Fire Tribes and Stateless Worlds: A Conversation

Bima Satria Putra, David Wengrow, and Stevphen Shukaitis



Jean Jacques Élisée Reclus, *Indonesia – Moluccas, Ambon Island*, 1894. License: Public domain.

Issue #164
June 2026

Several years ago Minor Compositions, the publishing project I run, was contacted by an anarchist publisher based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia called Page Against the Machine. What began as a proposal to translate and circulate Indonesian anarchist writing quickly grew into a more sustained collaboration linking radical publishing to prisoner solidarity work. What happens when histories are reconstructed not from the vantage point of states, rulers, and empires, but from those who evaded them, resisted them, or remained beyond their reach? And what kinds of political concepts emerge when writing takes shape under conditions of repression, in dialogue with both ancestral practices and contemporary radical theory? These questions animate *Anarchy in Alifuru* by Bima Satria Putra, written from inside an Indonesian prison.[1] Bima's work moves alongside thinkers such as David Graeber and James C. Scott, engaging questions of stateless societies, refusal, and nonhierarchical forms of life while also reworking them from a decolonial perspective. Bima does not treat anarchism as an imported framework to be adapted, but as something that can be traced within the political-economic practices of Southeast Asia itself: suppressed and fragmented, but not extinguished. When we heard, through mutual friends, that David Wengrow had encountered Bima's work and noted a set of unexpected resonances with his project with the late David Graeber, it suggested an opening for discussion. What follows is a conversation that brings these trajectories into contact: not to smooth over their differences, but to see what emerges in their juxtaposition. Moving across uneven contexts—academic and carceral, anthropological and insurgent—it reflects on the persistence of stateless forms of life, and on how their histories might reshape the ways we think about politics in the present. This conversation was conducted over email and has been edited for clarity.

