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## **A history of Alorese (Austronesian) combining linguistic and oral history**

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### **Citation**

Sulistyono, Y. (2022, February 16). *A history of Alorese (Austronesian): combining linguistic and oral history*. LOT dissertation series. LOT, Amsterdam. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3275052>

Version: Publisher's Version

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

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# Migration stories of the Alorese people<sup>5</sup>

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### 3.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to investigate the past of the Alorese people through their oral history, particularly stories about migration. The stories are summarized chronologically so they can provide insights into the events of the past.

In order to gather data for this study of Alorese oral history, I visited fourteen Alorese villages and conducted interviews with local traditional leaders, which were recorded on video. The fourteen villages in question are Kangge, Marisa, Beang Onong, Baranusa, Wailawar, Helangdohi, Pandai, Bana, Munaseli, Buaya, Ternate, Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong. These villages are located in several pockets along the coast covering a distance of over 100 kilometers' travel by boat. Figure 3.1 shows the location of the villages.

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<sup>5</sup> Part of this chapter is published in: Sulistyono, Yunus. 2021. "Interpreting oral history from the Alorese people in eastern Indonesia". *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*. 13(4): 339–350. Available at: <https://rus.ucf.edu.cu/index.php/rus/article/view/2173>.

Figure 3.1: Locations of the Alorese villages



The westernmost village is called Marisa, located on Kangge Island. To the east of Marisa is the nearby village of Kayang. Further to the east lies a newly established village, called Beang Onong. Around 10 kilometers to the southeast of Beang Onong is Baranusa. To the north, in northeast Pantar, a large number of Alorese groups are settled in the villages of Wailawar, Pandai, Bana, Helangdohi, and Munaseli. In this area, most of the villages are located near the sea, except Helangdohi, which is located in the interior mountains. Further to the east, in the Strait of Pantar, Alorese groups are found on two islands called Ternate and Buaya. The Alorese share the island of Ternate with speakers of a Papuan Alor-Pantar language called Reta (ISO 639-3: ret). On the Alor Peninsula, the Alorese live in three main villages: Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong.

My fieldwork in these villages generated oral history data. Sources for the oral history take two forms: oral testimonies and written texts. Oral testimonies are drawn from the interviews conducted during fieldwork (cf. §2.2.1.1), while written texts are drawn from documents provided by the traditional leaders, of which copies were made during fieldwork.

In the early stages of this research, the interviews were based on a set of questions related to a wide variety of cultural practices, such as traditional art performances, marriage, weaving tradition, religion, migration, clans, and sociopolitical roles.<sup>6</sup> Of all these cultural themes, the topics of migration and clans were the most prominent. The Alorese migration stories and clan histories, summarized in this chapter, recurred consistently in all of the interviews.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 3.2 provides information about previous studies of Alorese oral history. Section 3.3 presents the methods applied, including data collection and ways of interpreting the stories. In Section 3.4, I discuss migration stories along the lines of six main themes: (i) the flood on Rusa Island, (ii) the foreign arrivals on Pantar, (iii) the rise and fall of Munaseli, (iv) the expansions of Pandai, (v) the flood on Lapang-Batang, and (vi) the expansion to Ternate and Buaya. In addition, I discuss Alorese clans and their origins in Section 3.5. Finally, Section 3.6 provides a summary and conclusions.

### **3.2 Previous studies**

Previous studies of Alorese oral history mainly discuss themes relating to the history of wars, political alliances, myths, and legends about the beginnings of a given Alorese group. Lemoine (1969) is one of the first descriptions of Alorese

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A for the complete questionnaire.

oral history, which focuses on the community settled in northeast Pantar. This publication was the first to reveal narratives about the arrival of people from Java and a war between Munaseli and Pandai.

Gomang (1993) discusses political alliances among several Alorese kingdoms based on oral history. The political alliances were used to display Alorese traditional values in creating harmony among communities inhabiting areas of Alor-Pantar, which experienced frequent local conflicts. This depiction from Gomang is based on the interpretation of oral history obtained from three villages on the Alor Peninsula, namely Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong.

Rodemeier (2006) is a description of oral narratives of the Alorese people living in northeast Pantar. This study focuses on the discussion of Alorese myths, legends, and forms of rituals. The myths include stories about the beginning of the Alorese people in the mountains of northeast Pantar, particularly in the village of Helangdohi. Here can be found a legend about two babies who are believed to be the ancestors of today's Alorese people. In addition, several forms of rituals related to story telling are described in this study.

Wellfelt (2016) seeks to understand themes relating to indigenous history, socio-geographic grouping, local actors, and colonial interference in many communities across Alor Island. This study develops a method called *historyscapes*, in which various heterogeneous sources are incorporated to understand the connections between local people and non-existent geographical references. One chapter discusses the historyscape of the Alor Peninsula (Wellfelt, 2016:228–287), covering the history of the Alorese people living in the villages of Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, Dulolong, and on Ternate and Buaya. The discussion concerns stories about ancestors and conflicts among communities on Alor.

In linguistic studies of the Alorese language, it is usually stated that the Alorese speakers are descendants of groups migrating eastward from the Lamaholot area, which includes the eastern part of Flores, and the islands Adonara, Solor, and coastal areas of Lembata (Doyle, 2010:25; Klammer, 2011:8; Moro, 2018:180, 2019:381; Moro & Fricke, 2020:116). Based on legends about the arrival of a Javanese king who came to Pantar around 600 years ago, it has been suggested that the groups from the Western Lamaholot area settled on Pantar roughly in the the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

In general, studies of Alorese oral history have focused on specific Alorese groups living on the Alor Peninsula and in northeastern Pantar. The oral history of groups living in the western part of Pantar has not yet been described. The present study is the first to describe Alorese oral history from a wider

perspective, including Alorese groups living across the whole Alor-Pantar archipelago.

### 3.3 Methods

In this study, I combine survey and interview methods to collect data. I conducted a survey during visits to fourteen villages and carried out interviews with the local traditional leaders as my consultants. The aim in doing so was to reconstruct the history of Alorese through oral history (cf. §1.2). In the following sections, I describe the data collection, limitations, and approaches to interpreting the migration stories.

#### 3.3.1 Data collection

Table 3.1 lists the fourteen villages visited, the type of data that were collected, and details about the consultants. The villages are listed from west to east (see Figure 3.1). The data include historical narratives in the form of videotaped interview and written texts.

Table 3.1: Villages, types of data, and consultant details

Village	Type of data	Consultant unique identifier	Gender & age
Marisa	Interview	01401_mrs	Male, 62
Kayang	Interview	01301_kya	Male, 88
Beang Onong	Interview	01202_beo	Male, 71
Baranusa	Interview, texts	01103_bar	Male, 58
Wailawar	Interview, texts	01002_war	Male, 63
Pandai	Interview	00901_pan	Male, 68
Helangdohi	Interview	00801_hel	Male, 83
Bana	Interview, texts	00702_ban & 00703_ban	2 Males, unknown
Munaseli	Interview, texts	00601_mun	Male, 68
Ternate	Interview	00501_ter	Male, 66
Buaya	Interview	00401_bya	Male, unknown
Alor Besar	Interview, texts	00301_alb	Male, 61
Alor Kecil	Interview	00201_alk	Male, 69
Dulolong	Interview	00101_dul	Male, 63

Oral testimonies were collected through interviews conducted during fieldwork in 2018. The interviews were conducted with the local *ketua adat* (traditional leaders) as the main consultants. The *ketua adat* are the ones who

understand the details of the local oral history and who have the right to tell historic stories. A set of questions was prepared in advance for the interview (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and thus the oral stories are told in Indonesian. They vary in length from 15 to 68 minutes (see Table 3.2). During each interview, at least one consultant was present in front of the camera. In addition, two or three other elders were present in the same room to give input and corrections. Details of the collection of video recordings and the corresponding files are provided in Table 3.2. In the villages of Wailawar and Alor Kecil, two videos are listed in the table because, in both cases, the recording process was interrupted due to an empty battery in the recording device; thus two recordings resulted from a single interview session.

*Table 3.2: Video interviews on Alorese oral history\**

Video unique identifier	Format	Length	Size <sup>†</sup>
AOLYS_Marisa_2018_07_16_Cultural_Interview_01401-01	MP4	32 min	708
AOLYS_Kayang_2018_07_14_Cultural_Interview_01301-01	MP4	43 min	968
AOLYS_Beang_Onong_2018_07_16_Cultural_Interview_01202-01	MP4	15 min	331
AOLYS_Baranusa_2018_07_18_Cultural_Interview_01103-01	MP4	41 min	919
AOLYS_Wailawar_2018_05_21_Cultural_Interview_01002-01	MP4	23 min	449
AOLYS_Wailawar_2018_05_21_Cultural_Interview_01002-02	MP4	31 min	682
AOLYS_Pandai_2018_05_23_Cultural_Interview_00901-01	MP4	68 min	1490
AOLYS_Helangdohi_2018_05_20_Cultural_Interview_00801-01	MP4	35 min	776
AOLYS_Bana_2018_05_19_Cultural_Interview_00702_00703-01	MP4	42 min	936
AOLYS_Munaseli_2018_05_24_Cultural_Interview_00601-01	MP4	40 min	889
AOLYS_Ternate_2018_05_28_Cultural_Interview_00501-01	MP4	30 min	653
AOLYS_Buaya_2018_05_30_Cultural_Interview_00401-01	MP4	29 min	640
AOLYS_Alur_Besar_2018_06_06_Cultural_Interview_00301-01	MP4	63 min	1410
AOLYS_Alur_Kecil_2018_06_05_Cultural_Interview_00201-01	MP4	16 min	356
AOLYS_Alur_Kecil_2018_06_05_Cultural_Interview_00201-02	MP4	20 min	443
AOLYS_Dulolong_2018_06_04_Cultural_Interview_00101-01	MP4	47 min	970

\*Accessible at <https://dataverse.nl/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.34894/APQDTX>

<sup>†</sup>in mega bytes (MB)

In addition to video interviews, a number of written texts about oral history were provided by some of the consultants. The texts are written in Indonesian. Five of the fourteen villages have preserved written texts, listed in Table 3.3. Texts from Pandai and Alor Besar, identified in the table as

AOLYS\_pan\_WT-01, AOLYS\_pan\_WT-02, and AOLYS\_alb\_WT-02, are reproduced in Appendix A due to their relevance to the discussion in this chapter.

