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Finding Java: Muslim nomenclature of insular Southeast Asia from Śrîvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje

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Finding Java

Muslim nomenclature of insular Southeast Asia from Śrīvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje

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Introduction

In his account of Mecca as he saw it in 1885, C. Snouck Hurgronje observed how the pilgrims and resident scholars from Southeast Asia were known to locals individually as *Jâwî* (or *Jâwiyya* for a woman), in the plural as *Jâwiyyîn* (or *Jâwiyyât*), and collectively as 'the *Jâwa*'.¹ All these terms are related to the toponym that had seemingly served in Arabic since time immemorial to define both Java the island, and Southeast Asia the region, namely: *Jâwa* (جاوة). But just as the boundaries of that toponym were unclear, so too were the parameters of these related ethnic ascriptions in Mecca of the 1880s, with little difference made between Malay and Bugis, Javanese and Patani. Despite ongoing encounters with Southeast Asian pilgrims, scholars and guest workers in Saudi Arabia, or the regular sight of Indonesian students at Cairo's famous al-Azhar University (whom I have seen hailed by local touts crying 'Yâ Malayzî! Malayzî!'), the image of Southeast Asia and its peoples remains somewhat vague in the Middle East.

Of course most outsiders to any region of the world are seldom able to differentiate the countries and peoples they see, and thus group them in broadly similar, if not unitary, terms. And this is not to say either that one should not perceive Southeast Asian unity at certain levels, particularly in terms of its underlying culture and history. One of the most influential advocates of understanding Southeast Asia as an enduring fact has been Anthony Reid, who has written that 'those who travel to Southeast Asia, from China, India, or anywhere else know at once that they are in a

* Warmest thanks to Ann Kumar, Michael Feener, Ulrike Freitag, Bill Roff, Waruno Mahdi, Leonard Andaya, Sander Adelaar and – most of all – Geoff Wade for their patience with various fragments of this extended piece. Naturally none are responsible for the views expressed here; some will most likely beg to differ. I also wish to thank IIAS, the Royal Dutch Academy, and my colleagues at Princeton for supporting my scholarship, even if they don't always get what they expect.

¹ C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century: Daily life, customs and learning of the Moslems of the East-Indian-Archipelago*, trans. J.H. Monahan. Leiden: Brill, 1931, 215 n. 3.

different place. In part this is a matter of environment'.² In this regard he has the support of the geographer David Henley, who has objected to all-too frequent deconstructions of Southeast Asia within the field, suggesting that such endeavours often have 'the dubious ring of sophistry' about them and remarking that:

The truth is that if you travel through Southeast Asia it is obvious that it is one region: similar-looking people, landscapes, plants and animals, villages, markets, urban neighbourhoods, and means of transport, not to mention similar manners and similar food.³

The point is well taken. Even so, rather like the Arabic *Jâwa*, the boundaries of the region remain fuzzy, particularly the aquatic ones. Writing of the sea route to Siam in the late 17th century, an Iranian, Muḥammad Rabî` b. Muḥammad Ibrâhîm, paused to note that:

there is not really a clear separation between the seas we crossed. An ordinary traveller would not be able to perceive where one sea ended and the next began. As for the various great gulfs, although they are usually designated by separate names, they are really all joined together. They flow from the same direction and merge in the Great Ocean. The scholars of travel and geography, confronted with many different place names, some near to each other and some separated by great distances, have wandered into the discords of choppy seas, doldrums and foul winds and they divide the great expanse of waters which lies along this path into seven distinct parts. They insist that each tract be defined as separate and distinct and have decided to ascribe a different name to every section.⁴

Still, even if the seas were all one, Muḥammad Rabî` accepted that Siam, Java, Makassar, and Aceh were kingdoms distinct from mainland India and Sri Lanka, and treatable under the unitary rubric 'below the winds' (*Zîrbâdât*).⁵ This conception has certainly captivated later writers. Anthony Reid even deploys a quote from

Muḥammad Rabî`'s account laying out the climatic benefits of *Zîrbâdât* at the opening of his Braudelian classic *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*.⁶

² Anthony Reid, 'Introduction: A time and a place', in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, power, and belief*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, 3.

³ David Henley, review of Kratoska, Raben and Schulte Nordholt, *Locating Southeast Asia, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde* 161-1 (2005), 153.

⁴ [Muḥammad Rabî` b. Muḥammad Ibrâhîm], *The Ship of Sulaimân*, J. O'Kane (trans.), Persian Heritage Series no.11, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1972, 160.

⁵ Unlike Anthony Reid, Ibrâhîm included Japan in that same zone, *Ship of Sulaimân*, 188-98.

⁶ See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce: The lands below the winds*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 1.

As Henley so reluctantly observes, Southeast Asia's boundaries are always being tested within the field, though such a testing has seldom been attempted from the viewpoint of the Middle East.⁷ Thus I believe it is worth casting an eye over the *longue durée* of interaction between southeast and west Asia to find that while much of maritime Asia was often seen as a unitary zone, neither Jâwa nor Zîrbâdât are as consistently placed in it as one might think.

Suvarnadvîpa, Yava, and the Golden Khersonese

It is a generally held view that the Islamic geographical tradition, with its occasional insistence on distinct seas and tracts of habitable earth, has its roots both in the Greek tradition and that of India, whose imagined space of 'al-Hind' could be problematic for the Muslim heirs of Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 87-ca. 150).⁸ Before turning to what the Arab geographers made of the lands on the borders of al-Sîn, it is important to consider at some length what both earlier traditions may have said about Southeast Asia in light of recent research on the region itself.

The Greek and Indian geographical traditions were by-products of oceanic trade. The prestige products of the archipelago – chiefly gold, resins, spices and rare woods – have made their way to the courts and kitchens of India, Africa, China, and Europe since antiquity. For example, cloves, found solely in the remote Moluccas, were known in Rome at the beginning of the Common Era, and had already been in use in Asia Minor and China for centuries.⁹ Another export, camphor, was known to

⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Writing history "backwards": Southeast Asian history (and the *Annales*) at the crossroads', *Studies in History* 10-1 (1994): 131-45 and 'Notes on circulation and asymmetry in two Mediterraneans, c. 1400-1800', in Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and Roderich Ptak, *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous notes*. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1998, 21-43. The overall debate is also addressed in Heather Sutherland, 'Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean analogy', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34-1 (2003): 1-20.

⁸ For the Islamic geographical tradition, see S. Maqbul Ahmad, 'Kharîta, khârîta', in *Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition* (hereafter *EI2*), IV, 1077-83. For a critical view of the phrasing of an Islamic South Asian world under the rubric of al-Hind, see Sunil Kumar, 'review of André Wink, *al-Hind: The making of the Indo-Islamic World*. *Studies in History* 10-1 (January-June 1994): 147-52.

⁹ Bérénice Bellina and Ian Glover, 'Early contact with India and the Mediterranean', in Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood (eds), *Southeast Asia: From prehistory to history*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, 68-88, esp. 70. See also Leonard Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the early modern period*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993, 1-2.

Galen (129-ca. 216); its Greek name (κάρουρα) probably derives from the Malay *kapur* via the Sanskrit *karpûra*.¹⁰ The modern English, on the other hand, most likely comes from the Arabic *kâfir* (كافر). There is even a Qur'ânic reference (76:5) to *kâfir*-infused wine as a heavenly reward for the righteous, which is played against the punishments awaiting those who are ungrateful (*kâfir^{an}*) to God.

Pre-existing intra-regional exchange and the use of cloves and camphor across Asia, however, does not necessarily imply that there was always a continuous and integrated network of maritime trade stretching between Rome and China. Present indications are that Southeast Asia was more a terminus for two global routes than the crossroads it was to become from the 2nd century, and more especially once its courts adopted, at some time in the late 4th century, forms of Buddhism or protected cults of Viśnu and Śiva, which both Stanley O'Connor and Pierre-Yves Manguin have observed were manifested in a remarkably uniform aesthetic sense.¹¹

But while cultural Indianization may be dated from the 2nd century, Indian knowledge of the region appears to be much older. And just as Ptolemaic knowledge of distant Southeast Asia was a byproduct of commerce, the preceding Indian knowledge on which the Greeks may have drawn would have been generated by expanded trade with the kingdoms aspiring to mastery of its knowledge systems, or at least inclusion in its horizons. R.B. Sarkar once suggested that the wider dissemination of Buddhism during the reign of King Aśoka (r. 270-230 BCE) altered the textual representation of Southeast Asia from a few vaguely-defined lands to the south of Burma called Suvarṇabhūmi ('the land of gold') to Suvarṇadvīpa ('the isle of gold') as a major entrepôt on the way to China.¹²

¹⁰ See Waruno Mahdi, 'Some Austronesian maverick protoforms with culture-historical implications', *Oceanic Linguistics* 33 (1994):167-229 and 431-490, esp. 191.

¹¹ Stanley O'Connor, *The Archaeology of Peninsular Siam: Collected articles from the Journal of the Siam Society 1905-1983*. Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1986, pp. 8-10; Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'Religious networks, merchant networks: God and Mammon in Southeast Asian Indianization?', paper presented to the EUROSEAS conference, Paris, 1-4 September 2004.

¹² H.B. Sarkar, 'A geographical introduction to South-East Asia: The Indian perspective', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (hereafter *BKI*) 137-2/3 (1981): 293-323. For a view that continues to differentiate Suvarṇabhūmi and Suvarṇadvīpa as mainland and island Southeast Asia, see Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'The archaeology of early maritime polities in Southeast Asia', in Glover and Bellwood, *Southeast Asia*, 282-313, p. 293.

Then again, Sarkar did remark that there were already two major Southeast Asian landfalls seemingly known to Indian scholars. In the Râmâyana, attributed to Vâlmîki, these are termed Suvarṇarûpyakadvîpa and Yavadvîpa respectively, but they seem to have long been confused and conflated. Sarkar moreover points out that the passage on Yavadvîpa, i.e. 'the island of Yava', may well have been a subsequent interpolation that was applied first to Sumatra and then to its more easterly neighbor once it admitted 'Indian settlers'.¹³

Certainly Vâlmîki's description of Yavadvîpa as a land of seven kings, silver and gold, as well as gold-mines, more resembles Sumatra than Java. Where it does not seem to jibe though, is in respect of the island being literally named as a source of barley (*yava*).¹⁴ In this respect though, Waruno Mahdi has outlined a case for linking the transmission of sorghum into Southeast Asia ca. 1000-600 BCE, taking in the process the Sanskrit name for barley, but using it as a way of describing grain in general at the expense of original Austronesian forms for cereals such as foxglove millet. This name, he argues further, was actually transmitted through a Pali form as *java*, and applied in turn to a polity in East Sumatra.¹⁵

While the argument for the transmission and naming of a cultigen is highly plausible, the external identification and rationalization of what could have been an indigenous toponym is still open to debate, as Mahdi himself acknowledges.¹⁶ And even if we accept even the most conservative of datings of inclusion of the passages on Yavadvîpa in the Râmâyana (1st century CE), not to mention Mahdi's linguistic arguments of Southeast Asia-India exchange of people, spice and cultigens spanning the period from 1000 to 400 BCE, the lack of corroborative archeological evidence

¹³ Sarkar, 'A geographical introduction', 304-5.

¹⁴ The relevant passage from Vâlmîki is repeated in Waruno Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien, bevor sie "Malaien" hießen?', in A. Bormann, A. Graf and M. Voss (eds.), *Südostasien und Wir: Grundsatzdiskussion und Fachbeiträge*, Hamburg: Tagung des Arbeitskreises Südostasien und Ozeanien, 1995, 165.

¹⁵ Compare Mahdi, 'Maverick forms', 431-2; and his 'Linguistic and philological data towards dating Austronesian activity in India and Sri Lanka', in Roger Blench & Matthew Spriggs (eds), *Archaeology and Language IV: Language Change and cultural Transformation*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999, 160-242.

¹⁶ Waruno Mahdi, 'Review of J.G. de Casparis, *Sanskrit loan-words in Indonesian*', *BKI* 156-4 (2000):844-852, 845.

within Southeast Asia for a key site associated with oceanic trade seems to make Yava a mystery land before the 2nd century of the common era.

While it is conceivable that such a site may one day be found, I will suggest, agreeing in part with Mahdi's conclusions as to the locus of the first Yava in Sumatra, that later Southeast Asian polities retrofitted that Sanskritic name to their lineages, perhaps in the process of trying to bring themselves into the orbit of Indianization, but certainly in making claims to be the preeminent regional entrepôt.

Fuzziness regarding the locus of Yava could only have increased at a distance. Mahdi makes an argument that Han records make mention of Yavadvîpa in the form of Ye-diao, which apparently sent a tribute mission in 132 CE.¹⁷ And despite the fact that cloves and camphor were to be found in the Mediterranean at least by the time of Galen, Greek descriptions of the source of these goods did not go much beyond vague references to a fantastically wealthy region called the 'Golden Peninsula'.¹⁸ Given this emphasis on gold, it seems likely that such gilded images were transmitted by Indian (and perhaps even Pharaonic) sources on Suvarnabhûmi; sources we now lack.

As maritime trade linking the Mediterranean to the Indian(ized) Ocean did expand, there would have been a parallel process of its scholarly unveiling until the time that Ptolemy, working in Alexandria, was able to assign names to several Southeast Asian ports and perhaps with echoes of Indian sources. Based on the sailors' itineraries Ptolemy assembled, and in some cases criticized, these included the tantalizing destinations Iabadiû, Sabadibae and Zábai.¹⁹ The first in particular has attracted attention as a possible Yavadvîpa, especially given that Ptolemy, like

¹⁷ Scholars of China have tended to favour this as the misreading of a Sri Lankan toponym known in later works, though Mahdi points out that it was associated with a volcano – which Sri Lanka does not have. Compare Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien?', 165-6 and Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade: The early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea*. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998, 25.

¹⁸ 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, especially 123-59.

¹⁹ These names appear in the works of J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*. Calcutta, Thacker and Co., 1885; and G.F. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909. However the first two terms are notable by their absence in the authoritative study of Berggren and Jones, for whom Zábai is the most important, but still undefined, toponym to the east of Takôla: J. Lennart Berggren and Alexander Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography: An annotated translation of the theoretical chapters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

‘Vâlmîki’, wrote of it as an island of barley and gold.²⁰ But while scholars once placed the first two in island Southeast Asia and the latter as mainland Champa,²¹ or else argued for identifications within maritime Southeast Asia for each individually,²² all three seem to be derived (apparently by different linguistic or temporal paths) from the one toponym identical with Yavadvîpa. But what did the local people call it?