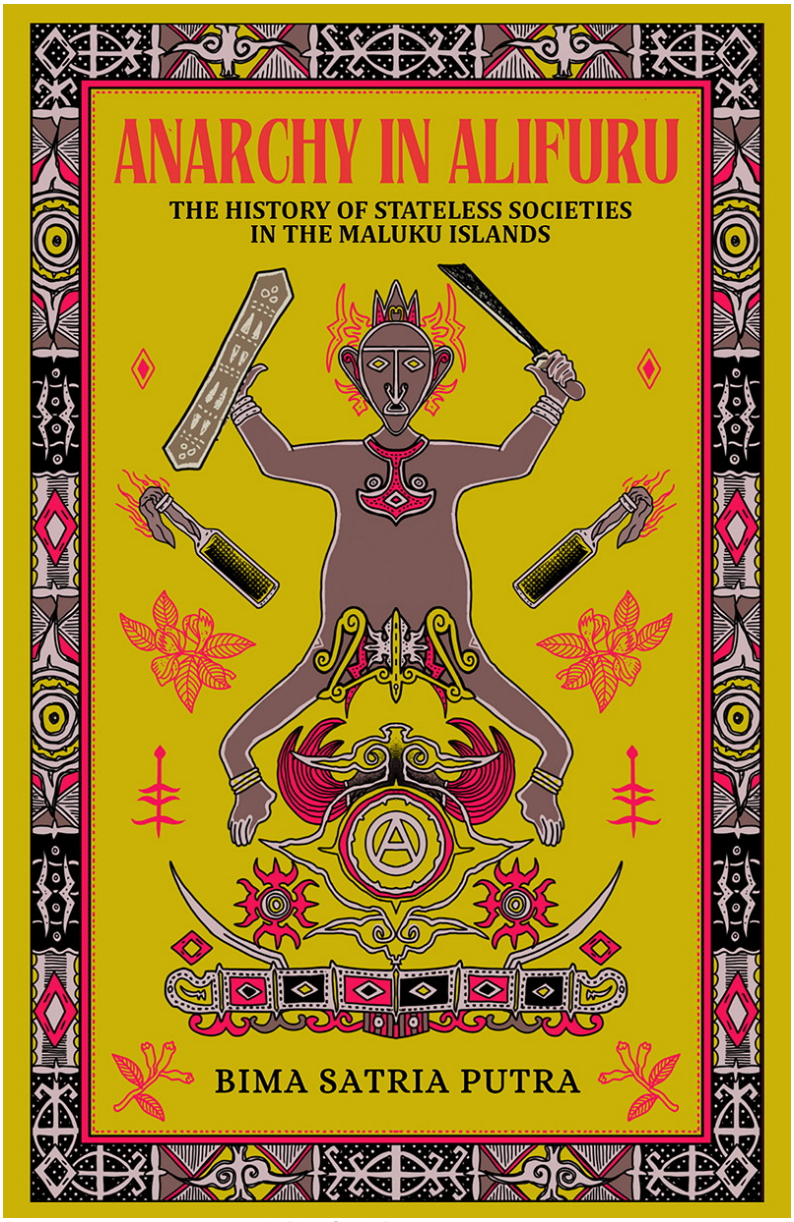
—Stevphen Shukaitis

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Stevphen Shukaitis (SS): Bima, your ongoing research initiative, the Fire Tribes Project (Proyek Suku Api), sets out to challenge dominant histories of Nusantara [the Old Javanese term for Maritime Southeast Asia] that are largely written from the perspective of rulers and conquerors. Instead, you focus on the experiences and political forms of those who were ruled—or who remained outside state structures altogether—across regions such as Maluku, Kalimantan, and Java. Could you describe the central aims of this project and what it means to reconstruct history from the perspective of stateless societies? David, your work, particularly in collaboration with David Graeber, has similarly questioned state-centered narratives of human history. How do you see projects like Bima's contributing to a broader rethinking of how histories of political organization are written and understood?

Bima Satria Putra (BSP): In Indonesia, the colonial period is popularly referred to as the "colonial era," and European pre-colonialism is referred to as the "kingdom era." This understanding is even shared by radicals and anarchists in Indonesia. A few years ago, we radicals and anarchists in Indonesia generally agreed that anarchism was an ideology imported from Europe. This could lead to two reactions. Some might argue that because anarchism is not fundamentally rooted in our society, it is irrelevant. On the other hand, those who do support an anarchist perspective could argue that anarchism might need some adjustments for the local context. But I created a third direction: A decolonial approach is inherent to anarchism because the latter's values can be traced back to ancestral political-economic practices before they were destroyed by Dutch colonialism and the Republic of Indonesia that succeeded it. This third direction emerged precisely after reading the works of Peter Kropotkin, David Graeber, and James C. Scott.[2] All of them argued that stateless societies had existed and were even a common political norm throughout human history. They provided compelling examples, and that's what prompted me to deconstruct Indonesian national historiography using history from below, or from the margins. The results of this research strongly support my thesis that anarchism once existed here and can therefore be used again today. That's the goal of the Fire Tribes Project.

