MALAY CONNECTIVITIES AND NETWORKS 
IN EARLY MODERN EASTERN INDONESIA

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Abstract

The earliest evidence of the involvement of the Malays in international trade comes from the kingdom of Srivijaya, which flourished from the late seventh century to the beginning of the eleventh century. It provided the model and, legends tell us, the founding fathers of the fifteenth century kingdom of Melaka, which today is viewed by Malaysians as the paradigm of Malay polities. As Melaka became the principal entrepot in the Southeast Asian region, its trade, language, religion, and culture extended throughout the archipelago. In the spread of Malay Melakan influence and in the subsequent history of the Malays, there arose two noteworthy tendencies: the flexibility of “Malay” as an identity marker, and the legitimizing role of Melaka/Johor among a number of archipelagic groups. In this paper I examine both tendencies as crucial in the success of the “Malays” in gaining both political and economic leverage in eastern Indonesia between the late sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries.

Keyword: malays, political, economic, culture, Southeast Asian

Southeast Asia sprawls across the Indian and Pacific Ocean, and until perhaps the sixteenth century the only known sea passage through the region was the Straits of Melaka. Located midway between the major civilizations to the east and the west, the Straits proved an ideal haven for ships because it was protected from the strong monsoon winds by parallel mountain chains along the spines of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. It was the “endpoint” of both the northeast monsoons that blew between January and April and brought traders from the east, and the southwest monsoons of July to November which carried traders from the west. While traders awaited favorable winds to return home, the communities located astride the Straits quickly seized the opportunities the situation provided. They established ports for traders to repair their ships, replenish supplies, obtain local products, and exchange goods with merchants from all parts of the world. Furthermore, the interior of both landforms that bordered the Straits produced valuable forest products, particularly camphor, benzoin, gaharuwood (eaglewood), and dragon’s blood (a kind of kino)—all of which were highly prized in the international marketplace, particularly in China.

For more than two thousand years, this narrow waterway brought traders, religious scholars, diplomatic missions, and adventurers to the ports bordering its shores. As a result of the economic opportunities provided by the steady influx of people and goods, communities in the vicinity of this waterway became increasingly involved in international trade. Much has been written about the impact of international and domestic trade in the transformation of Southeast Asian societies, both materially
and spiritually. In every period it was trade which served as the stimulus for the movement of goods and ideas across continents, and Southeast Asia’s ideal location midway between major civilizations provided its leaders with the luxury of surveying, experimenting, and selecting those elements that were most appropriate to advance their societies. The principal beneficiaries of this international trade were the Malayu, the principal inhabitants settled along both shores of the Straits of Melaka.

Development of Malayu Culture in Southeast Sumatra

Srivijaya (7th-14th centuries CE) and other early polities in the archipelago comprised a network of relationships with varying degrees of control exercised from the center. Those polities with greater independence and located in the areas farthest from the center were therefore provided an option to detach themselves from the core. Although there is insufficient information to describe the functioning of Srivijaya, some understanding may be gained from a general discussion of the mandala concept as applied to early Southeast Asian polities. In this concept, political control was exercised through the occasional oath-giving ceremonies and the bestowing of royal favors and blessings in exchange for tribute in the form of goods and services. It was a system that relied on persuasion and acknowledgement of mutual benefits rather than on force, though the threat of supernatural sanction was always a potential royal weapon. The relationship between the center and the periphery is often explained through an analogy with the beam of an upturned lamp. When cast on a flat surface the beam is most intense at the center and becomes progressively weaker toward the edges. In a similar fashion, a mandala polity’s influence is strongest in the areas closest to the center and weakest at the periphery. To carry the analogy a step further, if two lamps are placed close to each other their beams overlap at the edges, just as the authority of two competing centers may overlap at their peripheries. These borderlands thus form dynamic areas where shifts in allegiances most frequently occur to challenge the established political arrangements. Based on the reconstruction above of its geopolitical space, Srivijaya probably operated in accordance with the model of a Southeast Asian mandala polity.

