

Jamal Effendi and Sayyid Mustafa Rumi in Celebes: The Context of Early Baha'i Missionary Activity in Indonesia

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Abstract

In the late 19th century Jamal Effendi and Sayyid Mustafa Rumi made a journey to the Dutch East Indies (now the Republic of Indonesia) to establish the Baha'i Faith there. This paper presents the results of an attempt to recover more details of that journey by using Dutch colonial sources. It focuses on Jamal and Rumi's sojourn on the island of Celebes (now Sulawesi) as it was there that they achieved what might be considered to be one of their main successes: the conversion of the king and queen of Boné.

Keywords

Baha'i history
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Sayyid Mustafa Rumi
Indonesia
Sulawesi
Celebes Islands
Karaëng Popo
I Banri Patima

Already in the lifetime of its Prophet-Founder, Baha'u'llah (1817–92), efforts were made to establish the Baha'i Faith in South Asia. Two major actors in that respect were the Iranian Baha'i Sulaymān Khān Tunukābānī, known as Jamāl Effendi, and his Indian-Iraqi friend Sayyid Muṣṭafā Rūmī. Some years ago Dr Moojan Momen presented an overview of their efforts, which included a sojourn in the country we now call Indonesia.¹ Since the Dutch considered the vast Indonesian archipelago to be part of their empire at that time Jamal and Rumi made their journey to the islands of Java, Bali, Lombok and Celebes (now Sulawesi), a search for possible Dutch colonial sources on that journey seemed worthwhile. For practical purposes the search was limited to the Celebes part of the journey. This not only constituted the main part – Jamal and Rumi stayed on this island during four months of their overall six-months' sojourn in the Dutch East Indies – it was also the place where they achieved what might be considered to be their chief success: the conversion of the king and queen of Boné.

The aim of this study therefore was to recover details and context: when did Jamal and Rumi make their journey, whom did they meet, and did the king and queen of Boné indeed become Baha'is?²

Makassar

Jamal Effendi, who was about 65 years old at the time, and Sayyid Mustafa Rumi, who was 33, started their journey in Batavia (now Jakarta) on the island of Java, where they arrived by boat from Singapore. They were not the only ones making that crossing. In September 1885 – I will later demonstrate that Jamal and Rumi made their journey in that year – the Dutch consul in Singapore reported to the viceroy (*gouverneur general*) of the Dutch

1. As he explained in a footnote at the beginning of his article, Momen made use of an account by Rumi, as well as four other Persian sources. As far as Indonesia was concerned, however, he had to base his reconstruction solely on a 31-page manuscript that Rumi sent to the United States on 6 June 1931 (Section C in Momen). Part of that manuscript was later published in the *Bahā'ī Magazine*. (Sayyid Mustafa Roumie, 'Baha'i Pioneers; A Short Historical Survey of the Baha'i Movement in India, Burma, Java Islands, Siam, and Malay Peninsula,' *The Baha'i Magazine* 1931–1932.) See Moojan Momen, 'Jamāl Effendi and the early spread of the Bahā'ī Faith in South Asia', *Bahā'ī Studies*

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2. To meet the aims set, I conducted a search at the Dutch National Archives (*Nationaal Archief*, henceforward *NA*) in The Hague, where I went through the various archives of the Colonial Department. At the library of the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*, henceforward *KITLV*) in Leiden, I used the 'Colonial Records' (*Koloniaal Verslag*) and the 'Government Almanac for the Dutch-Indies' (*Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië*). The first is the official annual report for the benefit of the Dutch parliament written by colonial civil servants, the latter an official guide containing facts, figures and other information about the Dutch Indies. In the archives of that same institute I also found A. J. A. F. Eerdmans' unpublished manuscript on the history of Celebes (*KITLV*, DH 817 1–5). Since Eerdmans was a 'first inspector' (*controleur der 1ste klasse*) in the area north of Makassar (*Noorderdistricten*, Maros) at the time Jamal and Rumi made their journey to Celebes, and later successively served as 'secretary' and 'secretary for native affairs' (*secretaris voor de inlandsche zaken*) at the governor's office in Makassar, he is an important historical source, the more so as he spoke the local

East Indies that between March and August 'a total of 297 Arabs' had left that port for 'our properties in the Dutch East Indies'. He made this report because the times were troubled. In January of that year the British had lost Khartoum in Sudan as the result of a Muslim religious revival, and in June the leader of the revivalist movement, considered by his followers to be the Mahdi, had died. Did this Muslim Messiah have a following in the Dutch East Indies and should similar events be expected there? The consul did not think so.

From Batavia, Jamal and Rumi travelled eastwards to Surabaya, and from there via Bali and Lombok to the south-western peninsula of the island of Celebes. That area had a total population of about 600,000 Buginese and some 400,000 Makassarese, two closely related peoples who were known for their skills as seamen and traders. Although most were Muslim – Islam had come to the island at the beginning of the 17th century – the original animist priests and priestesses still wielded considerable influence.³ In 1878, for instance, the colonial authorities reported:

The Muslims of Celebes only profess Islam in its outward form. Most indeed treasure pagan notions, which express themselves in the religious worship, even by born Muslims, of certain trees, stones, etc. In its credulity the population is easily deceived, as in October 1877, when a rumour that, along with the long-awaited rain, a maiden had descended from heaven drew many pilgrims to Tello (in the immediate vicinity of Makassar), until the police intervened to prevent disturbances.⁴

Makassar (now Ujungpandang) was (and still is) the major locality of Celebes and the largest trading place of the archipelago east of Batavia. This is how two Swiss explorers described the city in 1893:

The surroundings of the city consist of never-ending rice paddies that during the summer lie dry and dusty, and during the winter, when they are flooded, are an inexhaustible breeding ground for mosquitoes that make life very bitter. Makassar is situated on a flat bay; a number of small islands protect the harbour against an all-too-heavy swell, so that ships can moor directly to a landing stage ... The city has little to distinguish it from other towns in the tropical east. Its crown jewels are two broad and straight lanes, one shaded by impressive Tamarinds, the other by Canarium trees, the so-called 'Hooge pad' and the 'Heerenweg', along which are located the houses of most Europeans. Large grass fields, especially the impressive 'Koningsplein', serve as breathing spaces. Near the port the old Fort Rotterdam rises above the plain with its high, picturesque, protective walls, which surround the garrison buildings and warehouse. Fort Vredenburg, more inland, no longer serves as a stronghold, but only as a barracks. The city centre is the 'Passerstraat', which runs beside the sea. Here are the offices and warehouses of the European traders and the shops of Chinese merchants. The two-storey houses, built close to one another, could evoke memories of a European city if the heat trapped between the walls did not proclaim its tropical location. On all sides, mostly to the north and to the south along the sea, the city fades into native compounds, where the houses no longer stand in organized rows, but are surrounded by

orchards, mostly coconut palms. Neither train nor tram disturbs the peacefulness of the place.⁵

