

# **Chinese Muslims and the Conversion of the Nusantara to Islam**



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## SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comprehensive re-examination of Maritime Southeast Asia's (or the Nusantara's) Islamic conversion history between the late thirteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Traditionally, academia has attributed this event to Muslim traders and/or Sufis from either India and/or the Middle East. During the late twentieth century, however, a number of scholars began to consider the possibility of Chinese Muslim involvement. The resulting discussions focused on a re-evaluation of Javanese history in the context of attempts to re-conceptualise pre-modern Nusantara trade (considered the catalyst for Islamisation) as fundamentally orientated towards Southern China, where Muslims played a significant commerce role from the seventh through to the early fifteenth century. Despite the intrinsic merits of these efforts, however, they have all been limited by an overwhelming focus on Java and a tendency to examine the relevant issues over a very narrow time span. This thesis seeks to rectify these problems. First, it will evaluate the validity of the new commercial framework over a much longer period – from the rise of Śrīvijaya in the seventh century CE to the establishment of the early seventeenth-century European trade monopolies. This *longue durée* view will provide a much stronger basis for both conclusively re-orientating pre-modern Nusantara trade towards China and also positing it as the catalyst for conversion, with Chinese Muslims at its heart. Second, the thesis will look beyond Java to examine the conversion histories of several other important Nusantara locations (Samudera-Pasai, Melaka and Brunei), as accessed through early written texts (indigenous, European and Chinese) and archaeology. The thesis then, and thirdly, couples this examination with a consideration of the Islamic influences which came to bear on the Nusantara's early intellectual and architectural expressions of Islam. Ultimately, by taking this broad chronological, geographical and cultural approach, the thesis aims to more reliably assess the possibility that Chinese Muslims influenced the Nusantara's initial Islamisation process.

## LONG ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the propagation of Islam in Maritime Southeast Asia (or the Nusantara) between the late thirteenth and early seventeenth centuries was, at least in part, the result of Chinese Muslim activity. Traditionally, scholars have attributed this initial wave of Islamizing activity to either Middle Eastern and/or Indian merchants and/or Sufis. These researchers, noting the universally mercantile nature of the Nusantara's first Islamic polities, and thereby positing conversion as a function of commercial interaction, have drawn attention to the conversion narratives found in both the region's earliest indigenous texts and in sixteenth-century European accounts of the region. These, they note, largely identify the first missionaries as either Arab or Indian merchants. Consequently, scholars have argued that Muslim merchants entered the region from the Indian Ocean and subsequently encouraged the adoption of Islam as a means of facilitating trade.

Building on these conclusions, this thesis attempts to identify a new set of actors – Muslims from China. While maintaining trade as the catalyst behind conversion – a conclusion rendered almost inescapable by the context in which Islam first appeared in the region – this thesis argues that the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries witnessed an unprecedented level of Chinese commercial interaction with the Nusantara. Chinese Muslims (a community composed primarily of Sinicised Arab and Persian settlers from the west) occupied a pre-eminent position in that process, thereby rendering them capable of influencing the Nusantara's first Islamic polities.

The possibility of Chinese Muslim involvement in the Nusantara's Islamisation was first mooted in 1964, with the publication of two reputed *peranakan* (Sino-Malay) Javanese manuscripts collectively entitled: *Peranan Orang2 Tionghwa/Islam/Hanafi didalam Perkembangan Agama Islam di Pulau Djawa, 1411-1564* ('The Role of Chinese Hanafi Muslims in the Spread of Islam in Java, 1411-1564'). These texts reputedly recorded the history of two fifteenth-century Chinese Muslim communities – one in Semarang and the other in Cirebon – established by the Chinese Muslim Admiral, Zheng He. These communities, the texts claimed, later played a crucial role in the fifteenth to sixteenth-century Islamisation of Java. Although both of these texts have since proven controversial, they have been responsible for sparking an ongoing debate. Prominent scholars like D. Lombard, R. Ptak and (most recently) G. Wade have all taken inspiration from them in order to argue that, irrespective of whether or not these texts are trustworthy, a number of facts clearly

implicate Chinese Muslims in the Nusantara's early Islamisation. In particular, these scholars have attempted a critical re-examination of both Java's indigenous sources and its archaeological record to demonstrate that, between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, Java hosted numerous large and very powerful Chinese Muslim communities which, these scholars argue, were collectively able to Islamize the entire island.

Despite the intrinsic merits of these arguments, they have all been limited by their overwhelming focus on Java and a tendency to examine no more than a few centuries of history. This thesis seeks to rectify these problems. It begins with a review of the relevant academic literature, both Western and Southeast Asian. Approaching this body of work chronologically, Chapter 1 outlines the intellectual trends which have (and continue to) characterise the field. It thereby situates this study amongst its peers while also providing a justification for it via the critique of earlier work.

In Chapter 2, the thesis progresses to outline pre-modern Nusantaran maritime trade, principally between the seventh and early seventeenth centuries. Because trade is commonly agreed to be the conduit through which Islam arrived in the region, Lombard *et al.* have privileged the re-conceptualisation of pre-modern Nusantaran trade as a means of justifying Chinese Muslim involvement in the Islamisation process. By re-orientating the Nusantara's early trade patterns towards Southern China, Lombard *et al.* have hoped to make the idea of a Chinese Muslim-driven Islamisation more realistic. Their narrow chronological focus, however, has rendered their arguments problematic; it is difficult to convincingly justify a far reaching re-evaluation of Nusantaran trade patterns over just a century or two of history. The *longue durée* view taken here, however, covering a thousand years of commercial history, provides a much stronger case for the proposed re-orientation. In short, Chapter 2 demonstrates that a wealth of archaeological and textual evidence favours a Chinese-dominated commercial environment in the Nusantara. This is particularly so between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, which represents the high point in early Nusantaran Islamisation. Moreover, Chapter 2 convincingly shows that Chinese Muslims dominated Chinese commerce over this same period.

After the above, Chapter 3 introduces the first of a series of prominent Nusantara entrepôts, all of which converted during the initial Islamisation period. The first to be examined will be North Sumatra's Samudera-Pasai. In all probability, Samudera-Pasai converted during the late thirteenth century. Precisely when remains unknown, but because the late thirteenth century corresponds to a high-point in Nusantara-based Chinese Muslim



commercial activity a potential link to that group is plausible. Nonetheless, the available (rather meagre) evidence is conflicting. On the one hand, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion narrative clearly (and plausibly) identifies Arab and South Indian influence. The nearby archaeological site of Kota Cina, however, and which was perhaps another early Islamic kingdom called Aru, demonstrates significant North Sumatra-based Chinese commercial activity contemporary to Samudera-Pasai's conversion. Furthermore, numerous early fifteenth-century examples of Samudera-Pasai's *batu Aceh* ('Acehnese Stones,' a type of grave marker) indicate Chinese artistic influences and, via the names carved onto them, the possible existence of a Chinese Muslim community in the city.

In Chapter 4, the thesis examines Melaka, the Nusantara's principal fifteenth-century Islamic kingdom. Melaka's conversion will be placed in the reign of its second ruler, Iskandar Shāh (r.1414-1424), and attributed to Samudera-Pasai's intervention. Additionally, however, early fifteenth-century Melaka will be shown to have maintained strong links with China, notably through Zheng He. It will be argued that Zheng He married one of his adopted Muslim daughters to Melaka's Iskandar Shāh. This marriage (which perhaps forms the basis of the later Hang Li Po legend) produced a son, called Raja Putih. This man subsequently rose to a position of considerable power in Melaka, proving instrumental in both the city's territorial expansion and the spread of Islam through its empire. Eventually, he became so influential that his nephew, Sultan Manṣūr Shāh, had him assassinated. This action, however, resulted in rebellion: the rulers of Kampar, Indragiri and Pahang, all of whom had converted because of Raja Putih, rose up against the Melakan Sultan. This, the thesis argues, demonstrates the existence of a powerful Chinese Muslim faction in Melaka, able to rival the authority of the city's Malay rulers. How this may have impacted upon the nature of Melakan Islam, however, is unclear.

In Chapter 5, the thesis will re-examine the evidence for Chinese Muslim involvement in the Islamisation of Java. It will demonstrate that, from the fourteenth century onwards, many Chinese Muslim merchants migrated to Java. The chronicler of Zheng He's voyages, Ma Huan, claims that these immigrants became particularly prominent in East Java. There they founded the city of Gresik which, by the mid-fifteenth century, had become an important centre of Islam; many indigenous Javanese texts associate the island's first and greatest Islamic figures with this polity. Moreover, in the mid-fifteenth century a Chinese Muslim merchant (called either Jinbun or Cu Cu) travelled from Gresik to Demak, where he

established a sultanate. By 1513, Demak's Sino-Javanese rulers had succeeded in conquering most of Java, later overthrowing Majapahit and establishing Islam's dominance on the island.

In Chapter 6, Brunei will be examined. In sharp contrast to any previous reconstruction of this kingdom's history, it will be argued here that Brunei hosted two sultanates. The first, which lasted from the late thirteenth century until the late fourteenth century, is now only testified to by the *Ming shi-lu*, some scattered archaeological remains and the late sixteenth-century Boxer Codex. It seems that during the late thirteenth century Brunei was invaded by a Muslim ruler, called Yūsuf. Originating from somewhere in the western half of the Nusantara, he overcame the local population, settled and established a Sultanate. Perhaps ruling as Maharaja Brunei, he proceeded to forge close links with Quanzhou's Chinese Muslim communities, marrying into their ruling elite. This link with China lasted until the kingdom's destruction in c.1371. In that year, a Chinese official called Shen Zhi visited the kingdom and convinced its ruler, Mahemosha (either Maḥmud or Muḥammad Shāh), to send tribute to China. This involved Brunei renouncing its vassalage to Majapahit; when Majapahit heard of this, it attacked and destroyed Brunei, thereby ending Brunei's first Sultanate. By the early sixteenth century, however, Brunei had re-converted, thereby creating its second Sultanate (which survives until today). Although the circumstances surrounding this second conversion are opaque, the first ruler was probably a man named Awang Alak Betatar and he may have converted because of intervention from Johore. Although Brunei's second Sultanate probably continued to hold China in high regard, it does not seem that Chinese Muslims were deeply involved in its affairs.

After Chapter 6, the thesis's two remaining chapters consider various textual and architectural aspects of early Nusantaran Islamic culture. They aim to determine what influences shaped their construction, and whether these can be traced to China. In this manner, Chapter 7 will consider the intellectual influences behind several early Nusantaran Islamic texts – namely, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, the *Sejarah Melayu*, the *Kitab Bonang*, an untitled Javanese work on Muslim ethics, a possible sixteenth or seventeenth-century *silsila* contained in the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, and the work of the region's earliest pre-1620 scholars (notably Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sāmaṭrānī). Many of these texts are shown to contain evidence of Persian intellectual influence. Given the strong ties between China and the Nusantara, coupled with the Persianate heritage of many Chinese Muslims, it is argued that this Persian influence may reflect Chinese Muslim activity. In particular, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila* demonstrates

an important Kubrawī intellectual heritage mediated through the Central Asian Ḥamadānī branch of that *ṭarīqa*. It is very unlikely that this heritage came to Java via either India or the Middle East; China, however, may have hosted this branch of the Kubrawī since at least 1370. Indeed, early texts often link Java's Kubrawī influence to Gresik, thereby supporting a possible Chinese link.

In the final chapter, the architectural heritage of Java's earliest mosques will be considered – namely, the Masjid Agung Demak, the Masjid Agung Cirebon, the Masjid Merah Panjunan, the Masjid Agung Banten and the Masjid Menara Kudus. The oldest surviving (and only pre-seventeenth-century) examples of Nusantara Islamic architecture, they demonstrate clear signs of Chinese influence. In short, they all demonstrate a common 'type': structures incorporating square floor plans, multi-tiered roofs, ornate decoration, round (sometimes pieced) wooden columns and large compounds containing (amongst other things) a graveyard. This type of building is essentially a hybrid Javanese-Chinese structure. Although a comparison with pre-Islamic Javanese buildings (notably the *pendopo*) reveals definite signs of continuation (wood as a construction material and tiered roofs supported by columns), significant differences also exist (the style of columns used, exclusion of large top plates and the way some upper roof-tiers were supported). These can only be explained via a comparison with Chinese architecture; it seems that Java's earliest mosques, while essentially conforming to traditional Javanese architectural forms, were built using Chinese construction techniques. This is particularly noticeable regarding the pieced columns (or *saka tatal*) found at Demak and elsewhere: while supporting what is essentially a large *pendopo*, these columns constitute a specifically Chinese form of construction frequently used during the Ming period (i.e. contemporary to Java's first mosques). Moreover, the decorative schemes utilised by many early Javanese mosques also carry clear signs of Chinese influence.

Ultimately, the thesis reveals compelling evidence for Chinese Muslim involvement in the Nusantara's late thirteenth to early seventeenth-century Islamisation. Prolonged and profound commercial interactions resulted in significant Chinese Muslim activity. This undoubtedly helped shape the region's first Islamic kingdoms. The significance of this research lies in its status as an historical enquiry which provides a broad and well-grounded justification for re-writing early Nusantara Islamic history. By broadening and deepening the discussion, it demonstrates a major role for Chinese Muslims in the Nusantara's Islamisation. In that regard, it brings to the fore an ethnic group which still sits at the very heart of Nusantara affairs. In the contemporary Nusantara, the (non-Muslim) Chinese

constitute a source of considerable social tension: the continuation of economic disparities established during the colonial era has fuelled both anger and resentment vis-à-vis the Malay majority. By demonstrating a Chinese role in Islamisation, this research links the Chinese to a key Malay identity marker: Islam. Potentially, this could help build bridges between the two groups.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for oft-cited works. In all instances, full publication details can be found in the bibliography.

|        |                                                                                                                      |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ASH    | Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfī, <i>Akhbār al-Šīn wa 'l-Hind</i>                                                                  |
| BC     | <i>The Boxer Codex</i>                                                                                               |
| BMJ    | <i>Brunei Museum Journal</i>                                                                                         |
| BSOAS  | <i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>                                                        |
| BTJ    | <i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i>                                                                                              |
| BTLV   | <i>Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land-en Volkenkunde</i>                                                                    |
| HH     | <i>Hikayat Hasanuddin (or Sejarah Banten Ranté-Ranté)</i>                                                            |
| HRP    | <i>Hikayat Raja Pasai</i>                                                                                            |
| IMW    | <i>Indonesia and the Malay World</i>                                                                                 |
| JESHO  | <i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>                                                      |
| JMBRAS | <i>Journal of the Malayan/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>                                          |
| JSAH   | <i>Journal of Southeast Asian History</i>                                                                            |
| JSAS   | <i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>                                                                            |
| KB     | <i>Kitab Bonang</i>                                                                                                  |
| LMM    | Marco Polo, <i>Livres des merveilles du monde</i>                                                                    |
| MSL    | <i>Ming Shi-lu</i>                                                                                                   |
| RIB    | Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, <i>Tuḥfat an-Nuẓẓār fī Gharā'ib al-Amṣār wa 'Ajā'ib al-Asfār</i> (or simply <i>Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa</i> ) |
| SAS    | <i>Southeast Asian Studies</i>                                                                                       |
| SM     | <i>Sejarah Melayu (or Sulalat us-Salatin)</i>                                                                        |
| SO     | Tomé Pires, <i>Suma Oriental</i>                                                                                     |
| SRRB   | <i>Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei</i>                                                                                     |
| TR     | M. O. Parlindungan, <i>Pongkinangolngolan Sinambela gelar Tuanku Rao</i>                                             |
| UUM    | <i>Undang-Undang Melaka</i>                                                                                          |
| XCSL   | Fei Xin, <i>Xingcha Shenglan</i>                                                                                     |
| YYSL   | Ma Huan, <i>Yingyai Shenglan</i>                                                                                     |
| ZFZ    | Zhao Rugua, <i>Zhufan Zhi</i>                                                                                        |

# Introduction

This thesis, entitled ‘Chinese Muslims and the Conversion of the Nusantara to Islam,’ is a comprehensive re-assessment of Maritime Southeast Asia’s conversion history between the late thirteenth and early seventeenth centuries – or the initial four hundred years during which the region’s future religious centres embraced Islam. Maritime Southeast Asia (henceforth termed ‘the Nusantara,’ for reasons given below) has attracted considerable academic attention vis-à-vis its conversion; a scholarly consensus, however, has never coalesced. To date, the majority of scholarship (reviewed in Chapter 1) has chosen to trace Islam’s dissemination through the region to either Middle Eastern and/or Indian Muslims. Our thesis, however, links archaeology, historical narrative and cultural practice to develop an alternative hypothesis, one that re-shapes the Nusantara’s history. As will be discussed, for millennia the Nusantara has acted as a meeting point for merchants from across Asia. As well as their merchandise, these traders also brought their religious beliefs and practices. These included Islam, which subsequently intermingled with indigenous cultures. Because previous research has assumed that pre-modern Nusantara commerce was Indian Ocean dominated, Indian Ocean merchants have been identified as Islam’s propagators. Utilising the most up-to-date research, however, our thesis will comprehensively re-evaluate this conclusion: we will argue that the Nusantara’s conversion period also saw China’s Muslims (originally merchants from the Middle East and Central Asia) dominate Nusantara trade. Coupling this conclusion with a wide-ranging re-examination of the region’s early Islamic textual and architectural legacies, our thesis will suggest that these Chinese Muslims played a

significant, but hitherto largely unrecognised, role in introducing and shaping Islam throughout the Nusantara.

But before any of this can be discussed, it is necessary to say a few words about the title's three key terms: 'Chinese Muslims,' 'conversion' and 'the Nusantara.' Defining these from the outset will make the overall discussion more intelligible.

### **'Chinese Muslims'**

Here, the phrase 'Chinese Muslims' refers specifically to Muslims of the early modern period who, despite being of either Persian/Central Asian or Arab descent, were resident in China. In today's parlance, they would be considered an ethnic minority. As discussed in later chapters, these predominantly Persian/Central Asian and Arab descended Muslims originally came to China to trade, perhaps as early as the seventh century. Initially sojourners, by the late thirteenth century, when this discussion begins, many of them were permanent settlers, constituting members of long-standing diaspora communities. As outlined by J. Chaffee, a diaspora is a community of socially related people who nonetheless remain 'an alien element in the wider society in which they become settled.'<sup>1</sup> As such, despite being termed 'Chinese' here, these Muslims cannot be considered Chinese in the same way as the Han people can. But neither can they just be considered part of their original homelands: as A. Cohen notes, despite maintaining traditions rooted in their places of origin, diaspora communities also experience a degree of acculturation with their new homelands.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, an early modern Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> John Chaffee, 'Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China,' *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 396.

<sup>2</sup> Abner Cohen, 'Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas,' in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Tenth International African Seminar at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, December 1969*, ed. Claude Meillassoux (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 267. Here, R. Redfield *et al.*'s classic definition of acculturation is being

Muslim would differ from Muslims found elsewhere by virtue of having become, to a greater or lesser degree, Sinicised. At the same time, however, he or she would not be strictly Chinese, either. Indeed, and as will be reviewed in later chapters, by the fourteenth century China's Muslims had developed a distinctively Chinese form of Islam – many spoke Chinese, had Chinese names and practiced Chinese customs (such as ancestor veneration). Inter-marriage with the Han population may also have made these individuals appear more physically Chinese, too.<sup>3</sup> As such, and to summarise, a Chinese Muslim from the early modern period was a practitioner of Islam who, despite being of either Persian or Arab descent, and despite maintaining identity markers related to those regions, had also adopted elements of Chinese culture. This made them distinct from Muslims found elsewhere.

### **‘Conversion’**

In its simplest form, conversion to Islam involves the repetition, in front of witnesses, of the *shahāda* (or testament of faith). This, regardless of anything else, is sufficient to admit someone into the Islamic community. As such, our thesis proposes to understand conversion in terms of this act, and this act alone; no other demands are made. Indeed, as R. Bulliet notes, conversion (whether to Islam or any other religion) need only involve a statement of identity like this, not the complete rejection of a

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used: ‘those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups’ (Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melville J. Herskovits, ‘Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation,’ *American Anthropologist* 38:1 [1936]: 149).

<sup>3</sup> Chaffee, ‘Diasporic Identities,’ *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 411; Kenneth R. Hall, ‘Multi-Dimensional Networking: Fifteenth-Century Indian Ocean Maritime Diaspora in Southeast Asian Perspective,’ *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 455-456.

previous religion or way of life.<sup>4</sup> The latter could, and often does, persist for a considerable period afterwards.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore inappropriate to style conversion in terms of the eradication of an earlier way of life – a process which, in the case of Islam, is termed ‘Islamisation’ (i.e. the process of making something Islamic). Conversion is simply the first step in that process. Nevertheless, and for that reason, this thesis will sometimes also use the word ‘Islamisation’; it always does so to refer to the initial conversion event, or something occurring shortly thereafter.

As also briefly mentioned, our thesis understands conversion (at least in the Nusantara) to be a function of trade diasporas. In other words, it hypothesises that, in the context of the Nusantara, Islam travelled with, and was disseminated by, merchants. As reviewed in Chapter 1, this link has long been argued; certainly, trade remains the most obvious channel by which Islam entered and spread through the region.<sup>6</sup> This is not, however, to deny the existence of other motivations for conversion; it is just that in the Nusantara, these do not seem to have had primacy. They are therefore not the main focus of our discussion.

### **‘The Nusantara’**

As already mentioned, the Malay term ‘Nusantara’ (literally, ‘islands in between’) will be used instead of the more common ‘Maritime Southeast Asia.’ This is because, as noted by N. Tarling, ‘Southeast Asia’ (whether attached to the preceding

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<sup>4</sup> Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay on Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 33-34.

<sup>5</sup> In modern-day Indonesia, this is amply attested to by C. Geertz (for example, see: Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971]) and M. C. Ricklefs (see: M. C. Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present* [Singapore: NUS Press, 2012]).

<sup>6</sup> Konrad Bekker, ‘Historical Patterns of Culture Change in Southern Asia,’ in *Beyond the Frontier: Social Process and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Bohannon and Fred Plog (Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1967), 72-73.



‘Maritime’ or not) is a highly problematic concept: it is essentially a Western construct, utilising Western conventions to create, rather than describe, reality.<sup>7</sup> As outlined by P. Thum, the term ‘Southeast Asia’ has its roots in European colonial tradition; the realities of imperial control created a need for outsiders to define the region in line with their own requirements. This generated the term ‘Southeast Asia,’ of which ‘Maritime Southeast Asia’ was a convenient subdivision. Later, during the Cold War, interest in these labels resurfaced when ‘Southeast Asia’ as a whole became the frontline in the fight against communism. As both Europe and the United States engaged in this struggle, their respective governments actively promoted an interest in ‘Southeast Asia’ (and its subdivisions) in order to further their national interests.<sup>8</sup> Almost unavoidably, therefore, the resulting narratives were defined by those interests. Consequently, A. Heryanto has argued that ‘Southeast Asia’ (whether ‘Maritime’ or not) is a concept that is inherently external to the region; it is something created by Westerners for Westerners and applied to the exclusion of Southeast Asians themselves.<sup>9</sup> Given this controversy, use of the term seems undesirable. It is therefore proposed that we use an indigenous term instead, something utilised by people resident in the region itself. As only the maritime, Muslim-dominated parts of the region are under discussion, it is proposed to use the Malay term *nusantara*.<sup>10</sup> Although this term is sometimes used only for the area covered by Indonesia, more commonly it refers to all parts of the archipelago where Muslims are found, regardless of national boundaries.<sup>11</sup> It is in this wider sense that the term is used here.

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<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Tarling, *Historians and Southeast Asian History* (Auckland: New Zealand Asia Institute, 2000), 99-100. See also: Donald K. Emmerson, “‘Southeast Asia’: What’s in a Name?” *JSAS* 15:1 (1984): 1-21.

<sup>8</sup> Pingtjin Thum, ‘Southeast Asian Studies as a Form of Power,’ *The Newsletter* 62 (2012): 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ariel Heryanto, ‘Can there be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?’ *Moussons* 5 (2002): 3-30.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, this term is in increasing use amongst English-language publications produced in the region (for example, see: Osman Bakar, *Islamic Civilization and the Modern World: Thematic Essays* [Bandar Seri Begawan: UBD Press, 2014]).

<sup>11</sup> See: Awang Sudjai Hairul and Yusoff Khan, ed. *Kamus Lengkap* (Petaling Jaya: Pustaka Zaman, 1990).

The above raises another issue: our thesis will also avoid describing the region in terms of its modern nation-states.<sup>12</sup> Although some scholars frequently use these identities (particularly ‘Indonesia’)<sup>13</sup> to describe the pre-modern period, it is questionable to do so. Most of the region’s modern nation-states are constructs originating from the late colonial period. As L. Andaya points out, to adopt them for the pre-modern era distorts our understanding of that earlier period; although Melaka is Śrīvijaya’s direct successor, those writing about ‘Malaysian history’ tend to ignore the latter because it is considered part of Indonesia while studies of ‘Indonesia history’ ignore Melaka because it is considered part of Malaysia.<sup>14</sup> To do this, however, fundamentally misunderstands the region as it existed in previous centuries. The common identities modern nation-states enforce, along with their implied divisions, have no meaning for the period under discussion and can add nothing to the thesis.

With the above comments and definitions in mind, our thesis will shortly begin with a review of the literature. It will then, in Chapter 2, progress to an examination of early Nusantara trade patterns. In line with previous scholarship, Chapter 2 will use the work of F. Braudel to theorise that the Nusantara’s conversion was primarily a result of commercial interaction. To understand conversion, Chapter 2 will therefore examine Nusantara trade patterns from the rise of Islam to 1620, when the imposition of European trade monopolies finally forced the Muslims from their dominate role in trade. This *longue durée* view, exceeding the study’s specific timeframe, is necessitated by a need to establish any apparent trends over as wide a time scale as possible, in order to make them

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<sup>12</sup> The notable exception is Brunei: as well as an early sultanate, this is also a modern nation-state. Its borders and political nature, however, have changed dramatically across the centuries.

<sup>13</sup> M. C. Ricklefs is a notable example of someone who uses ‘Indonesia’ in this way (see: M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001]).

<sup>14</sup> Leonard Y. Andaya, ‘Aceh’s Contribution to Standards of Malayness,’ *Archipel* 61 (2001): 29. See also: Tarling, *Southeast Asian History* (2000), 78.

convincing. Ultimately, the chapter will reveal compelling evidence for prolonged and profound commercial interaction between China and the Nusantara, both before and during the Nusantara's conversion period. Capable of affecting the Nusantara's economic, political and cultural makeup, these connections were dominated by Chinese Muslims and far exceeded in importance any Nusantara-Indian Ocean links. Chinese Muslims were therefore, at least in theory, in a position to disseminate Islam through the region.

With this background in mind, the thesis will then progress to consider (in Chapters 3 to 6) the conversion histories of various Nusantara locations: namely, Samudera-Pasai, Melaka, the Pesisir ('coastal') states of northern Java, and Brunei. In each case, the location's conversion history will be accessed through written texts (indigenous, European and Chinese) and archaeological evidence. In each case, a significant Chinese Muslim presence will be convincingly demonstrated – although the specific role that group played in Islam's dissemination will vary from location to location. A Chinese Muslim presence will be most obvious on Java, where the earliest and most important Islamic kingdoms appear to have been Chinese-established settlements. In Samudera-Pasai, Melaka and Brunei, although conversion was probably the result of Malay and/or Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern involvement, each location will also be shown to have housed a politically and culturally significant Chinese Muslim community that almost certainly helped shape Islam in those kingdoms.

To support these claims further, our thesis will end with an examination of the Nusantara's earliest Islamic cultural artefacts – its written texts, with a focus on their intellectual trends and influences (Chapter 7), and mosques (Chapter 8). In both cases, probable traces of Chinese cultural influence, often mirroring what was going on in China's own Islamic communities during the same period, will be demonstrated.

# 1. The Conversion of the Nusantara: A Narrative in Constant Flux

## 1.1. Introduction

As noted by F. Robinson, the Nusantara's high humidity does not encourage the survival of perishable materials.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, few primary historical documents or archaeological remains have survived to inform us about the region's conversion. So acute is this problem that many leading scholars (such as A. H. Johns) have asserted the necessity of inference when reconstructing the events underlying this historical process.<sup>2</sup> As a result, many conclusions remain controversial; despite an overriding belief that traders initiated conversion, little agreement exists about precisely who they were or when and where they were active. In light of this debate, in the current chapter we will briefly review all major scholarly contributions to our current understanding of the Nusantara's conversion. Beginning with early nineteenth-century European scholarship, we will progress through the twentieth century up until the work of contemporary Western and Nusantara scholars. We will uncover an academic discipline both rich and diverse, with a long and varied history. Although both Western and Nusantara scholars have traditionally favoured an Arab and/or Indian-driven conversion, since the late twentieth century an increasing (but still limited) number of voices have begun to examine the possibility of Chinese Muslim influence. Although still a minority, these scholars have begun to evaluate a long-neglected, but potentially

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1982), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony H. Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 58.

very important, aspect of the debate. Their initial studies constitute our thesis's spring board into the field as a whole.

## **1.2. From the Early Nineteenth to the Late Twentieth Century**

Any history of scholarship orientated discussion must first decide when the scholarship it is concerned with begins. Answering this question largely depends upon how the term 'scholarship' is understood. E. L. Boyer's 1996 definition is now the most widely accepted; although primarily constructed out of Boyer's own US-based experience, his definition also draws upon how the concept is understood elsewhere, throughout history. Ultimately, Boyer concluded that, since the mid-nineteenth century, and in response to developments in Germany, 'scholarship' has been concerned with discovery, with finding answers to long held questions. In short, it is about the creation of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Accepting this definition entails that any scholarship orientated towards the Nusantara's conversion should be understood as an attempt to critically reconstruct that event through an examination of all the available evidence. In some ways, the first European explorers, frequenting the region from the early sixteenth century, attempted this: they all produced sober histories reconstructed from often fanciful indigenous sources. But, although demonstrating (albeit not always highly developed)<sup>4</sup> critical

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<sup>3</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, 'From *Scholarship Reconsidered* to *Scholarship Assessed*,' *Quest* 48 (1996): 130-131.

<sup>4</sup> Portuguese writer Gaspar Correia (d.1563), who completed the first volume of his four part *Lendas da Índia* in 1552, is most frequently critiqued for his accuracy. Although honest and reliable when describing events witnessed first-hand (he is, for example, frequently critical of his India-based Portuguese superiors), a lot of his text is legendary in nature (including stories about people hundreds of years old, dragon bones in Sri Lanka and islands of gold). This is seen by some to demonstrate his uncritical faculty (e.g. Aubrey F. G. Bell, *Gaspar Carrea*, The American Hispanic Society Portuguese Series no. 5 [Milford: Oxford University Press, 1924], 35-36). The title of his book, however, perhaps suggests recording such tales, whether he believed them or not, was his aim (see also: Gaspar Correia, 'Lendas da India. Book Two,' in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed and trans. M. J. Pintado [Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993], 55-71; 209-287).

faculties,<sup>5</sup> these sources essentially remain records of indigenous oral and/or written histories, to which are added some first-hand European observations. Consequently, they are more appropriately treated as primary sources. Rather, it is argued here that the first scholarly accounts that match the above description only emerge during the early nineteenth century; it is with this period that the chapter begins.

During the early nineteenth century, Dutch and English scholars dominated all study of the Nusantara's conversion. Favouring general, all-encompassing theories that relied upon broad sweeps across the region, they quickly evidenced a preoccupation with finding a single origin for the Nusantara's Islam. Postulating that Islam arrived via trade (a premise made logical by the mercantile nature of the Nusantara's first Islamic kingdoms), they almost uniformly came to identify Arabs as the likely propagators.<sup>6</sup> Aside from an assumption that the relevant traders had arrived from the Indian Ocean (as the Europeans had themselves), this conclusion rested on two key points: the respect with which Arabs were held in the region and a consideration of newly-translated indigenous historical texts (notably the *Sejarah Melayu*, the court chronicle of Melaka), which commonly attributed conversion to Arab missionaries.<sup>7</sup> There was also an assumption that Arabia, as Islam's original homeland, would be a natural starting point for the religion. As a result, however, numerous early nineteenth-century English scholars/colonial officials, like Thomas Stamford Raffles,<sup>8</sup> John Crawfurd<sup>9</sup> and

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<sup>5</sup> In the words of Tomé Pires (c.1468-1524/40), perhaps the most respected of all early explorers: '[I tried] verifying my facts with many people; and whenever they seemed to me to agree thoroughly, I have written that down' (SO, 199).

<sup>6</sup> G. J. Resink, *Indonesia's History Between the Myths: Essays in Legal History and Historical Theory* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1968), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Stamford Raffles justified his argument in this manner. See: Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2 (London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817), 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy From the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China; Exhibiting a View of the Actual State of those Kingdoms* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828); John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago: Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of its Inhabitants*, in 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820).

Horace St. John,<sup>10</sup> argued for an Arabian source; so too did Dutch writers like G. K. Niemann<sup>11</sup> and P. J. Veth.<sup>12</sup> Although some (like Englishman J. H. Moor) rightly expressed scepticism about the reality of the Arab missionaries described in indigenous sources, this view maintained its dominance throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Even as late as 1913, the noted Arabist, T. W. Arnold, was still expounding it to the exclusion of all else.<sup>14</sup>

By and large, however, the above theory did not survive long into the twentieth century. Rather, attention soon shifted to India. C. Snouck Hurgronje's inaugural lecture at Leiden University, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1907, acted as the catalyst for this.<sup>15</sup> Particularly well versed in Aceh's affairs, where he had lived for some years,<sup>16</sup> Snouck Hurgronje drew upon his experiences there to outline his thoughts on conversion: in the specific context of Aceh, and despite maintaining a small role for (particularly Ḥaḍramī) Arabs, he began to strongly favour South Indian influence.<sup>17</sup> To support this, he noted Aceh's adherence to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* (mirrored throughout the region), which otherwise predominates only in South Arabia and South India. Equally, he

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<sup>10</sup> Horace St. John, *The Indian Archipelago: Its History and Present State*, in 2 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853), 46-50.

<sup>11</sup> G. K. Niemann, *Inleiding tot de kennis van den Islam, ook met betrekking tot den Indischen Archipel* (Rotterdam: n.p., 1861).

<sup>12</sup> P. J. Veth, *Java, geografisch, ethnologisch, historisch*, vol. 1 (Haarlem, n.p., 1875-84).

<sup>13</sup> Moore was particularly scathing about local histories, noting that each king had his own historian whose aim it was to glorify royal achievements and ancestry. As such, while visiting the 'Sultan of Coti' (or Kutai, in East Borneo), Moore recounts that the ruler took 'wonderful pains to convince me that he is the direct descendent of Mahomet.' This was done to increase the ruler's standing but, according to Moore, had no basis in truth. Moore claims, however, that questioning it was strictly forbidden. It is from instances like this that Moore concluded local histories could not be trusted (J. H. Moore, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries: Being a Collection of Papers Relating to Borneo, Celebes, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Nias, the Philippine Islands, Sulus, Siam, Cochin China, Malayan Peninsula etc.* [Singapore: n.p., 1837], 43-45).

<sup>14</sup> T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1913), 363-364.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in: G. W. J. Drewes, 'New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?' in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), 8.

<sup>16</sup> See: P. Sj. van Koningsveld, *Snouck Hurgronje dan Islam: Delapan Karangan tentang Hidup dan Karya Seorang Orientalis Zaman Kolonial* (Jakarta: Girimukti Pusaka, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> As well as his 1907 lecture, some of these thoughts are also reproduced in: C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism: Lectures on its Origin, its Religious and Political Growth, and its Present State*, American Lectures on the History of Religions Series (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1916), 53.

pointed to frequent references to Tamils in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (Samudera-Pasai's court chronicle) and noted that much of the Nusantara's pre-Islamic culture, including its religion, architecture, literature and coinage, was of Tamil origin.<sup>18</sup> The latter led Snouck Hurgronje to argue that the commercially driven mechanism which had earlier brought Indianisation to the region also precipitated Islamisation;<sup>19</sup> this logic became an important trend in later scholarship. Equally, Snouck Hurgronje also marked the beginning of what G. J. Resink calls the 'region-centric view.' As seen, nineteenth-century scholarship favoured broad sweeps across the region, to produce general theories. With Snouck Hurgronje, however, the emphasis shifted to looking at specific areas in more depth, to find local solutions to regional problems.<sup>20</sup> This would also become a future trend in scholarship.

Snouck Hurgronje's stature as a scholar made a South Indian-Nusantara connection the main focus of many – but certainly not all – subsequent scholarly works. G. E. Marrison, for example, wrote a particularly influential article on this subject in 1951. Using much the same arguments as Snouck Hurgronje, he also drew attention to the two missionaries mentioned in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*: an Arab from Makkah and an Indian *faqīr* (see Chapter 3). The latter, Marrison felt, was important; the former Sultan of a place called either Ma'abri or Mengiri (depending on which manuscript version of the text is referred to), Marrison postulated that he was South Indian.<sup>21</sup> As such, Marrison chose to favour the Ma'abri reading, because this comes from Raffles MS 67, considered the most accurate version of the text.<sup>22</sup> This then

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<sup>18</sup> All this is summarised in: Kenneth R. Hall, 'The Coming of Islam to the Archipelago: A Reassessment,' in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, ed. Karl L. Hutterer, Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia no. 13 (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1977), 217-218.

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller description of the commercial processes behind the Nusantara's Indianisation, see Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> Resink, *Indonesia's History* (1968), 4.

<sup>21</sup> G. E. Marrison, 'The Coming of Islam to the East Indies,' *JMBRAS* 24:1 (1951): 31.

<sup>22</sup> This is also asserted by: Russell Jones, 'Pengenalan,' in *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, ed. Russell Jones (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan dan Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1999), xv.



allowed him to link this name to the Arabic *ma‘bar*, meaning ‘crossing point.’ This term was applied by Arab traders to the Madurai and Tanjore districts of South India, opposite Sri Lanka. At one time, Arab texts even used it for the whole Coromandel Coast and, from 1335 until 1378, Madurai hosted a Sultanate called Ma‘bar.<sup>23</sup> As such, Marrison believed this term constituted yet more reason to directly link Samudera-Pasai’s conversion to South India. In 1977, K. R. Hall, although subsequently modifying his stance (see section 1.4) added to Marrison’s argument by noting that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* describes objects of South Indian origin amongst Samudera-Pasai’s coronation regalia, including a distinctive ankle bracelet.<sup>24</sup> Equally, he noted that the story of a Sultan who abdicates to become a *faqīr* parallels the Tamil tradition of the ‘Sea King’ (*As-Samuri*) called Perumal, who abdicated to study in Makkah. Hall believes the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*’s conversion account may therefore preserve a version of this tale.<sup>25</sup> But, as compelling as all this is, it applies only to North Sumatra; how far beyond that region it can be stretched remains unclear, with such obvious indications of Tamil influence not occurring elsewhere.

Despite Snouck Hurgronje’s stature, the twentieth century also saw many Dutch scholars hypothesise a Gujarati-Nusantara link. The first to argue this, however, was actually D. J. Pijnappel, in 1872. Although largely maintaining (in line with his contemporaries) the likelihood of an Arab-directed conversion, Pijnappel noted that elements of Persian influence also permeated early Nusantara Islam. This, he felt, could best be explained if Arab missionaries acting as merchants had first settled in Gujarat, before then going on to the Nusantara. While in India, they presumably fell

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<sup>23</sup> Marrison, ‘Coming of Islam,’ *JMBRAS* 24:1 (1951): 31.

<sup>24</sup> Hall, ‘Coming of Islam,’ in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction*, ed. Hutterer (1977), 217-218. Hall mistakenly calls this ankle bracelet a *nobat*. The *nobat* is actually a musical ensemble which accompanies the coronation ceremony. The term derives from the Persian *naubat* (see: ‘Alat Kebesaran Diraja: Nobat Diraja,’ *Laman Web Rasmi: KDYMM Sultan Terengganu*. Available at: <http://www.istana.terengganu.gov.my/nobat.php>. [Accessed on: 20/06/2015]).

<sup>25</sup> Hall, ‘Coming of Islam,’ in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction*, ed. Hutterer (1977), 221.

under the influence of the Persianised Delhi sultanate (which controlled Gujarat from 1304 onwards), eventually acculturating before then following the trade routes further east, taking their new Arab-Persian traditions into the Nusantara.<sup>26</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, many Dutch scholars (such as W. F. Wertheim) had begun to take this theory very seriously.<sup>27</sup> Although most continued to justify it via an evaluation of trade patterns, some attempted to broaden the evidence base. For example, it was argued that the gravestones of al-Malik al-Şāliḥ (d.1297), perhaps Samudera-Pasai's first Muslim ruler, and a key Javanese religious figure called Malik Ibrāhīm (d.1418), were Gujarati.<sup>28</sup> In both cases, however, Dutch scholarship failed to note that these gravestones were not original; they replaced earlier gravestones now lost. Moreover, al-Malik al-Şāliḥ's gravestone has since been shown to be of local production, not Gujarati at all (see Chapter 3).<sup>29</sup> Consequently, these relics say little about the influences at work during the lifetimes of the people whose graves they mark.

A challenge to the Gujarati view also emerged with the mid-twentieth century re-discovery and publication of Tomé Pires's *Suma Oriental*, written between 1512 and 1515 in Melaka. This highly respected Portuguese source (discussed in Chapter 4) not only described sixteenth-century Gujarati merchants as Hindu but simultaneously opening up another possibility: Pires attributed Samudera-Pasai's conversion to Bengali merchants.<sup>30</sup> This statement was soon taken up by S. Q. Fatimi, writing in 1963. Feeling previous arguments were too reliant on a West Indian Ocean-privileging reconstruction of Nusantara trade, he began to argue in favour of Bengal as the

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<sup>26</sup> D. J. Pijnappel, 'Over de Kennis, die de Arabieren voor de Komst der Portugeezen van den Indischen Archipel Bezaten,' *BTLV* 19 (1872): 135-158.

<sup>27</sup> W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1956), 193-196.

<sup>28</sup> Drewes, 'New Light?' in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ibrahim, Siddique and Hussain (1985), 9. See also: M. B. Hooker, 'Introduction: The Translation of Islam into Southeast Asia,' in *Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. M. B. Hooker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 262-263.

<sup>30</sup> *SO*, 143-144.

instigator of the Nusantara's conversion.<sup>31</sup> For example, he returned to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion story and chose to read Mengiri instead of Ma'abri. This allowed him to equate this location with a northwest Bengali city mentioned by the Persian polymath, Abū al-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (973-1048) as either Mungiri or Mangiri. Fatimi also noted that both the *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Raja Pasai* claim 'Samudera' was not a Malay word; both texts tell a legendary tale to explain its origin. As Fatimi notes, however, 'Samudera' is the Sanskrit word for 'ocean.' In this context, Fatimi highlighted the fact that the Bengali Pala dynasty (750-1159CE) called itself Samudera-Kula, or 'race of the ocean,' referencing supposed ancestry with the sea.<sup>32</sup> This, Fatimi claimed, indicated a possible Bengal-Samudera-Pasai link.

Although a welcome addition to the debate, Fatimi's argument has proven problematic. Although Pires is generally reliable, his account of Samudera-Pasai is questionable (see Chapter 3). Similarly, although a philological link between Mengiri and Mungiri/Mangiri is possible, Fatimi provides no reason (other than it fits his argument) to accept Mengiri over Ma'abri. Equally, use of Sanskrit is not limited to Bengal, as the above 'Sea King' example shows; there is therefore no reason to assume North Sumatra's use of 'Samudera' comes from Bengal's Pala dynasty. Indeed, the latter ceased to exist more than a century before Samudera-Pasai converted (given the date of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's death). This gap makes it even less obvious why the two should be linked – why should a newly converted Nusantara polity name itself after a long defunct, non-Islamic Bengali kingdom? Fatimi provides no answer.

The period contemporary to Fatimi also saw the emergence of the Nusantara's first conversion-focused scholarship. Over the second half of the twentieth century, this would prove to be far more influential in shaping regional opinion than Western

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<sup>31</sup> S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirk Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

scholarship. Although it would not mature until later, its first truly influential text emerged in 1963. Called *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia* ('The History of Islam's Arrival in Indonesia'), it was the product of a seminar held in Medan (Indonesia) during the same year. Focusing on North Sumatra, it included central contributions from M. D. Mansoer and the famed scholar, Hamka. In their respective articles, both attributed conversion to Arabs from Makkah.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Mansoer based his argument on a largely uncritical acceptance of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. Recounting its conversion narrative in full, he cited it as evidence of a Makkan origin (thereby largely ignoring the Indian *faqīr*). In other words, he elected to accept the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* as a relatively straightforward historical text, whose claims could be taken at face value. That the later *Sejarah Melayu* reproduced the same narrative<sup>34</sup> served, at least in his eyes, to further verify the story's reliability.<sup>35</sup>

Turning to Hamka's text (to which Mansoer deferred for further evidence supporting his case), this relied chiefly on the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*'s widespread presence in the Nusantara. This consistency across the entire region, Hamka argued, indicated that the proselytization process must have been dominated by Shāfi'ī Muslims. Like Marrison, Hamka noted that during the period in question this *madhhab* was only practiced in Makkah, Yemen (including the Ḥaḍramawt and Aden) and Malabar. Consequently, and again in light of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, Hamka favoured Arabs

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<sup>33</sup> Hamka also acknowledges the possibility of Persian influence, but limits discussion of it to a brief paragraph at the end of his article. Therein he notes two important points: in early Samudera-Pasai, Persian Shāfi'ī scholars were studied (including Tajuddin al-Achbahani and Said Sjaref Asj-sjrazi); and in modern-day Indonesia, some commonly used (but unnamed by Hamka) Shāfi'ī texts are Persian (see: Hamka, 'Masuk dan Berkembangnja Agama Islam Didaerah Pesisir Utara Sumatra,' in *Risalah Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia: Kumpulan Pedato, Restu dan Pendapat para Pemimpin Pemerasaran dan Pemanding dalam Seminar tgl. 17 sampai 20 Marat 1963 di Medan*, ed. Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia [Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia, 1963], 93-94).

<sup>34</sup> SM, 105-108.

<sup>35</sup> M. D. Mansoer, 'Masuk dan Berkembangnja Agama Islam di Daerah Pesisir Utara Sumatra,' in *Risalah Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia: Kumpulan Pedato, Restu dan Pendapat para Pemimpin Pemerasaran dan Pemanding dalam Seminar tgl. 17 sampai 20 Marat 1963 di Medan*, ed. Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia (Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia, 1963), 55-70.

from Makkah.<sup>36</sup> To further support this, he noted Arabic's widespread popularity in the Nusantara, the fact it was frequently used by early Nusantara '*ulamā*' to compose their texts, and the tendency of Malay speakers to pronounce Arabic in the same manner as Arabs from the Hijaz and Egypt (and in contrast to how Persian or Urdu speakers might pronounce it).<sup>37</sup>

Although an important first step, there are many problems with the above arguments. Certainly, Mansoer's simplistic treatment of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, and Hamka's failure to adequately consider the possibility that Shāfi'ī Islam originated from two or more of the locations he lists, both give pause for thought. Their shared focus on Arab involvement, however, is significant. As noted, the possibility of an Arab-led proselytization largely fell out of favour in Western circles during the early twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> In the Nusantara, however, the idea has persisted and continues to gain widespread acceptance. As discussed below, this is largely because of politically motivated efforts to stress the orthodoxy and importance of Nusantara Islam. Linking it to the Arabian Peninsula is seen to serve this purpose. Whether this is justifiable or not, it constitutes a large part of Nusantara-based scholarship.

During the rest of the late twentieth century, two final developments took place which, together, shaped the vast majority of the field's subsequent output. The first of these revolved around the work of A. H. Johns, who first proposed a Nusantara

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<sup>36</sup> Hamka, 'Masuk dan Berkembangnja Agama Islam,' in *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia*, ed. Seminar Sedjarah (1963), 92-93.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>38</sup> A 1974 article by B. G. Martin is one of the few late twentieth-century Western texts to maintain an Arab-led proselytization. In it, Martin attempted to parallel the Nusantara's Islamisation with East Africa's, in which Ḥaḍramī *sayyids* were deeply involved. He suggested that, as with Africa, sporadic Arab migrations into the Nusantara may have been triggered by natural disasters and wars, noting South Arabia experienced many troubles like this after c.1200. He provides no concrete evidence, however, that the postulated migration actually occurred (see: B. G. Martin, 'Arab Migrations to East Africa in Medieval Times,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7:3 [1974]: 370-378).

Islamisation theory in 1961,<sup>39</sup> later revising it in 1993.<sup>40</sup> In essence, his thesis appealed to the existence of a direct trade route between East and West Asia. By the late thirteenth century, he argued, the Middle Eastern and Indian merchants using this route had established trading communities all along its length. In the Nusantara, these included settlements on the north coast of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, where merchants would stop to await a change in monsoons. Having settled, however, Johns argued these merchants would require ‘*ulamā*’ to establish prayer times, conduct ritual observances and draw up business contracts. Significantly, therefore, during this period ‘*ulamā*’ were also Sufis: the Mongol invasions of the same century had led to a transformation in Islamic religious practices, including a marked increase in Sufi activities. From that point on, all ‘*ulamā*’ were trained in Sufi practices as a matter of course.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, by the end of the thirteenth century, Johns postulated that many traders had become members of *ṭarīqa* (Sufi brotherhoods), forming Sufi trade guilds. Members of these guilds then took their *shaykhs* with them on journeys, setting them up as ‘*ulamā*’ in the settlements they stayed in. As religiously-minded individuals, these Sufis subsequently began proselytising amongst the local, non-Muslim population.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, Johns argued that (either Middle Eastern or Indian) Sufism was inextricably linked to the growth of early Nusantara Islam.

The above hypothesis has subsequently come to dominate modern scholarship. Almost all scholars (whether Western or not) now accept it, including: Marshall G. S.

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<sup>39</sup> Anthony H. Johns, ‘The Role of Sufism in the Spread of Islam to Malaya and Indonesia,’ *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 9:3 (1961): 143-160. See also: Anthony H. Johns, ‘From Coastal Settlement to Islamic School and City: Islamization in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Java,’ in *Indonesia: Australian Perspectives*, ed. J. J. Fox *et al.* (Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1980), 163-182.

<sup>40</sup> Johns, ‘Islamization in Southeast Asia,’ *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 43-61.

<sup>41</sup> Hans Küng, *Islam: Past, Present and Future*, trans. John Bowden (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 335.

<sup>42</sup> Johns, ‘Islamization in Southeast Asia,’ *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 48-50.

Hodgson,<sup>43</sup> N. A. Baloch,<sup>44</sup> Syed Farid Alatas,<sup>45</sup> I. M. Lapidus,<sup>46</sup> F. R. von der Mehden,<sup>47</sup> M. C. Ricklefs<sup>48</sup> and P. Risso.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, however, as G. W. J. Drewes (and, indeed, Johns himself) points out, it is very difficult to prove.<sup>50</sup> Although the post-Mongol rise of Sufism is well attested to,<sup>51</sup> no evidence exists for a network of Sufi trade guilds.<sup>52</sup> Equally, this period provides very little evidence for direct trade between East and West Asia (see Chapter 2). Ricklefs has attempted to overcome these limitations by arguing that Islam's thirteenth-century presence at Majapahit's court (as illustrated by graves found at Trowulan) indicates Sufi activity – he feels it unlikely a sophisticated courtier in a Hindu kingdom would have been attracted by the religion of traders.<sup>53</sup> This point, however, is also very difficult to prove; it is impossible to know why a Hindu courtier may or may not have converted to or patronised Islam.

Ricklefs, however, is not the only person to defend Johns; famed Indonesian historian, A. Azra, has attempted to demonstrate that Aceh's seventeenth-century preoccupation with Sufism, illustrated by the conflict between followers of Ḥamzah al-Fanṣūrī and al-Rānīrī, indicates a probable Nusantara-based Sufi presence since at least

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<sup>43</sup> Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 535.

<sup>44</sup> N. A. Baloch, *The Advent of Islam in Indonesia* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1980), 2-3.

<sup>45</sup> Syed Farid Alatas, 'Notes on the Various Theories Regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago,' *The Muslim World* 75:3-4 (1985): 165; 170-171.

<sup>46</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 467.

<sup>47</sup> Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction Between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1993), 2.

<sup>48</sup> See: M. C. Ricklefs, 'Six Centuries of Islamization in Java,' in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 100-128; M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 6; and M. C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Norwalk, CT: East Bridge, 2006), 16-21.

<sup>49</sup> Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 46.

<sup>50</sup> Drewes, 'New Light?' in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ibrahim, Siddique and Hussain (1985), 14; Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 43.

<sup>51</sup> Not least from accounts of conversions amongst ruling Mongol elites, often the result of Sufis. See: Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 90-142.

<sup>52</sup> Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 50.

<sup>53</sup> Ricklefs, *History of Modern Indonesia* (2001), 16.

the thirteenth century.<sup>54</sup> He also highlights Pires's sixteenth-century comments about *tapas* (Javanese ascetics who were worshipped by Muslims)<sup>55</sup> in addition to others by the later Arabian *shaykh*, Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī's (d.1690) in his *Ithāf al-dhakī bi-sharḥ al-Tuhfat al-mursala ilā rūḥ al-nabī*, about 'the Jāwī' who had books 'on the Divine Realities [*ḥaqīqa*] and esoteric knowledge [*ʿulum al-asrār*].' <sup>56</sup> All these points, however, post-date conversion by some time; there is no *a priori* reason to suppose circumstances in seventeenth-century Aceh or sixteenth-century Java tell us anything about the thirteenth century. Indeed, one of the most important Sufi texts al-Kūrānī identifies as circulating on Java was Muḥammad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Burhānpūrī's *al-Tuhfat al-mursala ilā [rūḥ] al-nabī*. This text was written in 1590,<sup>57</sup> well after Java's conversion (see Chapter 5). It cannot, therefore, be related to that event.

Turning to the second late twentieth-century development, although beginning contemporary to Fatimi, this culminated in the 1970's and 80's. Drawing on the region-centric view pioneered by Snouck Hurgronje (above), it revolved around a new understanding of pre-modern Nusantara trade. Scholars like J. G. de Casparis and D. Lombard began to perceive the pre-modern Nusantara as an interconnected series of coastal states, constituting individual segments of a much larger cultural system (this idea is elaborated upon in Chapter 2).<sup>58</sup> This perspective divided the region into many sub-regions, all associated with particular states. This view encouraged a decentralised approach to the region as a whole; in other words, each sub-region was seen as unique, thereby making grand pan-regional theories unpopular. Instead, micro-theories

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<sup>54</sup> Azyumardi Azra, 'Opposition to Sufism in the East Indies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, ed. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 665.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 666 (found in SO, 177).

<sup>56</sup> Azra, 'Opposition to Sufism,' in *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, ed. De Jong and Radtke (1999), 668.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 668.

<sup>58</sup> See the articles: J. G. De Casparis and I. W. Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c.1500,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2: From Early Times to c.1500, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 276-339; and Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam and Chineseness,' *Indonesia* 57 (1993): 115-131.



concentrated on specific locations began to develop, ultimately leading to a more complex and nuanced view of the region as a whole. The Dutch scholar, H. J. de Graaf, is perhaps the most notable early example of this new trend: instead of focusing on a sole point of origin, in various place and at various times he identified Gujarati, Arab, Malay and Chinese involvement in Islamisation.<sup>59</sup> By the 1990's, this multi-directional approach had become the norm, with many scholars adopting it (including: U. Tjandrasasmita,<sup>60</sup> Johns,<sup>61</sup> Hodgson,<sup>62</sup> Baloch,<sup>63</sup> Alatas,<sup>64</sup> Lapidus,<sup>65</sup> von der Mehden,<sup>66</sup> Casparis and I. W. Mabbett,<sup>67</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Yoneo Ishii,<sup>68</sup> and Ricklefs).<sup>69</sup> The vast majority, in line with their predecessors, still privileged an Arab and/or Indian origin, but a few now looked further afield, to the possibility of either Chinese (Baloch) or Champan (Andaya and Ishii) influence.

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<sup>59</sup> H. J. de Graaf, 'Southeast Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century,' in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2: The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 123-124; 130.

<sup>60</sup> Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Arkeologi Islam Nusantara* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2009), 11-13. The section of this text dealing with conversion was originally published in 1985.

<sup>61</sup> Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 43-61.

<sup>62</sup> Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2 (1974), 543-546.

<sup>63</sup> Baloch, *Advent of Islam* (1980), 1; 4-5.

<sup>64</sup> Alatas, 'Notes on the Various Theories,' *MW* 75:3-4 (1985): 165.

<sup>65</sup> Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies* (1988), 467-470.

<sup>66</sup> Von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam* (1993), 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> Casparis and Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs,' in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, ed. Tarling (1999), 305; 330-331.

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Yoneo Ishii, 'Religious Developments in Southeast Asia, c.1500-1800,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2: From c.1500-1800, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 172-174.

<sup>69</sup> See both: Ricklefs, *History of Modern Indonesia* (2001), 3; and Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis* (2006), 17-21. He adopts the approach, however, as early as: M. C. Ricklefs, 'Islamization in Java: Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,' in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), 38.

### **1.3. Into the Twenty-first Century, Part One: The Development of Nusantara Scholarship and a Return to a More Exclusivist Approach**

If the last of the above developments marks the beginning of a more complex, multi-directional perspective of the Nusantara's conversion, the twenty-first century has seen Indonesian scholarship (which has mushroomed over the last few decades) at its forefront. For example, A. Arsyad (2006), while describing North Sumatra's conversion, has identified Muslims from Persia, India and Arabia as likely propagators.<sup>70</sup> With respect to Java, although drawing no explicit conclusions, Arsyad believes that, at least in part, the religion was introduced by Javanese traders from pre-Portuguese Melaka. Converted by Melaka's Malay residents, these Javanese Muslims then took their new religion back to their homeland, allowing Arsyad to also acknowledge the possibility of local proselytization.<sup>71</sup>

But, unlike his Western counterparts, Arsyad also shows a preoccupation with placing the first conversions as early as possible – that is, during the first Islamic century. He shares this preoccupation with many other Nusantara scholars; as above, this trend likely represents an attempt to stress the importance of Nusantara Islam via a demonstration of its antiquity.<sup>72</sup> Although vague about his justification for such an early date, Arsyad appears to be following Tjandrasasmita's earlier work: in 1985, the latter cited a 674CE Chinese Tang dynasty record of a supposedly *Ta-shih* (Arab) settlement on Sumatra. Seeing this as evidence of an early, Nusantara-based Islamic kingdom, Tjandrasasmita added to it a 748 account by a Japanese monk called

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<sup>70</sup> Azhar Arsyad, 'Islam Masuk dan Berkembang di Nusantara Secara Damai,' in *Menjadi Indonesia: 13 Abad Eksistensi Islam di Bumi Nusantara*, ed. Komaruddin Hidayat and Ahmad Gaus (Jakarta: Mizan, 2006), 79-80.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 82; 88-97. His account of Java is limited to reproducing the histories and genealogies of the *wali songo*.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 76.

Kanshin. This described Canton as home to many *Ta-shih* and *Bosi* (or *Po-sse*), who were observed living together. Following R. di Meglio, Tjandrasasmita equated the *Bosi* with the Malays; by the eighth century, therefore, he postulated that indigenous Nusantaraans had embraced Islam.<sup>73</sup> Neither Tjandrasasmita nor Arysad, however, claim these early conversions led to widespread Islamisation; that only came later and, according to each scholar, as the result of a distinctly multi-directional process.

Despite the above, not all contemporary Nusantara scholarship has adopted a multi-directional perspective. Indeed, in recent years some of the most prominent challenges to this approach have come from Malaysia. There, many scholars continue to stress an exclusively Arab-driven conversion; in addition to A. M. Ibrahim *et al.*<sup>74</sup> and Syed Farid Alatas,<sup>75</sup> the well-known Syed M. Naguib al-Attas (uncle to Syed Farid) has been particularly prominent in this regard. In both his *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* ('Islam in Malay History and Culture')<sup>76</sup> and *Historical Fact and Fiction*,<sup>77</sup> al-Attas has argued in favour of attributing all the Nusantara's twelfth to sixteenth-century Islamisation to Ḥaḍramī Arabs of the Banī Alawī (Ḥaḍramī *sayyids* descended from the Prophet via al-Ḥusayn). As presented in his most recent work, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (2011), al-Attas bases this conclusion on a close reading of the *Shajara al-ṣabaḥ banī Alawī*.<sup>78</sup> This is a seven volume Ḥaḍramī *silsila* (or genealogy) kept in Jakarta and collated by the Nusantara-based Ḥaḍramī organisation,

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<sup>73</sup> Tjandrasasmita, *Arkeologi Islam Nusantara* (2009), 12.

<sup>74</sup> Tan Sri Ahmad Mohd. Ibrahim, Mahmud Saedon Awang Othman and Tan Sri Mohd. Kamal Hassan, 'Islamization of the Malay Archipelago and the Impact of Shafi'i's *Madhhab* on Islamic Teachings and Legislation in Malaysia.' Paper presented to the International Symposium on Imam Shafi'i, Petaling Jaya, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> August 1990. Available at: <http://www.lib.iium.edu.my>. (Accessed on: 10/01/2012).

<sup>75</sup> Although Syed Farid Alatas was noted above for an article favouring a multi-directional approach, from the late 1990's onwards he has produced work privileging Ḥaḍramī Arabs. For example, see: Syed Farid Alatas, 'Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History,' in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 19-34.

<sup>76</sup> Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*. Available at: <http://www.ukm.my>. (Accessed on 08/02/2013).

<sup>77</sup> Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

*Rabitah Alawiyah* (founded in 1928). It attempts to record the family history of the entire region's Alawī population. In so doing, however, it also draws upon indigenous *silsilas* – including the *Silsilah Keturunan Raja-Raja Palembang* ('The Genealogy of the Rajas of Palembang'), written by a Tuan Faqih Jalal al-Din (d.1748). This text is an attempt to trace Palembang's Sultans to the Prophet via Muḥammad Sahib Marbat (1100-1161), a descendent of al-Ḥusayn through Aḥmad al-Muhājir (820-924). This is also the line of descent the Banī Alawī claim, hence the *Rabitah* felt justified in drawing upon this *silsila*.<sup>79</sup> The latter becomes relevant for Islamisation, however, when consideration is given to a small note in its margin.

This note claims that the first *sayyid* to settle in the Nusantara was a man called Jamāl al-Dīn al-Akbar. Al-Attas identifies this figure with the Ḥaḍramī *sayyid*, Jamāl al-Dīn (al-Akbar) al-Ḥusaynī. As a result, he lays great emphasis on what the rest of the note states: it claims that, after settling in Champa, Jamāl al-Dīn had a son called Zayn al-Akbar. At the instigation of his father, Zayn al-Akbar travelled around the Nusantara, finally settling on Java. There he became known as Sunan Tuban (or Nggesik), one of Java's greatest Muslim saints, before proceeding to father almost all Java's key religious teachers (including: Sunan Ampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Lamong, Sunan Orajat, Sunan Demak and Sunan Kudus).<sup>80</sup> Additionally, Sunan Giri and Sunan Gunung Jati were Zayn al-Akbar's grandsons via his sons Mawlānā Ishāq and 'Alī Nūr al-'Alām, respectively.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, al-Attas argues, this note essentially traces all Java's major saints to Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn (al-Akbar) al-Ḥusaynī and the Banī Alawī. Furthermore, by looking at other regional texts, al-Attas tries to implicate the Banī Alawī in the Islamisation of virtually the entire region. For example, he points to an unnamed Sulu tradition which claims the first proselytiser in the region was called

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<sup>79</sup> Al-Attas, *Fact and Fiction* (2011), 80-82.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 82-83.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 90-91.

Karim al-Makhdum, from Samudera-Pasai. Given this reference to Samudera-Pasai, al-Attas assumes this must be Zayn al-Akbar.<sup>82</sup>

In short, al-Attas's argument is highly problematic. To begin with, it should be noted that al-Attas is himself a member of the Banī Alawī; this suggests the possibility of bias. Certainly, it is unclear why the *Silsilah Keturunan Raja-Raja Palembang's* marginal note should, as al-Attas contends, receive primacy: as an addition to an eighteenth-century text, it neither pre-dates other accounts nor sits closer to the events it describes. Being Sumatran, it might also be asked whether it is authoritative regarding events on Java, with which it is primarily concerned. It is true, as al-Attas notes, that the Javanese *Sejarah Raja-Raja Cirebon* ('History of the Rajas of Cirebon') supports some of its claims,<sup>83</sup> but other earlier Javanese texts do not. The seventeenth-century *Babad Tanah Jawi*, for example, contains the story of a Muslim saint from Champa, but calls him Makhdum Ibrahim Asmara.<sup>84</sup> Although also giving him two sons, it calls them Raden Rahmat and Raden Santri and fails to link them to either Samudera-Pasai or the fathering of Java's Sunan. Indeed, Raden Rahmat, rather than the forbearer of Sunan Ampel, is actually described as his student.<sup>85</sup>

Despite these drawbacks, al-Attas also notes some linguistic evidence which he feels traces the marginal note to the fourteenth century. For example, it spells *ṣaḥīb* with a *ya'* after the second vowel to denote a *kasra* to the *ḥā'*. Equally, *marbāt* is spelt with a *tā'* *marbuṭa* for the last letter, instead of the correct *tā'*. Both these features, al-Attas claims, are characteristic of early Malay texts dating from the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.<sup>86</sup> To accept this, however, is equally problematic: not only would it mean Tuan Faqih was the copier (not author) of his *silsila*, but the original text would

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<sup>82</sup> Al-Attas, *Fact and Fiction* (2011), 93.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 85-86.

<sup>84</sup> *BTJ*, 27.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 86-87

predate the conversion of Palembang, and so the royal house whose descendants it records. Moreover, it is arguably impossible to judge fourteenth or fifteenth-century spelling conventions from an eighteenth century text.

But, the rejection of a multi-directional perspective is not confined to al-Attas or Malaysia; recent examples of Western scholarship also take this approach.<sup>87</sup> For example, A. Shih (2002) still chooses to rely solely on an Indian origin,<sup>88</sup> as does R. Ricci (2010). The latter, perhaps encouraged by the limitations imposed by her textual approach, which demands attention be paid to only Malay, Javanese and Tamil texts, has tried to trace the region's Islam to the Tamils (but while not discounting the possibility of inter-Malay dissemination, too).<sup>89</sup> Turning to S. Prange, he lays great stress on the possibility that pre-modern Indian Ocean commerce (which, for him, includes the Nusantara) was Arab-dominated for long periods of time. In particular, he notes that the Fāṭimid era (909-1171) saw Middle East trade shift towards the Red Sea. This made Aden and South Arabia important trade centres, providing an opportunity for (especially Ḥaḍramī) Arab merchants to travel into the Indian Ocean, and perhaps beyond to the Nusantara.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, Prange asks whether these Arabs could have influenced the Nusantara's Islamisation, especially given the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*'s ubiquity in both regions.<sup>91</sup> The problem with this argument, however, is the chronological mismatch between the period Prange uses to make a Nusantara-based Ḥaḍramī presence plausible and the evidence supporting their impact on Islamisation.

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<sup>87</sup> Aside from the examples discussed, a dominant Arab role in Islamisation has also been proposed by: George F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and early Medieval Times*, revised and expanded by John Carswell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 78.

<sup>88</sup> Anthony Shih, 'The Roots and Societal Impact of Islam in Southeast Asia,' *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 2 (2002): 114-117.

<sup>89</sup> Ronit Ricci, 'Conversion to Islam on Java and the *Book of One Thousand Questions*,' *BTLV* 165:1 (2009): 8-31; Ronit Ricci, 'Islamic Literary Networks in South and Southeast Asia,' *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21:1 (2010): 1-28.

<sup>90</sup> Sebastian R. Prange, 'Like Banners on the Sea: Muslim Trade Networks and Islamization in Malabar and Maritime Southeast Asia,' in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 30.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

Thus, the Nusantara provides no evidence of the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* prior to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s testimony of the 1330’s, when he observed it in Samudera-Pasai.<sup>92</sup> At best, therefore, Shāfi‘ī Islam can only be said to have appeared in the Nusantara one hundred and fifty years after the end of the Fāṭimid era, when Aden no longer commanded a dominant commercial position. Equally, it is unclear why this *madhhab* could not have arrived via South India, where it also predominated. Indeed, the Nusantara’s South India trade relationship was far more consistent than any connection with the Middle East (see Chapter 2).

In addition to Prange, however, Enseng Ho has made a plausible case for a second, sixteenth-century Red Sea-orientated shift in trade, occurring in the wake of Ottoman and Safavid activity.<sup>93</sup> This period, he notes, saw a plethora of stories emerge across India, all involving Arab *sayyids* (who may have been Ḥaḍramī) marrying into ruling elites. Because similar stories also occur in the Nusantara, Enseng speculates that these individuals may have reached the Nusantara, too.<sup>94</sup> But, even if this is accepted, the sixteenth century is well after most of the Nusantara’s conversion had taken place. Equally, and as Enseng admits, there is no conclusive evidence of significant Nusantara-based Ḥaḍramī activity until the eighteenth century. Consequently, his argument also falls short.

In this context, however, it is also worth noting the recent work of R. M. Feener and M. F. Laffan. While examining the fifteenth-century Sufi biography, *Ṭabaqāt al-Khawāṣṣ* by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Sharjī (1410-1487/8), they noticed references to an Abū ‘Abd Allāh Mas‘ūd ibn Muḥammad al-Jāwī.<sup>95</sup> This individual, discussed more

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<sup>92</sup> It was likely present prior to this, but there is no evidence to suggest for how long.

<sup>93</sup> Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 99-100.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 98.

<sup>95</sup> R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, ‘Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam,’ *Archipel* 70 (2005): 186-187.

fully in Chapter 2, was an early fourteenth-century Ḥaḍramī Sufi; his *nisba*, however, suggests a connection with the Nusantara. It is therefore significant that he lived contemporary to the earliest phases of the Nusantara's Islamisation; through him, Feener and Laffan also seek to implicate Ḥaḍramī Arabs in the conversion process.<sup>96</sup> But, although al-Jāwī certainly suggests a link between the two regions, the precise nature of this connection remains unclear: no other contemporary examples of his *nisba* exist and there is evidence that, more than one hundred years later, it was still unfamiliar to those reading al-Sharjī's work (see Chapter 2). This suggests any link it does represent was not deep rooted.

Although representing some of the more important developments in modern scholarship, the above does not comprise the sum total thereof. Rather, another strand of scholarship exists, focused on the possible role Chinese Muslims played in the Nusantara's conversion. Prior to the late twentieth century, this topic received very little attention; preconceived ideas about the orientation of Nusantara trade and the place of Islam in China made it far from an obvious research topic. Nonetheless, a small group of scholars have since begun to examine this issue in greater detail. Inspired by new research placing China at the heart of pre-modern Nusantara trade, they have begun to reinterpret the region's conversion in order to carve out a space for Chinese Muslims alongside their West Asian counterparts. Although still in its infancy, this latest trend in scholarship shows the potential to be very significant; it also constitutes the basis of this thesis. It is therefore worth considering this trend's origin and development in detail.

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<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere, however, Laffan has dismissed al-Attas's work as the 'eagerness of late comers to appropriate the saintly histories of Java,' referencing al-Attas's links to the Banī Alawī (see: Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011], 8-9).



#### 1.4. Into the Twenty-first Century, Part Two: The Chinese Muslim Hypothesis

In 1964, an Indonesian Batak historian called M. O. Parlindungan published a book entitled *Tuanku Rao*. Designed to glorify a nineteenth-century Minangkabau teacher of the same name (who had been active in the Batak lands), it included two edited, reputedly *peranakan* (Sino-Malay) Javanese manuscripts as an appendix. Parlindungan collectively called these texts, *Peranan Orang2 Tionghwa/Islam/Hanafī didalam Perkembangan Agama Islam di Pulau Djawa, 1411-1564* (The Role of Chinese Hanafī Muslims in the Spread of Islam in Java, 1411-1564).<sup>97</sup> Actually covering the period 1403 to 1585, they were supposedly based upon a collection of ancient manuscripts taken from two Indonesian Chinese temples, one in Semarang and the other in Cirebon.<sup>98</sup> Parlindungan claimed that, in 1928, a Dutch colonial official, identified by him simply as ‘Resident Poortman’, removed them from Indonesia, taking them back to the Netherlands.<sup>99</sup> While studying in Europe, Parlindungan befriended this official and obtained copies of the texts, which he then published in *Tuanku Rao*.<sup>100</sup> In brief, these published texts attributed Java’s conversion to a collection of Hanafī Chinese Muslim trading communities, reputedly established in the region by the Chinese Muslim Admiral, Zheng He, during his seven famous voyages (1402-1433).<sup>101</sup> By contrast, Arab and/or Indian Muslims are not mentioned.

The above texts mark the beginning of the debate linking Chinese Muslims to proselytization in the Nusantara. They have, however, proven very problematic. In Indonesia, for example, they quickly sparked a heated debate. Initially, they were taken up there by the popular historian, Slamet Muljana, who made them a central feature of

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<sup>97</sup> *TR*, 650-672.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 652; 666-667.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 671.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, 435.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 652-664; 667-671.

his 1968 *Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara* ('The Fall of the Hindu Kingdom of Java and Rise of the Islamic Nations of the Nusantara'). Reconstructing early Javanese Islamic history according to their claims, Muljana quoted them extensively, generally accepting their claims uncritically, even reinterpreting more established sources (like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*) in light of them.<sup>102</sup> Later, in his English work, *A Story of Majapahit* (1976), he expanded the discussion by speaking about traditional Nusantara mosque architecture as a possible derivative of Chinese prototypes,<sup>103</sup> a claim also made in the Parlindungan texts.<sup>104</sup> Elsewhere in Indonesia, however, both Parlindungan's and Muljana's work prompted strong opposition. From 1971, the prominent Indonesian news magazine, *Tempo*, spurred on by pre-existing Javanese-Chinese racial tensions, initiated a wave of public exchanges relating to the texts, and which lasted more than a decade. Characterised by racially-charged rhetoric, they saw complaints by K. H. A. Dahlan (the then Indonesian Minister of Religion), who retorted that it was unacceptable to turn the *qibla* to Beijing. The end result saw Muljana's book banned on grounds of disturbing public order, from which point onwards the possibility of Chinese Muslim influence over conversion became taboo in Indonesia.<sup>105</sup>

Turning to the West's reaction to the Parlindungan texts, objections were also raised there. These, however, were not motivated by racial prejudice, but issues of provenance:<sup>106</sup> until today, no original manuscripts have ever been found. Indeed,

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<sup>102</sup> Slamet Muljana, *Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta, LKiS, 2012), 86-122.

<sup>103</sup> Slamet Muljana, *A Story of Majapahit* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976), 245-247.

<sup>104</sup> *TR*, 660.

<sup>105</sup> See: Ann L. Kumar, 'Islam, the Chinese, and Indonesian Historiography – A Review Article,' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46:3 (1987): 607-608.

<sup>106</sup> Ricklefs, de Graaf and Pigeaud all discuss this point (for example, see: H. J. de Graaf and Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. M. C. Ricklefs, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia no. 12 [1984], 1).

Ricklefs has even intimated that Parlindungan's Resident Poortman never existed,<sup>107</sup> thereby implying the texts are forgeries.<sup>108</sup> Although this thesis will demonstrate that Poortman did indeed exist (see Chapter 7), these concerns have meant that, until recently, the West's reaction to the Parlindungan texts has been rather tepid. Despite this, in the early 1980's, the influential Dutch scholars, H. J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, took the step of reprinting them with an accompanying translation and commentary (not published until 1984, after both scholars had died). Until today, this constitutes the only detailed Western study of these texts. Although stressing caution, again because of a lack of provenance, both de Graaf and Pigeaud gave them their tentative support for two reasons: first, the texts state Majapahit fell to Demak (Java's pre-eminent sixteenth-century Islamic power) in 1527, a date each scholar had also reached independently;<sup>109</sup> second, in 1976 (and again independently of Parlindungan's texts) both scholars produced their own work arguing for Chinese influence over the Nusantara's Islamisation, especially in Central and Eastern Java. To support their case, they had pointed to evidence of Chinese trading communities along Java's northern coast and West Javanese legends of a Chinese princess who was supposedly the mother of Demak's first Sultan.<sup>110</sup> As such, because Parlindungan's texts supported these points, both de Graaf and Pigeaud were prepared to re-publish them in the hope they would add momentum to the idea of a Chinese Muslim-driven proselytization.

Nonetheless, de Graaf and Pigeaud's work on the Parlindungan texts was met with only three, slightly bemused review articles.<sup>111</sup> As such, nothing substantial was

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<sup>107</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), iii-iv.

<sup>108</sup> This claim has also been made by other scholars, including: Casparis and Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs,' in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, ed. Tarling (1999), 331.

<sup>109</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 90.

<sup>110</sup> H. J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Islamic States in Java, 1500-1700: Eight Dutch Books and Articles by Dr H. J. de Graaf as summarized by Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud*, *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 70 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 5.

<sup>111</sup> Salmon, for example, begins her review by calling it 'a very strange book indeed,' while Jones starts by stating, 'this is one of the most curious works that I have ever been asked to review.' See: Claudine

added to the debate until 1985, when an article by D. Lombard and C. Salmon appeared.<sup>112</sup> Both scholars of Chinese civilization, they noted that the Yuan and early Ming dynasties (1272-1433) witnessed substantial Chinese Muslim migration into the Nusantara, coinciding with the beginning of that region's Islamisation. Equally, and most importantly, they re-assessed Nusantara trade to place China and its Muslim communities at its heart, as more influential than either the Indian Ocean or the Middle East. In this way, they hoped to justify the possibility that Chinese Muslims were influential enough to affect religious change in the Nusantara.<sup>113</sup> This approach, however, directly challenged previously held assumptions.

The validity of Lombard and Salmon's key claim regarding trade constitutes the subject of Chapter 2. For now, let it be noted that their overall argument, which at no point refers to Parlindungan's texts, appears to have considerable validity. Certainly, it has since been taken up by a number of other Sinologists, notably R. Ptak<sup>114</sup> and G. Wade.<sup>115</sup> The work of these scholars, emerging from the late 1990's onwards, has primarily sought to strengthen the possibility of strong Nusantara-China trade links as a basis for postulating Chinese involvement in Islamisation.<sup>116</sup> The weakness of these efforts therefore lies in their failure to adequately consider a broader context –

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Salmon, 'Review of H. J. de Graaf, Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, and M.C. Ricklefs "Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries,"' *JSAS* 18 (1987): 340-341; and Russell Jones, 'Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries by H. J. de Graaf; Th. G. Th. Pigeaud; M. C. Ricklefs,' *BSOAS* 50:2 (1987): 423-424. See also: Denys Lombard, 'H. J. de Graaf & Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries,' *Archipel* 32 (1986): 186-187.

<sup>112</sup> Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam et Sinité,' *Archipel* 30:1 (1985): 73-94. This article was subsequently translated into English: Lombard and Salmon, 'Islam and Chineseness,' *Indonesia* 57 (1993): 115-131.

<sup>113</sup> Lombard and Salmon, 'Islam et Sinité,' *Archipel* 30:1 (1985): 73-75.

<sup>114</sup> See: R. Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia, 1368-1567: Visions of a System,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes*, ed. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and R. Ptak, South China and Maritime Asia vol. 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 157-191; and R. Ptak, 'Quanzhou: At the Northern Edge of a Southeast Asian "Mediterranean,"' in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 395-427.

<sup>115</sup> Most recently in: G. Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China in the Fourteenth Century,' in *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Geoff Wade and Li Tana (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 125-145.

<sup>116</sup> Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak (1998), 157-191.

particularly, the region's wider Islamic historiography and material remains. Although Wade does engage with traditional Javanese historiography (primarily to assess the Parlung texts), he is something of an exception and rarely looks beyond Java. Equally, as Sinologists, these scholars sit outside the field; from within it, aside from J. Gelman Taylor,<sup>117</sup> Hall,<sup>118</sup> Reid,<sup>119</sup> and Laffan,<sup>120</sup> few have engaged with the subject. Even these scholars show minimal concern – most content themselves with a brief reference to the possibility of Chinese Muslim influence, simply highlighting it as an area for future research.<sup>121</sup> Reid is the only exception, going into some detail about Chinese-Javanese interactions. As with Wade, however, he does not look substantially beyond Java.<sup>122</sup>

Despite these limitations, scholars like Lombard and Wade have begun to uncover, entirely independently of the Parlung texts, good reason to suspect Chinese Muslim involvement in the Nusantara's conversion. Equally, in Indonesia Muljana's work has been republished and is gaining steady popularity. In the last decade, it has inspired a number of (chiefly Chinese) Nusantara scholars to examine Chinese Muslim-directed conversion more closely – namely, Rosey Wang Ma,<sup>123</sup> Tan

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<sup>117</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, 'The Chinese and the Early Centuries of Conversion to Islam in Indonesia,' in *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, ed. Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), 148-164.

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, 'Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600-1500,' *JESHO* 47:2 (2004): 213-260.

<sup>119</sup> Anthony Reid, 'Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia,' in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 15-49.

<sup>120</sup> Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam* (2011), 9.

<sup>121</sup> Laffan is a good example of this, but see also: Andaya and Isnii, 'Religious Developments in Southeast Asia,' in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2, ed. Tarling (1999), 171.

<sup>122</sup> As well as his 'Flows and Seepages,' see: Anthony Reid, 'The Rise and Fall of Sino-Javanese Shipping,' in *Looking in Odd Mirrors: The Java Sea*, ed. V. J. N. Houben, H. M. J. Maier and W. van der Molen, Semaian 5 (Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azie en Oceanie Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1992), 177-211.

<sup>123</sup> Rosey Wang Ma, *Chinese Muslims in Malaysia: History and Development*, Southeast Asia Research Paper no. 62 (Taipei: Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies, 2003).

Yeok Seong<sup>124</sup> and Tan Ta Sen.<sup>125</sup> As in the West, however, these scholars have focused primarily on trade and rarely looked beyond Java. Nonetheless, a number of recent, Nusantara-produced architectural articles have attempted to link traditional Nusantara mosque architecture to either Chinese<sup>126</sup> or Champan<sup>127</sup> prototypes, again without referring to Parlindungan. Focusing on the analysis of roof designs and decorative motifs, they have argued for both Chinese technical and stylistic influence, thereby broadening the discussion.

Overall, however, the Chinese Muslim aspect of the conversion debate still lacks an in depth study, capable of shoring up its conclusions with a comprehensive review of all available evidence. Certainly, sufficient reason exists to suppose more lies behind the idea of Chinese Muslim influence than two, possibly forged, texts. Consequently, prior academic research, by neglecting this element of the debate, has perhaps distorted the reconstruction of Islamisation. It is the aim of this thesis to correct this discrepancy by providing the necessary in depth study.

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<sup>123</sup> Tan Yeok Seong, 'Chinese Element in the Islamization of Southeast Asia: A Study of the Story of Njai Gede Pinatih, the Great Lady of Gresik,' in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 70.

<sup>125</sup> Tan Ta Sen, *Cheng Ho and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 155; 171-172.

<sup>126</sup> See: A. S. Hassan, 'Argument Islam Came from East to South East Asia: Influences of Traditional Chinese Construction Elements at Kampung Laut's Old Mosque, Malaysia,' *Proceedings of the Conference on Technology and Sustainability in the Built Environment*, 327-362; and A. S. Hassan, 'Islam Came to Southeast Asia from China: Evidence from Traditional Chinese Roof Design in Kampung Laut's Old Mosque, Malaysia,' *Canadian Social Science* 6:5 (2010): 1-15. Also: Mohamed Tajuddin Mohamad Rasdi, 'Mosque Architecture in Malaysia: Classification of Styles and Possible Influence,' *Jurnal Alam Bina* (2007): 17. Handinoto and Samuel Hartono also try to trace early Javanese mosque architecture to China, but base almost all their claims on the Parlindungan texts (see: Handinoto and Samuel Hartono, 'Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina pada Bangunan Mesjid Kuno di Jawa Abad 15-16,' *Demensi Teknik Arsitektur* 35:1 [2007]: 23-40).

<sup>127</sup> Abdul Rahman al-Ahmadi, 'Bangunan Kuno Masjid Kampung Laut: Hubungannya dengan Campa dan Demak,' *Warisan Kelantan* 9 (1990): 2-4.

## 1.5. Conclusion

To sum up, the study of the Nusantara's conversion has both a long and diverse history. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, it continues in an unbroken line until the present. In both the West and the Nusantara itself, narratives have developed which reconstruct Islamisation in a variety of ways. These efforts consistently identify traders and/or Sufis as Islam's chief propagators; precisely where these individuals came from, however, remains uncertain. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we saw that both Dutch and English scholarship drew principally on indigenous sources to favour Arab involvement. Later, and particularly with the work of Snouck Hurgronje, attention turned to various parts of India, from South India to Gujarat to Bengal, and as suggested by trade patterns. As we saw, however, all these early theories tended towards an exclusivist approach – that is, of finding a single point of origin. During the latter part of the twentieth century, a new generation of scholars began to take a multi-directional perspective; more complex views of the region's commercial history resulted in a desire to identify multiple points of origin. Nonetheless, the same groups (Arabs, South Indian etc.), again arriving via the Indian Ocean trade routes, remained the key focus of attention. Although this multi-directional approach dominates modern scholarship, some (particularly in the Nusantara) continue to favour the more exclusive approach, usually privileging Arab influence.

Parallel to the above, we also saw that modern scholarship has begun to consider a possible proselytising role for Chinese Muslims. Although this possibility first emerged in 1964 with the doubtful *Parlindungan* texts, subsequent (often independent) attempts to re-assess pre-modern Nusantara trade patterns (by Lombard) and critically re-assess Javanese historiography (notably by de Graaf and Pigeaud) have

uncovered good reason to suppose a grain of truth underlies it. By and large, however, this alternative hypothesis has yet to enter mainstream scholarship; it remains confined to a small group of scholars, with the most significant contributions coming from Sinologists operating outside the field. Although undoubtedly significant, the work of these scholars has also been limited in scope: dealing mostly with trade relationships, they tend to over-emphasise Java while neglecting the region's other Islamic kingdoms. In consequence, and given the potential importance of this new strand of scholarship, our thesis will aim to rectify these problems. We will examine, in greater depth than has hitherto been the case, the evidence for Chinese Muslim proselytization amongst the Nusantara's most important kingdoms. We shall begin, however, by looking at Lombard *et al.*'s attempts to re-assess Nusantara trade; as will be shown, this is central to the debate.



## 2. China and the Indian Ocean in Nusantara Trade, c.671-1620 CE

### 2.1. Introduction

As we demonstrated in the previous chapter, international trade has been commonly identified as the catalyst behind the Nusantara's conversion to Islam. No matter which specific ethnic group is attributed with disseminating the religion, the importance of their commerce is seen as the motivating factor behind the desire to convert. Indeed, that such unanimity exists is not surprising: the earliest indigenous historical sources all speak of conversion at the hands of men from across the sea (usually Arabs)<sup>1</sup> and the region's earliest Islamic polities, sitting at the crossroads of the great East-West maritime trade route, were economically dependent on trade. More significantly, much of this trade was in the hands of Muslims. As such, the development of the observed scholarly consensus is predictable. It implies, however, that, to understand the Nusantara's Islamisation, it is first necessary to understand its trading patterns; if conversion was induced by trade, understanding where that commerce came from, and who brought it, is essential for understanding how and why Islamisation took place.

Traditionally, scholarship has tried to link the early Nusantara's commerce to the Indian Ocean, where that region is understood as the area stretching from East Africa to the Bay of Bengal. Given Islam's geographical roots, and the tendency of

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<sup>1</sup> An account of this type is told in virtually all indigenous sources. Two notable examples are the *Sejarah Melayu* (see: *SM*, 121-122) and the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (see: *HRP*, 15-17). From Java there is also the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, where a variant of this story is told in a variety of different contexts (for example, see: *BTJ*, 51-52).

early Nusantara texts to identify Arabs as early missionaries, this is logical. To set it on a surer footing, however, scholars have adopted (whether explicitly or implicitly) a theoretical framework in which the Nusantara and the Indian Ocean are merged together into a single commercial unit. Although this idea is present in much of the literature,<sup>2</sup> a full model for it did not emerge until after 1985.

In that year, while constructing his history of the Indian Ocean, K. Chaudhuri decided to conceptualise that region using a theoretical framework borrowed from French historian, F. Braudel. The latter's writings on the pre-modern Mediterranean had envisaged that sea as a nexus, both separating and connecting multiple mercantile-based civilizations around its rim.<sup>3</sup> A complex network of states had ensued, in which each individual polity was intimately connected to the others around it via a meshwork of complex commercial relationships. These connections not only led to economic consequences, however, but also to social, political and cultural ones; trade encouraged a variety of interactions (such as migration and invasion) capable of impacting upon a variety of developments in the region. Consequently, Braudel argued that the social, cultural, political and economic developments of each individual location scattered across the Mediterranean could only be understood in the context of the region's overall commercial network.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, once Chaudhuri applied this model to the Indian Ocean, connecting its disparate parts into a single commercial and cultural system, scholars of the Nusantara (most recently L. Andaya) began speaking of an 'Extended Indian Ocean' – that is, they merged the Nusantara into Chaudhuri's Indian Ocean-

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<sup>2</sup> Notable examples include: G. E. Marrison, 'The Coming of Islam to the East Indies,' *JMBRAS* 24:1 (1951): 28-37; Anthony H. Johns, 'The Role of Sufism in the Spread of Islam to Malaya and Indonesia,' *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 9:3 (1961): 143-160; S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirk Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>4</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*, ed. Roselyne de Ayala and Paule Braudel, trans. Siân Reynolds (London: Penguin Books, 2001). The theory is specifically elaborated upon on pp.1-2, before featuring throughout the rest of the text.

based, Braudel-inspired system (a step Chaudhuri did not take).<sup>5</sup> In this way, they sought to more clearly justify a role for Indian Ocean merchants in the Nusantara's Islamisation.

As we discussed in Chapter 1, however, from 1985 onwards, another series of articles began to emerge that challenged the above perspective. Beginning with D. Lombard,<sup>6</sup> R. Ptak<sup>7</sup> and G. Wade,<sup>8</sup> they argued that China, not the Indian Ocean, was the Nusantara's dominant commercial partner during conversion. Although all these writers maintained a significant place for the Indian Ocean in Nusantara affairs, they presented a concerted effort to re-evaluate the idea of an 'Extended Indian Ocean.'<sup>9</sup> Again taking inspiration from Braudel, they sought to apply his framework to the Nusantara and Southern China; the commercial ties between these two regions, they argued, were often more intense than between the Nusantara and the Indian Ocean.<sup>10</sup> As such, they coined the term 'Greater Nanyang' (or Greater Southern Sea). Borrowed from ancient Chinese texts (where 'Nanyang' signifies the South China Sea), they proposed it as a better descriptive term for Nusantara trade during the relevant period. But, because these scholars also claimed that this period saw Muslims dominate China's maritime trade, they argued that the concept should be equally applicable to

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<sup>5</sup> Leonard Y. Andaya, 'Eastern Indonesia: A Study of the Interaction of Global, Regional and Local Networks in the "Extended" Indian Ocean,' in *Reinterpreting Indian Ocean Worlds: Essays in Honour of Kirti N. Chaudhuri*, ed. Stefan C. A. Halikowski Smith (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 107-140.

<sup>6</sup> Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam et Sinité,' *Archipel* 30:1 (1985): 73-94.

<sup>7</sup> See: R. Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia, 1368-1567: Visions of a System,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes*, ed. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and R. Ptak, South China and Maritime Asia vol. 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 157-191; and R. Ptak, 'Quanzhou: At the Northern Edge of a Southeast Asian "Mediterranean,"' in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 395-427.

<sup>8</sup> Most recently in: Geoff Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China in the Fourteenth Century,' in *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Geoff Wade and Li Tana (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 125-145.

<sup>9</sup> Especially in: *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak (1998).

<sup>10</sup> Ptak, 'Quanzhou' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 395-396.

Islamisation. Again, this is not to forget the presence of Indian Ocean merchants, but in this scheme they are less important than the Chinese.

As pointed out by Wang Gungwu, although increasingly popular amongst historians,<sup>11</sup> the above interpretation is not without its problems; whether a Greater Nanyang actually existed, and precisely how closely it resembled Braudel's Mediterranean, is open to debate.<sup>12</sup> As highlighted by Ptak, this is primarily because a theory of this nature requires a very wide time frame to be convincing (Ptak suggests a millennium).<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, the reality and strength of the posited network can be called into question. It is therefore problematic that all of the above articles (including Ptak's) do not take a *longue durée* view, but instead restrict themselves to a few centuries of history.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly unsatisfactory given the possible relevance of the Greater Nanyang to the Islamisation debate. As such, in this chapter we will aim to rectify this problem by providing a comprehensive re-examination of Nusantara trade.

To meet Ptak's concerns, we will cover close to a thousand years of history. We will begin in c.671CE with the emergence of Śrīvijaya, the Nusantara's first maritime trade-based empire. This is the earliest possible point at which a Braudel-like network could have come into existence in the Nusantara; prior to that, the kind of civilization his theory requires, forming commercial links with other civilizations, did not exist in the region. By contrast, our discussion's end point will be 1620. This date, occurring

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<sup>11</sup> Wang traces the idea of a Greater Nanyang to Anthony Reid's 'Age of Commerce' theory, developed in the 1980's (see Wang Gungwu, 'A Two-Ocean Mediterranean,' in *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Geoff Wade and Li Tana [Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012], 69). But, although Reid does theorise the existence of a Southeast Asian trading network, and references Braudel in that context, he does not develop the Nanyang Theory as presented here. For him, and most of those who follow, any Southeast Asian network stopped at Vietnam and Luzon; it did not extend to Southern China (see: Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*, Vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988], 1-61).

<sup>12</sup> Wang, 'Two-Ocean Mediterranean,' in *Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li (2012), 70-73.

<sup>13</sup> Ptak, 'Quanzhou' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 398.

<sup>14</sup> Lombard and Salmon look at the period 1600-1800, Ptak 960-1368 (consonant with the Song-Yuan dynasties) and Wade the fourteenth century.

after the emergence of the first Nusantara-based Islamic polities, coincides with the beginning of effective European trade monopolies in the region. From that point on, the required indigenous trade-based civilizations disappeared. Looking between these two points, our discussion will have three aims: to see whether, both before and contemporary to the Nusantara's initial Islamisation, Chinese commerce dominated the region; to see what role Muslims played in that Chinese commerce; and, over the same period, to determine what commercial and cultural relationship the Nusantara had with the Indian Ocean, including its Muslim communities. This last aim constitutes an important means of evaluating the significance (if any) of Chinese activity, providing a rich context in which to understand Chinese commerce relative to conversion. Ultimately, a complex picture will emerge: although a Greater Nanyang, closely resembling Braudel's commercial and cultural Mediterranean network, undoubtedly existed both before and during the Nusantara's conversion period, sections of the Indian Ocean (particularly its eastern half) also proved capable of influencing the Nusantara over the same period. Equally, in each case Muslims played a substantial role in events.

## **2.2. The 'Śrīvijaya Period'**

As mentioned, our discussion will begin with Śrīvijaya, the Nusantara's first great trade-based empire, located in South Sumatra, possibly near modern-day Palembang.<sup>15</sup> Despite Śrīvijaya's prominence, however, the region preserves virtually

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<sup>15</sup> George Coedès and Louis-Charles Damais, *Sriwijaya: History, Religion and Language of an Early Malay Polity*, Monograph of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society no. 20 (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1992), 4-7.

no record of it, either literary or archaeological.<sup>16</sup> Only a few scattered statuary and inscriptional remains testify to its existence.<sup>17</sup> As such, for the first concrete reference to the kingdom it is necessary to look to early written sources produced outside the region – namely, to the work of the Chinese Buddhist monk, Yijing (635-713). While recounting his pilgrimage to India in 671CE, Yijing claims to have stayed at Śrīvijaya for six months. He described it as a well-established kingdom and a renowned centre of Buddhist learning.<sup>18</sup> Although this account suggests the kingdom was not new in 671, because no prior reference to it exists, this year must be taken as an approximate date of foundation. The final reference to Śrīvijaya, on the other hand, is in 1377.<sup>19</sup> In that year, the *Ming shi-lu* ('The Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty') records a Śrīvijayan envoy arriving in China to request the installation of the kingdom's ruler. This was traditionally the sign of an independent kingdom and, by 1397, appears to have led to Śrīvijaya's downfall; in that year the *Ming shi-lu* records that, soon after 1377, Śrīvijaya had been destroyed by Java's Hindu kingdom, Majapahit. In the 1370's, the latter had apparently claimed Śrīvijaya as a vassal. Consequently, when Śrīvijaya's ruler requested installation from the Chinese Emperor, Majapahit interpreted it as an act of rebellion and ruthlessly suppressed the kingdom.<sup>20</sup> As such, this provides a clear end date for the kingdom, meaning Śrīvijaya's existence can be confirmed from c.671 to c.1377. This 'Śrīvijaya period' will delineate the pre-Islamic sections of this chapter. But, as the defining characteristic of this time period, what was Śrīvijaya like as a polity?

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<sup>16</sup> Keith W. Taylor, 'The Early Kingdoms,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1: From Early Times to c.1500, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173.

<sup>17</sup> O. W. Wolters, *Early Southeast Asia: Selected Essays*, ed. Craig J. Reynolds (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 81.

<sup>18</sup> Śrīvijaya may appear before Yijing, in the Imperial Records of the Tang Dynasty. There it may appear as *Gantuoli*, a location which sent envoys to China in 441CE. This is, however, uncertain (see: O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* [London: Lund Humphries, 1970], 26).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Edward L. Dreyer, *Early Ming China: A Political History 1355-1435* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 118-119.

As mentioned, Yijing refers to Śrīvijaya as a Buddhist kingdom. This links well with Śrīvijaya's limited physical remains, which also testify to an Indianized Buddhist kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Apart from this, however, the only other characteristic of Śrīvijaya about which there is reasonable certainty is its status as a trade-based empire.<sup>22</sup> As such, the Chinese geographer Zhao Rugua (1170-1228), on the basis of material dating from the eleventh century,<sup>23</sup> notes that Śrīvijaya received tribute from fifteen local states which, together, constituted large parts of the Nusantara.<sup>24</sup> Equally, the Rājendracōla inscription of 1030, erected by a South Indian Cola king of the same name, and who had earlier attempted to invade Śrīvijaya, lists eleven countries as its tributaries.<sup>25</sup> But while all this clearly establishes Śrīvijaya as an empire, it also becomes relevant for trade when Zhao Rugua records that Śrīvijaya, but none of its tributaries, sent large amounts of tribute to China.<sup>26</sup>

Owing primarily to a Daoist and Confucian dislike of mercantile activity, traditional China was openly hostile to the idea of international trade – or, indeed, any contact with the outside world.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the Confucian elite, who dominated

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<sup>21</sup> Coedès and Damais, *Sriwijaya* (1992), 4-7.

<sup>22</sup> ZFZ, 60.

<sup>23</sup> This date is based, amongst other things, on comments Zhao Rugua makes while describing the Middle East. When speaking of Baghdad, on two separate occasions he calls it the greatest of Arab cities. His view of its precise role, however, is confused; at one point he claims it held sway over all surrounding areas (see: Ibid, 144), but at others that they had broken away and formed their own states. Moreover, when describing the Arabs as a people, he claims that Egypt was their capital (Ibid, 135). All this implies, however, that his information came from the late tenth or early eleventh centuries, when the influence of Abbasid Baghdad declined simultaneous to the rise of Fāṭimid Egypt after 969 (Paula A. Sanders, 'The Fāṭimid State, 969–1171,' in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1: Islamic Egypt, 670-1517, ed. Carl F. Petry [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 151). Indeed, Zhao Rugua's description of tribute missions supports this dating: from the rise of the Song (960) until approximately 1011, Zhao Rugua describes tribute missions in detail, providing specific dates and anecdotes about what happened during each mission. After this, however, most of his information is reduced to a simple mention that during a certain period a certain location sent a particular number of missions (ZFZ, 118-119). This indicates that Zhao Rugua had better access to sources dating from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries than to later ones. It is therefore reasonable to suppose much of his information came from the earlier period.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Coedès and Damais, *Sriwijaya* (1992), 9-14.

<sup>26</sup> ZFZ, 67-68; 73.

<sup>27</sup> By contrast, Buddhism had very little impact on the way trade was conducted (see: Hu Jichuang, *A Concise History of Chinese Economic Thought* [Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1988], 42). Daoist and

traditional Chinese thought, felt an obligation to encourage foreign nations to conform to Chinese culture for the sake of their own improvement – and it was expected that those nations would, in turn, welcome this opportunity. To this end, the tribute system was developed as a means of allowing foreign rulers to submit to the authority of the Emperor as the Son of Heaven. They would send envoys to China, pledging their loyalty and obedience to the Mandate of Heaven, while also (and most importantly here) bearing tribute to the Chinese Imperial court as a sign of that submission.<sup>28</sup> This tribute always took the form of trade goods (gold, spices, ivory, pearls etc.), which would later be sold on, either by the court itself (after purchasing them from the envoys) or by the envoys with the court's permission. As such, merchants acting (or merely posing)<sup>29</sup> as envoys could trade freely with China via the court – and often at a considerable profit because the court, as a sign of its largess, frequently paid far more for an item than it was worth.<sup>30</sup> The latter, however, meant that tribute became a very lucrative form of, what Wang Gungwu has termed, 'public trade.'<sup>31</sup> This is not to say that contrasting 'private trade' did not exist, or was not valuable, even when the tribute system was in full force,<sup>32</sup> but by dominating the Nusantara's China-bound tribute

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Confucian hostility to trade sprang from a desire to maintain a stable, self-sufficient society based on agriculture. International trade had no role in this system, save for providing the necessities China could not produce for itself (Gang Deng, *The Premodern Chinese Economy: Structural Equilibrium and Capitalist Sterility* [London: Routledge, 1999], 116).

<sup>28</sup> Geoff Wade, 'Some Topoi in Southern Border Historiography during the Ming (and their Modern Relevance),' in *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Sabine Dabringhaus, Roderich Ptak and Richard Teschke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), 145; also: Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 115.

<sup>29</sup> Court officials always feared many envoys were actually opportunistic merchants looking to trade with China. As such, they went to great lengths to check an envoy's credentials (see: Hok-Lam Chan, 'The "Chinese Barbarian Officials" in the Foreign Tributary Missions to China during the Ming Dynasty,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88:3 [1968]: 416).

<sup>30</sup> Ming-Yang Su, *Seven Epic Voyages of Zheng He in Ming China (1405-1433): Facts, Fiction and Fabrication* (Torrance, CA: n.p., 2005), 125-127.

<sup>31</sup> Wang Gungwu, "'Public" and "Private" Overseas Trade in Chinese History,' in *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien: Actes du Huitième Colloque International d'Histoire Maritime (Beyrouth – 5-10 Septembre 1966)*, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1970), 216.

<sup>32</sup> Wang maintains that, as early as the Tang (589-906CE) and later Five Dynasties (907-959) periods, when tributary trade was actively encouraged and officially dominant, private trade still outstripped it outside the main cities. This would explain, he claims, the large numbers of foreign merchants who



missions, Śrīvijaya was engaged in very profitable commerce. Indeed, many scholars have suggested that Śrīvijaya's empire was based on a desire to dominate the Nusantara's tribute missions, and thereby lay sole claim to the wealth they generated.<sup>33</sup> Certainly, Zhao Rugua's account supports the idea of Śrīvijaya operating a monopoly.

The above also suggests, however, that Śrīvijaya's relationship with China was extremely important for its prosperity. On the face of it, this could indicate that China wielded considerable economic and political influence during the Śrīvijaya period, supporting the idea of a Greater Nanyang. Nonetheless, most scholars maintain that, overall, Śrīvijaya's commercial links with China were relatively insignificant; those with the Indian Ocean were far more important.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in their eyes the Śrīvijaya period witnessed the beginning of the Nusantara-Indian Ocean relationship which would eventually facilitate Islamisation. As such, whether this period did indeed see Indian Ocean commerce outstrip China's is an important question to answer. It calls for a thorough examination of the relative roles each region played in Śrīvijaya's affairs.

### **2.2.1. Indian Ocean Trade during the Śrīvijaya Period**

Beginning with the Indian Ocean, it is first convenient to divide this region into two: East and West. In 1989, J. Abu-Lughod argued that pre-modern Indian Ocean trade was never unified; India's landmass, she claimed, had acted as an obvious landfall where merchants could stop and exchange goods. This effectively divided the region in two, down the middle of the Indian subcontinent (i.e. with Malabar in the west and the

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resided in China (although it is impossible to estimate their numbers precisely) (Wang, "Public" and "Private", in *Sociétés et Compagnies*, ed. Mollat [1970], 216).

<sup>33</sup> The most recent to make this claim is: Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c.800-1830*, Vol. 2: Mainland Mirrors: Europe, Japan, China, South Asia, and the Islands (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 778.

<sup>34</sup> K. McPherson demonstrates this trend: Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Coromandel Coast in the east). Although interconnected, these eastern and western regions constituted separate commercial spheres.<sup>35</sup> As the following pages will show, Abu-Lughod's analysis is both logical and amply supported by the available evidence. Consequently, her division is accepted here. Throughout the following sections, the Eastern Indian Ocean will refer to the Bay of Bengal, Sri Lanka and the eastern coast of India down to the Coromandel Coast; the Western Indian Ocean will run from East Africa to the Red Sea, Arabia, the Persian Gulf and the western coast of India down to Malabar.

### 2.2.1.1. The Eastern Indian Ocean

Throughout the Śrīvijaya period, ample evidence emerges for substantial trade-based interaction between the eastern half of the Indian Ocean and the Nusantara.<sup>36</sup> The latter's gradual Indianisation during this period (including the spread of Hinduism and Buddhism, the use of Indian architectural styles, etc.) alone bears witness to it. Moreover, the Nusantara's earliest Indianized remains (including those associated with Śrīvijaya) are in a Dravidian style, pointing to possible influence from the Coromandel Coast.<sup>37</sup> Supporting this, a number of early inscriptions attest to a trade-based Tamil presence,<sup>38</sup> while Zhao Rugua notes Śrīvijaya's Indian products (notably its pearls) were from Sri Lanka.<sup>39</sup> The Cola dynasty's attempts to invade Śrīvijaya in 1026 and 1068 also demonstrate continued and significant South Indian influence over the region.

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<sup>35</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 216-263; 274.

<sup>36</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 83-84.

<sup>37</sup> George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), 30-31.

<sup>38</sup> A touchstone unearthed at Wat Khlong (Thailand), for example, has a first to third-century CE Tamil inscription labelling it the property of a Tamil goldsmith operating in the area (see: John Guy, 'Tamil Merchant Guilds and the Quanzhou Trade,' in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001], 290-291).

<sup>39</sup> ZFZ, 61.

Indeed, these Nusantara-East Indian Ocean interactions probably pre-date the Śrīvijaya period: first-century CE Nusantaran archaeological remains testify to similar examples of Indianisation,<sup>40</sup> while the first references to Nusantaran ships visiting India's east coast also come from this period (with the first-century navigational treatise, *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*).<sup>41</sup>

However, notwithstanding the above, this movement of people, accompanied by cultural, economic and political influence, strongly suggests a Braudel-like system. That Śrīvijaya remained Indianized throughout its history, before eventually being eclipsed by the equally Indianized Majapahit, suggests this influence was both constant and widespread. It seems highly likely, therefore, that the Nusantara and Eastern Indian Ocean were part of a Mediterranean-like cultural system.

#### 2.2.1.2. The Western Indian Ocean

Turning to the Western Indian Ocean, proving the same kind of connections is more difficult. For example, during the Śrīvijaya period Islam dominated the Western Indian Ocean; the Nusantara, however, bears almost no evidence of Islamisation from this period.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, some scholars have been eager to establish a possible

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<sup>40</sup> Jacques Dumarçay, *The Palaces of South-East Asia: Architecture and Customs*, ed. and trans. Michael Smithies (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 122-123; and J. G. De Casparis and I. W. Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c.1500,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1: From Early Times to c.1500, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 304-305.

<sup>41</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, Pt 1: Containing an Account of the Navigation of the Ancients from the Sea of Suez to the Coast of Zanguebar, with Dissertations, ed. and trans. William Vincent (London: A. Strahan, 1800), 59

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, 'Economic History of Early Southeast Asia,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1: From Early Times to c.1500, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 228. Although this lack of Islamisation is largely accepted, some dispute exists. U. Tjandrasasmita, for example, suggests Tang dynasty records indicate the existence of an Arab settlement on the western coast of Sumatra in 674 (Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Arkeologi Islam Nusantara* [Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2009], 12). It is commonly accepted by most scholars, however, that the Chinese of this period confused Sumatra with Arabia (D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-east Asia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [London: Macmillan, 1968], 205). As such, this reference need not refer to the Nusantara at all. S. M. N.

connection, and from as early as possible. To do so, recourse has been made to several early Chinese and Arabic texts produced during (or shortly after) the period in question. While augmenting these with archaeological data, some scholars have argued Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean links could have been just as strong (or even stronger) than those with the Eastern Indian Ocean.<sup>43</sup> This claim now needs to be critically assessed, beginning with a discussion of the Chinese texts, which are the most frequently cited works in this context.

#### 2.2.1.2.1. The Chinese Texts

The first Chinese reference to Western Indian Ocean people visiting the Nusantara comes from Yijing: he claims to have travelled from China to Śrīvijaya aboard a Persian (*Bosi*) ship.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, this constitutes the first concrete observation, in any source, of a Western Indian Ocean ship visiting both China and the Nusantara.

After Yijing, comes the early ninth-century text *Zheng-yuan-xin-ding-shi-jiao-mu-lu*, compiled by Yuan Zhao from earlier material. It includes an account of the

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Al-Attas, on the other hand, draws attention to apparent Arab migrations from Southern China during the reign of Emperor Xi Zong (r.873-888; al-Attas incorrectly dates his reign to 878-889) which, he believes, led to the settlement of large and influential Arab merchant communities in Palembang and Kalah Bār. This claim is debatable, however, and discussed more fully below (see: S. M. N. al-Attas, 'Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu,' available at: <http://www.ukm.my/penerbit/syed-naquib-sq.pdf>. [Accessed on 8th February 2013]).

<sup>43</sup> See: al-Attas, 'Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu,' available at: <http://www.ukm.my/penerbit/syed-naquib-sq.pdf>. [Accessed on 8th February 2013]

<sup>44</sup> Although the identification of *Bosi* (often rendered *Po-sse*) with Persia is almost universally accepted, it is worth noting that some ambiguity exists. For example, two earlier Chinese references (the earliest dating from 306CE) seem to link it to the Nusantara. The first describes the people of *Bosi* coming by sea from the south and bringing only Southeast Asian produce (G. R. Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders in South-east Asia,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 [1957]: 8.). The second, on the other hand, a geographical text called *Man-su* (written in 860) claims Burma was bordered by *Bosi* on one side and *Po-luo-men* (India) on the other. This implies a location somewhere on the Malay Peninsula (Hadi Hasan, *A History of Persian Navigation* [London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1928], 99). Also, Zhao Rugua has an entry on a people called *Bosi* which places them somewhere in the Nusantara. Although he provides so little information about them that a precise identification is impossible (ZFZ, 152), it has been suggested that they could be a reference to Samudera-Pasai in north Sumatra. No firm evidence exists, however, to support this (David Whitehouse and Andrew Williamson, 'Sasanian Maritime Trade,' *Iran* 11 [1973]: 46-47).

