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## Sawerigading in Strange Places: The I La Galigo Myth in Central Sulawesi

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## SAWERIGADING IN STRANGE PLACES:

### *The I La Galigo myth in Central Sulawesi\**

*Jennifer W. Nourse*

Artikel ini menyajikan hasil penelitian tentang penyebaran dan pengaruh mitologi Bugis di kerajaan pantai Sulawesi Tengah yang terletak jauh dari pusat orang Bugis di Sulawesi Selatan. Tulisan ini secara khusus menjelaskan adat istiadat dan cerita-cerita yang selama ini dirahasiakan tentang tokoh Sawerigading, yang terkenal dalam mitologi Bugis sebagai bapaknya I La Galigo. Saya meneliti bagaimanakah cerita-cerita dan adat-istiadat yang berasal dari daerah orang Bugis ini memperpengaruhi adat-istiadat di daerah Sulawesi Tengah, dalam lingkup kerajaan Motoung. Penduduk yang kini menetap di daerah yang semula bernama Kerajaan Moutoung, menyatakan bahwa mereka adalah penduduk asli, dan bukan berasal dari Sulawesi Selatan. Mereka menyatakan bahwa Sawerigading sebenarnya pahlawan asli, pahlawan etnis Laujé, bukan etnis Bugis, Mandar atau Makassar. Di antara warga kelompok etnis yang tinggal di Kecamatan Tinombo, terdapat banyak penduduk yang memiliki nenek-moyang berasal dari Sulawesi Selatan. Ada keturunan yang menganggap dirinya orang Bugis, dan ada juga yang menganggap dirinya orang asli Laujé. Sebagian besar penduduk berpendapat bahwa Kerajaan Moutoung dipaksa tunduk di bawah penjajahan Belanda. Pada waktu penjajahan ini, orang Belanda memilih penduduk Mandar dan Bugis sebagai Raja-Raja. Orang asli Laujé tidak boleh dilantik sebagai raja di daerahnya sendiri. Karena Mandar dan Bugis kemudian menjadi dominan di daerah Laujé, ada sebagian penduduk yang kini percaya bahwa adat-istiadatnya dan cerita-cerita tentang Sawerigading berasal dari etnis Bugis dan Mandar. Tetapi, ada juga penduduk Laujé yang percaya bahwa adat-istiadatnya dan cerita-cerita tentang Sawerigading berasal dari tanah-air Laujé itu sendiri.

Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa tanggapan orang Laujé tentang Sawerigading ternyata dapat dikaitkan dengan pendapat tentang identitas mereka mengenai sejarah kolonial. Empat masalah akan dibahas dalam karangan ini: (1) cerita-cerita dan adat-istiadat tentang Sawerigading yang dimiliki dan dilaksanakan penduduk di tanah Laujé (yang semula termasuk Kerajaan Moutoung); (2) pembahasan tentang adat-istiadat Sawerigading: apakah hanya berasal dari raja-raja yang datang selama jaman Belanda, ataukah sebenarnya merupakan adat istiadat asli daerah ini sebelum jaman Belanda; (3) bagaimana dan mengapa penduduk asli yang bernama orang Laujé mengklaim bahwa Sawerigading sebenarnya 'anak asli orang Laujé'; dan (4) apakah cerita-cerita dan adat-istiadat Sawerigading sebenarnya memperlihatkan bahwa orang Bugis kini mempunyai pengaruh besar di daerah Sulawesi Tengah? Karangan ini menyimpulkan bahwa orang Bugis dan orang Sulawesi Tengah ternyata memiliki hubungan sejarah yang lebih dekat daripada yang selama ini dinyatakan dalam tulisan-tulisan ilmiah.

## INTRODUCTION

Sawerigading is the Bugis Odysseus. His epic wanderings are outlined in what has been called 'one of the most remarkable works of literature to be found in Indonesia', the Bugis *I La Galigo* epic cycle (Abidin and Macknight 1974:161).<sup>1</sup> Captivating wherever he is met and in whatever language he is mentioned, the stories about Sawerigading have travelled as has their Bugis hero, Sawerigading. Throughout Sulawesi and beyond Sawerigading is acclaimed as the great Bugis prince and hero.

