

THE DELIGHT OF THE DUTCH COMPAGNIE

On the *Toloqna Musuq Boné* by Daéng ri Aja.¹

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At the end of the seventeenth century the Buginese kingdom of Boné had become the most powerful political entity on the South Sulawesi peninsula. This followed the successful cooperation between the Dutch VOC and Arung Palakka, the famous leader of Boné, in their effort to defeat the Makasar kingdom of Goa under the reign of Sultan Hasanuddin. During the nineteenth century, however, relations between the two former allies were strained. This was due to various misunderstandings which were, in effect, a power struggle. As early as 1825 the Dutch Indies authorities had felt it necessary to send a military expedition to South Celebes aimed at forcing Boné to sign a renewed Bungaya treaty, in which the relations between the colonial government and the different Bugis and Makasar kingdoms had been regulated.² In 1838 Boné finally signed the treaty, but according to Dutch sources, did not live up to the regulations laid down in it.

The twenty years following the signing of the Bungaya treaty witnessed many irritations and minor confrontations between Boné and its rulers on the one hand, and the colonial government on the other. In the mid-fifties the Dutch-Indies authorities decided to send a military expedition to the peninsula to punish the troublesome kingdom. The immediate causes for the military intervention were manifold, but among the most important was the Dutch claim that Boné treated other kingdoms as their subjects, and the fact that the new queen, Besséq Kajuara, did not appear in Makassar to sign the Bungaya treaty after her accession to the throne in 1857.³ But probably the most irritating fact was the insult inflicted upon the Dutch by the Boné rulers who ordered that the Dutch flag be flown upside down on ships entering the Boné waters.⁴

In the beginning of 1859 a Dutch fleet appeared before the coast of Boné and anchored at Bajoé, a few kilometres from the capital Watamponé. While the main body of the military forces went ashore to conquer the capital, on February 19th a small squadron set off for the Cénrana river, which formed part of Boné's northern border.

Their aim was to survey the possibilities of settling along that river and in the meantime to punish the villages on its banks. It is those actions that are described in the following fragment of the *Toloqna Musuq Boné* 'Poem on the Boné war'.

This heroic poem was written shortly after the war by a man from Pompanua in Boné, Daéng ri Aja.⁵ In 1862 the toloq was published in Makassar by B.F. Matthes, a linguist working for the Dutch Bible Society, together with a historical introduction and a summary in Dutch, under the title *Boegineesch Heldendicht op den eersten Bonischen veldtocht van 1859* 'Bugis heroic poem on the first Boné expedition of 1859'.⁶ Matthes himself had copied the text from a manuscript shown to him in Lagusi, by a man of Arab descent called Abdullah, during one of his journeys in the interior of South Celebes in September 1861.⁷ About the author nothing more is known than the fact of his authorship of the *Toloqna Musuq Boné*.

The following fragment of the toloq describes a flanking movement of the Dutch attackers in the area of the Cénrana river. The action took only one day for the Dutch mariners to complete and resulted in the burning of several Bugis villages and fortifications. In the conventional ornate style of a toloq, Daéng ri Aja gives us his impression of the events on February 19th 1859: the landing of the Dutch troops, the fighting, the arrival of Opu Lebbuq Biritta and his troops, the burning of the Bugis possessions. As is usual in toloq texts, not one of the protagonists is mentioned by name, although some characters can be recognized from their title: *Batara Tungkeqna Boné* 'The Sole Queen of Boné' is of course Queen Besséq Kajuara; *kapitanna Kota Intang* 'Commander of the Jewel Fortress' is probably the title for the two supreme commanders of the Dutch expedition, Steinmetz and Waleson⁸; *Opu Lebbuq Biritta* 'Lord with the famous name' is, according to Matthes⁹, a prince from Luwuq named Opu To Masaguni. At the end of the fragment we encounter civil servants such as the 'administrator of Ternate' (*pétoroqna Taranatî*), the 'resident of Banda' (*rasidénngédé ri Banda*), and the 'great lord of Ambon' (*to marajana ri Ambong*). However, according to Dutch sources, these persons did not take part in the punitive expedition to Boné.

But let that fact not bother us too much. As we shall see, it is only a minor issue. The *Toloqna Musuq Boné* is not a narrative aimed at a

description of the facts in the western sense. Making use of the traditional tools available to Bugis poets, Daéng ri Aja presents a conventional account of the tragic events which occurred in his country.