David Wengrow (DW): I should probably start by explaining how I came across Bima's book *Anarchy in Alifuru* and why I was so excited to read it. Last March I was in Amsterdam to do some research at the Rijksmuseum, where I'm giving a lecture later in the year which will be the first time I will talk about some of the work I've been doing since David Graeber died. It's very much in line with the project we started together back in 2010, of which *The Dawn of Everything* was just one part. So, it's a sequel of sorts, which has taken me much deeper into the history and anthropology of the Indian Ocean. It's a particularly exciting time to do this, as archaeological research everywhere from the Swahili Coast to South Sulawesi is overturning a lot of conventional wisdom. While in Amsterdam I met up with Enzo Rossi, who hosted me and Graeber at the PPA [Conference on Philosophy, Politics, Anthropology & Allied Disciplines] meetings in 2019. It's one of the few talks we did together that was recorded.[3] A couple of weeks later Enzo sent me an image of his copy of *Anarchy in Alifuru*. I'd been reading everything I could get hand my hands on about the Maluku Islands and Nusantara, but none of the academic sources seemed to cite Bima's work. Enzo had found it in a radical bookstore in Amsterdam. On reading it, I was immediately impressed by the book's scope and ambition. It focusses on a chain of small islands stretching from the Alor archipelago to the Arafura Sea, which Bima calls the "Alifuru World," a maritime space of resistance to centralized authority, whether of Muslim sultans, Christian kings, or the Dutch East India Company.[4] Three things struck me immediately. Firstly, with the exception of the famous so-called "Spice Islands," these archipelagos simply drop off the map in most discussions of Southeast Asian political history. They are not considered important by Western onlookers. Secondly, as well as being fiercely antiauthoritarian, these islanders came up with all sorts of innovative and inclusive forms of decision-making, far more democratic than anything which existed in Europe at the time, including in the Dutch Republic. Thirdly, all this was going on near the epicenter of the global spice trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bima has pulled together enough evidence, in my view, to demonstrate the spatial coherence of the phenomenon in juxtaposition to nearby centers of monarchy, Islam, and European colonial power. When I found out he'd been conducting this kind of research while serving a prison sentence, I was frankly speechless.



Book cover of *Anarchy in Alifuru* by Bima Satria Putra, 2025

SS: I wholeheartedly agree. Both of your responses challenge the idea that stateless societies are marginal, incomplete, or simply waiting to become states. Bima, you describe a "third direction" in which anarchism can be approached through a decolonial reconstruction of ancestral political-economic practices in Nusantara. David, you emphasize how the societies Bima describes were not only outside centralized authority, but actively developed forms of democratic practice and political innovation, even in close proximity to state and colonial powers. In some ways, this resonates with earlier anarchist attempts—such as Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible* and the geographical writings of Élisée Reclus—to locate anarchistic tendencies beyond Europe, though these often framed the tendencies in terms of dispersed "precursors" rather than historically grounded political formations.[5]

What seems exemplary in both of your work, however, is the attention to the specific social processes that actively limit or prevent the consolidation of centralized authority. Bima, across the Fire Tribes Project you identify mechanisms such as kinship structures, deliberative practices, and limits on accumulation that work against state formation. David, in your archaeological and anthropological research—including your work with David Graeber—you've also pointed to societies that resist, evade, or even reverse processes of hierarchy and centralization. How should we understand these kinds of practices and institutions comparatively? And what might they contribute to expanding and enriching contemporary anarchist imaginaries, or more broadly, ways of thinking about politics that take the persistence and significance of stateless spaces seriously?

DW: I want to pick up on this point about stateless societies being something other than marginal or incomplete, or not simply waiting to become states. I would go much further—this is something I'm actively working on, so it's great to be able to

discuss it with Bima in this context. What I'm really struck by are the parallels between the histories of maritime Southeast Asia and North America. This might seem a stretch, but bear with me. Of course, the two cases are historically unrelated, at least until Europeans show up. But in both, you have the collapse of very powerful regional systems—even empires of a sort—happening shortly before that. I'm thinking in North America about the dismantling of the Mississippian civilization with its epicenter at Cahokia, and in Southeast Asia about the fall of Srivijaya.[6] They happen at roughly the same time, around the fourteenth century, and in both cases, whatever those regional polities represented was effectively rejected, and their very names were expunged from history. In the case of Srivijaya, its very existence had to be reconstructed from external sources, mostly Chinese but also Tamil and Arabic, by scholars in the early twentieth century. What follows, again I suggest in both cases, is what some historians refer to as the formation of a "shatter zone," or an area of radical political experimentation. I would be tempted to see Bima's Alifuru World as a critical part of that wider zone. What's particularly striking to me in Bima's account is the way he uses colonial accounts of these societies to highlight features of governance that Europeans found alien and bewildering, but which at the same time shed light on some basic mechanisms of social freedom, which people who have been trained in habits of obedience now find difficult to comprehend. Some of the descriptions that Bima has found could easily be placed in the mouths of Jesuit missionaries when they confronted similar forms of political freedom on the Great Lakes of Canada, a few centuries earlier. What really comes across, in both cases, is the logical connection between participatory democracy, based on skilled forms of reasoning and debate, and the freedom to disobey arbitrary commands. Graeber and I have argued that there is something elementary about this connection, not in the sense of it being primordial, but more as a kind of logical necessity for the cultivation of truly democratic systems.

