

ORAL HISTORY: AN ALTERNATIVE OF ISLAMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY IN BOLAANG MONGONDOW

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Abstract: *Today's Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow, North Sulawesi, has not been thoroughly investigated in order to show the existence of Islamic history in Bolaang Mongondow. The lack of written sources in developing Islamic historiography is one of the challenges recognized by Islamic historiography. The majority of Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow continues to employ colonial material as a primary basis to construct how Islamic history is told. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of colonial data/historiography must still be questioned. Furthermore, the reconstruction of Islamic Historiography in Bolaang Mongondow can be described as unmoved, with the historical narrative limited to discussions based solely on written sources. Oral history is offered as an alternative to exploring Islamic history through interviews. As a consequence, Islamic historiography, particularly in the Bolaang Mongondow region, will present an innovative interpretation of Indonesian-centric Islamic historiography by emphasizing the roles of ordinary citizens rather than notable figures in its historical story.*

Key Words : *Historical Approach, Oral Method, Decolonization*

Abstrak: *Historiografi Islam di Bolaang Mongondow Sulawesi Utara saat ini masih belum massive digali untuk menampilkan jejak Sejarah Islam di Bolaang Mongondow. Salah satu permasalahan Historiografi Islam yang dihadapi adalah kurangnya sumber-sumber tertulis dalam Menyusun historiografi Islam tersebut. Sebagian besar historiografi Islam di Bolaang Mongondow masih bergantung data kolonial sebagai sumber primer untuk menyusun bagaimana Sejarah Islam di narasikan. Padahal data/historiografi kolonial masih perlu dikritisi dan pertanyakan kembali keabsahannya. Akhirnya rekonstruksi Historiografi Islam di Bolaang Mongondow bisa dikatakan stagnan dengan narasi Sejarah yang terbatas pada pembahasan-pembahasan yang memiliki data tertulis saja. Sejarah lisan hadir sebagai alternative untuk menggali Sejarah Islam dengan metode wawancaranya. Hasilnya Historiografi Islam khususnya di wilayah Bolaang Mongondow akan menampilkan wajah baru mengenai Historiografi Islam yang Indonesia sentris dengan menampilkan peran orang biasa daripada peran-peran orang besar dalam narasi sejarahnya.*

Kata Kunci : *Pendekatan Sejarah, Metode Lisan, Dekolonisasi*

Introduction

History, as a science, is constantly evolving to improve the outcomes of its historiography¹. This evolution is related to the fact that the field of history, which

¹ According to Susanto Zuhdi (1996), historiography, apart from being understood as the result of historical work, can also be described as a process of writing history. The first definition concerns the study of the results of historical writing. It is primarily a study of the characteristics and trends of the written material. While the second meaning is related to the stages of historical research methods commonly known as; Heuristics, criticism, fact system or also called historical writing.

covers previous human events spanning decades or even hundreds of years, has limited written historical material. Because of the lack of material, some historiographies cannot be recreated and are rarely discussed by historians. As a result, inland or coastal regions or tribes that are not documented in colonial archives, foreign news, or other historical documents lack their own history.

One of the issues is that the dominant factor of colonial historiography is also one of the concerns. In this situation, colonial historiography always portrays westerners as the primary actors or participants in major events in Indonesia. This was known as Neerlandocentrism. Neerlandocentrism refers to the concept that Dutch agents played a dominant part in most historical events, whereas native people played just a small one². This historical narrative constructed by colonial people has been criticized by J.C Van Luer, who stated that the subjectivity of Dutch historians needs to be revisited because colonial historiography is the result of colonial historians who wrote from the decks of ships or the verandas of company lodges³.

This issue is becoming more complicated as many historians continue to argue that "No Document, No History." This perspective is firmly rooted in the conceptual paradigm of Indonesian historians, both in the context of history in general and Islamic history in particular. This idea was undoubtedly formed as a result of historians' differing perspectives. One of these is explaining that writing is the primary source of historical information, whereas writings or texts other than this are not the primary source for historical reconstruction.

In fact, in Indonesian regions such as Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Papua, it has often been associated with oral sources and oral traditions. Furthermore, because rural and coastal locations are difficult to access for both foreign and local traders, there are few reports regarding these residents. As a result, this region's historical narrative is more likely to be based on oral sources or oral traditions.