Despite the appearance in the inscriptions of a highly structured political system, Srivijaya was very likely governed in a much more decentralized fashion. Officialdom was essentially a “patrimonial staff.” The presence of the tuhan (lord and family head) in the kedatuan identified the spiritual center of the realm, while physical proximity to the tuhan determined the status hierarchy of his hulun (subjects or kinfolk). The phrase “people inside the land under the order of the kedatuan (uran di dalanña bhumi ajñaña kadatuanku)” suggests that the bhumi itself only comes into existence when it has come under the order of the ruler. The Srivijayan datu was an essential ingredient in

1 Throughout this paper I have decided to retain the Malay word and spelling “Malayu” to refer to the Malayu, in preference to the current usage of “Melayu.” The former was the way in which the name was more commonly transcribed in inscriptions and early historical documents. Adopting this spelling also avoids the association of the term with the dominant ethnic group in Malayuia today. By using “Malayu” I am including not only those in Malayuia but also those living in various parts of Indonesia, particularly in east coast Sumatra and the offshore islands to the south of the Malay Peninsula. I have, however, retained the English usage of “Malay Peninsula” because of its familiarity to English speakers.
defining the polity, and it was the datu’s *huluntuhan*, or relatives and retainers, who governed and linked the distant parts of the polity to the center. For this reason the term *huluntuhan* has been glossed as “polity” and even “empire,” making the ruler and his family a synecdoche of the polity.

In sum, the mandala political arrangement was admirably suited to the dispersed and independent communities that comprised Srivijaya. Implicit is the idea that governance would be by consensus since neither the ruler nor the community would enter into a relationship unless it was one of mutual benefit. Force was rarely contemplated, and when it was employed it usually proved ineffective against a highly mobile population operating in their familiar habitats. The port polities acted as “gatekeepers” along the major artery of a river basin, thus controlling the flow of goods.

Moreover, in some cases the downriver polities produced local goods, such as metal tools, salt fish, woven cloth and jewelry to entice the interior to trade their products downstream. Strategic collecting posts at important crossroads of river and land routes in the interior constituted vital nodes in Srivijaya/Malayu’s distribution network. The realm did not consist of contiguous territories within clearly demarcated boundaries, but of communities scattered in the rivers, jungles, and seas—anywhere in the region that agreed to submit to the spiritual powers of the ruler. It was people, not the lands or seas that they inhabited, which determined the extent of the realm. Even those who were not regarded as subjects felt the impact of this prestigious kingdom. Local folklore in the highlands of southern Sumatra preserve tales of charismatic leaders arriving from the outside bringing a new cultural order to fill the vacuum left with the demise of Srivijaya.

By the demise of Srivijaya/Malayu sometime in the fourteenth century, there were certain features which came to be associated with a “Malayu” polity: (1) an entrepot state involved in maritime international commerce; (2) a ruler endowed with sacred attributes and powers; (3) governance based on kinship ties; (4) a mixed population with specific and mutually advantageous roles in the economy; and (5) a realm whose extent was determined not by territory but by shifting locations of its subjects. This was a legacy bequeathed by Srivijaya/Malayu between the seventh and the fourteenth centuries. As subsequent Malayu kingdoms continued to practice and refine the conventions established by Srivijaya/Malayu, these features as well as behavioral patterns associated with these courts were increasingly identified as forming Malayu culture.

**The Malayu on the Peninsula**

According to a Malayu tradition found in the *Sejarah Malayu*, a prince and his followers migrated from Palembang (the site of Srivijaya) to the Malay Peninsula sometime toward the end of the fourteenth century. Most of the stories in this text are

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7 Although the traditions from which many of the stories in the *Sejarah Melayu* were taken may have originated in the fifteenth century, the earliest extant recension is the Raffles 18 manuscript dating from 1612. For a detailed study of the various versions, see Roolvink, “Variant Versions.” A useful compendium of articles about the *Sejarah Melayu* and the full Malay text in runi of the Raffles 18 can be found in Cheah, *Sejarah Melayu*. The author refers to his work as *Sulalatu'l-Salatina* or in Malayu *Penurunan Segala Raja-Raja* (The Genealogy of Kings). Roolvink believes that what we now know as
about individuals and events from the semi-legendary Melaka kingdom (c. 1400 – 1511) and may have originated in this period. When the Portuguese conquered Melaka in 1511, the Portuguese apothecary Tomé Pires collected many of the traditions of Melaka in order to reconstruct something of its past. Local documents were studied for an understanding of the Malayu foe and for an assessment of the trade possibilities for the Portuguese in the region. The outcome was the *Suma Oriental*, written in Melaka between 1512 and 1515, which describes some of the same episodes as those in the *Sejarah Malayu* but often in greater detail. Unlike these two documents, the Ming dynastic history, the *Ming Shi-lu*, is noted for the brevity of its comments dealing with Melaka. It is nevertheless an invaluable contemporary record of the early years of the Melaka kingdom. These three documents provide a far more detailed (though still limited) account of a Malayu polity than is available for Srivijaya/Malayu.