BSP: I completely agree with David when he discusses the collapse of a very "powerful" regional system. I discovered that some tribes have post-civilization histories: They were once centers of power or legitimate members of a dynasty, but then deliberately and actively withdrew to the periphery or decentralized themselves to rebuild their societies into relatively democratic and egalitarian ones. James C. Scott calls this "self-barbarization," a theory I used in the first book of the Fire Tribe Project, *Dayak Mardaheka: The History of a Stateless Society in the Interior of Kalimantan*.[7] Unfortunately, I found that book to be a bit messy and in need of improvement, and it hasn't been translated into English yet. The second book, *Anarchy in Alifuru*, doesn't elaborate on this in depth because I didn't find similar evidence.



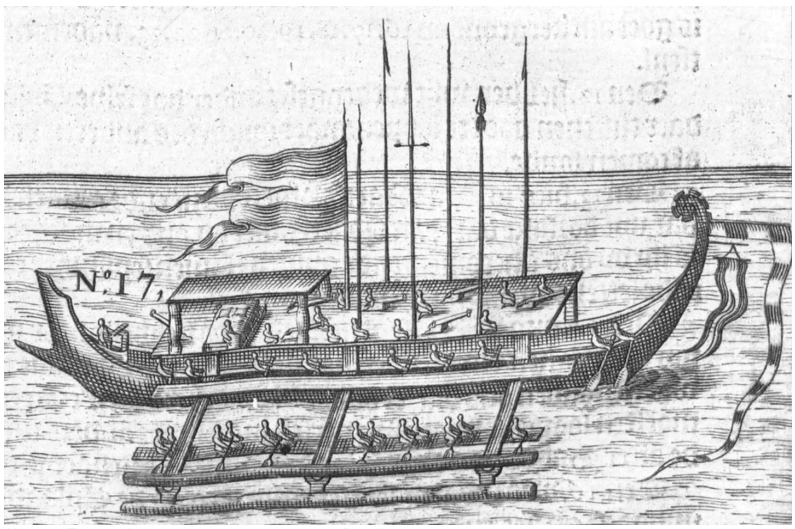
Anonymous sixteenth-century Portuguese illustration from the Códice Casanatense, depicting inhabitants from the island of Halmahera, also known as Gilolo, Indonesia, 1540. License: Public domain.

So, I found two situations. First, it's true that some of the people in Maluku were refugees from empires, and they have oral histories of this, or at least striking linguistic and physical evidence. But in general, the various societies in Maluku have never truly been ruled by a centralized authority before, or have never known a state. I believe Maluku is the best example of an anarchic Indigenous society that has never known "civilization." The project of consolidating power in Maluku really only took off under the Muslim sultanate and then the Dutch colonial state. Second, there were relatively "civilized" stateless societies, because they were actually centers of power or were part of kingdoms that later dissolved. This is what I am currently elaborating more seriously in my third book, *Anarchy in Sumatra*. The third book focuses on strategic trading regions in western Indonesia that have been connected to global trade since before Christ, and various empires have risen and fallen. Some stateless societies in the interior of Sumatra, such as the Batak and Minangkabau, for example, recognize several "royal accessories" in their society, such as royal titles and palaces, inherited from the past, but in their daily lives they operate

relatively autonomously from one another. I am not the first to point this out. You can examine the works of Anthony Reid, who makes a similar point, and especially Lance Castles.[8]