Bolaang Mongondow is an example of a North Sulawesi region with scant written records. This is one of the regions where Islam is currently practiced by the majority of the population. However, Islamic historiography in this region is still uncommon in the History of Islam in Eastern Indonesia. Because the history of Islam in Eastern Indonesia has so far been confined to Ternate, Tidore, and the surrounding territories. Meanwhile, the history of Islam in Eastern Indonesia does not include Bolaang Mongondow. At the very least, the history of Islam in the Bolaang Mongondow region can add to the national history of Islam in Eastern Indonesia.

Oral history can be used as a methodology to assist recreate Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow from a different angle. Oral history aids in the narration of history, not only of important people, but also of tiny individuals who have not yet gotten their historical narrative⁴. For example, the history of Muslim workers imported from Java to grow coffee in the Bolaang Mongondow area, as well

² Priyadi, Sugeng. *Historiografi Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak 2015. h.37

³ Abdulah, Taufik. *Nasionalisme Dan Sejarah*. Bandung: Satya Historika 2001. h.254

⁴ Alistair Thomson, Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History. *The Oral History Review*, 2007, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter-Spring, 2007), pp. 49-60.

as *Jiou's*⁵ involvement in spreading and teaching Islam in the Bolaang Mongondow area.

Colonial Historiography of Islam in Mongondow

Several Dutch scholars have provided accounts of Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow. The first two were titled "*Uit het verslag aangaande den werkkring Bolaang Mongondow, over het jaar 1907*", "*De zending in Bolaang-Mongondow*", as well as "*Verloven en Trouwen in Bolaang Mongondow*". Although Dunniber does not specifically address Islam in his work, he does present various explanations concerning Islam in Mongondow. One of the explanations can be seen below.

*"In 1689 liet „Koning" Jacobus Manopo van Bolaang Mongondou zich doopen, welk voorbeeld door meerderen zijner heidensche onderdanen gevolgd werd. Mohammedanen waren er destijds in deze streken nog niet."*⁶

According to the history narrated by Dunniber, in 1689 Jacobus Manopo from Bolaang Mongondow was baptized by several people who were then followed by his people. Mohammedans (Islam) did not yet exist in that region.

Dunniber's argument is fascinating to study since he emphasizes that there was no Muslim civilization in 1689, although Dunniber wrote this history in the 1900s. This tremendous disparity is, of course, difficult for Dunniber to witness directly in the Kotamobagu area at this moment. Another question is how he obtained the data and came to such conclusions.

Secondly, missionaries Wilken and Schwarz have also transmitted Islam in Bolaang Mongondow through number of their works. "*Verhaal eener reis naar Bolaang-Mongondou*" and "*Gedachten over het stichten eener zending in Bolaang-Mongondou*" are among the works in dispute. The historical narrative is shown below.

*"Bolaang. teruggekeerd, trad de Radja openlijk tot den Islam over, en beval zijnen onderdanen in naam en op last van het Gouvernement mohammedaansch te worden. Aan dit bevel voldeden velen; de ongehoorzamen moesten B. verlaten"*⁷

According to Wilken and Schwarz' historical version, when they returned to Bolaang, the King openly converted to Islam and ordered all of his citizens to become Muslims. Furthermore, Wilken and Schwarz noted that Islam was not well-established in Bolaang Mongondow since the king of Bolaang Mongondow was still seeking permission from the Dutch Resident to convert to Islam in 1844.

Explanations about Islam are also contained in the colonial work entitled *Voors Ttellen tot eorganisatie van het Inlandsch En Hoolandsch-Inlandsch Onderwijs In Afdeeling Bolaang Mongondou der Residente Menado*.

"De toenmalige Badja, Jacobus Manuel Manopo, deed aan den Resident van Menado het verzoek om een nieuwen meester te zenden, en toen hierop noch Antwoord noch een

⁵ *jiou* is the name for an Islamic religious figure or *kiai* (in Indonesian) used by the Bolaang Mongondow tribe. *jiou* in the Bolaang Mongondow community has an important role in teaching Islam such as reading the Qur'an and hadith.

