

THE CONCEPT OF A 'WORK' IN BUGIS MANUSCRIPTS¹

C.C. Macknight

A fundamental problem for any editor confronting the manuscript legacy of the past is to recognize and define the appropriate units on which to exercise his talents. These units are what, in this paper, I shall call 'works'. How can one know that one has the first and last line of a poem, and all the intervening lines, or in a collection of poems, the full collection as conceived by the poet (or anthologiser) and not a later selection? Or in prose, how can one be confident that one has all of what the author saw as a unit, and not just a fragment, or a summary? For an editor working with the manuscripts of, say, the Greek and Roman classics, there are a variety of methods with which to tackle these questions: considerations of form and style; almost always a named author and sometimes a name for the work itself; internal and external references to the work; and, finally, there is often the reassurance that enough others have perceived the unity of a work in order to produce closely comparable manuscripts. There may, of course, be complications, but no-one can reasonably doubt that a modern text of the first three books of Horace's Odes - to take an example quite at random - very closely approximates to a unit, with internal sub-divisions, which existed in Horace's mind about 23 B.C. An editor defines a work, graces it with an Introduction and Index, and sees to its being published between covers as handsome as he can manage. The result, as we all well know, is that in the normal course of events the published version becomes definitive. It is quoted, anthologized, analysed and even translated - and how often does the translation attain its own status! My purpose in this paper is to look at this problem of the definition of works in respect of the corpus of Bugis manuscripts.²

One should begin by noting that the concept might be expected to be, to a very large extent, foreign to the Bugis way of looking at the world. In a very important paper, Pelras has explored, in the Bugis context, the domain of the written and the domain of

the oral. He shows that these modes of expression are used in ways significantly different from those familiar to us.

Written expression and oral expression for the Bugis are closely linked and complementary. Shifting from one to the other is frequent and usual. Written material incorporates many elements accepted as oral and oral communication helps in its diffusion; but oral material in turn draws happily on written reserves as if on a memory that forgetfulness has no way of tarnishing.

The choice of one mode of expression rather than another depends on the nature of the statement that one seeks to favour and not on a separation in principle between genres of which some are written and others oral. Moreover, written material, which is not in itself any more noble or prestigious than oral material, possesses many of the characteristics which belong elsewhere to the latter. In this, it is clearly distinguished from written literature such as we know in our modern world.³

Pelras goes on to explain that such a situation is directly related to - and made possible by - an absence of the concept of publication. Usually, of course, publication means printing, but there have been situations, in Roman antiquity for example, where the same effect was achieved by mass reproduction of esteemed works by hand.

Pelras is surely right to stress the need to be aware of the oral element when studying Bugis texts.⁴ Yet an editor has to deal with the specific manuscripts before him and any direct observation of their use, even of precisely the same manuscripts, subsequent to their production will only supply arguments by analogy. Regrettably, we know almost nothing about the precise use of the manuscripts at the time and for the culture in which they were produced. Moreover an editor is doing precisely what the scribe in such a society does not do: an editor is producing a text which is fixed, whatever the sophistication of critical apparatus or lack of it. One of the key elements he fixes is the

definition of the work in question, its beginning, its end and the detail of its content. In a non-publishing context, these matters are much less fixed, as we shall see.

Almost all the Bugis manuscript material we have is written on imported European paper bound up in book form. These bound items may be conveniently called codices. A large number of these codices are copies, made under European inspiration and direction, of others borrowed for the purpose. This is clearly true of some of Matthes' items, now in Leiden, and for much of the material in the Yayasan Kebudayaan collection in Ujung Pandang, we know the name of the copyist working under Cense's direction in the 1930s and the name of the owner. Although no-one to my knowledge has made a systematic check, there is no reason to doubt that such copies faithfully represent the models they were copied from with only the trivial errors inherent in any manual copying. In any case, there are plenty of codices identical in nature (though often less easy to read) coming directly from a Bugis context. Both Dutch and British collections hold manuscripts plundered from the courts of Bone at various times during the nineteenth century.

At this stage of the discussion, I want to put to one side manuscripts of the I La Galigo epic cycle. These form a distinct group: never, to my knowledge are codices found containing both I La Galigo material and any of the other categories of material to be discussed. Pelras observes that a different term is used for the two classes of manuscripts. I La Galigo manuscripts understood generally are called sure': all other manuscripts, even when the word sure' is used in a specific work with reference to its nature, are collectively known as lontara' (Pelras: 279). Opinions differ on what should be regarded as a work in the I La Galigo material, and I do not think the matter can be convincingly resolved until we have available a considerable amount of carefully edited text on which to decide.