It was here in Makassar that Jamal and Rumi arrived. 'We landed here safely and the police instructed the porters to take us with our luggage to the Arab quarters, where we were to be put under the guardianship of the chief of this quarter', Rumi wrote in his account of the journey. In 1885 the city had some 20,000 inhabitants, including 4,000 Chinese, 1,000 Europeans and 200 Arabs.⁶ The various communities all lived in their own quarters and so Makassar had separate European, Malay, Makassarese, Wadjorese, Endehnese, Chinese and Arab quarters. Each had its own police force. The head of each force, who acted as chief of the quarter, was designated by the title 'captain' (*kapitein*). The Arabs, however, had their own 'head of the Arabs' (*hoofd der Arabieren*). In 1885 Said Ali Matard occupied that position,⁷ so it must have been he who greeted the two travellers cordially, allocated them to a large, abandoned brick building, and sent his men to rob and murder them in their sleep. As seasoned travellers Jamal and Rumi were able to foil this plot. They did not confront Matard with his evil designs, however, since they needed him in all their movements. Instead they presented him with 'a gem worth twenty dollars and thanked him for his kind protection'. During their stay in Makassar Jamal and Rumi became well known as faith healers and this enabled them to deliver 'the message of Baha'u'llah' to everyone with whom they came into contact.⁸

Makassar was not only a major trading place, it also served as the seat of the senior Dutch administrator of that region, the 'governor of Celebes and vassal states' (*gouverneur van Celebes en onderhorigheden*). His authority included most of Celebes as well as the so-called Lesser Sunda islands in the south. The north-eastern peninsula of Celebes made up the Residency of Menado, whereas the Moluccas, to the east, formed the Residencies of Ternate and Amboina. In central and south Celebes alone the Dutch sphere of influence included some 30 so-called 'alliance states' (*bondgenootschappelijke landen*), like Gowa or Sidenreng, as well as two 'vassal kingdoms' (*leenvorstendommen*): Tanette and Boné. All were feudal monarchies. A relatively small area surrounding Makassar, as well as the island of Saleijer (now Selayar), stood under direct Dutch rule, and were therefore called 'government lands' (*gouvernementslanden*). Only the Wadjo Federation (*Wadjo Statenbond*) was still independent.⁹

To continue their journey the two Baha'is needed the permission of the Dutch administrators. The office of the 'Government of Celebes and Vassal States' was located in Fort Rotterdam (now Benteng Ujungpandang), and consisted of only seven civil servants: Governor D. F. van Braam Morris, Deputy Governor Jacob Bensbach, Secretary J. van Slooten, Secretary for Native Affairs (*secretaris voor de inlandsche zaken*) Johan Albert George Brugman, and three clerks.¹⁰

Through the agency of the Turkish consul in Batavia it was Brugman who supplied Jamal and Rumi with the necessary travel documents. Brugman, who was probably born in Makassar and was in his late twenties, spoke the local languages fluently.¹¹ Since his appointment in 1883 he and his direct superior, Bensbach, had served as liaison officers between the Dutch governor and the local native rulers. This position gave Brugman

languages and knew the native rulers personally. His manuscript consists of 1,382 typed pages held in five folders. The last folder is entirely devoted to the history of Boné and also includes a detailed family tree of the rulers of South Celebes. The Royal Institute was also the place where I consulted most of the contemporary books I used as sources. Finally, I searched the *Celebes Courant*, the *Makassaarsche Courant*, *De Locomotief*, and the *Java Bode*, four early colonial newspapers kept at the Royal Library (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, henceforward KB) in The Hague. I likewise found there the volumes of the illustrated magazine *Bintang Hindia* and the 'Records of the East Indies Registry Office' (*Naamlijst der Europeesche Inwoners van het mannelijk geslacht in Nederlandsch-Indië en opgave omtrent hun Burgerlijken Stand*). The names and titles by which a person is designated in the former Dutch East Indies can be rather complicated, the more so when that person belongs to the nobility. Which part is a title and which a name? What does the title mean? And if it is a name, is it that of a person or of a place? Things can be even more difficult when names and titles have to be translated into another language and transcribed into another alphabet. And that was exactly the situation Rumi

found himself in, for the two main communities of South Celebes, the Buginese and the Makassarese, both had their own language, alphabet and script. When in the second half of the 19th century the Dutch started to tighten their grip on the various peoples and nations living in the Indian archipelago, they too were almost overwhelmed by the variety of languages and cultures. To cope with the problem, various booklets appeared and so it happened, for instance, that in 1884 Major P. B. van Staden ten Brink published a small book on the culture and geography of South Celebes for the benefit of his fellow officers in the Dutch Indian Army: *Bijdragen tot de Krijgsgeschiedenis en Militaire Geographie van de Zuidelijke landtong van het eiland Celebes*. Utrecht, 1884 (KITLV: M e 13). Of course, he also explained the various titles used by the nobility of the different peoples living there. Since this book dates from the time Jamal and Rumi made their journey, it seemed fitting to me to make use of it in this study. I also used Van Staden's book for the spelling of Makassarese and Buginese titles, which may be different from present-day spelling in Bahasa Indonesia, hence for instance: *tälloe-lattaé* (not: tellulatte). For the spelling of names I have followed Eerdmans; hence, for instance: Boné (not: Boni).

considerable executive power and maybe that was the reason Rumi mistook him for the governor.

Paré-Paré

From Makassar the two Baha'i envoys proceeded in a small sailing vessel to the coastal town of Paré-Paré, some 120 kilometres to the north. There they were welcomed at the wooden palace of a king whom Rumi called 'Fatta Aronmatua Aron Raffan'. He translated this title as 'the Great Monarch and King of all Kings'; but, following Van Staden, a somewhat better translation of the words *pätta aroeng matowa aroeng Rappang*, would be 'his Highness the Supreme King [and the] King of Rappang'.¹² *Aroe* (king), *Karaëng* (prince), *Datoe* and *Daëng* are decreasing ranks in Celebes society.