*Table 3.3: Texts about Alorese oral history obtained during fieldwork\**

Villages	Document unique identifier	Length	Contents
Alor Besar	AOLYS_alb_WT-01	10 p	History of Alor Besar Kingdom
	AOLYS_alb_WT-02	4 p	Family tree of the Alor Besar royals
Bana	AOLYS_ban_WT-01	4 p	History of Bana village
Pandai	AOLYS_pan_WT-01	15 p	History of Pandai Kingdom
	AOLYS_pan_WT-02	27 p	History of Munaseli Kingdom
Wailawar	AOLYS_war_WT-01	17 p	Wailawar village profile
Baranusa	AOLYS_bar_WT-01	10 p	Clans and traditional practices in Baranusa
	AOLYS_bar_WT-02	104 p	History of Baranusa Kingdom

\*PDF documents are accessible at <https://vici.marianklamer.org/manuscripts.html> and <https://dataverse.nl/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.34894/APQDTX>.

### 3.3.2 Limitations

Some limitations of the present study should be addressed. First, the interviews were conducted as direct ‘question and answer’ sessions with the researcher, during which the consultants told short narratives about their community’s oral history. Therefore, no full narration of stories was documented or recorded. Second, the scope of the present discussion only covers oral history about migration stories. Data collected on other Alorese cultural features during the interviews were excluded. Third, only fourteen out of roughly twenty Alorese groups living across the Alor-Pantar archipelago were sampled. Lastly, the discussion about Alorese clans in Section 3.5 covers only some of the Alorese clans; namely, the ones that show a relatively clear naming pattern. The remaining clans were excluded (cf. Appendix A).

### 3.3.3 Interpreting the stories

In this section, I discuss how the oral history data are interpreted and summarized in this chapter. I present examples of how information from oral testimonies and written texts are understood in building a chronology of the



migration history of the Alorese people. I use the term ‘account’ to refer to a local version of a story based on where it was told. For example, if a story was told in the Baranusa village, it is referred to as the ‘Baranusa account’.

Narrative knowledge in the Alorese community is preserved in two ways: orally and in writing. The written version usually represents the oral consensus which has been agreed upon through long debates or meetings among the elders of the community. These written texts have now become the main source of the narrative knowledge, with which no other members of the community are allowed to disagree. Nevertheless, some variations and differences can still be found in the oral versions. Common differences include inconsistency of character names, animal types, and geographical references.

Turning first to the oral data, Table 3.4 presents an example of how oral testimonies are interpreted. The left column is a direct transcription of the interview in the Indonesian language, which is sometimes mixed with the local Malay variety. The right column is a free translation in English. The free translations are always marked with quotation marks ‘...’. Notes in square brackets [...] are added to clarify the meaning where needed. Furthermore, important parts of the transcriptions (and translations) are highlighted in bold. The fragment in this table relates a legend about the beginnings of Alor Kecil village.

Table 3.4: Fragment of an oral narrative from Alor Kecil (Video unique identifier: AOLYS\_Alор\_Kecil\_2018\_06\_05\_Cultural\_Interview\_00201-01)

1. Desa Alor Kecil ini dahulunya ada penghuni tapi masih terpencar, tidak berkumpul.	1. ‘Alor Kecil used to be inhabited by people, but not united [as one community].’
2. Masih berkelompok-kelompok di masing-masing wilayah, begitu.	2. ‘[They] lived in small groups within their own territories.’
3. Terus, datang seseorang yang namanya <b>Saku Bala Duli</b>	3. ‘And then, a person named <b>Saku Bala Duli</b> arrived.’
4. Dia ini yang melihat bahwa kalau memang ada orang satu wilayah yang ada orang tetapi masih terpencar seperti begini, berarti tidak dapat berbuat sesuatu.	4. ‘He thought, if people are not united [living in one place together], they cannot do anything.’
5. Karena itu, dia sengaja mendatangi dari satu kelompok ke kelompok yang lainnya, meminta kalau dapat mereka berkumpul, kemudian membicarakan bagaimana kalau bisa, mereka buka satu lahan begitu untuk membuat satu perkampungan.	5. ‘Therefore, he systematically came to each group and asked them if they could gather round and talk about a plan to open the land [at a certain place] and build a village.’

6. Ternyata ini diterima dengan baik.	6. 'Apparently, this [suggestion] was well-received.'
7. Jadi, ada satu kelompok yang datangnya dari <i>Munaseli</i> , namanya <i>Bapak Mau</i> .	7. 'Then, there is a group from <b>Munaseli</b> , [its leader was] called <b>Bapak</b> [means 'father'] <b>Mau</b> .'
8. Dia ini punya kepandaianya untuk menimba besi menjadi parang, menjadi pisau, menjadi linggis.	8. 'He had an ability to forge iron into machetes, knives, and crowbars.'

The story presented in the table is apparently a mix of two separate tales. Lines 1–6 sketch the arrival of an important figure (*Saku Bala Duli*) who is regarded as the founder of the Alor Kecil community. The descendants of *Saku Bala Duli* are now members of primary clans in the Alor Kecil village. Then, lines 7–8 tell the arrivals of people from *Munaseli*. Here, my consultant mentions a character named *Bapak Mau*. Based on my interview, the descendants of *Bapak Mau* became a secondary clan in the Alor Kecil community because their ancestors, depicted here as the character *Bapak Mau*, arrived later than *Saku Bala Duli*.

Generally, stories about the beginnings of the Alorese people do not go back to the creation of man, unlike most historical narratives of Western Lamaholot-speaking groups in the Flores-Lembata area.<sup>7</sup> The Alorese stories rather point to certain locations that their ancestors came from. Moreover, the stories are heavily concerned with the order of arrival of the ancestors.

Turning now to the written data, Figure 3.2 provides an example of a written text from the village of Pandai. The text is hand-written by a person named Bahrudin Pella Boka and dated 7 November 2004 (Appendix A). Table 3.5 contains the transcription and translation of this text sample.

<sup>7</sup> An example of this claim is a story found in East Flores, where there is a legend about a clan named *Hipir* that appeared from within the Earth (Ataladjar, 2015:72). Another example is found in Tanjung Bunga, East Flores where the testimony of a local *ketua adat* claims that his ancestors came from inside the Earth (Sulistiyono, 2015a).

Figure 3.2: Sample of a written text from Pandai (AOLYS\_pan\_WT-01, page 7)

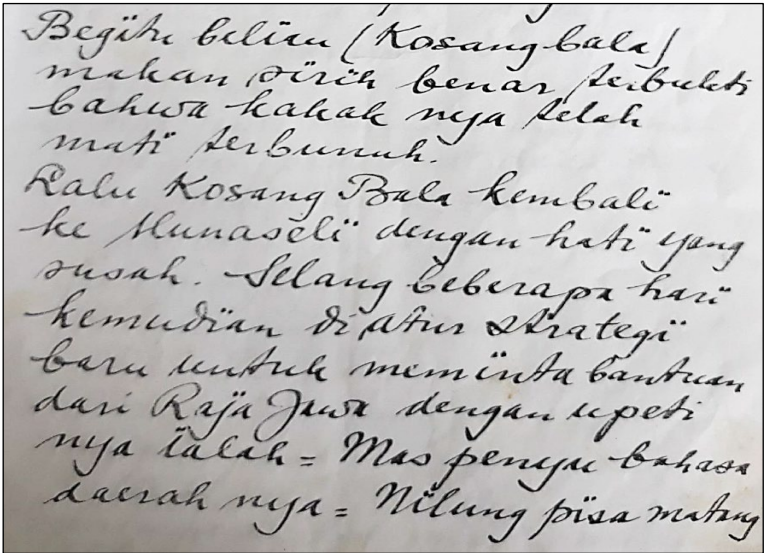


Table 3.5: Transcription and translation of text in Figure 3.2

Begitu beliau ( <i>Kosang Bala</i> ) makan sirih benar terbukti bahwa kakaknya telah mati terbunuh.	‘When he ( <i>Kosang Bala</i> ) was chewing betel nuts, his brother was apparently murdered.’
Lalu Kosang Bala kembali ke Munaseli dengan hati yang susah. Selang beberapa hari kemudian diatur strategi baru untuk meminta bantuan dari <i>Raja Jawa</i> dengan upetinya ialah: mas penyu, bahasa daerahnya: nilung pisa matang.	‘Then, Kosang Bala went back to Munaseli with a saddened heart. A few days later, a new strategy was arranged by asking for help from a <i>Javanese king</i> with a gift [a tribute from Munaseli to the Javanese king] of a golden turtle, called <i>nilung pisa matang</i> .’

This fragment is taken from a text that tells the story of a war between Munaseli and Pandai. Here, a character named *Kosang Bala* is mentioned. He is depicted as a warrior whose older brother was murdered by the Pandai people. This story is documented by the locals based on a locally known narrative about the war between Munaseli and Pandai. The war is also mentioned in several publications (Gomang, 1993:84; Lelang, 2008; Lemoine, 1969:7; Rodemeier, 2006:175, 301–305; Wellfelt, 2016:275).