A typical lontara' codex comprises a more or less disparate miscellany of items. Occasionally, a codex will contain only one item, but there is nothing to suggest that this represents anything more significant

than lack of space, the length of the item or failure to complete the codex. In a big codex, there may be a remarkable diversity: one described by Matthes comprises 183 items in 254 pages.⁵ Any general title is likely to be misleadingly incomplete or uselessly general. My favourite is that attached to 486 folio pages filled with over 100 items: 'various tales about kings in Bugis territory'.⁶

The contents of a miscellany are not totally random. It is usually possible to perceive some common interest. For example, a codex of 32 folios (64 pages) in the British Library (Add. 12368) contains four sections: the first and largest contains tracts on the medical treatment of various diseases; the second is an amulet associated with Arab magic; the third contains formulae against evil spirits, etc.; and the last comprises some verses from the Koran (in Arabic).⁷ The first three items, at least, seem to be related to medicine and health. A rather different commonality is seen in a manuscript of 156 pages probably copied for Matthes in 1861 at the house of Arung Ujung, one of the important figures in Bone. This contains 97 pages of legal materials associated with Bone, then three short technical items on houses, ships and fence-building, then records of some eighteenth-century conferences involving Bone, and finally, two more technical items on agriculture and fishing gear (Matthes 1875: 49-50, NBG 125. See also Macknight and Mukhlis 1979: 272). The links here are with Bone and the five technical items. In most cases, it would seem that we have to deal with what amounts to a commonplace book, in which one individual or perhaps two or three individuals related in some way have recorded interesting or useful items.

Usually the separate items are easily distinguished in a codex. The new items will begin on a fresh page, or after a space, or with a large or coloured letter, word or phrase, or with an appropriate Arabic word or phrase, or with an explicit statement in Bugis, or by some combination of these signs. Favourite devices are the word Fasal (in Arabic script) or the Bugis words Inanae panessaengngi ... (this makes clear or this fixes such-and-such a subject) or Inanae sure' poada-adaengngi ... (this is the writing that deals with such-and-such a subject). Other identifying

details such as dates and the name of relevant places or actors follow immediately. The conclusion of an item may be marked by Tammāt (in Arabic script).

Taken as a whole, the items found in the lontara' may be divided into various categories. It should be noted that this categorization is independent of the point made by Pelras that we should consider the oral dimension of the categories; that is so, but we can still legitimately assign the manuscript expressions of each category to the appropriate category. The exact definition of categories and the complete enumeration of those found in the traditional Bugis context are not beyond dispute and much more investigation, but the following list can serve for present purposes:

- (a) chronicles
- (b) kinglists and similar material
- (c) treaties
- (d) episodes
- (e) genealogies
- (f) diaries
- (g) adat law
- (h) other technical guides, including calendrical material
- (i) verse in several genres
- (j) religious works
- (k) jottings, letters, etc.
- (l) contents lists

However, before beginning to look at these categories, it will be useful to consider another class of material, that of translations. Not surprisingly, these are relatively numerous, especially from Arabic and Malay originals, but also from some European language material. For example, a codex in the British Library (Add. 12358) contains a Bugis translation of a Macassar translation of a Spanish treatise on gunnery, along with several other similar treatises of diverse origins (Cense in Ricklefs and Voorhoeve: 29). The bulk of the material translated from Arabic is, naturally, concerned with Islamic matters, including sections of the Koran.⁸ The most significant translations from Malay are of hikayat stories. In all these instances, it seems easy, at first glance, to refer the question of how to define the 'work' back to the non-Bugis original. Yet the question is not quite so easy.

than lack of space, the length of the item or failure to complete the codex. In a big codex, there may be a remarkable diversity: one described by Matthes comprises 183 items in 254 pages.⁵ Any general title is likely to be misleadingly incomplete or uselessly general. My favourite is that attached to 486 folio pages filled with over 100 items: 'various tales about kings in Bugis territory'.⁶