The designation used by Rumi for the chief of Paré-Paré is confusing because two different persons seem to be indicated here. During Jamal and Rumi's visit to Celebes the title *aroe matowa* belonged to Akil Ali La Tjintjing *Karaëng* Mangeppé *Datoe* Pamana, supreme king of Wadjo, while the kingdom of Rappang, and also the kingdom of Sidenreng of which Paré-Paré was the capital, was ruled by his nephew and son-in-law, King Soemangaroecca (see below).¹³ So whom did Jamal and Rumi actually meet – La Tjintjing or Soemangaroecca? Since Rumi reported that the king was advanced in age and that he attended the latter's funeral at the end of their stay, it can be safely concluded that La Tjintjing was indicated here, for that king died on 12 October 1885 in Paré-Paré at the age of about 70.¹⁴ Since the two men travelled on a six-months' visa it now can be deduced that they made their journey some time between May and November 1885. Rumi:

On our arrival I went directly to the customs official to ask permission for landing. The officer in charge gave me a pony on which to ride to the royal palace – a palace built of bamboo – to obtain this permission from their King. The King, who was advanced in age, was eagerly awaiting our arrival and watching with a telescope through the window of his palace. As soon as I entered the royal palace the King got up from his seat and warmly embraced me saying that he was happy to see his honourable guest. Then he eagerly inquired the whereabouts of Jamal Effendi, who, I replied, was still in the ship awaiting his royal command to disembark. When I entered the royal presence I saw there two envoys sent to the King by the Dutch Governor of Macassar with a private letter to the King indicating the arrival of the two visitors – Jamal Effendi and the writer – and requesting the King to refuse any help that they might request for the purpose of making their journey into the interior of the native states; for the letter stated that these two men were necromancers, and would use the art of enchantment to win the chiefs and their subjects for their mystic religious rites.¹⁵

Since it was Brugman's (and Bensbach's) job to be in contact with the native rulers, it is almost certain that it was he who had sent this letter – the more so as Rumi held the view that Brugman was the governor. Why the secretary for native affairs had felt it necessary to issue such a warning, we do not know. It might have had something to do with a fear of Muslim missionary activity in general – during their stay in Java the two Baha'is had been 'closely watched by detectives and spied upon everywhere' for that reason – or

with events that had occurred on the island of Sumbawa some years before. The Colonial Records state:

At the start of 1881 a Balinese living on Sumbawa caused some havoc in the sultanate of that same name by calling himself Imam Mahadi [*sic*] and proclaiming a new religious doctrine in which he claimed to be a resurrected ancient ruler. Summoned by the sultan of Sumbawa, he refused to appear and even started to use force against the messenger sent to him. When the sultan thereupon wanted to bring him into submission, it came to a violent confrontation in which the followers of this troublemaker were driven apart and he himself was so badly wounded that he died.¹⁶

In this connection it must not be forgotten that Sumbawa fell under the jurisdiction of the governor of Celebes; Brugman's colleagues had been directly involved in the matter. Anyway, La Tjintjing was, in the words of Rumi, 'not favourably impressed with this defamatory letter'.

In fact he was noticeably annoyed by it and in an angry tone he said to the two envoys, 'These venerable visitors are our guests and under our protection, and the Dutch Governor should not interfere with our religious affairs. This is my reply to his offensive letter, and an unofficial message which should be conveyed by you to him.' The envoys, thunderstruck, immediately retired disheartened and unsuccessful in their hostile mission.¹⁷

As Wadjo was still one of the few independent territories in Celebes, this strong reaction by the king is quite understandable. Why should he obey the orders of a Dutch secretary for native affairs who was about 40 years his junior? No, La Tjintjing certainly was not known for his pro-Dutch and servile stance – quite the contrary.¹⁸ Anyhow, the letter did not have negative consequences. And when Jamal and Rumi succeeded in curing La Tjintjing's psoriasiform skin disease 'the royal family was ... won to our friendship and to attachment to our Message more than ever before', Rumi reported.

The two Baha'is stayed in Paré-Paré for more than a month, during which time they had several meetings with not only the king but also 'his daughter, Fatta Sima Tana, who was married to Fatta Talloo Latta, the king of Sidenreng'. The woman indicated by *Pätta Simatana* or 'Her Highness Simatana' was Queen I Simatana *Aroe Nepo*.¹⁹ She was married to the ruler of Sidenreng (*pätta talloe-lattaé*), King Soemangaroeokka *Aroe Rappang*, but it is not clear whether Jamal and Rumi actually met her husband.²⁰

Padalie and Pamana

Travelling eastwards from Paré-Paré, and after a rather alarming boat trip through a crocodile-infested river, most likely the river Tjenrana, Jamal and Rumi reached the Wadjo provinces of 'Padalia and Fammana' or, in the spelling of Van Staden, 'Padalie' and 'Pamana' on the banks of that river. Crocodiles were a plague that summer, but according to the *Celebes Courant* the number of these reptiles had only *apparently* risen, due to the exceptional low water levels that season.

In Padalie and Pamana – the area of Tempé (now Singkang) – the two Baha'i envoys were welcomed by a royal couple Rumi described as 'King Fatta

All extracts from Dutch sources have been translated into English by the author.

3. Paul and Fritz Sarasin, *Reisen in Celebes ausgeführt in den Jahren 1893–1896 und 1902–1903*, 2 vols, Wiesbaden, 1905, 2:202–3.
4. *Koloniaal Verslag* (Colonial Records) 1870–1903, 1878, § 15.
5. Sarasin, *Reisen* 2:197.
6. *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië 1885–1903*, Batavia 1885, 1:4.
7. *Regeeringsalmanak* 2:201.
8. Roumie, 'Baha'i Pioneers' 275–6.
9. *Regeeringsalmanak* 1:105–6.
10. *Regeeringsalmanak* 2:200–1.
11. Brugman was the author of a small Dutch–Makassarese dictionary: *Nederlandsche en Makassaarsche Samenspraken*, published in Batavia in 1883.
12. The word *pätta* means 'his or her highness', *aroeng* or *aroe matowa* is a title exclusively used to indicate the king of Wadjo. In the Dutch Colonial Records the title *aroe matowa* is translated as 'supreme king' (*hoofdvorst*). See Van Staden, *Bijdragen* 66; and *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1882 and 1883.
13. *Regeeringsalmanak* for 1885, 233. Rumi's fusion of the two titles is most likely due to the fact that the king of Wadjo held residence with his daughter and son-in-law in Paré-Paré. See Van Staden, *Bijdragen* 85.

