



A BUGIS INSCRIPTION IN THE UDOK-UDOK CEMETERY, BRUNEI

Author(s): J. NOORDUYN

Source: *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (265) (1993), pp. 103-112

Published by: [Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41493227>

Accessed: 24/06/2014 06:16

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

A BUGIS INSCRIPTION IN THE UDOK-UDOK CEMETERY, BRUNEI

by
J. NOORDUYN

Introduction

The inscription discussed below was found by Awang Suhaili of the Brunei Museum in the Udok-Udok cemetery, Brunei, in 1986, as was briefly announced in the *Berita Museum*, January – June 1986.¹

According to information from the Curator of History Brunei Museum, the cemetery is located at a place called Udok-Udok, near Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei. It is an old Muslim cemetery still in use up to the present day judging from the contemporary gravestones that are found on the site.

The inscription is written in five short lines on stone in the Bugis language and in the Bugis script.

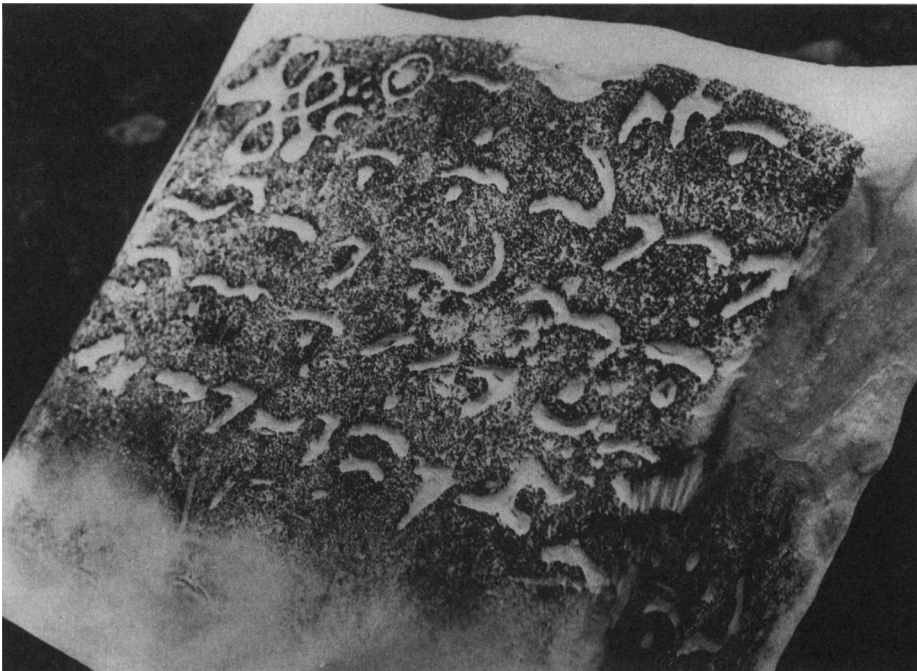
It should be noted that the Bugis script used in the inscription is syllabary² in which syllable and word-final consonants, apart from the nasals preceding four specific consonants (*in ngk, nc, nr, and mp*), are not expressed even when present in the spoken language, and no spaces are left between words. Therefore the text of the inscription below is romanised in two stages. First a bare transliteration is given of the characters, each of them separated by a space from the next one, in which nothing is added beyond what is indicated by the characters themselves. Secondly, a full transcription is offered, in which all linguistic features needed for an adequate interpretation of the text, including punctuation and capitals, are presented.

After this a number of notes are added explaining how the script has been used in the inscription and how this has been interpreted here. At the end there are both an interlinear and a free translation.

-
- 1 I am indebted to John S. Carroll for providing the two photographs of the inscription, to Robert Nicholl, former Curator of History of the Brunei Museum, for his comments on an earlier version of this article, and to Prof. T. Iskandar for contacting the Brunei Museum.
 - 2 Like all Indian and India-derived scripts, the Bugis script must, rather than as syllabic, be described as semi-syllabic or, more precisely, as syllabic-phonemic (Coulmas 1992:185), since only the basic characters represent syllables consisting of a consonant and inherent vowel a, whereas the other vowels are represented – as separate phonemes – by diacritic marks attached to these basic characters.
 - 3 A note should be added about the enigmatic word written in Malay/Arabic script at the left upper corner preceding the first and the second line of the Buginese inscription and which seems to open the inscription. It appears to consist of the letters nga-ma-h, the ha being of a not unusual elaborate decorative style which can occasionally be found in Malay letters and in Buginese diaries, for instance when the word juma'ah 'Friday' is written in Arabic script (an example is present in illustration no 79. in Gallop 1991: 108). The word intended cannot be an Arabic one since the letter nga with its three dots occurs in the Malay/Arabic and not in the Arabic script. The meaning of this unusual opening word remains unknown for the time being, however.



