Anyone with a serious interest in the Bugis language soon comes to confront the
Boegineesch-Hollandsch Woordenboek of Benjamin Frederick Matthes. This loyal
representative of the Netherlands Bible Society arrived in Makassar in 1848 as a well-
educated, newly-married 30-year-old, keen to come to grips with the task of translating
the Bible into the languages of South Sulawesi. Along the way, as it were, he also wrote a
good deal about the people and society of the area, but his chief interest was always
linguistic. He collected manuscripts of local literature in the search for an appropriate
style for his translations, and published editions of some of the works to be found in the
manuscripts; he produced grammars of both Makasar and Bugis; and of greatest on-going
scholarly importance, he compiled two extraordinary dictionaries. The first edition of the
Makasar dictionary appeared in 1859 and a much expanded second edition in 1883. The
Bugis dictionary appeared in 1874, with a supplement in 1889. In addition to their
function as steps on the way in the process of Bible translation, these dictionaries are
masterworks of nineteenth-century philology and of the European attempt to comprehend,
catalogue and control knowledge, especially where such knowledge could serve a variety
of colonial purposes.
By the standards of today, Matthes’ opportunities seem remarkably constrained and things moved slowly. When he arrived in South Sulawesi at the end of 1848, Makassar was still a small town, but it took him some six months to get out on his first visit to the south coast. It was not until the middle of 1852 that he was able to spend two months in the districts to the north of Makassar, yet these were all areas nominally under Dutch control. At the end of 1854, six years after his arrival, he moved to Maros about 30 km to the north, where in the middle of the next year his wife died, leaving him to bring up two young children. Though he did manage some travel into the Bugis areas in the centre of
the peninsula over the next year or so, he was frustrated in his attempt to visit the important state of Bone before he left Makassar on leave in early 1858. In the three years he was away in the Netherlands, he saw through the press his basic linguistic work on Makasar some four years after the materials had been sent back for printing.

During his second period in Sulawesi from 1861 to 1869, he paid more attention to Bugis matters. He was, at last, able to visit Bone, recently defeated in a major military campaign and here, as in several later trips, he had the support of his good friend, J. A. Bakkers, an important government official and, eventually, Governor. It was at this time too, that he was actively compiling material for the Bugis dictionary and finally began producing Bible translations in both Makasar and Bugis.

Back in The Hague, in two furnished rooms to begin with and being cared for by his daughter, Matthes pushed on with scholarship and translation. Among much else, he saw through the press the Bugis dictionary, the very considerable costs of which were borne by the Dutch government. This productive period was interrupted, however, by an invitation from the government to return to Makassar and oversee a school to train local young men who could assist the purposes of the colonial government. He agreed to go for four years — together with his daughter — and he seems to have been a success; translations of school books replaced the Bible for a while. He still took the chance, however, to collect any manuscripts that came his way.

Matthes was 62 when he eventually returned to The Netherlands in June 1880. Despite his many academic honours, a very public campaign to obtain a University position for him came to nothing and he quietly settled down again to the work of Bible translation. It took another 20 years to produce the printed versions of both Old and New Testaments in Makasar and in Bugis — and then he wanted to start on the Apocrypha! That was not to be, however, and he ended his days in Nijmegen where his son had retired after a career in the colonial army. He died in 1908, aged 90.
Matthes was nothing if not dogged — just remember that he translated some of the less interesting passages of the Old Testament not once, but twice! He also had method; his published works hang together and he makes many cross-references from one to another. In a very real sense, he created an intellectual universe with his dictionaries deriving from his manuscripts, his translations from his understanding of the languages, and the scope of his interests determined by his contacts and enquiries in the field.

Given the demands of developing his field more or less from scratch — since he paid slight attention to any work done previously — it is not surprising that Matthes developed an individual style which runs through all his publications. For example, he was responsible for working with the printers to develop the exact form of the characters to be used to represent the Bugis-Makasar script in his publications. For the transcription of this script into Latin characters, he devised a remarkably clumsy and not entirely adequate system.

The subsequent history of scholarship on the languages of South Sulawesi has been comprehensively laid out by Noorduyn. Matthes’ dictionary of Makasar is now totally superseded — with gracious acknowledgment of Matthes’ labours — by the work of Cense and Abdoerrahim which, though still in Dutch, is very much easier to use. The only recent help for the student of Bugis lexicography, however, is a rather slight and poorly edited dictionary by M. Ide Said, which seems to have been compiled without significant reference to Matthes.

