



Toraja Cultural Landscape: *Tongkonan* Vernacular Architecture and Toraja Coffee Culture

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Abstract

Tongkonan is a style of vernacular architecture famous in Toraja, a mountainous region in Sulawesi, Indonesia. The *Tongkonan* traditional house is a symbol of the Toraja people, representing the ancestors and the entire cosmos of life – from birth to death. The houses and their arrangement within a settlement form a social and cultural space that gathers the extended family of the *Tongkonan*. This article explores the landscape of *Tongkonan* architecture and coffee cultivation, showing how *Tongkonan* is essential to Toraja's cultural landscape and a foundation of Toraja coffee culture. The study draws together literature reviews, interviews, photographic and video observation, as well as photo-elicitation interviews. The research reveals that although the existence of *Tongkonan* architecture precedes the introduction of coffee cultivation, the *Tongkonan's* geographical closeness to the coffee farms, the historic economic importance of coffee, and the social and cultural relevance of *Tongkonan* creates a cultural landscape entangling *Tongkonan* settlements and forests, coffee farms and coffee culture activities. *Tongkonan* and coffee form Toraja's unique cultural landscape. The space of the *Tongkonan*, which includes coffee community activities, serves as a basis of Toraja coffee culture.

Keywords: Toraja, vernacular architecture, coffee culture, coffee plantations, cultural landscape, *Tongkonan*, Sulawesi, Indonesia

Introduction to Toraja Landscape

The Toraja landscape of lush highlands covered in tropical forests, towering limestone peaks, hills and valleys of *sawah* (rice paddies) and coffee estates, is characterized by cooler weather, misty bamboo groves, and rapidly flowing rivers. The area is also scattered with small village settlements comprised of groups of *Tongkonan* ancestral houses. From a distance they are noted to resemble boats lining the ridge of hills. When the coffee shrubs are harvested, fresh red coffee fruits cover the yards in front of the *Tongkonans*, where they are laid out to dry. The bustling of the settlement includes the sounds of voices, of children playing, and the rhythmic raking of coffee beans.

Toraja's geographical location on the tropical island of Sulawesi at an elevation greater than 1000 metres, makes it ideal for the cultivation of *Coffea arabica*, or the Arabica coffee species. Supported by its location on the old trade routes of Indonesia, and specifically the coffee trade route since the 1800s, along with a traditional culture of coffee appreciation, Toraja coffee has become one of Indonesia's – and the world's – most exceptional coffees, not just because of the natural environment, but also due to its hidden value associated with the *Tongkonan*.

Visitors recall several remarkable things about Toraja, including *Rambu Solo*, the unique funeral ceremony; the one-of-a-kind vernacular architecture of the traditional *Tongkonan* houses; and the exceptional coffee. However, people do not realize that each of these aspects are an integral part of a cultural ecology.

There is a powerful bond between *Tongkonan* vernacular architecture and its role as ancestral house, and the coffee culture which forms a valuable commodity on which Toraja people depend. Both tangibly and intangibly, architecture and coffee form a relationship. Thus, our research journey, and this article, begins with the premise that *Tongkonan* vernacular architecture and coffee culture are firmly connected, associated, and intertwined within the cultural landscape. This study aims to show the cultural foundation of Toraja coffee as a component of the cultural landscape and its relationships and associations with vernacular architecture. The unravelling of the Toraja cultural landscape of coffee culture and vernacular architecture will involve the analysis of Toraja photographic scenery, *Tongkonan* genealogy, and the kinship system.

Methods: A Revised Ethnographic Approach

This qualitative study employs an ethnographic approach, utilizing observation through photographs and videos, in-depth interviews, and secondary data collected

from research literature. Initial fieldwork was conducted in To'Barana, North Toraja, Sulawesi, however, field data collection came to a halt when the Covid-19 pandemic struck the world, thus altering how the study gathered its primary ethnographic data. Initial field observation elicited a series of photographs and videos taken before the Covid-19 pandemic closed international borders with Indonesia and borders between the numerous Indonesia islands. Following the restrictions placed on physical ethnographic fieldwork, the study continued through the use of in-depth virtual interviews between the researchers and Toraja residents via smartphone, with further correspondence via email.

Literature Review: An Extensive Landscape

The literature informing this study has extended across works on cultural landscape, coffee culture, and vernacular architecture. However, it is also necessary in this literature review to outline the links between these research fields, for instance, the relationship between cultural landscape and coffee culture; as well as between (vernacular) architecture and coffee culture; and furthermore, how all three are intertwined – cultural landscape, coffee culture and vernacular architecture.

Thus, the following literature review itself forms a landscape that cultivates the links that give an overview or panorama of the relations between these aspects, which are then able to be further demonstrated through our ethnographic case study of Toraja.

Cultural landscape, coffee culture, and vernacular architecture

This paper begins with an overview of the notion of cultural landscapes in order to synthesize thoughts on engaging both vernacular architecture and coffee culture as related cultures. As Ceccarelli and Rössler emphasised in their prelude statement to the World Heritage Papers 7, that brought experts together to explore the theme 'Cultural Landscapes: the Challenges of Conservation', cultural landscapes "represent the combined works of man [*sic*] and nature. Moreover, they are the places of peoples' livelihoods, identities and belief systems all over the world" (2003, p. 5).

Additionally, the authors went on the outline how:

Cultural landscapes have been rendered more biologically diverse through human intervention over centuries. They are the foundations of food production systems and living gene banks for the food crops of tomorrow. These areas are home to local populations and indigenous groups, and are rich in cultural diversity and intangible values, to be conserved as a whole for a sustainable future. (p. 5)

Furthermore, Rössler's article within the collection of papers, noted the significance of cultural landscapes that reflect people's cultural and spiritual relationships with nature and the intangible cultural aspect of biodiversity conservation (2003, p.10).

In a salute to the classic definition of cultural landscape, determined by Sauer in his most influential work of 1925, and which led to the conceptual development of notion of cultural landscape:

The cultural landscape is the geographic area in the final meaning (Chore). Its forms are all the works of man [*sic*] that characterize the landscape. Under this definition we are not concerned in geography with energy, customs, or beliefs of man but with man's record upon the landscape. Forms of population are the phenomena of mass or density in general and of recurrent displacement, as seasonal migration. Housing includes the types of structures man builds and their grouping, either dispersed as in many rural districts, or agglomerated into villages or cities in varying plans (Stadtebild). Forms of productions are the types of land utilization for primary products, farms, forests, mines, and this negative area which he has ignored. (p. 309)

Sauer went on to note, "The cultural landscape is fashioned out of the natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result" (1925, pp. 309-310). In his following article 'Recent Development in Cultural Geography' (Sauer, 1927), he added that the structures superimposed over the physical landscape make up cultural landscapes. More recently Fowler (2001) enriched the classic definition by emphasizing that cultural landscapes also function as a memorial – a monument of memories:

By recognizing 'cultural landscapes', we have, almost for the first time, given ourselves the opportunity to recognize places that may well look ordinary but that can fill out in our appreciation to become extraordinary; and an ability of some places to do that creates monuments to the faceless ones, the people who lived and died unrecorded except unconsciously and collectively by the landscape modified by their labors. A cultural landscape is a memorial to the unknown laborer. (p. 77)

Dieterich and van der Straaten's perception of cultural landscapes links cultivation, biodiversity and aesthetics. As they succinctly state: "We perceive cultural landscapes as landscapes that are cultivated and/or clearly reflect a history of cultivation. The

history of cultivation often is the root for value in terms of biodiversity and aesthetical qualities" (2004, p. xvi). This understanding of cultural landscape parallels Ukers (1922) concept and definition of coffee culture in his seminal book *All About Coffee*, in which he discusses the term coffee culture in various dimensions, including its history, cultivation, methods, economic values, and the approach of indigenous cultures to what he terms 'coffee culture.'

Over time, an extensive literature has accumulated on the subject of what is called coffee culture. Tucker (2011) is driven to further develop a definition of concept in her research on *Coffee Culture: Local Experiences, Global Connections*. She states that the term: "refers to the ideas, practices, technology, meanings, and associations regarding coffee" (p. 10) and coffee's ability to unite behavior, values, and exceptional knowledge within the coffee community. Additionally, Tucker (2011) argues that while coffee is a physical substance, it is imbued with social and symbolic meanings through culture. Therefore, the consumption of coffee can serve to affirm one's identity, express values, and strengthen social ties through culture. Tucker also emphasized Ukers' earlier research that connected coffee to coffee-related methods and technology, including cultivation methods and technologies, roasting and brewing methods and technologies, beverage methods, and how coffee is traded. Although not as comprehensive as Ukers' (1922) research in some regards, Tucker's study brings coffee culture research into the present and additionally examines culture, meanings, and histories, as well as the relationship between coffee production and consumption and some of the world's most pressing issues.

The importance of history and its links with culture to create meaning – emphasised in the conceptions of cultural landscapes and coffee culture – also manifests in the literature on vernacular architecture. According to Oliver (2007), vernacular architecture is a cultural product of an indigenous civilization that reflects its history. "A culture without the presence of its history is a culture without roots and, very possibly, without meaning" (Oliver, 2007, p. 25). Carter and Cromley (2005, p. 18) define vernacular architecture as "a set of objects, the common buildings of a given place and time; as ensembles of buildings or vernacular landscapes, the products of a particular architectural community; as vernacular architecture studies, an approach to studying buildings as cultural manifestations." Vellinga et al. (2007) furthermore note that vernacular architecture includes residential and non-residential structures. Traditional technology and locally available resources are generally used to build vernacular structures, which reflect the values, economics, and ways of life of the communities that build them.

