Writing and reading Makassarese

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
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Abstract

Makassarese is a language spoken by approximately 2 million people in the province of South Sulawesi in Indonesia. Over the centuries the language has been represented orthographically in many ways: with two indigenous Indic or *aksara* based scripts, a system based on Arabic script known as *serang*, and a variety of Romanised conventions. This paper gives an overview of writing in the Makassarese language, discussing *what* Makassarese people have written (the types of manuscript and genres of writing that are found); and *how* they wrote it (concentrating on the two writing systems indigenous to South Sulawesi). It also discusses the experience of reading Makassarese manuscripts, and the challenges of interpreting them.

1   Makassarese and Bugis scripts

South Sulawesi has two indigenous writing systems: the old Makassarese script which was used exclusively for Makassarese until it fell into disuse in the 19th century, and the Bugis-Makassar script, which is still in marginal use today for both Bugis and Makassarese, and possibly Mandar. (To avoid confusion these will be referred to simply as Makassarese and Bugis scripts respectively — other terms which can be found are *ukiri' jangang-jangang* (Bugis *uki' manu'-manu'*) 'bird writing' for the Makassarese script, and *lontara' beru* 'new *lontara"* or simply *lontara'* for the Bugis script.[1] Both are Indic type scripts: syllabic systems in which sequences of (C)V are represented by single characters (referred to as *aksara* by paleographers) where V is inherently /a/ or is modified by vowel diacritics.[2] The two scripts have virtually identical systems, but differ significantly in the actual forms.

    Table 1 shows instances of the two scripts side by side for comparison.[3] Shaded cells show aksara used only for representing the Bugis language, while the aksara ✺ for /ha/, used primarily in Arabic and Malay loans, never had a counterpart in the Makassarese script. The similarity in the systems can clearly be seen, as can the differences in the aksara themselves — the only close matches being Bugis *ta* = Makassarese *na*, Bugis *nya* = Makassarese *ba*, and both have a (more or less) similar *wa*. In Makassarese the aksara themselves are called *anrong lontara'* 'mother of writing', while the vowel modifiers are *ana' lontara'* 'child of writing',

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[1] Some advocate the use of the term *lontara'* as the preferred name for the Bugis script, for example in a proposed Unicode revision (Everson 2003). In my opinion *lontara'* refers more properly to manuscripts in general rather than the script itself. To the best of my knowledge the earlier (and preferable) Unicode designation of 'Buginese' remains official; it currently occupies positions 1A00-1A1F. The Makassarese script does not currently have a Unicode block, though Miller (2011) has proposed that it be given one.

[2] Macknight and Caldwell (2001) have suggested the term **aksary** for this kind of script, while other proposed terms include **neosyllabary** (Daniels 1990) and **abugida** (Daniels and Bright 1996).

[3] It should be noted that the Makassarese script was never standardised and there was significant variation. The font used here was created by Jason Glavy, based on the handwriting from one particular manuscript: KIT 668/216.

specifically: *ana' i rate* 'child above' (◌̇), *ana' i rawa* 'child below' (◌̣), *ana' ri boko* 'child behind* (◌), and *ana' ri olo* 'child in front' (◌).

	ka	ga	nga	ngka	pa	ba	ma	mpa
BUG	⸗	ꭥ	⋏	⌢	ꭝ	⋏	⌣	ꭥ
MAK	ꭦ	ꭥ	ꭦ		ꭝ	ꭦ	ꭦ	

	ta	da	na	nra	ca	ja	nya	nca
BUG	⌢	⌣	⌢	ꭥ	ꭥ	⌢	⋍	⋙
MAK	ꭥ	ꭦ	⌢		ꭥ	ꭦ	ꭦ	

	ya	ra	la	wa	sa	a	ha	
BUG	⋙	⌢	⋍	⋙	◇	⋙	∞	
MAK	ꭦ	ꭦ	ꭖ	ꭦ	ꭥ	ꭥ		

	ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	kə	
BUG	⸗	⸗̇	⸗.	⸜⸗	⸗⸝	⸗̣	
MAK	ꭦ	ꭦ̇	ꭦ̣	ꭦ	ꭦ		

Table 1: The Bugis and Makassarese scripts

Both scripts share the major deficiency that syllable codas are not shown, meaning that the reader must fill in the gaps at the time of reading a text. This obviously requires a high level of fluency, and preferably prior knowledge of the text matter (see §1.2).

1.1 History

Little is certain about the source of either of the scripts, or when they first began to be used. They are obviously Indic in origin, descendants like other South and South-East Asian scripts of the Brahmi script developed in India by the 5th century BCE. This can be seen both by the syllabic nature of the system and from the general appearance of the aksaras, however the exact line of descent for the scripts is far from clear. There is no single obvious precursor from which either the Makassarese or Bugis script was derived, though most sources agree that Kawi (the script used in Java and its satellites) or something close to it was a likely ancestor, possibly via a Sumatran intermediary (Hunter 1996; Kozok 1996; Noorduyn 1991b). The most comparable in appearance are Batak and Rejang scripts from Sumatra, and a variety of Philippine scripts including Tagalog, Kulitan, Hanunóo and Buhid. The Philippine scripts share the deficiency of omitting syllable codas, which suggests the possibility that they are derived from a South Sulawesi script (Macknight and Caldwell 2001:142), or at least from a relatively proximate common ancestor.