Front of the Bugis inscription of Brunei.



Front and righthand side of the Bugis inscription of Brunei.

Transliteration ³

1. sa la ma néné
2. na i po to
3. la to ga a na
4. na a na ko da ca
5. ka to mo rori ba la
- 5a. ni pa

Transcription

1. Salama'. néné
2. na I Potto
3. La Toga ana' –
4. na Anakoda Ca –
5. kka to monro ri Bala –
- 5a. (n) nipa.

The use of the script in the inscription

There are a few particulars in the way the Bugis syllabary has been used in the inscription which have to be pointed out and explained in order to prevent incorrect reading of the inscription and a misinterpretation of its contents.⁴ These and some other particulars concerning the use of the script are discussed in the following sections.

Flattened curves

A conspicuous general feature of the characters in the inscription under discussion is the almost complete absence of sharp angles and even of angles themselves, wherever they are normally a basic element of a character in the standard version of the script. All V – and ^ – shaped elements in the characters are flattened into weak curves, or almost horizontal lines, with no angle in the centre and with the two ends only slightly curved upwards or downwards. This feature applies to the great majority of the characters used in the inscription, i.e., to all characters for *ta*, *na*, *ma*, *da*, *pa*, *ga*, *ba*, *ca*, *la*, *ra*, and *a*. The only exceptions are the 7 shaped vowel mark for *o* (seven instances) and its counterpart (with its angle turned to the left) for *é* (two instances), while the shape of the *ka* (two instances) does not include an angle.

The reason why this particular feature is found in this inscription is unclear, unless it just stems from a cursive style of handwriting as is found, e.g., in 18th century manuscripts (see, for instance, the Bugis letter, illustration no 80, in Gallop and Arps 1991: 109). But since a high, sharp-angled curve occupies more space than one which is flattened down, it can perhaps be ascribed to the effort to save space on the front side of the stone or, alternatively, it may have to do with the material on which it is inscribed if it is assumed to be easier to incise a (slight) curve in stone than a (sharp) angle. Whether this is a particularity generally found in Bugis inscriptions on stone is difficult to say as no other examples of such inscriptions on stone are known to exist.

4 See, e.g. Fadhilah 1989/1991:50

It may be added that nothing as far as the clarity and distinctness of the inscription are concerned has been lost as a result of the flatness of the curves.

Characters with two vowel marks

Each basic character of the Bugis script represents a syllable consisting either of a consonant followed by the vowel *a* or of the word-initial vowel *a* alone. A vowel mark added to the basic character represents a vowel other than *a*, at the same time replacing the *a*. There are vowel marks indicating *é*, *o*, *i*, *e*, and *u*. They are a hooked backward slash before (*é*), a hooked forward slash after (*o*), a dot above (*i*), an upward hook above (*e*), and a dot below (*u*) the basic character, but always indicate the vowel following the consonant of the word-initial vowel. As a consequence, a text written in this Bugis syllabary is normally made up of basic characters accompanied by either a single vowel mark or none at all.

Occasionally, however, one may find a basic character accompanied by two vowel marks, which may then be either two different marks or the same mark twice. This is a device which is optionally used as a means of abbreviating words for the purpose of saving space, saving effort, or for some other purpose or no purpose at all, when two successive syllables have the same initial consonant in the text to be written. Rather than writing two identical basic characters successively, each with its own vowel mark, one of the basic characters is left out and the two vowel marks are both added to the other basic character. This means that a basic character seemingly irregularly accompanied by two vowel marks must be interpreted by reading the basic character twice and adding to each of them one of the two vowel marks, while the context determines which of the two vowels marks, in case they are different is to be read first.

The inscription under discussion contains two examples of this abbreviating device.⁵ They are indicated in the transliteration above by conjoining the two syllables concerned instead of writing them separated from each other like the others.

The first example of this abbreviating device occurs in line 1 of the inscription and consists of the basic character for *na* preceded twice by the vowel mark *é*, together representing the syllable *né* twice. In this case the two syllables constitute the word *néné*, 'grandfather'.