⁶ Dunnebier, W. "Zending in Bolaang Mongondow in 1910", *Manndberisten van het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* 1911. h. 5

⁷ Wilken, P., and Schwarz, A.T. *Gedachten over het stichten eener zending in Bolaang-Mongondou*, *Mededeelingen vanwege het Nederlandsche Zendeling-genootschap* 1867. h.42.

onderwijzer kwam, vroeg de Radja bij zijn bezoek in 1844 aan Menado den toenmaligen Resident, of het Gouvernement er iets op tegen zou hebben, wanneer door hem en de Christenen te Bolaang de Islam werd omhelsd, die sedert door handelaren was ingevoerd.”⁸

According to the historical narrative in this work, the Bolaang Mongondow people embraced Islam, which was disseminated by traders from the Bolaang Mongondow coast.

Based on many missionary and colonial accounts, Islam was present in Bolaang Mongondow after the inhabitants got acquainted with Christianity. In 1866, Wilken and Schwarz were sent to Bolaang Mongondow to take out a missionary campaign. Wilken and Schwarz authored works about the Islamization process in Bolaang Mongondow in 1876, which were later utilized as principles for writing colonial history. Dunniber then arrived in Passi in 1900 and settled there. The story told by Dunniber did not change much about the history of Islam in the Bolaang Mongondow area. Dunniber's historical ideas and explanations appear to be linked to the historical narrative produced by Wilken and Schwarz.

It is not specified when Islam first appeared in Bolaang Mongondow in the works of the two missionary personalities. Furthermore, there is no explanation for who practiced or preached Islam in Bolaang Mongondow. These missionary activities primarily included the process of Christianization and the building of schools.

Indonesian Historiography of Islam in Mongondow

Apart from being narrated by Dutch missionaries, Mongondow's Islamic historiography has also been re-narrated by several local ulama. Mongondow's Islamic historiography has been re-told by various local ulama in addition to being narrated by Dutch missionaries. History of the Bolaang Mongondow Region by Paransa et al. is one of them⁹. This book is particularly intriguing because it contains various sections that are not referenced in several of the colonial sources cited above.

Paransa went into great depth on the Bolaang Mongondow Community, including the origins of the Bolaang Mongondow population, who migrated from Gumalangit and settled in an area named Huntuk.

Paransa depicts a human being by the name of Gumalangit, which refers to "the person who came from the sky," in his narrative. Gumalangit is married to Tende Duata and they have children. This Gumalangit child will later marry the Tumotoi Bokol and Tumotoi Bokot child. The modern Bolaang Mongondow tribe originated from the numerous descendants that these two lineages produced over time. The Gumalangit and Tende Duata families are the two original families in this story, which seems to have been altered to Islamic beliefs that one cannot marry one's sibling.

This work also includes descriptions of early Mongondow kings that have not been previously published in colonial literature. Punu Mokodoludut reigned as

⁸ Anonim, VoorsTtellen tot eorganisatie van het Inlandsch En Hoolandsch-Inlandsch Onderwijs In Afdeeling Bolaang Mongondou der Residente Menado. h. 4

⁹ A.J Pranasa dan A. Majaan, Sejarah Daerah Bolaang Mongondow, DEPDIKBUD: Kotamobagu, 1983. h. 1-2

Bolaang Mongondow's first monarch in the 1400s, according to Paransa. Punu Yayubangkai, the son of Mokodoludut, governed as the second king in the 1400s. In the 1400s, Punu Domopolii ruled as the Third King, and his son Punu Butiti succeeded him as the Fourth King. Punu Makalalo was the Fifth King and Punu Mokodompit was the Sixth King. Punu Tadohe, the Seventh King, would subsequently give birth to Punu Loloda Mokoagow, his son¹⁰.

Apart from that, Taulu's work "The Entry of Islam in North Sulawesi," published in 1984¹¹, is one of the works that address the history of Islam in Bolaang Mongondow. This book examines the history of Islam's advent in numerous locations, including Bolaang Mongondow.

Taulu explains in this work that Islam arose after Jacobus Manuel Manoppo made Islam the official religion of the Bolaang Mongondow Kingdom. Taulu does not go into detail about the history of Islam in Mongondow before King Jacobus accepted and professed the Islamic faith. Nonetheless, he clarifies in his work two key players in Bolaang Mongondow's Islamization process who are not covered in the colonial sources mentioned above.