Links between Cultural Landscape and Coffee Culture

Forming a link between cultural landscapes and coffee culture can be established through the UNESCO criteria that determine what constitutes a cultural landscape. Rössler outlines the categories, according to the UNESCO criteria originally set out in (1992). These include the category of a continuing landscape:

A **continuing landscape** is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time. (2003, p. 11)

And also that of an associative cultural landscape:

The final category is the **associative cultural landscape**. The inclusion of such landscapes on the World Heritage List is justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent. (2003, p. 11)

Rössler also notes the Committee that established the original criteria voted to exclude references to "man's [*sic*] interaction with his natural environment" and "exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements" (2003, p. 12) from natural parameters at the same session that the cultural landscape definitions were introduced. Consequently, Rössler argues, neither the natural nor the cultural parameters used to explain the inclusion of assets on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1992) explicitly applied to human relations and the environment after 1992. Given the need for vigour and also broad representation of sites included in the World Heritage List, he highlights the need for new collaborations for coordinated regional inclusions and considerations of sustainable growth within landscapes, as well as new ideas for stronger legal security and new approaches to integrated management. He also reflects on the need to raise awareness of the concept of cultural landscapes. In 2008 UNESCO World Heritage updated the main category of cultural landscape to: "landscape designed and created intentionally by man [*sic*] which embraces garden and parkland landscapes constructed for aesthetic reasons which are often (but not always) associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles" (2008, p.86). Although some concerns of 2003 have been addressed in more recent World Heritage work, it obviously nevertheless remains the case that cultural landscapes and their intimate entanglements of nature-culture require ongoing and in-depth analysis.

Rössler (2003) refined Sauer's (1925) definitions of the cultural landscape, and adding to what he and Ceccarelli had written in their prelude to the collection of World Heritage Papers, he concludes that:

Cultural landscapes provide the basis for a genetic pool for the crops of tomorrow's world. They are the basis of the culture, identity and beliefs of the people who live within them. They are the basis of long-term survival and integrated sustainable development in the region beyond the protected areas. (2003, p. 14)

Links between Vernacular Architecture and Coffee Culture

Some existing studies from Indonesia have tried to link local architecture to coffee culture or to coffee as a cultural product, but have been unable to show the nature of the link. Ifani (2019) in an article set in Sumatra, views vernacular design as an example of local wisdom applied as an approach to designing a coffee house. The research describes how traditional Gayo architecture's metaphysical style, incorporating Gayo local wisdom, can be adopted into Gayo Highlands coffee house design by incorporating certain elements of the traditional house and thus conserve Gayo culture and encourage cultural tourism. Another study by Oktafarel et al. (2021), analyzes coffee culture in historical coffee shops, and coffee shops incorporated into heritage buildings in Jakarta and Bandung. They argue that architecture could mediate cultural development and coffee consumption by learning from the heritage buildings' roles in coffee culture. They argue that architecture shapes the environment for social and cultural activities and state that "the heritage building becomes a mediator for the cultural construction of the societies" as well as the construction of coffee culture. This study also indicated preserving and revitalizing the new consuming social habit by incorporating certain community cultures (Oktafarel et al., 2021).

There exists a considerable body of literature referred to in *Coffee Tales - Architettura d'interni per il caffè e le sue storie. Interior architecture for coffee and its stories*. The book describes "coffee, tales, and architecture, and their shared relationships" (Baragiotta et al., 2018, p.104). It's examples are set within the traditions of European coffee consumption, architecture and cultural philosophy. Baragiotta et al. (2018) state, based on Paul Ricœur's study, that architecture is in itself a type of hermeneutical narration, an understanding of the human approach to dwelling and living together in diverse ways of functioning, care, entertainment, and traditions, in addition to helping us to exist. The authors add that the availability of food and drink in consumer society is so essential that a producer should not depend entirely on the consistency of what is being sold but must also communicate the story of the commodity (where it comes from, what its characteristics are, who works on it) in order

for it to stand out. The authors eloquently argue that the flavour of a product must be put inside an imaginary building and be something that decisively contributes to it. They state:

In this sense, spaces for coffee constitute a quintessential example: places of ephemeral pleasure but with a long history in Western urban culture, urban interiors that illustrate the transformations of the city. (2018, p. 104)

The book compiles several projects that show the potential of coffee to empower interior architecture so as to enhance the narrative of cultures and behaviors in order to build hybrid urban interiors as places to experience coffee as a product. However, the interconnection of the coffee preparation method that includes the concept of coffee taste, sense, and the whole coffee culture and the interior space needed for functioning as links to architecture was not explored in this study. Ifani (2019) and Oktafarel et al. (2021) discussed the roles of architecture in coffee shops, while Baragiotta et al. (2018) discussed the other ways in which coffee empowered architecture. However, the studies by Ifani (2019), Oktafarel et al. (2021) and Baragiotta et al. (2018) only applied to where coffee is brewed and traded, which is, according to Ukers (1922) and Tucker (2011) only a small part of the coffee culture. The studies do not apply to the coffee culture as a whole and do not demonstrate how the architecture and coffee culture relate to each other.

Links between Cultural Landscape, Architecture, and Coffee Culture

A comprehensive description of vernacular architecture and coffee-related plantation and production, framed within a cultural landscape, can be found in the landscape of the first coffee plantations of a region of Cuba, which furthermore links the island with the tropical Caribbean and South America, and via slave labour to Africa. This site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000 under the title 'Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the Southeast of Cuba' based on *Criteria (iii), (iv)* World Heritage (2000) and it further fits the later requirement of *Criterion (ii)* in the updated World Heritage List (2014).

At the time of the sites application to the World Heritage List, in order to satisfy *Criterion (iii)*, the site had to "bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2). The Cuban submission states:

Criterion (iii) The remains of the 19th and early 20th century coffee plantations in eastern Cuba are unique and eloquent testimony to a

form of agricultural exploitation of virgin forest, the traces of which have disappeared elsewhere in the world. (World Heritage, 2000, p. 43)

The requirement of *Criterion (iv)* is that the site must “be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history” (UNESCO World Heritage, 2005, p. 2).

This was addressed in the following terms:

Criterion (iv) The production of coffee in eastern Cuba during the 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in the creation of a unique cultural landscape, illustrating a significant stage in the development of this form of agriculture” (World Heritage, 2000, p. 43).

In order to respect the changing concept of World Heritage, the criteria for inclusion are regularly revised by the Committee. Thus, while sites were previously selected from a list divided into cultural criteria, separated from natural criteria, and thus a site had to fit two separate criteria, in 2005 this was changed to just one list of criteria which better reflects the relations between nature and culture. Under the new guidelines, a site must meet at least one of the criteria.

In changing to one integrated list, some of the criteria were rearranged (including *criterion (iii)*). Thus, this criterion of the landscape of the first coffee plantations of Southeast Cuba now fits *Criterion (ii)*. To satisfy this criterion, the site must “exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 1).

Furthermore, according to UNESCO (2005) “the protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations. Since 1992 significant interactions between people and the natural environment have been recognized as **cultural landscapes**” (p. 3).

According to the information published on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website, the ‘Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the Southeast of Cuba’ is a cultural landscape that includes architectural and archaeological material and the infrastructure for coffee-related production and plantation. The UNESCO World Heritage List description states that:

The First Coffee Plantations in the Southeast of Cuba is a cultural landscape illustrating colonial coffee production from the 19th to early

20th centuries. It includes not only the architectural and archaeological material evidence of 171 old coffee plantations or *cafetales*, but also the infrastructure for irrigation and water management, and the transportation network of mountain roads and bridges connecting the plantations internally and with coffee export points. (UNESCO World Heritage, n.d.)

Furthermore, the updated World Heritage document of 2014 described the site in more detail as a large area that:

has permitted the preservation of a cultural landscape for coffee production from the agricultural level, to its processing, and the roads, trails and bridges that linked the product to market. Individual plantations include the owner's house (often based on Basque traditions), aqueducts, flourmills, fermentation tanks, drying sheds, and barracks. (2014, p. 182)

The heritage submission pertaining to the landscape of the first coffee plantations in the Southeast of Cuba identified the links between variables including the cultural landscape, vernacular architecture, and coffee culture. However, although all these aspects were identified, the study concentrated on the cultural value of the cultural landscape; it did not show how the vernacular architecture and coffee culture, as two variables under the cultural landscape, relate to each other. In short, the research focused on the technical values of the cultural landscape as supporting materials for inscribing the site into the World Heritage List. The presence of vernacular architecture and coffee cultivation methods and technology, which according to World Heritage (2014) are part of the site's cultural landscape, were not analyzed in detail. The related physical connection with socio-cultural values remain largely unexplored.

However, another World Heritage Listed example, this time from the tropics of South America, furthers the links between cultural landscape, vernacular architecture, and coffee culture. 'The Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia' (CCLC) was inscribed in 2011 under criteria (v) and (vi). The submission states:

Criterion (v): The CCLC is an outstanding example of continuing land use, in which the collective effort of several generations of Campesino families generated innovative management practices of natural resources in extraordinarily challenging geographical conditions. The strong community focus on coffee production in all aspects of life produced an unparalleled cultural identity, which finds its physical

expression in the cultural patterns and materials used for coffee farming as well as the urban settlements.

The second criterion is addressed as follows:

Criterion (vi): The coffee tradition is the most representative symbol of national culture in Colombia, for which Colombia has gained worldwide recognition. In the CCLC, this coffee culture has led to rich tangible and intangible manifestations in the territory, with a unique legacy, included in, but not limited to, the harmonious integration of the productive process in the social organization and housing typology, and communicated through associated local traditions and costumes, such as the sombrero aguadeño – a traditional type of hat – and the raw hide shoulder bag, still used by the coffee producers. (UNESCO World Heritage, 2011, p. 3)

Several further academic analyses of this site have been undertaken. Velandia Silva (2017) examined the heritage site's value, including environmental and cultural traditions, and its management arrangements, the Columbia State of Conservation and Continuity Issues. Velandia Silva notes that the CCLC was inscribed because of the region's ongoing land use, where farmers developed creative natural resource management practices that resulted in tangible and intangible cultural manifestations. In a follow up study by Velandia Silva and Diab (2021), the authors closely examine the complexities of this cultural landscape. Taking an ethnohistorical perspective, they explore how the landscape was created during pre-Hispanic past. This long historical view is pertinent to the conception of cultural landscape in order to take into consideration the unique cultural phenomena that create a site. Through such an analysis the inherently close links between culture and nature are revealed. These authors also critically question the institutional frameworks that are proposed by UNESCO and call for more nuanced studies that can interpret the meanings that arise from specific cultural landscapes.

