This work is a study of a transformation in history-making in early modern Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Why this interest in such a topic in such a place and time? Even asking this question is a sign of the times. The study of history at the end of the twentieth century takes place within a context in which a debate over whether true knowledge about the past is possible frames what historians write. Roughly portrayed, there is a struggle between a positivism bolstered by increasingly sophisticated methods of apprehending the facts of the past, and a relativism that denies the possibility of historical knowledge. Historians influenced by the methods from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, psychology, and more find themselves with a rich set of tools, models, and questions with which to probe the multiple facets of human life in the past. Other historians, influenced most by postmodern literary criticism, argue that the representations of the past that historians produce are so mediated by unstable language, situated within discursive formations, and shaped by cultural structures that their productions are fictions rather than “true” accounts of a fundamentally ungraspable past.

This debate over whether historical assertions are possible is fought out in publications, conferences, classrooms, and curriculums by disciples of both positions. Each tries to outflank the other, either by studiously arguing against points made by the other or by studiously ignoring their position as absurd or outdated. Straw men and red herrings abound in this debate. Some see in this an age-old ideological opposition between Left and Right; others see a contest between theory and practice. In this debate, “radical” “postmodern” scholars have seized the
epistemological and theoretical high ground. Consider Louis Montrose’s position:

By the textuality of histories, I mean to suggest, finally, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question—traces whose survival we cannot assume to be merely contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement; and secondly, that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediation when they are construed as the “documents” upon which historians ground their own texts, called “histories.”

Closer to the world of Southeast Asia, Hendrick Maier challenges the assumption that Malay historical texts were even intended to refer to the “real” world of past events, to be the sort of histories with which we are familiar. Instead of reading Malay hikayats (narrative accounts of the past), referentially as historical sources that can be used to reconstruct the past, what we should seek is a pleasurable and interesting reading that speaks to us in the present. While we can examine how readers in different positions and periods made sense of a given work, imbuing it with their presumptions, questions, and perceptions, no one reading of a hikayat can be considered true or accurate. Nineteenth-century Malays and contemporary Malays, early colonial officials and late colonial officials, not to mention postcolonial scholars, all read hikayats differently. There can be, he argues, no final reading.

According to Maier, then, scholars should abandon the sure-to-fail effort to reconstruct the authentic past. Contrast this with Keith Windschuttle’s position against what he sees as the onslaught of “theoretical and literary interlopers who are now so hungrily stalking the corridors.” In his provocatively titled The Killing of History: How a Discipline is Being Murdered by Literary Critics and Social Theorists, Windschuttle maintains that traditional historical narrative and inductive reasoning remains a reliable, objective way of pursuing truth and knowledge about the world that faces no devastating philosophical obstacles:

Although they are narratives of unique, unrepeatable events and are not involved in formulating general laws or making predictions, historical explanations share [scientific] characteristics with several other fields of study including evolutionary biology, geology and recent approaches to cosmology. Like these fields, the history of human affairs is defined by its study of
the variance over time of its subject matter. Again, like them, its explanations are grounded in contingency. What happens in history is not random but is contingent upon everything that came before. . . . Historians adhere to a disciplined methodology that involves the construction of explanations from evidence. The evidence they use is not given but is something they must, first, discover and second, analyse for authenticity and significance for the explanation. . . . Although much historical research may be inspired and initiated by historians’ values and theories, the kind of documentation and reference citation used within the discipline means that their explanations can be tested, corroborated or challenged by others. Hence the findings made by historical explanation are the product of a properly scientific methodology.\(^3\)

On one side, then, is a faith in the essential soundness of historical narrative and analysis, and on the other an equally strong faith that what historians write can never reliably represent the past.

This debate and the search for a decisive conclusion will certainly continue, for at issue is what form the doing of history will take in the future. Stanley Fish has argued that this opposition between two armed camps is misguided. He believes that theorizing the possibility of historical knowledge and giving historical accounts of the past are two separate activities. Once the influence of class, gender, race, and culture are acknowledged, and the inherently and ultimately tentative and partial nature of all knowledge about the world is granted, Fish asks, “Where then does this leave us? Precisely where we have always been, making cases for the significance and shape of historical events with the help of whatever evidence appears to us to be relevant or weighty.”\(^4\)

Yet there is a danger here of partitioning intellectual work, allowing “traditional” historians to blissfully go on doing what they have always done, not needing to heed the insights and implications of postmodern questioning, while relieving “new” historians and literary critics of the effort and responsibility of actually saying something about what happened long ago and what this means to us today. This balkanization is the norm within many history departments, where seminars on “historiography” are sequestered from seminars on “history” proper. Students are encouraged to find the proper balance. Some theory is good (but not too much), and it certainly should not interfere unduly with writing a dissertation about what happened in the past.