The contents of a miscellany are not totally random. It is usually possible to perceive some common interest. For example, a codex of 32 folios (64 pages) in the British Library (Add. 12368) contains four sections: the first and largest contains tracts on the medical treatment of various diseases; the second is an amulet associated with Arab magic; the third contains formulae against evil spirits, etc.; and the last comprises some verses from the Koran (in Arabic).⁷ The first three items, at least, seem to be related to medicine and health. A rather different commonality is seen in a manuscript of 156 pages probably copied for Matthes in 1861 at the house of Arung Ujung, one of the important figures in Bone. This contains 97 pages of legal materials associated with Bone, then three short technical items on houses, ships and fence-building, then records of some eighteenth-century conferences involving Bone, and finally, two more technical items on agriculture and fishing gear (Matthes 1875: 49-50, NBG 125. See also Macknight and Mukhlis 1979: 272). The links here are with Bone and the five technical items. In most cases, it would seem that we have to deal with what amounts to a commonplace book, in which one individual or perhaps two or three individuals related in some way have recorded interesting or useful items.

Usually the separate items are easily distinguished in a codex. The new items will begin on a fresh page, or after a space, or with a large or coloured letter, word or phrase, or with an appropriate Arabic word or phrase, or with an explicit statement in Bugis, or by some combination of these signs. Favourite devices are the word Fasal (in Arabic script) or the Bugis words Inanae panessaengngi ... (this makes clear or this fixes such-and-such a subject) or Inanae sure' poadadaengngi ... (this is the writing that deals with such-and-such a subject). Other identifying

Cense describes one item as a 'fragment of a Buginese translation or version of the Malay Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah'⁹ There are two problems here: why is it only a fragment (of 89 pages) and what is the precise relation between the Bugis and its Malay original? As we well know from the works of Dr Brakel, this latter question on this Hikayat above all perhaps may not have a simple answer. Given both these uncertainties, there is room for hesitation before assuming that one is dealing simply with a Bugis mirror to the original 'work'. It would, of course, be a major task to clarify all the details even for one work, and I do not know of any attempt to do so.

The first clear category of original Bugis material is that of chronicles or, in Bugis, attoriolong. These describe the reigns of successive rulers of a state. Applying a number of criteria, it is possible to distinguish 'works' among these chronicles. Thus I am confident that the material on Bone I am currently preparing for publication (with Mukhlis) can be so regarded: it has a clear beginning, there is evidence of internal cohesion and there are, at least, eleven broadly similar manuscript versions. There is some variation in the end among the versions, but it is always fairly abrupt, so that the 'work' may not be complete. More importantly, for comparison with non-Bugis materials, there is no indication of date or authorship and the title is very non-specific. I have explored elsewhere the mechanisms which I believe have resulted in the numerous minor variations between the versions of this 'work' and which, in my view, render it virtually impossible to reconstruct an original version (Macknight, unpublished). These various difficulties may enforce an editorial decision to stick to one manuscript version, but they do not remove the possibility of discerning the 'work'.

The situation in respect of the chronicle material from Wajo' seems to be more complex - though this may only be a result of Dr Noorduy'n's far more exhaustive investigations in the manuscripts. He assigns 44 items (some of more than one part) to 13 groups. Each group, he says, may be regarded as derived from one text (Noorduy'n: 21-26). However the story told by all these fragments, with varying attention to detail, is broadly consistent. The text published by Noorduy'n represents

an attempt to restore one of these groups to something like its original form. It is based on one manuscript (E1) with many corrections of detail from the other item in the group (E2) and other closely related groups. Some early pages, missing in E1, are restored in the same way. The number of 'works' one might distinguish among the Wajo' chronicle material - and as Noorduynd explains, he has not seen all the available material - is perhaps partly a question of scholarly preference for splitting or lumping. To what extent does one recognize various recensions, or fragments, which are then copied and fragmented themselves, as being separate 'works'? There is certainly no reason to suppose that each of Noorduynd's 'groups' represents a distinct 'work' since they involve no more than a putting together of similar manuscript items, but more than one work, as defined by wider criteria, are probably involved.

The distinction between chronicles and kinglists is somewhat artificial, since the chronicles are based on accounts of successive reigns and some, which begin by giving the usual details for early reigns, lapse into little more than names for later reigns. Given the brief and factual nature of the material, there is perhaps little point in worrying too much about the definition of separate 'works'. Noorduynd for the Wajo' kinglists divides 14 items into 9 groups.