Likewise in another analysis by Guzmán-Díaz et al. (2019), the cultural specificities of particular cultural groups and regions is recognized. They note that the inscription of this site on the World Heritage List is attributable to the recognition of 47 municipalities in four Colombian departments that make up the Coffee Axis (Caldas, Risa-ralda, Quindo, and northern Valle del Cauca). These regions are distinguished by coffee development and a range of characteristics and relationships reflecting the inhabitants' cultural heritage. Guzmán-Díaz et al. investigate the present state of Quindo identity in the context of 'The Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia' and the series of cultural embodiments that define it. Furthermore, Guzmán-Díaz et al. (2019)

suggest that investigating the origin and evolution of culture, which has been correlated with the arts, faith, and customs; as well as different methods relating to economic growth and human development, is essential in order to explore the conceptions of identity and their cultural manifestations. While recognizing the complexity of the meaning(s) of culture, they, nevertheless note that it encompasses a collection of characteristics that define a community and embody ideals, customs, and beliefs, all of which evolve with time, and these necessarily produce different manifestations through which identity is formed. In their research, Guzmán-Díaz et al. (2019) found the most recognized cultural manifestations by the community fell into different categories. They argued, in terms of the material culture associated with coffee-growing activity, that what stands out are the construction of houses in the traditional style of *Bahareque* (a mixture of wet earth, wood, and natural fibres); the coffee bags (of natural fibre); the Willys Jeep (antique car); and coffee and corn grinding machines and baskets (containers made of natural fibers, long and flexible, to collect coffee). Guzmán-Díaz et al. (2019) conclude that culture in the Quindo department is derived from the convergence of many influences produced during history. It was thus possible to construct a cultural identity with a distinctive legacy.

The Toraja Cultural Landscape

The above exploration of the literature on cultural landscape, vernacular architecture and coffee culture – and how these components are entwined in various cultural geographic settings – has been instructive in enabling us to outline a landscape of past studies, and, importantly, set an horizon of how to approach our case study located in the coffee hills of Toraja, Sulawesi.

A Panorama of Toraja

The name Toraja has two possible meanings. One states that it is derived from the Buginese To-ri-aja, or people of the interior highlands (Adriani & Kruyt, 1914). Another states that the first syllable 'to' means "people" and 'raja' means "grand or magnificent", implying that Toraja refers to "people of high status" (Nooy-Palm, 1979).

Previously, the entire region was governed by a regency called Tana Toraja. However, in 2008, Toraja was designed to become two regencies (*Kabupaten*) consisting of Tana Toraja and North Toraja. Tana Toraja is divided into 19 sub-districts, 47 *kelurahan* (urban villages), and 112 villages (*lambang*), covering an area of 1,990.22 km square. North Toraja comprises 21 districts, 40 subdistricts, and 111 villages (*lambang*), covering 1,215.55 square km. Toraja is located on the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia. Lying between 2°-3° South latitude and 119°-120° East longitude, the area is richly tropical (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). Generally, Toraja has two

seasons: the dry season begins July to November, while the rainy season lasts between December and June (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). The whole area is mountainous with an altitude above 1000 metres (PKTU, 2015). This combination of tropical climate, rain seasons and high elevation makes the Toraja area highly suitable for planting Arabica-type coffee.

According to the Dutch, the Sa'dan-Toraja were considered illiterate. Only a few Toraja were fluent in the language of the Buginese of the lowlands, verbally or in writing, with which the colonials were more familiar. Their stories, litanies and myths were transmitted orally in their local language (Nooy-Palm, 1979). Yet, more than verbal transmission of knowledge, the carving patterns that appear extensively on their *Tongkonan* houses, is a symbolic writing form that represents Toraja's life philosophy. And this material culture formed an important way by which the Toraja people acquired a sense of the value of their life and culture.

Tongkonan and Coffee Farms

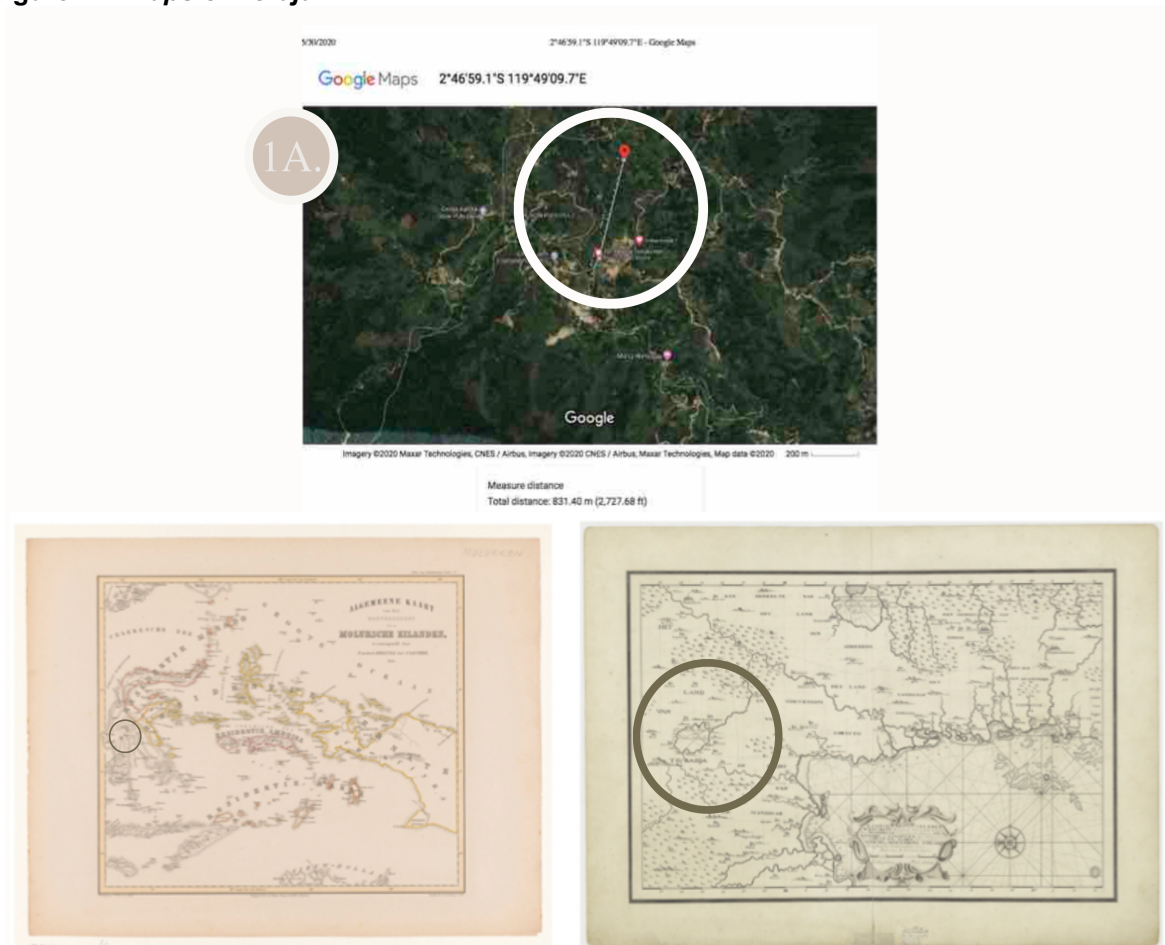
This study of the relationship between *Tongkonan* vernacular architecture and coffee culture begins with Sauer's (1925) classic definition of cultural landscape as human's record upon the landscape – however, it also moves beyond the basic scope of the definition (which implies a one dimension view of human agency over nature) to explore the intertwinings of nature on culture. Toraja's cultural landscape consists of the *Tongkonan* village and its surrounding traditional farming, including coffee farms and their relationship to the *Tongkonan* house.

In Toraja, forests and *Tongkonan* are an integral union of *sawah* (rice fields), *kebun* (gardens), and traditional houses (*Tongkonan* and *alang*). Toraja people are very dependent on the *Tongkonan* forest as a source of wood and non-timber raw materials for building/repairing houses and for traditional ceremonies. *Tongkonan* forest is also a form of local wisdom in water and soil conservation efforts to support agriculture, which is essential for the Toraja people who form an agricultural community. In other words, the existence of the *Tongkonan* forest determines the existence of the socio-economic life of the Toraja people.¹ [Authors' translation] (IKPR, 2018).

¹ Di Toraja, hutan dan Tongkonan merupakan kesatuan yang tidak terpisahkan dari sawah, kebun, dan rumah adat (Tongkonan dan Alang). Masyarakat Toraja sangat tergantung kepada hutan Tongkonan sebagai sumber bahan baku kayu dan non-kayu untuk kebutuhan bahan baku untuk membangun/memperbaiki rumah dan juga untuk upacara adat. Hutan Tongkonan juga merupakan bentuk kearifan lokal dalam upaya konservasi air dan tanah penunjang pertanian, yang bagi masyarakat Toraja, yang merupakan masyarakat agraris, sangatlah penting. Dengan kata lain, keberadaan hutan Tongkonan secara tidak langsung menentukan eksistensi kehidupan sosial-ekonomi masyarakat Toraja. (IKPR, 2018)

The relationship of the *Tongkonan* – which includes the ancestral houses, their placement in the village, and their proximity to the surrounding forests and coffee plantations – forms an intricate nature-culture landscape that involves all the senses. However, in this study, in order to demonstrate the proximity of *Tongkonan* and coffee we have chosen to concentrate on photographic evidence of this relationship. In what follows we mix written text with photographs and short explanations of each image.