This work on early modern Makassar is framed by the context of this debate. It cannot resolve the debate to anyone’s satisfaction, nor is that
its intent. My position will surely be clear in its pages. More importantly, this work asserts that a valuable contribution may be to shift the terms of the debate by focusing on studying how the past is apprehended, by studying what Greg Dening calls “history-making” as a practice. Surely it is here in this activity, in questions of what the past means and what people in the present do with the past, that the epistemological status and knowledge of the past converge.

And indeed within history as a discipline and Indonesian studies in particular, the nature and effects of history-making have begun to attract attention. In a fine study John Pemberton describes how the past as ritual has been deployed in New Order Indonesia to promote and fetishize political stability. Part of an oppositional collection of scholars centered at Cornell University who decry the policies of the Suharto era, Pemberton critiques the perverse and political ends to which this conception of Indonesia’s past has been put. But here too there is a danger of implying that while all history-making is partial, this particular form of New Order history-making is exceptionally vile and damaging. It is but a short step to a discourse analysis that focuses exclusively on the genealogy of this history, tracing its offending origins back to the Dutch colonial period, and in so doing eliding the many other historical discourses that have made their presence felt in the archipelago. For instance, a growing body of nuanced and cogent studies investigate New Order (and post-New Order) cultural politics and seek out and give space to alternative locations and possibilities. The position they occupy emphasizes borders, margins, exile, alterity, and subalternity as an alternative to the centrist positions and practices of the New Order. In terms of intellectual force within the American academy and within Indonesian studies, tropes of borders, margins, exile, alterity, and subalternity have occupied the center of authority, united by political opposition to the Suharto regime and philosophical opposition to its policies. A worthy and important project, by omission this populist discourse nevertheless valorizes and legitimizes in the name of the “Indonesian people” other unexamined but presumably less destructive and distorting forms of history-making. Nor is it far from here to romanticizing a dichotomy between New Order histories and other “authentic” or noncoercive forms of history-making.

In fact, any form of history-making—any situated use of the past in the present—is inherently a practice with disproportionate social and political effects. I am certain none of the authors just cited would disagree. But there has been very little explicit effort to perform genealo-
gies of the many other forms of history making that have developed within Indonesia, to see both the creative force they have and the social and political effects they nourish. It is at this position, within a context of recent literature on Indonesia and framed by a larger intellectual debate over the doing of history, that *Making Blood White* is situated.

**Making the Past Present:**
**History and Its Manifestations**

That the past is a resource upon which humans draw continuously each day is all too often overlooked. Yet it is the past that offers the raw material out of which we construct our selves and societies. It is in our histories that we explain who we are. The imagining of our identities, social lives, and perceptions of how the world works always and inevitably involves making histories from the past. Indeed, this activity is, as Greg Dening remarked, "so ordinary and easy an act that we do not have a word to describe it." Elaborating further, he writes,

> What I do here so self-consciously we all do unreﬂectively every day of our lives. In gossip, in nostalgic memories, in family anecdote, in toasts and speeches, in anniversary ceremonies, in *rites de passage*, in symbolic actions, we are always making History by crafted stories. We live by and in our crafted stories. Our social and cultural life is a theatre in which we display both ourselves and a signiﬁcant past. And the meaning of our stories is us, in our roles, in our relationship, in the structures of our society, in the systems of our culture.  

By virtue of being made in the present, histories inescapably speak to and of the present. Often subtly, but rarely simply, histories contain reflections of the present. The kind of stories found ﬁt to tell about the past cannot but mirror the class, gender, ideological, and historical background of the teller. Yet too often historians acknowledge this inevitability with reluctance and regret, believing that it compromises and devalues an older and nobler search for knowledge. But for those interested in history making, this entanglement of past and present offers a rich ﬁeld of study. It is the use to which the past could be put that I will focus on.