Indian prince Vajrabodhi who, in 717, reputedly travelled from Sri Lanka to China in the company of thirty-five Persian trading vessels. All these ships sailed to Śrīvijaya before making for Guangzhou, the chief Chinese port of the period.<sup>45</sup> Thirty-five ships is, for the time, a significant number of vessels (ship numbers and sizes are discussed below, in section 2.2.3.2). Consequently, if accurate, this account suggests Persians were important travellers in the region during the early Śrīvijaya period.

After Yuan Zhao, the next reference (again to Persians) is in Hui Cao's 727 geographical treatise. While drawing upon his own observations and earlier sources, Hui Cao claimed Persians regularly travelled to *Kunlun* (a location on the Malay Peninsula) looking for gold, before then going on to Guangzhou to buy silk.<sup>46</sup> He adds that they were now under the sway of the *Ta-shih* (or the Arabs).

Not long after Hui Cao, the first references emerge to permanent Persian settlements in China: in 748, a Japanese monk called Kanshin noted large Persian villages at both Hainan and Guangzhou, where Arab traders were also present.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, ten years later, a government report from Guangzhou claimed that the city had been sacked by a confederacy of Persian and Arab merchants. This led to the city being barred for all foreigners until 792. To be able to launch such an attack, however, a large number of these Western Indian Ocean merchants must have been resident in Southern China at this time.<sup>48</sup>

After the above, further pertinent information comes from the *Song shi* (the Imperial records of the Song Dynasty, 960-1279). Between 962 and 1155, this text records the arrival in China of fifteen, apparently Arab, Śrīvijayan envoys (sent over

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<sup>45</sup> Hasan, *History of Persian Navigation* (1928), 98.

<sup>46</sup> Whitehouse and Williamson, 'Sasanian Maritime Trade,' *Iran* 11 (1973): 46.

<sup>47</sup> Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 (1957): 27.

<sup>48</sup> Hall, *History of South-east Asia* (1968), 205.

eleven missions, ten before 1028).<sup>49</sup> The conclusion about their ethnicity is based on their given names: for example, nine of them bore names beginning with *Bu*, including Bu Tuohan (listed as an envoy in 975) and Bu Moxi (envoy in 1017). Philologically, *Bu* is thought to represent the common Arabic prefix *Abū* ('father of'), resulting in *Abū Adam* and *Abū Mūsā* for the given examples.<sup>50</sup> As such, and although many Muslims, whether Arabs or not, adopt Arabic names, these envoys could be evidence of Western Indian Ocean people associating directly with Śrīvijaya. In this respect, it is perhaps also significant that J. Chaffee claims the *Song shi* describes these envoys as *bazhu* ('ship-owners'), indicating they were merchants.<sup>51</sup> They could therefore establish a specifically commercial link between Śrīvijaya and the Western Indian Ocean.

But, before accepting this, it should be noted that Chaffee's argument has certain limitations. Although he gives the impression that all fifteen envoys were *bazhu*, a perusal of the texts reveals that only one is actually so named. Although another is called a 'foreign merchant,' otherwise they are simply termed 'envoys,' with no clue about what they did.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, however, the *Song shi* actually gives the impression that all these envoys were residents of Gunagzhou, not Śrīvijaya (or, indeed, the Arab world).<sup>53</sup> As such, the fifteen envoys listed in the *Song shi*, even if originally present in Śrīvijaya to trade, were actually Muslims resident in China. Śrīvijaya's ruler may therefore have employed them as envoys because they would be returning to China, making them a logical choice for conveying any diplomatic correspondence.

The final two Chinese sources worth considering are both contemporary to the later Śrīvijaya period. Of all the sources, however, they are perhaps the clearest about

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<sup>49</sup> See: John Chaffee, 'Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China,' *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 401.

<sup>50</sup> M. Nakahara, 'Muslim Merchants in Nan-Hai,' in *Islam in Asia*, Vol. 2: Southeast and East Asia, ed. Raphael Israeli and Anthony H. Johns (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 5.

<sup>51</sup> Chaffee, 'Diasporic Identities,' *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 401.

<sup>52</sup> Nakahara, 'Muslim Merchants in Nan-Hai,' in *Islam in Asia*, Vol. 2, ed. Israeli and Johns (1984), 5.

<sup>53</sup> Chaffee, 'Diasporic Identities,' *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 401.

possible links between the Western Indian Ocean (specifically, the Arabs) and Śrīvijaya. The first is the geographical text *Lingwai Daida*, written by Zhou Qufei in 1178. An Assistant Sub-Prefect of Guilin (capital of Guangxi province, Southern China), Zhou Qufei's work is notable for making little reference to earlier texts. As such, it appears to constitute his own research, possibly made in Guangzhou while he was travelling to his official residency (although this is uncertain, as he does not say where he obtained his information). Nonetheless, it seems to be a highly original source, perhaps containing primarily twelfth-century information.<sup>54</sup> With regards to Western Indian Ocean peoples and Śrīvijaya, it states:

Of all the wealthy foreign lands which have great store of precious and varied goods, none surpass the realm of the *Ta-shih*. Next to them comes *Shopo* [Java]; the third is *Sanfoqi* [Śrīvijaya]...*Sanfoqi* is [also] an important thoroughfare on the sea routes of the Foreigners on their way to and from [China].<sup>55</sup>

From this quotation three important points emerge. First, China was trading with the Western Indian Ocean – specifically, with the Arabs. Second, the goods these Western Indian Ocean merchants brought with them were highly prized in China – although whether this also meant they constituted the largest sections of trade (i.e. the highest volume) is unclear, as the most valuable trade goods were not necessarily the most common (see below, section 2.5.2). Lastly, it is clear foreign merchants in general (but presumably including Western Indian Ocean merchants) used Śrīvijaya as a stopping point on their way to China.

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<sup>54</sup> ZFZ, 104. This date is supported by Zhou Qufei's statement that the capital of the Arabs was *Ma-li-pa*, or the Merbat region of southern Arabia, home to Aden. After the eleventh century, this city became a major trading centre under the Fātimid-sponsored Sulayid dynasty, shifting Middle East trade towards the Red Sea. As such, it is likely Zhou Qufei's information (at least in this regard) comes from a time after this change took place (Donald S. Whitcomb, 'Islamic Archaeology in Aden and the Hadhramaut,' in *Araby the Blest: Studies in Arabian Archaeology*, ed. D. T. Potts [Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1988], 185).

<sup>55</sup> Cited in ZFZ, 23.

Turning to the second Chinese text, Zhao Rugua's *Zhufan Zhi* (written in 1225), this paints largely the same scenario. This is not, however, surprising: although Zhao Rugua was the former Superintendent of Maritime Trade for Fujian province, with access to official commercial records, his account is based primarily on Zhou Qufei's.<sup>56</sup> For example, the product lists he provides, detailing what can be found and where, are taken directly from Zhou Qufei. Zhao Rugua also quotes extensively from Zhou Qufei when describing the Middle East. Nonetheless, Zhao Rugua does add some further information: when describing Śrīvijaya, he claims many of its residents had the surname *Bu*, suggesting an Arab presence.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, when speaking of the Arabs, he claims:

The products of the[ir] country are for the most part brought to *Sanfoqi*, where they are sold to merchants who forward them to China.<sup>58</sup>

Supporting this assertion are the Śrīvijaya product lists themselves: many of the items listed (including frankincense, amber and coral) come from the Middle East.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, cloves and nutmeg are listed as Arab products,<sup>60</sup> despite coming from the Nusantara.<sup>61</sup> This confusion suggests either a close Nusantara-Middle East trading relationship or a mistake on the part of the sources.

At the end of this brief review, Chinese sources clearly provide grounds for postulating a direct and long-standing connection between the Western Indian Ocean and the Nusantara. Direct contact, recorded as early as 671, is maintained until the writings of Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rugua, thereby covering the entire Śrīvijaya period.

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<sup>56</sup> Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 (1957): 33.

<sup>57</sup> *ZFZ*, 60.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 114.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

<sup>61</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 1-3.



Until the thirteenth century, however, the sources are unclear about the nature and importance of this contact; the earliest sources only testify to Western Indian Ocean merchants using Śrīvijaya as a stopping point on their way to India from China (as illustrated by Yijing) and vice versa (by Vajrabodhi). Although groups of merchants passing through the region might be expected to engage in commercial activity (even if only limited), only Hui Cao refers to it actually taking place. Nothing more is forthcoming until Zhou Qufei's product lists and Zhao Rugua's comments about settlement. These alone suggest a widespread commercial relationship.

It should also be considered that much of the above (such as the records of Persian settlement at Hainan and Guangzhou, or the sacking of the latter in 758) speak more to Western Indian Ocean activity in China than in the Nusantara. This is equally true of the Śrīvijayan envoys: all residents of China, they indicate Muslim settlement there and contact between Southern China and Śrīvijaya, but little else. Of course, the argument could be made that, if later sources (like Zhou Qufei) indicate that China-bound Western Indian Ocean merchants stopped and traded at Śrīvijaya, it is possible (even likely) that earlier merchants did the same, whether the sources make this clear or not. But, even if this were the case, because the sources provide no idea of how extensive this hypothetical trade was, it is impossible to say how significant it may have been for any Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean relationship. Indeed, if we look beyond the Chinese texts, compelling evidence emerges that Western Indian Ocean interest in the Nusantara was only fleeting.

#### 2.2.1.2.2. The Arabic Texts and the Archaeological Record

Beginning with the early Arabic texts, the Śrīvijaya period witnessed the production of numerous geographical treatises. Many, however, were very fantastical in nature, earning the title *‘ajā’ib* (‘wondrous’). These also tended to borrow extensively from earlier sources, meaning they were neither first-hand nor up-to-date.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, a few Arabic geographical treatises avoided these problems, being instead original, sober and detailed accounts of regions beyond the Middle East. Chief amongst these was the *Akḥbār al-Šīn wa’l-Hind* (‘Accounts of China and India’). One of the earliest surviving examples of an Arabic geographical treatise, the *Akḥbār* is actually a composite text; it is made up of two distinct halves, a Book One (which is missing its first few pages) and a Book Two (which is complete).<sup>63</sup>

Book One, constituting the *Akḥbār*’s first half, is dated by Book Two to 237AH/851-852. Although its author goes unnamed (whether in Book One or Two), a later writer, Ibn al-Faqīh, while quoting from Book One, attributes it to Sulaymān al-Tājir (i.e. Sulaymān the Merchant). Indeed, Book One mentions this individual, but in the third person. Early Arabic authors, however, frequently used the third person when referring to themselves in their own texts, making Ibn Faqīh’s attribution plausible, if unsubstantiated.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> G. R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on Southeast Asia*, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series vol. 44 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 3-4.

<sup>63</sup> Only one manuscript copy of the *Akḥbār* survives: Paris MS Arabe 2281, copied in the late twelfth century. That rendition is therefore used here (Tim Mackintosh-Smith, ‘Introduction,’ in *Two Arabic Travel Books: Accounts of China and India by Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfi and Mission to the Volga by Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān*, ed. and trans. James E. Montgomery and Tim Mackintosh-Smith [New York: New York University Press, 2014], 16)

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

Turning to Book Two's origins, this was apparently written as a companion to Book One. In its opening paragraph, the author, identified as one Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfī, claims he was:

commanded to look carefully through it [Book One], and to verify the information I f[ound] in it about the affairs of the sea and about its kings and their various circumstances, and to compare this information with other reports passed down about these kings, known to myself but not appearing in the book.<sup>65</sup>

After finding Book One to be accurate, al-Sīrāfī collated these 'other reports...not appearing in the book' into Book Two, avoiding 'any of the sort of accounts in which sailors exercise their powers of invention but whose credibility would not stand up to scrutiny in other men's minds.'<sup>66</sup> Although no date is given for when this was accomplished, another prominent Arab geographer, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī (896-956),<sup>67</sup> claims to have met al-Sīrāfī in Basra in 303AH/915-916.<sup>68</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī later based his own geographical treatise, *Murūj adh-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawāhir* (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems, written in c.943), on information he gained from al-Sīrāfī.<sup>69</sup> This implies Book Two must be early tenth century.

In terms of content, both sections of the *Akhbār* describe a maritime trade route stretching between Sīrāf in the Persian Gulf and a Chinese port called Khānfū (commonly identified as Guangzhou). In each case, the primary concern is China and India; on the whole, and despite some fantastical flourishes regarding India, both locations (but particularly China) are described accurately and in considerable detail,

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<sup>65</sup> *ASH*, 25.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>68</sup> Mackintosh-Smith, 'Introduction,' in *Two Arabic Travel Books*, ed. and trans. Montgomery and Mackintosh-Smith (2014), 6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

covering everything from local culture to commerce.<sup>70</sup> This suggests each author drew upon reliable information, which they then recorded accurately. Consequently, both sections of the *Akhbār* appear to be valuable sources, painting a reliable picture of Arab trade during the Śrīvijaya period. It is therefore worth examining them in more detail.

Beginning with Book One, this reinforces the Chinese sources discussed in the previous section by very clearly stating the importance Arabs attached to trade with China. For them, China was an enormous market place and, because the Emperor paid so well for the goods reaching his court, a highly profitable one.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, so important was China that the text gives the impression that all eastward-bound Arab ships were destined for that country. Certainly, they are only described trading elsewhere in a limited way, during brief stops.<sup>72</sup> In the latter regard, Book One describes four main ports along the trade route east: Sīrāf, Kūlam Malī (modern-day Kollam in Kerala, South India), Kalah Bār and Guangzhou. Notwithstanding other, more minor stops, these were the major ports the Arabs sailed to on their way to China. Of them, the third location is Nusantara and constitutes Book One's most substantial reference to the region:

Both 'kingdom' and 'coast' are called *bār*. It is subject to the kingdom of al-Zābaj [Śrīvijaya], which one reaches by veering southwards from the land of India. All the people of these regions of Kalah Bār and al-Zābaj are under one king...The crews [of Arab ships] take on freshwater there...The distance to Kalah Bār from Kūlam [Malī]...is one month.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> T. Mackintosh-Smith notes numerous instances when the texts recount Chinese culture accurately: from an accurate description of Confucian ethics to an account of how the Chinese used toilet paper and bamboo urinals (Mackintosh-Smith, 'Introduction,' in *Two Arabic Travel Books*, ed. and trans. Montgomery and Mackintosh-Smith [2014], 5)

<sup>71</sup> The largess of the Chinese court is referred to on a number of occasions (for example: *ASH*, 39)

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

Despite being Book One's most substantial reference, this is very brief; there is no precise indication of location and no explicit reference to the city's population, culture or commerce. The text simply identifies Kalah Bār as a Śrīvijayan vassal and an Arab stopping point. Because Book One also claims Arabs traded wherever they stopped, it is likely Kalah Bār was a trading post too, but this is never explicitly stated. A further point, however, added a little after the above quotation, is that the people of Kalah Bār wore *fūṭah*, or waist wrappers, probably equivalent to the Malay *sarong*.<sup>74</sup> As the latter derives from Indian forms of dress, notably the Tamil *saran*, this could suggest an Indianized and predominantly indigenous population with connections to South India.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, this would link well with the idea of Arabs sailing directly to Kalah Bār from Kollam.

But the above notwithstanding, the fact remains that Kalah Bār is described in significantly less detail than either China or India. In part, this may reflect the purpose of the *Akhbār*, as set out in its title – i.e. to present an account of China and India. But it may also hint at an underlying lack of familiarity with the Nusantara, particularly beyond the route to China. Indeed, several points suggest this. For example, after referring to Kalah Bār, Book One continues to describe the trade route east, listing four further stopping points: Tiyyūmah, Kanduranj, Sanf and Şandar Fūlāt. Each of these kingdoms was reputedly ten days from the last, with China a full month from Şandar Fūlāt, which stood at the beginning of the South China Sea.<sup>76</sup> This last point indicates that all four kingdoms were within the Nusantara. On the one hand, that four further Nusantara kingdoms are named at all, with an idea of their relative distances, indicates some knowledge of the region, at least along the route to China. But, and as with Kalah Bār, none are precisely located or described in detail. Indeed, the universal application

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<sup>74</sup> ASH, 33.

<sup>75</sup> Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Gordon (1963), 20.

<sup>76</sup> ASH, 35.

of ten days sailing time makes the reader suspicious; it suggests the author was falling back on approximations, unsure of precisely where these kingdoms were.

This general impression is further supported by Book One's description of Sumatra, which all Arab ships must have encountered when entering the region from the west. As such, Book One refers to Sumatra as a large island opposite Sri Lanka, called 'al-Rāmanī.' It correctly names its northern tip Fanṣūr (after a city located there, in modern-day Aceh),<sup>77</sup> while stating that the island was ruled by many kings, but without numbering or naming them. It then correctly states that Sumatra produced gold, elephants, high-grade camphor, sapanwood and rattan,<sup>78</sup> and faced the Sea of Harkand (the Eastern Indian Ocean) on one side and the Sea of Salāhiṭ (the Straits of Malacca) on the other.<sup>79</sup> All this again suggests knowledge of the area surrounding the trade route to China. Beyond that route, however, some notable lacunas emerge. For example, the text provides almost no detail about Śrīvijaya (in South Sumatra, but not listed as a stopping point). Despite correctly identifying it as the Nusantara's major kingdom, the text is otherwise silent about it (aside from claiming it was near a 'Mount of Fire').<sup>80</sup> Indeed, even further beyond the trade route, it quickly becomes apparent that Book One has nothing to say about the Nusantara; it simply does not describe any other part of the region, providing no indication the Arabs sailed beyond the trade route, whether to trade, explore or settle. This is significant: it creates the impression that the Arabs saw the Nusantara as a region to be traversed, as something which lay between them and

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<sup>77</sup> There is some dispute about the precise location of Fanṣūr. As well as the northern tip of Aceh (championed by Mackintosh-Smith), V. Braginsky, and in common with many earlier writers, prefers to identify Barus in West Sumatra (Vladimir I. Braginsky, 'Towards the Biography of Hamzah Fansuri. When Did Hamzah Live? Data from his Poems and Early European Accounts,' *Archipel* 57 [1999]: 146). More recently, E. McKinnon has proposed Lhok Pancu at the north-west tip of Aceh (E. McKinnon, 'Ancient Fansur, Aceh's 'Atlantis': The Case for Lhok Pancu/Indrapurwa,' NSC AU lecture series, National University of Singapore, Singapore [2013]).

<sup>78</sup> *ASH*, 25.

<sup>79</sup> At one point the text does confuse the issue by describing the Andaman Islands (named Lanjabālūs) as coming after Sumatra. Later on, however, it corrects that mistake (*Ibid*, 27).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

China. Their (and Book One's) principle concern was therefore getting from one side of it to the other, creating a necessity to describe the trade route. At no point, however, does it appear the Arabs were interested in the region for its own sake.

The above picture is largely reinforced by the Nusantara's (albeit incomplete) archaeological record – in particular, by its shipwrecks. Valuable for piecing together past trade routes, shipwrecks can tell us who was active in an area and when, including what produce they were transporting and, by implication, where they visited in order to obtain that produce. In the Nusantara's case, only one relevant shipwreck has so far been discovered. Called the 'Belitung Wreck,' it was found in 1998 off the northern coast of Belitung Island, immediately east of Palembang. Due to its location, it was probably either on its way to Śrīvijaya, or just leaving it.<sup>81</sup> Its cargo, however, indicates it had already visited China: the ship was carrying a significant quantity of Chinese ceramics, all dating from the ninth century (or, more precisely, 'the third year of Gaizheng,' or 838).<sup>82</sup> These ceramics therefore place the wreck in the same approximate period as Book One. But, if determining the wreck's age has been relatively simple, establishing its origin has not.

According to its excavator, M. Flecker, the remains of the hull (15.3m of the keel, as well as some of the superstructure)<sup>83</sup> indicate a design of either Arab or Indian origin. Thus, the hull's planks were fastened together with stitching, rather than dowels or iron fastenings; ethnographic, iconographic and literary evidence ties this method of construction to Arabia and India, with most evidence coming from the Red Sea and

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<sup>81</sup> Michael Flecker, 'A Ninth-Century AD Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China,' *World Archaeology* 32:3 (2001): 336; Michael Flecker, 'A 9th-Century Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesian Waters,' *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 29:2 (2000): 199; Michael Flecker, 'A Ninth Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia,' in *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, ed. Regina Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson and Julian Raby (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2010), 114-119; J. Keith Wilson and Michael Flecker 'Dating the Belitung Shipwreck,' in *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, ed. Regina Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson and Julian Raby (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2010), 35-37.

<sup>82</sup> Flecker, '9th-Century Arab or Indian Shipwreck,' *IJNA* 29:2 (2000): 199.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 200.

Gulf regions.<sup>84</sup> As Flecker points out, however, an analysis of the timbers used in the ship's construction reveals woods of an Indian origin. Moreover, nothing amongst the cargo suggests the owners were Arabs – or, for that matter, Muslims. Indeed, a box of Indian origin (established by the type of wood used in its construction) was being used to transport produce bought in China; Flecker suggests this box was the personal property of one of the ship's merchants. Because Flecker believes a personal item would probably come from its owner's place of origin, he therefore tentatively suggests an Indian identity.<sup>85</sup>

The above conclusion, however, is highly speculative: nothing conclusively establishes the box as a personal possession or an item bought in India by an Indian (as opposed to an Arab travelling through). Instead, the wreck's cargo of Chinese ceramics indicates it was on its way back home when it sank, having sold its original produce. Consequently, any produce indicative of the ship's origin was presumably removed before it sank. This means the cargo found at the site cannot be used to draw any conclusion about the ship's origin.

But nevertheless, and on balance, an Arab origin is perhaps the most likely scenario: as Flecker highlights, most ships of this design were Middle Eastern. Equally, this period saw Indian wood exported to the Persian Gulf in large quantities, meaning an Arab ship could easily have been made from it.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, a ninth-century Arab ship sailing to China, buying ceramics and then sailing back through the Nusantara, fits

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<sup>84</sup> Evidence from India can be reduced to two first and second century CE reliefs at Bharhut and Sanchi, both depicting riverine craft. A twelfth-century memorial stone depicts a larger, sea-going ship with a stitched hull, but it has been suggested (whether correctly or not is uncertain) that this vessel was influenced by Arab construction (see: James Hornell, *The Origins and Ethnological Significance of Indian Boat Designs* [Calcutta: Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1920], 7). From the Middle East, evidence includes the first-century navigational treatise, *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which mentions such boats in Oman (see: *The Periplus*, Pt. 1, ed and trans. Vincent [1800], 59). The sixth-century work of Procopius also mentions them, but amongst the Arabs in general (see: Procopius, *The Secret History*, trans. G. A. Williamson [London: Penguin, 2007], 103-105).

<sup>85</sup> Flecker, '9th-Century Arab or Indian Shipwreck,' *IJNA* 29:2 (2000): 215-216.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 216.



very well with Book One's claims. Indeed, Chinese ceramics were very common in the Middle East during this period: according to A. Rougeulle, extensive fieldwork has revealed evidence of Chinese ceramic imports from right across the Persian Gulf and dating from the late eighth century onwards<sup>87</sup> (although not earlier).<sup>88</sup> Thirty-eight sites dating from the eighth to tenth centuries have revealed evidence of trade with China, suggesting a sustained connection.<sup>89</sup> This again fits with Book One's claims, suggesting the Belitung wreck could have been an Arab ship.

But if so, and if the ship was either making for or sailing away from Śrīvijaya (and had not simply been blown off course, perhaps sinking in bad weather), the Arabs may have been more closely connected to that kingdom than Book One suggests. Indeed, the Chinese texts examined in the previous section also suggested a closer connection with Śrīvijaya. But, neither those Chinese texts nor Book One implied extensive trade. Indeed, no Nusantara trade goods (such as spices) were found on the Belitung wreck, or by Rougeulle in the Middle East. Spices are, of course, highly perishable materials; they may simply not have survived to be excavated. But this absence cannot establish wide-spread connections with the Nusantara, especially given the picture painted by Book One and the Chinese texts. Consequently, during both the mid-ninth century and before, the existing literary and archaeological evidence does not support a strong connection between the Western Indian Ocean and the Nusantara. Middle East merchants undoubtedly travelled into the latter region, probably

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<sup>87</sup> Axelle Rougeulle, 'Medieval Trade Networks in the Western Indian Ocean (8th-14th centuries): Some Reflections from the Distribution Patterns of Chinese Imports in the Islamic World,' in *Tradition and Archaeology: Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean (Proceedings of the International Seminar Techno-Archaeological Perspectives of Seafaring in the Indian Ocean 4th cent. BC – 15th cent. AD, New Delhi, February 28 – March 4, 1994)*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-François Salles (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), 159-160.

<sup>88</sup> Bo Gyllensvärd, 'Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fostat, I,' *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 45 (1973): 91.

<sup>89</sup> Rougeulle, 'Trade Networks in the Western Indian Ocean,' in *Tradition and Archaeology*, ed. Ray and Salles (1996), 163-164.

conducting small-scale trade on their way to China, but anything more than this is difficult to establish.

Turning to the *Akhbār*'s Book Two, this marks a change in circumstances: according to its author, al-Sīrāfī, 'the situation ha[d] changed [since Book One was written], in China in particular. Because of events that occurred there, the trading voyages to China were abandoned and the country itself was ruined.'<sup>90</sup> Al-Sīrāfī then goes on to describe how, in 264/877-878, Guangzhou was sacked by a Chinese rebel leader called Huang Chao. Driven by xenophobia fuelled by Chinese economic woes, Huang Chao's bands reputedly attacked and massacred Guangzhou's foreign population. According to al-Sīrāfī, 120,000 people were killed, mostly Arabs.<sup>91</sup> Al-Sīrāfī also claims the Tang Emperor was forced to abandon his capital, Chang'an (Khamdān in the text), fleeing to the Tibetan border. There he amassed an army of Turkic mercenaries, with whose help he eventually overcame Huang Chao. According to al-Sīrāfī, however, the Emperor was unable to bring China back under his full control; even in al-Sīrāfī's time, warlords continued to govern most of the country, resulting in grave injustices. Arab merchants found themselves the victims of corruption and fraud, having their cargoes seized without reason. All this made it impossible for them to trade in China.<sup>92</sup>

As demonstrated by T. Mackintosh-Smith, the above description is largely accurate: a late ninth-century rebel leader called Huang Chao did exist, and he was defeated by a Turkic army led by a Tang Emperor.<sup>93</sup> Equally, although no Chinese source mentions Huang Chao sacking Guangzhou in 878, they do place him in that city

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<sup>90</sup> *ASH*, 67.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 67-69. Al-Mas'ūdī has 200,000 people (*Ibid*, 138).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 67-69; 71.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 140-141.

between 878 and 879.<sup>94</sup> Overall, therefore, al-Sīrāfi's account receives a high degree of corroboration, suggesting he accessed reliable information. This makes it likely that a massacre (or something similar) did affect Guangzhou's Arab communities in 878, despite Chinese sources failing to mention it. But if so, it is significant that al-Sīrāfi goes on to claim that those who survived Huang Chao's attack on Guangzhou fled to Kalah Bār.<sup>95</sup> There they re-established themselves, turning the kingdom into a new eastern terminus for Arab trade where Middle East merchants could buy the Chinese goods they no longer sailed directly to China for.<sup>96</sup> As such, from 878 onwards the Nusantara became, in and of itself, a destination for the Arabs. Indeed, the text immediately reflects this new importance by providing a wealth of new information about it.<sup>97</sup> For example, Book Two now attempts to locate Śrīvijaya (albeit imprecisely), describing it as 'opposite China', at a distance of about one month. Its ruler is called al-Mihrāj, who is said to be in control of many islands, including Kalah Bār. Book Two then recounts several episodes about al-Mihrāj and Śrīvijaya; although these do not approach the depth and reliability of the accounts surrounding China and India, tending instead to be formulaic and mythic, the fact that they are provided at all indicates an increased interest in the region.<sup>98</sup> It may also suggest greater contact with

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<sup>94</sup> William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (London: Atlantic, 2009), 86.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Attas has claimed that 120,000 to 200,000 was the number of people who fled into the Nusantara. This, however, is not borne out by the original texts; they make it clear this was the number killed (see: Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* [Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011], 39).

<sup>96</sup> *ASH*, 89.

<sup>97</sup> Post-al-Sīrāfi examples can be found in: Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 (1957): 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> One involves a cock particular to Śrīvijaya, which is able to communicate over long distances. Another tells how al-Mihrāj would every day place a gold ingot in a pool near his palace. At the end of his reign, these would be counted to determine how long he had reigned (*ASH*, 89-91). Later, the text tells the story of al-Qamār, a Mainland Southeast Asian location described as being 'opposite' Śrīvijaya. Although a lesser kingdom, al-Qamār's ruler is said to have desired to see al-Mihrāj's head in a brass basin at his feet. When this news reached al-Mihrāj, he ordered an attack, in which al-Qamār was overcome (Ibid, 91-97). Although there is no evidence Śrīvijaya ever controlled sections of Mainland Southeast Asia, it is conceivable this episode preserves the memory of some past conflict.

Śrīvijaya itself – something reflected in the later Chinese texts, by Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rugua.

Any increased interest in the Nusantara seems to have persisted well into the tenth century. During those first one hundred years after 878, Kalah Bār remains the most frequently mentioned Nusantara-based location in any Arab geographical treatise.<sup>99</sup> As a result, and in conjunction with the circumstances surrounding its rise to prominence, many scholars have suggested that Kalah Bār was Arab dominated. One particularly recent academic contribution, by S. M. N. al-Attas, has even suggested Arabs founded Kalah Bār.<sup>100</sup> But, whether Arab-dominated or Arab-founded, Kalah Bār's Arab associations could make it a significant instance of Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean interaction, involving migration, settlement and commercial activity. In short, it could be the conduit through which a Mediterranean-like system was formed.

But, before accepting this conclusion, some problems should be noted. Although the Arabic sources are clear that the sacking of Guangzhou led to greater Arab engagement with the Nusantara, directed primarily through Kalah Bār, there is no real evidence that the latter was Arab-dominated, let alone Arab-founded. Certainly, the early Arabic texts make neither claim. Book One, for example, by referencing the Malay *sarong*, arguably hints at an Indianized Kalah Bār. Book Two supports this when referring to the kingdom as part of Indianized Śrīvijaya. Equally, the Persian geographer, Ibn Khurdādhbih (c.820-912), claims Kalah Bār was ruled by someone called Jābat al-Hindī. He mentions this individual again (as do his contemporaries, Ibn Rusta and Marwarzī) as an Indian ruler, thereby implying Kalah Bār was Indian-

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<sup>99</sup> Tibbetts, *Study of Arabic Texts* (1979), 118.

<sup>100</sup> This claim is an important part of all al-Attas's work on this subject. In particular, see his: 'Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu,' available at: <http://www.ukm.my/penerbit/syed-naquib-sq.pdf>. (Accessed on 8th February 2013).

influenced.<sup>101</sup> Turning to the tenth-century Egyptian, al-Muhallabī (quoted in Abū al-Fīdā'), he claims Kalah Bār was mostly populated by Hindus and Zoroastrians.<sup>102</sup> His contemporary, Abū Ḍulaf Misar, on the other hand, whose work is now lost but quoted by others,<sup>103</sup> claims it was essentially a Chinese settlement.<sup>104</sup> He received his information, however, from Chinese traders and so may have been swayed to exaggerate their influence.

Nonetheless, none of these reports suggest Kalah Bār was Arab dominated. Neither do they support an Arab-led foundation. Indeed, Kalah Bār's origins may be pre-Islamic: in the mid-seventh century, the Nestorian *catholicus* (or bishop), 'Ishōyahb III (in office from 647/650 to 657/8), and who wrote on the basis of his own observations, claimed that the pre-Islamic Nestorian dioceses of Fārs and India stretched from the maritime borders of the Sassanid empire (then located at Daibul, in the Indus Delta) to a place called *QLH* in the east. D. Whitehouse and A. Williamson argue this Syriac word is almost certainly *Qal'ah*, or Kalah.<sup>105</sup> Consequently, 'Ishōyahb's evidence ties Kalah Bār in with a much earlier period and, again, links it to India.

Ultimately, however, because the Arabic texts are vague about Kalah Bār's precise location, the kingdom has never been positively identified.<sup>106</sup> There is therefore

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<sup>101</sup> See: Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China, Book 1: Al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik, Roads and Kingdoms by Ibn Khurdādhbih d.c. AH300/AD912*, trans. S. Maqbul Ahmad (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1989).

<sup>102</sup> Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 (1957): 22.

<sup>103</sup> Tibbetts, *Study of Arabic Texts* (1979), 9-10.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>105</sup> Whitehouse and Williamson, 'Sasanian Maritime Trade,' *Iran* 11 (1973): 43-48

<sup>106</sup> Many sites have been suggested for Kalah Bār, including: Kedah (first proposed by A. Maury in 1846), Takuapa (G. E. Gerini, 1909), Kra (G. Ferrand, 1919) and Klang (S. Q. Fatimi, 1960) (see: S. Q. Fatimi, 'In Quest of Kalah,' *JSAH* 1:2 [1960]: 62-63). Most recently, M. Laffan has suggested the area between Krabi and Chaiya (see: Michael Laffan, 'Finding Java: Muslim Nomenclature of Insular Southeast Asia from Śrīvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje,' in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo [Singapore: NUS Press, 2009], 25). Only two of these locations, however, reveal compelling archaeological evidence to support the claim: Kedah (or, more specifically, Pengkalan Bujang, in the modern-day state of Kedah) and Takuapa (located in the Thai state of Phang-nga). At both locations, archaeological excavations have unearthed unusual concentrations

no certain archaeological data about its population or age, against which the textual material can be checked. But although this limitation is unfortunate, it is not a reason to doubt the above conclusions. Rather, the texts are all very clear and consistent: no early source supports the idea that Kalah Bār was Arab dominated. Although Arabs certainly visited it from (at least) the mid-ninth to the mid-eleventh century, apparently using it as a trading base, it appears to have been an Indianized (not Arabised) settlement. The consistency of this image across all the sources suggests its veracity. Consequently, and because Kalah Bār was the Arabs' primary conduit into the Nusantara, where their influence should have been most keenly felt, little reason exists to suppose there was a Mediterranean-like system between the Nusantara and the Western Indian Ocean. Indeed, this conclusion is supported by several other points.

To begin with, like Book One, and despite the greater attention paid to Śrīvijaya, neither Book Two nor the later Arabic sources are interested in the Nusantara beyond the trade route. Ibn Khurdādhbih, for example, contains only a few cryptic remarks about islands to the east of Śrīvijaya.<sup>107</sup> Although Abū Ḍulaf is better informed, providing more information about specific locations, he borrows his

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of Middle Eastern goods (mostly ceramics and glass beads) in association with Chinese wares, thereby supporting the idea of an Arab-Chinese meeting point. Of the two locations, however, Kedah has traditionally been seen as the strongest contender. First of all, it has been argued that 'Kedah' could easily become 'Kalah' on an Arab tongue (see: Fatimi, 'In Quest of Kalah,' *JSAH* 1:2 [1960]: 62). Second, al-Sirāfi claims Kalah Bār was the source of *al-raṣāṣ al-qalī* (*ASH*, 89). This ambiguous term is usually translated as 'tin' (although it could also mean 'white lead,' used as a pigment, see: *Ibid*, 143). It is significant therefore that Kedah was an ancient source of tin. Nonetheless, the distribution of Middle Eastern and Chinese pottery at Pengkalan Bujang covers the Song to Yuan dynasties (i.e. 960-1367). As such, the finds begin after Kalah Bār is first mentioned and continue past its final, mid-eleventh-century reference (see: Alastair Lamb, 'Takuapa: The Probable Site of a Pre-Malaccan Entrōt in the Malay Peninsula,' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. John Bastin and R. Roolvink [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964], 83). Takuapa, on the other hand, has revealed evidence of Middle East, Chinese and Indian activity (again in the form of ceramics and glass beads) dating from between the seventh and tenth centuries. Although these dates overlap with the first Nestorian references to Kalah Bār, they do not extend as far as the final Arabic ones. This could be explicable, however, via the fact that Arabic sources frequently borrowed from each other; al-Bīrūnī's references could therefore have drawn upon earlier material. Nonetheless, it is significant that Takuapa contains no evidence of tin mining. Equally, located in Southern Thailand, it is considered to be too far north; no text gives the impression the Arabs sailed further up the coast than modern-day Malaysia (Tibbetts, *Study of Arabic Texts* [1979], 122).

<sup>107</sup> See: Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik*, trans. Ahmad (1989).

knowledge from Chinese sources.<sup>108</sup> Consequently, despite their post-878 links with Kalah Bār and Śrīvijaya, the Arabs still did not demonstrate an interest in the wider Nusantara. As with the discussion surrounding Book One, this does not suggest a Mediterranean-like system, at least beyond the trade route.

Of equal significance is the fact that Arabic references to Kalah Bār are not very continuous: beginning with Book One, they stop just two centuries later, with the scholar and geographer, al-Bīrūnī (d.1048). After him, no Arabic text mentions Kalah Bār. This has led G. Tibbetts to suggest the kingdom ceased to exist shortly after the mid-eleventh century.<sup>109</sup> There is, however, another possibility: according to another set of texts, an eleventh to thirteenth-century collection of Jewish business documents recovered from a Cairo Genizah,<sup>110</sup> the early eleventh century saw Indian Ocean trade begin to segment. From that point on (or contemporary to Kalah Bār's disappearance), fewer and fewer Middle Eastern merchants sailed past India.<sup>111</sup> Instead, they began to stay in Kollam, where they sold their merchandise to Indian traders who then took it on to China. Kalah Bār's disappearance from the Arabic texts may therefore reflect this segmentation – that is, a decline in Arab contact with, and knowledge of, the Nusantara. If so, the increased Arab activity provoked by Huang Chao's sacking of Guangzhou probably lasted just a few centuries. This is an insufficient time period in which to establish a Mediterranean-like system capable of profoundly affecting the region.

Finally, the above conclusions are also supported by the archaeological record. For example, although Śrīvijayan remains are generally scarce, caliphal *dīnārs* are frequently found in and around Palembang. These coins – universal Middle Eastern

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<sup>108</sup> Robert S. Wicks, 'The Ancient Coinage of Mainland Southeast Asia,' *JSAS* 16:2 (1985): 199.

<sup>109</sup> Tibbetts, *Study of Arabic Texts* (1979), 118; 127.

<sup>110</sup> See: S. D. Goitein and Mordechai A. Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza ('India Book')*, Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval vol. 31 (Jerusalem and Leiden: The Ben-Zvi Institute and E. J. Brill, 2008).

<sup>111</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization* (1985), 58-59.

currency from the ninth century onwards – are found all around the city, in archaeological deposits ranging from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Indeed, they are found so frequently that it has been suggested they were Śrīvijaya’s currency.<sup>112</sup> If so, Western Indian Ocean traders must have played a significant role in Śrīvijayan trade; this alone would explain why that kingdom adopted their currency, presumably as a means of facilitating trade. But, because these finds coincide with the supposed increase in Arab activity at Kalah Bār (a Śrīvijayan vassal) and just before Zhou Qufei’s references to an Arab presence at Śrīvijaya, they potentially support the narratives presented by Book Two and the later sources.<sup>113</sup> The *dīnār*, however, although common around Palembang, is not found elsewhere in the Nusantara; they were not, for example, used by Śrīvijaya’s vassals (where these have been located) or anywhere in Mainland Southeast Asia, which used coins modelled on the South Indian *Śrīvatsa*.<sup>114</sup> A golden *dīnār* dated 577AH (1181) has been found in Kelantan, apparently struck in the name of a local ruler, but this is an isolated example.<sup>115</sup> As such, the *dīnārs* also suggest that any substantial Western Indian Ocean-Nusantara commercial link was largely confined to the Straits of Malacca – that is, to the trade route east.

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<sup>112</sup> André Wink, “‘Al-Hind’: India and Indonesia in the Islamic World-Economy, c. 700-1800 A.D.,” in *India and Indonesia during the Ancien Regime*, Comparative History of India and Indonesia vol. 3, ed. P. J. Marshall *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 34; Hall, ‘Economic History of Early Southeast Asia,’ in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, ed. Tarling (1999), 228.

<sup>113</sup> Indeed, Book Two does claim *dīnārs* were exported to India, although without mentioning the Nusantara (ASH, 133).

<sup>114</sup> Wicks, ‘Ancient Coinage,’ JSAS 16:2 (1985): 196.

<sup>115</sup> Salleh Mohd. Akib, *Masjid Tua Kampung Laut* (Kota Bharu: Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, 2003), 2.



### 2.2.1.2.3. Summary

To summarise our discussion so far, it seems that a strong and continuous connection existed between the Nusantara and the Eastern Indian Ocean. Throughout the Śrīvijaya period (and probably before), intense commercial activity provided a conduit through which East Indian culture entered, and then re-shaped, the Nusantara. By the eleventh century, this influence had extended into the political realm with (for example) Cola attempts to invade Śrīvijaya. Placed all together, these circumstances strongly suggest a Braudel-like system existed between the Nusantara and the Eastern Indian Ocean.

Turning to the Nusantara's relationship with the Western Indian Ocean, we have seen this to be more problematic. Prior to the mid-ninth century, Chinese and Arabic sources are clear about a strong West Indian Ocean presence in Southern China (notably in Guangzhou). Whether this extended into the Nusantara, however, is unclear. For example, the early Chinese texts, although claiming Western Indian Ocean merchants traversed the Nusantara to reach China, provide no conclusive statement about how they engaged with it. The early Arabic texts, on the other hand, picture the Nusantara as merely a staging-post; Arab merchants, their sights firmly set on China, would stop in the Nusantara (notably at Kalah Bār) to take on water and engage in a little trade, but nothing else. Indeed, the *Akhbār*'s Book One contains scant information about the Nusantara; what little it does say is concerned with the trade route east.

After the mid-ninth century, however, the above situation changed. According to the *Akhbār*'s Book Two, after the sacking of Guangzhou in 878, Kalah Bār became the eastern terminus for all Arab commerce. With Arab merchants no longer able to trade in China directly, they shifted their activities to the Nusantara, where they began

meeting Chinese merchants at Kalah Bār. Indeed, from the eighth to eleventh centuries, Śrīvijaya used the caliphal *dīnār* as currency; because Kalah Bār was a Śrīvijayan vassal, the *dīnār*'s presence probably reflects this new Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean commercial relationship. Equally, and although slightly later, Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rugua testify to intimate Arab-Śrīvijaya trade links, including possible settlement.

Nonetheless, we saw that this situation did not persist for long: by the eleventh century, the Nusantara no longer used the *dīnār* and Arabic references to Kalah Bār had ceased. All this strongly suggests a decline in the Nusantara's relationship with the Western Indian Ocean. Indeed, a series of eleventh to thirteenth-century Jewish texts demonstrate a clear segmentation of Indian Ocean trade at this time. It appears that, as Indian Ocean commerce developed, merchants from the west stopped sailing beyond India.<sup>116</sup> Instead, they found it easier to sell their merchandise to Indian traders, who then took it on to China, eventually returning with Chinese produce to exchange for yet more Western Indian Ocean goods. Consequently, however, and despite the evidence for a strong mid-ninth to eleventh-century Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean relationship, outside that period nothing really points towards the kind of intimate association necessary for a Mediterranean-like system. Indeed, even when the interaction between these regions was at its height, no evidence emerges for the kind of cultural transfer characteristic of Braudel's theory (such as Islamisation).

### **2.2.2. The Chinese Tribute System during the Śrīvijaya Period**

Now that we have examined the evidence for a profound Indian Ocean-Nusantara connection, we must also evaluate, over the same Śrīvijaya period (i.e. from

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<sup>116</sup> The existence of this segmentation is supported by: Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization* (1985), 50-51; Wink, "Al-Hind," in *India and Indonesia*, ed. Marshall (1989), 33-72; Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (1989), 274; McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 81.

671 to 1377), the case for any Chinese-Nusantara connections. We will start this analysis with an examination of the case for early Chinese shipping in the Nusantara, before progressing to look at the realities of the aforementioned Chinese tribute system – in particular, its relationship with shifting Chinese attitudes to private international trade – up until the fourteenth century. Our key focus will be a consideration of how the latter affected China's interaction with the Nusantara as a whole. Ultimately, we will conclude that, by the end of the Śrīvijaya period, the Chinese were a significant commercial power in the Nusantara, capable of bringing about (albeit not necessarily intentionally) profound political and economic transformations. As such, and from at least the Song Dynasty onwards, the type of links necessary for a Mediterranean-like system did exist.

#### **2.2.2.1. The Chinese Tribute System and the Rise of the Song Dynasty**

From Yijing to Hui Cao, or contemporary to the early Śrīvijaya period, no Chinese text references a Chinese ship sailing into the Nusantara. Similarly, there is no archaeological evidence to suggest they did so, either. A Chinese interest in maritime affairs can be traced to as far back as the fifth and sixth centuries, when China became cut off from the overland Silk Route and developed a brief interest in maritime trade,<sup>117</sup> but this did not lead to a long-term or profound relationship with the ocean.<sup>118</sup> Certainly, throughout the Śrīvijaya period tribute was received via the maritime route. But, this emphasis on trade as tribute created in the Chinese mind an impression of trade as something brought to China by foreigners. It was not necessary to go in search of it. This point will be returned to shortly, but for now let it be noted that no evidence

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<sup>117</sup> Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 (2009), 773.

<sup>118</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 97.

exists for a Chinese role in the transshipment of goods by sea until the Tang interregnum (907-960), when archaeological evidence for it emerges in Japan.<sup>119</sup> This does not mean, however, that some form of Mediterranean-like system did not exist during the early period.

As noted in section 2.2, for much of its history China only accepted trade as tribute to the court, and then only from selected independent kingdoms. This is not to dispute the existence of illicit private trade; it is likely that many foreign merchants visited or resided in China to trade privately. But, because private trade was conducted covertly, little direct evidence for it exists, meaning its precise significance is difficult to assess.<sup>120</sup> What is certain, however, is that many traders were active in China as part of (or at least claiming to be part of) a tribute mission. As also described in section 2.2, Śrīvijaya dominated the Nusantara's tribute missions, with its dependencies sending their produce through it.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, Śrīvijaya's prosperity and ability to maintain an empire were predicated on this dynamic. In other words, its relationship with China, coupled with its ability to funnel the tribute of other states, generated the wealth and influence which allowed it to maintain control over its satellites.<sup>122</sup> Śrīvijaya was a trade-based polity and, as demonstrated in the previous section, the vast majority of (at least) Western Indian Ocean commerce was destined for China. This explains why, once the Arabs no longer sailed directly to China, they became more involved with Śrīvijaya. Indeed, once at Śrīvijaya, if the Arabs could then proceed as part of a Śrīvijaya tribute mission (or at least get their products taken along on one), the largess

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<sup>119</sup> Richard Pearson, Li Min and Li Guo, 'Port, City, and Hinterlands: Archaeological Perspectives on Quanzhou and its Overseas Trade,' in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 178.

<sup>120</sup> Wang, "Public" and "Private," in *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce*, ed. Mollat (1970), 216.

<sup>121</sup> Nik Hasan Shuhaimi bin Nik Abdul Rahman, 'The Kingdom of Srivijaya as Socio-political and Cultural Entity,' in *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise*, ed. J. Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), 65.

<sup>122</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 118.

of the Chinese court meant they stood to gain a significant profit – more so than if they attempted to trade privately. All this would explain why al-Sīrāfī and his successors refer to Śrīvijaya as ‘facing China’.<sup>123</sup> Even the much later twelfth-century Arab geographer, al-Idrīsī, explicitly states it was the centre for Chinese trade, further reiterating this point for Kalah Bār.<sup>124</sup>

Given the above, O. Wolters has suggested that Śrīvijaya was only interested in Western Indian Ocean merchants in so far as they wished to deal with China.<sup>125</sup> China was where its attention lay. Whether this scenario also applied to Eastern Indian Ocean merchants, however, is less certain. Evidence for their close connection with Śrīvijaya has already been noted; the strong likelihood of a Mediterranean-like system existing between them suggests Śrīvijaya’s interest in them would have extended beyond whether or not they were going to China. Nonetheless, what all this begins to illustrate is that, despite the fact that China did not send ships directly into the Nusantara, it still largely underpinned Śrīvijaya as a polity, determining the nature of its relationship with both the rest of the region and those who visited it. In other words, the economic and political supremacy of Śrīvijaya was intimately tied up with its relationship to China. Such influence between states is characteristic of Braudel’s theory. Nonetheless, many other characteristics of a Mediterranean-like system, including the movement of people and cultural exchange, seem not to have existed at this time. Clearer indications of these things do emerge, however, when the circumstances surrounding Śrīvijaya’s decline are considered.

As noted in section 2.2, Śrīvijaya’s demise occurred in the late fourteenth century. Its pre-eminent position, however, had been under threat for some time prior to that – perhaps from as early as the end of the tenth century, when a number of attempts

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<sup>123</sup> Wolters, *Fall of Srivijaya* (1970), 19-20.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

were made to destroy it. As such, and beginning in c.992, a series of invasions took place. In that year, for example, the Javanese Medang kingdom attacked Palembang, forcing the Maharaja of Śrīvijaya to request Chinese protection (as recorded by Zhao Rugua).<sup>126</sup> These invaders were eventually repelled, but not until 1006. During the same century, there followed two Cola invasions (referred to in section 2.2) and a possible Burmese attack. A Khmer army may have also made an attempt in the twelfth century.<sup>127</sup>

On the one hand, these invasions reflect the prosperity of Śrīvijaya, and so its desirability as a target. As V. Lieberman has argued, however, their destructive effects probably precipitated Śrīvijaya's loss of control over its satellite kingdoms. This is certainly logical, as warfare would naturally divert Śrīvijaya's attention and resources away from its dependencies and towards its invaders. This may have encouraged the former, now freer of supervision, to act more independently. Indeed, more direct support for this proposition comes from Zhao Rugua. As noted, much of his information originates in the twelfth century. By that time, he records that Śrīvijaya, formerly in full control of the Straits of Malacca, had to force merchant vessels into its port by attacking them.<sup>128</sup> Equally, he claims Kampar (on the east coast of Sumatra), a former tributary of Śrīvijaya, had recently declared its independence.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the *Song shi* confirms a rise in tribute missions from former Śrīvijaya dependencies, both during this period and in the tenth and eleventh centuries. For example, from 1079 to 1082, it records that Melayu-Jambi sent more tribute than Śrīvijaya itself.<sup>130</sup> All this, however, suggests a loss of control and makes it reasonable to date the beginning of

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<sup>126</sup> ZFZ, 62.

<sup>127</sup> Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 (2009), 775.

<sup>128</sup> ZFZ, 62.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>130</sup> Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 (2009), 775.

Śrīvijaya's decline to the tenth or eleventh century. But it is equally significant that a further, China-related factor may have been involved in this decline.

The period marking the beginning of Śrīvijaya's decline also coincides with the tenth-century rise of the Song Dynasty. This is significant because the Song witnessed the development of a markedly different Chinese attitude towards trade. To explain why, it is necessary to see how the dynasty formed and developed. The Song began in 960, with its capital at the central Chinese city of Kaifeng. It did not, however, control the whole of China; to the north it found itself bordered by the Liao Dynasty, centred on what is now Beijing. Because the Liao controlled access to the overland Silk Route, the Song was not able to directly access this source of trade and tribute.<sup>131</sup> The economic consequences were keenly felt, forcing the Song (and mirroring what had occurred during the Tang) to turn towards the sea. There they very quickly established good maritime links with Śrīvijaya and various other nations (including the Arabs), all through the formalities of the tribute system.<sup>132</sup> But in 971 the Song initiated a further development which would eventually change the way China interacted with the Nusantara: in that year, they established a Trade Superintendency at Guangzhou, with two others quickly following at Hangzhou and Mingzhou. These new government offices were designed, not to repress private trade, but to regulate and encourage it through legalisation. Thus, the Superintendencies were empowered to issue licenses to private foreign traders, allowing them to trade legally with China outside the confines of the tribute system.<sup>133</sup> The motivation for this policy change stemmed from a realization that private trade, as it grew in the southern ports, driven by the Song's heightened demand for goods via the maritime route, generated far larger profits than

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<sup>131</sup> E. Stuart Kirby, *Introduction to the Economic History of China* (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1973), 154-155.

<sup>132</sup> Nakahara, 'Muslim Merchants in Nan-Hai,' in *Islam in Asia*, Vol. 2, ed. Israeli and Johns (1984), 4-6.

<sup>133</sup> Zhou Qufei describes this intention behind the Superintendencies (ZFZ, 22-23).

the tribute system.<sup>134</sup> As the *Song shi* states when describing 1060's Quanzhou (the port which, during the eleventh century, replaced Guangzhou as China's largest):

The port was clogged with foreign ships, and their goods were piled like mountains. At that time local officials traded privately with the merchants [amassing great fortunes].<sup>135</sup>

This realisation of the volume and value of private trade motivated the government to act; the Superintendencies were therefore established, designed to both encourage this trade and systemise the collection of the customs revenue it generated.

As a result of the above, by the Yongxi period (984-987), the Song court was sending eunuchs abroad to encourage foreign nations to send, not tribute missions, but merchants.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, by 1019 China was, for the first time, sending its own ships into the Nusantara. Sent to trade directly for spices, they went after the realisation that travelling to obtain goods directly from their source was cheaper than going through an intermediary. This direct interaction, however, soon became the norm, with Chinese ships (also licensed by the Superintendencies) eventually dominating the Nusantara. Illegal trade (now redefined as trade without a licence) still continued, however, and was recognised as a problem in a report from the 1070's, made by Wang Anshi, a finance minister. His response, however, was not repression but a series of reforms to increase the efficiency of the Superintendencies and bring all private trade under their control. Indeed, this policy resulted in the establishment of the Superintendency at Quanzhou in 1087. By that time, this port was China's largest and the establishment of

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<sup>134</sup> Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 122-123.

<sup>135</sup> Cited in: Ibid, 123.

<sup>136</sup> Chaffee, 'Diasporic Identities,' *JESHO* 49:4 (2006): 400.



its Superintendency was not only recognition of that fact, but an attempt to take full economic advantage of its position.<sup>137</sup>

But, China's legalisation of private trade also had an important long-term impact: by allowing commerce to flourish outside the tribute system, it rendered the latter obsolete as a means of encouraging trade. Moreover, this situation was further exacerbated after 1125. In that year, an invading people from the north, called the Jurchen (later to form the Jin Dynasty), destroyed the Liao. The following year, they proceeded to take the Song capital, Kaifeng, forcing that dynasty southwards. There the Song re-established themselves south of the Yangtze, creating a new capital at Hangzhou and inaugurating the period known as the Southern Song.<sup>138</sup> Because of the hostile Jin, however, the Southern Song had even less access to the overland Silk Route. This further enhanced the importance of the Nanyang. Equally, the migration which accompanied the Song's move southwards resulted in substantial demographic changes all along the Yangtze. Towns and cities swelled as refugees, forced from the Song centres further north, resettled. Similarly, the prosperity of the region increased as it became the new centre of government.<sup>139</sup> These new circumstances, resulting in both increased wealth and urbanisation, made Southern China a far larger market place than it had been before.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, from the Southern Song until the Ming, the six seaboard provinces of China, despite constituting just one tenth of the country's total area, contained approximately half its population. A 1330 Yuan Dynasty census, for example, although imperfect, records that two thirds of the tax paying population lived

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<sup>137</sup> Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks* (1991), 127.

<sup>138</sup> Kirby, *Economic History of China* (1973), 156-157.

<sup>139</sup> Timothy Brook, 'The Merchant Network in 16<sup>th</sup> Century China,' in *Key Papers on Chinese Economic History up to 1949*, vol. 2, ed. Michael Dillon (Folkstone: Global Oriental, 2008), 508.

<sup>140</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization* (1985), 53; Guy, 'Tamil Merchant Guilds,' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 287.

there.<sup>141</sup> Consequently, Southern China's purchasing power, demand and consequent appeal as a market place all increased rapidly during this period. Because of a new reliance on the maritime trade route, these circumstances led to an expansion in maritime trade, as demonstrated by the increased activity of the Superintendencies; their surviving records all show an increase in licensing (of both foreign and Chinese merchants) and a doubling of revenue during this period.<sup>142</sup>

Long-term, the above resulted in the discontinuation of tribute as a form of trade.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, in 1178, the Emperor Xiao Zong informed the ruler of Śrīvijaya that his envoys need no longer go to the capital, but should remain in Quanzhou. This removal from the imperial presence sent a clear message: these envoys (and, by extension, Śrīvijaya) no longer commanded the same degree of respect they once had, with the Emperor no longer feeling the need to deal with them directly. Perhaps as a result of this, no further Śrīvijayan embassies went to China until the end of the Southern Song. It is this development, Dreyer claims, which effectively ended Śrīvijaya as a trade-based empire; more than any foreign invasion, Dreyer argues that the beginning of direct Chinese involvement in private trade undermined Śrīvijaya's wealth and prestige. It removed the tribute system as a factor in commerce and, in the process, the basis of Śrīvijaya's prosperity. The fact that Chinese ships were now plying the Nusantara, travelling directly to places of production, made the maintenance of a

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<sup>141</sup> Jung-pang Lo, 'The Emergence of China as a Sea Power During the Late Sung and Early Yüan Periods,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2: Southeast Asia and Ming China (from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century), ed. Geoff Wade (London: Routledge, 2009), 356.

<sup>142</sup> The records referred to come from the *Song shi*, the *Wenxian Tongkao* and the *Song Huiyao Jiben*. Taking Quanzhou as an example, in the 980's, before the establishment of the Superintendency, the *Song shi* records annual average earnings of 500,000 strings of cash through trade. After the establishment of the Superintendency the *Wenxian Tongkao* records that, between 1087 and 1098, this decreased to an average of little more than 410,000 strings per year (on the basis of 5,000,000 strings of cash over the twelve year period). According to the same source, however, after this period the amount doubled to an average of 1,000,000 strings per year until 1147, when it became 2,000,000. It then stayed at that level until records stop in 1159 (with the *Song Huiyao Jiben*). Similar figures exist for the other Superintendencies over the same period (Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks* [1991], 132-133).

<sup>143</sup> Taylor, 'Early Kingdoms,' in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt 1, ed. Tarling (1999), 174.

Śrīvijaya-like system unfeasible, with former Śrīvijayan vassals no longer needing to send their produce to Śrīvijaya to trade with China; they could now deal directly with the Chinese merchants who came to them.<sup>144</sup>

Indeed, the possibility that Chinese commercial activity caused Śrīvijaya's decline finds widespread support in the literature – even amongst those authors who otherwise favour Indian Ocean commercial dominance during the same period.<sup>145</sup> In the context of this thesis, however, it is an extremely important issue: it strongly suggests a (Southern) China-Nusantara Mediterranean-like system. From the rise of the Song, it seems direct links developed between Southern China and the Nusantara, involving the movement (if not migration) of people. This movement, precipitated by commercial interaction, apparently initiated profound Nusantara-based political and economic changes. As presented here, however, this argument is largely literary and theory-based. But, given its potential significance, it is worth examining the physical evidence for it, too. Indeed, by augmenting this theoretical argument with archaeology, not only will the conclusions be reinforced, but it may also help provide an impression of the relative importance China played in comparison to the Eastern Indian Ocean – i.e. of whether the Nusantara's links with China should be privileged over those it had with the Eastern Indian Ocean.

#### **2.2.2.2. The Archaeology of Chinese Trade**

The reality of Song China's rapid mercantile expansion is best illustrated by its increased ceramics production. As noted in section 2.2.1.2.2, ceramics were an

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<sup>144</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 118. See also: Wolters, *Fall of Srivijaya* (1970), 38.

<sup>145</sup> See as examples: Jung-pang, 'Emergence of China as a Sea Power,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, ed. Wade (2009), 356-357; Clarke, *Community, Trade, and Networks* (1991), 120; Wink, "Al-Hind," in *India and Indonesia*, ed. Marshall *et al.* (1989), 48; Taylor, 'Early Kingdoms,' in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, ed. Tarling (1999), 174; McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 98.

important Chinese export commodity. As such, any fluctuations in output are a good indication of shifting Chinese trade patterns. Thus, the Song period witnessed a dramatic increase in ceramics production, with major production sites being constructed all along the coast.<sup>146</sup> For example, excavations conducted in the ten coastal districts of Quanzhou, and reported by R. Pearson *et al.* in 2001, have revealed one hundred and fifty kilns dating from the Song period.<sup>147</sup> By contrast, only twenty-one kilns were found in layers belonging to the Tang and Five Dynasties periods.<sup>148</sup> The Song-era kilns were also very large. One discovered at Dehua, for example, was 57 metres long and probably capable of firing 30,000 pieces at a time.<sup>149</sup> This was the total cargo of an average ship in the fifteenth century (see below) and far outstripped what would have been required domestically.<sup>150</sup>

In section 2.2.1.2.2, Śrīvijaya's use of the *dīnār* was appealed to as evidence of a significant commercial role for the Arabs. The archaeology of the Nusantara as a whole, however, provides far more evidence of Chinese coinage. As such, Chinese coins occur in much greater quantities and were apparently used for much longer and over a much wider area. Indeed, Pearson *et al.* have argued that these coins are so common that, from the Song until the Ming Interregnum (i.e. 960 to 1450), they likely formed the currency of a number of different Nusantaran locations. In particular, they

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<sup>146</sup> Sten Sjostrand and Claire Barnes, 'The Turiang: A Fourteenth Century Chinese Shipwreck Upsetting Southeast Asian Ceramic History,' *JMBRAS* 74:1 (2001): 83.

<sup>147</sup> That is, two at Quanzhou, twelve at Jinjiang, fifty at Nan'an, two at Huian, twenty three at Anxi, six at Yongzhun, forty two at Dehua, six at Tongan, four at Putian and three at Xianyou (Pearson, Li and Li, 'Port, City, and Hinterlands,' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer [2001], 192).

<sup>148</sup> Nine at Jinjiang, four at Nan'an, six at Huian and one in both Dehua and Tongan (Ibid, 192). The figures quoted by Pearson *et al.*, however, may be an underestimate: So Kee Long, writing about excavations conducted during the early 1990's in seven Quanzhou districts (comprising six of the above ten), while also seeing a large expansion under the Song, recorded nineteen kilns from the Tang compared to one hundred and thirty from the Song (see: So Kee Long, 'The Trade Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien During the Sung,' *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 24 [1994]: 8). Ho Chuimei, on the other hand, reporting further excavations in the Minnan region (near Quanzhou) in 2001, found one hundred and seventy individual kiln sites dating from either the Song or Yuan periods (Ho Chuimei, 'The Ceramic Boom in Minnan during Song and Yuan Times,' in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001], 255-258).

<sup>149</sup> So, 'Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien,' *JSYS* 24 (1994): 11-13.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 15.

single out Majapahit: many surviving coins have been found on Java,<sup>151</sup> with Zhao Rugua also referring to their use there (discussed shortly). Moreover, a Javanese inscription dated 1300 expresses values in terms of this currency.<sup>152</sup> From elsewhere in the region, excavations at Kota Cina (in North Sumatra), Sungai Limau Manis (Brunei), Melaka and Singapore have all revealed substantial quantities of Chinese coinage. Further (but fewer) examples have also been found at Jambi, Sungai Mas, Pengkalan Bujang and Kompei.<sup>153</sup> Even Palembang has provided some examples. Indeed, the *Song shi* claims that, in 1079, some Śrīvijayan envoys were sent back to the kingdom with a gift of 64,000 strings of cash. This was a significant amount, equivalent to 13% of the annual revenue generated by Quanzhou's trade during the same period.<sup>154</sup> Even when Quanzhou was at its peak, this figure still represents 3% of the city's income.<sup>155</sup>

A clearer idea of the volume of coins China was exporting, however, comes from two fourteenth-century shipwrecks discovered off the Chinese coast, one at Sinan and one at Quanzhou. While the position of the Sinan wreck suggests a course for Japan, the Quanzhou wreck appears to have been heading for the Nusantara. Nevertheless, both were carrying coins as cargo, and in similar amounts. In the case of the Sinan wreck, for example, 8.1 tons (approximately eight million individual pieces) were recovered. This far exceeds the total amount of *dīnārs* found at Palembang and, in all likelihood, represents just one amongst many shipments.<sup>156</sup> Indeed, the Chinese texts from this period consistently refer to a considerable outward flow of copper cash from China. By

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<sup>151</sup> Pearson, Li and Li, 'Port, City, and Hinterlands,' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 201.

<sup>152</sup> Anthony Reid, 'Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia,' in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 19-20.

<sup>153</sup> Derek Thiam Soon Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy from the Tenth through the Fourteenth Century*, Ohio University Research in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no. 121 (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 166.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>155</sup> This is calculated on the basis of the figures given in n. 142.

<sup>156</sup> Pearson, Li and Li, 'Port, City, and Hinterlands,' in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 202-203.

the eleventh century, for example, after the Superintendencies had been formed and private Chinese trade was expanding, a minister of the Song court, called Zhang Fangbing, complained that Chinese coins were ‘commonly used amongst the barbarians,’ leading to a shortage within China itself.<sup>157</sup> Later (although perhaps referring to the same period) Zhao Rugua stated:

There is a vast amount of pepper in this foreign country [Java] and the [Chinese] merchant ships, in view of the profit they derive from that trade, are in the habit of smuggling [out of China] copper cash for bartering purposes.<sup>158</sup>

Zhao Rugua claims this smuggling became such a problem that, to curb it, all trade with Java was banned.<sup>159</sup> The problem persisted, however, as attested to by a 1216 High Commission report (cited in the *Song shi*). This claimed that corruption in the Superintendencies was allowing a continued and substantial outflow of copper cash. As a result, in 1234 any and all trade in copper cash was banned. Again, however, this did not solve the problem.<sup>160</sup>

But all this notwithstanding, if the *dīnār*’s presence at Śrīvijaya suggested a close Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean commercial relationship, it seems a similar Nusantara-China relationship also existed. But while the *dīnār*’s presence appears to have lasted no more than two or three centuries, and to have been largely confined to Śrīvijaya, Chinese coins were used for at least five hundred years and right across the region. This implies that any Chinese-Nusantara relationship was more profound.

For further data on Southern Song shipping, we must turn to the *Song shi*. This source provides several general comments about the dynasty’s naval power, including

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<sup>157</sup> Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks* (1991), 125.

<sup>158</sup> ZFZ, 78.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 78. For further details about the limiting of cash flow out of China, see: Guy, ‘Tamil Merchant Guilds,’ in *Emporium of the World*, ed. Schottenhammer (2001), 289.

<sup>160</sup> ZFZ, 81-82.

an indication of the possible scale of Southern Song maritime activity. Thus, the *Song shi* records that in 1251, when mobilizing to attack the Mongols, a survey was conducted of all registered seagoing craft along the coast, including all ships licensed by the Superintendencies. In total, 19,287 vessels of varying sizes were counted.<sup>161</sup> Considering this figure includes non-naval ships, it is probably not too much of an exaggeration; later, generally accurate, figures for the smaller Ming navy compare well with it.<sup>162</sup> But, precisely how many of these recorded vessels were trading ships bound for the Nusantara is unknown. Many may simply have been working the Chinese coast. Nonetheless, if these figures are compared with others relating to the ships which visited fifteenth-century Melaka (a trading empire of similar magnitude to Śrīvijaya), some interesting data is revealed.

Between 1512 and 1515, a Portuguese court apothecary named Tomé Pires, who worked in Melaka as ‘scrivener and accountant of the factory and controller of the drugs,’ wrote a book called the *Suma Oriental*.<sup>163</sup> A detailed account of various Nusantara kingdoms, the precise nature of this text is discussed in Chapter 4. Briefly, however, it was an official report written for the Portuguese court about trade. As such, it is full of numerical summaries, all detailing commercial activity.<sup>164</sup> Amongst these is a record of Melaka’s trade; it claims that the city’s most important foreign traders were Indian, with an estimated fifteen Indian ships arriving in Melaka annually (i.e. ships from Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal). In terms of specific Indian locations, most sent between one and two ships a year, but with the Gujaratis sending four.<sup>165</sup> These figures

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<sup>161</sup> Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks* (1991), 171.

<sup>162</sup> See: Ptak, ‘Ming Maritime Trade,’ in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak (1998), 157-191.

<sup>163</sup> *SO*, xiii; xxv.

<sup>164</sup> I. A. MacGregor, ‘Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia,’ in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 172-173.

<sup>165</sup> *SO*, 269-270.

are verified by an earlier 1510 letter from Rui de Araujo to Afonso d'Albuquerque, written from first-hand observations made while the former was a captive in Melaka.<sup>166</sup> Consequently, if these figures are accepted, they imply that, if only 0.08% of all the ships the Southern Song counted were involved in Nusantara trade, this would be more than Pires claimed came from India to Melaka every year. This is significant, suggesting the possibility of a far larger level of Chinese involvement in Nusantara trade than was the case for India.

As a final point, it is also worth noting the size of Chinese trading ships. In terms of length, Wu Zi Mu (writing in c.1270) records an average of 25 metres, with 5,000 *liao* burden (about 1,000 tons).<sup>167</sup> By comparison, the Belitung Wreck (with a keel of 15.3 metres) was probably only 8 metres in length.<sup>168</sup> This is significant because Marco Polo (1254-1324) claims, on the basis of observations made at Hormuz, that these ships were still plying the Indian Ocean during the late thirteenth century.<sup>169</sup> Equally, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also makes a point of highlighting the superiority of Chinese ships over both their Arab and Indian equivalents.<sup>170</sup> Consequently, we can assume Chinese ships were perhaps three times the size of their Indian Ocean equivalents by the fourteenth century. This increased size, however, would have meant that Chinese vessels were capable of carrying far more cargo than other vessels. As such, they would have been of far more value to the ports they stopped at, being able to conduct far more business. Consequently, and given China's growth as a marketplace, it is likely that Nusantara ports were very keen to attract Song period Chinese traders. This may explain the

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<sup>166</sup> Arthur Basilio de Sá, trans., 'Documents on the History of the Portuguese Patronage in the Far East. Vol. I (1506-1549),' in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado (Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993), 137.

<sup>167</sup> Jung-pang Lo, 'Chinese Shipping and East-West Trade from the Tenth to the Fourteenth Century,' in *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien: Actes du Huitième Colloque International d'Histoire Maritime (Beyrouth – 5-10 Septembre 1966)*, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1970), 174.

<sup>168</sup> Flecker, '9th-Century Arab or Indian Shipwreck,' *IJNA* 29:2 (2000): 208.

<sup>169</sup> *LMM*, 302.

<sup>170</sup> *RIB*, 224.



widespread use of Chinese currency; the Nusantara kingdoms which adopted it may have wished to facilitate Chinese trade.

#### **2.2.2.3. Summary**

In summary, it is clear that, by the end of the Śrīvijaya period, the Chinese were taking to the seas in considerable numbers and in ships of substantial size. We argued that this lent them significant commercial power, through which they were able to bring about (albeit not necessarily intentionally) very real political and economic changes in the Nusantara. They appear to have precipitated the fall of Śrīvijaya as an empire, while simultaneously sponsoring the rise of various other port states. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence we gleaned from both shipwrecks and deposits of coinage indicate that Song commercial influence likely outstripped anything the Western Indian Ocean had to offer during the same period. Consequently, all this is a strong indication of the existence, at least from the Song onwards, of the types of links necessary for a Mediterranean-like system between China and the Nusantara. A final point we must also consider, however, is the role Muslims may have played in all this. As in earlier times, did they still have a role in the commerce of southern Chinese ports, or was Chinese trade now solely in the hands of the Chinese themselves?

### **2.3. The Role of Chinese Muslims in Song Trade**

According to Zhao Rugua, Muslims not only remained active in Southern China during the Song period, but were amongst its wealthiest and most important

merchants.<sup>171</sup> This is supported by official Song records, which testify to notable Muslim commercial activity all along China's coast. In 1134, for example, the Quanzhou Superintendency informed the court that a Persian merchant had earned particular praise by amassing a taxable revenue of 300,000 strings of cash on a cargo of frankincense.<sup>172</sup> Certainly, in the context of Quanzhou's annual revenues for this period (see section 2.4.2), this was a sizable amount. In addition to this Persian merchant, Chinese records make frequent reference to a man called Bu Shougeng. A Muslim born in China during the mid-thirteenth century, the records frequently speak of him as an extremely prosperous and influential trader;<sup>173</sup> by the end of the Southern Song, and along with his brother (another merchant), he had been appointed as a provincial government officer.<sup>174</sup> Under the subsequent Yuan dynasty, however, he reached even greater heights, being appointed the Grand Commander of Fujian, with full control over the entire region and its shipping.<sup>175</sup> This role was later maintained by his descendants.

But, and as noted in section 2.2.1.2.2, during the Song period Indian Ocean trade had become segmented. Consequently, these Muslims, all originally from the Western Indian Ocean,<sup>176</sup> were no longer sojourners in China, but members of permanent Chinese settlements. In other words, with little direct movement between the Western Indian Ocean and China, these Muslims were now permanently settled in China. This is amply supported by Chinese records, which mention Muslims building houses and

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<sup>171</sup> ZFZ, 116-119.

<sup>172</sup> Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks* (1991), 134.

<sup>173</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. 'Pu Shou-Keng.'

<sup>174</sup> Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China,' in *Anthony Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li (2012), 128.

<sup>175</sup> Geoff Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion in South-East Asia, Eighth to Fifteenth Centuries,' in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3: *The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 387.

<sup>176</sup> This is suggested by the Song period Muslim gravestones found at Quanzhou. The people to whom they belonged have *nisbas* (an adjective indicating, amongst other things, a person's place of origin) indicative of a Western Indian Ocean origin (see: Chen Da-sheng, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou [Zaitun]*, trans. Chen Enming [supervised by Zheng Dechao] [China: Ningxia People's Publishing House and Fujian People's Publishing House, 1984], xv-xvi; 15-51).

marrying local women. Equally, during this period Quanzhou hosted a number of mosques; on the basis of early texts, Chen Dasheng and Lombard claim that 1350's Quanzhou hosted either six or seven mosques. By comparison, there were only two or three Hindu temples.<sup>177</sup>

By the end of the Southern Song period, this Muslim settlement in China was several generations old and had begun to result in a new type of Muslim: a Sinicised Muslim. This is illustrated by the aforementioned Bu Shougeng. Although his ancestors were from the west (possibly Central Asia), his family had been resident in China since the early Song and were beginning to show clear signs of Sinicisation.<sup>178</sup> This is illustrated, for example, by his name: although Bu Shougeng's surname, *Bu*, may be the Arabic *Abū*, the rest of his name is clearly Sinicised, as was his father's, Bu Kaizong.<sup>179</sup> This public adoption of a Chinese name, and as opposed to a purely Arabic one, suggests a degree of blending with the local culture – although the exact extent of that blending remains uncertain from his name alone.

Nonetheless, there are further indications of Muslims embracing Chinese culture at this time. For example, the oldest Muslim cemetery at Quanzhou, called Lingshan ('Mountain of Souls'), and which preserves graves from the thirteenth century, is aligned according to the principles of *feng shui*.<sup>180</sup> Equally, the late thirteenth century saw a number of mosques being built in a traditional Chinese temple style.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Chen Da-Sheng and Denys Lombard, 'Foreign Merchants in Maritime Trade in Quanzhou ("Zaitun"): Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,' in *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea*, ed. Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

<sup>178</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. 'Pu Shou-Keng'; Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders,' *JMBRAS* 30:1 (1957): 30-31.

<sup>179</sup> Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China,' in *Anthony Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li (2012), 128.

<sup>180</sup> Chen and Lombard, 'Foreign Merchants in Quanzhou,' in *Asian Merchants and Businessmen*, ed. Lombard and Aubin (2000), 22.

<sup>181</sup> The oldest surviving mosque built in a traditional Chinese style is the Fonghuang (Phoenix) mosque of Hangzhou. Originally dating from the Tang, it was rebuilt in this style during the Song and Yuan periods. Its current form comprises a rectangular brick hall divided into three square bays. Each bay is surmounted by a dome topped with a traditional Chinese roof (see Zhang Jing Qui, 'Mosques of Northern China,'

Consequently, by the end of the Southern Song, there had appeared, for the first time, a genuinely ‘Chinese’ Muslim community.

Although this Sinicisation was undoubtedly a slow process, and one which would not come to fruition until later (see the following sections), it implies that Chinese trade with the Nusantara might have constituted, in proportion to the number of Sinicised Muslims involved in it, evidence of Chinese Muslim involvement in the Nusantara. In other words, it may represent an Islamic ingress into the Nusantara which, on the basis of the evidence reviewed, was both widespread and profound.

#### **2.4. Nusantara Trade Contemporary to the Yuan Dynasty**

This section moves beyond the Śrīvijaya period to consider the Nusantara’s relationship with both China and the Indian Ocean during the Chinese Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Throughout this period, we will demonstrate that Chinese trade maintained the same level of activity witnessed under the Song and Southern Song Dynasties, resulting in another era of close Chinese-Nusantara interaction. We will argue that the Yuan period saw parts of the Nusantara adopt Chinese currency, suffer Chinese-led invasions and experience widespread Chinese migration. As above, these processes were largely dominated by China’s Muslim communities. Consequently, we will argue that a Mediterranean-like system, with Islam at its heart, undoubtedly existed between China and the Nusantara contemporary to the Yuan Dynasty. Turning to the Nusantara’s relationship with the Indian Ocean, although we will see that the Nusantara continued to enjoy strong, Mediterranean-like links with the Eastern Indian Ocean (and which probably retained a Hindu character), it is unlikely that a similar Mediterranean-

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MIMAR 3 [1982]: 58; and Zhang Jing Qui, *Islamic Architecture in China*, available at: [http://earp.cga.harvard.edu/files/basket/islamic\\_arch\\_china.pdf](http://earp.cga.harvard.edu/files/basket/islamic_arch_china.pdf). [Accessed on: 07/12/2011].

like system existed with the Western Indian Ocean. Although the Yuan period did see Western Indian Ocean merchants travel into the Nusantara, with some Middle Eastern influence coming to bear on Samudera-Pasai, these links were not widespread.

#### **2.4.1. Chinese Trade Monopolies, Migrations and Ship Design**

In 1271, the remains of the Southern Song fell to the Mongol Kublai Khan. Establishing the Yuan Dynasty, Kublai Khan (d.1294) and his descendants went on to rule the whole of the Chinese cultural area until 1368.<sup>182</sup> Their government precipitated large scale changes in the way Chinese trade was conducted – changes which privileged China's Muslims.

For the first few years after the end of the Southern Song, Chinese trade remained unchanged; private trade was encouraged and the Superintendencies remained open.<sup>183</sup> In 1284, however, a major shift occurred. Taking inspiration from the economic reformer, Lu Shirong (d.1285), the Yuan government attempted to monopolise all overseas trade with the aim of maximising profits. At Lu's suggestion, all private trade was abolished, along with the Superintendencies. In the place of the latter, Mercantile Shipping and Transportation Bureaux were established, with the first being set up in 1284, in Quanzhou. These Bureaux had responsibility for both providing ships (now built in government shipyards, established at Quanzhou and Hangzhou) and the personnel to man them. Ship captains would then be given licences by the Bureaux, permitting them to engage in trade. In essence, therefore, these captains and their crews were government employees and the fleets they manned government enterprises, conducting state-sponsored and managed trade. Profits would be split between the crew

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<sup>182</sup> Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy* (2009), 63.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 64.

and the government, 30% to 70% respectively.<sup>184</sup> All this applied, however, only to merchants resident in China. Foreign traders were allowed to come and go as before.

The importance of these developments lies in the identity of those given control of the new Bureaux. When the Mongols invaded China, they brought with them a large number of enslaved Asian peoples. Coming as part of the Mongol armies, the latter were predominantly Muslim (chiefly from Central Asia and Persia). Because the Mongols were a nomadic people, unused to living and managing a settled lifestyle, these Muslims quickly rose to positions of power; Kublai Khan, unwilling to trust China's native Han population (who resented the rule of a non-Chinese dynasty), tasked the Muslims with the governance of his new empire.<sup>185</sup> According to Marco Polo, supposedly a member of Kublai Khan's court, even the latter's chief minister was a Muslim, called Aḥmad.<sup>186</sup> Although a growing body of evidence suggests Marco Polo never visited China (discussed shortly), let alone held an official position there,<sup>187</sup> his information about Aḥmad is largely accurate: this person's existence and high position are also attested to in the *Yuan shi*.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, the latter gives the details of numerous other Muslim officials, too.<sup>189</sup> In particular, it claims that, in 1285, the Mercantile Shipping and Transportation Bureaux were placed under Muslim control, when an organisation of Central Asian Muslims called the Ortaq was entrusted with the sole responsibility of issuing trade licences. Moreover, Kublai Khan instructed them to only issue these licences to other Muslims, again to reduce the power and wealth of the Han.<sup>190</sup> As a result, during the early Yuan period Muslims not only maintained their

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<sup>184</sup> Hu, *Concise History of Chinese Economic Thought* (1988), 441.

<sup>185</sup> Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800* (Belconnen: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986), 98.

<sup>186</sup> *LMM*, 416.

<sup>187</sup> See: Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (New York: W. W. Horton and Company, 2000), 344-347.

<sup>188</sup> *LMM*, 416.

<sup>189</sup> Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China* (1986), 98.

<sup>190</sup> Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy* (2009), 65-66.

dominance of China's ports, but extended it until they controlled all aspects of maritime trade. In this way, Bu Shougeng, having risen to a governmental position under the Southern Song, was further promoted under the Yuan to Grand Commander of Fujian. In that position, he was tasked with the management of all regional maritime trade and ship production.<sup>191</sup>

Complete Muslim domination of all Chinese maritime trade did not, however, last long: the ban on private trade was revoked in 1294, just ten years after being implemented.<sup>192</sup> But although this allowed Han merchants back into the system, it is likely Muslims maintained a substantial lead over them; not only had the trade monopoly placed them in an advantageous position, but the Mongols continued to distrust the Han. Consequently, even after 1294, the Muslims possessed the resources, networks and official support necessary to maintain an effective lead over their competitors. Indeed, the government monopoly was reinstated in 1314, officially putting Muslims back at the forefront. By this time, however, the government had become wary of Muslim power. Since 1297, the court had been trying to abolish the Ortaq (which had continued to exist as a private trade guild) with the aim of transferring its duties to the Imperial Secretariat. The wealth generated by the Ortaq's trade had made the Muslims a source of concern for the government; it constituted not just a substantial loss of potential state income, but a possible threat to power (perhaps realised in the Red Turban Rebellion, discussed later in this section). As such, a contest for absolute power over maritime trade ensued, culminating in 1323, when the Muslim-dominated trade monopoly was finally lifted permanently and the Song-era private

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<sup>191</sup> Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China,' in *Anthony Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li (2012), 128-129.

<sup>192</sup> Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy* (2009), 65.

trade model reinstated.<sup>193</sup> Whether this meant a final decline in Muslim fortunes, however, is unclear (see section 2.5.2).

Although the above suggests an expanded Muslim role in Yuan-period Chinese trade, it cannot be assumed that this impacted heavily upon the Nusantara. In part this is because surviving Chinese sources do not provide enough information about the total volume of Yuan-period trade.<sup>194</sup> The *Yuan shi*, for example, contains no record of shipping revenues. Consequently, there is no direct evidence for whether, or to what extent, trade levels varied in comparison with the Song period. Nevertheless, the fact that the government attempted to monopolise trade at all, and that a power struggle ensued over who should control that monopoly, suggests that the value of that trade must have been significant. Indeed, hints of this significance emerge with Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1305-1369/1377). Marco Polo, for example, claims to have visited Quanzhou in 1292, to board a Chinese ship home. While describing the city, he states:

For one spice ship that goes to Alexandria to pick up pepper for export to Christendom, Zaitun [Quanzhou] is visited by a hundred.<sup>195</sup>

Equally, he also speaks very highly of Chinese ships: they were far larger and more advanced than anything else in the Indian Ocean, frequently sailing directly from Quanzhou to the Persian Gulf, stopping in the Nusantara, Sri Lanka and India on the way. Although there are several very cogent reasons to think Marco Polo never visited China, this basic scenario is supported by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy* (2009), 65; 69.

<sup>194</sup> Pin-tsua Chang, 'The First Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century,' in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c.1400-1750*, ed. Roderick Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 14.

<sup>195</sup> *LMM*, 250.

<sup>196</sup> Marco Polo's stay in China is questionable for several reasons. First, there is no Chinese record of it. This is particularly disconcerting given that Marco Polo claims to have held several official positions. Indeed, these included the governorship of Yangzhou. A complete list of Yangzhou's Yuan-period governors survives, however, with no reference to Marco Polo. Similarly, Marco Polo claims to have



Beginning his journey in 1325, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa travelled throughout Asia, eventually reaching China in c.1346. Although there is some doubt about whether or not he penetrated beyond the Chinese coast,<sup>197</sup> he almost certainly visited Quanzhou: several points he makes about the city are independently verifiable. For example, he claims that both pottery and ships were made there (facts already attested to here)<sup>198</sup> and that Muslims lived in a separate part of the city, with their own headman, the Shaykh al-Islam<sup>199</sup> (a social arrangement attested to by the Imperial records).<sup>200</sup> He also claims that China used paper money<sup>201</sup> (in use since the Song Dynasty)<sup>202</sup> and mentions staying for fourteen days with an important Quanzhou merchant called Awhad al-Dīn al-Sinjarī (of Persia).<sup>203</sup> This individual re-emerges in the *Yuan shi*: appearing there as A-mi-li-ding, in cooperation with another Persian general, he supposedly took control of Quanzhou in the 1350's, initiating the Red Turban Rebellion.<sup>204</sup> Consequently, given that so much of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's information is independently verifiable, there is no reason to doubt him. It is therefore worth considering what he has to say about Chinese shipping.

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aided the Mongol conquest of Xiangyang, which he dates to 1268. This, however, is two years before he claims to have reached China. Moreover, the Chinese sources date the fall of Xiangyang to 1273 and attribute it to Arab assistance (Hansen, *Open Empire* [2000], 344). Perhaps most tellingly of all, however, Marco Polo never uses a Chinese word in its original form, despite claiming to have learnt the language. Rather, he always uses the Persian form of a Chinese word. When this is coupled with his failure to mention many everyday aspects of Chinese life (like Chinese script, chopsticks and foot binding), it becomes doubtful that he visited China in person. Instead, and because he almost certainly went to the Middle East and Central Asia, it is more likely that he obtained his information from a Persian-speaking informant (Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, vol. 1 [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1959], 87).

<sup>197</sup> *RIB*, xviii.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, 261. He also claims, however, that pottery and ships were only made in Quanzhou and Guangzhou, which is mistaken. Nonetheless, this error may result from his unfamiliarity with the rest of China, especially if he did not go beyond the coast.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 264-265.

<sup>200</sup> *ZFZ*, 16-17.

<sup>201</sup> *RIB*, 262.

<sup>202</sup> R. V. von Glahn, 'Origins of Paper Money in China,' in *The Origins of Value: The Financial Innovations that Created Modern Capital Markets*, ed. William N. Goetzmann and K. Geert Rouwenhorst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65-89.

<sup>203</sup> *RIB*, 265.

<sup>204</sup> Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion,' in *Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, ed. Morgan and Reid (2010), 386-387.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa claims to have first encountered Chinese ships at Calicut (modern-day Kozhikode), where he found thirteen, one of which he boarded. Noting that ‘on the Sea of China travelling is done in Chinese ships only,’<sup>205</sup> he described these ships as follows:

[Chinese] ships have anything from twelve down to three sails...A ship carries a complement of a thousand men, six hundred of whom are sailors and four hundred men-at-arms...

Their oars, which are as large as masts, [need] ten or fifteen men joining together to work each of them, and they row standing on their feet. In the vessel they build four decks, and it has cabins, suites and salons for merchants; a set of rooms has several rooms and a latrine; it can be locked by its occupant, and he can take along with him slave girls and wives. Often a man will live in his suite unknown to any of the others on board until they meet on reaching some town. The sailors have their children living on board, and they cultivate green stuffs, vegetables and ginger in wooden tanks.<sup>206</sup>

Clearly, if this description is as accurate as his information about Quanzhou, Chinese ships were of considerable size and complexity. Although no clear idea about their length is provided, that they were capable of carrying a significant number of people, had multiple decks fitted with multi-roomed apartments (many with their own toilets) and facilities for growing food suggests a vessel of considerable scale. Certainly, this corroborates the impression provided by Marco Polo. It would also suggest a collection of ships well beyond the specifications of either the Belitung Wreck or its likely successors.

As for the passengers these Chinese ships carried, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa claims they were predominantly ‘Chinese merchants.’ Whether this means Han merchants is unclear, but Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was travelling after the trade monopoly had been lifted, so it is possible. He

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<sup>205</sup> *RIB*, 223.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, 223-224.

does note, however, that the captain of his ship was a Muslim called Sulayman al-Şafadī, originally from Syria.<sup>207</sup> Given the history of Yuan shipping, this individual was probably a resident of China. Certainly, just twenty-three years previously he would have had to have been in order to operate this ship legally.

But whether or not there were many Muslim merchants (from China or elsewhere) on board Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's ship, if travel on the China Sea was done only in Chinese ships, the implication is that they dominated Nusantara waters. This finds support in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's description of Quanzhou:

It is a huge and important city...Its harbour is among the biggest in the world, or rather is the biggest; I have seen about a hundred big junks there and innumerable little ones.<sup>208</sup>

This also supports the, perhaps dubious, testimony of Marco Polo, as well as the *Song shi* when it discusses Quanzhou's trade prior to the establishment of the Superintendencies. It suggests, however, that China was a market place of considerable size. The Nusantara's various polities, actively engaged in trade, could hardly have afforded to ignore it. Equally, if Quanzhou was the size stated it is unlikely that trade had not diminished since the advent of the Yuan Dynasty. Even if it had, it must still have remained of prodigious size.

Aside from the above, it is also noteworthy that the Yuan period witnesses the first references to Chinese ships sailing to the Spice Islands. Thus, five Chinese texts, collectively dating from between 1304 and 1368, mention Chinese merchants visiting these islands.<sup>209</sup> This is significant because these references come more than two

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<sup>207</sup> *RIB*, 224.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, 264.

<sup>209</sup> These texts are: *Dade Nanhai zhi* (1304), *Yiyu zhi* (fourteenth century), *Yiyu tuzhi* (c.1368), *Wenxian tongkao* (1339) and *Dadyi zhilue* (c.1350) (see Roderich Ptak, 'The Northern Trade Route to the Spice

hundred years before any Arabic text demonstrates a similar awareness of these islands.<sup>210</sup> It therefore seems that Yuan-period Chinese merchants had penetrated further into the Nusantara than their Western Indian Ocean counterparts. Indeed, the later Portuguese accounts of Antonio Galvão (c.1490-1557, writing in 1544) and João de Barros (1496-1570, writing in 1563) claim that indigenous Maluku traditions held the Chinese to be the first to trade in cloves,<sup>211</sup> of which this region was the sole producer until 1770.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, the Malay word for clove, *cengkeh*, is a Chinese term for a nail of similar shape.<sup>213</sup> All this might also suggest that the Chinese arrived in the Spice Islands before any East Indian Ocean trader, too.

But, whether these first Chinese merchants were Muslims is unclear. Antonio Pigafetta (1491-1534, writing in 1524) claims Muslims only began sailing to Maluku in the 1470's.<sup>214</sup> There is, however, reason to doubt this claim: both Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rugua mention cloves amongst the produce of the Arabs, suggesting possible Muslim contact with Maluku well before the 1470's.<sup>215</sup> Equally, and as observed by A. Reid, a fourteenth-century Ternate chronicle gives the kings of Maluku and Ambon quasi-Islamic names,<sup>216</sup> suggestive of some kind of early Islamic influence. It is at least plausible, given the Muslim role in Yuan-period Chinese trade, and the fact that six Chinese texts positively demonstrate Yuan-period contact between Maluku and China at a time when no Arabic text mentions the Spice Islands, that some of this early Muslim contact came via China. Indeed, Galvão also states that:

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Islands: South China Sea – Sulu Zone – North Moluccas, [14<sup>th</sup> to Early 16<sup>th</sup> Century],’ *Archipel* 43 [1992]: 29).

<sup>210</sup> Tibbetts, *Study of Arabic Texts* (1979), 232.

<sup>211</sup> Ptak, ‘Northern Trade Route,’ *Archipel* 43 (1992): 32. See also: Roderich Ptak, ‘China and the Trade in Cloves, Circa 960-1435,’ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113:1 (1993): 1-13.

<sup>212</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 2.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>215</sup> As an example, see: ZFZ, 209-210. As stated above, Zhao Rugua’s product lists were taken from Zhou Qufei’s.

<sup>216</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 6.

They [the Chinese] are said to have been masters of India and of its archipelago [i.e. the Nusantara], or at least to have sailed to there.<sup>217</sup>

Although this account is hedged, it is clear that Galvão had heard rumours of prior Chinese dominance in the Nusantara.

If the above suggests the continuation of an intense commercial relationship between China (including its Muslim residents) and the Nusantara, further evidence from the Yuan period suggests the beginning of something new and more profound. In 1293, Kublai Khan made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Java using a fleet containing 20,000 soldiers. Never before had a Chinese power attempted to do this – to exert direct political control over a part of the Nusantara. As such, this incident represents a clear intensification of the Chinese-Nusantara relationship. Although China had previously wielded indirect political influence over places like Śrīvijaya, now it was seeking to actively control their fates through the exertion of military force. This suggests a more intense connection between the two regions. Indeed, despite the invasion's failure, there is a possibility it left a more lasting impression, in the form of migration.

According to the Chinese historian, Wang Dayuan (1311-1350), writing in his *Daoyi Zhilüe* (published in 1350), many of the ships associated with the above expedition foundered off the coast of Goulan Shan (Gelam Island), Southwest Borneo. One ship, however, survived. But, rather than return to China, its crew decided to settle, thereby providing the first record, in any source, of permanent migration from China into the Nusantara.<sup>218</sup> Equally, and although neither Wang Dayuan nor any other Chinese source confirms it, because many of the soldiers in the Mongol armed forces

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<sup>217</sup> Quoted in: Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 32.

<sup>218</sup> See: Wang Dayuan, *Daoyi zhilüe jiaoshi*, Su Jiqing (rev. and annot.) (Beijing:Zhonghua shuju, 1981).

were Muslims from Central Asia, it is possible these soldiers were, too. If so, this instance of migration could be one of the first references, in any source, to Muslims settling in the Nusantara. Indeed, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa provides some support for this possibility.

Before reaching China, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's last Nusantara stop was a (as yet unidentified)<sup>219</sup> Hindu kingdom he called 'Tawalisi.' With its capital at 'Kailukari,' Tawalisi was ruled by a princess named Urduja. Despite being Hindu, however, Urduja could write the Arabic script (although without understanding it), speak Turkish and shoot from the saddle in the Turkish fashion.<sup>220</sup> To understand these observations better, it should be noted that when Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was writing (i.e. before the rise of the Ottoman Empire) Turkic culture was largely confined to Central Asia.<sup>221</sup> Consequently, in the figure of Urduja, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is probably referring to an individual who spoke Persian (Central Asia's fourteenth-century lingua franca; Turkish was only revived as a major language under the Ottomans)<sup>222</sup> and had learnt Central Asian forms of warfare. As such, and because a number of scholars consider Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account to be reliable<sup>223</sup> (indeed, we have also seen Ibn Baṭṭūṭa to be generally trustworthy) it should be asked whether Urduja demonstrates a link to the Mongol soldiers mentioned by Wang Dayuan. This is especially so given that the basic scenario Ibn Baṭṭūṭa paints is supported by the Arab geographer, Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī (1256-1327). Writing in c.1325, he says of the Nusantara:

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<sup>219</sup> A variety of locations have been suggested for Tawalisi, including Cambodia, Cochin China, Tonking, Sulawesi, Tawal Island in the Moluccas and Sulu (see: *RIB*, 322). The suggestions which garner the most support, however, are Brunei and Champa (see: Robert Nicholl, 'Brunei Rediscovered: A Survey of Early Times,' *JSAS* 14:1 [1983]: 43; and Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China,' in *Anthony Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li [2012], 131).

<sup>220</sup> *RIB*, 258-259.

<sup>221</sup> C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 74.

<sup>222</sup> It should be noted that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa could speak neither Persian nor Turkish, meaning he could easily have confused these languages.

<sup>223</sup> Most recently: Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China,' in *Anthony Reid and the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Wade and Li (2012), 131.

As to the three islands, the Island of Clouds, the Island of Storms, and the Island of Rain, they are peopled according to the people of Kashmir [this should probably, from the context, read Khmer] by a Turkish race, which after defeat took refuge there by sea, and there took up its abode.<sup>224</sup>

Precisely where he is referring to is again unclear but, like Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, he refers to a Turkic people settled in the Nusantara. Given, however, that they settled ‘after [a] defeat,’ this could be a reference to the Mongol soldiers Kublai Khan sent to Java. Certainly, there is no other historical event from this period which could have left a group of Turkic soldiers defeated in the Nusantara. As such, it is quite possible that the failed expedition to Java lies behind both Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and al-Dimashqī’s accounts. As such, and although admittedly speculative, the Mongol expedition to Java could have resulted in Muslim settlement in the Nusantara, introduced from China.

In addition to these soldiers, the events surrounding the aforementioned Red Turban Rebellion, an essentially Muslim-led movement, also provide some evidence of Chinese Muslim migration into the Nusantara. As such, the *Yuan shi* records that, in 1357, while Bu Shougeng’s descendent, Na-wu-na, controlled Quanzhou and its shipping, two Persian generals – the above mentioned A-mi-li-ding and a Sai-fu-ding (probably Sayf al-Dīn) – rebelled and took control of the city. This initiated the Red Turban Rebellion; A-mi-li-ding and Sai-fu-ding’s forces proceeded to conquer both Quanzhou and its surrounding area until by 1362 they were within reach of the territorial capital, Fuzhou. At this point, however, Imperial troops forced them back, eventually defeating them completely in 1366.

On the one hand, this Muslim-led rebellion demonstrates how powerful China’s Muslims had become during the Yuan period. It also, however, led to large-scale Chinese Muslim migration into the Nusantara; immediately after the rebellion, a Yuan

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<sup>224</sup> Cited in: Nicholl, ‘Brunei Rediscovered,’ *JSAS* 14:1 (1983): 43.

general called Chen Youding, assisted by an apparently Persian Shia called Jin Ji, began the methodical extermination of all Quanzhou's Sunni Muslims.<sup>225</sup> Supposedly undertaken to prevent another rebellion, this persecution soon spread to surrounding districts. Although no numbers are given, the sources make it clear that a large scale (but not exclusively) Muslim exodus into the Nusantara resulted, reminiscent of what occurred in Guangzhou in 878.<sup>226</sup> This time, however, the migrants did not go to just one location (i.e. Kalah Bār), but spread themselves over a wide area. Thus, during the early Ming, Ma Huan (c.1380–1460), writing about the seven voyages of Zheng He (conducted between 1402-1433), three of which he personally accompanied (those of 1413-15, 1417-19 and 1431-33),<sup>227</sup> records coming into contact with a number of Nusantaran cities which were playing host to, or had even been founded by, these Yuan-period refugees.<sup>228</sup> These communities, however, and their impact on Islamisation, belong more correctly to the next section. As such, they will be dealt with more fully there.

As a final point, the Yuan period also saw a substantial amount of Chinese technological influence come to bear on Southeast Asian ship design.<sup>229</sup> The first sign of this was the appearance of transverse bulkheads; a classic feature of Chinese ships (and one mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa),<sup>230</sup> by the end of the thirteenth century these were

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<sup>225</sup> Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion,' in *Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, ed. Morgan and Reid (2010), 387.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 386-387.

<sup>227</sup> J. V. G. Mills, 'Introduction,' in Ma Huan, *Yingyai Shenglan: The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores*, ed. Feng Ch'eng-Chün, trans. J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 13-15.

<sup>228</sup> But particularly on Java, see: *YYSL*, 93.

<sup>229</sup> See: Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'Trading Ships of the South China Sea: Shipbuilding Techniques and Their Role in the History of the Development of the Asian Trade Networks,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 36:3 (1993): 253-280; Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'New Ships for New Networks: Trends in Shipbuilding in the South China Sea in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries,' in *Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century: The China Factor*, ed. Geoff Wade and Sun Laichen (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010), 333-358.

<sup>230</sup> *RIB*, 224.



also being used in the Nusantara.<sup>231</sup> By 1371, however, both the Nusantara and China were producing near identical vessels, constituting a hybrid Chinese-Southeast Asian design. In other words, from 1371 onwards, Chinese and Southeast Asian ship construction methods merged. For example, whereas traditional Southeast Asian ships would be joined together with only dowels and Chinese ships with iron nails, these hybrid ships used dowels to fasten planking and iron nails for the framework. This produced what has been termed the ‘South China Sea ship.’<sup>232</sup> By the fifteenth century, these ships were standard across both the Nusantara and China. In fact, all early Nusantara shipwrecks dating from this period (including the Chinese Royal Nanhai, Longquan and Bukit Jakai wrecks) are of this hybrid style.<sup>233</sup> This merging of ship designs strongly suggests technical exchange between the Nusantara and China, resulting in a new form of vessel that became standard in both regions. This is again indicative of the type of connections necessary for a Mediterranean-like system and outstrips any equivalent connection with the Indian Ocean; there is, for example, no evidence the Nusantara ever built ships influenced by the Indian and/or Arabian variety observed in the Belitung wreck.

To sum up, the scope of China’s Yuan period trade was probably comparable to that of the Song and Southern Song periods. Muslims continued to play a substantial role in it, dominating Chinese maritime trade for much (if not all) of the Yuan Dynasty. Over this period, it also seems that Chinese commerce, by extending to the Spice Islands, stretched beyond the limits of any previous Chinese or Indian Ocean activity. It also appears to have attained far greater influence in the region, leading to the adoption of, not only Chinese currency, but also ship design. Further to this, there is also

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<sup>231</sup> This may also connect with the failed invasion of Java: Wang Dayuan claims many shipbuilders were amongst those who stayed behind (Wang, *Daoyi zhilüe*, Su [rev. and annot.] [1981]).

<sup>232</sup> Sjostrand and Barnes, ‘The Turiang,’ *JMBRAS* 74:1 (2001): 74-75.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

evidence (especially from the end of the Yuan period) of Chinese migration into the region, in which Muslims also played a significant role. Given all this, there appears to have been a high level of interaction – economic, technological and social – between China and the Nusantara contemporary to the Yuan Dynasty. With as much force as anything considered so far, this interaction suggests the existence of a Mediterranean-like system between the two regions, in which Chinese Muslims were key players.

#### **2.4.2. Indian Ocean Trade in the Nusantara Contemporary to the Yuan Dynasty**

In section 2.2.1.2, this chapter argued that a Mediterranean-like system undoubtedly existed between the Eastern Indian Ocean and the Nusantara during the Śrīvijaya period; this situation also seems to have extended into the Yuan. As such, Yuan-period Indian Ocean trade artefacts (but no wrecks) have been found throughout the Nusantara.<sup>234</sup> Moreover, Indian cultural influence also persisted during this period, most notably on Java, which remained a significant centre of Hindu culture until the sixteenth century.<sup>235</sup> As such, it seems the Eastern Indian Ocean and the Nusantara continued to exist as part of an important Mediterranean-like system throughout the Yuan period, with Hindu cultural influence at its heart.

Turning to the Nusantara's relationship with the Western Indian Ocean, McPherson has argued for a similar Mediterranean-like relationship there.<sup>236</sup> According to him, the Yuan period saw substantial Arab and Persian involvement in Indian Ocean commerce. McPherson bases this conclusion primarily on Ibn Baṭṭūṭa; he notes (correctly) that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa frequently identifies the Indian Ocean's merchants as either

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<sup>234</sup> Sjostrand and Barnes, 'The Turiang,' *JMBRAS* 74:1 (2001): 71-109.

<sup>235</sup> This is amply illustrated by its art and architecture (see: Fiona Kerlogue, *Arts of Southeast Asia* [London: Thames & Hudson, 2004], 90-92).

<sup>236</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 122.

Arab or Persian Muslims.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, although Ibn Baṭṭūṭa can be criticised for frequently ignoring any Muslim of non-Middle Eastern origin,<sup>238</sup> his emphasis on Muslim traders in the Indian Ocean is unquestionable. This is significant here, however, because McPherson argues that the Nusantara of the thirteenth to fourteenth century was part of an ‘Extended Indian Ocean’; appealing to the Nusantara’s Indianisation for justification, McPherson claims that the Yuan-period saw the Nusantara constitute part of an intimate trade-based system with the Indian Ocean. As a result, McPherson argues that Arab and Persian traders were also predominant in the Nusantara. Equally, because the first Nusantara Islamic kingdoms appear during this period, McPherson believes the Middle Eastern merchants Ibn Baṭṭūṭa speaks of were probably responsible for that initial period of Islamisation, too.<sup>239</sup> Consequently, McPherson privileges the Western Indian Ocean in both the Nusantara’s commerce and its Islamisation throughout the Yuan period. His conclusions, however, are problematic.

First, there is no reason to suppose Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s comments about Indian Ocean merchants can be applied to the Nusantara. This is largely because Ibn Baṭṭūṭa himself does not make that connection. Rather, he explicitly talks about Chinese commercial dominance in the Nusantara (see the previous section). Indeed, his comments about Middle Eastern ships unloading goods in India, where that produce would then be transferred to Chinese ships, suggests a similar picture to the one painted by the Genizah documents (see section 2.2.1.2.2); it suggests the segmentation of Indian Ocean trade, with Middle Eastern merchants depositing their goods in India where

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<sup>237</sup> See: *RIB*, 215-229.

<sup>238</sup> This is noticeable throughout his text, particularly when he discusses Samudera-Pasai; despite being a Nusantara Islamic polity, populated chiefly by Southeast Asian peoples, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa only refers to its Persian population (*Ibid*, 255-256).

<sup>239</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 130. In this regard he follows in the footsteps of A. Johns, whose work is discussed in Chapter 1.

either Indian and/or Chinese merchants would collect them, to take them on to China.<sup>240</sup> Consequently, McPherson's argument seems problematic: Ibn Baṭṭūṭa simply does not claim that Indian Ocean merchants, Middle Eastern or otherwise, also predominated in the Nusantara.

A second issue with McPherson's argument revolves around the fact that many Yuan-period Chinese Muslim traders were either Persian or Persianised Central Asians.<sup>241</sup> As such, when Ibn Baṭṭūṭa speaks of Persian Muslims, whether in the Indian Ocean or the Nusantara (such as at Samudera-Pasai),<sup>242</sup> he may have been referring to Chinese Muslims rather than Persians who had travelled there directly from Persia, as MacPherson assumes. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, however, is never clear on this point. The segmentation of Indian Ocean trade, however, coupled with the widespread nature of Chinese trade during this period, make it at least plausible that some of the Persian merchants Ibn Baṭṭūṭa refers to were from China. Certainly, when in China itself, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa consistently identifies China's Muslims as Persian.<sup>243</sup> It should also be considered, however, that Persian influence was equally strong in North India's Delhi sultanate.<sup>244</sup> Any Persian merchants active in the Indian Ocean could therefore have been residents of that kingdom, engaged in trade via one of its Gujarati ports.

But if the above suggests MacPherson overstates the case for Western Indian Ocean dominance in the Nusantara, it does not completely undermine his argument: Samudera-Pasai's court chronicle, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* ('Chronicle of the Pasai Kings'), also provides some evidence for Western Indian Ocean (specifically Arab)

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<sup>240</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 222-223.

<sup>241</sup> This is suggested by the Song and Yuan-period Muslim gravestones found at Quanzhou; via the *nisbas* recorded on them, Chen has demonstrated that the vast majority belonged to people of Persian ancestry (see: Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions*, trans. Chen [sup. Zheng] [1984], xv-xvi; 15-51).

<sup>242</sup> *RIB*, 255-256.

<sup>243</sup> For example, see: *Ibid*, 265.

<sup>244</sup> See: Peter A. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 184.

influence during the Yuan period. Thus, A. Johns points to the titles this text provides for Samudera-Pasai's first three Muslim rulers: al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (d.1297), al-Malik al-Zāhir (r.1297-1326) and al-Malik al-Manṣūr (r.1326-1330's). Each of these replicates the title of a prominent Egyptian ruler of about the same time: the Ayyūbid al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (r. 1240-1249), who captured Jerusalem in 1244; the Mamlūk al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260-1277), who halted the Mongol advance; and the Mamlūk al-Malik al-Manṣūr (r.1279-1290), who was well known for his anti-crusader activities.<sup>245</sup> Although there is no reference to Egypt or these three rulers in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (which, aside from some early gravestones, is Samudera-Pasai's only surviving relic), Johns feels this replication is not coincidental. Rather, he argues that Samudera-Pasai's rulers had heard of their Egyptian counterparts and, wishing to emulate them, adopted their titles. Certainly, to find three rulers in succession with the same titles as three prominent, near-contemporary Egyptian rulers suggests a link of some sort. Indeed, Fāṭimid Egypt dominated Middle Eastern trade during this period (see n. 24); if Western Indian Ocean merchants were operating in the Nusantara as McPherson suggests, this would make a link even more likely.

Yet further evidence for a Western Indian Ocean-Nusantara connection emerges with a Yamanī Sufi, called Abū 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd ibn Muḥammad al-Jāwī. As noted in the previous chapter, R. Feener and M. Laffan have identified this individual from a fifteenth-century Sufi biography, called *Ṭabaqāt al-Khawāṣṣ* and written by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Sharjī (1410-1487/8). This text states that:

Abū 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Jāwī, [spelt] with a *jīm* and *kasr al-wāw*, was once known as a great and famous shaykh in the city of Aden and surrounding areas. He was one of the greats, a shaykh and jurist of the

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<sup>245</sup> Anthony H. Johns, 'Islamisation in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism,' SAS 31:1 (1993): 50-51.

people of ‘Uwāja. He was a colleague of the great jurist Ismā‘īl al-Ḥaḍramī...<sup>246</sup>

Al-Jāwī is mentioned again in a text by the famous historian, ‘Abd Allāh al-Yāfi‘ī (1298-1367),<sup>247</sup> who claims that al-Jāwī was present at a religious ceremony during which al-Yāfi‘ī experienced a vision of the thirteenth-century Shāfi‘ī jurist, Maḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d.1277-8). This suggests al-Jāwī was active during the first half of the fourteenth century, contemporary to the late Yuan period. As such, it is important that his *nisba* suggests a connection with the Nusantara: in early Arabic texts, ‘al-Jāwī’ refers to someone with a connection to either Java or Sumatra. It may, however, be more correctly applied to his father, Muḥammad, in which case the connection could perhaps date from the thirteenth century. Nonetheless, it is still within the relevant time frame, meaning its precise significance needs to be outlined further.

As both Feener and Laffan note, a *nisba* need not denote a place of origin; it could also refer to a place someone travelled to or somewhere they received an education.<sup>248</sup> Because there is no indication that Southeast Asians visited Arabia during this period, however, or that Islamic centres of learning had been established in the Nusantara, the most reasonable explanation is that al-Jāwī was someone who had travelled to the Nusantara.<sup>249</sup> Indeed, his place of origin, ‘Uwāja, is a small town on the Red Sea coast, approximately 310km from Aden. As noted in section 2.2.1.2.1, during this period the Red Sea acted as the western terminus for all Indian Ocean trade. Potentially, therefore, ‘Uwāja could connect al-Jāwī to the Nusantara. As such, Feener and Laffan speculate that al-Jāwī, whether Abū ‘Abd Allāh or his father, was a

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<sup>246</sup> R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, ‘Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam,’ *Archipel* 70 (2005): 186-187.