Some of the strengths and weaknesses of Matthes’ Bugis dictionary have already been suggested. Undoubtedly its greatest virtue is the range of words included. Because it is primarily based on the manuscripts which he had collected and studied, it includes a great deal of archaic and highly specialised material, even if not everything of this type. Matthes believed that the manuscripts set an appropriate tone for his Bible translations. Given his time in the field, he must also have had a good command of everyday spoken
Bugis, and it would be interesting to know more about the contributions of particular informants to the dictionary. Actual usage is illustrated with a wealth of examples and cognates or sources noted in many other languages, especially Makasar and Arabic, but also Malay, Javanese and yet more from the enormous range of his scholarship. To further extend the encyclopaedic range of his work, Matthes made a collection of the material culture of South Sulawesi as it was in the mid-nineteenth century; he published illustrations of these items in his *Ethnographische Atlas* that went through various editions to accompany the dictionaries. The plates in the *Atlas*, in effect, illustrate entries in the dictionaries and they are admirably clear. The items themselves are still preserved in the National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde) in Leiden. The dictionary also contains a very extensive register of Dutch words with their possible Bugis equivalents, though this is really no more than a guide to the dictionary proper. Finally, there are 11 pages of improvements and corrections, to say nothing of another 150 pages in the *Supplement* 15 years later.

The greatest frustration for the casual user of the dictionary is that the entries are arranged, not in alphabetical order, but in the unique order of the Bugis-Makasar characters. This begins, *ka*, *ga*, *nga*, as with other related scripts, but there are differences as the sequence proceeds. Then there is the difficulty of Matthes’ cumbersome transliteration that requires various diacritics. More importantly, the glottal stop, a crucial phoneme in Bugis, is poorly and inconsistently indicated. Despite the abundance of quotations, the source of these quotations is rarely given, or not given precisely. Moreover, Matthes writes in a peculiarly ponderous, laboured Dutch, even by the standards of nineteenth-century scholarship; some of his entries could be charitably described as less than lucid. Finally and most distressingly, the publisher chose to use a paper that has degraded badly with the years; pages flake and tear with even the most careful handling.
Here, then, is a true leviathan of scholarship, but in this day and age, cast up on a rather lonely beach. How many people can use the guidance of this mighty whale in order to launch with confidence into the ocean of Bugis language and literature? In particular, the product of Matthes’ labours is effectively denied to those young Indonesians who might best profit from it.

<h1> The Project: Rescue </h1>

It is a rash enterprise indeed to begin a new dictionary — and life is short. But a new dictionary is not necessary here. There is much sound scholarship in Matthes that does not need to be re-done, even if much needs to be checked and, where appropriate, updated. What is needed is a translation, with opportunity for annotations of many kinds. Almost anything would help at some level.

What follows is a sketch of how a translation could be managed, making use of contemporary technology and allowing the work to be spread around amongst anyone minded to help. If money could be found to support particular parts of the project, that would make things go faster. What are the chances of the project making significant progress? I don’t know, but the task is certainly feasible, and one can only start by laying out a plan. If any inspiration were necessary, then Ian Proudfoot’s Malay concordance project is a marvellous model of what imagination, daring and dedication can achieve.

The format of the translation would be a website, from which anyone could download material and, if they wish, print off a hard copy version of material. That presupposes finding a server which is likely to remain viable in the long term, and there are some obvious institutions to approach. Given that this would be an evolving website, I doubt the need for a print-on-demand facility, but it is hard to know how the technology will change. More important is to establish the principle of free and open access, even if some restriction would be essential for making changes to the website. To ensure
consistency and standards, there would need to be an editor, or at least a very restricted editorial group, who would check and integrate the work of contributors. There is a strong case for using a data-base programme for the translated material and professional linguists have developed programmes that would be suitable, but there is also a case for keeping everything very simple and using Word, as in the examples below. At its most basic, the website would give access to a series of PDF files, each developed from a masterfile and replaced from time to time as new work was done, checked and entered into the whole. The website would be divided into five parts.