In this story, a 'Javanese' association is mentioned. This most likely relates to the Javanese empire *Majapahit*, which was a great influential realm in West Nusantara.<sup>8</sup> The theory about Javanese presence on Pantar is essentially based on the mention of the Island of Galiyao (today's Pantar) in the *Negarakertagama* chronicles, written by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit in 1365 (Barnes, 1982:407; Pigeaud, 1962:34). Pantar was referred to as one of the islands conquered by the Majapahit empire in the fourteenth century. Rodemeier (2006:70) states that the mention of the Javanese army in Alorese oral history is probably due to the fact that the Javanese army was known throughout the Nusantara archipelago, and therefore calling them an ally would raise one's reputation. This 'Javanese' association can also be interpreted as referring more generally to immigrants from elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, not necessarily from Java (Klamer, 2011:7).

Several Alorese clans believe that they are descendants of the Javanese people from Majapahit. These clans are generally acknowledged to have a higher status in society because of their 'Javanese' roots. This 'Javanese' association is mainly found in clans in the villages of Pandai and Baranusa.

### 3.4 Migration stories

In this section, I discuss six events that mark migrations of the Alorese people around the Alor-Pantar archipelago. The events include: (i) the flood on Rusa Island, (ii) foreign arrivals on Pantar, (iii) the rise and fall of the Munaseli Kingdom, (iv) the expansion of the Pandai Kingdom, (v) the flood on the Lapang-Batang Islands, and (vi) the expansion to Ternate and Buaya.

#### 3.4.1 The flood on Rusa Island

The island of Rusa is located in the strait between Pantar and Lembata (see Figure 3.1). In the village of Kayang, located in the west of Pantar, people mainly work as seaweed farmers and fishermen. They often go to the nearby islands, such as Kambing and Rusa, when fishing.<sup>9</sup> Similar activities are observed in nearby villages of Beang Onong and Baranusa, from where people regularly travel by boat to islands in the vicinity.

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<sup>8</sup> The term Nusantara is generally used as a cover term for islands spreading from Sumatra to Papua. The term was first used in the Javanese *Negarakertagama* (1365) to refer to islands desired to be conquered by the Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Majapahit in the fourteenth century (Muljana, 2005, 2006; Robson, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> The name *Kambing* and *Rusa* mean 'goat' and 'deer' in Malay.

To the community in west Pantar, including the Alorese, Rusa Island is a place that offers resources. However, to the people from the island of Lembata (west of Rusa), Rusa Island is a sacred place. Barnes (1974:201) states that people from Lembata consider Rusa Island to be the place where the souls of the dead go. This view is probably related to the difficulties encountered by fishermen crossing the strait from Lembata to Pantar, where there are strong sea currents. It is widely known that the waters in the strait between Lembata and Pantar are very dangerous and fishermen can only cross the strait at very specific times. If they fail, their dead bodies are usually buried on nearby islands, such as Rusa, and cannot be brought back to Lembata (Barnes, 1996:320).

Within the Alorese communities on Pantar and Alor, there is a legend of a flood on Rusa Island that caused the existing land to be divided and new islands to emerge. My consultants in Kayang believe that Rusa was once part of Pantar. In addition, my consultants in Alor Kecil claimed that Pantar and Alor were originally one island that had split due to a flood, which also caused the emergence of smaller islands, including the islands of Rusa and Kambing. Furthermore, my consultant in Baranusa said that people from a kingdom on Rusa fled to the mountains of Pantar because of the flood. In Table 3.6, I present oral testimonies of these accounts in a comparative format.

Table 3.6: Kayang, Alor Kecil, and Baranusa accounts of the story of the flood on Rusa (Video unique identifier: AOLYS\_Kayang\_2018\_07\_14\_Cultural\_Interview\_01301-01, AOLYS\_Alор\_Kecil\_2018\_06\_05\_Cultural\_Interview\_00201-01, and AOLYS\_Baranusa\_2018\_07\_18\_Cultural\_Interview\_01103-01)

Kayang account	Alor Kecil account	Baranusa account
Bapak lihat dari sana itu to, ujung lagi. Tsunami naik ini, baru kita hanya bukan menyeberang dengan perahu. Kita hanya <b>menyeberang dengan kaki</b> cari tempat saja. Kita bukan orang pelarian.	Itu menurut cerita raja kerajaan di sana dipimpin oleh Bapak <b>Raja Lapi Loma</b> . [...] Dulunya <b>Pantar dengan Alor itu satu</b> . Tetapi karena air bah, Pantar dan Alor terpisah lalu muncul Pulau Rusa dan Pulau Kambing. <b>Raja Lapi Loma</b> itu raja yang tertua di Alor. Itu letaknya di antara Pantar dan Alor. Sudah tenggelam.	<b>Koli Rawang</b> itu kerajaan di Pulau Rusa. Itu penduduk dari sana karena akibat pengaruh tsunami itu yang mereka lari datang membentuk <b>kerajaan di gunung</b> .

<p>'You look over there, on the tip. The tsunami rose, then we did not cross here by boat. <b>We only crossed [the strait] on foot</b>, looked for a new place. We were not fugitives.'</p>	<p>'According to stories, the kingdom over there [pointing west, referring to Rusa] was led by <b>King Lapi Loma</b>. [...] In the past, <b>Pantar and Alor were one [land]</b>. Because of the flood, Pantar and Alor split up, then Rusa and Kambing emerged. The <b>King[dom of] Lapi Loma</b> is the oldest kingdom in Alor. It is located between Alor and Pantar. It has already sunk [due to the flood].'</p>	<p>'<b>Koli Rawang</b> Kingdom was on Rusa Island. People from there fled because of the tsunami and formed a <b>kingdom in the mountain</b> [possibly referring to the northeast Pantar mountains; Helangdohi].'</p>
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This tale about divided lands and the emergence of new islands is attested in all three of these accounts, which are geographically distant (see Figure 3.1). In the Kayang account, the narrator describes an event of rising sea water. When the flood came, his ancestors rescued themselves by walking from Rusa to Pantar, implying that the Pantar mainland was accessible by foot. In the Alor Kecil account, the narrator indicates the location Rusa Island as if it is located between Alor and Pantar. It is plausible that, from the point of view of Alor Kecil, any islands located in the south and west of Pantar are considered to be located between Alor and Pantar, since one passes these islands when following the coastline of Pantar. In this account, a now-sunken kingdom on Rusa, led by King *Lapi Loma*, is introduced. In addition, the Baranusa account refers to a kingdom named *Koli Rawang* that collapsed because of the flood.

The legend about the lost civilization on Rusa is also discussed by Barnes (1982:410), who mentions archaeological evidence of a finger ring, a figure on a knoll, and an upright monolith. Moreover, a statement from my consultant in the village of Beang Onong attests that when people go to Rusa Island to hunt deer, they can see still the ruins of the kingdom.

The story of the *Koli Rawang* Kingdom is known to the Alorese people in west Pantar through this flood story. The kingdom is believed to be the oldest kingdom in Pantar. In northeast Pantar, there is also a myth about the origin of the Alorese people, involving a flood and two babies (Rodemeier, 2006:103). The two babies (named *Helang* and *Dohi*) were found after a flood and they were then raised by a couple living in the mountains around present-day Helangdohi. The

legend of Rusa in west Pantar strongly correlates with the story from Helangdohi, where the community's ancestors are believed to be the two babies who survived the flood.

A more detailed narration of the flood story on Rusa Island was provided by my consultant in Marisa. Table 3.7 presents a part of the narration.

Table 3.7: *The Marisa account of the story of the flood on Rusa (Video unique identifier: AOLYS\_Marisa\_2018\_07\_16\_Cultural\_Interview\_01401-01)*

1. Menurut legenda cerita orang tua, itu legenda tsunami itu terjadi di <b>Pulau Rusa</b> .	1. 'According to the stories from the elders, the flood happened on <b>Rusa Island</b> .'
2. Sebelum orang Munaseli ke sini.	2. '[It was] before the Munaseli people came here.'
3. Belum, itu tahun yang tidak bisa kita tentukan.	3. 'Not yet, we cannot say the year [because he doesn't know].'
4. Sudah lama.	4. 'It was long time ago.'
5. Ini menurut sejarah yang diceritakan oleh orang tua Alor.	5. 'This is according to a story told by our elders of Alor.'
6. Dan ada orang-orang khusus yang waktu itu ada di Pulau Rusa.	6. '[At that time], there were people on Rusa Island.'
7. Dan dengan adanya tsunami itu mereka lari.	7. 'Because of the flood, they ran away.'
8. Ada yang ke sini.	8. 'Some of them arrived here.'
9. Dalam pengertian artinya raja itu yang disebut dengan <b>Lapi Lomang</b> .	9. 'Meaning, there was a king called <b>Lapi Lomang</b> .'
10. Raja Lapi Lomang dari Istrinya Samu Makiwang.	10. 'King Lapi Lomang and his wife Samu Makiwang.'
11. Dia itu mendalami di sana tinggal di sana, dan menurut sejarah yang saya belajar di orang tua dulu itu, dengan punya anak istri kemudian dengan adanya peristiwa air bah itu maka mereka tinggalkan Pulau Rusa waktu itu.	11. 'He stayed there for a long time and based on stories that I learned from the elders, he had a wife and children, and then because of the flood, they left Rusa Island.'
12. Tapi raja Lapi Lomang datang di sini kemudian anaknya yang disebut dalam sejarah <b>Saku Bala Duli</b> , itu sudah sampai di Alor.	12. 'But King Lapi Lomang arrived here and then his son, mentioned in stories, named <b>Saku Bala Duli</b> , reached Alor.'
13. Yang dia kawin dengan istri orang Alor yang tinggal di Alor Kecil yang punya keturunan ada di sana.	13. 'In which [stories] he then married a wife in Alor and he stayed in Alor Kecil and had offspring there.'

