

Literacy, Orality and Memory

The Historical Intersection of Gowa and Polombangkeng

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ABSTRACT

In the sixteenth century, Gowa had conquered all the Makassar kingdoms, including Polombangkeng. To maintain their hegemony, Gowa began to write their historical texts that chronicled their origins and preserve their victories. At the same time, Polombangkeng began to produce resistant orality to the Gowa's literacy. This article discusses the historical intersection of Gowa and Polombangkeng through a texts analysis of Gowa's literacy and Polombangkeng's orality. By using an interdisciplinary approach, history, philology, and anthropology, this study proves that there are historical intersections, similarities, and contradictions between Gowa's literacy and Polombangkeng's orality. Gowa narrates their victory through literacy, while Polombangkeng narrates their triumph through oral tradition. Both Gowa's literacy and Polombangkeng's orality are politics of memory that aim to maintain their collective memories. Even though Polombangkeng's orality is only a marginalized narration, it is transmitted in various ways, including music, rituals, oral traditions, and continues to be reproduced to this day. Meanwhile, Gowa's literacy tends to stagnate, especially after the fall of Gowa in 1667. Gowa stopped writing their history and their collective memory transmission tends to weaken.

Keywords: Literacy, Orality, Politics of Memory, Gowa, Polombangkeng

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the victors write history. However, people also create their history through collective memory—it is the proper expression to describe the historical relationship between Gowa and Polombangkeng. When the rulers of Gowa reached their glory, controlling all the Makassar kingdoms, around the 1630s, they began writing chronic of *lontara bilang* (counting manuscripts), which contained carefully dated and chronologically ordered entries recording significant or surprising events [1]. However, the rulers of Gowa stopped writing *lontara bilang* when they lost in the Makassar war. According to Roelof Blok [2], the Makassarese (Gowa) no longer wrote notes on the chronicle. They would only continue the chronicle if they had succeeded in gaining independence. There is also a *lontara patturioloang* that contains historical records of Gowa until Sultan Hasanuddin passed away, but it is without a date and years. There are no exact figures for the year when the Makassarese wrote the *patturioloang*, but the contents and period have similarities with the *lontara bilang* Gowa.

Contrary to the Gowa kingdom's literacy, Polombangkeng, a vassal kingdom, did not write their history. However, they created and transmitted their history through collective memory. The literacy of the Gowa kingdom and the orality of Polombangkeng show two aspects that are not balanced when observed from the development of historical studies. The historiographical production of Gowa from various aspects is relatively abundant and has received attention from various social scientists. While Polombangkeng as a suburb plunged in the significant current of Gowa history, almost no comprehensive study discussing this area.

Gowa manuscripts as a historical source have produced scientific works from various disciplines. Abdul Razak Daeng Patunru's work "Sedjarah Gowa" is the first book to describe the history of Gowa-Tallo from the period of formation to the end of Dutch colonialism [3]. Although it tends to be considered conventional history, the presence of this work becomes an essential reference in writing the history of Gowa. Then William Cumming focuses on the history of

Makassar (Gowa) by analyzing the manuscripts of the Gowa kingdom in a social and cultural context. According to him, what we interpret as mere historical sources turns out to be a significant historical factor [4]. Another work by William Cummings [1, 5, 6] explicitly examines the Gowa and Tallo chronicles as important historical sources in studying pre-colonial Makassar related to the origin, growth, and expansion of the Gowa kingdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. French David Bulbeck [7] comprehensively discusses Gowa from the perspective of historical archeology. Close study of the archaeological record provided strong support for the literal truth of the origin stories of these kingdoms as stated in their chronicles. Bulbeck draws a linear line during the heyday of Gowa from archaeological evidence and the veracity of Gowa's royal diaries. Then Ahmad Sewang [8] analyzes Islamization in the Gowa by using the Gowa's manuscript. Rismawidiati [9] also uses *lontara* as the primary source in analyzing the expansion of the power of Gowa and Tallo in the 16th century. Production of the historiography of Gowa is abundant, written by scholars both at the master and doctoral degrees.