According to Taulu, Imam Tuweko and Hakim Bagus played a key role in Bolaang Mongondow's conversion to Islam. These two individuals were traders since, in the 1800s, the Gorontalo and Bugis people had converted a large number of people to Islam on Bolaang Mongondow's south coast. The Islamization effort, initiated in 1830 by Hakim Bagus and Imam Tuweko, originated from this coastal beach and spread inland, specifically to the Dumoga and Kotamobagu districts¹².

Aside from Taulu, "Cultural History of Sulawesi," published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1995, is the work by Mukhil P. et al., ed. R. Z. Leirissa that explains the history of Islam in Bolaang Mongondow¹³. Additionally, although this book provides a brief explanation of the process of Islam's entrance in Bolaang Mongondow, it does not precisely address the history of Islam in that region. According to Mukhil's writings, the Islamization process started in 1660, specifically under King Datu Binangkang. Loloda Mokoagow is another name for King Datu Binangkang. Moreover, Mukhil claimed in the book that Islam existed before Catholic Christianity, which the Portuguese brought with them.

Furthermore, Mukhil stated that the marriage of Andi Lantai and Henimombang, the daughter of Cornelis Manoppo, was the method of how the journey of Islamization was occurring. The story explains that a Wajo nobleman named Andi Lantai landed on the Bantik River in 1810. He had fought the pirates in the waters close to Molosing Island, along with all of his subordinates. At first, he only requested a temporary permit while he awaited the fixing of his battle-damaged ship. Nevertheless, he eventually made peace when he married Cornelis Manoppo, the

¹⁰ A.J Pranasa dan A. Majaan, Sejarah Daerah Bolaang Mongondow. H 16-21.

¹¹ Taulu, H.M. Masuknya Agama Islam di Sulawesi Utara: Dengan Perkembangan dalam Ikatan Kebudayaan dan Hukum Adat Daerah Terutama Minahasa (1525-1977). Tomohon: Yayasan Membangun 1984.

¹² Taulu Taulu, H.M. Masuknya Agama Islam di Sulawesi Utara: Dengan Perkembangan dalam Ikatan Kebudayaan dan Hukum Adat Daerah Terutama Minahasa (1525-1977). h. 6-7

¹³ Mukhlis et al. Sejarah Kebudayaan Sulawesi. ed. R.Z Leirissa. Jakarta: Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional, 1995.

Christian king of Bolaang Mongondow. After that, Andi Lantai and Henimombang have a child named Andi Panengkelan, who grew up in Wajo. After reaching adulthood, he was given the title King Abraham Sugeha and made King of Bolaang Mongondow. Following then, Bolaang Mongondow and its environs saw a significant influx of Muslims¹⁴.

From an Indonesian perspective, the Islamic historiography of Bolaang Mongondow differs from the colonial one. Historiography is portrayed from an Indonesian perspective using many collective recollections of the Bolaang Mongondow tribal community, including the tribe's founding. The picture of Bolaang Mongondow's history is rather complete, despite the fact that Indonesian historiography is now taking a traditional viewpoint. But there are still a number of historical stories that remain unsolved, such how Imam Tuweko and Hakim Bagus brought Islam to the world, how they did it, and how their successors came to be.

Oral History as an alternative

The Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow, which was addressed in the previous sub-chapter, demonstrates that the majority of Islamic history is still based on various written sources recorded by missionaries. At this point, some of the Indonesian historians who authored these books still appear hesitant to rely on oral histories for guidance. Despite this, oral histories have played a significant role in the advancement of human civilization. Oral language was utilized as a means of transmitting historical norms and values from a single era to a subsequent one long before recorded traditions emerged¹⁵.

Darban (1997) defines oral history as a historical source that is related by those who were present at the events or who were followers of those that occurred in their era¹⁶. In terms of the chronology of an event for which there is no written record, these witnesses and their adherents can be considered the primary informants. In addition, oral history can be defined as a way to identify, investigate, and assess how historical memory is formed when individuals connect their individual experiences to a larger social framework. In addition, oral history links how people utilize the past to understand life in the present and how it becomes a part of their surroundings¹⁷.