[...]	[...]*
14. Dan dia kerajaan <b>Koli Rawang Wang Weni</b> yang tenggelam ke muka.	14. 'And the Kingdom of <b>Koli Rawang Wang Weni</b> had sunk earlier.'
15. Ke muka tenggelam sesudah itu baru dengan adanya air bah naik menyeberang. <b>Hancurnya Munaseli ini kemudian</b>	15. 'It had sunk and then because of the flood, the people crossed the strait. <b>The collapse of Munaseli Kingdom happened later.</b> '
16. Menurut sejarah <b>Koli Rawang</b> itu hancur duluan.	16. 'According to history, <b>Koli Rawang</b> Kingdom sank first.'
17. Ini di pulau rusa pokoknya di barat sini.	17. 'This happened on Rusa Island to the west of here.'
18. Itu sampai di Tude.	18. 'It reached Tude (West Pantar)'
19. Tapi karena ada bencana penduduknya tersebar.	19. 'But because of the disaster, the people dispersed.'

\*This intermediate part is left out. A complete video recording and the transcriptions of this narrative are available at <https://dataverse.nl/file.xhtml?fileId=139747&version=1.0>.

In this Marisa account, line 1 indicates the location of the flood, Rusa Island. In line 2, and again in line 15, the narrator stresses that the flood happened before the arrival of refugees from Munaseli escaping a war defeat (cf. §3.4.3). A character, named *Lapi Lomang* is mentioned in line 9. This character is similar to King *Lapi Loma* named in the Alor Kecil account in Table 3.6. In line 12, the character *Saku Bala Duli* is again mentioned in reference to the ancestor of the Alor Kecil people (see Table 3.4). Moreover, the Kingdom of *Koli Rawang* is also named in line 14 and 16, similarly to the Baranusa account in Table 3.6.

The legend about a sunken kingdom on Rusa is sometimes linked to the Lapang-Batang flood (cf. §3.4.5) because they both represent a similar type of event, namely the rising of the sea water. Barnes (1982) considers the flood on Rusa to be the same event as the Lapang-Batang flood. He estimates that the flood took place in 1450, and links it with the Lapang-Batang origin of the Lamaholot people. This estimation is based on oral history mentioning a flood that took place a century after the 'Javanese' arrived on Pantar around the year 1357 (Barnes, 1982:411). On the other hand, by referring to the diary of Pigafetta, Ataladjar (2015:37) proposes, that the Lapang-Batang flood took place around 1522–1525, but does not mention Rusa.

Rodemeier (2006:103) implies that there was a kingdom that collapsed due to a flood that happened presumably five generations before the 'Javanese' people arrived on Pantar in the fourteenth century. If we count a generation as twenty-five years, the flood on Rusa may have taken place around the thirteen-



th century. In addition, in Table 3.7, my consultant from Kayang testifies that the flood on Rusa took place before the war in Munaseli; in lines 15–16, he says that first the kingdom on Rusa sank, followed by war in Munaseli. Therefore, I conclude that the flood on Rusa is not the same as the Lapang-Batang flood and that it happened before the ‘Javanese’ (settlers from islands west of Pantar) arrived on Pantar.

### 3.4.2 Settlers from islands west of Pantar

Stories about the ‘Javanese’ settlers on Pantar are widely attested in the villages located in northeastern Pantar (see Figure 3.3). The northeast Pantar area is where the coastal and mountain Alorese groups are settled. The coastal villages include Wailawar, Pandai, Bana, and Munaseli, while the only mountain village is Helangdohi.

Figure 3.3: Alorese villages on Pantar and the Alor Peninsula



In this area, there is a traditional treaty called *Helang anang Dohi anang* lit. ‘Helang child Dohi child’. This treaty is acknowledged by all five villages in northeast Pantar: Helangdohi, Wailawar, Pandai, Bana, and Munaseli. It contains an agreement that the villages in the coastal area are considered the ‘children’ of the village of Helangdohi. The names *Helang* and *Dohi* go back to the legend about the two babies found after the flood on Rusa Island (cf. §3.4.1). A narrative in which the treaty is mentioned is also presented in Rodemeier (2006:154).

The coastal communities were regarded as ‘children’ of the Helangdohi community because they were immigrants who were given permission by the

people in Helangdohi (the original owners of the land) to establish villages in the coastal area. These coastal villages developed into kingdoms and their stories are included in the local oral history. Table 3.8 contains part of a text about the kingdoms in coastal northeast Pantar.

Table 3.8: A fragment about an arrival from the west (AOLYS\_pan\_CQ\_WT-01, page 1)

1. Terjadinya kerajaan Pandai Baranusa ini akibat datangnya seorang dari asal Jawa Sekitar tahun <b>1310</b> yang namanya Majapahit sebab pada <b>1309</b> terjadi pecah perang antara Baginda Raja Kertarajasa dari Majapahit yang berpusat di Kediri dengan <b>Rangga Lawe</b> sebagai adipati Tuban.	1. 'The beginning of the Pandai-Baranusa Kingdom was when a person called Majapahit from Java arrived in <b>1310</b> due to a war in <b>1309</b> between King Kertarajasa from Majapahit, which was centered on Kediri, and <b>Rangga Lawe</b> , the leader of the Tuban Regency.'
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The text tells a story about the arrival of people from Java. The first striking feature is the mention of the years 1309 and 1310, whereas Lemoine (1969) and Rodemeier (2006) do not state specific years for the Javanese arrivals. The mention of this specific time is also seen in other local texts, such as those in Baranusa (cf. §3.4.4.2). It is unclear how the local sources and the authors of the texts came up with these years. However, they often correlate with the history of the Javanese empire, Majapahit.

The history of Majapahit is widely known because it features in Indonesia's national history textbooks. A Javanese character *Rangga Lawe* is mentioned in the fragment in Table 3.8. According to Indonesian history textbooks (e.g. Poesponegoro and Notosusanto, 1984:430), *Rangga Lawe* rebelled against the Majapahit government in 1309. It seems that the authors of the text given in Table 3.8 connected an event on Java, which is mentioned in national history textbooks, with their own interpretation of the Javanese presence on Pantar. In other words, it is likely that the text incorporates elements from both academic and indigenous history, which is prevalent in Alor (Wellfelt, 2016:20).

The story in Table 3.8 is actually a simplified version of a more complex oral narrative. The narrative involves a tale about an ancestor in the form of a fish (or sometimes an eagle) who turned into a woman. The woman was found on Java by two brothers. One of them then married the woman. After the marriage, they moved to Pantar and their offspring became the present-day Alorese people (Gomang, 1993:28; Lemoine, 1969:11; Rodemeier, 2006:144, 344). Table 3.9 below presents a fragment of this narrative based on the Pandai account.

Table 3.9: A narrative about the arrival of the Javanese people (Video unique identifier: AOLYS\_Pandai\_2018\_05\_23\_Cultural\_Interview\_00901-01)

1. Jadi ada dua saudara laki-laki, Akiae dan Majapahit.	1. 'There were two brothers, Akiae and Majapahit.'
2. Yang kakak Majapahit, adiknya Akiae.	2. 'Majapahit is the older brother and Akiae is the younger brother.'
3. Mereka berdua ke sini sedang memancing begitu.	3. 'They were both looking for fish.'
4. Mereka ke sini memancing.	4. 'They arrived here [because of] fishing.'
5. Mancingnya di Jawa.	5. 'The fishing [activity] was on Java.'
6. Lalu dia ini kan setelah dia obati ini, ikan yang dia ambil pancing ini sudah suruh dia berpakaian sudah.	6. 'Then, after he was healed [from unknown ailment], he asked the fish to get dressed.'
7. Bagaimana suruh dia berpakaian ko, datang bisa, turun bisa layani orang.	7. 'Why did he ask her to get dressed? So that she can come down and serve people.'
8. Jadi sekarang tadi dia naik, dia berubah menjadi manusia biasa.	8. 'So now when she climbed up, she [the fish] had turned into a human.'
[...]	[...]
9. Sehingga ada cerita di darat bahwa ada hubungan kawin mawin antara laut dengan darat.	9. 'There is a story that there was sexual intercourse between the sea and the land.'
10. Jadi keturunan Akiae dan Majapahit kawin dengan orang di gunung.	10. 'So the offspring of Akiae and Majapahit married people in the mountain.'

The narrative in Table 3.9 is the basis of the text presented earlier in Table 3.8. The other accounts of this same story differ from this account in some details, such as that the woman was originally an eagle instead of a fish. Generally, however, each account has a similar plot, involving two brothers and a woman. Such differences are expected, given that it is common for oral narratives to not only incorporate a sequence of events or facts, but also emphasize the drama of the story (Abrams, 2010:107). Today, some Alorese clans claim to be descendants of the 'Javanese' people from Majapahit. Due to these prestigious Javanese roots, these clans are considered the main clans in the villages of Pandai and Baranusa.

Besides Javanese ancestors, several other Alorese clans consider themselves to have ancestors from *Malaka* (a town in present-day Malaysia).

People from Malaka are believed to have established a kingdom in Munaseli. Table 3.10 presents a fragment from a text about the history of Munaseli.