Meanwhile, Polombangkeng as the Gowa's vassal was marginalized in historiography in South Sulawesi, especially in the pre-colonial period. Kooreman, an official of the Dutch colonial government, describes his experience in the South Sulawesi area. Although it does not explicitly discuss the Polombangkeng area, it provides essential information about this area as an area that is prone to robbery and theft [10]. Another article by Goedhart explicitly contains Takalar and places Polombangkeng as one of the discussions [11]. Then, Ijzereef's work may be the writing first on Polombangkeng in the form of a dissertation that looks at this hierarchy and regional autonomy. This work provides important information regarding the development of Polombangkeng during the Dutch colonial period [12]. However, the historiography of the Indonesian revolution in Polombangkeng abundant than the historiography of Gowa. Taufik Ahmad's latest study, which discusses the robbery in Polombangkeng, is a part of the protest political and economic injustice in the Dutch colonial period [13, 14]. The bandits transformed into fighters in the Indonesian independence revolution. Polombangkeng, which was previously a marginal area where theft and robbery thrived, was articulated during the revolution as one of the centers of the struggle to defend Indonesia's independence in South Sulawesi. Polombangkeng was previously a marginal area where rampant theft and robbery were articulated during the revolution as centers of the struggle to defend Indonesia's independence in South Sulawesi.

Then, how do the Polombangkeng people create their history? Here is where the Polombangkeng people seem to play an essential role in transmitting the past

from generation to generation. The narratives of their origins, triumphs, and defeats are not written much by historians, but they have the power to express their past through various ways, such as oral traditions, myths, and rituals. Interestingly, the relationship between Gowa and Polombangkeng has a dominant portion narrated in the oral tradition of the Polombangkeng people. Similarly, the Polombangkeng people metaphorize their relationship with Gowa in Makassar language *je'ne nipaleiki minnya'* (like water mixed with oil) [15]. On the other hand, the Gowa *lontara* places Polombangkeng as a vassal area, or the conquered kingdom only occupies a small portion of the Gowa kingdom narration. The greatness of Gowa, which represents Makassar's history, basically received cultural resistance from the vassal kingdoms, including Polombangkeng.

How is the Polombangkeng narrative produced and reproduced? Do they also produce resistance narratives that they expressed through oral traditions, rituals, and myths? By taking Gowa as the victorious kingdom and Polombangkeng as the loser kingdom, this article attempts to see the historical intersection in the collective memory of the Gowa people through the *lontara* and the collective memory of the Polombangkeng people expressed through oral tradition. How Gowa literacy and Polombangkeng orality are connected and contradicted and the extent to which the memory contained in literacy and orality transmitted from generation to generation are the main questions described in this article.

2. THE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOWA AND POLOMBANGKENG

This section describes the history of Gowa and Polombangkeng based on the perspective of both. The author wants to analyze the historical descriptions of the two from the oral tradition of the Polombangkeng people from the *lontara* of Gowa. The Polombangkeng oral tradition was narrated by Daeng Manombong in front of the Takalar Controller, J. Tideman in 1907. This oral tradition also bears similarities to what Daeng Rau said in 2018.

In the oral tradition of Polombangkeng, it is stated that Polombangkeng was initially a kingdom called Bajeng, namely an alliance of three *bate* (autonomous village), namely Bajeng, Bontokadatto, and Malewang. These three *bates* agreed to form a single legal area, known as the Bajeng Kingdom. The center of government in Biringbalang (South Polombangkeng). The king who controlled this area was Karaeng Lowe ri Bajeng. In this period, Bajeng was a sovereign kingdom whose greatness and influence were equal to Gowa [4]. Francis David Bulbeck mentions that this area had the most outstanding government before the rise of the

kingdom of Gowa [7] However, Bajeng only enjoyed independence in a relatively short time because of the conquest of the Gowa Kingdom. After the conquest of Bajeng, Gowa then changed the name Bajeng into Polombangkeng (broken leg) and added Lassang and Lantang into the Polombangkeng area. In other words, Gowa formed a new confederation called Polombangkeng.