Treaties form a particularly interesting category since we can be confident that in the case of treaties with the Dutch, and very probably in other cases too, there once existed (and often still exists) the actual treaty document itself, an indubitable 'work'. There may be problems with translation between the languages of the parties, and it may be necessary to distinguish between the various renewals of a treaty, but in theory these difficulties should be surmountable. Certainly there are many copies of the major treaties in Sulawesi history among the manuscripts. My very preliminary impression is that one finds among these copies just the type of variation which I believe to be the result of Bugis techniques of copying other prose material, such as chronicles. If this can be sustained, it adds some support to my ideas on that subject.

The penultimate category, jottings, letters, etc., consists of materials not normally copied. A letter, except in some special case, has an immediate function and no more. The same applies even more strongly to the writing exercises or odd pieces of arithmetic and the like that are often found on spare pages of codices. There is little likelihood that they will attract editorial attention in their own right, but they need to be mentioned in any overall list.

The same is true for the final category of contents lists which are sometimes found in the front or back of a codex. They are important in this context in two ways. Firstly, they confirm that there is no Bugis concept of a 'work' operating outside what can be derived from the items themselves as found in the codex. In other words, a Bugis scribe has as much trouble identifying items reliably as does the non-Bugis scholar. Secondly, they provide the perfect example of the 'non-work' for an editor. That is, they are not copiable by definition.

So far in this discussion, the concept of a 'work' has been restricted to the task confronting an editor. It is not possible here to explore the question of the nature and the function of a 'work' as seen by the society that produced and maintained it. However, there is one point that needs to be remembered. For all the lontara material, the actual form in which the society used the writing, at least since the eighteenth century and probably earlier, was as a codex. There is a real sense in which the codex is a useful unit of study. When one is considering questions such as the social function of a 'work' or the relation between the oral and written registers, it is important to realize that the 'work' is found embedded in a codex. This may throw some useful light on the affiliations of a particular version or help to account for certain peculiarities. Much more importantly, however, it goes a long way towards explaining how it is that concept of a 'work' which so bothers the modern editor, was of such little concern to a Bugis scribe. His attention was fixed on his own codex. This is, of course, saying no more than that within the overall register of writing, it is necessary to distinguish between, at least, a sub-register of manuscripts and a sub-register of printing, or, in the terms used earlier, between

non-published material and published material. The difficulty with the concept of a 'work' which this paper has explored is a function of the move from one sub-register to the other.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for a panel on Indonesian philology at the conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Monash University in 1982. I am particularly grateful to Dr J. Noorduyt for comments on that earlier version. Since 1982, the argument of the paper has been strengthened by some unpublished work by Mr Ian Caldwell.
2. It is convenient to restrict this paper to Bugis materials, but what I have to say applies in a general way to similar materials in other languages of South Sulawesi.
3. After C. Pelras 1979: 296-7.
4. I have also made the point, in a less general way, in an unpublished paper, "The oral transmission of a written tradition: Bugis chronicles from Sulawesi, Indonesia".
5. NBG 208 described in Matthes 1881: 6-16.
6. Ms. 174 (Old catalogue) in the Yayasan Kebudayaan collection in Ujung Pandang.
7. A.A. Cense in Ricklefs and Voorhoeve 1977: 32. B.F. Matthes (1875: 95) describes it as containing one work on medicine.
8. For example, British Library Ms. Add. 12374, described by Cense in Ricklefs & Voorhoeve: 33.
9. In British Library Ms. Add. 12364, described by Cense in Ricklefs & Voorhoeve: 30. For comments on translation and adaption into Malay, see Sweeney 1980: 69.

REFERENCES

- Macknight, C.C.
unpublished "The oral transmission of a written tradition: Bugis chronicles from Sulawesi, Indonesia".
- Macknight, C.C. and Mukhlis
1979 "A Bugis manuscript about praus", Archipel 18.
- Matthes, B.F.
1875 Kort Verslag, Amsterdam.
- 1881 Vervolg op het Kort Verslag, Amsterdam.
- Noorduyn, J.
1955 Een Achttiende-eeuwse Kroniek van Wadjo', 's Gravenhage.
- Pelras, C.
1979 "L'Oral et l'écrit dans la tradition Bugis", Asie du sud-est et monde insulindien, 10.
- Ricklefs, M.C. and P. Voorhoeve
1977 Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain, Oxford.
- Sweeney, A.
1980 Authors and Audiences in Traditional Malay Literature, Berkeley.
- Tobing, P.O.L.
1977 Hukum Pelayaran dan Perdagangan Amanna Gappa, 2nd ed., Ujung Pandang.