Table 3.10: Text about the history of Munaseli (AOLYS\_pan\_WT-01, page 1)

1. Dari cerita-cerita rakyat dari zaman dahulu kala sampai sekarang yang bersumber pada syair-syair adat demikian pun dari tanda-tanda bukti yang ada pada masa lampau berupa kota atau benteng yang sementara berada di <b>Lamalu</b> sekarang kepulauan ini diungkapkan sejarah datangnya seorang leluhur dari <b>jazirah Malaka</b> beberapa ratusan tahun Sebelum datangnya bangsa-bangsa barat.	1. 'Based on stories from the past which have sources in traditional poems and evidence of past civilization or castles located in <b>Lamalu</b> [now Munaseli] today, there is now revealed on these islands a history of the arrival of ancestors from <b>the land of Malaka</b> a few hundred years before the Europeans arrived.'
2. Sekitar pada tahun kurang lebih <b>1347</b> datanglah sekeluarga besar Bapak <b>Taru Amang</b> bersama 2 (dua) orang anak laki-laki yaitu Mau Taru konon gelarnya bilang Sultan Markus, dengan seorang adik yang bernama: Babu Taru.	2. 'Around <b>1347</b> , there arrived the big family of <b>Bapak Taru Amang</b> with two sons: Mau Taru, with the title Sultan Markus, and his younger brother Babu Taru.'

The text is about the beginnings of the Munaseli Kingdom. The place-name *Lamalu* refers to present-day Munaseli. It is unclear how the author came up with the year 1347, but this chronology implies that the people from Malaka arrived in Munaseli later than the 'Javanese' people in Pandai (cf. Table 3.8). Moreover, this account suggests that around the fourteenth century, the area of northeast Pantar was exposed to contact with people from overseas.

### 3.4.3 The rise and fall of the Munaseli Kingdom

The Alor-Pantar region has been known for its local conflicts and battles for many centuries (Gomang, 1993:3). The Alorese inhabitants of the region have also been involved in these conflicts and battles. One of many famous conflicts is the war between Munaseli and Pandai. In this section, I present stories about the time when the Munaseli Kingdom prospered, until the major defeat by Pandai.

As stated earlier, the origins of the Munaseli Kingdom are claimed to go back to ancestors from Malaka (cf. Table 3.10). Thus, the people of Munaseli have a different history from the community who had already settled in Pandai and claimed to be of Javanese descent. Munaseli is located in the east of the

northeast Pantar peninsula, while Pandai is located in the west of the peninsula. The distance between the two villages is around 10 kilometers (see Figure 3.3).

Stories about the Munaseli Kingdom are often concerned with the wealth of this kingdom and a magic rooster (Gomang, 1993:84; Rodemeier, 2006:300). While rooster is often considered a universal folk character, the Munaseli magic rooster in particular has the power to grant wishes. Often, it grants gold. The rooster is believed to be the source of Munaseli's wealth. The tale about the magic rooster is attested in the local history, in both written and oral sources, as shown Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: Written and oral narratives about the magic rooster in Munaseli

Written source (AOLYS_pan_WT-02, page 3–4)	Oral source (AOLYS_Pandai_2018_05_23_ Cultural_Interview_00901-01)
Dengan adanya Bapak <b>Babu Taru</b> mendapat <b>manu siri koko</b> ini lah hidup dan penghidupan mereka semakin kaya raya dan katanya menurut cerita bahwa kota atau benteng yang ada ini pun ciptaan dari <b>manu siri kokopula</b> . Babu Taru ini semenjak besar dan kawin mendapat seorang anak laki-laki yang bernama <b>Sirang Babu</b> .	Kalau waktu itu didirikan kerajaan Munaseli itu karena dengan ayam tadi itu <b>ayam sakti</b> itu. Terus dikasih makan terus dia berkokok. Terus barang itu jadi. Jadi didirikan Munaseli begitu. [...] Raja yang pertama itu <b>Babu Taru</b> , yang kedua itu <b>Lepo Mahi</b> , yang ketiga itu yang <b>Sirang Bagung</b> . Sudah. Raja ketiga sudah pecah.
'Because <b>Babu Taru</b> owned <b>manu siri koko</b> [the magic rooster], they lived wealthily and according to stories, the houses and fortresses were built by the rooster <i>manu siri koko</i> . When grown up, <b>Babu Taru</b> married and had a son called <b>Sirang Babu</b> .'	'The beginning of the Munaseli Kingdom goes back to the <b>magic rooster</b> . When given food, it crowed. And then, it granted requests. Thus, the Munaseli Kingdom began. [...] The first king was <b>Babu Taru</b> , the second was <b>Lepo Mahi</b> , and the third was <b>Sirang Bagung</b> . Then [the war] broke out.'

Both written and oral sources demonstrate the wealth of Munaseli. They also mention the first king of Munaseli, named *Babu Taru*, said to be the owner of the magic rooster. The character *Babu Taru* is the son of *Taru Amang* (see Table 3.10, line 2), who was the leader of groups from Malaka who arrived in Munaseli. Through *Babu Taru*'s wealth, acquired due to the magic rooster, the Munaseli Kingdom prevailed. Lemoine (1969:17) suggests that the legend of the Munaseli Kingdom involves not only a rooster, but also a golden turtle and a coral tree.

During the era of the Munaseli Kingdom, trading activities were centered in Munaseli. Rodemeier (2006:265) gives a detailed description of the trading empire of Munaseli; it is described as being a long-lost civilization until the invasion by the Pandai-Javanese, who forced the people of Munaseli to flee to Alor and west Pantar. The Pandai invasion of Munaseli was motivated by a conflict among traders. Lemoine (1969:10) explains that the wealth of Munaseli caused jealousy among neighboring groups. This interpretation is confirmed by local narratives from three villages: Bana, Wailawar, and Pandai, as shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12: Bana, Wailwar, and Pandai accounts of the war between Munaseli and Pandai (AOLYS\_Bana\_2018\_05\_19\_Cultural\_Interview\_00702\_00703-01, AOLYS\_Wailawar\_2018\_05\_21\_Cultural\_Interview\_01002-01, AOLYS\_Pandai\_2018\_05\_23\_Cultural\_Interview\_00901-01)

Bana account	Wailawar account	Pandai account
Perang itu kan masa kerajaan. Kerajaan Munaseli dengan kerajaan Pandai. Baru timbul angkat peperangan di <b>Bana</b> sini. Perangnya di <b>Bana</b> sini. Di sini kan pasar, di <b>Bana</b> . Karena mereka datang ke pasar <b>Bana</b> ini, orang Pandai juga datang, dari Munaseli juga datang. Lalu dari Pandai datang bawa garam, ikan, dengan kapur. Sedangkan dari Munaseli datang bawa emas. Datang baku tukar, lalu dorang baku keris di situ, baku hina. [...] Ada baku hina akhirnya ada perang. Yang menang itu dari Pandai.	Kalau dulu kerajaan Munaseli itu dihancurkan oleh <b>Lahar Blegur</b> . Yang menangnya Lahar Blegur. Sementara jual beli antara barang lokal dengan emas.	Jadi orang Munaseli turun dengan emas biji. Jadi kalau mau ditukar dengan jagung atau beras, atau tukar dengan ikan. Nah ini pakai dengan emas sedangkan orang dari kampung lain mereka hanya tukar dengan sirih pinang. [...] Baku hina sudah. Terjadi baku hina inilah makanya pada saat itu sampai juga perjanjian perang.

<p>‘The war was in the era of kingdoms. It was between Munaseli and Pandai. The war was here, in <b>Bana</b>. There was a market here in <b>Bana</b>. When they came to <b>Bana</b>, Pandai people came here, Munaseli people also came here. Pandai people came with salt, fish, and betel nuts while the Munaseli people came with gold. They traded and mocked each other. [...] Because of the mocking, a war broke out. The winner was Pandai.’</p>	<p>‘In the past, Munaseli was destroyed by <b>Lahar Blegur</b>. The winner was Lahar Blegur. While they were trading local goods and gold there [pointing to the north, referring to <b>Bana</b>].’</p>	<p>‘So people from Munaseli came with their gold. So they traded their gold for corn and rice or fish. They traded their gold while people from other villages only traded betel. [...] Then they mocked each other. This is why they declared war.’</p>
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The village of Bana is located between Pandai and Munaseli (see Figure 3.3). This place used to hold a market during the time when the coastal Alorese groups of Pandai and Munaseli lived side by side. The character *Lahar Blegur* is mentioned only in the Wailawar account, not in the other accounts. The trading situation is described as a busy market where people from Munaseli traded gold while people from other places traded fish and betel. This social inequality gave rise to envy, which led to a war.

Among the coastal villages in northeast Pantar, narratives about the war are attested in Bana, Wailawar, and Pandai, but not in Munaseli. In Munaseli, when I asked my consultant about the war, he did not directly refer to the war in his response. Instead, he narrated some highly detailed stories about the beginnings of the Munaseli Kingdom. I assume that this is because the defeat of Munaseli is considered a source of embarrassment for the locals.

The Munaseli war caused the collapse of the Munaseli Kingdom. The locals believe that several entities were involved in this war. My consultant in Pandai stated that people from Java, Kedang (Lembata Island), and Atauro (Portuguese: Atauru, now part of East Timor, located north of Dili) were considered allies. As a result, the war is considered to have been a great war because it involved people from overseas. The Munaseli Kingdom lasted for three generations: the first king was *Taru Amang*; the second king was *Babu Taru*; and the third king was *Sirang Bagung* (Table 3.11). The written text sampled in Table 3.10 states that the kingdom was established in 1347. Its collapse three generations later, due to the

Pandai invasion, must therefore have been around 1420 (if a generation is counted as 25 years).

#### 3.4.4 The expansion of the Pandai Kingdom

After defeating Munaseli, Pandai became the political center of northeast Pantar. In a later development, Pandai expanded its territory to the Alor Peninsula and west Pantar. In this section, I present stories that relate how people from Pandai reached Alor and took part in forming a kingdom in Alor Besar, called the Bungabali Kingdom (§3.4.4.1), and how they established Baranusa Kingdom in west Pantar (§3.4.4.2; see Figure 3.3 for locations).