Part A would consist of introductory material explaining the project and setting out the contents of the other parts. In its initial version, it would be wholly in English, but perhaps an Indonesian version might be added one day. It would be worth including here translations of Matthes’ prefatory material to the dictionary, the supplement and the ethnographic atlas since this provides the context of the work and some useful information.

Part B would consist of digital images of the pages of the three works: dictionary, ethnographic atlas and supplement. The files for the dictionary, which runs to a total of 1,188 pages, would need to be divided to allow easy navigation, but there are no technical problems with this. The National Library of Australia has recently made available a digital version of R. J. Wilkinson’s Malay-English dictionary of 1903 and this shows how such a project can be done.\textsuperscript{11} Given the relative rarity of the items — and even more the fragility of the pages of the dictionary — there are preservation grounds for this exercise alone, but for the translation project, it is also important to have easy access to the original materials.\textsuperscript{12}

Part C would be the translation proper. For ease of control and access, this would be divided into about 30 sections, each containing a few hundred entries, and the exact division between sections would be governed by how the totals fell out for particular
letters of the alphabet. Each section would indicate the date and stage of its latest revision. This matrix of division and stages would allow the total work to be managed as much smaller tasks and, as a new stage was completed for a particular section, this text would then replace the previous version of the same material on the website.

Stage 1 would consist of no more than a list of head-words or lemmas, taken directly from the dictionary but re-ordered alphabetically. This list would provide the skeleton of the divisions on which all else would rest. Although new entries could always be introduced, additions would be rare and would not upset the division into sections.

Stage 2 would be concerned, essentially, to identify each head-word with a simple gloss of one or two English words. Where Matthes distinguishes more than one basic meaning for a single head-word, which he marks by numbers, these separate meanings would also be distinguished at this stage.

Stage 3 would introduce some, at least, of the cognates provided by Matthes and the derived forms he lists, in a version of his transcription. Some of the cognates could be usefully checked at this stage, especially the Makasar cognates against Cense and Abdoerrahim’s dictionary and the Malay cognates against Said’s Bugis-Indonesian dictionary.

Stage 4 would involve a careful revision of the English glosses and entry of the examples of usage given by Matthes in Bugis and English translation. A matter on which Matthes’ transcription is inadequate is in the identification of various prefixes, and that would require particular care at this stage. Without going into the vexed question of the best Latin orthography for Bugis, it would be important to convert all Matthes’ Bugis to a modern standard. This would also be the best stage to note references to the ethnographic atlas and a few other sources mentioned by Matthes.

Stage 5 would allow for the entry of material beyond that found in Matthes. For example, it would be useful to add any further Indonesian glosses, mostly to be found in
Said’s dictionary. This extra material would need to be carefully distinguished and identified. Where there are difficulties, it would be possible, in this format, to have quite extensive discussion. Several possibilities for such additional material present themselves: the meaning of some words will have changed over the period of more than a century since Matthes was working and modern Bugis speakers might wish to comment; anyone working on Matthes’ manuscripts and published materials will quickly find usages quoted without attribution and these could be identified; and finally there are words, especially in *La Galigo* and other obscure texts, where there is scope for the discussion of meaning beyond the understanding Matthes had. This final stage would remain open-ended.

Part D of the project would take up one of the most useful aspects of the dictionary, that is the register of Dutch words. It would, in theory at least, be easy to develop a table of four columns listing equivalent Dutch, Bugis, English and Indonesian words from the glosses at various stages of part C. There would be, of course, many problems of detail, but the usefulness, even of an imperfect attempt, justifies the effort. With the ability to sort these columns alphabetically, one could present three versions of the same material arranged to allow access from Dutch, English or Indonesian.

Finally, part E would list references, abbreviations and any other peripheral material.

<h1>The Translation</h1>

Perhaps this is all just a castle in the air, but it is possible to venture a sample of the dream. In particular, the attempt allows experiment with conventions of font and presentation. I tend to favour the use of Garamond as a font, and somewhat to my surprise, find Matthes’ basic style of roman for words in Bugis, and italic for words in all other languages, the clearest. He is not, however, entirely consistent.
What follows is an attempt to show what the process of translation would look like. These six entries are drawn from pp. 32–3 of the dictionary and represent the variety of entries. They show how many of the issues mentioned above could be dealt with and the notes draw attention to matter of special interest. In order to minimise repetition, it is only necessary to show stages 2 and 5 of the process outlined above.