For some time it was believed that the Bugis script was derived from the Makassarese, however given their dissimilarity in form this seems unlikely. Instead it seems plausible that they are both derived from the same ancestor (Tol 1996:214), but the exact line of descent is still a matter for debate. There is no evidence suggesting that the Makassarese script is older than the Bugis, or vice versa — speculation on this subject being hampered by the fact that

there are few verifiably antique examples of either script. The damp tropical climate of South Sulawesi is not ideal for the preservation of manuscripts written on palm leaves or paper, and there is no evidence that there was any carving on stone, wood or bamboo.[4] It seems fair to assume that the two scripts developed somewhat independently in Makassarese and Bugis areas respectively, and both coexisted for some time, with texts written on lontar leaves or paper which simply have not survived the tropical climate or South Sulawesi's turbulent history.

Caldwell (1988, 1998), writing about Bugis, has argued that the desire to record genealogical information was the impetus for developing a script sometime in the 14th century, and Macknight (1993:34) concurs. Cummings (2002) does not speculate on the date of origin of either of the scripts but only says that they predate the arrival of Islam in 1605. This makes sense — as Noorduyn (1961) has pointed out, had there not already been a writing system in place at that time, the new converts would have simply adopted the Arabic script.

As for media, Macknight has argued that paper was unlikely to have been available before the 16th century, and that prior to this the medium for writing would have been the strip-roll, in which 'narrow strips of palm-leaf are sewn end to end to form a very long ribbon just wide enough for one line of script. This ribbon is then wound around two spools to form a device very similar to a modern tape cassette and providing the reader with a continuous line of text' (Macknight 1993:11-12). Some of these types of manuscript (in the simplified 'palm-leaf' style of Bugis script) are still preserved, but I am unaware of any in either Makassarese script or language.

A frequently cited passage from the Gowa Chronicle records that a certain Daeng Pamatte', the harbourmaster of Gowa in the early 16th century, 'made Makassarese *lontara"* (*ampareki lontara' Mangkasaraka'*), and there is also a cryptic comment in the Tallo' Chronicle that 'writing first became good' (*nauru mabaji' ukirika*) at around the same time (Cummings 2002:42). This probably refers to the same event. However, there is agreement among scholars that this means that Daeng Pamatte' instituted the keeping of historical records rather than inventing the script *per se* (Cummings 2002:42; Noorduyn 1993:567). Thus, though we can assume that there must have been writing before this time, it was during the 16th century that it really took off. For discussion of the subject matter of these manuscripts, see §2.

To my knowledge the oldest extant and verifiable specimen of any South Sulawesi orthography is on a copy of the 1667 Treaty of Bungaya which is held in the Arsip Nasional Republic Indonesia in Jakarta (reproduced in Tol 1996:216). Although the articles of the treaty themselves are in Dutch and Malay in Arabic (Jawi) script, the names of the Makassarese noble signatories were in Makassarese script. They are reproduced in Figure 1.

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[4] Noorduyn (1993:563-4) reports Kern's speculation that the simplified 'palm-leaf' style of writing the Bugis script could have been carried over from carving vertically onto bamboo tubes in the manner found in the Philippines and Sumatra. As indicated though, there is no evidence for this.
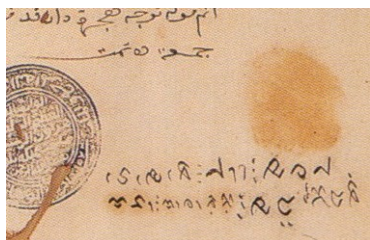
Figure 1:Detail of the Bungaya Treaty (from Tol 1996).

The names read: ᨑᨛᨃᨙᨔ (Lengkese'), ᨄᨚᨚ (Popo'), ᨀᨈᨶ (Katampa), ᨅᨒ (Ballo'), ᨅᨚᨈᨚᨔᨘ (Bontosunggu), ᨀᨑᨘ (Karunrung), and ᨁᨑᨔ (Garassi'). (The reader is directed to Andaya (1981) for the story behind the treaty and the parts that the signatories played in the Makassar War).

Some other examples of treaties and similar documents dating from the early 18th century are still extant and are listed by Noorduyn (1991b:472-3). However the oldest surviving large manuscript from South Sulawesi is in the collection of the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT) in Amsterdam. Known by its catalogue number KIT 668/216, it is a large bound paper volume of 77 leaves (154 pages) written almost entirely in Makassarese script. About one-third of the manuscript consists of the Chronicles of Gowa and Tallo' (pp. 1-33 and 33-56 respectively), and the remainder consists of various smaller texts. Noorduyn (1991b:470-2) describes the history of the manuscript and deduces (from the watermark on the paper and the fact that the latest event described in the manuscript is 1739) that it dates from the mid-18th century.

Figure 2: Extract from KIT 668/216.

Another manuscript in the Makassarese script is Or545.232 (origin unknown) from HISDOC at KITLV in Leiden. This is a manuscript of 13 double-sided pages in rather poor condition. Its date and provenance are unknown. Pages 1-12 are in the Makassarese script and appear to be the story of a certain Karaeng I La Padara, though they seem to be bound out of order (the remainder of the manuscript is in the Bugis script and contains some Makassarese poetry and also some Malay fragments in Bugis script). Much of the vocabulary was not comprehensible to me (or to Haji Djirong Basang Daeng Ngewa, the local scholar with whom I was working); as a result this manuscript awaits proper analysis and translation.
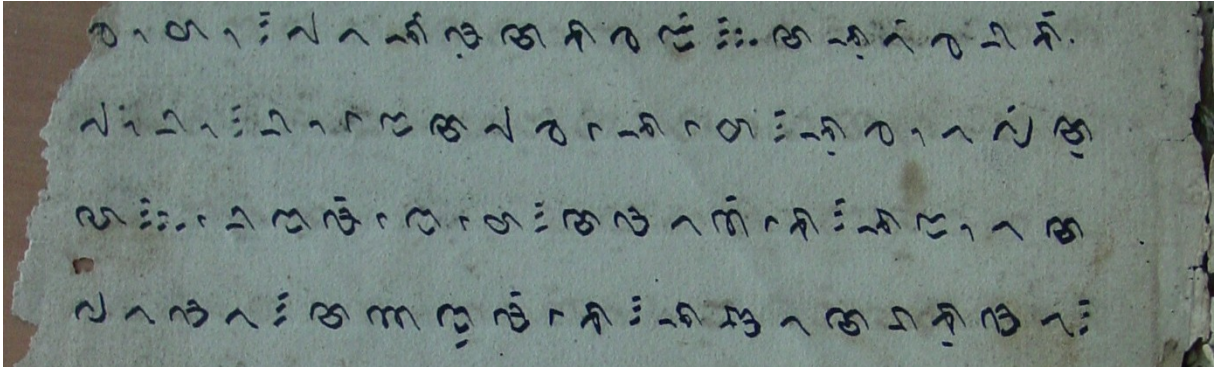
Figure 3: Extract from Or545.232.