<sup>247</sup> Called *Mir‘āt al-jinān wa ‘ibrat al-yaqẓān fī ma‘rifat mā yu‘tabir min ḥawādith al-zamān*, completed in 1349-50.

<sup>248</sup> Feener and Laffan, ‘Sufi Scents,’ *Archipel* 70 (2005): 187-188.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, 190.

merchant participating in Indian Ocean trade. During his travels, he probably visited the Nusantara, entitling him to his *nisba*. If so, however, this fact could potentially link with the naming of Samudera-Pasai's first three rulers by demonstrating a connection between the Nusantara and the region surrounding Egypt.

Ultimately, however, too much should not be made of al-Jāwī. Although he clearly indicates some kind of interaction with the Nusantara, how widespread and significant this was is uncertain. As such, al-Jāwī sits alone; no one else from this period bears his *nisba*. Indeed, that al-Sharjī felt the need to spell out 'Jāwī' suggests the unfamiliarity of the word. Consequently, even though the *nisba* does suggest Muslims from the Western Indian Ocean were travelling to the Nusantara (and returning), the unfamiliarity of the word Jāwī suggests they were not doing so in large numbers. It therefore cannot, by itself, suggest a Mediterranean-like system.

Indeed, returning to the Nusantara's Yuan-period archaeological record, although there are traces of Western Indian Ocean activity, it is again insufficient to suggest a Mediterranean-like system. For example, Pengkalan Bujang (in Kedah) is one of only a handful of Yuan-period Nusantara sites where a variety of Middle Eastern trade goods have been found. How important these were for the local economy, however, is far from clear; more substantial amounts of Indian and Chinese remains were also found. Equally, the segmentation of the Indian Ocean trade route could mean that any Middle Eastern goods found at Pengkalan Bujang were brought to the Nusantara by Indian and/or Chinese merchants.<sup>250</sup> This overall picture also holds true for other regional sites, notably the major entrepôt known as Kota Cina ('Chinese City'), located on the eastern coast of Sumatra. Hindu, Middle Eastern and Chinese deposits (including ceramics, glass ware and coins) have all been found there too,

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<sup>250</sup> Lamb, 'Takuapa,' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, ed. Bastin and Roolvink (1964), 83.

dating from the Song to Yuan periods. As the name of the site suggests, however, Chinese goods predominate.<sup>251</sup> It should also be noted that no Yuan-period Middle Eastern shipwrecks of the Belitung variety have been found in the Nusantara.<sup>252</sup> Indeed, all the shipwrecks recovered so far are Chinese (see the previous section).

Taking this section's discussion as a whole, it seems that during the Yuan period the Nusantara did not exist as part of an Extended Indian Ocean, in which Western Indian Ocean merchants predominated. Although Western Indian Ocean merchants did continue to travel into the Nusantara, the segmentation of Indian Ocean trade, coupled with the unfamiliarity of the *al-Jāwī nisba*, implies they did not do so in large numbers. Nonetheless, some Middle Eastern influence probably did come to bear on Samudera-Pasai (on the very edge of the region), although the literary and archaeological evidence does not suggest this influence extended much beyond there. By contrast, however, the Nusantara almost certainly did continue to enjoy a strong connection with the Eastern Indian Ocean. As during the Śrīvijaya period, this probably retained a strong Hindu character. When this conclusion is compared to the one reached in section 2.4.1, it seems the Nusantara of the Yuan period existed as part of a Mediterranean-like system with both the Eastern Indian Ocean and China.

## **2.5. Nusantara Trade from the Rise of the Ming Dynasty until 1620**

In 1368, the remnants of the Yuan Dynasty were forced from power by the rebel leader, Zhu Yuanzhang, later known as the Hongwu Emperor.<sup>253</sup> Establishing the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Hongwu ushered in a turbulent period for Chinese trade;

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<sup>251</sup> E. Edwards McKinnon, 'Research at Kota Cina: A Sung-Yüan Period Trading Site in East Sumatra,' *Archipel* 14 (1977): 22.

<sup>252</sup> Sjostrand and Barnes, 'The Turiang,' *JMBRAS* 74:1 (2001): 71-109.

<sup>253</sup> Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy* (2009), 211.



throughout the subsequent dynasty, China would adopt and reject various, often radically different, approaches to commerce. At times Ming China would embark on vast demonstrations of military and naval might, impacting on international trade (especially in the Nusantara) to an unprecedented degree. At other times, however, the Chinese court would attempt to ban all interaction with the outside world, dramatically reducing China's ability to project its power, whether in the Nusantara or elsewhere.

Making sense of these fluctuations is extremely important here. Collectively, they form the backdrop to much of the Nusantara's Islamisation, including the spread of Islam to the Malay Peninsula, Java and Brunei. In this section we will therefore evaluate Chinese-Nusantara commercial interactions from the beginning of the Ming until 1620, the overall discussion's end point (see section 2.1). Unlike in previous sections, however, these interactions will not be considered separately from those the Nusantara enjoyed with the Indian Ocean (both East and West). This is for two reasons: first, from the early Ming until the arrival of the first Europeans (i.e. 1368-1511) there is very little data pertaining to the Indian Ocean's interaction with the Nusantara, making a separate section unnecessary; second, from 1511 until 1620, although the evidence is far more prevalent, it is provided by Western sources that tend to discuss Indian Ocean and Chinese trade simultaneously. This naturally encourages the same approach in any subsequent discussion.

### **2.5.1. The Reign of Hongwu: Tribute, Migration and the Black Death**

The advent of the Ming Dynasty re-introduced, for the first time in four hundred years, complete Han rule over the entire Chinese cultural area.<sup>254</sup> Perhaps for this

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<sup>254</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 1-2.

reason the Ming, including the rebellion which swept them into power, were fervently nationalistic, opposed to any foreign (i.e. non-Han) interference in Chinese affairs. Indeed, once in power Hongwu was very quick to institute stringent reforms that would strip China of (what he perceived to be) foreign ideological accretions.<sup>255</sup> In short, Hongwu sought to re-create a Tang-like dynastic system orientated towards traditional Confucian values. The latter would re-establish China as the Middle Kingdom, the only true centre of civilization, to which all non-Chinese regions were culturally inferior.

This natural inferiority, however, meant that, and as in previous centuries, all foreign kingdoms could only interact with China via the tribute system, in which the imposition of vassalage to China necessarily admitted their lesser status.<sup>256</sup> Hongwu therefore quickly re-created the traditional tribute system, banning all private trade in the process. The latter's earlier legalisation was seen as a foreign innovation, an aberration it was necessary to strip away.<sup>257</sup> To this end, travel restrictions were also imposed on all residents of China, limiting the journey any person could make to the distance it was possible to cover, there and back again, in one day. Anyone caught travelling abroad without permission would be subject to the death penalty upon return.<sup>258</sup> In official terms at least, this signalled the end of any private trade with the Nusantara.

On the face of it, the above suggests Chinese influence in the Nusantara must have declined dramatically after 1368. As noted by Dreyer, however, the re-emergence of the tribute system may actually have had quite another consequence:

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<sup>255</sup> Witold Rodzinski, *The Walled Kingdom: A History of China from 2000BC to the Present* (London: Flamingo, 1984), 141.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, 148.

<sup>257</sup> Hu, *Concise History of Chinese Economic Thought* (1988), 448.

<sup>258</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Confucians of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19.

The 1370's...Ming ban on private trade and the revival of the trading superintendencies seemed to re-establish the preconditions of the Palembang [Śrīvijaya] system.<sup>259</sup>

In other words, just as the Tang tribute system had allowed Śrīvijaya to become a great mercantile empire, so too the Ming period opened up the possibility of another Nusantara polity achieving this same feat. Indeed, this possibility does not seem to have escaped the attention of the Nusantara's various rulers; from 1371 onwards, once Hongwu had sent the envoy Zhao Shu into the region to announce the resumption of the tribute system, a stream of Nusantara envoys began to arrive in China. Missions came from Java, Sumatra, Borneo and a host of other Nusantara locations, all seeking the same privileged status Śrīvijaya had once had. In 1371, for example, Brunei sent a mission which sought to project this small kingdom as the bearer of tribute from the Nusantara as a whole. To achieve this, Brunei renounced its vassalage to Majapahit – as seen in section 2.2.2.1, China only accepted tribute missions from independent kingdoms.<sup>260</sup> That Brunei was prepared, however, to risk enraging its Javanese overlord in this manner (indeed, it may have been subsequently sacked by Majapahit, see Chapter 6) illustrates the importance some Nusantara rulers attached to a special relationship with China. Indeed, Brunei was not the only kingdom to behave in this way.

Between 1371 and 1377, six missions arrived in China from a location identifying itself as Śrīvijaya. Apparently originating from Palembang,<sup>261</sup> each mission presented itself as the representative of the former empire of old, capable of again bringing rich produce to the Chinese court. What these missions did not inform the Chinese, however, was that Palembang (whether the heir to Śrīvijaya or not) was now

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<sup>259</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 118.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, 118.

the vassal of Majapahit. As a result, when the missions culminated in 1377 with a request that Hongwu invest Palembang's ruler as the king of Śrīvijaya (thereby marking it as an independent kingdom), Hongwu saw no issue in doing so. Assuming the kingdom was already independent, Hongwu readily agreed to send the necessary regalia and envoys. But also present at the Chinese court, and overhearing these exchanges, were envoys from Majapahit. Outraged by Hongwu's decision, they immediately returned to Java to inform their ruler, Hayam Wuruk. He promptly ordered the seizure and execution of the envoys China despatched to Palembang, before then attacking and sacking the latter to bring it back into line.<sup>262</sup> As noted in section 2.2, the *Ming shi-lu* records this event as the final scene in Śrīvijaya's long history – although, and as will be seen, Palembang survived and continued to play an important (albeit very different) role in Nusantara affairs.

After these events, Hongwu's reign saw no further diplomatic missions arrive from the Nusantara; Majapahit's hold on the region, it seems, was too strong.<sup>263</sup> But, that both Brunei and Palembang/Śrīvijaya had been prepared to risk enraging Majapahit in order to gain a unique position with China suggests the economic clout and prestige China commanded. It demonstrates that certain polities within the Nusantara considered a close commercial relationship with China worth the risk. This links well with the conclusions reached in section 2.4: as during the Tang Dynasty, it suggests Ming China had the ability to politically re-shape the Nusantara via the mechanics of the tribute system. Nevertheless, in this case it seems Hongwu-period China did not exercise that influence; Majapahit was allowed to attack and sack Palembang (and possibly Brunei) without any sanction, while no mercantile empire emerged. Consequently, it seems the political influence associated with a Mediterranean-like system was not exercised.

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<sup>262</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 118-119.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, 119.

Nevertheless, Mediterranean systems are not entirely reducible to political influence – their existence also largely depends on trade volumes. These reveal the extent of any actual interaction between different regions. It is very difficult, however, to estimate Chinese-Nusantaran trade volumes during Hongwu's reign. Not only is there a lack of written evidence, but also a dearth of archaeological data (such as shipwrecks). Concerning the written sources, only the *Ming shi-lu* contains any relevant information – namely, two figures regarding tribute levels. Thus, a report dated 1382 claims a single Javanese mission brought 75,000 *jin* of pepper (approximately 17 tons), while another dated 1392 claims a Siamese mission brought 170,000 *jin* (38 tons) of various commodities (including pepper and sappanwood).<sup>264</sup> Both Ptak and Dreyer claim these quantities are considerable for the period.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, Dreyer notes that, from the early 1380's onwards, Hongwu lost interest in the tribute system and attempted to restrict both the size and number of tribute missions entering China.<sup>266</sup> Consequently, the 1382 and 1392 missions may have been much smaller than earlier ones.

When assessing Hongwu-period Chinese trade, it should also be considered that private trade continued, despite any official ban.<sup>267</sup> Indeed, T. Brook believes written evidence from Hongwu's reign points to an expansion in private trade; accounts from Shanxi province testify to many farmers turning to trade after being denied access to

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<sup>264</sup> The conversion into tons is based on Dreyer's reckoning (see: Dreyer, *Early Ming China* [1982], 12). Ptak, however, has 8 tons for 170,000 *jin*. But, given that the modern Chinese *jin* is equivalent to 500g (converting to nearly 95 tons) while the *jin* of the much earlier Qin Dynasty (221-206BCE) was equivalent to 250g (47 tons), Ptak's figure seems too conservative. Certainly, that Chinese ships had burdens of 1,000 tons (see section 2.2.2.2) means 38 tons is by no means an unrealistic figure (Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak [1998], 164).

<sup>265</sup> Although Dreyer does not expand on his reasons for stating this (Dreyer, *Early Ming China* [1982], 112), Ptak reaches his conclusion via a direct comparison with the much lower figures provided for the contemporary European spice trade (Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak [1998], 164).

<sup>266</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 112.

<sup>267</sup> Zhang Feng, 'Rethinking the "Tribute System": Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics,' *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2 (2009): 570.

arable land (due to land shortages). Equally, in 1381 Hongwu issued an edict forbidding merchants from wearing silk. This was an attempt to curb their social prestige, which had reached a high level, suggesting great wealth.<sup>268</sup>

It is, however, extremely difficult to draw compelling conclusions from a ban on silk and records from a single province. The latter, for example, may actually refer to domestic trade, rather than international. Certainly, due to Shanxi's location at the end of the Silk Route, it refers to overland trade rather than maritime and is therefore of little relevance here. Equally, the aforementioned tribute figures cannot be considered representative without others to compare them to; the *Ming shi-lu* does not give the impression they were exceptional, which Ptak sees as justification for assuming locations other than Java and Siam sent similar amounts, but this is speculation without more evidence to decide the point.

If the discussion so far suggests a Mediterranean-like system did not exist between the Nusantara and Hongwu-period China, this conclusion should not be accepted before instances of Chinese migration are also considered. Section 2.4.1 demonstrated that the late Yuan period witnessed significant Chinese migration into the Nusantara. Existing evidence (although not over-abundant) suggests this continued into the Hongwu era. During this later period, migration appears to have received its impetus from Hongwu's suppression of private trade. This effectively took away the livelihoods of many merchants along China's southern coast. Although official records (including the *Ming shi-lu*) indicate smuggling helped fill this gap, with some former merchants also being conscripted into coastal military garrisons, for many people life remained difficult, with little alternative employment.<sup>269</sup> As a result, numerous former traders appear to have left China for the Nusantara, where trade could be pursued more

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<sup>268</sup> Brook, *Confucians of Pleasure* (1999), 70-71.

<sup>269</sup> Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (1982), 121-122.

freely. Thus, the traveller Wang Dayuan notes a significant Chinese presence at Singapore,<sup>270</sup> while Ma Huan claims that on Java:

One class of [people resident there are the] Tang people [i.e. the Chinese]; they are all men from Kuang tung [Guangdong] and from Chang [Zhangzhou] and Ch'üan [Quanzhou] and other such places, who fled away and now live in this country...many of them follow the Muslim religion, doing penance and fasting.<sup>271</sup>

Further on, Ma Huan names three major Javanese cities with substantial Chinese populations: Tuban, Surabaya and Gresik. He even claims Gresik had been founded by these migrants and gives it a Chinese name, Xin Cun ('New Village').<sup>272</sup> Perhaps significantly, and as discussed in Chapter 5, Javanese tradition identifies Gresik as Java's first Islamic centre.<sup>273</sup> In addition to all this, however, Ma Huan also claims post-1377 Palembang had become Chinese-dominated.<sup>274</sup> Indeed, this is supported by the *Ming shi-lu*, which claims that Palembang, after it was sacked by Majapahit, was resettled by several thousand Chinese families. Coming predominantly from Southern China, these migrants were ruling the city by the end of Hongwu's reign; under the leadership of a wealthy merchant from Nanhai, called Liang Daoming, they were sending tribute missions to the Ming court and conducting widespread trade.<sup>275</sup> All this,

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<sup>270</sup> Wang, *Daoyi zhi-lüe*, Su (rev. and annot.) (1981). G. Foccardi claims this was a colony (see: Gabriele Foccardi, *The Chinese Travellers of the Ming Period* [Wiesbaden: Kommissionsverlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1986], 12), whereas V. Purcell claims it was a Chinese fleet which had come to relieve a siege laid on by the Siamese (see: Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965], 235).

<sup>271</sup> YYS, 92.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 88-91.

<sup>273</sup> Pin-tsua, 'First Chinese Diaspora,' in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs*, ed. Ptak and Rothermund (1991), 17. According to a seventeenth-century Javanese source called the *Hikayat Hassanuddin* (or the *Sejarah Banten Ranté-Ranté*), Gresik was the home town of Demak's first Muslim ruler. Instrumental in spreading Islam across Java, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* also claims he was of matrilineal Chinese descent (see Chapter 5).

<sup>274</sup> YYS, 98-99.

<sup>275</sup> MSL, juan 38.4b.

however, is suggestive of a Mediterranean-like system: the widespread movement of people, coupled with changes in political authority, all indicate this type of system.

Turning to the Indian Ocean, it is difficult to assess Nusantara-Eastern Indian Ocean interaction during the Hongwu period. Not only is there no textual evidence relating to this point, but also very little archaeology. There is, however, no reason to suppose Eastern Indian Ocean activity flagged during this period; the maintenance of Java's Hinduised culture alone suggests a Mediterranean-like system persisted. Turning to the Western Indian Ocean, however, this region's commerce is much easier to evaluate. During the Hongwu period, the Western Indian Ocean was still grappling with the immediate aftermath of the Black Death (1348-1350). This epidemic had impacted very heavily on the Middle East. The Egyptian historian, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442), for example, deals with the effects of the plague in his history of the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks.<sup>276</sup> He speaks of whole cities being depopulated and claims that Fuṣṭāṭ, the centre of Egyptian trade, suffered very severely; several of its suburbs (including Zuqāq al-Qanādīl and al-Naḥḥāsīn) were completely abandoned. Indeed, al-Maqrīzī states much of the city was still in ruins during his own time.<sup>277</sup> In addition, he also speaks of the markets of Alexandria being abandoned and of many caravansarias being closed because of too few clients.<sup>278</sup> According to another historian, Ibn Abī Ḥajala (1325-1375), similar depopulations also occurred in Syria.<sup>279</sup>

Because al-Maqrīzī is a largely trustworthy source, it is unsurprising that his claims find support in the archaeological record. Although significant amounts of Yuan-

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<sup>276</sup> Al-Maqrīzī's text is called *Kitab al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*. With regards his information about the Black Death, this comes from either his own observations or earlier written sources (see: John Aberth, *The Black Death, The Great Mortality of 1348-1350: A Brief History with Documents* [New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005], 84).

<sup>277</sup> Cited in: Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 172.

<sup>278</sup> Cited in: Ibid, 279.

<sup>279</sup> Cited in: Ibid, 174.



period Chinese ceramics have been found at Fustāt, between the mid to late fourteenth century finds decrease dramatically.<sup>280</sup> Of course, this could have been the result of the Yuan-Ming transition and/or early Ming trade restrictions. Al-Maqrīzī's account, however, makes it equally plausible that the plague was at least also partially responsible. Indeed, because further outbreaks of plague occurred throughout the rest of the century (such as in 1360-61), M. Dols has concluded that the Middle East's fourteenth-century reduction in commercial activity was undoubtedly plague-related and probably continued until the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>281</sup> On the basis of al-Maqrīzī, this is a reasonable conclusion; he clearly demonstrates a continued negative effect into the 1440's.<sup>282</sup> Consequently, however, during Hongwu's reign the entire western half of the Indian Ocean was probably in commercial decline, as demonstrated by the fact that the Middle East no longer imported large amounts of Chinese ceramics. This implies that any Western Indian Ocean-Nusantara links, through which these ceramics would have arrived in the Middle East, had also weakened. As such, a Mediterranean-like system would seem unlikely.

To summarise our discussion, it seems that the Hongwu period saw private Chinese trade decline, with a series of court-directed restrictions effectively undermining the commercial developments witnessed during the Song and Yuan periods. Although Hongwu also re-established the tribute system, he showed little interest in it; coupled with Majapahit's firm grasp on the Nusantara, this meant the latter region could not engage with the tribute system as it had in the past, in order to create another trade-based empire. Nonetheless, we have argued that Hongwu's trade restrictions had a further repercussion: they resulted in widespread Chinese migration

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<sup>280</sup> Tsugio Mikami, 'China and Egypt: Fustat,' *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramics Society* 45 (1980-1): 87.

<sup>281</sup> Dols, *Black Death in the Middle East* (1977), 185.

<sup>282</sup> The archaeology, however, does demonstrate a pickup during the 1400 to 1435 period, when Chinese ceramics suddenly become more common (see: Mikami, 'China and Egypt,' *TOCS* 45 [1980-1]: 87).

into the Nusantara. Both Muslims and non-Muslims, these migrants were traders who eventually became so influential they were able to control existing cities and establish new ones. This suggests the presence of at least some of the circumstances necessary for a Mediterranean-like system, irrespective of declining trade levels.

Turning to the Indian Ocean, although there is little evidence relating to the Eastern Indian Ocean during this period, we reasoned that it probably maintained a strong, Mediterranean-like link with the Nusantara. The Western Indian Ocean, on the other hand, was still suffering from the aftermath of the Black Death; written sources claim this epidemic had decimated Egypt's major trade centres, with archaeological evidence likewise suggesting a collapse in trade. All this makes it very unlikely that a Mediterranean-like system existed between the Western Indian Ocean and the Nusantara during the Hongwu period.

### **2.5.2. Zheng He and the Rise of Melaka**

In 1398, Hongwu was succeeded by his young grandson, the Emperor Jianwen. The latter's reign, however, proved short lived: in 1402 Jianwen was overthrown by his uncle, Zhu Di, who became the Emperor Yongle.<sup>283</sup> During a reign that lasted until 1424, Yongle presided over a period of unprecedented Chinese engagement with the outside world; beginning in 1405, Yongle sponsored six enormous naval expeditions that travelled throughout both the Nusantara and the Indian Ocean. Each voyage (in addition to a seventh conducted between 1431 and 1433, during the reign of the Xuande Emperor) was commanded by a Chinese Muslim called Zheng He. Together, these

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<sup>283</sup> Sander Molenaar, 'Zheng He: Man and Myth,' Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oxford (2012), 21-22.

voyages provide some of the strongest evidence yet for a Mediterranean-like system between China and the Nusantara, in which Muslims played a prominent role.

Beginning our discussion of these voyages with a consideration of what motivated them, the *Ming shi* ('The History of the Ming,' an essentially edited version of the *Ming shi-lu* produced in 1739 by the Qing Dynasty)<sup>284</sup> cites two reasons for the expeditions: a need to locate the former emperor Jianwen and a desire to showcase the might and majesty of China. Regarding the first, although Jianwen was initially thought to have died during Yongle's insurrection, rumours spread that he had survived and escaped to the south. Because Yongle was a usurper, he quickly sought to act on these rumours and recover Jianwen, thereby preventing any challenge to his position.<sup>285</sup> Scholars acknowledge, however, that this motivation alone (even if genuine)<sup>286</sup> cannot explain the duration and scope of the expeditions which followed. Rather, this can only be explained via the second motive. Most scholars therefore interpret Zheng He's voyages as a show of power – although perhaps once again motivated by Yongle's need for legitimacy.<sup>287</sup> Almost certainly, they were designed to demonstrate Yongle's imperial power to all who might oppose him, whether domestically or internationally. As Zheng He's biographical sketch in the *Ming shi* states, the voyages were:

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<sup>284</sup> See: Wolfgang Franke, 'The Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644),' in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 60-77.

<sup>285</sup> Foccardi, *The Chinese Travellers* (1986), 31-32.

<sup>286</sup> As S. Molenaar notes, the *Ming shi* was compiled long after the events in question, at a time when many myths existed about the Jianwen Emperor's fate. Molenaar believes the Jianwen Emperor's possible survival was one such myth, which subsequently found its way into official records. He provides nothing conclusive, however, to prove this (see: Molenaar, 'Zheng He,' Unpublished Thesis, Oxford [2012], 35).

<sup>287</sup> This argument is favoured by: Bruce Swanson, *Eighth Voyage of the Dragon: A History of China's Quest for Seapower* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 29 and 32; Foccardi, *The Chinese Travellers* (1986), 32-33; Ming-Yang, *Seven Voyages of Zheng He* (2005), 23; Dreyer, *Zheng He* (2007), 3; Geoff Wade, 'The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2: Southeast Asia and Ming China, ed. Geoff Wade (from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century) (London: Routledge, 2009), 126; and Geoff Wade, 'Ming Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia,' in *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, ed. Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig (London: Routledge, 2005), 73-104; Wang Gungwu, 'Ming Foreign Relations: Southeast Asia,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2: Southeast Asia and Ming China (from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century), ed. Geoff Wade (London: Routledge, 2009), 260.

To display his [Yongle's] soldiers in strange lands in order to make manifest the wealth and power [of China].<sup>288</sup>

Certainly, this would explain the massive scale of the voyages that followed – although precisely how massive is disputed. The *Ming shi-lu*, for example, contains no detail about either the types of ship involved or the number of men who accompanied them. The earliest source to do so is actually a late Ming-period novel called *Sandao taijian Xiyang ji tongshu yanyi*, written by Luo Maodong in 1597. Essentially a work of fiction, this contains an itemised list of all the ships and men involved. These figures then re-appear in both the *Ming shi* and various other texts related to the voyages, including several (all post-1617) editions of Ma Huan's *Yingyai Shenglan*.<sup>289</sup> It is unlikely, however, that these figures originate with Luo Maodong's novel; as S. Church reasons, it is unlikely an official source like the *Ming shi* would rely on a novel. As such, Church surmises that the figures are based on another, more reliable work which has since been lost. She therefore chooses to cautiously accept them.<sup>290</sup> In short, Luo Maodong's figures claim that the first voyage (conducted between 1405 and 1407) included three hundred and seventeen ships, made up of sixty-two large treasure ships and numerous transport, combat and provision ships (the sizes of these are dealt with below). Together, these vessels carried 27,870 soldiers.<sup>291</sup> As for the subsequent six voyages,<sup>292</sup> most set out with more than two hundred ships, but none with less than one

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<sup>288</sup> Dreyer, *Zheng He* (2007), 3.

<sup>289</sup> Sally K. Church, 'The Colossal Ships of Zheng He: Image or Reality?' in *Zheng He: Images and Perceptions*, ed. Claudine Salmon and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 163-164.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-166.

<sup>291</sup> Mills, 'Introduction,' in Ma Huan, *Yingyai Shenglan*, ed. Feng, trans. Mills (1970), 10.

<sup>292</sup> The second occurred between 1407-1409; the third 1409-1411; the fourth 1413-1415; the fifth 1417-1419; the sixth 1421-1422; and the seventh 1431-1433. These dates are presented by Mills in his introduction to Ma Huan (see: *Ibid.*, 8). Originally, however, they appear on two stele erected by Zheng He, one at the Tianfei temple at Liu-jia-jiang (dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 1431) and the other at the Temple of the Celestial Spouse at Chang-lo, Fukien (dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 1431) (J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'The True Dates of the Chinese Maritime Expeditions in the Early Fifteenth Century,' *T'oung Pao* 34:5 [1939]: 342-343). By

hundred.<sup>293</sup> To put these figures in context, European standing armies of the mid-fifteenth century were an average of 20,000 men strong. This, for example, was the number of soldiers Ferdinand and Isabella used to invade Grenada. As for ships, the Spanish armada of the following century (then the largest European naval expedition in history) comprised only 130 ships, with 29,453 men.<sup>294</sup> Clearly therefore, and by the standards of the period, Zheng He's voyages constituted a huge force, far more than would be necessary for a simple recovery mission. Consequently, it is far more likely that their overwhelming display of naval prowess was designed to underpin Yongle's position as Emperor. Indeed, it very quickly resulted in numerous Nusantara rulers sending tribute missions to the court, all acknowledging Yongle as the Son of Heaven.

As already shown, however, the traditional Chinese tribute system was intimately linked to trade. Zheng He's voyages were therefore probably just as much about economics as politics and cannot have failed to impact on the Nusantara's trade networks.<sup>295</sup> Indeed, the *Ming shi-lu* makes it clear that the number of Nusantara tribute missions increased dramatically under Yongle: between 1402 and 1424, Champa sent nineteen missions, Cambodia seven, Siam twenty-two, Melaka fifteen, Samudera-Pasai fourteen, Java seventeen and Brunei eight.<sup>296</sup> The intensity of this activity exceeds anything witnessed over an equivalent period during previous dynasties. Indeed, Reid has argued that the volume of goods exchanged during these missions was so intense

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contrast, the *Ming shi* has the following dates: 1405-7, 1408-11, 1412-15, 1416-19, 1421-1422, 1424 and 1430-33 (Foccardi, *The Chinese Travellers* [1986], 28-29). As already noted, however, the latter source was compiled long after the events in question and at a time when Zheng He's official records had been destroyed. As such, it is felt the inscriptions are more reliable as they are more directly connected to Zheng He (Ibid, 25-26; 30).

<sup>293</sup> Mills, 'Introduction,' in Ma Huan, *Yingyai Shenglan*, ed. Feng, trans. Mills (1970), 8-9.

<sup>294</sup> Robert Finlay, 'The Treasure-Ships of Zheng He: Chinese Maritime Imperialism in the Age of Discovery,' *Terrae Incognitae* 23 (1991): 3-4.

<sup>295</sup> This opinion is supported by: Wan Ming, 'Reflections on the Study of Zheng He's Expeditions,' *Ming Studies* 49 (2004): 18-21.

<sup>296</sup> Wang Gungwu, 'China and South-East Asia 1402-1424,' in *Studies in the Social History of China and South-east Asia: Essays in Memory of Victor Purcell (26 January 1896 – 2 January 1965)*, ed. Jerome Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 394.

that it flooded Chinese markets, creating the first historical example of mass consumption. Thus, records show that the wages of Chinese officials and soldiers were part-paid in spices at this time.<sup>297</sup> In terms of firm numbers, however, the only clues provided by the *Ming shi-lu* relate to a 1411 visit to China by the first ruler of Melaka, Parameswara (d. 1414; Malay sources call this ruler Iskandar Shāh, see Chapter 4). It records that before this Malay ruler returned home, he was presented with:

a gold and jade belt, ceremonial insignia, two "saddled horses", 100 *liang* of gold, 500 *liang* of silver, 400,000 *guan* of paper money, 2,600 *guan* of copper cash, 300 bolts of embroidered fine silks and silk gauzes, 1,000 bolts of thin silks, two [bolts?] of "mixed gold" patterned fine silks, and two long-sleeved "kneeling gowns" interwoven with gold thread.<sup>298</sup>

In addition, 200 *liang* of silver, 5,000 *guan* of paper money and 60 bolts of various silks were given to Parameswara's consort. Silver, paper money, copper cash and variegated silks were then given to Parameswara's accompanying ministers. All this, however, adds up to a sizable amount. A *guan* of paper money, for example, was equivalent to one string of cash, comprising between 800 and 900 individual coins.<sup>299</sup> Consequently, as either paper money or actual strings of cash, the equivalent of more than three hundred million individual coins was being given away on this single occasion. Moreover, Pires claims Melaka's second ruler, whom he calls Iskandar Shāh (the *Ming shi-lu* has Megat Iskandar Shāh, while the *Sejarah Melayu* has just Megat)<sup>300</sup> was granted permission by the Emperor to use Chinese coins as currency.<sup>301</sup> Although the *Ming shi-lu* contains no record of this,<sup>302</sup> archaeological excavations at Melaka have

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<sup>297</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 12.

<sup>298</sup> *MSL*, juan 119.2b-3a.

<sup>299</sup> 'Weights and Units in Chinese Coinage,' *Ancient Chinese Coins*, available at: <http://chinesecoins.lyq.dk/weights.html>. (Accessed on: 17/12/2013).

<sup>300</sup> *MSL*, juan 155.2b-3a; *SM*, 120.

<sup>301</sup> *SO*, 243.

<sup>302</sup> See Wade's online version of the *Ming shi-lu*.

uncovered a significant number of these coins, more than enough to support their use as currency.<sup>303</sup> As such, it is perhaps appropriate to compare the potentially huge amount of Chinese coinage entering the Nusantara during this period with section 2.2.1.2.2's discussion of the *dīnār*; even if the paper money given to Parameswara is disregarded (there is no evidence this was ever used in the Nusantara), the *Ming shi-lu* testifies to Chinese coinage being distributed to Melaka in far larger quantities than the *dīnār* was to Śrīvijaya.

Given all this, it seems Melaka prospered considerably from its contact with China. Indeed, Pires's *Suma Oriental* claims that Melaka made a 200% profit on its Chinese trade, as opposed to an 80-90% profit on trade with India.<sup>304</sup> Perhaps as a result of this, to fully benefit from Chinese trade the fifteenth-century Nusantara as a whole underwent fundamental changes (including the development of cash-cropping) to help foster a trade network capable of satisfying Chinese demand.<sup>305</sup> Most notably, however, this process involved the establishment of Melaka as a new Śrīvijaya-like empire. Indeed, according to early Portuguese accounts, Melaka's founder, the aforementioned Parameswara, was the last prince of Śrīvijaya; Pires describes how, while still a tributary lord to Majapahit, Parameswara had attempted to assert his independence, only for Majapahit to expel him from Palembang.<sup>306</sup> Whether this is a reference to the aforementioned events of 1377, when Majapahit attacked Palembang after it attempted to assert independence, is unclear.<sup>307</sup> It seems certain, however, that Parameswara's

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<sup>303</sup> Tan Ta Sen, *Cheng Ho and Malacca* (Malacca: Cheng Ho Cultural Museum and International Zheng He Society, 2005), 69.

<sup>304</sup> *SO*, 284.

<sup>305</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 12.

<sup>306</sup> *SO*, 230-231.

<sup>307</sup> Both Wolters and Lieberman prefer to date Parameswara's expulsion to 1393. Both note that, upon the death of Hayam Wuruk in 1389, Majapahit was torn apart by warring princes. In 1397, the resulting power vacuum led to the Javanese appointing a 'small chief' to run Palembang because its native ruler was no longer there. Wolters and Lieberman both suggest that this is an opaque reference to Parameswara's expulsion, perhaps as a result of trying to assert independence during the Javanese civil

later actions in Melaka were the culmination of a process begun in Palembang during the reign of Hongwu – that is, the creation of a powerful Nusantara-based trade empire. Indeed, when the circumstances surrounding Melaka's rise are considered further, it becomes clear that its ability to accomplish this feat was dependent on China's commercial sponsorship.

Precisely when Parameswara first arrived in Melaka is unknown. By 1403, however, the Chinese court had heard of his new settlement, which at that stage was little more than a village.<sup>308</sup> Despite its small size, however, an envoy called Yin Qing was immediately dispatched to visit it.<sup>309</sup> In 1405, Yin Qing returned with a Melakan envoy who announced Parameswara's desire to become an officer of the Chinese court and be invested by the Emperor as king of Melaka.<sup>310</sup> Both wishes were readily granted. In addition, however, another step was taken: according to the *Ming shi-lu*, Yongle issued 'a stele inscription for Mt Zhenguo ["the mountain that protects the country"]'.<sup>311</sup> Written by the Emperor himself, this was a collection of verse stating the moral and political philosophy of the Imperial House. Designed to be set up on a hill above Melaka, it acted as a prominent physical symbol of the city's vassalage to China. Significantly, however, Melaka was the first ever recipient of an inscription like this, and on its first tribute mission. This suggests Yongle had a particular desire to draw the city into a close, immediately visible relationship.<sup>312</sup> As to why, this becomes apparent when consideration is given to the fact that, from this point on, Melaka became the

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war (see both: Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 [2009], 794-795; and Wolters, *Fall of Srivijaya* [1970], 113-114).

<sup>308</sup> According to the *Ming shi-lu*, Ma Huan and Fei Xin, Melaka was not originally a country with a king but a small village with a chief (see: *MSL*, juan 24.5b; *YYSL*, 108; *XCSL*, 53-54).

<sup>309</sup> *MSL*, juan 24.5b.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid*, juan 46.2a-b. If Parameswara was involved in the events of 1377, these requests would only be a continuation of his behaviour in Palembang.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, juan 47.4a-b.

<sup>312</sup> Indeed, only three other locations were ever given this diplomatic device: Brunei, Japan and Cochin China (see: Wang Gungwu, 'The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca, 1403-5,' in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata [Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005], 16-17).



official base for all Chinese shipping in the Nusantara, including Zheng He's fleets.<sup>313</sup> Thus, both Ma Huan and Fei Xin (another member of Zheng He's crew who wrote an account of the voyages) record Melaka's status as a rallying point for all seven fleets.<sup>314</sup> Not only was it in an excellent location to weather the monsoons but, being at the edge of the region, it also acted as a convenient base to push out into the Indian Ocean.<sup>315</sup> Yongle seems to have realised this, which explains his eagerness to establish a privileged diplomatic relationship straightaway. Moreover, both Ma Huan and Fei Xin claim that a sizable Chinese community was established in Melaka.<sup>316</sup> Designed to service the Chinese fleets and collect together the produce they would eventually take back to China, this community attracted sufficient wealth and prestige to transform Melaka from a small village into the heart of the Nusantara's trade.

When assessing the importance of Zheng He's fleets, it is also pertinent to consider how large his ships were. According to the *Ming shi*, Zheng He's Treasure Ships, of which sixty-two accompanied the first mission, measured 44.4 by 18 *zhang* (or 138.4 metres by 56 metres), with a burden of up to 5,000 tons. If true, these enormous vessels would have been considerably larger than their Chinese, Chinese-Southeast Asian hybrid or Indian Ocean equivalents. Even a century later, the first Portuguese ships to enter the region had a maximum burden of just 300 tons. By the end of the sixteenth century, this had grown to 1,500 to 2,000 tons, with dimensions of 50.3 metres long by 14 metres wide, but nonetheless still well short of these Chinese figures.

It is unlikely, however, that the Treasure Ships were the size described. Two key points suggest this, neatly summarized by Church. First, and in line with the marine

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<sup>313</sup> YYSL, 113-114.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid, 113; XCSL, 55.

<sup>315</sup> Tan, *Cheng Ho* (2005), 46.

<sup>316</sup> Ma Huan describes this settlement, known as the *guanchang*, as a large enclosure with both an inner and outer stockade, watch towers and four main gates (YYSL, 113). He does not state, however, whether its community was permanent. Nevertheless, both Fei Xin and the *Ming shi* note that some of Melaka's residents were descended from the Chinese, implying long-lasting settlement (see: XCSL, 54).

historian, C. Gibson, the standard opinion amongst naval architects is that a seaworthy wooden ship cannot exceed 91.4 metres (or 300ft) in length. Any larger than this and the structure becomes unstable.<sup>317</sup> Second, even if ships larger than 91.4 metres in length could be sailed successfully, it is doubtful whether Chinese craftsmen of the early Ming period had the technological capability to construct them. As Church argues, to prevent a wooden ship of this size breaking in two, a strong *longgu* (or dragon bone, equivalent to a Western keel) would be required. This would need to be made of at least two tree trunks tied together. Church does not believe Ming-period Chinese bracing technology could have accomplished this task.<sup>318</sup>

But if the *Ming shi*'s statements about the size of Zheng He's ships cannot be trusted, attention should instead be paid to Fei Xin's comment that the Treasure Ships had twelve sails.<sup>319</sup> This agrees with late sixteenth-century Chinese and European descriptions of Chinese ships; these claim that Chinese ships with twelve sails were 61 metres in length.<sup>320</sup> If this can also be applied to Zheng He's Treasure Ships, the latter would still have dwarfed any other early fifteenth-century vessel in either the Nusantara or the Indian Ocean. They would have represented (especially given their numbers) a considerable commercial opportunity for any Nusantaran ruler. That they became concentrated in Melaka suggests they likely had a pivotal role in its rise to prominence.

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<sup>317</sup> Charles E. Gibson, *The Story of the Ship from Earliest Days to the Present* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1958), 145. During the history of Western boat-building, only three wooden ships have been built in excess of 91.4 metres: the two sister ships, HMS Orlando and HMS Mersey (both launched in 1858), and the US clipper ship, the Wyoming (launched in 1909). All three, however, were structurally unsound; the Orlando and Mersey (both 102.4 metres long) suffered from separating hull timbers, while the Wyoming (at 137.1 metres long, far closer to the supposed size of the Treasure Ships) flexed during high seas. Indeed, it eventually sank in 1924 during a storm (see: 'HMS Orlando [1858] [2<sup>nd</sup>]: Wooden Screw Frigate 32-gun,' Britain's Navy, available at: <http://www.britainsnavy.co.uk/Ships/HMS%20Orlando/HMS%20Orlando%20%281858%29%202.htm>; 'HMS Mersey [1858] [2<sup>nd</sup>]: Wooden Screw Frigate 40-gun,' Britain's Navy, available at: <http://www.britainsnavy.co.uk/Ships/HMS%20Mersey/HMS%20Mersey%20%281858%29%202.htm>; John H. Lienhard, 'No. 2492: The Schooner Wyoming,' *Engines of Our Ingenuity*, [The University of Houston], available at: <http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi2492.htm>. [All accessed on: 06/01/2014]).

<sup>318</sup> Church, 'The Colossal Ships of Zheng He' in *Zheng He*, ed. Salmon and Ptak (2005), 161.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>320</sup> Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak (1998), 174.

Certainly, and as shown above, Zheng He's presence did coincide with that city's transformation into a trade empire. It therefore seems plausible that China once again forged a commercial relationship with the Nusantara capable of shaping the latter's political landscape.

It should be noted, however, that the above conclusion contradicts scholarship's existing interpretation of Melaka's rise to prominence. In that context, attention has traditionally been paid to an assertion, made by both Pires and the *Sejarah Melayu*, that Melaka reached its peak during the reign of Manşūr Shāh (d.1477). The fourth ruler according to Pires<sup>321</sup> and the sixth according to the *Sejarah Melayu*,<sup>322</sup> Manşūr Shāh ascended the Melakan throne in 1459.<sup>323</sup> This is long after Zheng He's voyages and corresponds to a point at which Chinese trade had begun to diminish (see the next section). Consequently, it has been argued that Chinese commercial influence could not have determined Melaka's expansion. Rather, because Pires identifies Indians as the city's most significant sixteenth-century foreign traders, it has been argued that the Indian Ocean probably facilitated Melaka's growth.<sup>324</sup> Any earlier relationship with China, scholars claim, is probably reducible to Melaka's need for protection against Majapahit and Siam.<sup>325</sup> Certainly, and as testified to by Ma Huan,<sup>326</sup> early fifteenth-

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<sup>321</sup> *SO*, 248.

<sup>322</sup> *SM*, 145.

<sup>323</sup> This is when the *Ming shi-lu* records the dispatch of two Chinese envoys to Melaka in order to invest Manşūr Shāh (see: *MSL*, juan 306.5a-b).

<sup>324</sup> L. Levathes, for example, claims Melaka's tribute missions provide direct evidence of trade with the Middle East. She claims that one of Parameswara's tribute missions (she does not specify which one) included ten objects called *aidai*. She identifies these as eye-glasses, somewhat similar to magnifying glasses. She claims they had never been seen in China before, having only recently been developed in Venice. That they were present in Melaka therefore suggests a link to the western half of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, Levathes argues that this link was direct: according to her, the name *aidai* is derived from the Arabic for 'eye', identified by her as *'uwaina*, suggesting these items came from the Middle East (see: Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne 1405-1433* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994], 119). All of this, however, seems to be spurious. Not only is the Arabic for 'eye' actually *ayn*, but Wade's edition of the *Ming shi-lu*, which lists every Melakan tribute mission, makes no mention of anything called an *aidai*. Indeed, it confines itself to describing Melaka's tribute missions as comprising 'local products' (for example, see: *MSL*, juan 71.1a).

<sup>325</sup> Hall, *History of South-east Asia* (1968), 209.

<sup>326</sup> *YYSL*, 108.

century Melaka was a Siamese vassal. Moreover, when Melaka changed allegiance to China, Siam was quick to express its unhappiness.<sup>327</sup>

But, although it is indeed true that Melaka probably peaked during the reign of Manşūr Shāh, its expansion during that period was based on strategic marriage and conquest, not commercial growth.<sup>328</sup> Indeed, Melaka's commercial supremacy had been established long before Manşūr Shāh's reign; only by virtue of that pre-existing supremacy was Manşūr Shāh able to conquer his neighbours and persuade members of other ruling houses to marry into his own. Melaka's earlier commercial prestige also explains why Siam was so concerned about losing it as a vassal. But, as to how this pre-existing supremacy was gained, although the *Sejarah Melayu* is silent,<sup>329</sup> Pires traces it to Melaka's second ruler, Iskandar Shāh, who he claims tried to corner the trade between Samudera-Pasai and Majapahit.<sup>330</sup> The accuracy of this claim will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4. For now, however, let it be stated that the preceding discussion demonstrates that Melaka sat within a much broader commercial framework than just Samudera-Pasai and Majapahit; during the early fifteenth century, it was also deeply involved with Chinese commerce. This is not only supported by the arguments presented above, but also by the fact that several Melakan rulers personally left their kingdom to visit China and pay homage to the Emperor. As such, Melaka's first three rulers all went to China, in some cases more than once.<sup>331</sup> That they were prepared to do so, however, undergoing a hazardous and difficult journey which would require them to

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<sup>327</sup> The *Ming shi-lu* even claims that Siam stole the aforementioned stele given by Yongle to Parameswara. It was, however, replaced (see: *MSL*, juan 72.4b-5a).

<sup>328</sup> See the account of Manşūr Shāh's reign: *SM*, 146-187.

<sup>329</sup> See the very brief and uninformative account of Melaka's commercial rise: *Ibid*, 118-128.

<sup>330</sup> *SO*, 239-242.

<sup>331</sup> Although Parameswara only visited once, Iskandar Shāh went twice. So too did Melaka's third ruler, who the *Ming shi-lu* calls Sri Maharaja (perhaps the *Sejarah Melayu*'s Muḥammad Shāh) (see: Wang Gungwu, 'The First Three Rulers of Malacca,' in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata [Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005], 37-40). Melaka's rulers, however, were by no means alone; in 1419, for example, the *Ming shi-lu* records that the rulers of seventeen different Nusantara kingdoms came to China in person to pay allegiance to Yongle (*MSL*, juan 216.1a).

leave their kingdoms in the control of others for many months (or even years)<sup>332</sup> demonstrates the influence China had over them. It certainly suggests that Melaka's relationship with China extended beyond a simple need for protection. When coupled with the evidence presented above, it suggests that, just like Śrīvijaya before it, Melaka desired to take full advantage of an opportunity to gain a privileged position within the Chinese tribute system. All this again suggests direct and substantial Chinese involvement in Melaka's affairs, in line with the requirements for a Mediterranean-like system.

Finally, it should also be noted that China's Muslims played an important role in these China-Nusantara interactions. Not only was Zheng He a Muslim (and, indeed, a *sayyid*)<sup>333</sup> but he also carried seven grand eunuchs, ten lesser eunuchs and fifty-three normal eunuchs who were also mostly Muslims.<sup>334</sup> So too were some of his interpreters (including Ma Huan)<sup>335</sup> and his navigators.<sup>336</sup> He also carried Muslim religious officials, like Ḥajī Ḥasan, the Imam of the Xian mosque.<sup>337</sup> Consequently, because many of these individuals (particularly the eunuchs) formed the 'face' of the fleet, interacting with local populations, to the outside world Zheng He's seven voyages

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<sup>332</sup> Sri Maharaja/Muḥammad Shāh, for example, stayed in China for two years (Wang, 'First Three Rulers of Malacca,' in *Admiral Zheng He*, ed. Suryadinata [2005], 26-41).

<sup>333</sup> Zheng He, who was originally called Ma He, came from Kunyang in Yunnan province. He was a direct descendent of the Bukhārī prince, Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Dīn (1211-1279), a Mongol general and former governor of Yunnan. Zheng He was therefore a member of a prominent Chinese Muslim family and a descendent of the Prophet (see: Dreyer, *Zheng He* [2007], 11-12). Moreover, in 1405 Zheng He's more immediate ancestry was inscribed on a grave memorial erected by Zheng He himself in honour of his father. This read: 'His [Zheng He's father's] name was Ha Ji and his surname was Ma. For the last several generations, he lived at Kunyang prefecture, Yunnan. His grandfather's surname was Bayan and his grandmother's surname was Ma. His father's surname was Ha Ji and his mother's surname was Wen.' As a result, both Zheng He's father and grandfather were Hajis, suggesting he came from a pious Muslim family with experience of the outside world (Ming-Yang, *Seven Epic Voyages of Zheng He* [2005], 45-46).

<sup>334</sup> Mills, 'Introduction,' in Ma Huan, *Yingyai Shenglan*, ed. Feng, trans. Mills (1970), 31.

<sup>335</sup> Wang Gungwu, 'Ma Huan,' in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644: The Ming Biographical History Project of the Association for Asian Studies*, vol. 2, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1026-1027.

<sup>336</sup> Wade, 'Zheng He Voyages,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, ed. Wade (2009), 125.

<sup>337</sup> Sen, *Zheng He* (2010), 171-172.

would have appeared to be largely Muslim enterprises. This may have coloured people's reaction to them.

To summarise, during the Yongle period China led a series of massive maritime expeditions into the Nusantara. Led by Muslims, we saw that these expeditions prompted an unprecedented degree of Chinese-Nusantara interaction. They saw an exponential rise in Chinese demand for Nusantara goods, thereby inciting a series of fundamental shifts in the Nusantara's trading patterns, all designed to help the region cope with this new level of demand. Most notably, however, these changes helped establish Melaka as the Nusantara's pre-eminent fifteenth-century (Islamic) power. This re-shaping of the Nusantara's political makeup, coupled with Melaka's use of Chinese coinage (mirroring an earlier situation on Java) and the frequent visits of numerous Nusantara rulers to China, strongly suggests the existence of a Mediterranean-like system between China and the Nusantara during the Yongle period.

### **2.5.3. From the Early Fifteenth Century until the Appearance of the First Europeans**

After 1433, China's relationship with the outside world began to change. Not only did it cease to send out large fleets, but the court restricted all tribute missions and officially banned international trade. As highlighted by B. Swanson, many factors contributed to this decision; increased Japanese piracy had begun to make ocean travel and coastal settlement dangerous, while the completion of the Grand Canal in 1411 closed the coastal transport routes and shifted attention from the construction of ocean-going vessels to canal barges. Perhaps most importantly, however, from the 1420's onwards Confucian ideals again came to the fore. Prominent Confucian elites

encouraged the Chinese court to create a state based on agrarian self-sufficiency, for which the outside world was largely irrelevant. These elites succeeded in persuading Yongle's successors to abandon all grand maritime pursuits, arguing they were both costly and of little value for China.<sup>338</sup> This led to an almost complete Chinese withdrawal from maritime affairs.

Numerous Chinese records testify to the negative impact this Confucian-inspired withdrawal had on Chinese trade. Collectively, they indicate a dramatic reduction in all Chinese commercial activity until at least the late sixteenth century. In 1577, for example, Zhang Han (1511-1593), the Governor General of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces from 1567, wrote in a work entitled *Shanggu ji*<sup>339</sup> that the sixteenth century had seen China's merchants experience a long series of severe trade restrictions. These included court monopolies, designed to limit both the production and distribution of goods, and court decrees limiting all foreign trade to tribute. The latter, however, was deliberately discouraged through the imposition of high commercial taxation.<sup>340</sup> Moreover, the *Ming shi-lu* records that, after the Portuguese were expelled from Guangzhou in 1522, both that city and several other Chinese ports were officially closed to all foreigners, whether bearing tribute or not.<sup>341</sup> This was followed in 1547 by a vigorous crack-down on all illegal trade, launched by the viceroy of Fujian, Zhu Huan. This proved largely successful, affecting Portuguese trade so badly that, in 1549, they attacked the port of Zhaoan in a desperate attempt to re-open it.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Swanson, *Eighth Voyage of the Dragon* (1982), 40-43.

<sup>339</sup> Brook, 'Merchant Network,' in *Key Papers*, vol. 2, ed. Dillon (2008), 512-513.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid, 517. The *Ming shi-lu* records a noticeable reduction in tribute missions as early as 1475; Samudera-Pasai's tribute missions, for example, ceased in that year (Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak [1998], 177).

<sup>341</sup> T'ien-Tse Chang, *Sino-Portuguese Trade from 1514 to 1644: A Synthesis of Portuguese and Chinese Sources* (Leiden: Late E. J. Brill Ltd., 1969), 68-69.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 81-83.

Traditionally, scholars have assumed that China's withdrawal from the outside world was accompanied by a proportional decrease in its interaction with the Nusantara.<sup>343</sup> This would have presumably ended any Mediterranean-like system between the two regions. Furthermore, scholars have also argued that, to compensate for the resultant loss in trade, the Nusantara turned to the Indian Ocean. Indeed, given that Melaka's early commercial dominance was largely dependent on China, it must be asked why its commercial status did not decline after 1433 if it remained dependent on that source of income. Rather, both B. Watson Andaya and L. Thomaz cite its continued prosperity as evidence that Melaka's closest commercial partner (at least in later years) was not China, but the (particularly Eastern) Indian Ocean. Both argue that Melaka's rulers filled the trade deficit created by China's withdrawal with Indian Ocean commerce.<sup>344</sup>

Certainly, in light of the consistently important role the Eastern Indian Ocean played in Nusantara affairs, this scenario is plausible. Equally, there are numerous points which support it. Pires's account, for example, asserts that early sixteenth-century Melakan commerce was Indian Ocean-dominated, with Western Indian Ocean people settling in Melaka (after travelling there from Gujarat)<sup>345</sup> and people of Indian

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<sup>343</sup> In addition to Watson Andaya and Thomaz, see: Michael N. Pearson, 'Islamic Trade, Shipping, Port-States and Merchant Communities in the Indian Ocean, Seventh to Sixteenth Centuries,' in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 326-327.

<sup>344</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities of the Islamic World*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 314; Luis Filipe Ferreira Reis Thomaz, 'The Indian Merchant Communities in Malacca under the Portuguese Rule,' in *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, ed. Teotonio R. de Souza (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1985), 58; Luis Filipe Ferreira Reis Thomaz, 'Melaka and Its Merchant Communities at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century,' in *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea*, ed. Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 24-39.

<sup>345</sup> Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities*, ed. Bosworth (2007), 314; *SO*, 269. For example, a woman who helped the Portuguese conquer Melaka was reputedly Persian – although, of all the Portuguese sources which describe the fall of Melaka, only Manuel de Faria e Sousa explicitly states this (see: Manuel de Faria e Sousa, 'Asia Portuguesa,' in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado [Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993], 109). Fernão Lopes da Castanheda, however, implies a Persian connection when he states that the woman took in Duarte Fernandes (a Persian convert to Christianity) because they spoke the same language (see: Fernão



origin becoming officials in the Melakan court<sup>346</sup> (a claim supported by the *Sejarah Melayu*).<sup>347</sup> By contrast, Pires states that by the early sixteenth century the Chinese were a very small group, of little account.<sup>348</sup> Still further support can be found in the long-term effects of the Black Death. Although the Black Death initially led to a sharp decrease in the Western Indian Ocean's commercial activity (see section 2.5.1), by the fifteenth century the opposite was true. Although largely limited to Europe,<sup>349</sup> from 1400 onwards there was a surge in demand for the Nusantara's spices.<sup>350</sup> European import records show that from 1400 to 1500, the spice trade (especially in nutmeg, cloves and mace) grew between 155% and 177%, with the largest increases occurring after 1470.<sup>351</sup> With the majority of the imported spices originating in the Nusantara and arriving in Europe via the Middle East, it might be expected that Western Indian Ocean merchants (or their Indian middlemen) would have been drawn into the Nusantara in increasing numbers during this period. If so, this would lend further credence to Pires's observations and to any argument in favour of an increasingly strong Melaka-Indian Ocean link from the 1430's onwards.

Taken all together, the above paints a compelling picture: from the early 1430's until the latter part of the sixteenth century, the basis for a previously strong China-Nusantara relationship had been undermined while contact with the Indian Ocean seems to have increased, spurred on by Europe's increasingly high level of demand for the

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Lopes de Castanheda, 'History on the Conquest of India by the Portuguese. Book I and II,' in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado [Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993], 91).

<sup>346</sup> Pires claims Manşūr Shāh's top two advisors were Hindu: a former slave from Palembang and an Indian. The latter eventually rose to be chief of the exchequer (see: *SO*, 249).

<sup>347</sup> This text does not mention Manşūr Shāh's Hindu advisors, but does claim that the reign of Melaka's third ruler saw the elder brother of the Hindu Raja of Kalinga become a court minister. This elder brother had fled to Melaka after a dispute with the Raja (see: *SM*, 129-130).

<sup>348</sup> *SO*, 116.

<sup>349</sup> Dols, *Black Death in the Middle East* (1977), 286.

<sup>350</sup> David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, ed. Samuel K. Cohn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 47-48.

<sup>351</sup> Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 (2009), 800.

Nusantara's spices. This would suggest the Nusantara's focus of attention, and so the greatest possibility of a Mediterranean-like system, would have been with the Indian Ocean. But, before accepting all this as conclusive, a number of problems should be discussed.

First, during this period archaeological deposits reveal no more evidence for Indian Ocean (East or West) activity in the Nusantara than during the Yuan period. Trade undoubtedly continued, but no wrecks survive, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions. By contrast, and as noted above, many wrecks of Chinese-Southeast Asian hybrid design have been found, such as the Royal Nanhai wreck (dated to c.1460).<sup>352</sup> Although these could have originated from either China or the Nusantara, all carried Chinese goods. As such, they indicate continued commercial contact between the regions. Supporting this further is the fact that a number of Chinese loanwords entered Malay vocabulary at about this time, all related to shipping and trade.<sup>353</sup> As with the Malay word for clove, they suggest a significant level of Chinese influence over the Nusantara's maritime activities, including its trade. By contrast, although the advent of Islam brought many Arabic and Persian religious words into the Malay lexicon, far fewer words associated with trade can be found.<sup>354</sup>

The second point to note relates to Pires: despite his comment about the insignificance of the Chinese in Melaka (a point which scholars tend to privilege), he actually provides more evidence for their importance. For example, he claims that during the late fifteenth century trade with China yielded such high profits that the

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<sup>352</sup> Sjostrand and Barnes, 'The Turiang,' *JMBRAS* 74:1 (2001): 75.

<sup>353</sup> As given by A. Hamilton, these include (but are not limited to): *bali* (from *ba li*, meaning a passenger space on board a junk), *cincu* (*zun zu*, either the supercargo of a ship or a shipowner's representative), *ci* (*shi*, a measurement of weight), *sampan* (*san ban*, a small boat), *kangka* (*gang ka*, a landing place near the limits of upstream navigation), *toko* (*duo ge*, warehouse), *tekang* (*dai gong*, a coxswain) and *ciyau* (*ge jin*, to row standing) (see: A. W. Hamilton, 'Chinese Loan-Words in Malay,' *JMBRAS* 2:1 [1924]: 48-56).

<sup>354</sup> Two prominent exceptions are the Persian *Shahbandar* (harbour master) and *pasar* (market place).

rulers of Melaka, Java and Siam all sent their best products there.<sup>355</sup> He describes Guangzhou (although, at this point, without having visited it) as a great port, with an abundance of products and many large junks.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, when it comes to the number of Chinese ships said to frequent Melaka, Pires paints a very interesting picture; he claims ten Chinese junks visited Melaka each year.<sup>357</sup> Indeed, this is supported by a 1510 letter by Rui de Araujo: written independently of Pires, and on the basis of eye-witness testimony gathered while de Araujo was held captive by the Sultan of Melaka, this letter claims between eight and ten Chinese ships visited the city annually.<sup>358</sup> This is significant because neither author describes any other region from outside the Nusantara sending this number of ships to Melaka (from within the Nusantara most ships came from Java, which Pires claims sent between fifty and sixty ships annually, both large and small).<sup>359</sup> Consequently, although perhaps small in comparison to Zheng He's fleets, even during the early sixteenth century China seems to have maintained a significant level of commercial contact with Melaka.<sup>360</sup> Indeed, when Pires notes the relative value of the revenue (in the form of presents) generated by the Chinese trade with Melaka, he states:

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<sup>355</sup> SO, 118.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, 121-123.

<sup>358</sup> Sá, trans., 'History of the Portuguese in the Far East. Vol. I,' in *Portuguese Documents*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. Pintado (1993), 137. Equally, the account of Melaka attributed to Albuquerque claims five Chinese junks were in port when the Portuguese arrived (see: Afonso Dalboquerque II, *The Commentaries of Afonso Dalboquerque, Second Viceroy of India*, vol. 3, trans. Walter de Gray Birch [London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880], 97-98). This is one more than Pires claims the Gujaratis sent per year (see section 2.2.2.2).

<sup>359</sup> SO, 282.

<sup>360</sup> It should also be added that Pires claims Melaka received up to three junks a year from the Ryukyu Islands (Ibid, 130). After 1435, trade between the Nusantara and the Ryukyu Islands increased dramatically. This was because the Chinese court still accepted tribute from these islands, meaning they could be used to circumvent Chinese trade restrictions. As such, the cargo these three junks carried may also have ultimately been bound for China (see: Ptak, 'Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia,' in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, ed. Guillot, Lombard and Ptak [1998], 171-173). For the Nusantara as a whole, Pires claims China had 1,000 junks (although not necessarily very large) which traded wherever they wished (SO, 122-123).

[Those presents] from China were larger than from all other parts...amount[ing] to a great deal because the number of sea-traders who paid presents is considerable.<sup>361</sup>

This also implies that China was still very significant. Similarly, another Portuguese letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1512 describes how João de Moraes was dissuaded from travelling to China by Melakan Muslim merchants; they were afraid of losing the enormous profits they gained from this trade and chose to jealously guard it.<sup>362</sup> Also, if Zhang Han's source is considered as a whole, it actually reveals a robust level of Chinese international trade; it describes how many inhabitants of Fujian, for example, engaged in international trade illegally. The administrative book of Huian County (in Fujian) supports this, with numerous references to cash cropping within China to produce goods for illegal export.<sup>363</sup>

All this seems to indicate that China probably remained an important commercial player in the Nusantara, even after Zheng He. Indeed, and basing himself on similar evidence, Reid claims the fifteenth century probably saw no significant change (and perhaps even an increase) in the volume of Chinese shipping entering the Nusantara.<sup>364</sup> This undermines both Watson Andaya's and Thomaz's argument; it suggests that significant levels of trade continued between the Nusantara and China. This could also indicate the persistence of a Mediterranean-like system. Indeed, adding to the likelihood of this possibility, and linking with the aforementioned instances of Nusantara-bound Chinese migration under both the Yuan Dynasty and Hongwu, is the *Ming shi-lu*'s record of various Nusantara envoys who visited the Ming court during the fifteenth century. As discussed in section 2.2.1.2.1, because the *Song shi* lists nine

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<sup>361</sup> SO, 274.

<sup>362</sup> Ronald Bishop Smith, *A Projected Portuguese Voyage to China in 1512 and New Notices Relative to Tome Pires in Canton* (Bethesda, MD: Decatur Press Inc., 1972), 3.

<sup>363</sup> Brook, 'Merchant Network,' in *Key Papers*, vol. 2, ed. Dillon (2008), 528-529.

<sup>364</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 12.

Śrīvijayan envoys with Arabic names, it has been argued that during the Śrīvijaya period Arabs (albeit probably those resident in China) played an important role in the Nusantara's commerce. In light of this argument, it is significant that the early Ming period saw a large number of Nusantara envoys who were Chinese. Thus, Yan Congjian, author of the sixteenth-century text, *Shuyu zhoubi lu*, claimed that:

Most of the barbarian envoys from the four corners were not their countrymen, but the shameless Chinese who changed their names, skulked away and usurped official prerogatives.<sup>365</sup>

Indeed, according to the *Ming shi-lu*, during the fifteenth century a total of fifty-three Nusantara envoys were Chinese, approximately half of whom came from Java.<sup>366</sup> First emerging during the reign of Yongle, their presence continued until the mid-Ming. Furthermore, many were Muslims.<sup>367</sup> In 1438, for example, three Chinese Muslim envoys arrived from Majapahit, led by a man named Ma Yongliang. The latter would again act as Majapahit's chief envoy in 1443 and 1447. Melaka also sent at least one Chinese Muslim envoy, Hoja Yaliu (possibly Ḥajī 'Alī), whose original name was Xiao Mingzhu, from Jiangxi. He had apparently fled China after committing a crime, eventually becoming an official at the Melakan court. He accompanied two Melakan missions, one in 1508 and another in 1510, each time acting as an interpreter.

The *Ming shi-lu* gives the impression that all these men were merchants, present in the Nusantara because of the Chinese ban on private trade.<sup>368</sup> This had forced them to pursue a living elsewhere. But, and just as under the Song Dynasty, they must have

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<sup>365</sup> Hok-Lam Chan, 'The "Chinese Barbarian Officials" in the Foreign Tributary Missions to China during the Ming Dynasty,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88:3 (1968): 417.

<sup>366</sup> Reid, 'Flows and Seepages,' in *Sojourners and Settlers*, ed. Reid (1996), 27; Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, Vol. 2 (2009), 800. As Reid notes, because many Nusantara envoys used either Malay or Javanese names, many more of them could have been Chinese than is immediately apparent.

<sup>367</sup> Hok-Lam, "'Chinese Barbarian Officials,'" *JAOS* 88:3 (1968): 411.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 414-415.

been men of note to occupy these official positions. As traders, their reputations were likely based on the size and importance of their commerce.<sup>369</sup> This is another indication that Chinese traders (again Muslims) were playing a significant role in Nusantara affairs after Zheng He. Having migrated into the region, they had gained entry to numerous local courts. That some had adopted local names (as stated by Yan Conjian) also suggests a degree of acculturation. Nonetheless, all this strongly suggests the existence of a China-Nusantara Mediterranean-like system, irrespective of whether one was also present between the Nusantara and the Indian Ocean.

#### **2.5.4. From the Appearance of the First Europeans until 1620**

As noted in previous sections, the early sixteenth century coincides with the initial period of European expansion into the Nusantara. According to Reid, however, despite conquering Melaka and ending its role as a trade-based empire, the first Europeans had very little impact on existing Nusantara trading patterns; their early attempts to monopolise trade all failed, forcing them (whether the Portuguese, the Spanish, the English or the Dutch) to become just one more commercially interested group within a pre-existing trade framework. Only after 1620 did more effective European (particularly Dutch) monopolies come into being, fundamentally altering the region's commercial makeup.<sup>370</sup> Until then, however, the status quo continued much as before. As such, how can the Nusantara's relationships with the Indian Ocean and China be characterised between the early sixteenth century and 1620, the final period to be considered here?

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<sup>369</sup> Hok-Lam, "Chinese Barbarian Officials", *JAOS* 88:3 (1968): 416.

<sup>370</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 23.

Using early European sources, McPherson has again argued for an ‘Extended Indian Ocean’ dominated by Middle Eastern merchants.<sup>371</sup> Maintaining his Yuan-period reconstruction of Nusantara trade, he extends it into the Ming period, providing several compelling arguments for doing so. For example, he notes that the rise of the Europeans in the Indian Ocean paralleled a proportional increase in the commercial vigorousness of indigenous states, designed to counteract European (particularly Portuguese) influence and maintain the original trade networks. In the Bay of Bengal, for example, Masulipatnam (then part of the Mughal-controlled Deccan) developed a thriving sixteenth-century trade with the Nusantara, mediated through Aceh. In the Maldives, where the Portuguese lost control less than a decade after arriving, another thriving trade base developed, and which again mediated between the Indian Ocean and the Nusantara via Aceh. Equally, Malabar developed several fleets able to take on the Portuguese, thereby enabling that region to also continue trading with the Nusantara. On Sri Lanka, although the Portuguese controlled the coast, they could not defeat the inland kingdom of Kandy or prevent it trading in its own right.<sup>372</sup>

Concerning McPherson’s comments about Western Indian Ocean involvement in the above process, he argues that by the mid-1540’s, after continued Portuguese efforts to monopolise the pepper trade, an alternative Muslim-operated trade route sprang up between Aceh, the Maldives and the Red Sea.<sup>373</sup> Bypassing India entirely, by the 1560’s a stream of Acehnese ships were plying this route, bringing the Nusantara and Western Indian Ocean into direct contact.<sup>374</sup> By 1600, European accounts were speaking of Turks (or Rumes) in Aceh, Banten, Banda and Ternate.<sup>375</sup> Indeed, early seventeenth-century Acehnese religious texts, as well as displaying clear evidence of

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<sup>371</sup> McPherson, *Indian Ocean* (1998), 137-138.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid*, 168-169.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid*, 169.

<sup>374</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 20-21; Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization* (1985), 66.

<sup>375</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 22.

Middle Eastern theological influence (see Chapter 7), also speak of Middle Eastern peoples settling in Aceh. Al-Ranīrī (d.1658), for example, an Indian *‘ālim* (religious scholar) who visited Aceh during the 1570’s and 1580’s, records the presence there of the Makkan scholars Muḥammad Azharī and Abū al-Khayr, in addition to the Arab scholar Muḥammad al-Yamanī.<sup>376</sup> Early Portuguese sources also speak of several hundred Turkish soldiers being sent to Aceh in the late 1530’s, to help defend the city against their attacks.<sup>377</sup>

This evidence for direct Nusantara-Western Indian Ocean contact is compelling. The Nusantara’s links with the Western Indian Ocean in particular appear to have increased and to have involved the transfer of both people and ideas. That various Indian civilizations re-grouped and maintained their trade networks after the arrival of the Europeans indicates that any earlier Nusantara-Eastern Indian Ocean relationship probably also continued into this period, too. All this suggests a Mediterranean-like system between these regions. However, it should also be noted that much of the above relates only to Aceh. Although various early European sources speak of Indian Ocean traders and Arab missionaries deeper within the Nusantara, these people were always less numerous.<sup>378</sup> As such, whether a Mediterranean-like system can be assumed beyond North Sumatra and the Straits is unclear. As shall be argued in Chapter 3, these locations, because of their position at the very edge of the Nusantara, may have enjoyed a uniquely close relationship with the Indian Ocean. Generalising their experience across the entire region may therefore be undesirable.

Turning to Chinese trade over the same period, in 1567 the Longqing Emperor (r.1567-1572) lifted China’s ban on private trade. Instituting a licensing system akin to

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<sup>376</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 144.

<sup>377</sup> See: Ismail Hakki Göksoy, ‘Ottoman-Aceh Relations as Documented in Turkish Sources,’ in *Mapping the Acehnese Past*, ed. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly and Anthony Reid (Leiden: KITLV, 2011), 65-96.

<sup>378</sup> For examples, see: Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 22 and 184.



the one in use during the Song, fifty-five Chinese junks were licensed to trade in the Nusantara during the first year. By 1588, this had risen to eighty-eight and, by 1597, one hundred and fifty-seven.<sup>379</sup> The latter level was maintained until 1620, no doubt augmented by illegal trade (for which there are no figures). As such, from 1567, and despite any earlier dips, the Nusantara's Chinese trade appears to have taken off again. Certainly, in 1567, when the Spanish were just beginning to establish themselves in the Philippines, Governor Miguel López de Legazpi (d.1572) wrote to Philip II to report large amounts of Chinese trade in both Luzon and Mindoro. It would be desirable, he said, to attract this trade, as it was worth a great deal.<sup>380</sup> To this end, memoranda were sent to Mexico stressing the importance of exporting silver to the Philippines because this metal was highly prized in China.<sup>381</sup> By 1571, with silver now their chief trading commodity, the Spanish were fully engaged with the Chinese trade networks; according to Hernando Riquel, a Government Notary in 1570's Manila, in 1572 three Chinese ships arrived in the city, with another five visiting the surrounding islands.<sup>382</sup> By 1575, Captain Juan Pacheco Maldonado (d.1575) wrote to Philip II saying:

There are many Chinese there [in the Philippines]. They have their own agency for the collection of pepper. Twelve or fifteen ships from the mainland of China come each year to the city of Manila, laden with merchandise...and [take] everything in the same abundance as in España and the Indies, so that they lack for nothing.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Reid, *Age of Commerce*, Vol. 2 (1988), 19. In 1589, just over half of these ships were licensed to travel to Borneo and the Philippines, while the remainder were destined for the Straits (of which eight went to West Java, eight to Cochin China, seven to South Sumatra, four to Siam, three to Cambodia and another three to Champa).

<sup>380</sup> Ch'en Ching-ho, *The Chinese Community in the Sixteenth Century Philippines*, East Asian Cultural Studies Series no. 12 (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1968), 27. This source is essentially a collection of primary Spanish texts, with some accompanying analysis. It forms the basis of the following discussion.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 60.

This demonstrates that the Spanish trade with China had increased dramatically in just a few years. Large amounts of goods were now being exchanged, with local Chinese institutions being established to facilitate that process. Moreover, 1575 also witnessed a Chinese attack on Manila: the Chinese pirate, Lin Feng, recently driven from China by the Chinese Imperial navy, made two attempts to take the city with a fleet of sixty-two ships. Although he was repulsed, the Spanish became deeply concerned. Growing increasingly wary of Chinese military might, they began to reduce trade with China in an attempt to limit Chinese influence in Manila.<sup>384</sup> By 1577, however, it was realised that the Spanish could not survive in the Nusantara without access to China's trade. The latter accounted for most of the Philippines' commerce. Consequently, in that year Governor Francisco de Sande (d.1627) implored Philip II to issue a new decree reversing the embargo. He further proposed exempting the Chinese from all customs duties for the next thirty years, as an incentive to bring them back.<sup>385</sup> These measures quickly took effect and, by 1587, the new Governor, Santiago de Vera (in office until 1590), could state:

Many vessels have come to these islands from China this year...more than thirty of considerable burden, laden with a quantity of merchandise...and more than three thousand men.<sup>386</sup>

A significant profit, de Vera claims, could be made from this trade because the Chinese sold their goods so cheaply. This picture is largely supported by another account, written the following year by Bishop Salazar (d.1594):

Twenty merchantmen generally sail hither each year from China, each one carrying at least one hundred men, who trade...They bring hither two

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<sup>384</sup> Ch'en, *Chinese in the Philippines* (1968), 40-41.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid, 76.

hundred thousand *pesos*’ worth of merchandise...and in such abundance that the city and its environs are supported thereby during the whole year.<sup>387</sup>

Although the number of ships and men varies in each account, both indicate a considerable, highly profitable trade. Reinforcing this, Mexican commercial records from this period indicate that Chinese cloth was being imported into the Spanish colony in such large quantities that it threatened the Spanish economy by pricing out home products. Equally, the large amount of silver still being exported (between 300,000 and 500,000 *pesos* each year) was beginning to prove problematical – so much so that, in 1586, Philip II once again tried to prohibit trade with China. The viceroy of Mexico, however, Marqués de Villamanrique (d.1590), objected on the grounds that the Spanish could not maintain themselves without it, either in the Philippines or Mexico. He also felt the natives would rebel if it were stopped, as their access to cheap, high-quality goods would end.<sup>388</sup> All this indicates both the high volume and extreme significance of Chinese trade, at least for the Spanish. By contrast, Philippine-Indian Ocean interaction, as mediated through the Straits of Malacca, seems to have been relatively insignificant. Certainly, the Spanish paid comparatively little attention to it.<sup>389</sup>

The above situation, however, was not limited to the Philippines or the Spanish – it was also shared by the Dutch on Java. As L. Blussé states, the records of the VOC (the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or Dutch East India Company) indicate a parallel situation: at least initially, Dutch Batavia was almost wholly dependent on Chinese trade. Thus, and just as the Spanish had done, when the Dutch first arrived in the Nusantara in 1596, they noted the importance of Chinese trade for the local economy. Comprising high quality goods, they realised a considerable profit could be

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<sup>387</sup> Ch’en, *Chinese in the Philippines* (1968), 77.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>389</sup> This is apparent throughout all the Spanish texts presented by Ch’en.

made from it.<sup>390</sup> As such, when planning their Nusantara headquarters, a chief Dutch consideration was ensuring easy access for the Chinese. Perhaps mirroring Yongle's policy, they initially targeted Melaka. After failing to conquer it, however, they shifted attention to Banten, then the chief terminus for all Javenese-Chinese trade. But, finding themselves unable to control the market there, in 1619 they settled on Batavia (modern-day Jakarta). Once established there, the Dutch Governor General, Jan Pieterszoon Coen (d.1629), quickly began cajoling Chinese merchants into sailing there. The consequence was a rapid increase in Dutch-Chinese trade.<sup>391</sup> Although the precise amount varied over time, during the 1620's and 1630's VOC records indicate that an average of five Chinese junks arrived in Batavia each year. Although this seems like a small number, in 1625 the same records demonstrate that the total tonnage brought by these ships exceeded that of all goods (including those from the Indian Ocean) taken back to Europe by the Dutch in the same year.<sup>392</sup> The latter was a significant amount: between 1600 and 1625, the Dutch sent an average of ten ships into the Nusantara annually,<sup>393</sup> each capable of carrying between 500 and 1,000 tons.<sup>394</sup> This amply illustrates the volume of Dutch-Chinese trade, while also serving to reinforce the significance of Chinese trade with the Spanish: because many more ships were involved in the Philippines, the volume of Spanish-Chinese trade must have been many times greater. Indeed, even the Melakan sultanate received twice as many ships as the Dutch per annum. As noted in section 2.5.2, the ships Melaka encountered were probably also the same size as those the Dutch dealt with. In any case, it is evident that Chinese trade

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<sup>390</sup> Leonard Blussé, 'Chinese Trade to Batavia during the Days of the V.O.C.,' *Archipel* 18 (1979): 195-197. Also see: Leonard Blussé, 'Batavia, 1619-1740: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town,' *JSAS* 12:1 (1981): 159-178.

<sup>391</sup> Blussé, 'Chinese Trade,' *Archipel* 18 (1979): 197.

<sup>392</sup> J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1967), 198.

<sup>393</sup> See: Carla Rahn Phillips, 'The Growth and Composition of trade in the Iberian Empires, 1450-1750,' in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 42.

<sup>394</sup> Gibson, *Story of the Ship* (1958), 121-126.

was very significant for the Dutch. Indeed, they quickly moved to monopolise it, preventing any other Nusantara ports from dealing with it. Like the Spanish, they did not attach this much importance to Indian Ocean trade.<sup>395</sup>

Given the above, and despite a significant Indian Ocean presence around North Sumatra and the Straits of Malacca, it seems that deeper within the Nusantara Chinese activity was far more significant. By 1620, both the Spanish in the Philippines and the Dutch on Java were dealing with a huge amount of Chinese commerce; given their initial motivations for accessing this trade, it is likely the Nusantara's indigenous rulers were also engaged in it. As such, the indication is that over this period China had once again developed a close commercial relationship with the Nusantara, indicative of a Mediterranean-like system. The reality of such a system is also supported by instances of yet more large-scale Chinese migration into the region. VOC records, for example, indicate that each Chinese ship which visited Batavia carried an average of 1,000 passengers. According to Governor General Pieter de Carpentier (in office from 1623-1627), only one third of these would return to China.<sup>396</sup> Equally, a similar level of migration was directed towards the Philippines: in 1585, the first general junta of the Philippines conducted a population survey which recorded between 4,000 and 5,000 Chinese residents in Manila.<sup>397</sup> Turning to other parts of the Nusantara, the Chinese writer Zhang Xie, in his *Dongxiyang kao* (1618), also testifies to large scale Chinese migration to Patani during this period.<sup>398</sup>

All this strongly suggests a Mediterranean-like system: it seems that during the period under discussion, strong Chinese-Nusantara commercial activity persisted, leading to large-scale migration and even an attempted invasion of the Philippines. As

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<sup>395</sup> Blussé, 'Chinese Trade,' *Archipel* 18 (1979).

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid*, 204.

<sup>397</sup> Ch'en, *Chinese in the Philippines* (1968), 55-56.

<sup>398</sup> Wade, 'Zheng He Voyages,' in *China and Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, ed. Wade (2009), 125.

to the role of Muslims in this process, however, no early European source associates the Chinese traders of this period with Islam. Indeed, in this context it should be noted that Quanzhou, the former centre of Chinese Muslim commerce, had been destroyed at the end of the Yuan. Its harbour had also started to silt up at that time, rendering it useless as a port for large ocean-going vessels. This development drove Chinese commerce towards other ports (notably Guangzhou), where Muslims did not predominate.<sup>399</sup> This, along with the fact that many Chinese Muslims migrated into the Nusantara from the end of the Yuan onwards, suggests Chinese Muslims no longer played a pivotal role in Chinese commerce during this later period. Consequently, they probably would not have played a key role in any Mediterranean-like system.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, after examining the available evidence over a thousand-year period, it seems that the Nusantara participated in an active commercial relationship with all of its neighbours. Although these relationships varied in both intensity and complexity over time, we saw that a potential Mediterranean-like system, founded on strong commercial ties, emerged for all the regions considered. With regard to the Eastern Indian Ocean, the evidence there was particularly strong and continuous; during the early Śrīvijaya period (and probably even before) ample evidence exists to suggest an ‘Extended East Indian Ocean,’ characterised by intense commercial activity, Indianisation, and several invasions of the Nusantara. After this period, the evidence suggests this relationship probably continued largely unchanged, right up until 1620.

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<sup>399</sup> Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions*, trans. Chen (sup. by Zheng) (1984), xiv.

Turning to the Western Indian Ocean, we saw there that the evidence for strong commercial ties varied quite widely. Although the early Chinese texts are clear that Persians and/or Arabs were the dominant foreign traders in China's southern ports from the rise of Islam until at least the Song period, whether their influence also extended into the Nusantara is unclear. The early Chinese sources, although recording the presence of Western Indian Ocean merchants in the Nusantara, do not record the degree of their engagement with it. Early Arabic texts, on the other hand, indicate an interest in the region around the Straits of Malacca, but not beyond – an impression largely supported by the archaeological evidence.

Nonetheless, we did see two periods of significant Western Indian Ocean-Nusantara interaction emerge. The first took place between the eighth and eleventh centuries, when Śrīvijaya used the caliphal *dīnār* as currency and Zhao Rugua testifies to Arab settlement in the region. But, how far beyond Śrīvijaya the *dīnār* was used is unknown (these coins are not found elsewhere) and there is no evidence of any Middle Eastern cultural and/or political influence during this period. As such, whether this first point also equated to a Mediterranean-like system is uncertain. The second period of influence, however, occurred between the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This saw direct commercial links develop between North Sumatra and the Red Sea, involving the movement of people (including the dispatch of Ottoman soldiers to Aceh to help fight the Portuguese) and ideas (evident in Acehnese religious texts, which show clear signs of Western Indian Ocean influence). All this indicates the existence of a Mediterranean-like system, but unfortunately occurs very late; it comes well after the Nusantara's Islamisation had begun. Indeed, the latter started during the late thirteenth century, by which time Indian Ocean trade had become segmented. We argued that the latter resulted in Western Indian Ocean merchants no longer sailing beyond India in

large numbers. Rather, they would stop in the latter location and pass their goods on to either Indian or Chinese merchants, who would then take them into the Nusantara. Consequently, when the Nusantara's Islamisation began, Western Indian Ocean merchants were no longer present in the region in significant numbers. A Muslim dominance of Chinese ports did continue into the Ming period, but this was as a result of overland migration under the Yuan Dynasty, not direct contact by sea.

Regarding China's links with the Nusantara, we saw that during the early Śrīvijaya period China was able to exert considerable (albeit indirect) influence over the region. Indeed, it was China's policy towards trade which essentially established Śrīvijaya as a trade-based empire. During this early period, however, China did not send its own traders into the region. As such, any claim to a Mediterranean-like system should not be overstated. From the time of the Song Dynasty onwards, however, this changed: from that point on, we saw a constant stream of evidence emerge for direct and large-scale Chinese involvement in the Nusantara. Both the surviving archaeology and literary evidence points towards China as the Nusantara's major commercial partner until at least 1620. It appears to have been both the Nusantara's largest market place and to have had larger and better ships than anywhere else, meaning it could conduct more business more safely. Indeed, by Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's time, all traders travelling between India and China made the journey on board Chinese ships. Moreover, by the early fifteenth century, Zheng He's huge voyages were taking place. These witnessed an enormous level of Chinese involvement in the region, far beyond anything the Indian Ocean ever staged. We saw that these Chinese fleets essentially sponsored the rise of Melaka as a trade-based empire and helped facilitate an unprecedented level of political contact between the two regions. Furthermore, from the late fourteenth century onwards, large numbers of Chinese people settled in the



Nusantara, establishing new cities and dominating old ones. Although people from the (especially Eastern) Indian Ocean also settled in the region at this time, perhaps becoming members of local courts, we argued that they did not come in such large numbers.

Taken together, all these factors (coupled with others, like technological exchange relating to ship design) strongly suggest a Mediterranean-like system existed between China and the Nusantara during much of the period in question. Furthermore, until the final stages of the period, China's trade was dominated (sometimes even monopolised) by Muslims. Initially, these Muslims were from the Western Indian Ocean but, over time, as direct links with their homeland diminished, they became progressively Sinicised. Consequently, any cultural influence exerted by China's post-Song Dynasty commerce could have taken the form of Islamic influence. Significantly, therefore, this period also coincides with the emergence of the Nusantara's first Islamic polities.

Ultimately, our overall discussion paints a complex picture. It seems that a Mediterranean-like system existed between the Nusantara and more than one location simultaneously. At one time or another, all of the considered locations enjoyed this type of relationship with the region. Although the strength of their relationships ebbed and flowed over time, it seems that both China and the Eastern Indian Ocean were especially capable, for much or all of the above period, of influencing the Nusantara socially, culturally and politically. In the case of China, Muslims were heavily involved in that process. Consequently, further study is required to determine whether their influence could have impacted upon the Nusantara's Islamisation, which largely coincides with their period of activity in the region. This will now form the subject of our subsequent chapters, which will begin by looking at the specific histories of various

early Nusantara Islamic polities, to see whether any evidence exists to determine who helped Islamise them.

## 3. Samudera-Pasai

### 3.1. Introduction

North Sumatra is commonly considered home to the Nusantara's first Islamic polities. Of these, Samudera-Pasai (also spelt Samudra-Pasai or just Pasai) has garnered the most attention; a mighty trading power of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, much ink has been spilt trying to trace its history. In particular, many Islamisation theories have been proposed. These have variously identified Arabs, South Indians, Gujaratis and Bengalis as possible proselytisers. Our chapter, however, will explore the possibility that Chinese Muslims should be added to this list. As such, we will begin by recounting all the early textual narratives relevant to Samudera-Pasai's conversion; in the absence of a definite archaeological site, these must underpin any understanding of the kingdom's history. Following this outline, our discussion will outline the reliability of these sources and their narratives, a task which concurrently serves to evaluate earlier Islamisation theories. Our chapter then supplements the textual evidence with a consideration of a nearby archaeological site called Kota Cina (possibly the remains of Aru, another early Islamic kingdom) and Samudera-Pasai's early fifteenth-century *Batu Aceh* tradition, the last surviving physical remnants of the kingdom. Neither of these factors has previously been discussed relative to Samudera-Pasai's conversion, but both are nonetheless pertinent: the first demonstrates a substantial Chinese presence in North Sumatra contemporary to Samudera-Pasai's conversion, while the second demonstrates Chinese influence

over a part of Samudera-Pasai's later Islamic culture. Ultimately, however, we will find that neither of these things are sufficient to conclusively demonstrate Chinese Muslim influence over Samudera-Pasai's conversion. Instead, the surviving evidence tends more towards Middle Eastern missionary activity, albeit also inconclusively.

### **3.2. The Early Sources**

#### **3.2.1. Early Non-indigenous Sources**

As briefly mentioned, the vestiges of Samudera-Pasai remain undiscovered. Only some early gravestones (mostly of the *Batu Aceh* variety) survive near Lhokseumawe.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of more substantial archaeological remains, however, historians must rely on written sources to reconstruct the kingdom's past. With regards to conversion, the non-indigenous travelogues of Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa are the earliest relevant examples.

Beginning with Marco Polo, while describing his supposed return voyage from China to Europe, perhaps made in 1292,<sup>2</sup> he briefly mentions two adjacent North Sumatran kingdoms: Basma and Samara. H. Yule, citing Arab and Persian renderings of Pasai as Basam, believes the first refers to Pasai, whereas the second is an obvious variation on Samudera. If Marco Polo did indeed obtain his information from Persian speakers (see Chapter 2), these identifications seem reasonable, if unsubstantiated. Consequently, if Yule's conclusions are accepted it

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 257.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (New York: W. W. Horton and Company, 2000), 344.

is significant that Marco Polo describes neither location as Islamic: the people of Basma ‘lived like beasts without laws or religion’<sup>3</sup> while Samara, where Marco Polo reputedly spent five months awaiting the change in monsoons, was a wealthy Hindu kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, of the eight Sumatran kingdoms Marco Polo mentions, only one was Islamic: ‘Ferlec’ (probably Perlak, also known as Peureulak). This had been:

So much frequented by the Saracen merchants that they have converted the natives to the Law of Mahomet.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, as of 1292, Marco Polo gives the impression that Samudera-Pasai was neither Islamic nor a unified kingdom. An Islamic presence associated with trade may, however, have been established in Perlak.

Turning to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, he provides a very different picture. While explicitly claiming to have visited Samudera-Pasai (probably in 1345),<sup>6</sup> he describes an established Islamic kingdom. Its ruler, al-Malik al-Zāhir, presided over a court where jurists, theological discussion and Qur’anic recitation were common place. The Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* was avidly followed and many Persians resided in the city.<sup>7</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa does not, however, state how or when Islam arrived.

Aside from the above, the only other relevant, non-indigenous account of Samudera-Pasai comes from Tomé Pires. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, Pires’s *Suma Oriental* attributes the kingdom’s conversion to Bengali merchants:

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<sup>3</sup> *LMM*, 285.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 292.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 284.

<sup>6</sup> *RIB*, 322.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 256.

Pase [Pasai] use to have heathen kings, and it must be a hundred and sixty years now [c. 1353-56] since the said kings were worn out by the cunning of the merchant Moors...[who] made a Moorish king of the Bengale caste, and from that time until now the kings of Pase have always been Moors.<sup>8</sup>

To support this claim, Pires reports a Samudera-Pasai custom that any man who kills the king becomes king himself (provided he is a Muslim). This, Pires states, is also the case in Bengal.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2.2. The Indigenous Sources

Turning now to the indigenous sources, only one describes Samudera-Pasai's conversion: its court chronicle, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* ('The Chronicle of the Pasai Kings').<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the earliest surviving Malay chronicle (see section 3.3), it begins by claiming Samudera-Pasai was the Nusantara's first Islamic kingdom – although ultimately it provides no specific dates.<sup>11</sup> The events leading up its conversion, however, started in Samarlanga, also on the north coast of Sumatra. For the sake of the following discussion, it is worth briefly relating them.

According to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, two brothers, Raja Muḥammad and Raja Aḥmad, settled in Samarlanga, each founding a city. Soon after, both decided to adopt a child: Raja Muḥammad chose a young girl he found in the hollow of a bamboo stem, and whom he called Puteri Betung, and Raja Aḥmad a handsome young boy called Merah Gajah. Once grown up, Merah Gajah married Puteri

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<sup>8</sup> SO, 143.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 143-144.

<sup>10</sup> The following account is based upon the version of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* contained in Raffles Malay 67. The reason for this choice is explained below. It should be noted that the *Sejarah Melayu* also contains an account of Samudera-Pasai's conversion. This, however, is copied from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* and so need not be considered separately (see: SM, 107).

<sup>11</sup> 'Maka ada diceriterakan oleh orang yang empunya ceritera ini, negeri yang di bawah angin ini, Pasailah yang pertama membawa iman akan Allah dan akan Rasulullah' (HRP, 3).

Betung and, together, they had two children: Merah Silau (or Silu) and Merah Hasum.<sup>12</sup>

Although the marriage between Merah Gajah and Puteri Betung was a happy one, Merah Gajah soon became fascinated by a single golden hair on top of his wife's head. When questioned about it, Puteri Betung refused to allow him to pluck it. Nonetheless, one evening, while she slept, and thinking no harm would come of it, Merah Gajah pulled it from her head. As a result, Puteri Betung died soon after. When news of this reached Raja Muḥammad, he became so enraged that he killed Merah Gajah. Raja Aḥmad quickly launched a war of retaliation, during which both his and his brother's kingdoms were destroyed; only Merah Silau and Merah Hasum survived. Rather than stay and rebuild their ancestral homeland, however, both princes decided to travel west.

Striking out together, they came to a country called Biruan (also rendered Berawan or Beruana, possibly modern day Bireuen on the west bank of the Pasangan River).<sup>13</sup> Each established a settlement there, but soon found neither could live happily side-by-side with the other. As a result, Merah Hasum asked Merah Silau to leave. Merah Silau did so, travelling to a place called Buluh Telang (also on the Pasangan River). There the local ruler, Megat Sekandar (or Iskandar), invited him to stay. Soon Sekandar became deeply impressed by Merah Silau's wealth and good manners; together with his brother, Megat Kedah, he decided to make Merah Silau king. Readily accepting this honour, Merah Silau began his rule by attacking the father of these two brothers, Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir, the ruler of Rimba Jerana (an unidentified location). Apparently overlord to his two sons, al-Malik al-Nāṣir was quickly overcome by Merah Silau, leaving the latter as the sole

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<sup>12</sup> *HRP*, 3-7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

authority in the area. With Merah Silau's position thus secured, he resettled in a new location, which he named Samudera.<sup>14</sup>

After narrating the above, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* proceeds to claim that, while still alive, the Prophet Muḥammad had said:

After I have died, there will be a land from beneath the wind [i.e. in the Nusantara] called Samudera. When you hear news of this nation, dispatch a ship with the royal regalia and bring the people of that nation into Islam...There shall also be a *faqīr* [beggar or pauper] in the land called Mengiri [or Ma'abri]; take him with you to Samudera.<sup>15</sup>

As such, when news reached Makkah of Merah Silau and his new city, a ship was promptly made ready and placed under the command of a man called Shaykh Ismā'īl. Once this ship had been dispatched, and as instructed, it stopped at Mengiri/Ma'abri (usually associated with South India, see Chapter 1) to take on board a *faqīr* named Muḥammad. A descent of the first caliph, Abū Bakr, this Muḥammad had previously been the Sultan of Mengiri/Ma'abri; when he heard about Shaykh Ismā'īl's mission, however, he abdicated in order to don the mantle of ascetic. The ship's crew now complete, Shaykh Ismā'īl set off once again and made directly for Samudera.<sup>16</sup> When he arrived, he learnt that Merah Silau had recently experienced a dream in which the Prophet had appeared to him, renamed him al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and (after spitting in his mouth) given him the ability to recite both the *shahāda* and Qur'an, thereby converting him to Islam. After hearing about this dream, Shaykh Ismā'īl knew he was in the right place and, together with

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<sup>14</sup> HRP, 7-13.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Although the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* makes this a direct journey, the later *Sejarah Melayu* claims Shaykh Ismā'īl first visited (and converted) Fansuri, Lamuri and Aru (also all in North Sumatra) (see: SM, 107).



the *faqīr* Muḥammad, proceeded to convert the rest of the city.<sup>17</sup> Once this conversion was complete, both Shaykh Ismāʿīl and Muḥammad left, leaving al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to found another city, Pasai, which he gave to his son, al-Malik al-Ṭāhir. This created the joint kingdom of Samudera-Pasai.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.3. Evaluating the Accounts of Samudera-Pasai's Conversion

Collectively, the accounts just given offer a great deal of variation: conversion is variously ascribed to the work of Arabs, South Indians and Bengalis. Persians are also mentioned, but it is unclear whether they played a missionary role. As for when conversion may have occurred, no specific dates are given but, when taken together, Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa suggest the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century. Pires, on the other hand, points to the mid-fourteenth century. But which (if any) of these accounts can be relied upon?

Beginning with Marco Polo, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is unlikely he visited China, let alone the Nusantara. Although he probably travelled to the Middle East, and perhaps also Central Asia, he almost certainly did not go any further. Consequently, his account of Basma and Samara (even if it refers to actual locations) cannot be first-hand. Rather, it probably reflects information obtained indirectly, either from the Middle East, Central Asia or elsewhere. Consequently, whether it is accurate and/or refers to the situation in North Sumatra in c.1292 is far from clear.

Turning to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, his reference to Persians in Samudera-Pasai is unique. Because other parts of his text (such as the name of the ruler and the

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<sup>17</sup> *HRP*, 13-17.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

presence of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*) are verifiable, however, there may be some basis to it. Indeed, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* does carry some clear indications of Persian influence. For example, the text's main theme is kingship coupled with a belief in a harmonious world protected by the ruler. The latter is the bearer of sacral power, to whom all subjects should remain loyal, no matter what. As pointed out by V. Braginsky, this is essentially the Persian model of kingship.<sup>19</sup> Although this need not, in and of itself, mean the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s concept of kingship is also Persian (as opposed to something which arrived in Sumatra via a third, Persian-influenced party), Braginsky also notes that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* borrows extensively from an earlier Persian text called the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (see Chapter 7).<sup>20</sup> Independently of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, this undoubtedly points towards a Persian presence at Samudera-Pasai – a presence influential enough to shape the kingdom's court chronicle. How this may relate to conversion, however, is unclear.

Turning to Pires's *Suma Oriental*, although a generally reliable text (see Chapter 4), its claims about Samudera-Pasai cannot be substantiated; no other source corroborates its version of events, specifically that conversion occurred in the mid-fourteenth century due to Bengali intervention. Indeed, as noted by I. MacGregor, despite being well informed about other parts of the region, Pires had comparatively little information to go on concerning Sumatra. Consequently, there is no reason to accept his claims.<sup>21</sup> Despite this, however, and as noted in Chapter 1, S. Q. Fatimi has attempted to bolster Pires's position. Some of the arguments he uses to do this (such as reading *Mengiri* instead of *Ma'abri*) were recounted in

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<sup>19</sup> V. I. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 183-184.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>21</sup> I. A. MacGregor, 'Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 124.

Chapter 1. In addition, however, Fatimi also points to the fact that Bengal introduced Mahayana Buddhism into the Nusantara. This, he claims, establishes a long-standing, religiously-orientated connection between the two regions. This could have been carried over into the initial period of Islamisation.<sup>22</sup> To further support this, Fatimi turns to the Malay *sarong*; he notes that Duarte Barbosa (writing in 1518) claims Bengalis:

[wear] girdles of cloth and over them silk scarves...[with] daggers garnished with silver and gold, according to the rank of the person, carried in their girdles.<sup>23</sup>

This Fatimi likens to the traditional Malay *sarong*, so again suggesting cultural influence. But, in and of themselves, neither this point nor the previous one prove anything. Bengal may have had a religiously-orientated connection to the pre-Islamic Nusantara, but nothing suggests this is relevant to Samudera-Pasai's later Islamisation. Turning to the *sarong*, it is unclear what this item of clothing indicates about Islamisation; it is not, whether in the Nusantara or elsewhere, a specifically Islamic form of dress. Moreover, and as Fatimi himself notes, early sources are actually more likely to speak of Tamils wearing this article of clothing. Indeed, Tamils call it a *saran* (from the Sanskrit *saranga*),<sup>24</sup> which resembles the Malay term. Consequently, it is probable that the latter is derived from the former.

Of all the accounts reviewed above, however, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* is arguably the most important because it comes directly from the kingdom itself. When determining its historicity, however, it is crucial to first establish when it was written; if it originates from a period near to the events in question, it could be

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<sup>22</sup> S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirk Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 20.

of great value. Unfortunately, however, none of the texts' three manuscript versions give a date of composition. These three texts are: MS Raffles Malay 67 (henceforth Raffles 67) kept in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London; the incomplete MS No. Mal.-Pol. 50 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and the also incomplete MS Or. 14350 in the British Library. As the Paris MS is a copy of the Raffles 67, made in 1838 by the French scholar Édouard Dulaurier,<sup>25</sup> it can be dismissed here. Of the other two, however, the only dates provided refer to when the manuscripts were copied: Raffles 67 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1815<sup>26</sup> and MS Or. 14350 in 1797.<sup>27</sup> None of this helps determine when the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* was initially composed. To do this, scholars turn to its contents.

As MS Or. 14350 is incomplete, discussions rely on Raffles 67. Appealing to this version of the text, R. O. Winstedt has noted that its final episode depicts Majapahit's 1360 conquest of Samudera-Pasai.<sup>28</sup> This implies that the text could not have been written prior to the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>29</sup> To this observation, R. Roolvink adds that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* fails to use any Melakan court language, which was introduced during the mid-fifteenth century. Because this type of language was commonly used in all post-fifteenth-century Malay chronicles, its absence in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* suggests the latter was written before then.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* fails to mention Melaka at all. Given the latter's prominence and Samudera-Pasai's possible role in its affairs (see

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<sup>25</sup> Russell Jones, 'Pengenalan,' in *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, ed. Russell Jones (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan dan Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1999), xiii.

<sup>26</sup> This date comes from the text's hijrī date: *Tamat hari Isnin, kepada hari dua puluh sa, kepada bulan Muharam, sanat zai Hijratul Nabi 1230* (Ibid, xiv).

<sup>27</sup> Or 1211 AH (Ibid, xv).

<sup>28</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 103.

<sup>29</sup> R. O. Winstedt, 'The Chronicle of Pasai,' *JMBRAS* 16:2 (1938): 24-30.

<sup>30</sup> R. Roolvink, 'Hikajat Radja-Radja Pasai,' *Bahasa dan Budaja* 2:3 (1954): 6.

Chapter 4) this is puzzling – unless, that is, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* was written before the rise of Melaka, generally thought to have occurred shortly after 1400.

Adding to the above, V. Braginsky draws attention to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s uniform nature. Believing the text to be a well-integrated whole, centred on a common theme (the rise and fall of a kingdom in relation to its observance of ethical principles), Braginsky feels the final text must have been composed by a single author; it is too consistent to be the work of multiple writers. As such, the entire text (including the conversion narrative) could potentially date from the same period. As to precisely when, Braginsky observes that the text is very critical of Sultan Aḥmad I, Samudera-Pasai's final ruler prior to Majapahit's invasion. From Chinese sources, it is known that this ruler did indeed exist, and that he regained the throne in 1387, when Samudera-Pasai re-asserted its independence from Majapahit.<sup>31</sup> When he died, however, is unknown. Nonetheless, Braginsky argues that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* must have been written after 1387 – that is, after the last point at which Aḥmad I is known to have been on the throne. This is because no author would have been brave enough to criticise a reigning Sultan. As such, and given Roolvink's observations, Braginsky speculates that the reign of Aḥmad I's son, Sultan Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (who died in either 1405 or the 1430's), provides a likely time of authorship: Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, who presided over Samudera-Pasai's rejuvenation as a regional power, would have been interested in explaining Samudera-Pasai's earlier fall while also reigning prior to Melaka's rise to prominence.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, a date of authorship between 1387 and either 1405 or the 1430's seems likely, making the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* a very early source and therefore of potential value. Indeed, evidence does exist which may support the

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<sup>31</sup> *MSL*, juan 46.2a-b.

<sup>32</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 111.

*Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account: namely, the gravestone of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ.

Found near Lhokseumawe, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's gravestone bears a brief but very clear inscription, including both his name and date of death – Ramaḍān 697AH or June/July 1297. First recorded in the early twentieth century, when Dutch scholars stumbled across it after the conquest of Aceh, this gravestone was not linked to Samudera-Pasai's conversion until J. P. Moquette examined it in 1912. Correctly associating it with Samudera-Pasai's first Muslim ruler, Moquette proceeded to compare it with other early regional gravestones; he felt it most closely resembled those imported from Cambay, notably that belonging to Malik Ibrāhīm, found in Gresik and dated 1414. He therefore concluded that it was of Gujarati provenance, thereby implicating that region in Samudera-Pasai's Islamisation.<sup>33</sup>

This argument, however, and despite becoming widespread amongst later scholars,<sup>34</sup> is seriously flawed: the gravestone of Malik Ibrāhīm, although undoubtedly of Gujarati origin (exact copies exist in Cambay),<sup>35</sup> bears little resemblance to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's. As such, the Gresik stone is a large, arched shaped monument of white marble, profusely ornamented with low-relief trees, lamps and floriated Kufic script (see **Fig. 1**).<sup>36</sup> By contrast, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's much smaller gravestone is made of light-coloured sandstone and decorated with substantially different motifs (**Fig. 2**). It also has distinctive *subang* (earring)

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<sup>33</sup> See: J. P. Moquette, 'De Grafesteenen te Pasé en Grisee Vergeleken met Dergelijke Monumenten uit Hindoestan,' *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 54 (1912): 536-548.

<sup>34</sup> Indeed, it remained common into the 1990's. See: M. C. Ricklefs, ed., *Islam in the Indonesian Social Context*, Annual Indonesian Lecture Series no. 15 (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Gordon (1963), 31-32.

<sup>36</sup> The figures cited in this chapter can be found in the 'Samudera-Pasai' section of the Appendix.

features halfway up each side, which essentially reveal it for what it is: a classic example of the Nusantara's indigenous *Batu Aceh* tradition.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, very similar examples of *Batu Aceh* can be found in association with late fifteenth-century Melaka: the damaged gravestone of Maṣṣūr Shāh (d.1477, see **Fig. 3**) and complete gravestone of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'ayat Shāh (d.1488), for example, both share the same basic design.<sup>38</sup> This has led Lambourn and D. Perret to conclude that al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's gravestone belongs to the same typology. In other words, it is not Gujarati, but of local manufacture and probably contemporary to the late Melaka period. As a result, it must post-date 1297 and cannot therefore be original. Rather, it is likely to be a replacement for something earlier.<sup>39</sup>

The above, however, raises a problem: if the gravestone is not original, its inscription may not be either. If so, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ may not be a genuine Samudera-Pasai ruler and/or his date of death may not be 1297. Immediately adjacent to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's grave, however, is another belonging to a further Samudera-Pasai ruler called al-Malik al-Zāhir, who died on the 12<sup>th</sup> Dhū al-Hijja 726/9<sup>th</sup> November 1326.<sup>40</sup> The *Hikayat Raja Pasai* claims this was al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's son; al-Malik al-Zāhir's gravestone, which is undoubtedly original,<sup>41</sup> supports this identification. As such, it seems to affirm al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ as a pre-1326 ruler of Samudera-Pasai. It does not, however, establish him as the kingdom's first Muslim ruler or confirm his date of death (although 1297 would be logical given the date on al-Malik al-Zāhir's gravestone and the comments made by Marco

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<sup>37</sup> Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 262-263.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Perret, 'Some Reflections on Ancient Islamic Tombstones Known as *Batu Aceh* in the Malay World,' *IMW* 35:103 (2007): 320; 323.

<sup>39</sup> Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 271.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>41</sup> Perret, 'Reflections on Ancient Islamic Tombstones,' *IMW* 35:103 (2007): 323.

Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa). At the very least, however, al-Malik al-Šāliḥ's gravestone provides some support for, at least part of, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s account.

Another point which suggests the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s account may contain a grain of truth is its reference to a place called either Mengiri or Ma'abri. As noted in Chapter 1, if the 'Ma'abri' reading is favoured, a link is created with the Arabic word *ma'bar* ('crossing point'), perhaps through its plural form, *ma'ābir*. As G. E. Marrison notes, Arab traders once used this term to describe the Madura and Tanjore districts of South India, opposite Sri Lanka.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, a Sultanate of Ma'bar did once exist in this region, between 1335 and 1378.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, and if this reading of the text is correct, it could constitute an actual memory of South Indian involvement in Samudera-Pasai's conversion. Certainly, South Indian Muslims also followed the Shāfi'ī *maddhab*, while K. R. Hall has noted that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* describes objects of South Indian origin amongst Samudera-Pasai's coronation regalia (including a distinctive ankle bracelet).<sup>44</sup>

Still further possible confirmation of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s account can be found in the joint article by R. Feener and M. Laffan and separate text by A. Johns, both referenced in previous chapters. As noted, these authors have all argued for a thirteenth to fourteenth-century Middle East-North Sumatra link; this would tie in with the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account, with its suggestion of Arab influence coming directly from the Middle East. As such, Feener and Laffan have pointed to the Haḍramī Sufi, Abū 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad

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<sup>42</sup> G. E. Marrison, 'The Coming of Islam to the East Indies,' *JMBRAS* 24:1 (1951): 31.

<sup>43</sup> See: Mehrdad Shokoohy. *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa)* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, 'The Coming of Islam to the Archipelago: A Reassessment,' in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, ed. Karl L. Hutterer, Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia no. 13 (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1977), 217-218.



al-Jāwī,<sup>45</sup> whose *nisba* suggests he (or his father) were connected with the Nusantara. Johns, on the other hand, has observed that early Samudera-Pasai regnal names (including al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ) parallel those of prominent Middle Eastern rulers from approximately the same period, indicating knowledge of those individuals.<sup>46</sup> As explained in previous chapters, although Feener and Laffan's argument has some limitations, Johns's observations bear more weight and should be considered carefully. Consequently, there is some evidence confirming a Middle East-Samudera-Pasai link during the period when Samudera-Pasai probably converted.

In addition to these three scholars, M. Mansoer has also tried to defend the Arab-related elements of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion narrative. He does this by appealing to the Malay word *labai* (also spelt *lebai* or *lebe*). Undoubtedly an early Malay Islamic term, *labai* refers to someone concerned with religious affairs conducted in a mosque, usually an Imam. But because it occurs throughout the region (including in North Sumatra) it has commonly been thought to have some kind of association with the region's earliest proselytisers.<sup>47</sup> As such, and while assuming it was used in early Islamic Samudera-Pasai, Mansoer claims that *labai* first referred to Arab traders, thereby creating a link between Arabs and the Nusantara's Islamisation (i.e. by suggesting Arab traders were the region's first religious officials).<sup>48</sup> Mansoer's argument, however, has two serious flaws. First,

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<sup>45</sup> R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, 'Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 186-187.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony H. Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 50-51.

<sup>47</sup> Hoesein Djajadiningrat, 'Local Traditions and the Study of Indonesian History,' in *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, ed. Soedjatmoko, Mohammed Ali, G. J. Resink and G. McT. Kahin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), 80.

<sup>48</sup> M. D. Mansoer, 'Masuk dan Berkembangnya Agama Islam di Daerah Pesisir Utara Sumatra,' in *Risalah Seminar Sedjarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia: Kumpulan Pedato, Restu dan Pendapat para Pemimpin Pemerasaran dan Pembanding dalam Seminar tgl. 17 sampai 20 Marat 1963 di*

*labai* does not appear in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. As such, it cannot be convincingly associated with early Samudera-Pasai. Instead, *labai*'s first appearance is actually in Pires's *Suma Oriental*, where it is applied to Cirebon's early sixteenth-century ruler, Lebe Uça (see Chapter 5).<sup>49</sup> This suggests it may actually be a Javanese term. Second, Mansoer is incorrect to associate *labai* with Arab merchants. Rather, European scholars once argued that this term originally referred to Tamil trading communities. These scholars, who generally believed the Nusantara's Islam came from South India, based this conclusion on an observation that Urdu speakers commonly referred to Tamil merchants as *labbais*. Assuming this was the origin of the similar Malay term, it was cited as evidence of Tamil involvement in early Nusantara Islamic affairs.<sup>50</sup> As noted by T. Tschacher, however, there is no evidence *labai* is derived from *labbais*: the Malay term, for example, is never used to refer to traders. *Labai* may, however, be related to the Tamil *leppai* or *lappai*, also meaning someone concerned with religious affairs. This term, however, does not occur in Tamil until 1648, more than a century after *labai* first appears in the *Suma Oriental*. Tschacher therefore concludes it is just as likely the Tamils borrowed it from the Malays as vice versa.<sup>51</sup>

But despite any glimmers of support, there are also problems with the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account. For example, its magical overtones and utilisation of apocryphal *ḥadīth* suggest a degree of invention. The account also appears confused: although it claims Samudera-Pasai was the first kingdom to

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Medan, ed. Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia (Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia, 1963), 71.