Java or Sumatra? Yava or Jaba?

While it has been commonly concluded that (modern) Java is to be identified as the Sanskritic Yavadvîpa, Mahdi argues in some detail that it should actually be understood as referring to East Sumatra in general, and the area around Jambi in particular.²³ Further, he has suggested to me that the indigenous name was most likely pronounced by its Malay-speaking inhabitants as *Jawa* – reflecting a Pali-influenced form of Yava – and by the sea peoples (*Orang Laut*), whose loyalty was crucial to facilitating its trade, as *Jaba*.²⁴

Nonetheless, Mahdi’s wide-ranging work has also demonstrated that we cannot be certain of the early Malay pronunciation, especially given that extant inscriptions of the 7th and 8th centuries make no distinction between *b* and *w*, both

²⁰ Mahdi, ‘Wie hießen die Malaïen?’, 166.

²¹ Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*. 2 vols, Philo Press, Amsterdam, 1975, II, 269.

²² One literalist argument has Zábai as Jambi, Iabadiou as southwest Borneo, and Sabadibae as West Java: W.J. van der Meulen: ‘Suvarṇadvîpa and the Chrysê Chersonêsos’, *Indonesia* 18 (October 1974): 1-40; and ‘Ptolemy’s geography of mainland Southeast Asia and Borneo’, *Indonesia* 19 (April 1975): 1-32. Van der Meulen (but not Ptolemy) may have been right regarding the general location of Zábai. Ptolemy criticized Marinus’s placement of Zábai 20 days sail from Kattigara along a southward facing coast (the Malay Peninsula?). Cf. Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy’s Geography*, 156.

²³ Mahdi, ‘Wie hießen die Malaïen’, 162-76. Mahdi is by no means the first to argue for a Sumatran proto-Java, though his arguments are perhaps the most accessible to date.

²⁴ Waruno Mahdi, personal communication, December 2004. This assumes that the Orang Laut dialect was a preserved archaic form of Malay. According to Adelaar, a historical *b between ‘a’s as a rule became *w* in Malay. Cf. Adelaar, *Proto-Malayic: The reconstruction of its phonology and parts of its morphology and lexicon*. Pacific Linguistics C-119, Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Dept. of Linguistics, A.N.U., 1992.

being written with the letter usually read as the Sanskrit *v*.²⁵ But, as J. Gonda once pointed out, *b* and *v* appear to have been used in free variation in early periods of Indo-Aryan, giving rise to cognates often being spelt with either letter. He furthermore observed that there remains ‘no distinction’ between them in India, with *v* now dominant in the south and *b* in use for all words in the north, whether spelt with a (modern) *b* or a *v*.²⁶

In general too, it is fairly clear that what is now generally rendered as *v* in modern Sanskrit scholarship seems to have been generally represented by *b* in Old Malay. This tendency is most regular in word initial position, and examples of presumably early Sanskritic borrowings of this type include the terms *bicara* (speak), *baca* (read), and *bangsa* (clan) from *vicāra*, *vācana*, and *vamsa* respectively.²⁷ However this is less clear in medial positions, with Malay maintaining both *b* and *w*.

Gonda once suggested that where *w* appears in Malay it is most often the result of a subsequent borrowing or influence from Javanese. And while he proposed a pattern of Javanese *w* borrowings often replacing Malay *b* words, his dating of such a shift was linked to then current understandings that the Sumatrans had come under Javanese influence by the 8th century Śailendra dynasty. As I will suggest below, this supposition is tested by questioning of the very reading of the name ‘Jawa’, and where the Śailendra *vamsa* may have come from in the first place.

Complicating matters, Sander Adelaar has identified a tendency in Malay for the *b* in both initial and medial positions to become a *w* over time. Even so, I would argue that ascertaining the timing of this shift – whether imposed or autonomous – is an important task for the periodization of Southeast Asian history, and one this essay will attempt to undertake by examining the external echoes found in Greek, Arabic and Chinese.

To this end Adelaar’s research on phonemic shifts in Malay provide us with a tool to resolve matters in respect of the archaic echoes we have for *Yava* as there is a

²⁵ See Waruno Mahdi, ‘Old Malay’, in Alexander Adelaar and Nikolaus P. Himmelmann (eds), *The Austronesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 182–201, 186.

²⁶ See J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, Nagpur: Lokesh Chandra, 1952, 249-50.

²⁷ Gonda, *Sanskrit*, 251. For examples, see pp. 44, 94-95, 317-18, and 326, which do include some limited Tamil borrowings, such as *bala*, from *valam*. Mahdi, meanwhile, explains the use of *v* vs. *b* to a Hindu-Sanskrit corpus vs. a (later) Pali Buddhist one. See Mahdi, ‘Old Malay’, 186.

strong argument for directionality implied. First, as noted above, a medial *b* tends to become *w* over time, and by whatever means, but rarely is the reverse the case. Second, a loan with an initial *y* will tend to become *j* in Malay and Javanese but a *j* is unlikely to become a *y*. For such reasons then one would expect *Yava* (or perhaps even a prototypical *Yaba*), to have soon been adopted (or just maintained) as *Yaba*, before being assimilated as *Jaba* and ultimately becoming *Jawa*; and all without any need for Mahdi's postulated Pali mediating form.

Thus regardless of how the name was inscribed by the elite on a monument, we must be open to the strong possibility that 'Yava' was known in the vernacular of its inhabitants as *Yaba* during the earliest period of Indianization. At the very least I would maintain that this form best explains Ptolemy's *Iabadiou* without any need for Indian mediation. And while the other two of his forms – *Zábai* and *Saba* – seem to require other routes of contact, perhaps via a Tamil form, this need not necessarily be the case. After all, it would appear from both Ptolemy's accounts and the researches on Austronesian navigation that 'Greeks' were just as likely to meet 'Malays' as they crossed the Indian Ocean. And in such cases then the phonemic rules of Greek, which has no *j*, are just as likely to have compensated in some way for a slightly later, but now more indigenous *Jaba*.²⁸

As I will argue below, there is retrospective evidence in Chinese and Arabic sources that indicate that there could well have been a proto-'Malay' polity known as *Jaba* by the 5th century, that it was probably centred nearer to Jambi than Palembang, and that it most likely stretched its influence across the Sunda Strait either by force or kinship ties. Indeed, when we consider the shared regional aesthetic noted by Manguin and the curious fact that early Javanese inscriptions implicitly group almost all Indonesian peoples under the rubric of *Jawa*,²⁹ and in distinction to the mainland Khmer and Cham peoples (whose own inscriptions refer, in the same script, to the peoples of the Island world as *Jvā*) we might well conclude that the original term,

²⁸ With thanks to Peter Brown for putting me on the scent of this particular possibility.

²⁹ Jan van den Veerdonk, 'Foreigners in Old Javanese inscriptions', paper presented to the colloquium 'Non-Javanese, not yet Javanese, and un-Javanese', Leiden, 25 March 2004. Although unstated, this agrees with Barrett Jones's corpus of 10th century inscriptions, where there appears to be no term for non-Javanese as foreigners. Rather, named foreigners consist of various peoples of India, Chams, Singhalese, Bengalis, Mons and Khmers. See Antoinette M. Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*. Dordrecht and Cinnaminson, Foris, 1984, 23-6.

however it was pronounced, had become synonymous with a broader identity in the region.

Certainly, it is clear that cultural flows from India must have come to Java itself by way of Sumatra, which sits far more strategically on the international trade routes. And much as later Straits dynasties like Malacca and Aceh would appropriate the lineages of the first Muslim kings of Pasai, whichever Sumatran polity had first played a role in the preceding dissemination of Indic modernities in the region would just as surely have found its name appropriated by subsequent Indianized polities that claimed to be its inheritors. Indeed, what concerns us now is one such entity born of the 7th century whose rulers inscribed a genealogical link to Yava, even if they announced to the world that they were resplendent and new.

Śrīvijaya: gatekeeper to the China Sea and heir to Malayu (and Jaba?)

Of course the multi-ethnic crews plying the routes from India and China always knew full well what islands they lay off. But as we are now bereft of their charts of the region and most first-hand accounts of its kingdoms, we can only partially reconstruct the histories of their states. The most enigmatic of these is perhaps Śrīvijaya (lit. 'resplendent victory'), an entity that has left little in the way of major monuments found on the mainland and Java aside from the ambiguously inscribed stela. Some of these were placed at strategic locations on Sumatra and Bangka, but others were placed far further afield.

Through the use of textual evidence, including the identification of the epigraphic term *Vijaya* with the *Fo-shi* of Chinese sources, Georges Coedès suggested in 1918 that Śrīvijaya is identifiable with an entrepôt centred on Palembang. Subsequent archeological finds dating from the late 7th century have lent weight to this conclusion.³⁰ Further, an inscription placed at Chaiya, on the eastern side of the Isthmus of Kra, shows that the early rulers of this polity claimed to exert an influence over large parts of the Malay Peninsula, and most likely had aspirations of playing the major role in facilitating the lucrative Indo-Chinese trade.

³⁰ George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: East West Center Press, 1968, 81-96 and passim. See also P-Y. Manguin, 'Palembang and Sriwijaya: An early Malay harbour-city rediscovered', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 66-1 (1993): 23-46. The 'myth' of Śrīvijaya will be considered afresh by Roy Jordaan and Brian Colless: *The Mahârâjas of the Isles: The Śailendras and the problem of Sriwijaya*. Leiden: VTCZAO, forthcoming.

Even if Coedès's notions of a thalassocracy are being recast these days in terms of it being more a paragon state or a *primus inter pares*, Śrīvijaya sat in a Southeast Asian web of trade and competition.³¹ Sheldon Pollock furthermore suggests that it is reasonable to regard Śrīvijaya – like the neighbouring kingdoms of Java, Champa and, later, Angkor – as participating in a wider ecumene that made use of Sanskrit as 'a cosmopolitan vernacular' for the declarative statements of its inscriptions and temples.³² Pollock argues that this community was only fragmented in later centuries when Sanskrit was abandoned by the courts – both in Southeast Asia and in India itself. This is perhaps only true in part, given that the majority of the surviving Śrīvijayan inscriptions were inscribed in Old Malay – which is a significant break with regional tradition, even if it was in a Malay which invoked the authority of Sanskrit.

From the outset too it is important to state that while the Śrīvijayan capital may have claimed a place as the principal Indianized kingdom of the region sustained economically by its links with the straits, this would not have prevented rival cities from seeking alternate patrons, nor yet from sending occasional tribute of their own to China. One such rival was nearby Malayu, which Rouffaer first argued was to be identified with Jambi, if not the origin of a 'Malay' culture that was later placed under the custodianship of Palembang.³³

Rouffaer made this connection primarily by linking the identification of a strategic hill in the town that had been the site of old fortifications with the possible Tamil etymology of the name as Malayûr, i.e. 'the city of the hill'. On the other hand Mahdi holds that this is a folk etymology, citing the earlier Chinese accounts that lack such a final *ûr*.³⁴ Indeed the first mention of Malayu in Chinese accounts is of a polity

³¹ For a reappraisal of the spread and influence of Śrīvijaya, and conclusions that China trade only became important in the 9th century after the Abbasid revolution, see Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *The Malay Peninsula: Crossroads of the maritime silk road (100 BC – 1300 AD)*, Victoria Hobson (trans.). Leiden etc.: Brill, 2002.

³² Sheldon Pollock, 'The cosmopolitan vernacular', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57-1 (1998): 6-37.

³³ In this Rouffaer was following on the path blazed by Coedès regarding Palembang. See G.P. Rouffaer, 'Was Malaka emporium vóór 1400 A.D., genaamd Malajoer? En waar lag Woerawari, Mâ-Hasin, Langka, Batoesawar?', *BKI* 77 (1921): 1-174, see especially pp. 1-19.

³⁴ Waruno Mahdi, Review of J.G. de Casparis, 851.

called Mo-luo-yu sending its first (and only) tribute mission to Tang China in 644.³⁵ Thereafter it was mentioned by the visiting monk Yijing (635-713), who wrote of an 'island' called Mo-luo-yu in his *Nan-hai ji-gui nei-fa juan* (ca. 691), and *Da Tang xi-yu qiu-fa gao-zeng* (ca. 691), though he used a different last character in each case.³⁶

According to the common interpretation of the remarks of Yijing, this polity had come under Śrīvijayan control ca. 670, although Vickery, deconstructing Coedès's equation of *Fo-shi* with *Viyaja*, suggests that Yijing was more likely describing the conversion of that place to Buddhism.³⁷ Certainly it is hard to make absolute claims as to the relationship between Palembang and Malayu in the 7th century as the Śrīvijaya encountered by outsiders was probably a shifting riverine zone of entrepôts that could coalesce for mutual interest, much like the estuarine polities that constituted Champa or even Kra. This multicentred identity will prove of relevance when we turn to the Arab accounts of the Malay lands, which do seem to point to a place they still called Jāba having being absorbed by a larger entity at a certain point in time.

None of this is to say that Java did not play an important role in the region. Pollock, for one, is probably right to see Śrīvijaya as part of a wider Indianized world that also involved the more easterly island. In fact some of the earliest archaeological evidence in the region is to be found in West Java, site of the kingdom of Târumâ, which Miksic suggests may be identified with a state that sent missions to China between 430 and 452.³⁸ And at least part of Java (perhaps the same part) seems to have been known to Indophilic Chinese pilgrims as Ho-ling.³⁹

On first inspection this intra-insular relationship is seemingly made clear by an inscription made at the Buddhist monastery of Nâlandâ, in Bihar, datable to ca. 849 or

³⁵ Wang, *The Nanhai Trade*, 92 and 120.

³⁶ With thanks to Geoff Wade.

³⁷ Michael Vickery, 'Champa Revised', *Asia Research Institute Working Paper* No. 37, March 2005, http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps05_037.pdf, pp. 43-44.

³⁸ See John N. Miksic, 'The classical cultures of Indonesia', in Glover and Bellwood, *Southeast Asia*, 238.