In this chapter I present an alternative response to Sawerigading. Among the Central Sulawesi Laujé who live in the Kecamatan Tinombo on the Tomini Bay, Sawerigading is not a Bugis hero, but a native son. In what follows I explore his transformation from Bugis into local Laujé hero and what this transformation reveals about the extent of Bugis influence in a Central Sulawesi coastal kingdom which is at the political periphery of South Sulawesi.<sup>2</sup> Most of the people in the community I discuss claim to be either Laujé, the indigenous ethnic group, or an immigrant mix of Kaili, Gorontalo or Mandar. Only a few people claim to be Bugis, yet they invoke the Bugis hero-god, Sawerigading, as the key figure in a cluster of highly secret and circumscribed rites while claiming that Sawerigading and their rites about him are Laujé. This chapter asks what these rites and lore reveal about local and immigrant relations. Locals ask and debate similar questions. Their debate, however, is entangled with contemporary ethnic concerns and issues of power. It is thus nearly impossible to reconcile oral history with documentary sources. Nevertheless, the fact that the ritual and lore about Sawerigading exists in rites which are supposedly 'pure' Laujé, passed down intact from time immemorial, leads me to conclude that there is much Bugis influence in this remote kingdom. In the following, then, I will discuss three issues: (1) how and why the Laujé have co-opted Sawerigading as one of their own ancestors; (2) how this co-optation and simultaneous denial of Bugis heritage reflects the negligible degree of political influence and control Bugis people have in the region today; and (3) how the presence of Sawerigading and other aspects of Bugis culture in supposedly traditional Laujé rites reflects a much closer historical contact with, and influence of, Bugis-Makassar migration on this peripheral trading-port kingdom in Central Sulawesi than is usually acknowledged.

## THE SAWERIGADING STORY

The Laujé's version of Sawerigading begins with the story of Sawerigading's father, the Voracious Boy ('To Modoko' in the Laujé language). The story is as follows:

The first Laujé man and woman had grown old and had not been blessed with children. The old couple prayed that they give birth to a son. Their prayer was granted, but the son was a burden. He ate so much that they could not keep him fed. He also was incredibly strong. He was able to clear seven mountainsides with his machete. Yet it was the boy's appetite that disturbed his parents.

The boy was huge and while still a child he could eat seven bundles of rice in a day. His father decided he couldn't continue to feed him. So he [the father] vowed to kill his own son. The father asked the boy to fetch a huge boulder down a steep ravine. Then the father rolled a boulder toward his son, but the boy returned carrying the boulder and seven others on his shoulders. Another time the father asked the boy to look for firewood in a certain place. The father pushed a tree he had been chopping so it would fall on his own son. The boy returned carrying the tree and seven logs on his shoulder.

The boy realized his parents did not want him and resolved to leave home. His mother prepared food for his journey and his father gave him a magic sword which had come from the Inscribed Rock, which marks the centre of the earth and the place from which all things, human and animal, emerged.

The boy walked for seven days with his powerful sword and his provisions. On the seventh night he came to an empty village in the land of Cina. He found a girl hiding inside a drum. He asked her to cook him some rice. She replied that she couldn't because the sound of rice pounding would attract the giant bird that had killed her entire village.

The Voracious Boy promised that he would protect her. The girl from Cina pounded rice. When the bird came, the boy used his magic sword from the Inscribed Rock to kill the bird and bring all the souls of the villagers back to life.

The Voracious Boy married the girl. Their first son was Sawerigading. Their descendants became the people from across the sea, the older siblings of the Laujé.

When I first heard this story I thought it interesting that Sawerigading was the son of a Chinese woman and a Laujé man. All reference to Sawerigading's Bugis heritage was completely obliterated. I later found out, however, that Cina is the ancient name for Pammana in Wajo', South Sulawesi, a community located within the former Bugis kingdom of Boné (Abidin and Macknight 1974:163). For those with knowledge of ancient Bugis kingdoms, the Laujé To Modoko story brings the original Laujé son in contact with a Bugis woman whom he then marries. The Laujé Voracious Boy becomes the saviour of the

Bugis community. Few people reciting this story, however, are aware of these connections.

What the storytellers and audience are aware of is something of contemporary interest to them: the origins of other ethnic groups and their relationship to the Laujé. On the most superficial level the Voracious Boy story blurs the boundaries between Laujé and other ethnic groups. In the story all immigrants, whether they are known as Bugis or as Cina, are descendants of the Laujé first son, the Voracious Boy, who married women in other communities and peopled the earth. Following this story, many Laujé call the immigrants who live in their community today 'older sibling' (*sia'a*) because these people are believed to be descendants of the first Laujé son, the Voracious Boy. Some Laujé even refer to immigrants as *Sia'a Puangé* combining the Laujé term for older sibling, *sia'a*, with the Bugis term for Lord, *Puangé*.