<sup>49</sup> SO, 183.

<sup>50</sup> Torsten Tschacher, 'Circulating Islam: Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic Traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara,' in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 52.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 52.

convert, it gives Islamic names and the title Sultan to earlier figures (including al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's grandparents). B. Watson Andaya has suggested some early Nusantara rulers may have adopted Islamic names, not because they were Muslims, but to attract Muslim traders.<sup>52</sup> As such, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* could be correct to state that Samudera-Pasai was the first Islamic kingdom, while also mentioning earlier rulers with Islamic names. There is, however, no reason to suppose Watson Andaya is correct; no record exists of a non-Muslim ruler taking an Islamic name, whether in North Sumatra or elsewhere. It should also be considered that Marco Polo's account (for what it is worth) testifies to an earlier Islamic Sumatran polity at Perlak. Similarly, during the early twentieth century an Arab historian called Sayyid 'Alawī bin Ṭāhir bin 'Abd Allāh al-Haddād al-Haḍramī visited the site of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's grave, where he claimed to find another old gravestone. Supposedly dedicated to an al-Malik al-Kāmil, it was dated to 7<sup>th</sup> Jumada al-Awwal 607AH (27<sup>th</sup> October 1210).<sup>53</sup> This individual was apparently another earlier Muslim ruler, although of precisely where is unclear. No subsequent trace of this gravestone, however, has been found. Syed M. Naguib al-Attas has speculated this may be because it has become damaged and/or illegible. Certainly, many early gravestones in the area have suffered this fate. Nonetheless, in 1980, another early gravesite was reported by N. Baloch. This reputedly bore the following inscription:

Al-Malik Mawlānā 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Crown of the State [*Tāj al-Dawla*],  
the Saint of the Highest Order [*al-Quṭb al-Ma'ālī*] of Pasai, who died on

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<sup>52</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities of the Islamic World*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 314.

<sup>53</sup> Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011), 16.

Wednesday in the month of Dhū Qa‘dah in the year six hundred and ten [1214].<sup>54</sup>

This would also suggest the existence of an earlier Islamic ruler, specifically of Pasai. But, and as with Sayyid ‘Alawī’s find, there is no other record of this gravestone. O. Yatim and A. Nasir, for example, who have documented the Nusantara’s earliest gravesites in considerable detail, fail to mention it. They do, however, record a grave in Kompleks Teunku (at Iboih, near Lhokseumawe), which bears the name Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fāsī and is dated 816AH (1414).<sup>55</sup> Another Samudera-Pasai grave, this could be the source of Baloch’s report; it is the only known grave bearing a similar name and date. It appears, however, to be the grave of an early fifteenth-century Arab merchant of North African ancestry (i.e. from Fez), whereas Baloch’s inscription clearly indicates an Islamic ruler. As such, the latter must remain unexplained – unless, that is, Baloch either misread or mistranslated the text.

To sum up, neither Marco Polo nor Pires provide any valuable information about Samudera-Pasai’s conversion. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, on the other hand, are more informative. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa testifies to a well-established, fourteenth-century Islamic kingdom, home to a large Persian community and the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*. All these points appear realistic, with the gravestones of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and al-Malik al-Zāhir suggesting the possibility of conversion by the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century and the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* showing clear signs of Persian influence. Turning more fully to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, although problematic as an historical source, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ’s gravestone suggests it

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<sup>54</sup> N. A. Baloch, *The Advent of Islam in Indonesia* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1980), 46.

<sup>55</sup> Othman Mohd. Yatim and Abdul Halim Nasir, *Epigrafi Islam Terawal di Nusantara* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2007), 20-22.

correctly identifies him as a Samudera-Pasai ruler, if not the one to convert. The text's possible use of the term Ma'abri also renders South Indian influence possible (and perhaps explains the presence of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*), while Johns's work makes the likelihood of Arab involvement in conversion equally plausible. Although these points do not confirm the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account in its entirety, they do suggest some truth lies behind it. But, as enlightening as these points are, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the possibility of Chinese Muslim involvement in Samudera-Pasai's early Islamisation. So far, there has been little indication of this. A close consideration of a wider body of evidence, however, begins to change that.

### **3.4. The Case for Chinese Muslim Involvement**

As noted, except for some gravestones the remnants of Samudera-Pasai remain undiscovered. In the absence of any substantial archaeological remains, the kingdom's commercial relationships cannot be properly evaluated, meaning Chapter 2's claims about Chinese commercial dominance (and, therefore, potential Chinese Muslim role in the region's Islamisation) cannot be adequately assessed. As reviewed in Chapter 2, however, the limited (mostly textual) evidence which does survive suggests the wider North Sumatran region enjoyed an unusually close commercial relationship with the Indian Ocean. Although much of the evidence establishing this related to the later kingdom of Aceh, Johns's observations about Samudera-Pasai's first three Muslim rulers suggests it could be projected back to that kingdom.

Despite all this, however, in 1972 an important archaeological discovery was made which paints a very different picture. The find was a city, covering 25 hectares along the edge of a silted up river estuary in the Deli delta, near the modern city of Medan (314km south of Lhokseumawe).<sup>56</sup> The site, named Kota Cina (after a small nearby village), had extensive twelfth to fourteenth-century deposits, including an exceptional amount of trade goods and some ancient shipwrecks (all found in the estuary, and all apparently trade vessels).<sup>57</sup> These finds led E. McKinnon, the site's chief excavator, to conclude that Kota Cina had once been an important entrepôt, possibly Aru (or Haru, see later in this section).<sup>58</sup> As such, the site is potentially comparable to Samudera-Pasai: Aru was also an early North Sumatran Islamic entrepôt, operating during the same period. It should therefore be examined in more depth.

In brief, finds at Kota Cina indicate commercial links with India, the Middle East and China. For example, a small number of Persian and/or Arabian ceramics have been found, in addition to glass artefacts (mostly beads) of either Arabian or Chinese origin. Two eleventh to twelfth-century Buddha statues and a Siva *lingga* (or phallus) have also been uncovered.<sup>59</sup> Stylistically, these can be traced to either South India or Sri Lanka. They therefore potentially link with nine Sinhalese coins found at the site, ranging in date from 1200 to 1209.<sup>60</sup> Chinese goods, however, have proven far more prevalent than any of these; literally thousands of Tang and Song dynasty coins have been discovered, along with

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<sup>56</sup> John N. Miksic and Yap Choon Teck, 'Compositional Analysis of Pottery from Kota Cina, North Sumatra: Implications for Regional Trade during the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries A.D,' *Asian Perspectives* 31:1 (1992): 60-61.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>58</sup> See: E. Edwards McKinnon, 'Research at Kota Cina, a Sung-Yüan Period Trading Site in East Sumatra,' *Archipel* 14 (1977): 23; and A. C. Milner, E. Edwards McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar S. H., 'A Note on Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 1-42.

<sup>59</sup> McKinnon, 'Research at Kota Cina,' *Archipel* 14 (1977): 22-23.

<sup>60</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 28.

deposits of Chinese porcelain up to one metre thick. From this, McKinnon has concluded that the site was almost certainly Chinese dominated; it probably included a sizable Chinese community, in addition to the native inhabitants and any Indian/Sinhalese settlers (who probably brought the Middle Eastern goods, in line with Indian Ocean trade patterns after that region's segmentation – see Chapter 2).<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, McKinnon feels the Chinese settlement was probably permanent. This was suggested to him, not only by the volume of finds, but by a votive offering of gold leaf found at the base of a brick structure interpreted as a *stupa*. This offering was stamped with Chinese characters, indicating to McKinnon that it was probably deposited by a member of a Chinese community. If so, it is possible, McKinnon argues, that the Chinese were responsible for constructing the building.<sup>62</sup> The construction of religious institutions in turn suggests the beginning of the permanent communities necessary to maintain them (as with the mosques and Hindu temples of Quanzhou, see section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

There is, however, a degree of speculation here. It is possible, for example, that the gold leaf was deposited by a non-Chinese group, who obtained it as an offering from Chinese traders. After all, Buddhism was also practiced in pre-Islamic Sumatra; the indigenous inhabitants of Sumatra could therefore have also built and dedicated this *stupa*. Nonetheless, and as illustrated by Chapter 2, numerous permanent Chinese communities did exist in the Nusantara during this period. Moreover, McKinnon found support for his theory amongst local legends: residents of the area were questioned and found to preserve memory of a city where Kota Cina now stands. This, they claimed, had been established by Indians but frequented by the Chinese. The latter eventually became so powerful that they

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<sup>61</sup> McKinnon, 'Research at Kota Cina,' *Archipel* 14 (1977): 29-30.

<sup>62</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 20.

were able to drive the Indians out. They then established themselves as local rulers, only to be forced out in turn by a plague of shellfish. The remnants of their population then either went back to China or resettled in other parts of Sumatra. Chinese dominance would also, McKinnon claims, explain the name of the nearby village; this is called Kota Cina ('Chinese City') despite the fact that no Chinese live there, either now or in the recent past. McKinnon believes the name is a memory of the earlier settlement, again demonstrating its Chinese characteristics.<sup>63</sup>

At the very least, however, there is credible archaeological evidence for a substantial Chinese commercial presence at Kota Cina. If the local legends are correct, this may have also resulted in permanent settlement, possibly even political control, but these points are less certain. What is clear, however, is that Chinese activity far outstripped its Indian Ocean equivalent. This might be relevant to North Sumatra's Islamisation: the ceramic finds range from the Song to Yuan periods, or contemporary to the rapid expansion of Chinese private trade in which Chinese Muslims played a major role. As such, it is probable that Chinese Muslims visited Kota Cina. Indeed, due to the value and volume of their trade, they probably played a significant role there. The possible impact this had upon Islamisation becomes clearer when Kota Cina's identification with Aru is considered.

This identification was first outlined in 1978, in a joint article by McKinnon, T. Luckman and A. Milner. They noted a tendency in early sources to locate Aru in the vicinity of Deli: the Chinese *Wubeizhi* map, for example, drawn in the early fifteenth century, places Aru in the Deli estuary,<sup>64</sup> as does Zheng He's

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<sup>63</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 5.



companion, Ma Huan.<sup>65</sup> Equally, the *Sejarah Melayu* describes Aru's chief minister, Raja Pahlawan, as the Raja of Serbanyaman;<sup>66</sup> this is a nineteenth-century Batak name for one of the four *suku* (chieftainships) of Deli.<sup>67</sup> Pires, on the other hand, although also locating Aru in the region of Deli, claims it was not on the coast (like Kota Cina) but in the hinterland.<sup>68</sup> In all probability this refers to the modern site of Deli Tua ('Old Deli'): 25km inland from Kota Cina, local legend claims Deli Tua was formerly the centre of a great kingdom. Excavations support this, revealing significant fourteenth to sixteenth-century occupation layers, including massive earth ramparts.<sup>69</sup> Aru, however, is first mentioned in 1282, when the *Yuan shi* records that Kublai Khan sent an envoy to the kingdom, demanding its ruler submit to the Khan's authority.<sup>70</sup> This reference is contemporary to Kota Cina, but pre-dates Deli Tua. How can this conundrum be solved?

McKinnon and his co-authors suggest the solution is simple: the capital of Aru moved. The final deposits at Kota Cina indicate violent destruction: coins were buried *en mass* (common before a siege, when individuals wish to protect their wealth) and there is evidence of conflagration (although limited).<sup>71</sup> As the site contains no Ming-period artefacts, it follows that this must have occurred during the Yuan period. Precisely when is unclear, but this rough dating ties in with Majapahit's conquest of North Sumatra in the 1360's (see above, section 3.3). Certainly, the *Pararaton* (a chronicle describing Majapahit's conquests, perhaps written in 1600)<sup>72</sup> claims the architect of Majapahit's expansion, Prime Minister

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<sup>65</sup> YYSL, 114.

<sup>66</sup> SM, 207.

<sup>67</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 5.

<sup>68</sup> SO, 148.

<sup>69</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 29.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>72</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 76.

Patih Gajah Mada (in office from 1331 to c.1365), swore to conquer Aru in order to lay claim to its great wealth. That the 1365 *Nagarakertagama* (a eulogy to Majapahit's ruler, Hayam Wuruk) lists Aru as one of Majapahit's dependencies suggests he achieved his aim.<sup>73</sup> As such, McKinnon *et al.* suggest that Kota Cina may have been the original capital of Aru, prior to its conquest by Majapahit. When the Javanese destroyed the city, it became necessary to relocate the capital to Deli Tua. If so, this explains why Aru is not mentioned by either Ibn Baṭṭūṭa or Wang Dayuan (a Chinese traveller who visited the Nusantara in 1349);<sup>74</sup> because Aru was an important entrepôt, their silence only makes sense if their visits coincided with a hiatus in Aru's affairs, consistent with its conquest and destruction by Majapahit.

Ultimately, much of the above is circumstantial; no firm evidence links Kota Cina to Aru, such as inscriptions at the site bearing that name (although Kota Cina has yet to be fully excavated, meaning an inscription may yet be found). Nonetheless, there is logic to McKinnon *et al.*'s argument: if Deli Tua post-dates the earliest references to Aru, another capital must have once existed. This was likely a city of consequence; Kota Cina, as a major entrepôt in close proximity to Deli Tua (and so within the confines of Aru's known territory), is an obvious candidate. Indeed, even if not Aru's former capital, Kota Cina must have been a very significant port within its domain. As such, although speculative, McKinnon *et al.*'s conclusion shall be accepted here. But, why is it important?

In short, although Aru has left no record of its history, there are two surviving (albeit brief) accounts of its conversion in Pires and the *Sejarah Melayu*;

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<sup>73</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 39.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

these essentially state the same thing: that Aru converted before Samudera-Pasai.

Thus, Pires states:

The King of Aru had turned Moor before any of the others, even before the king of Pase according to what they say.<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, the *Sejarah Melayu* claims Aru converted just prior to Samudera-Pasai, when visited by Shaykh Ismā‘īl.<sup>76</sup> As such, if these accounts are to be believed, because Samudera-Pasai converted prior to the early fourteenth century, Aru must have done so even earlier. How much earlier is unknown, but this period coincides with the Chinese dominance of Kota Cina. There is therefore a possibility that Chinese Muslims were involved; as Aru was adjacent to Samudera-Pasai (testified to by Pires), perhaps that mechanism also took hold in the latter location. Although this conclusion is admittedly speculative, it is a possibility. Certainly, two trade-based kingdoms positioned so closely to one another might be expected to have hosted similar merchant communities.

In addition to Kota Cina, early fifteenth-century examples of Samudera-Pasai’s *Batu Aceh* tradition also indicate Chinese influence. First studied by historians, these artefacts have traditionally been valued only for their epigraphical data. A lasting result of this has been a tendency to ignore their non-textual elements, such as their decoration. When these additional points are duly considered, however, they reveal unmistakable traces of Chinese influence.

As such, the earliest surviving examples of Samudera-Pasai’s *Batu Aceh* tradition, all produced during the early fifteenth century, use roundels (or circular cartouches) as decoration. Roundels, however, are very uncommon in Islamic art,

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<sup>75</sup> SO, 245.

<sup>76</sup> SM, 107.

funerary or otherwise; they do not lend themselves to the geometric patterns characteristic of the medium.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, aside from Samudera-Pasai's *Batu Aceh* tradition, fifteenth-century (and earlier) Islamic funerary art witnesses only two other instances of this motif's use: in specimens of Timurid mortuary architecture and Yuan-period Muslim gravestones from Quanzhou.<sup>78</sup> In the first instance, roundels appear very infrequently, and principally on Samarqand's Shāh-i Zinda mausoleum complex, built between 1385 and 1386.<sup>79</sup> This houses the tombs of Timur's sister, Shirīn Bika Agā, and niece, Shād-i Mulk Agā. Both of their mausoleums include roundels executed in tile work and filled in with calligraphy. In each case, however, the roundels are accompanied by Chinese-style lotus flowers, cloud designs, dragons and phoenixes.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, art historians have argued that the Timurid roundel is linked to Chinese artistic influence. Certainly, roundels are common in traditional Chinese religious art and the Timurids, constituting part of the Persian culture sphere, inhabited a world in which Chinese artistic influence had been at work for many centuries.<sup>81</sup> Although Persian art had never before favoured the roundel, because trade was particularly strong between the Timurids and Ming China, and would have included Chinese ceramics replete with Chinese designs, this period would have favoured additional artistic exchange.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Yolande Crowe, 'Some Timurid Designs and Their Far Eastern Connections,' in *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 172.

<sup>78</sup> Chen Da-Sheng, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou (Zaitun)*, trans. Chen Enming (supervised by Zheng Dechao) (China: Ningxia People's Publishing House and Fujian People's Publishing House, 1984), 29; 43-45; 50-51. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, fifteenth-century Brunian tombstones also use the roundel. As here, however, their presence is almost certainly the result of Chinese influence.

<sup>79</sup> Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles* (London: The British Museum Press, 2005), 68.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>81</sup> See: Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> Crowe, 'Far Eastern Connections,' in *Timurid Art and Culture*, ed. Golombek and Subtelny (1992), 168-169.

Concerning the Quanzhou gravestones (see **Figs. 4 to 6**), their roundels (also found on other types of Chinese Muslim inscription, see **Fig. 4**) likewise take inspiration from non-Islamic Chinese art. Significantly, however, their roundels are utilised in a similar manner to those seen at Samudera-Pasai. For example, at Samudera-Pasai, Grave VIII at Kuta Kareueng (dated either 824/1421 or 834/1430-1, see **Fig. 7a and 7b**)<sup>83</sup> and a tombstone pair from Cut Madi (dated 12<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān 830 or 7<sup>th</sup> July 1427, see **Figs. 8a and 8b**)<sup>84</sup> both use a central roundel to enclose calligraphy, around which are arranged further inscriptions and/or abstracted, floral-themed decoration, all carved in relief. At Quanzhou, roundels can also constitute central motifs that, either left blank or filled in with calligraphy, are likewise often (but not always) surrounded by abstract decorative schemes – in this case either cloud patterns or floral-themed decoration (see **Figs. 4 and 6**).<sup>85</sup> Given this similarity, it might be asked whether Quanzhou examples of the roundel influenced the *Batu Aceh*.

To answer this, it should be noted that roundels do not appear on earlier Samudera-Pasai grave markers. Indeed, the latter are not *Batu Aceh* at all: fourteenth-century Samudera-Pasai grave markers, although varying in form, are often simply unadorned square columns, topped with pommel-like decoration.<sup>86</sup> Roundels do, however, appear in fourteenth-century Javanese decoration: the *candi* (Hindu temple) Panataran in East Java,<sup>87</sup> built in 1347, includes several roundels amongst its decorative friezes (see **Figs. 9 and 10**). In each case, the roundel

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<sup>83</sup> Or. 23, 481, photograph 462. Leiden University Library, Legatum Warnerianum, the Netherlands.

<sup>84</sup> Or. 23, 481, photographs 869 and 873. Leiden University Library, Legatum Warnerianum, the Netherlands.

<sup>85</sup> For example, see: Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou*, trans. Chen (sup. Zheng) (1984), 29; 44; 50-51.

<sup>86</sup> The gravestone of Samudera-Pasai's second ruler, al-Malik al-Zāhir (d. 1326), is a good example of this type (see: Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies,' *JESHO* 51 [2008]: 258).

<sup>87</sup> A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), plates 280-282.

encloses an animal figure (usually a bird) enveloped in swirling floral designs, typical of pre-Islamic Javanese art.<sup>88</sup> As a possible precursor of the *Batu Aceh*, however, these Javanese examples do not convince: unlike the Panataran examples, none of the *Batu Aceh* roundels are associated with animal figures or Javanese floral designs. Equally, the Javanese examples are not associated with funerary culture, instead constituting small decorative sections in much larger temple friezes (see **Fig. 10**). Neither are they accompanied by writing. It might also be asked why, if the *Batu Aceh* roundels derive from these Javanese examples, there is an eighty year delay between them. If the Samudera-Pasai roundels derive from those at Panataran – and certainly they do not derive from later Javanese *candi*, which do not use roundels – it is difficult to explain their late appearance.

But, if not present on earlier Samudera-Pasai grave markers or derived from pre-Islamic Javanese designs, it is noteworthy that, and as at Samarqand, Samudera-Pasai's roundels are accompanied by a variety of Chinese artistic motifs. The Cuta Madi stones, for example, have elongated curved *hastae* reminiscent of Quanzhou designs, and lotus terminals to the Arabic word *ilā* (see **Fig. 8b**). The Kuta Kareueng specimens also include the latter, in addition to elaborate, Chinese inspired floral decorations (see **Fig. 7b**). As at Samarqand, these Chinese artist motifs, positioned directly alongside the roundel, may indicate that the latter also has a Chinese origin. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that Samudera-Pasai's roundels are utilised in the same manner as those at Quanzhou, containing calligraphy and positioned at the centre of wider decorative schemes. Consequently, they may indicate Chinese Muslim influence over early fifteenth-century Samudera-Pasai funerary culture. Indeed, in an early twentieth-century

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<sup>88</sup> Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), 91-92.

Dutch photograph of the Teungku Sareh grave group, a cenotaph can clearly be seen amongst the numerous examples of *Batu Aceh* (see **Fig. 11**).<sup>89</sup> In shape and form, this cenotaph is strongly reminiscent of examples from Quanzhou (see **Fig. 12**), with clear Chinese-style cloud patterns along its edge. As such, it was almost certainly imported from China, probably during the mid-Yuan period, when these cenotaphs were produced.<sup>90</sup> This confirms that, prior to the early fifteenth century, Samudera-Pasai was indeed aware of Quanzhou's Islamic funerary culture. Conceivably, it could therefore have influenced the formation of Samudera-Pasai's *Batu Aceh*.

Indeed, the epigraphic data provided by Samudera-Pasai's early *Batu Aceh* may also indicate possible Chinese influence. Grave XX at Teungku Sareh, dated 6<sup>th</sup> Rabi' I 833 or 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1429, and which also features a roundel, is dedicated to a Naynā 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā Shāh.<sup>91</sup> The initial element of this name (Naynā) appears to be a title. In a variety of spellings, it re-occurs on several early fifteenth-century Samudera-Pasai *Batu Aceh*: at Kuta Kareueng, for example, there is the grave of Nā'inā Husām al-Dīn ibn Nā'inā Amīn, dated 823/1420.<sup>92</sup> The title's origin and meaning, however, are mysterious: it is not Malay, Arabic, Persian or Turkish. Rather, prior to these early fifteenth-century examples, it can only be found in Quanzhou. There it occurs on three fourteenth-century gravestones: those of Fāṭima bint Naynā Aḥmad (d.704/1304), Naynā Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (d.700/1301) and Naynā 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn

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<sup>89</sup> Or. 23, 481, photograph 478. Leiden University Library, Legatum Warnerianum, the Netherlands.

<sup>90</sup> Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou*, trans. Chen (sup. Zheng) (1984), 31; 42-43.

<sup>91</sup> Or. 23, 481, photograph 462. Leiden University Library, Legatum Warnerianum, the Netherlands.

<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth Lambourn, 'The Formation of the *batu Aceh* Tradition in Fifteenth-century Samudera-Pasai,' *IMW* 32:93 (2004): 219.

Manṣūr ibn ‘Umar al-Abyānī al-Yamanī (undated, but also fourteenth century).<sup>93</sup>

Once again, its significance is unclear but, given the nature of Quanzhou’s Muslim community, Lambourn has speculated it may indicate someone engaged in commercial activity, perhaps signifying a prominent merchant.<sup>94</sup> Given Samudera-Pasai’s commercial nature, this interpretation would also be applicable there.

Perhaps more significantly, however, because the title is unknown prior to its appearance at Quanzhou, it could be a Chinese Muslim term (although which Chinese word it derives from is unclear). If so, the Samudera-Pasai examples could be linked to China. Certainly, they appear contemporary to the aforementioned examples of Chinese artistic influence, which even occur alongside them. Significantly, they also coincide with the voyages of Zheng He; these regularly visited Samudera-Pasai, with Zheng He even becoming involved in a 1415 dynastic dispute there, which culminated with him invading the polity (see Chapter 2). It is also known that members of Zheng He’s crew (many of whom were from Quanzhou) remained in the Nusantara: the *Ming shi-lu*, for example, claims that a ship which accompanied Zheng He’s final voyage (1431-1433) returned with only three of its original three hundred soldiers.<sup>95</sup> The rest had settled in the Nusantara. Precisely where is unknown, but given Zheng He’s regular visits to Samudera-Pasai, it is plausible some of them ended up there. As such, and although speculative, those people buried at Samudera-Pasai with the title *Naynā* could have been Chinese Muslims who, after migrating to the region, either contemporary to Zheng He or earlier, died there.

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<sup>93</sup> Chen Da-Sheng and Ludvik Kalus, *Corpus d’Inscriptions Arabes et Persanes en Chine 1: Province de Fu-jian (Quan-zhou, Fu-zhou, Xia-men)* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1991), 87-88; 232-233; 241-243.

<sup>94</sup> Lambourn, ‘Formation of the *batu Aceh* Tradition,’ *IMW* 32:93 (2004): 219.

<sup>95</sup> Cited in: Anthony Reid, ‘Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia,’ in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 26.



Before accepting this conclusion, however, it should be noted that a variation of *Naynā* can also be found in later Portuguese sources. They, however, apply it to Indian merchants operating in the Nusantara.<sup>96</sup> For example, Portuguese accounts of Melaka's conquest in 1511 refer to a Tamil merchant called Naina Chatu. A Hindu resident of Melaka, Naina Chatu became a pivotal Portuguese ally during the city's conquest, eventually being made *shahbandar* (or harbour master) of the city.<sup>97</sup> Another example is provided by J. M. dos Santos Alves, who notes that the Portuguese encountered a prominent Hindu Tamil merchant, this time called Naina Kunapan, in 1521 while at Samudera-Pasai. A resident of the kingdom, Naina Kunapan helped mediate between the Portuguese and Samudera-Pasai's Sultan.<sup>98</sup> Given these two examples, Lambourn argues that *Naynā* may be a Tamil title; she speculates that it may be derived from the Tamil word *nāyanār*, meaning 'lord,' 'master,' 'God' or 'Siva,' which she feels could have been applied to important merchants. There is, however, no conclusive evidence to support this derivation: no Tamil source, whether from the period or before, uses the term *Naynā*. Equally, nothing links the Quanzhou or Samudera-Pasai bearers of this title to the Tamils: Grave XX's occupant, for example, was of Persian descent, while Quanzhou's *Naynā* 'Umar was Yemeni (i.e. his great-grandfather bears the *nisba* al-Yamanī).

Ultimately, Lambourn's Tamil-hypothesis relies on two very late examples of how *Naynā* was used. When determining the title's origin, however, it would be more logical to turn to the earliest examples. In this case, the latter point towards

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<sup>96</sup> Lambourn, 'Formation of the *batu Aceh* Tradition,' *IMW* 32:93 (2004): 219.

<sup>97</sup> See: L. F. F. R. Thomaz, *Nina Chatu and the Portuguese Trade in Malacca*, trans. M. J. Pintado (Melaka: Luso-Malaysian Books, 1991).

<sup>98</sup> J. M. dos Santos Alves, *O dómino do norte do Samatra. A história dos sultanatos de Samudera-Pacém e de Achém, e das suas relações com os Portugueses (1500 – 1580)* (Lisbon: Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal, 1999), 121.

China. Indeed, it is highly significant that *Naynā* does not appear in any Indian text or on any Indian gravestone. It cannot therefore be established as an Indian term, Tamil or otherwise. Rather, it was first used in fourteenth-century Quanzhou, followed by the fifteenth-century Nusantara. It does not appear within the Indian Ocean. Consequently, it seems likely the title originated amongst China's Muslims, before moving into the Nusantara, where it was perhaps awarded to Naina Chatu and Naina Kunapan because of their status as merchants. A Chinese origin is also reinforced by the Chinese artistic influences accompanying the title's first appearance at Samudera-Pasai. Taken together, all this suggests Chinese Muslim influence contemporary to Zheng He's voyages.

To sum up, Aru/Kota Cina demonstrates significant Chinese commercial activity in the North Sumatran area contemporary to Samudera-Pasai's conversion. Due to the nature of Yuan-period Chinese trade, this activity almost certainly involved Chinese Muslims. Whether it impacted upon Samudera-Pasai's conversion, however, is unknown. Although it would be surprising if two adjacent kingdoms (Aru and Samudera-Pasai) were not frequented by similar merchant groups, there is no evidence to suggest Chinese Muslims influenced Samudera-Pasai until the mid-Yuan period (i.e. with imported cenotaph). In this context, however, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's comments may again become relevant. In Chapter 2, it was demonstrated that most Yuan-period Chinese Muslims were of Persian descent;<sup>99</sup> the Persians Ibn Baṭṭūṭa saw at Samudera-Pasai may therefore have been from China. Certainly, by the thirteenth century, direct Middle East-Nusantara travel had become rare, reducing the likelihood that any Persian in the Nusantara arrived

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<sup>99</sup> Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou*, trans. Chen (sup. Zheng) (1984), xvi.

there directly from Persia itself. To say they came from China instead, however, is purely speculative.

Returning to Samudera-Pasai's early fifteenth-century *Batu Aceh* tradition, this not only shows signs of Chinese artistic influence, but may also provide evidence of Chinese Muslim migration into the region. Both this artistic influence and migration appear to have originated from Quanzhou. Nevertheless, these factors all post-date Samudera-Pasai's conversion. As such, they cannot be directly related to that event. Instead, dating from the early fifteenth century, they are contemporary to the voyages of Zheng He; they may therefore represent the fruits of his involvement in the region. Indeed, Zheng He's crew was largely drawn from Southern China, including Quanzhou. Because many of his crew members migrated into the region, his voyages could form the backdrop to what has been discussed, suggesting that Chinese Muslims played a role in the formation of Samudera-Pasai's early fifteenth-century Islamicate culture.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, we have seen that reconstructing the conversion history of Samudera-Pasai is difficult. A dearth of reliable and/or detailed evidence (whether written or archaeological) means any firm conclusions are impossible. Nonetheless, we have seen that Samudera-Pasai probably converted during either the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Moreover, the gravestone of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ seems to confirm the existence of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s first Muslim ruler, although without necessarily confirming his role in conversion. Turning to the possible instigators of conversion, we saw that both South Indian and Arab

influence is plausible, but nevertheless still problematic due to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s limitations as an historical source. The *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s possible reference to a place called Ma'abri, however, coupled with Samudera-Pasai's adherence to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, makes South Indian involvement probable. Equally, Feener and Laffan uncovered tentative evidence in favour of a Nusantara-South Arabia link, while Johns demonstrated Samudera-Pasai knowledge of Middle Eastern affairs at around the same time as conversion. Judging by the characteristics of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, it also seems Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's comments about Persian influence are worth considering. But how (or if) they relate to conversion, and whether they are tied to China's Persian Muslims, is far from clear.

Turning more fully to the possibility of Chinese Muslim influence, our discussion demonstrated nothing that would conclusively link this group to Samudera-Pasai's conversion. The nearby archaeological site of Kota Cina/Aru, however, did demonstrate significant North Sumatra-based Chinese commercial activity contemporary to that event. This activity probably involved Chinese Muslims, but a lack of evidence attesting to their presence is problematic. Any possible Chinese Muslim involvement in Samudera-Pasai's conversion should therefore not be overemphasised. The kingdom's later *Batu Aceh* tradition, however, does reveal evidence of Chinese Muslim influence contemporary to the mid-Yuan and early Ming periods. Because this falls after conversion, it cannot be related to that event, but nonetheless suggests Chinese Muslims influenced the construction of Samudera-Pasai's later Islamicate culture. In all probability, this relates to Zheng He's activities in the region.

## 4. Melaka

### 4.1. Introduction

As noted in previous chapters, Melaka was the Nusantara's major fifteenth-century maritime trading power. Able to control the trade route to China, it built an impressive empire based on trade, spreading Islam to large parts of the Malay Peninsula (Pahang, Perak, Kedah, Terengganu and Kelantan)<sup>1</sup> and Sumatra (Rokan, Siak, Kampar and Indragiri).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, by the end of the fifteenth century, Javanese and Sumatran students were travelling to the city to study Islam; when Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511, its '*ulamā*' fled to North Sumatra, Java, the Moluccas and Borneo, where they continued to teach their form of Islam.<sup>3</sup> As such, the Islamisation of the region as a whole is closely tied to Melaka. Concerning how the city itself became Islamised, however, scholars have traditionally attributed proselytization to Samudera-Pasai, a conclusion based primarily upon the early Portuguese texts.<sup>4</sup> During this chapter, however, we will re-examine those texts in order to demonstrate an equally important Chinese Muslim presence in the city, something scholarship has so far overlooked. We will conclude that, although Samudera-Pasai probably did convert Melaka, Islam was first introduced into the Melakan court by Zheng He when he married his adopted daughter to the city's second ruler, Iskandar Shāh (r.1414-1424). Furthermore, this

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<sup>1</sup> H. J. de Graaf, 'Southeast Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century,' in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2: The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 126.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1982), 90.

<sup>3</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 470.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see: Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities of the Islamic World*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 309-318.

union produced Raja Putih (the ‘White Raja’), who became extremely important at court; he was instrumental in spreading Islam to Kampar, Pahang and Indragiri, eventually gaining so much power that his nephew, the sixth ruler of Melaka, Manşūr Shāh (r.1459-1477), had him assassinated. This led to rebellion, with Kampar, Pahang and Indragiri, all important Melakan territories, turning against Manşūr Shāh in order to avenge their forbearer. As in the previous chapter, however, before we lay all this out, our discussion will begin with an outline of all the available accounts of Melaka’s conversion, as provided by the early sources.

## **4.2. The Early Sources**

### **4.2.1. The Early Portuguese Sources**

Because of Melaka’s importance for the Portuguese, they wrote many texts about it. Only four, however, provide us with an account of conversion: Tomé Pires’s *Suma Oriental* (written between 1512-1515), Fernao Lopes de Castanheda’s *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India Pelos Portueueses* (1551-1554), João de Barros’s *Decades da Asia* (1552-1563) and the *Commentaries* of Afonso d’Albuquerque (1557). Together, these are the earliest surviving records of Melaka’s history. Of them, the *Suma Oriental* is both the earliest and the most detailed, often forming the basis of modern reconstructions.<sup>5</sup> As such, it is the best place to start here.

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<sup>5</sup> That is, all post-1944 reconstructions. In 1944, Pires’s full text was published for the first time, after having been rediscovered in Paris in 1937. Prior to this, only an incomplete Italian translation had been available, and which had been largely ignored (see: J. Noorduyn, ‘Concerning the Reliability of Tomé Pires’ Data on Java,’ *BTLV* 132:4 [1976]: 467). Earlier studies had used Albuquerque’s *Commentaries* when reconstructing Melakan history (for example, see: R. O. Winstedt, ‘A History of Malaya,’ *JMBRAS* 13:1 [1935]: 38; and Bernard H. M. Vlekke, *Nusantara: A History of the East Indian Archipelago* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945], 68), a trend still maintained by a few post-1944 sources (for example, see: D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-east Asia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [London: Macmillan, 1968], 209). As examples of sources which rely on the *Suma Oriental*, see: R. O. Winstedt, *The Malays*:

According to the *Suma Oriental*, Melaka converted during the reign of its second ruler, identified as a man named Iskandar Shāh (known in indigenous and Chinese sources as Megat Iskandar Shāh). Supposedly the son of Melaka's first ruler, Parameswara (d.1414, also called Parameswara in the Chinese sources but Iskandar Shāh in the indigenous sources),<sup>6</sup> after ascending the throne Iskandar Shāh sought to strengthen his position by dominating all regional trade. To this end, he began negotiations with the ruler of Majapahit; his aim was to divert that kingdom's international trade (which then ran through Samudera-Pasai) to Melaka. Majapahit, however, would only agree to this if the Sultan of Samudera-Pasai also acquiesced. Iskandar Shāh therefore approached the latter, only to be told that diversion would only be possible if he, Iskandar Shāh, became a Muslim.<sup>7</sup> Initially, this request fell on deaf ears, Iskandar Shāh imprisoning the envoys who sent it. After three years, however, the envoys were released and trade was allowed to move from Samudera-Pasai to Melaka – not, however, because Iskandar Shāh converted, but because of his just rule and fair-mindedness.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, this shift brought many Samudera-Pasai Muslim merchants to Melaka:

Parsees, as well as Bengalees and Arabian Moors...and they were very rich, with large businesses and fortunes, and they...settled there.<sup>9</sup>

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*A Cultural History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1950), 34; K. E. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Malaya* (London: Eastern Universities Press, 1964), 23-27; Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities*, ed. Bosworth (2007), 309-318; Christopher H. Wake, 'Melaka's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam,' *JSAH* 5:2 (1964): 104-128; Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Barbara Watson Andaya and Yoneo Ishii, 'Religious Developments in Southeast Asia, c.1500-1800,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2: From c.1500-1800, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 164-227.

<sup>6</sup> *SO*, 240.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 239.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 239-240.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 240.

Due to the wealth they brought to the city, Iskandar Shāh came to look upon them very favourably. He therefore gave them their own area of the city, allowing them to build mosques.<sup>10</sup>

When this news came, the said king of Pase [Samudera-Pasai], on the advice of the priests he had sent there [to Melaka], secretly sent others of greater authority to impose upon him [Iskandar Shāh] and turn him away from his race and heathenry.<sup>11</sup>

These renewed efforts succeeded: at the age of seventy-two, Iskandar Shāh adopted Islam and married a Samudera-Pasai princess. By the end of his reign (eight years later), both his household and the general population had also converted.<sup>12</sup>

Turning to the other three Portuguese sources, both de Castanheda's and de Barros's texts are comparatively brief. The former claims foreign Muslim merchants came to Melaka and, after growing powerful, fought the natives, gained control and converted the city.<sup>13</sup> Barros, on the other hand, states:

They [the kings of Melaka] were induced by the Persians and Gujarati Moors, who came to Malacca and resided there for the purpose of trade, to become converts [to Islam].<sup>14</sup>

Turning to the *Commentaries* of Albuquerque, these state that:

Seven years after Parimicura [Parameswara] had begun his population of Malacca, he died, and left behind him a son whose name was Xaquemdarxa [Iskandar Shāh], who, though he was a Hindoo, married a daughter of the king of Pace [Pasai]...when they married, either by reason of the entreaties of

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<sup>10</sup> SO, 241.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 241-242.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 242.

<sup>13</sup> Fernao Lopes de Castanheda, 'History on the Conquest of India by the Portuguese. Book I and II,' in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado (Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993), 87.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in: Hadi Hasan, *A History of Persian Navigation* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1928), 145-146.



his wife, or from the admonitions of his father-in-law, very few days elapsed before he became a Moor.<sup>15</sup>

This largely agrees with Pires's account, although without referencing trade. Regarding the latter, the *Commentaries* claim initial efforts to dominate trade were actually made by Parameswara: after moving to Melaka, he sought to attract pirates by offering them a place to take on water. These bandits eventually decided to stay, however, trading in their stolen goods. Thanks to the wealth this generated, within just two years Melaka had grown to a considerable size, after which Majapahit sought a trading relationship, with Samudera-Pasai and Bengal also sending merchants.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4.2.2. The *Sejarah Melayu***

Aside from the Portuguese texts, only Melaka's court chronicle, the *Sejarah Melayu* ('The Malay Annals,' also known as the *Sulalat us-Salatin*), provides an account of conversion. Although the *Sejarah Melayu*'s date of composition is disputed, it is probably early seventeenth century (see section 4.3.1).<sup>17</sup> In short, it claims that Melaka converted during the reign of its third ruler, Muḥammad Shāh (also known as Raja Tengah; this ruler is not mentioned by Pires but may occur in Chinese records as Sri Maharaja). A notably just ruler, one night this man had a dream in which the Prophet Muḥammad appeared to him. During this vision, the Prophet taught him the *shahāda* and gave him the name Muḥammad Shāh. The Prophet then informed him that, during the course of the following day, a ship would arrive from Jeddah; there would be a man on board whom Muḥammad Shāh was to obey. At this point,

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<sup>15</sup> Afonso Dalboquerque II, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque, Second Viceroy of India*, vol. 3, trans. Walter De Gray Birch (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), 77-78.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-77.

<sup>17</sup> The version of the *Sejarah Melayu* used here is Raffles Malay 18, kept at the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. The reason for this choice is explained in section 4.3.1.

Muḥammad Shāh promptly awoke, only to find that he had been magically circumcised and could not stop repeating the *shahāda*, over and over. This continued throughout the day until, with his officials now deeply concerned about him, news reached the court of a ship that had just arrived from Jeddah. Moreover, a man had disembarked and begun praying in a manner never before seen by the locals. Muḥammad Shāh therefore immediately left his palace and, upon seeing the new arrival, recognised his form of prayer as identical to the one he had seen in his dream (although no prayer is described in the dream). The man's name was Makhdūm Sayyid ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and, after greeting him warmly, Muḥammad Shāh took him back to the palace. There the Makhdūm (meaning a teacher of Sunna) instructed Muḥammad Shāh in the tenets of Islam, thereby securing the ruler's conversion.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4.3. The Nature of the Malay and Portuguese Sources**

Clearly all the accounts presented above differ quite markedly from each other. Not only are all the Portuguese accounts different, but they share little with the *Sejarah Melayu*. As such, the question is which (if any) can be relied upon? To answer this, let us first examine these texts as sources.

##### **4.3.1. The *Sejarah Melayu***

Beginning with the *Sejarah Melayu*, scholarship remains divided about its historicity. On the one hand, some scholars are prepared to lend it significant support. An official 2011 study of Melaka's pre-colonial past, for example, based itself solely on

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<sup>18</sup> SM, 122.

the text's claims.<sup>19</sup> Equally, some Western scholars, like B. Watson Andaya, have coupled its narrative with Pires's to produce a hybrid account.<sup>20</sup> Other scholars, however, have dismissed the *Sejarah Melayu* out of hand, at least regarding its conversion narrative.<sup>21</sup> As to which approach is the more appropriate, this largely depends on the view taken of the Raffles Malay 18 manuscript (henceforth Raffles 18).

Although many recensions of the *Sejarah Melayu* exist,<sup>22</sup> most scholars agree that Raffles 18 is both the earliest and most complete.<sup>23</sup> As such, and in the absence of a critical edition, it is almost universally employed in discussions. Copied in c.1813 for Thomas Stamford Raffles, while he was Lieutenant-General of Java, the manuscript's preface claims that the original text was commissioned on the 12<sup>th</sup> Rabī' al-awwal 1021AH (or 13<sup>th</sup> May 1612), when 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh III of Johor (r.1597-1615) ordered the compilation of a document charting the history and traditions of Melaka. This task was given to a nobleman called Tun Bambang, who then proceeded to compile the *Sejarah Melayu* from local traditions.<sup>24</sup> Other (longer) versions of the

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<sup>19</sup> See: Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail, Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali and Zulkanian Abdul Rahman, 'A New Date on the Establishment of the Melaka Malay Sultanate Discovered,' *Institut Kajian Sejarah dan Patriotisme Malaysia*. Available at: <http://www.iksep.gov.my>. (Accessed on: 19/12/2011).

<sup>20</sup> As such, while maintaining Pires's reason for conversion, Watson Andaya uses the *Sejarah Melayu* to argue that conversion took place during the reign of Melaka's third ruler (see: Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities*, ed. Bosworth [2007], 314). The serious historical nature of the *Sejarah Melayu* is also maintained by V. Matheson Hooker; she notes that, by preserving statecraft, social customs and traditional protocol, the text demonstrates an importance beyond simple folklore (see: Virginia Matheson, 'Sovereigns and Scribes: Life as Reflected in some of the Literature of the Malays,' in *Indonesia: Australian Perspectives*, ed. J. J. Fox, R. G. Garnaut, P. T. McCawley and J. A. C. Mackie [Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1980], 183-184).

<sup>21</sup> For example: P. E. de Josselin de Jong, 'The Character of the Malay Annals,' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. John Bastin and R. Roolvink (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), 235-236. De Jong does maintain, however, that the *Sejarah Melayu* is a more realistic historical document than other Malay chronicles (such as the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*).

<sup>22</sup> H. Chambert-Loir lists four recensions of the *Sejarah Melayu*: a 'short version' that was first printed in 1841; Raffles 18; a 'long version', of which there are several versions; and Shellabear's recension, which is a combination of the short and long versions (see: Henri Chambert-Loir, 'The *Sulalat al-Salatin* as a Political Myth,' *Indonesia* 79 [2005]: 131).

<sup>23</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Melakan Empire: Moral Judgement in Tun Bambang's *Sejarah Melayu*,' *JMBRAS* 71:2 (1998): 105.

<sup>24</sup> SM, 65-66.

*Sejarah Melayu* add to this the existence of an earlier text from Goa. This, they claim, arrived in Johor in 1612 and was subsequently worked up into the *Sejarah Melayu*.<sup>25</sup>

In 1938, R. O. Winstedt took the above and postulated that the Goan text was a chronicle written in (or shortly after) 1536 by a refugee from the Melakan court. Winstedt, however, and for reasons that will be shortly discussed, identified Raffles 18 as that Goan text, not the worked-up version. Rather, he believed the longer versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* constituted the latter, and therefore the text written by Tun Bambang.<sup>26</sup> This hypothesis has since found widespread acceptance.<sup>27</sup> If correct, it would make Raffles 18 a significant historical document, linked directly to the Melakan sultanate.<sup>28</sup> A number of points, however, make Winstedt's argument unlikely.

First, it is not supported by Raffles 18's preface: this very clearly states that in 1612 Tun Bambang wrote the chronicle to which it belongs (*karanglah hikayat ini*, literally 'composed *this* chronicle'). As such, there is no reason to suppose the body of Raffles 18 is something earlier. V. Braginsky, however, has attempted to bypass this objection by suggesting the revising editor (i.e. Tun Bambang) was using the preface to note his instructions *vis-à-vis* the text of Raffles 18, before then proceeding to write another text represented by the longer versions.<sup>29</sup> This is not, however, very compelling either because, again, it is not what the text states.

An additional problem with Winstedt's argument is the lack of attention he (and, mirroring him, Braginsky) pays to Raffles 18's internal characteristics. As such, the text's narrative style changes notably between the beginning and the end. Thus, the

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<sup>25</sup> R. O. Winstedt, 'The Malay Annals or *Sejarah Melayu*,' *JMBRAS* 13:1 (1938): 1-225. Longer versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* include the Munshi and Dulaurier editions.

<sup>26</sup> See: Winstedt, 'The Malay Annals,' *JMBRAS* 13:1 (1938): 1-225.

<sup>27</sup> Most notably: Vladimir I. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 92-103. See also: C. A. Gibson-Hill, 'The Malay Annals: The History Brought from Goa,' *JMBRAS* 29:1 (1956): 185-188.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Winstedt's conclusion is supported by de Jong (see: De Josselin de Jong, 'Character of the Malay Annals,' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, ed. Bastin and Roolvink [1964], 238).

<sup>29</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 187.

account of the final ruler, Maḥmūd Shāh (r.1488-1511), is extremely detailed (indeed, it takes up half the chronicle) and, stylistically, almost entirely composed of short anecdotes about specific individuals and events. These are very vivid, conjuring up realistic images of the people involved, free of mythic elements. The impression is of a very natural, organic text. Indeed, it is chiefly upon these observations that Winstedt claims the author of Raffles 18 lived during the final days of the Melaka sultanate; for him, these stories belie probable first-hand experience of Melakan court life.<sup>30</sup> But, even if this is accepted, this characterisation does not hold for the rest of the text. From Chapters 1 to 14, the narrative style is completely different, being far more formalised and mythic in tone. The stories are longer and tell the reader little about the realities of Melakan life. Usually, the chief concern is to explain, via a magical occurrence, the existence or name of a local landmark.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, up to Chapter 6 the narrative is composed almost solely of these stories. From then until Chapter 14, more realistic detail begins to emerge but remains limited and gathered almost exclusively into the reign of Maṇṣūr Shāh.<sup>32</sup> The end result is an impression that the author of Raffles 18 was far less well acquainted with early Melakan history than with the reign of Maḥmūd Shāh. This forced him to fall back on traditional, formalised literary conventions when describing the former. It should be asked, however, what this tells us about the text's authorship.

In short, the observed stylistic differences between the first and second halves of Raffles 18 suggest a different author was responsible for each section. Winstedt is probably correct, however, when claiming that the detail contained in the second half

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<sup>30</sup> Winstedt, 'The Malay Annals,' *JMBRAS*, 13:1 (1938): 33-34.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Chapter 5 of the *Sejarah Melayu* recounts the story of Badang, the Raja of Singapore's war-chief. Known for this great strength, he supposedly split a large rock at Kuala Sayong using just his head. The story then claims this rock can still be seen there, so explaining the existence of a local landmark (see: *SM*, 100).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 146-196.

indicates an author with close connections to the period in question (i.e. Maḥmūd Shāh's reign). Indeed, that all the genealogies listed in the second half of the text end with the grandchildren of the people involved suggests an early sixteenth-century origin is probable. As such, if an earlier text from Goa did indeed exist, it probably constitutes the second half of Raffles 18, or whatever that part of the text was originally based on. The first half of Raffles 18, however, cannot also be characterised in this manner. Rather, it is a collection of assorted legends grouped around the theme of Melaka's history – this is precisely what the preface claims Tun Bambang constructed in 1612. As such, it is suggested here that in 1612 an early sixteenth-century chronicle relating to Maḥmūd Shāh was returned to Johor. This was then given to Tun Bambang, who edited it and added a series of legends (i.e. the text's first half) to create a fuller history: the *Sejarah Melayu*. Raffles 18 is the earliest surviving version of that text. Certainly, its preface associates the text with Tun Bambang, and in form that text does correspond to what Tun Bambang set out to accomplish. Equally, Tun Bambang would be more likely, as someone far removed from the events and places described, to display so little knowledge of early Melakan history. A person who experienced the sultanate first-hand may have been better informed. It is true, as Braginsky notes, that a common theme runs through both halves of the text (namely, the rise and fall of a great empire), which he cites as evidence of single authorship,<sup>33</sup> but this theme could be the imposition of Tun Bambang as editor.

Accepting the above analysis, however, leaves little reason to accept the historicity of the *Sejarah Melayu*'s conversion account, which sits deep within the legendary part of the text. Indeed, its conversion narrative is strikingly similar to the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s account of Samudera-Pasai's conversion, related in the previous

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<sup>33</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 187.

chapter: both involve intercession by the Prophet that, received as a dream, results in the ruler being renamed and given the ability to recite an Islamically significant text or phrase in the original Arabic. In each case, an Arab missionary also arrives from Jeddah, as predicted in the ruler's dream. As such, and despite some minor differences, the same basic narrative is being employed in both cases. Significantly, therefore, the *Sejarah Melayu* reproduces the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion narrative in the same chapter as its account of Melaka's conversion.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, there can be no doubt that the *Sejarah Melayu*'s author was aware of it.<sup>35</sup> It therefore seems that the *Sejarah Melayu*'s account of conversion, as presented in Raffles 18, is not serious history. Rather, it is part of a larger collection of legends that were assembled in 1612 by Tun Bambang. In other words, it is an account which, as Raffles 18's preface claims, was *himpunkan daripada segala riwayat orang tuha-tuha dahulu kala* ('assembled from all the legends of the ancestors').<sup>36</sup> If this terminology is taken literally, the account was probably never intended to be taken seriously.

#### 4.3.2. The Portuguese Sources

Turning to the Portuguese sources, assessing their historicity is more straightforward. Although by no means perfect, the best of them are well-respected historical texts; they draw critically upon early eyewitness accounts and/or indigenous historical traditions, some of which were likely circulating during the Melaka Sultanate

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<sup>34</sup> *SM*, 107-108.

<sup>35</sup> A. Hill, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s translator and commentator, also highlights this point (see: A. H. Hill, 'Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai: A Revised Romanised Version of Raffles MS67, Together with an English Translation,' *JMBRAS* 33:2 [1961]: 40).

<sup>36</sup> Here *riwayat* is understood to mean 'legend.' More literally, it means a (usually oral) narration handed down from one generation to the next. The historicity of these narrations, however, is usually unclear (and so they are not straightforward *sejarah*, or history). For example, the life of the Melakan folk hero, Hang Tuah, is classed as *riwayat* – that is, a traditional narrative which may have some basis in fact, but precisely how much is unknown. Consequently, the term equates roughly to the English 'legend', as in the legend of King Arthur or of Robin Hood.

itself. As such, modern historians argue that they preserve valuable information which has otherwise not survived. Regarding the four sources discussed here, there are also some obvious overlaps between them. On the face of it, this mutual confirmation suggests accuracy. A deeper look, however, reveals a more complex picture.

Beginning with Castanheda, he operated as an unofficial historian, working outside the constraints of the court. Drawing primarily on the recollections of Portuguese sailors living in Asia, his account is the most distinctive of those reproduced above, claiming conversion occurred as a result of conquest. His use of sailors as a primary source of information, however, creates a problem:<sup>37</sup> because sailors were the rank and file, they did not have access to the same sources of information possessed by the Portuguese elite. The latter, due to their high positions, were able to draw on a wealth of important sources when reconstructing local history; sources common Portuguese sailors (and by extension, Castanheda) did not have access to. Indeed, some aspects of Castanheda's narrative are demonstrably unreliable. For example, he claims that Maḥmūd Shāh died long after Melaka's fall. Although this may have been common hearsay amongst Portuguese sailors, official sources were better informed; they correctly assert that Maḥmūd Shāh died soon after the conquest of Melaka.<sup>38</sup> All this entails, however, that Castanheda's text cannot be relied upon.

Turning to Barros, in some respects his position is the opposite of Castanheda's. As an official historian, he wrote under royal patronage, with access to official materials. He never, however, went to the Nusantara himself. With regards to Melaka's history, he attempted (but failed) to find a native chronicle; in its absence, he had to fall back upon returning Portuguese accounts. Pires's *Suma Oriental* and Albuquerque's

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<sup>37</sup> I. A. MacGregor, 'Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 191.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 192.



dispatches were chief amongst these. Indeed, as a whole Barros provides little information which cannot be found in either of them.<sup>39</sup> As such, whether he is reliable or not really relates to the trustworthiness of these other sources. Let us therefore turn to them.

Beginning with the *Commentaries*, these were actually written by Albuquerque's son, Afonso, using official despatches his father sent to King Manuel.<sup>40</sup> The dispatches in question, however, have not survived; the accuracy of Afonso's text cannot therefore be checked. Theoretically, however, the *Commentaries* are very reliable, having been potentially informed by Albuquerque's experience as the conqueror and governor of Melaka. It should be noted, however, that Albuquerque was aware of Pires's *Suma Oriental*: in 1515, he sent a letter to King Manuel stating that Pires would soon be returning to Portugal with an account of Asia.<sup>41</sup> This is certainly the *Suma Oriental*, which was completed in 1515. This is significant, however, because of the overlap between the *Suma Oriental* and the *Commentaries*; the possibility that the *Commentaries* borrow from the *Suma Oriental* should be considered. Nevertheless, on occasion, and as demonstrated above, the *Commentaries* do differ from the *Suma Oriental*. This suggests its author had access to information beyond what was simply in the *Suma Oriental*. Nonetheless, because Pires's text is frequently more detailed and earlier, it should perhaps take primacy.

Indeed, of the four texts under discussion, the *Suma Oriental* has undoubtedly gained the most attention from scholars.<sup>42</sup> Originally intended as an official report for

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<sup>39</sup> MacGregor, 'Portuguese Historical Writing,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. Hall (1961), 185.

<sup>40</sup> Dalboquerque II, *Commentaries*, trans. Birch, vol. 1 (1880), ii.

<sup>41</sup> *SO*, xxvi.

<sup>42</sup> See: MacGregor, 'Portuguese Historical Writing,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. Hall (1961), 174; Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 47-48; Watson Andaya, 'Malacca,' in *Historic Cities*, ed. Bosworth (2007), 314; Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula Before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961), 307.

the Portuguese king, it is a sober and carefully constructed account. In line with Portuguese ambitions, its primary focus is trade and how to control it. Nonetheless, it also details the histories of various Nusantara locations, including Melaka. In terms of the sources used for this endeavour, Pires claims to have consulted ‘various authors, and the truth is gathered from what the majority affirm.’<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, however, for Melaka’s history he relies chiefly (but not exclusively) on a Javanese ‘chronicle...which is widely affirmed by them.’<sup>44</sup> This appears to have been a written text Pires encountered while on Java,<sup>45</sup> but is ultimately unidentified.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, Pires critically selected it in accordance with what he thought most credible, as determined by what the majority affirmed. This selectivity has traditionally been seen as the *Suma Oriental*’s greatest strength. Certainly, Pires seems to have stripped his narrative of any mythic accretions, thereby avoiding the problems associated with the *Sejarah Melayu*. Equally, it should be remembered that the Javanese constituted a majority in pre-Portuguese Melaka.<sup>47</sup> This strong connection to the city reinforces the

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<sup>43</sup> SO, 229.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 230.

<sup>45</sup> A letter from Ruy de Brito to King Manuel, dated 6th January 1514, claims Pires visited Java with a mission led by João Lopes de Alvim. This left Melaka on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1513, returning on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June of the same year. Precisely where it went, however, is disputed: Barros claims it went to all parts of Java, while Castanheda, who also accompanied the voyage, says it only went to Jepara (see: Ronald Bishop Smith, *The First Age of the Portuguese Embassies, Navigations and Peregrinations to the Kingdoms and Islands of Southeast Asia [1509-1521]* [Bethesda, MD: Decatur Press Inc., 1968], 57-59). Pires, however, confuses the issue still further: the *Suma Oriental* explicitly states the mission visited Tuban, Sidayu and Rembang (all immediately adjacent to each other), but not Tegal, Majapahit, Cirebon, Demak and Tidunan. There is no clear indication about Jepara, Semarang, Gresik or Surabaya (see Pires’s account of Java: SO, 174-196).

<sup>46</sup> Th. Pigeaud and H. de Graaf speculate it may have been something similar to the seventeenth-century *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. This (at least regarding Javanese history) tallies well with Pires. It fails, however, to mention Melaka. Also, Pires did not visit Banten (see: H. J. de Graaf and Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, *Islamic States in Java, 1500-1700: Eight Dutch Books and Articles by Dr H. J. de Graaf as summarized by Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud*, Verhandeligen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 70 [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976], 6).

<sup>47</sup> Numerous Portuguese sources (including Pires) testify to an important Javanese presence in pre-Portuguese Melaka. The first to do so was Rui de Araujo, a Portuguese soldier held captive in Melaka throughout 1510. In a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> February of that year, and addressed to d’Albuquerque, de Araujo describes the Javanese as both Melaka’s principle merchants and its armed forces (see: Arthur Basilio de Sá, ‘Documents on the History of the Portuguese Patronage in the Far East. Vol. I: [1506-1549],’ in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado [Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993], 133).

likelihood of a Javanese chronicle accurately recounting Melaka's history. Moreover, because Pires wrote immediately after the fall of Melaka, it is highly likely that the chronicle he used originated from a period contemporary to the Melakan Sultanate. Consequently, the *Suma Oriental* may have been produced using potentially very valuable information.

Nonetheless, the use of a Javanese chronicle also entails certain limitations. For example, the *Suma Oriental*'s account of Melaka's commercial rise (which is closely tied to its conversion) lends prominence to Majapahit. This emphasis might well be expected of a Javanese source, which would naturally privilege its homeland. Perhaps significantly, therefore, Majapahit's role is not discussed in any other Portuguese text; Albuquerque, for example, speaks of pirates instead and fails to link them to conversion. Indeed, his account may be more accurate: this period did witness substantial pirate activity in the Straits of Malacca, with Chinese sources claiming Zheng He actively policed the area to destroy pirate bands, enlisting Melaka as an operational base in this process.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, and although no Chinese source describes Melaka as a pirate base, some corroboration for Albuquerque's account is apparent. This suggests Albuquerque's *Commentaries* may, at least on this occasion, be more valuable than the *Suma Oriental*.

Nevertheless, because each is a valuable source, it is compelling that both Pires and Albuquerque, while differing on some of the detail, identify Samudera-Pasai as the instrument of Melaka's conversion. Because their accounts differ, it is unlikely they simply copied this point from each other. Rather, this agreement amidst differing points of detail suggests that they accessed differing accounts that nonetheless stated the same thing (i.e. that Samudera-Pasai helped convert Melaka), thereby indicating mutual

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<sup>48</sup> YYSL, 99-100.

corroboration and possible accuracy. Indeed, independently of these two accounts, other reasons emerge for supposing Samudera-Pasai influenced early Melakan Islam. For example, and as noted in Chapter 1, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa observed the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* in fourteenth-century Samudera-Pasai; that Melaka’s fifteenth-century law code, the *Undang-Undang Melaka* (discussed more fully in Chapter 7), was also influenced by Shāfi‘ī thought indicates possible Samudera-Pasai influence.<sup>49</sup> Equally, the *Sejarah Melayu* (for what it’s worth as an historical source) claims Manṣūr Shāh sent envoys to Samudera-Pasai to find answers to religious questions.<sup>50</sup> At the very least this suggests Tun Bambang (perhaps in common with his contemporaries) saw Samudera-Pasai as Melaka’s superior in the field of religion. Although speculative, this could suggest a degree of religious indebtedness, consonant with the idea of Melaka obtaining its Islam from Samudera-Pasai.

Taken together, the above suggests that Samudera-Pasai may well have played a role in Melaka’s conversion. Equally, and as something mentioned in both Portuguese sources, a royal marriage may have accompanied that process. But, and as discussed in Chapter 2, during Iskandar Shāh’s reign (and, for that matter, Muḥammad Shāh’s) Melaka’s trade was dominated by the Chinese. During that period, Chinese fleets of immense size, led by Muslims, frequented Melaka for a generation, sponsoring its rise to power. As such, could they have also played a role in the city’s early Islamisation?

#### **4.4. A Chinese Muslim Role in Conversion**

Militating against the possibility of a Chinese Muslim role in Melaka’s early Islamisation is the fact that neither the Portuguese nor the *Sejarah Melayu* attest to one.

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<sup>49</sup> See: *UUM*.

<sup>50</sup> *SM*, 185.

They also fail to mention a significant Chinese role in Melakan trade. The latter, however, is almost certainly an oversight: as well as the evidence uncovered in Chapter 2 (including Pires's statements about the immense value of Chinese trade), Melaka's archaeology clearly attests to a strong commercial relationship. Indeed, the Melakan sultanate's fifteenth-century remains almost entirely relate to a Chinese presence. In 2004, for example, the remains of Zheng He's settlement (the *guanchang*) were reputedly discovered on the north bank of the Melaka River.<sup>51</sup> Immediately adjacent to both the river (used to transport goods) and the famous Melaka Bridge (used as a bartering place),<sup>52</sup> its position suggests an especially favoured location. Certainly, it gave the Chinese easier access to these important commercial zones than any other merchant group.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, from both within and outside the *guanchang*, large amounts of Ming period artefacts have been uncovered. These include wells of a specifically Chinese design, diverse trade goods (most notably porcelain) and Chinese coinage.<sup>54</sup> Chinese porcelain, for example, has been recovered from both within the city and from far beyond it; the 1467 Melakan gravesite at Pengkalan Kempas, for example, today in the neighbouring state of Negeri Sembilan, was found littered with Yongle-period porcelain when it was excavated during the early twentieth century.<sup>55</sup> Regarding Chinese coinage, this has been found across Melaka and ranges in date from the

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<sup>51</sup> Tan Ta Sen, *Cheng Ho and Malacca* (Malacca: Cheng Ho Cultural Museum and International Zheng He Society, 2005), 48-49.

<sup>52</sup> *SO*, 238.

<sup>53</sup> By contrast, Kampung Kling, which was home to Melaka's Indian traders, was located behind the *guanchang*, effectively cut off by it from both the river and the bridge. See: Castanheda, 'Conquest of India. Book I and II,' in *Portuguese Documents*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. Pintado (1993), 85; M. G. de Eredia, 'Eredia's Description of Malacca, Meridional India, and Cathay. Translated from the Portuguese, with Notes,' trans. J. V. Mills, *JMBRAS* 8:1 (1930): 19-20.

<sup>54</sup> Tan, *Cheng Ho and Malacca* (2005), 49.

<sup>55</sup> Ivor H. N. Evans, 'A Grave and Megaliths in Negri Sembilan with an Account of Some Excavations,' *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums* 9:3 (1921): 168-169; C. Boden Kloss, 'Notes on the Pengkalan Kempas Tombstone,' *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums* 9:3 (1921): 185-189.

fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. It has been found in far larger quantities than any other type of currency, including the Islamic coins minted by the sultanate itself.<sup>56</sup>

Another Melakan site of particular interest is Bukit Cina ('The Chinese Hill'), located on the south side of the Melaka River. Mentioned by both the *Sejarah Melayu*<sup>57</sup> and the Portuguese texts,<sup>58</sup> this particularly prominent survival of Melaka's past has traditionally functioned as a Chinese graveyard (indeed, the largest outside China, comprising 12,500 individual graves) and preserves many Ming-period examples, some of them Muslim.<sup>59</sup> It also has a number of Chinese-associated wells at its base. Two legends, however, surround its origin: the first associates it with Zheng He, claiming it was granted to him as a place to bury deceased members of his crew, with the wells being constructed to serve the *guanchang*;<sup>60</sup> the second, however, and which is present in the *Sejarah Melayu*, associates it with a Chinese princess called Hang Liu (or, more commonly, Hang Li Po). Reputedly the wife of Manşūr Shāh, Hang Liu was granted the hill as a place for her and her five hundred Chinese followers to settle. The wells were then dug for their convenience – hence the largest is currently called Perigi Hang Li Po ('Hang Li Po's Well').<sup>61</sup>

But, regardless of which of these accounts is correct, the hill's Chinese associations are clear. As such, it is significant that the site sits on the southern side of the Melaka River – that is, on the side reserved for the city's elite, where both the royal compound and the enclave reserved for Melaka's highest echelons were located.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Tan, *Cheng Ho and Malacca* (2005), 69. Pires also testifies to Chinese-like coins being used in Melaka (SO, 275).

<sup>57</sup> SM, 169.

<sup>58</sup> Most early Portuguese texts mention Bukit Cina, including: SO, 237; and Eredia, 'Description,' trans. Mills, *JMBRAS* 8:1 (1930): 87 (it also features on Eredia's map of Melaka).

<sup>59</sup> Carolyn L. Cartier, 'Society Creating Historic Open Space in Melaka,' *Geographical Review* 83:4 (1993): 360.

<sup>60</sup> Tan, *Cheng Ho and Malacca* (2005), 56-57.

<sup>61</sup> SM, 168-169.

<sup>62</sup> Castanheda, 'Conquest of India. Book I and II,' in *Portuguese Documents*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. Pintado (1993), 85.

Consequently, Bukit Cina again indicates a privileged position for the Chinese. Indeed, Bukit Cina is one of only two prominent hills in Melaka. The other, today called St Paul's Hill, was reserved for the royal compound. Bukit Cina, however, is considerably larger than St Paul's, being both taller (50 metres in height) and wider in extent (currently covering forty-two hectares, but once much larger).<sup>63</sup> This again suggests that, when it was given to the Chinese, they commanded serious respect in the city; enough to allow them to occupy the city's most prominent physical landmark, usually the preserve of the Malay ruler.

All this seems to confirm the reality of a special role for Zheng He and his compatriots in Melaka, reinforcing the conclusions reached in Chapter 2. In light of this, however, the question again arises, could they have been involved in Melaka's Islamisation, if not its conversion? The rest of this chapter will demonstrate that, although Chinese Muslims may not have converted Melaka, both Pires and Albuquerque provide a hitherto neglected picture of Chinese Muslim involvement in Melaka's expansion, including the Islamisation of its empire.

#### **4.5. The Great Captain and His Chinese Daughter**

Both Pires and Albuquerque claim Iskandar Shāh travelled to China. According to the *Suma Oriental*, this occurred at the beginning of his reign, when Iskandar Shāh was forty-five. Going to pay allegiance to the Emperor, he was received with great honour. When the time came to return home, however, the Emperor entrusted Iskandar Shāh to

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<sup>63</sup> Cartier, 'Historic Open Space in Melaka,' *GR* 83:4 (1993): 364-365.

the care of a 'Great Captain.'<sup>64</sup> Together, this captain and Iskandar Shāh travelled back to Melaka and:

The captain brought with him a beautiful Chinese daughter, and when the said Xaquem Darxa [Iskandar Shāh] reached Malacca, in order to do honour to the said captain, he married her, although she was not a woman of rank. And heathens do not mind being married to Moorish women, because it is the custom here, and the Moors are better pleased to marry their women to heathens than for themselves to marry heathen women, as they make their husbands Moors.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore:

The said king Xaquem Darxa had a son by this Chinese woman, who was called Rajapute [or Raja Putih, the White Raja], from whom are descended the kings of Pahang, Kampar and Indragiri.<sup>66</sup>

To all this Albuquerque adds little, essentially providing the same account.<sup>67</sup> In all probability, the 'Great Captain' referred to is Zheng He. Certainly, rumours of Zheng He's enormous fleets had reached the Portuguese long before Pires and Albuquerque; even before Vasco da Gama returned triumphant from India, stories were circulating about how, eighty years earlier, twenty to twenty-five well-armed Chinese ships had gone to Calicut every few years. By Pires's time this had grown to fleets of up to eight

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<sup>64</sup> SO, 242.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 242-243.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>67</sup> His account reads as follows: 'And when the king of China had taken his leave of Xaquemdarxa, he sent with him a captain who was to accompany him back to Malacca, and in consequence of the great friendship which sprang up between them on their road, Xaquemdarxa married one of his daughters, by whom he had a son whose name was Rajapute, from whom are descended the kings of Champar [Kampar] and Pam [Pahang]' (Dalboquerque II, *Commentaries*, trans. Birch, vol. 3 [1880], 78-79). He places this event, however, at the very end of Iskandar Shāh's reign, rather than at the beginning. This variation is explicable, however, if it is considered that, despite the fact Pires claims this voyage occurred at the beginning of Iskandar Shāh's reign, he actually recounts it at the very end by skipping backwards from Iskandar Shāh's death. Doing so, however, disrupts his usually linear chronology; if the author of the *Commentaries* (or the dispatches they were supposedly based on) drew from the *Suma Oriental*, this may have confused them.



hundred ships.<sup>68</sup> As such, it is eminently plausible that Pires could have heard about Zheng He, especially in connection with Melaka, with which he had been closely associated. It is therefore significant that the *Ming shi-lu* provides some support for the *Suma Oriental*'s account by claiming that Zheng He sailed in the company of two Melakan rulers: Parameswara in 1411 and Iskandar Shāh in 1419.<sup>69</sup> In each case, however, the voyage was a trip from Melaka to China, not *vice versa*. Equally, neither journey occurred at the beginning of the ruler's reign. Iskandar Shāh did, however, visit China in 1414 (the year of his ascension), but not in the company of Zheng He. But despite these limitations, the *Ming shi-lu* provides clear confirmation that Iskandar Shāh both sailed with Zheng He and visited China at the beginning of his reign. It is therefore plausible that both Pires and Albuquerque are recounting an actual occurrence. As such, what is its significance?

In short, the above represents the first instance of a (specifically Chinese) Muslim element being associated with the Melakan court. As has been shown, Pires's conversion account comes at the end of Iskandar Shāh's reign; because this marriage occurs at the start, Pires is essentially claiming that Chinese Islam was the first to penetrate Melaka's highest echelons. Neither he nor any other source mentions another Islamic group in this position before that. Although both Pires and Albuquerque are clear that this activity did not result in Iskandar Shāh's conversion, this initial Islamic foray is still significant, as becomes apparent when Raja Putih is considered.

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Finlay, 'The Treasure-Ships of Zheng He: Chinese Maritime Imperialism in the Age of Discovery,' *Terrae Incognitae* 23 (1991): 2.

<sup>69</sup> Wang Gungwu, 'The First Three Rulers of Malacca,' in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 35-37.

In line with the early date of the marriage, Pires claims Raja Putih was Iskandar Shāh's eldest child,<sup>70</sup> older even than Muẓaffar Shāh (d.1459), Iskandar Shāh's eventual successor. Consequently, Pires claims that Raja Putih had a better right to rule than his half-brother, but was excluded as the son of a lesser wife. Nevertheless, because of a just and fair nature, Raja Putih became a well-respected man in Melaka, loved by both his brother and the general populace. Muẓaffar Shāh elevated him to the highest position at court, giving him the title Paduka Raja and making him guardian and tutor to his own heir, Manṣūr Shāh. Just as importantly, however, Muẓaffar Shāh allowed Raja Putih's sons to marry the daughters of the Rajas of Kampar, Indrigiri and Pahang. By these marriages, Pires claims these rulers were converted to Islam and drawn under Melaka's sway. They all swore loyalty, however, to Raja Putih, not the ruler of Melaka.

After Muẓaffar Shāh's death, Raja Putih's prestigious position continued: he was appointed as Manṣūr Shāh's chief advisor and continued to enjoy great popularity. Soon, however, Manṣūr Shāh became concerned that his uncle was plotting to take the throne; he had become so powerful he was beginning to usurp royal privileges. As such, Manṣūr Shāh had him assassinated, thereby ending any potential threat. This decision, however, created an immediate reaction: the kings of Kampar, Indrigiri and Pahang all rebelled in order to avenge the death of their forbearer. Manṣūr Shāh was forced to pacify them.<sup>71</sup>

This sequel to Iskandar Shāh's marriage (also told by Albuquerque)<sup>72</sup> appears to describe a power struggle at the very heart of the Melakan court: Iskandar Shāh's Malay descendants, rulers of the kingdom, were being challenged by their half-Chinese relative. In Melaka, the latter had risen to a position second only to the Sultan; outside

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<sup>70</sup> Further on, Pires claims some of the people he spoke to maintained that Raja Putih was actually the son of a concubine (SO, 246). Although he refrains from explicitly judging between these two traditions, the *Suma Oriental* proceeds on the basis that Raja Putih was indeed the son of the Chinese girl.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>72</sup> Dalboquerque II, *Commentaries*, trans. Birch, vol. 3 (1880), 79.

the city, he was able to command the allegiance of Melaka's outlying provinces, the ones Pires claims were Melaka's closest allies.<sup>73</sup> Ultimately, this precarious situation resulted in the need to assassinate Raja Putih. Manşūr Shāh, fearing a coup (whether real or imaginary), commanded his removal. This decision, however, caused a revolt, underlining the power Raja Putih had accumulated. The picture which emerges is therefore of a very powerful Chinese Muslim faction in Melaka, the seeds of which were sown by Zheng He. Certainly, China's significance during Melaka's rise to power makes a powerful political figure like Raja Putih plausible: China's importance for Melaka would have naturally empowered any Chinese residents of the city.

At this point, it should also be noted that the *Sejarah Melayu*'s Hang Liu may also preserve a memory of the *Suma Oriental*'s account. Another Chinese girl married to a Melakan ruler, Hang Liu also had a son with the title Paduka and was initially escorted to Melaka by a Chinese official called Ling Ho.<sup>74</sup> The latter could be a distortion of Zheng He. The *Sejarah Melayu*, however, places all this in the reign of Manşūr Shāh, long after the death of Iskandar Shāh. Equally, the *Sejarah Melayu* claims Hang Liu was a member of the Chinese Imperial House and (at least upon first arrival) a non-Muslim. All this limits the degree of similarity between the two narratives. There is, however, no reason to accept the historicity of Hang Liu, at least as she is presented in the *Sejarah Melayu*.

As noted by the Malaysian historian Khoo Kay Kim, there is no Chinese record of Hang Liu. If indeed a Ming princess who married a Melakan ruler, this is strange; the

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<sup>73</sup> This is both openly stated by Pires and implied when the kings of Kampar, Indragiri and Pahang are always those the Sultan of Melaka is most eager to have at court (see: *SO*, 251-253). For its part, the *Sejarah Melayu* also makes it clear Pahang was particularly close to Melaka: immediately after Melaka's fall to the Portuguese, its court fled to Pahang (*SM*, 270).

<sup>74</sup> According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, Hang Liu's son was called Paduka Mimat. He in turn had a son called Paduka Sri Cina, a grandson called Paduka Ahmat and a great-grandson called Paduka Isap. No other information, however, is provided. It should also be noted that some versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* have Li Po instead of Ling Ho (see: *Ibid*, 168-169).

*Ming shi-lu* would almost certainly contain a record of an event like this. That none survives, however, suggests to Khoo that Hang Liu is probably mythical.<sup>75</sup> But, although Khoo's argument undermines the historicity of Hang Liu as she is presented in the *Sejarah Melayu*, it does not prevent her being a more elaborative version of Zheng He's daughter. Although speculative, Tun Bambang could have recast the latter as a Chinese princess active during Manşūr Shāh's reign. As seen, the *Sejarah Melayu* has a tendency to aggrandise Manşūr Shāh, gathering all significant pre-Maḥmūd Shāh events into his reign. Indeed, all references to Melaka's relationship with China are assembled there.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps the memory of Zheng He's daughter was also shifted there, while simultaneously being altered to make her a princess, thereby lending further prestige to the Melakan court. But certainly, if neither a princess nor a diplomatic gesture, the *Ming shi-lu* would contain no record of her.

Ultimately, however, none of the Chinese texts dealing with Zheng He and his voyages mention this marriage. Raja Putih is also not referred to. Equally, Zheng He was a eunuch; it is therefore impossible that he had biological children. None of this, however, is necessarily conclusive. Although a eunuch, it is known that Zheng He adopted children: after his death, an adopted son called Zheng Hao claimed inheritance as his descendent.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, it is not impossible (but undocumented) that Zheng He also had an adopted daughter. If he chose to marry her to a foreign ruler, this would only have been common diplomatic practice at the time.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, if this were the

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<sup>75</sup> Khoo has written no research article on this topic. Rather, his comments were made in the context of recent efforts to redesign Malaysia's school history curriculum. They were then widely reported in the press (for example, see: Priya Kulasagaran, 'Prof Khoo: No record of the existence of Princess Hang Li Po; It's a Myth,' *The Star*, Monday 16th January 2012. Available at: <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2012/01/16/prof-khoo-no-record-of-the-existence-of-princess-hang-li-po-its-a-myth/>. [Accessed on: 17/01/2014]).

<sup>76</sup> See: *SM*, 166-170.

<sup>77</sup> Chang Kuei-sheng, 'Cheng Ho,' in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644: The Ming Biographical History Project of the Association for Asian Studies*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 198.

<sup>78</sup> The *Sejarah Melayu*, for example, includes countless examples of such marriages.

case, then the silence of the written sources is neither surprising nor damning: the *Ming shi-lu*, for example, is very sketchy about Zheng He's various voyages, in part because their official logs were destroyed.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, information about a marriage may simply have been lost. Of the other surviving Chinese sources, the stone inscriptions set up by Zheng He deal mostly with dates and grand military endeavours,<sup>80</sup> while both Ma Huan and Fei Xin rarely discuss diplomatic matters, instead confining themselves to local cultures and commerce.<sup>81</sup> As for Raja Putih, his rise to prominence occurred long after the voyages ceased; his career may therefore have simply failed to reach Chinese ears.

To sum up, while recounting Iskandar Shāh's marriage to a Chinese Muslim girl and the subsequent career of her son, Raja Putih, both Pires and Albuquerque seem to be describing a real historical event. They thereby indicate the existence of a powerful Chinese Muslim faction in early Melaka. Certainly, Zheng He is known to have established a Chinese community in the city; archaeology demonstrates both the reality and commercial importance of that settlement. Moreover, Fei Xin, on the basis of first-hand observation, claims that members of this community married into the local population, creating a permanent settlement. Because this settlement was commercially based, with Muslims deeply involved in Chinese trade during this period, it is likely some of these settlers were Muslims. Indeed, some support for this can be found in the early Portuguese texts: these use two words for the Chinese residents of Melaka, *chins* and *chincheus*. R. Jones's study of early Chinese loanwords in Malay has identified the

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<sup>79</sup> Gabriele Foccardi, *The Chinese Travellers of the Ming Period* (Wiesbaden: Kommissionsverlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), 25-26.

<sup>80</sup> See: J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'The True Dates of the Chinese Maritime Expeditions in the Early Fifteenth Century,' *T'oung Pao* 34:5 (1939): 341-413.

<sup>81</sup> See their: *YYSL* and *XCSL*.

Hokkien sub-dialect of Chiangchew (i.e. Zhangzhou) as particularly important.<sup>82</sup> Because ‘chiangchew’ is phonetically similar to *chincheus*, he believes the same group is being referred to; Ma Huan’s fifteenth-century account refers to numerous Nusantara-based immigrants from Zhangzhou, many of whom were Muslim.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, it seems Raja Putih probably did not exist in isolation, but as part of a wider Chinese Muslim population – his mother’s compatriot co-religionists. Certainly, the *Sejarah Melayu* claims Hang Liu settled in Melaka with five hundred followers. Both the archaeology and urban landscape of Melaka indicate this Chinese population had a significant social standing. This was most likely based on its commercial prowess, with Raja Putih’s rise to prominence also reflecting this status. It also entails, however, that Chinese Muslims were instrumental in Melaka’s early expansion, including the spread of Islam through its empire.

#### 4.6. Conclusion

To conclude, several different versions of Melaka’s conversion history exist. Of them, the Malay one, probably dating to 1612, is the least reliable. The Portuguese accounts, however, and most notably the *Suma Oriental*, we saw to be more valuable. The *Suma Oriental*, for example, is both detailed and carefully collated. Although not perfect, it can be cross-checked with other sources (notably the *Commentaries* of Albuquerque, early Chinese texts and Melaka’s archaeology) to determine which sections of it are the most reliable. In this manner, we saw that the *Suma Oriental*’s account of Samudera-Pasai’s involvement in the conversion of Melaka is probably accurate, despite some reservations about the role of Majapahit in that process.

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<sup>82</sup> Russell Jones, ‘The Chiangchew Hokkiens, the True Pioneers in the Nanyang,’ *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 82:2 (2009): 39-66.

<sup>83</sup> YYSJ, 93.

The *Suma Oriental*, however, along with Albuquerque's *Commentaries*, also indicated a significant Chinese Muslim presence in Melaka: the marriage of Zheng He's adopted daughter to Iskandar Shāh is the first instance Pires provides of Islam entering the Melakan court. Indeed, aspects of this account find ready confirmation elsewhere; the *Sejarah Melayu*, for example, may preserve a garbled version of it in the figure of Hang Liu.

Further to this, however, we also saw that Zheng He's Chinese daughter had a son, Raja Putih. He would later rise to a position of power at the Melakan court, proving instrumental in both Melaka's territorial expansion and the spread of Islam through its empire. Indeed, so well-respected was he that, when he was assassinated by Manşūr Shāh, the rulers of Kampar, Indragiri and Pahang all rebelled against their Melakan overlords. The most important territories in Melaka's empire, they had all borne allegiance to Raja Putih. But, if this part of Pires's narrative is reliable – and we saw no reason to reject it – it suggests an important political role for Chinese Muslims in early Melaka. As such, and in conjunction with Melaka's archaeology and urban landscape, which also point to an important commercial and social status for the Chinese, it seems Muslims with links to China played a significant role in early Melakan affairs, including in the Islamisation of its territories.

## 5. Java

### 5.1. Introduction

Java is one of the Nusantara's great cultural centres. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was ruled by Majapahit, a powerful Hindu empire that controlled much of the region, dominating its politics and trade. From the late fourteenth century onwards, however, Java's northern coast began to host increasingly important Muslim communities, all composed of foreigners drawn there by trade. Traditionally, scholarship (both Indonesian and Western) has argued that, from the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, these Muslim traders established themselves as local rulers.<sup>1</sup> As a result, small Islamic kingdoms sprang up right across Java's northern coast, with the most powerful one appearing at Demak. By the time the Portuguese arrived, Demak had begun to challenge Majapahit; by around 1527, it had successfully overthrown its Hindu predecessor, establishing itself (and consequently Islam) as Java's dominant power.

As for the origin of the Muslim traders who established these early kingdoms, traditionally they have been identified as either Arabian and/or Indian (see Chapter 1). In 1964, however, two reputed *peranakan* (Sino-Malay) texts were published.<sup>2</sup> These claimed Java's conversion was the work of Chinese Muslim communities, established by Zheng He. Both texts, however, have proven controversial – not just because of their

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see: H. J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Islamic States in Java, 1500-1700: Eight Dutch Books and Articles by Dr H. J. de Graaf as summarized by Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud*, *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 70 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> See: *TR*.



revisionist claims, but because of an uncertain provenance. Consequently, at least outside Indonesia, they have figured only marginally in academic discussions. Nonetheless, in light of the controversy they throw up, this chapter has two aims: firstly, to use more well-established primary texts to re-evaluate Java's conversion *vis-à-vis* Chinese Muslim involvement while, secondly, evaluating these two *peranakan* manuscripts. The latter will be accomplished in light of new information regarding their provenance. As in other chapters, however, our discussion will begin with an outline of the relevant primary sources before moving on to an analysis of their reliability. In line with our chapter's aims, this analysis is divided in two. First, we will re-evaluate the history of conversion as it is narrated in more standard texts, like the *Suma Oriental*, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, *Hikayat Hasanuddin* etc. In contrast to previous scholarship, we will conclude that these sources hint at a conversion process which began in the late fourteenth century, in Gresik. Furthermore, Chinese Muslims were undoubtedly central to that process: from the late fourteenth century onwards, we will argue that they built up an important power base in Gresik, even threatening Majapahit. By the mid-fifteenth century, one of their number, a Chinese Muslim merchant called either Cu Cu or Jinbun, had founded Demak. Under his (and his son's) leadership, most of Java was converted to Islam by the end of the same century. With this new interpretation in mind, the second part of our analysis will then re-examine both *peranakan* manuscripts. Although our chapter will ultimately argue in favour of Chinese Muslim-driven conversion, it will conclude that these texts are forgeries; not only does their provenance remain questionable, but their contents show clear signs of having been written during the twentieth century, by someone with a Dutch education. We will argue that this was probably the Indonesian historian who initially published them, M. O. Parlindungan.

## 5.2. The Early Sources

### 5.2.1. Sixteenth-Century European Sources

Tomé Pires is the only pre-eighteenth century European author who explicitly mentions Java's conversion. He is, however, inconsistent about whom the missionaries involved were. As such, he makes three separate statements about them. First, he identifies them as Persian, Arab, Gujerati, Bengali and Malay Muslim merchants who had settled along Java's northern coast approximately seventy years earlier (i.e. 1442-1445). Gradually acculturating, he claims their descendants used their trade to induce the rulers (*pate*) of Java's northern entrepôts to convert, or else be overthrown.<sup>3</sup> Soon after this, however, Pires presents a second identification: he states that Java's Muslim lords were not indigenous, but the descendants of Chinese, Persian and Indian Muslim merchants.<sup>4</sup> Then lastly, Pires finally claims that Melaka's third Sultan, Muẓaffar Shāh (r. 1445-1459), sent ambassadors to Java who induced the local rulers to convert.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, Pires does not evaluate these separate claims, or attempt to reconcile them. He does, however, provide a history of each major Javanese entrepôt which, when considered in the context of his statements about conversion (and a range of other sources, below), help unravel his account. As such, those histories (despite rarely referencing conversion directly) will now be recounted.

Demak is the Javanese entrepôt Pires spends most time describing. As Java's most important Islamic kingdom, Pires claims it was in control of all the others and had

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<sup>3</sup> SO, 174; 182.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 245.

both Palembang and Jambi (both on Sumatra) as vassals.<sup>6</sup> Although Pires provides no precise date for its conversion, he claims that its current ruler was its third Muslim lord. The first (who goes unnamed) was either a merchant from Gresik (who founded Demak) or a slave of Demak's last pagan lord – Pires did not know which, but claimed the majority of the people he spoke to favoured the latter tradition. Nonetheless, this individual, through conquest and intermarriage, turned Demak into a powerful kingdom. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son, Pate Rodim, who continued in the same way. During Pires's own time, the son of this ruler, also called Pate Rodim (and about thirty years old at the time), was on the throne. He had, however, given himself over to concubines. Nonetheless, the activities of his grandfather and father ensured he remained Java's chief *pate*.<sup>7</sup>

Despite Demak's political dominance, Pires claims that Gresik was commercially pre-eminent: it was the 'greatest trading port, the best in all Java,' known locally as 'the rich man's port.'<sup>8</sup> Numerous foreigners (including the Chinese, South Indians, Gujaratis and Bengalis) visited it. It controlled all of Java's eastern trade (i.e. to the Spice Islands) and ruled Madura. It also had a twin city called Giri, separated from it by a river. Although both Gresik and Giri were Islamic by the time Pires visited the island (i.e. 1512-1515), Pires does not say how or when they were converted. He does claim, however, that during the mid to late-fifteenth century, Gresik was conquered by a Malay family from Melaka. As such, its present ruler was a fifty-year old Malay man, called Pate Cuçuf (probably Pate Yūsuf). The latter's father, Adam, had settled in Melaka just prior to Cuçuf's birth (i.e. c.1460). There he married the sister of Melaka's powerful Sri Nara Diraja, Tuan 'Alī. This union produced Cuçuf, and linked Adam to

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<sup>6</sup> SO, 184-185.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 192.

Melaka's ruling family (Sultan Muẓaffar Shāh's mother was another of Tuan 'Alī's sisters).<sup>9</sup> Soon after Cuḡuf's birth, however, Adam left Melaka for Gresik. There he seized the city and installed himself as ruler. After much time had passed, he summoned Cuḡuf to join him and, once Adam died, Cuḡuf remained to rule in his stead. Pires describes Cuḡuf as being at constant war with Gresik's twin city Giri, although why is unclear. Concerning Giri, Pires simply states that it was inland and conducted very little trade. It was ruled by a man called Zeynal, described as the oldest of all Java's *pate*. Respected throughout the land, Zeynal had been the elder Pate Rodim's comrade-in-arms. Nothing more, however, is said about either him or Giri.<sup>10</sup>

Aside from Demak and Gresik, Pires attaches particular importance to Cirebon and Jepara. Cirebon had reputedly converted forty years before Pires visited Java (i.e. in 1472-1475), at the hands of Demak's first ruler. The latter had sent a slave (who goes unnamed, but was originally from Gresik) to conquer and convert it. Afterwards, the slave became Cirebon's ruler. This individual was the second Pate Rodim's grandfather,<sup>11</sup> although his relationship to Lebe Uḡa (possibly Lebai Mūsā or 'Īsā), Cirebon's ruler when Pires was writing, is not stated.<sup>12</sup>

Turning to Jepara, this likewise converted between forty and forty-five years before Pires visited Java. Pires claims that a 'working man' from the island of 'Laue' had made his way there from Melaka, engaging in trade. After amassing a great fortune, he succeeded in killing Jepara's *pate* and taking control of the city, converting it in the process. During Pires's own time, the ruler of Jepara was a twenty-five year old man

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<sup>9</sup> R. J. Wilkinson, 'The Malacca Sultanate,' *JMBRAS* 13:2 (1935): 50. The *Sejarah Melayu* also refers to Pate Adam, and again makes him the son-in-law of the Sri Nara Diraja. It associates him, however, with Surabaya (*SM*, 226-227).

<sup>10</sup> *SO*, 193-194.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 183.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 183.

called Pate Unus (Yūnus). The working man's grandson, he was also brother-in-law to the second Pate Rodim.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from the above locations, Pires mentions only two more of relevance: Banten and Tuban. Whereas Pires claims Banten was still pagan in 1512-1515,<sup>14</sup> Tuban (Majapahit's main port) was governed by a Javanese Muslim. Then fifty-five to sixty years of age, this man's grandfather, Tuban's last Hindu ruler, had converted the city.<sup>15</sup> Although no dates are given, this could potentially push Tuban's conversion back to the early fifteenth century.

Aside from Pires, the sixteenth century provides only two other relevant European sources. The first is João de Barros's *Decades da Asia* (1552-1563), which describes the Javanese as:

the most civilized people of these parts [i.e. the Nusantara], who according to what they say themselves came from China, and it appears that what they say is true, because in their appearance and in the form of their civilization they follow the Chinese closely...However, since Moors from Melaka sailed there...and because of the war which the Moors made against them, they began to withdraw to the interior of the country near the mountains.<sup>16</sup>

The second is then Willem Lodewycksz's *Historie van Indie* (written in 1598). Lodewycksz, a Dutch merchant who visited Banten in 1596,<sup>17</sup> claimed that the people of that city:

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<sup>13</sup> SO, 187-188.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in: Anthony Reid, 'The Rise and Fall of Sino-Javanese Shipping,' in *Looking in Odd Mirrors: The Java Sea*, ed. V. J. N. Houben, H. M. J. Maier and W. van der Molen, Semaian 5 (Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azie en Oceanie Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1992), 197.

<sup>17</sup> Vibeke Roeper and Diederick Wildeman, 'Willem Lodewycksz,' in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Jennifer Speake (London: Routledge, 2014), 735.

when asked say that they have their origin from the Chinese [who fled China because of oppressive labour regimes].<sup>18</sup>

### 5.2.2. European Sources from the Eighteenth Century Onwards

After the sixteenth century, nothing of value emerges until the account of Java written by the Dutch official, J. Stavorinus (1739-1788). Focusing his attention on west Java, Stavorinus recorded many local traditions that traced Islamisation began in 1406, in the city of Cirebon. In that city, Stavorinus came across local traditions which attributed Islam's introduction to an Arab called Cheik ibn Molana (i.e. Shaykh ibn Mawlānā) or Ibn Israel, a wandering preacher who had first visited and converted Aceh, Johor and 'other places in the east.' Finally settling in Cirebon, Shaykh ibn Mawlānā established a Sultanate and began Java's Islamisation. Subsequently buried in the city, his tomb was still an object of great veneration during Stavorinus's own time. Both Cirebon's and Banten's current rulers claimed descendent from him.<sup>19</sup>

After Stavorinus comes Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826). Between 1811 and 1816, Raffles served as the Lieutenant-General of Java.<sup>20</sup> He took advantage of his position to collect many Javanese traditions, recording them in his 1817 *The History of Java*. Overall, his conversion account is substantially similar to the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s (see the next section). Nonetheless, he adds various details not found elsewhere. For example, before describing the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s series of events, he recounts two earlier attempts at Islamisation, both connected with Gresik. The first involved a

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<sup>18</sup> Cited in: Anthony Reid, 'Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia,' in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 37.

<sup>19</sup> J. S. Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies*, trans. S. H. Wilcocke, vol. 3 (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 372.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimir I. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 5.

fourteenth-century Arab called Mawlānā Ibrāhīm. A *pandita* (sage or scholar) from Arabia, he established himself at Desa Leran, near Gresik. Joined there by his cousin, the Raja of Cermin (a country in Sabrang, Champa), he built a mosque and began attracting converts. Although the Raja eventually left Desa Leran, Mawlānā Ibrāhīm remained behind; Raffles associates his grave with that of Malik Ibrāhīm, found in Gresik and dated 1419.<sup>21</sup>

Turning to the second early attempt at Islamisation, sometime after the death of Mawlānā Ibrāhīm, Raffles claims another prominent Muslim arrived on Java: a Cambodian woman called Niai Gedi Pinateh. The wife of a Cambodian minister, she had been banished from her homeland for sorcery. Given her high status, however, the Raja of Majapahit took her in and sent her to live in Gresik. There she became very pious and adopted Sunan Giri, one of the famous Wali Songo (Nine Saints) of Java, whose father, Shaykh Mawlānā Ishāq, had recently died. After this, however, Raffles provides no further detail about Niai Gedi Pinateh's career. He simply comments that she died forty-five years after Mawlānā Ibrāhīm (i.e. c. 1464).<sup>22</sup> Raffles does add, however, that:

The doctrines of Sheik Maulana Ishak, the father of Susunan Giri and one of the earliest missionaries, were those of Abu Hanafa [*sic*], which is the same as the Persians are said to profess; but these doctrines have, subsequent to the times of Susunan Giri, been changed to those of Shafiki [i.e. Shāfi'ī].<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1 (London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817), 113.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 397.

To support this, Raffles points out that a ‘Moharrar of Abu Hanifa’ could still be found circulating on Java. This would be a *marḥarrar* (or compendium) of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*.

After the above, Raffles follows the *Babad Tanah Jawi* quite closely, focusing most of his attention on Demak. He traces the latter’s foundation to 1477 and names its founder as Panambahan Jimbun. By the early sixteenth-century, Raffles claims Demak’s third ruler, Pangeran Tranggana, had gained control of all Java. Soon afterwards, however, Western Java was lost to Cirebon, where a man named either Sheik ibn Mulana or Mawlānā Ibrāhīm ruled. The latter (not to be confused with the Mawlānā Ibrāhīm of Gresik, but perhaps the same as Stavorinus’s Shaykh ibn Mawlānā) had previously married Panambahan Jimbun’s daughter, Niai Bintara. From that point on, he became known as Panambahan Makdum Jati and began to spread his influence throughout the western part of the island.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.2.3. The Indigenous Sources

The *Babad Tanah Jawi* is Java’s earliest surviving and most prominent court chronicle. Produced by the kingdom of Mataram (c.1587-1755), many different versions exist. They are all, however, broadly similar, frequently reproducing large sections word-for-word; this suggests that they all ultimately derive from a common archetype.<sup>25</sup> This is usually attributed to the court official, Pangeran Adilangu II, who probably composed it between 1690 and 1718.<sup>26</sup> It is possible, however, that the text

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<sup>24</sup> Raffles, *History of Java*, vol. 1 (1817), 135-138.

<sup>25</sup> M. C. Ricklefs, ‘The Evolution of Babad Tanah Jawi Texts: In Response to Day,’ *BTLV* 135:4 (1979): 448.

<sup>26</sup> J. J. Ras, ‘The Genesis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*: Origin and Function of the Javanese Court Chronicle,’ *BTLV* 143:2 (1987): 345.



was started even earlier, in the reign of Sultan Agung (1613-1645).<sup>27</sup> In terms of published versions, only one exists: a greatly condensed version of the 1836, eighteen-volume Surakarta Major *Babad* (Leiden Cod. Or. 1786).<sup>28</sup> This was first published (in the original Javanese script) in 1874, by J. J. Meinsma. In 1941, it was transliterated and re-published by W. L. Olthof. The latter edition has since become the standard version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* used amongst historians.<sup>29</sup> As such, it is also utilised here. Given its highly edited form, however, reference is also made to the relevant sections of the Surakarta Major *Babad*'s full text, where this has been published by M. C. Ricklefs.<sup>30</sup> Equally, another version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, commonly called the *Babad Kraton*, will also be considered. Again partially published by Ricklefs, this is kept at the British Library (Add. MS 12320). It was written in Jogjakarta in 1777 by Raden Tumenggung Djajengrat, son-in-law of Sultan Hamengkubuwana I (1755-1792). Amongst the most complete versions of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, it is also the oldest known example.<sup>31</sup>

Concerning the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s conversion account, all the different versions largely agree: they all trace conversion to the northern coast and attribute it to the Wali Songo, supposedly active during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>32</sup> As elsewhere, the text intimately links this process to Demak. For the *Babad Tanah Jawi*,

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<sup>27</sup> C. C. Berg, 'Javanese Historiography: A Synopsis of Its Evolution,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 18-20.

<sup>28</sup> M. C. Ricklefs, 'A Consideration of Three Versions of the *Babad Tanah Djawi*, with Excerpts on the Fall of Majapahit,' *BSOAS* 35:2 (1972): 289.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 288.

<sup>30</sup> *In Ibid*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 289-290.

<sup>32</sup> There is no commonly agreed list of these saints. Nevertheless, the most frequently cited names are: Mawlānā Malik Ibrāhīm (or Sunan Gresik, d.1419; mentioned in section 5.2.2); Sunan Ampel (or Raden Rahmat, 1401-1481; supposedly the son of Sunan Gresik and born in Champa); Sunan Bonang (b.1465; the Son of Sunan Ampel and a resident of Tuban); Sunan Drajat (b. 1470; also the son of Sunan Ampel, he resided in Gresik); Sunan Giri (b. 1442; the son of the aforementioned Mawlānā Ishāq); Sunan Kudus (d.1550); Sunan Kalijaga (b.1450); Sunan Muria (the son of Kalijaga); and Sunan Gunung Jati (1450-1568). In addition to these, the following names may also appear: Sunan Ngampel-Denta, Sunan Sitijenar, Sunan Walilanang, Sunan Bayat and Sunan Ngudung (see: M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001], 9-10).

the latter's history starts with Majapahit's final ruler, Prabu Brawijaya. He supposedly married a Chinese princess (who goes unnamed), of whom his first wife, a Champan princess, disapproved. Very fond of his first wife, Prabu Brawijaya agreed to banish his new Chinese bride; the latter was, however, already pregnant. Prabu Brawijaya was therefore unwilling to send her back to China. Instead, he gave her to his son, Arya Damar, the Adipati of Palembang. The latter took her to his city, where she gave birth to a baby boy, Raden Patah. Later she had another son, this time by Arya Damar, called Raden Husen.<sup>33</sup>

After Raden Patah reached maturity, Arya Damar abdicated in his favour and appointed Raden Husen as his deputy. Neither brother, however, wished to remain in Palembang; they both wanted to serve Prabu Brawijaya. As such, they departed for Java, landing at Ampel Denta (near Surabaya). There they encountered one of the Wali Songo, Sunan Ampel. One of two brothers from Champa, Sunan Ampel had originally been named Raden Rahmat and was the son of an Arab holy man, called Makhdūm Ibrāhīm Asmara, and a Champan princess. He also had a brother, called Raden Santri, who later became Sunan Drajat of Gresik.<sup>34</sup> Under Sunan Ampel's tutelage, both Raden Patah and Raden Husen decided to convert to Islam. This prompted Raden Patah to reconsider his decision about serving the pagan Prabu Brawijaya. Instead, he decided to stay in Ampel Denta, where he married Sunan Ampel's granddaughter, Niai Ageng Maloka. He then travelled west, settling at Bintara, where he established a mosque and *pesantren* (religious school). Raden Husen, on the other hand, continued on to Majapahit, where he entered court service and became the Adipati of Terung.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *BTJ*, 29-30.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 30-31.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 37-39.

After a while, Raden Patah established a large following in Bintara — so large, Prabu Brawijaya feared rebellion. Hearing of Raden Patah's relationship to Raden Husen, Prabu Brawijaya immediately dispatched the latter to bring his half-brother to court. When Raden Patah arrived, Prabu Brawijaya recognised him as his son (a fact he had been hitherto unaware of). Both long versions of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* claim a deep affection then sprang up between the two men, cemented by Prabu Brawijaya's profound respect for Islam.<sup>36</sup> As a sign of this favour, Prabu Brawijaya made Raden Patah the Adipati of Bintara, upgrading that settlement from 'the village of Bintara' (*pedukuhan Bintara*) to the Kingdom of Demak (*kerajaan Demak*).<sup>37</sup> With an agreement that Raden Patah would come back and see his father once a year, Prabu Brawijaya allowed him to return home.

Shortly after the above episode, news reached Prabu Brawijaya of an additional threat: another of the Wali Songo, Sunan Giri, had extended his influence over East Java, subjecting many local lords. The *Babad Tanah Jawi* claims Sunan Giri was the descendent of an Arab from Jeddah, called Syekh Wali Lanang. The latter had travelled to the Nusantara and settled in Ampel Denta, where he had also studied under Sunan Ampel. Later, he travelled on to Melaka, by way of Blambangan. In the latter location, he had left his pregnant wife, where she gave birth to Sunan Giri. Because of a plague in the city, however, Sunan Giri had been sealed in a box and cast into the sea; found by a merchant, he was given to Janda Samboja (a former servant of the Raja of Blambangan), who settled with him in Gresik. There Sunan Giri was raised as a Muslim and sent to study with Sunan Ampel. By the reign of Prabu Brawijaya, however, he had become a powerful local ruler. To prevent him rebelling, Prabu Brawijaya therefore

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<sup>36</sup> Ricklefs, 'Three Versions of the *Babad Tanah Djawi*,' *BSOAS* 35:2 (1972): 292.

<sup>37</sup> *BTJ*, 41-42.

dispatched an army to meet him (supposedly headed by Hayam Wuruk's Prime Minister, Gajah Mada, despite the fact he died in c.1363). This was defeated, however, by Sunan Giri's magical *kris*. Nonetheless, Majapahit's forces soon got another chance: some time after this attack, Sunan Giri died and was succeeded by his grandson, known as the *pandita* of Giri. Majapahit attacked again, this time successfully: Giri was destroyed and the *pandita* forced to flee to the coast.<sup>38</sup>

In total, it took Majapahit three years to deal with Giri. In all that time, Raden Patah failed to visit his father. According to the long versions of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, this concerned Prabu Brawijaya, who missed his son. As such, he again sent Raden Husen to Demak. When Raden Husen met with Raden Patah, the latter explained that his reservations about submitting to a pagan ruler had returned; rather than pay homage to his father, he was thinking of rebelling. After much persuasion, Raden Husen finally agreed to help Raden Patah in this endeavour and, from that point on, the Surakarta Major *Babad* claims Muslims rulers from across Java began to assemble in Demak (including the Bupati of Madura, Arya Teja of Cirebon and the *pandita* of Giri). The collected armies of these many rulers then marched on Majapahit, taking the city.<sup>39</sup> The *Babad Kraton*, however, claims Demak acted alone in the conquest of Majapahit.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, in both versions, Prabu Brawijaya then fled, leaving Raden Patah in possession of Majapahit and its royal regalia. According to the texts, this supposedly took place in 1478. Raden Patah then took the regalia back to Demak; now the supreme ruler of Java, he took the title Senapati Jimbun Ngabdur Rahman Panembahan

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<sup>38</sup> *BTJ*, 51-52.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 54-55.

<sup>40</sup> Ricklefs, 'Three Versions of the *Babad Tanah Djawi*,' *BSOAS* 35:2 (1972): 301.

Palembang Sajidin Panatagama.<sup>41</sup> This event also marked the final victory of Islam, which proceeded to spread unchallenged throughout the island.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, two more indigenous texts are worth considering: the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. The first is the Malay version of Banten's court chronicle (the Javanese version is known as the *Sejarah Banten Ranté-Ranté*), written in the seventeenth century. There are four recensions of this text: the late eighteenth to early nineteenth-century Cod. Or. 1711, kept at the University of Leiden; MS Raffles Malay 30, kept at the Royal Asiatic Society in London and dated the 30<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān 1230AH/6<sup>th</sup> September 1815; MS No. Mal.-Pol. 140 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 1892; and the undated Cod. Or. 1746, also kept at the University of Leiden.<sup>43</sup> In 1938, J. Edel used Cod. Or. 1711 as the basis for a critical edition. It is his text which is utilised here.

Like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* links Java's Islamisation to Demak. It traces Demak's Islamic history to a Chinese Muslim merchant called Cu Cu. In the late fifteenth century, Cu Cu supposedly sailed to Gresik to trade. Later moving to Demak, he settled down and grew very prosperous. Nonetheless, he did not use his influence to establish a Muslim kingdom. Rather, that was done after his death, by his eldest son, who took over the city and ruled as Pangeran Sumangsang. He remained loyal to Majapahit, however, while also establishing close ties to Palembang. When Pangeran Sumangsang in turn passed away, he was succeeded by his own son,

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<sup>41</sup> This Javanese title translates to: General (*Senapati*) Jimbun 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the Lord (*Panembahan*) of Palembang and Religious Scholar (*Sajidin Panatagama*).

<sup>42</sup> *BTJ*, 56.

<sup>43</sup> *HH*, 15-17.

Sultan Tranggana (r.1504-1546). According to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, it was this ruler who then overthrew Majapahit, establishing Islam's supremacy on Java.<sup>44</sup>

As well as Demak, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* also contains pertinent information about Cirebon. It claims that Cirebon was founded by Demak's first Muslim ruler (i.e. Pangeran Sumangsang). It did not become a major kingdom, however, until it came under the sway of Sunan Gunung Jati. One of the Wali Songo, Sunan Gunung Jati was a religious scholar from Samudera-Pasai. He had fled that location after a Portuguese attack, settling in Demak. There he married Sultan Trenggana's daughter, after which his new father-in-law sent him to complete West Java's Islamisation. Initially travelling to Banten, Sunan Gunung Jati converted and ruled that city before moving on to Cirebon.<sup>45</sup> He succeeded in transforming that city into a major Sultanate, before dying there in c.1570, at an advanced age.<sup>46</sup>

Turning to the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, this is Cirebon's court chronicle. Dated to 1720, it is attributed to a court official called Pangeran Arya Cerbon.<sup>47</sup> The only existing manuscript copy is currently preserved in the Kraton Keprabonan, Cirebon.<sup>48</sup> Although chiefly concerned with Cirebon, this text again privileges Demak in Java's Islamisation. It calls that kingdom's first Muslim ruler Jinbun, claiming he was a half-Chinese Muslim born in Gresik. Like in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, his father was Majapahit's final ruler. His mother, however, is identified as a Chinese Muslim

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<sup>44</sup> HH, 122. See also: Adi P. Talango, *Sosok-Sosok Hebat di Balik Kerajaan-Karajaan Jawa: Perjuangan dan Kegigihan Mereka Sumber Inspirasi Kita* (Jogjakarta: Flashbooks, 2012), 78; and Sabjan Badio, *Menelusuri Kesultanan di Tanah Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Aswaja Pressindo, 2012), 47-48. These two Indonesian sources have a different version of this narrative: they claim that the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* describes Cu Cu as the son of a Chinese minister. The latter had migrated to Java, where Cu Cu became a Majapahit court official. In this capacity, he helped put down a rebellion in Palembang. As a reward, he was made ruler of Demak with the title Arya Sumangsang. Where these authors obtained this differing narrative is unclear, but it may represent a variant tradition overlooked by Edel.

<sup>45</sup> HH, 140

<sup>46</sup> Cited in: Badio, *Kesultanan di Tanah Jawa* (2012), 48-50.

<sup>47</sup> Mohamad Ramdhany, 'Studi Analisis Arah Kiblat Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon.' Unpublished PhD Thesis, IAIN Walisongo, (2012), 36.