In this case, oral history is an effort to find historical facts that cannot be found in primary historical sources, such as documents. Uncovering historical facts through interviews is referred to as an oral document that contains testimony and part of the community's memory of an event. This is significant because not all historical figures left behind written records¹⁸.

¹⁴ Mukhlis et al. *Sejarah Kebudayaan Sulawesi*. ed. R.Z Leirissa. . h . 92-93.

¹⁵ Alistair Thomson, Michael Frisch and Paula Hamilton. *The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives*. Oral History Society, Autumn, 1994, Vol. 22, No. 2, 25th Anniversary Issue (Autumn, 1994), pp. 33-43

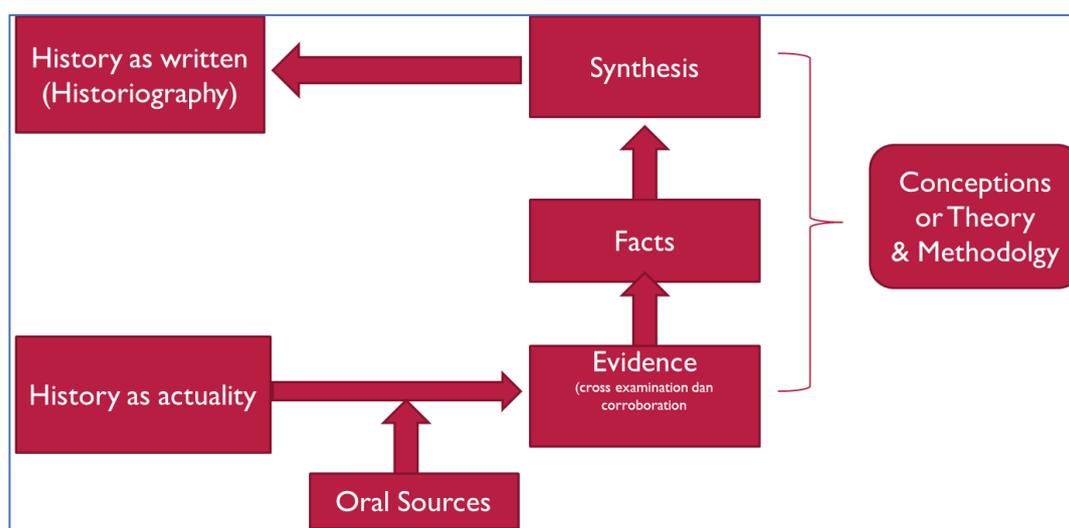
¹⁶ A. Adaby Darban. *Sejarah Lisan Memburu Sumber Sejarah dari Para Pelaku dan Penyaksi Sejarah*. *Journal Humaniora*, Vol.4 No.2, 1997. pp 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.1908>.

¹⁷ David Lance, *Oral History Archives: Perceptions and Practices*. *Oral History*, Autumn, 1980, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 59-63.

¹⁸ Robin Lin Miller, Jean King and Melvin Mark. *The Oral History of Evaluation*. *American Journal of Evaluation*, Volume 30 Number 2 June 2009, pp 232-244.

But as a necessary stage in historical methodology, this oral material must be challenged. Oral material cannot be directly written without criticism in the process as a historical source. The criticism in question may take the shape of external or intrinsic criticism. Oral sources can serve as one of the primary sources of historical data and must be critically analyzed in order to produce reliable data

Figure 1. Oral Sources in Historical Analysis¹⁹



Oral history as a methodology can provide a new perspective on the development of Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow. In chart 1 explained by Berkhofer, it is explained that history as actuality will produce evidence, one of which is data in the form of oral sources. In fact, there is still a lot of Oral sources data in Bolaang Mongondow that can be used to reconstruct the history of Islam in Bolaang Mongondow. Some examples of research that might be carried out include the history of Muslim workers in Bolaang Mongondow, the history of Purworejo Village, which was a Javanese community group brought by the Dutch to grow coffee in Bolaang Mongondow, and the role of Islamic unions in Bolaang Mongondow in Islamic learning. This is due to the fact that the utilization of Oral Sources in Islamic Historiography in Bolaang Mongondow will provide a different viewpoint on the historical narrative. In addition, it is impossible to overlook the significance of oral history sources in Bolaang Mongondow's Islamic historiography. Oral data can complement some Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow which has not been widely studied. As a consequence, the oral history method is needed in Islamic historiography in Bolaang Mongondow.