If we elaborate further, this has theoretical consequences about strategy: In the past, as Graeber has argued, rebellion was not merely a direct confrontation with power, seizing it, and then transforming it revolutionarily, but also a "breakaway" (both physically and socially) that shapes the society that is desired. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri speak of "exodus," and Mario Tronti discusses "refusal."[9] Resonant ideas also appear in the work of Bellamy Fitzpatrick, particularly his concept of "desertion."[10] The practices of my ancestors in Indonesia echo their theories. This only raises more questions. Is this strategy still relevant in a modern context where technology and the tentacles of power touch nearly every inch of the earth? Can such autonomous spaces exist not only in wild or peripheral regions, but also in the heart of power, here and now? If anarchy broke out after the dissolution of ancient kingdoms, will the scenario be similar in the collapse of modern global civilization? Or will it be anarchic chaos as imagined in pop culture, i.e., Mad Max–style or zombie apocalypses? Whatever the form of society and whatever the answers to these questions, all historical and anthropological studies show that the state is not eternal, and anarchy always looms, waiting at the end of the timeline of ancient civilizations. It begins with chaos, abandonment, and various new societies.

DW: This is exciting. I wish we could talk with James Scott and David Graeber. Working on these topics is for me a way of staying in conversation with them. So far this has largely been an intellectual project for me, but these exchanges are bringing the political issues into more immediate focus. I'd like to pick up on your Mad Max analogy, Bima. What do we really know about nonstate systems that come, as you so nicely put it, "at the end of the timeline of ancient civilizations"? As you've demonstrated in your writing, often the evidence must be rescued from between the fault lines of historical disciplines. For example, in Cambodia the centuries between the fall of the Khmer Empire and the establishment of European colonial rule are dismissively referred to as the "post-Angkor" phase or "Middle Period." In fact, these often turn out to be periods of political and religious creativity. They contain ideas and materials for building alternative societies, rooted in the history of certain landscapes, but they are now largely hidden from sight by the more spectacular footprint of monarchy and empire.



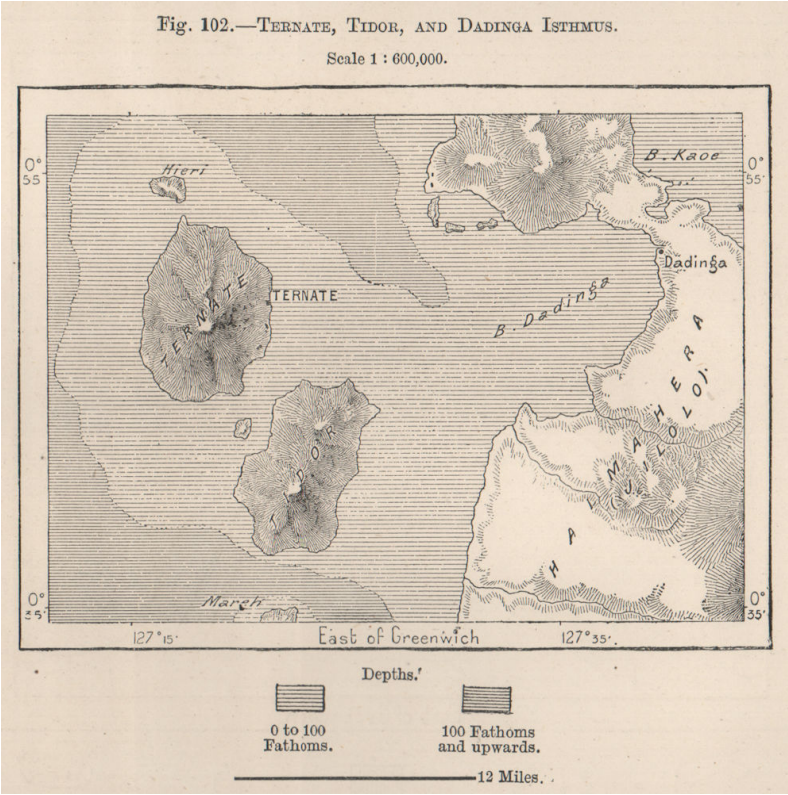
King of Ternate's kora-kora, 1601. License: Public domain.