<sup>48</sup> Uka Tjandrasasmita, 'Art de Mojopahit et art du Pasisir,' *Archipel* 9 (1975): 97.

girl, called Siu Ban Ci. The latter was the daughter of Tan Go Hwat, a Gresik-based merchant and religious scholar with the title Kyai Bantong.<sup>49</sup>

Turning to what the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* has to say about Cirebon, unlike some other sources it does not link that city's foundation to Demak. Rather, it claims that Cirebon began as a small fishing village, called Muara Jati. During the fourteenth century, while under the suzerainty of the Hindu Sunda kingdom, Muara Jati was ruled by a man called Ki Gedeng Alang-alang. Under his leadership, the village began to attract a large amount of Chinese trade. As a result, it grew in wealth and prestige, attracting the attention of Sunda's ruler. Pleased with the village's progress and continued loyalty, he renamed it Cerbon (i.e. Cirebon) and gave Ki Gedeng Alang-alang the title 'kuwu of Cerbon.'<sup>50</sup> The latter individual, however, soon died and was succeeded by his son, Walangsungsang. Under him, Cirebon's prosperity continued to increase until Walangsungsang became strong enough to declare independence. At that point, he also converted to Islam – two religious teachers (called Syeh Datu Kahfi and Syeh Nurul Jati) had settled on a nearby hill, called Amparan Jati (or Gunung Jati). Together they instructed Walangsungsang in Islam, persuading him to adopt the faith and thereby initiating Muslim rule in Cirebon. Shortly afterwards, Walangsungsang also departed for Makkah. Taking his younger sister, Rarasantang, with him, they visited Egypt along the way. While there, Rarasantang married a 'Sultan of Egypt' named Sharīf 'Abd Allāh, later giving birth to a son, Sharīf Hidāyat. The latter accompanied his mother and uncle back to Cirebon, where he eventually became ruler (in c.1470).

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<sup>49</sup> Cited in: Talango, *Kerajaan-Karajaan Jawa* (2012), 78.

<sup>50</sup> Cited in: Satyawati Suleiman, Hasan Muarif Ambary, Onghokham and Paramita R. Abdurachman, 'Latar Belakang Sejarah,' in *Cerbon*, ed. Paramita R. Abdurachman (Jakarta: Yayasan Mitra Budaya Indonesia dan Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1982), 28.

Upon ascending, he changed his name to Sharīf Hidāyat Allāh. Under him Cirebon reached its peak and, after he died, he became known as Sunan Gunung Jati.<sup>51</sup>

#### 5.2.4. The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*

In 1964, the Indonesian scholar M. O. Parlindungan published a biography of the nineteenth-century Minangkabau religious teacher, Tuanku Rao. Although primarily an exploration of Batak history, this text included an intriguing appendix: as Appendix 31, Parlindungan reproduced two reputed *peranakan* manuscripts, one from Semarang and one from Cirebon. Collectively, he entitled these: *Peranan Orang2 Tionghwa/Islam/Hanafi didalam Perkembangan Agama Islam di Pulau Djawa, 1411-1564* ('The Role of Chinese Hanafi Muslims in spreading Islam to the Island of Java, 1411-1564').<sup>52</sup> Completely unrelated to the rest of his research, they were published as curiosities; both texts sought to substantially revise Java's conversion history, linking it to Zheng He and a group of Javanese-Chinese Muslim communities.

According to Parlindungan, both texts were discovered in 1928, in two Sam Po Kong temples – one in Semarang and one in Talang (Cirebon). Both were originally written in Chinese (Parlindungan produced them in a mixture of Indonesian and English), and the Semarang text was said to be between four and five hundred years old (the other goes undated). Both were supposedly found by a 'Resident Poortman' during the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) revolt (dated by Parlindungan to 1928). As will be related in more detail below, Parlindungan claims Poortman was the former Dutch Resident of Jambi and an amateur Sinologist. Because of his Chinese expertise, the

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<sup>51</sup> Suleiman *et al.*, 'Latar Belakang Sejarah,' in *Cerbon*, ed. Abdurachman (1982), 32-33.

<sup>52</sup> *TR*, 650.



Dutch colonial authorities had charged him with investigating Raden Patah's supposed Chinese origins. After studying various local legends, Poortman was led to Semarang's famous Sam Po Kong temple; learning of its large manuscript collection, he took advantage of the Communist Revolt to use local police to ransack it. With their help, he uncovered the first Chinese manuscript. Excited by the find, Poortman went in search of further clarification and, noting that the newly discovered text frequently referred to Cirebon's Sembung mosque, he decided to go there. Upon arrival, he learnt of various Cirebon folktales associating Sembung, Sarindil and Talang (all suburbs of the modern city) with Muslim communities that predated the Sultanate. As Poortman knew of a Sam Po Kong temple in Talang, he decided to visit it. Once again, he used local police to ransack its archives, thereby uncovering the second Chinese text. Poortman then took both manuscripts back to Holland, where he produced an edited version of each, with inserted CE dates (to replace Chinese ones). Although Parlindungan claims to have seen the originals in 1937, he only published these edited versions.<sup>53</sup> As these are in a mixture of Indonesian and English, Resident Poortman must have translated them (either into the texts Parlindungan reproduces, or Dutch versions later translated by Parlindungan).<sup>54</sup> As for the originals, Parlindungan claims to have deposited these on Poortman's behalf in the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, in 1938.<sup>55</sup> They have not, however, been recovered, and doubts have been raised about Resident Poortman's existence. But despite these obvious limitations, each text forms a significant part of modern discourse. They therefore require examination. Certainly, their potential

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<sup>53</sup> *TR*, 652-665.

<sup>54</sup> Parlindungan would have been capable of this translation; he received a Dutch education in Medan and later studied in the Netherlands (Claudine Salmon, 'Review of H. J. de Graaf, Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, and M.C. Ricklefs "Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries,"' *JSAS* 18 [1987]: 340).

<sup>55</sup> *TR*, 671. Later reports, however, claim he left them in a manuscript store (*gedung*) in Rijswijk (Ann L. Kumar, 'Islam, the Chinese, and Indonesian Historiography – A Review Article,' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46:3 [1987]: 608).

importance is clear: they reputedly testify to a direct link between Chinese Muslims and Java's conversion.

Before examining them, however, it is necessary to rename them – Parlindungan's title is not only unwieldy, but inaccurate. By subsuming each text under a single heading, he creates an impression of unity; although the texts undoubtedly complement each other, nothing indicates they were intended to form a single document. Equally, Parlindungan's title highlights the period 1411 to 1564. The Semarang text, however, starts in 1407 and ends in 1546, while the Cirebon texts begins in 1415 and ends in 1585. Given all this, Parlindungan's choice of heading seems fundamentally inadequate, and so will not be used. Since 1984, when an English translation of the texts was published by H. J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, they have been more commonly known as 'The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cirebon.'<sup>56</sup> This, however, is equally misleading: while also guilty of subsuming them beneath one heading, it labels them Malay, which is factually inaccurate as both were supposedly Chinese. To counter these problems, it is therefore proposed that the texts be given new, separate titles emphasizing their *peranakan* heritage. In short, they will be called: the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* (i.e. 'The Chinese Chronicle of Semarang' and 'The Chinese Chronicle of Cirebon'). This choice is inspired by current trends in Indonesian scholarship, which tend to name both documents (collectively) the *Kronik Tionghua*.<sup>57</sup>

Beginning with the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, this text's first entry is dated 1407. In that year, it claims Zheng He conquered Kukang (Palembang), establishing the Nusantara's first Chinese Hanafī Muslim community in the city. By 1416, the text

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<sup>56</sup> See: H. J. de Graaf and Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. M. C. Ricklefs, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 12 (1984).

<sup>57</sup> For example, see: Talango, *Kerajaan-Karajaan Jawa* (2012), 76-77.

states further communities had been established on Java: in Ancol (identified as Jakarta), Sembung (Cirebon), Lasem, Tuban, Tse Tsun (Gresik), Jiaotung (Jarotan), Cangki (Indramayu) and Semarang.

In 1419, Zheng He reputedly appointed a Champan notable, Haji Bong Tak Keng, to regulate and govern all these communities (in addition to ones established elsewhere in the region).<sup>58</sup> By 1423, Bong Tak Keng had delegated these duties to Haji Gan Eng Cu, who he appointed as ‘Kapten Cina Islam’ of Tuban. In that role, Gan Eng Cu also had authority over Palembang and helped regulate Java’s Chinese trade. The latter task was facilitated by the fact that Tuban was Majapahit’s major port. As a reward for this regulation, the text claims Majapahit’s ruler, Queen Su King Ta, gave Gan Eng Cu the title *A Lu Ya*.

In 1430, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims Zheng He occupied the territory of *Tu Ma Pan* in East Java, appointing a Chinese official called Gan Eng Wan (Gan Eng Cu’s brother) to govern it. Shortly afterwards, Zheng He presented this territory to Majapahit; Gan Eng Wan, however, remained its governor.<sup>59</sup> The following year, the text states Zheng He died; he was mourned throughout the Chinese Muslim communities he helped establish.

In 1436, the text claims Gan Eng Cu travelled to China, to pay allegiance to the Emperor. In exchange, his Javanese territories were elevated to the status of a ‘Chinese Crown Colony.’<sup>60</sup> By 1443, however, Gan Eng Cu had also begun delegating his duties: he supposedly appointed the head of Semarang’s gunpowder factory, Swan Liong, as

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<sup>58</sup> *TR*, 652-653.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 653-654.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 654.

the Kapten Cina of Palembang, with authority over that region. Another Chinese Muslim, Bong Swi Hoo, was made Swan Liong's deputy.<sup>61</sup>

From 1450 onwards, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims that Java's Chinese Muslim communities began to lose touch with their homeland; China withdrew from the outside world, cutting off its diaspora communities. As a result, many Chinese Muslims began to lapse, with many mosques becoming Sam Po Kong temples. Bong Tak Keng, Gan Eng Cu and Bong Swi Hoo, however, are said to have remained firm in their commitment to Islam, evidenced by continued efforts to try and unite their communities. Bong Swi Hoo, however, soon realised that this could only be achieved if some acculturation was allowed. As such, the text states that he ordered all the Chinese communities on Java to adopt Javanese as their official language and permit their members to intermarry with the indigenous population. By 1451, he had also moved his headquarters from Palembang to Ampel Denta, where he established a primarily Javanese Muslim community.<sup>62</sup>

In 1456, the text states that Swan Liong (still resident in Palembang) adopted two *peranakan* boys: Jin Bun and Kin San. Jin Bun was the son of Majapahit's new ruler, Kung Ta Bu Mi.<sup>63</sup> Both were raised as Muslims and, in 1474, travelled to Java to see Bong Swi Hoo. Upon his arrival, the text claims Jin Bun was given some unoccupied land to the east of Semarang, where he established a Javanese Muslim community to replace Semarang's now lapsed Chinese Muslim community. From there he began to plot against Majapahit; to this end, he sent Kin San to spy on that kingdom. According to the text, however, Bong Swi Hoo would not allow any attack; he preferred peaceful co-existence. Nonetheless, by 1477 Jin Bun had built up a strong following.

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<sup>61</sup> *TR*, 655.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 656-657.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 657.

With this, he succeeded in conquering Semarang and Bong Swi Hoo persuaded Kung Ta Bu Mi to make him governor of the surrounding territory (called *Bing To Lo* by the text), with his seat at Demak. The latter honour, however, made it necessary for Jin Bun to visit Majapahit. Once there, Kung Ta Bu Mi acknowledged him as his son. Jin Bun, however, remained reluctant to *sembah* to his father because he was a non-Muslim.

The following year (1478), the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims that Bong Swi Hoo died. The text then states that Jin Bun immediately marched into Java's interior, to occupy it. Taking Majapahit, he seized both its regalia and Kung Ta Bu Mi. He sent both back to Demak, where Kung Ta Bu Mi was kept as a prisoner. Majapahit was not, however, laid waste; the text states that it was allowed to survive, eventually being repopulated by its former Hindu population.<sup>64</sup> In 1488, Jin Bun appointed Kung Ta Bu Mi's son-in-law, the Hindu Pa Bu Ta La, as Majapahit's governor.<sup>65</sup>

In 1512, the text claims Pa Bu Ta La invited a group of 'Red-headed Barbarians' (i.e. the Portuguese), who had recently conquered Melaka, to trade with Majapahit. As a result, a group of them arrived on Java in 1517; when Jin Bun learnt of this he considered it an act of betrayal and promptly attacked Majapahit. The city was defeated and sacked, but again not destroyed. Pa Bu Ta La was also allowed to stay on as ruler because he was married to Jin Bun's sister.<sup>66</sup>

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* dates Jin Bun's death to 1518, claiming he was replaced by his son, Yat Sun. The latter, however, did not reign long, dying in 1521. This prompted succession troubles, which Pa Bu Ta La saw as another opportunity to act independently of Demak: reputedly, he opened diplomatic relations with both Melaka and China, thereby attempting to break free of Demak's control. By the end of

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<sup>64</sup> *TR*, 657-659.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 660.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 661.

1521, however, the text claims Tung Ka Lo, Yat Sun's brother, had become Demak's ruler. Initially, however, Tung Ka Lo was unable to do anything about Majapahit. Instead, in 1526 he supposedly sent a fleet (led by Kin San) to subdue the Chinese Muslim communities in Cirebon. Nonetheless, in the following year the text claims Pa Bu Ta La died; Toh A Bo, Tung Ka Lo's son, was immediately sent to occupy Majapahit. This was accomplished and the kingdom destroyed. Pa Bu Ta La's two sons (who would not convert) fled to Pasuruhan (in Central Java) and then Panarukan (in the far east of Java).

After the fall of Majapahit, there is only one more entry in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*: in 1546, Tung Ka Lo died and was succeeded by his son, Muk Ming. One of Jin Bun's grandsons, however, called Ji Pang Kang, decided to attack Demak and destroy it. Muk Ming fled to Semarang, but was pursued and killed. Soon afterwards, a Central Javanese ruler called Peng King Kang seized upon the resulting chaos and attacked Ji Pang Kang, killing him. Peng King Kang then set up his own kingdom in Java's interior (i.e. Pajang).<sup>67</sup> This is where the text ends.

Turning to the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*, this is a much shorter document. It begins in 1415, when a Haji Kung Wu Ping (identified as a descendent of Confucius) reputedly established a lighthouse on Gunung Jati, to help guide the Ming fleets. Chinese Muslim communities were then established nearby, in Ceribon, Sarindil and Talang. Together, they serviced both the lighthouse and any Ming ships that docked there. As in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, however, after 1450 these communities are said to have declined as they lost contact with China. Although the Cirebon community

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<sup>67</sup> TR, 663-664.

remained strong, Sarindil's mosque is said to have become a hermitage (*pertapaan*) and Talang's an ancestral temple.<sup>68</sup>

After 1450, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon's* narrative skips ahead to 1526. In that year, it records the arrival of the Demak fleet mentioned in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*. This fleet supposedly landed at Talang while under the command of Kin San and an (unnamed) Demak general. Kin San (who could speak Chinese, still Cirebon's *lingua franca* at this time) allegedly befriended Cirebon's imam, Haji Tan Eng Hoat. The latter is said to have recently taken up residence in Sarindil's hermitage; Kin San, however, persuaded him to help Demak take Cirebon. Indeed, with Tan Eng Hoat's aid, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims Demak quickly accomplished its aim, and without the use of force. As a reward, Tan Eng Hoat was made Cirebon's new ruler, with the title *Mu La Na Fu Di Li Ha Na Fi* (Mawlānā Fuḍūlī Ḥanafī). After this, Demak's forces withdrew.

In 1552, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims Tan Eng Hoat still controlled Cirebon. In that year, however, the aforementioned Demak general returned: the text claims that after 1526, he had been appointed as Demak's governor in Banten. But, after Pajang's conquest of Demak, he had been forced from his position. He had then travelled to Sarindil, to live out his days as a hermit. Tan Eng Hoat, however, had another idea. The text claims he had grown fearful of the non-Muslim Chinese in Cirebon, who were now very powerful and little inclined to convert to Islam. He is therefore said to have asked the general to help him establish a Sultanate. The general agreed, despite being advanced in years.<sup>69</sup> Together, they established the Cirebon Sultanate, building a palace where the present Kraton Kesepuhan stands. The Demak

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<sup>68</sup> *TR*, 667.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 667-668.

general became the first Sultan, while Tan Eng Hoat was appointed viceroy of nearby Kadipaten. There he is said to have helped spread Shāfi‘ī Islam to the region east of Priangan, as far as Garut. In 1553, the Demak general also married Tan Eng Hoat’s daughter (described simply as ‘Putri Cina,’ the ‘Chinese princess’).<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, the text states that Cirebon’s Chinese Muslims had begun to acculturate, adopting Javanese names and forcing the non-Muslim Chinese to submit to them.

In 1564, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims Tan Eng Hoat was killed trying to conquer Galuh, in West Java. In 1570, the general also died and was succeeded by his (unnamed) infant son. Due to the latter’s age, a minister called Tan Sam Cai (or Muḥammad Shāfi‘ī) acted as regent. The latter, however, had reputedly turned away from Islam, regularly worshipping at the Talang temple. The only person who dared oppose him was a descendent of Kung Wu Ping (the original Chinese settler), called Haji Kung Sem Pak (or Muḥammad Murjānī). In 1585, the latter poisoned Tan Sam Cai. After his death, the latter was venerated in the Talang temple as a demi-god.<sup>71</sup> Here the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* ends.

#### 5.2.5. The Early Chinese Sources

No early Chinese source describes Java’s conversion. Two, however, reference the establishment of early Muslim communities on the island. The first is Ma Huan’s *Yingyai Shenglan*. Published in 1451 (but written between 1413 and 1433), the *Yingyai*

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<sup>70</sup> *TR*, 668-669.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 669-671.



*Shenglan* is an eye-witness account of Zheng He's seven voyages.<sup>72</sup> Its detailed description of Java states:

The Muslim people [of Java]...are all people from every foreign kingdom in the West who have migrated to this country as merchants...[there are also the] T'ang people [i.e. the Chinese]...all men from Kuang tung [Guangdong] and from Chang [Zhangzhou] and Ch'üan [Quanzhou] and other such places, who fled away and now live in this country...many of them follow the Muslim religion, doing penance and fasting.<sup>73</sup>

The text then lists Java's three main ports: Tuban, Surabaya and Gresik. All three, it is claimed, sheltered Muslim populations, many of whom were Chinese.<sup>74</sup> In particular, Ma Huan identifies Gresik as a specifically Chinese-founded settlement; currently home to a thousand Chinese families, Ma Huan gives it a Chinese name, Xin Cun (meaning 'New Village'), and identifies its ruler as a man from Guangdong province.<sup>75</sup>

Turning to the second source, this is an eighteenth-century travelogue by the Chinese explorer, Ong Tae Hai. From 1783 onwards, Ong spent ten years on Java.<sup>76</sup> While there, he encountered many large Chinese Muslim communities; populated primarily by people from either Fujian or Guangdong, Ong claims that the earliest of them had been established during Zheng He's voyages.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> There is also Fei Xin's account of Zheng He's voyages, called the *Xingcha Shenglan*. This, however, is far less detailed and probably based on Ma Huan (see: *XCSL*, 46-50). The version of Ma Huan's text utilised here is the critical edition produced by J. Mills in 1970. This drew upon three recensions: the 1617 *Jilu Huibien*; the 1824 *Shengchao Yishi*; and the *Guochao Diangu* (produced between 1451 and 1644).<sup>72</sup> Mills's reconstruction relies primarily on the 1617 text (*YYSL*, 38-39).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 93.

<sup>74</sup> This is made realistic by the Ming interregnum and Hongwu's ban on trade (see Chapter 2).

<sup>75</sup> *YYSL*, 89-90.

<sup>76</sup> Ong Tae Hai, *The Chinese Abroad: A Desultory Account of the Malayan Archipelago, particularly of Java* (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1849), viii.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

### 5.3. Interpreting the Established Sources

Java's conversion has generated a voluminous amount of secondary literature, much of it written by Indonesians. Although many of the latter have produced highly critical texts, casting an expert eye over the available evidence,<sup>78</sup> many more have chosen to focus almost exclusively on indigenous texts, accepting their claims at face-value. S. Badio is a good, recent example of this trend: focusing primarily on the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, he crafts an image of Java's conversion that essentially reproduces that text's narrative in full, while notably failing to mention Pires or any other non-Nusantaran source. Only fragmentary archaeological remains (usually gravestones) are used to augment his argument, and only when they support the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s account. In this way, he produces a relatively straightforward narrative: dating conversion to the fifteenth century, he attributes it to the nine (usually Arab) Wali Songo and the first ruler of Demak (a descendant of Majapahit's ruling house).<sup>79</sup>

Badio, and those of his compatriots who pursue a similar line, fall into a class of Indonesian intellectuals moulded by Indonesia's post-colonial nationalism; to create a strong sense of national consciousness, Sukarno (followed by Indonesia's subsequent national leaders) encouraged Indonesian intellectuals to privilege indigenous texts (like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*) when reconstructing the nation's past.<sup>80</sup> Often this came at the expense of the European sources, which were henceforth associated with oppressive colonial regimes. The result has been a reluctance to question indigenous histories like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, especially if doing so requires the utilisation of discourses

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<sup>78</sup> As an example, see: Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Tinjauan Kritis tentang Sajarah Banten: Sumbangan bagi Pengenalan Sifat-sifat Penulisan Sejarah Jawa* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1983).

<sup>79</sup> Badio, *Kesultanan di Tanah Jawa* (2012), 5-11. Another good example of a text taking this line is: Hafidz Rafi'uddin, *Riwayat Kesulthanan Banten* (Banten: n.p., 2006).

<sup>80</sup> Bambang Oetomo, 'Some Remarks on Modern Indonesian Historiography,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 73-77.

produced outside the region.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, the debate surrounding conversion has not remained stagnant. In 1968, Slamet Muljana published his *Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara* ('The Fall of Java's Hindu Kingdom and the Rise of the Nusantara's Islamic States'), which attempted to modify traditional Javanese historiography by accommodating the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*.<sup>82</sup> Initially, this proved controversial: in the early 1970's, amidst significant Javanese-Chinese racial tension, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion banned Muljana's book and officially rejected any possibility of Chinese Muslim involvement in Java's conversion.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, interest in both texts persisted; from the late 1990's onwards, Muljana was followed by several other scholars who aimed to reconcile both *Kronik Tionghua* with the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and other early sources. Many of these efforts focused on equating the Chinese figures mentioned in both *Kronik Tionghua* with those in the other texts, so giving traditional narratives a Chinese flavour.<sup>84</sup> Others, however, attempted to collect additional Javanese traditions supporting Chinese Muslim involvement in conversion.<sup>85</sup> In either case, the result has been a split in Indonesian scholarship: on the one hand sits a group favouring literal readings of traditional Javanese texts while, on the other, are those who wish to revise those texts by associating Java's early Islamic figures with China.

Concerning Western scholarship, again there has been a tendency to focus on the indigenous texts, most notably the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. H. J. de Graaf was the first

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<sup>81</sup> Nicholas Tarling, *Historians and Southeast Asian History* (Auckland: New Zealand Asia Institute, 2000), 81-82.

<sup>82</sup> Slamet Muljana, *Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta, LKiS, 2012). See also: Slamet Muljana, *A Story of Majapahit* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976).

<sup>83</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, 'The Chinese and the Early Centuries of Conversion to Islam in Indonesia,' in *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, ed. Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), 150.

<sup>84</sup> Talango, *Kerajaan-Kerajaan Jawa* (2012), 75-83.

<sup>85</sup> Handinoto and Samuel Hartono, 'Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina pada Bangunan Mesjid Kuno di Jawa Abad 15-16,' *Demensi Teknik Arsitektur* 35:1 (2007): 23-40.

Western scholar to use the *Babad Tanah Jawi* to reconstruct Java's conversion; although more critical than some Indonesian writers, he still largely accepted its narrative. By considering when and why it was written, however, in addition to how its narrative compared to other sources (notably the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*), he proposed some modifications. In particular, he decided to shift conversion into the early sixteenth century: because Pires refers to Majapahit in c.1512, de Graaf reasoned that the latter's fall (a key part of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s conversion narrative) could not have occurred in 1478, as stated. Rather, it must have happened after Pires's visit (along with Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, he suggests 1527, which corresponds to the reign of Demak's third Sultan, Trenggana).<sup>86</sup>

Subsequent scholars (most notably Ricklefs) have largely maintained this argument, offering only minor refinements.<sup>87</sup> In line with the indigenous texts, they have also identified either Arabs and/or Indians as the early missionaries. Following developments in Indonesia, however, some scholars have begun to examine the possibility of Chinese Muslim involvement. As we noted in previous chapters, this trend began with de Graaf and Pigeaud. In recent years, however, G. Wade has been the most prominent voice in this area.<sup>88</sup> As in Indonesia, Wade has used both *Kronik Tionghua* to reinterpret existing traditions. Consequently, the debate about Chinese

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<sup>86</sup> See: De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Islamic States in Java* (1976), 3-7.

<sup>87</sup> Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia* (2001), 5-6. See also: M. C. Ricklefs, 'Islamization in Java: Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,' in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), 36-43 and M. C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Norwalk, CT: East Bridge, 2006), 16-21.

<sup>88</sup> Most recently in: Geoff Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion in South-East Asia, Eighth to Fifteenth Centuries,' in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 366-408. For other scholars who pursue this argument see: N. A. Baloch, *The Advent of Islam in Indonesia* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1980), 1-3; Pin-tsua Chang, 'The First Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century,' in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c.1400-1750*, ed. Roderick Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 13-28; Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam and Chineseness,' *Indonesia* 57 (1993): 115-131; Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 7-8.

Muslim involvement in Java's conversion has become universal. As such, in this chapter we will seek to evaluate it. This can only be done, however, in the context of all the early texts and not just the two *Kronik Tionghua*. As such, we will begin by analysing the more well-established texts, both indigenous and European. These will be privileged because their provenance is more certain. Our discussion will initially assess their reliability, deciding which should and should not be used to reconstruct Java's conversion. On that basis, we will then attempt our own reconstruction of conversion, and which will indeed privilege Chinese Muslim involvement. After determining this, a more in depth consideration of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* will follow. This will begin with an examination of the provenance of each text, before moving on to their general reliability and how they tie in with the account we reconstructed from the most reliable sources.

### **5.3.1. The Reliability of the Sources**

Beginning with the indigenous sources, as we mentioned, scholarship has paid most attention to the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Serious doubts, however, surround its conversion account: not only does it post-date events by several centuries, but it was produced by Mataram in Central Java, an area geographically far removed from the relevant coastal settlements. More fundamentally, however, many scholars have argued that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* was never intended as history in the modern sense. Both C. Berg and H. Djajadiningrat, for example, see pre-modern Javanese historiography as an attempt to impart legitimacy to a ruling house, not relate actual events. This is done via

magical stories, usually surrounding the genesis of that house.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s conversion account is littered with miraculous stories – all linked, as Berg and Djajadiningrat claim, to the birth of important political figures<sup>90</sup> (or else relating how they converted).<sup>91</sup> This trend undoubtedly diminishes the text's potential reliability, suggesting it should not be privileged when reconstructing Java's history, as has hitherto been the case.

This is not to say, however, that the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative is without merit. Certainly, its basic elements find confirmation elsewhere. For example, all the early sources (whether indigenous or European) identify Demak as the major power behind conversion and link it to the fall of Majapahit. Equally, they all claim that Demak's founder had Chinese ancestry. This mutual confirmation across numerous different sources suggests that these points, at the very least, can be relied upon. Moreover, it is even possible that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* drew from an earlier Demak chronicle: in 1612, Mataram's second ruler, Panembahan Sedaing Krapyak, ordered his officials to put in order a text called the *Babad Demak*.<sup>92</sup> Although the precise nature of this text is unknown, the name suggests a chronicle from Demak itself.<sup>93</sup> At the very least this must have pre-dated 1612, but could even (if indeed produced by the Demak

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<sup>89</sup> See both: Berg, 'Javanese Historiography,' in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. Hall (1961), 18-20; and C. C. Berg, 'The Javanese Picture of the Past,' in *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, ed. Soedjatmoko, Mohammed Ali, G. J. Resink and G. McT. Kahin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), 87-117. Also: Hoessein Djajadiningrat, 'Local Traditions and the Study of Indonesian History,' in *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, ed. Soedjatmoko, Mohammed Ali, G. J. Resink and G. McT. Kahin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), 74.

<sup>90</sup> For example, see the account of Arya Damar's birth: his mother was supposedly a giant who lived in the woods and transformed herself into a beautiful woman (*BTJ*, 27-28).

<sup>91</sup> As in the case of Sunan Kalijaga, who was reputedly converted by Sunan Bonang via magical means (*Ibid*, 35-36).

<sup>92</sup> Ras, 'Genesis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*,' *BTLV* 143:2 (1987): 351-353.

<sup>93</sup> Indeed, in the late twentieth century a text bearing this name was discovered in Gresik. It proved to be a systematic register of all north Java's conversion-era nobility, from Cirebon to Surabaya. It also included an account of the war against Majapahit, led by 'Sunan Demak.' This title implies that Demak's first ruler was once seen as a Muslim religious figure in his own right (*Ibid*, 353). Aside from Ras's brief reference to it, however, the *Babad Demak* has neither been published nor utilised by the secondary literature, whether indigenous or Western. Consequently, it has not been possible to examine it here.

sultanate) have been written before 1568 (when Pajang appropriated Demak's regalia, effectively ending the kingdom). Consequently, if Western arguments about Majapahit's fall in 1527 are correct, the *Babad Demak* could date to within fifty years of the relevant events. This would make it a potentially significant source, which Mataram apparently knew of and preserved a copy of. Whether the *Babad Demak* was utilised for the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, however, is unclear, although certainly possible. All this implies that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* may still have some value.

Turning to the other indigenous sources, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* is seventeenth century, while the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* is eighteenth century. Like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, therefore, they both post-date conversion. Unlike the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, however, they have the advantage of belonging to the coastal regions that were involved in conversion. In other words, they form part of the traditions those regions had about their own role in that process. They cannot therefore be ignored. Indeed, in this context de Graaf, Pigeaud and Ricklefs all emphasize the strong similarity between the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and the *Suma Oriental*, particularly regarding Majapahit's late demise. Pires's account of Java is considered very reliable (discussed shortly); because the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* agrees very closely with it, while being produced entirely independently, there is a good chance that it records reliable historical information. For this reason, de Graaf *et al.* use the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* as a corrective for the *Babad Tanah Jawi* – although while still ultimately focusing on the latter text.

As for the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, the literature has never fully utilised this source. As a result, it remains largely unevaluated. It is, however, an official court chronicle produced in Cirebon itself. This alone suggests it is worthy of attention. As such, it will be referred to here and, as far as possible, evaluated for the first time. Certainly, that the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* takes the step of naming Raden Patah's

mother and grandfather, something no other text does, suggests it may preserve a separate, potentially interesting tradition.

Turning to the European sources, previous chapters have already discussed Pires's reliability. Concerning Java, he is particularly notable for having visited the island during (or near to) the period in question: a letter from Ruy de Brito to King Manuel (dated the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1514) claims Pires went to Java on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1513, accompanying a mission captained by João Lopes de Alvim. He later returned during the same year, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June.<sup>94</sup> According to the *Suma Oriental*, Pires used his visit to access (albeit through an interpreter) local historical traditions, both oral and written.<sup>95</sup> As such, many scholars consider Pires an extremely reliable source for fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Javanese history.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, and as briefly mentioned, the *Suma Oriental* agrees well with the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, thereby signifying independent verification of the same traditions, suggesting veracity. Pires, however, never visited Banten. Rather, it seems that his information came from Tuban (Majapahit's main port), as the only location Pires explicitly mentions visiting.<sup>97</sup> This means that, although Pires's account is undoubtedly early and of great value, it is still not a first-hand account from either Demak or Cirebon. Hence, some caution may still be necessary. Pires was, however, writing after the first Portuguese visit to Gresik

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<sup>94</sup> Ronald Bishop Smith, *The First Age of the Portuguese Embassies, Navigations and Peregrinations to the Kingdoms and Islands of Southeast Asia (1509-1521)* (Bethesda, MD: Decatur Press Inc., 1968), 57.

<sup>95</sup> *SO*, 199.

<sup>96</sup> For example, see: J. Noorduyn, 'Concerning the Reliability of Tomé Pires's Data on Java,' *BTLV* 132:4 (1976): 467-471.

<sup>97</sup> By contrast, the *Suma Oriental* is clear that Pires did not visit Trowulan (the capital of Majapahit), Cirebon or Demak. Whether he went to Jepara, Semarang, Gresik or Surabaya, however, is unknown. For his part, de Brito does not elaborate on where Pires visited, while later sources are contradictory (Barros, for example, claims de Alvim visited all the ports of Java, while Fernao Lopes de Castanheda says he only went to Jepara) (see: Smith, *First Age of the Portuguese Embassies* [1968], 58-59).



(Antonio de Abrea having sailed there in 1512).<sup>98</sup> He may therefore have also utilised information from there.

Turning to the other European writers, with the exception of Barros (see Chapter 4) they all visited Java and drew upon its traditions. Consequently, all are potentially worthy of attention. Both Stavorinus and Raffles, however, post-date events by some time; this may make them questionable. Certainly, Stavorinus's claims about Cirebon openly contradict the other sources. Given his late date, this discontinuity likely indicates unreliability; because he obtained his information directly from Cirebon, he may have been reporting a local Cirebon tradition which sought to glorify Sunan Gunung Jati (i.e. as the local saint). Raffles, on the other hand, was an excellent early scholar, who made every attempt to access local traditions and record them accurately. Indeed, this is amply demonstrated above: Raffles can clearly be seen accurately recounting the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative. Although the latter is suspect (see next section), Raffles also includes additional information not found elsewhere (regarding Mawlānā Ibrāhīm and Niai Gedi Pinatēh). Although the origin of this information is unknown, it could conceivably come from another, perhaps more reliable (although still necessarily late) tradition. It may therefore be worthy of consideration. But this conclusion is speculative: Raffles could have consulted a now lost version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, not necessarily any more accurate than the ones reviewed here.

Summing up, of all the early sources, Pires and the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* seem to be the most promising: the *Suma Oriental* is the earliest extant text and draws directly from Javanese tradition, while the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* agrees very closely with it. This text, however, has the added advantage of coming directly from the relevant coastal areas of Java. It is also clear that many of the other sources, although less reliable,

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<sup>98</sup> Smith, *First Age of the Portuguese Embassies* (1968), 57.

include potentially valuable information, too. Consequently, as we reconstruct Java's conversion history, although the *Suma Oriental* and the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* will occupy centre stage, we will also take select points from the other sources in so far as they are considered reliable and can augment the discussion.

### 5.3.2. A New Interpretation

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the *Suma Oriental* was primarily intended as a government report detailing Asian trade. By comparison, Islam's spread through Java was only a peripheral matter. This lack of interest no doubt explains Pires's contradictory statements on the matter. But despite this confusion, Pires can still clearly be seen identifying Persian, Arab, Indian, Chinese and Malay influence. When and where these different groups were active, however, is not immediately obvious. If Pires's comments about individual entrepôts are considered, however, matters are quickly clarified.

As mentioned, Pires presents Demak as Java's pre-eminent Islamic city. This image is consistent across all of the sources, making it easy to accept. According to Pires, Demak's first Muslim ruler (who goes unnamed) was either a merchant from Gresik or a slave belonging to Demak's final pagan ruler. Although Pires refuses to choose between these traditions, the indigenous sources clearly favour the first interpretation: the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* contains the same claim (although without stating that this individual ruled Demak), while the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* describes Demak's first Muslim ruler as the grandson of one of Gresik's most prominent merchants and religious scholars, Tan Go Hwat (who also bore the title Kyai Bantong).

This mutual confirmation across three separate sources suggests this link to Gresik is probably correct.

The indigenous sources, however, also agree on another point: that Demak's first Muslim ruler was Chinese. As such, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* claims he was of pure Chinese ancestry and called Cu Cu, while the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* claims he was only half-Chinese and called Jinbun. In the latter case, it was his mother, Siu Ban Ci, the daughter of Tan Go Hwat, who was Chinese. Jinbun's father, on the other hand, was Majapahit's final ruler. A variant of this tradition also appears in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, where Jinbun (or Jimbun) came from Palembang and was the son of a 'Chinese princess' and the last ruler of Majapahit. Because the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is the earlier text, however, the tradition may well originate with it. Significantly, therefore, a consideration of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s authorship uncovers a probable motive for its fabrication.

As briefly stated, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* was Mataram's court chronicle. Between the late sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, Mataram was Java's pre-eminent sultanate; its rulers controlled much of the island and, in an attempt to gain prestige, consciously tried to position themselves as the successors to Demak. For this reason, Panembahan Sedaing Krapyak ordered the preservation of the *Babad Demak*, as an attempt to lay claim to Demak's heritage. But, and as noted by J. Ras, even after the rise of Islam, Javanese culture still invoked Majapahit as the primary means of conferring political legitimacy. The Hindu rulers of that kingdom were still seen as manifestations of the Supreme Being, and therefore as the ideals of kingship. Any Javanese ruler seeking unquestioned loyalty therefore needed to claim Majapahit

ancestry.<sup>99</sup> In this context, it is unsurprising that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* attempts to trace Mataram's ruling house to Majapahit via Demak: its rulers were the descendants of Demak's Sultans who, in turn, were descended from Majapahit's final ruler.<sup>100</sup> It therefore seems that this element of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is simply a device to confer legitimacy on Mataram. Indeed, 'Prabu Brawijaya,' the name given by the *Babad Tanah Jawi* to Jinbun's father, is a generic title that could refer to any Majapahit ruler.<sup>101</sup> This lack of specificity casts doubt upon whether a real individual is being referred to. At the same time, Pires relates a potentially important tradition:

They say that the Javanese used to have affinity with the Chinese, and one king of China sent one of his daughters to Java to marry Batara Raja Çuda [who was then the king of Majapahit], and that he sent her to Java with many people of China, and that he then sent money in the [form of] cash which are now currency, and they say there was a junk load of them, and that the said king was a vassal, not a tributary, of the king of China and that the Javanese killed all the Chinese in Java by treachery. Others say that it was not so, but that one king was never related to or knew the other, and that the Java cash were brought to Java for merchandise, because the Chinese used to trade in Java long before Malacca existed.<sup>102</sup>

Here, Pires presents another narrative involving a Chinese princess who married a Majapahit ruler – although not the final one and with no apparent link to Demak. Pires, however, was not convinced by it. He therefore recounted another tradition, refuting the first. Indeed, that second account is far more realistic: during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Java did indeed use Chinese copper cash for currency, and which had originally been brought there for trade (see Chapter 2). By contrast, however, there

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<sup>99</sup> Ras, 'Genesis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*,' *BTLV* 143:2 (1987): 353-354.

<sup>100</sup> As such, Sutawijaya (Mataram's founder) was supposedly the adopted son of Hadiwijaya, the last sultan of Pajang (the kingdom which initially succeeded Demak). The latter was, in turn, son-in-law to Demak's final sultan who, through Raden Patah, was a descendent of Majapahit's final ruler (Ras, 'Genesis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*,' *BTLV* 143:2 [1987]: 351).

<sup>101</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 82-83.

<sup>102</sup> *SO*, 179.

is no record (from this period or any other) of a marriage between the Javanese and Chinese ruling families.<sup>103</sup>

But all this notwithstanding, that the *Suma Oriental* and the later *Babad Tanah Jawi* share this common theme raises a possibility: that the former's Chinese princess is a precursor to the latter's. This is speculative, but if the *Babad Tanah Jawi* does indeed recycle a version of the tradition preserved in Pires's earlier text, because Pires considered that narrative to be doubtful, he provides yet another reason for dismissing it in the later *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Moreover, the *Suma Oriental*'s Chinese princess is entirely unconnected to Demak, further suggesting that the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative is a distortion of something earlier. As for the later *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, this presumably (as the later text) inherited the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s version of events. By also including a reference to Gresik and a Chinese trading family, however, it effectively combines the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative with the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s. As seen, the latter text is far more plausible. Certainly, Pires also claims that some of Java's Muslim lords were Chinese. Although he does not say which, the indigenous sources indicate Demak was probably one of them.

In the above context, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* appears to be reliable. It is perhaps mistaken, however, when stating that Cu Cu was not Demak's first ruler; as seen, it claims Cu Cu's son, Pangeran Sumangsang, first ruled Demak, and that his grandson, Sultan Trenggana (who apparently ruled during Pires's visit to Java), established Demak's pre-eminence (notably by conquering Majapahit). But the other sources – including the *Suma Oriental*, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and (perhaps following the latter) the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* – not only claim Cu Cu/Jinbun was Demak's first Muslim ruler, but also the one who established the kingdom's prosperity. For the

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<sup>103</sup> See also: SO, 181.

last two sources, this included conquering Majapahit. Pires, however, agrees with the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* that Majapahit existed until the reign of the third ruler, albeit greatly reduced. Pires, however, dismisses that third ruler, Sultan Trenggana, as weak: he had given himself over to concubines and only remained chief *pate* because of the influence built up by his father and grandfather. Although this unflattering portrait could simply be Portuguese propaganda, designed to diminish an important enemy, the fact remains that, by 1513, Pires does paint Demak as Java's chief power, already in control of Java's northern coast and southern Sumatra. Only a diminished Majapahit, pushed far into the interior, remained beyond its control. Furthermore, Pires is very clear that Demak had occupied this position for some time. Indeed, his description of the island is largely predicated on that fact: he links Cirebon's mid-fifteenth century conversion to Demak's expansion (discussed shortly) and claims that Zeynal of Giri, Java's oldest *pate*, had been the comrade-in-arms of Demak's second ruler. This military role again hints at a fifteenth-century expansion. Consequently, however, shadows of Demak's pre-Trenggana rise to power occur throughout Pires's narrative. As such, it seems that Demak's prosperity was not predicated on Trenggana's actions, but on that of earlier rulers. There is therefore no reason to doubt that Cu Cu/Jinbun ruled Demak, just as Pires and the other sources claim – although, and in light of de Graaf and Pigeaud's work, which places Majapahit's fall in c.1527, Trenggana probably did conquer that kingdom.

As mentioned in section 5.2.1, Pires also claims that Cu Cu/Jinbun converted Cirebon. Indeed, the *Suma Oriental* pictures a very close Demak-Cirebon relationship; Cirebon appears to have been Demak's base in the west, ruled by its chosen man. That both the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and Raffles testify to a similar relationship makes it even more likely that this claim is accurate. But as to how the cities became linked, Pires

states that in c.1473 Cu Cu/Jinbun sent an unnamed Gresik slave to conquer Cirebon. He then made this slave Cirebon's first Islamic ruler, with the city remaining a Demak vassal (i.e. it is not described as a sultanate). This account, however, differs from the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. The *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, for example, speaks of Cu Cu's son, claiming that he founded (and not just conquered) the city. No Gresik slaves are mentioned, and it is unclear who subsequently ruled the city. The *Hikayat Hasanuddin* also claims, however, that Cirebon remained insignificant until the arrival of Sunan Gunung Jati: the latter (not mentioned by Pires) is pictured as a religious scholar from Samudera-Pasai who, after fleeing a Portuguese invasion, travelled to Demak. From there he proceeded to conquer and convert Banten, before subsequently establishing the Cirebon Sultanate. The *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, on the other hand, makes no mention of Demak at all. It claims that Cirebon began as a small fishing village called Muara Jati which, owing to Chinese trade, grew in importance until it was able to declare independence and eventually convert.

When evaluating the above accounts, it is notable that the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s image of Sunan Gunung Jati finds support elsewhere: Barros's *De Asia* also speaks about a man from Samudera-Pasai, called Falatehan (perhaps Fadhillah Khan or Fatahillah), who, after returning from Makkah, found the Portuguese occupying his homeland (which they did between 1521 and 1524).<sup>104</sup> As a result, Falatehan was unable to return home and instead travelled on to Demak, where he married the ruler's sister and then proceeded to conquer Banten and nearby Sunda Kelapa (modern-day Jakarta).<sup>105</sup> Although Barros does not mention Cirebon, this account is remarkably similar to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s. This corroboration suggests both accounts are

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<sup>104</sup> Ricklefs, *History of Modern Indonesia* (2001), 34.

<sup>105</sup> Cited in: Ibid, 34.

accurate, with Fatalehan and Sunan Gunung Jati probably being the same person (although no indigenous source refers to Sunan Gunung Jati as Fadhillah Khan, Fatahillah or anything similar). Barros's failure to mention Cirebon, on the other hand, could reflect his time of writing: his *Decades* were completed in 1563. Significantly, therefore, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* places Sunan Gunung Jati's death in 1570 and claims Cirebon was the final place he went to. Consequently, Barros's silence may simply reflect the fact that he wrote before Fatalehan/Sunan Gunung Jati had travelled to Cirebon.

But although this section of the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* appears to be accurate, this text cannot be accepted in full because, and as seen, its description of Demak's early expansion is flawed. In particular, because Cu Cu was probably Demak's first ruler, and may therefore have played a more active role in the kingdom's expansion than the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* allows, it cannot be assumed that it was actually Cu Cu's son who founded/conquered Cirebon. Moreover, the possibility that Cirebon was insignificant prior to Sunan Gunung Jati's arrival is also unlikely: although Pires does not testify to a pre-1512-1515 Cirebon sultanate, it is clear that the city was regionally important before then. Equally, Cu Cu/Jinbun's association with Gresik makes the figure of a Gresik slave as the founder of Cirebon plausible. As such, although the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s account of Sunan Gunung Jati (and, by association, the establishment of Cirebon's sultanate) is probably largely correct, Pires's description of conversion is to be preferred. By contrast, the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* appears to be of little value; its account is incompatible with the other sources. Although the description of Chinese trade is intriguing (see section 5.3.2.2.2), there is no evidence for an early Cirebon-Middle East link and claims of Arab ancestry are always problematic.



To sum up the discussion so far, Demak's first Muslim ruler was probably a Chinese Muslim merchant called either Cu Cu or Jinbun. Originally from Gresik, he began the process of building Demak into a great Islamic power. Together with his son, he spread Demak's influence right across Java and into Sumatra. Although generally vague about dates, the *Suma Oriental* places Demak's conquest of Cirebon in c.1473; this implies that Cu Cu/Jinbun began his activities during the mid-fifteenth century. Indeed, by 1513 the *Suma Oriental* claims that Demak had been Islamic for three generations; if a mid-fifteenth century start-date is accepted, this would entail each generation of Demak rulers was roughly equal to thirty years, which is plausible for the time period. Pires also consistently claims that those Javanese entrepôts which paid allegiance to Demak embraced Islam during the lifetime of their current ruler's grandfather. This again fits with the mid-fifteenth century and suggests these initial Muslim rulers were indeed Cu Cu/Jinbun's contemporaries.

Given the above, by the time Pires visited Java in 1513 (when Cu Cu/Jinbun's grandson was on the throne), it seems Demak had occupied its pre-eminent position for at least two generations. By that year, it already controlled all of Java's northern coast, in addition to southern Sumatra, and had Cirebon as a western power base. All this implies that a substantial part of Java's early Islamisation occurred during the fifteenth century, not the sixteenth as previously claimed by de Graaf, Pigeaud and others. Indeed, if the sources reviewed here are examined more closely, they may also hint at an even earlier period of Islamisation.

### 5.3.3. Gresik as an Early Islamic Centre

That both Cu Cu/Jinbun and Cirebon's first Muslim ruler came from Gresik opens up an important possibility: that Gresik was an earlier Islamic centre than Demak. Certainly, it indicates that Gresik housed a Muslim population well before Demak's conversion – although this need not mean it was also an Islamic kingdom before Demak. By 1513, however, it was clearly a well-established and powerful Islamic kingdom: Pires describes it as Java's wealthiest entrepôt, in control of all of Java's eastern trade and nearby Madura. Ruled by a Melakan called Pate Cuçuf (whose father conquered the city during the late fifteenth century), rather than Demak's vassal, it was apparently an independent, rival kingdom. Although none of this is necessarily a comment on conversion, Pires does not give the impression this powerful early sixteenth-century kingdom had embraced Islam recently. For example, he describes Giri as Gresik's twin city, the two together forming a single kingdom.<sup>106</sup> If so, it is likely that they converted at around the same time. It is therefore significant that Giri's ruler, Zeynal, was supposedly Java's oldest *pate*. Although his precise age is not stated, the *pate* of Tuban was between fifty-five and sixty; because Pires visited Tuban, his estimate is probably correct. It implies, however, that Zeynal was (at the very least) in his early sixties. He was therefore probably born in c.1450 or before – in other words, when Demak's expansion and Java's wider Islamisation were just beginning. There is no mention, however, of Zeynal being either a convert or Giri's first Muslim ruler. This might imply that Giri (and, by extension, Gresik) had a pre-1450 Islamic past.

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<sup>106</sup> Pires's claim that Zeynal was at war with Pate Cuçuf may also be significant. On first sight, if Giri and Gresik were twin cities, a war between them would seem odd. But, if Zeynal ruled Giri before Cuçuf's father conquered Gresik (as might be suggested by his age), his war with Pate Cuçuf could have been intended to regain control of the city. If so, and if Zeynal was neither a convert nor Giri's first Muslim ruler, both Giri and Gresik were probably Muslim before Pate Adam's arrival.

Although the above scenario is speculative, other sources seem to support it. For example, the non-*Babad Tanah Jawi* sections of Raffles's work, all of which relate to the pre-Demak period, provide the same impression: according to Raffles, Java's first missionaries (Mawlānā Ibrāhīm and his brother) settled in Gresik, as did Niai Gedi Pinateh (Sunan Giri's guardian). Raffles therefore closely ties Gresik to the three figures he claims were Java's first Islamic authorities. The source of his information on this point, however, is unknown. Nevertheless, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* provides a similar picture: it claims that, before Demak's rise to power under Cu Cu/Jinbun, Gresik posed Islam's first challenge to Majapahit. As such, before Demak's rise, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* claims that Gresik's local saint, Sunan Giri, had extended his influence over all of East Java and could count many cities as his vassals. Majapahit, feeling threatened by this, dispatched an army to crush Sunan Giri. This, however, was defeated, leading to a prolonged struggle that Majapahit only won with difficulty. Given the above, this narrative could easily be a genuine memory of Gresik as a pre-Demak centre of Islamic authority. Certainly, the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s account of this period, albeit unreliable, does also contain some accurate information.

But all this notwithstanding, it is Ma Huan's *Yingyai Shenglan* which provides the most compelling evidence for an early Islamic kingdom at Gresik. As noted in section 5.2.5, this 1451 source (which utilises observations made between 1413 and 1433) describes Java in some detail. This description includes some references to early fifteenth-century Gresik: the city is described as home to a thousand Chinese families who, Ma Huan claims, had founded the city during the previous century. Ma Huan even gives Gresik a Chinese name, Xin Cun ('New Village'), and claims that its current ruler

was a man from Guangdong province.<sup>107</sup> Although he does not explicitly identify this man as a Muslim, elsewhere he traces many of Java's Chinese Muslims to Guangdong.<sup>108</sup> All this raises the possibility that, by the early fifteenth century, Gresik was a specifically Chinese city ruled by a Muslim. Certainly, as discussed in Chapter 2, the turmoil caused by the Ming transition, coupled with Emperor Hongwu's ban on trade, led to a late fourteenth-century Chinese Muslim exodus into the Nusantara, just as Ma Huan claims. Equally, the *Ming shi-lu* refers to members of Zheng He's voyages deserting in the Nusantara: for example, during the final voyage, one ship returned with only three of its originally three hundred soldiers.<sup>109</sup> How many of these reached Java is unclear, but some could well have been drawn by the island's pre-existing Chinese communities.

The possibility of Gresik's Chinese connection, however, immediately evokes Cu Cu/Jinbun's supposed Chinese ancestry. By the same token, Raffles links all three of his early Islamic figures to Champa. Historically, Champa was an important stopping point on the way to and from China and, by 1471, hosted a significant Muslim community.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, during that period it was conquered by its Vietnamese neighbours<sup>111</sup> who, after experiencing various periods of direct Chinese control (most recently between 1406 and 1428),<sup>112</sup> had become heavily Sinicised.<sup>113</sup> They later passed this Sinicised culture on to the Chams. As such, although two distinct cultures, Champa

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<sup>107</sup> YYSL, 89-90.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>109</sup> Cited in: Reid, 'Flows and Seepages,' in *Sojourners and Settlers*, ed. Reid (2001), 26.

<sup>110</sup> Raymond Scupin, 'Cham Muslims in Thailand,' in *The Muslims of Thailand*, Vol. 1: Historical and Cultural Studies, ed. Andrew D. W. Forbes (Bihar: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), 105.

<sup>111</sup> Danny Wong Tze Ken, 'Vietnam-Champa Relations and the Malay-Islam Regional Network in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries,' *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Issue 5 (March 2004).

<sup>112</sup> Geoff Wade, 'Engaging the South: Ming China and Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 588-589.

<sup>113</sup> See also: R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, Vol. 1: Champa, Greater India Society Publication No. 1 (Lahore: The Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot., 1927); John K. Whitmore, *Vietnam, Ho Quy Ly, and the Ming (1371-1421)* (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1985).

and China were intimately connected; any Champan involvement could have carried Chinese overtones. Certainly, Raffles claims Sunan Giri followed Ḥanafī law: Chinese Muslims also profess this *madhhab*.

#### 5.3.4. Summary

Taking the above as a whole, Java's Islamisation seems to have started in the island's east. During the late fourteenth century, Chinese Muslims migrated to Java in large numbers. Establishing themselves across the island – but most notably in Gresik – by the early to mid-fifteenth century, they were amongst Java's most important traders. This turned Gresik (and as is implied by the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and Raffles) into an early centre of Islamic expansion. It was only after this, during the mid-fifteenth century, that one of Gresik's Chinese residents established himself further west, in Demak. There he successfully created Java's pre-eminent Islamic power, which would eventually spread Islam across the island. As a result, however, Java's early Islamic history appears intimately connected to Chinese Muslims. Certainly, although Pires speaks about Arab, Persian and Indian influence, he fails to provide any specific examples in support of this statement.

Chinese Muslim influence, however, is ultimately unsurprising: Barros and Lodewycksz also testify to it, as does the much later Ong Tae Hai. As seen in section 5.2.5, he described many large Chinese Muslim communities on Java. Their members were predominantly from either Fujian (where Zhangzhou and Quanzhou are located) or Guangdong province. He claims, however, that they had begun arriving during

Zheng He's time.<sup>114</sup> This is interesting because it is consistent with the claims made in the two *Kronik Tionghua*. Consequently, our discussion now turns to them.

#### **5.4. The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon***

##### **5.4.1. Provenance**

As noted above, the provenance of the two *Kronik Tionghua* texts is problematic: the original manuscripts remain unseen and the existence of Parlindungan's Resident Poortman has been questioned.<sup>115</sup> Many scholars (including Ricklefs, J. de Casparis and I. Mabbett)<sup>116</sup> have therefore expressed doubts about their authenticity; as R. Jones notes, it is impossible to adequately assess either one of the texts without being sure of their origins.<sup>117</sup> Resolving this issue is therefore crucial. As mentioned above, Parlindungan claims both manuscripts were deposited in Leiden's Museum of Ethnology in 1938. Initial enquires, however, have revealed no trace of them.<sup>118</sup> The issue of the text's provenance will therefore rest on Resident Poortman: as their alleged discoverer, their existence is intimately tied up with his. Consequently, our discussion will begin by examining Parlindungan's biography of this man.

According to Parlindungan, Resident Poortman studied Indology at Delft (no dates are given). Although specialising in Batak history and language, he also learnt

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<sup>114</sup> Whitmore, *Vietnam, Ho Quy Ly, and the Ming* (1985), 21.

<sup>115</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), iii-iv.

<sup>116</sup> Ricklefs expresses these doubts in his introduction to de Graaf and Pigeaud's translation of the two *Kronik Tionghua*. For the other two authors, see: J. G. de Casparis and I. W. Mabbett, 'Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c.1500,' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1: From Early Times to c.1500, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 331.

<sup>117</sup> Russell Jones, 'Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries by H. J. de Graaf; Th. G. Th. Pigeaud; M. C. Ricklefs: A Review Article,' *BSOAS* 50:2 (1987): 424.

<sup>118</sup> Email communication with Dr. Paul L. F. van Dongen, Keeper of Manuscripts at the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

Arabic and a coastal dialect of Minangkabau. A serious student, he furthered his studies by gaining access to the research materials (both published and unpublished) of ‘Dr van der Tuuk, Meerwald, Dammerboer, Ophuisen and others.’<sup>119</sup> After graduation, he became a civil servant in the Dutch East Indies and was posted to Tapaktuan, Aceh. Parlindungan does not explicitly say when this posting occurred, but claims it was shortly after the Dutch pacification of Aceh began. He associates the latter event with the future Dutch Prime Minister, Hendrikus Colijn (1869-1944); Parlindungan claims Colijn asked for a Minang-speaking interpreter to help him communicate with Aceh’s Minang-speaking coastal people. He was promptly sent Poortman, who quickly earned Colijn’s respect and trust. As a result, Poortman was entrusted with a secret mission to Singkil, to determine whether the region should be incorporated into Aceh or neighbouring Tapanuli.<sup>120</sup> Fulfilling that task successfully, Poortman was rewarded with the Comptrollership of Sipirok (the capital of Tapanuli). Parlindungan dates this promotion to 1904.<sup>121</sup>

After this, Parlindungan is vague about Poortman’s career. Between 1914 and 1918, Poortman reputedly taught himself Chinese using Ma Huan and Fei Xin (while also accessing the *Yuan shi*).<sup>122</sup> Parlindungan does not state, however, what Poortman’s official position was during this period. Nonetheless, at a later point (although no precise date is given) Parlindungan claims that Poortman became the Resident of Jambi. He then ended his career as ‘Acting Advisor on Native Affairs’ in Batavia.<sup>123</sup> It was in this capacity that he was charged with tracing Raden Patah’s Chinese ancestry (see section 5.2.4). Parlindungan claims that Poortman was singled out for this mission

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<sup>119</sup> *TR*, 424.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 424-425.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, 426.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 650.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 426.

because of his knowledge of Chinese; few Dutch officials knew this language. As mentioned in section in 5.2.4, this mission supposedly coincided with the PKI Revolt (dated by Parlindungan to 1928) and resulted in the discovery of both *Kronik Tionghua* texts.

In 1930, Parlindungan claims that Poortman retired and returned to the Netherlands. Taking up residence in Voorburg (a suburb of The Hague), he continued his study of the Batak and wrote a number of (again secret) government reports.<sup>124</sup> For his part, Parlindungan met Poortman in 1937, studying Batak history with him.<sup>125</sup> The two subsequently remained in touch, until Poortman's death in 1951.<sup>126</sup>

This briefly sums up Parlindungan's biography of Resident Poortman. In essence, it constitutes the background behind the discovery of the two *Kronik Tionghua*. But as noted, some scholars claim no trace of this Resident Poortman can be found, suggesting fabrication. This conclusion, however, is premature: the *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* lists a C. Poortman as both Controleur of Sripolok between 1904 and 1907,<sup>127</sup> and Resident of Jambi from 1923 to 1925,<sup>128</sup> just as Parlindungan claims. The *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* (folios 892 and 969) reveals this to be one Cornelis Poortman, born in Rotterdam on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1873. Furthermore, according to this individual's *Persoonskaart* (or 'Personal Record Card,' preserved at the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*), he died in Rijswijk on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1951. Rijswijk is a suburb of The Hague directly adjacent to Voorburg. As such, it seems highly likely that this Cornelis Poortman is the person Parlindungan refers to; the provenance of the two *Kronik Tionghua* therefore begins to look more realistic. But, in

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<sup>124</sup> *TR*, 434.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 428.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 435.

<sup>127</sup> *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: n.p., 1887-): (1905), 277; (1906), 216 and 281; (1907), 217 and 283.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, (1924), 253; (1925), 257.



the absence of any original manuscripts, proof of Poortman's existence is not, *ipso facto*, proof that the *Kronik Tionghua* texts are authentic. To begin to set this possibility on firmer ground, it is necessary to demonstrate the accuracy of Parlindungan's account of their discovery. As will be shown, however, this account is actually rather shaky. Nonetheless, it is not an obvious fabrication and so, to help determine whether it does in fact contain any truth, it will be instructive to first evaluate Parlindungan's account of Poortman's life as a whole.

Unfortunately, no official Dutch source describes Cornelis Poortman's education. Consequently, it is not possible to confirm whether he studied Indology at Delft, specialising in the Batak. It is, however, a plausible scenario: until 1864, Delft (then known as the Royal Academy) was the Netherlands's principle training facility for colonial officials, with a thriving Indology program that included Batak studies. After 1864, when the Academy was rebranded as a polytechnic, this Indology program declined, as more emphasis was placed on architecture and engineering.<sup>129</sup> The programme was still taught, however, until 1901.<sup>130</sup> It is therefore entirely possible that Poortman enrolled there (given his date of birth, presumably during the early 1890's).<sup>131</sup>

Turning to Poortman's alleged interest in Batak culture, Parlindungan gives this centre stage: he constantly refers to it throughout *Tuanku Rao* and lists nine separate Batak/Sumatra-orientated texts supposedly authored by Poortman.<sup>132</sup> As such, for

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<sup>129</sup> 'History of the University,' *TU Delft*. Available at: <http://www.tudelft.nl/en/about-tu-delft/history/>. (Accessed on: 22/09/2014).

<sup>130</sup> Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *Dutch Scholarship in the Age of Empire and Beyond: KITLV - The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, 1851-2011* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 102.

<sup>131</sup> It has not, however, been possible to confirm this with Delft: the university does not preserve a central record of its students, but a series of departmental ones. As such, because their Indology program ended in 1901, the relevant department no longer exists; the current location of its old records remains unknown (Email communication from Ruth Koole, Delft University of Technology, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014).

<sup>132</sup> These are: 'De Mohammedaansche Godsdienst Volgens de Hanafitische Leer bij den Chineesen te Bagansiapiapi'; 'De Hambali Fanatiekelingen ter Sumatra's West Kust'; 'De Slag bij Air Bangis ten Jare, 1821'; 'De Amstarmelingen der Singamangaradja's'; 'De Simalungun Bataksche Zelfbestuurders'; 'Korte Inhouds Opgave van de in 1884 te Bakkara Gevonden Stukken'; 'De Karo Bataksche

Parlindungan it seems that Poortman was a Batak specialist first and foremost. By comparison, the two *Kronik Tionghua* are simply asides, curiosities designed to highlight Poortman's ability to access rare and previously unseen material. Indeed, Poortman's interest in Batak culture is confirmed by an article on Aceh, written by him in 1916.<sup>133</sup> Although there is no other Sumatra or Batak-orientated publication by a Cornelis Poortman (or any other Poortman), this is not necessarily problematic: Parlindungan readily acknowledges Poortman's anonymity in the field, citing it as the result of his texts being unpublished government reports. Certainly, there are several other points which suggest Poortman's interest in the Batak may be genuine.

First, the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* confirms Poortman's official role in Tapanuli, which is deep inside Batakland. In fact, it claims Poortman spent virtually all his Dutch East Indies career in (usually north) Sumatra. At the very least, this strongly suggests that he had a particular interest in Sumatra, including the Batak regions. Indeed, Poortman's obituary records that A. M. Goedhart, the former Governor of Aceh, and C. J. van Kempen, the former Governor of Sumatra's East Coast, attended his funeral (van Kempen provided the eulogy).<sup>134</sup> Turning to Poortman's later career, during the 1930's his *Persoonskaart* lists him as a member of the Department for Social Services. Consequently, and just as Parlindungan claims, he remained a government official even after his retirement. Equally, in the 1930's and 40's Poortman seems to have produced at least two (published) government reports – one on the pension

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Zelfbestuurders'; 'Het Sultanaat Kuntu/Kampar'; 'Titulatuur in het Rijk Pagarruyung'. Indeed, when he references Poortman's Batak-orientated texts, Parlindungan even cites specific page numbers. These are elaborate lengths to go to if he simply fabricated them.

<sup>133</sup> C. Poortman, 'Een Atjeher bij den Keizer van Frankrijk,' *Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur* 50 (1916): 385-387.

<sup>134</sup> Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, *Collectie Familieadvertenties tot 1970* s.v. 'Poortman.'

schemes of Colonial Officials and another on the governance of Indonesia.<sup>135</sup> Although these do not relate to the Batak, they confirm the broader detail of Parlindungan's account – i.e. that Poortman was a government official who authored government reports.

Returning to Poortman's supposed interest in the Batak, Parlindungan's claim that he accessed the work (both published and unpublished) of 'Dr van der Tuuk, Meerwald, Dammerboer, [and] Ophuisen' renders this plausible. The last of these individuals is presumably Ch. A. van Ophuijsen (1856-1917), the Leiden-based Professor of Malay who devised the orthographic system used for Indonesian between 1901 and 1947. Although Ophuijsen did not specialise in the Batak, or teach at Delft, he was certainly active during the early 1890's.<sup>136</sup> It is entirely plausible that a young, enthusiastic Poortman went to Leiden to seek him out. It is the other three names, however, which are the most interesting; considered together, they suggest Parlindungan's account is accurate.

The first is clearly H. N. van der Tuuk (1824-1894), the well-known linguist and Toba Batak specialist. If Poortman studied the Batak, an interest in van der Tuuk's work would be logical. Equally, the Toba Batak predominate in Tapanuli, where Poortman was later posted. Parlindungan claims, however, that Poortman accessed van der Tuuk's unpublished work; this implies (as with the other names) that he gained access to van der Tuuk's private (i.e. unpublished) papers, perhaps entailing that the

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<sup>135</sup> C. Poortman, *De Toekomst van het Binnenlandsch Bestuur: Verhandeling voor het te Weltevreden te Februari 1922 te houden B. B. Congres* (Batavia: Vereeniging van Ambtenaren bij het Binnenlandsch Bestuur, 1922); C. Poortman, *De Indische Pensioenen: Vereeniging Bond van Gepensioneerde Burgerlijke Landsdienaren en Locale Ambtenaren in Nederlandsch Indië* ('s-Gravenhage: [n.p.], 1933); C. Poortman, *Bestuur en Bestel in Indië* ('s-Gravenhage: Van Hoeve, 1947).

<sup>136</sup> H. M. J. Maier, 'From Heteroglossia to Polyglossia: The Creation of Malay and Dutch in the Indies,' *Indonesia* 56 (1993): 54.

two met. Since 1873, however, van der Tuuk had been a civil servant on Bali.<sup>137</sup> Consequently, by the 1890's, both he and his private papers were in the Dutch East Indies, all but inaccessible to Poortman. This seems to make Parlindungan's account unlikely – until 'Dammerboer' is considered.

Parlindungan's 'Dammerboer' is probably the late nineteenth-century Batak specialist, J. G. Dammerboer. This figure, although now obscure, was a late nineteenth to early twentieth-century missionary specialising in the Angkola Batak. He was particularly interested in Batak education, publishing widely on the subject.<sup>138</sup> Although during the early twentieth century he worked as a missionary for the *Java-Comité*,<sup>139</sup> earlier on he was employed by the *Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap*, translating Biblical texts into Angkola Batak.<sup>140</sup> This is significant because, between 1847 and 1873, van der Tuuk also worked for this organisation. Originally tasked by them with translating the Bible into Toba Batak (and spending ten years on Sumatra to do so), between 1857 and 1868 van der Tuuk taught Toba Batak to the *Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap's* future missionaries.<sup>141</sup> During that period, he resided in Amsterdam and produced several volumes of Batak translation,<sup>142</sup> a Toba Batak

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<sup>137</sup>C. Grijns, 'Van der Tuuk and the Study of Malay,' *BTLV* 152:3 (1996): 357.

<sup>138</sup> His most notable education-related work was: J. G. Dammerboer, *Singgolom: Boekoe Basaon na Nibaen* (Batawi: Gouvernement, 1907). In addition, J. Aritonang mentions a series of pedagogically-orientated articles by Dammerboer, all published in the journal *Immanuel* (see: Jan S. Aritonang, *Mission Schools in Batakland [Indonesia]: 1861-1940* [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 186). Also see: L. K. Harmsen and J. G. Dammerboer, *Kitab Batjaan Anak-anak jang Baharoe Tahoe Mambatja* (n.p.: n.p., 1903); J. G. Dammerboer and Si Koepang Loebis, *Soerat Ogen* (Batawi: Gouvernement, 1910); J. G. Dammerboer, *Game-game: Bataksche Taaloefeningen* (Batawi: Ruygrok, 1912); A. Schreiber and J. G. Dammerboer, *Beknopt Onderricht Omtrent het Menschelijke Lichaam in de Bataksche Taal* (Batavia: n.p., 1918).

<sup>139</sup> International Council on Archives, *Guides to the Sources for the History of the Nations*, Vol. 4: Sources for the History of Asia and Oceania in the Netherlands, Pt. 2: Sources 1796-1949, comp. Frits G. P. Jaquet (München: K. G. Saur, 1983), 387.

<sup>140</sup> Such as the Gospel of St. Mark: J. Dammerboer, *Djamita na denggan na ni soeratkon ni Si Markus. Het Evangelie van Markus in het angkolaisch* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1879).

<sup>141</sup> Grijns, 'Van der Tuuk,' *BTLV* 152:3 (1996): 354-355.

<sup>142</sup> Including: H. N. van der Tuuk, *Het evangelie van Lukas* (Amsterdam: Muller, 1859).

dictionary and some grammatical studies.<sup>143</sup> The *Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap*, however, retained all of his unpublished material regarding these projects, including early drafts and notes.<sup>144</sup> Consequently, because Dammerboer later worked from the same organisation, he presumably had access to that material; Poortman could have accessed it through him.

If anything, this link strengthens Parlindungan's account. Certainly, Parlindungan seems unaware of any potential connection between van der Tuuk and Dammerboer, meaning that the above comes across as unplanned and (therefore) real. Furthermore, however, Parlindungan's 'Meerwald' also ties in with this account. Like Dammerboer, this figure was a late nineteenth-century Batak specialist and Dutch missionary. More correctly called J. H. Meerwaldt, he also focused on Batak education, publishing even more extensively on this issue than Dammerboer.<sup>145</sup> But unlike Dammerboer, Meerwaldt shared van der Tuuk's interest in the Toba Batak. It is unknown, however, where he was in the early 1890's: between 1896 and 1904, he worked for a German-based missionary organization called *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (a 1902 article describes him as their employee and they published some of his work)<sup>146</sup> but earlier than this, little information is forthcoming. Meerwaldt's earliest publication (dated 1883) comes out of Amsterdam, but whether this means he

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<sup>143</sup> Notably: H. N. van der Tuuk, *Tobasche Spraakkunst*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1864 and 1867).

<sup>144</sup> International Council on Archives, *Sources for the History of the Nations*, Vol. 4, Pt. 2, comp. Jaquet (1983), 324.

<sup>145</sup> See: J. H. Meerwaldt, *Bonandolok* (Amsterdam: Hoeveker & Zoon, 1883); J. H. Meerwaldt, *Eerste Leesboekje voor de Bataksche Scholen* (Bielefeld: Ernst Siedhof, 1896); J. H. Meerwaldt, *Der Sklaverei Entronnen: Die Lebensgeschichte eines Padita-Batak* (Barmen: Verlag des Missionshauses, 1898); J. H. Meerwaldt, *Tolu Pulu Onom Turpuk Sidjahaon ni Anaksikola: Angka na Umbalga* (Bielefeld: E. Siedhoff, 1901); J. H. Meerwaldt, 'Pidari,' of *De Strijd van het Licht Tegen de Duisternis in de Bataklanden* (Utrecht: H.H. Londt, 1903); J. H. Meerwaldt, *Handleiding tot de Beoefening der Bataksche Taal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1904); J. H. Meerwaldt, *Johannes Pasaribu ein Pandita Batak* (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1904). More recently, he is noted for this activity by: Susan Rodgers, *Print, Poetics and Politics: A Sumatran Epic in the Colonial Indies and New Order Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>146</sup> See: J. H. Meerwaldt, 'De Bataksche Tooverstaf,' *BTLV* 54:1 (1902): 297-310.

was based there is uncertain. After 1908, however, he was definitely based in Amsterdam, where he worked for a missionary training school called *Samenwerkende Zendings-Corporaties*.<sup>147</sup> This, however, is long after Poortman supposedly accessed his work. Ultimately, however, it needs to be considered that Meerwaldt and Dammerboer were active in the same fields (missionary work and Batak education) at the same time. They were both Dutch and, at various times, based in Amsterdam. These coincidences raise the possibility they knew (or were at least aware of) each other. If so, and if Poortman made contact with one of them, he could easily have been directed to the other. In any case, a consistent pattern is established: three of the four people Parlindungan associates with Poortman's education were Dutch missionaries interested in the Batak. Although it is possible that Parlindungan simply listed two missionaries he knew were active in the Batak region, he shows no awareness of these potential connections between them and van der Tuuk, making his account appear genuine.

But if the above covers Poortman's education and supposed interests, what about his career? As already noted, Parlindungan correctly associates him with the Comptrollership of Sipirok and the Residency of Jambi. A further comparison with the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren*, however, reveals many more similarities. According to that text, Poortman joined the Dutch East Indies civil service on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1896. He was immediately posted to Java, where he stayed until 1899.<sup>148</sup> Parlindungan, however, does not mention this; he begins by describing the posting to Tapaktuan. Nevertheless, the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* does state that Poortman was relocated to North Sumatra in 1899. It does not say where he went, but

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<sup>147</sup> The latter still preserves his papers on *adat* and missionary experience in the Batak regions (see: International Council on Archives, *Sources for the History of the Nations*, Vol. 4, Pt. 2, comp. Jaquet [1983], 388-389).

<sup>148</sup> According to his *Persoonskaart*, in that year he also married Eleanora Hermina Kastelijn (originally of Surakarta). The marriage occurred in Magelang, Central Java.

does claim he was ‘put at the disposal of the Governor of Aceh’; this statement tallies with Parlindungan’s account. Equally, Parlindungan times Poortman’s move to coincide with the pacification of Aceh. This gradual process began in 1898, when J. B. van Heutsz was appointed Governor of Aceh (with Colijn as his deputy). By 1903, most Acehnese political leaders (including Sultan Alauddin Muhammad Da‘ud Syah II) had capitulated, leaving the province (mostly, but not entirely) under Dutch control.<sup>149</sup> Consequently, Parlindungan’s timings appear correct: the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* does indeed date Poortman’s move to the pacification, when Colijn was active in Aceh. Furthermore, although the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* does not detail Poortman’s Acehnese activities, it does state that, in 1901, he was sent to the province’s northwest coast. This is the region of Singkil, suggesting that Parlindungan’s account of Poortman’s secret mission there could be correct. Equally, this move was followed by Poortman’s promotion to the Comptrollership of Sipirok, again fitting Parlindungan’s account.

Although the above makes it appear as though the Dutch records tally well with Parlindungan’s account, subsequent to this the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* contains a lot of information Parlindungan lacks. After 1907, it records a period in Europe (lasting until 1909, and apparently spent in The Hague),<sup>150</sup> followed by a return to Sumatra. This time, however, Poortman was posted to Medan and charged (on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1910) with the governance of Langkat. Staying there until 1911, he subsequently moved all around the Nusantara before returning to Sumatra as the

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<sup>149</sup> Edwin Wieringa, ‘The Dream of the King and the Holy War against the Dutch: The *Kôteubah* of the Acehnese epic, *Hikayat Prang Gômpeuni*,’ *BSOAS* 61:2 (1998): 298.

<sup>150</sup> The *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* does not elaborate on where he went. According to his *Persoonskaart*, however, his two youngest children were born in The Hague during this period: Cornelis Johan Louis Poortman (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1908) and Petronella Poortman (on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1909). His eldest son, on the other hand, Arie Willem Poortman, was born in Baros on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1902. This is consistent with a North Sumatran posting.

Assistant Resident of Palembang (appointed on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917). Later, he became the Resident of New Guinea and then the Resident of Jambi (1923-1925). Parlindungan, however, only mentions this last posting. Otherwise, from this period he only refers to Poortman's knowledge of Chinese (supposedly gained between 1914 and 1918), which there is no way to confirm using the records currently available. Nonetheless, this lack of detail (and perhaps the failure to mention Poortman's initial posting on Java) may simply reflect Parlindungan's concerns: his interests surrounded Poortman's Batak expertise and role in discovering the two *Kronik Tionghua* texts. Neither Poortman's initial service on Java nor these 1907-1923 activities are relevant to those points. This might explain why they are not mentioned, meaning their absence need not cause alarm. Rather, up until 1925 it seems that Parlindungan provides a good account of Poortman's career. But after that, things become problematic.

As seen, Parlindungan ends Poortman's career in Batavia, as 'Acting Advisor on Native Affairs.' In this role, he supposedly found the two *Kronik Tionghua* in 1928, during the PKI revolt. As briefly mentioned above, however, this scenario is improbable. First, the PKI revolt actually occurred between the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1926 and January 1927, with all significant Javanese activity ending before December 1926.<sup>151</sup> As the revolt is essential to Parlindungan's account (it provides Poortman with the opportunity to search the temples and find the texts), it seems that events must have occurred earlier (probably in late 1926). But, the *Nederlands Indië Stamboek Ambtenaren* claims Poortman retired, not in 1930 (as Parlindungan claims), but on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1925 and while still Resident of Jambi. It contains no record of a subsequent posting to Batavia. Supporting this, Poortman's *Persoonskaart* lists Jambi as his final

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<sup>151</sup> Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program and Tactics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1965), 16; Bob Hering, *The PKI's Aborted Revolt: Some Selected Documents*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Occasional Papers No. 17 (Townsville City: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1986), 24.



Dutch East Indies place of residence; by the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1925, he was back in the Netherlands (in Rijswijk). Consequently, Parlindungan's account seems impossible: during the PKI Revolt, Poortman was not Batavia's 'Acting Advisor on Native Affairs,' but retired and living in Europe.

On the face of it, this seems to fatally undermine Parlindungan's account: if Poortman was in the Netherlands during the PKI revolt, he cannot have found the texts as described. Because the revolt is central to the discovery of each text, speculation about an earlier date (i.e. pre-1925, when Poortman was still in the Dutch East Indies) seems unacceptable. The revolt did, however, lead to increased surveillance (particularly of the Chinese) until at least the governorship of A. C. de Graeff (1926-1931), which might re-open the possibility of a 1928 (or later) date.<sup>152</sup> There is currently no evidence, however, that Poortman returned to the Dutch East Indies after 1925. But, if all this implies that the two *Kronik Tionghua* are fabrications, the question remains: who fabricated them and why?

Why, for example, would Parlindungan fabricate the texts? His concerns lay with the Batak, not Java and/or Indonesia's Chinese communities (Muslim or otherwise). Indeed, this lack of interest is amply reflected in his failure to use either *Kronik Tionghua*; he simply reproduces them at the end of *Tuanku Rao* as Appendix 31, with a description of how they were found. They are neither flaunted nor discussed, merely offered as interesting curiosities Parlindungan received from Poortman. Consequently, because they serve no real purpose, there is no obvious motive for fabricating them.

But, what if Poortman fabricated them? Indeed, this would explain an observation made by Wade: he notes that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* contains

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<sup>152</sup> Van der Kroef, *Communist Party of Indonesia* (1965), 20.

references to a Gan Eng Cu, the reputed ‘Kapten Cina Islam’ of Tuban. According to the text, in 1436 Gan Eng Cu travelled to China as an envoy. This is significant because it finds support in the *Ming shi-lu*: in 1438, this source (and only this source) records Gan Eng Cu’s arrival in China as Java’s envoy.<sup>153</sup> When Parlindungan was writing, however, this part of the *Ming shi-lu* had not been translated into any foreign language, nor was it available in Indonesia. It is therefore unlikely that he had access to it, suggesting to Wade that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* (or at least some parts of it) is genuine.<sup>154</sup> This, however, fails to consider the possibility that Poortman fabricated them: Poortman supposedly knew Chinese and, once back in the Netherlands, pursued his research in Leiden.<sup>155</sup> In the 1930’s, the University of Leiden possessed at least two copies of the *Ming shi* (the edited version of the *Ming shi-lu*).<sup>156</sup> This text also mentions the 1438 mission, making it entirely possible that Poortman knew of Gan Eng Cu and incorporated him into a fabricated text.

Nonetheless, the notion that Poortman faked the texts is also unsatisfactory: like Parlindungan, Poortman has no obvious motive for doing so. He also shows every sign of being an upstanding and reliable person. As such, perhaps a (currently unknown) third party fabricated them? This scenario, however, is also problematic: it would imply that Parlindungan’s account of their discovery is largely correct (i.e. by absolving both he and Poortman of any blame). Not only is this not the case, but it would entail that

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<sup>153</sup> As well as the 1438 mission, the *Ming shi-lu* also records Gan Eng Cu acting as the Javanese ambassador in 1442, 1446 and 1447. The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* mentions none of these other visits. It also does not provide the same biography for Gan Eng Cu as the *Ming shi-lu*: that he was originally a fisherman from Longxi (in Fujian) who, after being blown off course, was wrecked on Java (*MSL*, juan 43.2a).

<sup>154</sup> Wade, ‘Early Muslim Expansion,’ in *New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, ed. Morgan and Reid (2010), 396-397.

<sup>155</sup> *TR*, 428-429.

<sup>156</sup> This information is kept by their library catalogue: [http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo\\_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=UBL\\_V1&docId=UBL\\_LMS000945658](http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=UBL_V1&docId=UBL_LMS000945658); [http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo\\_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=UBL\\_V1&docId=UBL\\_LMS002660850](http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=UBL_V1&docId=UBL_LMS002660850). (Accessed on: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014).

Semarang and Cirebon must have hosted separate conspiracies to fabricate early texts implicating Chinese Muslims in Java's Islamisation process. These then just happened to fall into the hands of the same man. This seems equally unlikely.

Ultimately, therefore, the provenance of both *Kronik Tionghua* texts remains unresolved. Although it can now be confidently stated that Parlindungan's Resident Poortman existed, whether he found the texts (at least as described) is uncertain. But, in the absence of any obvious candidate or reason for fabricating them, it cannot be assumed they are forgeries either. Certainly, many other early Javanese *Peranakan* chronicles exist: the *Kaiba Lidai Shiji*, for example, is a well-known seventeenth to eighteenth-century *peranakan* chronicle from Batavia.<sup>157</sup> Equally, until 1931, Semarang's *Kongkoan* (Office of the Head of the Chinese Community) preserved a substantial body of early Chinese texts. These have since disappeared, but were used by Liem Thian Joe to write a history of Semarang's Chinese communities. Although Liem does not mention either of the *Kronik Tionghua* texts, or provide an account substantially similar to theirs, his history also begins in 1416. It therefore suggests that, at the very least, the *Kongkoan* did preserve the memory of a Semarang-based Chinese community contemporary to Zheng He.<sup>158</sup> Nonetheless, this does not establish the existence of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* or the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*. Rather, the only way to now advance that discussion is to consider the contents of those texts in more detail.

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<sup>157</sup> Hsu Yun-ts'iao, ed., 'Kaiba Lidai Shiji,' *Journal of the South Seas Society* 9:1 (1953): 1-64.

<sup>158</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwayat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia bagian Riwayat Semarang 1416-1931* (Semarang: Ho Kim Yoe, 1933).

## 5.4.2. The *Kronik Tionghua* Texts

### 5.4.2.1. The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*

As argued by L. Suryadinata, the names used in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* appear to be genuinely Chinese. This may count in the text's favour. They are not, however, transcribed into Mandarin; they appear to be in a dialect capable of turning Sam Boa into San Po Bo, Ma Huan into Mah Hwang and Fei Xin into Fen Tsin.<sup>159</sup> Suryadinata does not, however, attempt to ascertain precisely which dialect this is. Rather, R. Jones takes up this task and identifies it as Hokkien. Certainly, this is logical: a southern Chinese dialect, Hokkien is commonly used throughout the Nusantara.<sup>160</sup> Jones further supports his conclusion, however, by pointing to the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s definition of three of its Chinese names: Jin Bun as 'strong man,' Swan Liong as 'diamond dragon,' and Kin San as 'Golden Mountain.' According to Jones,<sup>161</sup> in Hokkien the last two of these definitions are indeed correct. 'Jin Bun,' however, despite *jin* meaning 'man,' has no apparent meaning, whether in Hokkien or any other Chinese dialect.<sup>162</sup> This is intriguing: 'Jin Bun' is the only one of these names which occurs elsewhere. Conceivably, therefore, it could represent a Chinese name which, over time, has been adapted to a Javanese language. If so, its presence amongst otherwise intelligible Chinese names (i.e. which have not undergone adaptation) is confusing. It suggests that not all of these names have experienced the same

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<sup>159</sup> Leo Suryadinata, 'Zheng He, Semarang and the Islamization of Java: Between History and Legend,' in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 78-79.

<sup>160</sup> Jones, 'Review Article,' *BSOAS* 50:2 (1987): 424.

<sup>161</sup> According to Ricklefs (who does not speak Hokkien), only the last of these is correct while the other two are meaningless (De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs [1984], 189).

<sup>162</sup> Jones, 'Review Article,' *BSOAS* 50:2 (1987): 424.

transmission history. This might indicate that, originally, they did not come from the same text and have only been placed together relatively recently.

Perhaps the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s most important claim, however, relates to the presence of a Nusantara-based network of early fifteenth-century, Chinese Muslim communities. Concentrated on Java, these communities sit at the heart of the text. Moreover, they are entirely plausible: Ma Huan testifies to the existence of many, predominantly Muslim, Chinese communities on Java, while Ong Tae Hai links them to Zheng He. Similarly, numerous sources (including the *Ming shi-lu*) testify to Zheng He's involvement in Palembang,<sup>163</sup> which is where the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims he founded the Nusantara's first Chinese Muslim community. Nonetheless, at this point a problem arises: the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* explicitly states that Zheng He founded all of the Nusantara's Chinese Muslim communities, beginning with Palembang. Ma Huan, however, is very clear that this was not the case: the Chinese communities he mentions had existed since the late fourteenth century, a claim supported by the evidence for Chinese migration (see Chapter 2). The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* also depicts these communities as heavily networked, linked together into administrative districts with governors appointed to manage them. There is, however, no evidence for this arrangement: Zheng He's official remit did not demand it, no record of his voyages mentions it and (aside from Gan Eng Cu) none of the governors listed by the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* (including Bong Tak Keng, Gan Eng Wan and Swan Liong) are found elsewhere. Even in the case of Gan Eng Cu, the *Ming shi-lu* describes him as a Javanese envoy, not the governor of a Chinese diaspora.<sup>164</sup> All this makes the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s account appear doubtful.

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<sup>163</sup> *MSL*, juan 71.1a.

<sup>164</sup> For example, see: *Ibid*, juan 43.2a.

It should also be considered whether Zheng He visited the Javanese cities listed by the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* – namely, Ancol/Jakarta, Sembung/Cirebon, Lasem, Tuban, Tse Tsun/Gresik, Jiaotung/Joratan, Cangki/Indramayu and Semarang. Ultimately, because the official records of Zheng He's voyages have been destroyed, it is difficult to know precisely.<sup>165</sup> Ma Huan, however, describes only Tuban, Surabaya, Gresik and Majapahit; given his stated aim was to recount the voyages in full,<sup>166</sup> this might infer that only these cities were visited. Nonetheless, Ma Huan did not accompany all of the voyages. Equally, the fleets were often divided up so that they could cover more ground.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, and although Ma Huan did claim to have consulted other former crew members to fill gaps in his knowledge, Zheng He (or at least some of his ships) could have visited areas Ma Huan was unaware of.<sup>168</sup>

It should also be noted that, although no contemporary Chinese source mentions Zheng He in Semarang, a well-known Javanese tradition does claim that he visit the city. This tradition revolves around the so-called *gedung batu* (lit. 'Stone Storeroom'), a cave where Zheng He reportedly stopped to pray during one of his early voyages (precisely which is unknown). Later, after some of his crew elected to stay, Zheng He reputedly established a mosque (or, according to some, a temple) over this cave.<sup>169</sup> The *gedung batu*, however, is not mentioned until 1704 (when it reportedly collapsed and needed repairing),<sup>170</sup> while the legends surrounding it are not clearly described until Ong Tae Hai.<sup>171</sup> Before this, no evidence exists for the tradition. Nonetheless, the Nusantara's largest Sam Po Kong temple does currently sit above the cave. It was from

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<sup>165</sup> Bruce Swanson, *Eighth Voyage of the Dragon: A History of China's Quest for Seapower* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 41-42.

<sup>166</sup> YYSL, 55.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>169</sup> Priambudi Setiakusuma, *Klenteng Agung Sam Poo Kong* (Semarang: Sam Poo Kong Foundation, 2006), 57.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>171</sup> Ong, *The Chinese Abroad* (1849), 21.

this temple that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* supposedly came. Indeed, unlike other Chinese temples, which are aligned north-south, Semarang's Sam Po Kong temple is aligned towards the *qibla*. Because the current building is recent, it is impossible to know whether this alignment is original. If it were, however, it would suggest that the temple was once a mosque. This would make it more likely that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, as an essentially Islamic text, was found there.

If the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* did indeed come from this temple, however, a significant point emerges: it never mentions the *gedung batu*. Although the text agrees that Zheng He visited Semarang, established a mosque there and settled some of his crew, it never mentions the cave. This oversight is curious: in post-eighteenth-century Semarang tradition, the *gedung batu* is inseparable from Zheng He's presence in the town and constitutes the entire reason for the existence of the Sam Po Kong Temple from which the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* supposedly came. It might therefore be expected that this text would refer to it. Both de Graaf and Pigeaud, however, argue that its failure to do so suggests authenticity: both scholars consider the *gedung batu* tradition to be pious legend, leading them to suggest that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s failure to mention it indicates that its narrative is more accurate and, in all probability, pre-1704 in date.<sup>172</sup> This, however, is unconvincing because parts of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* seem to draw from the *Babad Tanah Jawi*.

As such, the aspects of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s narrative centred around the rise of Demak strongly resemble the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s account: the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* Demak's first ruler is also called Jinbun and described as the son of Majapahit's final ruler, this time named 'Kerta Bumi.' As in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Jinbun was sent to Palembang where, together with his younger brother, he

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<sup>172</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 52-53.

was raised (this time as a Muslim) by the city's governor (in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, a Chinese man called Bong Swi Hoo). Eventually, both brothers travelled back to Java, where Jinbun established himself at Demak (reigning from 1475 to 1518), while his brother went to Majapahit. Jinbun then spread his influence across Java, finally pacifying (but not destroying) Majapahit in 1478. Clearly, all this largely reproduces the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s less-than-reliable narrative. By contrast, it completely ignores the more accurate claims made by Pires and the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. For example, the date of Jinbun's reign is incompatible with Pires (and all later Portuguese sources, like Barros), who has Demak's third ruler on the throne in 1513. Equally, Jinbun's Gresik ancestry is absent. Because this provides a strong link with Java's early Chinese Muslim communities, its absence here is confusing. If the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* were a genuine Chinese Muslim document, it could be expected to mention Gresik. Instead, however, the text endorses the spurious Majapahit genealogy. Although it is conceivable that this genealogy existed as an oral tradition prior to the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the latter represents the first known record of it. This might imply that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* draws from (and therefore post-dates) it. As mentioned, because the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is attributed to the court official, Pangeran Adilangu II, who probably wrote it between 1690 and 1718, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* must post-date that period. This, however, is the same period during which the *gedung batu* is known to have become an object of veneration. As such, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s failure to mention this structure must remain an enigma. It cannot, however, be construed as evidence of an early date.

Despite the above, however, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* does not simply repeat the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative – some differences are apparent. These, however, are not necessarily encouraging either. For example, the *Kronik Tionghua*



*Semarang* re-names Jinbun's father Kerta Bumi (Kung Ta Bu Mi). This, in itself, is not problematic because the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s alternative, Prabu Brawijaya, is only a generic title (see section 5.3.2). Kerta Bumi, however, is the name of a locality, not an individual. It was only applied to a member of the Majapahit court once: according to a passage in the *Pararaton* (a Majapahit king list dated to c.1600),<sup>173</sup> the youngest nephew of King Suraprabhawa (r.1466-1478) had the title Bhre Kerta Bumi.<sup>174</sup> In 1929, however, Dutch scholarship misinterpreted this passage; initially, it was mistakenly understood to mean Bhre Kerta Bumi was the king of Majapahit.<sup>175</sup> This mistake was not realised and corrected until 1978, in the work of J. Noorduyt.<sup>176</sup> That it appears in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, however, strongly suggests a Dutch educated author writing between 1929 and 1978. Similarly, the text ends with Demak's fall to Pajang (also recounted as in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*). That the narrative finishes here, however, suggests the author understood this event as marking the end of one period and the beginning of another. This is very characteristic of a modern, western-educated author, not an early Javanese one.<sup>177</sup>

Turning more fully to the issue of dates, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* initially attracted de Graaf and Pigeaud's attention because it dates Majapahit's fall to 1527; entirely independently of this text, both scholars had earlier reached the same conclusion.<sup>178</sup> Although this coincidence could be significant, there are several problems. First, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* describes three attacks on Majapahit: one in 1478, one in 1517 and another in 1527. No other source testifies to this.

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<sup>173</sup> J. J. Ras, 'Hikayat Banjar and Pararaton: A Structural Comparison of Two Chronicles,' in *A Man of Indonesian Letters: Essays in Honour of Professor A. Teeuw*, ed. C. M. S. Hellwig and S. O. Robson (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), 192.

<sup>174</sup> Y. Padmapuspita, trans., *Pararaton: Teks Bahasa Kawi, Terjemahan Bahasa Indonesia* (Jogjakarta: Taman Siswa, 1966), 43.

<sup>175</sup> M. A. Muusses, 'Singhawikramawarddhana,' *Feestbundel KBG* 11 (1929): 207-214.

<sup>176</sup> J. Noorduyt, 'Majapahit in the Fifteenth Century,' *BTLV* 134:2 (1978): 239-240.

<sup>177</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 118.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

Nonetheless, if this chapter's analysis is correct, and Demak's influence was already widespread by 1513, a series of late fifteenth-century attacks might be plausible; Pires does describe Majapahit as greatly reduced and hemmed in from the north, suggesting an ongoing conflict. Equally, de Alvim's 1513 mission sailed to Tuban, Majapahit's chief port. This could tie in with the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s claim that, while asserting independence from Demak, Majapahit officially invited the Portuguese to Java in 1517.

Ultimately, however, all this is speculation: nothing proves any pre-1527 conquest of Majapahit, or that Majapahit officially invited the Portuguese to Java. Indeed, ultimately very few of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s dates are accurate. For example, it incorrectly dates both Zheng He's voyages (1405 to 1431, not 1405 to 1433) and Zheng He's death (1430 not 1433). Similarly, although it correctly claims Zheng He clashed with the Javanese while in eastern Java, it incorrectly dates that event to 1430 (in reality, it occurred in 1407). It also incorrectly claims that Zheng He triumphed during that clash, establishing control over part of Java; according to the *Ming shi*, one hundred and seventy members of Zheng He's crew were killed and no conquests were made.<sup>179</sup> Given all this, no reason exists to suppose the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* is inherently reliable. Rather, because so few of its other dates are correct, its successful dating of Majapahit's fall may simply be accidental.

On the other hand, however, de Graaf and Pigeaud note that a failure to accurately record either the date of Zheng He's voyages or his death may simply be a result of isolation from China.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, and as seen in previous chapters, early Nusantara texts rarely record dates accurately anyway. The *Kronik Tionghua*

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<sup>179</sup> Wang Gungwu, 'China and South-East Asia 1402-1424,' in *Studies in the Social History of China and South-east Asia: Essays in Memory of Victor Purcell (26 January 1986 – 2 January 1965)*, ed. Jerome Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 391.

<sup>180</sup> De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 55-6.

*Semarang*'s failure to do so may therefore not be a barrier to accepting its legitimacy, but rather something that counts in its favour. Indeed, if the text were a forgery, incorrectly dating Zheng He's voyages would be surprising. By the early twentieth century (when the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* was presumably put together), many academic texts recorded these accurately.<sup>181</sup> Certainly, *Tuanku Rao* refers to Ma Huan, who has a largely accurate list of Zheng He's voyages and when they occurred. Indeed, it is intriguing that Ma Huan's only major dating mistake (putting the beginning of Zheng He's first voyage in 1407)<sup>182</sup> does not reoccur in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, which uses the correct date of 1405.<sup>183</sup> This text also correctly dates Zheng He's conquest of Palembang to 1407, for which Ma Huan provides no date.<sup>184</sup> By itself, this mixture of correct and incorrect dating might therefore imply the text is not contrived.

A final curious point about the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* is its depiction of how Java's Chinese communities lost their Muslim identity – i.e. as a result of their isolation from China. This, however, makes little sense. After Zheng He's withdrawal from the region in the early 1430's, Java's Chinese Muslim communities would certainly have experienced a period of separation from their homeland: from 1433 until 1567, China banned all international trade and withdrew from maritime affairs (see Chapter 2). Under those circumstances, an eventual loss of Chinese identity, accompanied by acculturation, might be expected. But, it is unclear why this should have led to a decline in their Islamic identity. During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (when this decline supposedly occurred) Java was experiencing rapid Islamisation. This suggests the existence of a thriving Javanese Islamic culture, in

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<sup>181</sup> For example, J. Duyvendak's text, the first to accurately set out all the relevant dates for Zheng He's voyages, was published in 1939 (see: J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'The True Dates of the Chinese Maritime Expeditions in the Early Fifteenth Century,' *T'oung Pao* 34:5 [1939]: 341-413).

<sup>182</sup> *YYSL*, 99-100.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

which abundant opportunities would have existed to encounter and engage with Muslims. Indeed, if the above analysis is correct, Chinese Muslims were central players in this Islamisation process. None of this indicates a decline. It also makes little sense that these communities' loss of Muslim identity would have been compensated for by an adoption of Chinese customs (i.e. mosques becoming ancestral temples): backsliding into Chinese customs would imply closer connections with China, as it essentially entails sinicisation. This is therefore another problematical aspect of the text.

Taking all the above together, it is difficult to accept the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* as genuine. Although its utilisation of incorrect dates and failure to mention the *gedung batu* could count in its favour, it has numerous other flaws: it draws on unreliable traditions while ignoring more accurate ones, and bears the hallmarks of a modern author. As such, and in the context of its difficult provenance, it must be concluded that the text is a fabrication – although by who and when remains unclear.

#### **5.4.2.2. The *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon***

Beginning with this text's reputed origin, a visit to the Talang temple revealed several problems. First, despite being aware of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* (primarily via Muljana's work), the temple's current community preserves no memory of its narrative or of the original manuscript(s) it may be based on.<sup>185</sup> As Poortman was supposedly active ninety years ago, this is perhaps not surprising or damning: no one alive today could have seen or read the original. But this is not the only problem. Contrary to Parlindungan's claims, the Talang temple is not (and never has been) a Sam Po Kong temple; it is a traditional ancestral temple, dedicated to its founder, Tan Sam

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with the temple's custodian, conducted on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Tjai. This individual, however, is mentioned in the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*: called Tan Sam Cai or Muḥammad Shāfi‘ī, he is described as a Chinese Muslim court official who reneged on his faith, worshipped in the Talang temple (according to the text, originally a mosque built in 1415 but later converted into an ancestral temple) and finally died of poisoning in 1585. Indeed, this narrative finds some support in local traditions: a local account of the temple’s foundation claims Tan Sam Tjai was a Chinese court official who converted to Islam and established the Talang temple as a mosque. But, after later renouncing Islam and re-embracing his original Chinese heritage, he re-dedicated the mosque as an ancestral temple, where he was subsequently venerated after his death.<sup>186</sup> Although this account’s accuracy is unclear, it does garner support from elsewhere: Tan Sam Tjai is buried in a Muslim graveyard (but not in a Muslim grave), where a tri-lingual (Chinese-Malay-Javanese) memorial plaque describes him as a court official who bore the title Raden Aria Wira Tidela. The plaque, however, dates his death to 1765. He therefore post-dates events by a significant margin. Equally, and unlike Semarang’s Sam Po Kong temple, the Talang temple (whose buildings are eighteenth century) is not aligned towards the *qibla*. There is therefore no indication it was once a mosque.

If the above seriously damages the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*’s credibility, consideration of its contents does little to allay any fears, with many of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*’s problems being repeated: there is a clear sense (perhaps more implicit than before) of a large network of Chinese Muslim communities, despite a lack of evidence for one; there is no contemporary Chinese record of Zheng He’s fleets visiting Cirebon; the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* ends with Pajang’s conquest of Demak, again implying the end of one period and the beginning of another; and there is the

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<sup>186</sup> This account also came from the temple’s custodian.

same illogical depiction of Sinicisation as a result of isolation from China. As above, all this suggests the text is fabricated. Indeed, when compared with the other sources reviewed here, the precise origins of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* actually seem quite straightforward.

The *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* recounts how, in 1415, a Chinese Admiral (*laksamana*) called Haji Kung Wu Ping built a lighthouse on top of Gunung Jati. He also established three Chinese Muslim villages there, which subsequently helped repair Zheng He's fleets. Although no Chinese source records this, there is a similar account in the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*: this claims that Cirebon began as a series of villages which (thanks to Chinese trade) grew into a city. It also claims that two Majapahit-bound Chinese officials, a general called Wai Ping and an Admiral called Te Ho, then built a pagoda on top of Gunung Jati. Rather than a lighthouse, this served as a memorial (to what is unclear).<sup>187</sup> The similarity between these narratives, however, and the names of the Chinese officials involved (i.e. 'Kung Wu Ping' and 'Wai Ping' coupled with 'Zheng He' and 'Te Ho') suggests a connection between the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* and the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. But, any similarity between these two texts notwithstanding, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon's* subsequent narrative (regarding post-1526 events) differs dramatically from the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. For that later period, it seems to draw from the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*.

In 1526, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims Demak's (in this case third) ruler sent Sunan Gunung Jati to conquer Cirebon. After doing so, Sunan Gunung Jati moved to Banten before, finally, returning to Cirebon to establish the sultanate. This is substantially similar to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's* claims. Indeed, the only major difference concerns Tan Eng Hoat, the Chinese man who the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*

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<sup>187</sup> Cited in: De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Ricklefs (1984), 120.

claims ruled Cirebon prior to Sunan Gunung Jati's return (and who joined forces with him to create the sultanate). This individual is absent from the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. He does, however, appear in the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*: there, he is Jinbun's Gresik-based grandfather. Why this variation exists is unclear but, ultimately, it seems a substantial part of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* is, in essence, a hybrid of these two indigenous texts. Aside from the greater emphasis on Chinese Muslims, it contains hardly any information which cannot be found in those two sources. Those Chinese Muslim elements, however, are not convincing; it is therefore unlikely the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* represents an independent, parallel tradition. As such, because both the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* is early to mid-eighteenth century in origin, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* must at least post-date that period. Its periodization of history, however, and as above, probably indicates a modern author.

Intriguingly, however, the above demonstrates that the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* utilises texts which the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* shows no awareness of. This includes the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*; as discussed, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s narrative could have benefitted from that text's input. Consequently, that the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* utilises this text might, given its absent from the other *Kronik Tionghua*, suggest that a different author was responsible for producing each *Kronik Tionghua*. But, the judgements made here about the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s reliability are predicated on a comparison with the *Suma Oriental*, which has also left no mark on either *Kronik Tionghua*. This is suggestive: as mentioned in Chapter 3, the *Suma Oriental* was not rediscovered and published until 1944. This is several years after Parlindungan claims to have first encountered the two *Kronik Tionghua*. If that claim is accurate, then the texts existed before the *Suma Oriental* re-emerged. This means their author would have been unaware of it. Without the latter, they could not have

appreciated the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s reliability and have therefore been motivated to use it when constructing the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*. Nonetheless, because traditional Javanese historiography links Banten and Cirebon via Sunan Gunung Jati, it would still have been logical for them to use the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* when recounting Cirebon's history. This appears to be what has happened.

## 5.5. Conclusion

To sum up, Chinese Muslim involvement in Java's conversion seems very likely. We have seen it clearly attested to in all of the most reliable primary sources, particularly the *Suma Oriental* and *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. From hints contained in the *Suma Oriental*, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and Ma Huan, conversion appears to have begun in the late fourteenth century. During that period, large numbers of Chinese Muslims settled throughout Java, but most notably in the east. There they founded Gresik which, by the mid-fifteenth century, was an important centre of Islam; Java's earliest Islamic figures are all associated with it, and it may even have established political influence over surrounding regions, ultimately threatening Majapahit's authority. Most notably, however, we saw that during the same period a Chinese Muslim merchant travelled from Gresik to Demak, where he founded a sultanate. By 1513, both he and his descendants had succeeded in conquering most of Java and south Sumatra, establishing Islam's dominance throughout this region. Only a greatly reduced Majapahit survived, trapped in the interior, but which was itself eventually overcome in c.1527. Given all this, we have argued that Chinese Muslims were major players in Java's initial Islamisation. By contrast, although references can also be found to Javanese (Tuban's rulers were Javanese) and Malay (Sunan Gunung Jati was from Samudera-Pasai,



suggesting Malay heritage) involvement, the sources provide no good evidence for either Arab or Indian activity.

Despite the above conclusion, however, we have not been able to establish the legitimacy of either of the *Kronik Tionghua* texts. In short, it seems that neither are genuine documents: their provenance is very problematic and their contents do not suggest authenticity. The question of who forged them and why, however, is difficult to answer. Because the evidence seems to point towards a twentieth-century forger, and no one else is mentioned in connection with them, the two most viable candidates are Parlindungan and Poortman. Neither, however, has an obvious motive for fabricating them. On the one hand, the fact that the author of both *Kronik Tionghua* appears to have had a Dutch education and, given references to Gan Eng Cu (otherwise found only in the *Ming shi-lu* and *Ming shi*), likely knew Chinese, the finger might point to Poortman. But, as C. Salmon points out, Parlindungan also had a Dutch education.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, he claims to have seen the original manuscripts and to have then subsequently donated them to the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. If the texts are both fabrications, however, neither of these things can be true – indeed, neither text can be found at the museum. On the strength of this, therefore, we suggest here that Parlindungan is the one who is actively deceiving the reader. It therefore appears that he is the likely forger. But, precisely why he should have done so, and then chosen to associate the forged texts with Poortman, is unclear. Given the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s reference to Gan Eng Cu, however, which Parlindungan could not have taken directly from the Chinese sources himself, we could speculate that Poortman was the source of (at least some of) the information contained in each *Kronik Tionghua*. But, rather than two *peranakan* manuscripts, perhaps this information took the form of a theory about Chinese Muslim

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<sup>188</sup> Salmon, 'Review,' *JSAS* 18 (1987): 340.

involvement in Java's early Islamisation. Certainly, because many early Javanese texts, all of which were known during the early twentieth century, explicitly identify many key actors in Java's early Islamisation with China, it is entirely plausible that someone of Poortman's background and training could have developed this theory. If he did, however, and then imparted that theory to Parlindungan, it must be presumed that, for some reason of his own, Parlindungan decided to present that theory in the form of two *peranakan* texts. Although this scenario explains some of the facts, it must remain speculative.

## 6. Brunei

### 6.1. Introduction

During its fifteenth to sixteenth-century peak, Brunei was a significant kingdom; it ruled Borneo's entire northern coast, Sulu and southern Luzon.<sup>1</sup> Territorially, it was one of the Nusantara's largest kingdoms. Today, however, it is also one of its most understudied: Brunei's history has been considered by only a handful of (mainly Western) scholars. Combining European and indigenous sources, these academics have placed Brunei's conversion in the early sixteenth century and attributed it to Johor. Official Brunei historiography, on the other hand, has used the indigenous sources, combined with ones from China, to move the date back to 1363 and implicate Temasik (old Singapore). In this chapter, however, we will present a very different interpretation: drawing on European, Chinese and indigenous texts, augmented with archaeological data (most notably gravestones), we will claim that Brunei embraced Islam not once, but twice.

The first occasion was during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, when a ruler called Yūsuf travelled to Borneo from an unknown location in the western half of the Nusantara. After invading Brunei, he established a Sultanate. We will see that this kingdom experienced heavy Chinese Muslim influence throughout its history, specifically through the city of Quanzhou. By c.1371, however, it had also fallen under

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<sup>1</sup> D. E. Brown, *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate* (Bandar Seri Begawan: The Brunei Museum, 1970), 142.

the sway of Majapahit; in or around that year, Majapahit attacked and destroyed it, exiling its Muslim ruler, Muḥammad Shāh, and reinstituting non-Muslim rule. The latter then persisted until at least 1426; at some point thereafter, Muḥammad Shāh's grandson, 'Abd al-Majīd, reconquered the kingdom. This restored version of the first Sultanate continued until at least 1485/6 but, by 1505, had apparently reverted to pre-Islamic (perhaps Buddhist) practices. The circumstances surrounding this reversion, however, are unclear. Nevertheless, this second interregnum lasted until 1514 or 1515, when Islam was reintroduced into Brunei via Johor. During this later period, Brunei continued to look up to China, possibly even hosting a significant Chinese community, but these factors did not bear upon its Islamisation. Arab influence, however, almost certainly did, most notably through the second Sultanate's third Sultan, Sharīf 'Alī. Although he did not convert the kingdom, he undoubtedly played a role in shaping its brand of Islam. But, before we can draw any of these conclusions, the discussion must begin, and as in previous chapters, by outlining all the textual evidence relevant to conversion.

## **6.2. The Early Sources**

### **6.2.1. The European Sources**

As elsewhere, Brunei's conversion is first mentioned by the early European sources. They only refer to it, however, incidentally – there are no detailed accounts. The Italian Ludovico di Varthema (c.1470-1517), although unlikely to have visited the region in person, is the first to provide any relevant information; in an account written

in 1505, he describes the ‘island of Bornei’ as pagan.<sup>2</sup> This was apparently still the case in 1514: in that year, a letter from Rui de Brito Patalim, Captain-General of Melaka, to King Manuel I described ‘Burneo’ as a great island between China and the Moluccas. Its king was pagan, but its merchants Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

After de Brito Patalim, Tomé Pires’s *Suma Oriental* (1512-1515) refers to ‘Borneo’ as a collection of large and small islands, mainly inhabited by heathens. The ‘chief island,’ however, had recently converted to Islam – although it is not stated how recently or under what circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Duarte Barbosa (c.1480-1521), however, contradicts this in his 1518 account of the Nusantara, which claims that the island of Borneo was ‘inhabited by Heathens with a Heathen King and a language of its own.’<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, conversion is confirmed in 1521, by the Italian Antonio Pigafetta (1491-1534). The official chronicler of Ferdinand Magellan’s mission to circumnavigate the Earth, Pigafetta reports visiting the city (as opposed to the island) of ‘Borney’ in mid-1521; he claims it was Islamic and ruled by a forty-year-old king, called Raja Siripada (perhaps Raja Seri Paduka).<sup>6</sup> Like Pires, Pigafetta does not elaborate on how or when conversion took place. He simply states that all of the inhabitants were circumcised, performed Islamic ablutions and observed Islamic dietary requirements (although they killed animals while addressing the sun and consumed *arak*).<sup>7</sup> He also makes the following statement:

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<sup>2</sup> Ludovico di Varthema, *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508, Translated from the Original Italian Edition of 1510*, trans. John Winter Jones, ed. Richard Carnac Temple (London: The Argonaut Press, 1928), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Nicholl, ed. *European Sources for the History of the Sultanate of Brunei in the Sixteenth Century* (Bandar Seri Begawan: Muzium Brunei, 1975), 4.

<sup>4</sup> *SO*, 132.

<sup>5</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, written by Duarte Barbosa, and Completed in the Year 1518AD*, vol. 2, trans. Mansel Longworth Dames (New Dehli: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 206-207.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholl, ed. *European Sources* (1975), 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

In that port [i.e. the Bay of Brunei] is another city inhabited by heathens, which is larger than that of the Moros...the two peoples have daily contacts together in the same harbour. The heathen king is as powerful as the Moro king [and the two are at war].<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent to Pigafetta, only one 1578 Spanish report proves relevant. Written by a Spanish notary called Alonso Beltran, it claims that the Borneans' ancestors were Makkan. This information was obtained from a native of Balayan (on Luzon), called Megat Cina,<sup>9</sup> a name which indicates a Chinese nobleman.