14. Governor of Celebes to viceroy, cablegram 17 October 1885 (NA Mailrapporten 1885, fiche 1520).
15. Roumie, 'Baha'i Pioneers' 313.
16. *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1882.
17. Roumie, 'Baha'i Pioneers' 314.
18. In the Colonial Records the king of Wadjo is denounced several times: for instance, for offering a safe haven to the anti-Dutch 'rebel' *Karaëng* Bonto-Bonto; for involvement in a coup in Balangnipa; for refusing to sign a contract with the colonial authorities; but also for failing to attend the inauguration of his pro-Dutch nephew and son-in-law as the new king of Sidenreng. See *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1870–83.
19. From 1906 to 1917 a woman called I Simatana was Aroe of Nepo, a place in the kingdom of Sidenreng.
20. The title *pätta tälloelattaé* is exclusively used to indicate the ruler of Sidenreng. The connection is further proved by the fact that Soemangaroekka was married to 'Aroe Nepo, daughter of his uncle La Tjintjing ... Aroe Matowa of Wadjo', as Van Staden reported. See Van Staden, *Bijdragen* 74 and 83–4. The name of the daughter, Simatana or Samatana, is given by Mukhlis (*Sejarah; Kabupaten Daerah Tk. II Sidenreng-Rappang*. Ujung Pandang, 1985).
21. Van Staden, *Bijdragen* 112–13.

Chikourdi of Padali and his Queen Diammarala'. His reference here is to the *pätta tjakoridié*, the title for the deputy ruler of Wadjo.²¹ The king indicated here therefore is Abdoel Rachman La Koro, *Aroe* Padali. Although *Aroe* Padali – as La Koro is referred to in the Colonial Records – was the official deputy of La Tjintjing, he could well be considered to be the de facto ruler of Wadjo at that time, since his superior had already been living with his daughter in Paré-Paré for several years.²² A queen by the name of Diammarala cannot be identified in the Dutch sources.

Since the people of Pamana were not at all interested in their mission, Jamal and Rumi decided to continue their journey. Generously supplied with all the necessary travelling equipment and three long canoes with full escort, they headed for Boné, but not before they had helped with the control of a local outbreak of smallpox, which still gave them 'the opportunity to deliver the [Baha'i] Message to all'.

Context

'We started down the crocodile-infested river once more. Before sunset we reached our destination', Rumi wrote. Since 1871 the kingdom of Boné had been ruled by Queen (*Aroem Poné*) I Banri Patima *Aroe* Timoeroeng, who in 1880 had married her cousin, Prince La Goeliga *Daëng Sérang Karaëng* Popo, a grandson of the king (*radja*) of Gowa. Two years later the couple had had their first child, Princess Boenga Soetara Bässe *Daëng* Baeo.

Already in the year of the marriage it had become clear that *Karaëng* Popo – for that was the name by which the prince consort was generally known – was a factor to be reckoned with. That same year tension between Boné and Wadjo rose to fever pitch after a Bonéan subject was murdered in Wadjo. Boné – read *Karaëng* Popo – demanded satisfaction. But the supreme commander (*pillá*) of Wadjo bluntly rejected this demand and even refused to receive a Boné representative. An armed confrontation seemed inevitable, but was prevented at the last moment by the Dutch administrators.²³ Yes, the prince consort seemed to have been quite a personality. This is what Secretary for Native Affairs A. J. A. F. Eerdmans – we will come back to him later – wrote about *Karaëng* Popo's arrival in Boné:

When *Karaëng* Popo came to Boné, theft and robbery were rampant there. No one contemplated improving the situation. Especially at the markets, insecurity was great (the followers of the rich and famous were the greatest and boldest thieves) and often resulted in disturbances and manslaughter. Supported by his wife, *Karaëng* Popo had it proclaimed at the markets that theft committed there would be punished by death. At first this had a good effect, but soon someone was caught red-handed. Without delay *Karaëng* Popo had the perpetrator dig a hole at the marketplace in full view of the public. When this was done the man was stabbed to death at the edge of the hole and buried there and then. The public was so struck by fear that from then on no theft, however small, was committed at the market or, as one Bonéan said, 'one could leave a bag with golden coins there in the evening to find it undisturbed the next morning'. Not only at the markets was security ensured: known thieves and robbers were also dealt with. A certain Latto Garimpang (translated: the old one from Garimpang) was known as a receiver of cattle and the terror of the countryside. Even cattle stolen in the Eastern Districts [which stood under

direct Dutch rule] were brought to him. In his home town he had made a fortress on a hill in which he and his insolent and fearless robbers lived. The entrance to the stronghold was a heavily guarded gate. No one dared to confront Latto Garimpang, and so he could continue his evil practices. Unsuccessfully, Karaëng Popo had him warned to end his practices. Seeing that his warning was not heeded, Karaëng Popo one day assembled some 500 horsemen and went straight into the town of this Latto Garimpang, who appeared trembling in front of Karaëng Popo. When he begged for clemency he was told that for once a just punishment would not be carried out, but that if in the future a message came that he had received even one piece of cattle, Karaëng Popo would return and hang him in public. After the stronghold was demolished, Karaëng Popo left. Latto Garimpang never returned to his old profession. It is reported that after Karaëng Popo had left, he exclaimed: 'This really is a man of whom I am afraid'.²⁴

But, as always, there was a flip side. In its election of I Banri Patima to the throne of Boné, the state council (*Hadat*) of the kingdom had passed over her older half-brother, La Pawawooi *Karaëng Ségéri*.²⁵ Certainly, he had been elected (by way of compensation) commander-in-chief (*poenggawa*) and awarded a medal by the Dutch, but still he was in third place, after his half-sister and the prime minister (*tomarilaleng*, or in Dutch: *rijksbestierder*). Of course his position (and self-esteem) was further threatened when *Karaëng Popo*, a prince some 25 years his junior, appeared at the royal court. Eerdmans states:

Was it a surprise that Karaëng Popo was hated and feared by the numerous idle, arrogant descendants of kings and nobles, who, as followers, looked for and found protection with the Tomarilaleng, the Poenggawa and other nobles who, without these followers, had no power – and therefore gave ear to their complaints, objections and inspirations against the innovations introduced by Karaëng Popo for the benefit of country and population. Yes, it must be admitted that Karaëng Popo acted heavy-handedly, but what else could he do, if he wanted to be obeyed?²⁶

In the summer of 1884 – a year before Jamal and Rumi arrived on the scene – La Pawawooi got his opportunity to (further) discredit his brother-in-law with the Dutch colonial authorities.

