*Madurese seafarers: Prahus, timber, and illegality on the margins of the Indonesian state*
By KURT STENROSS
Singapore: NUS Press (in association with the Asian Studies Association of Australia), 2011. Pp. xxvi + 315. Maps, Plates, Notes, Bibliography, Index.
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It has been remarked by some that Indonesia might be the only large economy in the world that would not grind to a complete and utter halt if oil suddenly dried up and became unavailable across the globe. The reason for this, the truism says, is that the sailing fleet of the country has such a long history, and such comprehensive coverage of the island nation's ports, that Indonesia's economy would continue to function, albeit at a slower pace. No one knows when these words were first uttered, and they probably are no longer precisely true for Indonesia. But this does not take away from the *geist* of the statement, or the sentiment; Indonesia is an archipelagic nation, and it is still very much dependent on its ships. Today most of these ships run on gasoline, even if many do indeed still have sails to use for times that the winds are blowing in the correct direction. Kurt Stenross has been an avid chronicler of these shipping traditions in one particular part of the archipelago, the island of Madura (off northeast Java) and its attendant small islets. It is fair to say that there is no living person who knows more about these craft — their history, construction, viability and design — than Stenross. Over several decades, he has returned again and again to Madura, and has even sailed with the Madurese in a number of directions. What MacKnight, Pelras and Ammarell, among others, have collectively done for the Bugis, Stenross has done on his own for the shipping traditions of the Madurese. His new book tells that story, and gives an exhaustive account of the Madurese as sailors, traders and smugglers in the central waters of the Java Sea.

The book is organised into seven chapters. The first chapter outlines who the Madurese are as a maritime people, while the second looks at the main cargoes that make their journeys profitable and worthwhile. Chapter three looks at the ships themselves, and the places they come from on the island of Madura proper. Chapter four looks at what Stenross calls 'opportunity and illegality', while chapter five analyses the profits from such activities. Chapter six then studies entrepreneurship and risk as part of this overall equation, placing the maritime Madurese in a long line of ethnic minorities who seem to be drawn to taking chances with illegal cargoes in complex markets. The seventh chapter acts as a conclusion, though this section could have been usefully expanded into a longer meditation about the aims and conclusions of the book as a whole. Throughout the volume, the book makes careful use of maps and photographs (the latter mostly close-ups by the author himself), and there are some useful tables and charts that show the quantities of materials being moved by these ships. There is not a lot of 'big picture' theory or anthropological hypothesis in this book, but there is a prodigious amount of detail, and there is simply no way to question the author's thorough mastery of his subject (it seems total and totalising).

Stenross is most at home chronicling the nature and diversity of his subjects and ships. One can tell that his heart is most in 'finding out where, when, and why', as no

one has adequately done this sort of work for the Madurese as a maritime community before. In this it is hard to find a better guide than the author — he has been coming back to these shores, and to these communities, for most of his adult life. He has not been satisfied with remaining comfortable in (largely uncomfortable) Madura, either, as his sailors regularly ply the tradewinds to Borneo, Sumatra and Java, circling in an arc through the middle parts of the Java Sea. Though the Madurese do a lot of fishing and small-scale trading, they are also important porters of wood through the archipelago, and satellite communities of Madurese have popped up in many places in an attempt to aid in this trade. The timber trade is big business, and because of this Madurese shippers have had some real success in carving out a niche for themselves in an increasingly competitive economy of commodity-circulation. Stenross shows how Madurese-specific craft such as the *mayang*, *golekan*, *lete-lete* and especially the *janggolan* have fit into these regional and transregional systems of exchange. They have done so legally and illegally, mirroring the dual nature, by and large, of the complex functioning of the Indonesian economy as a whole. *Madurese seafarers* is the kind of solid research — undertaken over decades — that shows us how the lived experience of others can function literally right outside of our sight. Not many people probably know of the Madurese contribution to the Indonesian economy, or to its shadow equivalent (the black market in illegally transited wood). After reading this book, however, we all will have a better idea of how the economy of the world's largest archipelagic nation functions, and the people at the geographic centre of it who help make it all run.

ERIC TAGLIACOZZO
*Cornell University*

*Collective violence in Indonesia*
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In academia, there are generally three different kinds of edited volumes. First, there are those that contain a loose collection of articles, which all vaguely relate to a specific region or subject, but otherwise have little to do with each other. Second, there are edited books that impose strict methodological guidelines on their contributors, leading to a publication in which all authors test or adopt a particular theoretical approach. Third, at times edited volumes are published in which the contributors not only follow different hermeneutical models, but in fact use the book to attack and contradict each other. Ashutosh Varshney's *Collective violence in Indonesia* falls into this latter category, with its editor and authors disagreeing on almost everything, from the scope and causes of violence to the best way of setting up databases. While