5 This abbreviating device has seldom been mentioned when the details of the Bugis/Makasar syllabary are explained.

It is touched upon by Matthes in his *Makasarese and Buginese grammars* (Matthes 1858:11, 1875:16). He describes it as a reduplication of a syllable by writing the vowel twice. He gives examples for the vowel marks for *é* and *o* adding that it is seldom used for other vowels since that would easily cause confusion. The inscription under discussion shows that it could nevertheless be used for the *i*, too. Abbreviation of identical syllables with vowel *i* and of those with the vowel *u* is, for example, frequently found in the Leiden University Library MS Cod. Or. 1922, the former almost consistently in the word *palili* 'vassal', and the latter, for instance, in the word *tomattuttung* 'greedy'. The two dots are put next to each other in both cases, above and below the basic character, respectively.

The device is attested by Kros in the MS of the Makasarese story of Jayalangkara and explained in the notes accompanying his edition of this story (1990:43). It is mentioned, though as a proposed innovation, in Sikki et al. 1991:5.

The use of the abbreviation device for two different vowels, as attested in the inscription under discussion, has not yet been mentioned elsewhere. An example is also to be found in Cod. Or. 6147 in the word *lilu* 'forget'.

The second example occurs in line 5 and consists of the basic character for *ra* with the *i*-mark above it and the *o*-mark following it, together representing the syllables *ro* and *ri*. In this case there is ambiguity in interpretation since either of the two syllables could be intended to be the first in the text and the other the second. Only the meaningful context can be decisive in determining the correct order of the two syllables in the present text. In this way, the meaning of the context shows that the order of the two syllables is that given in the transliteration, because *ro* together with the preceding syllable *mo* constitutes a word, which is *monro*, 'to stay, to live' and *ri* must be monosyllabic preposition which here means 'in'.

The reason why these two instances of the abbreviating device are used in this inscription can be ascribed to the wish to save space and effort in inscribing the characters on a small piece of stone.

Prenasalisation

As was mentioned above, the Bugis syllabary contains four basic characters indicating a prenasalised consonant namely the characters for *ngka*, *nca*, *nra*, and *mpa*. Although these special characters are invariably used, in their proper places, in modern practice of writing Bugis script and particularly in printed texts, older manuscripts not influenced by this modern practice show that the use of these characters formerly was, in fact, optional.⁶ In many cases, in such manuscripts, the characters for the non-prenasalised consonants are used for indicating the prenasalised ones. This is also the case in the inscription under discussion. None of the characters for prenasalised consonant occurs in this inscription, and this is not only due to the fact that the greater part of the inscription text does not include any words containing a prenasalised consonant. The word *monro*, 'to stay', occurring in line 5 and mentioned in the previous section, is the only instance of a word containing a prenasalised consonant, whereas this consonant is indicated in the inscription by a character for a non-prenasalised consonant. The character for *ro* must be read *nro* because the writer had the free choice of either using or disregarding the nasal in writing and apparently opted for the latter.

It is also clear that one of the reasons for doing so must have been that otherwise the abbreviating device discussed in the previous section could not have been applied here because then there would have been two different basic characters, namely *nra* and *ra*, rather than the two identical ones as required.

A seemingly divergent *sa*

A minor problem is presented by the first character of the first line. It consists of a small circle and a comparatively large dot in its centre. There is no character of this form in the Bugis script, however. One may therefore suppose that it does not belong to the inscription, or that a differently shaped character was intended. The latter alternative appears to be that right one. If the dot in the character is disregarded, the remaining small circle is the Bugis basic character for *sa*. If the first character of the inscription is read *sa*,

⁶ An example of a manuscript in which the use of prenasalized characters appears to be completely arbitrary is that employed by R.G. Tol for his edition of the Bugis Toloqna Arung Labuaja text (Tol 1990: 131-132).

it combines easily with the second and the third characters in producing the word *salama*, 'hail, greetings'. As this is an appropriate beginning for the text, it is undoubtedly the correct reading. The first character must therefore be read *sa*. Since no other example of a Bugis *sa* with a dot in its centre is known, the dot must in all likelihood be regarded as a small hole already present in the stone before the inscription was inscribed upon it.

A less usual feature of the initial *a*'s

In the Bugis script, the word-initial, or rather syllable-initial, vowel *a* consists of a M-like basic character (consisting of two circumflexes linked together or – as in the present case of flattened curves – of a short wave consisting of one trough between two crests) with a dot placed under the righthand circumflex or crest. In the present inscription, however, this dot has been put under the lefthand rather than the righthand crest. In the present inscription, however, this dot has been put under the lefthand rather than the righthand crest. This is a less usual feature which, however, occasionally is found as an alternative in other cases. Examples are the manuscripts NB 7, 28, 208, 209, 214, 215 (mostly Makasarese, all of them written by Tajuddin ibn Siraj al-Arifin) and NB 182 (Bugis, written by Aji Muda) in the Matthes collection, Leiden University Library, in which the same details occurs as a systematic feature. This is also the case in the present inscription, since the dot can be observed in the lefthand part of the character in each of the three occurrences of the character in the inscription. The fourth character of line 3 and the second one of line 4 are such *a*'s and the second one of line 2 is such an *i* (which is an *a* character with the *i*-vowel dot above it).