The feud between Bajeng and Gowa openly began. In the Bajeng oral tradition, it is stated that the war between Bajeng and Gowa began when Karaeng Lowe and his empress named Sitti Daeng Nisanga were blessed with a beautiful daughter named I Naima. I Naima's beauty was famous in the lands of Makassar, so that the King of Gowa, Tomaparisi Kallonna (1510-1546) intended to marry her. When the envoy of the king of Gowa arrived, Karaeng Lowe refused the envoy's proposal of the king of Gowa [15]. As a result of this refusal, the relationship between Bajeng and Gowa worsened and ended in war.

Gowa attacked Bajeng five times, but all failed. Gowa experienced defeat after defeat throughout the war against Bajeng. Bajeng is the only kingdom in South Sulawesi that Gowa never conquered through open war. The King of Gowa realized that Bajeng could not be defeated, and because of that, he ordered Bonto Lemngan to investigate the source of Bajeng's power. Bonto Lemngan went to Bajeng and pretended to be the *toriboya* (fugitive) of the king of Gowa and asked for political asylum from the Bajeng kingdom. Karaeng Lowe accepted Bonto Lemngan's request for protection. Bonto Lemngan, who was skilled at diplomacy, gradually influenced Karaeng Lowe to dig trenches from the east and south and raise the land of the Gowa border area. That is the cause of the uneven topographical structure in this area [15]

Bonto Lemngan returned to Gowa and conveyed the results of his investigation to the king of Gowa. The King of Gowa Tunipalangga then planned a scheme to defeat Bajeng by inviting I Panai Karaeng Galesong to cooperate in seizing Bajeng's *kalompoang* (heirloom) named I Buqle' and promising him protection and honour. Panai Karaeng Galesong was a former assistant to Karaeng Lowe. Panai Karaeng Galesong then accepted the offer of the king of Gowa. The scheme to beat Bajeng goes well. Panai invited Karaeng Lowe to a party in Tamangapa. Panai had planned to get Karaeng Lowe drunk at a *ballo'* (arrack from sugar palm) drinking party. When Karaeng Lowe started to get drunk, the Gowa troops pretended to attack Galesong by burning straw around Galesong's palace. The sky of Galesong looked red, and it was visible from Tamangapa. Panai then told Karaeng Lowe that the Gowa troops had burned his palace. Karaeng Lowe also promised to help him. However, Panai stated that he was ready to face Gowa if Karaeng Lowe was willing to

lend Buqle'. Karaeng Lowe also agreed to I Panai's request on the condition that he took an oath. Karaeng Lowe ri Bajeng then handed over Buqle' while taking the oath; "If you deceive me if you do not return it after wearing it, you and all your grandchildren will live in misery and full of pain, you will live without children, like a tree that does not sprout, you will eat dirt, you will use fishing nets for your clothes, your house will fall, and the gods curse you" [4]. Before finished, I Panai quickly rode his horse to the royal palace of Gowa. In the presence of the king of Gowa, I Panai paid homage and handed over I Buqle'. Finally, Karaeng Lowe ri Bajeng lost I Buqle', the symbol and legitimacy of his power in Bajeng.

The Polombangkeng oral tradition is different from the Gowa lontara *patturioloang*. This manuscript states that Bajeng and Polombangkeng are two different regions, although it states that the king of Bajeng is the son of Karaeng Lowe. In this lontara, it states:

43. *Tuma'gauka ri Bajeng ana'na Karaeng Loë, nikanaja Daenna I Pasairi, kakanna I Daeng Masarro; ia- minne sari'battanna Tuma'gauka ri Sanrabone, ri Lengkese', ri Katingang, ri Jamarang, ri Djipang, ri Mandalle', tujui sisari'battang, ma'la'lang sipuengaseng.*

43. Raja Bajeng is the son of Karaeng Loe (ri Bajeng), (his name) is only said to be Daenna I Pasairi (his older brother I Pairisi), his brother I Daeng Masarro, he is related to the kings of Sanrabone, Lengkese, Katingang, Jamarang, Jipang and Mandalle, they are seven brothers (to) all under the royal umbrella (La'lang sipue) [16]

The conquest of Polombangkeng also mentioned:

