

## The triumph of lontara'

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Recent work on the early history of South Sulawesi provides a context within which various scripts were developed for writing Bugis and Makasar. Like most other scripts in Southeast Asia, the earliest of these were based on the Indic system of aksara with vowel modifiers and are conveniently referred to as aksaries. Like most borrowings, the scripts were significantly 'localised' initially and then adapted over time. Both of these processes involved some deliberate initiatives. Though we do not know who was responsible for most of these decisions, we can offer some suggestions on when, where and perhaps why they were made. The lontara' script eventually evolved as a remarkably elegant and effective means of rendering South Sulawesi languages.