Pages 32 and 33 of Matthes’ Bugis dictionary
**Stage 2**

16.1.07

**KERRANG**

1. *Stand on end*

2. *Open*

**KERRÉ’**

*Pblegm*

**KERRI’**

*Scratch*

**KERRING**

*Violent*

**KERRO**

1. *Court song*

2. *Profane*

**KERRU**

14 Clucking

---

**Stage 5**

19.1.07

**KERRANG**

1. *To stand on end, used of the hair of the head or body hair in general*

From there, *kerrampulu* a sort of charm or spell that strikes anyone with fear and awe of its owner and, as it were, makes the hair of their whole body stand up from fear and alarm

[Jonker notes a use of the word in Matthes’ *Boeginesche Chrestomathie* vol. 2, p. 273, line 9 up (actually it’s 11 up!). Another notable use of this term is in the nickname of the third ruler of Boné, Kerrampélua’, whose hair is said to have been standing on end when he was born. See]
under wélua’. The supplement adds a Mak. cognate korang; this appears in M’s Makasar dictionary, but not in C.

2. To open, open up, make loose

Mak. karang

For example, an umbrella or sunshade, sails, etc.

<h2>KERRÉ’</h2>

Phlegm

Mak. karra’

Makkerré’ to bring up phlegm, to clear one’s throat, to vomit

<h2>KERRI’</h2>

Scratch

Mak. kari’

Makkerri’ to scratch, to scrape off; Puru-makkerri’, see puru 1; Kerri’i berre’é to scrape a stick across the top of a measure of rice (to check that it is not over-full)

Pkkerri’ the stick for scraping; Pkkerri’-kaluku, the Mak. kikkirang, an oblong piece of timber with a piece of iron projecting from one end which has an point like a riding spur and is used to scrape out coconuts. (Eth. Atlas pl. 11/25) [The illustration is very clear. The object itself is series 37/item 88 in the museum.]

Pkkerri’-pe’jé a hook used to scrape the salt together (in the saltpans).

Pkkerri’-kanuku one of the roe-roe [ornaments] used to file the finger nails

<h2>KERRING</h2>

Violent, strong (e.g. used of an east wind).

Mak. karring

[C gives the sense of dry, with the Ind. cognate kering.]

S taggering-kerring berdebar-debar
<h2>KERRO</h2>

1. <i>A kind of court song for births, circumcisions, etc.</i>

Mak. <i>karro</i>

N.B. the book in which the kerro is written is also called kerro; from this, riwata'ni

kerroé the kerro is brought up in the house, see wata’

Makkerro <i>to chant the kerro</i>

Toriakerroang be or she for whom the kerro is chanted

Pakkerro <i>those who chant the kerro</i>

2. <i>Profane, sacrilegious</i>

Cf. Arab. makhrib Mak. <i>karro</i>

For example: makkerroni puasaé the fast is violated, Harangngi mackerrotoi it is

prohibited and sacriligious

<h2>KERRU</h2>

<i>Clucking, the sound one makes to call chickens</i>

Mak <i>kurr</i> Ind. Jav. <i>kur</i> Bat. <i>burbo</i>

[The pronunciation of this word is variable. Murni Mahmud prefers kuru’<sup>20</sup>]

From this it is used metaphorically: makkerru-sumange’na<sup>21</sup> to summon someone’s

sumange’ or personal life spirit (see under sumange’) as if it were a bird, especially a hen; this may be to prevent it flying away or, to make it return when it might already have flown away. Thus one says, for example, kerru-sumange’mu summon your sumange’, <i>my child!</i> that is, so that it should not depart. This expression is used for a child that shows a special sweetness, since one presumes that the evil spirits might regard so much sweetness with envious eyes and on account of this bring harm to such a child just where they can. With this expression, therefore, one indicates indirectly that the child has a lovable appearance, and it is
preferable in the eyes of the native to express it like this, rather than to say straight out macapadé-padémani, or such like (see below), since this would cause the spirits to be slightly more envious.\textsuperscript{22}

Mappakerru-sumange\textsuperscript{2} to scatter cucubanna and wenno (coloured rice and roasted material; see under these terms) over someone in order to summon his sumange\textquoteleft, that is, in order that it should not depart. N.B. this happens in respect of bridegrooms and all high-placed people when one welcomes them, anxious as one is that the evil spirits out of envy at the joy of their high rank might cause their sumange\textquoteleft to depart.