On a deeper level the story comments on relations of hierarchy and the moral status of locals as opposed to outsiders. The story characterizes a key moral transgression: an ostensible superior (in this case, the parents) out of greed or misplaced self-interest, neglect to feed a dependent. As a result, the descendants of the transgressor, now junior siblings to him, are bound to make up for this 'original sin' by paying allegiance to the older sibling's descendants, the *Puangé*, who come to the Laujé land. They are obligated to work or feed the *Puangé* by giving tribute to him. As punishment for the original parents' laziness and moral lassitude they lose their only valuable, the sword they give their son. This is why, so the story goes, outsiders have superior magic and mystical power to the local Laujé. The Laujé unwittingly give it to them. Sawerigading becomes the embodiment of all the mystical power that was once in the Laujé land and disappeared because of Laujé parental neglect. Sawerigading inherits mystical power from his Laujé grandfather, becoming the first *sando* or healer with true mystical power, who returns to the Laujé land. The story about Sawerigading continues:

Through his travels and marriage with women in other lands, Sawerigading had become a powerful *sando* (ritual specialist). He had inherited ritual objects and knowledge from his Laujé father, giving him power unequalled in anyone else. Sawerigading returned to the Laujé land bringing these objects of power with him.

During the time between the departure of Sawerigading's father and Sawerigading's own return, though, another person of power, a younger sibling from Mecca arrived. He was the prophet Mohammed, who had become Lord of the Laujé land.

Mohammed challenged Sawerigading to a duel of magic. They were to stack the eggs of a bush turkey (*mamua*) seven layers high, on the beach, one on top of the other without having them break or fall.

Sawerigading used his magic. He was able to stack the eggs seven layers high. But Nabi Mohammed stacked them with a space of air remaining between each egg. Mohammed won. Sawerigading and his magic were banished to the sea. Mohammed became the ruler of the things of the earth, Sawerigading of procreation and death.

On one level this story is an allegory about the relationship of Islam and custom. Religion, brought by Mohammed, conquers the *adat* practised by Sawerigading. On another level this story is about the older sibling, Sawerigading, whose traditional beliefs should still be respected despite their replacement by a 'younger sibling', Mohammed. Because this story and the one about the Voracious Boy have many layers of meaning, the same stories can be used by various people to make contradictory claims.

On one hand, then, people can use Sawerigading to assert indigenous superiority of custom and ethnic identity over outside religion and ethnic claims. On the other hand, people can claim kinship ties to Prince Sawerigading and distinguish themselves as superior to Laujé commoners. These two ways of viewing Sawerigading divide the Laujé aristocrats who speak about Sawerigading into two camps. One camp, which I designate 'the purists', says that Sawerigading is a Laujé ancestor, not from any other ethnic group. His name is known only by elite Laujé in Dusunan and only they can call upon him to protect their community from illness and famine. The second camp, which I designate 'accommodationist', says that Sawerigading is a 'mix' of Kaili, Laujé, Bugis and Mandar, just as the people in Dusunan are. These people use Sawerigading's Bugis pedigree as a way to promote their own elite status.

These two competing philosophies about Sawerigading reflect the debate in the Dusunan community about the best way to overcome the historical favouritism which the Dutch showed toward immigrants and against the indigenous people. The 'purists' believe the best way to reclaim their powers unjustly usurped by immigrants favoured by the Dutch is to emphasize that the Laujé's supreme leader, the *olongian*, and ancestors, such as Sawerigading, are purely Laujé. They say that the Voracious Boy is actually Sawerigading, not the father of Sawerigading. The purists then, erase a generation so that the woman from Cina does not enter the bloodline of Sawerigading. The other people, the 'accommodationists' acknowledge that Sawerigading is half-Laujé, half-something else. The accommodationists vary as to whether they emphasize

Kaili, Bugis or Mandar connections in Sawerigading's matriline. All of the accommodationists agree, however, that Sawerigading is the son of an immigrant woman and the Laujé man called To Modoko. To understand why these two camps take the positions they do, a review of immigrant history in the region is necessary.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LAUJÉ AND IMMIGRANT HISTORY

Both purists and accommodationists acknowledge that immigrant traders lived in what is now the coastal town of Tinombo as long ago as the eighteenth century. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Tinombo (called Siavu then) was a temporary coastal settlement for itinerant merchants from South Sulawesi who wished to trade with the indigenous Laujé living inland along the shores of the Tinombo River and in the foothills and mountain peaks of Mount Sojol. Bugis and Mandar ships would drop anchor offshore, their holds stocked with porcelain, glassware, cloth and brass. After several months of selling the merchandise they would refill the holds with raw products from the Laujé mountains, such as dammar, rattan and animal organs used in Chinese medicine.<sup>3</sup> During the selling and restocking period, shipmates would disembark and camp in Siavu. By the late nineteenth century, many of the immigrant traders had formed their own more permanent communities. There was the Kaili *kampung* (residential location), the Bugis *kampung*, the Mandar *kampung* and the Garontalo *kampung*. In each of these *kampung* immigrant men had married Laujé women from the coastal foothills and begun to sell goods from their own houses even after the ships sailed on to other ports. Eventually Siavu was renamed Tinombo<sup>4</sup> and it became a more permanent settlement like other immigrant enclaves strung along the coast of the Tomini Bay, with a permanent dock and a few warehouses for goods owned by the immigrant merchants (van Hoevell 1892).