I'm glad that you bring up Anthony Reid's enormous body of work. I've been immersed in it for almost two years now. One thing I took from this, and from work by Barbara Andaya on the history of Sumatra, relates to this question about whether spaces of political autonomy are more likely to arise in demographically marginal spaces, or might even be confined to such peripheral areas, the cracks in between.[11] Obviously, this is sometimes the case, as with Alifuru. But one point that Reid, Andaya, and others have stressed about Sumatra and other large islands in the Malay Archipelago is that historians have often tended to read their histories back to front in this respect.

It's largely but wrongly assumed that the most dynamic things were going on along the coasts, in the port cities, and that the highland interior was a static tribal backwater. But things worked the other way around. The evidence seems clear that prior to European colonization, most people in Sumatra lived in the interior.[12] It was a case of "big inland tribes" and "little coastal kingdoms." What the sultans and oligarchs were getting up to in the port cities was in some ways quite marginal to most people's experience, and Europeans who we've been taught to see as the central historical actors are hardly mentioned in Indigenous histories. I think Romain Bertrand also makes this point.[13] In at least some cases, from what I gather the peoples of the interior seem to have organized their societies in explicit opposition to the values of port cities, in a process of cultural schismogenesis.[14] This would also apply to gender roles.

But there's an important difference from the "Zomia" situation outlined by James Scott, or by Geoffrey Benjamin for groups like the Semang and Senoi in the interior of Malaysia.[15] (I believe this was a key source for Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed*.) We aren't talking here about scattered tribes or tiny bands of fugitives from urban civilization, eking out an existence up in the hills somewhere. It's the other way around. The highland interior is the population center, with the largest and most complex irrigation systems, controlling the sources of spice and other forest goods. Yet at the same time, at least some of these densely populated upland societies—after roughly the sixteenth century—are also bastions of antiauthoritarian values and women's freedoms.

Anthony Reid talks about the emergence of an explicit exegesis on freedom (*Merdeka*), or rather various exegeses, which intensify once European colonists begin to form alliances with the downstream rulers.[16] For example, the *merdike due*, or "Two Free Clans," of Pasemah, in the hinterland of Palembang. I've seen pictures of megalithic monuments from that part of South Sumatra, which are extraordinary: massive stone statues of humans, animals, and monsters, which local histories link to a hostile ancient power that once existed, but which they expelled from their lands. There is a point here about scale: The demographic balance was the other way around. Most people were concentrated in upland valleys and plateaus, beyond the reach of coastal kingdoms. I guess this would also apply to Bataks, Minangkabaus, Toraja … I've been in conversation, lately, with a group of anthropologists at the University of Indonesia who are researching the formation and breakdown of these kinds of systems, especially in Borneo. Imam Ardhianto, and Dave Lumenta. I hope to visit next year.



Map of Ternate, Tidore, and Dadinga Isthmus, Maluku, Indonesia, 1885. License: Public domain.

SS: Bima, to this point, your recent work on Suku Pelangi traces long histories of gender and sexual diversity in Indonesian societies, directly challenging the idea that LGBT identities are "imported" from elsewhere. In some ways, this feels like another instance of what we've been discussing: dominant frameworks projecting a model of historical development that ends up obscuring what is already there. How does this line of research intersect with your earlier work on stateless societies? Do you see continuities between forms of social organization that resist centralized authority and those that sustain more plural or nonnormative configurations of gender and sexuality? David, I'm curious how this resonates with your own work. In your studies of societies operating outside or against state structures, do you find similar patterns where less centralized or antiauthoritarian contexts allow for a wider range of gender roles or social identities? And to what extent might these configurations also be actively produced—rather than simply permitted—by the same practices of debate, refusal, and noncompliance you've both been describing?

