

A FIRST REPORT ON SOME COMBINED HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN SOUTH SULAWESI

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In an earlier article, published while I was still in the field, I described the prospects for landscape archaeology in the southwest corner of South Sulawesi (Bulbeck 1986-87). At the time I had only a partial notion of the wealth of genealogical and other textual information available for the studied area. Detailed analysis of the major texts, which include two 'chronicles' and a royal diary, has allowed a tight description of sociopolitical developments from the early 16th century, when the local Makassar were organised into numerous warring chiefdoms, until the late 17th century when the Dutch and the Bone-Soppeng Bugis defeated the confederated Makassar state of Gowa. Previous historical analysis (e.g. Mukhlis 1975; Andaya 1981; Reid 1983) has not had the benefit of a landscape archaeological perspective which directs the enquiry towards considering the chronology, spatial extent and hierarchical alliances of the various sociopolitical groupings involved. The full analysis (Bulbeck in prep.) is taking a considerable time, but I hold that both archaeological and early historical research should be directed as far as possible towards the reconstruction of a sound anthropological perspective, and that such an approach is still at an incipient stage of development in Indonesian research.

A research grant from the Australian Myer Foundation, earmarked for a project involving equal Australian and Indonesian participation, financed an archaeological survey of the hinterland Bugis kingdom of Soppeng. Reports of the surveyed sites, and analysis of the implications for unravelling Soppeng's history, are presented in the report by Kallupa *et al.* cited at the beginning of this article. The team was headed by the senior author of the report, Bahru Kallupa of Suaka Peninggalan Sejarah dan Purbakala Sulawesi Selatan, and included Ian Caldwell who at the time was in South Sulawesi undertaking his field research for his doctoral thesis on South Sulawesi's pre-Islamic history (Caldwell 1988).

Soppeng was originally divided into two principalities, West Soppeng and East Soppeng, before its unification in the 16th century. Caldwell's study of the Soppeng texts had implied that West Soppeng was already a large kingdom by the 13th and 14th centuries when its rulers also controlled the port of Suppa some 50 kilometres to the northwest. During the Soppeng survey we followed local information to locate the main sites mentioned in the texts and then mapped the surface archaeological remains for assessing the individual site histories. Most of

the sites fell within ten kilometres of the modern district capital of Watansoppeng, with outliers at the pre-Islamic jar burial sites of Petta Balubue and Gowarie where the respective founders of West Soppeng and East Soppeng supposedly descended from the sky. The results confirmed Caldwell's hypotheses that West Soppeng's early prominence relied on a developed wet rice economy, and that West Soppeng had an essentially confederative social organisation even after the absorption of East Soppeng and the establishment of the joint capital in Watansoppeng. On a broader scale, the work demonstrated that large agrarian chiefdoms existed at a time when South Sulawesi's main kingdoms were supposedly based on long distance trade (e.g. Pelras 1981), and that complex social organisation in South Sulawesi preceded the development of the Bugis script at about 1400 AD (Caldwell 1988).

Apart from its summary of Caldwell's arguments, the report *Survey Pusat Kerajaan Soppeng 1100-1986* also contains the following points of archaeological interest:

1. A detailed account of Tinco Tua, West Soppeng's early capital, which on present documentation stands out as the type site of a Bugis protohistorical palace centre.
2. A description of the site survey technique, similar to that developed previously by Bintliff and Snodgrass (1985:134-6), which allows sites to be recorded in areas like South Sulawesi where complex modern landuse patterns prevail.
3. The first ever mathematically based seriation of the Chinese and mainland Southeast Asian tradewares, with results generally confirming the chronology of Guy (1986).
4. A statistical technique for converting tradeware sherds frequencies into explicit chronologies for the individual sites.
5. A description of the flaked stone artefacts and decorated earthenware sherds recovered from the sites.

The report is available in two formats, one with colour photocopies of the plates, marketing at A\$25 (including postage), and a cheaper format with black and white photocopies of the plates (A\$15, including postage). Interested parties can acquire a copy by writing to me at the address given on page iv of this bulletin.