The Application of Oral History Method

Oral history has become increasingly popular since Allan Nevins of Columbia University started using it to reconstruct the history of white men in the United States in 1948. In this case, there is no doubt that the oral history approach has begun

¹⁹ Berkhofer, Behavioral approach to historical analysis. London: Collier MacMillan Limited 1971. h. 23

affecting historians' perspectives in both Europe and the United States. Social history studies started to take the role of elite issues and political history research. Apart from that, historical studies are starting to be oriented towards writing history from below²⁰.

Deconstructive awareness has led certain historical scientists to base their thinking on the grand design of narrativism and relativism, which emerged from the constraints of positivism, which was regarded far from reality. According to Post Positivist enthusiasts, historical truth is a representation of factual reality that is the outcome of source analysis and interpretation, as well as the framework of thought that supports the process of synthesis. Moreover, they believe that oral histories are the result of historical events rather than the work of contemporary historians who have a distance from the past²¹.

Oral history is considered in the advancement of historical science as a means of conducting in-person conversations with sources to investigate historical occurrences²². When applying the oral history approach, there are a few deliberate processes that must be followed. First is the methodological tool, which is the requirement for conducting library research. Historians use this to investigate issues or historical occurrences that they wish to study more. Historians can develop a research agenda or events they wish to examine with the use of library research. Researchers can also develop research tools that will give them guidance when conducting interviews.

The second step involves preliminary observation. The purpose of this preliminary observation was to assess conditions in the field before beginning research. Additionally, preliminary observations were made in order to identify the subjects of the field interviews. It is also critical to pay attention before doing early observations, such as field equipment such as a tape recorder, stationery, and authorization to conduct observation activities from the appropriate authorities if necessary.

The third stage involves conducting interviews. Numerous interview models are available for use in conducting interviews. Narrative interviews are one that researchers frequently employ. In narrative interviews, the importance of how the question-answer process might awaken the informant's subconscious regarding the events they have encountered is emphasized more. Historians must thus encourage informants to share experiences freely and to listen intently during narrative interviews²³.

Critical selection of oral sources is the fourth stage. In order to gather accurate data, this fourth step is crucial. One way to criticize is to consider how old the oral source is. Historians need to consider this situation and evaluate each informant in turn. Historians can obtain information by comparing informant data with other sources. Comparison of informant data by looking at sources can provide

²⁰ Bambang Purwanto, *Gagalnya Historiografi Indonesiasentris*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak. h.69

²¹ Bambang Purwanto, *Gagalnya Historiografi Indonesiasentris*. h.70

²² Derek Clifford, *Methods in Oral History and Social Work*. Oral History, Autumn, 1995, Vol. 23, No. 2, Working with Memories (Autumn, 1995), pp. 65-70.

²³ Kah Seng Loh, Ernest Koh and Alistar Thomson. *Oral History and Fragments in Southeast Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. h. 5.

historians with information that it could be that older informants have higher data accuracy than younger informants. Apart from that, historians also need to pay attention to the informant's health, whether the interviewee is mentally and spiritually healthy.

Finally, the fifth step is transcription. The information from the sources needs to be transcribed once the interviews have been conducted and it is determined that the data satisfies the anticipated targets. Transcribing oral material into written sources is the act of transcription itself. In addition, this transcription allows you to play back the recorded findings after completion²⁴.

Conclusion

It remains unclear in some of Indonesian and colonial historiographic works about Islam, particularly Islamization in Bolaang Mongondow. In this case, oral history techniques and approaches can be used to explore and fill in a number of gaps in Islamic historiography. A portion of the disputed history discusses the roles played by Javanese coffee growers in the Islamization of the Bolaang Mongondow region, as well as the roles played by slaves brought by the Dutch to mine gold in Sumatra, Java, and Bugis. As a result, in addition to recorded history data, oral history data can also be a primary source.

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²⁴ A. Adaby Darban. Sejarah Lisan Memburu Sumber Sejarah dari Para Pelaku dan Penyaksi Sejarah. *Journal Humaniora*, Vol.4 No.2, 1997. pp 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.1908>.

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