The general consensus about the history of Pandai holds that there was a couple from Java who came to Pantar and had five children. One child named *Dai Mauwolang* ruled the Pandai Kingdom, another child named *Bara Mauwolang* ruled the Baranusa Kingdom, and a child named *Tuli Mauwolang* ruled the Bungabali Kingdom in Alor Besar. The other two children ruled kingdoms in *Blagar* and *Kui*, the two non-Alorese coastal communities in the area (see Figure 3.3). These five kingdoms were consolidated under the political alliance known as *Galiyao Watang Lema* ‘five coastal domains’ (Gomang, 1993:28; Rodemeier, 1995:441). Gomang (1993:85) mentions that one of the founders of this alliance was King *Selasang Bakolaha* of the Bungabali Kingdom in Alor Besar. In the Alor Besar manuscript (AOLYS\_alb\_WT-02, Appendix A) concerning the family tree of the Alor Besar royals, King *Selasang Bakolaha* is the twenty-third king of Alor Besar. Considering that the present monarch is the twenty-eighth king, the alliance is five generations old (around 125 years old).

##### 3.4.4.1 The Pandai expansion to Alor Besar

The Pandai expansion to Alor Besar marks the movement of the Alorese people from Pantar to the east in the sixteenth century. Wellfelt (2016:273) states that the lineage of the Alor Besar royal family tree went back seventeen generations prior to the year 1971. She concludes that the establishment of the first Alorese village on Alor must therefore have taken place around 1550.

In the Alor Besar oral history, arrivals of groups from Pantar are mentioned in a legend about the marriage of a couple who came from Pantar and from the mountains of Adang (Gomang, 1993:86; Hägerdal, 2010; Wellfelt, 2016:248).<sup>10</sup> The main point of this story is that *Tuli Mauwolang*, one of the five Javanese sons, came to Alor and defeated a local ruler, called *Bunga Bara*. *Tuli Mauwolang* then

<sup>10</sup> Adang is a mountainous area on the Alor Peninsula. The people of Adang speak a non-Austronesian language called Adang (ISO 639-3 code: and; Robinson & Haan, 2014). They live in the interior mountain area close to the coastal Alorese community (see Figure 3.3).



married a local woman and built a kingdom, named Bungabali. Some Alorese clans in the villages Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong regard themselves as the descendants of Tuli Mauwolang.<sup>11</sup> Table 3.13 presents an excerpt of an interview conducted in Alor Besar about the history of the clans.

Table 3.13: Interview in Alor Besar about clan history  
(AOLYS\_Alors\_Besar\_2018\_06\_06\_Cultural\_Interview\_00301-01)

1. Ada tiga suku utama.	1. 'There are three main clans.'
2. <i>Bungabali</i> yang di sini ini atau disebut juga <i>Suku Raja</i>	2. ' <b>Bungabali</b> is the one living here, or [it] is also called <b>Suku Raja</b> [king's clan].'
3. <i>Suku Kapitang</i> itu yang Apu Kulung di atas ini, kapitang itu yang sekarang bilang pasukan tentara.	3. ' <b>The clan Kapitang</b> , this is the Apu Kulung from above here, Kapitang, which is now called the army.'
4. Mereka aslinya dari <i>Pandai</i> , dari desa Alila, ada dua etnis bergabung lalu tinggal di sini.	4. 'They are originally from <b>Pandai</b> , from Alila, there were two ethnic groups merged here.'
5. Suku Hukung atau suku Lelang Kisu.	5. 'Clan Hukung or clan Lelang Kisu.'
6. Mereka dari Solor, Mananga.	6. 'They came from Solor, Mananga [in Solor].'

The *Suku Raja* (lit. 'king's clan') is one of the main clans in Alor Besar. The clan is also known as the *Bungabali* clan. The locals believe that members of this clan are descended from people from the mountains of Adang. The clan *Kapitang* is descended from *Tuli Mauwolang* from Pandai.

Generally, the Alor Besar oral history concerns two different tales. One tale is about ancestors from Adang, while the other tale refers to an origin among the Pandai-Javanese. The first tale involves an Adang mountain ancestor and an Alorese-speaking woman (Wellfelt, 2016:248), who married each other and then lived on the coast. The second tale mentions Tuli Mauwolang as the first foreign arrival in Alor Besar (Gomang, 1993:28; Wellfelt, 2016:248). It is likely that this foreign arrival concerns groups of people from Pandai, mentioned in the interview presented in Table 3.13 lines 3–4.

<sup>11</sup> Note that ancestors of the villages Alor Besar, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong on the Alor Peninsula arrived in different stages and some are recent arrivals. These villages are considered to be the three Alorese villages that have mixed origins (Wellfelt, 2016:248).

### 3.4.4.2 The Pandai expansion to Baranusa

The Pandai expansion to Baranusa took place around the same time as the expansion to Alor Besar. The history of the Baranusa Kingdom also goes back to the Javanese association with Pandai, in which one of the five children, *Bara Mauwolang*, became ruler of the Baranusa Kingdom. The written text from Pandai narrates an event after the Munaseli war and the movement of Pandai people to the west.

Table 3.14: Written text about migration to the west (AOLYS\_pan\_WT-02, page 13)

1. Sesudah selesai perang antara kedua kerajaan Pandai-Baranusa melawan kerajaan Munaseli, maka pada beberapa tahun kemudian terjadilah kakak beradik yaitu <b>Mauwolang</b> dan Boli Mau (Boli Tonda) bersama semua keluarga kawan kerabatnya mengangkat kaki tinggalkan <b>Waiwagang</b> dan berangkat Menuju bagian barat.	1. 'After the war between Pandai-Baranusa and Munaseli, a few years later, the siblings Mauwolang and Boli Mau (Boli Tonda) together with their family members left <b>Waiwagang</b> [now Wailawar] and departed to the west.
2. [...] maka rombongan Boli Tonda tadi semuanya menyeberang ke Pulau Batang untuk tinggal di sana.	2. '[...] Boli Tonda groups attempted to cross to Batang Island to live there.'

Table 3.14 shows two lines from a written text that tell of movements of the Pandai people to the west. The group from Pandai left the Pantar mainland from Waiwagang (present-day Wailawar). They headed to Batang Island (line 2), located west of Pandai (see Figure 3.3). Then, a natural disaster struck the Lapang-Batang Islands (cf. §3.4.5).

Another expansion attempt by the Pandai people towards the west took place in the eighteenth century. A group of people moved to an island, named Kura Island, in the Baranusa Bay (see Figure 3.3). My consultant in Baranusa claimed that this movement happened in 1783 when the Baranusa Kingdom was under its eighth king. This Baranusa group settled on Kura for a few generations. Then, in 1908, a family named Baso, descendants of the former Baranusa king, decided to move the kingdom to the north, which is now the modern-day Baranusa.

An additional expansion to Kayang took place in the eighteenth century. Kayang is located 20 kilometers west of Baranusa (see Figure 2.1). Oral history in Kayang recounts that their ancestors arrived seven generations ago. Table

3.15 contains a testimony from Kayang describing the lineage of the first settlement in Kayang.

*Table 3.15: Oral testimony about family lineage since the first settlement in Kayang*

1. <i>Pertama moyang perang itu Lutang Lesi.</i>	1. 'First, [my] ancestor was from the war, [he was] Lutang Lesi.'
2. <i>Lutang Lesi dia punya anak Telu Lutang.</i>	2. 'Lutang Lesi had a child, Telu Lutang.'
3. <i>Dia punya anak Por Telu.</i>	3. 'He [then] had a child, Por Telu.'
4. <i>Por Telu punya anak Bleta Pora.</i>	4. 'Por Telu had a child, Bleta Pora.'
5. <i>Bleta Pora punya anak Woto Bleta.</i>	5. 'Bleta Pora had a child, Woto Bleta.'
6. <i>Woto Bleta punya anak Lawing Woto.</i>	6. 'Woto Bleta had a child, Lawing Woto.'
7. <i>Lawing Woto punya anak yang saya ini.</i>	7. 'Lawing Woto had a child, me.'
8. <i>Saya, dia punya anak mati.</i>	8. 'I have a child [but he] died.'
9. <i>Diganti saya, sebagai bapak.</i>	9. '[The lineage is then] replaced by me, as the father.'
10. <i>Sudah keturunan yang ketujuh to?</i>	10. 'It is already the seventh generation, right?'

The movements of groups of Alorese people could have been motivated by the pursuit of territorial expansion. Lemoine (1969:15) states that the king of Pandai sent away groups of people to colonize the surrounding area. It is possible that this has been a regular practice of the Alorese people, as in the nineteenth century, a king in Alor Besar sent out groups of Reta people to occupy two islands, Ternate and Buaya, in the Pantar Strait (cf. §3.4.6).

Some recent expansions in the west took place in the twentieth century. The village of Beang Onong in western Pantar was established in the early 1960s when people from Baranusa moved to Beang Onong. In addition, a community in Bagang, located around ten kilometers east of Baranusa, settled there in the late 1980s. A group from Kayang, west Pantar, also recently moved to the nearby island of Kangge and established the village Marisa there. Today, permanent residents are starting to occupy Lapang Island due to seaweed production around the island.

#### **3.4.5 The flood on the Lapang-Batang Islands**

The story about the flood on the Lapang-Batang Islands is known not only in the Alorese community but also in the Lamaholot communities in East Flores Regency and on Lembata. The locals there believe that the Lapang-Batang

Islands were once inhabited by their ancestors. These ancestors had to flee to Lembata and other places because of a natural disaster.

The Alorese oral accounts do not mention a flood on the Lapang-Batang Islands. Instead, when they were asked about the flood, some consultants responded that it was not in their capacity to tell the story because their culture does not have historical ties with Lapang-Batang. However, my consultant in Baranusa recounted a historic flood on Lapang-Batang that caused people to flee to Lembata. Table 3.16 contains a fragment of the interview in Baranusa.