The most recent large manuscript written in Makassarese script to my knowledge is a copy of a *lontara' bilang* (daily register, see §2.2.4)) owned by a *tu-mailalang* (prime minister) of Gowa. The original *lontara' bilang* is probably lost, the copy was presumably commissioned by Cense in the 1930s, and this copy was photographed in the 1970s by Campbell Macknight and forms part of the microfilm collection which is kept at the Australian National University.[5] The register itself covers dates between 1834 and 1858. The script in this copy is quite unusual. Although it is clearly a variant of the Makassarese script, many of the aksara are almost unrecognisable when compared to those in earlier manuscripts.
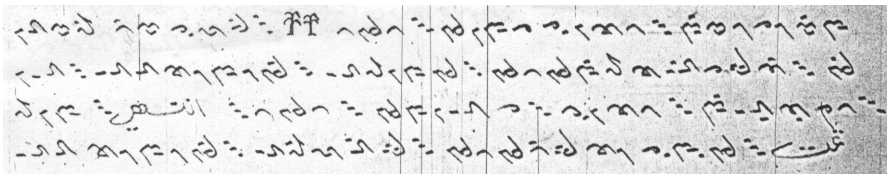

Figure 4: Later Makassarese script.[6]

Table 2 below gives some isolated forms for comparison with the aksara as seen in the earlier manuscript KIT 668/216. At a superficial glance the script looks quite similar to the Bugis script — this is most likely due to the copyist being much more familiar with the latter and imposing its style on what could have been a more 'authentic' Makassarese original. I simply note in passing the use of images of palm trees as punctuation, not seen in any other manuscript to my knowledge.

		ka			a
		ya			sa

Table 2: Comparison of some early and late Makassarese aksara.

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[5] Item 4, DS646.4.S6 reel 1 in the Menzies library.

[6] The text transliterates (without the addition of unrepresented syllable codas) as: *lebapi nibatuwangi. nakana. karenatumena. ribotobira | e. alamoroki. apareka. kanakaripamaitayaji. ki* ('before arriving there, their Kar(a)eng Who Rests in Bontobiraeng spoke, "it is easy to do, because it is only in our nature"').

The process by which the Makassarese script became obsolete and was replaced by the Bugis was probably gradual, and may have been influenced by several factors, among them the decline of the power of Gowa and subsequent demoralisation of Makassarese chroniclers;[7] the concomitant increase in Bugis power and influence; and the simpler (though less attractive to my eye) nature of the Bugis script. Cummings has speculated that for some time the Makassarese script was viewed as 'more arcane, rarified, and hence more spiritually powerful than the (Bugis) script' and also that Makassarese used it 'in certain texts to distinguish themselves and their past from Bugis' (Cummings 2002:44). This could explain the script's continued existence for some time after the fall of Gowa, but the fact remains that there are now no Makassarese who can read it — my experience tallies with Cummings' (pers. comm.) that Makassarese people, even those well versed in reading *lontara'* in Bugis script, need to have old Makassarese *lontara'* transliterated for them before attempting to interpret them.

1.2   Problems with the scripts

I can only agree wholeheartedly with Cummings' lament that '(r)eading Makassarese is difficult and requires patience and persistence' (Cummings 2002:xii). As mentioned earlier, both scripts share a major drawback in that they fail to represent any syllable codas, which leads to numerous possible ambiguities and makes it difficult to read texts whose content is not already reasonably well known. Because of this, the scripts have been called 'defective' (Noorduyn 1993:533).

As an example, consider the 9 possible pronunciations of the sequence ᨅᨅ or ᨅᨅ: *baba, babang, baba', ba'ba, ba'bang, ba'ba', bamba, bambang, bamba'*. (Underlining shows words which actually occur in the language). Even if Makassarese used the Bugis symbols for prenasalised syllables (such as ᨇ *mpa*), that is no help in this instance because there is still no symbol for *mba*.)[8] When one considers also that in the older *lontara'* there are no gaps between words, while the main element of punctuation, the *passimbang* (᨞), is used between chunks of text of no fixed size, the potential for confusion becomes obvious. Cummings (2002:xii) gives the (invented) example ᨊᨀᨑᨙᨄᨙᨄᨊᨒ ᨅᨙᨊᨚᨈᨚᨀ, which can be read as either *nakanrei pepe' balla' datoka* 'fire consumed the Chinese temple' or *nakanrei pepe' balanda tokka'* 'fire consumed the bald Dutchman'. Clearly even the most fluent reader will have to pause frequently to work out by context what the intended word is.

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[7] It is worth repeating here Blok's 1759 comment: 'the manuscripts of the Maccassars have, since the conquest of their kingdom, been discontinued, and they have no intention to resume them, until their much wished for restoration be realized' (Blok 1817:iii).