Returning to the more general point of the prospects for surveying open sites in South Sulawesi, I would like to cite some aggregate figures to indicate the density of archaeological information potentially available. During the Gowa survey the team concentrated on recording all 17th century and earlier burial areas, plus any other surface artefactual remains immediately adjacent, within the surveyed area of 167 square kilometres (Figure 1). The 152 documented sites involved the detailed mapping of 2,061,272 square metres (two square kilometres) and the identification of 37,629 tradeware sherds, 80,204 earthenware sherds, 1,811 flaked stone artefacts, plus smaller quantities of bronze (four pieces), iron (22 slag lumps or fragments from tools), coins (18), and ground stone artefacts (seven). During the fieldwork in Soppeng we mapped 91,959 square metres distributed over 15 sites and recorded 5,351 tradeware sherds, 28,953 earthenware sherds, and smaller quantities of bronze (six pieces), iron (four fragments), coins (three), and flaked stone artefacts (four). In both the Gowa and the Soppeng surveys the

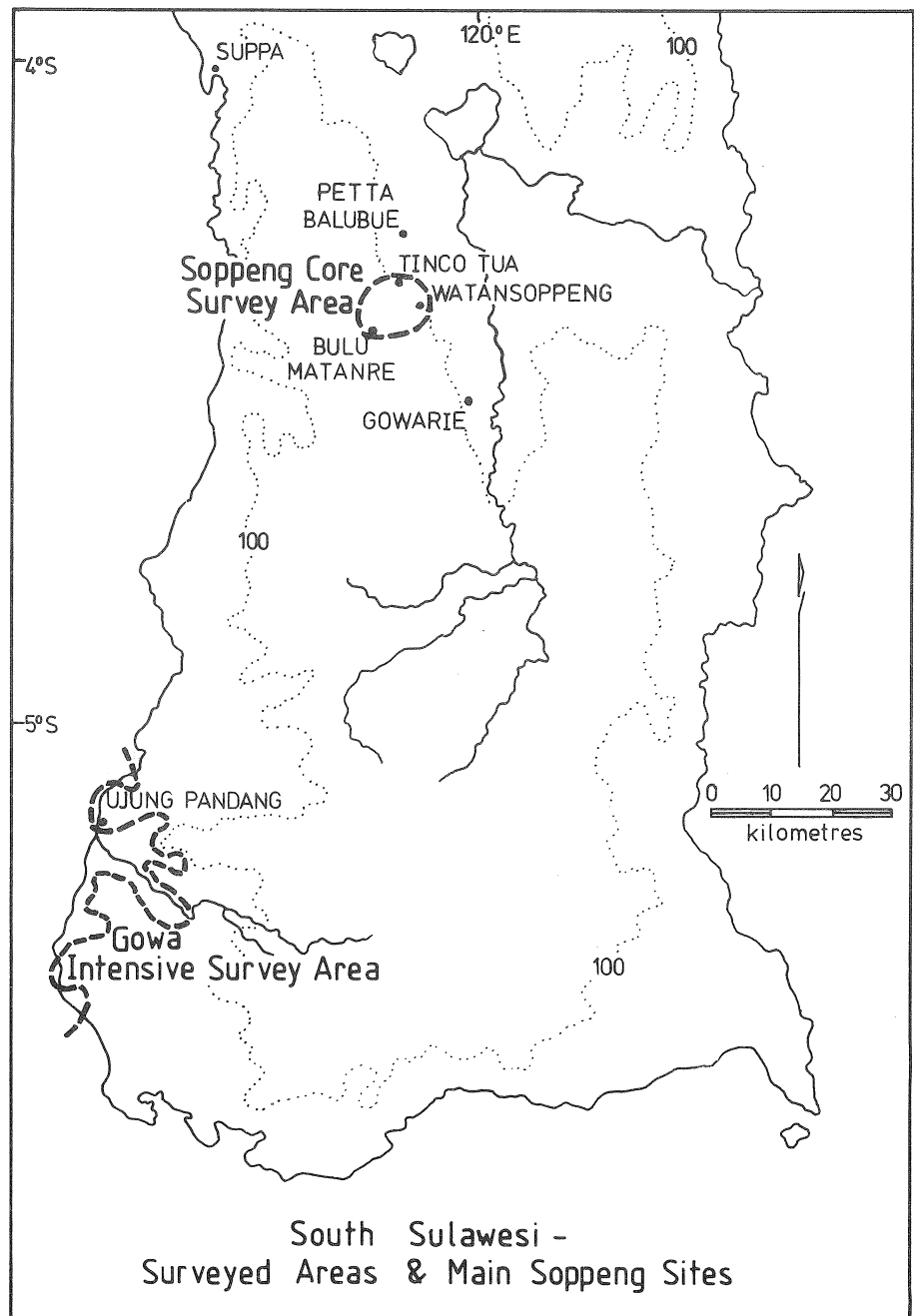


FIGURE 1: SOUTH SULAWESI - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

archaeological work achieved two main goals: the reconstruction of site histories which could be used to test the varying interpretations arising from the texts, and the development of a perspective on the local human geography both enriched by and enriching the analysis of the historical data.

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