Like many other traditional poems from other cultures, this Bugis poem rests firmly in a bed of conventions. Typical for the Bugis toloq are its 8-syllable metre, use of an archaic lexicon, specific formulas and widespread use of parallelisms and metaphors. Within this customary strait-jacket the author has to tell his story. Originality is unusual and not appreciated. If a writer feels compelled to express his creativity, then it can only be channeled through the very well-trodden paths of tradition.¹⁰

One of the reasons for the misinterpretation of traditional narratives lies precisely in the misunderstanding of its poetics. Especially where historical narratives are concerned, the western reader is easily misled by passages which can be 'checked' against archival material. Leaving aside the question of the reliability of these colonial reports, the two sources are almost always conflicting, if not contradictory. All too often such a reader smiles ironically when he reads of battles with 'hundreds of victims' whereas he 'knows from the archives' that only a handful of natives were wounded. He does not know that in poetical descriptions of a Bugis battle a number of conventional phrases should be used; these belong to the poet's tools.

The text under discussion is very well suited as an example of the formulaic nature of Bugis poetry. In fact, to judge from the abundance of its formulas, it is one of the most conventional toloq known to us. Almost every line can also be found in other toloq (or other poems). The interesting thing here is that this specific conventional use has not changed over the years, or even over the centuries. In the text below for example, we come across phrases such as 'At the break of day, early next morning, when above the mountains rose the heat of the brightly shining sun ...' (l. 1-5) and 'Faster than betel can be chewed, in the twinkling of an eye, ...' (l. 14-15, 49-50, 109-110). These phrases (and many others in the text) also occur - in exactly the same wording - in toloq from both the 17th century and the 20th.

It is, we hope, superfluous to note that expression 'Faster than betel can be chewed, in the twinkling of an eye' does *not* mean that

the occurrence following it took place in, say, .03 of a second. Such phrases are merely conventional devices that *must* be used in instances like these. They bear no referential relevance.

Still, in every toloq, even the most conventional, a number of metaphors seem to be unique. In those places the author apparently had room to give the narrative a personal touch. In our fragment of the *Toloqna Musuq Boné* the simile *nariésaq tennung mua* 'like a warp is overrun by the woof' (l. 35 and 127) seems to be such a case.

In its contents too, this fragment is quite common. We see the brave hero, here Opu Lebbuq Biritta, in a desperate situation. He and his army are surrounded by the enemy. To surrender is against his pride. Rather he prefers to fight to the death. He states that wish in a lengthy dialogue with his soldiers, makes a sortie and is prepared to die in order to uphold the name of Boné (l. 74-103). It does not seem to matter that they have lost the war, much to the delight of the Dutch. The Bugis do not have to feel ashamed about their defeat: they have sacrificed their lives and have saved Boné's prestige. At least poetically so.

Do these remarks then diminish the power of Bugis poetical expression? We very much doubt it. On the contrary, by the repetition of its formula the back bone of the text becomes visible, almost tangible. It enhances the meaning and deepens the beauty of its metaphors. And truth is absolutely irrelevant.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Namarété langiqédé ¹¹
namapappaq na bajaé
mpellang ni ri wawo buluq
tikkaq mata dettiaé
cumiring mpalinonoé | At the break of day
early next morning
when above the mountains rose the
heat of
the brightly shining sun, |
| 6 | nasama tarakkaq maneng
kompania Balandaé.
Naénréq paranruki wi
rukka mawekkeq pabbiring.
Masadda ni tamboroqna | the Dutch <i>Compagnie</i>
set off.
They went ashore to cause a
tremendous tumult on the coast.
Their drums were heard everywhere |
| 11 | nasiwéwangeng maneng na
sininna to maégaé
monroé ri laleng Boné. | and all the ordinary people living in
Boné
shivered in fear. |

