Title: Oral and Local Traditions in Eastern Indonesia

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Brief description of the chosen format:

This will be a classical panel with three or four paper presenters. The aim is to allow for an interdisciplinary discussion, as the panel will include scholars in the fields of history and anthropology. Emphasis is put on the exchange of ideas between Indonesian and European researchers, making use of their different resources and perspectives to engage in a fruitful conversation.

Brief description of the panel:

Eastern Indonesia is a region that is characterized by great ethnic and linguistic diversity and comparatively small-scale historical polities. In this environment, local histories, which were often orally transmitted, became important for the self-understanding of the communities, which historically often lived in a volatile environment marked by resource scarcity, local warfare, and colonial exploitation. Traditions can be remarkably stable and convey data about persons and events over hundreds of years; however, they may also be altered to serve claims and identities pertaining to their own time. Thus, they are documents of the present as well as transmitting the collective memory of the past. Here, it is important to carefully analyze the great variety of oral forms of narrations and the circumstances of transmission. The presentations of this panel make use of the recent methodological advances in the study of oral traditions to study local cases in the island world to the North Maluku, Maluku and Timor regions, scrutinizing communities and former polities with a strong awareness of the communal past.

Through this panel, we thus aim to expand our understanding on the themes related to:

* The intersection of methodological approaches in advancing our knowledge about local and oral tradition, from both historical and anthropological perspectives.
* Connecting local and oral traditions with perceptions of oral history and space in the North Maluku, Maluku, and Timor regions.
* Exploring the recurring narrations related to heroic figures of old, perceptions of geographies, or the past as laid down by the materiality and symbolism of villages, houses, and objects.

Session format: single session