Figure 1A. *Maps of Toraja.*



Above. Google map of To'Barana *Tongkonan* village in Sarambu showing the distance from the *Tongkonan* to the coffee estate in Rante Uma, about 831.40 metres (Area of Buntu Pepasan, Toraja). Below (Left). Old Dutch map from 1855. *Map of the Moluccas, Celebes, Timor, and the Western part of the New Guinea*. General map of the Governorate of the Moluccan Islands (Cronenberg, 1855). Below (Right). Old map (undated). *Map of the west coast of the Celebes* (Aubert, n.d.).

These maps (and the following photographs) concentrate on To'Barana *Tongkonan* Village, in the district of Pulu-Pulu in North Toraja. The photographic evidence was collected in the year 2019. The following photo collage (Figure 1B) articulates what Sauer (1925) wrote about the definition of the cultural landscape. It includes all human-made structures that characterize the landscape, such as the *Tongkonan* house and

Alang (rice barn) (Figure 1B point A within the circle) and the types of land use of the *Tongkonan* forest, where the coffee farms are located (Figure 1B point B within the circle).

Figure 1 B. *Tongkonan and Land Use*



The area of this research is To'Barana *Tongkonan* village. Image A is the area of the *Tongkonan* village where the *Tongkonan* house and *alang* (rice barn) are located. B is the area of *Tongkonan*'s forest in which the coffee farms are located.

Toraja's scenery evolves with time. The vintage photographs on the next page portray a significant portion of rice fields stretching as far as the eye can see and creating a distinct landscape. More recent photographs illustrate the landscapes of small-scale coffee farms that live side by side with various vegetation. As late as the early 1980s, rice fields (*sawah*) remained a prominent feature of Toraja's landscape (Figure 2A). Toraja people began growing coffee in their *Tongkonan* forest in the 1870s for economic reasons, and this cultivation has continued to expand (Figure 2B). Coffee was planted alongside other plantations in the *Tongkonan* forest, including jackfruit, *cempaka* (a fruit related to jackfruit), bamboo, *seigon* (tree grown for wood) among other plants (IKPR, 2018).

Figure 2A. Landscape Photographs of Toraja.



Figure 2A. (Above). The Landscape of Toraja from 1980's photos shows rice fields (*sawah*) covering a large area (Kis-Jovak et al., 1988, pp. 14, 65). (Bottom Left to Right) Photos c.1911, Toraja fortress Neneng in the Bituang region from the northeast seen from two angles, and the cultivated valley of Simbuang-Mapako (Grubauer, 1911). (Right) A 1937 photo of people tying young rice plants to replant them in a *sawah* near Tadongkon, Kesu district (van der Kooi, 1937).

Figure 2B. Drone Photograph of To'Barana Tongkonan Village, 2019



Figure 2B. Drone photo of To'Barana *Tongkonan* village and forest in Sarambu, Buntu Pepasan, North Toraja, taken in 2019. It depicts a landscape covered mainly by various middle to high plantations, such as coffee, *sengon*, *cempaka*, etc.

Figure 3. Rice Harvest in Toraja



Figure 3. (Left) An old photo (undated) of the rice harvest in the Toraja area. The rice bundles are formed into large piles for further drying. (Middle) The next photo in the series shows the rice stacked in front of the *Tongkonan* (Fotobureau Stevens, n.d. a,b). (Right) A view of a man raking coffee for drying in front of a *Tongkonan* (Ciri Khas Kopi Toraja, 2016)

While the *Tongkonan* forest and fields that surround the villages continue to be sites for mixed agricultural production – including forest, bamboo, fruit and wood trees, wet rice cultivation and the increasing plantations of coffee – the village became known for its coffee processing activities. The *Tongkonan* ancestral house has become a backdrop for the coffee activities of stacking, sorting, laying out for drying and sifting (see Figure 3).

In Figure 4 below, the photographs show *Tongkonan* village houses in their natural forest setting. The old photo from 1937 (left), shows a *Tongkonan* dwarfed by the surrounding bamboo forest and the descending rice terraces in front. The second photo was taken in 2019 and shows the *Tongkonan's* bamboo-filled forest and coffee trees as part of the *Tongkonan* forest.

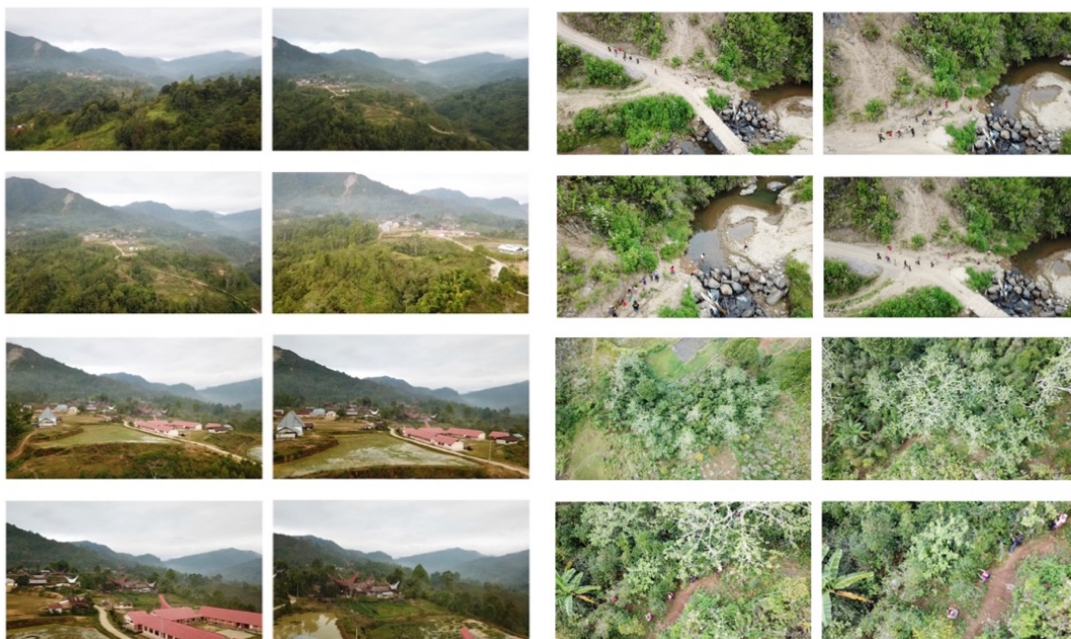
Figure 4. Tongkonan set in Mixed Forest



Image A (Left). A Toraja village tucked among the bamboo (van der Kooi, 1937). Image B (Right) A *Tongkonan* village on the way from Tongkonan To'Barana to the coffee estate in Rante Uma, Buntu Pepasan (Rombe, 2019). It shows that *Tongkonan's* landscape includes not only bamboo forests but also old coffee trees.

Figure 5 (below) illustrates *Tongkonan* houses and forest aerial photographs taken with a drone in To'Barana, Sarambu, Buntu Pepasan, North Toraja Regency in 2019. The landscape of *Tongkonan* and its environs were captured, including coffee farms that are part of the *Tongkonan* forest that surrounds the village. When harvest time comes, *Tongkonan* family members go to the coffee farms together to pick the coffee cherries and bring them back to the *Tongkonan* village to be processed. The *Tongkonan* village and the coffee farm are linked by networks of natural paths, the winding river, large rocks, and grasses.

Figure 5. To'Barana Tongkonan and its Surrounding Paths, Nature and Fields



(Left) The location of To'Barana Tongkonan, Sarambu, Buntu Pepasan, North Toraja Regency. There are three *Tongkonan* houses and seven Alang (rice barns) surrounded by smallholder coffee farms.

(Right) In Rante Uma, Buntu Pepasan, North Toraja Regency, a 2019 photo series portrays the Toraja landscape of smallholder coffee farms. The coffee farms are located in the *Tongkonan* forest, part of *Tongkonan* village's extension area. Coffee is cultivated in harmony with various middle and high level plantations plants. (Rombe, 2019)

Tongkonan in Toraja Culture

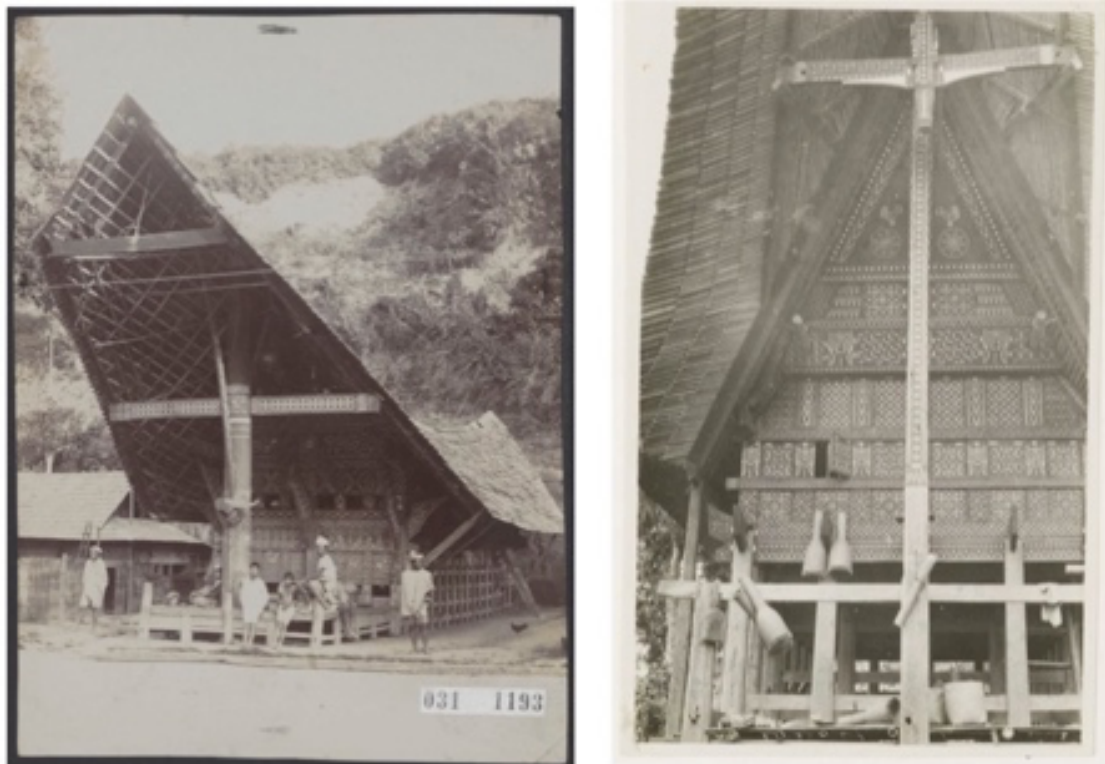
The *Tongkonan* house according to Tinting Sarungallo “represents our ancestors. As long as *Tongkonan* is still standing, we feel that our ancestors still exist, indirectly, that if it still stands, so do we as a Toraja people”² (Sarungallo, 2021a). Furthermore, according to Octavianus Miting, *Tongkonan* is a symbol of the Toraja people.