³⁹ On Ho-ling, first mentioned in 640, and its tribute missions, the first of which was sent four years after Malayu in 666, see Wang, *Nanhai Trade*, 92 and 120-1. Regarding Java's integration in networks of Tantric Buddhism spanning India, Sri Lanka, China, and Japan, see Jeffrey Roger Sundberg, 'The wilderness monks of the Abhayagiravihâra and the origins of Sino-Javanese esoteric Buddhism', *BKI*, 160-1 (2004): 95-123.

perhaps 860. The inscription records a sizeable endowment made by a ruler called Bâlaputra, who declared himself to be the Mahârâja of Suvarṇadvîpa.⁴⁰ It also outlines a dynastic link with a Yavabhûmî ('the land of Yava'), implying that Bâlaputra is the grandson of its (former) Śailendra king.⁴¹ Such a linkage is also construable from the Chaiya inscription of 775, whose two sides – the earlier certainly Śrîvijayan and the later probably Śailendran – are arguably related.⁴² Still we learn little more from these inscriptions about either Śrîvijaya or the Śailendras, a dynasty that left inscriptions in central Java between 746 and 847, and to which the construction of the Borobudur is ascribed.

Whereas there are those who will argue for an enduring and perhaps too central Java at the heart of the archipelago, one might just as easily conceive of a south Sumatran entity that could at times extend its influence into Java, or at least as far as nearby Ho-ling. Such may well be construable from evidence in Java, where some of the few extant inscriptions in Old Malay are to be found. The epigrapher Marijke Klokke has recently argued, moreover, that Old Javanese inscriptions of the 9th century indicate that there was a 'local' Śaivite interregnum in central Java between 803 and 827, and that recent archaeological finds suggest that the Śailendra 'foreigners' may well have come from no further afield than west Java.⁴³

⁴⁰ According to Wolters, Chinese monks were advised from the time of Yijing to study in Suvarṇadvîpa. See Oliver Wolters, *The Fall of Śrîvijaya in Malay History*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970, 39. Clearly Sumatra long mattered in the minds of the monks of Nâlandâ. After ordination there, Atîśa (b. 982) is said to have been directed to perfect his knowledge of Mahâyâna Buddhism in Suvarṇadvîpa, where he stayed from 1011 to 1023. See Anil Kumar Sarkar, *The Mysteries of Vajrayana Buddhism: From Atisha to Dalai Lama*. New Delhi: South Asian Publishers. Jacq-Hergoualc'h also remarks that he was preceded in the 8th century by the putative introducer of Tantric Buddhism to China, Vajrabodhi. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 320.

⁴¹ Hirananda Shastri, 'The Nalanda copper-plate of Devapaladeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII (1924), 310-27. The inscription gives the name of the mother of Bâlaputra as Târâ, daughter of king Dharmasêtu, who was the consort to the mighty king that was the son of the ruler of Yavabhûmi. Cf. Jan Wisseman Christie, 'Revisiting early Mataram', in Marijke J. Klokke and Karel R. van Kooij (eds), *The Fruits of Inspiration: Studies in honour of Prof. J.G. de Casparis*. Egbert Forster: Groningen, 2001, 25-55, p. 30.

⁴² Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 243-47, 270.

⁴³ M. Klokke, 'The Sailendras: Javanese or non-Javanese', paper presented to the colloquium 'Non-Javanese, not yet Javanese, and un-Javanese'. The existence in Java of Old Malay stelae from the late 8th century (Christie, 'Revisiting Mataram', 37) may be suggestive of common Śrîvijayan cause with

The problem thus remains the identification of the Yava inscribed by the Śailendras and the Śrīvijayans alike. One Śrīvijayan inscription of 686, found on the island of Bangka, records both the incorporation of the local Kota Kapur ('Camphor Town') and preparations for an attack on a place usually read as Jāwa, and often identified as Târumâ.⁴⁴ Bearing in mind the arguments about the ambiguities of script and pronunciation sketched above, this could be just as easily read as Jâba, and be understood as an antique gloss for the rival polity centred at Malayu (and that may once have claimed influence over Târumâ).⁴⁵

If such is the case then it would at least imply that Vickery is right to question the nature of the relationship between Jambi and Palembang seemingly observed by Yijing around 671, though there is no doubting that Jambi did ultimately come under Palembang's authority, and that its lineage was probably usurped or transferred in the process. This is not to say though that such claims were universally accepted, as might be indicated by the Old Javanese Canggal inscription of 732, which Mahdi argues likens Yava to an isle abundant in corn and an apparently lost homeland.⁴⁶

I would suggest that by the 9th century when Bâlaputra was making his grant at Nâlandâ, he was probably looking back in time to an ancestral Yava known across the seas as an entity of influence and prestige – perhaps even more than he could then boast. Indeed it is noteworthy in this regard that the Austronesians were apparently known in Pali as Jāvaka ('the ones from Yava') a term long thought to have engendered the Arabic ethnonym with which we will later be concerned.⁴⁷

Similar ambiguity about the precise identity of Yava abounds on all sides of the South China Sea. The Vietnamese annals for the year 767 refer to raids on the

West Javanese Śailendras; or yet that they were already identical. It is interesting to note in this connection that the first inscription written in Old Javanese, as opposed to Sanskrit (or yet Old Malay), appears in 804. Meanwhile substantial finds, including Pali votive tablets, continue to be made in West Java and bear a similarity to material found in Sumatra.

⁴⁴ Manguin, 'Archaeology', 304-5.

⁴⁵ As De Casparis noted, it is not known whether the long vowels, written in emulation of the Sanskrit models, were pronounced. See J.G. De Casparis, *Indonesian Palaeography: A history of writing in Indonesia from the beginnings to C. A.D. 1500*. Leiden and Köln: Brill, 1975, 25-6. Given that it is lacking in the Sanskrit Yava, but maintained in the Pali Jāva, it is perhaps better maintained here.

⁴⁶ Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien', 167-8.

⁴⁷ On Yavaka/Jāvaka, see Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien', 171.

mainland stemming from 'Java' and the Southern Islands.⁴⁸ Even here though, it is not certain that one is distinct from the other, or even that the 'Java' mentioned (i.e. Shepo; then pronounced in Chinese as 'Jaba') is Java, with which it can be safely identified after 820.⁴⁹ Similarly, while a Cham inscription of 787 mentions repairs to a temple after an attack from Jvâ – identified at one stage by Coedès as Java – this Old Khmer term, probably like the Old Javanese, makes no obvious distinction between Javanese and Sumatrans.⁵⁰

Even if the 'Java' of the various mainland Southeast Asian inscriptions is separate from Sumatra, the fragmentary evidence at hand could point to two kingdoms, most-likely related by dynastic ties, that could work in concert in the late 8th century. It is further indicative of Javanese independence in at least part of the 9th century that Ho-ling reappears as an independent tributary to the Tang in 820.⁵¹ Crucially though it is equated with the old name Shepo, an identity it maintains from then on as its western neighbour would perhaps choose to emphasise the (perhaps more limited) identity as Suvarnadvîpa.

Regardless of the definitive separation from central Java by the mid 9th century, and probably the loss of Chinese recognition as the definitive Yava (i.e. Shepo), Śrîvijayan claims to authority rooted in a Yava lineage continued to be made in the Indian Ocean as late as the early 11th century. For example, a series of copper plates was inscribed during the reign of the Cōla Râjarâja-Râjakêsarivarman (985-

⁴⁸ Miksic, 'The classical cultures of Indonesia', 243. Whereas Miksic states that it was an attack from Java and the Southern Islands, Geoff Wade informs me that there is some ambiguity here. G. Wade, personal communication, 9 November 2004.

⁴⁹ I am most grateful to Lewis Mayo for explaining the reconstructed pronunciation and identification of Shepo with reference to the work of Pulleyblank. See Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991. By comparison Wang observes that Ho-ling, rather than Shepo, with which it was identified in 820, was the named culprit, having already sent its second and third tribute missions in 767 and 768, and then commencing a series of attacks on the mainland which he connects to the recent arrival of Arab or Persian merchants in Annam and Champa. See Wang, *Nanghai Trade*, 92-3.

⁵⁰ Certainly Coedès was aware of the ambiguity of Jvâ. See Coedès, 1929, cited in Jacq-Hergoual'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 426.

⁵¹ Wang, *Nanghai Trade*, 93.

1013), announcing that a temple had been commissioned in his domains in 1005 by the Yava-descended rulers of Śrīvijaya.⁵²

All this strengthens, I believe, the contention that ‘ancestral’ Yava was a place first centred within Suvarnadvīpa that was positioned to draw on the arterial trade and that embraced the concomitant flows of Indianization; that it may have subsequently stretched for a time to claim parts of Java; and that the later dynasties of both isles and the peninsula, including Malayu and Śrīvijaya, would long claim its aura. In time, however, the eastward drift of Yava to Java was compensated by the prestige attached to the very name of Śrīvijaya itself – prestige I would argue would be actively disputed by Malay and Tamil rulers alike.

Three Vijayas? Jambi, San-fo-qi and the Cōlas

Despite the arguments about influence and territory alluded to above, the existence of Śrīvijaya and its importance need not be doubted. Neither should the fact that it, or at least the polities that shared its inheritance, remained engaged with both their local neighbours and the states of the Indian Ocean. This could bring as much strife as recognition. Java – again Shepo in the Chinese sources, but now more clearly identifiable as Java – attacked Śrīvijaya ca. 992, and was in turn attacked in 1016. Then, in 1025, the Straits of Malacca suffered raids from the formerly friendly Cōla Empire.

The catalogue of Cōla victories named 13 landfalls, both peninsular and insular, including Kedah (Kadāram) and Malayu (Malaiyūr), Lamuri (Ilāmurideśam) and Langkasuka (Ilangāsogam). But it is also noteworthy that both a Śrīvijaya and what seems to be Palembang (i.e. Mevilimbangan) are listed separately, which has led Fukami Sumio to wonder if they were not, by this time, separate entities.⁵³ This is a

⁵² See Shastri, 'The Nalanda copper-plate', 312-3. From Menon's research it appears that the Cōlas accepted these claims, regarding both Śrīvijaya and Śailendra, at times slightly, as one and the same. A.G. Menon, 'Copper plates to silver plates: Cholas, Dutch and Buddhism', in Klokke and Van Kooi, *Fruits of Inspiration*, 291-317, *infra.* 296-7.

⁵³ Coedès, who listed the conquests in order, chose not to identify Mevilimbangan with Palembang due to his commitment to a Śrīvijaya of seven centuries, and instead followed the suggestion of Sylvian Lévi that it represented Karmaranga on the Isthmus of Kra. See Coedès, *Indianized States*, 142-3. Krom also details the epithets applied to the towns in the inscriptions. See N.J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 2nd revised edition. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1931, 250. For a reordered

possibility worth pondering, as it may well be that an erstwhile peninsular vassal had taken over the name from a weakened Palembang after the Javanese raids of 1016. On the face of it though this would have been a fundamental shift in circumstance, especially if we accept that a previous Tamil inscription of 1014 referred to the son of the benefactor of Negapatam, Mâravijayaottungavarman, as a ‘descendant of the Śailendra family, king of (both) Śrîvijaya and Katâha (i.e. Kedah)’.⁵⁴

Still, it remains possible that the dual mention of Kedah and Srivijaya might imply that the inscription could actually have been commissioned by a peninsular upstart claiming the genealogy of Palembang, perhaps giving the Javanese and then the Côlas an excuse for their invasions. It is certainly interesting to consider that the Côlas may also have seen themselves as the successors to Śrîvijaya, but from a base in Kedah. There is evidence of an ongoing presence in the area, and the Côla king Râjendra I (r. 1012-44) took over responsibility for the endowments of the Negapatam temple. And if we accept the arguments of Fukami discussed below, it may be that his vassals may even have been responsible for later temple building in Guangzhou under the name of San-fo-qi – a name which is usually linked with Śrîvijaya by virtue of its similarity to the older (Shi-li-)fo-shi.

Perhaps both views are right. That is, the lord of Kedah may well have recognized Śrîvijaya as his suzerain, but, in keeping within the regional tradition, saw his kingdom as a meaningful (Śrîvijayan) polity in its own right. Meanwhile the Côla king Râjendra I (r. 1012-44) took over responsibility for the endowments of the Negapatam temple once supplied by the rulers of Sumatra, and his descendants – or perhaps their Kedah vassals – may well have been responsible for later temple building in Guangzhou under the name of San-fo-qi. It is quite likely too that they were recognized as being the protectors of the region in some way until their defeat in Sri Lanka in the 1070s would ultimately isolate their Kedah outpost.

According to Wolters, the Tamil incursion of 1025 and then the eventual decline of the Côlas in Sri Lanka in the 1070s led ultimately to the resurgence of Malayu, which was clearly called by this older name by the Côlas in their catalogue of

listing placing Kedah as the first, rather than the last, conquest, see Fukami Sumio, ‘San-fo-qi, Srivijaya, and the historiography of insular Southeast Asia’, in Nguyễn Thê Anh and Ishizawa Yoshiaki (eds), *Commerce et Navigation en Asie du Sud-Est (XIVe-XIXe siècle)*, Tokyo: Sophia University, ca. 2000, 39-40.

⁵⁴ Translation in Coedès, *Indianized States*, 141.

victories, and in distinction to Śrīvijaya (or at least Palembang).⁵⁵ However, while the name Mo-*luo-yu* does resurface (with a variant first character) in the *New History of the Tang* (1034), this was a compilation based on far older materials.⁵⁶ Certainly it seems well worth noting that Malayu was much better known in Chinese sources from the 9th century as Jambi (Chan-pei/Zhan-bei).⁵⁷ It was also at this time that oceanic Sino-Arab trade seems to have been at its peak. Based on the arguments surrounding Arabic nomenclature presented below, and the fact that much of Southeast Asian diplomacy with China between 850 and 1000 was conducted by Muslims with strong ties to Guangzhou, it may be possible that this intervening terminology was coloured by the nomenclature of emissaries of a much larger place they may still have called Jâba, thus making them Jâbî people in turn. First though a word needs to be said about the findings of Fukami.