It is generally agreed that immigrants lived in what is present-day Tinombo. The immigrant men married Laujé women who then stayed in Tinombo. These lower-class women usually adopted the ethnic identity of their spouse and their descendants became Kaili, Bugis or Mandar, not Laujé. What is questioned, however, is what happened when elite Laujé women married immigrant men and the men moved to the Laujé village of Dusunan. The question about heritage hinges on one particular event. Some time during the early nineteenth century, the daughter or niece of the mountain *olongian*, an autochthonous leader, agreed to marry a Muslim man. The sacred regalia of the

*olongian* was used to sanctify the marriage. When the *imam* performed the Islamic ceremony over the pagan regalia, the young woman and her new husband claimed the regalia was now Islamic. They felt it should be moved to a new settlement called Dusunan located near the coast on the opposite side of the Tinombo River from the immigrant community. Dusunan then became the centre of the Laujé royal kingdom. From this time forward the lowland Laujé who lived in Dusunan identified themselves as Muslims and as elite relatives of the *olongian*. They believed they were completely distinct from the mountain Laujé who remained animist. The purists like to emphasize the leadership role of the *olongian* and her genealogical descent from mountain Laujé. They never adequately identify the new Muslim husband of the *olongian*. The accommodationists say the new husband was an immigrant man. They characterize the newly formed kingdom as more of a diarchy, the *olongian* acting as a silent priest king or queen and the new immigrant husband, called a *tadulako* or *toribangka*,<sup>5</sup> acting as the warrior figure defending the community.<sup>6</sup> The *tadulako* or *toribangka* had the spiritual and mystical knowledge to ward off marauding pirates<sup>7</sup> who had until now forced the Laujé to live in the foothills far from shore. Now that the female *olongian* married an immigrant man, as the *tadulako* he could teach the lowland Laujé men how to perform headhunting raids so the Laujé territory would remain safe for Laujé families.

For both the ‘purists’ and the ‘accommodationists’ their identity as Muslims and elites was crucial for distinguishing themselves from the commoners in the mountains. Yet the way each defined their relationship to immigrants was quite different. Purists liked to emphasize the independence of the Laujé kingdom and to characterize the *olongian* as supreme. Accommodationists depict the Laujé kingdom as shared between an autochthonous *olongian* and an immigrant warrior. They also tell stories about tribute payments the Laujé *olongian* made to Rajas and *olongian* to the north of Tinombo in Moutong and in Gorontalo. Archival evidence supports the accommodationists (Hart 1853; van Hoevell 1892; Riedel 1870): Laujé *olongian* paid tribute to the Gorontalo *olongian* in the eighteenth century (Riedel 1870).

Oral fragments also indicate long-standing connections between Laujé and politically or economically superior civilizations. The Laujé *olongian* sent Laujé subjects to pan for gold for the Moutong *Puangé* to the north of Tinombo. This labour tribute indicates that the Laujé *olongian* was subservient to the Bugis *Puangé* of Moutong. The realm of Moutong was created at some point during the nineteenth century (oral dates and documents vary). Moutong, like Dusunan,

was founded by itinerant Bugis and Mandar traders who had married local women and settled in the region. When the Dutch came to the Moutong area in an attempt to find signatories for their Lang Contracts (in the mid- to late-nineteenth century), they brought translators of Bugis and Mandar ethnic origin from South Sulawesi. When the translators encountered fellow Bugis, they convinced them to sign the contracts. Thus a Bugis 'kingdom' was born in the middle of the Tomini Bay (Geuns 1906).<sup>8</sup> Because the Bugis and Mandar held *de facto* political and economic hegemony in the Tomini Bay in the early nineteenth century and possibly because the *tadulako* was Bugis, they could request that their in-law, the Laujé *olongian*, send subjects to Moutong to pan for gold (Riedel 1870; Nourse 1994; Henley 1996). Purists, however, deny this.