² « *Tongkonan* itu merupakan pengganti daripada leluhur kami. Kalau *Tongkonan* masih berdiri, kami merasa bahwa leluhur pendahulu kami masih ada, secara tidak langsung, bahwa kalau masih berdiri kami masih orang Toraja» (Sarungallo, 2021b).

Tongkonan is the Toraja people's cosmos of life, and it is essential to the Toraja people³ (Miting, 2021). *Tongkonan* is the Toraja people's centre of life from birth to death, where they perform the majority of their activities, including sleeping and eating, dying, and various ritual celebrations.

Moreover, *Tongkonan*, according to J.P. Bandora, is a place to assemble with family for a *rambu solo* event and *rambu tuka'*. In contrast, the *Alang* is a place to store rice and provides seating for distinguished guests. J.P. Bandora is one of the *Parengnge* (an indigenous stakeholder) in Toraja. (Tumba'Arrang et al., 2020).

Figure 6. Old photos of a *Tongkonan* house.



(Left) An old photo of the Toraja house (Toradja Huis, n.d.). (Right) An old photo of decorations and woodcarvings on the *Tongkonan* (van der Kooi, c. 1935).

In addition to the *Tongkonan* house, the *Alang* (rice barn), Figure 7, is a structure that forms an integral aspect of the *Tongkonan* village. It is located on the north side of *Tongkonan* house. According to Octavianus Miting, the *Alang* is a location to address problems between family members as well as to store the important rice crop. Rice,

³ Moreover, *tongkonan* merupakan lambang dari orang Toraja dan *Tongkonan* itu merupakan Cosmos kehidupan orang Toraja, karena *Tongkonan* itu semua kegiatan adat aktivitas dalam kehidupan kita kita laksanakan di *Tongkonan*, misalnya upacara perkawinan diadakan di *Tongkonan*, kematian diadakan di *Tongkonan*, jadi semua kegiatan dalam kehidupan orang Toraja dilaksanakan di *Tongkonan* dan artinya *Tongkonan* itu sangat penting buat orang Toraja. (Miting, 2021).

according to Toraja belief of *Aluk Todolo*, has a spirit. So family members who have issues should speak honestly and correctly in the presence of the *Alang*.⁴

Figure 7. Old Photos of the Alang (rice barn).



(Left) A 1932 photo of an Alang (rice barn) (Toradja Huis, 1932). (Right) A 1911 photo of an Alang, in Neneng, Bituang region (Grubauer, 1911).

The *Tongkonan* house and *Alang* (rice barn) are inseparable. They form a symbol of our mother, or a symbol of a grandmother for the house, and a symbol of a grandfather for the rice barn. And this symbolism is enacted through numerous everyday examples: the *Tongkonanan* is a place to cook, and the mother implements the nurturing symbolic importance of providing for her family enough to eat each day. In turn, and obvious in an intimate relation, the *Alang* is where the rice is collected by the father and managed by the mother for her family.⁵ In this article we spell *Tongkonan* and *Alang* with a capital T and A out of respect, because these are not mere objects, but are living entities, part of the nature-culture entanglements of the Toraja landscape.

Tongkonan's inherited treasures include the *Tongkonan* village, the *Tongkonan* house and the *Alang* (rice barn), as well as the *Tongkonan* forest which includes the

⁴ Alang - lumbung, dan lumbung itu adalah tempat menyelesaikan segala hal yang ada dalam rukun keluarga. Misalnya ada perselisihan diselesaikan di situ karena lumbung itu adalah tempat padi. Dan padi itu menurut orang Toraja punya roh. Dan di lumbung itu Sebelum melaksanakan pembicaraan perselisihan dan apalah - jadi kita bilang di atas lumbung ini ada padi - jadi kita disini menyelesaikan masalah bukan mencari Siapa yang salah siapa yang benar? (Miting, 2021).

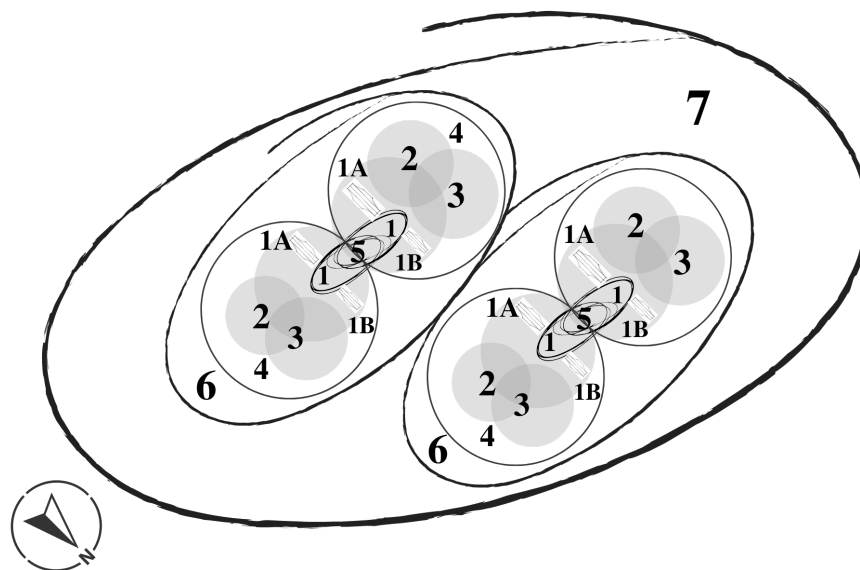
⁵ "Jadi Tongkonan dengan Alang tidak terpisahkan, jadi itu merupakan simbol ibu kami, atau simbol nenek, kemudian alang itu merupakan simbol kakek, jadi ada contoh kecil: jadi tongkonanan itu tempat memasak dan itu dilaksanakan oleh ibu untuk bagaimana keluarganya bisa cukup untuk makan hari ini. Kemudian Alang itu merupakan gudang atau tempat padi (yang dikumpulkan bapak) yang dikelola oleh ibu untuk keluarganya". (Sarungallo, 2021a).

Kombongna Tongkonan land, the *Tongkonan Sawah* land, the *Paqpalakapangna Tongkonan* land, and the *Liliqna Tongkonan* land.

Kombongna Tongkonan is frequently planted with various plants, including coffee, cocoa, teak, banana, and bamboo, whereas *Tongkonan Sawah* is reserved for rice-growing. *Paqpalakapangna Tongkonan* is a large plantation area, whereas *Liliqna Tongkonan* encompasses the *Tongkonan* village.

Figure 8 shows the spatial Interpretation of Toraja's traditional cultural space. 1A represents the *Tongkonan* house that always faces North, and 1B illustrates the *Alang* (rice barn), which meets face-to-face with the *Tongkonan* house. Both 1A and 1 B are located on the *Tanah Tongkonan* (1), which connects to the *Tongkonan Sawah* (2) and *Paqpalakapangna Tongkonan* (3). The *Tongkonan* village (4) includes *Tanah Tongkonan* (1), *Sawah Tongkonan* (2), and *Paqpalakapangna Tongkonan* (3). *Tongkonan* villages (4) are linked by a cultural, socio-economic space (5). *Saroan* is a term used to describe a community of *Tongkonan* villages (6). Some *saronan* communities form a larger network known as *lembang* (7).

Figure 8. The spatial interpretation of Toraja traditional cultural space.



The *Tongkonan* house, the landscape, the microcosmos, macro cosmos, and the genealogies and kinship system are all inextricably linked and ingrained in the entire cultural landscape. Natural features such as rivers, paths, mountains, *sawah*, and plantations all play a role in *Tongkonan* genealogies. The Toraja landscape philosophy comprises *Tongkonan parit* (small river), *sawah* (rice field), farm, and lines of bamboo separating and connecting to another *Tongkonan* village.

Because Toraja is not a kingdom, each indigenous territory has an autonomous role divided among each *Tongkonan*, and each *Tongkonan* then fulfills responsibilities as a member of society. *Tongkonan* has its own set of rules that must be followed by the community, which differ from government regulations.

In the Toraja indigenous belief of *Aluk Todolo*, there is a rule called *Aluk Tallu Lolona*, the continuing value of the local wisdom of Toraja is found in *Tongkonan* and *saroan*, called *Aluk Sanda Pitunna*, which is a rule based on article 7777. It regulates the relationship between humans, humans and plants, and humans and animals. In this rule, wise and meaningful management of natural resources is required that centres on the three shoots of life (humans, plants, and animals) and has sustainability value for all living things in an integrated ecosystem (Salubongga, 2011). In relation to *Tongkonan*, it is a cosmic symbol and a visible representation of the intangible values of *Aluk Tallu Lolona*. (Rombe, Ching et al., 2021)

Tongkonan as part of Toraja Community System

The ancestors passed on knowledge from generation to generation through the symbolic characters on the carved panels that decorate each *Tongkonan* ancestral house. The carved panels serve as a visual representation of the Toraja philosophical value of life, and a visual representation of the kinship system.