As far as the tribute missions go, the term relating to Jambi in the work cited by Fukami is in fact a composite of San-fo-qi and Zhan-bei, not Mo-*luo-yu*, which sent missions in 1079 and 1082. Moreover these occurred around the same time as missions from another San-fo-qi, namely San-fo-qi-Zhu-nian. These occurred in 1077, 1079, 1082, 1088, and 1090 respectively, leading Fukami to argue that they actually refer to Cōla peninsular territories, or those that devolved from them with a primary focus around Kedah.⁵⁸

These are not, moreover, the only San-fo-qis in the listing, and at least one other San-fo-qi is noted by Fukami. As such then Fukami is perhaps well-justified to argue that San-fo-qi must be understood as a regional term rather than as a lingering

⁵⁵ Wolters, *Śrīvijaya*, p. 45.

⁵⁶ According to Wade, Malayu (Mu-la-yu) also reappears in the Yuan history (*Yuan shi*) of the late 14th century, but with reference to the 13th century rule of Qubilai. In the same text there is also a late 13th century reference to a polity called either Mo-la-yu or Ma-lai-hu.

⁵⁷ According to Wade, Chan-pei/Zhan-bei was first noted in the *You-yang za-zu* of 840. Wang records its first mission to Tang China as being in 852, with another in 871. See Wang, *Nanhai Trade*, 121. Thereafter it appears in the *Bei-hu-lu* of that decade (though with different orthography), but then there is silence until the 11th century. Wolters gives the missions of the 9th century as occurring in 853 and 871 and then implies (without documentation) that Malayu-Jambi sent independent tribute missions to China after taking over as the capital of Śrīvijaya some time between 1079 and 1082. See Wolters, *Śrīvijaya*, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁸ Fukami, 'San-fo-qi, Srivijaya, and the historiography of insular Southeast Asia', 39-41.

gloss for Śrīvijaya. As we will see below, this agrees with the Arabic usage that I will propose as its origin, and which Fukami also suggested.

Whatever the origins of, nomenclature for, and relationship between, Jambi and Palembang, the two rival Sumatran claimants to the memory of Śrīvijaya endured – and most likely endured among other Malay claimants to the name – before being felled in the late 12th century by the forces of the Javanese kingdom of Singasari.⁵⁹ It is also clearer by this time that Singasari and its successors had become the dominant regional claimants to the name Yava/Jaba, and perhaps therefore to an archipelagic inheritance acknowledged by China.⁶⁰

In retrospect too it seems that the eastward translocation of ‘Java’, now more definitely pronounced as *Jawa*, is nicely paralleled by the later northward transposition of ‘Malayu’ to the peninsula between the foci of Javanese and Thai power. This later trajectory was first mapped by Oliver Wolters when seeking to explain how Śrīvijaya should be seen as the well-spring of Malay customs and traditions refined in 15th century Malacca. However, it should also be said that Wolters’ account is far too dogged in linking San-fo-qi to Śrīvijaya alone, whether in a Palembang- or Jambi-dominated phase, and relies on the teleology implied by the eastern Malay record. Certainly it plays down any contributions from the rival Muslim states of Pasai and then Aceh in forming what I shall suggest could just as readily be called ‘Jāwī’ as ‘Malay’ court culture. Whatever the case, after the Mongol interventions of 1273, rulers of the western end of the island world who could now draw on the China trade directly would begin to replace both Sanskrit and their Indianized traditions with the script and religion of several of the peoples of the Indian Ocean.⁶¹ These included Tamils, Iranians and Arabs.⁶² And what the northern

⁵⁹ Cf. Wolters, *Śrīvijaya*, 42, 77 ff.

⁶⁰ Such a continuum is implied by Prapañca by virtue of his assigning the expeditions against the Malayu to *Jawa* rather than Singasari, which had since been dispossessed by the kings of Majapahit whom he served. See Mpu Prapañca, *Deśawarnana (Nāgarakṛtāgama)*, Stuart Robson (ed.). Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995.

⁶¹ Even the 15th century rulers of Ayudhya would inscribe a major monument in four languages, including Arabic and Chinese, but excluding Sanskrit. David K. Wyatt, *Siam in Mind*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002, 26.

⁶² It would appear that Iranians may have dominated the early Islamic trade with China, much as Sogdians and Bactrians are believed to have played a prominent role in the preceding Vaiṣṇavite networks. Manguin, ‘Archaeology’, 297. See also Jacq-Hergoualc’h, *Malay Peninsula*, 259 and the

Indian geographers had once called Suvarṇadvîpa (and perhaps Yavadvîpa too) these traders, many of them Muslim, seem to have called, or at least written, Zâbaj.

Zâbaj and the fabulous isles of the Mahârâja

Once a recognizably Indianized swathe of maritime Southeast Asia did become a crossroads of inter-oceanic trade, the stability of some of its component states could be subject to political developments at its market termini. Hence when the Sui dynasty (590-618) restored officially-sanctioned Nanhai trade – under the standard guise of ‘tribute’ – there were political repercussions along the coast of present-day Vietnam.⁶³ By the same token, later moments of instability in the southern Chinese ports, such as riots and the sacking of Guangzhou attributed to ‘Arab and Persian’ pirates in 758,⁶⁴ or a massacre of the Muslim merchants there during the Huang Chao rebellion thirty years later, may well have been a boon for island Southeast Asia. Writing in the 12th century, al-Idrîsî (1100-65) – whose writings I shall later turn to – remarked that when China was convulsed by troubles, the merchants would descend to the harbors of a place they called Zâbaj.⁶⁵ It is these harbours that will concern us in much of what follows.

There seems to be some evidence that Zâbaj (زابج) was an established toponym when the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mûn (r. 813-33) commissioned a rectangular map of the world. What appears to be an 11th century echo of this map gives the name ‘the lands of Zâbaj’, but places it on the African coast below the orthographically similar ‘lands of Zanj’ (زنج).⁶⁶ Somewhat later statements concerning Zâbaj – or the

special issue of *Archipel* (No. 68, 2004). It is once more remarkable that while Iranians may have been visitors to Java – perhaps listed under the north Indian rubric of Aryya – there is no evidence of any Arab contacts. Van den Veerdonk, 'Foreigners'.

⁶³ William A. Southworth, 'The coastal states of Champa', in Glover and Bellwood, *Southeast Asia*, 209-33, esp. p. 223.

⁶⁴ *Tzū-chih t'ung-chien*, 7062, as cited by Oliver Walters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970, 39.

⁶⁵ Abî `Abd Allâh Muḥammad bin Muḥammad `Abd Allâh b. Idrîs al-Ḥamûdî al-Ḥasanî (al-Idrîsî), *Opus Geographicum* (Kitâb nuzhat al-mushtâq fî ikhtirâq al-âfâq), E. Cerulli et. al. (eds), 2 vols. Rome, 1970, I, 62.

⁶⁶ Rapoport and Savage-Smith, 'Medieval Islamic views of the cosmos: The newly discovered *Book of Curiosities*', *The Cartographic Journal*, vol. 41 no. 3 (December 2004): 253-9, fig 1. Another indication of the early provenance, as far as the information about Southeast Asia is concerned, is

variants Zabaj (زبج), Zabâj (زباج) and Rânaj (رانج) – come in accounts compiled around the time the Nâlandâ inscription was made (i.e. ca. 850), and in a period of heightened sea contact between Southern China and the Abbasid port of Siraf in the Persian Gulf.⁶⁷ Like Ptolemy's work, these show evidence of being compiled from multiple sources that may well describe the same places with different names. Certainly some of their information intersects. The first, the *Akhbâr al-ġin wa'l-hind* (*Reports of China and India*), is attributed in part to the first-hand information of 'Sulaymân the trader'.⁶⁸ The second, the *Kitâb al-masâlik wa'l-mamâlik* (*The Book of Routes and Kingdoms*), is ascribed to an Iranian, Ibn Khurdâdhbih (a.k.a. Ibn Khurradâdhbih).⁶⁹

Zâbaj is only mentioned in twice in the *Akhbâr*, but may be safely located in the vicinity of Sumatra given that its description comes after Langabâlûs (often understood to be the Andamans) and Râmî (North Sumatra).⁷⁰ This latter place was said to be washed by two seas, that of Harkand in the west (the Bay of Bengal) and Salâh to the east (see below). It was also famous for its gold, cannibals, and camphor groves, allegedly known in the local language as *fansûr*.⁷¹ Zâbaj itself, meanwhile, is mentioned as a kingdom (*mamlaka*) controlling a region called Kalâh Bâr. Here Bâr is explained as meaning both the kingdom and its coast, while Kalâh is also described as being 'on the right side of India' (*mutayâmana `an bilâd al-hind*), that is: to the right

shown by the fact that there is no clear mention – nor indeed any depiction – of many of the islands that were known in the 13th century.

⁶⁷ The most commonly cited presentation of early Arabic texts is that of Tibbetts, which relies heavily on the summaries of Ferrand. See G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*. Brill, Leiden, 1979; and Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et textes géographiques Arabes, Persans et Turks relatifs à L'extrême-Orient*. Paris: Ernest Laroux, 1913.

⁶⁸ J. Sauvaget, *Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde*. Paris, 1948.

⁶⁹ Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 100-16 and passim. A later distillation is: G.R. Tibbetts and Shawkat Toorawa, 'Zâbadj, Zâbidj, Zâbag', *EI2*, XI, 367-9. Tibbetts' reading of Ibn Khurdâdhbih is based on a 19th century recension, namely: *Kitâb al-masâlik*, M.J. De Goeje (ed.), Leiden, 1892, 87-8, 132-3, 138.

⁷⁰ Sauvaget, *Relation*, 4. Râmî or Râmî is conventionally understood to be a reference to Lamreh. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 138-40; Edward McKinnon, 'Beyond Serandib: A note on Lambri at the northern tip of Aceh', *Indonesia* 46 (October 1988):103-21.

⁷¹ This is perhaps an erroneous interpretation based on a report linking camphor acquired in Lamreh to its source of Fansur.

of the continent when sailing to China.⁷² This has created no small problem of identification.

My proposal is that Zâbaj was originally intended as being on the right of the mainland, and not its dependant Kalâh. Faced with a sea of possibilities, Tibbetts would not positively identify Kalâh. Still, given the physical legacy of Śrîvijayan statements found at Chaiya, and Wade's reinvestigation of the Chinese sources, the flat land between Krabi in the west and Chaiya in the east is an obvious candidate for the principle passage of many that passed through a regional Kalâh, known today as the isthmus of Kra.⁷³

Equally problematically, the *Akhbâr* later has it that a volcano called 'the mountain of fire' (*jabal al-nâr*) lay in the vicinity of Zâbaj (which is never described). Apparently it, or probably just its summit, was impossible to approach due to its constant emission of flame and smoke, but its lower slopes held all-important pools of freshwater.⁷⁴ While it is not clear from the passage who did the calling, the general context supports the identification of an insular volcano, given that the mariners in need of water seem to be both the source of the information and the namers of this useful landmark.

Although Tibbetts was less than eager to nominate any mountain of fire not found on Java, and Mahdi has arguments for Sumatra's own Merapi, reference to what would have been a volcano reachable by ship would make Krakatoa the obvious candidate. Certainly it cannot be excluded from consideration on the grounds of being inhospitable to human habitation. Dutch sources of the 18th century note the presence

⁷² Sauvaget, *Relation*, 8.

⁷³ Geoff Wade, 'From Chaiya to Pahang: The Eastern Seaboard of the Peninsula as Recorded in Classical Chinese texts' in Daniel Perret, Amara Srisuchat and Sombun Thanasak (eds.) *Études sur l'histoire du sultanat de Patani*, Paris, EFEO, 2004, pp. 37-78. Tibbetts, who tended to believe distances above toponymic coincidence, objected to the equation of Kra with Kalâh, claiming that Arab sailors were not philologists (*Arabic Texts*, 125-6), and rejected the equation of Bâlûs and Barus for the same reason. Even so, there is a certain amount of consistency here, and, given such a liquid shift, Kra would also seem a likely candidate for Ptolemy's Takôla (also known to the Arabs as Qâqula). Cf. Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography*, 172.

⁷⁴ 'They say that near to Zâbaj is a mountain, which they name "the mountain of fire" and which cannot be approached. Smoke appears from it by day and tongues of fire by night. At its base are springs of cool and hot freshwater.' Sauvaget, *Relation*, 10. As we shall see, such an understanding is confirmed by al-Idrîsî.

on Krakatoa of settlers from Johor who both grew rice there and supplemented their income through raiding in the Sunda Strait.⁷⁵ It was also a location that I would suggest was crucial for the wider ambitions of Zâbaj, and allows us to visualize yet again an entity that exercised some control over the Strait, which I would suggest it most likely did prior to the alienation of the Śailendras from Java.⁷⁶

Ibn Khurdâdhbih sets out a similar relationship for Zâbaj as a kingdom that stretches north to Kra and (east) to the volcano, though in Tibbetts's summary it is the so-called king called Jâbat al-Hindî (loosely, but erroneously, translatable as 'the Indian Jâba') who was in possession of the isthmus.⁷⁷ Ibn Khurdâdhbih provides mention of Zâbaj and what seem to be its neighbours in a list of the sub-rulers of India (ملوك الهند), though it is worth remembering that, perhaps in tribute to their ecumenical nature, Zâbaj and its compradors were often seen as forming a zone *within* India, much as 19th century scholars and early Indian nationalist historiography imagined greater India beyond the Ganges.

The first sub king listed in the *Kitâb al-masâlik* was perhaps called 'the Jâba', and he was to be found in the vicinity of a ruler who sounds suspiciously like 'king of the islands' (the text has ملك الجزر rather than ملك الجزر), and another who could, by dint of another mistranscription, be a lord in charge of the monsoons, or even 'the king of the typhoons'.⁷⁸ In any case, the first of these kings was not yet called the Jâba[t] al-Hindî in the text, as Tibbetts misleadingly suggests. Rather, this expanded term is mentioned later in the text when the adjectival form is added to remind the reader of the Jâba's original framing Indian context.

⁷⁵ VOC 3128: 1725v-1726v, Generale Missive, 31 December 1765, as quoted by Ota Atsushi, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, state, and the outer world of Banten, 1750-1830*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005, 124.

⁷⁶ It also seems that it was from this strait that Malay sailors set out for Madagascar using the Ocean currents. For a recent statement on evidence of early Southeast Asia-Madagascar linkages based in part on the work of Pierre-Yves Manguin, see Alexander Adelaar, 'The migrations of Madagascar: Making sense of the multidisciplinary evidence', a paper presented to the international symposium *The Dispersal of the Austronesians and the Ethnogeneses of People in the Indonesian Archipelago*. Solo, 28 June – 1 July 2005.