The 'purists' deny any immigrant 'blood' in the royal family until the early twentieth century. They do so to make a point about immigrant treachery. According to the 'purists' the Dutch colonial empire expanded its authority into this region of the Tomini Bay in the early twentieth century. Rather than fight the militarily superior Dutch, the Laujé aristocrats agreed to accept a Bugis *Puangé*, the head of the Moutong realm, as ruler of their own Laujé kingdom.<sup>9</sup> They did so because the Bugis convinced them they would be equal partners in sharing power. The Laujé agreed to let one of their own, the daughter of the *olongian*, marry this Bugis Raja of Moutong named Daeng Malino, thinking that the son from this union would eventually inherit the throne. According to the purists, the Bugis tricked the Laujé. They encouraged the Dutch to select the Bugis Raja's first cousin, instead of the half-Bugis/half-Laujé boy who was the son of the *olongian*. Later, say the purists, after the second Raja was deposed (in the 1920s), the Laujé were passed over again in favour of a Mandar man named Raja Tombolotutu. He served until 1964 and his relatives continue to occupy local offices to this day.

The 'purists' claim that immigrants have in the past and continue to this day to make policies that favour immigrants over locals. Immigrants have proven themselves deceitful, thus no elite marriages with immigrants, especially the Bugis, have been allowed since the early twentieth century. Their purist argument is designed to convince the Indonesian government that the Laujé territory should be its own sovereign district divorced from immigrant control. The 'purists' reason that if they can prove the enduring genealogical bond of Laujé *olongian* with Laujé highlanders, then the *olongian* can reign today.

In my opinion the purists' argument is naive, a quixotic lost cause. Yet they continue to argue against mythological intermarriages with immigrants to

make their point about contemporary ethnic relations more emphatic. Thus when the purists speak about Sawerigading he is of pure Laujé stock.

The accommodationists, however, have a much different perspective. They believe that historically Laujé elites have intermarried with Bugis, Kaili and Mandar immigrants until, as the *olongian's* wife says, 'we have become multi-coloured like the speckled hen'. The *olongian's* wife, a woman born in 1905, said that when she was young, there was a Bugis curing rite (*masarungé*), which the *tadulako* performed. It was much like the *Momosoro*, but no commoners could attend. This rite was an offering to Sawerigading who sat on the golden throne in the centre of the sea. She said that in this rite the sick person must step on the head of a goat (just as the *olongian* does on the last night of the Laujé's only remaining community-wide rite, the *Momosoro*). Then they must say the name of the *Puangé* or Raja, Sawerigading:

He is the first, before all the other spirits. All the others from the sea, the traders, those that ride the waves, the red and the black [lesser spirits], they all came later. Sawerigading was there from the first sitting on the golden throne.

According to the *olongian's* wife, only people who were descendants of the *Puangé*, the immigrant Raja, were allowed to invoke Sawerigading. These were the Laujé aristocrats, the descendants of the *olongian* and the *tadulako*. She said 'the people of the mountains and the commoners do not know Sawerigading'. He was at the apex of a pantheon of lesser spirits who served him. The *olongian's* wife acknowledged that Sawerigading was a spirit derived from a Bugis rite, but she was one of the few people who did so. Most other accommodationists saw Sawerigading as half Laujé, half some undefined ethnicity. These people did not remember that Sawerigading once had a Bugis rite of his own. They still acknowledged Sawerigading, though, by bringing him into the only extant curing rite (the *Momosoro*), which is headed by the *olongian*.

#### SAWERIGADING AND HIS PACT WITH ELITE LAUJÉ

Exegetes tell me that every year, during the *Momosoro*, Sawerigading, the lord of the sea spirits and the first Laujé *sando*, is invoked. 'Those of us who remain on the land tend to neglect our ancestor of the sea so this rite honours him.' The tale of Sawerigading fits right into the *Momosoro* ritual, which some people claim is a curing rite, others a harvest rite. The Sawerigading tale, like the rite, asserts that the land and the sea, religion and custom, are separate domains. The

*Momosoro* reunites ‘older siblings’ like Sawerigading and custom, with ‘younger siblings’ like Mohammed and Islam. After seven days of honouring the sea spirits like Sawerigading and the earth spirits of the rivers and land, both sets of spirits are sent back to their homes, satisfied and honoured. As a result fertility and health will abound. The rite and the tale emphasize that Mohammed, religion and things earthly are superior in everyday life, but Sawerigading is superior in the more permanent matters of life and death which are associated with the sea (since dead souls are said to go to the centre of the sea and be reincarnated from that source).