Table 3.16: The Baranusa account about flood on Lapang-Batang  
(AOLYS\_Baranusa\_2018\_07\_18\_Cultural\_Interview\_01103-01)

1. Suku Sandiata punya sumber kehidupan kegiatan ini di Pulau Lapang	1. 'The clan Sandiata has a source of living from working on Lapang Island.'
2. Pulau Lapang Batang	2. 'The Lapang-Batang Islands.'
3. Mereka dulu hidup di sana satu kerajaan besar.	3. 'They [their ancestors] used to live there [in a] big kingdom.'
4. Suku Sandiata ini mendominasi Pulau Lapang Batang.	4. 'The clan Sandiata dominated the Lapang-Batang Islands.'
5. Ada bekas-bekas peninggalan masih ada.	5. 'There are remains of the kingdom there.'
6. Karena akibat tsunami, maka penduduknya meninggal ada yang lari dengan perahu sampai di Lembata.	6. 'Because of a tsunami, the people died and some of them fled [to other places] by boat [and] reached Lembata.'

Here, the narrator was actually talking about the history of the Alorese clans. He mentions the flood in the context of talking about the clan *Sandiata*, which apparently consists of descendants of people who once settled on the Lapang-Batang Islands.

According to oral tradition in the Lamaholot community, some of the Lamaholot people are descendants of the people from the Lapang-Batang Islands (Ataladjar, 2015:15–19; Sulistyono, 2015). Fricke (2019:13–15) suggests that the people on Lapang-Batang may have been part of the Alorese people, who have been present on Pantar since at least the fourteenth century. The Lamaholot clans who were originally from Lapang-Batang are referred to as *tena mao* lit. 'boat float' (Ataladjar, 2015:11). They are believed to be the refugees from the natural disaster on the Lapang-Batang Islands. Ataladjar (2015:37), having compiled historical records and oral history of the Lamaholot people, concludes that the natural disaster on Lapang-Batang must have happened between 1522–1525.

Evidence of the early inhabitants of the Lapang-Batang islands is in a record made by European voyagers. The famous voyage of Magellan reached

eastern Indonesia in the sixteenth century (Kelsey, 2016:30). A ship named Victoria, which was a remnant of Magellan's fleet, passed by the Lapang-Batang Islands on 9 January 1522 (Ataladjar, 2015; Pigafetta, 2010:150). A diary written by a person on the ship named Francisco Albo records two small inhabited islands located between Pantar and Lembata, identified as the Lapang-Batang Islands by Le Roux (1928:12).

### 3.4.6 The expansion to Ternate and Buaya

Another important movement of the Alorese people was the expansion to Ternate and Buaya. Ternate and Buaya are two small islands located in the strait between Alor and Pantar (see Figure 3.3). An oral testimony from Buaya states that the ancestors of the Buaya community were people from Pura who moved to Alor Besar and then to Ternate and Buaya. Pura is a larger island located south of Buaya and Ternate. Table 3.17 presents the oral account from Buaya.

Table 3.17: Oral account from Buaya  
(AOLYS\_Buaya\_2018\_05\_30\_Cultural\_Interview\_00401-01)

1. Itu moyang kita tiga dengan keluarga Bapak Raja antar datang di Alor Besar.	1. 'Our ancestors were from the three [villages] with the family of the king who arrived in Alor Besar'
2. Datang di Alor Besar langsung tinggal di Alor Besar di kali tinggal di situ.	2. '[They] arrived in Alor Besar and then lived in Alor Besar, close to a river there.'
3. Tinggal di situ, tapi namanya kita dulu kan nenek moyang itu masih <b>Kristen</b>	3. '[They] lived there, but our ancestors were <b>Christians</b> .'
4. Habis tinggal di Alor Besar itu di Alor kering.	4. 'Upon living in Alor Besar, Alor was [in the] dry [season].'
5. Tapi namanya <b>orang Pura</b> itu, namanya, sudah minum, bicara banyak, makan juga bisa ribut.	5. 'But they were people from <b>Pura</b> , they drink [traditional wine], they talk a lot, [and] they eat loudly.'
6. Orang <b>Reta</b> punya minum dari moyang kita.	6. 'The <b>Reta</b> people have traditional wine from our ancestors.'
7. Akhirnya Bapak Raja bilang, 'orang Pura datang tinggal di kita ini tapi ribut-ribut kita tidak bisa tidur.'	7. 'Finally, the King said, "the people from Pura came to live with us but [they are] very noisy [so] we cannot sleep".'
8. Jadi kasih mereka pindah.	8. 'So they asked them to move.'
9. Akhirnya itu moyang kita ini langsung dari Alor Besar.	9. 'Finally our ancestors [departed] from Alor Besar.'
10. Dulu itu perahu besar, dulu kan pakai perahu.	10. '[They rowed] a big boat, they used to travel by boats.'
11. Bawa mereka ambil barang dari perahu,	11. '[They] carried their belongings on

<i>langsung dayung.</i>	the boat and rowed.'
12. <i>Dua pulau ini masih kosong.</i>	12. 'These two islands were empty.'

This account indicates that the king in Alor Besar was disturbed by the noise made by the people from Pura and therefore, ordered them to move to Ternate. However, my consultant in Alor Kecil proposed that the king in Alor Besar ordered people to move there in order to prevent the Dutch occupation of the two islands. The association with Reta in line 5–6 implies that the ancestors of today's residents of Ternate and Buaya were probably speakers of Reta. Reta is a non-Austronesian language (ISO 639-3 code: *ret*) spoken on Reta, Ternate, and the Alor Peninsula.

In line 3, the consultant states that his ancestors were followers of the Christian religion. It is plausible that when the Reta people moved to Alor Besar, Christianity had already spread through the Alor archipelago. The Reta people then converted to Islam by following the king in Alor Besar. Subsequently, the Alor Besar king ordered them to move to Ternate. In 1935, this Reta group on Ternate moved to Buaya due to a religion-related conflict (Gomang, 1993:114). Today, there are three villages on Ternate: one Alorese speaking and two Reta-speaking villages. Meanwhile, the entire Buaya Island is inhabited by an Alorese-speaking group.

### 3.5 Alorese clans and their origins

Another topic that recurred in all the interviews was that of the Alorese clans. The Alorese clans relate to domains within a single Alorese village; each village is traditionally subdivided into domains for which the Indonesian term *suku* 'clan' is used.

When asked about the history of clans during the interviews, all of my consultants mentioned the clans with higher social status first, followed by clans with a lower social status (cf. Table 3.13). The clans with higher status are those whose ancestors arrived earlier and the clans with lower social status are those whose ancestors arrived in more recent times. Therefore, I expect that the order of arrival of Alorese clans may show patterns that correlate with the migration stories discussed in the previous sections. Table 3.18 shows a number of Alorese clans that have similar names.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Not all Alorese clans are presented in the table (see Appendix A for the complete list).

*Table 3.18: Some Alorese clans and their relation to key events in the chronology*

[illegible]

The oral histories of the clans sometimes refers back to a certain event in the migration stories. In order to examine the connection between the Alorese clans and the migration history, I built a chronology based on a number of events, some of which have been discussed in the previous sections. These events include: 1) the flood on Rusa, 2) the arrivals from the west, 3) the mountain people on the Alor peninsula, 4) the Munaseli war, 5) the expansion to Alor, 6) the expansion to Baranusa, 7) the expansion to Kayang, 8) the flood on Lapang-Batang, 9) the expansion to Ternate and Buaya, 10) recent arrivals, and 11) the expansion to Dulolong.

Based on the similarity of clan names, I infer that these Alorese clans share common ancestors. However, this hypothesis is uncertain because every clan in each village tells different origin stories. In the following discussion, I show some possible connections between the Alorese migration stories and the history of some of the clans.

Several clans with similar names—*Muko-Bao*, *Bao*, *Muko Raja*, *Mukor*, and *Bao Raja*—are widespread on Alor and Pantar. My consultant in Alor Kecil claimed that the ancestor of the clan *Bao Raja* in Alor Kecil was *Saku Bala Duli*, a refugee from Rusa Island. In Alor Kecil, this clan has the highest social status. In other villages, however, the ancestors of this clan are not yet clear. For example, in Baranusa, the clan *Bao* fulfills the role of preachers in mosques, but their origin was not mentioned.

The clans *Being* and *Marang* are found in the villages of Wailawar, Helangdohi, Pandai, Bana, and Munaseli, which are located in northeast Pantar. In the interviews, my consultants claimed that these clans were originally from Helangdohi. Oral history in Helangdohi recounts that the ancestors of these clans were the two babies *Helang* and *Dohi* who survived the flood on Rusa Island (cf. §3.4.1). The majority of my consultants in these villages agree that the clans *Being* and *Marang* are the original owners of the land, meaning that they were the indigenous inhabitants of Pantar. It is likely that they were already on Pantar before the settlers from islands west of Pantar arrived.

In Pandai, there are clans named *Dingalaeng* and *Laduboleng*. Local oral history recounts that these clans were from Java. They hold the highest social status in Pandai. Several other clans that are of foreign origin include *Uma Kakang*, *Uma Tukang*, and *Uma Aring*. Clans with these names are relatively widespread in the Alorese community. However, it is unclear whether these clans share a common origin, as the oral history in different villages tells different stories. It is plausible that the names of these clans are related to their function in society, rather than their origin. For instance, the clan *Uma Kakang* in Buaya and Baranusa fulfills the role of community leader, while the clan *Uma*



*Aring* in Baranusa has the role of enforcing the local traditional law.<sup>13</sup>

In Alor Besar, the *Bungabali* clan is of Adang mountain origin. This clan consists of the descendants of *Mau Pelang*, mentioned in the oral history described by Wellfelt (2016:244). The clan *Bungabali* is at the top of the social hierarchy in Alor Besar because their clan members are the royal family of the Alor Besar (*Bungabali*) Kingdom. The clan that has Pandai origin is called *Kapitang* (possibly derived from Portuguese *capitão* or Dutch *kapitein* ‘captain’). This clan has the social role of guarding the land in case of war.