Slight damage at the top

There is some slight damage at the upper edge of the inscription stone near the third character of line 1. A small piece of stone is missing here from the upper part of this character. The shape of the *ma*-character (consisting of one trough) is still recognisable here but since there is no stone surface above this character it is uncertain whether or not a dot was present in that place, and with a dot, the character would have been a *da* rather than a *ma*. This uncertainty vanishes, however, as soon as this character appears to be a constituent part of the word *salama*, 'greetings', the first word of the inscription, as mentioned in section 4.4.

A lateral extension

Whereas almost the entire inscription to be found on the front surface of the inscription stone, the two last characters of the inscription are not. They are placed on the lefthand side – which is narrower than the front – of the stone, round the corner of the 5th and last line, as an extension of this 5th line, and are therefore indicated as occurring in line 5a in the transliteration and the transcription. The reason why these characters were placed on one side of the stone rather than on the front, on which sufficient space seems to be available for them, is not clear. The most likely explanation seems to be, however, that at the moment of writing there was no space left on the stone below the 5th line because it was standing up as a grave stone, its lower part buried in the ground. This would also explain the other indications of space saving efforts such as the flattening of the curves

and excessive use of the abbreviating device, which were observed in the discussions above.

This side extension of the inscription is not included on one of the two photographs depicting the inscription which are available for investigating it. This (photograph 1) happens to be the best and clearest of the two photographs but the other one (photograph 2) has to be consulted for this side extension.

The contents of the inscription

Personal names

A large part of the inscription is occupied by personal names. There are three of them, which can be recognised as three different ones by means of the personal articles used in the first two cases and the preceding word *anakoda*, 'ship's captain', occurring in the third. As the Bugis personal articles are distinct for male and female gender – *la*, and *wé* or *i*, respectively – the first name can be identified as the name of a woman: I Potto, and the second one as the name of a man: La Toga. There can be no doubt that the third one, Captain Cakka, was also the name of a man, since the occupation of ship's captain was (and is) a purely male profession.

Because of the large number of variety of Bugis names combined with the incompleteness of the Bugis script it is often difficult to present an exact and absolutely certain transcription of a name. When none of the common or well-known names can be recognised the best method for selecting a likely transcription is to find a word which exists as Bugis noun, verb or adjective, since such normal words are often used as names. This means that when a name is selected on this basis there is still a margin of uncertainty – not whether the word selected could be used as a name, but whether it was the real name meant in this particular case.

In this way the word *potto*, 'bracelet' which seems to be a likely woman's name, has been selected as the first name (line 2, which is that of a woman in view of the female personal article *I* introducing it.

For the second name (line 3) is transcribed as Toga, although there is no Bugis word with exactly this form. Possibly what is meant is the verb *toge*, 'to sit'; but there is no vowel mark for *e* on the inscription stone here.

For the third name (line 4/5) the word *cakka*, 'clear, bright', has been selected because it is the only solution for which a Bugis word is available.

A toponym

The last word of the inscription, following the words *monro ri*, 'living in, (line 5), is clearly a toponym. It is the well-known place name Balanipa. This is the name of two different sea ports in South Sulawesi. One is located on the southern part of the east coast of the Bugis region, the other on the south coast of the Mandar region in the north. The name consists of the word *balang*, 'pond', (in the Makasarese language) or *bala*, 'stable', (in Mandarese) followed by the word *nipa*, '*Nipa fruticans*' tree'. Since the name in the former alternative should be written as Balangnipa or Balannipa, and it is uncertain to which one of the two ports the inscription is referring, the toponym has been transcribed as Bala (n) nipa here.

The individual(s) referred to

The occurrence of three different personal names in the inscription does not mean that three different individuals are referred to in it since two of the names are preceded by a kinship term: *néné*, 'grandfather', in the case of the first name (line 1) and *ana*, 'child', in that of the third name (line 3), both followed by the personal suffix of the third person – *na*, 'his/her', which in this case indicates a possessive link with the following word. This means that it is not I Potto who is referred to in line 2 but her grandfather, and not the Sea Captain Cakka in line 4/5 but his son.