- Ala maressaq otaé
ala kédéq pabbojaé
16 nasigugureng tumerra
tumerra ritiriq lébu
sining parulu musuqna
sining to ritunruanna
Batara Tungkeqna Boné
21 barisigna
kompania Balandaé.
Nasiduppa ni tebbaqé
narini to na tanrapiq
barisigna
26 kompania Balandaé
ménréqé mallaleng tonang.
Kua ni guttuq sibali
oninna marianngédé.
Nadaremmeng na rituling
31 oninna barisigédé.
Naripalao soroqna
sining parulu musuqna
sining to ritunruanna
Batara Tungkeqna Boné.
36 Nariésaq tennung mua
lolangenngé ri Taponngé.
Natennga tikkaq mawajiq
naritunu na Taponngé,
napada soroq maccikéq
41 pada kua wali-wali.
Narini to na tanrapiq
sininna to maégaé
narini to na ro mai
joncongeng ripolalenna
46 Opu Lebbaq Birittae
madduma-ruma laona
moseng sipakinra-inra.
Ala maressaq otaé
ala kédéq pabbojaé
51 narini maneng tanrapiq
ri turunggenna Laoni
joncongeng ripolalenna
- Faster than betel can be chewed,
in the twinkling of an eye,
lead was discharged
round-cast lead,
by all the commanders,
all the followers
of the Sole Queen of Boné
and the army
of the Dutch *Compagnie*.
They met in the fight,
when the army
of the Dutch *Compagnie*
went ashore, on their vehicles. Like
rolling thunder
was the sound of the cannons. The
rumbling was heard
of the noise the army made.
All the commanders,
all the followers
of the Sole Queen of Boné
were forced to retreat.
Like a warp is overrun by the woof
Taponngé was conquered.
Right at noon
Taponngé was burned,
and both parties
retreated
to recover.
And then arrived
all the people,
there arrived
the ships that brought
Opu Lebbaq Birittae
with a crowd of people
passionately singing war songs.
Faster than betel can be chewed
in the twinkling of an eye,
they all arrived
in the harbour of Laoni,
the ships that brought

- sininna to maégaé.
Nagiling mua makkeda
56 Opu Lebbuq Birittaé,
'Aga na sia tanngaqmu
ri laleng nawa-nawammu
ri tanana Taponngédé?
Narini mu to pa mai
61 sikoci natonangié
barisigna
kompania Balandaé,
kapitanna Kota Intang
ri minangana Laoni.'
66 Nagiling mua makkeda
sininna to maégaé,
'Idiq na sia tanngaq i
ri laleng nawa-nawatta
apaq tettasala to na
71 riasenngédé madécéng.'
Nagiling mua makkeda
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé,
'Ia sia ri tanngaqku
ri laleng nawa-nawakku.
76 Uasenngédé madécéng
tasaliweng ro la béla
méwa i mappuliq-puliq
kompania Balandaé,
kapitanna Kota Intang.
81 Apaq rékkua la béla
tenreq tasaliwengi wi
tudang ngi mani la béla
tuna biritta ri Boné.
Nasipulungi pannguju.
86 Rékkua massaliweng ngiq
paranruq rukka parimeng
tabbuang na giq la béla
napalari lampéq na gi
tenreq na ritu naola
91 pannguju to ri saliweng.
Rékkua tenreq maéloq
massaliweng ro la béla
- all the people.
And then spoke
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé,
'What is your opinion,
what do you have in mind
with regard to Taponngé?
The boats are here
manned
by the army
of the Dutch *Compagnie*,
and the commander of Kota Intang
has moored in Laoni's rivermouth.'
Thereupon said
all the people,
'Our opinion is
what you have in mind,
because you cannot be wrong
what you say is best.'
Thereupon said
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé,
'This is what I think,
what I have in mind.
I consider it best
that we come out
to wage a life-and-death struggle
with the Dutch *Compagnie*
and the commander of Kota Intang.
Because
if we do not come out
Boné will be known
as an unworthy name.
Gather and get ready.
If we go out
to start the turmoil again,
we will either be defeated
or we will make them flee so far away
that weapons
cannot follow them.
If you do not want
to go out there