The past can be drawn upon in a multitude of ways. Most common, perhaps, is seeking in the past shared origins and experiences at the expense of differences and divisions, thereby promoting the feeling, and thus the reality, of social unity. At the other extreme, and common too,
is the politically interested selection of particular facts and plots from all the past has to offer in order to bolster and justify the dominance of certain social groups. Social rivalries without rival histories would be rare indeed.

The act of history making, and the social, cultural, and political contexts in which it is always enmeshed, was as much a feature of early modern Makassar as it is today. For Makassarese too the past offered a space in which they could speak to themselves and others about their cultural values, social relations, and political formations. Certainly it would be an error to say that before the spread of literacy Makassarese were without history—that is, without stories they recounted about the significant past.  

However, with the spread of literacy, even a literacy restricted to an elite, the nature of the stories Makassarese told about the past changed fundamentally in form and content. Makassarese created new kinds of histories that served new purposes. Chronicles, genealogies, king lists, treaties, diaries, law codes, and advice about how to govern flourished beginning in the sixteenth century. All bridged past and present in novel ways. The wide-ranging social, political, and cultural effects of these new kinds of written histories on Makassar are the subject of this book. But if Makassarese written histories in particular will merit close attention, it would be useful to consider more broadly the mediums in which the past is made present.

The past travels to the present by a number of routes. We live amid the past, surrounded by monuments, names, buildings, objects, habits of thought, patterns of behavior, and turns of phrase that bring the past into the present. These material and immaterial traces of the past are so ubiquitous that we often forget they exist, but as David Lowenthal writes, "The past is everywhere. All around us lie features which, like ourselves and our thoughts, have more or less recognizable antecedents. Relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Each particular trace of the past ultimately perishes, but collectively they are immortal. Whether it is celebrated or rejected, attended to or ignored, the past is omnipresent." The past, living and thriving in the present, gives meaning to our lives without which we would quite literally be lost and bereft of identity. This crucial past is brought forward through the years in a variety of mediums, but four seem particularly important: places, practices, objects, and narratives. Of these four, historians are specialists in the last, focusing their attentions on the efforts of people who consciously make histories out of the past. Yet the other three are equally
worthy of our attention, and in many societies carry the burden of the past into the present. Consider each of these four in turn.

Historical places allow us the illusion of traveling back in time. Sites as simple as a bend in a river and as complex as the vast, managed monuments of national governments stand for a past that on the one hand is no more, but that on the other hand survives in our memories and attendance at such “historical” sites. They urge that the past not be lost. This attention to identify particular locations as places where the past is recalled is universal. Among the Apache, named places served as spatial anchors in traditional narratives, “summarizing them, as it were, and condensing into compact form their essential moral truths.” Among the Ilongot of northern Luzon, Renato Rosaldo discerned a sense of time rooted in movement between places. Ilongot associated places with past events, travel with the passage of time. History was seen as a journey along a path, as a movement through space in which “people walk along a trail and stop at a sequence of named resting places.” Like movement itself, Ilongot perceived history as unpredictable and improvised rather than obeying a fixed pattern.

In this predilection to encode the past in a spatial landscape Apache and Ilongot are not alone. In as distant a time and place as revolutionary France, reformers in Caen plotted a revolutionary procession that bypassed old routes, skirting religious and political sites associated with a tainted past, to establish in travel a commemoration of the revolution. “The festival that they invented erased memories” and, in so doing, attempted to define the shape of later historical memory.

Not all places are equal in historical value. Although there are no people without history, there are places without history. Some sites are extraordinarily rich. Sigmund Freud imagined a Rome in which all its myriad historical layers, its “long and copious past,” coexisted in the present. “On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of today as bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but on the same site also Agrippa’s original edifice; indeed, the same ground would support the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the old temple over which it was built. And the observer would need merely to shift the focus of his eyes, perhaps, or change his position, in order to call up a view of either the one or the other.” The material traces of many eras survive and cluster at this one location, making modern Rome a fascinating mélange of historical events, structures, and people.

