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An Attempt at Localizing Galiyao

Galiyao appears, among other geographical names, in the Nagara-Kertagama, an old Javanese text of the realm of Majapahit written in 1357. Early European maps and documents also mention Galiyao1 (Barnes 1982:407-8). Then, around 1650, the name seems to have suddenly disappeared. This ‘disappearance’ does not permit easy identification of the location of Galiyao. As a result, modern scholars trying to identify this location have had to argue indirectly, basing their determination on the sometimes rather vague information of early European sources. Van Fraassen (1976:295-6) based his identification on a phonetic similarity of names, suggesting an identification of Galiyao with the island of Kalao, situated between Flores and Selayar.

Barnes acknowledges the strength of Van Fraassen’s argument where he writes: ‘Kalao does indeed look more like Galiyao than do the designations of any of the other islands or districts which have been suggested from time to time, and the strength of van Fraassen’s position lies in this similarity’ (Barnes 1982:407). Nonetheless, Barnes (1982:409) as well as Le Roux (1929:12), who relied basically on written documents and maps, came to the conclusion that the island of Pantar should be considered as the original Galiyao.

That the ‘disappearance’ of the name Galiyao around 1650 is not a reality becomes evident only when one looks at local traditions. On Adonara and Solor, Dietrich (1984:317) found references to ‘Galéau’, which, interestingly enough, was associated with an area between Lembata and Alor, thus supporting Le Roux’s and Barnes’ identification.

Besides Dietrich’s information on the west of Alor and Pantar, I discovered that there was a Galiyao known even to the east of these two islands, namely on Wetar. Elbert stopped on this island during his ‘Sunda Expedition’ in 1910 (Elbert 1911-12, II:223). Here he met traders from Alor and from the small island of Pulau Kambing, also known as Atauro, which is located between Alor and Wetar. Some Wetarese, namely the Tobu Tihu living in the interior of Wetar, called these traders ‘Galigau’. The Tobu Tihu claim a common origin with the ‘Galigau’ people. This is seen as a

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1 In these documents the various spellings, such as Galiyao, Gallejau, Galigau, Galéau, Galiou, Galao, and so on, are probably the result of the name being written as it was heard by different foreigners.
requirement for peaceful trade relations between the two parties. Elbert's 'Galigau' again points in the direction of the Alor-Pantar archipelago.

The clues pointing to Galiyao as Pantar or nearby Alor can now be confirmed by evidence from these two islands themselves which had so far been lacking. In 1991 and 1994 I spent some time on Alor and Timor to collect data on the oral traditions of Alor and Pantar.2 With regard to the local history of Pantar itself I recorded the following story. The actual name of Galiyao was Galéau Watan Léma, which is comparable to Solor Watan Léma.3 Galéau was – supposedly – founded after the fall of the Pantar kingdom of Munaseli. At that time the kingdom of Pandai, also on Pantar, became the centre of Galéau. Many clans on Pantar and surrounding islands such as Alor and Timor were members of Galéau. All the Galéau Watan Léma areas had relations with each other. Of what kind these relations were I was not told. Today Galéau no longer exists in its original form and function, but only as the name of a clan in Alor Besar. In those early days, however, it was never the name of a clan.

Concerning Galiyao's 'original form and function' I obtained pertinent information during my visit to Alor Besar (NW Alor) in 1994. There, in the course of a recitation of traditional texts at a circumcision ceremony, 'Watan Léma' was mentioned several times. Later the reciters told me that these five (léma) coastal areas (watan) comprise not only Alor Besar, but also Solor, Adonara, Pantar, and Kui (a Muslim area in SW Alor).4 In those areas live the descendants of the five sons of the Raja of Barnusa, who is sometimes also referred to as Raja Pandai (today the names Pandai and Barnusa are still commonly used for the whole of the island of Pantar). Only when asked whether this Watan Léma was the same as Galiyao did my informants switch at once to the same term my informant from Pantar used: Galéau Watan Léma. On Alor, as on Pantar, it was emphasized that Galéau Watan Léma is comparable to Solor Watan Léma but that it also includes other areas. How the people compare the two alliances I could not ascertain. Asked about the kind of connections between the five Galiyao (or Galéau) areas, they emphasized the simplicity of marriage arrangements. They told me that this was important because of the complex problems caused by the type of gifts the groom's family has to offer to the bride's family. These marriage gifts differ from one island to the other and cannot normally be substituted by another kind of wealth. Therefore an Alorese man may not be able to marry a Solorese woman because he may not be

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2 I searched for the history of Pantar in Kupang (Timor) instead of Pantar itself because of the fact that many descendants of the former royal families of the Alor-Pantar archipelago now live and work in Kupang.
I gratefully acknowledge the help I received from Raja Lukas Laka Sirangbabu of Munaseli (Pantar) and Raja Nampira of Alor Besar, now living in Kalabahi, Alor.

3 Solor Watan Léma, Paji Watan Léma, or Lima Pantai is an alliance of five (léma) coastal places (watan, pantai) located between eastern Flores and Lembata.

4 It is by no means clear which areas of Solor, Adonara, and Pantar were involved.
able to offer an elephant tusk (gading) as a marriage gift, and the Solorese family would not accept a kettledrum (moko), the common Alorese marriage gift, from him. Only for the members of Galéau Watan Léma was interinsular marriage no problem.