[8] Even in Bugis the use of these symbols is inconsistent (Noorduyn 1993:545-9). Note that the failure of Makassarese to adopt these Bugis symbols suggests either (a) that the Bugis script was adopted simply as a replacement for the Makassarese rather than on its own merits, or (b) that those symbols were a more recent innovation. It certainly cannot be said that Bugis requires these symbols while Makassarese can get by without them, as the phonologies of the languages are quite similar in this respect.

1.3 Punctuation

Punctuation varies widely across documents. The basic unit of punctuation is the *passimbang* (Bugis *pallawa*), three dots, usually vertical ⁝ in the Makassarese script rather than the slanted one ⸪ normally used in the Bugis script. This is used between units of quite varying size depending on the individual style of the scribe and the nature of the text, but generally either the word or the phrase. In some instances a *passimbang* occurs within words: an example is from Article 16 of the Treaty of Bungaya in KIT 668/216: ⟨ᨊᨄᨚᨈᨙᨑᨂᨙ⟩ (*napoteranga.sengi* 'he (must) return them all') where the *passimbang* is in the middle of the presumably monomorphemic plural marker *ngaseng*. Whether this is intentional or merely scribal error is impossible to determine, but given that the *passimbang* are in a different colour ink (and would therefore probably have been added after the rest of the page had been written), the latter seems likely.

There are also some idiosyncratic variations of punctuation: both KIT 668/216 and Or.545.232 contain the symbol ⁝–, which is clearly used to separate larger chunks of text, such as to signal the end of one king's reign and the beginning of another's (this is equivalent to ⟨symbol⟩ found in the Bugis script). The *Lontara' bilang tumailalang Gowa* manuscript uses the more usual slanted *passimbang* ⸪, but also uniquely uses small images of palm trees. These can occur singly or up to three at a time. Their purpose is unclear.

After the creation of Bugis printing types in 1856, Matthes introduced the convention of leaving spaces between words in printed Makassarese texts and using the *passimbang* more consistently as a clause delimiter. These innovations are also found in some later handwritten manuscripts, though by no means all (Noorduyn 1993:553).

1.4 Script reform proposals

Given the deficiencies of the system it is no surprise that there have been several proposals for modifying the Bugis script (none are known for the Makassarese script). Actually the system only needs the addition of two symbols (or diacritics) to become a near perfect way to represent the language. These symbols only need represent the opposition between syllable-final nasal (N) and stop (C); the phonetic realisation is entirely predictable (with the single exception of geminate *rr*). Thus, the 9 possibilities for ⟨kk⟩ given above: *kaka, kakang, kaka', kakka, kakkang, kakka', kangka, kangkang, kangka'*; would be represented by ⟨kk⟩, ⟨kk⟩N, ⟨kk⟩C, ⟨k⟩C⟨k⟩, ⟨k⟩C⟨k⟩N, ⟨k⟩C⟨k⟩C, ⟨k⟩N⟨k⟩, ⟨k⟩N⟨k⟩N, ⟨k⟩N⟨k⟩C respectively.

However, attempts to improve the Bugis script have not always been sensible, nor have they become popular. One modification of the script is to use a caron-like symbol ˇ above an aksara as a *virama* or vowel-killer, to show that the symbol represents a consonant without a vowel, thus representing syllable codas. In this system no allowance is made for predictable assimilation, so nasal codas must be represented by the relevant choice of ⟨m⟩ ⟨n⟩ ⟨ny⟩ ⟨ng⟩ (*m, n, ny, ng*), and geminates must be represented by sequences of two symbols, with the first carrying the diacritic (eg. ⟨salangga⟩ *salangga* 'shoulder', ⟨nakku'⟩ *nakku'* 'yearning'). This system adds greatly to the length of documents while still only providing a partial solution — there is no conventional way to represent syllable-final glottal stops so these are omitted.

Some recommend using ⸜⸝ (*k*-virama) for glottal stops, so *nakku'* = ⸜⸝⸜⸝⸜⸝ but this is clearly not an ideal solution. In practice people are generally aware of the virama option but do not seem to use it, though it is provided for in the Unicode proposal (Everson 2003), but with different symbols — either a trailing dot or underlining, thus ⸜⸝⸜⸝ or ⸜⸝⸜⸝ for *nakku'*.

Matthes in his grammar (1858:11) describes the use of the diacritic ⸜⸝ (known as *anca'* in Makassarese) to represent a syllable ending with a nasal, eg. ⸜⸝⸜⸝⸜⸝ *salangga* 'shoulder'. This symbol is called *ecce'* in Bugis and represents schwa, so the above would read [saləga] to a Buginese. Matthes remarks that this usage is for beginning readers, although it was also found in a small number of ordinary texts (Noorduyn 1993:549). The Unicode proposal (Everson 2003) includes provision for something similar labelled *anusvara* after Sanskrit tradition. Although this addition is quite sensible, confusingly the proposal is for the caron-like modifier ˘ which has previously been used as virama (see above) though in the proposal ˘ is placed 'before [rather than over - AJ] a consonant which is pre-nasalised', so *salangga* = ⸜⸝⸜⸝ ˘⸜⸝. The most recent font for the Bugis script, Xenotype Lontara,[9] includes this provision but the anusvara is placed above the post-nasalised consonant (which was the convention for *anca'*, thus *salangga* = ⸜⸝⸜⸝⸜⸝).

The Unicode proposal also includes provision for representing final stops or glottal stops with a circumflex-like character ˆ, thus *nakku'* = ⸜⸝ˆ⸜⸝ˆ. This modification is quite sensible but to the best of my knowledge its use is unattested.