Elsewhere, a single event may vest a place with extraordinary and durable significance for later inhabitants and visitors. To its citizens, the
assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas haunted the meaning of that city’s significance in American history for decades. So ripe with historical meaning are places such as Hiroshima and Agincourt that merely to speak their names is to conjure up entire histories. Naming in fact is a powerful way of charging a place with historical meaning. European explorers during the early modern era consistently (re)named newly encountered areas, symbolically establishing them within a model of the world based on European thought and interests. Not dissimilarly, Chinese travelers inscribed the landscape by physically engraving literary texts onto stone landscapes. “The text altered the scene by shaping the perceptions of later travelers and guiding those who sought to follow in the footsteps of earlier talents. Often, local figures would request or commission such inscriptions by notable visitors to signify the importance of such a place. Certain sites thus became shrines in the literary culture, eliciting further inscriptions through the centuries.”

In contrast to sites redolent with past associations, other places seem to have no remembered past. In the Makassarese Sinriliq Kappalaq Talumbatua, its hero journeys from place to place, from community to community, crossing long distances in between that in contrast to these communities have no apparent significance. Such wastelands may of course become inscribed with historical meaning or may already have meaning for others. But never does the past lie evenly upon the land. Any landscape may be viewed as a mosaic of locations with differing histories that are themselves continually debated and changing. This past is encoded in the landscape and read when places are visited, passed, and mentioned. We live in a landscape that cannot but bear witness to the past that preceded us.

As important a medium as places for preserving the past are the practices carried out at them. Practices—and in particular those recognized with the status of “rituals”—are of course politically charged instruments designed to shape social relations in the present, as many have recognized. But actions are also a form of history-making. Rituals such as the revolutionary procession in Caen can be read as affirmations of particular interpretations of past events. Constructing a ritual to be witnessed by a wide public is one effective means of visibly making a history of the past. On Sumba in eastern Indonesia, annual pasola jousting has been transformed from a religious rite in which the historical relations between communities was dramatized to a folkloric celebration of “traditional culture” staged for tourists and visiting dignitaries. Both are performances that present the past with very different terms and meanings, making a history as they are enacted. Among the Toraja in central Sul-
wesi, each year before sowing new rice a rite known as medatu was performed in which Toraja went down to pay symbolic tribute to the ruler of Luwuq in exchange for the fertility this sacred center provided. Other communities gave tribute of cloth, slaves, or a buffalo horn filled with gold, but all these ritual exchanges enacted an initial alliance between highland and lowland as well as annually confirming this historical link.\textsuperscript{18}

Paul Connerton cogently argues that repetitive, formal actions are effective mnemonic devices, more effective in fact than written texts. “Ritual movements preserve,” he writes. “This is the source of their importance and persistence as mnemonic systems. Every group, then, will entrust to bodily automatisms the values and categories which they are most anxious to conserve. They will know how well the past can be kept in mind by a habitual memory sedimented in the body.”\textsuperscript{19} Shared social or communal memories in particular are best preserved in the public, ritual actions that groups enact together. In practices, like places, the past survives.

The ritual exchanges between Toraja and Luwuq allude as well to the importance of objects as vehicles for bringing the past into the present. One aspect of this importance is the physical presence of objects within the community. Janet Hoskins describes the centrality of such history-laden objects in affirming community identity in the present.

In a nonliterate society, where “documentary evidence” takes the form of tombstones, heirloom urns, and sea worm swarmings, ritual provides the locus for an imaginative reflection upon the past. The material traces of the ancestors are assembled for collective examination, their names are repeated in prayers and invocations, and their continuing power is “tested” through propitiatory offerings. This ritual experience is, in the end, a form of self-knowledge.\textsuperscript{20}

Objects have a unique ability to make the past visible, to give it a tangible form. Being present, they bear direct witness to the past and are thus often the locus or reference point for historical claims. In such societies we might speak like Hoskins of a “great things” tradition of history instead of a “great men,” “great women,” or we should add “great events” approach to the past.\textsuperscript{21} But while such objects themselves are incontrovertible, the historical meanings they carry are always contested and dependent upon who possesses them. For example, the Elgin marbles taken from Athens and currently found in the British Museum can be used to make a variety of histories: of rapacious British imperialism, of modern Greek inadequacies, of a universal cultural heritage belonging to all humankind, of a glorious past that belongs to and in Athens.
Even more than possession of places, possession of objects carries with it the right to incorporate them into histories, to determine how the past will speak to the present. Possession, as it were, is nine-tenths of the past.