### 6.2.2. The Indigenous Sources

Four indigenous sources mention Brunei's conversion: the Boxer Codex, the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei*, a stone inscription called the *Batu Tarsilah*, and an oral tradition called the *Syair Awang Semaun*. The *Batu Tarsilah* (dated 1221 AH, or 1807)<sup>10</sup> is virtually identical to a shorter version of the *silsila*, and so need not be considered separately. The Boxer Codex, on the other hand, is the earliest and most detailed of the sources. It will therefore be examined first.

The Boxer Codex is a sixteenth-century Manila manuscript renowned for its seventy-five illustrations of Japanese, Chinese, Formosan and Nusantara peoples. It also contains, however, written descriptions of various kingdoms, including Brunei (in folios 71-86).<sup>11</sup> When the manuscript first came to light in 1947, after C. R. Boxer purchased it from Lord Ilchester's library at Holland House (partly destroyed during the

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<sup>8</sup> Nicholl, ed. *European Sources* (1975), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, ed. *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803: Expeditions by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and their Peoples, their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, sharing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of those Islands from their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 4: 1576-1582 (Cleveland, O.: Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1903), 150.

<sup>10</sup> Hugh Low, 'Transcription and Translation of a Historic Tablet,' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5 (1880): 32.

<sup>11</sup> BC, 1.

Blitz), it was thought to be entirely European: written in Spanish, its contents exhibited clear European influences (its description of China, for example, mirrored Martín de Rada's)<sup>12</sup> and its calligraphy seemed to match the handwriting of Juan de Cuellar, secretary to Luis Pérez Dasmariñas, Governor of the Philippines from 1593 (a fact which also helped date the manuscript). Later research, however, and which is discussed more fully below, has favoured an at least partial indigenous authorship for parts of the text, including the section on Brunei. A sixteenth-century date is maintained, however, because no post-1590 dates occur in the text (the section on Brunei contains only two dates, 1588 and 1589).

But all this notwithstanding, the Codex claims that Brunei's first Muslims were all foreigners and that Brunei's first Sultan, Yuso (Yūsuf), arrived from across the sea, having originally been the king of an unidentified city called 'Cauin,' in the western Nusantara.<sup>13</sup> Apparently born Muslim (no conversion is mentioned), Yūsuf left Cauin with all his people. The Codex does not say why he did this but, after travelling far and wide, he finally reached Brunei and battled with the native Uisayas people, overcoming them. He then settled for a few days but, being still young and adventurous, decided on a final journey to China. Travelling there with all his people, he arrived safely and was granted an audience with the Emperor. The latter installed him as the king of Brunei, granting him a royal insignia and coat of arms 'which nowadays the said king of

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<sup>12</sup> Carlos Quirino, 'Boxer Codex: A Folio of Rare Filipiniana,' in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, Vol. 4: The Spanish Colonial Period (16<sup>th</sup> Century): The Day of the Conquistador, ed. Alfredo R. Roces (n.p.: Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc., 1977), 1003-1004. De Rada (1533-1578) was an early Spanish missionary. He visited China in 1575, returning to Manila in the same year (see: Galeote Pereira, Gaspar da Cruz and Martín de Rada, *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P. and Fr. Martín de Rada, O.E.S.A. [1550-1575]*, ed. C. R. Boxer [London: The Hakluyt Society, 1953], lxvii; lxx; lxxvi).

<sup>13</sup> Carroll attempts to identify Cauin with the Malay Sabang, a village on Pulau Kundur (located between Singapore and Sumatra). This conclusion, however, is problematic because, to sustain it, Carroll must rely on three letter substitutions common in Spanish texts: that *c* is sometimes the cedilla (pronounced as an *s*); *u* sometimes *b*, *v* or *w*; and *n* sometimes the Malay *ng*. Putting all this together, Cauin becomes Sabang. All these substitutions, however, are provisional, with nothing to suggest they should all be applied here. As such, Carroll's argument is rejected as too speculative (BC, 17).

Borney [still] has.’<sup>14</sup> Also, seeing Sultan Yūsuf was unmarried, the Emperor gave him a noble Chinese woman as a wife. The latter was ‘lord of a city which was called Namtay [probably Quanzhou, see section 6.4.2].’<sup>15</sup> She accompanied Yūsuf back to Brunei, where the Uisayas were again defeated. Yūsuf and his wife then settled permanently, all subsequent Brunei rulers being descended from them. These rulers maintained their links with ‘Namtay,’ however, with several generations of Brunei kings continuing to receive rents from their ancestor’s properties there. The Codex claims that Yūsuf lived three hundred years before the present (i.e. c.1288-1289, based on the two dates found in the manuscript’s Brunei section).<sup>16</sup>

Turning to the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei*, there are two distinct versions of this text: MS No. 25032 (henceforth MS A), currently kept at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, and MS No. 123 (Malay) (henceforth MS B), kept in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. Their chief difference lies in their length: MS A’s *silsila* is very brief, serving only to introduce a larger treatise on Brunei *adat*, titular and customs, while MS B is a much fuller chronicle.<sup>17</sup> A further difference lies in their authorship: MS A’s introduction attributes the text to a Datu’ Imam Ya’akub, while MS B’s introduction names a Datu’ Imam Aminuddin ibnu Orang-kaya di Gadong Lewadin.<sup>18</sup> Each introduction, however, associates composition with the Sultans Muhiyddin (r.1673-1690) and Husin Kamaluddin (r.1710-1740), with later revisions supposedly taking place in 1807.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of content, both *silsilas* claim Islamisation occurred over a three-reign period, none of which are dated. Both call Brunei’s first Muslim ruler Awang Alak (or

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<sup>14</sup> BC, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>17</sup> SRRB, 4 and 7.

<sup>18</sup> See: Ibid, 11; 51.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 11 and 51.



Khalak) Betatar, who reigned as Sultan Muḥammad. MS B further claims that he founded Brunei,<sup>20</sup> while MS A simply says he established Islam.<sup>21</sup> Both texts, however, associate his conversion with Johor, claiming that he travelled there to be invested as Sultan, afterwards marrying a Johor princess (and while still in Johor).<sup>22</sup> MS B adds that he also married a relative (*saudara*) of an unnamed Chinese Emperor. The latter had, after fleeing China for undisclosed reasons, eventually settled at Cina Batangan (or Kinabatangan, North Borneo).<sup>23</sup> MS B also claims that some items in Brunei's royal regalia (used during the ruler's investiture ceremony) originated from China.

After Awang Alak Betatar, each text speaks of a Sultan Aḥmad; of all Brunei's sultans, his biography is the most confused. MS A claims he was Awang Alak Betatar's eldest brother, Pateh Berbai, who (and instead of Awang Alak Betatar) married a Chinese princess.<sup>24</sup> MS B, on the other hand, claims that Sultan Aḥmad was a Chinese official called Ong Sum Peng. Along with a more senior official, Ong Bong Kong, Ong Sum Peng had been ordered by a Chinese Emperor (this time not resident on Borneo) to recover a legendary jewel from Mount Cina Balu (Kinabalu). Guarded by a dragon, many Chinese died attempting to retrieve it; the *silsila* claims this is why the mountain is currently named Cina Balu, to honour the dead.<sup>25</sup> This notwithstanding, however, after the jewel's recovery, the two officials fell out and Ong Sum Peng was forced to leave the expedition. He travelled to Brunei, where he was offered Awang Alak Betatar's daughter in marriage. Due to his virtuous nature, he was also made Awang Alak Betatar's successor.<sup>26</sup> Later reigning as Sultan Aḥmad, Ong Sum Peng strengthened Islam's presence in Brunei. In addition, his reign also saw the arrival in

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<sup>20</sup> *SRRB*, 51-52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 11 and 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> In Malay, *balu* means a widow or widower. *Cina balu* therefore carries the sense of a bereaved China.

<sup>26</sup> *SRRB*, 52-54.

Brunei of a man called Sharīf ‘Alī. Both manuscripts agree that the latter was an Arab from Ṭā’if (near Makkah), who married Sultan Aḥmad’s daughter to become the third Sultan. Sharīf ‘Alī then completed Brunei’s Islamisation, building the first mosque and establishing the *sharī’a*. All subsequent Sultans of Brunei claim descent from him.<sup>27</sup>

The last indigenous source is the *Syair Awang Semaun*. This oral tradition can be found right across Borneo’s northern coast. It is, however, of uncertain date and exists in many recensions; currently, only the version associated with the Bay of Brunei has been recorded and published, and only during the late twentieth century. How it compares to the other versions is unknown.<sup>28</sup> This Bruneian version, however, tells the story of fourteen half-brothers, of whom Awang Semaun was the youngest. Conceived by the same (foreign) father, each of these brothers had a different mother from a different indigenous tribe resident around the Bay of Brunei. Each brother was also born in ignorance of the others, their father having abandoned them prior to birth, leaving only a note to tell them who they were. Using these, however, the brothers eventually found each other. Once reunited, they selected the most handsome and intelligent amongst them as leader: the *silsilas*’ Awang Alak Betatar. Under his direction, the brothers proceeded to conquer the northern coast of Borneo and the small islands to the south and east. They also founded Brunei’s capital city and established its customs and social practices. The brothers remained pagan, however, until a group of them captured a ship carrying the Sultan of Johor’s daughter. They promptly sent her to Awang Alak Betatar, who married her. When news of this reached the Sultan of Johor, rather than take reparative action, the fame of Brunei convinced him to visit the city and install his new son-in-law as (and mirroring the *silsilas*) Sultan Muḥammad. In this

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<sup>27</sup> *SRRB*, 11-12; 54.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *Brunei* (1970), 135.

way, Awang Alak Betatar, his brothers and the population of Brunei were all converted to Islam.<sup>29</sup>

### 6.2.3. The Chinese Sources

The final group of sources are Chinese. Like the early European texts, these do not describe Brunei's conversion, but only hint at it. Although disputed (see section 6.4.1), the first Chinese reference to Brunei probably occurs in the geographical treatise *Taiping Huanyuji*, written by Yue Shi (930-1007) during the Taipeng era (976-983).<sup>30</sup> It records a location called Boni (or Po-ni) that sent tribute to the court in 977; most scholars associate this Boni with Brunei.<sup>31</sup> As such, it is significant that the three chief envoys who accompanied this mission were called Shinu (Sina), Bu Ya Li (Abū 'Alī) and Ge Xin (Qāsim). These are all Muslim names, indicating an early link between Brunei and Islam. Furthermore, these envoys described how the decision to send tribute had been encouraged by an Arab trader called Bu Lu Xie (perhaps also Abū 'Alī).<sup>32</sup> Brunei's king, however, is given the non-Islamic name Xiang Da.

Although Boni appears in several Chinese texts after Yue Shi, no new information emerges until Zhao Rugua (1170-1228); while describing Brunei in some detail, he claims it was Buddhist.<sup>33</sup> This is later confirmed by Yuan-period sources, including Wang Dayuan (1311-1350).<sup>34</sup> Turning to the Ming period, in 1370 the envoy Shen Zhi was ordered to visit Boni. After returning in 1371, his account was recorded

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<sup>29</sup> Haji Abdul Hamid Jaludin, *Syair Awang Semaun: Sebagai Epik Bangsa Melayu Brunei* (Brunei Darussalam: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Johannes L. Kurz, 'Boni in Chinese Sources: Translations of Relevant Texts from the Song to the Qing Dynasties,' Working Paper Series No. 4 (Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, 2011), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> Chen Da-Sheng, 'A Brunei Sultan in the Early 14<sup>th</sup> Century: Study of an Arabic Gravestone,' in *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*, ed. Vadime Elisseef (Oxford: Berghahn Books and UNESCO Publishing, 2000), 154.

<sup>33</sup> ZFZ, 156.

<sup>34</sup> Wang Dayuan, *Daoyi zhilüe jiaoshi*, Su Jiqing (rev. and annot.) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 148.

by the official historian, Song Lian, also compiler of the *Yuan shi*. This record (mirrored by the *Ming shi-lu*) claims that Boni's ruler was called Mahemosha (reconstructed as either Maḥmūd Shāh or Muḥammad Shāh),<sup>35</sup> who agreed to send an envoy to China called Yisimayi (Ismā'īl). The latter's arrival in China was recorded by the *Ming shi-lu*, which also claimed that Boni's diplomatic letter was in a script similar to the Muslims' (or *hui-hui*'s, i.e. *jawi*).<sup>36</sup> All this suggests Islamic influence.

By Yongle's reign, however, these early indications of an Islamic presence had disappeared: Boni's 1408 mission, for example, was accompanied by its ruler, Manarejiananai, who was undoubtedly non-Muslim;<sup>37</sup> he ate pork during his stay (see section 6.3.1) and his name probably represents either Maharaja Gyana or Maharaja Karna.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, this ruler died in China and (according to the *Ming shi-lu*) was buried according to Confucian and Buddhist rites. The memorial composed in his honour calls his father Manareshanawang, his son (who succeeded him) Xiawang, and his three younger brothers Shilinananou, Shiliweiruonasha and Nawanruoye.<sup>39</sup> None of these are Muslim names either (Xiawang, for example, probably represents Seri Awang). After this, Xiawang continued to send missions until 1426, after which Brunei is not mentioned again until 1618, long after its conversion.<sup>40</sup>

### 6.3. Existing Interpretations

The above sources have been variously interpreted, resulting in two contrasting analyses. The first, based primarily on the *silsilas* and the Chinese sources, posits

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Pelliot, 'Le Hōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l'Histoire des Ming,' *T'oung Pao* 38:2 (1948): 268.

<sup>36</sup> *MSL*, juan 67.6b.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, juan 85.1a-b.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Nicholl, 'Notes on Some Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 35.

<sup>39</sup> *MSL*, juan 85.1a-b.

<sup>40</sup> Cited in: Brown, *Brunei* (1970), 134.

conversion by the late fourteenth century. The other, based on the European sources, favours the early sixteenth century. These theories dominate all current interpretations of Brunei history, meaning they must be thoroughly evaluated before any alternative can be suggested.

### **6.3.1. Official Brunei Historiography: Conversion during the Late Fourteenth Century?**

*Pusat Sejarah Brunei* ('The Brunei Historical Centre'), champion of official Brunei historiography, strongly supports a fourteenth-century conversion.<sup>41</sup> Basing their arguments on MS A (the shorter *silsila*), they attribute conversion to Johor and date it to 1363.<sup>42</sup> Given neither version of the *silsila* (nor the *Syair Awang Semaun*) provide any dates, 1363 relies on the *Ming shi-lu*'s Mahemosha being a representation of 'Muḥammad Shāh.' This then allows this 1371 Brunei ruler to be Awang Alak Betatar after conversion. The move from 1371 to 1363 then seems a largely arbitrary decision, based on a belief that Islam was already established when Shen Zhi travelled to Brunei. It creates, however, a problem: the Johor sultanate was not established until 1512. The *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* attempts to bypass this by claiming that the Johor referred to was actually an earlier Islamic kingdom at Temasik (old Singapore) which, it is speculated, ruled parts of the Malay Peninsula later occupied by the Johor sultanate.<sup>43</sup>

Turning to the end of Awang Alak Betatar's reign, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* dates this to 1402 (why is unclear). He was then reputedly succeeded by his son, 'Abd

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<sup>41</sup> Aside from the sources referenced below, their views are most clearly elucidated in: Haji Awang Mohd. Jamil al-Sufri, *Tarsilah Brunei: Sejarah Awal dan Perkembangan Islam* (Bandar Seri Begawan: Jabatan Pusat Sejarah, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Robert Nicholl, 'Some Problems of Brunei Chronology,' *JSAS* 20:2 (1989): 175-195.

<sup>43</sup> A. V. M. Horton, *A New Sketch of the History of Negara Brunei Darussalam* (Bordesley: A. V. M. Horton, 1995), 10.

al-Majīd Ḥasan. The latter is not mentioned in any text, and so not referred to above. His existence, however, is testified to by an early Bruneian gravestone; most recently described by L. Kalus and C. Guillot, this is dated 862AH/1457-1458 and inscribed with the name Zaynab (or possibly Sitti) ‘bint Sulṭān ‘Abd al-Majīd ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad Shāh al-Sulṭān.’<sup>44</sup> The precise significance of this gravestone is discussed in section 6.4.3. For now, let it be noted that the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* equates this ‘Abd al-Majīd (Ḥasan) with the *Ming shi-lu*’s Manarejjananai, thereby dating his death to 1408.<sup>45</sup> ‘Abd al-Majīd (Ḥasan) was then supposedly succeeded by Sultan Aḥmad, who reigned until 1426. In line with MS A, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* claims Sultan Aḥmad was ‘Abd al-Majīd (Ḥasan)’s uncle. He should not, however, be equated with Xiawang, who was only four in 1408 and the son of Manarejjananai. As this does not fit Sultan Aḥmad’s profile, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* essentially ignores Xiawang. After 1426, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* claims Sultan Sharīf ‘Alī reigned until 1432; this date is based on a Brunei gravestone once thought to be his.<sup>46</sup>

Although the above interpretation constitutes official Brunei history, it is not without its problems. First, by maintaining the *silsilas*’ king list alongside a 1363 conversion, Xiawang (who the *Ming shi-lu* clearly identifies as Brunei’s ruler until at least 1426) goes unexplained. So too does the fact that Manarejjananai was a non-Muslim – as seen, his name is not Islamic, and certainly not ‘Abd al-Majīd Ḥasan. He was also buried according to non-Islamic rites and served pork during his stay in China.<sup>47</sup> As noted by C. Brown, Yongle provided Muslims with special pork-free food rations upon request and had the expertise available to bury Manarejjananai according

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<sup>44</sup> Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, ‘Les inscriptions funéraires islamiques de Brunei (deuxième partie),’ *Bulletin de l’Ecole Française d-Extrême-Orient* 93 (2006): 151.

<sup>45</sup> See: Zong Yu Wu, *Brunei dalam Sejarah Cina: Penyusun dan Penterjemah Bahasa Mandarin ke Bahasa Melayu* (Bandar Seri Begawan: Pusat Sejarah Brunei, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Graham Saunders, *A History of Brunei*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 42-43.

<sup>47</sup> Carrie C. Brown, ‘Some Ming Regulations on Provisions for Tributary Delegations,’ *BMJ* 3:2 (1974): 230-231.

to Islamic rites, should the latter have desired it.<sup>48</sup> That Manarejiananai requested none of these things, however, strongly suggests that he was a non-Muslim. This does not fit the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*'s chosen interpretation.

Further problems with the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*'s analysis include the fact that Sultan Sharīf 'Alī's reputed gravestone actually belongs to someone called Asueri.<sup>49</sup> It cannot therefore be used to date Sharīf 'Alī to 1432. Likewise, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*'s claims about fourteenth-century Temasik also go unsupported.<sup>50</sup> Turning to Mahemosha, whether he was a Muslim will be discussed more fully in section 6.4.1, but if he was, and if Brunei was ruled by a non-Muslim in 1408, it does not seem he was Awang Alak Betatar as no indigenous source refers to a lapse in Islam after his conversion. Finally, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*'s decision to take a literal reading of MS A is also questionable, primarily because of MS B: a different version of the same *silsila*, MS B is contemporary to MS A but more detailed. Its author may therefore have been better informed. The *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*, however, provides no justification for rejecting MS B in favour of MS A. Consequently, it is unclear why (for example) the latter's account of Sultan Aḥmad should be more acceptable than MS B's.

In addition to all this, however, and as discussed further in section 6.4.2, MS A and MS B's conversion narratives appear to be based on the tradition found in the Boxer Codex, with which they share many points. It seems that the later texts took events associated with the Codex's Yūsuf (such as investiture in a foreign land and marriage to a foreign woman) and transferred them into a later period, substituting references to China with Johor. The latter was probably motivated, at least in part, by a

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<sup>48</sup> Brown, 'Some Ming Regulations,' *BMJ* 3:2 (1974): 230-231.

<sup>49</sup> Horton, *New Sketch* (1995), 11.

<sup>50</sup> Since the 1980's, some archaeological evidence has emerged for a thirteenth to fourteenth-century Singaporean entrepôt. There is, however, no evidence it was Islamic (see: Derek Heng, 'Situating Temasik within the Larger Regional Context: Maritime Asia and Malay State Formation in the Pre-modern Era,' in *Singapore in Global History*, ed. Derek Heng and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied [Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011], 27).

quest for legitimacy: as Melaka's successor, Johor was heir to the Nusantara's Islamic authority *par excellence*. Any association with it therefore brought great prestige. But, if this means the *silsilas*' accounts of conversion (and, by extension, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei*'s) cannot be supported, what of the other analysis?

### 6.3.2. A Sixteenth-Century Conversion?

Many scholars (including G. Saunders<sup>51</sup> and R. Nicholl)<sup>52</sup> choose to reconstruct Brunei's conversion via the European sources. As noted, these only really provide an idea of date – i.e. shortly before 1515. Based chiefly upon the *Suma Oriental*, however, this should be taken seriously: not only is the *Suma Oriental* generally reliable, but the other European texts also indicate the early sixteenth century. Di Varthema, for example, seems to place conversion after 1505, while de Brito Patalim's 1514 letter speaks about Muslim merchants and a pagan king. If the latter embraced Islam later the same year (or early in the next) it would tie in with Pires. Indeed, de Brito Patalim claims to have gathered his information from three 'island of Burneo' junks docked in Melaka. Moreover, the merchants he spoke to were related to Melaka's *Temenggong* (who also owned one of their junks). Mentioned by several early Portuguese sources, the latter was undoubtedly Bruneian.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, de Brito Patalim obtained his information from a group of people who were either from, or otherwise closely connected to, Brunei. As such, if he places conversion after 1514, this fact can probably be relied upon. Similarly, although Barbosa's text (also referring to a pagan king) was

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<sup>51</sup> Graham Saunders, 'Thoughts on Brunei Historiography,' in *From Buckfast to Borneo: Essays Presented to Father Robert Nicholl on the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Birth, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1995*, ed. Victor T. King and A. V. M. Horton (Hull: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hull, 1995), 345.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Nicholl, 'Brunei Rediscovered: A Survey of Early Times,' *JSAS* 14:1 (1983): 36.

<sup>53</sup> Nicholl, ed. *European Sources* (1975), 4.



published in 1518, he left the Nusantara in 1514, returning to Portugal in 1516.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, he was resident in Melaka at the same time as de Brito Patalim. It is therefore possible that Barbosa utilised the same information as de Brito Patalim. Certainly, their accounts of Brunei are very similar.

But, if the above means 1514 to 1515 is a realistic date of conversion, Johori involvement also becomes plausible: founded in 1512, Johor did send missionaries into the wider region. It also maintained a prominent (but not pre-eminent) position in regional trade, thereby linking with de Brito Patalim's comments about Muslim merchants.<sup>55</sup> Given all this, both Saunders and Nicholl, while maintaining Awang Alak Betatar as Brunei's first Muslim ruler, place his conversion in c.1515 and attribute it to Johor's intervention. To support this further, they draw attention to the Spanish record of the death of Sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār (or Abdul Kahar) in 1578.<sup>56</sup> This is the first certain date for a Brunei Sultan and, according to both *silsilas*, Sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār was Brunei's sixth Sultan.<sup>57</sup> If he therefore died around sixty-three years after conversion, Brunei's first six Sultans would have had an average of ten years each on the throne. This compares well with average reign lengths elsewhere in the region (such as in Melaka).<sup>58</sup>

But, accepting all this leads Saunders and Nicholl to be more dismissive of the Chinese texts. Both, for example, reject the possibility that Mahemosha was a Muslim; drawing on W. Groenveldt, Saunders argues that his name is probably a corruption of

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<sup>54</sup> Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. 2, trans. Dames (1989), xlv.

<sup>55</sup> Nicholl, 'Brunei Rediscovered,' *JSAS* 14:1 (1983): 45.

<sup>56</sup> Saunders, *History of Brunei* (2002), 44; Nicholl, 'Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 25-42. By contrast, the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* dates his reign to 1524-1535 (cited in: Horton, *New Sketch* [1995], 38).

<sup>57</sup> *SRRB*, 54.

<sup>58</sup> Between 1400 and 1511, Melaka had nine rulers. This equates to an average reign of twelve years each (see: *SM*).

Sri Maharaja,<sup>59</sup> while Nicholl suggests it represents (without corruption) the Buddhist title Maha Moksha ('Great Eternity').<sup>60</sup> Either way, however, they argue that Mahemosha was a non-Muslim, meaning conversion could not be fourteenth-century. In line with this, both note that the Chinese author Huang Shengceng, writing in the 1520's, described Brunei as Buddhist. If conversion was already one hundred and fifty years old by then, both believe Huang Shengceng should have been aware of it.<sup>61</sup>

Before accepting Saunders and Nicholl's conclusions, however, a problem should be noted: Brunei's Kota Batu ('Stone Settlement'). One and a half miles from Bandar Seri Begawan, Kota Batu is Brunei's only ancient stone-built residential structure. Significantly, it is mentioned by Pigafetta, who claims it was home to Brunei's ruling family and its upper elites<sup>62</sup> – a description supported by the later Spanish sources.<sup>63</sup> Excavations at Kota Batu, however, while demonstrating continuous tenth to eighteenth-century occupation,<sup>64</sup> have uncovered four fifteenth-century Muslim gravestones: two that explicitly carry fifteenth-century dates (namely, 836/1432-1433<sup>65</sup> and 858/1454)<sup>66</sup> and two undated examples which are nonetheless traceable to this period on stylistic grounds.<sup>67</sup> Together, these four gravestones indicate that Muslims were using this royal site during the fifteenth century. Although this need not, by itself, also mean a fifteenth-century conversion, it implies that Muslims occupied a prominent position in Brunei during this period. This suggests that the European sources may not

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<sup>59</sup> W. P. Groeneveldt, 'Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese Sources,' *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 39 (1876): 110.

<sup>60</sup> Nicholl, 'Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 35.

<sup>61</sup> Saunders, *History of Brunei* (2002), 39; Nicholl, 'Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 35.

<sup>62</sup> Nicholl, ed. *European Sources* (1975), 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Brown, *Brunei* (1970), 130-131. As such, the site has yielded abundant examples of tenth to eighteenth-century Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics. Numerous Chinese coins have also been found, dating from 906 to 1368 (after 1368 undated Islamic coins were used, and which also display evidence of Chinese influence – see section 6.5).

<sup>65</sup> Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, 'Les inscriptions funéraires islamiques de Brunei (ire partie),' *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d-Extrême-Orient* 90-91 (2003): 261-263.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 267.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 246.

be telling the whole story. Indeed, further archaeological and textual evidence not only supports this conclusion, but indicates the possibility of an earlier Sultanate – that is, one that sits apart from the Bruneian Islamic kingdom described by the Europeans at the start of the sixteenth century.

#### **6.4. Brunei's Thirteenth to Fifteenth-Century Sultanate**

##### **6.4.1. Maharaja Brunei**

In 1987, an old gravestone was found in the Brunei Museum's storeroom (see **Fig. 13**). Originally from the Residency/Dagang cemetery, it was initially described as granite and of probable Brunei manufacture. Undated, its precise age could not be determined.<sup>68</sup> Subsequently, however, it was re-examined by Chen Dasheng. Well-known for his work on South China's Muslim gravestones, Chen immediately recognised it as a Yuan-period Quanzhou Muslim memorial: its distinctive bow-shaped top, decorative bands (rendered in concave relief) and inscription were all typical of Quanzhou Muslim gravestones produced between 1272 and 1362 (as well as the examples given in Chapter 3, see **Figs. 25 and 27**). Chen also noticed the gravestone was made from diabase, not granite. Diabase cannot be found in Brunei but is common in Quanzhou (ninety-one of the one hundred and eleven Quanzhou gravestones described by Chen are made from diabase).<sup>69</sup> Given all this, Chen concluded the gravestone had been imported from China and could not be later than 1362. A particularly close resemblance to Fāṭima bint Naynā Aḥmad's Quanzhou gravestone

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<sup>68</sup> Netassim bin Haji Jibah and Suhaili bin Haji Hassan, 'Tomb of Maharaja of Brunei,' *BMJ* 6:3 (1987): 10-15.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Dasheng, *Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou (Zaitun)*, trans. Chen Enming (supervised by Zheng Dechao) (Ningxia: Ningxia People's Publishing House and Fujian People's Publishing House, 1984), xv.

(dated 1304, see Chapter 3), however, led Chen to favour an early fourteenth century date. All this becomes significant here, however, when the gravestone's Arabic inscription is considered:

This tomb belongs to the late martyred Sultan, a learned and just man, a protector and conqueror. He was called Maharaja Brunei.<sup>70</sup>

In other words, this gravestone testifies to the existence of a pre-1362 Bruneian Sultanate. As such, whether from the early fourteenth century or later, it pre-dates all prior estimates of when Brunei converted. But, how reliable is its epigraphic evidence?

Until recently, no other scholar had managed to examine this gravestone, casting doubt upon its veracity. In 2003, however, Kalus and Guillot published a photograph of it: the resultant image clearly shows, just as Chen describes, a Quanzhou-style gravestone bearing the above inscription (the title *Mahārājā Brunī* can be seen at the start of the fourth line from the top, see **Fig. 13**).<sup>71</sup> Any particular resemblance to Fāṭima bint Naynā Aḥmad's gravestone, however, is probably overstated; the latter is no more like Maharaja Brunei's gravestone than any other example of that type of Quanzhou memorial.<sup>72</sup> But this notwithstanding, the gravestone evidently exists and is indeed Chinese. Consequently, it seems to demonstrate the reality of an early, China-connected Bruneian Sultanate dating from anywhere between 1272 and 1362. If so, however, it raises two problems: the *Ming shi-lu*'s Manarejiananai, Brunei's apparently non-Muslim 1408 ruler, and the apparently late conversion attested to by the European sources.

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<sup>70</sup> Chen, 'A Brunei Sultan in the Early 14<sup>th</sup> Century,' in *The Silk Roads*, ed. Elisseef (2000), 148

<sup>71</sup> See: Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),' *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 271-272. Another, independently obtained photograph of this relic has since been published by: Rozan Yunos, 'Maharaja Sultan Brunei.' *The Daily Brunei Resources*. Available at: <http://bruneiresources.blogspot.co.uk/2008/11/maharaja-sultan-brunei.html>. (Accessed on: 23/05/2014).

<sup>72</sup> Chen, *Islamic Inscriptions*, trans. Chen (sup. Zheng) (1984), Figs. 31-80.

Leaving the European sources for a moment, although the *Pusat Sejarah Brunei* claims otherwise, Manarejjananai was almost certainly a non-Muslim (see section 6.3.1). Consequently, a conundrum emerges: despite evidence for a thirteenth or fourteenth-century Muslim ruler, Brunei was ruled by a non-Muslim in 1408. J. Kurz, however, has suggested that Maharaja Brunei and Manarejjananai did not rule the same kingdom; although Maharaja Brunei definitely ruled Brunei (his title testifies to this, as does the location of his gravestone, i.e. in modern-day Brunei), Kurz has argued that Manarejjananai ruled somewhere else.<sup>73</sup> Kurz rests this argument on the fact that the *Ming shi-lu* simply calls Manarejjananai the ruler of *Boni*. Although commonly assumed to be Brunei, Chinese texts are very vague about *Boni*'s location; it could, at least some of the time, have been somewhere else. As such, despite consistently associating *Boni* with camphor (ancient Brunei's chief export item), Chinese texts only ever give it a general Nusantara location, even occasionally placing it near Japan and the Ryukyu Islands.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, Kurz argues that to assume Manarejjananai's *Boni* was Brunei is unwise. Nothing specifically links it to that location.

But, as valid as this point may be, Maharaja Brunei and Manarejjananai do seem to have ruled the same location. As such, the *Ming shi-lu*'s first unambiguous reference to Brunei (as *Bunlai*) is in 1618. In that year, Brunei sent tribute to the Chinese court. Its diplomatic letter claimed that its ruler possessed an Imperial Seal issued by Yongle.<sup>75</sup> Imperial Seals were important Chinese diplomatic gestures, used to invest foreign rulers. In the Nusantara, Yongle only issued them to Siam, Java, Samudera-

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<sup>73</sup> Kurz, 'Boni in Chinese Sources' (2011), 33.

<sup>74</sup> For example, Yue Shi places it to the south of China (Ibid, 6) while Zhao Rugua claims it was southeast of Quanzhou and forty days from Java (ZFZ, 155). Likewise, Shen Zhi puts it a month from Java (Carrie C. Brown, 'An Early Account of Brunei by Sung Lien,' *BMJ* 2:4 [1972]: 219-231). Most Hongwu-period sources, however, classify *Boni* as an eastern nation, along with the Ryukyu Islands and Japan (Kurz, 'Boni in Chinese Sources' [2011], 35).

<sup>75</sup> Brown, *Brunei* (1970), 134.

Pasai, Lamuri, Melaka, Sulu and *Boni*.<sup>76</sup> As *Bunlai* is certainly not any of the other locations, a link is made with *Boni*. Furthermore, the *Boni* that Yongle issued an Imperial Seal to was undoubtedly Manarejiananai's kingdom: the *Ming shi-lu* claims the seal was given to Xiawang, Manarejiananai's son.<sup>77</sup> As such, it seems Maharaja Brunei (who definitely ruled the site of modern-day Brunei, as associated with *Bunlai*) and Manarejiananai ruled the same location. Nonetheless, when Mahemosha is considered, it becomes evident that they did not come from the same dynasty.

Despite Groenveldt's, Saunder's and Nicholl's objections, Mahemosha was probably a Muslim. The name Mahemosha (rendered like this or similarly) occurs frequently in the *Ming shi-lu*, and almost always represents either Muḥammad or Maḥmud Shāh (for example, Melaka's Maḥmūd Shāh is called 'Mahamusha').<sup>78</sup> These precedents strongly suggest that Brunei's Mahemosha should also be understood this way. By contrast, however, Groenveldt's and Saunder's argument is questionable. Nothing, for example, suggests Mahemosha is a corruption, whether of Sri Maharaja or something else. Although Nicholl's Maha Moksa (which does not require corruption) is more reasonable, the *Ming shi-lu* never uses Mahemosha for Maha Moksa. As such, and coupling all this with the letter Mahemosha sent to China in 1371, which was written in a script like the Muslims' (i.e. *jawi*), and the fact that his envoy was called Ismā'īl, a Muslim identity seems likely. Indeed, Song Lian's account of Shen Zhi's mission also describes Ismā'īl as a member of Mahemosha's family.<sup>79</sup> This further reinforces the point. As a result, however, by 1371 Brunei had had at least two Muslim rulers, which

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<sup>76</sup> Annabel Teh Gallop, 'Camels, Seals and the Early Tin Coinage of Brunei,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 276.

<sup>77</sup> Wang Gungwu, 'The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca 1403-5,' in *Admiral Zheng He and Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: International Zheng He Society and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 16-17. The other occasions were to Japan in 1406, Melaka in 1409 and Cochin in 1416.

<sup>78</sup> *MSL*, juan 217.5a.

<sup>79</sup> Brown, 'Account of Brunei by Sung Lien,' *BMJ* 2:4 (1972): 219-231.

suggests a dynasty. But, by 1408, non-Muslim rulers were back in charge. Song Lian provides a possible reason why.

In his account of Shen Zhi's visit to Brunei, Song Lian claims that Sulu had recently invaded the kingdom, causing extensive damage. Its army had been repelled, but only with Majapahit's aid; after this, Brunei became Majapahit's vassal.<sup>80</sup> Although a c.1371 Sulu invasion cannot be verified, the *Nagarakertagama* does list Brunei as a vassal of Hayam Wuruk's (r.1350-1389).<sup>81</sup> This becomes significant when considered alongside another incident, already recounted in Chapter 2: in 1377, Palembang sent tribute to China while simultaneously renouncing its vassalage to Majapahit. When Majapahit heard of this, it promptly invaded Palembang and overthrew its ruler. In light of this, it is noteworthy that Song Liang claims that Mahemosha's decision to send tribute to China was overheard by a Majapahit envoy to his court. Accusing Mahemosha of disloyalty, this envoy condemned the move.<sup>82</sup> Initially, this made Mahemosha reluctant to send any tribute, but Shen Zhi finally convinced him to. As with Palembang, the subsequent Bruneian mission renounced Brunei's vassalage to Majapahit, chiefly because China would only accept tribute from an independent kingdom (see Chapter 2). As such, because Majapahit knew about this mission, and given how it reacted to the same situation six years later, it is reasonable to suppose that Brunei's 1371 diplomatic activity vis-à-vis China led to Mahemosha's removal from the throne and the end of his Bruneian Sultanate.

To further support this, Manarejjananai's Chinese epitaph is also significant: set up after his death (and recorded in the *Ming shi-lu*), it fails to mention Mahemosha or his 1371 mission to China. Because Mahemosha reigned only thirty-seven years before Manarejjananai, who was twenty-eight when he died, this is confusing. Born nine years

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<sup>80</sup> Brown, 'Account of Brunei by Sung Lien,' *BMJ* 2:4 (1972): 219-231.

<sup>81</sup> Nicholl, 'Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 26.

<sup>82</sup> Brown, 'Account of Brunei by Sung Lien,' *BMJ* 2:4 (1972): 219-231.

after 1371, Manarejiananai should have been closely related to Mahemosha, if the two were from the same dynasty. But, if Manarejiananai were descended from someone else, perhaps placed on the throne by Majapahit in or around 1371, failure to mention Mahemosha becomes understandable. Indeed, Manarejiananai's epitaph only mentions his father, Manareshanawang. Why only one ancestor is listed is unclear, as it was not usual Chinese practice, but it could indicate a new dynasty. Given the lengths of time involved, if Brunei's first Sultanate was brought to an end with (or shortly after) Mahemosha, Manareshanawang would have been old enough to be Majapahit's replacement ruler.

Ultimately, the above is difficult to prove: it cannot be conclusively shown that Majapahit precipitated a late fourteenth-century dynastic and religious change in Brunei. Nevertheless, Maharaja Brunei's gravestone, coupled with the Chinese references to Mahemosha, demonstrate the reality of a fourteenth-century Bruneian Sultanate. Somewhere between 1371 and 1408, this ceased to exist. These facts, however, do not exhaust the sum total of what can still be learnt about this early Muslim kingdom. Rather, when the Boxer Codex and Brunei's earliest gravestones are also considered, it seems that we can, firstly, fill in some of the details surrounding this early kingdom's formation and, secondly, hypothesize that, at some point after 1426, Mahemosha's descendants recaptured Brunei and (albeit briefly) reinstituted their Sultanate.



#### 6.4.2. The Formation of Brunei's First Sultanate: Evidence from the Boxer Codex

The Boxer Codex has never been fully utilised by the literature. Most frequently ignored, at best it is referred to only briefly.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, in the context of Brunei it is the earliest known indigenous text we have, and therefore potentially significant. As mentioned, however, it has been suggested that it is Spanish, not indigenous. But, although probably commissioned by a Spaniard, J. Carroll notes three points which strongly suggest indigenous authorship: first, the Codex describes Islam without condemning it, which is unusual for a sixteenth-century European source; second, it records day-to-day information about various Nusantara kingdoms (including Brunei), thereby suggesting an author who lived amongst the local population, which is something Spaniards did not do; and third, the Codex's author knew both Tagalog and Malay, a rare skill amongst Spaniards.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the author frequently substitutes the Tagalog *l* for the Malay *r*, and Tagalog *r* for the Malay *d*. According to Carroll, this suggests a Malay-speaking Tagalog. As many Tagalogs were traders, Carroll believes the author was probably a merchant who had travelled throughout the region for trade, spending some time in Brunei. After eventually settling in Manila, he dictated his experiences to Juan de Cuellar (explaining the calligraphy), perhaps as a report for Luis Pérez Dasmariñas (see section 6.2.2).<sup>85</sup> As a reconstruction, this is rendered more likely by Francisco de Sande's 1578 interrogation of Balayan Tagalog merchants;<sup>86</sup> selecting only those who had visited Brunei, de Sande used them to help prepare for an attack on

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<sup>83</sup> Nicholl, for example, uses it in just one article, and then for only two paragraphs (Nicholl, 'Some Problems of Brunei Chronology,' *JSAS* 20:2 [1989]: 193-194). Saunders, on the other hand, has just three lines (Saunders, *History of Brunei* [2002], 44).

<sup>84</sup> *BC*, 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

Brunei. Although the Codex post-dates 1578, if the Spanish found Tagalog information useful at that time, they may have returned to it in c.1593.<sup>87</sup>

If Tagalog authorship informed by a period of residency in Brunei is therefore accepted, the Codex could record an early Bruneian tradition. Indeed, even if its Tagalog author had not visited Brunei, both pre-1571 Manila and its surrounding area (including Balayan) were Bruneian principalities.<sup>88</sup> Bruneian traditions may therefore have been circulating throughout those regions in the 1580's or 1590's. Indeed, a genuine link between the Codex and Brunei is suggested by the fact that a vestige of the Codex's China-orientated tradition survives in *silsila* MS B: alongside the Johor princess, MS B claims Awang Alak Betatar also married a Chinese princess and, although MS B initially attributes Brunei's royal regalia to Johor, it later describes it as Chinese.<sup>89</sup> These points could be a memory of the Codex's earlier tradition. If so, they suggest these elements of the Codex were known in Brunei before that kingdom's current traditions were finalised – in other words that the latter are a reworking of the former. As such, the Codex's tradition is probably not only genuinely Bruneian, but perhaps also the most authentic. This last point, however, will largely depend on whether a Bruneian ruler ever travelled to China.

According to the *Ming shi-lu*, two Bruneian rulers travelled to China: Manarejiananai and Xiawang. As discussed, Manarejiananai died in China while still a

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<sup>87</sup> C. Quirino, another translator of the text, rejects Tagalog authorship. Instead, he notes that the Codex uses Ming-period Chinese paint, paper and artistic motifs. These, he claims, indicate a Chinese author (Quirino, 'Boxer Codex,' in *Filipino Heritage*, Vol. 4, ed. Roces [1977], 1003). Although Manila did host a substantial sixteenth-century Chinese population (see Chapter 2), the use of Chinese paint and paper need only suggest where the author obtained his materials. Chinese artistic motifs are more convincing, but only apply to the text's illuminations, not its prose. As the latter contains no Chinese vocabulary, and even relies on European sources when describing China, a Chinese author seems unlikely.

<sup>88</sup> Gerald H. Krausse, 'Brunei and the Sea: Transformation of a Maritime State,' in *From Buckfast to Borneo: Essays Presented to Father Robert Nicholl on the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Birth, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1995*, ed. Victor T. King and A. V. M. Horton (Hull: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hull, 1995), 367.

<sup>89</sup> *SRRB*, 51.

non-Muslim.<sup>90</sup> He is therefore unlikely to be the Codex's Yūsuf. His son, however, is potentially more revealing: Xiawang visited China twice, once in 1408 and then again in 1412, receiving the Imperial Seal during his first visit.<sup>91</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, Brunei's royal family still possessed this seal in 1618; the Codex is probably referring to it when it speaks of a royal insignia and coat of arms given to Yūsuf by the Emperor, 'which nowadays the said king of Bornei [still] has.' If so, because no other Brunei ruler was invested in China, elements of Yūsuf's biography seem to be based on Xiawang's experience. But despite this possibility, Xiawang cannot be directly equated with Yūsuf: no Chinese source associates Xiawang with Islam nor records his marriage to a Chinese woman. Equally, when invested in 1408, Xiawang was not a mature young man newly arrived in Brunei, but the infant son of Brunei's previous ruler. Do these differences, however, reveal Yūsuf as a distortion of Xiawang, who was perhaps mistaken for Brunei's first Islamic ruler, or do they suggest Yūsuf was a separate individual onto whom features of Xiawang's biography were grafted?

In short, three points suggest Yūsuf is not just a distortion of Xiawang, but a separate individual. These are: 1) his late thirteenth-century date (i.e. 1288-1289); 2) his status as founder of a dynasty; and 3) his wife's hometown, Namtay. Taken together, these suggest Yūsuf may have been Maharaja Brunei (or at least someone closely related to him), making the latter the founder of Brunei's first Sultanate.

Beginning with Yūsuf's date, the Codex places him in the late thirteenth century – that is, three hundred years before 1588-1589. This is long before Xiawang and, on the face of it, could tie in with Maharaja Brunei, whose gravestone was produced between 1272 and 1362. Indigenous sources, however, rarely provide accurate dates or time

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<sup>90</sup> Carrie C. Brown, 'Two Ming Texts Concerning King Ma-na-je-chia-na of P'o-ni,' *BMJ* 3:2 (1974): 227.

<sup>91</sup> *MSL*, juan 86.1a-2b.

spans. There is therefore no *a priori* reason to accept Yūsuf's late thirteenth-century date. Nonetheless, further consideration of the text's list of rulers suggests three hundred years, although perhaps not precise, is broadly correct.

Apart from Yūsuf, the Codex lists five other Bruneian Sultans: Raja Borney (described as the 'sultan-in-waiting'), Nūr al-'Alam/Lixar (who was on the throne when the Codex was written), Aril Lula, Salan and Soliman.<sup>92</sup> In short, this king-list appears to match the *silsilas*'. As such, a 'Sultan Lixar' is the addressee of a Spanish letter dated the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1578. This letter claims that Sultan Lixar succeeded Sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār.<sup>93</sup> As noted in section 6.3.2, the *silsilas* claim 'Abd al-Qahhār was Brunei's sixth Sultan, thereby making Sultan Lixar the seventh. According to the *silsilas*, Brunei's seventh Sultan was called Sayf al-Rijāl. Significantly, therefore, 'Lixar' probably represents the Arabic name 'Rijāl' – in Spanish, *r* and *l* are frequently interchanged and an *x* is pronounced as a *j*.<sup>94</sup> If so, however, Sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār becomes the Codex's Aril Lula. Moreover, the *silsilas* name a Shah Brunei as Sayf al-Rijāl's successor (i.e. the Codex's Raja Borney) and a Sulaymān as the fourth Sultan (i.e. Soliman, again matching the Codex). Consequently, the two sources appear to record the same king-list, suggesting they are accurate (at least in this respect).

All this, however, implies that Yūsuf cannot be Awang Alak Betatar: the *silsilas* are very clear that Awang Alak Betatar (as founder of his dynasty) reigned two generations before Sulaymān. Indeed, if Awang Alak Betatar is the Bruneian ruler who converted around 1514 or 1515, a two-generation gap between him and Sulaymān seems reasonable, given that the latter probably ruled during the mid-sixteenth century. It is, however, incompatible with the Codex. Given the latter's otherwise close similarity to the *silsilas*, coupled with the relatively short time span between Sulaymān

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<sup>92</sup> BC, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Blair and Robertson, ed. *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 4 (1903), 152.

<sup>94</sup> Nicholl, ed. *European Sources* (1975), 37.

and Awang Alak Betatar, and the fact that the Codex was written less than one hundred years after the second Sultanate was created, it seems unlikely that the Codex would have made this mistake. Instead, it is more reasonable to see Yūsuf as someone other than Awang Alak Betatar. Given the Codex's timeframe and the existence (verified by Maharaja Brunei's gravestone) of an earlier fourteenth-century Sultanate, Yūsuf may well (as founder of a dynasty) have established that earlier polity.

Furthermore, Maharaja Brunei's gravestone fails to list any ancestors. This might indicate that, like Yūsuf, he founded a dynasty. The Nusantara's Sultans placed great emphasis on their genealogies, as these both created legitimacy and underpinned a monarch's right to rule.<sup>95</sup> As such, the absence of a genealogy requires explanation. This is difficult here unless Maharaja Brunei established his dynasty. At the very least, however, the Sultanate's existence cannot be proven before him.

In addition to the above, a possible link to Yūsuf is also suggested by the latter's wife and her association with a place called 'Namtay.' According to Carroll, 'Namtay' is the Chinese Nantaiwu. This small but famous mountain on Jinmen Island, once surmounted by an eighteen metre high tower, acted as a landmark for ships sailing to Quanzhou, just a short distance up the coast.<sup>96</sup> As such, Carroll believes the Codex's 'Namtay' is a reference to Quanzhou. Not only does this conclusion seem philologically sound, but it proves significant for two reasons. First, Maharaja Brunei's gravestone was produced in Quanzhou. This artefact therefore confirms a link (of some sort) between that Chinese city and an early Islamic ruling family in Brunei<sup>97</sup> – a link which,

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<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Lambourn, 'Tombstones, Texts and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia,' *JESHO* 51 (2008): 274-275.

<sup>96</sup> *BC*, 17.

<sup>97</sup> The nature of this link is disputed. For example, Saunders argues the gravestone demonstrates Maharaja Brunei was also from China. As such, he speculates that Maharaja Brunei travelled to Brunei from China during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. After settling there, he established an Islamic dynasty; when he died, a gravestone was imported from his homeland (Saunders, 'Brunei Historiography,' in *Buckfast to Borneo*, ed. King and Horton [1995], 345). This scenario is, however,

because of the date of Maharaja Brunei's gravestone, could be contemporary to the late thirteenth century. Second, Brunei's Jalan Brunei Tutong cemetery preserves another early Quanzhou Muslim gravestone. Part of a very large grave at the cemetery's centre, it is inscribed with Chinese characters and dated to the Jing Ding period of the Song Emperor Lizong (1260-1264). According to its inscription, it belonged to 'Pan Yuan Master Bu of Quanzhou,' who had taken up residence in Brunei. 'Pan Yuan' is an official Song title, indicating Master Bu occupied an important position (although what is unclear).<sup>98</sup> The name Bu, however, coupled with mention of Quanzhou, recalls the Muslim merchant-king, Bu Shougeng. As seen in Chapter 2, the latter's family ruled Quanzhou throughout this period, controlling its trade. This is significant because Yūsuf's wife supposedly came from Namtay's ruling family. Consequently, although Master Bu's presence does not confirm her existence, it does demonstrate a near-contemporary Quanzhou-Brunei link involving the former's ruling family. All this relates back to the Codex's narrative.

So, returning to the question posed above – was Yūsuf a distortion of Xiawang or a separate individual – it seems the second option is more likely. Certainly, when the Codex was written, China was still very prestigious in the Nusantara (particularly in the east, where its trade remained strong). Xiawang's investiture by the Emperor, including receipt of an Imperial Seal, would have remained a significant event. It is therefore plausible that, almost two hundred years after Xiawang, Brunei's ruling elite would have chosen to attribute it to Brunei's first Muslim ruler, most likely to enhance the latter's standing. This tradition then presumably passed into the Codex. Certainly, because Yūsuf's marriage to a Chinese woman and his visit to Quanzhou are both

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entirely speculative: the Quanzhou origin of Maharaja Brunei's gravestone is not enough, in and of itself, to prove he was also Chinese.

<sup>98</sup> Wolfgang Franke and Ch'en T'ieh-fan, 'A Chinese Tomb Inscription of AD1264, Discovered Recently in Brunei: A Preliminary Report,' *BMJ* 3:1 (1973): 92-93.

unconnected to Xiawang, these features must stem from something beyond the latter figure's biography. Master Pu and Maharaja Brunei's gravestone indicate this was something factual, involving a real link with Quanzhou. Whether this involved a Brunei ruler who travelled to China, however, is unclear because that part of the narrative could simply reflect Xiawang's visit grafted on to Yūsuf. But, inter-marriage and subsequent financial links with Quanzhou remain plausible because neither come from Xiawang.

Taking all these points together, it seems that the Codex preserves the early history of Brunei's first Sultanate. Drawing on sixteenth-century Bruneian traditions, the Codex apparently records how, during the late thirteenth century, Brunei was invaded by a Muslim ruler called Yūsuf. This man, who reputedly came from somewhere further west in the Nusantara, overcame the local population and established a Sultanate. Perhaps ruling as Maharaja Brunei, he maintained close links to Quanzhou. These are not only attested to by the Codex: Maharaja Brunei's gravestone also came from there and at least one prominent member of Quanzhou's Chinese Muslim community resided in Brunei during this period. Indeed, evidence for a Chinese-Bruneian link also emerges in 1371: according to Shin Zhi, Mahemosha's chief minister was a Chinese man named Wang Zongshu.<sup>99</sup> It is unclear whether Wang Zongshu was a Muslim, or from Quanzhou, but his presence again connects China to Brunei's first Sultanate. At the very least, however, and as discussed in Chapter 2, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries China was the Nusantara's largest market place and Quanzhou China's largest port, with Muslims as its most important traders. These Brunei-Quanzhou links are therefore realistic; the gravestones of Maharaja Brunei and Master Bu demonstrate their reality.

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<sup>99</sup> Brown, 'Account of Brunei by Sung Lien,' *BMJ* 2:4 (1972): 219-231.

From its inception until 1371, therefore, Brunei's first Sultanate appears to have been influenced by China's Muslims. But, although Majapahit likely removed Mahemosha from his throne in or shortly after that year, neither the Sultanate nor the Chinese influence which characterised it appear to have ended there. Rather, Brunei's earliest surviving gravestones suggest Mahemosha's kingdom re-emerged during the fifteenth century.

#### **6.4.3. The Re-Emergence of Brunei's First Sultanate**

In 2001, the French scholars, Kalus and Guillot, comprehensively surveyed all Brunei's surviving, pre-sixteenth century Islamic gravestones. Although many were undated (but traceable to the period on stylistic grounds), fourteen bore inscriptions placing them between 1371 and 1515. Moreover, several of these fourteen bore names and titles indicative of a ruling Muslim elite. Consequently, if we are to hypothesize that Majapahit caused a dynastic and religious change in Brunei shortly after 1371, these artefacts require further explanation.

Perhaps the most significant gravestone described by Kalus and Guillot bears the name Zaynab (or possibly Sitti) 'bint Sulṭān 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad Shāh al-Sulṭān' (see **Fig. 14**).<sup>100</sup> Dated 862/1457-1458, this artefact is significant for three reasons. Firstly, if Zaynab died in 1457/8, or 86/7 years after 1371, her great-grandfather, Sultan Muḥammad Shāh, could be Song Lian's Mahemosha. Certainly, Kalus and Guillot argue (and without mentioning Song Lian's account) that this Sultan probably governed Brunei in the mid- to late fourteenth century.<sup>101</sup> If so, however, Zaynab's gravestone essentially confirms Mahemosha's Muslim identity and

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<sup>100</sup> Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (deuxième partie),' *BEFE* 93 (2006): 151.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 176.



the existence of his earlier Sultanate. In addition, however, and secondly, it lists another Sultan after him – Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd. Moreover, and thirdly, it places Zaynab, as the daughter of that subsequent Sultan, in Brunei in the late 1450’s. The gravestone therefore indicates that members of Muḥammad Shāh’s family not only continued to reside in Brunei long after 1371, but that one of them, ‘Abd al-Majīd, had (and perhaps still) ruled the kingdom as Sultan.

Indeed, this picture is further supported by several other early Bruneian gravestones. There is, for example, the gravestone of ‘Raja Ayang bint Ismā‘īl ibn Yūsuf al-‘Azīz al-Khawlānī’, dated to 856/1452-1453 (see **Fig. 15**).<sup>102</sup> As noted by Kalus and Guillot, in Malay culture ‘Raja’ (and in contrast to ‘Maharaja’, see below) need not indicate a ruler but will almost certainly apply to a member of a royal household.<sup>103</sup> Just like Zaynab’s gravestone, therefore, Raja Ayang’s also indicates the existence of a mid-fifteenth-century, Brunei-based Islamic royal house. Couple this with several other Muslim gravestones that bear noble titles – including those of ‘Tuan Amina’ (dated 10<sup>th</sup> Safar 883/13<sup>th</sup> May 1478, see **Fig. 16**)<sup>104</sup> and ‘Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda’ (dated 890/1485-1486, see **Fig. 17**)<sup>105</sup> – and it seems almost certain that Brunei hosted a mid- to late fifteenth-century Muslim ruling elite.

Given the argument presented in section 6.4.1, these gravestones therefore present a conundrum: despite the *Ming shi-lu*’s identification of three non-Muslim Bruneian rulers during the early fifteenth century (i.e. Manareshanawang, Manarejjananai and Xiawang), making it entirely plausible that Brunei’s first Sultanate ended at some point after 1371, from the mid-fifteenth century onwards evidence again emerges for a Brunei-based Muslim kingdom. As well as highlighting this problem, however,

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<sup>102</sup> Kalus and Guillot, ‘Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (deuxième partie),’ *BEFE* 93 (2006): 139.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>104</sup> Kalus and Guillot, ‘Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),’ *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 240.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

Zaynab's gravestone may also provide the solution – both in its possible identification of Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd as the grandson of Song Lian's Mahemosha, and in its failure to apply the title 'Sultan' to Zaynab's grandfather, Yūsuf.

As noted in Chapter 3, Majapahit also overthrew the Nusantara Sultanates of Aru (probably between 1331 and 1349)<sup>106</sup> and Samudera-Pasai (in 1360).<sup>107</sup> In each case, however, the kingdom in question was eventually re-established. Chinese records, for example, claim that Samudera-Pasai's Sultanate was re-instituted in 1387, when Sultan Aḥmad I (the ruler deposed by Majapahit twenty-seven years earlier) reconquered his kingdom.<sup>108</sup> Although Aru's history remains largely obscure, excavations at Deli Tua (Aru's post-Majapahit capital) also indicate a late fourteenth-century re-establishment.<sup>109</sup> These Sumatran examples, however, suggest a possibility: that Mahemosha's descendants also reclaimed their lost kingdom. Certainly, this would explain Zaynab's gravestone. Not only does this make Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd a descendent of a Sultan Muḥammad Shāh, thereby creating a possible link with Brunei's 1371 ruler, but its failure to apply the title 'Sultan' to Zaynab's grandfather, Yūsuf, is suggestive. Although this title is applied to both 'Abd al-Majīd and Muḥammad Shāh, that Yūsuf does not possess it may indicate, if the argument presented here is correct, that he did not rule Brunei, instead spending his life in exile. Certainly, if one of Mahemosha's descendants did reclaim Brunei, they presumably did so only after 1426, or the last point at which the *Ming shi-lu* records a non-Muslim on the Bruneian throne. If section 6.4.1's reconstruction is accurate, by 1426 Xiawang was Brunei's third non-

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<sup>106</sup> As argued in Chapter 3, Aru's conquest was orchestrated by Majapahit's Prime Minister, Patih Gajah Mada. Because Patih Gajah Mada only came to office in 1331, Aru's conquest must therefore have occurred after that date. By contrast, Aru is not mentioned by either Ibn Baṭṭūṭa or Wang Dayuan, who both travelled through the Nusantara in the late 1340's. This makes it likely that any conquest occurred before 1349 (see: A. C. Milner, E. Edwards McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar S. H., 'A Note on Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 [1978]: 39).

<sup>107</sup> V. I. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 103.

<sup>108</sup> *MSL*, juan 46.2a-b.

<sup>109</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, 'Aru and Kota Cina,' *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 29.

Muslim ruler – or, the probable grandson of Majapahit’s appointee to replace Mahemosha. It would therefore be logical if Mahemosha’s grandson (i.e. ‘Abd al-Majīd), as Xiawang’s contemporary, was the one to reclaim Brunei.

But the above notwithstanding, the probability of a Majapahit enforced interregnum – and, by implication, a Muslim re-conquest of Brunei – is reinforced by two additional, early fifteenth-century Bruneian gravestones. Only six of the Bruneian gravestones Kalus and Guillot record carry early fifteenth-century dates: aside from two unattributed gravestones (one dated 835/1432<sup>110</sup> and the other Rabī’ al-Thānī 848/July-August 1444),<sup>111</sup> there are those belonging to men called Daeng Pandita (dated Sha‘abān 804/March-April 1402, see **Fig. 18**),<sup>112</sup> Yūnus (dated Ramaḍān 821/October 1418, see **Fig. 19**),<sup>113</sup> Husayn ibn Yahyā (dated 6<sup>th</sup> Jumādā al-Awwal 828/26<sup>th</sup> March 1425)<sup>114</sup> and ‘Alī (dated to Jumādā al-Awwal 836/December 1432-January 1433).<sup>115</sup> It is Yūnus’s gravestone, however, coupled with another undated and unattributed example of almost identical design (see **Fig. 20**),<sup>116</sup> which is significant.

In short, both of these gravestones utilise a very distinctive, apparently Javanese-influenced ‘triple-leafed’ motif. As such, each is surmounted by a three lobed ‘leaf’, replete with a high central ridge. The latter emerges from the pinnacle of a tear-shaped lozenge positioned in the gravestone’s lower centre, and flanked on either side by two further leaf-like designs. This lozenge is surrounded by beaded (or perhaps, to maintain

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<sup>110</sup> Milner, McKinnon and Tengku Luckman, ‘Aru and Kota Cina,’ *Indonesia* 26 (1978): 238.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 264-265.

<sup>112</sup> Kalus and Guillot, ‘Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),’ *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 236. Because ‘Daeng’ is also a noble title, Kalus and Guillot suggest this individual could also have been part of a ruling Muslim elite. ‘Daeng’, however, is a Bugis and not a Bruneian title, while ‘Pandita’ signifies a religious scholar. It has therefore been more plausibly suggested that Daeng Pandita was a roving religious scholar (perhaps a missionary) of Bugis origin who died in Brunei (see: Haji Mohammad bin Salem, ‘Batu-Batu Nisan Lama sehingga Abad ke-16 Masihi di Perkuburan Islam Brunei Darusalem: Satu Perbandingan dan Persamaannya,’ *Berita Muzium* 2 [1998]: 13).

<sup>113</sup> Kalus and Guillot, ‘Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),’ *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 256.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 257. For further information about these gravestones and their discovery, see: Matassim bin Haji Jibah, ‘Notes on Tombstones Recently Found in Brunei,’ *BMJ* 5:2 (1982): 22.

the floral motif, petal-like) decoration and contains an inscription. In the case of Yūnus's gravestone, this is in Arabic and Sanskrit. The undated and unattributed gravestone, on the other hand, is only in Arabic. At the foot of each gravestone is an additional floral design.

As mentioned, the overall impression of these two gravestones is strongly Javanese in character. The floral motifs at their bases, for example, bear a resemblance to floral-themed walled decorations found on Javanese *candi* (Hindu monuments) dating from the ninth century onwards (see **Fig. 21**).<sup>117</sup> Indeed, such designs are also found on Java's earliest Islamic monuments; the wall decorations at the Muslim mausoleum of Sendang Duwur, Lamongan, for example, utilise the same style (see **Fig. 22**).<sup>118</sup> Although the date of this complex is uncertain, a chronogram at the site (reading *Gunanaing Saliro Tirto Hayu*) represents the *Śaka* year 1483 (i.e. 1561).<sup>119</sup> The use of Sanskrit, however, is perhaps an even stronger indicator of Javanese influence. When Yūnus's gravestone was initially discovered, P. Shariffuddin and Nicholl argued that the Sanskrit inscription on its front (which reads 'may goodness happen to the going to dust of the four beings, which is as excellent as the diamond')<sup>120</sup> reflected the barely Islamised nature of early fifteenth-century Brunei. In other words, by assuming a c.1515 date of conversion, both Shariffuddin and Nicholl placed this inscription at the very beginning of Brunei's Islamisation and attributed it to an early hybrid Islamic-pagan identity.<sup>121</sup> As seen here, however, by 1418 Brunei had housed a substantial Islamic population (including a Sultanate) for some time. Yūnus's gravestone cannot

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<sup>117</sup> See: A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), plates 48, 49 and 130.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, plate 342.

<sup>119</sup> Wiranto, 'Syncretic and Semiotic the Ancient Indonesian Mosque and Tombhouse. Case Study: Sendang Duwur-East Java,' *Dimensi Teknik Arsitektur* 30:2 (2002): 146. For an explanation of the *Śaka* calendar, see Chapter 8.

<sup>120</sup> Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),' *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 256.

<sup>121</sup> P. M. Shariffuddin and R. Nicholl, 'A Possible Example of Ancient Brunei Script,' *BMJ* 3:3 (1975): 116-122.

therefore reflect an early stage of Islamisation. Indeed, earlier relics of Brunei's Islamic past do not use Sanskrit; the gravestones of both Maharaja Brunei and Daeng Pandita, for example, are written entirely in Arabic and (notwithstanding the use of 'Maharaja') demonstrate no evidence of pre-Islamic influence. Similarly, the *Ming shi-lu* demonstrates Brunei's use of *jawi* by 1371; no known Nusantara Islamic culture adopted *jawi* only to later reject it in favour of Sanskrit. As such, Sanskrit's appearance in 1418 is unlikely to be the result of a barely Islamised Bruneian identity.

Rather, and just like other aspects of the two gravestones, it probably reflects Javanese influence. During the Singhasari-Majapahit period (1222-1486),<sup>122</sup> educated members of Majapahit's court routinely amassed extensive Sanskrit vocabularies<sup>123</sup> and Sanskrit inscriptions frequently appeared on Majapahit's royal monuments (such as at Jaka-Dolok, near Surabaya).<sup>124</sup> It is therefore entirely plausible that the Sanskrit inscription seen on Yūnus's gravestone resulted from contact with Java. It would therefore be consonant with a period of Javanese hegemonic control coinciding with the first quarter of the fifteenth century. A c.1371 Majapahit-led invasion of Brunei therefore remains plausible and, given the testimony of the *Ming shi-lu*, almost certainly resulted in the installation of non-Muslim rule. By the mid-fifteenth century, however, Brunei's early gravestones indicate that a descendant of Brunei's 1371 Muslim ruler had retaken Brunei; mirroring the situation in Samudera-Pasai and Aru, it seems that Mahemosha's grandson, 'Abd al-Majīd, reconquered Brunei and re-established the first Sultanate. Although the ultimate fate of this kingdom remains unclear (see the next section), it seems to have persisted until the mid-1480's.

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<sup>122</sup> Jan van den Veerdonk, 'Curses in Javanese Royal Inscriptions from the Singhasari-Majapahit Period, AD 1222-1486,' *BTLV* 157:1 (2001): 97-112.

<sup>123</sup> Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century: A Study in Cultural History: The Nāgara-Kērtāgama by Rakawi Prapañca of Majapahit, 1365 A.D.*, vol. 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 514.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 333.

After establishing the above, it only remains to discuss a series of features typical to the majority of Brunei's cache of fifteenth-century gravestones and which suggest Chinese influence remained strong throughout the lifetime of the first Sultanate.<sup>125</sup> Most notably, there is a form of fifteenth-century Bruneian gravestone which closely parallels Quanzhou's funeral memorial tradition. Although not employed universally, this form reoccurs throughout the century, from Daeng Pandita's 1402 gravestone to the 1485/6 gravestone of Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda (see **Figs. 16 to 18**, in addition to **Figs. 23 and 24**). Typically, it involves a stele which, while tapering towards the bottom, finds itself surmounted by a simple bow-shaped top. At its base is a stone plinth, either elaborately carved with lotus designs or left plain. Invariably, each face of each stela is also elaborately carved, and always in the same manner. On one side will be two raised bands in concave relief, each running parallel to the gravestone's outer edge; one will sit at the outer edge itself, while the other is positioned further in. The two together therefore create a border, and which is filled in with either calligraphy or elaborate floral designs. As for the central space delineated by the second raised band, this is filled with a decorative mix of calligraphy, roundels, Chinese eternal knot motifs and yet more elaborate floral patterns. Turning to the other side of each gravestone, a single raised band again sits along the gravestone's outer edge. The gravestone's main inscription then occupies the rest of the space, with further raised bands delineating each line of text.

In short, this overall form strongly resembles the Quanzhou memorials discussed above (in addition to Maharaja Brunei's gravestone, see **Figs. 25 to 27**). For example, despite being less ornate, the bow-shaped top surmounting each Bruneian gravestone recalls the bow-shape atop each Quanzhou gravestone. Likewise, the faces of each

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<sup>125</sup> Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (deuxième partie),' *BEFE* 93 (2006): 170-175.

Quanzhou memorial are also edged with raised bands executed in concave relief – bands which can also be used to create borders filled with decorative motifs (although not calligraphy, see **Fig. 25**) and to delineate lines of text (see **Fig. 25**). Turning more fully to the decorative motifs found on these Bruneian gravestones, they are also Chinese-inspired. They include Chinese-style roundels (see **Fig. 24a**), swirling floral patterns (see Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda **Fig. 17**, which is particularly similar to **Fig. 25** and **26**), eternal knot motifs and cloud patterns (see the base of Daeng Pandita's gravestone, **Fig. 18**). Perhaps most strikingly, however, some Bruneian examples (such as **Figs. 17** and **23**) have lotus designs at their base which are virtually identical to those seen at Quanzhou (see **Fig. 27**). Indeed, even those fifteenth-century Bruneian gravestones which do not belong to the specific type discussed here still display signs of Chinese decorative influence. Zaynab's gravestone, for example, which is markedly more ornate, preserves a simple bow-shaped form in its centre (where it delineates the space intended for an inscription) and is surmounted by a large, Chinese-style lotus blossom.

Ultimately, these influences suggest that Brunei continued to enjoy a close relationship with China throughout the fifteenth century. The nature of this relationship, however, is unclear. Certainly, fifteenth-century Chinese trade restrictions make it unlikely that extensive interaction with the Chinese mainland played a role (see Chapter 2). Rather, and perhaps paralleling the situation on Java (see Chapter 5), Chinese migration could have been responsible. Widespread Chinese migration, for example, could have introduced Chinese artistic influences, perhaps via Chinese craftsmen. Certainly, and as with the sixteenth-century examples of Bruneian coinage discussed in the next section, Brunei's Chinese-influenced gravestones were neither imported from China nor produced elsewhere. Logically, therefore, a Brunei-based community of

Chinese craftsmen could explain the ubiquitous nature of the observed Chinese influences. But this possibility notwithstanding, these influences undoubtedly indicate that Brunei's access to Chinese culture came via Quanzhou. It thereby links with Brunei's earlier Islamic past.

### **6.5. The End of Brunei's First Sultanate and the Kingdom's Early Sixteenth-Century Re-Conversion**

As discussed in section 6.3.2, the European sources clearly describe early sixteenth-century Brunei as non-Muslim. From di Varthema (1505) to de Brito Patalim (1514), this conclusion seems unavoidable. Only with Pires (1515) does a Muslim identity re-emerge; consonant with his contemporaries, Pires describes it as recent. Indeed, and as also discussed in 6.3.2, both the Bruneian king-lists and the early Spanish records of Brunei's rulers support an early sixteenth-century conversion event. So too may Pigafetta's 1521 account of two warring Bruneian cities, one Muslim and one pagan. Nicholl, for example, has suggested that this situation hints at recent conversion.<sup>126</sup> But, if Brunei did experience an early sixteenth-century conversion event, what happened to its first Sultanate? Did it end at some point before 1505 and, if so, why?

Ultimately, the evidence is far too meagre to draw any conclusions. Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda's gravestone, however, strongly suggests that Muslim rule continued until at least the mid-1480's. As such, the first two elements of his name, the Malay 'Syeteria' (i.e. 'Ceteria') and 'Pengiran', both indicate a man of noble blood: during this period, 'ceteria' signified a Bruneian noble of the middle rank, while

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<sup>126</sup> See: Nicholl, 'Controversial Issues in Brunei History,' *Archipel* 19 (1980): 39.



‘pengiran’ demonstrated blood-ties with the royal household.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, later Bruneian Muslim culture attributed ‘Maharaja’ to a high ranking official; *silsila* MS B, for example, calls Sultan Aḥmad’s chief official ‘Pengiran Bendhara Seri Maharaja Permaisura’.<sup>128</sup> Given all this, and because Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda’s gravestone is clearly that of a Muslim, a ruling Muslim presence can be demonstrated as late as 1485/6. Moreover, Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda’s gravestone also calls him *khalīfa*.<sup>129</sup> During this period, *khalīfa* commonly referred to a Sufi saint.<sup>130</sup> Consequently, Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda may also have been a high ranking practitioner of Sufism.

But, even though Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda’s gravestone clearly attests to Islam’s still dominated position in 1480’s Brunei, the early European sources are equally clear that by 1505 Brunei had reverted to non-Muslim rule. The available evidence, however, does not speak to how, when or why this happened. Nevertheless, it could be speculated that the earlier interregnum in Muslim rule, especially given its length, could have irreversibly weakening Mahemosha’s ruling house. Non-Muslim elements could have remained strong in Brunei, even after ‘Abd al-Majīd retook the kingdom. Although speculative, if this situation did exist, it could have allowed a set of circumstances to develop which allowed Brunei to backslide into pre-Islamic practices. Indeed, Pigafetta’s account may recall the final stages of that process: a kingdom divided between Islamic and non-Islamic practices. Given the comments made by Huang Shengceng during the 1520’s (see section 6.3.2), these non-Islamic practices were probably Buddhist.

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<sup>127</sup> Ranjit Singh and Jatswan S. Sidhu, *Historical Dictionary of Brunei Darussalam* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), li.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 17

<sup>129</sup> Kalus and Guillot, ‘Inscriptions funéraires islamiques (ire partie),’ *BEFE* 90-1 (2003): 270.

<sup>130</sup> See: Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: Tauris Parke, 2000).

Turning to the circumstances surrounding Brunei's subsequent re-conversion, as noted the European sources are unhelpful on this point, while the Codex provides no relevant information. The *silsilas* and the *Syair Awang Semaun* are therefore our only available sources. As seen in section 6.3.1, however, they fashion conversion from Yūsuf/Maharaja Brunei's biography. As such, they are unreliable. Nonetheless, section 6.3.2 argued that their references to Johor, despite any legitimising function these may have played, could be based on fact. Certainly, the Johor Sultanate existed in c.1514-1515 and did engage in missionary activity. Similarly, because all three sources identify Awang Alak Betatar as the sixteenth-century Sultanate's first ruler, this point may also be accurate. Other than this, however, when and why Brunei converted for the second time remains obscure. But despite these limitations, the *silsilas* do contain some intriguing information about the sixteenth-century Sultanate's second and third rulers. As seen, their king-lists are probably accurate, meaning it is safe to assume these individuals existed. They should therefore be considered further, as they demonstrate possible Chinese and Arabian influence.

Beginning with the possibility of Chinese influence, both versions of the *silsila* link Brunei's second Sultan, Aḥmad, to China: MS A claims he was Awang Alak Betatar's brother who married the daughter of a Chinese Emperor who had settled on Borneo, while MS B claims he was a Chinese official called Ong Sum Peng who, with another official called Ong Bong Kong, travelled to Mount Kinabalu to retrieve a jewel guarded by a dragon. MS A's version of events, however, is very unlikely: no Chinese Emperor ever settled on Borneo<sup>131</sup> and the reference to a Chinese wife probably reflects

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<sup>131</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, the *Ming shi* does record a rumour that Jianwen, Yongle's deposed nephew, fled China in 1402 by heading south. Zheng He's voyages were supposedly sent into the Nusantara to find him. These rumours do not, however, link Jianwen to Borneo. Neither do they appear to be genuine: no Ming-period source suggests Jianwen survived, or that Zheng He was asked to find him. Rather, these claims only appear during the Qing Dynasty, beginning with the *Ming shi* (see: Sandar Molenaar, 'Zheng He: Man and Myth,' Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Oxford [2012], 23).

the Codex's Yūsuf. It is therefore easy to dismiss this version of events. MS B, however, is equally problematic: although both 'Ong Sum Peng' and 'Ong Bong Kong' are authentic Chinese names, correctly rendered in the Hokkien dialect, no official Chinese record of these individuals or their mission exists.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, a dragon-guarded jewel on Mount Kinabalu recalls a brief reference in Wang Dayuan's fourteenth-century text to a Dragon Mountain located somewhere near Brunei.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, Nicholl even argues that Wang Dayuan is the source of MS B's tradition, thereby demonstrating that a genuine Chinese connection underlies the latter.<sup>134</sup> This, however, is far from certain: Wang Dayuan does not mention a jewel or explicitly refer to Mount Kinabalu.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, the possibility should be considered that Wang Dayuan's Dragon Mountain refers to a Nusantara and not a Chinese tradition. Certainly, Wang Dayuan's Dragon Mountain does not appear in any other Chinese source, while tales about Ong Sum Peng and the jewel of Mount Kinabalu (if indeed related to Wang Dayuan's account) are ubiquitous across northern Borneo.<sup>136</sup> This might suggest that Wang Dayuan simply recorded a fourteenth-century Nusantara legend, which later found its way into MS B. It need not therefore indicate that MS B's tradition derives from a Chinese original or, for that matter, has any basis in fact.

Aside from the above, however, there are several other points which more clearly support a sixteenth-century China-Brunei connection. For example, early sixteenth-century China remained a significant (albeit reduced) Nusantara trading partner (see Chapter 2), with early Spanish sources testifying to a significant Chinese

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<sup>132</sup> See the *MSL*.

<sup>133</sup> Wang, *Daoyi zhilüe*, Su (rev. and annot.) (1981), 148.

<sup>134</sup> Robert Nicholl, 'Brunei and Camphor,' *BMJ* 4:3 (1979): 53.

<sup>135</sup> He simply says the Dragon Mountain is 'to the right' of Brunei; because his perspective is unknown, this could be in any direction (Wang, *Daoyi zhilüe*, Su [rev. and annot.] [1981], 148).

<sup>136</sup> Ivor H. N. Evans, *Among Primitive Peoples in Borneo: A Description of the Lives, Habits and Customs of the Piratical Head Hunters of North Borneo, with an Account of Interesting Objects of Prehistoric Antiquity Discovered in the Island* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), 276-277.

commercial presence in Brunei-controlled Manila.<sup>137</sup> Equally, Brunei's sixteenth to seventeenth-century coinage bears apparent traces of Chinese influence. Known as *pitis*, this unique form of currency, and somewhat like the gravestones reviewed the previous section, only employs Chinese decorative motifs, including cloud patterns and a distinctive seated camel motif. Indeed, the latter is rendered in identical form to the camel-handles of Chinese Imperial Seals (like the one given to Tibet in 1324), suggesting a possible link to Brunei's own Imperial Seal.<sup>138</sup> Certainly, the *Dong Xi Yang Kao* of Zhang Xie (written in 1618, but based on earlier material) states that:

The king [of Brunei] has a golden seal, weighing 16 *taels*; on the seal are Chinese seal-characters and on the top is the image of an animal; it is said to be a present from the time of Yongle; when the natives marry, they ask for an impression of this seal on their backs.<sup>139</sup>

Consequently, Brunei's seal was undoubtedly surmounted by an animal design. Whether this was a camel, however, is unclear but possible: seal designs were often standardised across nations of similar rank, and the Imperial Seal given to Siam in 1403 (the only one described by the *Ming shi-lu*) was surmounted by a camel. Although Siam ranked more highly than Brunei, both nations may have been entitled to the same seal because they both belonged to the same region. Significantly, therefore, A. T. Gallop draws attention to the *pitis*'s use of the camel motif as a 'coat-of-arms', or apparent symbol of authority. If indeed based on the camel-handle of an Imperial Seal, this usage would suggest that Brunei's seal continued to constitute a prominent symbol of authority well into the seventeenth century, thereby demonstrating China's sustained political influence and ability to legitimate.<sup>140</sup> Certainly, Zhang Xie testifies to the

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<sup>137</sup> See: Blair and Robertson, ed. *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 4 (1903).

<sup>138</sup> Gallop, 'Tin Coinage of Brunei,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 276-277.

<sup>139</sup> Groeneveldt, 'Notes on the Malay Archipelago,' *VBGKW* 39 (1876): 102.

<sup>140</sup> Gallop, 'Tin Coinage of Brunei,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 278.

seal's ritual importance (including its function as part of the royal regalia), while also implying that the Bruneians remained aware of its Chinese origin (i.e. it was described to him as a present from Yongle). Certainly, if the seal was still perceived as fundamentally Chinese, then its continued importance may have been linked to that identity, since this would have defined it for the Bruneians. This standing could not have been maintained for two hundred years unless China retained a meaningful connection to Brunei. Indeed, because the *pitis* only employ Chinese designs, Gallop believes they were produced by Chinese craftsmen.<sup>141</sup> This is certainly logical, and would perhaps parallel the situation concerning Brunei's fifteenth-century gravestones (see the previous section). Likewise, because the *pitis* (and again paralleling the gravestones) are unique to Brunei, it might also follow that these craftsmen were resident in Brunei itself. As seen, the Spanish testify to Chinese communities elsewhere in Bruneian territory, making this possibility not so far-fetched. Whether this influence was Muslim, however, is unclear – the evidence does not speak to this.

Turning to the third Sultan, Sharīf 'Alī, although Arabs (particularly from Makkah) constitute a common Nusantara literary trope, in this instance Brunei's Sharīf 'Alī appears to have a factual basis: early Spanish sources also testify to his existence, confirming that he was both a *sharīf* (and so of Arab descent) and a Bruneian Sultan. They also claim that he was buried in Sulu, where his grave became an important site of pilgrimage until the Spanish destroyed it in 1628.<sup>142</sup> Because Spanish sources are generally reliable, this constitutes good independent evidence of Sharīf 'Alī's existence. Equally, there is also Alonso Beltran's 1578 comment about Bruneians being descended from Makkans (see section 6.2.1); this otherwise anomalous statement suddenly makes sense if Sharīf 'Alī was a real person. As such, although the evidence is slender, Sharīf

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<sup>141</sup> Gallop, 'Tin Coinage of Brunei,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 278.

<sup>142</sup> Saunders, *History of Brunei* (2002), 42.

‘Alī (or someone similar) may once have existed. As one of Brunei’s first Sultans, he would have helped shape the second Sultanate’s brand of Islam.

## 6.6. Conclusion

To conclude, our discussion has proposed that Brunei experienced two Sultanates. The earliest is now largely forgotten: only the late sixteenth-century Boxer Codex, some Hongwu-period Chinese records, and some scattered archaeological remains testify to its existence. Taking these things together, however, we were able to reconstruct the following: in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, Brunei was invaded by a foreign Muslim called Yūsuf. Perhaps the former ruler of an unidentified location in the western Nusantara, Yūsuf overcame Brunei’s local population and established a Sultanate. Possibly ruling as Maharaja Brunei, he forged close ties with Quanzhou and China’s Muslim communities. Nothing else, however, is known about the kingdom until 1371. In that year, it is mentioned again by the *Ming shi-lu* and the Chinese court historian Song Lian: a Chinese official, called Shen Zhi, was sent to meet its ruler, Mahemosha (Muḥammad Shāh). Shen Zhi persuaded Mahemosha to send tribute to China and renounce his vassalage to Majapahit. When Majapahit heard about this, it strongly disapproved; as with Palembang in 1377, Majapahit retaliated by attacking Brunei and removing Mahemosha from his throne. This, we argued, temporarily ended the first Sultanate; by 1408, Brunei was again ruled by non-Muslims. At some point after 1426, however, or the last point at which the *Ming shi-lu* records a non-Muslim on the throne of Brunei, Mahemosha’s grandson, ‘Abd al-Majīd, and mirroring the circumstances surrounding Samudera-Pasai and Aru, reconquered the kingdom. This restored version of the first Sultanate then persisted until at least 1485/6.

At some point thereafter, however, it began to revert to pre-Islamic (perhaps Buddhist) practices. How these pre-Islamic practices again came to occupy such a prominent position is unclear. We speculated, however, that the first interregnum in Muslim rule could have strengthened the position of Brunei's non-Muslim residents, perhaps allowing for a set of circumstances to develop in which a coup (or some similar form of disruption) could have occurred. Certainly, by 1505 non-Muslim rulers were again in charge. All in all, however, this first Islamic kingdom, and while it lasted, appears to have been established by other Nusantaraans, before coming under heavy Chinese Muslim influence.

Turning to Brunei's second Sultanate, we saw that the early European sources conclusively date its creation to around 1514-1515. The circumstances surrounding this second conversion, however, are opaque: European sources make no comment, while indigenous texts are both late and unreliable. Nonetheless, we found that both *silsilas* and the *Syair Awang Semaun* name the first Sultan as Awang Alak Betatar and attribute conversion to Johori intervention. Both these points, we argued, are plausible. Moreover, the *silsilas* make some interesting comments about Brunei's second and third Sultans, which together may hint at Chinese and Arab influence. The second Sultan's links with China, however, cannot be confirmed, although sixteenth-century Brunei probably did maintain a high regard for China and may have continued to host a significant Chinese community (although whether that included Muslims is unclear). By contrast, the third Sultan, Sharīf 'Alī, was almost certainly of Arab descent, as testified to by the Spanish sources. As such, we can conclude that Middle Eastern people were undoubtedly influential in sixteenth-century Brunei, helping to forge its brand of Islam.

## 7. The Nusantara's Earliest Islamic Influences, as Revealed in its Earliest Surviving Islamic Texts

### 7.1. Introduction

So far, our thesis has pursued a historically-orientated discussion; it has aimed to trace Chinese Muslim influence through a reconstruction of specific conversion events. This chapter, however, marks the first of two that will seek to take a different approach: each will examine a specific aspect of the Nusantara's Islamicate culture to determine what helped shape its conceptualisation, whether Chinese Muslim influence or something else. In this chapter, we will examine early Nusantara Islamic texts – or, more specifically, the early beliefs and practices they contain (or hint at). The emphasis will be on where the latter may have originated. Pre-1620 Nusantara-produced religious texts, however, are very rare.<sup>1</sup> Only a handful of explicitly religious themed texts survive, and which include – but are not limited to – books on kingship (such as the Acehnese *Tāj al-Salāṭin*, 'The Crown of the Sultans,' written in 1603),<sup>2</sup> Qur'anic commentaries (such as MS Or. li.6.45, a c.1604 commentary on Sūra al-Kahf currently held in Cambridge),<sup>3</sup> law codes (such as the fifteenth-century *Undang-Undang Melaka*, or 'Laws of Melaka') and mystical texts (such as the sixteenth-century *Kitab Bonang*,

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<sup>1</sup> Early European texts contain no information about the Nusantara's first Islamic practices. Indeed, only one early European reference exists to a possible Nusantara-based Islamic practice: Tomé Pires briefly refers to Javanese *tapas* (holy men who remained celibate, did not eat rice or drink wine) who, he claims, were greatly venerated by both Hindus and Muslims. Although this might hint at ascetic (i.e. Sufi) practices, it is so vague as to remain largely unhelpful (see: *SO*, 177).

<sup>2</sup> Bukhari al-Jauhari, *Tāj al-Salāṭin*, ed. Khalid Hussain (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966). The *Undang-Undang Melaka* and *Kitab Bonang* are referenced below, in their respective sections.

<sup>3</sup> P. Riddell, 'Camb. MS. Or. li.6.45: The Oldest Surviving Qur'anic Commentary from Southeast Asia,' *Journal of Quranic Studies* 16:1 (2014):120-139.



‘The Book of Bonang’). Indigenous historical texts, however, also hint at the beliefs and practices of the people they describe and/or were written by. As such, and taking all these indigenous religious and historical texts together, we will examine the following (in chronological order): the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, the *Sejarah Melayu*, the *Kitab Bonang*, an untitled Javanese work on Muslim ethics, a possible sixteenth or seventeenth-century *silsila* contained in the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, and the work of the region’s earliest pre-1620 scholars (notably Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sāmaṭrānī).

Although a broad and wide-ranging sweep of the region’s most important early religious and historical texts, this selection must necessarily fall short of being entirely comprehensive. Most notably, it leaves out the aforementioned *Tāj al-Salāṭin* and early Qur’anic commentary; this is primarily because of the difficulties associated with accessing these texts. Nevertheless, the works which have been selected are undoubtedly sufficient for a detailed and accurate picture of the Nusantara’s early Islamic beliefs and practices. Ultimately, we will demonstrate that these selected pre-seventeenth-century Nusantara Islamic texts were all heavily exposed to Persianate culture (notably via Central Asia). This exposure is evidenced by the early translation of Persian texts, frequent references to the Persian cultural area and the practice of Ishrāqī (or Illuminationist) Sufism (notably the Kubrawī). While much of this Persian influence could have arrived via India, a Chinese origin (where most Muslims were from Persia/Central Asia) is also possible. By 1620, however, Persian trends diminish markedly; from Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī onwards, Persian influences are replaced by Arabic ones, apparently introduced and maintained via direct contact with the Middle East.

## 7.2. The Nusantara's Earliest Islamic Texts

### 7.2.1. The *Hikayat Raja Pasai*

As discussed in Chapter 3, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* is (at the very least) early fifteenth century. Unfortunately, however, the text contains no clear exposition of religious matters, whether legal, theological, doctrinal or mystical. Indeed, the only point at which Islam garners any attention is during the conversion account (see Chapter 3). This, however, is heavily mythologized; in no way can it be considered a systematic espousal of what its authors did (or did not) believe. Nonetheless, upon closer examination, it (and other pertinent features) may reveal a number of important points.

At the centre of the conversion account sits a magical dream, during which Merah Silu (Samudera-Pasai's first Muslim ruler) encounters the Prophet. The latter renames him al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and (after spitting in his mouth) gives him the ability to recite both the *shahāda* and the Qur'ān.<sup>4</sup> This last point is potentially significant: M. Laffan notes that it parallels a miracle associated with 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d.1165), the traditional founder of the Qādirī *ṭarīqa*. According to 'Abd Allāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfi'ī's biography of this individual (entitled *Khulāṣat al-mafākhir fī 'ikhtisār manāqib al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir*), the Persian-speaking 'Abd al-Qādir gained fluency in Arabic in much the same manner. Laffan therefore argues that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account is evidence of early Qādirī influence.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, this conclusion would be logical for a number of other reasons: the Qādirī was one of the first *ṭarīqa* to penetrate the Nusantara (see section 7.2.6) and al-

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<sup>4</sup> HRP, 3-13.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 5.

Yāfi'ī studied under a man called Abū 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Jāwī. As argued in previous chapters, al-Jāwī was an early fourteenth-century Yamanī Sufi and Shāfi'ī scholar with probable links to the Nusantara.<sup>6</sup> As such, he may constitute a connection between al-Yāfi'ī, the Qādirī and Shāfi'ī Samudera-Pasai. Indeed, during the fifteenth century, the Qādirī *ṭarīqa* predominated in North Africa.<sup>7</sup> As seen in Chapter 2, Samudera-Pasai's first three Muslim rulers (al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, al-Malik al-Zāhir and al-Malik al-Mansūr) appear to have been named after near-contemporary Middle Eastern rulers, two of them Egyptian. This again reinforces the possibility of a connection, as might the Red Sea trade route's pre-eminence during this period (see Chapter 2). This trade route began in Egypt, before going to Aden (near to where al-Jāwī was active) and then the Nusantara.

At face value, the above appears compelling: some good evidence points towards a Nusantara-Middle East/North Africa link. But, whether it entails a conduit for Qādirī influence is uncertain. First, it is unclear whether al-Jāwī was a member of the Qādirī; al-Yāfi'ī does not explicitly describe him as such, only mentioning him in the context of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. Second, although it is unclear why Samudera-Pasai's first three rulers named themselves after their Egyptian counterparts, it certainly need not suggest a Qādirī link. Third, no other potential traces of Qādirī thought exist in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. Indeed, there is no evidence of any Nusantara-based Qādirī activity prior to Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī (see section 7.2.6); his late sixteenth to early seventeenth-century writings actually testify to the novelty of Qādirī teachings during that later period. If the Qādirī *ṭarīqa* had been present in the region since the fourteenth century, this would be difficult to explain. Fourth (and lastly), during the fourteenth century the al-Jāwī *nisba* was very rare – indeed, the above individual is the only known example

<sup>6</sup> See: R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, 'Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 185-208.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: Tauris Parke, 2000), 71-72.

from that period (see Chapter 2). This suggests any link between the two regions was not profound, casting doubt upon whether it was capable of shaping religious practices.

Consequently, and in the context of the Indian Ocean's post-eleventh century segmentation (Chapter 2), although al-Jāwī almost certainly testifies to a Middle East-Nusantara link, how strong this was and whether it was linked to the Qādirī is unclear. Indeed, as A. Hill notes, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* uses very little Arabic vocabulary/phraseology.<sup>8</sup> This suggests possible unfamiliarity with Arabic, which is difficult to reconcile with the possibility that Islam was mediated to Samudera-Pasai from the Arab world (as the above implies). It certainly does not support the possibility of early Samudera-Pasai scholars accessing an Arabic texts like al-Yāfi'ī's.

As noted in Chapter 3, however, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* testifies to another avenue of influence: Persian. As such, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s central theme revolves around the Persian concept of kingship.<sup>9</sup> Equally, several of its episodes are borrowed from the Persian text, *Hikāyat Amīr Ḥamza*.<sup>10</sup> As such, and in the context of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who testifies to an early fourteenth-century Persian presence in the kingdom, it seems that Persian influence may have been strong. Indeed, despite some good evidence for Arab influence, Persian influence was probably far more profound; not only does it shape many key concepts in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, but even the word *hikayat* is originally Persian.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai: A Revised Romanised Version of Raffles MS67, Together with an English Translation,' trans. A. H. Hill, *JMBRAS* 33:2 (1961): 29.

<sup>9</sup> V. I. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 183-184.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

### 7.2.2. The *Undang-Undang Melaka*

The *Undang-Undang Melaka* ('The Laws of Melaka') purports to be an Islamic legal code established by Melaka's first Muslim ruler. More than fifty manuscript versions currently survive, testifying to its former popularity.<sup>11</sup> Apparently exported throughout the region, it was frequently enlarged and adapted to the needs of others, thereby creating six distinct recensions of the text.<sup>12</sup> In 1976, Liaw Yock Fang undertook an extensive study of these different recensions, producing a critical edition. This is utilised here. Given the ostensibly Islamic nature of the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, it may provide an insight into early Islamic practices, particularly if its interpretation of the *sharī'a* can be tied to a particular *madhhab*.

The *Undang-Undang Melaka*'s preface attributes the text's origin to the reign of a Sultan Iskandar Shāh, 'the first ruler to open up [and convert] the land of Melaka, bearing the title of Sultan Maḥmūd Shāh.'<sup>13</sup> Liaw claims that this is the *Sejarah Melayu*'s Muḥammad Shah (r.1424-1444), who that text also credits with converting and enlarging Melaka.<sup>14</sup> If so, the above preface essentially dates the *Undang-Undang Melaka*'s origins to the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The *Sejarah Melayu*, however, is not a reliable source; its conversion account is probably early seventeenth century and therefore unlikely to be accurate (see Chapter 4). As such, if the *Undang-Undang Melaka* contains the same tradition, it may simply be evidence that this text also dates from the early seventeenth-century, when the *Sejarah Melayu* and its traditions first emerged.

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<sup>11</sup> Liaw Yock Fang, 'Naskah Undang-Undang Melaka: Suatu Tinjauan,' *Sari* 25 (2007): 86.

<sup>12</sup> These are: the Foundational (or Pokok) Version, the Acehnese Version, the Patani Version, the Panjang Version, the Johor Version and the Islamic Version (Ibid, 86).

<sup>13</sup> *UUM*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> *SM*, 120-121.

But significantly, the *Undang-Undang Melaka*'s brief portrayal of Melaka's first Sultan is not exactly the same as the *Sejarah Melayu*'s. According to the latter, Muḥammad Shāh's personal name was Raja Qāsim (not Iskandar Shāh) and he was succeeded by Raja Ibrāhīm (not, as the *Undang-Undang Melaka* claims, Muẓaffar Shāh).<sup>15</sup> These differences raise a possibility. As seen in Chapter 4, the *Suma Oriental*'s account of Melaka is probably the most faithful; it also attributes conversion to Melaka's second ruler, and like the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, calls that ruler Iskandar Shāh (r.1414-1424) while also claiming that he established Melaka's greatness and was succeeded by Muẓaffar Shāh.<sup>16</sup> Despite no mention of the title Maḥmūd/Muḥammad Shāh, these two narratives correspond very well. Consequently, they may represent the same, early sixteenth-century tradition. Indeed, the *Undang-Undang Melaka*'s preface mentions Melaka's final ruler, Maḥmūd Shāh (r.1488-1511), and gives the impression that he was active when the text was written: having inherited the laws from a previous period, he now exercised supreme authority over them (*ialah yang mempunyai 'adat dan hukum dan perintah datang sekarang ini*).<sup>17</sup> As a result, it seems that the *Undang-Undang Melaka* may date from Maḥmūd Shāh's reign, while preserving something earlier. The latter could, if associated with Iskandar Shāh, be something from the first quarter of the fifteenth century. As such, the original *Undang-Undang Melaka* could be a very early and potentially important text.

As Liaw's study demonstrates, however, all surviving versions of the *Undang-Undang Melaka* are hybrid texts, evolved over many centuries.<sup>18</sup> In other words, although perhaps originating with a fifteenth or sixteenth-century text, they also incorporate later material. Nonetheless, after careful examination Liaw believed he

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<sup>15</sup> *UUM*, 64.

<sup>16</sup> *SO*, 241-243.

<sup>17</sup> *UUM*, 64.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 31-32.

could identify the original sections. First, he pointed to *fasal* 1 to *fasal* 3; these comprise decrees about the duties of high officials and the restriction to royalty of both the colour yellow and the use of five specific words (*patik, titah, murka, kurnia* and *nugraha*).<sup>19</sup> Liaw does not elucidate why he chose these three *fasal* as original, but their essential points are also contained in the *Sejarah Melayu*, where they are again associated with rules introduced by Muḥammad Shāh.<sup>20</sup> If they are accepted as early, however, it is significant that they contain no hint of Islamic influence. The rules regarding dignitaries, for example, all stem from Malay tradition, as do the language restrictions.<sup>21</sup> The prohibition against wearing yellow, on the hand, has no parallel in earlier Malay tradition, but is not Islamic either. If anything, it recalls a similar Chinese prohibition, restricting yellow to the Emperor.<sup>22</sup> Given the influence China had over early Melaka (see Chapter 4), coupled with the fact that Melaka's first three rulers all visited the country (Iskandar Shāh going twice), Malay imitation of Chinese customs would be unsurprising.

After *fasal* 3, some versions of the *Undang-Undang Melaka* speak about the Sultan augmenting the above laws by collecting various criminal codes (*dihimpunkan hukum ini*) stored by the ministers (*terhimpun pada-pada segala menteri*).<sup>23</sup> Precisely which Melakan Sultan did this is unclear, but the version of the text preserved in the Farquhar 10 manuscript (dated to 1741)<sup>24</sup> identifies Muḥammad Shah. As to which laws were collected, some manuscripts (notably Leiden's 1827 Cod. Or. 1705 [1] and 1839 Cod. Or. 1706 [1]) identify the next nine *fasal*. Others, however, such as Leiden's KL. 67 C (dated 1848) and Jakarta's Bat. Gen. 154 (dated 1846), identify the next nineteen.

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<sup>19</sup> *UUM*, 67.

<sup>20</sup> *SM*, 122-123.

<sup>21</sup> R. J. Wilkinson, 'The Malacca Sultanate,' *JMBRAS* 13:2 (1935): 28-29.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> *UUM*, 32.

<sup>24</sup> This is one of the earliest surviving copies of the *Undang-Undang Melaka*. It is kept at the Royal Asiatic Society in London (*Ibid*, 32).

After examining the text, Liaw sides with the latter opinion: up to *fasal* 23 (but excluding *fasal* 16 and 18, below), he notes a consistency in style and content suggestive of unified authorship. He therefore argues that this section of the text was also composed during the Melaka sultanate, terming it the ‘*Undang-Undang Melaka* proper.’<sup>25</sup>

Examining the ‘*Undang-Undang Melaka* proper’ in more detail, ‘*adat* (or local custom)’<sup>26</sup> evidently occupies a far more prominent position than the *sharī‘a*. Thus, ‘*adat* rulings are always given first, and in more detail. By contrast, the ‘laws of God’ come last and are always elucidated very simply and briefly – if anything, they are merely noted as an alternative to more established, pre-Islamic customs. Indeed, in the first twenty-three *fasal*, Islamic rulings are only referred to six times: in *fasals* 5.3, 7.3, 8.2-3, 11.4, 12.2 and 14.1-2. Furthermore, it is impossible to determine whether any particular *madhhab* underlie these references; on each occasion, only a general Qur’anic punishment is given, common to all *madhhabs*.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, not all these punishments are given accurately: *fasal* 14.2, for example, states the *sharī‘a* punishment for false testimony in adultery cases is a fine followed by an oath, rather than the correct eighty lashes.<sup>28</sup> This kind of fundamental error, coupled with a general unfamiliarity with Islamic legal principles, indicates a society in the very early stages of Islamisation; Islam, it seems, had barely begun to shape traditional society. Indeed, it is also noteworthy that very few Arabic words occur in the first twenty-three *fasal*. Most of these are gathered into *fasals* 16 and 18, which utilise a plethora of Arabic terms while discussing the specifically *sharī‘a* issues of unauthorised agents (*ḥukm fuḍūlī*) and the

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<sup>25</sup> *UUM*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> See: *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), s.v. ‘Adat Law.’

<sup>27</sup> Such as for murder (*fasals* 5.3, 7.3 and 8.2-3), theft (11.4), sexual misconduct (12.2), and swearing oaths (14.1-2).

<sup>28</sup> See *sūra* 24 (*al-Nūr*), *āya* 4.



option of rescission (*khiyār*). Liaw, however, argues that these two *fasal* are not part of the original text: their use of Arabic and reliance on detailed knowledge of the *sharī'a* suggests a different (and probably later) author.<sup>29</sup>

All in all, the above suggests that the author(s) of the '*Undang-Undang Melaka* proper' had received only limited exposure to classical Islamic texts and terminology. Certainly, and like the author(s) of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, they do not seem to have known Arabic. Furthermore, the absence of a strong Islamic legal tradition might imply that the Muslims who brought Islam to Melaka were comparatively unconcerned with *sharī'a*. This, however, is speculation: first, it is unclear what the lack of a legal tradition might imply about the Muslims who brought Islam to the Nusantara while, second, what role (if any) those who brought Islam to Melaka played in the construction of the *Undang-Undang Melaka* is also uncertain. It should also be considered that later parts of the text are far more Islamic in tone. As such, the *Undang-Undang Melaka's* marriage laws (*fasal* 25 to 28) are a direct translation of Shāfi'ī legal texts, notably the *Kitāb al-taqrīb* of Abū Shujā' (d.1196).<sup>30</sup> Liaw speculates that these sections may date from Maḥmūd Shāh's reign – although, ultimately, he has very little to rest this on. Nonetheless, a Shāfi'ī intellectual lineage would be entirely consistent with the previous discussion: as seen in Chapters 3 and 4, Samudera-Pasai converted Melaka and, since the early fourteenth century, when Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited the region, had been following the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. Equally, the *Sejarah Melayu* contains numerous references to Melaka's deference to Samudera-Pasai religious opinion. It would therefore make sense if Melaka, perhaps from the point of its conversion onwards, used Shāfi'ī law. Indeed,

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<sup>29</sup> *UUM*, 32-33.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 34-35. Liaw speculates that it could also have been the *Fath al-Qarīb* of Ibn al-Qāsim al-Ghazzī (d.1512), a commentary on Abū Shujā' (d.1196). This interpretation is also supported by: Tan Sri Datuk Ahmad Mohamad Ibrahim, Mahmud Saedon Awang Othman and Mohd. Kamal Hassan, 'Islamization of the Malay Archipelago and the Impact of Shafi'i's *Madhhab* on Islamic Teachings and Legislation in Malaysia,' 8-10. Paper presented to the International Symposium on Imam Shafi'i, Petaling Jaya, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> August 1990. Available at: <http://www.lib.iium.edu.my>. (Accessed on: 10/01/2012).

an incomplete copy of Abū Shujā‘’s text, with an accompanying Javanese translation, was brought back to the Netherlands in 1610.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, that text was circulating through the Nusantara early on in the latter’s Islamic history.

To summarise, the earliest sections of the *Undang-Undang Melaka* demonstrate little knowledge of *sharī‘a*. Perhaps dating from the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, they are primarily concerned with *‘adat*. Islamic rulings, if included at all, are only brief references (and not always accurate). Later sections of the text, however, demonstrate a greater awareness of (specifically Shāfi‘ī) Islamic law.

### 7.2.3. The *Sejarah Melayu*

Like the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, the *Sejarah Melayu* does not contain a systematic account of its authors’ beliefs and practices. There are, however, a number of intriguing references to them. But, before discussing these, it must be considered that the *Sejarah Melayu* is, like the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, a hybrid text; its first half is an early seventeenth-century collection of Johori traditions, while the second half (dealing exclusively with Melaka’s final ruler, Maḥmūd Shāh) is an early sixteenth-century text written by a member of Melaka’s court (see Chapter 4). As such, while the second half is potentially a first-hand account of Melakan Islam, the first half is more likely to represent Islam as it was understood in late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Johor. Given the latter’s relationship to Melaka, however, Johori traditions could easily represent a continuation of the situation in Melaka. As such, they are still worthy of consideration. Nonetheless, to maintain a clear chronology, the earlier (i.e. second) section of the text will be dealt with first.

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<sup>31</sup> KB, 1-2.

The *Sejarah Melayu*'s second half begins with a somewhat disparaging assessment of Malay religious knowledge. Just prior to Maḥmūd Shāh's enthronement, it mentions the Bendahara Paduka Raja's nephew, Tun Muḥammad. He is described as 'learned for a Malay' (*jikalau duduk pada jumlah Melayu, ialah alim*), but nonetheless possessing only a little (*sedikit*) knowledge of Arabic grammar and syntax (*saraf nahu*), canon law (*fiqah*) and theology (*usul*).<sup>32</sup> This suggests two things: first, Melaka was not steeped in Islamic learning and, second, what learning it did possess was relatively uncontroversial – the three referred-to religious disciplines are all conventional aspects of Islamic learning, with no mention of anything potentially heretical. As a general picture, all this links well with the *Undang-Undang Melaka*: its Islamic content, although sparse, is also uncontroversial and demonstrates only limited knowledge of Arabic, the *sharī'a* and Islamic doctrine.

After Maḥmūd Shāh's enthronement, a religious teacher is described arriving in Melaka 'from above the wind' (i.e. from the west).<sup>33</sup> Called Mawlānā Sada Jahān, the *Sejarah Melayu* gives him the Arabic title, *makhdūm*.<sup>34</sup> In Arabic, this commonly denotes a teacher of *sunna*;<sup>35</sup> this would fit with the type of knowledge Tun Muḥammad possessed. It is unlikely, however, that Mawlānā Sada Jahān was an Arab: 'Jahān' is a Persian name that, during this period, was commonly used in the Persian influenced areas of north-east India (notably Punjab, Sind and Gujarat) and Central Asia. Indeed, the title *makhdūm* was also most commonly used in those regions, where it had come to denote a Sufi *shaykh*.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, it was far more commonly used there than in the Middle East. Consequently, Mawlānā Sada Jahān may have been a Sufi from either of these

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<sup>32</sup> *SM*, 206.

<sup>33</sup> This description re-occurs in the *Sejarah Melayu*: Raja Ibrāhīm (Muḥammad Shāh's youthful successor) was overthrown with the help of a Mawlānā from 'above the wind' (Ibid, 133).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>35</sup> Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 59.

<sup>36</sup> *SM*, 59.

two regions; given Pires's statement about Melaka's Indian merchants being predominantly Gujarati (see Chapter 4), Mawlānā Sada Jahān may have been from there.

But his origin notwithstanding, the *Sejarah Melayu*'s depiction of Mawlānā Sada Jahān is significant. Initially, he is described as a great scholar, who instructed the king, his son and all the nobles.<sup>37</sup> This glowing praise, however, is short lived: all three subsequent references to him are very unfavourable. As such, soon after his arrival, the Sri Rama accuses him of opportunism, of only coming to Melaka to seek a fortune.<sup>38</sup> Then, while teaching Arabic, Mawlānā Sada Jahān's students persistently mock him for poor Malay pronunciation.<sup>39</sup> Lastly, during the Portuguese siege, he is accused of cowardice after wishing to flee the battle while everyone else stayed firm.<sup>40</sup> Although none of these incidents tell us about Mawlānā Sada Jahān's or Melaka's brand of Islam, they are significant for overturning a later Malay literary trope – namely, a deep-seated reverence for early Islamic (predominantly Arab) teachers from the west. This suggests two things: first, this section of the *Sejarah Melayu* probably pre-dates the development of that trope (reinforcing the idea that it is old) while, second, Melaka's first Muslims did not look up to their West Asian co-religionists in the same way as later Malays did. Why is unclear, but it suggests that Melaka's early Muslims did not feel as indebted to that region as their later successors.

From Maḥmūd Shāh's reign, two additional incidents are worth mentioning. First, Melaka reputedly sent a religious question to Samudera-Pasai. This concerned a dispute between the scholars of *Muwara annahar* (i.e. Transoxiana, comprising Bukhara, Samarkand, etc.), Iraq and Khurāsān about which saying was correct:

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<sup>37</sup> SM, 248.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 267.

‘whoever declares God to be the Creator and Preserver to Eternity is an infidel,’ or ‘whoever declares God is not the Creator and Preserver to Eternity is an infidel.’<sup>41</sup> Precisely which religious debate this refers to is unclear but, if the eternal ‘Creator and Preserver’ of the Qur’an is intended, the reference may be to the Mu‘tazila-Ash‘arī schism about whether the Qur’an is created or eternal. The latter, however, was not localised to the stated areas and occurred principally during the eighth and tenth centuries (whereas the *Sejarah Melayu* gives the impression it was ongoing).<sup>42</sup> But nonetheless, even without knowing precisely what this question refers to, the incident suggests two things: first, Melaka looked up to Samudera-Pasai in religious matters while, second, Melaka was actively interested in Islam as it believed that religion was understood and expressed in the Persian cultural area.

This last point links with the final incident in Maḥmūd Shāh’s reign: during Melaka’s siege, two Islamic texts were read out, to inspire its defenders. These were the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*.<sup>43</sup> As seen, the first of these underpins the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*; it was therefore certainly circulating in the Nusantara during the fifteenth century (although the earliest surviving Malay copy dates to 1736). Concerning the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*, although not mentioned in Malay before the *Sejarah Melayu*, the earliest surviving Malay copy was brought back from Aceh to England in 1604.<sup>44</sup> As such, it is amongst the earliest surviving Malay Islamic texts and may therefore have been around during the fifteenth century (although this

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<sup>41</sup> SM, 249-250.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ‘Abbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 61-62.

<sup>43</sup> At the very beginning of the *Sejarah Melayu* another text is mentioned: the *Hikayat Iskandar Zhul-Qarnayn*. Although this reference falls in the later part of the text, because Melaka’s first Muslim ruler called himself Iskandar, with the subsequent dynasty (in common with other Malay royal houses) tracing its ancestry back to Iskandar Zhul-Qarnayn (i.e. Alexander the Great), it has been argued that this text was amongst the first Islamic works to enter the city. Significantly, therefore, it is also Persian (see: R. O. Winstedt, ‘The Date, Authorship, Contents and Some New MSS. of the Malay Romance of Alexander the Great,’ *JMBRAS* 16 [1938]: 1-23).