One elite man told me that ‘the commoners only know that the shrine of the *olongian* (*ginaling*), which serves as the focal point of the *Momosoro*, holds a piece of the original tree, but there are other pieces of wood inside it too’. These include ‘seven types of wood’. One wood is for the ‘common people’.<sup>10</sup> This ‘wood of the commoners’ is female and could be used to heal commoners’ illness. Its ‘male’ counterpart is the tree of the *olongian* which is used to cure only the aristocrats. This tree is known as the ‘staff or lance of Sawerigading’. The man told me that ‘the *olongian* ruled the Laujé because of a secret alliance with Sawerigading’ — an alliance about which the commoners did not know. ‘Elites learned about Sawerigading’, he said, ‘from the Kaili and the Mandar people they marry. Commoners know nothing about Sawerigading’s secrets because commoners only marry Laujé.’ Though this man did not say so, his comments implied that Sawerigading was to the Laujé as the *tadulako* is to the *olongian*. Sawerigading is foreign born and creates a secret alliance with the *olongian* just as the *tadulako* does.

The Sawerigading story and rites about him resonate with accommodationist history about the first lowland marriage of the *olongian* to the *tadulako*. The connection between Sawerigading and the *tadulako* is never explicitly stated, but is implied. Sawerigading, like the *tadulako*, is regarded as a person who bridges two realms. This is evident in a crucial offering which is made for Sawerigading during the *Momosoro*. The offering associates Sawerigading with the fecund powers of the sea spirits. Participants use an egg from a rare species of bush turkey, called the *mamua* in Laujé and *maleo* in Indonesian. This is the same type of egg that was used in the contest between Sawerigading and Mohammed. The *mamua* was known as Sawerigading’s ‘plaything’. It was said to perch on the ‘two-branched tree’ on the highest mountain. One branch leaned seaward, the other towards the land. From its perch, the bird could fly in either direction. It left its seaward perch to fly to the

coast to deposit its eggs. It returned to roost on the landward branch.<sup>11</sup> In the past, seven *mamua* eggs were used just as seven eggs are stacked in the Sawerigading tale. Nowadays, however, these turkey eggs are difficult to find, so one egg is deemed sufficient for the offering.<sup>12</sup> The turkey egg is placed in front of the altar of the *olongian* so it can be blessed before it is sent on a boat out to the centre of the sea.

The *maleo* egg, like Sawerigading, bridges two domains — the sea and the land. *Maleo* fowls lay their eggs during the dry season at the end of the monsoon when the rice is about to be harvested.

In the months of August and September, when there is little or no rain they come down from the interior to ... scratch holes three or four feet deep just above high water mark where the female deposits a single large egg in the loose hot black sand of the beach ... she covers it with about a foot of sand and then returns to the forest ... she comes again to the same spot to lay another egg and each female bird is supposed to lay six to eight eggs during the season (Wallace 1869:272).

For the ritualists the eggs are not only important icons of fecundity and rejuvenation, but the manner in which the bird lays the eggs is important as well. *Maleo* birds live in both the realm of the sea and the land. Consequently, the birds represent the joining of land and sea, and the joining of spiritual fluids needed for fertilizing rice. The Laujé say that rice cannot grow unless the male spirit (Sawerigading) who sits on the throne at the centre of the sea, sends his sexual fluids to the mother earth (the *olongian*), the giant Laujé woman who forms the Laujé earth and rivers. Once fluids from Sawerigading mix with the Laujé earth mother's fluids, rice is fertilized, people are fed, and humans procreate and populate the earth. Their souls come from the centre of the sea to occupy their bodies until they die and the soul returns to its home in the centre of the sea. For those inclined to accentuate accommodation and the intermarriage of the Laujé *olongian* with the immigrant *tadulako*, this rite emphasizing the joining of two domains — land and sea, religion and custom, Mohammed and Sawerigading — is a perfect complement to their world view.

For those inclined to accentuate Laujé purity, the story of Sawerigading coupled with the bush turkey egg can make a claim to Laujé superiority. After all, Mohammed is the younger sibling who rules over the earthly domain while the 'banished' Sawerigading engenders life and oversees death. The ruler of more permanent things is Sawerigading. And he is Laujé.