Pakkerru-sumangekkeng something or another (a buffalo, for example) used for someone to summon his sumange\textquoteleft. For example: Narékkua arungngé mappégau\textquoteright-gau\textquoteleft, namasélemmanenni tau-maégaé, upakkerru-sumangekkengngi if the ruler gives a feast and thereby does something to frighten all the people away, I use (that is, sacrifice) (one black buffalo) in order to summon back the sumange\textquoteleft which has already been driven off by fright (or, was on the point of flying off). [A simpler translation would be: If the ruler gives a feast and all the people are shocked, I would restore confidence.\textsuperscript{23}]

Pappakerru-sumange\textquoteleft literally a summoning of the sumange\textquoteleft; from this, a means of preserving the sumange\textquoteleft; from this, a present of a kris or a pike or other similar object.
Notes

1 I would like to thank Ian Caldwell, Jason Lee Kwok Loong and the editors of this volume for their helpful comments on a draft of this paper.

2 The two major sources for Matthes’ life and work are H. van den Brink, Dr Benjamin Frederik Matthes: zijn leven en arbeid in deinst van het Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1943) and J. L. Swellengrebel, In Leijdeckers Voetspoor I 1820–1900 (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 147–72.

3 See J. Noorduyn, “Variation in the Bugis/Makasarese script”, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 149 (1993): 533–70, especially pp. 543–4. The script is best described as an aksary from the Sanskrit word for character, aksara; the script is based on the Indic system found widely in Southeast Asia, though its exact derivation and history are obscure. In addition to the “standard” script used by Matthes, there are many variants, as well as the so-called “old Makasar” aksary with characters of a quite different form.


notes that “it is by far not exhaustive as regards the language of traditional literature” (p. 10).

Handling the actual items produces some ironies. For example, a well-made earthenware jar, shown in the *Ethnographische Atlas* plate 10, item 9 and rather misleadingly termed a *gandi* (*kendi*), is registered in the museum as series 37, item 35. It is even illustrated with a good photograph in H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van ’sRijks Ethnographisch Museum* vol. 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1922), p. 20 and plate 5/1 — or on the museum’s website (<www.rmv.nl>). Surprisingly, it turns out to have a stamp on the base indicating its European manufacture.


The Inter Documentation Company has published a microcard edition of the dictionary and some work has been done to digitise and translate the *Ethnographische Atlas*.

Considerable help with this process of identifying examples is available from an annotated copy of the dictionary once owned by Prof. J. C. G. Jonker and now held in the Leiden University Library. There is also a microfilm of this copy in the Australian National University Library.

These have been re-ordered from the dictionary order: kerrang, kerri’, kerring, kerru’, kerré’, kerro.

Note the possibility of adding additional relevant information, especially the Jonker material.
It may be occasionally helpful to give Matthes’ Dutch gloss, but this would always be available in the original materials.

Note the helpfulness of the *Ethnographische Atlas*. I have not handled the object itself, but it is duly listed in Juynboll’s *Catalogue van ’sRijks Ethnographisch Museum*, vol. 16, p. 15.

C indicates the Makasar dictionary of Cense and Abdoerrahim and would be used where this supplies significant further information.

S indicates the Bugis dictionary of M. Ide Said and would be used only where the relevant information differs from that in Matthes.

I am most grateful to Murni Mahmud for her expert criticism and enthusiastic assistance, especially with the stage 4 revision of the derived forms and these stage 5 annotations.

The use of the hyphen in constructions of this type is debatable. On the one hand, it is useful to distinguish the two elements; on the other, it keeps them together for further derived forms as shown below.

This rambling explanation is, unfortunately, typical of Matthes.

Matthes’ translation shows his habit of trying to explain — often somewhat tediously — rather than just translating the sense of the words. Swellengrebel, *In Leijdeckers Voetspoor I*, pp. 162–4 gives examples of this tendency in his Bible translations. I suspect that this example is drawn from a manuscript.