

The Case against La Maddukelleng

Bugis Diplomacy in the 18th Century

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Abstract

This article presents an eighteenth-century Bugis text from South Sulawesi in Indonesia. It concerns the career of La Maddukelleng (c.1700-1765). Also known as Arung Singkang and Arung Peneki, he played a key role in the complex politics and wars of the period. After establishing his military credentials in Kalimantan, he returned to Sulawesi in the early 1730s and imposed himself as ruler of the Bugis state of Wajo from where in 1739 he led an almost successful campaign to expel the Dutch East India Company from its base in Makassar. Despite this defeat, he retained his position in Wajo until 1754 and, even after stepping down, continued to cause unrest. In 1763, representatives of the three main Bugis states, Bone, Wajo and Soppeng, met to discuss what might be done. The document presented here in Bugis transcription and English translation reports on each of the seven meetings. There was no practical outcome. The discussions reflect, however, the history of the previous thirty years, as well as illustrating the texture of eighteenth-century Bugis politics. The use of written documents as evidence in discussion is particularly noteworthy.

Keywords: manuscripts; Bugis; La Maddukelleng; history of Sulawesi; public law.