The history of several other Alorese clans goes back to different stages of ancestral arrivals. The clan *Lekaduli* is found in Pandai, Alor Kecil, and Dulolong. My consultant in Alor Kecil claimed that this clan is descended from the refugees of Munaseli who fled after being defeated by Pandai. The clan *Kapitang/Pitang* is found in Wailawar, Helangdohi, Bana, and Alor Besar. In addition, some of the clans with the name *Kapitang/Pitang* have a history that goes back to the expansion of the Alorese people to the east (Alor Besar). In Pandai and Baranusa, the clans *Haliweka*, *Sandiata*, and *Maloku* are presumably of common ancestry because their history goes back to the time when people from Pandai started to move to the west (Baranusa). In Baranusa, several clans have a history going back to the flood on Lapang-Batang. These clans are *Uma Kakatua*, *Uma Bepa*, *Uma Puko* and *Uma Wai Boho*. In Marisa, the four clans in the table are of unknown origin, but some of them came from Rusa and some of them were from the mountain. Furthermore, on the islands of Ternate and Buaya, the history of the *Deing Wahi* clan goes back to the time when the king in Alor Besar ordered people from Reta to move to Ternate and Buaya. Moreover, some relatively recent arrivals from overseas are also attested. For example, the *Makassar* clan in Baranusa and Alor Kecil arrived recently when traders from south Sulawesi came to Pantar and decided to settle there. In addition, the *Uma Kabagoe* clan is from Borneo and the *Lamakera* clan is from Solor.

The clans *Alu Kae* and *Kaa Nae* in Alor Kecil and Dulolong are of common ancestry. The oral history from these villages recounts that the ancestors of the two clans arrived from Pantar. In Alor Kecil, the *Alu Kae* clan is originally descended from the *Being* clan on Pantar. In Dulolong, the clan *Kaa Nae* is descended from the *Alu Kae* clan in Alor Kecil. Oral history in Dulolong recounts that the *Kaa Nae* clan moved to Dulolong from Alor Kecil and then built the Kingdom of Alor. The Kingdom of Alor is of recent establishment; specifically, from around the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This kingdom started to recede when, in 1918, its king *Bala Nampira* was killed by people from Atimelang (central Alor)

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<sup>13</sup> In Alorese, *uma* means ‘house’, *kakang* means ‘older sibling’, and *aring* means ‘younger sibling’.

due to his attempt in preventing the construction of access roads on Alor by the Dutch government (Du Bois, 1960; Gomang, 1993:4, 81; Stokhof, 1984; Wellfelt, 2016:285).

To sum up, in villages that have political powers, the Alorese clans that have higher social status tend to be those descended from earlier arrivals that were mostly of foreign origin. This situation is mainly found in Munaseli, Pandai, and Baranusa. In Alor Besar, however, clans of foreign origin have a lower social status compared to the clans of Adang mountain origin. In Helangdohi and Alor Kecil, the primary clans are those descended from refugees from Rusa Island. Meanwhile, the primary clans in Ternate and Buaya are those who came from Pura via Alor Besar. Finally, the primary clans in Dulolong are those from Alor Kecil, who formed the Kingdom of Alor in Dulolong.

### 3.6 Summary

The oral history of the Alorese suggests that their migrations have been characterized by events such as floods, wars, territorial expansions, and community displacement. The ancestors of the Alorese people were a mix of mountain people and migrants; there were people from the interior Alor-Pantar mountains and there were migrants on coastal Pantar who then merged with the inlanders. In addition, this chapter has described the history of the Alorese clans and how this correlates with the Alorese migration stories.

In the chronology outlined above, the first key event in Alorese oral history is a natural disaster on Rusa Island which caused people to flee from Rusa to Pantar (Helangdohi) and Alor (Alor Kecil). The foreign arrivals on Pantar in the fourteenth century marked the beginning of political developments in the Alorese community, in which local kingdoms began to form. Subsequently, the people spread towards the east (Alor Besar) and west (Baranusa). Furthermore, some relatively recent movements, such as the expansion to Marisa, Dulolong, and the islands of Ternate and Buaya, are also attested in the oral history.

The history of Alorese clans also shows connections between the arrivals of each clan's ancestors and the events that mark the ancestors' arrivals. Even though not all Alorese clans show clear connections, some similarity in clan naming and community roles suggests that the history of the Alorese clans correlates with the migration stories. Several clans, such as *Being* and *Marang* have common ancestors going back to the mountain people in Helangdohi. Other clans, such as *Uma Kakang*, *Uma Tukang*, and *Uma Aring*, have similar roles in their respective villages.

Based on the description of oral history and the origin of clans presented in this chapter, the fourteen Alorese villages can be listed in order from the ones

that have the earliest history to the ones that have the most recent history. Table 3.19 thus summarizes the history of each village in chronological order.

*Table 3.19: A summary of the oral history of the fourteen Alorese villages/communities*

Villages/ community	Estimated date of establishment	Sources and the corresponding events based on oral history
Helangdohi	13 <sup>th</sup> century	Flood on Rusa Island took place five generations before the arrival of the Javanese group on Pantar (cf. §2.4.1; Rodemeier, 2006:103).
Alor Kecil	13 <sup>th</sup> century	Ancestor of the primary clan in Alor Kecil, named <i>Bao Raja</i> , goes back to the character <i>Saku Bala Duli</i> , who came from Rusa Island (cf. §3.4.1; 3.5).
Pandai	14 <sup>th</sup> century	Ancestors from 'Java' (Lemoine, 1969; cf. §3.4.2)
Munaseli	14 <sup>th</sup> century	Ancestors from 'Malaka' (cf. §3.4.2; 3.4.3)
Alor Besar	16 <sup>th</sup> century	Lineage of the royal house in Alor Besar goes back seventeen generations before the year 1971 (Moro, 2018:180; Wellfelt, 2016:273; cf. §3.4.4.1).
Baranusa	18 <sup>th</sup> century	A group of people from Pandai moved to Kura Island in 1783 (cf. §3.4.4.2).
Kayang	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Ancestry of people in Marisa goes back seven generations (cf. §3.4.4.2).
Ternate	19 <sup>th</sup> century	When the people from Pura moved to Alor Besar and then to Ternate, Christianity had already spread in Alor-Pantar (cf. §3.4.6).
Dulolong	1912	There was a power struggle in which the Tuli Mauwolang dynasty in Alor Besar was replaced by the Nampira dynasty in Dulolong (Gomang, 1993:81).
Buaya	1935	A group of Alorese people on Ternate moved to Buaya due to a religious conflict (Gomang, 1993:114; cf. §3.4.6).
Beang Onong	1960's	The village of Beang Onong was established due to expansion from Baranusa (cf. §3.4.4.2).
Marisa	1960's onwards	Marisa is the result of a recent expansion from Kayang.
Bana	1966	Based on the text <i>Sejarah Berdirinya Desa Bana (Bana Onong)</i> (AOLYS_ban_WT-01)
Wailawar	20 April 1996	Based on the text about Wailawar village (AOLYS_war_WT-01)

In addition to the list of villages, local kingdoms mentioned in the Alorese oral history can also be organized in the same manner. Table 3.20 summarizes the history of the Alorese kingdoms.

*Table 3.20: A summary of the history of the Alorese local kingdoms*

Kingdom	Estimated date of establishment	Sources and the corresponding events based on oral history
Koli Rawang	13 <sup>th</sup> century	Flood on Rusa (cf. §3.4.1; Rodemeier, 2006:103)
Pandai	14 <sup>th</sup> century	Ancestors from ‘Java’ (Lemoine, 1969; cf. §3.4.2)
Munaseli	1347	Ancestors from ‘Malaka’ (cf. §3.4.2; 3.4.3)
Bungabali	16 <sup>th</sup> century	(Moro, 2018:180; Wellfelt, 2016:273; cf. §3.4.4.1).
Baranusa	1783	(cf. §3.4.4.2)
Alor	1911–1918	(Gomang, 1993:4, 81; Wellfelt, 2016:285).

To conclude, the ancestors of the Alorese people probably settled in northeast Pantar and the Alor Peninsula in the thirteenth century. They came from Rusa Island and settled in Helangdohi and Alor Kecil. Then, in the fourteenth century, overseas people, depicted as ancestors from ‘Java’ and ‘Malaka’, arrived in coastal Pandai and Munaseli. With their social and political influence, these migrants from overseas merged with the inland population in northeast Pantar, and in later developments, spread to the many locations where they are living today.

The mention of arrivals from Rusa Island and the migrants from ‘Java’ and ‘Malaka’ suggests that the history of the Alorese people may date back to the thirteenth century, meaning their community could be as old as 800 years. However, the time when the Alorese language spread in this community is probably not as long ago as this; it is likely that the language only began to spread due to the fourteenth century arrivals, meaning it has been used in the community for the last 600 years or so. The speakers of Alorese must have had great influence in the region; they must have also been large in number and socially dominant. It seems that the group on Helangdohi are originally not Alorese (cf. §3.4.1; Rodemeier, 2006:103); rather they were descendants of the two babies who were saved from the flood on Rusa. Given their common ancestry, it is plausible that the group in Alor Kecil is also not originally Alorese (§3.4.1). Thus, the arrival of overseas people in northeast Pantar in the fourteenth century is more likely to represent the arrival of the Alorese-speaking community in the Alor-Pantar region.