At the same time that *Karaëng Popo* had left Gowa to marry I Banri Patima, one of his uncles had left for the island of Sumbawa to marry the daughter of Sultan Ammaroela.²⁷ When the sultan died on 20 August 1883, a rumour spread that the division of the estate had resulted in discord and disputes amongst the heirs. The conflict had even caused riots, it was said. By the time the news reached the Dutch authorities, two Gowanese princes together with a sizeable armed escort had already set sail for Sumbawa to protect, with force if necessary, the interests of their brother.²⁸ Being a man of action, *Karaëng Popo* had not hesitated to join his uncles with an army of some 300 Buginese. The governor immediately dispatched the government steamer *Anjer* (*Carnation*) – on board his deputy Bensbach and the crown prince of Gowa, who was also the father of *Karaëng Popo* – to intercept the fleet and to settle matters peacefully. When they arrived in Sumbawa the

22. *Aroe Padali* lived most of the time in Tempé. In the Colonial Records he is praised on several occasions for his pro-Dutch stand and for his role as mediator during various conflicts between the Wadjo Federation and its neighbours. For this he was awarded 'the golden medal and chain of merit' in 1880. *Aroe Padali* succeeded La Tjintjing as king of Wadjo. Under his rule the Wadjo Federation signed a political contract with the Dutch, by which it recognized Dutch sovereignty over its territory and became an 'alliance state'. For his involvement in arranging this contract Brugman was awarded a decoration and promoted to deputy governor (*assistent-resident*). *Aroe Padali* died in May 1891. See *Regeeringsalmanak* 1891; Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 3:751; and *Koloniaal Verslag* 1881, 1886, 1887 and 1889.
23. *Koloniaal Verslag* 1881.
24. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:843–4.
25. Boné was ruled by a seven-member state council which elected the head of state as well as the prime minister and the commander-in-chief. That the state council did not elect La Pawawooi, who was, after all, the eldest son of the late king, was due to the fact that his mother was of lower-ranking nobility than the mother of his half-sister. It is likely, however, that there was a second reason: La Pawawooi had

sided with the Dutch when they had subjected the kingdom in 1860. From a Bonéan point of view that, of course, was treason.

26. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:843–4.
27. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:825.
28. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:847.
29. *Celebes Courant*, 5 and 22 August 1884.
30. *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1885.
31. For Deputy Governor Bensbach even these measures did not go far enough. In a report on the affair to the viceroy in Batavia (Governor Tromp had died on 27 December 1884), dated 2 January 1885, Bensbach expressed the opinion that it had been ‘an omission’ by his late superior to allow Karaëng Popo to return to Boné. He continued: ‘Although some measure of leniency towards Karaëng Popo was justified, since the vassal queen was expecting for several months, and taking Karaëng Popo back to Makassar could have a highly negative effect on her condition, Karaëng Popo was not grateful for this favour, but upon his return in Boné misused his influence on the vassal queen of Boni to force her to do exactly the opposite of what the Governor had wanted and to keep the members of the Hadat out of the decisions made.’ (NA Mailrapporten 1885, fiche 1475).
32. Queen of Boné to Governor of Celebes, letter E

rumours proved to be largely unfounded, and all returned to Celebes. The *Celebes Courant* commented somewhat scornfully: ‘So the whole story boils down to a family brawl over the division of estate, a matter that is often not unknown even among civilized peoples, and as such not worth mentioning.’²⁹ But that was not the way Charles Christiaan Tromp, Dutch governor at the time, saw it. This was unauthorized behaviour and he had the two princes fined for it by their father.³⁰ And as for *Karaëng Popo*, he was summoned to Makassar.

Considering this military campaign a violation of the Dutch–Bonéan Treaty, which limited Boné’s authority to its territory on South Celebes, the governor demanded an explanation. *Karaëng Popo* argued that he had been assured from various sides ‘that the governor had left for Sumbawa in the company of the king of Gowa to discipline that country, and that he, as a [Dutch] subject as well as grandchild of the aforementioned king, had felt obliged to join them in war’. Although ‘convinced of the opposite’, the governor accepted this excuse. The main point, however, was that this incident offered him an opportunity to curtail the ‘far-reaching arrogance’ of the prince. And so Tromp, accompanied by *Karaëng Popo*, had gone to Balangnipa, where he had summoned the members of the state council, the commander-in-chief and the deputy commander of Boné. In a meeting held on 20 October 1884 Tromp told those present that Boné had to obey the Dutch Indies government; that *Karaëng Popo* was to refrain from interference in the affairs of Boné; that he had to return all he had taken from the people of Boné; that the state council had to replace the aged prime minister; that it was his wish that La Pawawooi, half-brother of the queen and present commander-in-chief be elected to that office; and finally, that he would present the members of the council with written instructions as to how to behave towards the queen and the prince consort in the future.³¹

After the state council had briefed her on the meeting in Balangnipa, I Banri Patima send a letter to the governor, in which she replied that there was no need for additional written instructions: the present Dutch–Bonéan Treaty was sufficient. ‘Already this contract is often hard to live by, yet we hope and try to fulfil to the best of our abilities all that is enshrined therein.’³² The queen agreed that Boné’s prime minister was indeed so ailing that he himself had urged her ‘to appoint another in his place since he [could] no longer carry the task put on his shoulders’, but that this in itself constituted insufficient grounds for his dismissal. Therefore it had been decided to have him assisted by his son.³³ Hearing that the governor had reprimanded her husband in the presence of others, the queen wrote:

That *Kraëng Popo* is accused of having appropriated the belongings of the people, that we deny; this we know, however, that he has taken the properties of the queen of Boni, and all that with prior knowledge of the members of the Hadat, who themselves have arranged it, for *Kraëng Popo* has been instructed by me at all times to look after my properties and to do everything that our customs and traditions prescribe. I have never noticed anything other than that he always opposed those who committed injustice to the common man. In my opinion *Kraëng Popo* has always behaved in this way and it is because of this that I feel entitled to claim ‘that peace and order reigned’ in my country. I therefore inform the Governor that I have authorized *Kraëng Popo* to maintain

all that has been agreed upon by the members of the Hadat and myself, to enforce our customs and traditions, and to look after all of the properties of the queen of Boni.³⁴

Was this merely an attempt by a woman to stand up for her husband, turning a blind eye to his mistakes? It is possible, but not likely. Right from the start of her reign I Banri Patima seemed to have had a keen eye for the welfare of her subjects, by abolishing all kinds of monopolies.³⁵ Had she really abandoned her egalitarian policies and allowed her husband to plunder the country?

And by the way, how did the Dutch actually know whether or not the people of Boné were exploited? From whom did they obtain their information? We know of at least one source: Prince La Pawawooi. In a letter to Deputy Governor Bensbach following the Sumbawa incident, he complained that some of his property, as well as that of the deputy commander, had been taken from him by the queen and her husband.