⁷⁷ See Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 28.

⁷⁸ Ibn Khurdâdhbih, *Kitâb al-masâlik*, 16-7. I accept that this reading is very tenuous as the more likely plural of typhoon (Ar. *ṭūfân*) should be *ṭawâfîn*, rather than the *ṭâfîn* of the text.

I would be doubly cautious about accepting Tibbetts's assertion that this reference implied an Indian origin for the ruler concerned. The first mention of Jâba suggests that the extant manuscripts may well be missing the word 'king' (ملك), which several of the other potentates have, and which would make the sentence syntactically more logical, giving 'the king of Jâba'.⁷⁹ Then again, Chinese sources do perhaps indicate that the rulers of East Sumatra maintained a name connected in some way to the founder state.⁸⁰ And we may well point to the Malay practice of identifying the ruler with the polity. Perhaps then the 'king of Jâba' was indeed Râja Jâba.

Most likely based on separate information, Ibn Khurdâdhbih mentions that the lord of Zâbaj – which Tibbetts felt could only have been Java – had a distinct title. De Goeje's text gives *al-f.t.j.b* (الفتجب) or *al-q.-.kh.t* (القنخت) whereas Yusuf read *f.y.j.b.t* (فيجبت). Reflecting a Javacentric reading of early Indonesian history, Ferrand interpreted this as *punggawa*, while De Goeje and Kern read *pati-jaba*.⁸¹

Ibn Khurdâdhbih also lists another king who ruled 'the isles of the eastern sea' (جزائر البحر الشرقي) called the Mah[â]râja (المهراج). Of all the terms that have been used to make an identification with the supposedly Java-centred Śailendras, who are known to have deployed the title, then this is it. However, as S. Fatimi once noted, there is parenthetic evidence in the writings of al-Jâhiz (d. 868) of letters ostensibly sent to the first Umayyad caliph (Mu'âwiya, r. 661-80) by a sovereign calling himself 'the king of kings' (*malik al-amlâk*) boasting, in a very Sumatran way, of his many women, his hundreds of elephants and control over precious goods – including cloves and camphor.⁸²

⁷⁹ Thus: ومن ملوك الهند [ملك] جابة وملك الطافن وملك الجرر

⁸⁰ According to the highly caustic notes of Gerini, (basing himself on the Ming Annals) the people of San-fo-qi (which he interpreted as Śrîvijaya) addressed their superiors as Chan-pei (=Jâbi?) in emulation of the name of their previous sovereign, and that it was still reserved to speak of the location of his original court. Cf. Gerini, *Researches*, 564-5, n.4.

⁸¹ Yusuf, on the other hand, favored the Sanskritised *vijayapati*. These readings are summarized in Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 27, 108-09. Yet another title mentioned in the series is the Indic Balhara.

⁸² See S.Q. Fatimi, 'Two letters from the Maharaja to the Khalifa', *Islamic Studies*, 2 (1963), 121-40. Much of the rhetoric of these letters, supposedly seen in the *diwan* of the Caliph, is consistent with the claims of later Southeast Asian kings. Doubt may be safely cast, however, on the reported requests from these self-satisfied lords for instruction in Islam, or yet confirmation of a previous conversion,

On the face of it then we apparently have at least three Southeast Asian sovereigns mentioned Arabic accounts of 9th century: (1) Jâba (or perhaps just the King of Jâba), (2) the ruler of Zâbaj (whose subsidiary title is indecipherable), and (3) the Mahârâja of the Eastern Isles.⁸³ Like Ptolemy's three echoes though, and given the historical moment of their appearance, these most likely stand for one ruler who could claim the authority of a long absorbed Jaba and its former archipelagic claims.

Naturally enough the true nature of political links within Southeast Asia is not discernable in the account of Ibn Khurdâdhbih, who concentrated on trade and curiosities. Echoing in part the description of Langabâlûs supplied by Sulaymân or his contemporaries (where a simple folk would trade fruit for African metal), Ibn Khurdâdhbih described Râmî as a place where a small black people lived in the hills and a 'white' sea people would paddle out to passing vessels to trade their ambergris.⁸⁴ (see Fig. 1)

After writing of giant snakes in the hills of Zâbaj, or yet of enormous camphor trees, Ibn Khurdâdhbih notes that all the islands of this sea were 'full of wonders'.⁸⁵ (See Fig. 2) Later, he speaks of the distances between Sri Lanka (Sarandîb), the

which are more likely to have been a rhetorical flourish of their reporter al-Jâhiz. With thanks to Nico Kaptein.

⁸³ If a clearer text is located, readings of the name of Zâbaj's lord should, like so many of the toponyms and technical terms found in the Arab texts, be taken in a Malay rather than a Javanese direction. For example, the word *bersila* was used in the *`Ajâ'ib al-hind*, attributed to al-Râmhurmuzî (ca. 1000), while Sauvaget (*Relation*, 38, note 8) suggested that the Arabic term for the Straits, Salâht (سلاط) cf. Tibbetts: Salâhit), is from the Malay *selat*. This would seem to have become a term of identification for the *Orang Laut* by Tomé Pires's day, given his references to the *celates* as 'thieving corsairs who go to sea in small *paraos* robbing when they can. They are obedient to Malacca ... [and] serve as rowers when they are required by the king'. See Tomé Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, Armando Cortesão (tr. and ed.). London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944, II, 264.

⁸⁴ Cf. Sauvaget, *Relation*, 8. There are parallels in the stories of dark and light peoples to the descriptions of the Swahili Coast. Freeman-Grenville once suggested that the 'white' people might be understood to be foreign traders; perhaps Arabs and Iranians. See G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962, 39. Then again, the relationship in Southeast Asia seems more akin to that between coastal 'Malays' and the forest peoples responsible for the gathering of products sought after by the traders. See Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 2nd ed., Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001, 12.

⁸⁵ Ibn Khurdâdhbih, *Kitâb al-masâlik*, 65.

Andamans and Kra (written Kilah),⁸⁶ observing that the latter is a part of the kingdom of Jâba al-Hindî, which again aligns with Śrîvijayan claims. The Sumatran connection is all the more obvious in the subsequent passages with their reference to gold, cannibals and camphor. And when there is final mention of a Jâba in the *Kitâb al-masâlik*, it is still on Sumatra, but as a toponym placed at a relatively short distance (overland?) from Barus, on the west coast.⁸⁷

Ibn Khurdâdhbih's fusion of different sources is further complicated in another passage where he states that the king of Zâbaj *is* the Mahârâja, supporting the idea, I believe, that the regional designations of Jâba, Zâbaj, and the isles of the Mahârâja are all identifiable with each other and the old Sabadibae, Iabadiou and Zâbai *in toto*.⁸⁸ More than this though, a Śrîvijayan (or perhaps earlier) tributary relationship is indicated by the mutual proximity of the polities of Jâba, Salâht and Harang, of which Jâba – with its gold-bedecked Buddhist king – was primary.

From this we might infer that Jâba/Zâbaj held sway over the Straits and perhaps even Ho-ling. Certainly it is possible, and the later Ibn Rusta (ca. 900) seems to have believed that the name Harang itself derived from the title of a viceroy deputized by the Mahârâja to rule over that territory, which would fit with the idea of a Javanese territory giving due attention (at one stage) to a Sumatran overlord.⁸⁹

Ibn Khurdâdhbih also records that the Mahârâja of Zâbaj received a measure of gold each day that was melted into an ingot and thrown into a pool of water.⁹⁰ This

⁸⁶ Ibn Khurdâdhbih, *Kitâb al-masâlik*, 66. Most texts appear to place variants of Langabalus in the Andaman archipelago. Ibn Khurdâdhbih's islands would also seem, phonetically at least, to have had some early relationship to Barus (i.e. Lanka Barus), which is also described as a source of excellent camphor and (like much of island Southeast Asia) home to cannibals. It is tempting here to imagine that, like Yava, Barus was once something larger, or simply elsewhere. Wolters once noted that Chinese sources placed Barus on the east, rather than the west, coast of Sumatra.

⁸⁷ Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 28-9. Regarding this location for Jâba, compare Ibn Khurdâdhbih, *Kitâb al-masâlik*, 66, who gives Harlaj or Hûlaj instead of the Salâht or Harang of the *Akhhâr*. It would also appear that Vladimir Braginsky overzealously seized upon a northerly Jâba to make an identification of Eastern Christian sources (i.e. Shabat) with what would become Aceh. See Vladimir I. Braginsky, 'Two Eastern Christian sources on Medieval Nusantara', *BKI* 154-3 (1998): 367-96

⁸⁸ Cf. Ibn Khurdâdhbih, *Kitâb al-masâlik*, 68; Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 28-9.

⁸⁹ See Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 32.

⁹⁰ Such a practice fits with the arguments of Jairus Banaji regarding the ways in which the Byzantine *solidus* and Persian *drahm* were melted down as bullion in the Indian Ocean. See Jairus Banaji,

tale was often repeated by subsequent compilers and may well have helped the Indian Abû Rayḥân al-Bîrûnî (973-1048) link Zâbaj to Sumatra (ca. 1030) when he stated that these isles were known to the Indians of his day as Suwarna Dîb (i.e. Suvarṇadvîpa).⁹¹ Still, by comparison with our two earliest sources, and well before al-Bîrûnî made this identification, it is clear in the early 10th century account of Abû Zayd of Siraf that Zâbaj is broadly identifiable with the fame of Śrîvijaya, given that he locates a toponym within it called Sribuza (سریزه).⁹² And while it is often thought that this is an Arab corruption of the Indian term, it could well be that Sribuza reflects the contemporary Malay pronunciation quite faithfully, given the same rules of Malay phonemic shifts that have allowed us to equate the written Yava with the spoken Jâba. And again too the geography in Abû Zayd's account is consistent with the rhetoric of Śrîvijayan claims, it being painted as a state with influence over a thousand parasangs worth of 'islands', specifically including Kalâh and Râmî.

Whether Śrîvijaya actually exerted its control over the western part of the archipelago consistently from inception to decline is moot. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, for example, has emphasized the paucity of peninsular evidence after the mid-9th century. It is also noteworthy that Abû Zayd deems the terrain of Sribuza proper to be half the size of neighboring Râmî, the primary source of camphor (see Fig. 3), while Kalah is

'Precious metal coinages and monetary expansion in late antiquity', in *Dal Denarius al Dinar: l'Oriente e la moneta romana*. F. De Romanis and S. Sorda (eds). Rome: Italian Institute for Numismatics, 2004.

⁹¹ See Edward Sachau (ed.), *Alberuni's India*. London: Trübner and Co., 1887, 103. Interestingly Abû Zayd also writes of *both* Zâbaj and the land of gold, while al-Bîrûnî makes a double confusion, naming 'the islands of Zanj' as the land of gold (at p. 204), and then as Suvarṇabhûmi (p. 157). It would also appear that Suwarna Dîb (سورن ديب) may lie at the heart of another misunderstanding that has Sri Lanka in Arabic as Sarandîb (سرندیب), predating European arguments about the identity of Ptolemy's Taprobane; Cf. Yule, *Marco Polo*, II, 295; Thomas Suárez, *Early Mapping of Southeast Asia*, Hong Kong: Periplus, 1999, 100-01. The Indian link with Suvarṇadvîpa was by no means a memory. Atîśa, for example, set out for Suvarṇadvîpa after his initiation at Nâlandâ, though it is interesting to note that no connection is made in any way with a Yavadvîpa.

⁹² The edition of Abû Zayd used by Ferrand was produced by Langlés (*Silsilat al-tawârîkh*, Paris, 1811), and translated by M. Reinaud: *Relation des voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et à la Chine dans le IXe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, 2 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1848. For the section on Zâbaj, see I, 92-135 / II, ٨٩-١٠١.

also described as the all-important midpoint between the lands of the Chinese and the Arabs.⁹³

In any event, enduring Zâbaj, though *not* impermanent Srîbuza, obviously served as an important coverall for the lands that lay before Cambodia (Qmâr, from the ethnonym still used to define Cambodian territory as *Sruk Khmer*) and Champa (Sanf). Furthermore these Zâbaj lands as a whole are painted as an ancient rival of Qmâr when Abû Zayd recounts an allegedly old story of an attack by it on the latter. Based on the once common interpretation of an inscription commissioned by Jayavarman II, wherein the Khmer king claims to have thrown off the yoke of Jvâ, Tibbetts adjudged this story to be an echo of 8th century Javanese raids on Cambodia.⁹⁴ The Javanese argument, however, resting once more on easterly interpretations of the word Jvâ, is open to question as historians of the mainland – most notably Michael Vickery – are not necessarily convinced that there were ever the attacks on Cambodia that were inflicted on Vietnam and Champa by 'the Southern Isles' (see above), or especially that a Javanese ascendancy was only broken by Jayavarman II.

Even so, if we see an early incarnation of a 'Khmer' polity laying some claim to the Gulf of Siam, or even to one side of the crossing at Kra, then it could have had had reason to clash with Śrîvijaya or one of its Malay vassals, entailing that Jayavarman's disputed inscription could be reread in terms of *which* Jvâ may ever have carried out an attack on his kingdom (or that of his ancestors). Manguin, for example, has suggested that the depredations of Śrîvijaya may have spelt an end to the old Funanese culture of Oc Èo, which would seem to presage such an event.⁹⁵

In this probably later instance of island-mainland rivalry it may only have been a small expedition that could have left Jayavarman in charge. Or might we instead see the revolution in Java in 803, implied by Klokke's reading of the inscriptions, as offering Jayavarman II a chance to renounce his allegiance to a

⁹³ كله وهي المنصف بين اراض العرب وارض الصين. *Relation*, ٩٠.

⁹⁴ Coedès, *Indianized States*, 100, 306; Cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 32-6, 112-3.