The supernatural ruler who descended on Bukit Siguntang in Palembang is called Sri Tri Buana in the *Sejarah Malayu*, and Permaisura in the *Suma Oriental*. It is the latter name that is mentioned in an entry dated 3 October 1405 in the *Ming Shi-lu*, where a “Bai-li-mi-su-la” is said to be “the native ruler of the country of Melaka.” Both names for the founder of Melaka underscore the non-Muslim origin of the Palembang prince. Though the outlines of the story of the Palembang prince’s peregrinations are structurally similar in the *Suma Oriental* and the *Sejarah Malayu*, the latter text has obviously been written for the pleasure and edification of the Melaka court. While the *Suma Oriental* describes the movement as a flight to escape Majapahit’s wrath, the *Sejarah Malayu* explains it as a planned visit.

In the *Sejarah Melayu* Sri Tri Buana encounters a singa, a strange type of lion associated with ancient times, while on a visit to the island of Temasek. Interpreting this as a sign, he settles in Temasek and renames it Singapura, or the “City of the Singa”. Sri Tri Buana remains in Singapore until his death and is succeeded by his son. Singapura becomes a great city attracting many foreigners, but its fame is short-lived because it is attacked and destroyed by Majapahit. The destruction of Singapore is implicitly attributed to injustices committed by the ruler against his faithful subjects, thereby incurring the punishment of the Almighty.

In Tome Pires’ *Suma Oriental*, the reason for the abandonment of Singapore is an attack not by Majapahit but by the Siamese. The *Sejarah Melayu* mentions that Melaka, but not Singapore, was attacked by the Siamese from Shahru’n-nuwi, (“New City”), which was the name that the Persians gave the city of Ayutthaya. Both Singapore and Melaka may have been attacked or at least threatened by the Siamese. Founded in 1351 Ayutthaya had developed into a major entrepot in the region. The

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8 Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*.
9 Wade, “Ming Shi-lu.”
10 Wade, “Ming Shi-lu,” 262.
11 Both titles are linked to Siva, with “Permaisura” meaning “Lord of All” and “Sri Tri Buana” meaning “Lord of the Three Worlds.” The latter appears to have been a favored title linked to royalty and kingship in early Southeast Asia. Wolters, *Fall of Srivijaya*, 232, fn. 18; Wilkinson, *Malay English Dictionary*, vol. 2, 890.
rapid rise of any rival entrepot would have been viewed as a threat to Ayutthaya’s own ambitions. According to the episode in the *Suma Oriental*, the Permaisure (Sri Tri Buana) kills the Siamese governor in Singapore and takes control of the city. This incurs the wrath of the Siamese who then send a large expedition and expel the Palembang people from the island.\textsuperscript{14} The thriving northeastern Sumatran coastal polity of Pasai may also have suffered an attack by the Siamese. In the *Sejarah Melayu* the ruler of Samudera/Pasai is seized by the ruler of Sharu’n-nuwi and forced to tend the palace fowls.\textsuperscript{15} Evidence of Siamese incursions in the Malayu world is corroborated in the *Ming Shi-lu* under the date 20 November 1407:

\begin{quote}
The kings of the two countries of Samudera and Melaka also sent people to complain that Siam had been overbearing and that it had sent troops to take away their seals and title patents which they had received from the Court. They also noted that the people of their countries were scared and unable to live in peace.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