<sup>44</sup> R. O. Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969), 105-106.

cannot be positively proven). Nevertheless, the earliest surviving Malay example of each text is a direct translation of a Persian original. For example, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* is a Malay translation of the Persian *Qissa-yi Amīr Ḥamza*;<sup>45</sup> it even preserves some sections in the original Persian (notably in the preface and amongst some of the main verses).<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, there is also an Arabic version of the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, which differs from the Persian; the Malay text, however, shows no awareness of it.<sup>47</sup> Of the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*, this is again a Malay translation of a Persian original (and which bears the same name). In this case, the Persian original is a Shī‘a text: the historical Muḥammad Ḥanafī (the son of ‘Alī and a slave girl) occupies only a minor position in Sunni Islam, but has been elevated to the position of *mahdī* by some Shī‘a groups.<sup>48</sup> The Malay translation, however, is notable for altering the Persian text to reduce its Shī‘a tendencies (although otherwise both are the same).<sup>49</sup>

Turning to the *Sejarah Melayu*’s first half, as mentioned above, this is essentially a collection of early seventeenth-century Johori traditions. Although these may take root in genuine Melakan events, their depiction of Islam probably reflects the later period. Nevertheless, three incidents are worth mentioning,<sup>50</sup> all attributed to the reign of Manṣūr Shāh (in to which the *Sejarah Melayu* tends to gather all significant events, perhaps implying this chronology is doubtful). The first involves a Mawlānā Abū Bakr, a religious teacher who arrived in Melaka by ship, carrying a book called *al-Durr al-Manẓūm* (‘The String of Pearls’).<sup>51</sup> Although this title is common amongst Sufi texts, the precise identity of both this man and his book remains unknown – although

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<sup>45</sup> Winstedt, *History of Classical Malay Literature* (1969), 96.

<sup>46</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 179.

<sup>47</sup> Winstedt, *History of Classical Malay Literature* (1969), 96.

<sup>48</sup> Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History of Doctrine of Twelver Shi‘ism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 36.

<sup>49</sup> *The Story of Muhammad Hanafiyah: A Medieval Muslim Romance*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 16, trans. L. F. Brakel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 5.

<sup>50</sup> The *Sejarah Melayu*’s conversion account is not mentioned because it is borrowed from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (see Chapter 4).

<sup>51</sup> SM, 183.

the Raffles 18 manuscript claims the book was sent to Samudera-Pasai for exposition (hinting at the same kind of religious indebtedness seen above), no more information is forthcoming. G. J. Drewes, however, speculates that the title may hint at a work by al-Ghazālī (d.1111), but nothing conclusively proves this.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, John Leyden's translation of the *Sejarah Melayu* (made in c.1810 from a now lost 'long version' of the text, apparently owned by a Tamil scribe from Penang called Ibrāhīm Munshi)<sup>53</sup> attributes the *al-Durr al-Manẓūm* to a Mawlānā Abū 'Ishāq, supposedly a Sufi 'from above the winds.' Mawlānā Abū Bakr was his disciple who, after mastering the *al-Durr al-Manẓūm*, was sent to Melaka to preach Abū 'Ishāq's work. According to this version of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the *al-Durr al-Manẓūm* was a treatise on the essence, attributes and actions of God, a description which would aptly fit a Sufi work.<sup>54</sup> As such, and if this version of events is correct, Melaka may have experienced a Sufi-oriented connection with western Islamic regions. Ultimately, however, because the original Malay text Leyden worked with is missing, his rendering cannot be checked. Indeed, because this tradition is absent from Raffles 18 (commonly thought to be the basis of all long versions) it may be an addition from the seventeenth century or later.

Nonetheless, a possible Abū Bakr-Sufi connection is also apparent in the second incident: the *qāḍī* of Melaka (called Yūsuf) reputedly had a vision of Abū Bakr, in which the latter was surrounded by light 'like the wick of a candle is surrounded by its flame' (*seperti sumbu dian yang dikeliling apinya*).<sup>55</sup> Although this could simply be a generic description, designed to emphasize Abū Bakr's otherworldliness, it is reminiscent of the light imagery used by many Ishrāqī Sufi groups. Ultimately taking

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<sup>52</sup> Cited in: Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam* (2011), 6.

<sup>53</sup> Virginia Matheson Hooker and M. B. Hooker, 'Introduction,' in *The Malay Annals*, trans. John Leyden (Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2010), 33-34.

<sup>54</sup> *The Malay Annals*, trans. John Leyden (Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2010), 202-203.

<sup>55</sup> SM, 185.

inspiration from the Persian mystic Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191),<sup>56</sup> Ishrāqī Sufis utilise a Qur’anic passage in which the Light of God is compared to a candle burning in a glass lantern, placed in a niche in the wall. The lantern and its candle are taken as metaphors for the heart of the true believer; when the latter attains enlightenment, God’s Light shines from them.<sup>57</sup> By the fifteenth century, many (mostly Persian and Indian) Sufi groups had adopted this imagery to express their mystical philosophies, subsequently building a variety of practices around the idea of light and its connection with God.<sup>58</sup> Although the *Sejarah Melayu* does not contain enough information to connect Abū Bakr to a particular *ṭarīqa*, its use of this candle motif when describing Yūsuf’s vision suggests a possible connection to the Suhrawardī, or some similar group. Indeed, an Ishrāqī presence in the Nusantara is further supported by another, very early Malay text: called the *Hikayat Nur Muhammad*, it deals with the Prophet Muḥammad’s pre-existence as the light of Prophecy, from which the universe was created.<sup>59</sup> These are classic Ishrāqī themes. The earliest known Malay copy of this text, kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, dates to the early seventeenth century and is a direct translation of a Persian original.<sup>60</sup> It should also be noted that the Suhrawardī were strongly Shāfi‘ī; if Melaka also adhered to this *madhhab*, a Suhrawardī presence might be all the more likely.<sup>61</sup>

Turning to the final incident from the first part of the *Sejarah Melayu*, after Mawlānā Abū Bakr’s arrival (but not as a result of it) Manṣūr Shāh sent an official to Samudera-Pasai. Called Tun Bija Wangsa, he went to ask whether those sent to Hell abide there forever. Samudera-Pasai’s chief scholar, called Tun Makhdūm Mua,

<sup>56</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 73.

<sup>57</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Arkana, 1989), 50-51.

<sup>58</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 73-75.

<sup>59</sup> Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 602-603.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 743.

<sup>61</sup> A. A. Suvarova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: The Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2004), 133.



initially answered in the affirmative. One of his students, however, called Tun Hasan, derided this answer as too simplistic; he provided an alternative, which all agreed was better (although it is not reproduced in the *Sejarah Melayu*).<sup>62</sup> Again, this account provides a clear sense of religious indebtedness to Samudera-Pasai. Additionally, however, A. Johns notes that eternal damnation was a common topic during the fifteenth century, finding its most popularly expression in the *Insān al-Kāmil* of Baghdadī mystic, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (1365-1428).<sup>63</sup> Al-Jīlī was not only a member of the Qādirī, but also an important proponent of Neo-Platonism, a follower of the doctrine of the Perfect Man proposed by Ibn ‘Arabī (d.1240) and, later on, al-Fanṣūrī’s primary inspiration (see section 7.2.6).<sup>64</sup> As such, Johns believes the *Sejarah Melayu*’s reference to eternal damnation may well come from al-Jīlī and (by extension) the Qādirī. If so, it links with Laffan’s argument just discussed.

There are, however, problems with Johns’s interpretation. First, al-Jīlī was by no means the only author to tackle eternal damnation; the *Sejarah Melayu*’s brief reference to this issue could easily have originated from elsewhere. Second, it is also possible that this part of the text reflects early seventeenth-century Johori tradition. If so, it would post-date al-Fanṣūrī, meaning any use of al-Jīlī may simply reflect the same intellectual trends al-Fanṣūrī accessed, not something earlier. Indeed, Aceh (where al-Fanṣūrī lived) attacked and subdued Johor in 1613 and 1615, shortly after the order to write the *Sejarah Melayu* was given.<sup>65</sup> This could have provided an opportunity for al-Jīlī’s thought to enter the text via seventeenth-century North Sumatra.

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<sup>62</sup> SM, 183-184.

<sup>63</sup> A. H. Johns, ‘Muslim Mystics and Historical Writings,’ in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 41.

<sup>64</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 107.

<sup>65</sup> Leonard Y. Andaya, ‘Aceh’s Contribution to Standards of Malayness,’ *Archipel* 61 (2001): 41.

## 7.2.4. Two Early Javanese Islamic Texts

### 7.2.4.1. The *Kitab Bonang*

Turning to Java, two early texts are worth considering: the *Kitab Bonang* and an early (untitled) code of Muslim ethics. Beginning with the *Kitab Bonang*, since 1870 the only known manuscript copy of this work has been kept at the University of Leiden, as Cod. Or. 1928. Initially, however, it was in the possession of Bonaventura Vulcanius, Leiden's Professor of Greek between 1578 and 1614.<sup>66</sup> It is unknown precisely how he obtained it, but one of his pupils, Damasius van Blijenburg, was connected with Holland's first two Nusantara-bound expeditions (conducted between 1595 and 1600).<sup>67</sup> Consequently, it may have come to Vulcanius through him, arriving in Holland in either 1597 (when the first expedition returned) or 1600 (when the second returned).

As to where the text came from originally, who wrote it and when, this is all uncertain. Both Dutch expeditions based themselves in Banten, from where they proceeded to East Java (notably Sidayu, near Surabaya) and then (in the case of the second) the Spice Islands.<sup>68</sup> *Kitab Bonang*'s postscript attributes authorship to Sunan Bonang, Tuban's local saint. Whether this is correct or not, if the postscript's author felt motivated to claim it, an East Javanese origin may be likely.<sup>69</sup> A Bantenese origin, however, is equally possible: Sunan Bonang's authorship is only mentioned in the postscript, with the rest of the text giving the impression that the author was actually a man called Seh Bari.<sup>70</sup> Although this person's identity is unclear, another (albeit later)

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<sup>66</sup> *KB*, 1.

<sup>67</sup> M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 30-31.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 31-32.

<sup>69</sup> *KB*, 1-2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*.

Javanese text (a *primbon* from Wanayasa, Leiden Cod. Or. 7475) describes him as a religious scholar from Banten.<sup>71</sup> If accurate, this implies that the text came from there, especially given that the Dutch spent most of their time in the city. As seen in Chapter 5, Banten converted after Pires's visit in 1513. This implies that the *Kitab Bonang* was written after that date, but before the first Dutch expedition in 1595. At the very least, therefore, the text must be late sixteenth century. Although this post-dates Demak's expansion by more than a century, it still represents Java's earliest known Islamic text.

In terms of content, the *Kitab Bonang* is a collection of discourses (Drewes speculates they may have originally been sermons) on a common theme: the principles of *usul suluk*, or mysticism. Ultimately, the text aims to describe the mystic's obliteration in (or unification with) God's Being, as attained through God's Grace. The result of this unification is that God comes to replace the sense organs of the mystic (meaning the latter comes to see through God, hear through God and so on).<sup>72</sup> The origins of this discourse are readily spelled out – the text attributes them to Seh Bari's study of al-Ghazālī (specifically, an unknown text called *usul suluk*).<sup>73</sup> Indeed, knowledge of al-Ghazālī would be unsurprising: he was popular throughout the Islamic world. Moreover, he was also a Shāfi'ī jurist,<sup>74</sup> if sixteenth-century Java already followed this *madhhab*, it may have facilitated the introduction of al-Ghazālī's work. It is also notable that Seh Bari may have been Persian (or of Persian descent): the second part of his name appears to be the *nisba*, al-Bārī, linking him to the Persian city of Bār, in the area of Khurāsān.<sup>75</sup> Mention of Khurāsān immediately recalls the *Sejarah*

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<sup>71</sup> KB, 11-12.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 18-19.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>74</sup> Ebrahim Moosa, 'Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111),' in *Islamic Legal Thought: A Compendium of Muslim Jurists*, ed. Oussama Arabi, David S. Powers and Susan A. Spectorosky (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 275.

<sup>75</sup> KB, 11.

*Melayu's* concern with religious questions from that area (although these do not reappear here).

Significantly, the *Kitab Bonang's* espousal of al-Ghazālī's mysticism is done in direct and explicit opposition to Ibn 'Arabī's. The latter believed the mystic (in common with all creation) was an extension of God's Essence, as something which had grown out of it, like a seed. This perception resulted in a pantheistic philosophy, considered by many to be heretical (and commonly termed Wujūdī).<sup>76</sup> That the *Kitab Bonang* explicitly rejects this position, however, and in favour of the more conventional al-Ghazālī, suggests to Laffan an attempt to enforce orthodoxy. He also believes it implies a rejection of al-Jīlī (as Ibn 'Arabī's main fifteenth-century proponent). Laffan therefore speculates that Ishrāqī thought was preferred, as this constituted an opposing school to the Wujūdī. The text, however, reveals no direct evidence of this.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, any attempt to enforce orthodoxy potentially links with the conventional types of Islamic knowledge revealed in the other texts.

It should be noted, however, that P. Zoetmulder disputes the *Kitab Bonang's* conventional nature because, in his opinion, it also draws on al-Ḥallāj. The latter famously referred to the annihilation of man's Inner Self in God's Being, resulting in an exchange of roles, where God uses the tongue of man to praise Himself.<sup>78</sup> This position does indeed resemble the *Kitab Bonang's* mystical philosophy, but has traditionally been viewed as heretical. Al-Ḥallāj, however, is never mentioned in the *Kitab Bonang*. Equally, the idea of man's annihilation in God, resulting in an exchange of roles, finds expression in more orthodox sources, too. For example, a *ḥadīth qudsī* found in al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-riqāq* No.38) contains a similar idea, in which the believer is

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<sup>76</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 83.

<sup>77</sup> Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam* (2011), 9.

<sup>78</sup> P. J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature: Islamic and Indian Mysticism in an Indonesian Setting*, ed. and trans. M. C. Ricklefs (Leiden: KITLV, 1995), 300-308.

described drawing closer to God through worship until ‘I [God] am his hearing by which he hears and his sight by which he sees.’<sup>79</sup> As Drewes notes, numerous early mystical texts utilised this *ḥadīth*, opening plenty of alternative routes via which this idea could have reached the *Kitab Bonang*.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, there is no need to assume that al-Ḥallāj was being utilised. Rather, the *Kitab Bonang* probably represents a conventional brand of mysticism, based on the work of al-Ghazālī.

#### 7.2.4.2. An Untitled Code of Muslim Ethics

Turning to the second Javanese text, the untitled code of Muslim ethics, since 1860 the only known manuscript of this work has been kept at the *Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea*, in Ferrara.<sup>81</sup> Prior to this, the text’s history is unknown; almost certainly, however, it predates 1860 by a considerable period. As such, it is written on strips of palm leaf (and one copper plate) in an archaic form of Javanese akin to the early seventeenth-century *Pararaton* (see Chapter 5). These facts alone indicate an early date. Additionally, however, the text seems to address a newly converted audience, amongst which numerous pre-Islamic customs survived. Taken together, these points indicate the text was likely written during the sixteenth century, at the very latest.<sup>82</sup>

Dealing with its contents, the text systematically sets out how a Muslim should behave, with particular emphasis on the inner disposition necessary for a righteous life (and as instilled by religious education). Helpfully, it lists the three written sources which influenced its construction: al-Ghazālī’s *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*; the eleventh-century *Rawḍat al-‘ulamā’* of al-Bukhārī, an ethical work which considers the Islamic practices

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<sup>79</sup> *KB*, 24.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 25-26.

<sup>81</sup> *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethics*, ed. and trans. G. W. J. Drewes, *Bibliotheca Indonesica* 18 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), 1-2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 2-3.

of Bukhara and Samarkand,<sup>83</sup> and an unknown source called *Maṣābiḥ Maḥāṭiḥ*. Drewes speculates that the latter may be the *Maḥāṭiḥ al-Rajā' fī sharḥ Maṣābiḥ al-Dujā* of al-Aqūlī al-Wāsiṭī (d.1394), a commentary on the work of Abū Muḥammad Farrā' al-Baghawī (d.1117 or 1121), a Central Asian Shāfi'ī jurist and *ḥadīth* specialist.<sup>84</sup> Aside from the similarity in name, however, there is nothing specific to support this conclusion. Nonetheless, the known influences plainly hint towards the same trends observed above: all the sources relate to the Persian cultural area, with particular attention being paid to Central Asia. The knowledge on display is also very conventional, as in other sources. But, the cited works are all Arabic texts, with no evidence they had been translated into Malay (or another language) at this point. Consequently, unless unknown translations subsequently emerge, whoever wrote this code of Muslim ethics probably knew Arabic. This stands in contrast to trends witnessed above.

#### 7.2.5. The *Hikayat Hasanuddin*

The *Hikayat Hasanuddin* was discussed in Chapter 5; a reliable historical text produced in the seventeenth century, it could also contain information relevant to this discussion. Indeed, its account of Sunan Gunung Jati's early sixteenth-century trip to Makkah and Madīna (supported by contemporary Portuguese sources, see Chapter 5) includes a *silsila* detailing his fellow students and teachers. The most recent, identifiable name on this *silsila* is mid-sixteenth century (discussed shortly), suggesting this part of the text may have originally been written around that time. Given its subject matter, it is therefore worth considering.

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<sup>83</sup> Ashirbek Muminov, 'Dihqāns and Sacred Families in Central Asia,' in *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet*, ed. Kazuo Morimoto (London: Routledge, 2012), 204.

<sup>84</sup> *Code of Muslim Ethics*, ed. and trans. Drewes (1978), 4-6.

Beginning with the *silṣila*'s comments about Sunan Gunung Jati's Madīnan studies, it claims he was taught there by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī. The latter reputedly initiated him into the Shādhilī, Shaṭṭārī and Naqshbandī *ṭarīqa*.<sup>85</sup> This account, however, is impossible: although Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī was a real person (he was a Mālikī jurist who taught at al-Azhar and was the grand master of the Shādhilī *ṭarīqa*), he died in Cairo in 1309.<sup>86</sup> Clearly, therefore, Sunan Gunung Jati could not have studied under him. Equally, Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī has never been associated with either the Shaṭṭārī or Naqshbandī *ṭarīqa*.<sup>87</sup> It also seems that none of these three *ṭarīqa* were practiced in the Nusantara prior to the mid-seventeenth century: 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkīlī (1615-1693) was the first to seriously introduce the Shaṭṭārī,<sup>88</sup> while Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Maqassārī (b.1627) introduced the Naqshbandī.<sup>89</sup> The Shādhilī *ṭarīqa*, on the other hand, although practiced, has never been widespread in the Nusantara; there is no evidence for it during the sixteenth century.<sup>90</sup> But, although all this is long after Sunan Gunung Jati, it is before the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* was written. It is therefore possible that this part of the text reflects the intellectual currents from which it emerged and which its author attempted to trace to Banten's local saint (presumably to increase either the saint's or the intellectual currents' legitimacy).

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<sup>85</sup> *HH*, 138.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn 'Aṭā'illah al-Iskandari, *The Book of Aphorisms* (Kitāb al-Hikam), trans. Muhammad Nafih Wafy (Petaling Jaya: Islamic Book Trust, 2010), vii; x.

<sup>87</sup> See: Al-Iskandari, *Book of Aphorisms*, trans. Wafy (2010).

<sup>88</sup> Azymardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: Asian Studies Association of Australia, Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 85.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>90</sup> Rather, the earliest possible connection comes from Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (active in Aceh between 1637 and 1644). He may have known of the Shādhilī through his teacher, Bā Shaybān. But even if so, al-Rānīrī was never initiated into it, making it unlikely he practiced it (*Ibid*, 56-57).

Turning to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s account of Sunan Gunung Jati's Makkan studies, there he reputedly studied under a Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā.<sup>91</sup> Unlike Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī, this name appears in numerous Javanese texts; often corrupted to Jumadil Kubra, its owner's precise identity varies. For example, the eighteenth-century *Babad Cirebon* makes him the grandfather of the Wali Songo (notably of Sunan Gunung Jati, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Ampel).<sup>92</sup> The oldest and most prevalent traditions, however, associate him with Gresik: a late seventeenth-century *silsila* belonging to the Shaṭṭārī master 'Abd al-Muḥyī (of Pamijahan, south of Tasikmalaya) lists Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā as Sunan Giri's grandfather. This claim is repeated in an unnamed and undated Gresik chronicle, described and summarized by J. Wiselius in 1876.<sup>93</sup> Although not mentioned in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* text utilised in Chapter 5, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā appears in a variant version (called the *Babad Pajajaran*) as Sunan Ampel's cousin, who lived an ascetic life in the jungle near Gresik.<sup>94</sup> Finally, T. Stamford Raffles preserves a Gresik tradition in which Sunan Ampel:

visited Sheik Molana Jomadil Kobra, a devotee who had established himself on Gunung Jali [in Gresik], and who declared to him that his arrival at that particular period had been predicted by the prophet; that the fall of paganism was at hand, and that he was elected to preach the doctrine of Mahomet in the eastern ports of Java.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *HH*, 137.

<sup>92</sup> Cited in: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra, Jumadil Kubra and Jamaluddin al-Akbar: Traces of Kubrawiyya Influence in Early Indonesian Islam,' *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 320.

<sup>93</sup> J. A. B. Wiselius, 'Historisch Onderzoek naar de Geestelijke en Wereldlijke Suprematie van Grisse op Midden en Oost Java Gedurende de 16e en 17e Eeuw,' *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 23 (1876): 458-509.

<sup>94</sup> Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Tinjauan Kritis tentang Sejarah Banten: Sumbangan bagi Pengenalan Sifat-sifat Penulisan Sejarah Jawa* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1983), 262.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2 (London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817), 117.



Although all different, a common theme emerges with the above accounts: Jumadil Kubra/Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā consistently appears as Java's earliest Muslim preacher, often as an ancestor to the Wali Songo. Most (and the earliest) of the sources also associate him with Gresik, suggesting a probable link with that city. The *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s account, however, differs from these: it identifies Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā as Sunan Gunung Jati's Makkan teacher. Nonetheless, it is still manifesting a tendency to trace Javanese Islam to this figure, only in a different way. This fact, and some other aspects of the *silsila*, suggest this Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā is worthy of further consideration.

Two interpretations of the Makkan section of Sunan Gunung Jati's *silsila* exist. The first originates with the Nusantara's Ḥaḍramī community, and was briefly recounted in Chapter 1. To re-cap, members of the Banī 'Alawī (most recently M. Naquib al-Attas) have assumed that 'al-Kubrā' is a mistake for 'al-Akbār.' On this basis, they identify Jumadil Kubra with the fifteenth-century Ḥaḍramī *sayyid*, Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī al-Akbār (or Jamāl al-Dīn al-Akbār al-Ḥusaynī). This individual was reputedly the grandson of an 'Abd al-Malik, a descendent of Aḥmad al-Muhājir (the first *sayyid* to settle in the Ḥaḍramawt, and progenitor of the Banī 'Alawī). According to Ḥaḍramī tradition, 'Abd al-Malik left Yemen for Nasrabad (India) during the late fourteenth century, where he settled and had a son called al-Amīr Aḥmad Shāh Jalāl. The latter became the father of Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī al-Akbār. Whereas Ḥaḍramī traditions fall silent after this point, al-Attas goes further to claim that Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī al-Akbār migrated to Champa during the early fifteenth century, where he had a son called Zayn al-Akbār. Together with his father, Zayn al-Akbār travelled throughout the Nusantara and eventually settled on Java, where he fathered the various Sunan (thereby making Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī al-Akbār their grandfather, as Jumadil

Kubra is in the *Babad Cirebon*).<sup>96</sup> Al-Attas bases these claims on an (undated) marginal note in the eighteenth-century *Silsilah Keturunan Raja-Raja Palembang*.

As covered in Chapter 1, the above interpretation is very suspect: the tradition al-Attas presents is very late and underpinned by doubtful evidence. Indeed, it was not voiced until the twentieth century, when Sayyid ‘Alawī ibn Ṭāhir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Haddār al-Ḥaddād (d.1962) first produced it.<sup>97</sup> One of the first Nusantara Ḥaḍramīs to try and record his community’s genealogy, al-Ḥaddād had very little evidence to support his claims.<sup>98</sup> The *Silsilah Keturunan Raja-Raja Palembang*’s marginal note was his principle source but, ultimately, nothing more than an undated addition to a late text. Indeed, as noted by A. Knysh, even when early records do exist in the Yemen, fourteenth to fifteenth-century Ḥaḍramī historiography is particularly patchy; a lacuna opens up, into which much imagination has been poured.<sup>99</sup> Consequently, no *a priori* reason exists to suppose the events described occurred – that ‘Abd al-Malik existed, that he migrated to India and/or had the family attributed to him. But, if this renders this first interpretation suspect, the second is far more convincing.

As originally proposed by M. van Bruinessen, Jumadil Kubra/Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā could be a reference to the thirteenth-century Central Asian Sufi of the same name. Active in Khwarazm until his death in 1221, this Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā founded the Ishrāqī-orientated Kubrawī *ṭarīqa*.<sup>100</sup> Originally, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā had been a member of the Suhrawardī *ṭarīqa* before developing his own interpretation of al-Suhrawardī’s teachings. He began to visualise the believer as a light emanating from God’s Light; through meditation (during which visions of coloured light were

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<sup>96</sup> Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011), 84; 90.

<sup>97</sup> Van Bruinessen, ‘Najmuddin al-Kubra,’ *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 325.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 326.

<sup>99</sup> Alexander Knysh, ‘The Sada in History: A Critical Essay on Hadrami Historiography,’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9:2 (1999): 215-216.

<sup>100</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 79.

experienced), it was possible for the believer's luminous being to pass back into (i.e. merge with) God's Attributes.<sup>101</sup> From this interpretation, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā developed the eponymous Kubrawī *ṭarīqa*.

Although Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā pre-dates Sunan Gunung Jati (meaning the latter could not have studied under him either), that he is the man referred to is rendered likely by the other names on the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila*. As such, aside from Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā and Sunan Gunung Jati, the Makkan section of this *silsila* provides its Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā with a full spiritual genealogy back to the Prophet and lists a further twenty-seven names, all supposedly representing Sunan Gunung Jati's fellow students.<sup>102</sup> Beginning with the spiritual genealogy, this is indeed an accurate rendition of the historical Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā's *silsila*. The latter has two branches, one going back to the Prophet through the Sufi Ismā'īl al-Qaṣrī, and the other going back to the Prophet through the Suhrawardī Sufi, 'Ammār ibn Yāsir al-Bidlīsī.<sup>103</sup> The *Hikayat Hasanuddin's* version only contains the branch going back through Ismā'īl al-Qaṣrī, but (excluding a few minor errors) reproduces it correctly.<sup>104</sup> Of the twenty-seven additional names, only eleven are identifiable; although none are contemporary to Sunan Gunung Jati (or each other), they are all members of two separate lines of the Hamadānī branch of the Kubrawī (named after 'Alī al-Hamadānī, d.1384, the most prominent member of this branch of the order).<sup>105</sup>

Ultimately, the above suggests that whoever wrote the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila* had more than just a passing knowledge of the Kubrawī *ṭarīqa*. He apparently had access to accurate, detailed information about its founder and subsequent practitioners, which he felt compelled to link to his local saint. But, whether this simply

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<sup>101</sup> Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (2000), 80.

<sup>102</sup> *HH*, 137.

<sup>103</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra,' *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 306.

<sup>104</sup> *HH*, 137.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 137-139; Van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra,' *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 306.

means the historical Sunan Gunung Jati was a member of the Kubrawī is unclear. Rather, it is more significant that Javanese historiography is replete with references to Jumadil Kubra/Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, always as a very early (if not the earliest) Muslim practitioner on the island. This suggests that the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila*, rather than providing a literal record of Sunan Gunung Jati's spiritual heritage, is a continuation of (and the key to understanding) the other Javanese texts: together, they hint at Kubrawī influence over early Javanese Islam. This may, of course, mean that Sunan Gunung Jati was a member of this *ṭarīqa*, as too may have been the other Sunan reputedly descended from Jumadil Kubra/Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā. But equally, it could simply entail that, when the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* was written, association with the Kubrawī acted as a key legitimising device. Moreover, because most of the texts (including the earliest) associate Jumadil Kubra/Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā with Gresik, any reference to the Kubrawī may be an allusion to that city's brand of Islam. Certainly, as argued in Chapter 5, Gresik was amongst Java's earliest (and most powerful) Islamic polities, capable of spreading its influence across the eastern parts of the island.

With regards to the duration of any Kubrawī influence on Java, as mentioned the *silsila* records two lines of the Hamadānī *ṭarīqa*. One of these terminates with 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Jāmī (d.1555/6), the other with Aḥmad al-Shinnāwī (d.1619).<sup>106</sup> As discussed below, al-Shinnāwī's line probably represents a later attempt to revive the Kubrawī; any meaningful Nusantara-based Kubrawī activity therefore probably ended with the other line (i.e. after the mid-sixteenth century). Certainly, given the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* is a late seventeenth-century text, if any significantly later practitioners existed, they should perhaps be mentioned.

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<sup>106</sup> *HH*, 137-139.

### 7.2.6. Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and Later Scholars

Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī is the Nusantara's first identifiable Islamic scholar. He is also the first to leave us with a substantial, systematic body of work. Very little, however, is known about him. Although his *nisba* suggests he came from Fansur (modern-day Barus, in north Sumatra), little else is certain. As outlined below, he apparently travelled to the Middle East (notably Makkah and Baghdad) and his work demonstrates a preoccupation with Wujūdī.<sup>107</sup> As explained above, the latter is a Neo-Platonist mystical philosophy which argues for a unity between God and His creation, which is thought to have emanated from Him in a series of stages. Besides this intellectual preoccupation, however, most other aspects of al-Fanṣūrī's biography remain unresolved – including when he was active. This, however, is an important issue to resolve; doing so will help situate al-Fanṣūrī amongst the other texts. It is therefore necessary to begin with this matter.

Traditionally, scholars have placed al-Fanṣūrī's death in the reign of Aceh's Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh (r.1588-1604). This is based on a number of considerations. First, one of al-Fanṣūrī's poems appears to be dedicated to this ruler, suggesting he survived into that period.<sup>108</sup> Second, during the later reign of Iskandar Muda (r.1607-1636), Aceh's *Shaykh al-Islam*, Shams al-Dīn al-Sāmaṭrānī (d.1630), mentions al-Fanṣūrī; some have argued that al-Sāmaṭrānī's references indicate the two men knew each other.<sup>109</sup> If so, however, they seem to have belonged to different generations: although both share a preoccupation with Wujūdī, they conceive of it

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<sup>107</sup> See: Hamzah Fansuri, *The Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. G. W. J. Drewes and L. F. Brakel, Bibliotheca Indonesica 26 (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986).

<sup>108</sup> The relevant poem calls the ruler it is dedicated to *Shāh 'Ālam*; this was a title applied to Sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh (cited in: Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdiyyah of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Aceh*, Monographs of the Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society No. III [Singapore: Malaysian Printers Ltd., 1966], 44).

<sup>109</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 53.

differently. Al-Fanṣūrī relies on Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Jīlī and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī to argue that creation emerged from the Absolute Reality of God in a five-stage emanation;<sup>110</sup> al-Sāmaṭrānī, however, refers to a seven-stage emanation.<sup>111</sup> This difference is significant: a seven-fold emanation was not suggested until 1590, when it appeared in the *al-Tuḥfa al-mursala ilā rūḥ al-Nabī* of the Gujarati Sufi, Muḥammad ibn Faḍlillāh al-Burhānpūrī.<sup>112</sup> Al-Sāmaṭrānī’s utilisation of this theory means he had access to this text (implying it reached the Nusantara not long after its completion). Al-Fanṣūrī, however, makes no mention of a seven-fold emanation, even in order to refute it. This suggests unawareness of the concept. If so, and as suggested by G. Drewes, al-Fanṣūrī may have died in c.1590 – that is, either shortly before or after al-Burhānpūrī’s work reached the Nusantara.

Although this is plausible, Sir James Lancaster’s 1602 account of Aceh should also be considered. In that year, Lancaster visited Aceh as Britain’s envoy. While there, he negotiated a treaty with two nobles, one of whom he described as a ‘wise and temperate’ man who held great favour with the king and knew Arabic fluently.<sup>113</sup> Simply identified as Aceh’s ‘chiefe bishope,’ it has been suggested that this was al-Fanṣūrī: it is too early to be al-Sāmaṭrānī (who did not rise to prominence until Iskandar Muda’s reign) and no other Acehnese religious figure of this stature is known from the

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<sup>110</sup> See: Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986).

<sup>111</sup> Al-Sāmaṭrānī’s position is well stated in an anonymous seventeenth-century Acehnese text, published by Johns. In all likelihood, if this text was not the work of al-Sāmaṭrānī himself, it was produced by one of his disciples (see: A. H. Johns, ‘Malay Sufism, as Illustrated in an Anonymous Collection of Seventeenth Century Tracts,’ *JMBRAS* 30:2 [1957]: 31).

<sup>112</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 41.

<sup>113</sup> While his deputy was a man of the ‘most ancient nobilitie,’ who also knew Arabic but was of a lesser standing (James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591-1603*, ed. William Foster [London: The Hakluyt Society, 1940], 96). Azra believes this could have been al-Sāmaṭrānī. Interestingly, Englishman John Davies (who visited the Nusantara between 1598 and 1603) also refers to the ‘archbishop’ of Aceh: favoured by the king, the people called him a Prophet and he was allowed to wear separate apparel from everyone else (see: John Davies, *The Voyages and Works of John Davies*, ed. Albert Hastings Markham [London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880], 151).

period.<sup>114</sup> If so, this means al-Fanṣūrī died during the early seventeenth century. But, whether during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, if this traditional view of al-Fanṣūrī is correct, it places him at the very end of this discussion's timeframe. Intellectually, he would therefore sit after the above texts.

Since 2000, however, the above view has come under increasing scrutiny. In that year, C. Guillot and L. Kalus published a French article detailing a discovery made in 1930's Makkah.<sup>115</sup> Throughout the 1930's, the director of Cairo's Museum of Arab Art, Gaston Wiet, had been attempting to compile a complete record of Makkah's early epigraphy. His ultimate aim was to publish the collected material as a book, entitled *Corpus d'Inscriptions de la Mecque*. He died, however, before being able to complete his task; as a result, his research never appeared. Nevertheless, at the end of the twentieth century, Guillot and Kalus gained access to his notes, amongst which they discovered a copy of an inscription made by Wiet's assistant, Hassan Mohammad el-Hawary. In 1934, el-Hawary had visited Makkah and, in the city's *Bāb al-Ma'lā* cemetery, copied and photographed a gravestone dated the 9<sup>th</sup> Rajab 933AH/11<sup>th</sup> April 1527, and which bore the name Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>116</sup> According to the accompanying epitaph, this Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī was '*al-Shaykh al-ṣāliḥ* [i.e. the devoted Shaykh], a servant of God, [and] a *zāhīd* [i.e. ascetic],' and bore the title *Sayyidinā*. All this identifies him as a high ranking Sufi. Furthermore, the inscription calls him *al-shaykh al-murābiṭ*, which Guillot and Kalus interpreted to mean a '*combattant de la frontière*.'<sup>117</sup> As such, they felt Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī came from the very edge of the Islamic world. As a result, and despite their record of the inscription being Wiet's copy of el-Hawary's own copy (the latter's photograph had

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<sup>114</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 53.

<sup>115</sup> This article has since been translated into Indonesian: Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, 'Batu Nisan Hamzah Fansuri,' *Jurnal Terjemahan Alam dan Tamadun Melayu* 1 (2009): 27-49.

<sup>116</sup> Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, 'La stèle funéraire de Hamzah Fansuri,' *Archipel* 60 (2000): 5-6.

<sup>117</sup> Guillot and Kalus, 'La stèle funéraire de Hamzah Fansuri,' *Archipel* 60 (2000): 6.

disappeared, and no rubbing was ever made), Guillot and Kalus argued that the grave almost certainly belonged to the Nusantara's Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī.

This conclusion, since taken up by a number of prominent scholars,<sup>118</sup> has profound implications: if correct, al-Fanṣūrī would date from the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, or contemporary to the later stages of the Melakan Sultanate. If so, both he and the intellectual trends he represents would predate much of the above material. Indeed, Guillot and Kalus attempt to bolster this argument with a range of other facts. For example, al-Fanṣūrī never mentions Aceh by name, and is never himself mentioned by any Acehese chronicle. It cannot therefore be proven he was linked to that kingdom.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, al-Sāmaṭrānī does not explicitly say he knew al-Fanṣūrī (he only mentions him)<sup>120</sup> and Lancaster's 'chief bishope' goes unnamed.<sup>121</sup> Consequently, neither can be used to conclusively link al-Fanṣūrī to late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century Aceh. Lastly, Guillot and Kalus note that Jāmī is al-Fanṣūrī's most recent source. Jāmī, however, died in 1492. If al-Fanṣūrī lived a full century after this figure, Guillot and Kalus find it hard to believe that he did not use more recent material (al-Sāmaṭrānī, for example, uses the much more recent al-Burhānpūrī).<sup>122</sup> But, even considering these additional points, Guillot and Kalus's argument fails to convince.

Although al-Fanṣūrī never refers to Aceh by name, he almost certainly operated within its cultural confines: not only is one of his poems apparently dedicated to an Acehese ruler (above), but he frequently utilises many Acehese words without explaining them and employs numerous allegorical images common to Acehese

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<sup>118</sup> For example: Feener and Laffan, 'Sufi Scents,' *Archipel* 70 (2005): 185-186.

<sup>119</sup> Guillot and Kalus, 'La stèle funéraire de Hamzah Fansuri,' *Archipel* 60 (2000): 14.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



craftsmen.<sup>123</sup> These points suggest that he was familiar with Acehese culture and expected his audience to be so, too. The latter makes it entirely plausible that he was writing for an Acehese audience. Indeed, although he is not mentioned in any Acehese chronicle, broader Acehese tradition does link al-Fanṣūrī to the kingdom. Specifically, it locates his grave at the southernmost tip of Aceh, in Kampung Oboh (in Simpang Kiri, Rudeng).<sup>124</sup> If this is correct, it would refute any possibility that al-Fanṣūrī was buried in Makkah.

Turning to al-Sāmaṭrānī's vagueness about whether he knew al-Fanṣūrī, this cannot be said of another figure: the lesser-known Sumatran scholar, Ḥasan al-Fanṣūrī. This individual implies that al-Fanṣūrī was his teacher (calling him *ustaz kami*) and taught him *dhikr* (the Sufi's ritualised remembrance of God). Although Ḥasan's precise dates are unknown, he also utilises al-Burhānpūrī's work. Consequently, he must post-date 1590.<sup>125</sup> But, if al-Fanṣūrī died in 1527 and Ḥasan was his pupil, the latter must have lived into his nineties and only finalised his concept of Wujūdī at the very end of his life. Although this is technically possible, it is unlikely – few lived that long during this period. It is far more probable that al-Fanṣūrī lived closer to 1590, thereby allowing (the therefore much younger) Ḥasan to be his pupil and, a few years later, absorb influences from al-Burhānpūrī.

This issue of scholarly influences also raises the time lag between al-Fanṣūrī and the last source he uses. As noted by V. Braginsky, however, this point is largely irrelevant: al-Fanṣūrī utilises the concept of a five-fold emanation, which has its final theorisation in the work of Jāmī. Consequently, al-Fanṣūrī is simply quoting the

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<sup>123</sup> Vladimir I. Braginsky, 'On the Copy of Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph Published by C. Guillot & L. Kalus,' *Archipel* 62 (2001): 29-30. Braginsky also covers some of the issues tackled here in: Vladimir I. Braginsky, 'Towards the Biography of Hamzah Fansuri. When Did Hamzah Live? Data from his Poems and Early European Accounts,' *Archipel* 57 (1999): 135-175.

<sup>124</sup> Braginsky, 'Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph,' *Archipel* 62 (2001): 28.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

originator of the ideas he favours; al-Sāmanṭrānī does the same when he refers to al-Burhānpūrī. None of this necessarily reflects when al-Fanṣūrī was writing, only what was intellectually important to him.<sup>126</sup>

In addition to these points, Guillot's and Kalus's argument is also rendered problematic by the fact that some of al-Fanṣūrī's poems state they were written in the 'season of the white man [*orang putih*].'<sup>127</sup> Malay writers did not use the term *orang putih* until the arrival of the Dutch and the English in the very late sixteenth century; any earlier than this, and they would refer to Europeans as either *pertugan* or *peringgi* (from the Arabic *faranjī*, meaning 'Franks').<sup>128</sup> As such, this suggests that al-Fanṣūrī must have been writing at the end of the sixteenth/beginning of the seventeenth century, just as has traditionally been thought.<sup>129</sup>

With all this in mind, it is significant that the (now almost certainly) late sixteenth-century al-Fanṣūrī represents something new in the Nusantara: an Arabic speaking, Wujūdī-orientated Qādirī Sufi. As such, al-Fanṣūrī not only followed the unconventional Wujūdī brand of Sufism, drawing upon Ibn 'Arabī, al-Jīlī and Jamī, but

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<sup>126</sup> Braginsky, 'Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph,' *Archipel* 62 (2001): 26.

<sup>127</sup> See: Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986).

<sup>128</sup> Al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdīyyah* (1966), 9.

<sup>129</sup> If this means Guillot's and Kalus's argument can be dismissed, how is the Sufi *shaykh* Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī to be explained? In short, this name could be a misreading. As noted by Braginsky, the article by Guillot and Kalus analyses this object's inscription using on a copy of a copy, with no further research (such as someone going to Makkah to find the grave) to determine whether el-Hawary and/or Wiet copied the inscription correctly (Braginsky, 'Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph,' *Archipel* 62 [2001]: 22-24). Indeed, even if there is little reason to suppose Wiet made a copyist's error, el-Hawary could easily have done so – he was, after all, working quickly in the midst of a busy cemetery. Certainly, and as Braginsky also notes, many other *nisba* could, with the misplacement of a diacritical mark or reproduction of a wrong letter, be mistaken for 'al-Fanṣūrī' (Ibid, 23). For example, during this period North Africa's premier Sufi centre was Manṣūra. This gives the *nisba* 'al-Manṣūrī' which, when written in Arabic, potentially needs just a single misplaced dot to be transformed into 'al-Fanṣūrī.' Indeed, a consideration of Manṣūra in this context is significant because Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī is also described as an *al-shaykh al-murābiṭ*. As Guillot and Kalus note, *murābiṭ* at one time referred to a person who, while being dedicated to the defence of Islam, lived on the edge of the Islamic world. By the sixteenth century, however, its usage had altered; it now signified a Sufi saint, thereby connecting with Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh al-Fanṣūrī's gravestone. But regardless of the sense in which it was used, *murābiṭ* has always been a primarily North African term. By contrast, and as noted by C. Majul, it has never been widely used in the Nusantara, where the term *khanqah* has traditionally been preferred for a Sufi saint (Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (1999), 82). The application of *murābiṭ* therefore suggests a North African context. Consequently, and given the similarity between the *nisbas* 'al-Manṣūrī' and 'al-Fanṣūrī,' Ḥamza bin 'Abd Allāh may well have been from Manṣūra.

also (and like al-Jīlī) was a member of the Qādirī *ṭarīqa*<sup>130</sup> (although no known Qādirī *silsila* preserves his name).<sup>131</sup> All this represents a significant break with earlier trends: the earliest texts favoured more conventional Ishrāqī strains of thought (the *Kitab Bonang* perhaps being a direct attack on Ibn ‘Arabī) and, despite some speculation about Qādirī influence in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu*, there is no trace of this *ṭarīqa* elsewhere. Al-Fanṣūrī also breaks with previous trends by demonstrating excellent knowledge of Arabic: innumerable Arabic quotations and technical terms litter his work.<sup>132</sup>

This does not mean, however, that older trends disappear with al-Fanṣūrī – the impression of Persian culture, for example, can still be seen. As such, al-Fanṣūrī’s poetry is essentially an impersonation of Persian *ghazal* poetry. He also uses Persian quotations throughout his work, making it clear that he knew this language, too.<sup>133</sup> In fact, overall al-Fanṣūrī demonstrates a far profounder knowledge of Persian literature than of Arabic. The vast majority of his Arabic quotations are Qur’anic, with some from the *ḥadīth*, while his Persian quotations come from a very diverse range of sources, including the Sufis al-Bistāmī (d. 874), Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910) and al-Ḥallāj (d. 922).<sup>134</sup> He even accessed al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* through its Persian abridgement, *Kimiya-i sa’adat*.<sup>135</sup> It therefore seems that he kept up connections with the Persian cultural sphere.

After al-Fanṣūrī, al-Sāmaṭrānī is the only other pre-1620 Nusantara scholar about which something substantial is known. As seen, he also ascribed to a Wujūdī-

<sup>130</sup> Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986), Poem XVI.

<sup>131</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Origins and Development of the Sufi Orders (*tarekat*) in Southeast Asia,’ *Studia Islamika* 1:1 (1994): 6.

<sup>132</sup> Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdīyyah* (1966), 45-46.

<sup>135</sup> Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986), 14.

orientated mysticism, but modified al-Fanṣūrī's position with al-Burhānpūrī's work.<sup>136</sup> He therefore demonstrates closer links to India. But, and like al-Fanṣūrī, he also knew Arabic and had good knowledge of Middle Eastern scholarship (although it is unclear whether he travelled to the Middle East). Persian influence, however, becomes less marked in his work, suggesting a further drift away from that area.<sup>137</sup>

Although little else is known about early seventeenth-century Acehnese (or wider Nusantara) religious thought, the few texts which do survive indicate al-Fanṣūrī and al-Sāmaṭrānī's Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern connections became widespread.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, during the rest of that century, and despite a post-1630's decline in Wujūdī fortunes, greater connectivity with Indian and Arabic scholarship became a basic principal of Nusantara scholarship. All late seventeenth-century scholars (like al-Rānīrī, al-Singkilī and al-Maqassārī) demonstrate this link; all were fluent Arabic speakers and had spent time studying in the Middle East and/or India. While in those places, they became the first known Nusantara-based members of *ṭarīqa* which would later dominate the region (notably the Makkan-based Shaṭṭārī and Indian-based Naqshbandī orders).<sup>139</sup> By contrast, examples of Persian thought (including Ishrāqī Sufism) began to disappear. It therefore seems that, beginning with al-Fanṣūrī, the late sixteenth century saw a process start which would eventually bring Nusantara intellectual life into close contact with Arabic and Indian thought, while gradually moving away from the Persian cultural sphere.

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<sup>136</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 42.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>138</sup> See: Johns, 'Anonymous Collection of Seventeenth Century Tracts,' *JMBRAS* 30:2 (1957): 1-110.

<sup>139</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 57; 71; 87-88.

### 7.2.7. Summary

During the preceding discussion, we have seen a definite pattern emerge: the Nusantara's earliest Islamic texts carry clear indications of Persian influence. By contrast, not until Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī does convincing evidence for widespread Arabic (coupled later with Indian) influences appear.

Taking each text in turn, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* demonstrates very little knowledge of either Islam or Arabic; religious matters go undiscussed, while Arabic vocabulary remains sparse and frequently poorly used. Laffan, however, has argued that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion account is linked to the Qādirī tradition. His argument, however, is very speculative. Rather, many of the text's key concepts (like its idea of kingship) are derived from pre-Islamic Persian originals. It also seems that the text was written in light of the Persian *Hikāyat Amīr Ḥamza*; the latter apparently constitutes a model for the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s construction. Access to this Persian learning, however, implies knowledge of the Persian language and contact with Persian/Persian-influence peoples.

Moving on to the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, like the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* this also demonstrates scant Islamic learning. Nevertheless, it almost certainly indicates Melaka was Shāfi'ī from very early on. By also including a law that prohibits anyone other than the ruler from wearing yellow, it may also hint at Chinese influence. Turning to Melaka's other key text, the *Sejarah Melayu*, this likewise contains little in the way of profound Islamic learning. Its second (and more reliable) half, however, demonstrates an interest in Persian texts and religious questions which it associates with Central Asia. It also names a religious scholar, Mawlānā Sada Jahān, who may have been Indian (perhaps Gujarati). Regarding the text's first half, this contains possible traces of Ishrāqī

Sufism: it names a Sufi scholar, Abū Bakr, who is described in terms reminiscent of Ishrāqī-orientated Sufism. Although no specific *ṭarīqa* is identified, one possibility would be the Suhrawardī. If so, it is significant that the latter was strongly Shāfi‘ī; this could tie in with the *Undang-Undang Melaka*. Nonetheless, because Abū Bakr features in the more recent part of the text, he could reflect an early seventeenth-century religious trend, rather than something from Melaka itself.

Turning to the three Javanese texts – the *Kitab Bonang*, an unnamed ethical work and the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* – these also demonstrate a preoccupation with religious debates taking place in Central Asia. The unnamed text is equally significant for being the only pre-al-Fanṣūrī source to exhibit good knowledge of Arabic. Most notably, however, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* contains evidence (perhaps linked to Gresik) of the Kubrawī *ṭarīqa*, a brand of Ishrāqī Sufism from Central Asia. Given the potential link to Gresik, this *ṭarīqa* could have been active on Java since the late fourteenth century (see Chapter 5). It only seems to have persisted, however, until the mid- to late sixteenth century (the final name on the *silsila* is mid-sixteenth century). Nonetheless, it may therefore link with the late sixteenth-century *Kitab Bonang*: although never explicitly referring to Ishrāqī Sufism, this text strongly critiques Ibn ‘Arabī, implying an author with possible Ishrāqī sympathies.

Overall, an Ishrāqī presence on Java could also link with Melaka: pre-Portuguese Melaka was largely populated by Javanese traders. If Gresik had hosted a brand of Ishrāqī-orientated Sufism since the late fourteenth century, Javanese Muslims could have taken it to Melaka. Alternatively, the Javanese could have encountered Ishrāqī Sufism while in Melaka and then taken it back to Java. The first of these possibilities, however, begs the question of whether the *Sejarah Melayu*’s references to

Ishrāqī Sufism are tied to the Kubrawī. Although certainly possible, there is nothing to confirm this.

Aside from the above, in general the earliest texts demonstrate a conventional (albeit limited) knowledge of Islam. As such, the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Kitab Bonang* all provide the impression of being uncontroversial; they all contain examples of (or references to) standard branches of Islamic learning. By contrast, the far more problematic ideas associated with Wujūdī only emerge with Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and his successors. These individuals were closely associated with Aceh and also demonstrated more intimate links with Arabic and Indian learning. Equally, they also represent the first Nusantara-based members of *ṭarīqa* which would later dominate the region as a whole. Accompanying these new trends is a marked decline in the earlier examples of Persian influence; from this point on, Arabic texts become more prominent than Persian and Ishrāqī Sufism becomes less and less important. Whether there is a causal relationship between these developments, however, is unclear.

Now that these conclusions have been reached, it only remains to be asked where the identified influences came from. Regarding Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and his successors, this question is easily answered: they are usually very clear about whom and what influenced them. In almost all cases, they studied in the Middle East and/or India; al-Sāmaṭrānī alone constitutes a possible exception, although al-Fanṣūrī, as well as going to the Middle East, claims to have received enlightenment in the Ayutthaya capital.<sup>140</sup> But regardless of where they went, they all brought back new ideas (like the Wujūdī) and introduced new *ṭarīqa* (like the Qādirī, Shaṭṭārī and Naqshbandī). Ultimately, however, these scholars and their stream of thought belong to the very end

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<sup>140</sup> Fansuri, *Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. and trans. Drewes and Brakel (1986), Poem XXXII.

of the period under discussion; for the vast majority of the time, it was the Persian influences which persisted. The latter, however, are far more difficult to trace. The final section of this chapter will therefore examine this issue.

### 7.3. The Origin of the Nusantara's Earliest Islamic Influences

In short, Persian influence could have entered the Nusantara in any of three ways: directly from the Middle East, from Persian-influenced parts of India or from the Persian communities of China. Each of these possibilities will now be discussed in turn. We will conclude that, although direct Nusantara-Middle East links are perhaps unlikely, India's Delhi sultanate (with its roots in Central Asia) could have influenced the Nusantara through its Gujarati ports. Observed examples of Kubrawī influence, however, are almost certainly Chinese.

Beginning with the Middle East, as noted above, the Malay translations of the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah* and *Hikayat Nur Muhammad* are all based on Persian originals. This might suggest a direct Nusantara-Middle East link. Equally, the section of the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's* Kubrawī *silsila* ending with Aḥmad al-Shinnāwī also appears in the *al-Simṭ al-majīd* of Madīnan scholar, Aḥmad al-Qushāshī (d.1661).<sup>141</sup> There it forms part of the latter's own Kubrawī *silsila*. This is potentially significant because al-Qushāshī had Nusantara students; these included al-Singkīlī, who actually quotes from the *al-Simṭ al-majīd* (although not the *silsila*).<sup>142</sup> As such, this part of the text could have entered the Nusantara from the Middle East, via al-Singkīlī. But, although interesting, neither of these possibilities is conclusive.

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<sup>141</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra,' *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 307.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 307.



As seen in Chapter 2, by the eleventh century, Indian Ocean trade had become segmented. From that point on, few Persians travelled beyond India, with people from the Nusantara not going the other way (at least in large numbers) until the seventeenth century. As such, it seems unlikely that the above *Hikayats* (all present by the late fifteenth century) could have entered the Nusantara directly from Persia – the links necessary for that kind of cultural transfer did not exist. Turning to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila*, neither al-Qushāshī nor al-Singkīlī appear on it.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, nothing connects them directly to the text. That al-Qushāshī undoubtedly lists part of it, however, makes a Middle Eastern origin (at least for that section) plausible. But, because al-Shinnāwī is the last individual named on al-Qushāshī's part of the *silsila*, the latter must be at least early seventeenth century.<sup>144</sup> As discussed, that period saw many Nusantarans travel into the Middle East; one of them (although precisely who is unknown) could have transmitted this part of the text. This does not, however, mean that the whole *silsila* came from the Middle East: the other half of the text, ending with 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Jāmī, does not appear in al-Qushāshī's work.<sup>145</sup> Neither does this part of the text list any Middle Eastern scholars, but only Central Asian ones. It also ends sixty-four years earlier than al-Shinnāwī. For van Bruinessen, these facts imply that al-Jāmī's part of the text represents an earlier Kubrawī-Nusantara connection, one which ended in the mid-sixteenth century. The al-Shinnāwī *silsila* may then have been an early seventeenth-century attempt to revive it.<sup>146</sup> This is a potentially significant point, which needs further discussion.

As argued in section 7.2.5, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's* Kubrawī *silsila* appears to be indicative of a long and profound Kubrawī-Nusantara connection, potentially going

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<sup>143</sup> Azra, *Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004), 85.

<sup>144</sup> Azymardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2006), 188.

<sup>145</sup> *HH*, 137.

<sup>146</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra,' *BTLV* 150:2 (1994): 312-313.

back to fourteenth-century Gresik. Only a long relationship like this would explain why Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā appears in so many early Javanese texts, and as such an important figure. It would be difficult to reconcile this point with the Kubrawī as a *ṭarīqa* newly introduced during the seventeenth century (as the al-Shinnāwī part of the text seems to have been). Rather, it is more likely that the *ṭarīqa* was practiced much earlier, with al-Jāmī's *silsila* preserving the memory of that fact. Equally, that this part of the text belongs to the Central Asian Hamadānī branch of the order (see section 7.2.5) links with the many instances of Central Asian influence described in section 7.2. But, because Central Asia never had any direct contact with the Nusantara, mention of this region raises the second possible route for Persian influence: via India.

During the period under discussion, Persian influence was very strong in northern India. From 1206 to 1526, north India was ruled by the Delhi sultanate, a kingdom with roots in the Central Asian Ghurid dynasty (c.897-1215).<sup>147</sup> Like the Ghurids, Delhi's Sultans were Turkic and great patrons of Persianate culture.<sup>148</sup> This is demonstrated by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa: when he visited Delhi's early fourteenth-century court, he encountered a heavily Persianized society, where Persian was the *lingua franca* and Persianate literate culture actively encouraged. Significantly, this Persian influence was maintained via active links with Central Asia; as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa noted, many Delhi court officials were Central Asian immigrants (particularly men from Khurāsān).<sup>149</sup> These individuals brought Persian texts and ideas with them, notably regarding Persian concepts of kingship (also found in the Nusantara).<sup>150</sup> This Central Asian-mediated Persian influence continued until the very end of the Delhi sultanate. Some Central

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<sup>147</sup> Peter A. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>149</sup> *RIB*, 165; 168; 188.

<sup>150</sup> Said Amir Arjomand, 'The Salience of Political Ethic in the Spread of Persianate Islam,' *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1:1 (2008): 15.

Asian rulers (notably Timūr, in 1398) even invaded Delhi, bringing fresh waves of influence.<sup>151</sup> Consequently, Delhi was suffused with Central Asian Persianate culture. Could it have passed this on to the Nusantara?

Although primarily land-locked and agrarian-based, from 1303/4 the Delhi sultanate controlled coastal Gujarat;<sup>152</sup> it was from one of Gujarat's ports that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa set sail for Samudera-Pasai (although not without changing ships in South India).<sup>153</sup> Potentially, therefore, members of Delhi's Persian-influenced sultanate could have accessed the Nusantara. Indeed, Pires claims that many of Melaka's foreign merchants were Gujarati (albeit Hindus) and the *Sejarah Melayu*'s Mawlānā Sada Jahān may have been from there. As such, the Central Asian influences seen in the *Sejarah Melayu* could have come via this route. Equally, since the thirteenth century, when the Suhrawardī *ṭarīqa* was first introduced into north India by Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarī (d.1267), Ishrāqī-influenced *ṭarīqa* were also very popular in India.<sup>154</sup> Consequently, the *Sejarah Melayu*'s possible allusions to Ishrāqī Sufism, despite being vague and non-specific, could also relate back to north India.

Nonetheless, North Indian influence cannot explain all the trends witnessed above. As seen, the Malay translations of the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah* and *Hikayat Nur Muhammad* are based on original Persian texts; they bear no trace of Indian influence.<sup>155</sup> This is strange if they arrived via that location, especially given that specifically Indian versions of these texts also existed during this period.<sup>156</sup> Further problems surround the Kubrawī: although an Indian branch of this *ṭarīqa* had existed since the late thirteenth century (when introduced by

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<sup>151</sup> Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate* (1999), xiii.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 212.

<sup>153</sup> *RIB*, 215.

<sup>154</sup> Ibn Batuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, A.D. 1325-1354*, trans. C. Defrémery, B. R. Sanguinetti and H. A. R. Gibb, vol.3 (New Dehli: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1999), 597.

<sup>155</sup> Winstedt, *History of Classical Malay Literature* (1969), 96; 106-107.

<sup>156</sup> See: Braginsky, *Traditional Malay Literature* (2004), 180; 182.

Badr al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, a student of Sayf al-Dīn al-Bāharzī, d.1263), it was not the Central Asian version seen in the al-Jāmī section of the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila*. As noted above, the latter is the Hamadānī branch of the Kubrawī, while the Indian branch is called the Firdawsī.<sup>157</sup> No members of the Firdawsī appear in the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. Once again, this suggests Indian influence is not enough to explain the Persian trends seen in the earliest Nusantara texts. Rather, another source of Persianate influence must have been present. In this regard, it is noteworthy that, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, most ships sailing between India and the Nusantara (including the one Ibn Baṭṭūṭa travelled on) were Chinese. These vessels, which dominated Nusantara waters, were predominantly owned and operated by Chinese Muslims from the Persian cultural area (see Chapter 2). Consequently, if this group was also present, could they have played a role in transmitting Persian culture, too?

To answer this question, something first needs to be said about the nature of Chinese Islam. Prior to the late seventeenth century, however, very little is known about this. Nonetheless, before the early Ming (and the first efforts to Sinicise them), Z. Benite has argued that China's Muslims probably saw themselves as a diasporic community. In other words, they probably identified more closely with the wider Islamic world than with China.<sup>158</sup> Significantly, therefore, China's pre-Ming dynasty Muslims possessed a clear Persian heritage: the *nisbas* listed on Quanzhou's early Muslim gravestones indicate many people of a Central Asian background, including people from the places mentioned in the *Sejarah Melayu* (see Chapter 2). Indeed, because China maintained good links with Central Asia via the Silk Route, China's Muslims remained well-connected to their homeland – just as the Delhi Sultanate

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<sup>157</sup> Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return (Merṣād al-'ebād men al-mabdā' elā'l-ma'ād): A Sufi Compendium by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, Known as Dāya*, trans. Hamid Algar, Persian Heritage Series No. 35 (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1982), 5.

<sup>158</sup> Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 16-17.

did.<sup>159</sup> As Benite notes, these links continued into the Ming, when Chinese Muslims are recorded travelling into Central Asia to collect and study Islamic texts.<sup>160</sup> It is unknown, however, which Central Asian traditions they followed. The only surviving evidence is some seventeenth to eighteenth-century texts, known as the *Han Kitab*.

Although little studied, the *Han Kitab* are the earliest (known) examples of Chinese Muslim religious literature. They therefore provide a rare insight into early Chinese Muslim belief and practices. Amongst them, original Chinese Islamic texts do not appear until the late seventeenth century; produced after the period under discussion, they therefore need not be considered here.<sup>161</sup> Prior to this, however, all extant texts are translations of Arabic and (in the vast majority of cases) Persian originals. In the main, two types of text emerge: Ḥanafī legal texts (notably the *Al-irshād ilā ma'rifa naqalat al-akhbār* of al-Khalīl ibn 'Abd Allāh Ya'lā al-Khalīlī al-Qazwīnī, d.1054)<sup>162</sup> and various Persian Sufi texts.<sup>163</sup> Although the Ḥanafī texts perhaps have little bearing on the Nusantara,<sup>164</sup> the Sufi examples are more significant: the earliest of them (all produced during the late 1670's) are Kubrawī. In particular, the work of Central Asian Kubrawī master, 'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī (who died between 1263 and 1293), appears to have been popular: several copies of his *Maqṣad al-Aqṣā* survive, in addition to an unidentified work called *Munabbihāt*.<sup>165</sup> But, a China-based, Central Asia-orientated Kubrawī presence raises a question: could it relate to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin's silsila* and/or possible Kubrawī activity in fourteenth century Gresik? Certainly, Chapter 5 postulated that fourteenth-century Gresik had been

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<sup>159</sup> See: Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>160</sup> Benite, *Dao of Muhammad* (2005), 41.

<sup>161</sup> Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese, Late Ming and Early Ch'ing: Books, Authors and Associates* (Belconnen: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1981), 1-3.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>164</sup> Although, and as noted in Chapter 5, Raffles recorded an early nineteenth-century tradition which claimed that the teachings of (at least some) Sunan were Ḥanafī.

<sup>165</sup> See: Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese* (1981), 32-33.

a Chinese Muslim-dominated settlement. But, to answer this question more comprehensively it must be determined precisely when the Kubrawī arrived in China.

Two interpretations exist regarding this point, both originating with the *ṭarīqa* itself: one cites the year 1370,<sup>166</sup> the other the 1660's.<sup>167</sup> Both, however, accept a Central Asian origin and name an Arab as the first practitioner (Mohidin and Muhuyindeni Yibuni Aluobi respectively). Deciding between these traditions is difficult; a lack of pertinent information makes any argument hard to sustain. Modern scholarship, however, tends to favour the later date – certainly, all *Han Kitab* Kubrawī texts post-date the 1660's and an assumption persists amongst many Sinologists that Sufism only entered China during the tumultuous years of the Ming-Qing transition.<sup>168</sup> If these arguments are correct, however, a link with Javanese tradition seems unlikely. Nonetheless, a re-evaluation of the evidence, especially in the context of broader Islamic history, suggests the 1660's is far too late.

As such, the early thirteenth-century Mongol conquests resulted in a rapid expansion of Sufi activity across Asia. As documented by many scholars, during this period *ṭarīqa* of every description began to flourish right across the Islamic world, filling the void left by the destruction of more institutional forms of the religion.<sup>169</sup> In Central Asia, this expansion saw the Kubrawī become pre-eminent; from the thirteenth century onwards (or just as Central Asia-to-China migrations were taking place) Kubrawī Sufis became conspicuous members of the region's Mongol courts. Finding ready patrons, they gained much power and influence, even bringing about two major conversions: Berke Khan (d.1266), the third ruler of the Golden Horde, who was

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<sup>166</sup> Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 130.

<sup>167</sup> Raphael Israeli and Adam Gardner-Rush, 'Sectarian Islam and Sino-Muslim Identity in China,' *The Muslim World* 90:3-4 (2000): 448.

<sup>168</sup> Gladney, *Dislocating China* (2004), 128.

<sup>169</sup> For example, see: A. H. Johns, 'Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism,' *SAS* 31:1 (1993): 48-50.

converted by Ṣayf al-Dīn al-Bukhārī, and Ghazān Khān (r.1295-1304), the Ilkhanid ruler converted by Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Hammuyī of Khurāsān in 1295.<sup>170</sup> The Kubrawī continued this political penetration well into the fourteenth century, becoming especially prominent in the south-eastern parts of Central Asia (i.e. in the areas bordering China).<sup>171</sup> By the end of the fourteenth century, however, Timūr (r.1370-1405) had begun his expansion. Conquering one local dynasty after another, the Kubrawī's political connections quickly came to count against them: now crystalized into the Hamadānī, Timūr saw them as complicit in the regimes he overthrew. He therefore moved to suppress the order. Indeed, he proved so successful that, from the early fifteenth century on, the Kubrawī virtually disappeared from Central Asia.<sup>172</sup> From that point on, only sketchy reports continue until, by the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, these also stop. Scholars therefore argue that, by the early seventeenth century, the Kubrawī had become extinct in Central Asia (although it would continue in Persia and elsewhere).<sup>173</sup> Certainly, no evidence exists for it after that point.

Taken together, the above suggests three things: first, unless early Chinese Muslims were completely isolated from (or atypical when compared to) their co-religionists, it is very unlikely that they did not practice some form of Sufism prior to the seventeenth century. So universal was this form of Islam, that its complete absence from pre-seventeenth-century China simply is not credible.<sup>174</sup> Second, because many

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<sup>170</sup> Razi, *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, trans. Algar (1982), 4. Equally, the prominent Kubrawī Sufi, al-Simnanī, had been an official at the court of Ghazan's father, Arghun (Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate,' *JESHO* 42:1 [1999]: 32).

<sup>171</sup> Devin DeWeese, 'The Eclipse of the Kubraviyah in Central Asia,' *Iranian Studies* 21:1 (1988): 53-4.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-61.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 46; Razi, *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, trans. Algar (1982), 7.

<sup>174</sup> Indeed, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account of China's Muslims (see Chapter 2) seems to hint at a Sufi presence well before the seventeenth century. As such, he makes two observations about Chinese Islamic practices which suggest a Sufi presence. First, the Imam at Quanzhou's mosque inherited his position (*RIB*, 262.). As R. Israeli and A. Gardner-Rush note, this is indicative of Sufi (or possibly Shī'a) influence (Israeli and Gardner-Rush, 'Sectarian Islam and Sino-Muslim Identity,' *MW* 90:3-4 [2000]: 448). Second, while in

Muslims came to China from Central Asia, and just as Kubrawī influence peaked, it is entirely plausible that some of them followed that *ṭarīqa*. Third, the circumstances surrounding its decline make it very unlikely that the Kubrawī first entered China from Central Asia during the 1660's because, by that time, the *ṭarīqa* did not exist in the latter region. Rather, the 1370's would seem far more plausible, coinciding as it does with a peak in Central Asian Kubrawī activity.

If the above argument is accepted, Kubrawī influence could well have entered the Nusantara via China. Certainly, it is entirely plausible that the Kubrawī existed in China in the 1370's, just as that *ṭarīqa* was introduced to Java, perhaps via Chinese-dominated Gresik. Because no early Chinese Kubrawī *silsila* have been published, however, it is uncertain which branch of the order predominated in China. The circumstances surrounding the *ṭarīqa*'s transmission, however, make it likely that the Hamadānī were present. If so, this would also link with the Nusantara.

But, if Kubrawī influence entered the Nusantara via China, perhaps the other observed aspects of Persianate culture do so, too. Certainly, it seems any Central Asian influence is just as likely to have originated with China as with India. It should be noted, however, that the first Persian texts translated into Malay have not yet been found in China. This might suggest that they did not come from there – although, as seen above, it is not likely they came from Persia or India, either. But ultimately, very little research has been conducted into the nature of Chinese Islam; few early Chinese

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Guangzhou, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited a Chinese-speaking ascetic who lived outside the city, in a cave. Although no one could swear to this man's religion, it was strongly suspected he was a Muslim: fasting perpetually, he spoke well of the Prophet, of 'Umar and 'Alī, but actively disliked Mu'āwiya and Yazīd. This was enough for Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and his guides (including the local *Shaykh al-Islam* and *qāḍī*) to suspect a Muslim identity – i.e. that this ascetic was a Sufi. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa still cautioned, however, that no one had seen the ascetic pray (*RIB*, 265-267). The latter point, however, need not be damning: some Sufis (especially monists) are well-known for not following standard religious practices. It is, however, confusing that the ascetic knew no Arabic and/or Persian; if he were a Muslim, some knowledge of these languages might be expected (although neither Ibn Baṭṭūṭa nor his guides hold this ignorance against him). Nonetheless, it is at least plausible that both these points indicate a Sufi flavour to early Chinese Islam.



Muslim texts have been catalogued and even fewer examined in detail. Consequently, texts like the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* could easily exist somewhere in China but, as of yet, have not been recorded. This uncertainty, however, cannot form the basis of any firm conclusions. Rather, it (and the above) merely suggests a potentiality: that, potentially, Chinese Muslims were just as capable of transmitting Persianate Islam into the Nusantara as Muslims from India or elsewhere. At least in the case of Kubrawī influence, this potentially seems very likely. With regards other aspects of Persian influence, however, further research needs to be conducted before any conclusion can be made.

#### **7.4. Conclusion**

To conclude, from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* until Java's earliest Islamic texts, we have seen a definite pattern emerge: little specific knowledge of Islamic doctrines and/or legal questions; rare (and sometimes inaccurate) use of Arabic; hints of (Ishrāqī) Sufism; and heavy Persian influence. Despite these general trends, however, exceptions exist: the *Undang-Undang Melaka* (although by no means an in depth legal treatise) indicates Melaka possessed knowledge of Shāfi'ī law, while the untitled Javanese code of Muslim ethics probably utilised Arabic texts. In addition, Laffan argues (although speculatively) for Qādirī influence in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. Despite these exceptions, however, we saw that the more general trends hold true across most of the texts. Of them, the Persian influence is both the most ubiquitous and significant: from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s Persian concept of kingship to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s (perhaps Gresik-linked) Kubrawī *silsila*, Persian influence (particularly from Central Asia) is well attested to. By contrast, not until Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī do we see convincing

evidence of widespread Arabic influence. It is also at this point that more controversial mystical ideas (like Wujūdī) appear for the first time, in addition to the *ṭarīqa* that would later dominate the region (including the Qādirī, Shattārī and Naqshbandī). Along with these late sixteenth to early seventeenth-century developments, we also witnessed a simultaneous decline in the earlier Persian influences – although whether these things were linked remains unknown.

Concerning the origin of these influences, we saw that Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and his successors clearly state where they studied and with whom: most went to the Middle East and/or India, bringing their new ideas back with them. We found instances of Persian influence, however, harder to trace. Before the late sixteenth century, the Indian Ocean's segmentation means a direct Nusantara-Persia link is unlikely. Indeed, to assume Middle East influence ignores the many references to Central Asia. In the latter regard, India's Delhi sultanate, with its roots in Central Asia and an outlet to the Nusantara in Gujarat, could have been the source of at least some of the observed influence. Java's Kubrawī influence, however, almost certainly did not come from there. Rather, this *ṭarīqa* appears to have (at least initially) entered the Nusantara via China. During the relevant period, many of China's Muslims were of Central Asian descent; because they maintained links with their homelands, it is probable many of them practiced the Kubrawī. Although we found that the sources are insufficient to determine whether they followed the same branch of the Kubrawī seen in the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* (i.e. the Ḥamadānī), this is also likely. Certainly, that branch was not practiced in India.

But, if the above establishes a China-Central Asia-Java link, it also opens up a whole range of new possibilities. As seen in Chapter 2, from the thirteenth century onwards, Chinese Muslims travelled throughout the Nusantara, sponsoring the rise of

numerous Nusantara entrepôts and settling in large numbers. Consequently, because they were also Persianised, and enjoyed particularly strong links with Central Asia, it is possible they introduced many more of the above influences than just the Kubrawī. But, because our knowledge of early Chinese Islam is still lacking, it is impossible to elaborate on this any further.

## 8. The Origins of the Javanese Mosque

### 8.1. Introduction

As noted by H. J. de Graaf, when a religion first becomes established in an area, its places of worship tend to resemble those from the proselytiser's homeland:<sup>1</sup> the first South American churches resembled Spain's;<sup>2</sup> Śrīvijaya's surviving Buddhist statuary is stylistically South Indian;<sup>3</sup> China's first mosques were built to a Central Asian design (notably the Qingjingsi, or Aṣḥāb, mosque in Quanzhou).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this trend is not surprising: initial places of worship were often built under the direction of the first proselytisers. It would only be natural for the latter to imitate the architectural forms most familiar to them, as the prism through which they understood their sacred spaces. This suggests, however, that the Nusantara's earliest mosques may tell us something about the first Muslim missionaries who visited the region.

Given the above, our final chapter will examine five pre-1620 Nusantara mosques. Only pre-1620 mosques have been selected in order to stay within the timeframe delineated at the start of our thesis. Taking each mosque in turn, we will aim to see what influences came to bear on their construction. All five mosques are located along the north coast of Java and, together, represent the only surviving pre-1620 mosques located in the areas discussed in Chapters 3 through 6. The fact they are all

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<sup>1</sup> H. J. de Graaf, 'The Origins of the Javanese Mosque,' *JSAH* 4:1 (1963): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo claims Hernando Cortéz, after capturing and destroying the Aztec capital, quickly erected a Spanish-style cathedral over the ruins of its main temple (see: Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. John M. Cohen [London: Penguin, 2003], 408).

<sup>3</sup> O. W. Wolters, *Early Southeast Asia: Selected Essays*, ed. Craig J. Reynolds (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 81.

<sup>4</sup> Sun Dazhang, *Islamic Buildings: Ancient Chinese Architecture*, trans. Zhong Guodong and Zhang Long (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2003), 123.

Javanese, however, raises a problem: can conclusions drawn from them be generalised to Samudera-Pasai, Melaka or Brunei? Some scholars have argued they can:<sup>5</sup> surviving European descriptions of pre-1620 Melakan mosques, for example, indicate buildings with similar (at least outward) appearances to the Javanese mosques.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, surviving eighteenth-century Melakan mosques (such as the Kampung Hulu and Kampung Kling mosques), as well as others of similar age from elsewhere on the Malay Peninsula (such as the Kampung Laut Mosque in Kelantan),<sup>7</sup> are built in a Javanese manner.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, variations across the region also exist; successive attempts to construct a typology have revealed some dramatic differences.<sup>9</sup> For example, many mosques from the Malay Peninsula (such as Surau Aur in Patani, probably eighteenth-century) are more like Malay houses than Javanese mosques.<sup>10</sup> As a result, our discussion will err on the side of caution and abstain from general conclusions. The mosques described will only be referred to as ‘traditional Javanese mosques.’ Although examining them will inform our previous discussion about Java (Chapter 5), they cannot be expected to speak directly about other places.

Ultimately, we will conclude that these traditional Javanese mosques draw their inspiration from earlier, pre-Islamic Javanese structures (notably the *pendopo* and *meru*). These alone, however, cannot explain all the various architectural features displayed by each mosque. Rather, these only become understandable when considered

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<sup>5</sup> See: Abdul Halim Nasir, *Mosque Architecture in the Malay World*, trans. Omar Salahuddin Abdullah (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2004), 35; Mastor Surat and Nangkula Utaberta, ‘Memantapkan Historiografi Masjid Tua Kampung Laut Melalui Analisis Perbandingan dengan Masjid Agung Demak,’ *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 1:1 (2010): 33; Mohd. Tajuddin Mohd. Rasdi, ‘Mosque Architecture in Malaysia: Classification of Styles and Possible Influence,’ *Jurnal Alam Bina* (2007): 20.

<sup>6</sup> Fernao Lopes de Castanheda, ‘History on the Conquest of India by the Portuguese. Book III and IV,’ in *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, Vol. 1: 1509-1511, ed. and trans. M. J. Pintado (Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, 1993), 333.

<sup>7</sup> Salleh Mohd. Akib, *Masjid Tua Kampung Laut* (Kota Bharu: Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> This observation is based on site visits to the mosques in question.

<sup>9</sup> The most recent attempt to construct a typology can be found in: Mohd. Rasdi, ‘Mosque Architecture in Malaysia,’ *JAB* (2007): 1-37.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne Bougas, ‘Surau Aur: Patani’s Oldest Mosque,’ *Archipel* 43 (1992): 89-112.

in the context of Chinese influence. As such, we will conclude that the traditional Javanese mosque, although a continuation of earlier Javanese structures, was built using the expertise of Chinese craftsmen, who left a distinctive stamp on the buildings. Whether these craftsmen were Muslims is unknown, but Chapter 5's conclusions make it likely.

## 8.2. Java's Oldest Mosques

This first section will describe the form, construction and decorative schemes of five Javanese mosques: the Masjid Agung Demak, the Masjid Agung Cirebon, the Masjid Merah Panjunan, the Masjid Agung Banten and the Masjid Menara Kudus. To help further this endeavour, diagrams and pictures will be used.<sup>11</sup> Each of our descriptions begins, however, with a discussion of the mosque's age.

### 8.2.1. Masjid Agung Demak

Local traditions assert that the Masjid Agung Demak (see **Fig. 28**) is the oldest surviving mosque in Indonesia. According to some of these traditions, a tortoise-shaped impression at the back of the mosque's *miḥrab* (see **Fig. 29**) is symbolic of the *Śaka* year 1401 (or 1479CE);<sup>12</sup> this, it is claimed, is when the building was constructed. There is, however, no evidence independent of these traditions to suggest this shape

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<sup>11</sup> All descriptions are based on site visits, conducted between 2011 and 2013. The accompanying floor plans (i.e. the diagrams) were drawn by Rahayu Mohamed Saleh on the basis of information gathered during those visits. Each plan reproduces only the original elements of each structure (i.e. later additions are omitted). All diagrams and figures can be found in the 'Javanese Mosques' section of the Appendix.

<sup>12</sup> The mosque's Imam explained this symbolism thus: the tortoise's head represents the 1, its four feet the 4, its large circular body the 0, and its tail the final 1. The *Śaka* calendar was Java's pre-Islamic (and early Islamic) calendar. Derived from an Indic original, it was based on the phases of the moon. Each year comprised twelve months and, in length, was roughly equivalent to the Gregorian year. It ran, however, approximately eighty years behind (see: Ian Proudfoot, 'In Search of Lost Time: Javanese and Balinese Understandings of the Indic Calendar,' *BTLV* 163:1 [2008]: 87).

was ever intended as a chronogram.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Raden Patah's grave is located within the mosque complex; according to Tomé Pires, Raden Patah attended the inauguration of a mosque in 1506.<sup>14</sup> Although by no means certain, this could have been the Masjid Agung Demak: local legend attributes construction (especially of the four central columns, see **Fig. 30**) to Sunan Kalijaga, who was active during Raden Patah's reign. Perhaps more conclusively, however, the Vietnamese tiles decorating the structure are all fifteenth century (discussed shortly), suggesting a late fifteenth to early sixteenth-century date.

Turning to the form of the mosque, it is typical of the Javanese tradition. A large square building measuring 24.82m by 24.75m,<sup>15</sup> it sits upon the ground and is topped by a three-tiered pyramidal hipped roof (known locally as a *tajug*) (see **Fig. 28**). In front of the mosque there is currently a large *serambi* (veranda); this was added in 1845, and so will be ignored here.<sup>16</sup> The mosque sits within a walled compound, containing various other religious buildings (including a *wuḍū'* area and a *pawadonan*, or separate prayer hall for women) and a grave complex. As mentioned, the latter (located to the north and west of the mosque) contains the graves of people associated with the site's construction and may therefore be original. The other buildings, however, are more recent in date and arranged, higgledy-piggledy, around the mosque. The compound itself is roughly square, with the mosque arrayed in the centre. A courtyard and main

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<sup>13</sup> Timothy E. Behrend, 'Keraton, Taman, Mesjid: A Brief Survey and Bibliographic Review of Islamic Antiquities in Java,' *Indonesia Circle* 35 (1984): 45. Indeed, S. Haryadi proposes an alternative: he notes that the tortoise is known by three different names on Java: *bulus*, *penyu* and *kura-kura*. The first, if divided into two syllables (*bu* and *lus*) means 'to enter gently.' It could therefore imply conversion, or to gently enter the mosque. *Penyu*, on the other hand, can also mean 'to ask,' perhaps another reference to conversion or proselytization. Lastly, *kura-kura* is phonologically similar to the Arabic *qur'ān* (reading the Qur'an) and could therefore be an invitation to worship (see: Sugeng Haryadi, *Sejarah Berdirinya Masjid Agung Demak dan Grebeg Besar* [Demak: Mega Berlian, 2002], 47).

<sup>14</sup> Cited in: Ibid, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmed E. I. Wahby, 'The Architecture of the Early Mosques and Shrines of Java: Influences of the Arab Merchants in the 15th and 16th Centuries? Vol. 1: The Text,' Unpublished PhD Thesis, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg (2007), 51.

<sup>16</sup> Behrend, 'Keraton, Taman, Mesjid,' *IC* 35 (1984): 45.

entrance sit directly in front of it. To maintain a line of symmetry through these two and the mosque, the *qibla* uses an incorrect east-west alignment.<sup>17</sup> A small entrance also currently exists in the compound's northern side, providing access to the grave complex. A minaret is positioned next to the compound's main entrance, but was added in 1924.<sup>18</sup>

As noted by J. Dumarçay and M. Smithies, the mosque's interior was profoundly altered during nineteenth-century restorations. Very thick masonry walls were added around the outside, in addition to a wooden ceiling to conceal the upper beams. The original wooden columns (except for the four central columns, known as *saka guru*) were also replaced with masonry columns; these have European-style capitals and are bridged with arabesque arches.<sup>19</sup> Despite these alterations, however, comparisons with other early mosques indicate the mosque's basic construction remains unaltered and is therefore worth describing.

In short, within the masonry walls are sixteen pillars in four rows of four (see **Diagram 1**). To understand their function, these columns should be viewed as two squares: a central square of four and an outer square of twelve. Each of these squares sits directly below the bottom of a roof tier. In other words, the bottom of each roof tier (excluding any overhang) sits directly upon a square of columns positioned beneath it. The rafters of each tier are positioned above these columns, so the latter carry the full weight of the roof. Thus, the four central *saka guru* sit beneath the terminus of the uppermost roof tier, with each column sitting in a corner of the tier, supporting the four rafters which make up its pyramidal structure. In this way, the four columns support the entire roof tier's weight. As for the second square of columns, these support the middle

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<sup>17</sup> It should be seven degrees north of west (Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1,' Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg [2007], 50).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Dumarçay and Michael Smithies, *Cultural Sites of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65.



roof tier: four columns again sit in the corners, while the remaining eight are arranged in pairs between them, two on each side of the square. Rafters from this middle tier again sit upon these columns, channelling the weight of the roof down onto them. The lowest roof tier, on the other hand, sits upon the nineteenth-century external wall (positioned in the middle of the tier) and a further row of round and square masonry columns located outside the prayer hall (except at the front, where the addition of the *serambi* has led to their removal). A model of the mosque in the site's museum, which claims to show it as originally built, also has a wall and set of columns in this position. In this case, the columns are all round and completely encircle the building (these are shown on **Diagram 1**).

The mosque currently has three doorways: one directly opposite the *mihrab* (i.e. on the eastern side), one on the northern side and another on the southern. The latter two are positioned near the eastern corner of the walls in question. The aforementioned model, however, shows three doorways on the eastern side, in addition to the northern and southern ones.

As with all the mosques described in this chapter, the Masjid Agung Demak's roof is tiled. More unusually, however, each roof tier has a very substantial overhang. Although substantial overhangs are common on the lowest roof tiers of other mosques (sometimes several metres deep, creating a portico), they are unusual higher up.

Another of the Masjid Agung Demak's unusual features relates to its four *saka guru*. Those currently standing in the mosque are replicas of originals now in a museum on the site; these draw considerable attention due to their unusual design. Thus, each is of massive construction, being approximately 1m in diameter and 16.3m in height.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1,' Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg (2007), 52. Wahby cites this figure from the Indonesian Directorate for the Preservation and Protection of National Heritage; H. O'Neill, however, has it as 22m (see: Hugh O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, ed. Martin Frishman and Hasan-

Although without capitals, they once sat upon large stone bases still *in situ* in the mosque (see **Fig. 30**). Their most interesting feature, however, is the fact they are not solid: each column is made up of thin strips of wood (each no more than 10cm wide), pieced together and held in place by large metal bands. As such, each column is essentially hollow. Local tradition pays much attention to this strange mode of construction, giving the columns the special name *saka tatal* to distinguish them from other *saka guru* of more usual design (i.e. made of solid tree trunks). As briefly mentioned, the *saka tatal* are attributed to Sunan Kalijaga: local legends claim that, after creating the first three *saka guru* from solid tree trunks, Sunan Kalijaga ran low on timber. He therefore devised the *saka tatal* method of construction to provide the final column (although all four are in fact built like this).<sup>21</sup> To emphasise their importance, each column is currently named after a Javanese saint: Sunan Bonang, Sunan Gunung Jati, Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Ampel.

The final relevant features of the Masjid Agung Demak are decorative: its tile work and two original sets of doors, currently kept in the site museum. Dealing with the tiles first, as mentioned above, these are examples of fifteenth-century Vietnamese ceramics. This is made clear by their mixed Vietnamese-Chinese design, typical of pottery produced in Vietnam during this period.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, this specific form of tile can only be found on Java: as well as at Demak, they can also be seen at Trowulan (the site of Majapahit's capital), the Sawentar temple at Blitar, the Kidal temple at Malangon, the minaret of Kudus (see section 8.2.5), and at the tomb of Sunan Bonang (in Tuban). They may also have once been present at the now destroyed Mantingan

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Uddin Khan [London: Thames and Hudson, 1994], 234). Given the official status of the Directorate, it has been decided to accept their figure.

<sup>21</sup> O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan (1994), 233.

<sup>22</sup> Sakai Takashi, 'Preliminary Study of Vietnamese Decorated Tiles Found in Java, Indonesia (1)' *Taida Journal of Art History* 25 (2008): 132.

mosque in Jepara.<sup>23</sup> At Demak, however, sixty-six specific types have been identified; mostly blue and white, they are located either around the *miḥrab* (which is also decorated with a *Surya Majapahit*, the imperial insignia of Majapahit)<sup>24</sup> or along the outer face of the front wall. They incorporate a variety of floral, cloud and animal motifs. In shape, they fall into three broad categories: stepped crosses, standard double crosses and circles with foliated edges.<sup>25</sup> The first are the most common and closely resemble traditional Javanese wall decorations (as found in Cirebon and elsewhere). So great is this resemblance that some have suggested the tiles were specifically made for the Javanese market (especially given their absence outside the island).<sup>26</sup>

Turning to the doors, these originally occupied the two doorways no longer present in the front wall of the mosque. One set is decorated with *makara* creatures (characteristic of Majapahit art) and depictions of pottery which have been stylistically linked to Champa (in Vietnam).<sup>27</sup> The second set of doors, on the other hand, is decorated with abstract floral designs. Lotus flowers feature prominently, all set on a red background. On the whole, the style is strongly reminiscent of Chinese art (see section 8.3.3).

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<sup>23</sup> Abu Ridho, 'Notes on the Wall Tiles of the Mosque at Demak,' in *Vietnamese Ceramics, with illustrated catalogue of the exhibition organised by the Southeast Asian Society and held at the National Museum, Singapore in June 1982*, ed. Carol M. Young, Marie-France Dupoizat, and Elizabeth W. Lane (Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society/Oxford University Press, 1982), 37.

<sup>24</sup> M. Andy Baharuddin, 'Masjid Kuno Demak Jawa Tengah,' in *Sejarah Masjid-Masjid Kuno di Indonesia*, ed. Rudy Harisayah Alam (Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama Departemen Agama, 1998), 68-70.

<sup>25</sup> Takashi, 'Study of Vietnamese Decorated Tiles (1)' *TJAH* 25 (2008): 134-137; 143.

<sup>26</sup> John Guy, 'Vietnamese Trade Ceramics,' in *Vietnamese Ceramics, with illustrated catalogue of the exhibition organised by the Southeast Asian Society and held at the National Museum, Singapore in June 1982*, ed. Carol M. Young, Marie-France Dupoizat, and Elizabeth W. Lane (Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society/Oxford University Press, 1982), 30.

<sup>27</sup> Baharuddin, 'Masjid Kuno Demak,' in *Sejarah Masjid-Masjid Kuno*, ed. Alam (1998), 68-70.

### 8.2.2. Masjid Agung Cirebon (or Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa)

Cirebon is a city rich in early Nusantara Islamic history, providing this chapter with two pre-1620 mosques, more than anywhere else. Of these, the Masjid Agung (see **Fig. 31**) will be dealt with first. The literature rarely mentions this mosque<sup>28</sup> but, in some ways, it is strikingly different from any other early Javanese mosque and therefore worthy of attention.

The date of the Masjid Agung Cirebon is uncertain. According to palace tradition, a chronogram at the site (reading *waspada panembe yuganing ratu*) represents the *Śaka* year 1422 (1500CE).<sup>29</sup> Other local traditions, however, claim the structure was originally built in c.1480CE, and then rebuilt in 1500 after a fire.<sup>30</sup> Nothing, however, conclusively proves either date. Nonetheless, as seen in Chapter 5, Pires does claim that Cirebon converted between 1473 and 1475 (i.e. forty years before he wrote the *Suma Oriental*). If so, a mosque would have existed in the city between 1480 and 1500. Whether this was the Masjid Agung is unclear, but possible. Local tradition also claims, however, that the mosque was built by Sunan Gunung Jati, in collaboration with Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Bonang, and some men sent from Demak.<sup>31</sup> This is problematic in the context of a 1480 to 1500 dating because Sunan Gunung Jati was not active until after the Portuguese arrival (i.e. after 1509). Neither was he a contemporary of either Sunan Kalijaga or Sunan Bonang, both of whom supposedly lived during the late fifteenth century. Nonetheless, the involvement of the latter two individuals would link with the

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<sup>28</sup> Among the few references to it are: G. F. Pijper, 'The Minaret in Java,' in *India Antiqua: A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented by His Friends and Pupils to Jean Philippe Vogel, CIE, on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Doctorate*, ed. Kern Institute, Leiden (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947), 279; Behrend, 'Keraton, Taman, Mesjid,' IC 35 (1984): 44; Dumarçay and Smithies, *Cultural Sites* (1998), 49-50.

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan (1994), 277.

<sup>30</sup> I heard this tradition from a guide at the Keraton Kesepuhan.

<sup>31</sup> Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1, Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg (2007), 60.

chronogram. Indeed, in this context it is also potentially significant that Pires likewise links Cirebon's late fifteenth-century Islamic history to Demak (see Chapter 5).

Turning to a description of the mosque, it stands in its own compound, a short distance from the Keraton Kesepuhan.<sup>32</sup> The latter is Cirebon's earliest Islamic palace complex, containing both Islamic and pre-Islamic buildings. The mosque compound contains the mosque itself and four large *serambi* (two to the front of the mosque and one on either side). The *serambi* on the northern side of the mosque covers a *wuḍū'* pool, which may be original. The mosque complex as a whole is surrounded by a boundary wall of red terracotta brick, stylistically similar to the pre-Islamic sections of the adjacent Keraton Kesepuhan. According to the Indonesian Directorate for the Preservation and Protection of National Heritage, which surveyed the site in 1988, both this outer wall and all the *serambis* are nineteenth-century additions. As such, and because the *wuḍū'* pool has no characteristics relevant to this discussion, only the mosque's prayer hall will be considered.

The Masjid Agung Cirebon's prayer hall is delineated by a rectangular brick wall measuring 18m by 13m (see **Diagram 2**). This wall, which is aligned correctly towards the *qibla*, is painted red (except on its eastern side, which is partly made of stone) and stands 3m high. It is unattached to anything above or around it and therefore plays no structural role. Stylistically, it is similar to the oldest section of the Keraton Kesepuhan; unlike the boundary wall, however, it is original. In total, the wall has nine doorways: four on the northern side, four on the southern, and one on the eastern (directly opposite the *miḥrab*). The latter constitutes the main entrance and is richly decorated with floral and Chinese eternal-knot motifs. Both of these motifs reoccur in small lozenges along the same side of the wall (see **Fig. 32**). By contrast, the other

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<sup>32</sup> The word *keraton* refers specifically to the palace of a Javanese prince.

doorways are unadorned and fitted with plain doubled-leaved wooden doors (see **Fig. 33**). These openings also vary in height: some are 1.68m high by 0.68m wide, others 1.22m high by 0.53m wide. The latter force anyone using them to enter the mosque in a bowed position; as at the Masjid Merah Panjunan, this may have been to encourage humility (see the next section). The sides of the wall bearing these doors are also pierced with diamond-shaped ventilation shafts. In total, there are fourteen of these.

Turning to the mosque's roof, as at Demak this is three-tiered and hipped. Although the lowest two tiers have a substantial overhang (forming a portico), the upper-most tier does not. Indeed, this upper-most tier constitutes the biggest difference between this mosque and the Masjid Agung Demak – i.e. it is ridged, not pyramidal. On Java, this is unique (at least regarding prayer hall roofs). The reason for this difference, however, is unclear. M. Surat and N. Utaberta note that on Java a ridged roof (known as a *Bumbung Bentuk Joglo*) is synonymous with royal buildings<sup>33</sup> – the buildings in the adjacent Keraton, for example, all have ridged roofs. As such, and given the mosque's proximity to the Keraton, this might explain the shape of the roof. Equally, however, it may be necessitated by the rectangular shape of the prayer hall: also unusual amongst Javanese mosques, this shape of prayer hall would make a ridged roof preferable (as a pyramidal roof fits more naturally over a square building). But regardless of why it was adopted, the presence of a ridged roof results in an unusual internal structure.

Although the Demak mosque's columns can be grouped conveniently into two squares (also the case in other mosques, see sections 8.3.3 and 8.3.4), here the situation is more complex. Within the prayer hall itself, there are thirty columns: all are round, 0.6m in diameter, made of teak and placed upon simple, circular stone bases twice the width of the column itself (see the example in **Fig. 33**). The central twelve of these

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<sup>33</sup> Surat and Utaberta, 'Historiografi Masjid Tua Kampung Laut,' *JIA* 1:1 (2010): 41.

columns (in three rows of four) constitute the *saka guru*. Together, they support a system of four trusses from which the upper roof tier is formed. As such, the tie-beams of each truss sit directly upon three columns positioned beneath them (one column at each end, with another in the middle). The trusses are then connected together with purlins (currently obscured by a wooden roof-lining) to form the roof-tier. For extra support, a kingpost descends from the middle of the roof and is connected to cross-beams positioned above the tie-beams.

Turning to the prayer hall's other columns, these are all lined up against the inner face of the above mentioned wall and end in line with it (i.e. none progress above it). Their sole function is to support the lowest level of a complex system of cross-beams which radiate from and between all the *saka guru* to the columns beyond the prayer hall (see **Fig. 34**). This system of beams (currently reinforced by metal scaffolding inserted in the late 1930's)<sup>34</sup> strengthens the structure.

Outside the prayer hall, the mosque's structure becomes more familiar: rectangles of columns support the remaining roof tiers in a manner akin to Demak. Thus, eighteen round columns sit directly against the outer face of the prayer hall wall. There they support the middle roof tier at its lowest point, with the latter's rafters resting upon them. The lowest roof tier is supported by two further rectangles. The first, made up of twenty-six round columns, sits mid-way down the tier. A column in the northeast corner of this rectangle is a *saka tatal*; aside from the Masjid Agung Demak, this is the only mosque on Java to have a column like this. The second rectangle of columns is then positioned at the very edge of the mosque. These, however, differ markedly from those found elsewhere: small and square, they resemble the columns of the later *serambi*. This might suggest they are additions, contemporary to those

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<sup>34</sup> O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan (1994), 234.

structures. Nonetheless, that other mosques also have columns in this position suggests that, even if not original, these square columns replaced earlier ones that were perhaps more stylistically similar to columns elsewhere in the building.

The final two features of note are both decorative. First, the two outermost rectangles of round columns have capitals richly carved with double-layered stars. This pattern is also apparent on pavilions belonging to the pre-Islamic section of the Keraton Kesepuhan and the other early Cirebon mosque reviewed here (see **Fig. 38**). Second, the mosque's *miḥrab* (see **Fig. 35**) is heavily decorated. As at Demak, it has a *Surya Majapahit* at its top, but also examples of the floral and Chinese eternal-knot lozenges seen above. Local tradition associates this *miḥrab* with Sunan Kalijaga, claiming the large lotus flower hanging from the niche was carved by him.

### 8.2.3. Masjid Merah Panjunan

This small mosque is Cirebon's second contribution to this chapter. Located in Kampung Panjunan (Cirebon's Arab quarter), to date it has only been treated in depth by a single article, produced in 1982 by L. Brakel and H. Massarik.<sup>35</sup> Although this text offered many valuable insights, it also made a number of errors. Hopefully, these will be rectified here.

As no early Javanese text refers to this mosque, it is difficult to date. An oral tradition recorded by U. Tjandrasasmita claims it was built by a Mawlānā 'Abd al-Raḥmān and is the oldest mosque in Cirebon, predating both the arrival of Sunan

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<sup>35</sup> L. F. Brakel and H. Massarik, 'A Note on the Panjunan Mosque in Cirebon,' *Archipel* 23 (1982): 120-131.



Gunung Jati and the building of the Masjid Agung Cirebon.<sup>36</sup> None of this, however, can be independently verified. It is also unclear who Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was, as he is not mentioned in any other tradition. Brakel and Massarik therefore suggest an alternative date: drawing upon three early texts (the *Babad Cirebon*, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*), they note that each refers to an individual called Pangeran Panjunan. This similar name could indicate a link with the mosque (although this is not stated in the texts). Both the *Babad Cirebon* and *Hikayat Hasanuddin* claim Pangeran Panjunan was a Baghdādī Arab who, forced to flee his homeland after keeping dogs, subsequently settled in Cirebon (in Kampung Panjunan). As noted by Brakel and Massarik (and this thesis), however, Arab genealogies are too common in Javanese historiography to be credible. Equally, details of this Pangeran Panjunan’s life overlap with that of the Baghdādī Sufi, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī.<sup>37</sup> As founder of the Qādirī *ṭarīqa* (popular in the Nusantara, see Chapter 7), his story was well-known in the region and could have been utilised here. As such, Brakel and Massarik turn to the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*: there Pangeran Panjunan, born in 1525, was the son of Pangeran Pasarean (son of Sunan Gunung Jati) and Ratu Nyawa (a daughter of Raden Patah). This version, they claim, seems far more realistic: certainly, Sunan Gunung Jati and Raden Patah were contemporaries and closely allied with each other, making marriage between their families likely. This version of events would also explain the use of the royal title ‘Pangeran’; this is reserved for people directly descended from Malay royalty, which a Baghdādī Arab would probably not have been. Consequently, the authors conclude that the mosque was probably built by this member

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<sup>36</sup> Uka Tjandrasmita, *The Islamic Antiquities of Sendang Duwur*, trans. Satyawati Suleiman (Jakarta: Archaeological Foundation, 1975), 65. The same tradition is also recorded by Pijper (see: G. F. Pijper, *Fragmenta Islamica: Studien over het Islamisme in Nederlandsch-Indië* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1934], 98).

<sup>37</sup> Brakel and Massarik, ‘Panjunan Mosque,’ *Archipel* 23 (1982): 120-131. Indeed, many aspects of Pangeran Panjunan’s biography are apparently based on stories surrounding famous mystics; the keeping of dogs, for example, is reminiscent of al-Ḥallāj.

of Sunan Gunung Jati's family, perhaps in the mid-sixteenth century. Supporting this further, the mosque is decorated with sixteenth-century Chinese plates and (as will shortly be discussed) parallels the architectural style of the Masjid Agung Cirebon. The latter fact suggests the two structures likely date from the same period.

Turning to a description of the mosque, it forms part of a small compound aligned to the *qibla* and surrounded on its eastern and southern sides by a terracotta brick wall. Buildings unrelated to the site lie to the north and west. The terracotta wall is stylistically similar to that of the Masjid Agung Cirebon and the pre-Islamic sections of the Keraton Kesepuhan. Unlike the latter structures, however, it has a central split-gate (called a *candi bentar*) decorated with *garuda* wings.<sup>38</sup> The section of the wall north of this gate is said to belong to the Keraton Kesepuhan, whereas the southern side belongs to the Keraton Kanoman, another royal complex founded in 1678. This suggests to Brakel and Massarik that the wall was added after 1678: the attributions reflect the subsequent split in the royal house.<sup>39</sup> Although this is difficult to prove, that the wall does not mesh with the side of the prayer hall where the two meet suggests they are not contemporary.

Aside from the mosque, the compound contains a modern *wuḍū'* and toilet area (both to the north, under recent pavilions), a small *serambi* with an open courtyard in front (both to the front of the mosque), and a storeroom and *pewadonan* (both to the south). A single, unmarked grave sits to the rear of the mosque, just off the *pewadonan*. Brakel and Massarik also record a pavilion in the front courtyard, containing two large circular *bedug* (drums).<sup>40</sup> These features, however, are now absent – although an old

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<sup>38</sup> Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1,' Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg (2007), 61.

<sup>39</sup> Brakel and Massarik, 'Panjuran Mosque,' *Archipel* 23 (1982): 128.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

drum matching their description is kept near the grave. A minaret recorded by Wahby in 2007 has also disappeared.<sup>41</sup>

As remarked by Brakel and Massarik, the *serambi* is a later addition.<sup>42</sup> Stylistically, it is entirely different from the mosque's prayer hall: its walls (made of terracotta brick, painted red) are decorated with European-style columns and Dutch plates (see **Fig. 36**). They are also separated from the prayer hall walls by doorway-sized gaps. The sixteen columns supporting the *serambi*'s (single-tiered) roof are also all square, as in the later sections of the Masjid Agung Cirebon (although to the *serambi*'s rear are some round columns, as in the oldest sections of the Masjid Agung Cirebon, see below). Given all this, the *serambi* will be ignored.

Turning to the prayer hall, this measures approximately 9m by 9m (see **Diagram 3**). It has a two-tiered pyramidal roof supported by sixteen columns arranged in four rows of four, or two concentric squares. A system of single cross-beams connects all these columns, helping support the structure. A terracotta wall lies to the north, south and west of the structure.<sup>43</sup> The roof overhangs the northern and western walls by 1m; the *pewadonan* lies to the south, halting the roof line. The way the roof is supported by these columns and walls parallels the situation at the Masjid Agung Demak. As mentioned, all the columns are round; they also sit upon plain circular stone bases twice their width (see **Fig. 37**) and have capitals stylistically identical to those in the oldest parts of the Masjid Agung Cirebon (see **Fig. 38**). This further ties the two structures together. The eastern-most four columns sit outside the prayer hall proper, to the rear (or western end) of the *serambi*.<sup>44</sup> They do not, however, constitute part of the

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<sup>41</sup> Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1,' Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg (2007), 61.

<sup>42</sup> Brakel and Massarik, 'Panjunan Mosque,' *Archipel* 23 (1982): 124-126.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>44</sup> Brakel and Massarik mistakenly have two columns in this position, which they add to the sixteen supporting the roof (*Ibid*, 124).

latter structure: they support the mosque's lowest roof tier, which ends immediately after them (i.e. without any overhang). Approximately 2m behind these four columns, to the back of the *serambi*, sits a highly ornate terracotta brick wall (also painted red, see **Fig. 39**). This partitions the *serambi* from the prayer hall. As at the Masjid Agung Cirebon, it is stylistically similar to the Keraton Kasepuhan's pre-Islamic sections and has no structural role. Four of the round columns (including two of the *saka guru*) sit directly against its back. This partition wall possesses a central, very low gateway decorated with *garuda* wings and square masonry columns (see **Fig. 40**). The latter have European-style capitals; Wahby claims they are additions, replacing an earlier *paduraksa* (closed and roofed) opening.<sup>45</sup> The current gateway is so low it forces anyone entering the prayer hall to do so crouching, a design which again parallels the Masjid Agung Cirebon. Brakel and Massarik suggest it was to encourage humility when entering the structure.<sup>46</sup> Aside from the gateway, this wall is heavily decorated on both sides with ceramics. Brakel and Massarik claim these are all Chinese and sixteenth century, helping date the structure.<sup>47</sup> Although this identification is true in some cases (such as **Fig. 41**), closer inspection reveals many of the ceramics to be Dutch (evident from their decoration, which include windmills).<sup>48</sup> The date of this wall is therefore problematic.

Turning to the mosque's other walls, these are much plainer. The northern wall, for example, is entirely undecorated, pierced along its length by just a single doorway (immediately behind the partition wall) and a row of diamond-shaped openings 1.8m from the ground. The latter are exactly like the diamond-shaped openings at the Masjid

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<sup>45</sup> Wahby, 'Architecture of Early Mosques and Shrines. Vol. 1,' Unpublished Thesis, Bamberg (2007), 61-62.

<sup>46</sup> Brakel and Massarik, 'Panjunan Mosque,' *Archipel* 23 (1982): 124.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 122-124.

<sup>48</sup> This observation was made during a site visit, when the tiles were inspected first-hand and found to incorporate many European motifs.

Agung Cirebon and are likewise used for ventilation. Turning to the southern wall, this has only one opening: a door leading into the *pewadonan*. The western wall, on the other hand, has two rows of diamond-shaped ventilation shafts, one above the other, and on both sides of the *miḥrab*. They are at the same height as those on the northern wall. The *miḥrab* itself is an arched structure with two European-style masonry columns; in form it resembles the winged-gateway (minus the wings) and may therefore be an addition, too. It is sparsely decorated with floral motifs.

Turning to the *pewadonan*, this runs parallel to the prayer hall. Brakel and Massarik claim it is original. If so, it would be a unique feature: no other early Javanese mosque has an additional room like this, used for this purpose.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, however, the room itself is uninteresting: it is entirely undecorated, contains no columns and is surmounted by a ridged roof. The latter is supported by the terracotta walls and extends easterly, past the *pewadonan* to cover a storeroom. The latter runs parallel to the *serambi* and was probably added along with it, suggesting that the *pewadonan*'s current roof cannot predate the *serambi*. This fact, coupled with the *pewadonan*'s rarity in a structure of this age, might suggest it is also an addition.

#### 8.2.4. Masjid Agung Banten

The first certain reference to this mosque is in Francoise Valentijn's 1694 account of Banten: he describes it as a large square structure with five roof tiers, as seen today (see **Fig. 42**).<sup>50</sup> As to when the structure was originally built, however, local tradition asserts that construction took place during the reign of either Banten's first

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<sup>49</sup> T. Aryanti, for example, claims the *pewadonan* was not incorporated into the Javanese mosque until the early eighteenth century. He identifies the earliest surviving example as the one at the Masjid Agung Demak (Tutin Aryanti, 'The Center vs. The Periphery in Central-Javanese Mosque Architecture,' *Dimensi Teknik Arsitektur* 34:2 [2006]: 75).

<sup>50</sup> Cited in: Pijper, 'The Minaret in Java,' in *India Antiqua*, ed. Kern Institute (1947), 276.

Sultan, Ḥasanuddīn (r. 1552-1570),<sup>51</sup> or his successor, Mawlānā Yūsuf (r. 1570-1580).<sup>52</sup> Indeed, both individuals are buried at the site, suggesting the possibility of an early date. Local tradition also claims some elements of the mosque were added during the mid-seventeenth-century, by the Dutch architect Hendrik Lucasz Cardael. This would again suggest an early date, stretching back to at least the early seventeenth century.

The mosque itself sits within a walled compound, also containing a large *serambi* (to the front of the mosque), a minaret (in a courtyard, also to the front of the mosque), a grave complex (to the north) and a meeting hall (known locally as the *tiyamah*, and positioned to the south). As in other locations, the *serambi* is a recent addition and need not be considered further. Equally, the minaret and *tiyamah* are attributed to Cardael.<sup>53</sup> Although nothing conclusively confirms this, both structures are typically European; the minaret in particular has been likened to a seventeenth-century European lighthouse.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, both the compound wall and some thick masonry walls which surround the mosque's prayer hall incorporate European-style columns at regular intervals, including around the *miḥrab* (see **Fig. 43**). The walls are also pierced by European-style windows and arched doorways. Aside from these masonry elements, however, the body of the mosque is considered to be substantially original.<sup>55</sup> In form, it represents a structure very similar to the Masjid Agung Demak. Indeed, its basic construction is virtually identical. As such, this discussion need only focus on the mosque's more distinguishing characteristics.

First amongst these are the frequently commented upon five roof tiers. Although the first three are like those at Demak (even including very large overhangs), the remaining two (also pyramidal) are very small and purely decorative. These are

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<sup>51</sup> O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan (1994), 235.

<sup>52</sup> Hafidz Rafi'uddin, *Riwayat Kesulthanan Banten* (Banten: n.p., 2006), 109.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>54</sup> O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan (1994), 235.

<sup>55</sup> Behrend, 'Keraton, Taman, Mesjid,' *IC* 35 (1984): 43-44.

positioned directly over the top of the third roof tier and are built around a central kingpost. The latter extends down through the ceiling of the mosque, to a point level with the bottom of the third roof tier. It is supported there by three levels of cross-beams (see **Fig. 44**). Together, the two small roof tiers create the impression of a miniature *meru* (see section 8.3.1), sitting on top of the mosque.

The prayer hall itself is slightly rectangular (25m by 23m). This shape is a result of the masonry wall opposite the *miḥrab* being pushed out to the edge of the bottom roof tier; the other walls allow the roof a 2m overhang. The prayer hall is divided in two by a masonry wall (also with European columns, and so probably added) that stretches from floor to ceiling (see **Diagram 4**). Orientated east-west, this wall is positioned 4m from the southern wall and runs the whole length of the space. It creates a *pewadonan* on the left-hand side of the building, accessible via a small door in the partition wall, near the *miḥrab*. The remaining space (measuring 19m by 25m) constitutes the main prayer hall and is accessible via five arched doorways in the wall opposite the *miḥrab*, in addition to a further (square) door in the centre of the northern wall.

The main prayer hall and *pewadonan* together contain thirty columns. The partition wall, however, is positioned where a row of six columns would otherwise be. This may suggest (if the partition wall is not original) that the structure was designed with thirty-six columns. Nevertheless, to understand the function of these columns, they must be seen as those at Demak: as a series of concentric squares which, along with the prayer hall's masonry walls, support the roof-tiers above them. Unlike at Demak, however, the columns at Banten are neither evenly sized nor evenly spaced; they get smaller and closer together the further they are from the centre. Equally, the columns are not round, but octagonal. This shape is unique amongst early Javanese mosques.

Another distinguishing feature of the Masjid Agung Banten is its system of cross-beams (see **Figs. 44** and **45**; these beams are only present on the side of the mosque without the partition wall). At a point level with the bottom of the second roof tier, four cross-beams arranged in two pairs (one beam above the other) radiate from the *saka guru* (see **Fig. 45**). Arranged at right angles to each other, each pair joins with the top of a column from the second square. To be more precise, they join with the columns either side of the corner column of that square (see **Diagram 4**). The purpose of these beams is to support the columns. A similar set radiate from the corner columns of the second square to the tops of the columns either side of the corner column of the third square. Although cross-beams are common in early mosques, this particular system is unique.