So, after the initial greeting, the inscription opens with mentioning the name 'Grandfather of I Potto', and after mentioning the name La Toga continues by stating the name 'Son of the Sea Captain Cakka'. In principle, it is possible that these three names refer to three different persons, since there is nothing in the inscription indicating otherwise. But in the present case it is most likely that they refer to one and the same individual. This is then the man who is first introduced with reference to his granddaughter, I Potto, secondly mentioned by his own personal name, La Toga, and finally mentioned with reference to his father, the Sea Captain Cakka.

When the inscription closes with making mention of someone 'who (to) lives or lived in Balan(n)ipa', it is again most likely that this does not refer to, e.g., the Sea Captain Cakka, but once again to the same man called La Toga.

The purport of the inscription

The conclusion of the preceding sections must be that the content of the inscription is nothing more than the triple name of a presumably Bugis man who lived in Balan(n)ipa. No purport for these references is offered in the inscription. Since, however, the stone containing the inscription has been found standing in a cemetery, it must be considered to be a gravestone commemorating the names of the man who was buried under it, without actually mentioning his death or his burial.

From the fact that the first mention of this man's name refers to his being a grandfather it may be inferred that he was a man of advanced age. It is quite common that a Bugis man, as soon as he has his first child, is named after this child with a *tecnonym* replacing his personal name in practical usage, and that the *tecnonym* is changed again for a name referring to his grandchild's name as soon as his first grandchild has been born.

The date

Since the inscription does not contain any indication as to the time when it was written and inscribed, it must be accepted as an undated inscription. There are, however, some data from outside the inscription which may have some bearing on its date of origin.

Since according to information from Brunei Museum there is a date in European figures on the reverse side of the stone, reading 1272 Hijrah (which is equivalent to A.D. 1855-6), this may provisionally be accepted also as the date of the Bugis inscription. As the Bugis script does not have its own characters for the numerals, the Arabic numerals or the European ones are used instead.

On the other hand, as Robert Nicholl suggests (personal communication of 29-8-1992), it is difficult to imagine a Bugis grave stone being carved in Brunei in the 1850s, as we know that the Bugis were execrated as unmitigated villains between 1810 and 1840, when the *Sha'er Awang Semaun* was compiled. There would presumably have been no objection to reusing an ancient Bugis tomb stone (more especially since the script could not be read). As we know from Dalrymple that the Bugis were all-powerful in Brunei in the mid-eighteenth century, the inscription on the Udok-Udok stone may well date from the mid-eighteenth century.⁷

Interlinear translation

1. Salama'. Néné -
hail grandfather
2. na I Potto,
of PAF (name)
3. *La Toga, ana'* -
PAM (name) son-
4. *na Anakoda Ca-*
of Sea-Captain (name ->)
5. *kka to monro ri Bala-*
person/ who living in (topo-
- 5a. *nipa.*
nym)

PAF = Personal Article Female

PAM = personal Article Male

Free translation

The inscription may now be translated as follows.

(1) 'Greetings. The Grandfather (2) of I Potto, (3) La Toga, The Son (4) of Sea Captain Ca (5)kka, who lived in Bala (5a) n(n) ipa [has been buried here]'.

References

- Coulmas, Florian, 1992 [1989] *The Writing Systems of the World*. Oxford etc. : Blackwell.
- Fadhilah, Moh. Ali, 1989/1991, 'Beberapa catatan tentang lontara', *Amerta (Berkala Arkeologi)* 11:14-53.
- Gallop, Annabel Teh, with Bernard Arps, 1991, *Golden Letters, Writing Traditions of Indonesia*. London: The British Library; Jakarta: Yayasan Lontar.

⁷ Robert Nicholl is apparently using unpublished material. The publication of the *Sha'er Awang Semaun*, Brunei's only epic, is in fact prohibited. All this material needs further study, which falls outside the scope of the present article.

- Kros, A.M., 1990, *Pau-pauanna Jayalangkara (Het verhaal van Jayalangkara): Een Makassaarse teksteditie*. Leiden. (Doctoraalscriptie.)
- Matthes, B.F., 1858, *Makassaarsche spraakkunst*. Amsterdam: Muller
- Matthes, B.F., 1875, *Boeginesche spraakkunst*. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff.
- Sikki, Muh., et al., *Tata bahasa bahasa Bugis*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Tol, Roger, 1990, *Een haan in oorlog: Toloqna Arung Labuaja: Een twintigste-eeuws Buginees heldendicht van de hand van I Mallaq Daéng Mabéle Arung Manajeng*. Dordrecht: Foris.