In the *Ming Shi-lu*, Melaka is mentioned for the first time as a port that was visited in 1403 by the eunuch Yin Qing at the orders of the Ming emperor. China had never heard of Melaka until informed about its existence by some Muslim traders from south India. These merchants were apparently eager to see the development of an entrepot in the Straits of Melaka, which was much more convenient than the port at Ayutthaya for traders coming from the west. Convinced by these merchants that Melaka was a commercial success, the Ming emperor dispatched a sizeable delegation to establish relations with the new polity. On 11 November 1405 Melaka was granted an inscription composed by the emperor himself to be placed on Melaka’s state mountain (present-day Bukit Cina). Only three other nations were given such a signal honor by the emperor: Japan in 1406, Brunei in 1408, and Cochin in 1416. China’s desire to find a convenient trade center in the Straits and a safe passage to India coincided with Melaka’s own hopes of becoming a major entrepot. This convergence of interests enabled Melaka to weather the initial serious threats to its existence from Ayutthaya and Majapahit. By the time China abandoned the policy of state-trading in 1435, Melaka had already become well-established as a major emporium in the region.\textsuperscript{17}

Melaka became the entrepot of choice for traders from the east, particularly the Chinese. The Chinese emperors had given their special favor to Melaka in order to encourage it to maintain peace in the Straits and thereby assure the safety of Chinese traders. It was for this very same reason that Srivijaya/Malayu had become a “favored coast” for the Chinese.\textsuperscript{18} Pasai, on the other hand, appears to have been frequented mostly by Muslim traders from the west. Were it not for the interest shown in Melaka by the Ming emperor of China, there would have been little hope for its survival against attacks by both Ayutthaya and Majapahit. Melaka grew prosperous and powerful, and by the second half of the fifteenth century it had extended its influence over much of the Malay Peninsula, the east coast of Sumatra, and the many adjacent islands which were home to the Orang Laut. Melaka’s economic success could be measured by the fact that it had not one but four *syahbandar*, the official appointed to handle all matters dealing

\textsuperscript{14} Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*, vol. 2, 232
\textsuperscript{15} Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 35-6.
\textsuperscript{16} Wade, “Ming Shi-lu,” 413-4.
\textsuperscript{17} Wang, “Opening of Relations.”
\textsuperscript{18} Wolters, *Fall of Srivijaya*, ch. 13.
with foreign commerce at the port. One was assigned solely to the Gujarati since they regularly comprised the most numerous merchants in the port; another to those from southern India (benua Keling), Bengal, Pegu, and Pasai; a third to traders from Java, Maluku [i.e. northern Maluku], Banda, Palembang, Tanjong Pura [Borneo], and the people from Luzon (Luçoes); and finally a syahbandar to the Chinese (including those from southern China), people from Ryukyu, and the Chams.\textsuperscript{19}

One of the major reasons for Melaka’s success was the special allegiance given to Melaka’s rulers by the Orang Laut. There were many Orang Laut groups who were regarded as Melaka’s subjects. On the east coast of Sumatra from Arcat southward to Rokan, Rupat, and Bengkalis (\textit{Purim}) the Orang Laut populations served Melaka as rowers or fighting men. Below Bengkalis were the larger polities of Siak, Kampar, and Indragiri, whose rulers were related to the Melaka royal family and could therefore be relied upon to contribute their boats and fighting men (many of whom would have been Orang Laut), to Melaka’s fleets. But perhaps the source of the greatest Orang Laut strength for Melaka came from the islands of Lingga, whose ruler, according to Tomé Pires, was likened to a king of the Orang Laut with their forty lanchars, or native boats, and 4-5,000 men.\textsuperscript{20} Unmentioned by Pires were the islands of Riau, which were as heavily populated with Orang Laut as in Lingga. The special relationship between the Malayu and the Orang Laut assured the success of the Malayu polities from the seventh to the mid eighteenth century.

Melaka’s rapid rise and stunning success made it an economic and cultural model for other polities in maritime Southeast Asia. The styles and ideas emanating from Melaka became \textit{de rigueur} among the elite in courts as distant as Ternate, and the Malayu language emerged as a trade and diplomatic lingua franca for the region. After Melaka’s rulers embraced Islam in the mid-fifteenth century, the court sought to rival Pasai as a center of Islamic learning. It began to promote the religion through sponsorship of Islamic scholars and translations of Islamic treatises into the Malayu language. In the rapidly expanding Islamic world of Southeast Asia, Melaka became known as a patron of Islam. Melakan court practice, behavior, dress, language, and religion were emulated by other polities, thereby adding to the corpus of activities and artifacts that were available to be selected by certain populations at specific periods in history to become the basis of a Malayu identity.

