Kathryn Anderson Wellen

The Open Door. Early Modern Wajorese Statecraft and Diaspora, Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014, 217 pp. ISBN 9780875807126. Price USD 35.00 (paperback).

This detailed and fascinating study is a first book by Kathryn Wellen based on a rich trove of documents which shed light on the Bugis kingdom of Wajoq in South Sulawesi and its unique economic and political success in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After the Makassar War (1666–1669), during which the Wajorese had allied themselves to the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa against the neighboring kingdom of Boné under the pro-VOC ruler Arung Palakka (1634–1696), many of the defeated Wajorese left and settled elsewhere in the archipelago. Through unexamined and difficult to read documentation, the author successfully highlights the relationship between this Wajorese diaspora and state-building during the early modern period. Her contribution goes well beyond the field of Southeast Asia. Her arguments are highly relevant to scholars working on diaspora merchant networks. Wellen's study adds to current work that goes beyond the long held dichotomy between the state and diaspora (as she notes, Philip Curtin's 'sharp delineation between trading diaspora and host society has not withstood the test of time' (p. 10)). The author is well versed in the main debates and concepts that dominate the field of diaspora networks, as predecessors who have shown the limitations of this diaspora/ host state dichotomy, Wellen cites three scholars: Jonathan Israel, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe (this reviewer), and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. Wajorese participation in state building brings to mind the role of Jewish trading networks in Europe, the Armenians in Iran, and the Iranians abroad regarding each of these group's participation in state-building in the host societies.

Wajoq economic success has been identified in other studies, but Wellen's arguments go against much of what has been argued before. She argues that it was not Wajoq defeat and oppression at home but Wajoq trade organization within the network that contributed to their prominent political and economic success. To scholars of trading diasporas, perhaps the most important parts of this book are Chapters 2 and 4, where Wellen argues that the strong cultural emphasis on what was known among the Bugis as *pesse* (which she translates as solidarity, but can also mean trust within the network) was one of the keys to this success. The Wajorese diaspora contributed more than any group to the Bugis maritime enterprise, which created stiff and successful competition against European (mainly Dutch) and Chinese shipping throughout the archipelago.

She carefully documents the strong participation of the Wajorese in maritime commerce as well as in state-building. The Wajorese trading network ran their maritime commerce outside the control of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) which was operating a sea-pass system. The Wajorese operated both inside and outside the VOC's territory. Wellen highlights that in reality the VOC's control over petty trade by country craft shipping was weak, but that Wajorese success was also key in the trade of top commodities in territories overseen by the Dutch. Wajorese Indian textile sales in VOC-controlled South Sulawesi were so successful that the VOC failed to sell these textiles at the competitive prices that the Wajorese network had set in local markets. Aromatic woods, camphor, beeswax, birds' nests, dragons' blood, pearls, tortoise shells, mother of pearl and edible sea weed were the lesser commodities traded by the Wajorese merchants next to gold, pepper, and textiles. She brings to light an organized network that stood behind the debt of individual merchants with an institutionalized system formally codified through their own financial and legal systems (p. 68). Equally important to their success was the enticement of foreign merchants into their network by providing them with 'favorable and safe trading conditions' (p. 69). This collaboration was done through extending to other merchants the protection of an organized and legislated Wajorese merchant network. This 'open door' to the world and to other merchants demonstrates that this was not at all a closed trading diaspora network.

Wajorese customary law served as commercial law to an extended network across the archipelago. This comprehensive Wajorese law code for commerce and navigation, which consisted of 25 chapters, was codified by their matoa (leader) in Makassar between 1697 and 1723, and was agreed to by matoas in the major ports of Sumbawa, Pasir, Kutai and Pontianak. Through the legal code and its ratification by different community leaders, she finds that different Wajorese communities were linked by organized cooperation and strict legislation for their mutual benefit. The laws spelled out fair business practices, lending and borrowing money and goods, types of loans, sharing profits and losses, inheritance, and identified who would be responsible for damaged or mishandled goods (pp. 71–75).

Wellen shows that while most local South Asian trading networks were at a disadvantage compared to Chinese, European, and Indian merchants because of a lack of pooled capital, these legal codes gave the Wajorese an exceptional advantage (p. 75). It is fascinating to read that according to this code of laws rather than preferring to trade with family the Wajorese exercised extra caution when they did chose to trade with kin. This powerful finding encoded in law destroys another cliché dear to scholars who still argue that trading diaspora

networks are always necessarily closed circuits of trade which rely on trust that is exclusively family and kinship based.

South Sulawesi is notoriously hard to study because of indigenous scripts. To study their prominent role, Wellen has read a vast amount of archives in Dutch but has the rare skill of deciphering *lontaraq*, an indic derived script, that is key to studying the Bugis statecraft and economic enterprise. The Wajoq are Buginese but Wellen demonstrates that as a distinct group they play an exceptionally visible role in polity and state-building as an economically successful diaspora. While this reviewer is certain that Katheryn Wellen's excellent scholarship will be considered important by experts of South East Asian history, my own expertise compels me to highlight this as a major contribution to the field of trading diaspora networks. *The Open Door* should be of great interest to scholars of diaspora trading networks and economic history.

Ina Baghdiantz McCabe

Tufts University

ina.mccabe@tufts.edu