The incomes of the Pangoeloe djowa and myself, yes, also our vassal lands, have been taken away. It is intended to take away my land in Watoe and Pa also. These lands have always been connected to the title of Poenggawa. The revenues of both districts are not permitted to me, neither are the taxes on the paddy harvest and on fishing.³⁶

The interests of the common man of Boné are not mentioned here. La Pawawooi seems to be preoccupied with his personal interests only. From the contents of these letters it is clear that a conflict had developed between the royal couple on the one hand and La Pawawooi on the other. In early 1885 the new governor, Van Braam Morris, deemed it necessary to visit Boné, in the company of the king and crown prince of Gowa, in an attempt to reconcile the two brothers-in-law. On that same occasion Van Braam Morris relieved the ailing prime minister of his duties and had him replaced by the most senior member of the state council.³⁷ It is interesting to note that the governor did not follow the solution previously offered by the queen, that is, to have the son of the prime minister appointed as his father's assistant. Maybe the choice for a member of the state council was a compromise: La Pawawooi did not become prime minister, as the Dutch would have liked, but neither did the son of the prime minister, who was known to be a loyal supporter of Karaëng Popo.

Boné

This was the situation in Boné when Jamal and Rumi came to the kingdom in the summer of 1885. Times were hard for Queen I Banri Patima and her husband Karaëng Popo. Not only had the prince consort been publicly humiliated, the royal couple had also lost their second child, a boy, soon after his birth that winter. Despite this personal tragedy, Jamal and Rumi were warmly received and given the guest house opposite the palace for a residence. Rumi states:

After dinner we were invited to the audience chamber where we were received enthusiastically by the King and Queen. In this very first interview we became intimately acquainted with each other, and the King as simply as a child put all

22 October 1884
(NA Mailrapporten
1885, fiche 1475).

33. Queen of Boné to Governor of Celebes, letter B 22 October 1884 (NA Mailrapporten 1885, fiche 1475).
34. Queen of Boné to Governor of Celebes, letter 29 October 1884 (NA Mailrapporten 1885, fiche 1475).
35. Already in 1872 the Colonial Records reported that the situation in Boné had changed for the better: 'The monopoly on commodities had been lifted and the cronies of the late king, who had been favoured by him at the expense of the population, had been forced to leave the country.' And again several years later: 'A Bonéan delegation that came to Makassar in April 1878 informed the administration of an important decision by the queen. It concerned the abolition of all monopolies within the kingdom, as a result of which – as was told – the common man and everybody else in Boni was free to sell his products wherever he could.' See *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1872 and 1879; Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:792.
36. Poenggawa to Deputy Governor, letter 23 November 1884 (NA Mailrapporten 1885, fiche 1475).
37. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:846.
38. Roumie, 'Baha'i

Pioneers' 343.
39. Roumie, 'Baha'i
Pioneers' 344.

sorts of questions to us, both material and spiritual ... The King was so attracted by the stirring talks of Jamal Effendi that he kept him answering religious questions until the late hours of the night; in fact, it was not until two o'clock in the morning that we were permitted to retire.³⁸

Several audiences later Karaëng Popo asked the two Baha'is – they apparently conversed in Arabic –

...to write a handbook in Arabic outlining principles for the administration of his State, as well as a booklet for teaching Arabic colloquial conversation [for the benefit of the queen]. This gave us an unusual opportunity to present the principles of Baha'i administration and government to the King, for we based our handbook upon the universal laws of Baha'u'llah.³⁹

Meanwhile Rumi had somehow evoked the anger of an Arab fellow traveller. And one day this man struck him on the head with a heavy block of wood. 'Fortunately the Queen, happening to look out from her palace window, saw this attack and informed the King who with a large corps of his followers rushed in and arrested the Arab.' Orders were given to execute the attacker, but Jamal and Rumi were able to ease this sentence and to have him banished to Makassar.

When the books were completed the royal couple 'accepted the Baha'i Cause and made a vow to promulgate it in all the provinces of the Celebes Islands as soon as they should receive [divine] confirmation for this missionary effort', Rumi reported.

What prompted the prince to ask for a handbook on government? And why a conditional vow? It is possible that the new Dutch governor still intended to issue new instructions, as announced by his predecessor. If the threat of a one-sided extension of the Dutch–Bonéan Treaty had indeed not completely evaporated, it could well be that a 'written instructions' of their own offered the royal couple a kind of bargaining tool or fresh arguments in their negotiations with the colonial authorities. And maybe a successful outcome of this dispute was the condition referred to. All this is, of course, pure speculation but it seems obvious that the exceptional request had something to do with the situation the royal couple found themselves in.

In October 1885 Jamal and Rumi set out to retrace their journey. 'The atmosphere was very melancholy when we went to bid adieu to their Royal Highnesses', Rumi wrote. In Padalie news reached them that La Tjintjing had passed away in Paré-Paré. Leaving Jamal behind, Rumi pressed on by pony to reach the town just in time to attend the funeral of the king. On that occasion Queen I Simatana presented Jamal and Rumi with adoption papers for two Buginese boys, Nazir and Bashir, to be servants in Baha'u'llah's household in Akka. Then the two men returned to Singapore by way of Surabaya and Batavia.

Aftermath

How did the queen and prince of Boné fare? Few details have remained. We do know that the new prime minister of Boné held office until 1889. Then the Dutch granted him an honourable discharge and (finally) appointed

La Pawawooi to fill the vacancy.⁴⁰ Although La Pawawooi was now the most powerful man in Boné, his new position does not seem to have enabled him to control Karaëng Popo. On the outside, as in the previous years, all remained calm. But eventually it again became clear that the prince consort remained an influential figure – and that the Dutch authorities did not like it.

At the beginning of December 1894 – Karaëng Popo was in Gowa to attend the inauguration of his father as next king of Gowa – news came that the queen of Boné had become seriously ill.⁴¹ When Queen I Banri Patima died on 17 February 1895 the Dutch antipathy towards her husband resurfaced in full. Following the death of the queen, the state council immediately elected her 13-year-old daughter and only surviving child, Boenga Soetara, as successor. But Van Braam Morris refused to ratify their choice. In a letter to his superior, the viceroy in Batavia, he explained why. First of all he held the opinion that the council had not been able to make its choice freely. Its members had been intimidated by Karaëng Popo, who had forced them to elect his under-age daughter so that he might remain in control as her regent. And that in itself was unacceptable.