There were two essential components that defined the Malayu polity in Melaka and became the basis of the ethnicized Malayu from the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century. The first was the ruler, who was attributed with a superior descent (\textit{asal}) through a genealogy that combined both a supernatural origin and a fictive lineage extending back to the Prophet Solomon (Sulaiman). Such an illustrious descent was necessary in order to justify and legitimize the ruler’s position as the mediator and \textit{primus inter pares} of leaders of kinship networks. The second vital component was the alliance of kinship networks. Scholarship has tended to focus on the ruler as the linchpin of Malayu society, with all meaning derived from association with the ruler. As a result, little attention has been given to the clues available in Malay sources that suggest that the alliance of kinship networks may initially have been the more important of the two in determining the shape and viability of a Malayu polity.

\textsuperscript{19} Cortesão, \textit{Suma Oriental}, vol. 2, 265.
\textsuperscript{20} Cortesão, \textit{Suma Oriental}, vol. 1, 148-57.
Melaka’s stunning success, particularly in the principal redistribution center for the trade in cloves, nutmeg, and mace, caught the attention of the Portuguese. Spurred by the prospects of obtaining these highly valued spices directly without the intervention of Muslim traders, the Portuguese gradually extended their sea voyages from the Iberian Peninsula over the centuries and eventually reached the west coast of India in 1498. The grand plan developed by the Portuguese commander Alfonso d’Albuquerque was to seize all the vital links in the spice route, which included Melaka. Thus in 1511 Melaka fell to the Portuguese after a long hard-fought battle, and the Malay ruler and his followers were forced to flee and find another part of the kingdom to establish the new royal residence and hence the capital. Not all the Malayu followed the fugitive ruler. Many proceeded to east coast of Sumatra with the largest number going to Aceh, thus making it the dominant Malay kingdom in the area. There were others, however, who went to the eastern archipelago to join their compatriots who had earlier settled in the area.

The Malayu in Makassar

Srivijaya had been a major redistribution centre for Malukan spices, and it is likely that Malayu traders from Srivijaya were involved in the transport of the spices from Maluku, as they were in the fifteenth century when the Malayu from the kingdom of Melaka were prominent traders throughout the region. Together with the Javanese and the Bandanese, the Malayu were the principal carrier of spices. The fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511 led to an exodus of Malayu traders to other ports in Southeast Asia. Some of them went to Siang in present-day Pangkajene on the west coast of South Sulawesi, which had replaced Bantaeng as a major trading port on the island. In 1544 the Portuguese Antonio Paiva noted the bustling atmosphere at Siang, where the bulk of the merchants were Malayu from Ujung Tanah (Johor), Patani, and Pahang and had settled there some fifty years before. But the Christianization of the ruler of Siang by the Portuguese may have spurred the Muslim Malay merchants to shift their trade to the new thriving port at Makassar, which was under the control of a newly-formed union of the Makassarese kingdoms of Gowa and Tallo.

According to Gowa traditions, “Malayu” from Pahang, Patani, Johor, Campa, and Minangkabau (as well as the Javanese) arrived in Makassar and were granted certain privileges by the Karaeng Gowa to entice them to settle in the port. They sought assurance that their lands and homes would be inviolate and that they would be exempt from certain arbitrary royal practices. When the Karaeng Gowa asked the leader of the Malayu who composed the group, the reply was: “All those of us who wear sarongs, i.e.