- 96 méwai mapuliq-puliq
kompania Balandaé
kapitanna Kota Intang
tudang ko sia la béla.
Na iaq sia tarakkaq
méwai mapuliq-puliq
napadenngi gi la béla
101 sumangeq bannapatikku
kompania Balandaé
kapitanna Kota Intang.’
Telleppeq lalo adanna
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé
106 natarakkaq na nalao
nasama tarakkaq maneng
sininna to riwawana.
Ala maressaq otaé
ala kédéq pabbojaé
111 nariserrung ngi mariang
nasibali na oninna
marianngé wali-wali.
Kua ni letté pareppaq
oninna marianngedé.
116 Nadaremmeng na rituling
oninna barisiqédé
pada kua wali-wali.
Naripawampang ngi bakké
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé.
121 Narikenna to na sia
tumerra ritiriq lébu
turunrupa palallona
Opu Lebbuq Birittaé.
Naripalao soroqna
126 sininna to riwawanna.
Nariésaq tennung mua
lolangenngé ri Laoni.
Natennga turungeng mua
matana walinonoé
131 naritunu na Laoni.
Nasiteppa tenréng mani
matana walinonoé
- to wage a life-and-death struggle
with the Dutch *Compagnie*
and the commander of Kota Intang,
you just stay behind.
Then I will go alone
and wage a life-and-death struggle,
even if my life spirit
be extinguished
by the Dutch *Compagnie*
and the commander of Kota Intang.’
Hardly had Opu Lebbuq Biritta
finished speaking,
when he left and went
together with
all the people he had brought with
him. Faster than betel can be chewed
in the twinkling of an eye,
the cannons were pounding;
the sounds of the cannons from both
sides were responding to each other.
Like rolling thunder
was the sound of the cannons.
The rumbling was heard
of the noise
both armies made.
The corpses lay scattered
in front of Opu Lebbuq Biritta.
Hit
by round-cast lead
was the marvelous visage
of Opu Lebbuq Biritta.
All the people he had brought with
him were forced to retreat.
Like a warp is overrun by the woof
Laoni was conquered.
And when the sun
was setting
Laoni was burned.
And when the sun
was only a ladder high,

- 136 tennatinrelleq ri aja
napada soroq maccikéq
pada kua wali-wali.
Nasipakinra-inrana
kompania Balandaé
nrumpaq wanua mallenngeq
palalatung lipu bonga
141 napada taddéweq maneng
ri kappalaq tonangenna.
Nalalo na ri bénténna
sininna to maégaé
naléppang mala maneng ngi
146 mariang nabokorié
sining parulu musuqna
sining to ritunruanna
Batara Tungkeqna Boné.
Napatoddang maneng mua
151 ri kappalaq tonangenna
nalao marakka-rakka.
Natakkadapiq maneng na
kompania Balandaé
pétoroqna Taranati
156 rasidénngédé ri Banda
ri kappalaq tonangenna.
Natinrelleq na ri aja
matana walinonoé
madduppa ni pettanngédé.
161 Marannyala ni ri laleng
ri laleng lantéraq kaca.
Tuo ni aratigaé
mattappaq samana esso
ri kapalaq tonangenna
166 kapitanna Kota Intang.
Natudang mua maccokkong
kapitanna Kota Intang
ri kadéra palallona.
Nariwémpéngeng mua na
171 tabu ripamésakenna.
Napura majjelleq wenni
kapitanna Kota Intang
- it had not yet set in the west,
both parties retreated
to recover.
Delighted was the Dutch *Compagnie*
with the conquest
of the cherished villages,
the burning of the lands,
and all of them returned
to the ships that brought them.
All the men
passed the strongholds
and dropped in to take all the cannons
left behind
by the commanders,
and the followers
of the Sole Queen of Boné.
They all went on board
the ships that brought them
and left in a hurry.
And they all arrived,
the Dutch *Compagnie*,
the administrator of Ternate,
the resident of Banda,
on the ships that had brought them.
The sun set
in the west,
the darkness fell.
Lights burned inside,
inside glass lanterns.
The candles were lit
and shone like daylight
in the ship that brought
the commander of Kota Intang.
The commander of Kota Intang
sat down
on his lofty chair.
Continuously
food was brought in.
After the commander of Kota Intang
had finished his repast,

narini to na tanrapiq
to marajana ri Ambong
nasama-sama tanrapiq
pétoroqna Taranati
ri kappalaq tonangenna
kapitanna Kota Intang.

there arrived
the resident of Ambon,
together with
the administrator of Ternate
on the ship that brought
the commander of Kota Intang.

NOTES

1. It is a pleasure to thank Jim Collins and the late Jack Prentice for their their efforts to improve our English.
2. Perelaer 1872 I:73-86.
3. Perelaer 1872 I:198-9.
4. Perelaer 1872 I:105, 112-5; Herfkens 1900:9-10.
5. Matthes 1862a:3.
6. Matthes 1862a.
7. Matthes 1862b:209.
8. Matthes 1862a:5.
9. Matthes 1862a:49.
10. Tol 1990:18-34.
11. This fragment of the Toloqna Musuq Boné can be found in Matthes edition of the text (1862a). It starts on page 139 line 30, and runs to page 142 line 20.]

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