He [Karaëng Popo] is, as Your Excellency is well aware, the second son of the radja of Gowa [and] about 34 years of age; he is a proud, impudent and greedy man, eloquent and cunning, but without tact and understanding. The vassal queen, who was at least 16 years his senior, was totally spoon-fed by him. He has been so stupid as to abuse this [trust] and to govern Boni in a Gowanese way, as a dictator that is, brushing aside the hadat [state council] and the institutions of the country. He has introduced various new taxes, enslaved the people to himself and his Gowanese followers, and humiliated the nobles in all possible ways, for instance by forcing them to give their daughters in marriage to his followers of low rank ... Moreover, he has been repeatedly guilty in their eyes of incestuous behaviour, which in their opinion will bring bad luck to Boni if he stays any longer. They have endured all this for the vassal queen's sake, but now they deem the time to be right to bring an end to this unbearable yoke, if not peacefully then by force. I am convinced that a civil war will not fail to occur in Boni if the power of Karaëng Popo is not curtailed.⁴²

An unpleasant man this Karaëng Popo! But there was a second, more important matter to be taken into consideration. Princess Boenga Soetara was half Gowanese by birth and rumours had already started that there were plans to have her married to the eldest son of the crown prince of Gowa.⁴³ If that indeed happened, the risks involved were great, for 'might bad fortune cause their oldest child to be a son, that child would be both vassal king of Boni as well as radja of Gowa, as a result of which' – and here the governor showed his cards – 'the claims we have on Boni are in great danger of being eliminated'. This was the moment to stop Karaëng Popo once and for all. Within days Van Braam Morris and his right-hand man Brugman were in Boné 'to neutralize the after-effects of a political mistake made by the former governor' (i.e. Tromp's involvement with the marriage of I Banri Patima and Karaëng Popo).⁴⁴ The choice of the state council was nullified. And pending a final decision by the viceroy, the governor appointed La Pawawooi as the new king and the latter's eldest son as new prime minister. 'I am already old, I am not capable, I am an opium

40. According to the Colonial Records this choice was made 'on the recommendation of the queen'. But since the record carefully avoided the phrase 'elected by the state council' and stressed that according to the contract any new prime minister of Boné needed an appointment (not merely a ratification) by the Dutch Indies government, one can have doubts as to the true nature of this recommendation. See *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1890.

41. *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1895; and *De Locomotief*, 4 March 1895. (KB: C 76, microfilm).

42. Governor of Celebes to Viceroy, letter 9 March 1895 (NA Mailrapporten 1895, fiche 2349).

43. The new king of Gowa, Karaëng Popo's father, had died in May 1895.

44. Back in 1880 Governor Tromp had 'strongly pushed through' the marriage. See Eedrmans, unpublished manuscript 5:389–99; and *De Locomotief*, 15 March 1895.

45. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 5:227; *De Locomotief*, 15 March 1895; *Java Bode*, 18 March 1895 (KB: C 47, microfilm).
46. Director Internal Administration to Viceroy, letter 27 March 1895 (NA Mailrapporten 1895, fiche 2349).
- 47 *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1895. Karaëng Popo is reported to have remarried to I Nako Karaëng Panaikang, by whom he had a daughter by the name of I Manene Karaëng Ballasari.

smoker', La Pawawooi objected; but that was all false modesty, according to Van Braam Morris. 'Apparently he was afraid that Karaëng Popo would accuse him of tripping up his niece, and therefore had deemed it necessary to have himself forced', the governor explained.

When a member of the state council objected that he could not understand why Boné should not also be ruled by a girl, since this was the case in the Netherlands itself (Queen Wilhelmina had succeeded her father King Willem III in 1890 at the age of 10), Van Braam Morris angrily let slip the remark that Boné could not be compared to the Netherlands, adding: 'In Boné I am in charge!'⁴⁵ This 'bitter but salutary pill', as it was dubbed by a local newspaper, also came to the attention of G. A. Scherer, general director for the internal administration (*directeur binnenlands bestuur*). In a piece of advice to the viceroy on the matter he wrote:

Leaving aside for the moment whether or not the Governor's understanding of this matter is correct, it must be said that he, in dealing with it, has repeatedly violated both the spirit and letter of the contract signed with Boni, and this I consider to be very worrying.⁴⁶

Although the Dutch colonial government in Batavia knew perfectly well that this course of action amounted to a violation of the Dutch–Bonéan Treaty, Scherer's objections were overruled. As was Eerdman's suggestion of arranging for a multiple regency in which Karaëng Popo would be aided by a Dutch civil servant, the commander (*doeloeng*) of Adjangale and a few family members. And so La Pawawooi was to be officially installed as the next king of Boné. In the meantime Van Braam Morris was bent on a way to sideline Karaëng Popo once and for all. 'It would be a blessing for Boni if he behaved in such a way that one could deny him stay in that country', he wrote on 9 March, having just returned from the vassal kingdom. And he also had an idea: at the inauguration of La Pawawooi as new vassal king the regalia would have to be handed over, as they represented royal authority. 'This will probably cause difficulties from Karaëng Popo's side, since they are kept in the royal home occupied by him and his daughter. I therefore deem it advisable to bring a guard of honour of 75 infantry troops, who can assist the Bonéans in procuring the ornaments when necessary.' A few weeks later he had his excuse. Deputy Governor Brugman, who had remained in Boné 'to be on the alert, to discuss the new contract with the newly appointed vassal king, and to make all the necessary arrangements for the latter's inauguration', reported that Karaëng Popo had refused to cooperate in the transfer of the regalia. And so the prince – accused of embezzlement – was banned from Boné. While he returned to Gowa, near Makassar, his daughter was placed under the care of the new king.⁴⁷ According to the official reading of events this was done 'in accordance with the explicit wish of her late mother, who apparently was of the opinion that she would be better off under the care of her uncle than that of her own father'. Not everyone was fooled by this, however. With indignation Eerdmans spoke of a 'false representation' and he continued:

La Pawawooi was never married to a noble woman. He was always surrounded by women of lower class, dancers, etc. His whole entourage was very mediocre, not at all royal – and would the late queen, who by the way was very devoted

to her consort, have preferred to have her child brought up in *such* a milieu, known to everyone, instead of that of her own father?⁴⁸

Although Boenga Soetara never became queen of Boné, she did not lose her rights to the throne. A request by Van Braam Morris and La Pawawooi to appoint the latter's eldest son heir to the throne was denied by Batavia.⁴⁹ The princess died in Boné on 20 February 1903, a year after her father.⁵⁰ She was only 21. La Pawawooi soon came into conflict with the Dutch, was deposed by them in 1905, and spent the last six years of his life in exile on the island of Java.⁵¹

Conclusion

Up to now it was not known when Jamal and Rumi made their journey to the Dutch East Indies. According to Momen it had been in about 1884–5. This study has been able to confirm and specify that date. As Rumi attended the funeral of King La Tjintjing of Wadjo, who died on 12 October 1885, it can be established that the two Baha'is made their six months' sojourn in the archipelago some time between May and November 1885.