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21 Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, ch. 4.
22 Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*.
24 Bantaeng was still a formidable trading port in 1667, when the Dutch commented on the prosperity of the city and noted that some 100 boats were in the harbour carrying about 6000 tonnes of rice. Andaya, *Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 75-6.
26 In these chronicle traditions the term “Malay” seems to have been used as an ethnic category for most traders from the western archipelago, including the Javanese. The Minangkabau were widely regarded as Malay, and the Chams were closely related linguistically and culturally to the Malayu and may have been indistinguishable to those from Sulawesi. Andaya, *Leaves*, 6-7, 82, 20, 43-5.
the people of Pahang, Patani, Campa, Minangkabau and Johor.” 27 In agreeing to the demands of these traders, Tunipalangga took an important step in making the port of Makassar attractive not only to Malayu but to all international merchants. The decision to make the position of Syahbandar, the official in charge of international trade, a separate entity from the influential Tumailalang office, was another well-calculated move to develop Makassar as an entrepot. 28 Measures taken by Tunipalangga are reminiscent of those that characterized Melaka 29 and may have been suggested by the new Malay settlers. He established an official system of weights and measures, and he created the post of Tumakkajananngang Ana’bura’ne to oversee some forty occupational groups within the port city. Some of the groups would have been directly involved in the requirements of any port aspiring to entrepot status, such as shipwrights, food producers, and carpenters. 30 The Malayu were one of the earliest foreign groups, along with the Bandanese, to settle in Makassar and would have been directly responsible for the rapidity with which Gowa-Tallo became a major player in the international spice trade. 31

By the first half of the seventeenth century, Makassar became a truly international entrepot serving as a base not only for the experienced Malayu traders and other archipelagic nations, but also for the Chinese, Indians, English, Portuguese, and the Danes. It became unnecessary to go to the sites where the goods were produced or collected since the port of Makassar provided an uninterrupted supply of spices, sandalwood, slaves, tortoiseshells, wax, etc. The Malays were one of the earliest foreign groups, along with the Bandanese, to settle in Makassar and would have been directly responsible for the rapidity with which Gowa-Tallo became a major player in the international spice trade. 32 Much of the carrying trade was still in the hands of Malays and non-Sulawesians in the beginning of the seventeenth century. A Dutch report of 1603 describes an annual visit of Portuguese from Melaka to Makassar to load cloves, nutmeg, and mace, which they purchased with Indian cloth. These spices were being brought to Makassar principally by Malays, Javanese, and Bandanese. Malays resident in the city maintained links with their compatriots in other communities throughout the region and entered into cooperative ventures with the Portuguese in the trade between Melaka and Makassar. 33 The Malayu from Makassar traded obtained spices, sandalwood, slaves, massoy bark, tortoiseshell, and from the early eighteenth century, tri pang, in exchange for cloth, Chinese ceramics, rice, salt, iron, and exotic goods. Their ships were found everywhere throughout the scattered islands and coastlines in eastern Indonesia, and every year the ruler of Gowa provided passes to the Malays from Makassar to go with two or three junks with 30,000 rijksdaalders in capital to trade at Cebu in central Philippines. 34

Makassar’s emergence as eastern Indonesia’s major stapling centre for spices brought the kingdom of Gowa-Tallo into direct conflict with the monopolistic policies of the VOC. Unable to prevent the traders from Makassar from obtaining the much

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27 Abdurrahim, “Kedatangan Orang Melaju”, 144-5.
28 Wolhoff and Abdurrahim, Sedjarah Gowa, 25.
29 Andaya and Andaya, History of Malayuia, 44-6.
30 Wolhoff and Abdurrahim, Sedjarah Gowa, 25-6.
31 Sutherland, “Makassar Malayu”, 78-9; Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, vol. 2, 260.
32 Sutherland, “Makassar Malayu”, 78-9; Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, vol. 2, 260.
33 Sutherland and Brée, “Quantitative”, 400;
34 Noorduyn, “Handelsrelaties”, 108.
valued spices, and fearful of undermining its own prestige in the region, the VOC blockaded the port of Makassar in 1634-5 and in 1654-5. To protect his lucrative trade to the eastern islands, the Karaeng Gowa placed some 300 Makassarese vessels on both the north and south sides of Makassar to protect the Makassarese junks and other boats that arrived daily from Ambon via East Seram. When the blockades proved only temporarily successful, the VOC decided to take harsher measures. In 1660 it bombarded the port and forced Gowa-Tallo to sign a treaty that favoured the Dutch. But the initial advantage won by the Dutch was short-lived as the Makassar-based merchants found ways to continue to pursue their lucrative spice trade to Maluku.