BPS: When I gather relevant material for research, I sometimes come up with interesting discoveries. For example, missionary reports about transgender Dayak shamans in Kalimantan, or James Brooke's travelogues on Sulawesi.[17] That's why I conduct two studies simultaneously. I understand that, just like stateless societies, gender and sexual diversity are equally

understudied topics in Indonesia. But this is a consequence of colonialism. The history of independent peoples is overshadowed by the history of kings, just as gender and sexual diversity are reduced to a more heteronormative telling of history. Another similarity is that I can observe that stateless societies tend to be free from the constraints of heteropatriarchy: Women become tribal chiefs, and transgender people hold respected positions in their villages. Conversely, the strongest resistance to non-heteronormativity occurs in centers of power, such as the rebellion of priests against the Queen of Aceh, whom they consider unfit to lead them.[18] At least this is what happened in Southeast Asia.

If we agree that the anarchist model of society is anti-state and anti-patriarchal, then I believe these are two topics that should not be discussed separately. That's why in my first book, *Dayak Mardaheka*, I included a special subchapter devoted to gender studies. In my understanding, an anarchist society is necessarily stateless, although statelessness is not necessarily anarchic. But since my second book, *Anarchy in Alifuru*, I've simplified the term "anarchist society" to just "stateless" because I want to focus on the form of social organization and its political relationship with the surrounding kingdoms. Harold Barclay takes a similar approach in his book *People without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy*, when he states that, "while these societies lack government … patriarchy often prevails … But since they are highly decentralized, lacking government and the state, they do exemplify anarchy."[19] Thus, I compiled a separate book, *Rainbow Tribes: Indonesian Queer Histories from Pre- to Late Colonial Eras*.[20]

DW: I also came across quotes from Brooke and other Europeans about Sulawesi in the nineteenth century, in which they express astonishment that women could hold all the important government positions in Wajorese and Buginese society, and that women acted freely in most matters without permission from their husbands. As far as I know from the writings of Christian Pelras and others, the Bugis traditionally recognized four genders, with masculine and feminine roles in society defined mainly in terms of how people behave rather than fixed physical traits.[21] The third and fourth categories relate to transgender people whom Bima refers to, some of whom joined the ranks of the *bissu*—a kind of priesthood, who were married to the gods, and spent much of their lives mediating between mortals and their divine spouses.[22] The Bugis and Wajo also had very advanced systems of social contract theory, which placed strict limitations on the power of rulers, and are probably just as old if not considerably older than those of Western Europe.

The connection between authoritarian rule and patriarchy seems fundamental to me, although its history is still poorly understood, partly because there has been a certain resistance—at least in my field—to defining and discussing non-patriarchal systems of organization. I think this really comes out in the wider history of the Indian Ocean, where you have a spectrum of societies existing for long periods of time on the cusp of large, territorial empires but only partially or intermittently incorporated into them. I'm still pulling together various strands of evidence, but my sense is that resistance to empire is often explicitly framed as a rejection of patriarchy, and led by women. Think of the Trung Sisters in Vietnam,[23] for example, or Queens of Arabia in the Iron Age,[24] or the Nubian uprisings against Rome under Amanirenas.[25] There's a pattern here, which I think deserves to be better known. This forms an important part of the argument in the continuation of my project with David Graeber, which will eventually become a book called *The Third Freedom.*

