And although, together with the Chronicle of Talloq, it is of immense value for the reconstruction of the
history of Makassar, especially before the arrival of Western powers, it is not a history in the academic sense of the word. In the past both texts were readily interpreted as such by Western historians (and others, like administrators, for example). William Cummings stresses that fact in his short but invaluable introduction to the translations and transcriptions of both texts. “Containing facts” – which certainly they do – “does not make them factual”, as he stresses (p. 10).

Makassar was the most powerful kingdom in the eastern part of the Malay archipelago when the later colonial powers arrived there in the early seventeenth century in search of the valuable spices from Maluku, and it was the gateway to these Spice Islands. Inevitably a struggle for power over the trade in spices evolved between the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Makassar empire which ended with the latter’s defeat by the VOC in the 1660s. From that time on administrators, historians and other academics have shown a growing interest in the history of Makassar – and other South Sulawesi kingdoms –, not only because of their historical contents, but also because of the difference with other ‘historiographical’ traditions in the archipelago, which, according to them, were not as reliable and factual as the Makassarese texts, and in general were much more of a mythical character.

Cummings does take the chronicles of Gowa and Talloq out this Western perspective and stresses that they should be observed from a Makassarese point of view. He brings to the fore the importance of genealogies, social order and familial relationships that define the borders of the realm. They are not historical in the sense that they evaluate the past, search for motives or causations, or reflect on that past. They are social maps of the realm.

Both the texts of the Gowa chronicle and the Talloq chronicle were until now only available to non-Makassarese speakers (and readers) in two unreliable Indonesian translations of a published Makassarese text, which itself was not the best source either. With his clear and accurate English translation, Cummings has finally made the text of these important texts available to a global audience. With the extensive notes to the translation and the transcription of the texts the reader gets the opportunity to dive deep into texts that by themselves are rather difficult to follow, because of the terseness of the language, the vast amount of personal names and the sometimes difficult to understand metaphors. It presents a fascinating insight into the importance of kinship in Makassarese society, and the way they shape the realm. Genealogies are of central importance and they form the core of much of Bugis and Makassarese written traditions, from the chronicles of the various kingdoms to the extensive Bugis epic La Galigo. The texts of the chronicles of Gowa and Talloq show probably most clearly the central importance of genealogies. Other chronicles, like for example that of the Bugis kingdom of Wajoq, do elaborate much more extensive on events not directly related to the genealogy. It’s likely that they take us back to a point in time close to the origin of historical writing in South Sulawesi.
The KITLV in Leiden has lived up its tradition of publishing reliable and readable editions of traditional texts originating in the archipelago. A few remarks, however, should be made. A detailed map with the locations mentioned in the texts is in fact indispensable for a good understanding. Unfortunately this is lacking completely. Regarding the notes, I would have preferred a separation of those notes that are mainly of a philological character from the ones clarifying the contents of the texts. They are now all referred to from the translation, while the transcription contains no references at all. While in general the whole edition is carefully edited, some inconsistencies in the spelling of personal names do occur. So do we find both Tunatangkalopi and Tunatangkaqlopi, and the name Tumassalangga is spelled in four different ways.

But these remarks do not in any sense detract from the fact that Cummings has done an excellent job in finally making available these chronicles that shed light on the early history of one the main pre-colonial empires in the Southeast Asian archipelago to an audience of outsiders, much wider than its authors have ever intended.


Edi Sedyawati
Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya
Universitas Indonesia
edi_sedyawati@yahoo.com


Kajiannya terpusat pada apa yang disebut grimingan, yaitu suatu permainan pada instrumen gender [gendhèr], yang dimainkan pada tahap-