Tongkonan as the smallest community within the Toraja kinship system, serves as a critical reference point for bilateral kinship systems in the Toraja community. The *Tongkonan* can be traced back to a person's ancestors on both sides. According to Toraja tradition, each Torajan has two *Tongkonan* lineages: *Tongkonan* from the mother's side and *Tongkonan* from the father's. If a Torajan person dies, they are buried in the *Tongkonan*'s mother's grave, yet while alive they use the *Tongkonan*'s father's family name. In this way each Toraja person remembers where the *Tongkonan* from their mother and father came from.⁶

In the Toraja kinship system, the family is connected through *Tongkonan*. *Tongkonan* can also be interpreted as a house of ancestors that binds the culture of each Toraja person with their *Tongkonan*, even if they have moved away from their hometown to be with their grandchild according to the hereditary inheritance system. A *Tongkonan* has historically been genetically linked to one or more *Tongkonans*. When a Torajan

⁶ Jadi begini, di toraja itu, ada tongkonan dari pihak ibu. Ada Tongkonan dari bapak, Sebagian besar orang Toraja kalau mati dikubur bersama ibu, tapi waktu hidup dia memakai nama keluarga Bapak. Sebanding. untuk tidur lebih tenang katanya selalu di sisi ibu, sehingga anak Toraja selalu mengingat di mana Tongkonan Ibu, dan di mana Tongkonan bapak (IKPR, 2018).

is away from their land of Toraja, its family system remains intact. Even if they have been physically and mentally separated from the beloved land for many years, they remain a part of the kinship system; they will remain physically and mentally bound, and their descendants are still welcome members of the *Tongkonan*. That is *Tongkonan's* strength in the kinship system.

Figure 9 below portrays the 1982 *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. According to Y.L. Rombe, the cultural funeral of his aunt, Indo Sampe, was held in the family *Tongkonan* in To'Barana. All of the significant members came from many locations outside of Toraja to attend the ceremony. It was a special moment, a family sociocultural gathering, and a release of longing for all family members. Even second- and third-generation families who have never visited Toraja are warmly welcomed as *Tongkonan* members. (Rombe, Y.L., 2021)

Figure 9. *Rambu Solo* 1982



(Left). An old photo of *Rambu Solo'*, a customary ritual death of Toraja society. (Right). The image depicts a family meeting of *Rambu Solo'*, followed by a funeral ceremony in Tikala, Tana Toraja (Rombe, 1982).

Tongkonan is part of the more extensive traditional community institution known as *saroan*. *Saroan*, is Toraja's traditional customary institution involving traditional ceremonies, agricultural land management, and environmental management. *Tongkonan*, as a shaper of *saroan*, plays an essential role in agricultural and environmental management under Toraja's customary law. Several of these *saroan* banded together to form a larger traditional community institution known as *lembang* which is now used to refer to an Indonesian administrative unit called *kecamatan* (district). Without *Tongkonan*, the larger institutions of *saroan* and *lembang* would not exist.

According to Tinting Sarungallo⁷, *lembang* is the forefront of the village in the current government and represents the state system of government and not the customary system as it remains held by *Tongkonan*. Now, the two are partners⁸ (Sarungallo, 2021a).

Toraja's Coffee Culture

The primary source of income for residents of *Toraja* today is coffee from their farms. Before Dutch colonization, the coffee trade connected Toraja to the outside world through Arab and Buginese merchants (Nooy-Palm, 1979).

Bigalke (2005), argues that there is some linguistic and horticultural evidence to suggest that coffee arrived in the highlands of Toraja long before the Dutch brought it to the island in the 1830s. The Torajan term for coffee, *kaa*, comes from the Bugis word *kawa*, which is derived from the Arabic *qahwah*, rather than the Malay word *kopi*, which is derived from the Dutch *koffie*. In the 1920s, van Dijk, a Dutch planter, discovered 200 to 300-year-old coffee trees on land he cleared in the western Sa'dan-Toraja highlands. If the trees were that old, it is conjectured that it could have been Arab traders who brought coffee to South Sulawesi, either directly, or via Java (Bigalke, 2005).

At the community farming level, small coffee plantations in Toraja rely on old trees that were planted in the Dutch era which are a different variety to the coffee trees planted in more recent years on larger plantations. The coffee that was planted during the colonial period was a tall tree bearing a large coffee fruit. Harvesting must be done collaboratively, with people assisting each other to reach the highest branches. Thus, modern processes do not entirely replace traditional methods of processing green bean coffee and in the *Tongkonan* it is still mostly done manually and involves gathering and socializing among the communities. This is different than the modern coffee processing systems in surrounding areas where farms are professionally managed by a company that employs individuals and purchases the red cherry from the collector.

⁷ Tinting Sarungallo is a recognized *Tongkonan* figure from Kete'Kesu in North Toraja Regency.

⁸ Karena lembang itu ujung tombak dari pemerintahan kita yang sekarang, desa.

Tapi kalau tongkonan itu ada aturan-aturan tersendiri, yang kalau lembang itu aturan pemerintah..tapi sekarang pemerintah dengan tongkonan itu anggaphlah bermitra. (Sarungallo, 2021a).

Figure 10. Transporting Coffee Cherries.



(Left) A specific way of transporting coffee cherries in Northern Toraja, near Poso (Central Sulawesi). Baskets for the transport of rice, coffee, and other products, made from leaf sheaths of a palm species, are waterproof (Toradja Koffie Baskets, 1929). (Right) Transporting coffee plants, Toraja, and Celebes (Sulawesi) (Transporteert Koffieplantjes, 1900-1940).

Figure 10 includes an old photograph from 1929 (left), and a photo from between 1900-1940. Both depict men carrying coffee and other commodities in natural baskets, which was the traditional method of transporting coffee from Toraja to other locations. At that time, Toraja coffee had developed into a valuable commodity that Buginese and Arab merchants traded outside the Toraja region and Sulawesi Island (Nooy-Palm, 1979).

Figure 11 (below) shows a café in Palopo, in the state of Luwu. According to Braam Morris (1889), Palopo was located at the base of a steep, winding pass that lead into the highlands, making it ideal for trading with the Toraja. In the late nineteenth century this trade consisted primarily of coffee and slaves. While Boomgaard & van Dijk (2001) assert that Luwu was once an (Islamic) Buginese empire dominated by Toradja subjects. Palopo, the area's sole 'city,' served as the Buginese capital and a significant trading center. They note that Fritz and Paul Sarasin, Swiss explorers who spent extensive time in the Toraja area between 1893 and 1903, dubbed it 'Venice in the

mud.' The establishment's 'Cold Corner' got its name because cold beer was available 24 hours a day (along with Toraja coffee).

Figure 11. Old Photo of a Café (cold corner) where Beer and Coffee was Consumed.



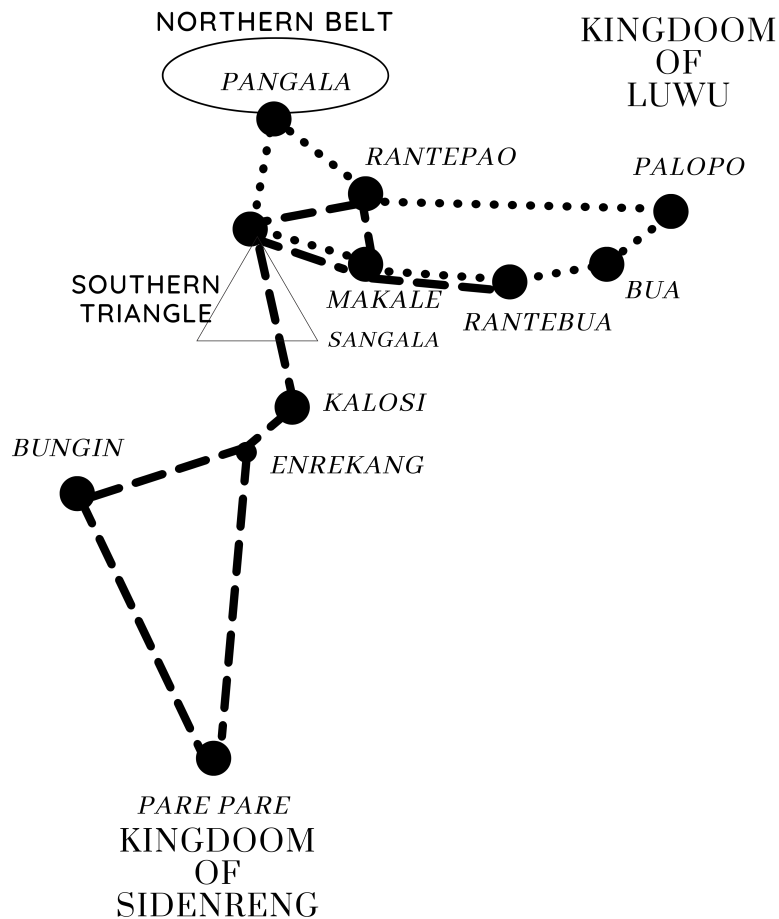
Figure 11. A café in Palopo, which was the capital of Luwu Regency (Kouden Hoek, 1931).

Figure 12 (below) is a diagram showing the coffee trade route in which Toraja formed an important area of coffee production that supported two large networks of Sulawesi's coffee trading between 1860 and 1885 (Bigalke, 2005). This production, itself, grew in response to the increased global demand for coffee which encouraged in the expansion of coffee plantations in the highlands.