In 1666 the VOC launched a major expedition to destroy Gowa-Tallo, a task which was undertaken with great trepidation because of the fearsome reputation of the Makassarese warriors in close combat and use of firearms. The Dutch, bolstered by their Bugis allies and arch-enemies of the Makassarese, finally seized the port city after a protracted and fierce struggle that began in 1666 and only finally ended in 1669. The Malayu settlers in Makassar proved to be among the fiercest defenders of the ruler and the kingdom. Some 2000 Malayu musketeers participated in the battles, and when those around them felt that it was time to surrender, they replied defiantly: “When we can no longer do anymore nor defend ourselves then is it time enough to seek peace.” Despite the fierce resistance, the kingdom of Gowa fell, and many of the Malayu fled to Mandar, Pasir, Bima and further east.

By the terms of the Bungaya Treaty first signed by the Dutch and the Makassarese leaders in 1667 and renewed in 1669, Gowa-Tallo agreed to Dutch-imposed restrictive measures which were intended to limit the ability of the Makassarese traders to sail to eastern Indonesia without VOC passes. The treaty introduced a number of measures which led directly to an exodus of Makassarese and an influx of Bugis into the kingdom. There followed a decline in economic activity in Makassar, thus prompting the Dutch to invite the Malayu to return. The Malayu were given places to the north of the city intermingled with the Bugis, their erstwhile enemies. When trouble broke out between the two groups, the Malayu requested and were given a new area to settle in a place just north of the Dutch residences at Vlaardingen. The Malayu then resumed their trading activities and became the intermediaries between the Dutch and the Bugis-Makassarese community.

The Malayu were known for their skill at goldsmithing and in the arts, and were particularly admired for their devotion to the study of the Qur’an and for teaching both their boys and girls to read and write. The girls were adept at composing sya’ir in both the Malay and Makassarese language, and all were taught the hikayat as well as Malay adat istiadat. They were regarded as the most advanced of the communities in Makassar, and the Dutch gave their leaders the European titles of Mayor, Kapitan, and Letnan. The Kapitan Melayu became the leader of the Malayu community in Makassar.

Eventually, the Malayu and Makassarese traders resumed their lucrative activities in defiance of the treaty by completely avoiding the Dutch and by trading in more remote areas of the eastern Indonesian seas. Already in the first half of the

35 Tiele and Heeres, *Bouwstoffen*, vol. 2, 256.
eighteenth century, the VOC began to complain about the “incursions” and “smuggling” of the traders based in South Sulawesi. It became obvious by the latter half of the eighteenth century that the Dutch were helpless to prevent a resurgence of local and international commerce in eastern Indonesia, stimulated by the growing presence of English country traders.\footnote{Bassett, \textit{British Trade and Policy}.} Despite the VOC conquest of Gowa-Tallo in 1669, the Malayu and Makassarese quickly resumed their prominent role in regional trade and helped maintain the port of Makassar as the major entrepot for eastern Indonesian commodities for the remainder of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

\textbf{Malay Influence Elsewhere in Eastern Indonesia}

Makassar was the principal settlement of Malayu in eastern Indonesia. The next in importance was the kingdom of Bima on the eastern end of Sumbawa, whose relations with the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa became closely intertwined in the early seventeenth century. After the rulers of the twin kingdom of Gowa and Tallo embraced Islam in 1605, they embarked on a series of campaigns to convert their neighbors to the new religion. As part of this process, they also extended their conquests to Bima on the island of Sumbawa, which converted in 1619 and appointed its first Muslim ruler, the Sultan Abdu'l-Kahir, on 7 Feb 1621.\footnote{Noorduyn, “Makasar”, 338.} It was this sultan who sought to entice Malayu to his kingdom to encourage more international trade. As an inducement he offered them ricefields but, as the local traditions report it, the Malay Datuks and Enciks rejected the offer. The reason is that they wished to emphasize to the sultan that they were sailors and traders and not farmers. They thus requested and were granted the privilege of trading without having their merchandise subject to taxation. In addition, the sultan gave the Penghulu, or head of the Malayu, and the Malay Imam the exclusive right to organize their own Malay kampongs in accordance with Islamic law. When they impinged upon local \textit{adat} or custom, however, they had to consult with the local leaders. Malay girls were exempted from being taken as “ladies-in-waiting” at the palace, while the boys would have the honor of being appointed as Dambe Mone Ana Rato (sons of the Rato) and become specialist dancers at the sirih-puan feast held during Maulud.\footnote{Syamsuddin, “Coming of Islam”, 296-7.}