Notes

1 Bima Satria Putra, *Anarchy in Alifuru* (Minor Compositions, 2026).
2 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (William Heinemann, 1902); David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, 2009).
3 "Graeber and Wengrow on the Myth of the Stupid Savage," May 2019, posted December 21, 2019, by Red Plateaus, YouTube →.
4 See also Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Walburg Pers, 2003).
5 Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Harper Collins, 1992); Élisée Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus*, ed. John P. Clark and Camille Martin (PM Press, 2013).
6 Timothy R. Pauketat, *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi* (Viking, 2009); O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History* (Lund Humphries, 1970).
7 Bima Satria Putra, *Dayak mardaheka: Sejarah masyarakat tanpa negara di pedalaman Kalimantan* (Pustaka Catut, 2021).
8 Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (Yale University Press, 1988–93); Lance Castles, "Statelessness and Stateforming Tendencies among the Batak before Colonial Rule," *Indonesia*, no. 31 (1981).
9 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000); Mario Tronti, *Workers and Capital*, trans. David Broder (Verso, 2019).
10 Bellamy Fitzpatrick, "An Invitation to Desertion," *Backwoods: A Journal of Anarchy and Wortcunning*, no. 1 (Spring 2018) →.
11 Barbara Watson Andaya, *To Live as Brothers: Southeast Sumatra in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1993).
12 Anthony Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra* (NUS Press, 2021).
13 Romain Bertrand, *L'Histoire à parts égales: Récits d'une rencontre Orient-Occident (XVIe–XVIIe siècle)* (Seuil, 2011).
14 Gregory Bateson, *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe* (Stanford University Press, 1958).
15 *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, ed. Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou (International Institute for Asian Studies and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002). Scott's engagement with Benjamin appears especially in discussions of Semang/Senoi societies.
16 *Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. David Kelly and Anthony Reid (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
17 James Brooke, *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke, K.C.B., Rajah of Sarawak*, ed. John C. Templer, 3 vols. (Richard Bentley, 1853).
18 For queenship and gender conflict in Aceh, see Sher Banu A. L. Khan, *Sovereign Women in a Muslim Kingdom: The Sultanahs of Aceh, 1641–1699* (NUS Press, 2017).
19 Harold Barclay, *People without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy* (Kahn & Averill, 1990), 18.
20 Bima Satria Putra, *Rainbow Tribes: Indonesian Queer Histories from Pre- to Late Colonial Eras* (Minor Compositions, forthcoming).
21 Christian Pelras, "The Bugis," in *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox, and Darrell Tryon (ANU Press, 1995); Christian Pelras, *The Bugis* (Blackwell, 1996).
22 Sharyn Graham Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia: Sexuality, Islam and Queer Selves* (Routledge, 2010).
23 Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (University of California Press, 1983).
24 Ellie Bennett, *The Queens of the Arabs During the Neo-Assyrian Period* (University of Helsinki Press, 2004).
25 László Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (Brill, 1997).

Subject
Anarchism, Southeast Asia, Global South

Return to Issue **#164**

Bima Satria Putra is a writer, researcher, and translator interested in the study of history, anthropology, and ecology. His works include *Perang yang Tidak Akan Kita Menangkan: Anarkisme & Sindikalisme dalam Pergerakan Anti-kolonial hingga Revolusi Indonesia (1908–1948)* and *Dayak mardaheka: Sejarah masyarakat tanpa negara di pedalaman Kalimantan*. He is currently conducting research on the Fire Tribes Project and remains committed to writing while serving a fifteen-year prison sentence.

David Wengrow is a professor of comparative archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and has been a visiting professor at New York University. He is the author of three books, including *What Makes Civilization?* and *The Dawn of Everything* (cowritten with David Graeber). Wengrow conducts archaeological fieldwork in various parts of Africa and the Middle East.

Stevphen Shukaitis is Reader in Culture & Organization at the University of Essex and is codirector of COVER, a research center of the commons. Since 2009 he has coordinated and edited Minor Compositions. He is the author of *Imaginal Machines* (2009), *The Composition of Movements to Come* (2016), *Combination Acts* (2019), and *The Wages of Dreamwork* (2024, cowritten with Joanna Figiel). His research focuses on the emergence of collective imagination in social movements and the changing compositions of cultural and artistic labor.

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