56. *Matei Tumapa'risi' Kallonna Karae-ngami Tunipalangga ansossorangi ma'gauka; areng kalenna, iangku mabassung, iangku maweke-weke, nika na I Mario-gau', areng pama na'na nikana I Daeng Bonto, pakkaranganna ritama' gau' na nikana Karaeng Lakiung.*

60. *Iami anne karaenga ambetai Badjeng, ambetai Lengkese', tu-Polombangkeng....*

56. After Tumaprisi Kallonna died, it was King Tunipalangga who inherited the government; his first name, hopefully not to be cursed, is called I Mario-gau, the name of his Daeng is called I Daeng Bonto, the name of his Karaeng before controlling the government is called Karaeng Lakiung

60. It was this king who defeated Bajeng, defeated Lengkese; Polombangkeng people [16]

Based on the manuscript, it states that Tunipalangga defeated Bajeng, Lengkese; Polombangkeng people. If we analyze the text of this manuscript, the use of the word "tu Polombangkeng" (the Polombangkeng people)

does not refer to a region but a community. In the oral tradition, the name Polombangkeng refers to Bajeng troops who lost in a war. The legs of the troops were hit by lead due to a fire in an attack on Gowa. They were then called Polombangkeng (broken leg). This name later became the name of the territory of the former Bajeng kingdom. The mention of Polombangkeng goes hand in hand with Gowa's interest in eliminating Bajeng's identity. To maintain its hegemony, Gowa also transferred hundreds of Bajeng troops to the areas of Limbung, Pammate Ballo, Kutula, and Mata Allo [11]. The Bajeng people that have transferred then called himself *ana' Bajeng* (son of Bajeng). This area is now called Bajeng. Similarly, the Bajeng people who refused to move chose to settle in Monconngkomba also referred to themselves as *ana' Bajeng*.

3. POLITICS OF MEMORY: HISTORY OF THE WINNER AND THE LOSER

In the mid-sixteenth century, Gowa began to control the past by collecting the *kalompoang* as a source of legitimacy. Gowa became a representation of the Makassar kingdom. The history of Gowa represented the history of Makassar. In other words, the history of Gowa is a benchmark for the history of Makassar. In Dipesh Chakrabarty's words, Gowa became the silent reference or a master narrative for all Makassarese history [17], and William Cummings says that Gowa has dominated "genres of historical creation"[4]. In contrast, Polombangkeng is only a marginal narrative and sinks behind the great currents of the glory of the Gowa. They are scattered. Malewang and Bontokadatto acknowledged the power of Gowa, some of them migrated to Turatea, Jenepono, some headed north of Maros, Gowa moved some to the area around Limbung, and some still settled and built a new settlement called Monconngkomba, the former core area of the Bajeng Kingdom [15].

The process of centralization of Gowa as a master narrative has several components. First, genres of history-making, notably *patturioloang*, spread outward from Gowa, making Gowa's chronicle the archetype after which other communities would model their history. Second, historical manuscripts spread outward from Gowa. This process made Gowa the primary geographical source of the sacred words of the ancestors. Third, the Makassarese adopted the motifs found in the Gowa chronicles as the key tropes oral communities use to make histories from the past, again conferring on Gowa the recognition that it was the cultural centre and most important politic in Makassar [4].

However, in the tradition of writing Gowa *patturioloang* some things cannot be conveyed or can be conveyed. Writing the words in the manuscript needs a ritual to have sacredness in the writing process. This

process is a justification for removing or adding according to their interests. Remove or edit and construct a previous version of historical fact; omitted, obscured, and hidden is part of the politics of memory [18]. The presence of sacred principles, ethics not to mention taboos, becomes the cultural justification for omitting or obscuring historical facts. The sacredness of the writing of this lontara appears that the phrase "may I not be cursed" repeatedly appears in the *patturioloang* of Gowa-Tallo every time the author writes down the personal names of the rulers. Sacralization and omission of a particular event is also selective memory. The author of *lontara* selected what is said and not said, what is happy to be revealed and what is not happy to be revealed or hidden. Selection in disclosing memories also has its politics [19].