1.5   Reading *lontara'*

Cummings describes his experience of reading Makassarese as follows:

> Often the meaning of a word or phrase becomes clear only later as the context unfolds, demanding that the reader turn back the page and re-read in this new light. Reading Makassarese — scanning, deliberating, choosing, and remaining open to possibilities — involves actively reworking material to achieve a satisfactory, if always tentative, sense. Furthermore, Makassarese composers assumed a whole world of associations and knowledge that future readers would bring to the text. Defining a word is never a matter of a simple one-to-one unvarying correspondence between languages. Words are read and gain meaning from the web of implications, allusions, and contrasts they have not only with other words in that language, but with the world to which that language refers. Reading the archaic words that have passed out of use in contemporary spoken Makassarese is often a matter of assumption and inference…
> In my translations I have been guided by the desire to reproduce on paper the rhythm of reading Makassarese texts I first encountered in Makassar. To do so I have used commas and semicolons liberally to structure the text. Only rarely do I follow strictly the breaks (**.**) the Makassarese composer placed within his text. Instead, I use commas and semicolons to mark out what I believe are read as coherent units of meaning, a process that is, of course, a matter of judgment. In my experience, Makassarese reading *lontaraq* read one statement at a time, scanning, deciding, and then interpreting each such unit as a whole before moving to the next. Makassarese reading has both a staccato rhythm and what can only be described as a declarative confidence in each statement. Texts are composed of these typically short declarations (Cummings 2002:xii-xiii).

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[9] www.xenotypetech.com

Leaving aside the difficulty in identifying words, especially those which are archaic and unlikely to be in the dictionary, some of the most difficult (grammatical) aspects of interpreting texts from *lontara'* are:

- given the lack of spaces between words it is often unclear whether any given *na* should be identified as the conjunction *na* 'and', the 3rd person proclitic *na=*, or the 3rd person possessive suffix ≡na

- similarly, it is often difficult to determine whether a *ku* should be attached to the previous element as the 1st person possessive suffix, or the following element as the 1st person proclitic pronoun.

- it is impossible to distinguish between the 1st person absolutive enclitic =*a'*, and the article ≡a, so ꦮꦫꦢꦂ could be interpreted as *karaenga'* 'I am king' or *karaenga* 'the king'.

- it is often not clear whether a verb prefix is *aC-* or *aN-* (§7.1), as in ꦄꦧꦼꦠꦻ *a'betai* 'he won' (intransitive) or *ambetai* 'he defeated …' (transitive).

The last point raises an important problem with using *lontara'* as sources of information about the language's state at a particular historical period: Texts are necessarily filtered through the contemporary language — that is to say that the modern reader unavoidably reconstructs missing elements using knowledge of the language as spoken today. For example, a reader's choice of *aC-* or *aN-* in *a(?)betai* is based on what the choice would be by a modern speaker, or on what one knows of the grammar in general. However there does not seem to be any solution to this particular problem, and it is not in itself an excuse to give up using manuscript data altogether. It simply means we must exercise caution, remembering that some details have been added by the reader.

2   Literature

In this section I outline the main types of literary genre which are found in Makassarese, from both written and oral traditions.[10] The distinction is important, because the manuscripts (*lontara'*) which comprise the corpus of pre-modern indigenous writings represent only a few major types: namely *patturioloang* (chronicles); *rapang* and *parakara* (expositions of *ada'* or traditional law); texts of religious instruction, *kotika* (which resemble almanacs and give information about calendars), and *lontara' bilang* (diaries or datebooks); while other genres such as *sinrili'* (epic chanted tales), *kelong* (poems) and *rupama* or *pau-pau* (folk tales) were transmitted through oral traditions.

It is instructive in fact to examine what sort of manuscripts are not found in Makassarese. For example, the Bugis creation myth/epic tale *I La Galigo*, written in a refined literary register[11] and contained in innumerable manuscripts found throughout the Bugis speaking area, is often reported to form one of the largest single works of literature in the world (Pelras 1996:34). It has also been described as 'the most encompassing, encyclopaedic work

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[10] More detailed discussions of Makassarese literary genres can be found elsewhere (see especially Cummings 2002, 2003; Noorduyn 1991a).

[11] This literary register forms the basis of Sirk's (1996) grammatical description.

regarding the knowledge important to Bugis society' (Koolhof 1999:384). But it has no parallel in Makassarese culture. Neither do the epic works of Bugis written poetry known as *tolo'*. Indeed there does not appear to have been a tradition of putting down myth or literature in writing until the colonial era, with a few notable exceptions such as translations of legendary or religious texts from Malay or Islamic tradition.[12]

2.1   Orality and literacy in Makassarese

Much has been written about the relationship and lack of a clear boundary between oral and written genres in South Sulawesi. Pelras (1979), writing about Bugis literature, claimed that the two genres could not be separated and each borrowed from the other; while Macknight (1993:29) has surmised that the 'writing in an oral style' seen in La Galigo manuscripts could be explained by being the work of a 'writing composer' — a scribe who uses oral composition techniques to create a written work. More recently Cummings (2002, 2003) has written about the complex relationship between Makassarese oral and written histories, in which, for example, oral histories from polities outside Gowa may mimic the style of the Gowa Chronicle (which itself borrows from oral traditions) in order to promote their own region's history and deny central claims about Gowa's primacy; in essence using the authority of the Chronicle in order to deny its authority.

However, while the ongoing debate about orality and literacy is important, in some ways it diverts attention from the point, crucial for the present work, that in Makassarese certain genres were obviously intended primarily for entertainment or aesthetic pleasure, while others were intended for recording information considered important. The former, such as *sinrili'*, *kelong* and *rupama*, were exclusively oral; the latter, such as *patturioloang*, *rapang* and *lontara' bilang*, may have features of oral composition but, unlike the Bugis examples, there is no indication that they were ever considered as performance genres[13] — indeed, in the case of *lontara' bilang* the genre seems to have been designed <u>not</u> to be entertaining. When looking at the characteristics of language in various genres this division is important: the 'oral' genres contain a more literary or poetic style, and above all in the case of *sinrili'* are more obviously products of an oral compositional tradition.