Although Makassarese and Dutch sources indicate that it was the Makassarese who brought Islam to Bima, local traditions attribute the conversion to the Malayu. The various Malay kampongs located around Bima Bay were under leaders who were said to be descendants of the Malayu who spread the religion.\footnote{Syamsuddin, “Coming of Islam”, 297.} The reputation of the Malayu as the bearers of Islam was strongly established in the western archipelago, and so it is very likely that this Bima tradition was established in later years despite historical evidence of the role of the Makassarese in the Islamization process in Bima.

In both the kingdoms of Gowa and Bima, the Malayu became a well-established part of the local communities and occupied positions of great respect. As traders they also were instrumental in bringing wealth to the kingdom and to their descendants. The contributions of the Malayu, however, were not limited to these two kingdoms but extended throughout eastern Indonesia. As in the traditions of South Sulawesi and
Bima, it was the Malayu who were attributed with introducing Islam to the rulers and the population. The desire to believe this in face of contradictory evidence from history demonstrates the prestige that the Malayu had among the local populations as devout Muslims and erudite scholars of Islam.

Connected to both trade and Islam was the Malayu language. From the days of Srivijaya and Melaka, the Malayu brought their goods and ideas to all parts of the archipelago and conducted their transactions using the Malayu language. It became the principal *lingua franca* in maritime Southeast Asia, including many coastal ports in mainland Southeast Asia. From eighteenth century onward, Malayu became the language of trade in East Seram (eastern end of Seram, Seram Laut and Gorom archipelagoes) and on the island of Timor. Malay was also spoken at Solor and Ende, two important secondary entrepots in eastern Indonesia. Because of the economic and cultural importance of the Malayu based primarily in Makassar, the Malayu language continued to remain an important trade language long after the fall of Malayu Melaka in 1511.

**Conclusion**

The story of the Malayu in the western archipelago is fairly well-known and documented, but not that of the Malayu of the “eastern” diaspora who made significant contributions the history of eastern Indonesia. Foremost among them were the Malays from Makassar. During the heyday of the kingdom of Melaka, some of the Malayu traders settled permanently in Siang in South Sulawesi. This was a common practice among trading communities whose annual visits could be facilitated by resident compatriots who could conduct trade without the pressure of completing transactions before the shift in monsoon winds. After Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511, a number of the Malays went east and settled in Siang and later in Makassar, as well as in other areas of eastern Indonesia.

The well-respected and fairly large Malay community became major traders in eastern Indonesia, using their substantial capital to build and outfit ships manned by Malays and Makassarese. By using small but numerous smaller boats, they were able to trade in many of the small, isolated islands and obtain spices, sandalwood, slaves, tripang, tortoiseshell, and other eastern goods in exchange for cloth, iron, salt, porcelain, and exotic goods in demand in the islands. Goods obtained in the islands were then exchanged in Makassar with international traders, mainly Chinese. In this intermediary role the Malays in Makassar continued the role played by their ancestors in the western archipelago in earlier centuries. From Makassar the Malay community expanded to other areas of eastern Indonesia, but particularly to the kingdom of Bima on the island of Sumbawa. Here they underwent a similar process of acceptance by the local ruler and community, and they came to occupy a privileged position in the Bima court.

Throughout the eastern diaspora the Malays had high prestige, not merely as excellent traders but also as the bearers of Islam. The long participation of the Malays in international trade throughout the archipelago made the Malay language a *lingua franca* among the coastal communities and the trade language of choice. As a result of the prestige of the Malayu and their strong association with Islam, the Malay language became the court and literary language in Bima. Many of the Muslim sultanates in the region also adopted Malay as a court language and the language of Islam. In this regard,
the Malays in eastern Indonesia continued the traditions of the Malayu in Melaka and encouraged them to retain the language and many of the customs of their forebears who first settled in the region.

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