## CONCLUSIONS

In sum, then, the Laujé have co-opted Sawerigading as one of their own, for many reasons. One reason reflected by the wife of the *olongian* wife and the other accommodationists has to do with association with the currently powerful. At one point in time the Bugis were the local powerbrokers. For those Laujé seeking to enhance their own social status it was expedient to ally oneself with the Bugis, to acknowledge one's relationship with Sawerigading and the *tadulako*. To do so marked one's high status (see Abidin and Macknight 1974:166).<sup>13</sup> It is only older people, however, who claim this status. Perhaps this is because only older people remember the Bugis Raja and his power, or perhaps it is because only older people remember the marriage of the daughter of the Laujé *olongian* to the Bugis Raja Daeng Malino. Many elite Laujé make vague claims to Mandar and Kaili ancestry. Because the longest serving Raja was Mandar, their claims to Mandar ethnicity are probably intertwined with this fact. Most of the younger elites comment on their ancestral connections to the Kaili who, in post-independence Indonesia, do tend to be the powerbrokers in the *kabupaten* capital of Palu. In line with their own shifting claims about ethnic identity people also claim that Sawerigading could be the son of the first Laujé child who married a Kaili woman or a Mandar woman or a Bugis woman. Sawerigading's ancestry shifts depending upon the speaker and the direction from which he or she perceives that political power emanates.

The second reason Sawerigading becomes a native son is due to contemporary reaction to immigrant hegemony. In an attempt to counteract the perceived hegemony of immigrants, be they Mandar, Kaili or Bugis, purists have co-opted Sawerigading as one of their own. If they can say Sawerigading is Laujé then they can also claim their indigenous leader, not an outsider, deserves the right to rule over local people.

Another more poignant and impressionistic reason exists for why Sawerigading has become Laujé. Like the Laujé, Sawerigading is only peripherally important in the 'real' world. Islam, Mohammed, Pak Camat, the Bupati and President Suharto matter much more than some ancient ancestor who lived prior to the 'coming of Islam'. Sawerigading, the ancient epic hero, becomes a perfect icon to represent marginal peoples whose beliefs and ceremonies seem so antiquated. As long as the Laujé are marginal, Sawerigading will continue to be a Laujé native son.

NOTES

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1 In a wonderful article by Andi Zainal Abidin and translated and adapted by C.C. Macknight, the diffusion of the Sawerigading story is discussed. They say:

The names Sawerigading and *I La Galigo* are well known in Central Celebes. This strongly suggests that this area might once have been ruled or come under the aegis of the ancient Buginese Kingdom of Luwu, at the head of the Gulf of Bone. Adriani and Kruyt relate the visit of Sawerigading or Lasaeo to Pamona in the Poso area in which he is depicted as a hero from heaven. They conclude from the folk-tales about him in this East Toraja region that the kings of Luwu, Waibunta and Pamona shared a common origin (Abidin and Macknight 1974:164).

Sawerigading also appears in the Palu Valley on the west coast and in nearby Donggala. No mention is made, however, of Sawerigading in Central Sulawesi communities like Tomini, Tinombo and Moutong.

There are many other works on the *I La Galigo*. The *I La Galigo* is known as the longest literary work in the world. According to Tol:

Its size is estimated at approximately six thousand folio-pages. Set in a meter of five and occasionally four syllables, it relates events from pre-Islamic, 14th century Luwu, the cradle of Bugis culture. Consisting of dozens of different episodes, each with its own protagonists, and covering several generations, using a wide range of literary conventions such as flashback and foreshadowing, the epic tells the story of the arrival on earth of the gods and the adventures of their descendants. The main protagonist of the story is Sawerigading, the great Bugis culture hero, who travels to remote places and falls deeply in love with his twin sister. This incestuous love is strictly prohibited and Sawerigading ultimately marries another woman. In the end the whole divine family gathers in Luwu and all the gods depart from the earth, having lived there for seven generations (Tol 1990:49).

Other noteworthy articles about or relevant to the *I La Galigo* are by Matthes (1954), Mattulada (1982), Gibson (1994), Errington (1989), Harmonic (1991) and Kern (1939).

2 According to the 1980 census the Laujé number no more than fifteen thousand people (Anema 1983). They live on the coast and in the mountains of the lower south-west quadrant of the Tomini Bay. Laujé communities are divided among seven riverine systems of which Tinombo is the largest. Along the Tinombo River and its branches live about six thousand Laujé, almost half of whom reside in coastal communities.