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[12] According to Matthes (1858:xi): *'De meeste, zoo niet alle vertellingen en romantische verhalen… hebben hunnen oorsprong aan de Maleijers te danken; terwijl die Makassaarsche godsdienstige geschriften… niets dan vertalingen en vrije omwerkingen van Arabische stukken te noemen zijn.'* (Most, if not all stories and romantic tales have the Malays to thank for their origin; whereas Makassarese religious writings… can be called nothing more than translations and free reworkings of Arabic pieces). A similar observation was made by Niemann (1863).

[13] I have been unable to get conclusive information about this. Although it is likely that *lontara'* need to be read aloud in order to be properly interpreted (see Saenger 1997 about the difficulty of reading text without word spacing; also Cummings 2002:xii, 41), it is not known if *patturioloang* were ever ceremonially read aloud for education or entertainment.

2.2   *Lontara'*

In this section I summarise the genres that tend to appear in manuscripts that are referred to as *lontara'*, but first I will discuss the nature of *lontara'* themselves. The word (in origin referring to leaves of the *lontar* palm, as used for Javanese and Balinese literary traditions) in general is used to denote a physical handwritten manuscript, usually in the Bugis or Makassarese script, comprising 'a more or less disparate miscellany of items' (Macknight 1984:105). They vary in length from single sheets to hundreds of pages in bound codices, and may contain a fragment of a large work, or a collection of entire texts, or something in between. For example, the *lontara'* believed to be the oldest (KIT 668-216) has 154 surviving pages and contains versions of the Chronicles of Gowa, Tallo', Sanrabone, Bangkala', Maros, and Cenrana as far as p. 62; and from then a variety of different types of text, including treaties, tellings of particular events or reigns of *karaeng*, *rapang*, Islamic texts including the story of *Noong* (Noah), and so forth.

In both Bugis and Makassarese culture certain *lontara'* are believed to have sacred and mystical qualities (see for example Koolhof 1999), and in Makassarese they are included in the larger category of *kalompoang* (regalia, lit. 'greatness', see e.g Rössler 2000).[14] To this day certain *lontara'* are believed to be so powerful that they must not be read by the wrong person (or in some cases even read at all). In 2010 I carried out a preliminary survey of *lontara'* kept in provate collections in Makassar and villages to the south, and found that many local custodians maintained the belief that some *lontara'* are sacred in themselves and require ritual preparation before opening them (usually involving animal sacrifice), or that they may contain information that should not be shown to outsiders, commoners, or non-Muslims.

This of course can result in the knowledge of the substance of the *lontara'* being lost, as Cummings (2002:55) recounts: 'In one case, the carefully handled manuscript of a family who no longer dared to open the case but who generations ago had been instructed to preserve its contents turned out to be only the receipt for the sale of a horse'. Similarly I was shown a piece of paper in Bugis script which turned out to be a contract for property sale. Many *lontara'* have however found their way into institutional collections in Indonesia or abroad, or been made available for copying or photographing.

2.2.1   *Patturioloang*

The main indigenous written text genre in Makassarese is the *patturioloang* or Chronicle. (*Patturioloang* is a *pa><ang* nominal derivation (see §6.2.2.3) based on *tu-ri-olo* <person-PREP-front> 'ancestor'.) Of these, by far the best known are the Chronicles of Gowa and Tallo', which exist in many different manuscript copies (for a listing of those known to exist in public collections see Noorduyn (1991b) — many more undoubtedly exist in private collections). Both chronicles were published by Matthes in the Chrestomathie (Matthes 1883), and later translated into Indonesian (Abdul Kadir Manyambeang and Abdul Rahim Daeng

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[14] This has led to them having a controversial position amongst some followers of orthodox Islam, and in fact many *lontara'* were burnt during the Islamist-inspired Kahar Muzakkar rebellion of 1950–1965 (Dijk 1981).

Mone 1979; Wolhoff and Abdurrahim 1959), and recently English (Cummings to appear). There are also several recent works that examine particular chronicles or the genre in general (Cummings 1999, 2000, 2002; Noorduyn 1991b).

Cummings (2002:77-88) has discussed the features typical of oral compositions which are found in *patturioloang*. These include paired phrases and the constant use of formulae and conventional phrasings. He goes so far as to list the most common phrases found in the Chronicles:

- *anne karaeng uru* … 'this was the first ruler to …'

- sitau pole bainenna/ana'na… 'another wife/child of …'

- *angnganakkangi* … 'he had a child …'

- *anne karaenga (ta)nipuji(jai)* … 'this ruler was (not) (only) praised as …'

- *anne karaenga ambetai* … 'this ruler conquered …'

To which might be added the constant use of the archaic formulae *iang kumabassung* 'may I not swell up', and *iang kumaweke-weke* 'may I not be destroyed', preceding the naming of members of the royal class. While their superstitious use in warding away misfortune associated with breaking naming taboos should not be underestimated, they have an obvious filler function whose use can be appreciated when it is remembered that most royal personages had at least three sets of names: posthumous names (*areng mate*), personal names (*areng kale*), and family or *daeng* names (*areng pamana'* or *pa'daengang*). With the addition of Islamic names in the 17th century one can understand that the dredging of names from memory was not an inconsiderable part of the oral performance and the formulae would have added valuable thinking time, but then found their way into written texts as well.

While most attention has been paid to *patturioloang* relating to prominent polities such as Gowa, Tallo' and Maros, there are numerous others and in fact some are still being created.