⁹⁵ Manguin, 'Archaeology', 300-01. Perhaps this ultimate displacement stemmed from conflict over the isthmian cities in the region of Kra, identified by Wheatley as the Ptolemaic Pentapolis and the Chinese *Tun-sun*. See Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*, 16. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, basing himself in part on Sinhalese accounts, identifies Tambralinga as a later assailant on the Khmers that could just as easily be classed as a Zâbaj people for the purposes of the story. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 425-6.

weakened Śrīvijaya? For while the tale reported by Abū Zayd speaks of a raid that ends with the execution of a haughty king of Qmār (and the installation of his minister as viceroy), it need not be connected to the ongoing cultural interaction between Java and Cambodia still postulated by art historians and archaeologists which indicate more frequent periods of alliance (against Śrīvijaya?) than enmity.⁹⁶

Leaving the question of attacks and reputed imperium aside, it is clear that Zābaj only takes on life in Arabic sources on Southeast Asia – which we lack before the 9th century, and thus before Śrīvijaya – as a gloss for the space then claimed by that dynasty, though just after they had lost any hold over Java. It probably remained thereafter as a regional term as Palembang's influence ebbed and flowed within it. Moreover it may also have been that this term, perhaps pronounced by the Sinified 'Arabs' then engaged in the long-distance China Sea trade, that coloured a new shift in Chinese terminology, around 900, from the seemingly precise Shi-li-fo-shi to the more general San-fo-qi.⁹⁷ At least this hypothesis would support Fukami's contention that San-fo-qi was not directly related to Shi-li-fo-shi at all, but was merely a wider term used for a number of Malay polities.⁹⁸

Certainly the etymology of Zābaj has often seemed far from clear. Choosing the dialectical variant of Lower Egypt, Zābag, Ferrand once adduced from the researches of De Goeje that this is ultimately a corruption of the Pali adjective Jāvaka

⁹⁶ In constructing his own narrative for the possible reasons for an attack from Tambralinga, Jacq-Hergoualc'h (following Wolters) speculates that such could have invited reprisals from its ally Java. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 353 It is also worth recalling here that Coedès once tried to link the Śailendras to the nascent Khmer state by the fact that both claimed to be 'king of the mountain', a claim we have seen implicit on the Tamil etymology for Malayu. See Coedès, *Indianized States*, 89.

⁹⁷ Coedès, *Indianized States*, 131. With thanks to Geoff Wade, who first informed me that the old Hokkien pronunciation of *shi-li fo-shi* (uttered *si-li fut/but-se*) was a potentially acceptable rendering of Śrīvijaya, and that *san-fo-qi* (uttered *sna-fut/but-zue*) was 'an acceptable rendering of Zabaj'. Personal communications, 22 September and 3 December 2004. For observations of the place of Muslims in the Cham trade, see Geoff Wade, 'Champa in the *Song hui-yao*', Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series, No. 53, National University of Singapore, November 2005.

⁹⁸ Basing himself on Tibbetts's analysis, Fukami proposes this very identification on the basis of the similar claims to territory of Zābaj and San-fo-qi, but is also drawn to deconstruct any historical link between Śrīvijaya and Zābaj. See Fukami Sumio, 'San-fo-qi, Srivijaya, and the historiography of insular Southeast Asia', 41-2.

via the Dravidian Shâvaka.⁹⁹ However this argument necessitates a series of linguistic shifts taking place across the Indian Ocean (Pali > Tamil? > Persian > Arabic) coupled with the presence of the people themselves on the shores of the Persian Gulf; and all after a putative colonization elsewhere in India and the Persian Gulf. To my mind this explanation is more redolent of alleged waves of Indianization in Southeast Asia or European colonization that were occurring when it was put to paper. It also leads one to question why a people would have adapted their ethnonym at each step of their migration unless they had already lost their language, and thus their distinct identity, as 'Jâvaka' people.

Intriguingly though, one of Mahdi's sources for his reconstruction of Jambi as the heart of Malay Yava hints at a different possibility.¹⁰⁰ This is the account of the Chinese monk Faxian who, while *en route* for China in 414, called in at a Southeast Asian port which is conventionally transcribed as Ye-po-ti. While scholars have generally agreed that Ye-po-ti is to be equated with Yavadvîpa, it is noteworthy that Pulleyblank's reconstruction of the contemporary Early Middle Chinese pronunciation is *jia-ba-dej*, while the Sino-Vietnamese form of the same is Dabàdà, now pronounced in the northern dialect as Zabadai, and in the southern as Yabadai.¹⁰¹

These northern echoes, I would argue, are much better understood as reflecting an Old Malay Jabades from the Sanskrit Yavadeś (land of Yava) rather than Yavadvîpa. Further the Vietnamese ones in particular seem to show two of the same interpretive paths for *j* taken in the Greek. Certainly it allows us once again to think beyond Yava/Jâba as a single island. It also becomes possible to see how Jabades could just as easily have engendered the Arabic Zâbaj, being understood as it was through the Ptolemaic Zâbai. Indeed I would emphasise once more the importance both of Greek sources and Chinese destinations above any direct Indian contribution

⁹⁹ This was indirectly accepted by Tibbetts and Toorawa ('Zâbadj', 367) referring to Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien', 171. I have pursued this with Pak Waruno, who has supported this identification and who indicated the original sources of the equation of Sayâbiga with Zâbaj. Interestingly, the *Encyclopedia of Islam* entry on the latter makes no cross-reference to Sayâbiga (s.v.), which itself is to be found as a revised version of the entry in the very first edition of the *Encyclopedia* by Ferrand: 'Sayâbidja', *EII*, vol. IV, pp. 200-01.

¹⁰⁰ Mahdi, 'Wie hießen die Malaien', 168, quoting Legge, 1886.

¹⁰¹ Thanks again to Lewis Mayo for help with Pulleyblank, and to William Southworth for telling me of the Sino Vietnamese form of Ye-po-ti.

for Arabic accounts of the Indian Ocean. After all, first contact between the Islamizing west and all-important China was made at a time when the business of the caliphate was still handled by officials trained in Greek, or who continued to make reference to the Greek tradition that would so colour early Muslim geography.

I have already made mention of the maps commissioned by the Caliph al-Ma'mûn, widely remembered as the great patron of the translation of Greek knowledge into Arabic. It is also notable that the 9th century Armenian geography of Ananias of Shirak made use of what must have been contemporary Ptolemaic information for its very brief passages on Southeast Asia, including the isle of Barti'iu (i.e. Iabadiou).¹⁰² And, as the recent work of Yossef Rapoport on the *Book of Curiosities* has shown, the hand of Ptolemy is far more in evidence for the passages on the Indian Ocean than any contemporary mariners' accounts, and it is China, not Zâbaj, which is the destination of import. Indeed, despite the inclusion of al-Ma'mûn's map, with its mention of Zâbaj, the same manuscript's main map of the Indian Ocean makes no mention of that place, but nonetheless places the brooding volcano *en route* to the richly documented coast of Southern China.¹⁰³

As I will suggest in the last part of this essay, it is even conceivable that the distant scholars may also have *misread* as much as misheard Zâbaj from reports of a different name altogether that corresponded to one of the believed domains of the Mahârâja. Even so, this brings us back in search of a local source for Zâbaj. For while there is no inscription featuring the name, there is a possible echo in Muara Sabak ('the port of Sabak'), located in the estuary of the Batang Hari river leading to Jambi, where material dating from the 10th century has been found.¹⁰⁴ And whereas it is possible that early reports of this Sabak could easily have been interpreted as new references to Zâbai or Saba, the relatively late dating of the finds suggest that 'Sabak' is more likely to be a Malay echo of the pronunciations of later sailors who, having negotiated 'the Idol Strait' (Selat Berhala), were heading upriver to the most durable port of the Malay lands they still called Zâbaj or Zâbag, remembered less with each passing day as ancient Yavadvîpa or Jabades for that matter.

¹⁰² Robert H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Riechert Verlag, 1992, 75-6, 237-40. With thanks to Peter Brown.

¹⁰³ For a copy of the map and preliminary remarks, see Rapoport and Savage-Smith, 'Medieval Islamic views of the cosmos', fig. 2.

¹⁰⁴ I am grateful to Ed McKinnon and Geoff Wade for bringing this to my attention.

The waning of Zâbaj and the Afro-Asiatic translocations of Qamar

Etymology aside, there is evidence in the Arabic accounts that Zâbaj begins to fade in relevance, or at least lose any precision, in the 11th century – even if some of the compilers continued to add the name next to what were the emerging toponyms of importance, and much as the more precise Sribuza had been accommodated by Abû Zayd within Zâbaj. It is most likely that this is connected to the (final) fall of Śrîvijaya.

The first major change to the nomenclature of the region is signaled by al-Bîrûnî, who most clearly, and most atypically, used Indian sources to equate Zâbaj with golden (but indistinct) Suvarṇadvîpa. Still, he devoted little direct attention to Zâbaj as compared with a complex of islands that Sachau read as Dîbajât (الديجات). Due to their proximity to the 'islands of Zanj', and accepting Ferrand's suggestion that the name comprised of a Persianized plural of the Pali word for island, (i.e. *dîpa*), Tibbetts argued was a reference to the Maldives.¹⁰⁵ This is indeed most likely given that al-Bîrûnî places it in the centre of the island world by making mention of an orthographically unusual variant of Qmâr that is far closer to the Khmer pronunciation, viz. Qmayr (قمير). This he placed as the eastern terminus of 'the islands of Zâbaj', which were laid out as an arc stretching across the Indian Ocean from the isles of Zanj in the west, and passing through Dîbajât in the middle.¹⁰⁶

By comparison, al-Bîrûnî's slightly later *Kitâb al-tafhîm* (ca. 1028) gives a different form for these medial isles, i.e. Dhabîhât (الذبيحات), which could be read as 'the slaughtered', and might hark back to the Tamil raids five years previously.¹⁰⁷ Further it is this perhaps more sanguine form which is repeated by the most important fuser of the Ptolemaic and Arabic traditions, al-Idrîsî, who shifts both it, and a neighbouring land he calls Qamar (القمر), further into the space once occupied by Zâbaj.

¹⁰⁵ Alberuni's *India*, I, 253-4. Cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 50, note 19.

¹⁰⁶ Alberuni's *India*, I, 103.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, al-Bîrûnî's chart of the Indian Ocean, which distinguishes the *jazâ'ir al-dhabîhât* from the *jazâ'ir al-zanj*. British Museum, Or. 8349, f.58. For a copy of the map, see Ahmad, 'Kharîṭa'.

Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Sharîf al-Idrîsî is famous for his fusion of all available geographical information at the behest of King Roger of Sicily in the 1150s. But while Tibbetts highlighted al-Idrîsî's mention of Zâbaj, he played down the fact that the scribes concerned were by no means agreed that there was such a place at all. Whereas Zâbaj was still a requisite toponym in the 10th century, it is absent from the first-hand accounts thereafter. None of the sources used for Cerulli's edition of al-Idrîsî's geography spelt the term as we have.¹⁰⁸ And while Idrîsî himself may well have known of the term, we find that each later scribe who copied the manuscripts now available wrote, and often in internally consistent ways, that the Swahili coast of Zanj faced the islands of Zâlij, Zânij, Rânij, Râlij, Râ-h, Râ-j or yet Rânih, and that these were situated in the region of a small island dominated by a mountain of fire that had freshwater pools at its base.¹⁰⁹

The other problem with making al-Idrîsî's descriptions of places internally consistent is that, like his predecessors, he merged different accounts in quest of completeness as he swept back and forth in time and space across the isles between Africa and China. Indeed both places are connected to Zâbaj in his account: at one point he recounts the story that when there was trouble or oppression in China, the traders would come to that kingdom and its adjacent islands due to the justice and decency of its peoples.¹¹⁰ Elsewhere it is in the context of being the source of sailors who would arrive on the African coast seeking to trade their goods for local iron – he even reports that such dealings were facilitated by the fact that each knew some words of the others language.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ See al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 61-2, 67-86. Cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 51-4.

¹⁰⁹ See al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 62. The explicit reference to an insurmountable, but nonetheless approachable, insular volcano seems to confirm that the earlier references (obviously paraphrased by al-Idrîsî) must have been to Krakatoa.

¹¹⁰ See al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 62. By comparison, the *Mukhtaṣar al-`ajâib* referred to such events leading to Chinese pillaging of the islands of Zâbaj. See Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 49.

¹¹¹ See al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 61. Al-Idrîsî, who dwells on the superior qualities of Indian weapons made from African iron (p. 67), was well aware of the long history of trade between Africa, India and the archipelago – there are suggestions that the African iron itself was in fact an early form of steel. Emmanuel Kreike, personal communication. Certainly the Zang were known to Indonesians. Javanese inscriptions from the 10th to the 14th centuries, for example, refer to the presence of people called *Jënggi*. Van den Veerdonk, 'Foreigners'; Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java*, 25.

Idrîsî's comment on the mutual intelligibility of African and Asian languages is most likely to be a northward mapping of the links between Malay and Malagasy – and al-Idrîsî certainly notes that sailors from Zâbaj would visit Madagascar, as indeed Barito groups, Malays, and probably other Southeast Asians had been since at least Śrîvijayan times, riding the fast current from the Sunda Straits.¹¹² By the same token, 'the islands of Zâbaj' are described as a place of great size populated by very black people. As he has it, everything they planted – be it corn, sugarcane or camphor trees – was similarly black.¹¹³

We should not read too much into this, as colour is often used in the accounts as an index of the climes of habitation. Certainly it could have been a function of his patently confused accounts of both East Africa and Southeast Asia that could only have been heightened both by the maps he was using and news of the ongoing commerce between them.¹¹⁴ For example, he states that Madagascar, which he described as having a mixed people who were by then largely Muslim, was known in the language of the islands of Zâbaj as Unqûja, though this seems to reflect the local 'Zanjî' term, rather than any Malay one.¹¹⁵

Of course, like all the accounts, there are elements of truth, but the contemporary needs to be sifted from the past. Relying on past sources, Idrîsî repeats Abû Zayd's story of Sribuza. And although none of the transcriptions (| ستره | شرنوه | شرنده | شربوة) show that it was recognized by the copyists, it was

¹¹² See Adelaar, 'The migrations of Madagascar'. On the current patterns in the Indian Ocean, see A. Schott and Julian P. McCreary, Jr., 'The monsoon circulation of the Indian Ocean', *Progress In Oceanography*, 51-1 (2001), 1-123, especially fig. 8, showing the currents associated with the Summer monsoon. It would also appear that early Austronesian contact with the African coast took the form of traders arriving on such currents. This is perhaps even alluded to by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis historia* (ca. 70 CE), with his reference to 'Trogodytes' arriving in Ethiopia with cargoes of cinnamon. See the relevant passage cited and discussed in Waruno Mahdi, 'The dispersal of the Austronesian boat forms in the Indian Ocean', in Roger Blench and Matthew Spriggs (eds) *Archaeology and Language III: Artifacts, languages and texts*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 144-79, esp. 155 ff.