When Gowa became the master narrative of Makassar history and became a model for writing *patturioloang* for other Makassar communities, Polombangkeng as a vassal kingdom created an oral tradition resistant to Gowa. Unlike other Makassar kingdoms who wrote their oral traditions in manuscript form, the Polombangkeng people maintained their oral traditions differently. They do not follow the *patturioloang* model as Gowa did for the first time. The political project to culturally dominate Polombangkeng was not entirely successful, if not a complete failure. The politics of trying to change the name of Bajeng to Polombangkeng, changing the title of *karaeng* to *tomalompo* did not completely erase their memory of their identity. Then, the politics of uniting several regions into the Polombangkeng structure also did not produce results. The Bajeng people, even though they were part of a unitary area with Polombangkeng, feel they are not part of Gowa. They still feel they are the real Bajeng, independent people. Their honour was still equal to Gowa.

One of the communities that most maintain their identity as Bajeng people are those who choose to settle in Monconngkomba, the former core area of the Bajeng kingdom. They were the remnants of the Bajeng troops who refused to move in Gowa by forming a new Bajeng community. The first leader of this new Bajeng was Daeng Mabella [11]. They do not recognize the power of Gowa. The new Bajeng in the Monconngkomba community grew the strongest to maintain respect for Karaeng Lowe ri Bajeng. They continue to narrate and transmit their past perspectives in their way through oral, myth, ritual, and daily life practices. As a result, the narration of their past and how Gowa took their heirloom obscured their identity still preserved today. Gowa was indeed victor and wrote a history of their victories, but the remnants of the Bajeng kingdom also produced narratives of resistance through oral traditions, myths, and rituals.

Gowa as the victor and ruled over all of Makassar, wrote its history through *lontara patturioloang* and *lontara bilang*, which then spread and were followed by most of the other Makassar kingdoms. Of course, this causes cognitive changes in Makassar society. Kenneth George [20, 21] sees the development of the literacy model in continuous performances circulating in a shared society whose shape is influenced by power relations, social structures, and culture. Literacy and power approach a very intimate relationship. Literacy is a new phenomenon in power that marks the modern era of Makassar.

While Polombangkeng was a vassal of Gowa, they maintained their orality, they tended to be backward in literacy, but they strengthened internally. Then, how is the mental structure and cognition of the Polombangkeng people formed and used in dealing with the changing social world? The history of Polombangkeng perspective, which is transmitted from generation to generation through oral tradition, is internalized, used to feel, understand, realize, and assess the world we face. Historical experiences, cultural roots, myths, rituals, and oral traditions are internalized through regular patterns and then produce resistance actions against Gowa. They always narrate in oral tradition that they have never lost a war against Gowa. According to them, Gowa conquered them due to Galesong's betrayal and Gowa's cunning strategy to seize their *Kalompuang*.

The Polombangkeng people have a medium that presents their past in their daily lives, namely, practice, object, and narrative. These four culturally and deeply rooted mediums form a memory scheme so that it becomes a knowledge structure that represents an object or event, which in turn becomes a collective memory. The Polombangkeng people understand their past and how Gowa defeated them is part of the collective memory. This collective memory can be observed by considering a collection of memory schemes located at the supra-individual level of social life and formed through binary social interactions, both culturally related to interactions between individuals and individual interactions and institutional forms (Beim, 2007, pp. 7-26). The orality maintained by Polombangkeng has the power to form a collective memory because it can be accessed and spoken by anyone.

4. CONCLUSION

Gowa, as the victorious kingdom, controlled all the Makassar kingdoms in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writing a history of their origin, glory, and greatness through *lontara patturioloang*. This tradition of writing *lontara* then spread and was followed by most of the other Makassar kingdoms. The victory of Gowa written in their manuscript is an attempt to

maintain dominance and hegemony over other kingdoms. Meanwhile, Polombangkeng, as the defeated kingdom, also narrated their history through oral traditions transmitted from generation to generation. The memories of the Polombangkeng people expressed in oral traditions tend to be resistant to Gowa. Specific communities still use Bajeng to justify their identity when facing a social world that marginalizes them. The historical crosses between Gowa and Polombangkeng seem to overlap and contradict each other, which is the knick-knacks that characterize the relationship between these two regions.

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