Objects also are superbly malleable assets in history-making because, being durable, they survive for generations and are passed on from one person or group to another. Objects can circulate socially in a way that places and practices cannot. This attribute has long attracted attention; among anthropologists discussion of “the gift” as a topic of analysis has a lengthy history. Circulating in this fashion, objects acquire new historical meanings as the traces of previous owners become part of an object’s significance. Which objects become the focus of such attention is unpredictable, for any object can be made to carry semantic meanings. The exchange of cloth, for example, is used in many societies to speak about relationships between people, between groups, and with the unseen world. In Makassar, the Sja’ir Perang Mengkasar describes how Sultan Hasanuddin sent his ally, the victorious ruler of Talloq, a gold-patterned chintz, then upon his return presented him “a gift of raiment, the choicest cloths from the regions to the West, glittering as though they were made of glass.” Other nobles too were given first a headdress, then cloth, a kris, a cutlass, and a ring. More than mere rewards, these items bore with them the power and prestige—the indelible imprint—of their royal giver. This new past gave them new historical meaning. For these reasons and more, objects from the past play a crucial role in later history-making. This role, however, is never simple. As Greg Dening wrote of Europeans in the Marquesas, their “problem was to transmit across the beaches their own particular signs of institutions and roles. How could Cook communicate the idea of property when even he himself could not make explicit all the interconnections of religion, law, government, economy and value that were contained in a simple nail?” Objects from the past are suspended in the webs of culture, structures of society, and discourses of power of the present. The histories that can be made with them are always partial. All of these contexts make and remake objects from the past.

In summary, to places, practices, and objects histories attach. Places, practices, and objects bring into the present the past about and with which histories are made. Tied to each are narratives short or long about the past they incarnate. They anchor the past and make it available to those in the present. Though not often viewed in this light, written histories perform the same function.

Typically, a historian would not feel the need to justify relying on written sources from the past to construct his or her history, but a word
about precisely this is important. Makassarese historical texts take center stage in this work not simply because they are the abundant and comfortable material I am accustomed to, but because of their privileged status within Makassarese historical discourse. In most societies written histories carry only a small portion of the past into the present. Naturally this is true of oral societies such as early Makassar. But in Makassar the advent of historical literacy brought about a revolution in history-making. The histories contained in written manuscripts occupied a prestigious and lofty social position. Places, practices, and objects did not diminish in significance, but indeed established the paradigm in which Makassarese viewed historical manuscripts. These manuscripts were ritually venerated sacred objects carefully preserved at guarded locations. The nature, significance, and effects of this expansion of the past in the present are the subject of the chapters that follow.

Early modern Makassarese brought the past into the present using all four of these mediums. From locations as specific as the installation stone of the *tumanurung* in Kale Gowa to places as large as Gowa (the largest and best-known Makassarese polity) itself, Makassarese believed that certain spots were charged with historical potency where the past remained alive in the present. Rituals carried out at such places were also acts of history making. The installation of Gowa’s rulers was a per-

Figure 1. Historical reenactment of *kalomboang* cleansing ritual
formance that re-created the founding of Gowa at the tumanurung’s descent. This was a history made to privilege Gowa, just as annual Idul Fitri celebrations at the Ballaq Lompoa (Gowa’s royal palace) commemorated the coming of Islam to Makassar in a history that bolstered Gowa’s status. Figure 1 shows part of a 1997 ritual procession drawing water from a well with which to cleanse Gowa’s sacred kalompoang, or regalia.

Among the most historically potent objects through which the past flowed in Makassar were the named royal crown (Salakowa) and sword (Sudanga) of Gowa. Possessing them made their bearer symbolically (and at times effectively) the rightful descendant of Gowa’s founders. Beginning in the sixteenth century, written manuscripts were a medium in which new histories of the past were preserved. The past itself seemed to adhere to and survive within these written vessels. All of these modes of making the past present are examined in the chapters that follow. Particular attention, however, is paid to Makassarese history-making at the conjunction of the historicity of places, practices, and objects: written accounts of the past. The advent of written histories engendered powerful changes in Makassarese society, and these changes will be my particular focus.

The Argument

This study examines the ways in which the past was conceived, interpreted, and used in early modern Makassar. More exactly, it is a study of a shift in historical consciousness, and of the social, cultural, and political effects that shift had, following the advent of literacy in early modern Makassar. History in Makassar was always about more than the past. The past gave the present meaning, and histories were the medium in which those meanings were conveyed, asserted, and debated. Makassarese based political struggles and social rivalries on historical claims. More than this, the forms in which Makassarese wrote about the past were closely tied to particular political and social formations. Historians studying early modern Makassar cannot but be struck by the uncanny correspondence between the social and political order that Makassarese created and the histories they wrote during this period. The kinds of histories Makassarese wrote belonged to this age, and when this age was no more, changes in how Makassarese thought about and wrote about the past were inevitable. An extraordinary example concerns chronicles.