These two local traditions concerning Galiyao collected on Pantar and Alor Besar show some important similarities. Both traditions stress that the correct term is not Galiyao but Galéau Watan Léma; that it is seen in contrast to Solor Watan Léma; and that the centre of Galiyao is Pandai, also known as Barnusa. Only in Alor Besar were the five sons of the Raja of Barnusa mentioned as the founding fathers of Galéau Watan Léma. The aim of the ‘Watan Léma’ had been the simplification of bridewealth exchanges – not, as one would have expected in view of the ‘Galigau’ traders on Wetar, of trade relations. In Alor Besar I learned that trade relations obviously existed but that they were not recognized as being of special importance at any time. From Pantar I received information on the time of the Galéau’s foundation. This was in the period after the fall of Munaseli, a former kingdom on Pantar. No one indicated how long Galéau had existed or why it no longer exists today. A reason for its disappearance may possibly lie in the change of the religious system. Today the exchange of bridewealth is no longer necessary, even though it sometimes still takes place.

The information from Pantar and Alor Besar concerning the five brothers as founders of Galéau seems to fit in quite well with the local tradition collected by Dietrich (1984:317) in Terong (South Adonara). Here the father of these founders is mentioned, too. The Waimahing clan from Terong claims descent from Majapahit, a Raja of Barnusa (Pantar). He had five sons who became the founding fathers of Galéau Watan Léma. One of the sons had to leave Barnusa and came from Munaseli to Terong, where his descendants came to form one of the governing clans.

The connection of Pantar with Majapahit and his five sons as founding fathers of Galéau Watan Léma enables us to see Lemoine’s (1969) analysis of the original population of Pantar as well as the results of Vatter’s research (1932) in a new light, even if neither refers to Galiyao. Lemoine tells us of the first inhabitant of Pantar, Raja Majapahit, whose five sons became founders of five kingdoms on Pantar and neighbouring islands. She mentions the locations of four of these kingdoms: Pandai, which was ruled by the first-born son; Barnusa, ruled by the second son; Alor Besar; and a kingdom on Lembata (Lemoine 1969:13, 15). Vatter’s research basically confirms Lemoine’s information, asserting that Majapahit’s five sons founded three realms on Pantar, one in Labala (South Lembata), and one on Alor (Vatter 1932:24).

With reference to the question of what areas actually formed part of the alliance, a letter written by the Raja of Buton in 1682 may be of interest. When the Raja informed the Dutch Governor-General about the Solorese intentions towards the Portuguese, he listed ten places: ‘Adonara, Lama-
hala, Lamakéra, “Louliang” (?), Terong (Adonara), “Bermoussa” (Barnusa), “Blecker” (Belagar), “Pandaija” (Pandai), Alor, and Malua’ (Dietrich 1984:319). Of these, Adonara, Lamahala, Lamakéra, and Terong are Solor Watan Léma areas. Barnusa, Belagar, Pandai (all on Pantar), Alor, and Malua do not belong to the Solor Watan Léma region. We may well assume that they belonged to the Galéau Watan Léma. This interpretation is largely in agreement with the above-cited sources. Lemoine included three of the five places in the Buton list in her own list, namely Barnusa, Pandai and Alor (a name often used for Alor Besar). It is also for the greater part in agreement with Vatter, who included four of these five places in his list: three on Pantar and one on Alor. The letter from the Raja of Buton offers a possibility of identifying Malua, which also features indirectly in my list from Alor Besar, namely where Kui is mentioned as a member of the Galéau. Malua is the local name for a group of people from Southwest Alor who according to Van Lynden are actually Kui people (Van Lynden 1851:329). The name Malua is still in use in Kui.

In the list from Buton, ten Solorese regions which were in fact members of the Solor Watan Léma and Galéau Watan Léma are mentioned in the same breath. This strongly suggests that the two alliance systems of Solor and Galiyao were interconnected and even had some importance beyond the relatively small area of the Solor-Alor Archipelago. This might offer a clue as to why the list from Alor Besar mentions Solor and Adonara as being involved in the Galéau Watan Léma alliance. They in fact fit in with both alliance systems, Solor Watan Léma and Galéau Watan Léma, namely as unspecific, general designations for the Solor alliance.

Looking from the Solor Watan Léma perspective, from Lamakera on Solor, one may note that the people here still remembered Galéau. They told Dietrich: “‘Galéau Watan Léma’ (once had been) between Lembata and Kalabahi (Alor)’ (Dietrich 1984:317). In Terong, the mention of Galéau has even more importance than as a mere designation reminiscent of former partners further to the east. One clan in Terong, in an area that is otherwise Solorese, still claims descent from one of the founding fathers of Galéau Watan Léma.

Both these areas might provide a point of departure for research focusing on the relations between Galéau Watan Léma and Solor Watan Léma. Ritual texts from Terong or Lamakera may possibly contain the same kind of information as those in Alor Besar. People in the latter area at least still draw attention to the relation with Solor today. The relevant stanza, written in an archaic form of Bahasa Alor, runs as follows:

\[
Gali au Solo Watang Lema
\]
\[
Being Bunga Bali
\]
\[
Being Bunga Bali Nonaing Homang
\]
Brief Communications

Teleng Nonaing Homang

[in connection with (gantung) - he possesses - a place]

Aside from the word-for-word translation (that between square brackets above), this text was explained to me as follows: 'The five coastal regions of Galiau and Solor are closely connected with the chief and ritual centre of Bungabali (= Alor Besar). This unites them in the same way as if they resided in the same place.'

Summarizing, it may be said that Galiyao was not a single island but an alliance of several coastal regions. The order in which the different kingdoms are mentioned varies from place to place. People invariably mention their own region first in order to underline its pre-eminence. It is very likely that the five Galiyao kingdoms were located on the island of Pantar and in the western part of the island of Alor.

Similarly, it can be stated that Galiyao is still far from forgotten. Although it has lost its former function, people still remember its erstwhile existence and are careful not to lose sight of the ancient interinsular relations.

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