¹¹³ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 61.

¹¹⁴ At one point he is clearly using extant charts, writing: 'And in this part of the isles depicted in their place are the isles of Dabîhât ...', while elsewhere he refers to 'informants'. al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 69, 72.

¹¹⁵ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 61. Later again he specifically described Unqûja as being one of the islands of Zâbaj. al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 63. Unqûja appears for the very first time on a map within the *Book of Curiosities*. See Rapoport and Savage-Smith, 'Medieval Islamic views of the cosmos', 256.

declared to extend for a thousand miles, and to be frequented by the traders of the isles of Zâbaj; implying that it lay at the heart of their lands.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, immediately after describing the island volcano, he mentions that one of the isles of Zâbaj, known in the reading favoured by Cerulli as K-r-m-û-h (كرموه), was inhabited by a black people that called themselves *bûmiyyîn* (sing. *bûmî*).

I would suggest here that this could be read as Karimun, one of the first islands encountered in the Riau archipelago, and that the term *bûmî* reflects the Sanskrit-derived word for ‘land’ (i.e. *bhûmi*) that is found in the Śrīvijayan inscriptions and which is still used today as a component of Malay and Javanese identity, whether as *bumiputra* or *pribumi*. And even if the distances cited for these islands from Africa are ridiculously short (a day and a night’s travel), the observations surrounding the *bûmiyyîn* were more clearly linked to Asia than Africa. Indeed they might well be identified as referring to the *Orang Laut* policing the (unavoidable) Riau archipelago, perhaps known to earlier compilers as Salâḥ. As al-Idrîsî tells us:

They are a licentious and hostile people. They carry weapons with them wherever they go. At times they board their ships and threaten the [merchant] vessels – eating their goods, hindering the people and preventing any access save for those whom they have appointed. There is no avoiding their exactions and wickedness.¹¹⁷

By contrast, when he returns to the poor and sparsely-inhabited town of Sofala in Mozambique, al-Idrîsî notes that it was subjected to the raids of powerful kingdoms like the islands of Zâbaj. But Zâbaj is only named as a domineering neighbour, and the orthography of the various texts edited by Cerulli shows that this is better read as Zanj.¹¹⁸

When al-Idrîsî does shift more clearly to sources relating to the central and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean – having already confused the Bay of Bengal (i.e. ‘the Sea of Harkand’), with the ‘Sea of Oman’ – he associates two toponyms with al-Bîrûnî’s Dabîḥât, viz. Anbûna and Qamar. One is the capital of an archipelago, the other its more important neighbour. Based on his long descriptive passage, which I have translated here for reasons of its relative inaccessibility to non-specialists and its interesting descriptions of Indian Ocean practices, I suspect that at least one of these should be placed in, if not in close communication with, Southeast Asia; perhaps

¹¹⁶ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 61.

¹¹⁷ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 63.

¹¹⁸ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 67.

through the mechanism of Tamil-Khmer cooperation that may well have led to Śrīvijayan decline before the hammer-blow from Java.¹¹⁹

In this part of the islands depicted in their places are the islands of Dabīhāt, each being linked to the other. Their number is beyond calculation. Most are empty and the largest is Anbūna, which is thriving with a great throng inhabiting both it and the larger surrounding isles. They are linked/subject to the island of Qamar. All of these islands has a chief to gather them together and to defend and protect them, and to negotiate [for them] to the best of his ability. His wife rules among the people and speaks to them without being concealed from their view. And the chief, her husband, obeys, not questioning any of the commands that she ordains. The appointment of women among them is a longstanding practice from which they will not abstain. This queen is called the Damhara and she wears gold vestments and a crown of gold studded with precious stones. She wears gold slippers on her feet, and nobody walks with slippers other than her. If somebody is found to be wearing slippers, then he has his legs cut off. As regards her coming and going: she rides, with her maidens behind her, fully adorned at the head of a procession of elephants with banners and trumpets. Her husband the king, along with a number of ministers, follows her at a distance. This queen has monies, garnered from well-known levies. And she dispenses these monies among the poor people of her country on that day. And she does not dispense money to any unless she is standing before them, looking on. The people of her country attach [70] types of silk both to her path and the places she frequents, these being of a fine quality we have described [previously]. Thus is the queen of the island known as Anbūna, her husband, and their people.

The main goods produced by the people of the afore-mentioned islands of Dabīhāt are of mother-of-pearl. Mother-of-pearl is made from turtles. These are of seven slices – no more can be obtained from single turtle. The weight of four slices of them is a *minā* (منا), fetching 260 dirhams. Heavier sorts can be of two slicings per *minā*, from which trinkets and combs are made because it is so coarse. In its essence it is of variegated colour. The pure [ranking people] of Dabīhāt and the women of this island walk with exposed heads and with their hair braided. A single woman will have ten combs or more in her hair – for this is their adornment. And thus [too] walk the women of the island of Saḥāb. Its people are Magians, and we shall mention them later, with God's aid.

These islands known as Dabīhāt throng with people. They are planted with coconuts and sugarcane, and their traders deal in seashells. Each of the islands is separated by a distance of six miles, more or less. Their possessions are hoarded as shells in treasuries of great number. The people of these islands are skilful in the manufacture of fine handicrafts. Nobles among that [sic] weave simple shirts complete with sleeves and pockets. And they make boats from small reeds, and viable houses and wonderful buildings from [71] loose stones. They also make homes from driftwood. Perhaps they use burnt aloes wood within their buildings of importance and dignity. It is said that these shells on which their wealth is based come to them

¹¹⁹ For the passages cited below, see al-Idrīsī, *Opus*, I, 69-72.

on the sea in which there lives a spirit (*rūh*). They take coconut palms and offer them unto the sea, and they become encrusted with shells. And they call these ‘conch’ (*kunj*). From some of these islands comes a torrent (*sayl*) like a current (*qatarân*) that burns the fish in the sea, which they quench on the water’s surface.¹²⁰

The last of these islands linked to the limits of the island of Sarandîb in the sea known as Harkand – and linked in turn to these islands known as Dabîhât – is the island of Qamar. Between them is a journey of seven days. It is a long island. Its king lives on it in a city called Malây. The people of this island say that its length extends to the very east for four months journey. Its beginnings are in Dabîhât and its end faces the islands of China in the South. Its king does not seclude himself, [but] nor do any stand in his presence to serve him his food and drink or his needs other than effeminate men wearing precious stuffs of Chinese and Iraqi silks. Each wears on his right hand a golden bangle, known to them in the language of India as *lakankû*.¹²¹ These effeminate ones are known as the Tanbâba (التنباية), and they marry men in place of women, serving the king by day, and returning by night to their husbands. The agriculture of this island [supports] coconuts, sugar cane, and betel (*tânbûl*). This is the most common plant growing on this island, betel being a tree with a trunk similar to the palm, [its foliage] twisting and infesting that of trees around it. It has leaves like those of the bay tree [72] or perhaps they are a little more transparent. [It is] hot to the taste, like the flavour of cloves. If one of them desires to eat it, he takes unslaked lime crushed as a paste with water which he chews with a quarter of a dirham’s weight of leaves. The taste will not be soothing unless it is done this way. Then the consumer experiences [both] a sweet and soothing sensation, and a blazing fragrance that is quite pleasing. This is famous in all the lands of Hind and surrounding parts. In this island clothes of hemp are made. This hemp is a plant rather like the papyrus plant. This is *qirtâs* (قرطاس),¹²² and it is so-named because the people of Egypt use it to make sheafs of paper (قراطس). The manufacturers take the best of it [i.e. the local hemp] and make a sheet of it rather like a fine multicoloured silk brocade (ديباج).¹²³ This is exported to all the other lands of Hind. Perhaps it has even arrived in Yemen and is worn there. Some informants report that they saw many things from there in

¹²⁰ This sounds very much like the use of hot-springs for the cooking of fish, though I am not aware of such practices outside the Pacific.

¹²¹ Alternatively given in the MSS as *kabakî*, *latanfaq*, *laqanqû*, and *lakanua*.

¹²² Interestingly the Malay word for paper, *kertas*, comes from Arabic, which was itself a loan from Greek. It seems here that the Malays may have chosen this word, rather than the more common *waraq*, because indigenous forms of material (for writing?) were manufactured in a similar way, or yet because it is used in the Qur’ân.

¹²³ If anything here is a potential mote of recognition by which the isles of Dabîhât could be rendered by copyists into the seemingly sensible ‘isles of the brocades’. Certainly Southeast Asia has a long history as a recognized centre for the production of textiles.

Yemen. In this island mats are made on which marvellous figure[s are] whitewashed.¹²⁴ The chiefs hang these on their homes in place of silk and other such fabrics. Other than this, in this island is a tree called the *bull* (بل).¹²⁵ It is a form of Bdellium (مقل) reaching a height of ten men. From this island come the ships known as *mash`iyyât* (مشعيات), being a raiding longboat (*shawân*) of fine workmanship. Each is sixty cubits long and is hewn from a single timber, carrying 150 men on its deck. One informant who has recently been there also reports that he saw a table around which 200 men were sitting. And on this island are woods that are not found anywhere else on earth. Its people are white, with little facial hair, and resembling Turks – indeed they claim that they are originally Turks.

Next among the famous islands of this sea of Harkand is the isle of Sarandîb ...

As we have seen, Anbûna is described in this section as the most vital island amidst the Dabîhât archipelago, and a place in contact with (if not obeying the ruler of) Qamar. Here is to be found a chieftain who deals with external affairs while his gold-crowned queen wields power at home in what appears to have been a matriarchal, if not matrilineal, island society with access to elephants and cowrie shells as currency, but no significant forests.

So is this the Maldives, or should we instead look at the numerous islands north of Sumatra and east of Kra? Certainly the implicit linking of Anbûna, Qamar and Sarandîb allows us to think of several options. Perhaps we might also detect the traces of the former Cōla emporium in this story or else relate them in some way to the claims of Śrîvijaya that it had usurped.

For starters one might consider the notion that the archipelagic Dabîhât was a vassal to an ascendant Cambodia (the Qmâr of old) now stretching its influence over Kra. But while Cambodia was ruled in the late 11th century by a woman called Kambujarâjalaksmî, this is too late to be a contender for Idrîsî's queen of Anbûna.¹²⁶ Second is the idea of a peninsular state once vassal to Śrîvijaya that was claiming Cambodian territory. Jacq-Hergoualc'h has speculated that one such entity, Tambralinga, challenged Cambodia in the early 11th century and has implied that the

¹²⁴ This seems to be a reference to *ikat* cloth or perhaps even *batik*.

¹²⁵ This is the Bael or Bengal quince. See Adwâr Ghâlib, *al-Mawsû`a fi `ilm al-tabi`a*. Beirut: Dâr al-Mashriq, 1988, I, 155.

¹²⁶ On the older tradition of Khmer queenship and mention of Kambujarâjalaksmî, thought to have been a consort of Hargavarman III (r. 1066-80), see Trudy Jacobsen, 'Autonomous queenship in Cambodia, 1st – 9th century', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, no. 13 part 3 (2003): 357-75, esp. 364-5.

Côlas may have raided the region, and the Malay Peninsula in particular, in response to an appeal for help from the Khmers.¹²⁷

At the end of the day though it is most likely the Maldives that is being described under the rubric of Dhabîhât, with the sailing distance between Anbûna and Qamar being acceptable when we allow for the rapidity of the ocean current. And while the Khmers, or else a Khmer vassal, may well have come to exercise greater influence over the Isthmus of Kra and nearby islands in the wake of the Tamil raids – conceivably in partnership with the Côlas – it is Qamar that is clearly most important to us here.

I would venture to propose here that Qamar represents the name of a Sumatran port maintained by a recovering Malayu: perhaps Kampar may even be meant. Another possibility is Kampé (Aru), which is known to have had independent relations with Southern India in the 13th century.¹²⁸ Either way, an even firmer Sumatran connection can be made with al-Idrîsî's Qamar when he explicitly states that its master lived in a capital called Malây[u] (ملاى), and that his rule was said by its people to stretch the length of the east and unto the islands of China.¹²⁹ The reference to androgynous servants is furthermore redolent of Sumatran practices. For while it is usually thought that the Acehese sultans maintained a body of eunuchs (*sida sida*) to serve at court in emulation of Ottoman models, Leonard Andaya has

¹²⁷ Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *Malay Peninsula*, 355-6. It is also possible that Jacq-Hergoualc'h has retro-fitted Wyatt's suggestions about Sri Lanka becoming the protector of Tambralinga in the late 12th century. Cf. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *The Malay Peninsula*, 399-401.

¹²⁸ On Aru, see Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 31. Even so, Kampar remains a stronger contender for what could have been considered one of two Qamars, of which there seem to be 16th century echoes. Ramusio's chart of 1554 shows 'Caimparr' at the site of present-day Kampar and a 'Campar' on the mainland between Cambodia and Champa, a juxtaposition that, like the map's southward orientation, seems to pay tribute to a much earlier Arab original. Cf. Suárez, *Early Mapping*, 55-7 and 134-5. Incidentally, Suárez's examples are contemporaries: the Idrîsid is from 1553 and the Spanish from 1554.

¹²⁹ Another possibility for Malây would appear to be the Maldivian atoll of Male', though it would seem to close to the other isles and too small to justify the claim that the rule of its king stretched to the islands of China (i.e. Java) – unless of course those of the Côla were being usurped in the 12th century. On the Maldives as remembered in one Islamic history of the 17th century, see Naseema Mohamed, 'Notes on the early history of the Maldives', *Archipel* 70 (2005):7-14.

pointed out that it probably has a more localized heritage of quasi-religious transvestitism once found in the courts of the Malay world.¹³⁰ (See fig.4)

Of course al-Idrîsî's Qamar could still describe many places in the Indian Ocean world, whether conforming to a Cambodian vassal in control of Kra and the Andamans, or being just an echo of Śrîvijaya. However, when his account depicts a coastal entrepôt linking the wealth of east and west, people dressed in the fine stuffs of China and Iraq, raiding ships supposedly carved from a single trunk, and 'white' peoples living in the region who claimed to be descended from 'Turks', one thinks more naturally of Straits of Malacca. Indeed it is this last suggestion of Muslim outsiders linked ultimately to Central Asia through Southern China that seems to point again to the potential for an insular Southeast Asian location given that there is evidence from within the Chinese annals of a very active northern role in the conversion of parts of the archipelago to Islam.¹³¹ Certainly there is evidence in the Chinese accounts of a long-standing Muslim presence in the region oriented far more to Guangzhou than to Baghdad.