According to Bigalke (2005) in the first trading network, one drove from the northern belt of production in the remote Pangala area, via Rantepao, which was and still is, the Toraja market centre, down the mountainous pass into Palopo, the Kingdom of Luwu's port and court centre. The Arab immigrant, Said Ali, was the brains behind the network's creation. Pong Maramba, who dominated the key central markets, and Pong Tiku, who dominated the largest, were two of Said Ali's closest leaders in terms of coffee production sources.

The second network connected the southern coffee triangle to Pare-Pare, the expanding Kingdom of Sidenreng's port outlet, via a series of rival Toraja market centres. The Kingdom of Sidenreng was able to pry loose from the extensive political control of the highlands in 1906, and through the town of Pare-Pare, this kingdom was able to redirect the coffee trade (Bigalke, 2005).

Figure 12. *Taraja Coffee Trade Toutes in the Late 1800s.*



The coffee trade routes c.1890, adapted from Bigalke (2005), show two networks, the northern belt and southern triangle, that grew in response to the global coffee market and the expansion of coffee bushes in Toraja's highlands.

Toraja coffee is not part of the religious symbols in the *Aluk Todolo*, the Toraja indigenous belief system translated as 'the way of the ancestors.' *Aluk Todolo* does, however, include several symbols which are used in the carved architectural panels of the *Tongkonan* house, including the cock, buffalo head, and sunlight (see Figure 13). Nevertheless, many motifs carved on the *Tongkonanan* panels include a motif called *Pa'buu Tina'* (see Figure 14) that refers to *Waru*⁹ (Wijayanti, 2011), and which Tinting Sarungalo referred to as a coffee flower, calling it *Patola Kopi* in one WhatsApp personal communication.¹⁰

⁹ *Waru*, a plant with the scientific name *Hibiscus tiliaceus* is scientifically classified into the genus *Hibiscus*. (Riset, 2021).

¹⁰ Sarungalo (2021, 27 October). Conversation about *Pa'buu Tina'*.

Figure 13. Toraja Main Carving Motifs

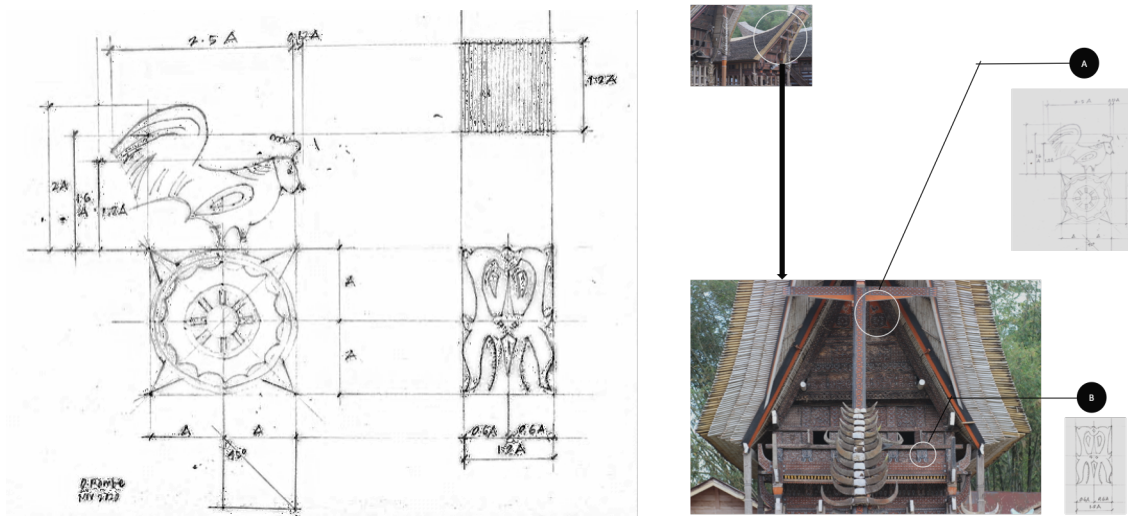
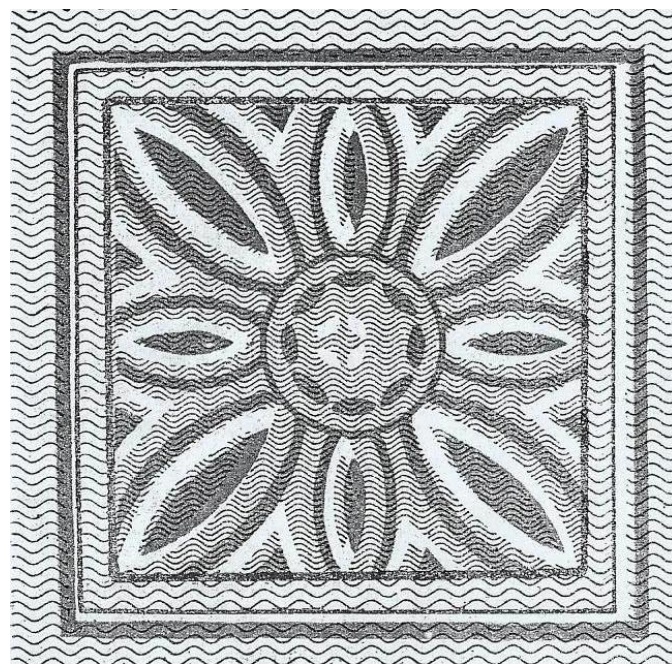


Image 1 (Left). *Passura' Pa' Barre Allo* (bottom) & *Pa' Manuk Londong* (top). Right hand side, *Passura' Pa' Tedong* (bottom) & *Pa' Sussuk* (a decoration beneath the motif). The figures are redrawn, and the proportions are interpreted by Octaviana Rombe using photos elicitation inspired by Tangdilintin's work in 1978. It is a balanced geometrical proportion, whether it is in a symmetrical or asymmetrical form. (Rombe, Goh et al., 2021). Image 2 (Right) Toraja material symbols. North face details of the *Tongkonan* house show the *Pa' Barre Allo*, the radiance of sunlight motif surmounted by the *Pa' Manuk Londong*, the cock (A), and the *Pa' Tedong*, the buffalo head (B) surrounded by the motifs' development. (Rombe, Goh, et al., 2021)

Figure 14. The *Pa' bua Tina'* (Halocелеbes, 2021)



However, Kathleen Adams,¹¹ in an electronic interview during the COVID-19 pandemic does not readily accept that coffee is a motif in carving. Nevertheless, her nuanced understanding of changing cultural traditions is insightfully articulates the changing cultural landscape and nature-culture intertwinings.

She states:

It is interesting to think about Toraja coffee culture, since as Biglake¹² writes, coffee is a relatively recent cash crop and likely is not part of ancient Toraja culture, as best we can tell. It was introduced a couple hundred years ago.... Further carving evidence suggests it is not a key aspect of ancient Toraja heritage, as coffee beans motifs are not one of the traditional carvings on tongkonan facades, unlike other plants and livestock that are part of those designs and important to ancient Toraja culture, historically. This suggests that coffee culture is not one of the essential aspects of old Toraja heritage. But of course, culture is always changing, and heritage is not something fixed/frozen in time...and, since coffee's introduction, it has become a cultural staple, served in rituals, grown by many farmers in small and larger plots...and made internationally famous by some of the larger transnational producers (including the transnational Japanese company Toraco¹³). That company and others, via coffee labels/logos cultivated an association between tongkonans (as icon of Torajanness) and Toraja coffee. And certainly coffee is grown everywhere, and the beans are dried everywhere, including (but not limited to) in front of tongkonans, on and around along, and on rante! So, today, coffee culture is part of today's Toraja ideas about their heritage, and much valued...part of sociability, part of livelihood, and part of today's rituals...reflecting changes in Toraja culture over the past couple hundred years. (Adams, 2021)

Coffee in Toraja has become, over the past couple of hundred years, an integral part of the local culture. The sheer quantity of the coffee produced also indicates its central role in the Toraja economy. Based on statistical data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, the total coffee production in Toraja in 2020 was 2,633,140 tons

¹¹ Kathleen Adams is a socio-cultural anthropologist with field research experience in Indonesia (especially Sulawesi and Alor). Her research expertise includes the anthropology of tourism, heritage and the politics of identity, ethnographic arts, and museum studies.

¹² Biglake, T. W. (2005). *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People*. NUS Press Singapore. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=9i9e3j2qPCAC&printsec=copyright&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹³ www.toarco.com

from the total production of all plantation production (coconut, coffee, and cacao) 4,070,590 tons. (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020b) The area of plantation crops was 10,638,900 hectares from the total 15,096,600 hectares of the total area of plantation crop (coconut, coffee, and cacao) in Toraja (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020a). Coffee is the most significant plantation production yield in Toraja and covers the largest area of plantation crop in the area.

According to Neilson (2014) Toraja coffee already has a good name in the global market with prices above the New York price.¹⁴ For the Torajan people, coffee is the primary cash crop, with a productive yield of approximately 889 tons per harvest, according to a 2019 report (PPKT, 2019). In turn, the people of Toraja spend the majority of their coffee revenue on their *Tongkonan* and traditional ceremonies.

When the coffee is ready to be harvested, the families gather to pick and process the coffee. It is very much a family event. In small groups members of the family harvest the coffee from the trees at the coffee farms surrounding the *Tongkonan* village. They then bring the red coffee cherries to be processed in the *Tongkonan* village.

Coffee production is traditionally a Toraja family event from picking to processing. The manual labour involves natural equipment, including a wooden block to separate the skin from the coffee bean and the bamboo basket used to collect all the inside beans after peeling. The family members 'dance' on the top of the collected cherries to peel off the skin, which is part of the family's excitement during the harvest time.

The coffee processing is undertaken in the middle yard between the *Tongkonan* houses and *Alang* (rice barns). Family members and guests who come to visit, gather in this central area – thus, the middle yard becomes the social space of this community system.