As an example, in 2010 I met Daeng Rahaman who lives just outside Boddia village in Galesong about 15 km south of Makassar. He showed me a large collection of *lontara'* (at least 12 exercise books) concerned with (his own version) of the history of Galesong, which he has handwritten over the course of 20 years.
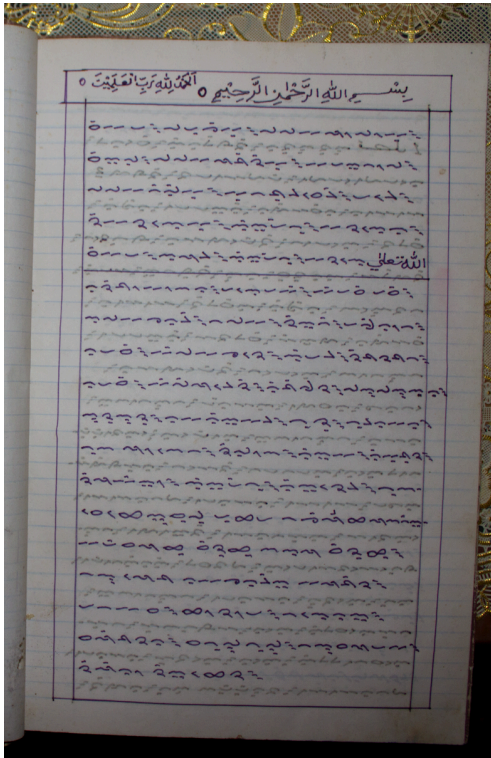
Figure 5: A page from Daeng Rahaman's *patturioloang Galesong*.

2.2.2 *Rapang* and *Parakara*

Rapang are statements of customary law (*adat*) and guides for correct behaviour based on the pronouncements of ancestors, who may or may not be named specifically. *Parakara* are similar to *rapang* but from a legal perspective, relating to criminal and inheritance laws, and so forth (Cummings 2002:47,147). Manuscripts consisting of compiled *rapang* and/or *parakara* are common, and there is also a collection of them in the Chrestomathie (Matthes 1883), which were romanised and translated into Indonesian in a publication by the Proyek Penerbitan Buku Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah (Matthes 1985).

2.2.3 *Kotika*

These *lontara'* contain information about the indigenous and Islamic calendars, and are used to determine propitious days for undertaking particular activities. They are still often consulted, especially by sailors from more traditionally-oriented parts of the provinces. Figure 6 shows a page from a *kotika* owned by a Daeng Jaga in Makassar, written (or more precisely, copied from an older version) in the 1970s.
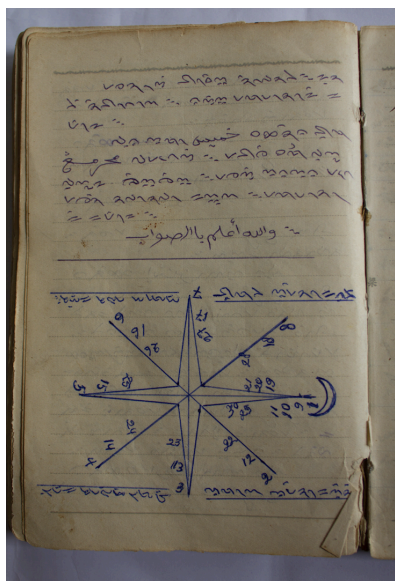
Figure 6: An example of a *kotika*.

2.2.4 *Lontara' bilang*

These daily registers, also known as diaries or annals, were records of important events associated with particular kingdoms. The genre was discussed thoroughly in a paper by Cense (1966). The best known of these is the diary of the courts of Gowa and Tallo', which was transliterated from a *serang* (Arabic) copy and translated into Dutch (Ligtvoet 1880), and more recently and comprehensively by Cummings (2010).

2.3   Published works in Bugis script

As has earlier been mentioned, in the mid-19th century Matthes had printing types created for the Bugis script, which made mass production of texts possible for the first time. The largest scale work is Matthes' Chrestomathie of 1860 (revised 1883), which contains a variety of texts based on copied *lontara'*.[15] Also at this time previously oral traditions such as *sinrili'*, *pau-pau* and *kelong* began to be written and published (see Noorduyn 1991a:143ff).

2.4   Oral genres

2.4.1   *Sinrili'*

This is probably the best known of Makassarese literary forms today — most recent local works on *sastra Makassar* (Indonesian: 'Makassarese literature') are devoted to it (Cummings

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[15] In some cases this book or sections of it have in fact become *lontara'* in their own right and are treated as valued heirlooms (Cummings 2002:54).

2002:42) — but in origin it was exclusively an oral tradition of epic prose, intended for chanted performance by professional *pasinrili'*, who were customarily blind, to the accompaniment of a two-stringed spike fiddle known as the *keso'-keso'* (Sutton 2002:105). To my knowledge *sinrili'* were first written down (in Bugis script) at the instigation of Matthes, and several were included in his Chrestomathie (Matthes 1883): these include *Datu Museng*, and *I Ma'di'*. These, together with some others were later published in roman script with Indonesian translation (Parewansa et al. 1992).
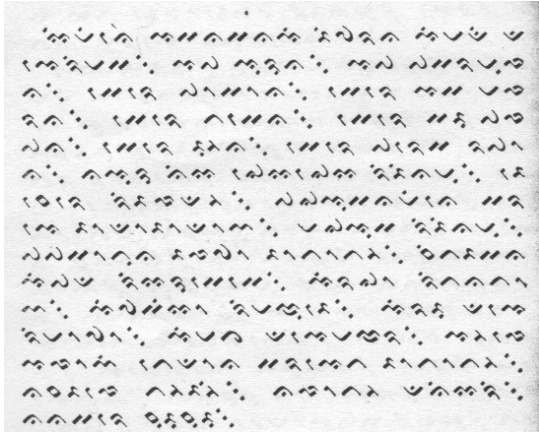

Figure 7: Extract from the *sinrili'* I Ma'di' as published in Matthes' Chrestomathie (1883).