Rumi mentions the names or titles of several persons. As far as Celebes was concerned these can be identified as: Johan Albert George Brugman, secretary for native affairs; Akil Ali La Tjintjing *Kraëng* Mangeppé *Datoe* Pamana, supreme king of Wadjo and his daughter I Samatana *Aroe* Nepo, queen of Sidenreng; Abdoel Rachman La Koro *Aroe* Padali of Wadjo; and finally, I Banri Patima *Aroe* Timoeroeng, queen of Boné and her husband La Goeliga *Daëng* Sérang *Karaëng* Popo. It remains uncertain whether or not Jamal and Rumi also met Soemangaroecka *Aroe* Rappang, king of Sidenreng.

This study has not been very successful in uncovering biographical information on the queen and prince of Boné. We still know little about the queen, and the emerging images of the prince are not uniform. In Rumi's account *Karaëng* Popo comes over as a warm, enthusiastic, inquisitive and firm personality. But that was, as we have seen, not the way Van Braam Morris, Bensbach and Brugman saw him. Who is right here? Was *Karaëng* Popo a bad and dangerous ruler or, rather, a benevolent despot – possibly even influenced by the Baha'i Faith? The problem is that the picture presented here is almost exclusively derived from Dutch sources, that is to say, the Dutch colonial authorities. Apart from Rumi's account and three letters by I Banri Patima no sources have been discovered that might have told the story from the perspective of the other side. There is only one text that can serve as a kind of historical counterpoint here, and that is Eerdmans' unpublished manuscript on the history of South Celebes. Eerdmans succeeded Brugman in 1888 as secretary for native affairs and, by virtue of his office, got to know *Karaëng* Popo very well. Since the two men seem to have liked each other, Eerdmans' observations are of great historical importance here, the more so as he was denounced for making a stand on behalf of the prince.⁵² So let us see how Eerdmans describes him. 'Karaëng Popo was short of stature but his sharp and piercing eyes filled one with awe, his whole way of behaving also bore evidence of courage, firmness and sovereignty.'⁵³ And he continues:

Karaëng Popo ... was a singular personality, someone with a rare, firm character for a native, that expressed itself in his words and attitude – that is why he

48. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 5:228–9.
49. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten: 'Een gebiedende noodzakelijkheid; Besluitvorming rond de Boni-expeditie 1903–1905', in H. A. Poeze en P. Schoorl (ed.), *Excursies in Celebes* (Leiden, 1991) 148.
50. *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1904.
51. Already in 1900 the new governor of Celebes reported that the king was not prepared, as the new Dutch–Bonéan Treaty stipulated, to give up his right to levy import and export taxes. Another governor could not resolve the problem either, and so it happened that on 28 July 1905 a Dutch expeditionary force landed on the coast of Boné. The capital Watampone was taken two days later. Many fled the town, but on 8 August five members of the state council returned and surrendered the regalia – Boné had fallen. La Pawawooi, who had fled north to Wadjo, was taken prisoner on 18 November. His eldest son was among the hundreds who were killed. In the end it was Brugman, who had by then risen to the rank of Resident, who was assigned the task of escorting his one-time protégé, as well as two of his sons and three grandchildren, to Java. And there the last king of Boné died on 17 January 1911. In Watampone one of La Pawawooi's grandchildren, Andi

Mappasissi, now runs a small museum in his memory. See Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 5:949 and 1015; and *Bintang Hindia*, 1906: 66 (KB: 9147 C6–9).

52. In the same year that Karaëng Popo was banished from Boné, Eerdmans was promoted away to the island of Borneo (now Kalimantan), where he was to become 'deputy governor of the peripheral territories'.
53. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 4:844.
54. Eerdmans, unpublished manuscript 5:218–20.

was called arrogant and bold, and did not find favour with the civil servants, who were the only ones who met him, Mr Bensbach and Brugman. Governor Van Braam Morris has only met him a few times and, moreover, did not speak Boegenese and Makassarese, the only languages Karaëng Popo spoke and understood. So everything the Governor knew of Karaëng Popo he had obtained through the channels of Bensbach and Brugman ... Karaëng Popo had, as I said, his peculiarities of language and attitude, which had to attract attention as they contrasted with the very polite, often servile and compliant attitude of other kings towards Mr Bensbach and Mr Brugman. But on the word of those other kings one could usually not rely; one could on that of Karaëng Popo, however. He did not easily give his word and did not readily admit to be mistaken, but once given or admitted, one could rely on him. The Government could have had much profit from Karaëng Popo; the prospect of a decoration would have prepared him to give everything; but one has preferred to put oneself in the front, rather than to make use of the good services of one like Karaëng Popo, who, in contrast to the others, had enough initiative to attract attention to his services and was not afraid to admit the truth. Such persons were too dangerous.⁵⁴

If we weigh the evidence it must be concluded that Eerdmans presented the most reliable profile of Karaëng Popo. The Dutch governor and his associates undoubtedly pursued power, status and wealth themselves. Their allegations of exploitation and dictatorship can therefore well be interpreted as either psychological projection or pretexts for sidelining a powerful native ruler who stood in their way. Whatever the case, it is undeniable that Karaëng Popo stands out among the other native rulers of his time. And it is tempting to attribute this to a conversion to the Baha'i religion, as claimed by Rumi. But do we have any external evidence for that? Eerdmans is the most detailed source about the royal couple we have, but he does not make mention of their religion or a *change* in their religion. From the information he provides it is also not possible to detect any transformation in the behaviour of the couple. But maybe the source is overworked here. After all, Eerdmans first met the couple in 1888, three years after their possible conversion, so he was not able to see a difference, if indeed there had been one. And there is another problem: Rumi reports that the queen and prince 'made a vow to promulgate it [the Baha'i Cause] in all the provinces of the Celebes Islands as soon as they should receive [divine] confirmation for this missionary effort'. Why this vague condition? Does it have to be interpreted as a kind of polite escape clause? In the end the conclusion is inevitable: it cannot be confirmed by using Dutch sources that the queen and prince of Boné actually converted to the Baha'i religion. In fact, it is not even possible to prove that Jamal and Rumi ever visited the island of Celebes in the first place. The two Baha'is were simply never mentioned in Dutch sources. Yet it must also be stressed that there is no reason to disbelieve Rumi. His account fits well into the context provided by these same colonial sources and it can therefore be considered to be a reliable narrative of one of the very first Baha'i missionary efforts in that vast archipelago we now call the Republic of Indonesia.

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