After the final defeat of Gowa in 1669 by the Dutch East India Com-
pany and their Bugis allies, Makassarese no longer added to the Gowa and Talloq chronicles. The chronicles, products of and about a golden age of glorious achievements by these twin polities, had lost the social context that gave them meaning. To continue to write chronicles made no sense in Gowa. In his 1759 history of Makassar, Roelof Blok, the Dutch governor at Makassar, wrote that Makassarese told him they had deliberately stopped adding to their chronicles and would not continue until they regained their independence from the Dutch. After 1669 the chronicles would acquire new meanings from changed circumstances, increasingly betokening a distant, proud past that Makassarese hoped would return, but that contrasted strikingly with the meager present. Chronicles would be copied, but not composed. There developed, it seems, a sense in Makassarese minds that the periods before and after the conquest were distinct eras. The past later Makassarese sought to bring into the present was the revered past of the preconquest era, a golden age unsullied by defeat and decline.

The most essential idea argued in this work is that histories are not just records of the past, but themselves forces or agents that affect the course of developments. Though hard to pin down precisely, things variously described as “historical consciousness,” “mentality,” and “perceptions of the past” do exist. They are not simply structured by the prevailing social, cultural, or ideological contexts in which they are made; they also shape those contexts. More than just mirrors supposedly allowing us access to the “spirit” or “mind” of an age, histories of the past should be the focus of explicit study as historical objects in their own right. Certainly more difficult to study than the economic, political, or social forces for which most historical sources seem best suited, they are nonetheless no less potent engines capable of preserving or transforming the worlds in which humans live. The three parts of this study examine an evolution in historical consciousness among early modern Makassarese and trace the effects this had on the way they constructed their world.

With an eye then toward larger issues, part 1 of this study describes the manuscripts and stories in which Makassarese made their histories in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter 1 provides the reader discussions of three crucial contexts that frame this work: the ongoing scholarly debate over how to evaluate Indonesian historical texts, an overview of the historical trends and events in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Makassar, and an assessment of the central place of culture in this study of early modern Makassar. Chapter 2 undertakes the
laborious but essential work of describing the evolution of written scripts and genres of historical writing in early modern Makassar. Special emphasis is placed on the social and cultural context in which these new forms of history-making developed. Chapter 3 then examines the passage from oral to written histories. Understanding their fundamentally different forms, concerns, and social functions is an essential prerequisite to measuring the impact and significance of written histories in and on Makassarese society.

In part 2 the nature and consequences of this shift in how the past was made present in written histories are examined in three related areas. Chapter 4 explores how written histories were vital in the creation of a new, increasingly hierarchically ranked social formation based on a fundamental distinction between red-blooded and white-blooded descent. Most critically, written histories describing the descent of “nobles” from a white-blooded heavenly being (tumanurung) separated and elevated this social elite from red-blooded Makassarese “commoners.” Chapter 5 examines the parallel process of political centerization, in which new pasts displaced old and in so doing established Gowa as the center of Makassarese society. Gowa increasingly became both the model by which other Makassarese polities judged themselves and their past and the location of the most significant historical events in Makassar’s past. Chapter 6 turns to the influence of written histories in creating the idea that Makassarese possessed something called “a culture” that could be defined and to which they could refer. This process enhanced the ability of white-blooded Makassarese to reinforce their privileged social position, reifying and extending a stratified social hierarchy by making it part of the “core” of Makassarese culture. Though described sequentially, these processes were simultaneous; each depended on and was strengthened by the others.

Finally, the conclusion briefly revisits the main threads of argument made in earlier chapters, but takes as its main task considering the implications this work has for the study of the past in early modern Southeast Asia and beyond. It offers an assessment of the predominant way historians perceive the study of this place and time and suggests an approach to the region that promises to enrich and extend not only our understanding of the past, but of how the past might be better approached in the histories we make. As a beginning toward this end we turn first to the world of history-making in sixteenth-century Makassar.