Other *sinrili'* available in published form include the *Sinrili'na Kappala' Tallumbatua* (Aburaerah Arief & Zainuddin Hakim 1993), which tells a fictionalised account of the Bugis prince Arung Palakka (called Andi Patunru in the *sinrili'*) and his alliance with the Dutch which permitted the defeat of Gowa.[16] Some *sinrili'* are (or at least were) also commercially available in abridged versions as recorded performances on cassette tape.

There are a number of *pasinrili'* (*sinrili'* performers) still active, and in fact some *sinrili'* have been composed in recent decades in both Makassarese and Indonesian, including one on family planning (*Sinrili' Keluarga Berencana*). However despite (or perhaps because of) the co-option of the *sinrili'* genre as the official exemplar of Makassarese literature, it does not seem especially popular today (see Sutton 2002:105-133).

2.4.2 Kelong

Kelong are a genre of short chanted or sung poems, similar to Malay *pantun*, with an 8-8-5-8 metre,[17] and free rhyme. The Chrestomathie (Matthes 1883) contains 8 pages of them, many reappearing among 634 romanised *kelong* with Indonesian translations (Sahabuddin Nappu 1986). A later publication (Sahabuddin Nappu & Sande 1991), although not describing them as *kelong*, merely *puisi*, contains nearly 400 of them, as well as some wedding poems with different metres. Another collection contains several hundred (Gani et al. 1987). There are

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[16] Andaya (1980) examines the paradox that the person who arguably did most to destroy Makassarese political power also became a Makassarese folk hero.

[17] Incidentally, many Makassarese pop songs use this metre, or 8-8-8-8.

also several hundred *kelong* which were collected by Abdurrahim and can be found in Cense's archives at KITLV (Or.545.55g, 56b).

2.4.3   Rupama and Pau-pau

These are folk tales, often recognisable as similar or identical to stories from other Indonesian cultures, for example stories containing the *pulando'* or mouse-deer (not found on Sulawesi) which are from a Malay tradition. There are a number of collections of these, the results of projects in the 1980s and 90s.[18] It does not seem that these were written down until collected by teams working for the Pusat Bahasa or Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (DepDikBud). *Pau-pau* are also folk tales but tend to be longer than *rupama* — one published example is *I Kukang* ('the orphan') (Intje Nanggong Siradjoedin 1940), which is one of the later Makassarese publications printed in Bugis script.
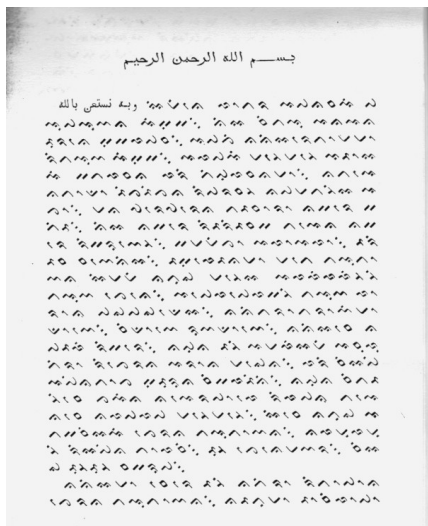

Figure 8: The first page of I Kukang (Intje Nanggong Siradjoedin 1940).

3   Conclusions: the scripts today

As was earlier mentioned, the Makassarese script is defunct and I have not yet encountered a single Makassarese person who can read it. This is despite the fact that it can be learned in a few hours by someone familiar with the Bugis script, and I can only conclude that it is a cultural belief that the Makassarese script cannot be read.

The position of the Bugis script is better, and there remains a significant number of elderly or middle-aged Makassarese people who are still fluent readers or even writers, especially in areas somewhat isolated from modern influences. Although in urban areas it is rare to find young people who are fluent in reading, at least they are aware of the existence of the script — having been taught it in school, and getting exposure to it through street signage and

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[18] Two are word for word almost exactly the same, despite having different authors (Syamsul Rizal and Sahabuddin Nappu 1993; Zainuddin Hakim 1991).

official banners. In more rural areas I have met people in their 20s who have gained some fluency in reading through maintenance of traditional methods of transmission.

However, it appears that the tradition of writing Makassarese in the Bugis script — or more properly *composing* in it — is highly endangered. Although I have met young Makassarese who can read Bugis script and to a degree write (or rather copy) it, the only people I have met who can actively compose in it are elderly, and in fact many have died since I started working in South Sulawesi in 1995. Local scholars and archivists pay attention to the manuscript tradition, but seem unaware that the tradition of writing *patturioloang* still exists, but in a highly endangered state.

The impact of the official support of the Bugis script through signage and education requires study. Bugis script has been taught in the school system as *muatan lokal* 'local content' since at least the 1980s, but anecdotal evidence suggests that poor teaching methods and a lack of interesting reading material could in fact be counter-productive, and for at least a proportion of the students this decreases the prestige of the script. Around 2006 Bugis script was added to the street signs in Makassar city as seen in Figure 9, and even before that it was commonly used for signs in front of government buildings. There is also the use of 'Buginised' roman script as seen in Figure 10, produced by local tourism authorities during the promotional campaign 'Visit Makassar 2012'. Whether such efforts bear fruit in renewed interest in the local writing traditions remains to be seen.

Figure 9: Street sign with Bugis script

Figure 10: Promotion for 'Visit Makassar 2013'
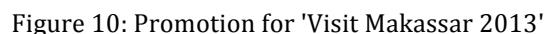
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