The final feature worth discussing are the stone bases associated with the columns. As such, each square of columns sits upon a different, but always elaborately carved, stone base (see **Figs. 46** to **48**). These are unique amongst Javanese mosques and have Chinese stylistic influences. For example, the second and third squares sit on bases decorated with lotus leaf designs reminiscent of those seen on Chinese column bases from the same period.<sup>56</sup>

#### **8.2.5. Masjid Menara Kudus**

Local tradition attributes the construction of this mosque to Sunan Kudus, who is buried at the site. An Arabic inscription to the rear of the mosque's *mihrab* bears the date 956AH (or 1549) and describes how Sunan Kudus left Demak to found the city and mosque. Whether this is accurate, however, is unclear. Nonetheless, many Ming

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<sup>56</sup> Andrew Boyd, *Chinese Architecture and Town Planning, 1500B.C. – A.D.1911* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1962), 27.



Dynasty plates adorn the mosque's minaret, in addition to some fifteenth-century Vietnamese tiles (identical to those at Demak).<sup>57</sup>

The site is essentially a large walled compound, made from red terracotta brick. In style, the overall impression is similar to that of the compounds at Cirebon. The mosque sits in the compound's northeast corner. It is, however, of little interest, being an almost entirely new construction. Nonetheless, the compound contains many other features which appear to be original and are therefore worth discussing. These include its monumental gateways and a large minaret immediately to the mosque's southeast.

Beginning with the mosque's most prominent feature, its large minaret (see **Fig. 49**), this is stylistically identical to a Balinese Hindu temple's drum tower (see section 8.3.1). As in Bali, the tower is surmounted by a small pavilion, under which are several drums. These include a large round drum (as at other mosques) and a set of slit drums, all hanging from the roof. The latter (but not the former) are also typical of Balinese temples. Amongst early Javanese mosques, the presence of a minaret is unique. No other example has one.

Turning to the compound's many monumental gateways, these are also stylistically typical of the Balinese temple. Designed to represent the *mahameru* (see section 8.3.1), they are either *candi bentar* (split-gates) or *paduraksa* (closed and roofed, as in **Fig. 50**). Importantly, three of these gateways sit within the mosque itself: one (a *candi bentar*) acts as the main entrance, opening onto the street; a second (a *paduraksa*) is currently positioned at the front of the *serambi*, acting as an entrance into that space; the third (also a *paduraksa*, see **Fig. 50**) sits to the front of the mosque's prayer hall. The latter is the only one with decorated floral panels, reminiscent of those at the Masjid Agung Cirebon. All three gateways are perfectly aligned with each other

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<sup>57</sup> Whether this early date is correct or not, local tradition actually asserts that Kudus's first mosque was the Langgar Bubrah. Although this structure fell into ruin long ago, what remains is architecturally similar to the Masjid Menara Kudus (Takashi, 'Vietnamese Decorated Tiles [1]' *TJAH* 25 [2008]: 139).

and the *miḥrab* behind them. Together they create the impression of a three-courtyarded Balinese temple. In other words, it appears as though the mosque were built directly over the top of one of these temples (see section 8.3.1). Many of the doors on these gateways parallel those at Demak, demonstrating both Javanese and Chinese influences.

Notably, the mosque compound also has a graveyard complex. The boundary walls and gateways of this six-courtyard complex are again stylistically Balinese. That the boundary walls are continuous with the (still apparently original) rear wall of the mosque suggests the complex is original. The complex is accessed via a *paduraksa*, hidden behind the *wuḍū'* area located at the rear of the minaret. The first courtyard contains no graves, only a pavilion and (to the right) another *paduraksa*. The latter has a brick screen positioned behind it, obscuring any view of what is beyond. This screen is flanked by two pillars and arches slightly in the centre. It is decorated with leaf designs and has an Arabic inscription set into it. The large courtyard behind it marks the beginning of the graveyard proper, with many small graves scattered around it. From there radiate four further courtyards, all containing early graves. Sunan Kudus's grave is located in a large courtyard at the very rear of the complex.

#### **8.2.6. Summary**

In total, we have examined five mosques, all of them pre-1620. Although each has been renovated and/or added to over the centuries, they have all been shown to preserve substantial sections of their original structures. Although none are identical, our descriptions have revealed a number of similarities, allowing for some generalisations.

First, wood constitutes a primary building material: it is used for both columns and roof timbers. In all cases, however, masonry walls are also present – although, outside Cirebon and Kudus, these are later additions. The latter point makes it unclear whether all the structures originally had them. The second generalisation, however, revolves around the fact that all the mosques have multi-tiered roofs: excluding Kudus (where the original roof does not survive), the Masjid Merah Panjunan (perhaps as the smallest) has two tiers, whereas the Masjid Agung Cirebon and Masjid Agung Demak each have three. The Masjid Agung Banten's decorative tiers bring its total to five, although without these it would also have three. Except for the Masjid Agung Cirebon's ridged roof, all the mosques have square pyramidal roofs. This probably reflects the generally square shape of the buildings beneath.

A third generalisation is possible regarding the way each roof is supported. In each case, and again excluding Kudus, columns arranged in concentric squares (or, at the Masjid Agung Cirebon, rectangles) rise to the full height of the roof in order to support a roof tier positioned directly above them. At Demak, Banten and in the Masjid Merah Panjunan, the outer masonry walls also help support the lowest roof-tier. Only the Masjid Agung Cirebon's wall has no structural role, standing unattached as it does from the rest of the building. Nonetheless, the otherwise uniform nature of this construction method constitutes one of the biggest similarities between the structures reviewed here. On the other hand, the system of cross-beams designed to support these columns varies from mosque to mosque.

A fourth generalisation involves the layout of each mosque. With the possible exceptions of the Masjid Merah Panjunan (with its *pewadonan*) and Masjid Menara Kudus (with its possible three-fold division), internally all the mosques are composed of single, very large spaces. Their prayer halls are neither subdivided nor supplemented

by other rooms, whether around the building or in upper storeys. Also, all the mosques are only accessible via doorways on their eastern, northern and southern sides; in no instance is there a doorway on the *mihrab* (or western) wall. Furthermore, the principle entry point is always on the wall opposite the *mihrab*: at Demak and Banten, this constitutes a series of doors, whereas in Cirebon a single entry point is positioned in line with the *mihrab*. As the masonry walls at Banten are later, however, the current arrangement may not reflect anything in existence earlier.

Currently, all the mosques sit within walled compounds. These commonly contain subsidiary buildings (usually associated with *wuḍū'*) and a grave complex. Except at Kudus, however, the compounds' boundary walls and additional buildings are recent additions. At Demak and Banten, however, (and as at Kudus) the grave complexes are undoubtedly early (as they contain graves associated with the people who built the mosque). This indicates the mosques may always have been part of a wider compound, if not precisely the one they sit in today. By contrast, the only mosques without grave complexes are in Cirebon – although a single, unmarked grave can be found at the Masjid Merah Panjunan.

Overall, the two Cirebon mosques bear a great deal of resemblance to each other. Both have similar columns and decorated terracotta walls. Concerning their columns, in each case these are rounded, with circular stone bases twice their width and pre-Islamic Javanese motifs decorating their capitals. Round columns, although of a different design, are also characteristic of the Masjid Agung Demak; there they take the form of *saka tatal* (also present at the Masjid Agung Cirebon). The Demak columns do, however, have round stone bases, as at Cirebon. At Banten, on the other hand, the columns are octagonal and have far more elaborate stone bases, incorporating Chinese

stylistic influences. Also uniquely, Banten's columns vary in size according to their structural position.

When it comes to pre-Islamic Javanese stylistic influences, these are perhaps most evident at Kudus, where they saturate the site. At both Demak and Banten, on the other hand, they are largely absent: both sites lack *candi bentar* and boundary walls in the style of sites like the Keraton Kesepuhan. Demak does, however, have a *Surya Majapahit* above its *miḥrab*, as too does the Masjid Agung Cirebon. By contrast, all the mosques have Chinese decorative elements: Chinese ceramics adorn walls at both Kudus and the Masjid Merah Panjunan, while Chinese floral patterns and/or eternal knot motifs are ubiquitous across all sites. Vietnamese wall tiles can also be seen at Demak and Kudus.

This briefly summarises the most important features of the early Javanese mosques. Our chapter will now try to uncover the possible inspiration(s) behind these features. Some evidence has already been revealed for pre-Islamic Javanese stylistic influence, as well as the use of Chinese artist motifs, but we now need to say more about the construction methods underlying each building.

### **8.3. Possible Origins of the Javanese Mosque**

In the past, three possible sources of inspiration have been suggested for the Javanese mosque: pre-Islamic Javanese, South Indian and Chinese. We will now take the case for each of these in turn, examining them in light of the above descriptions.

### 8.3.1. Pre-Islamic Javanese Designs

Beginning with K. Hidding (1933)<sup>58</sup> and G. F. Pijper (1947),<sup>59</sup> many scholars have argued that the traditional Javanese mosque is simply a continuation of the island's pre-Islamic architecture.<sup>60</sup> This proposal rests on a belief that early Javanese Muslims utilised their pre-Islamic understandings of the sacred to construct their first mosques. In other words, those earlier understandings formed the prism through which the Javanese interpreted the mosque as a sacred space. This is certainly logical, as the Javanese might be expected to turn to the familiar when interpreting their new religion. But, does the evidence we reviewed above support it?

As already noted, some of the first mosques do bear indications of pre-Islamic stylistic influence. The Masjid Menara Kudus is the best example of this: as numerous authors note, it strongly resembles a Balinese Hindu temple.<sup>61</sup> Certainly, Balinese temples are renowned for imitating earlier Javanese examples, now destroyed.<sup>62</sup> A Balinese temple essentially comprises a complex of one, two or three walled courtyards, positioned one behind the other. These spaces are connected by monumental gateways of either the *candi bentar* or *paduraksa* variety. A large drum tower (with a pavilion at

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<sup>58</sup> K. Hidding, 'Het Bergemtief in Eenige Godsdienstige Verschijnjnselen op Java,' *Tijdschr voor Indische taal, Land- en Volkenkunde* 73 (1933): 469.

<sup>59</sup> Pijper, 'The Minaret in Java,' in *India Antiqua*, ed. Kern Institute (1947), 275-276.

<sup>60</sup> Other prominent examples include: Nasir, *Mosque Architecture*, trans. Abdullah (2004), 35; Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1982), 95; A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 1; Andrew Peterson, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 118; J. Kathirithamby-Wells, 'The Islamic City: Melaka to Jogjakarta, c.1500-1800,' *Modern Asian Studies* 20:2 (1986): 338; Bambang Seti Budi, 'A Study on the History and Development of the Javanese Mosque, Part 1: A Review of Theories on the Origin of the Javanese Mosque,' *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* 3:1 (2004): 189.

<sup>61</sup> For example: Behrend, 'Keraton, Taman, Mesjid,' *IC* 35 (1984): 41-42.

<sup>62</sup> During the pre-modern period, Bali and Java were intimately connected. For example, Majapahit ruled Bali from 1343 until 1398, during which time many aspects of Javanese culture were exported to Bali (including temple architecture). This cultural exchange was finally cemented during Java's Islamisation; as Demak conquered the island, refugees from Majapahit's court fled to Bali, taking their culture with them. This further perpetuated the replication of Javanese-style Hindu temples on Bali, where they continue to be built today (Urs Ramseyer, *Art and Culture of Bali* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977], 55-56; 130).

the top, under which are usually two slit drums) can be found in a bottom corner of the first courtyard.<sup>63</sup> Terracotta brick is the chief building material, and Chinese ceramics are frequently used for decoration.

All this strongly parallels Kudus: the same vernacular is used, the same decoration, the same gateways. Even the drum tower is the same, and in the same relative position. Equally, the three gateways within Kudus's mosque and *serambi* area correspond to what might be expected if three courtyards had once occupied that space, one immediately behind the other. A. Peterson goes so far as to argue that this was indeed once the case, and that the site re-uses an earlier Hindu temple in order to capture its sacred character.<sup>64</sup>

But, although many stylistic parallels clearly exist, the idea of re-use is unlikely. If the gateways inside Kudus's *serambi* and mosque once marked the entrance to courtyards, there should be evidence of the walls which once delineated those spaces. Nothing, however, suggests either gateway once formed part of a wall; the side of each bears no sign of a wall having been removed. Indeed, given the presence of the grave complex and *miḥrab* (both original), the possibility of re-use diminishes still further; neither of these features would be found in a Hindu temple.

Nonetheless, a similar argument for re-use has also been made for the Masjid Agung Cirebon. Pijper, for example, has claimed that its prayer hall wall (stylistically similar to Kudus) was once part of a temple complex.<sup>65</sup> Again, however, this seems unlikely: the structure is too big for a building from within a temple complex, and almost certainly could not have been a former boundary wall. This is because the latter have monumental gateways. If such gateways were once present at the Masjid Agung

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<sup>63</sup> Ramseyer, *Art and Culture of Bali* (1977), 131; Miguel Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* (London: KPI, 1986), 264.

<sup>64</sup> Peterson, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (1996), 133-134.

<sup>65</sup> Pijper, 'The Minaret in Java,' in *India Antiqua*, ed. Kern Institute (1947), 279.

Cirebon, their removal should have left signs on the structure. None, however, exist. Similarly, the existing doorways and ventilation shafts would be additions, as no existing example of a Balinese temple has them. But if so, they should be cut into the surrounding brickwork. They are, however, integral to it, suggesting they have always been present.

But, if neither the Masjid Menara Kudus nor the Masjid Agung Cirebon re-uses an earlier Hindu structure, the people who built them must have consciously utilised pre-Islamic forms in their construction. This supports Hidding's and Pijper's arguments about Javanese builders utilising pre-Islamic ideas of the sacred to express their understanding of the mosque as a sacred space. Nonetheless, and as noted above, not all the mosques share the features seen at Kudus and Cirebon: the mosques at Demak and Banten, for example, lack both terracotta walls and monumental gateways. Were these structures therefore not influenced by pre-Islamic Javanese architecture?

Decorative scenes on Javanese *candi* (Hindu monuments) may help answer this. S. Wirjosuparto claims some of these depict structures similar to the early Javanese mosque – that is, square pavilions (known locally as *pendopo* or *pendapa*) surmounted by pyramidal roofs resting on columns.<sup>66</sup> Turning to A. Kempers's comprehensive record of *candi* decoration, there are indeed nine *candi* representations of *pendopos* like this, spread over four different sites: four from *candi* Djawa (built in c.1300), located near the foot of Mount Welirang;<sup>67</sup> a single scene from *candi* Kedaton (1370), located to the west of Mount Hjang;<sup>68</sup> another single scene from *candi* Djago (thirteenth-century), located near Malang;<sup>69</sup> and a final three from *candi* Sukuh (1440), located on

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<sup>66</sup> Sujipto Wirjosuparto, 'Sedjarah Bangunan Mesdjid di Indonesia,' *Almanak Muhammadiyah* 22 (1962): 68-69.

<sup>67</sup> Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), 82; plates 243-246.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, plate 311.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, plates 251-252.



the slopes of Mount Lawu, east of Surakarta.<sup>70</sup> In all cases, square pavilions with pyramidal roofs are shown; unlike the mosques, however, they have single-tiered roofs, no walls, are raised on pilings and have curved roof ridges. Equally, although the structures depicted at Sukuh have four (square) columns supporting the roof (one in each corner), those at the other sites have a single, central column (also square). With the exception of Kedaton, the *candis* also depict rectangular *pendopos*: these have ridged, single-tiered roofs supported by either four or six square columns. Once again, the structures sit on pilings and have no walls.<sup>71</sup>

Despite some similarities (the roof shape, a square plan and the use of columns), the above suggests the *pendopos* depicted on the *candi* are by no means an exact match for later mosques. A clearer idea of the two buildings' relative similarity, however, could be gained from a consideration of their construction techniques. The *candi* depictions, however, are not detailed enough to allow a judgement in this regard. Nonetheless, early *pendopo* survive all over Java: the Keraton Kesepuhan, for example, has a number of early *pendopo* outwardly identical to those depicted on the *candi* (see **Figs. 51 and 52**).<sup>72</sup> When closely examined, these *pendopo* undoubtedly have similar constructions to the early mosques; for example, they all have four (always square, not round) *saka guru* supporting the roof above. But, notable differences occur too: the earlier *pendopos* all have very large, ornately carved top plates (see **Fig. 53**). The latter are made up of four beams arranged in a square, which together support a small ceiling and the roof above. Immediately below this top plate, a single cross-beam usually runs between each *saka guru*. Although all buildings have top plates, none of the mosques

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<sup>70</sup> Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), plates 331-333.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, plate 251.

<sup>72</sup> Jacques Dumarçay, *The Palaces of South-East Asia: Architecture and Customs*, ed. and trans. Michael Smithies (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 105. The Keraton's *pendopo*, however, do not sit on pilings but large brick bases. Nonetheless, three *pendopo* shown at *candi* Djago do the same (Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* [1959], plate 251).

reviewed here has one like this; their later *serambi*, however, do. So too do later mosques, which also (and again like the *serambi*) have the square columns of the *pendopo*. As such, it seems these elements of the *pendopo* were utilised both before the rise of Islam and during later phases of Java's Islamic history. There were not, however, used during the initial phases of Islamisation. This suggests those who built the earliest Javanese mosques were actively rejecting the top plates and square columns of this traditional form of Javanese architecture. As such, by itself the *pendopo* cannot explain the mosque.

The Sukuh *candi* depictions, however, show another structure of possible interest: the *meru*. Rather than the *pendopo*, J. Prijotomo suggests this tower-like structure could be the traditional Javanese mosque's antecedent.<sup>73</sup> As M. Covarrubias notes, the *meru* was intended as a shaft (or conduit), down which the gods descended. This created a sacred space at the bottom, in which the believer could commune with the divine.<sup>74</sup> For Prijotomo, this corresponds to the function of a mosque prayer hall, making the *meru* a suitable candidate for the prior understandings of the sacred that Javanese Muslims may have brought to their first mosques. That the *meru* is physically similar to the Javanese mosque supports this conclusion: both the depictions at Sukuh and surviving examples on Bali show the *meru* to be a square tower, made up of multiple pyramidal roofs positioned one above the other. These roof tiers diminish in size as they go up the structure, with the largest rarely being more than four or five metres square. They always occur in odd numbers (between three and eleven)<sup>75</sup> and

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<sup>73</sup> Josef Prijotomo, *Ideas and Forms of Javanese Architecture* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1984), 44.

<sup>74</sup> Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* (1986), 268.

<sup>75</sup> There is disagreement on this: Covarrubias claims the number is between three and nine (Ibid, 268), whereas Ramseyer states between one and eleven (Ramseyer, *Art and Culture of Bali* [1977], 132). Although many *meru* have eleven tiers (for example, the *meru* at the Pura Taman Ayun temple at Mengwi, South Bali), none have just one. As such, and given that three is a very common number of tiers, Covarrubias's and Ramseyer's figures have been combined.

four square columns can usually be found at the base. As in the mosque, these are arranged in a square and called *saka guru*. In the Sukuḥ depictions, these columns sit on wooden floors, raised above ground level by pilings.<sup>76</sup>

In consideration of the above, a physical and functional resemblance undoubtedly exists between the *meru* and the traditional Javanese mosque. Indeed, the two decorative roof tiers above the Masjid Agung Banten are reminiscent of a miniature *meru*. The depictions at Sukuḥ also demonstrate that the *meru* was once associated with Majapahit (Sukuḥ is a Majapahit site); a possible link between the Masjid Agung Demak and Majapahit is evidenced by the *Surya Majapahit* above the former's *miḥrab*. As such, and if Prijotomo is correct, even those mosques with no other stylistic affinities to the Balinese temple may still ultimately derive from pre-Islamic Javanese forms. But, before drawing any conclusions like this, a number of problems should be noted.

First, although most early mosques have odd-numbered roof tiers, this is not universal: the Masjid Merah Panjunan has only two. Prijotomo cannot explain this anomaly. Second, the *meru*'s *saka guru* perform a sacred function: they are boundary markers for the sacred space within.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, they are (in and of themselves) objects of reverence. The *saka tatal* notwithstanding, there is no evidence this has ever been the case in a mosque, despite the sacred nature of the building. A third problem revolves around the mosque as a large building, designed to hold large congregations: the *meru* is the opposite, being a small structure capable of holding no more than a few people. Indeed, some Balinese examples cannot be accessed at all – their pyramidal roofs simply cover (or form a shaft over) an altar used for ritual purposes. This suggests that, ultimately, the purpose of the two buildings was understood differently.

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<sup>76</sup> For example, see: Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), plate 333.

<sup>77</sup> Prijotomo, *Javanese Architecture* (1984), 53.

Larger problems than this, however, emerge when construction techniques are considered. As described above, each mosque roof tier is supported by a series of columns stretching from floor to ceiling, with cross-beams running between them. In the *meru*, however, although this construction is mirrored at the bottom of the structure, above the second roof tier there are dramatic differences. From the second tier onwards, roof tiers are not placed on top of columns, but attached to their sides. Equally, columns no longer stretch to the ground but rest upon cross-beams placed immediately beneath them. For example, the *saka guru* terminate at the top of the second roof tier, where a set of cross-beams connect them together. The four columns for the next roof tier then sit on these beams, each slightly further within the structure than the *saka guru* (to reduce the overall width of the building). These new columns then terminate at the top of the third roof tier, where more cross-beams serve to support four further columns for the next roof tier. This pattern continues on up the structure. Given this, the construction of the mosques cannot be wholly based upon the *meru*; the roof tiers of each are built up in very different ways.

Nevertheless, the above differences could reflect the increased size of the mosque in comparison to the *meru*. In other words, if a *meru* were expanded into a mosque, the resultant increase in floor area could have necessitated an altered construction, if only to accommodate the increased size and weight of the roof tiers. Much larger supporting columns would be required, for example, which it might be more difficult to carry on cross-beams. But, whether the structure of the early mosques would be the unavoidable consequence of this situation is unclear; numerous alternative construction techniques could conceivably have been used. This is significant because of the early Javanese mosque's structural uniformity. Given the multiple ways in which a *meru* could have been adapted, this is surprising. It suggests, however, that the

builders of the first mosques were using another pre-existing building as a model. Indeed, the *meru* is not the only possible prototype Prijotomo identifies: he also appeals to the Balinese *wantilan*.

The *wantilan* is a large pavilion designed to host cockfights on festivals days.<sup>78</sup> Positioned near (but always outside) a temple complex, the bloodletting which occurs within serves to banish the malevolent Bhuta Kala (the dark powers which romp through the retinue of divine beings).<sup>79</sup> Significantly for this discussion, however, surviving *wantilan* are remarkably similar to the traditional Javanese mosque: although open on all sides, they are square and have pyramidal roofs of either two or three tiers. The latter are always supported by columns with cross-beams, as in the mosques.<sup>80</sup> But, before taking this as conclusive, it should be noted that no example of the *wantilan* survives prior to the nineteenth century. Neither is there any evidence of them outside Bali<sup>81</sup> – they are not, for example, depicted on Java's *candi*. As such, there is no reason to suppose the *wantilan* predates the Javanese mosque. Equally, as noted by H. J. de Graaf, the *wantilan* is not a sacred building; it is a place of ritual impurity, where man is cleansed of the Buta Kala before entering the temple. This state of impurity means any union with the Supreme Being is impossible within the *wantilan*'s confines. In other words, the purpose of a *wantilan* is antithetical to that of a mosque.<sup>82</sup> As such, if the people who built the first Javanese mosques were influenced by earlier ideas of the sacred (as posited above), it is unlikely they would have chosen the *wantilan* as a mosque prototype.

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<sup>78</sup> Prijotomo, *Javanese Architecture* (1984), 43-44. This candidacy is also supported by O'Neill and W. F. Stutterheim (see: O'Neill, 'South-East Asia,' in *The Mosque*, ed. Frishman and Khan [1994], 227-228; and W. F. Stutterheim, *Leerboek der Indische cultuurgeschiedenis*, vol. 3: De Islam en zijn komst in den archipel [Batavia: J. B. Wolters, 1935], 137).

<sup>79</sup> Prijotomo, *Javanese Architecture* (1984), 43.

<sup>80</sup> Ramseyer, *Art and Culture of Bali* (1977), 132-133.

<sup>81</sup> Budi, 'Study of the Javanese Mosque, Part 1,' *JAABE* 3:1 (2004): 192-193.

<sup>82</sup> De Graaf, 'Origins of the Javanese Mosque,' *JSAH* 4:1 (1963): 5.

To summarise, we have seen that pre-Islamic Javanese influences undoubtedly came to bear on the early Javanese mosque. The sites at Kudus and Cirebon make this clear. The influences they evince, however, are largely decorative and not found across all sites. Rather, when it comes to the structural features displayed by all mosques, it seems no pre-Islamic Javanese structure can be unhesitatingly accepted as a suitable prototype. The pre-Islamic *pendopo* shares some similarities but, ultimately, Java's first mosques actively reject its specific form. The *meru* appears outwardly similar, and perhaps performs a similar sacred function, but has so many upper structural differences that it cannot be equated with the mosque either. Turning to the *wantilan*, this is structurally very similar to the mosques, but radically different in terms of function. Equally, this type of building may post-date the mosques of this period, perhaps making it just as likely that the mosque influenced the *wantilan* as vice-versa. Nonetheless, the presence of at least some structural similarities between these buildings and the mosques implies a form of continuation. Overall, the *pendopo* is perhaps the most likely candidate for the source of this continuity: unlike the *wantilan*, the *pendopo* undoubtedly predates the mosques and, unlike the *meru*, was designed as a meeting place for large groups of people while not having a radically different upper structure.<sup>83</sup> But any continuation of the *pendopo*'s form must have also seen the shape of that building augmented by something else, creating the observed differences. The question we must now ask is, what?

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<sup>83</sup> F. Kerlogue also makes this case for the *pendopo*, focusing on its incarnation as a village meeting hall (a *balai*) (see: Fiona Kerlogue, *Arts of Southeast Asia* [London: Thames & Hudson, 2004], 130-131).

### 8.3.2. Influence from the Malabar Coast

Both de Graaf<sup>84</sup> and F. Robinson<sup>85</sup> support the idea of South Indian influence. Pointing to Malabar, they highlight strong trade links with the Nusantara and the fact that both regions share the same *madhhab* (see Chapters 1 and 2). The latter point suggests cultural transfer which, they feel, may have also extended to mosque architecture. Indeed, and as both authors note, Malabar does possess a number of early mosques similar to those in the Nusantara: wooden buildings with multi-tiered roofs supported by columns. It is therefore worth examining them further.

Although no two Malabari mosques are identical, surviving examples strongly resemble each other. The earliest is the Mithqalpalli mosque, located in Cranganore.<sup>86</sup> According to local tradition, this was built by a merchant called Nakhūdā Mithqāl, during the early fourteenth century.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions this individual as Malabar's most prosperous merchant, who traded actively with China.<sup>88</sup> As such, those connected with him (if not he, himself) would have travelled through the Nusantara. These journeys may have provided an opportunity to build (or influence the building of) a mosque in the region. This is, of course, speculation but nonetheless possible. It is perhaps equally possible that any resultant structure resembled the Mithqalpalli mosque, as an expression of the architecture familiar to the builders. Consequently, it is worth examining that structure in more detail.

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<sup>84</sup> De Graaf, 'Origins of the Javanese Mosque,' *JSAH* 4:1 (1963): 5.

<sup>85</sup> Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World* (1982), 95.

<sup>86</sup> Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa)* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2003), 49.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

<sup>88</sup> *RIB*, 223.

The Mithqalpalli mosque is a rectangular building surmounted by a four-tiered gabled and ridged roof. Each of the four tiers constitutes a separate storey,<sup>89</sup> with the whole building set upon a stone foundation, four steps high. From the top of this foundation rises a one-storey high outer wall (also of stone), into which semi-circular arched doorways are pierced at regular intervals. A veranda encloses this wall, created by the substantial overhang of the lowest roof-tier; this overhang is supported by wooden columns and designed to copy the *pradakshinapatha* (or circumambulation path) of a Hindu temple. The mosque's ground-floor houses the main prayer hall and an adjacent anti-chamber,<sup>90</sup> while the upper floors constitute a *madrassa* and various storerooms.<sup>91</sup>

In terms of construction, the ground-floor walls support nothing, with the whole structure resting on a system of wooden columns and cross-beams. The columns are arranged in rows and are alternately either square or octagonal. This arrangement is common to all Malabari mosques and imitates earlier Hindu tradition (being directly comparable to column arrangements in the temples of Madurai and Kayalpatnam).<sup>92</sup> Cross-beams run directly between these columns, the rafters of the roof resting upon them. Depending on their location, the cross-beams either support the roof tiers or the floors of each storey. The beams and rafters diminish in size the higher up the structure one goes.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to the Mithqalpalli mosque, the Misqual mosque of Kozhikode and the Puzhakkal Juma-Masjid of Manjakkal Mahe (both fourteenth century) also have the

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<sup>89</sup> K. J. John, 'The Muslim-Arabs and Mosque Architecture in Malabar,' in *Kerala Muslims: A Historical Perspective*, ed. Ashgar Ali Engineer (Delhi: Ajanta, 1995), 51-53.

<sup>90</sup> Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India* (2003), 154.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>92</sup> John, 'Mosque Architecture in Malabar,' in *Kerala Muslims*, ed. Engineer (1995), 50.

<sup>93</sup> Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India* (2003), 156.



form just described.<sup>94</sup> When comparing these structures to the traditional Javanese mosque, some features are immediately familiar. The idea of multi-tiered roofs supported by wooden columns, for example, clearly parallels what is seen on Java. Similarly, the use of diminishing octagonal columns recalls the Masjid Agung Banten, while a ridged roof coupled with a prayer hall wall that serves no structural purpose resembles the Masjid Agung Cirebon. Ultimately, however, these similarities are overshadowed by some substantial differences. Unlike in Malabar, traditional Javanese mosques tend to be square, with pyramidal roofs. Ridged roofs, on the other hand, are very uncommon, while no Javanese mosque has a gabled roof. Javanese mosques also do not have four roof tiers, or any additional storeys. The latter is a very important difference: additional storeys mean the insertion of extra floors and the cross-beams necessary to support them. All these things are absent on Java. Indeed, the original form of a traditional Javanese mosque lacks any of the subsidiary spaces (*madrasas* etc.) common to the upper storeys of early Malabari mosques. The traditional Javanese mosque seems to have been understood as a large space designed for prayer; Malabari mosques are always more complex than this.

Given the above considerations, it seems the traditional Javanese mosque cannot be directly equated with those from Malabar. Although they share some features (tiered roofs, wood as a construction material and a structure supported by columns), they diverge with regards to many others (the number of roof tiers used, the presence of gabled roofs, multiple storeys and multiple functions). Perhaps significantly, however, many of the features they share also characterise pre-Islamic Javanese structures. As such, it is perhaps unnecessary to look towards Malabar to explain their presence in the Javanese mosque.

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<sup>94</sup> Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India* (2003), 154.

It is also doubtful, however, whether Malabari mosques explain the observed differences between pre-Islamic Javanese architecture and the traditional Javanese mosque. For example, although Malabari mosques also lack elaborate top plates, this is a result of their gabled and ridged roofs. Because the latter do not appear on Java, they cannot explain the top plate's absence there. Similarly, although Malabari (or Hindu) architectural influences may have inspired Banten's octagonal columns, round columns find no parallel in South India. Neither do *saka tatal* or Chinese-inspired decoration. Consequently, it does not seem these South Indian structures can inform us about why traditional Javanese mosques differ from earlier examples of Javanese architecture.

### 8.3.3. Influence from China

As noted in Chapter 5, Chinese Muslims played a significant role in Java's Islamisation. Settling on the island in large numbers, they founded settlements and rose to prominent positions (notably in Gresik and Demak). As such, it is plausible that Chinese influence also came to bear on the construction of the traditional Javanese mosque. The presence of Chinese decorative influences may even make it likely. Indeed, this possibility is mooted in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* which, under the year 1481, states:

After a request from the shipyard workers, Gan Si Tjang petitioned Kin San that the non-Muslim Chinese in Semarang be allowed to participate in the meritorious act of constructing the Masjid Agung Demak. Jin Bun consented to this.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *TR*, 660.

To this brief reference, Parlindungan adds a supposition: that the *saka tatal* were made according to Chinese methods of ship-mast design.

Although Parlindungan's text is highly questionable and there is no evidence that Chinese ship-masts were ever built like the *saka tatal*, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s brief statement has attracted attention. For example, S. Muljana took it up in 1976,<sup>96</sup> followed by Th. G. Th. Pigeaud and H. J. de Graaf in the early 1980's (in their joint translation of each *Kronik Tionghua*).<sup>97</sup> In both instances, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* provided an impetus for noting a similarity between the traditional Javanese mosque and the Chinese pavilion (*tingxie*). It was asked whether this resemblance indicated direct influence. Subsequently, authors like Handinoto, S. Hartono<sup>98</sup> and Tan Ta Sen<sup>99</sup> have argued that it does; in the context of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s statement, these authors have analysed the form and/or historiography of various Javanese mosques and claimed that Chinese influence is likely. None of them, however, have attempted a detailed structural comparison, or were aware of the precise difficulties surrounding the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s provenance (see Chapter 5). Because Java's Islamisation was almost certainly Chinese-directed, however, these limitations do not undermine the possibility of Chinese influence. On the contrary, the realities of early Javanese Islamic history entail that traditional Javanese mosques must now be re-evaluated in the context of a broad discussion of Chinese Islamic architecture, to see whether a link is justified.

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<sup>96</sup> Slamet Muljana, *A Story of Majapahit* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976), 245-247.

<sup>97</sup> H. J. de Graaf and Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. M. C. Ricklets, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 12 (1984), 150-154.

<sup>98</sup> Handinoto, and Samuel Hartono, 'Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina pada Bangunan Mesjid Kuno di Jawa Abad 15-16,' *Demensi Teknik Arsitektur* 35:1 (2007): 23-40.

<sup>99</sup> Tan Ta Sen, *Cheng Ho and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 197-201. Other scholars who take up this line are: Abdul Rahman al-Ahmadi, 'Bangunan Kuno Masjid Kampung Laut: Hubungannya Dengan Campa dan Demak,' *Warisan Kelantan* 9 (1990): 1-2 (where possible dissemination via Champa is discussed); Mohd. Rasdi 'Mosque Architecture in Malaysia,' *JAB* (2007): 15, 20-22; Akib, *Masjid Kampung Laut* (2003), 1-3.

Initially, Chinese Islamic architecture followed Persian/Central Asian designs.<sup>100</sup> From the Yuan period onwards, however, a process of Sinicisation began. The Fenghuang mosque in Hangzhou is a good early example of this: built in 1281 (and later renovated twice, in 1451 and 1646),<sup>101</sup> it has a rectangular, single-storey brick prayer hall formed from three separate square bays, all linked together. Each bay is surmounted by a dome supported by typically Central Asian *iwan*-style arches.<sup>102</sup> On top of each dome, however, is a pyramidal two-tiered roof – octagonal for the central bay and hexagonal for the other two. These roofs mean that the building, when viewed from outside, resembles three Chinese pavilions put together.<sup>103</sup> By the advent of the Ming Dynasty, this process of Sinicisation was complete: from that point on, all Chinese mosques were built in a fully classical Chinese style. Examples of this type of building quickly appeared all over China, including at Kunming, Songjiang and Dingxian.<sup>104</sup> Arguably the most well-known instance, however, is the Huajuexiang mosque in Xian.

An inscription at the site dates the Huajuexiang mosque to 1392.<sup>105</sup> Although later renovations occurred in 1606 and 1764, the surviving structure preserves the original 1392 form. Aligned east-west (i.e. to the *qibla*), the mosque is a single-storey building shaped like an upside down ‘T’ measuring 38m long by 33m wide. Raised on a

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<sup>100</sup> Such as the now abandoned Qingjingsi mosque in Quanzhou, built 1009-1010 (Chen Da-Sheng and Kalus, Ludvik, *Corpus d'Inscriptions Arabes et Persanes en Chine 1: Province de Fu-jian [Quan-zhou, Fu-zhou, Xia-men]* [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1991], plate iii).

<sup>101</sup> Institute of the History of Natural Sciences (China), *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture* (Beijing: Science Press, 1986), 360-361.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 91.

<sup>103</sup> IHNS, *Ancient Chinese Architecture* (1986), 360-361.

<sup>104</sup> Luo Xiaowei, ‘China,’ in *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, ed. Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 209.

<sup>105</sup> Sun, *Islamic Buildings*, trans. Zhong and Zhang (2003), 139. As noted by W. Franke, another inscription at the site claims that the mosque was founded in 742CE. This inscription, however, is fourteenth century; its claims may therefore be dubious (Wolfgang Franke, ‘Notes on Some Ancient Chinese Mosques,’ in *Documenta Barbarorum: Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Sagaster and Michael Weiers [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983], 112). Certainly, and as Zhang maintains, the current structure cannot be earlier than 1392 (Zhang Jing-Qui, ‘Mosques of Northern China,’ *MIMAR* 3 [1982]: 60).

stone platform, it is divided into three parts: a 5m deep veranda (where worshippers leave their shoes), a 23m long prayer hall, and a 10m square *mihrab* hall. Made entirely of wood, these three sections have a total of thirty-six round columns: six in the veranda area, twenty-six in the prayer hall, and four in the *mihrab* hall. The veranda's six columns form a single row at the building's main entrance. The prayer hall then has six parallel rows, arrayed from north to south thus: two of four columns, two of five columns, and then another two of four. Each row stretches through the building, to within 4m of the rear wall. The columns are all spaced in the same way, but not evenly (i.e. in the rows of four, the second column is 10m from the first, the second and third immediately adjacent to each other, and then the third and fourth another 10m apart). In the *mihrab* hall, two columns mark the entrance to the space, while the other two are positioned 1m from the rear wall.<sup>106</sup>

Turning to the mosque's roofs, it has three, all linked together. These are gabled, single-tiered and have a slight curve to their bottom edge. The latter is the result of a bracketing system (*dougong*) which surmounts each column and allows the bottom of the roof-line to be raised slightly. Resting on the columns and their brackets are a series of cross-beams, each running the length of the building. On top of these sit a complex system of posts and beams, all of which support the roof. These ascend to the roof-ridge, diminishing in length as they go to create a stepped formation. Purlins join these steps together, forming the roof surface. No trusses are used.<sup>107</sup>

The mosque's main entrance is on the eastern side (i.e. opposite the *mihrab*), occupying the entire length of that wall. Two smaller doors can also be found mid-way down the northern and southern prayer hall walls. The Huajuexiang mosque as a whole

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<sup>106</sup> Sun, *Islamic Buildings*, trans. Zhong and Zhang (2003), 139.

<sup>107</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture: A Study of the Development of Its Structural System and the Evolution of Its Types*, ed. Wilma Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 12.

is enclosed within a large rectangular compound, also orientated east-west. This compound is symmetrical down a central axis and contains five courtyards; only the last two, however, are original. The mosque straddles each of these: the first contains a series of secondary buildings (lecture halls and a *wuḍū'* area) positioned down each side, while a large pagoda (used as a moon-watching tower) sits in the centre. The latter is an addition; originally, the mosque had no tower of any kind. The second courtyard, in which the majority of the mosque sits, is empty. It was originally intended, however, as a graveyard.<sup>108</sup>

Although no two Chinese mosques are identical, the Huajuexiang mosque is characteristic of many others: both the Niujie mosque in Beijing (built in 1442 and renovated in 1696) and the Xuanhua Southern Mosque in Hebei (fifteenth century) are similar. All are wooden constructions, single storeyed, have three-fold divisions and multiple roofs. The latter are frequently multi-tiered (either two or three) and gabled. Pyramidal (usually hexagonal) roofs are also common over *miḥrab* halls. Although column arrangements can vary considerably between buildings (as does overall layout), these features are always load-bearing and circular in shape. A stepped arrangement of posts and beams also always supports the roof. Large compounds (including subsidiary buildings and graveyards) are also typical, as is the absence of a minaret.<sup>109</sup>

That Chinese mosques should share many features in common is not surprising. In large part, their conformity results from Chinese efforts to standardise building practices. In 1103, the Chinese court published a building manual called the *Yingzao Fashi*.<sup>110</sup> This dictated the construction techniques, building materials and

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<sup>108</sup> Sun, *Islamic Buildings*, trans. Zhong and Zhang (2003), 139.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>110</sup> Else Glahn, 'Chinese Building Standards in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century,' *Scientific American* 244:5 (1981): 132-135.

measurements necessary for every type of traditional Chinese building.<sup>111</sup> Subsequently, it became the standard text for training craftsmen. Although some scholars doubt whether it was ever strictly followed,<sup>112</sup> N. Shatzman-Steinhardt *et al.* believe teachers and apprentices probably did largely adhere to its recommendations; its construction techniques and basic architectural styles were well-established and proven to work.<sup>113</sup> Little would therefore have been gained from changing them. As such, and because the *Yingzao Fashi* remained popular throughout the Ming period (the Ming imperial library, for example, contained five copies),<sup>114</sup> it is likely that the fifteenth to seventeenth-century Chinese craftsmen working on Chinese mosques followed its precepts, producing buildings with substantially similar characteristics. Certainly, this is observed above: although floor plans vary, the means of construction is the same for each mosque. As such, if Chinese craftsmen helped construct Java's early mosques, the same construction techniques should be evident. This, however, seems not to be the case.

For example, Javanese mosques do not have *dougong*, or the distinctive system of diminishing posts and beams ascending to roof-level. Equally, the Javanese mosque is never divided into three sections or given a gabled roof. Neither does it have wooden walls, unevenly spaced columns or dramatically varying layouts. By the same token, Chinese mosques are never square and, although some have pyramidal roofs, these are hexagonal or octagonal, not square. All this would seem to diminish the possibility of any influence.

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<sup>111</sup> Qinghua Guo, 'Yingzao Fashi: Twelfth-Century Chinese Building Manual,' *Architectural History* 41 (1998): 1.

<sup>112</sup> Qinghua Guo believes there was probably an amount of give and take; local building traditions likely altered the *Yingzao Fashi*'s recommendations. Ultimately, however, no study has examined this issue in detail. Until this is done, all conclusions are speculative (Ibid, 12).

<sup>113</sup> Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Fu Xinian, Else Glahn, Robert L. Thorp and Annette L. Juliano, *Chinese Traditional Architecture* (New York: China Institute in America and China House Gallery, 1984), 56-57.

<sup>114</sup> W. Perceval Yetts, 'A Chinese Treatise on Architecture,' *BSOAS* 4:3 (1927): 485-489.

Nonetheless, it should also to be noted that Chinese and Javanese mosques have many specific similarities. For example, Chinese mosques usually (and in accordance with the *Yingzao Fashi*'s requirements for temples) have a single main entrance, occupying the entire length of the wall opposite the *miḥrab*. Lesser entrances are then placed on the walls to either side, but no doorway ever appears on the building's rear (i.e. *miḥrab*) wall. All this closely parallels the Javanese mosque: their main entrances are also always opposite the *miḥrab* (although not necessarily occupying the whole wall), with lesser ones to either side and no means of entry on the *miḥrab* wall. Indeed, this arrangement sets the mosques apart from pre-Islamic Javanese buildings, which were accessible from all sides. Chinese influence could explain this difference.

Large compounds are another characteristic of both Javanese and Chinese mosques. Although the Kudus example imitates earlier Hindu structures, this is not the case elsewhere. Indeed, the very different Demak compound is, if its newer subsidiary buildings are ignored, symmetrical along a central axis running through the mosque and its front courtyard. This directly parallels Chinese examples; mosques from elsewhere in the Islamic world, although symmetrical, generally lack large compounds.<sup>115</sup> Many Javanese and Chinese mosques also have adjacent graveyards, again not the case elsewhere in the Islamic world.<sup>116</sup> The Javanese and Chinese lack of a minaret also fails to parallel Islamic architecture from further afield.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps even more revealingly, however, the Demak mosque's *qibla* alignment is east-west. This is incorrect for the Nusantara, but accurate for China.

But, perhaps the most significant similarity between Javanese and Chinese mosques are their columns. Thus, Chinese columns are rounded and rest upon circular

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<sup>115</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (2005), 15.

<sup>116</sup> Some notable exceptions, however, are various Ottoman-period mosques, such as the Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul (Ibid, 263-264).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 15.



stone bases; the *Yingzao Fashi* insists the latter be twice the diameter of the columns themselves.<sup>118</sup> As above, this closely parallels the situation on Java. In fact, excluding Cirebon's double-star capitals, early Javanese mosque columns are virtually identical to Chinese ones. As seen, round columns are a significant stylistic departure from pre-Islamic (and later Islamic) Javanese architecture; Chinese influence could explain this departure.

A further relevant point relating to columns involves the *Yingzao Fashi*'s instructions for building a 'pieced column.' Although most traditional Chinese columns are made from a single tree trunk, when a tree of sufficient size could not be found, small strips of timber would be joined together to form a tubular structure. This would then be secured around the outside with iron bands, so forming the 'pieced column.'<sup>119</sup> This structure is clearly synonymous with the *saka tatal*. Indeed, Javanese legend even claims that Demak's *saka tatal* were constructed when no sufficiently large tree trunks could be found. Consequently, although perhaps not Parlungan's ship-masts, the *saka tatal* may indeed be evidence of direct Chinese involvement in early Javanese mosque construction. Certainly, pieced columns were very common during the early Ming period. Throughout the dynasty, China experienced a chronic wood shortage coupled with a desire to build ever larger structures. This necessitated the frequent use of pieced columns; both the Taihe Hall of the Imperial Palace (built between 1406 and 1430) and the Qianian Hall of the Temple of Heaven (1420) use them. Comparing these examples to Demak's *saka tatal* reveals substantial similarities.<sup>120</sup>

In addition to the above, Handinoto and Hartono record a number of Javanese legends which also hint at Chinese influence over early Javanese mosque construction. For example, a local Kudus tradition attributes the Masjid Menara Kudus to a

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<sup>118</sup> Glahn, 'Chinese Building Standards,' SA 244:5 (1981): 138.

<sup>119</sup> IHNS, *Ancient Chinese Architecture* (1986), 133-135.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 135.

companion of Sunan Kudus, called Kiai The Ling Sing.<sup>121</sup> Although the Sunan gave the order to build the mosque, these traditions claim Kiai The Ling Sing carried out the work (hence the road outside the mosque is called Jalan Kyai Telingsing). ‘Kiai’ or ‘Kyai’ is the local title for a religious scholar; The Ling Sing, however, is a Chinese name. As such, it seems local Kudus legend preserves the memory of a Chinese Muslim who, closely associated with the local Sunan, helped build the latter’s mosque.<sup>122</sup> Although this mosque’s strong Hindu characteristics might make this seem unlikely, there are indications of Chinese influence at the site: Chinese plates decorate the minaret, there are Chinese-style carvings on some of the mosque doors, and the *paduraksa* gateway within the mosque has decorative lozenges containing Chinese-style floral decoration. Similarly, a *paduraksa* gateway within the grave complex has a screen behind it; this is reminiscent of Chinese architecture, where screens are commonly positioned behind gateways, including in mosque compounds. As such, Chinese influence at Kudus is plausible.

A similar tradition to the above also exists with regards to the now destroyed Mantingan mosque, in Jepara. Reputedly built in 1559, local Jepara tradition claims its patron was Ratu Kalinyamat (d.1579).<sup>123</sup> This ruler reputedly had a close confidant, called Tjie Wie Gwan. Another Chinese Muslim, Tjie is buried next to Ratu Kalinyamat.<sup>124</sup> The same local traditions, however, claim Tjie was a carpenter and stone mason who helped build the Mantingan mosque.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, the surviving decorative scenes and structural fragments from this mosque (preserved in the Muzium Jawa

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<sup>121</sup> Handinoto and Hartono, ‘Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina,’ *DTA* 35:1 (2007): 29-30.

<sup>122</sup> H. M. Hembing Wijayakusuma, *Pembantaian Massal 1740: Tragedi Berdarah Angke* (Jakarta: Pustaka Populer Obor, 2005), 41.

<sup>123</sup> Handinoto and Hartono, ‘Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina,’ *DTA* 35:1 (2007): 36.

<sup>124</sup> Sumanto al-Qurtuby, *Arus Cina-Islam-Jawa: Bong/ear Sejarah atas Peranan Tionghoa dalam Penyebaran Agama Islam di Nusantara abad XV and XVI* (Yogyakarta: Inspeal Ahimsakarya Press, 2003), 137.

<sup>125</sup> Handinoto and Hartono, ‘Pengaruh Pertukangan Cina,’ *DTA* 35:1 (2007): 37.

Tengah, Semarang) show clear signs of Chinese influence: surviving stone footings are Chinese in style, while decorative scenes incorporate numerous Chinese motifs (most notably swirling cloud patterns).<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, a surviving sixteenth-century illustration of the mosque (from Wouter Schouten's *Oost Indische Voyage*, 1660) shows a large, five-tiered pagoda with curved roof-lines reminiscent of a Chinese building.<sup>127</sup>

The above raises another important issue: mosque decoration. All pre-1620 Javanese mosques include examples of Chinese decoration – namely, Chinese plates, eternal-knot motifs, swirling cloud patterns and lotus designs. Aside from the plates, however, none of these Chinese features appear in association with pre-Islamic Javanese buildings.<sup>128</sup> This is not to say, of course, that pre-Islamic Javanese decoration is not evident on some mosques: both the Masjid Agung Cirebon and Masjid Menara Kudus, with their *candi*-themed decoration, testify otherwise. But the lotus flowers seen at Demak, for example, or the eternal knot motifs from a number of other sites, are entirely absent from pre-Islamic Javanese structures. Some *candi* have cloud patterns (such as the mid-fourteenth-century sections of *candi* Panataran), but these are stylistically different from the early Islamic examples: on the *candis*, animals and monsters interweave with large, highly pronounced swirls of cloud textured and ruffled to look like leaves.<sup>129</sup> The overall impression is of a pattern rendered in imitation of earlier *candi* floral designs.<sup>130</sup> On the remnants of the Mantingan mosque, however, cloud patterns are far smaller and lighter; stylistically, they are very similar to Chinese examples from the same period. Moreover, the Jepara examples are also accompanied by friezes depicting mountains. Although accompanied by familiar pre-Islamic

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<sup>126</sup> These observations were made during a visit to the spoken-of museum.

<sup>127</sup> See: Wouter Schouten, *Voilage de Gautier Schouten aux Indes Orientales* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1707).

<sup>128</sup> Kerlogue, *Arts of Southeast Asia* (2004), 128-129.

<sup>129</sup> Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), 90-92 and plates 275-279.

<sup>130</sup> Such as at Borobodur, where four hundred individual examples of these floral patterns can be found (Ibid, 47-48; plates 88-89).

Javanese images (including the *pendopo*), these mountains are also rendered in a traditionally Chinese style. Similarly, the lozenges encompassing these motifs are also Chinese: their distinctive shape (also found at Kudus and Cirebon)<sup>131</sup> occur on both Islamic and non-Islamic Chinese decorative designs,<sup>132</sup> but not pre-Islamic Javanese *candi*.<sup>133</sup>

To sum up, we can confidently state that traditional Javanese mosques are not simply Chinese buildings transferred into the Nusantara. The standardisation of traditional Chinese building practices allows for an accurate characterisation of Chinese construction techniques; on the whole, these seem not to have been used on Java. The roof structures and floor plans of traditional Chinese buildings (including Chinese mosques) differ dramatically from their Javanese equivalents. Nonetheless, a number of very specific similarities do exist. For example, the types of columns used and the arrangement of entryways are all the same. Indeed, some of these shared features (notably round and pieced columns) are part of what distinguish the traditional Javanese mosque from both pre-Islamic Javanese structures (like the *pendopo*) and later examples of Javanese Islamic architecture. As a result, the observed catalogue of Javanese mosque-*pendopo* differences might arise from Chinese influence. This possibility is reinforced by both the traditional Javanese mosque's penchant for Chinese decoration (again absent in pre-Islamic Javanese buildings), Javanese legends which link the mosques to the Chinese, and a number of specific characteristics which, as Islamic buildings, Javanese mosques only share with their Chinese counterparts – i.e. the absence of a minaret and the mosque's inclusion in a compound containing a

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<sup>131</sup> Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (1959), plates 347, 348 and 350.

<sup>132</sup> See: Liu Xinyuan, *Imperial Hongwu and Yongle Porcelain Excavated at Jingdezhen*, trans. James Spencer (Taipei: Chang Foundation, 1996), 179-183; and Liu Xinyuan, *Xuande Imperial Porcelain Excavated at Jingdezhen* (Taipei: Chang Foundation, 1998), 295.

<sup>133</sup> Kempers certainly provides no non-Islamic examples (Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* [1959], 106; plate 350).

graveyard. All this might suggest that Chinese craftsmen, utilising Chinese construction techniques, were involved in erecting the first Javanese mosques which, otherwise, followed pre-Islamic Javanese forms.

#### **8.4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, with the exception of the Masjid Menara Kudus, all five of the pre-1620 Javanese mosques examined here preserve their original structures. We described these above. Although they all varied, many shared characteristics emerged; these demonstrate the existence of a ‘traditional Javanese mosque’ type, characterised by square floor plans, multi-tiered roofs, round wooden columns and large compounds containing a graveyard. Even when a specific mosque rejects some of these characteristics (e.g. the Masjid Agung Cirebon is rectangular and has no graveyard), it still closely follows others (the Masjid Agung Cirebon has round columns and a multi-tiered roof, supported in the same manner as elsewhere). In addition to their structural characteristics, however, we saw that these mosques also share decorative schemes: each displayed evidence of mixed pre-Islamic Javanese-Chinese decoration. In some instances (such as at Kudus) pre-Islamic schemes predominated, but in others (such as at Demak) Chinese designs abounded. In all cases, however, both influences were present.

Ultimately, we can say that the latter statement characterises the traditional Javanese mosque: they are hybrid Javanese-Chinese structures. Thus, comparisons with pre-Islamic Javanese structures (most notably the *pendopo*) reveal definite evidence of continuation: wood as a construction material and tiered roofs supported by columns. Significant differences, however, also emerged: the style of columns used, exclusion of

large top plates and the way some upper roof-tiers were supported. These variations prevented us from seeing the traditional Javanese mosque as simply (for example) a large *pendopo*. When trying to explain the differences, however, we quickly saw that Malabari influence was unlikely; although some scholarship has suggested traditional Malabari mosques may have been the prototype for some early Nusantara mosques, on Java this seems unlikely. Comparisons with Chinese architecture, however, revealed possible explanations for many of the observed differences: although traditional Chinese structures (including mosques) differ structural from traditional Javanese mosques, both buildings share specific characteristics that explain the above variations. Perhaps most notably, examples of the traditional Javanese mosque column are also found in Chinese architecture, including the distinctive *saka tatal*. Equally, many features that set traditional Javanese mosques apart from other examples of Islamic architecture can also be found in Chinese mosques, including adjacent graveyards and the absence of a minaret.

Given this conclusion, our discussion proposes that the traditional Javanese mosque, although essentially constructed in the same tradition as pre-Islamic Javanese buildings (notably the *pendopo*), was built with the aid of Chinese craftsmen. The latter, while attempting to imitate earlier *pendopo* (perhaps in deference to local preferences) lent their new structures specifically Chinese characteristics. Of course, none of this proves these Chinese craftsmen were Muslims. Chapter 5's discussion of Chinese Muslim migration to Java, however, makes it likely. Certainly, that the Masjid Agung Demak has some of the most obvious examples of Chinese influence (including Chinese decoration on its doors, its *saka tatal* and *qibla* orientation) is significant: as seen in Chapter 5, Demak was probably founded and ruled by Chinese Muslims. The

Chinese features of the Masjid Agung Demak probably reflect this early Chinese Muslim (as opposed to just Chinese) heritage.

## Conclusion

Traditionally (and our thesis argues, quite rightly), scholarship has identified commercial interaction as the driving force behind the Nusantara's Islamic conversion. By assuming the region's principal trade links were with the Indian Ocean, early scholars therefore attributed Islam's spread through the Nusantara to either Middle Eastern and/or Indian Muslim merchants. From the 1970's onwards, however, a number of other scholars (notably S. Muljana, H. de Graaf, Th. Pigeaud, D. Lombard and G. Wade) began to consider the possibility that Chinese Muslims were also involved. This debate was initially triggered by M. Parlindungan's two (very problematic) *Kronik Tionghua* texts. It soon, however, moved beyond them. Beginning with de Graaf, Pigeaud and Lombard, attention quickly turned to two further issues: early Javanese texts which attributed Chinese ancestry to key Islamisation figures, and new archaeological discoveries which suggested that China's (predominantly Muslim) merchants were actually the dominant external force in pre-modern Nusantara trade. Taking these points together, the above scholars argued that Chinese Muslims played a far larger role in the Nusantara's conversion process than has been previously realised.

Despite the intrinsic value of these initial scholarly efforts, we argued that they all shared the same two limitations: an overwhelming focus on Java and a tendency to examine a very narrow time period. Indeed, very few have looked beyond a single century of Javanese history, which is highly problematic: the Nusantara's conversion history cannot be fully appreciated unless it is considered in the round and over an extended period. Our thesis has therefore sought to correct these limitations by moving beyond Java, to paint a broader picture of Nusantara Islamic history between the late



thirteenth century and 1620. In the context of a comprehensive review of pre-modern trade, our thesis has sought to re-examine the conversion histories of numerous early Nusantara Islamic kingdoms. Now, at the very end of that endeavour, we can state that substantial evidence exists for positing Chinese Muslim involvement in the Nusantara's early Islamisation. From Samudera-Pasai in the west to Brunei in the east, it seems that Chinese Muslim merchants played a significant role in spreading Islam through the region.

After a brief literature review, our thesis began with a consideration of trade patterns. As mentioned, Islam's spread through the Nusantara has long been linked to trade; because early Muslims entered the region as merchants, and the Nusantara's first Islamic kingdoms were all entrepôts, we also accepted that conclusion here. In light of it, our Chapter 2 took inspiration from F. Braudel's analysis of the pre-modern Mediterranean to argue that, between the seventh-century rise of Śrīvijaya as a major trading power and 1620, when European monopolies ended all significant Asian involvement in trans-regional trade, the pre-modern Nusantara existed as part of an intense commercial system with both the Indian Ocean and China. This system was capable of facilitating cultural exchange (including conversion) via the movement of people and ideas.

Beginning with the case for a close Nusantara-Indian Ocean commercial link, we found that one undoubtedly existed throughout the period under discussion. It varied, however, in both intensity and complexity. In short, it appears to have been strongest contemporary to Śrīvijaya's golden age (i.e. from the seventh to eleventh centuries). During that period, the Nusantara experienced a particularly strong level of interaction with the eastern half of the Indian Ocean (that is, the eastern and southern coasts of India, Sri Lanka and the Bay of Bengal). But, although this led to

Indianisation (including the adoption of Hinduism and Buddhism) nothing links it to Islamisation, at least during this period. Nevertheless, the Śrīvijaya period also saw the Nusantara develop links with the predominantly Muslim Western Indian Ocean (East Africa to the Red Sea, Arabia, the Persian Gulf and the western coast of India). How strong these connections were, however, is unclear: despite early Chinese texts which indicate a seventh to tenth-century Persian and/or Arab commercial dominance in Chinese ports, with the exception of an entrepôt called Kalah Bār (probably located on the western side of the Malay Peninsula) this supremacy does not seem to have extended into the Nusantara. Indeed, Arabic sources actually suggest a lack of interest in the region, which is largely supported by the archaeological record. Śrīvijaya's eighth to eleventh-century use of the caliphal *dīnār* is an exception to this, suggesting some kind of Arab commercial dominance, but how far beyond Śrīvijaya this extended is unknown. Certainly, however, it did not translate into religious influence: the Nusantara provides no evidence of Islamisation until the late thirteenth century, well after the *dīnār* fell out of use. Indeed, when the Nusantara's Islamic kingdoms did begin to appear, Indian Ocean trade had segmented. From that point on, Arab and Persian traders no longer sailed beyond India in large numbers. Muslim traders from the Eastern Indian Ocean, however, did and may have impacted upon Islamisation because, and as during the Śrīvijaya period, the Eastern Indian Ocean's continued to enjoy strong links with the Nusantara.

Turning to the Nusantara's commercial relationship with China, although largely ignored by previous scholars, we saw this to be just as important as any Indian Ocean connection. This was particularly so during the Nusantara's Islamisation period: from the Song Dynasty onwards, a constant stream of evidence emerged for direct and large scale Chinese involvement in Nusantara commerce. From this period onwards,

the surviving archaeological and documentary evidence points conclusively towards China as the Nusantara's major commercial partner. It constituted the region's largest market place and, from the late thirteenth century, had larger and better ships than anywhere else, meaning it could conduct more business, more safely. Indeed, we also saw that, by the early fourteenth century and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, even Indian merchants were using Chinese ships to travel into the Nusantara. By that time, these vessels had penetrated the entire region, including locations where no Indian Ocean merchant had ever sailed (such as the Spice Islands). By the early Ming period, Zheng He's huge voyages were also taking place. These resulted in an enormous level of Chinese political and commercial interaction with the Nusantara, far exceeding in scale anything ever staged by any Indian Ocean polity. During that thirty-year period, Nusantara rulers began visiting China on a regular basis and Chinese trade helped establish Melaka as the region's pre-eminent maritime Islamic power. Furthermore, from the late fourteenth century on, all this was accompanied by large-scale Chinese migration into the Nusantara, especially to Java. All this, occurring just when the Nusantara began converting to Islam, undoubtedly constituted the formation of a Mediterranean-like system.

Given the above, it is significant that, from the thirteenth century onwards, Chinese trade was dominated (sometimes even monopolised) by Muslims. Initially from the Western Indian Ocean, these Muslims were Persian, Central Asian and Arab traders who, by the late thirteenth century, had settled permanently in China and begun to Sinicise. After the establishment of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in 1272, they were also given full control over China's maritime trade networks. We argued that this situation opened up a range of possible avenues via which Chinese Muslims could have influenced the dissemination of Islam through the Nusantara. Using this possibility as a

starting point, the rest of our thesis then tried to determine whether any concrete evidence existed to support this hypothesis. To do so, we examined the conversion histories of various important Nusantara locations (Samudera-Pasai, Melaka, Java and Brunei) coupled with early examples of Nusantara Islamic culture (texts and mosque architecture).

Samudera-Pasai, one of the region's earliest Islamic kingdoms, was examined first. In all likelihood, Samudera-Pasai converted during the late thirteenth century. Precisely when remains unknown, but its first Muslim ruler was probably a man named al-Malik al-Şālih, who may have died in 1297. But, because the late thirteenth century corresponds to the high-point in Nusantara-based Chinese Muslim commercial activity, a potential link with Samudera-Pasai's conversion is plausible. Nonetheless, the available (rather meagre) evidence is conflicting. On the one hand, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*'s conversion narrative clearly identifies Arab and South Indian influence. Although the historicity of this source is problematic, Samudera-Pasai's first three rulers all bore titles (al-Malik al-Şālih, al-Malik al-Zāhir and al-Malik al-Manşūr) indicative of Egyptian influence. Certainly, during the late thirteenth century the Red Sea (via its major port, Aden) dominated Middle Eastern maritime trade; all Mediterranean-bound commerce coming from the Indian Ocean was funnelled through it, towards Egypt. Consequently, any thirteenth-century Middle East-Nusantara link would have undoubtedly involved Egypt. Indeed, this would also tie in with M. Feener and M. Laffan's Haḍramī Sufī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Jāwī.

But in addition to this possible Arab link, we also saw numerous indications of Persian influence at Samudera-Pasai. Various aspects of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, for example, demonstrated clear Persian (but corresponding little evidence of Arabic) influence, while Ibn Baṭṭūṭa encountered many Persians when he visited the kingdom in

the mid-fourteenth-century. Because the fourteenth-century Indian Ocean was commercially segmented, however, it is unlikely that these Persians sailed to the Nusantara directly from the Middle East. Rather, they may instead reflect Chinese Muslim activity. Certainly, most of China's Muslims were of Persian descent and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa always refers to the Muslims he encountered in China as Persian, making it plausible (but not provable) that those he saw at Samudera-Pasai were also from there. Moreover, the nearby archaeological site of Kota Cina (perhaps the kingdom of Aru) demonstrates significant North Sumatra-based Chinese commercial activity contemporary to Samudera-Pasai's conversion. The nature of Chinese commerce during that period makes it highly likely that Chinese Muslims were heavily involved in this, although little evidence attests to their presence. Later examples of Samudera-Pasai's fifteenth-century *batu Aceh* tradition, however, support the possibility of a Chinese Muslim presence; many of these early Islamic grave markers incorporate Chinese artistic motifs and carry names suggestive of Chinese migration into the region.

Turning to Melaka, we presented several (varying) accounts of this city's early fifteenth-century conversion. The Portuguese explorer, Tomé Pires provided the most reliable: he placed Melaka's conversion in the reign of its second ruler, Iskandar Shāh (r.1414-1424), and attributed it to Samudera-Pasai's intervention; as Melakan trade expanded, Pires claims that Samudera-Pasai sent merchants to initiate religious change. Certainly, the region's trade patterns make this scenario plausible, and it would fit with the *Sejarah Melayu*'s view of Samudera-Pasai as a higher religious authority. It means, however, that Melaka's conversion resulted from forces within the Nusantara itself, rather than external ones.

We also saw, however, that early fifteenth-century Melaka maintained strong links with China, notably through the Chinese Muslim, Zheng He. Indeed, we argued

that Melaka only became a great empire because of Zheng He's support. It is therefore significant that the early Portuguese sources also claim that Zheng He married one of his adopted (Muslim) daughters to Melaka's Iskandar Shāh. This marriage (perhaps forming the basis of the later Hang Liu legend) occurred before Iskandar Shāh's conversion. It therefore represents the first instance of Islam entering the Melakan court. Even more importantly, however, this Chinese daughter had a son by Iskandar Shāh: Raja Putih. This man subsequently rose to a position of considerable power in Melaka, proving instrumental in both the city's territorial expansion and the spread of Islam through its empire. Eventually, he became so influential that his nephew, Sultan Maṣṣūr Shāh, had him assassinated; Maṣṣūr Shāh felt this was the only way to preserve his own authority. His actions, however, resulted in rebellion: the rulers of Kampar, Indragiri and Pahang, all of whom converted because of Raja Putih and subsequently swore allegiance to him (not the Sultan), rose up. This, we argued, suggested the existence of a powerful Chinese Muslim faction in Melaka, able to rival the authority of the city's Malay rulers. Certainly, Melaka's urban landscape reflects an important commercial and social status for the Chinese. How all this may have impacted upon the nature of Melakan Islam, however, is unclear. But, as we discussed in Chapter 7, early Melaka-associated texts demonstrate clear signs of Persian influence, coupled with a concern for religious questions that the *Sejarah Melayu* chooses to associate with Central Asia. Although Melaka's links with India may explain some of this, so too could a connection with China's Muslim communities (perhaps via those resident on Java).

Moving on to Java, we saw that the various early Islamic kingdoms spread along this island's northern coast provide some of the best evidence, from anywhere in the region, of Chinese Muslim involvement in Islamisation. During the fourteenth century,

the Yuan-Ming transition, coupled with the Emperor Hongwu's ban on private trade, forced many Chinese Muslim merchants to leave China. According to Ma Huan, most of these migrants settled on Java. There Ma Huan claims they became particularly prominent in east Java, where they founded Gresik. By the mid-fifteenth century, various early sources (notably Pires, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and the *Babad Tanah Jawi*) point to Gresik as an important early Islamic centre: Java's earliest Islamic figures are all associated with the city and it may have begun to establish political influence over surrounding areas, threatening the authority of Majapahit, Java's Hindu empire. Furthermore, in the mid-fifteenth century a Chinese Muslim merchant (called either Jinbun or Cu Cu) travelled from Gresik to Demak, where he established a sultanate. By 1513, Demak's Sino-Javanese rulers had succeeded in conquering most of Java, overthrowing Majapahit and establishing Islam's dominance over the island.

Given the apparent intensity of this Chinese connection, it is unsurprising that early Javanese Islamic culture demonstrates strong indications of Chinese influence. For example, not only do many early Javanese Islamic texts contain evidence of Persian intellectual influence, but the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* points towards an important Kubrawī intellectual heritage, as mediated through the Central Asian Ḥamadānī branch of that *ṭarīqa*. It is very unlikely that this heritage came to Java via either India or the Middle East; in China, however, this branch of the Kubrawī may have been present since at least 1370. Indeed, early Javanese texts often link Java's Kubrawī influence to Gresik, thereby supporting the notion of a Chinese link.

In addition to the above, we also saw that the architectural form of Java's earliest mosques indicate possible Chinese influence. Our examination of these buildings revealed a common 'type': structures incorporating square floor plans, multi-tiered roofs, ornate decoration, round (sometimes pieced) wooden columns and large

compounds containing (amongst other things) a graveyard. This type of building, we argued, is essentially a hybrid Javanese-Chinese structure. Comparisons with pre-Islamic Javanese structures – notably the *pendopo* – revealed definite continuations (wood as a construction material and tiered roofs supported by columns), but also significant differences (the style of columns used, exclusion of large top plates and the way some upper roof-tiers were supported). These differences, however, could be easily explained via a comparison with Chinese architecture. In other words, it seemed to us that Chinese construction techniques had been used to build what were otherwise Javanese structures, thereby explaining the variations between the mosques and pre-Islamic examples of Javanese architecture. This trend was particularly noticeable regarding the pieced columns (or *saka tatal*) found at Demak and elsewhere. We saw that these constituted a specifically Chinese form of construction, frequently used during the Ming period (i.e. contemporary to Java's first mosques). Moreover, the decorative schemes utilised by many early Javanese mosques also carried clear Chinese influences. Again, this was particularly noticeable at Demak. Indeed, the Masjid Agung Demak's *qibla* was arrayed east-west; this alignment is incorrect for the Nusantara, but accurate for China. As such, it may also hint at Chinese influence, thereby linking with the Chinese Muslim heritage revealed in the early texts.

Brunei was the final location we examined. In short, it appears to have hosted two sultanates. Evidence for the first is now restricted to some brief references in early Chinese sources (including the writings of Hongwu-period court historian, Song Lian), some scattered archaeological remains and the late sixteenth-century Boxer Codex. It seems, however, that during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, Brunei was invaded by a Muslim called Yūsuf. Originating from somewhere in the western half of the Nusantara, he overcame the local population, settled and established a Sultanate.



Perhaps ruling as Maharaja Brunei, he then proceeded to forge close links with Quanzhou and its Muslim communities, principally by marrying a member of that city's governing elite. Although this reconstruction posits Brunei's first Sultanate as the creation of other Nusantaraans, these links with China remain significant: the Boxer Codex, coupled with the first Sultanate's archaeological remains, suggest strong links were maintained with, in particular, Quanzhou throughout the lifetime of the Sultanate. Certainly, the first Sultanate coincides with the rise of both the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, when Chinese Muslims monopolised China's maritime trade, travelled into the eastern Nusantara in large numbers and eventually migrated there. Many of these Chinese Muslims would have begun their journeys in Quanzhou, then China's largest port.

After Yūsuf, nothing else is known about Brunei's first Sultanate until 1371. In that year, a Chinese official called Shen Zhi visited the kingdom, meeting its ruler, Mahemosha (Muḥammad Shāh). After some persuasion, Shen Zhi convinced Mahemosha to send tribute to China and renounce his vassalage to Majapahit. When Majapahit heard about this, however, we hypothesised that it promptly attacked Brunei in retaliation, removing Mahemosha from his throne. This, we argued, temporarily ended the first Sultanate; by 1408, Brunei was again ruled by non-Muslims. At some point after 1426, however, Mahemosha's grandson, 'Abd al-Majīd, mirroring similar patterns of resistance to Majapahit elsewhere in the region, reconquered the kingdom. This restored version the first Sultanate then appears to have persisted until at least the mid-1480's. At some point thereafter, however, it reverted back to a pre-Islamic (perhaps Buddhist) identity. How and why pre-Islamic practices came to re-occupy such a prominent position in Brunei is unclear, but if the above interregnum in Muslim rule strengthened the position of Brunei's non-Muslim population, a coup may provide

a possible explanation. Whatever the circumstances, however, by 1505 non-Muslims were again ruling Brunei.

As for Brunei's second Sultanate, we argued that this appeared during the early sixteenth century – specifically, in around 1514 or 1515. Although this date is conclusively suggested by the early European sources, the precise circumstances surrounding Brunei's second conversion remain opaque: the European sources make no comment, while indigenous texts are both late and unreliable. Nonetheless, the latter testify to Johori involvement, which is at least plausible (Johor was established in 1512). In addition, however, the Brunei *silsilas* also make some interesting comments about this Sultanate's second and third rulers, which together hint at Chinese and Arab influence respectively. The second Sultan's links with China, however, cannot be confirmed, although sixteenth-century Brunei probably did maintain a high regard for China and may have continued to host a Chinese community (although whether that included Muslims is unclear). By contrast, the third Sultan, Sharīf 'Alī, was almost certainly of Arab descent, as testified to by the Spanish sources. Indeed, Sharīf 'Alī probably ruled during the mid-sixteenth century; as we saw in other chapters, widespread Arabic influence did penetrate the Nusantara at around this time, as evidenced by the work of Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and the beginning of direct Nusantara-Middle East trade links mediated through Aceh.

Taking everything we have discussed as a whole, Chinese Muslim influence in the Nusantara seems to have been both consistent and widespread, indicating the validity of the hypothesis put forward in Chapter 2: that Nusantara-China commercial interaction was sufficiently intense to result in cultural transfer. Indeed, when taken together the various histories we discussed above hint at three waves of probable Chinese Muslim influence, all coinciding with specific developments in Chinese trade.

The first wave coincides with the early to mid-Yuan dynasty (i.e. the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century), when Muslims monopolised Chinese trade and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa testifies to Chinese vessels dominating Nusantara waters. It is precisely at this point that the first (recorded) Nusantara-based Islamic kingdoms appear in North Sumatra and Brunei. Although Chinese Muslims may not have converted these locations, in all likelihood they influenced the type of Islam practiced there. Turning to the second wave, this dates to the late fourteenth century. At that point, political changes in China forced Muslim (and non-Muslim) merchants to migrate into the Nusantara. Many settled on Java, where they established Gresik. This city became the island's first Islamic centre; the precursor to Demak, it would eventually prove pivotal in converting the rest of the island. The final wave of Chinese influence then coincides with the early fifteenth century and the voyages of Zheng He. Although Zheng He perhaps did not convert the leader of any polity, he undoubtedly helped shape Islam in the Nusantara. He not only sponsored the rise of Islamic Melaka, but also planted a Chinese Muslim faction in its court. This subsequently rose to great heights, helping expand Islam through the region before finally challenging the authority of Melaka's Malay rulers.

In sum, our thesis offers convincing evidence for positing a Chinese Muslim role in the Nusantara's late thirteenth to early seventeenth-century Islamisation. Expanding on pre-existing studies, it draws on a wide body of evidence to establish a clear link between Islam's dissemination through the Nusantara and a Chinese Muslim-dominated trade network. By contrast, our discussion has revealed comparatively little evidence of Indian involvement, while a significant Arab presence was probably confined largely to the sixteenth century or later.

The significance of our research lies in its status as an historical enquiry that justifies a broad and well-grounded re-examination of early Nusantara Islamic history.

In particular, it brings to the fore an ethnic group which still sits at the heart of Nusantara affairs. In the contemporary Nusantara, the (non-Muslim) Chinese constitute a source of considerable social tension; the continuation of economic disparities established during the colonial era has fuelled both anger and resentment vis-à-vis the Malay majority. By demonstrating a Chinese role in Islamisation, however, our research links the Chinese to a key Malay identity marker: Islam. Potentially, this could help build bridges between the two groups. Nonetheless, to set this research on firmer ground, any future study should consider two further points. First, all the remaining parts of the Nusantara, in addition to Mainland Southeast Asia, should also be considered to see whether the patterns revealed above hold for there, too. Second, it is problematic that early Chinese Islam remains so poorly understood. If traces of Chinese Islam are to be more easily and convincingly uncovered in the Nusantara, further work needs to be done in this area.

**APPENDIX:**  
**DIAGRAMS AND FIGURES**

## **SAMUDERA-PASAI**



Figure 1: The gravestone of Malik Ibrāhīm (left), dated 1414 (TM-60048930. Tropen Museum, Amsterdam).



Figure 2: The gravestone of al-Malik al-Šāliḥ, dated Ramaḍān 1297 (J. P. Moquette, 1912).



Figure 3: The gravestone of Melaka's Sultan Maṣṣūr Shāh (d.1477) currently housed in the Muzium Negara, Malaysia.



Figure 4: An undated inscription from Fuzhou (near Quanzhou) featuring a central roundel and elaborate floral designs (Chen and Kalus, 1991: plate 88b).

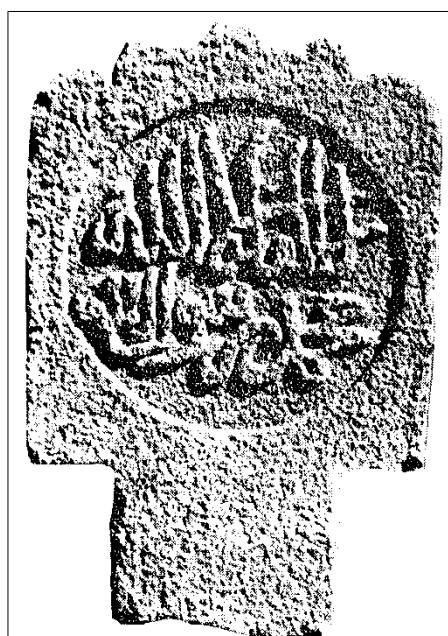


Figure 5: An anonymous Quanzhou gravestone featuring a central roundel and calligraphy (Chen, 1984: Fig. 77:2).



Figure 6: The Quanzhou gravestone of Khadīja Khātūn (d.1336), with a blank roundel surrounded by swirling cloud patterns (Chen, 1984: Fig. 51).





**Figure 7a: Frontal view of Grave VIII at Kuta Kareueng, dated either 824/1421 or 834/1430-1. Features a central roundel with calligraphy (Or.23, 481, photograph 62. Leiden University Library).**

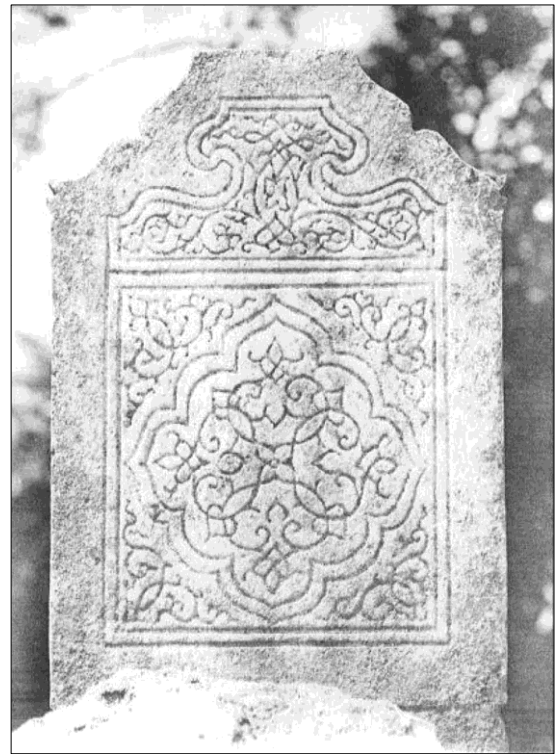


**Figure 7b: Reverse of Grave VIII at Kuta Kareueng. The abstracted floral patterns are strongly reminiscent of Chinese designs (Or.23, 481, photograph 64. Leiden University Library).**



**Figure 8a: First of the Cuti Madi pair, dated 12<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān 830/7<sup>th</sup> July 1427 (Or.23, 481, photograph 869. Leiden University Library).**

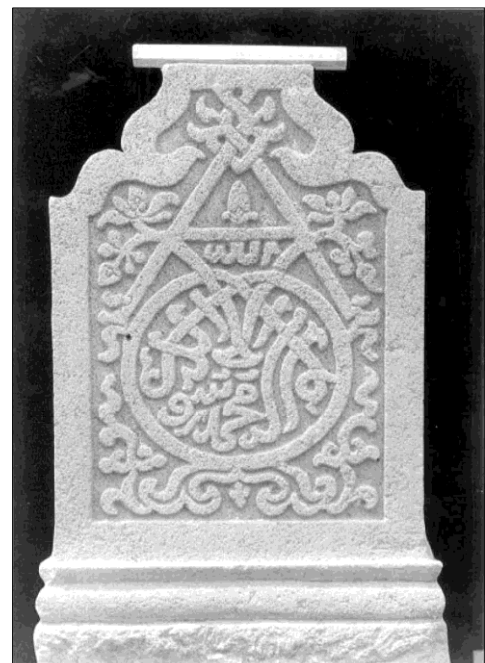


**Figure 8b: Second of the Cuti Madi pair (Or.23, 481, photograph 873. Leiden University Library).**





**Figure 9: Contemporary image of an individual roundel at *candi* Panataran, featuring an animal figure and swirling floral motifs.**

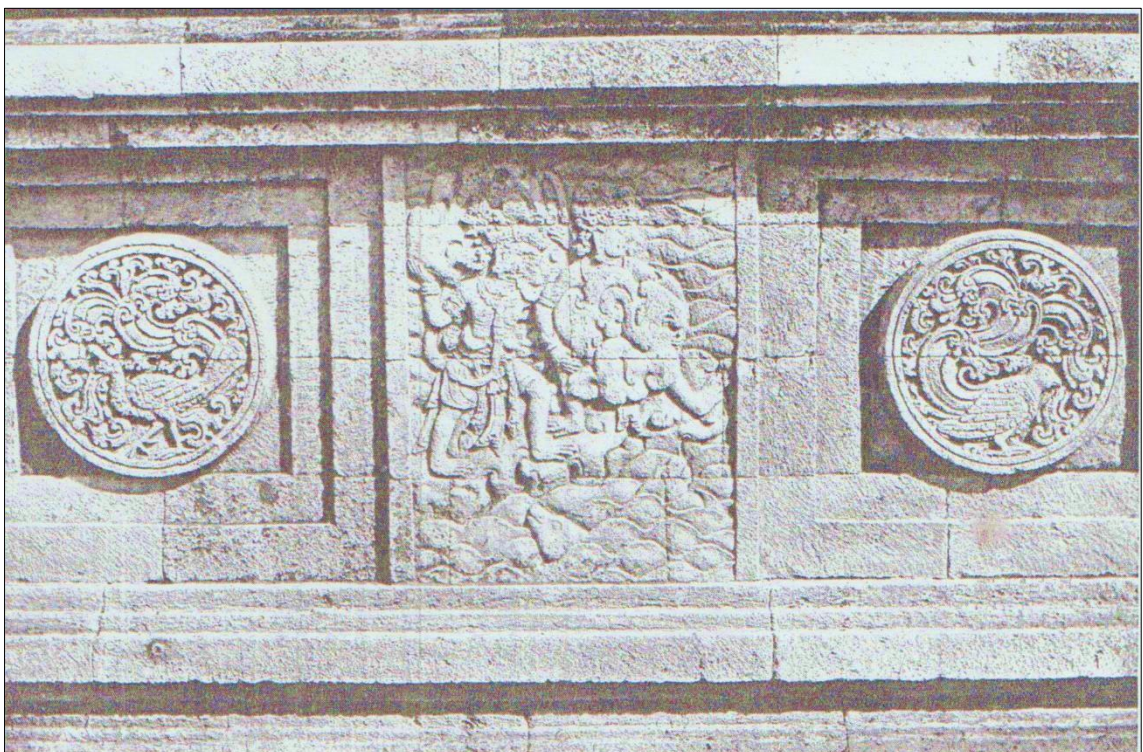


**Figure 10: Example of two roundels set within a wider decorative freeze, *candi* Panataran (Bernat Kempers, 1959: plate 281).**





Figure 11: The Teungku Sareh grave group, featuring a possible Quanzhou-produced cenotaph to the rear, next to the standing figure (Or.23, 481, photograph 478. Leiden University Library).

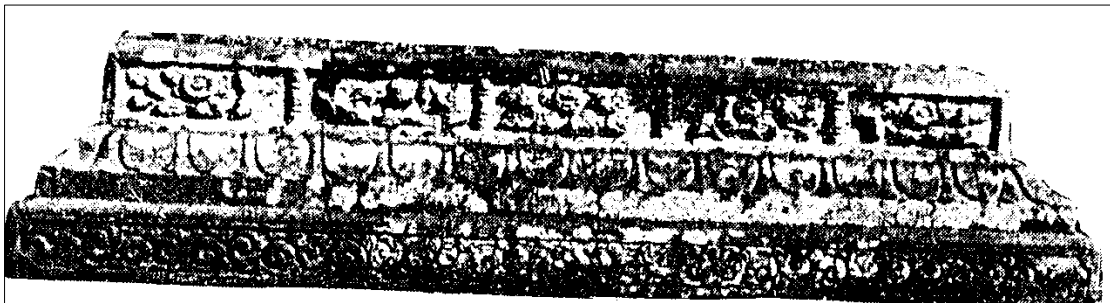


Figure 12: Fourteenth-century example of a Quanzhou-produced Muslim cenotaph, comparable to that in Fig. 11 (Chen, 1984: Fig. 114).

## **BRUNEI**

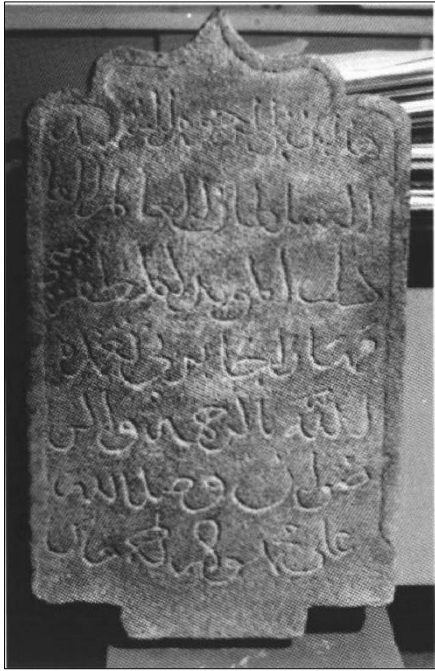


**Figure 13: The undated gravestone of Maharaja Brunei (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 23).**



**Figure 14: The gravestone of Zaynab (or Sitti) bint 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad Shāh al-Sulṭān, dated 862/1457-1458 (Kalus and Guillot, 2006: Stele 29).**

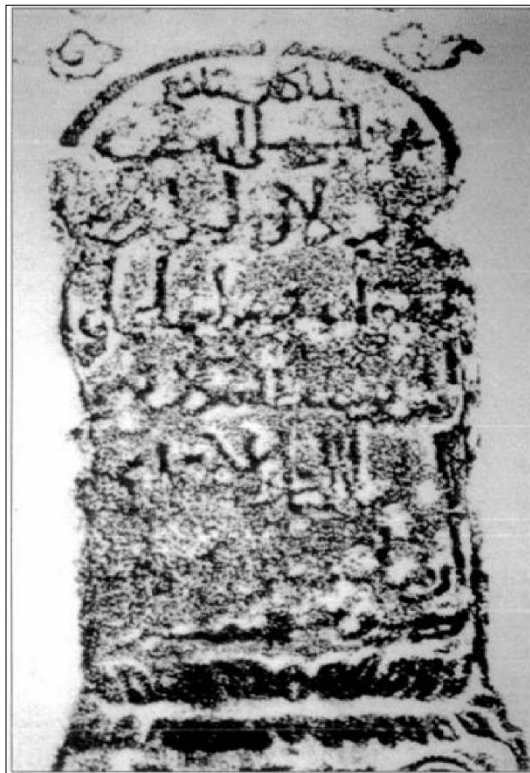


**Figure 15: Rubbing of the gravestone of Raja Ayang bint Ismā'il ibn Yūsuf al-'Azīz al-Khawlānī, dated to 856/1452-1453. Note the Chinese-style lotus design at its base (Kalus and Guillot, 2006: Stele 24).**





Figure 16: Front (left) and reverse (right) of the gravestone of Tuan Amina, dated 10<sup>th</sup> Safar 883/13<sup>th</sup> May 1478. With its bow-shaped top and double band decoration, it is typical of Brunei's unique fifteenth-century form of gravestone. The floral decoration on the reverse, however, is unique (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 3).



Figure 17: Gravestone of Syeteria Pengiran Maharaja Dinda, dated 890/1485-1486. It has a Chinese-style lotus design at its base (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 21).



Figure 18: Gravestone of Daeng Pandita, dated Sha'abān 804/March-April 1402. Another apparent example of Brunei's fifteenth-century form of gravestone, it has a swirling cloud pattern at its base (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 1).





**Figure 19:** The distinctive, triple-leafed gravestone of Yūnus, dated Ramaḍān 821/ October 1418 and replete with Sanskrit inscription (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 14).



**Figure 20:** An undated and unattributed triple-leafed gravestone akin to Yūnus's. A distinctively Javanese floral design can be seen at its base (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 15).

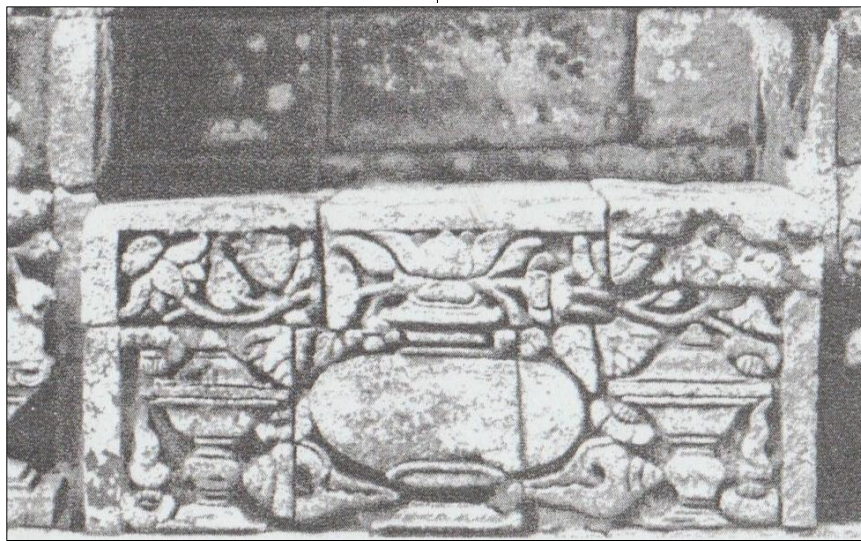


**Figure 21:** Ninth-century examples of Javanese floral designs, *candi Sewu* (Bernat Kempers, 1959: plate 130).



**Figure 22: Early Javanese Muslim wall decorations, Sendang Duwur, Lamongan. Floral decorations similar to those seen in Fig. 20 are visible in both the middle and upper tiers (Bernat Kempers, 1959: plate 342)**





**Figure 23: An undated and unattributed example of a fifteenth-century Bruneian gravestone, replete with roundels and eternal knot motifs (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 7).**



**Figure 24a: An second undated and unattributed fifteenth-century Bruneian gravestone, again replete with raised bands roundels and eternal knot motifs (Kalus and Guillot, 2003: Stele 9).**



**Figure 24b: The reverse of Fig. 24a. This side demonstrates the use of raised bands to delineate lines of text.**



Figure 25: Undated and unattributed Quanzhou gravestone belonging to a Yuan-period official from Yongchun county. The use of raised bands to create a border around the outside and delineate lines of text is clearly apparent (Chen, 1984: Fig. 60).

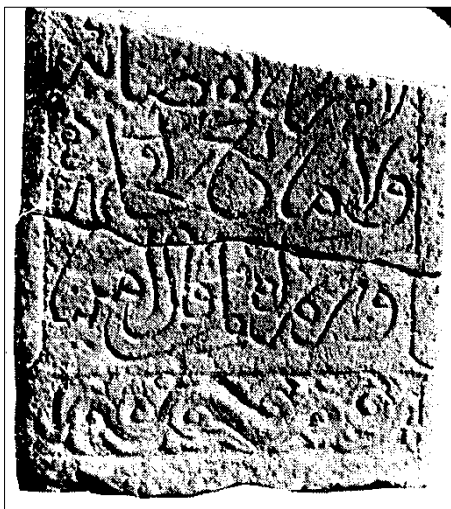


Figure 26: Lower section of a Quanzhou gravestone belonging to Abū Bakr ibn Husayn, dated 717/1317. A swirling floral motif sits at its base (Chen, 1984: Fig. 44)

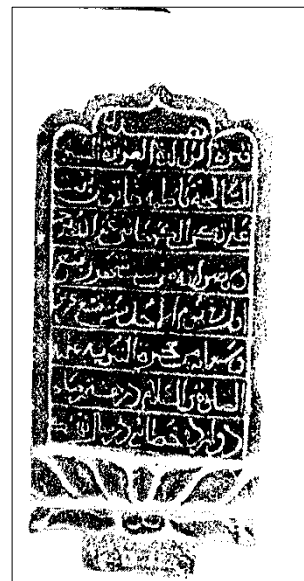


Figure 27: The Quanzhou gravestone of Fāṭima Khātūn. The lotus design adorning its base is similar to several seen at Brunei (Chen, 1984: Fig. 50)

## **JAVANESE MOSQUES**

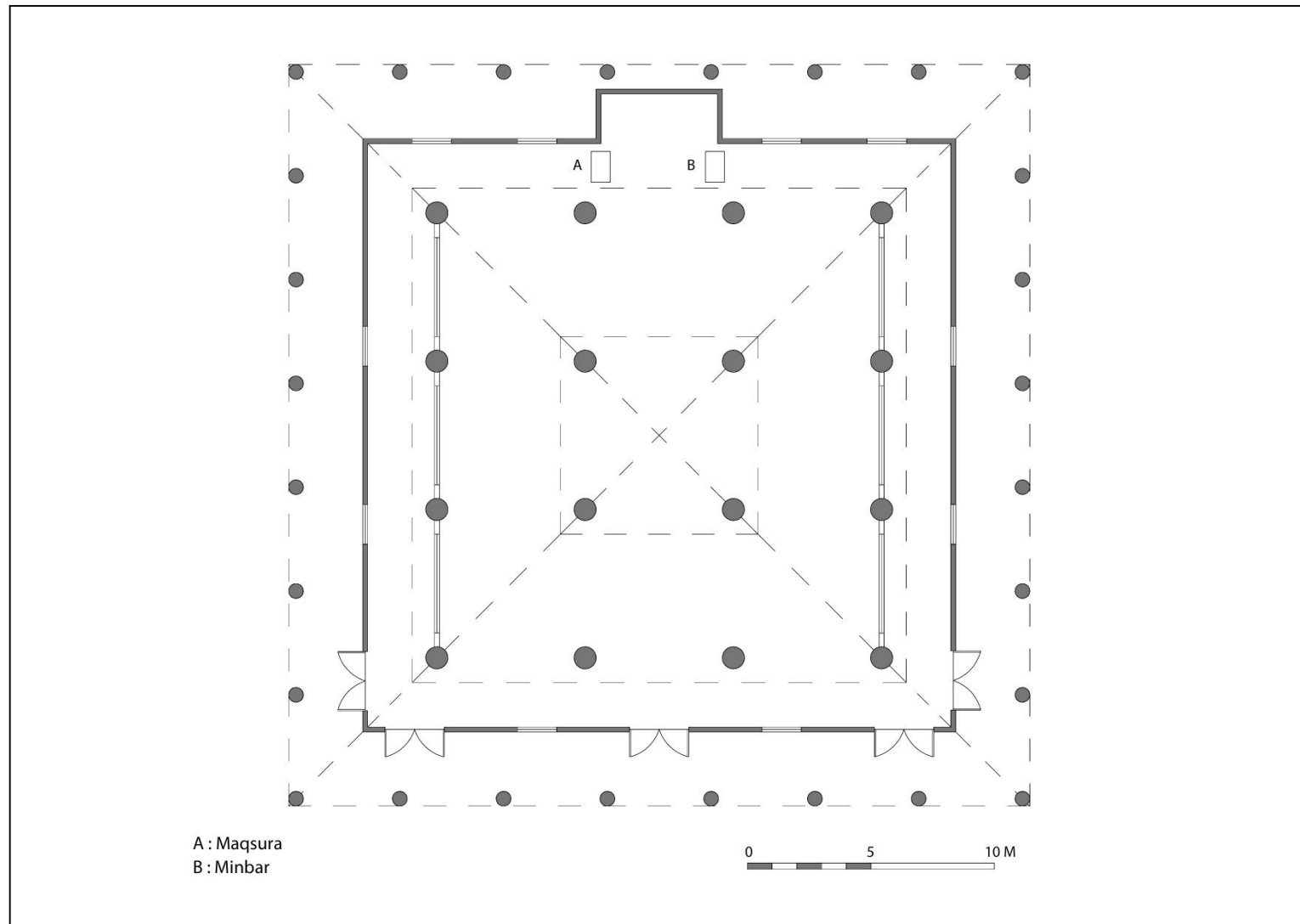


Diagram 1: Masjid Agung Demak's floor plan.



**Figure 28:** Exterior view of the Masjid Agung Demak



**Figure 29:** The Masjid Agung Demak's *mihrab* and tortoise-shaped chronogram.



**Figure 30:** The Masjid Agung Demak's *saka total*. The mosque's newer masonry walls, columns and ceiling can be seen in the background.

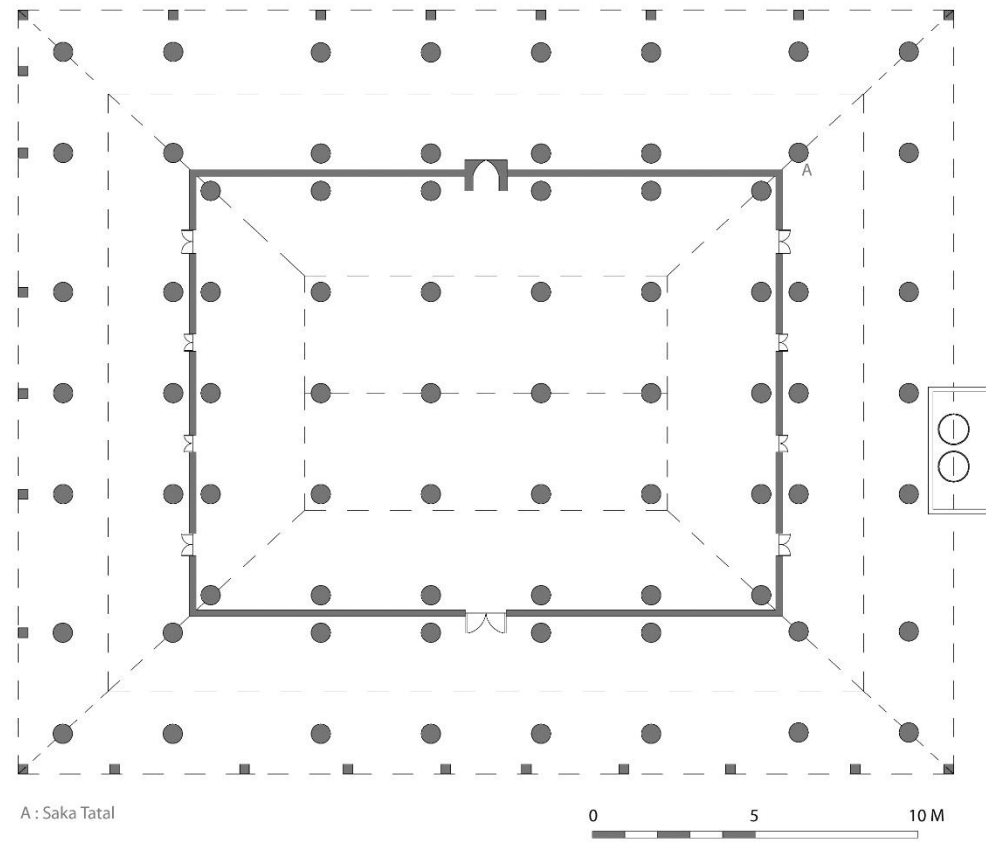


Diagram 2: Masjid Agung Cirebon's floor plan.





**Figure 31:** The Masjid Agung Cirebon complex. The mosque is the tall building located at the rear. The two buildings immediately behind the gateway are later *serambi*.



**Figure 32:** The floral (left) and Chinese eternal-knot (right) motifs used to decorate the front wall of the Masjid Agung Cirebon's prayer hall.



**Figure 33: Two examples (large and small) of the Masjid Agung Cirebon's northern and southern doorways. Two diamond-shaped ventilation shafts are also shown. The blue tiles are modern.**



**Figure 34: Interior of the Masjid Agung Cirebon's prayer hall, showing its columns, the lowest register of cross beams and the supporting steel structure.**





Figure 35: The Masjid Agung Cirebon's *mihrab*.

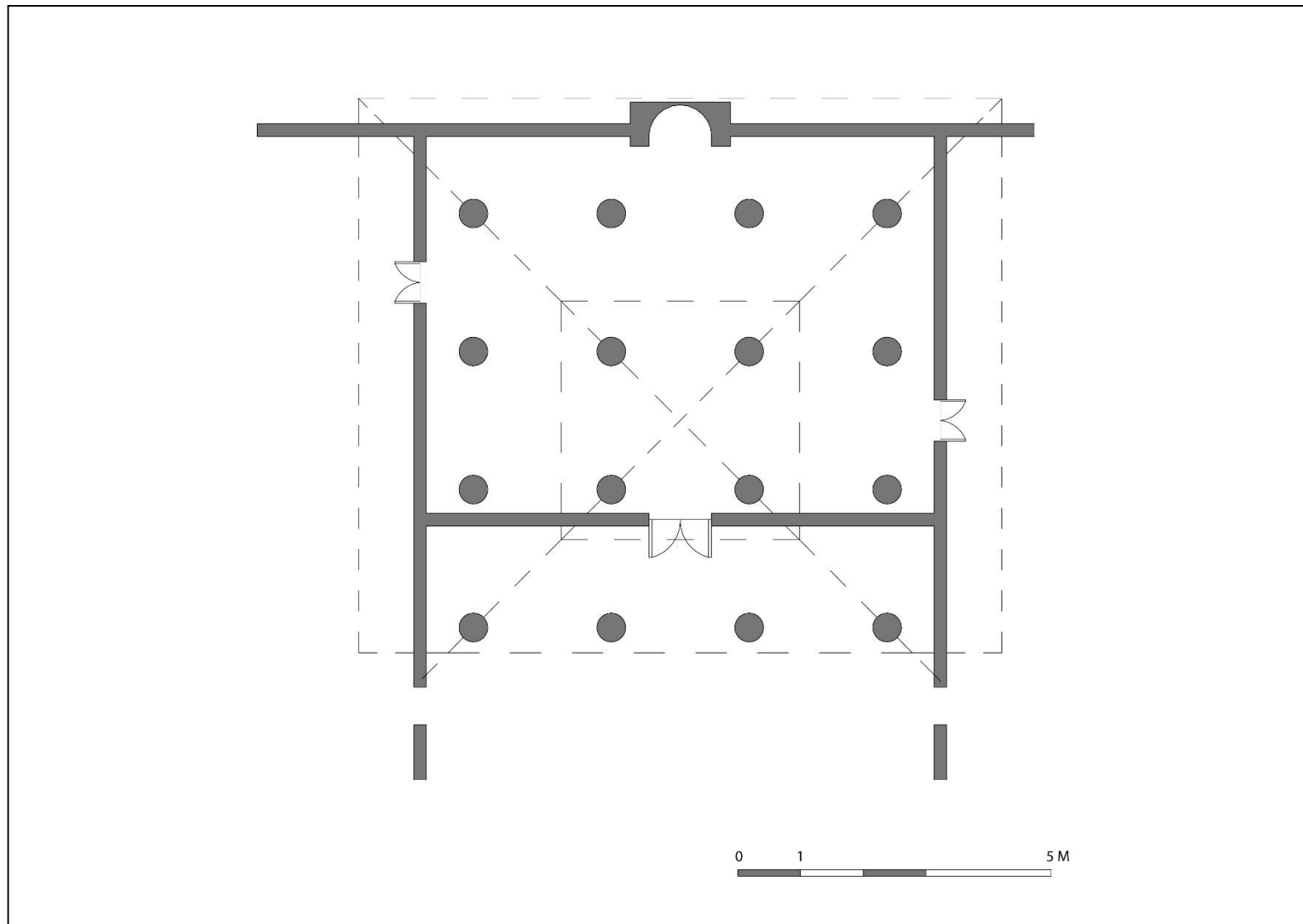


Diagram 3: Masjid Merah Panjunan's floor plan.



Figure 36: Side wall of the Masjid Merah Panjunan's later *serambi*, showing European style columns and Dutch plates.



Figure 37: Typical example of a round column and base from the Masjid Merah Panjunan.



Figure 38: Typical example of a double-star capital from the Masjid Merah Panjunan (also found at the Masjid Agung Cirebon).





Figure 39: View of the Masjid Merah Panjunan's *serambi*-prayer hall partition wall and three of the four round columns sitting outside the prayer hall.



Figure 40: The Masjid Merah Panjunan's partition wall gateway



Figure 41: Example of a Chinese plate set into the Masjid Merah Panjunan's partition wall.

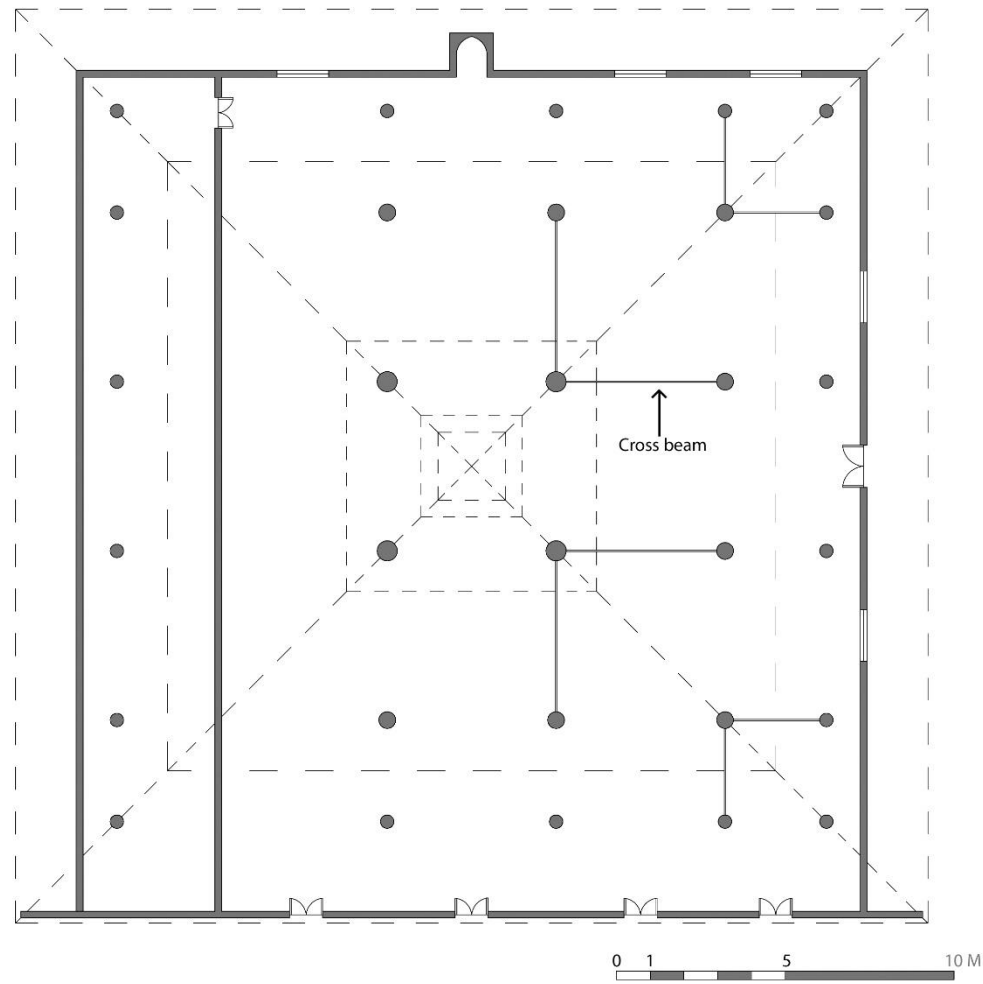


Diagram 4: Masjid Agung Banten’s floor plan.



Figure 42: Exterior view of the Masjid Agung Banten.



Figure 43: The Masjid Agung Banten's *mihrab*, flanked either side by European-style columns.



Figure 44: The Masjid Agung Banten's kingpost and cross beams.



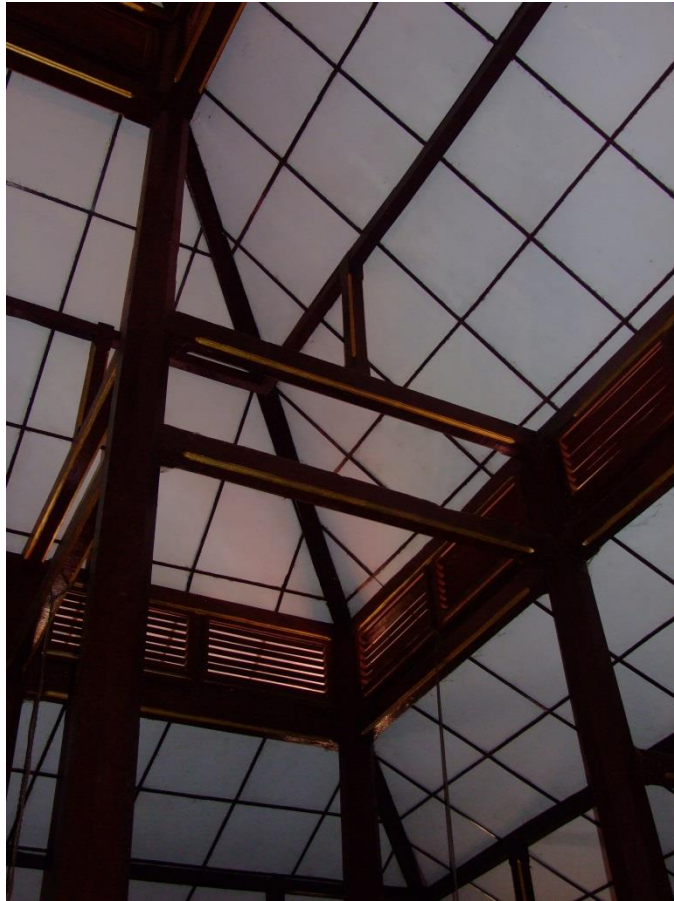


**Figure 45:** Cross beams radiating from the *saka guru*, Masjid Agung Banten.



**Figure 46:** *Saka guru* column base, Banten.



**Figure 47:** A base from the second square of columns, Banten.

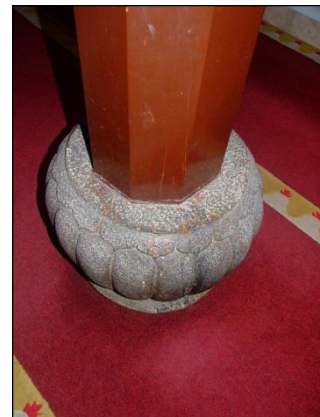


**Figure 48:** A base from the third square of columns, Banten.



**Figure 49:** Exterior view of the Masjid Menara Kudus, with its famous minaret (left) and new serambi (right).



**Figure 50:** The *paduraksa*-style gateway in the Masjid Menara Kudus's prayer hall.





Figure 51: Example of a square *pendopo*, Keraton Kesepuhan.



Figure 52: A rectangular *pendopo*, Keraton Kesepuhan.



Figure 53: View of a square *pendopo*'s top plate, Keraton Kesepuhan.

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