- 3 The most common item hunted was the *usé timpaus* a marsupial which supposedly is called a *kuskus* in Indonesian but I could never find it in a dictionary. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries only highlanders hunted this animal because it was believed to be sacred to Muslim lowlanders. It was sacred because the animal fasts during Ramadhan like a good Muslim. Chinese traders want *usé* musk glands as an aphrodisiac and thus lowlander merchants, whether Chinese, Arab or locals, offer a good price for the hunter who brings in an *usé* body.
- 4 According to oral histories Siavu was the name of a small *kampung* near the shore. It was also the name of the river flowing down from the mountains. Once the various immigrant *kampung* were formed the community was much bigger than that comprising the Siavu *kampung*. It was renamed Tinombo. No one could tell me why and how this particular name was chosen.
- 5 Even the names of the titles point away from the Laujé region to two different directions in Sulawesi. The term *olongian* seems to be derived from the north in Gorontalo (van Hoevell 1892). The term *toribangka* (people of the coast) points to the south, perhaps to the Kaili region or further south.
- 6 These two large categories, the *tadulako* and the *olongian*, were separated in certain ritual practices. The *olongian* was buried below the ground, the *tadulako* buried above. The *tadulako* oversaw headhunting rituals while the *olongian* oversaw harvest rituals. Both seemed to play a role in curing. The *tadulako* also was the leader of a group of secular officials who made up the Laujé aristocracy. These included the judge, called the *jogugu*, the speaker, called the *marsoleh*, the messenger and go-between to the mountains, called the *walaapuluh*, the harbour-master or *kapitao dagaté* and the *pasobo* (agricultural specialist). The *olongian* was the titular leader of these officials, though her involvement in government was minimal.
- 7 According to oral histories, pirates from the Philippines and from Ternate used to take people as slaves whenever they went to the beach to make salt. The Laujé feared the pirates and thus stayed in the mountains. It was only when the *olongian*'s niece married the *tadulako* that some mountain Laujé moved to the lowlands because the *tadulako* made them feel safe.
- 8 In 1905, after the major Sulawesi ports of Menado, Gorontalo and Makassar had been successfully pacified, the Dutch began to concentrate on the Tomini Bay in Central Sulawesi. Wanting to expand their colonial empire to this region, the Dutch hoped to find local rulers who would be willing to order their subjects to plant cash crops. But the Dutch had to communicate with the local rulers through the Malay language. Most Laujé, Tajio and other indigenous peoples were not proficient in Malay and the Dutch could not communicate with them. The Dutch soon turned to the immigrants who were proficient in Malay and claimed to be aristocrats, descendants of junior lines from the Mandar and Bugis courts in South Sulawesi (Riedel 1870; Geuns 1906; van Hoevell 1892).
- 9 In 1916 or so the Rajadam of Moutong moved from Moutong to Tinombo. Originally the realm of Moutong was based in the town of Moutong some five hours (in 1980s measurement) drive north of Tinombo. The autochthonous people living in this area were the Talio. Further to the south of the Tinombo region are the Tajio. Because one of the early Rajas of Moutong married a woman from the Tajio region and another woman from the Laujé region, the Rajas considered the whole area to lie under the 'umbrella-dom' of the Raja of Moutong.

10 According to this elite man, the pieces of wood were taken out of their wrappings and scraped into a bowl of water which curers then used to massage the severely ill. I was not able to ascertain whether the 'seven trees' were mythical or real. The name for the commoner tree, Si Omogang, may be derived from the root *ogang* meaning river basin. It then could refer to the people of a single watershed.

11 The *mamua* egg is an important ritual object among the Banggai who also have a ceremony similar to the Momosoro (Kennedy 1973).

12 According to Acciaioli and Muller:

Up to half a century ago, the authority of the Islamic Raja of Banggai on Peleng Island even extended to supervising the gathering of maleo bird eggs from the hatchery at Bakiriang, about one hundred kilometers (sixty miles) away. Besides receiving a tax on all eggs collected, the raja personally received the first one hundred eggs and approved the harvest, after which others were allowed to consume the remainder. Though recognizing the depredations that the piratical Banggai raja allowed his subjects and the sea rovers from Ternate, some ecologists have dubbed him one of Indonesia's first resource managers because of his role in the maleo egg harvest. Today such protection is exercised by the Nature Preservation (PPA) department. A permit to visit the maleo hatcheries must be obtained from the PPA agents stationed at Batui, or from the guard post at Bakiriang Reserve (Acciaioli and Muller 1990:181).

13 Abidin and Macknight note the following:

It is of interest to note the acknowledgement of South Celebes influence in the formation of the local aristocracy. The belief in descent from Sawerigading has often been used as a matter of prestige and appears in many forms. For example, the ruler of Panipi who was deposed by the Dutch in 1870 was called Dukelleng, after Sawerigading. In 1871, his son, Bobihu, led a revolt, but was captured and imprisoned by the Dutch in Fort Rotterdam in Makassar. However he put it about that he was a descendant of Sawerigading and the guard, acknowledging this, quietly released him and he fled back to Gorontalo. In Buol on the north coast of Celebes, there is a legend of descent from Sawerigading and other characters from the *I La Galigo* epic which is strikingly similar to that found in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (1974:166).

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