Figure 15 below depicts the *Tongkonan* house as part of the village and its natural surroundings through a photo collage. The photographs were obtained with a human view angled camera, and the collage captures the process of Toraja's coffee culture. The whole process of coffee culture binds the element of Toraja cultural landscape: *Tongkonan* and natural surroundings in one frame.

In a photo-elicitation interview, Stephanie was surprised at how the photo collage visualized the connection between coffee and *Tongkonan* and it this could prompt strong feelings of connection.¹⁵

¹⁴ If all the coffee in Sulawesi is usually traded as Kalosi or Toraja coffee, it already has a pretty good name yes in the global market, and surely the price received above the Price of New York. (Neilson, 2014).

¹⁵ Interview with sociologist. (Stephanie, 2021).

Figure 15. *Photo Collage of Harvest*



Photo collage taken in To'Barana *Tongkonan* village and coffee field, 2019. The image illustrates the family's involvement in coffee harvesting and coffee's ability to bring the family together. (Rombe Collection, 2019)

Coffee in Toraja is planted mixed with other trees such as bamboo, jackfruit, *sengon*, and banana in the surroundings of the *Tongkonan* village. The farm is part of the traditional land-use system that is owned by the family of the *Tongkonan*, and part of the traditional settlement of the *Tongkonan*. Figures 16 and 17 (below), depict the *Tongkonan* house as part of the traditional settlement within its natural surroundings, and simultaneously depicts Toraja's coffee culture process, including the excitement and closeness of family members processing coffee in front of the *Tongkonan*.

Figure 16. Collage of Tongkonan in Natural Surroundings and Coffee Process



A collage of screen-captured videos taken in To'Barana, Pulu-Pulu in 2019 shows the traditional processing of coffee beans in front of the *Tongkonan* house. (Rombe Collection, 2019)

Toraja's coffee culture is developed at the stage of green bean cultivation, processing, and trading. The roasting and drinking stages do not involve much further development. Coffee has become an exclusive commodity for trading outside Toraja due to its value to the Toraja people as a cash crop. Even though coffee is the most popular drink for social gatherings in Toraja because of its long history and well-known name among Toraja people, coffee is not a part of the formal cultural ritual.

According to Miting, the concept of a café had traditionally not developed in Toraja society because local people prefer to drink coffee on the wooden platform that sits under the the *Alang* (rice barn) and is part of its construction. Thus, the *Alang*, also acts as a social hub.¹⁶

¹⁶ Interview with Pak Otto (Octavianus Miting). Octavianus Miting is a Toraja coffee farmer and tourist companion. (Miting, 2021).

Figure 17. Coffee Production in To'Barana Tongkonan Village.



Figure 17. (Left) To'Barana *Tongkonan*, Sarambu, Buntu Pepasan, North Toraja Regency. There are three *Tongkonan* and eight *Alang* surrounded by a coffee plantation. (Rombe, 2019), (Right) The front yard of *Tongkonan* is a centre for various culturally valuable activities and ceremonies, such as death ceremonies, harvest collection and coffee processing. (Rombe, 2019)

However, recently, in the last five years, the presence of the modern coffee shop has appeared, with the presentation of roasting and brewing techniques using international standards and carrying Toraja coffee as a pride label. The Toraja style of roasting and drinking has not been developed as part of the character of the café coffee culture.

Figure 19 (below) depicts Toraja people drinking simple black coffee during a social gathering in the Alang. In this social gathering, there is no specific coffee-serving ritual.

Figure 19. *Drinking Coffee in the Alang (rice barn)*



As part of the society, people drink simple black coffee in the *Alang* (rice barn) (Rombe Collection, 2019).

According to Tinting Sarungallo, many Toraja people travel outside of Toraja.¹⁷ The sentimental attachment to their hometown and a continuation of the Toraja kinship system prompted some Torajans to open a café that reflects both the Toraja culture and Toraja coffee. Toraja coffee is roasted and served as the preferred choice in these cafés. The presence of *Tongkonan* as a symbol of Toraja can be seen in many café's murals and artwork. It is a remembrance of the owner's relationship with Toraja. The

¹⁷ Sarungallo, T. (2021a, 3 September 2021). *Interview with Tinting Sarungallo* [Interview].

kindship system allows Torajan coffee culture to spread beyond Toraja to where the roasting and drinking of coffee forms a culture of coffee consumption and appreciation.

Figure 20 (below) shows Toraja coffee outside Toraja. The image on the left is a Toraja café owned by a Toraja family living in Jakarta which includes a variety of Toraja coffee from various villages in Toraja. Right is another Toraja café owned by a Toraja family that lives in Yogyakarta, their expertise is in one particular coffee from Pulu-Pulu village in North Toraja. The image below is a Toraja café and roaster owned by a Toraja family that lives in Jakarta and has expanded their business to the United Arab Emirates. They sell coffee from throughout the Indonesian archipelago, with a specialization in Toraja coffee. All these cafes and roasters use *Tongkonan* to represent their relationship to Toraja.

Figure 20. *Toraja Cafés*



(Left) Toraja Café in Jakarta. (Right) Cornel Café in Yogyakarta (Ray, 2021) , (Magala, 2018). (Below) Kopi Ketjil Café in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Apart from its connection to the *Tongkonan* and its cultural setting, coffee has been a part of Toraja's economic setting. A coffee festival is held annually in Toraja as part of a socio-economic ceremony with the goal of celebrating and promoting coffee (see Figure 18 Left). However, unlike rice, coffee has not entered the sacred realm of the *Aluk Tadolo*. The cultural value of rice is recognized in the *Ma'Tumbuk* rice ritual. Rice is unique in that it is explored by the Toraja community as part of the *Rambu Solo* cultural ceremony and in the *Aluk Todolo* Toraja traditional belief system (Figure 18 Right). According to Prasetijo, "Torajans consider coffee to be one of the most important aspects of life – a livelihood, as it is a source of income. While rice is thought to shape culture, coffee has to do with the market. It's fascinating to watch the mental shift from rice to coffee"¹⁸ (Prasetijo, 2021).

Figure 18. Toraja Coffee Festival and the Rice Ritual, Ma'Tumbuk



(Left) The Toraja coffee festival 2018 (Purnomo, 2018), (Right) The rice ritual of Ma'Tumbuk (Istov, 2018)

Furthermore, Adams argues that,

I also think Toraja coffee culture has tremendous potential for further development for tourism. It also has resilience in pandemic times, as coffee plantation tours and tastings can all happen outdoors, which is safer with COVID-19. And, of course, returned tourists are interested in reliving their times in the Toraja highlands by buying Toraja coffee online (maybe a kind of nostalgia cyber-tourism?). (Adams, 2021)

¹⁸ Makanya mbak makanya kan berarti kan gini di culture nya orang Toraja, yang masuk di dalam otaknya, itu tetep beras itu - sebagai satu bagian yang penting, Tetapi dia melihat kopi mungkin satu hal yang sifatnya kehidupan *livelihood*, *culture* itu kan tidak harus selalu dipahami dalam satu upacara-upacara tetapi bisa jadi Mbak misalnya di beberapa tempat beras atau padi itu memang punya sesuatu yang tinggi karena kan dia dianggap pembentuk kebudayaan jadi orang makan dan segala macam kan di situ kalau kopi ini kan ga...hubungannya dengan market dengan pasar dan segala macam, tapi yang menarik sebenarnya itu bisa dilihat bagaimana itu mentality dari beras ke kopi... (Praetijo, 2021).

Conclusion: Changing Cultural Landscapes

Tongkonan and coffee culture has a close correlation due to Toraja's geographical location, the historic economic value of coffee in Toraja, and the social and cultural significance of *Tongkonan*.

Toraja's geographical location, with its mountainous location, is ideal for growing the highest quality coffee and since the 16th century, Toraja's location on the coffee trade axis has attracted foreign traders searching for coffee. In Toraja, the selling price of coffee is higher than other farm commodities and coffee's economic worth acted to draw the coffee farm closer to the centre of the Toraja community and Toraja settlements grew to include the coffee field. In the early nineteenth century, the land use surrounding the *Tongkonan* village changed from rice fields to coffee plantations. The key settlement, which consists of the *Tongkonan* house and *Alang* (rice barn) and the extension of the *Tongkonan* forest, which includes a coffee farm and community-based coffee culture activities, shapes the Toraja people's record upon the landscape, creating a specific cultural landscape.

Furthermore, the *Tongkonan's* material manifestation (the ancestral house, architectural panels, the special layout in the village) is a symbolic meaning of Toraja's traditional belief of *Aluk Tadolo*, with its philosophy of *Aluk Tallu Lolona*, which upholds three life relationships: human relations with humans, and animals, and plants, and is a central component of Toraja's agriculture, which includes coffee culture as its primary component. It expands coffee's socioeconomic worth to include the socio-culture. *Tongkonan*, along with the rest of Toraja's cultural landscape, serves as the foundation for Toraja's coffee culture.

Despite the fact that rice is the most respected commodity in Toraja, having its own sacred sanctuary in the *Alang* (rice barn) within the *Tongkonan* village, coffee has always been a commercially important crop. Furthermore, despite coffee being a relatively new commodity compared to rice, it has its own position in the *Tongkonan*. Coffee is the socio-economic center of the *Tongkonan*, whereas rice is the centre of the *Tongkonan's* socio-cultural systems. The identification of a *Patola Kopi* motif as a design element the *Tongkonan Pa'bu'a Tina'* points to the growing recognition of coffee as part of the *Tongkonan* material culture and signifies entry of coffee as part of the intangible value of the Torajan socio-cultural space. While the presence of the coffee festival – as part of Toraja's cultural events series – raises coffee tangibly as paramount to Torajan community culture. As Toraja's primary cash crop, coffee is eroding the value of rice in society and culture both tangibly and intangibly due to its dominant position in Toraja's socio-economy.



This changing cultural landscape – based on the historical introduction of an introduced species of plant, that then grew to become the centre of social and economic importance – also changes the nature-culture relations within the land of Toraja.

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