Al-Idrîsî comes back to Sumatra after his long digression on Sri Lanka. This time though it is the Sumatra of Ibn Khurdâdhbih.¹³² Another shift in time and place follows when he has the shores of Sofala being lapped by the waters of what al-Mas'ûdî (d. 956) had called 'the Cham Sea' (البحر الصيني). Like all of the descriptions of Southeast Asia to date, this sea is imagined as a part of the continuous Ocean between China and Africa. Trade with the people of Qamar is mentioned here again

¹³⁰ On the *sida sida* in Aceh, see Leonard Andaya, 'Aceh's Contribution to Standards of Malayness', *Archipel*, 61 (2001), 29-68, especially pp. 55-8. Such transvestite priests are still to be found in the Bugis *bisu*.

¹³¹ For an important statement stressing Chinese agency in the Islamization of Southeast Asia, see Geoff Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion in Southeast Asia 8th to 15th centuries', forthcoming in *New Cambridge History of Islam*, Michael Cook (ed.), Vol. 3: *The Eastern Islamic World 11th -18th centuries*, David Morgan and Anthony Reid (eds).

¹³² al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 75. Again we have Râmî, said to be the domain of many kings, in which al-Idrîsî locates a small black forest people. They are also said to have little boats that run in good wind, to sell amber in exchange for iron, and have camphor and pearls. Next comes Barus, where naked women are in charge of sales of goods to passing ships.

and, for the first time in Idrîsî's account, the land of the Mahârâja – indicating yet another interpolation from an earlier text about Jâba/Zâbaj.¹³³

Despite Sofala being in Africa, I would argue that his description of that town is still relevant to the general history of religion on the eastern fringes of the Indian Ocean'. Trade is described as being in the hands of outside intermediaries who had come from all the surrounding islands – one manuscript even states that they came from 'the lands of God Almighty and the isles as well'.¹³⁴ Furthermore these foreigners lived in segregation from the locals, with their veiled women remaining at home due to the overwhelming public nakedness – and just like the descendants of immigrant 'Turks' living in not-so-distant Qamar?

In another pass over the region, al-Idrîsî jumps up to Kalah, and repeats elements of Ibn Khurdâdhbih's account of the realm of the king he had so confusingly called Jâba al-Hindî.¹³⁵ Next, he turns to the similarly dated Jâba, Salâht and Hazlaj (i.e. Harang), but provides a refreshed sketch of a ruler he accepted was called 'the Jâba', describing him as a lord who wears a gold crown, and a devout worshipper of the Buddha in a land dominated by temples and golden statues.¹³⁶

At last we have a description, or at least a memory, that would seem to point to Java of the long-displaced Śailendras. Once more, however, this is more likely to be either based on an old description of Śrîvijaya, which had sponsored the building of Buddhist temples abroad, such as the one in the Cōla domains before the raids of

¹³³ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 79. The likely source is al-Mas'ûdî, given that he had associated the Cham Sea with the dominion of the Mahârâja of Zâbaj. Cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 38. Regarding the Cham connection, Geoff Wade has reminded me of the linguistic connections between Cham and Acehnese, William Southworth has spoken to me of the likelihood that many of the mainland coastal terms are Chamic, and Jacq-Hergoualc'h (*Malay Peninsula*, 269) notes the remarkably 'Chamic' features of 9th century sculptures found in the vicinity of Chaiya; all of which is suggestive of the Gulf of Thailand once being a 'Cham' body of water (or at least the peninsular obverse of Kalâh), and that parts of Qmâr and Sanf were more heterogeneous than they are today.

¹³⁴ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 79-80.

¹³⁵ Apparently this was not a name understood by al-Idrîsî, who did not copy the section on the names of the sub-rulers of greater India, or the later copyists, who usually only recognized the 'Hind' part of the construct. Variants given in the MSS were Habâbat al-Hindî, Hanâbat al-Hindî, Hadabat al-Hind, and Jâbat al-Hind.

¹³⁶ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 81.

1025, or perhaps it referred to one of the San-fo-qi successors that erected another in Guangzhou in 1079.

So where is a Java in al-Idrîsî's text? A hasty reading would suggest the island/port of Mâ'it̃ (مائط), or perhaps Mâbiṭ (مابط), where al-Idrîsî has traders thronged on the coast. It was also a place that apparently faced the northward isle of Tiyûma (Tioman) and Qmâr and Sanf beyond – a designation that fits with Java's long engagement with mainland peoples.

This identification is unlikely though, as it was in fact merely one of many locales copied in from the account of Ibn Khurdâdhbih or the *'Ajâ'ib al-hind*. Even then, we should look for it in region of Riau, as indeed Tibbetts did when he found the very same toponym associated with Jâba.¹³⁷ Java and Borneo are not so much notable by their absence as they never really figured in the Arab accounts thus far, implying that the primary concern of (Muslim?) shipping remained with the arterial China trade.¹³⁸ It is notable that there is no identifiable mention of Arabs in any of the contemporary inscriptions from central and east Java. And it is only on al-Idrîsî's final pass through the region, and as he shifts back south from Sanf, that he seems to be tracing a route that moves nearer to that island or Borneo.¹³⁹

As we have seen Malây itself, meanwhile, is described here as a huge island stretching from east to west. There is, however, no mention of any peninsular territory, which seems to fit present knowledge of a much reduced Sumatran entity, leaving the peninsula to be contested by the mainland powers of Angkor and Pagan. Even so, the Sumatran city is still described as an important entrepôt for Muslim-Chinese trade. It remains the abode of 'the king of the islands', with his soldiers, elephants, ships and great agricultural wealth, and an economy based on silver 'Tartar dirhams'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 29, 109.

¹³⁸ The same pattern is borne out by an examination of the China-Cham networks. See Wade, 'Champa in the *Song hui-yao*.'

¹³⁹ Here he describes an island called Shâmil as being of great agricultural wealth that was but a short sail to 'Ashûrâ. However it was also only of 4 days compass, and near another small island near Malây, which is suggestive of Bangka or the Riau Archipelago. al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 85.

¹⁴⁰ al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 85. Again this would exclude Java, as that island's economy only shifted to the use of Chinese coins ca. 1300. Miksic, 'Classical cultures', 246, 251. Perhaps this was a part of a strategy to control all remaining trade in what would by then be the Sumatran vassal of Majapahit.

Regardless of the confusing and multi-layered nature of al-Idrîsî's account, the identification of Qamar with (probably south) Sumatra, and thus with what was still the most important part of the archipelago for traders, was apparent on the maps resulting from it. This includes the circular model produced for Roger of Sicily in 1154.¹⁴¹ Here Qamar looms large in the Indian Ocean even if it remains close to a deformed Africa, easily overshadowing neighbouring Râmî and (long defunct) Jâba.¹⁴²

But just as it seems that Qamar could have been imagined as the domain of Malayu-Jambi, its etymology is as elusive as that of Zâbaj. Tibbetts was perhaps part way there with one argument that it was a conflation with mainland Qmâr, due to the older stories about Zâbaj's raid on the Khmers. Another possibility raised by him is that the appellation is tied up with the Afro-Asian relationship that is so prominent in al-Idrîsî's account. Qamar (i.e. 'moon') was first used to describe the source of the Nile based on Ptolemy's 'mountains of the moon'; indeed it is clearly depicted in this manner in what appears to be the earliest map in the *Book of Curiosities*.¹⁴³

Alternatively too Qamar is the after-effect of 11th century Còla dominion that briefly linked all these isles much as Śrîvijayan commerce had done beforehand. In time it would shrink back westward as the real distances of the Indian Ocean became better known to the Arab geographers, lingering on Madagascar with its Austronesian tongue and Afro-Asian population (by which time it was more commonly vocalized as Qumr), being finally resting on the Comoros; another one-time possession of the Còla kings.

Bearing such transpositions in mind, all this confusion conforms to the longer history of an Indian Ocean filled with duplicated toponyms bespeaking constant interaction between its peoples. As such, the temporary translocation of once westerly Qamar on the Arab charts to the cost of easterly Jâba and Zâbaj reflects some

¹⁴¹ Konrad Miller, (ed.), *Weltkarte des Idrisi von Jahr 1154 n. Chr.*, Stuttgart: 1929; cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 53 and 85, and fig. 3. Among the sources used was a Bodleian Library manuscript (ms. Poc. 375), whose Southeast Asian pages are reproduced in: Suárez, *Early Mapping*, 134-5.

¹⁴² One Idrîsid map copied around the 13th century that was included in the *Book of Curiosities* also copies the form of Râmî as found in other variants, but does not assign it a name. See Jeremy Johns and Emilie Savage-Smith, 'The book of curiosities: A newly discovered series of Islamic maps', *Imago Mundi* 55 (2003), 7-24, plate 2.; Cf. Suárez, *Early Mapping*, 134-5.

¹⁴³ See Rapoport and Savage-Smith, 'Medieval Islamic views of the cosmos', fig. 1.

recognition of shifts in political fortunes in the region. However this recognition was ultimately obscured by the encyclopaedic impulse for completeness, a commitment to the Ptolemaic notion of an enclosed Ocean, and what seems to have been a profound ignorance of what precisely occurred beyond the still non-Muslim Bay of Bengal. In the following section I will argue that it was only with the final demise of the Zâbaj successors of Śrîvijaya and the Côlas that 'Java', their conqueror, could appear in the Arabic sources as Jâwa. Ironically enough, this process of renaming was probably accelerated as peoples in some north Sumatran ports converted to the religion of some of the 'Turks' who had long been living among them, and perhaps as the reins of this upstart Java would slacken.

Jâba with a wâw: Java ascendant as Islam comes to Sumatra

Assembled by scholars in a mode that relied on the accumulated knowledge of the past, and lacking the personal experience of the region that their informants had, most general geographies, as opposed to the practical rutters, continued to focus on the products of the region, or on reporting tales of the bizarre. It was in these accounts that Zâbaj would continue to figure as a wild place at the end of the known world.

Yet change was in the air on the eve of the 13th century, when the Mongols would devastate much of Asia and further Muslim incursions in India would result ultimately in the sack of Nâlandâ in 1234. The Southern Song would turn to Southeast Asia afresh for income, and the rulers of Java would seek a place in the revived international trade at the expense of East Sumatra.¹⁴⁴ It also seems that, apparently for the first time, Arab vessels were calling regularly at Javanese ports after stopping at Lamreh and skirting the southern coast of Sumatra – perhaps to avoid the politically unstable straits and their 'Bûmî' pirates.¹⁴⁵

It is therefore no coincidence to find that a new term Jâwa (جاوه) – rather than the old (Malay) Jâba (جابه) – appears in contemporary geographical treatises

¹⁴⁴ For an important early statement linking the rise of Javanese trade in this period and its global ramifications, see B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies: Part one*. Van Hoeve: The Hague and Bandung, 1955, 7-36.

¹⁴⁵ Chinese vessels had already begun to 'winter' in Lamuri in the late 12th century, while Java began to receive official visits in 1225. See Wolters, *Śrîvijaya*, 42.

such as the *Mu`jam al-buldân*, compiled by Yâqût b. `Abd Allâh (1179-1229).¹⁴⁶ It is worth adding, however, that Jâwa still does not yet receive the distinct alphabetical listing that Zâbaj still merits. Instead it appears within a much longer passage on the Indian Ocean, in which it is described as the first part of the lands of *China* (rather than India) reached by a perilous route, and takes its place beside Sri Lanka and Zâbaj:

Then there are the lands of China. The first of these is Jâwa (جاوة), to which the sailing is on a sea that is difficult to navigate and quick to destroy, before passing on to the clear [waters] of the lands of China. People have greatly exaggerated the description of this sea and its length and breadth, saying contradictory things detracting to the intelligence of their reporter. In it are great islands of number known to God alone. The largest and most famous of these are the islands of Saylân (سيلان), which has many cities, and the island of Zânaj [i.e. Zâbaj].¹⁴⁷

Another use of Jâwa, and as a regional term, is found in the *Tarîkh al-mustabsir* of Ibn al-Mujâwir (c. 1228), when he describes the effects of lightning on a tree near the mosque of Mu`âdh b. Jabal in Yemen.

In the same way mariners seek direction to the region of Java [*iqlim al-jâwa*] simply by means of the frequent flashes of lightning, since in the season of travel to Java [*mûsim sifârat al-jâwa*] the rains are abundant, the sky completely overcast... and the seas very rough. ... Others have remarked that many Arar trees grow in these parts and if the resin runs from the tree, the sea appears to travellers like the flashing of lightning.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, another spelling of the term (جاوا) also appears in the Wüstenfeld edition of Yâqût. This comes in a poem by Abû Muḥammad al-Aswad composed for Ziyâda b. Bajdal al-Tarîfî al-Tâ'î. 'Have you not seen the wind between Muwaysal and Jâwâ?' al-Aswad asks. We might ask in turn where Muwaysal and Jâwâ are. Much as he gives two terms for Sri Lanka in his *Mu`jam* (Saylân and Sarandîb) Yâqût is unclear. And while this variant Jâwa passes without mention, his explanation for Muwaysal is intriguing. As Yâqût has it, Muwaysal is a diminutive form for Mâsil, a waterway that channels torrents from the hinterland of the lands of

¹⁴⁶ Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 114. For the passages relating to the *Mu`jam al-buldân*, Tibbetts uses: F. Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Jacut's geographisches Wörterbuch*. 6 vols, Leipzig, 1866-73.

¹⁴⁷ *Jacut's Wörterbuch*, I, 506. Wüstenfeld (V, 58) notes that Zâbaj is intended.

¹⁴⁸ Translation based on G.R. Smith, 'Ibn al-Mujawir's 7th/ 13th Century Arabia – the wondrous and the humorous', in A.K. Irvine, R.B. Serjeant, and G. Rex Smith (eds.), *Miscellany of Middle Eastern Articles in Memoriam Thomas Muir Johnstone 1924-83*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1988, 111-24, p. 113. Arabic in parenthesis from Abû l-Faḍl Yûsuf b. Ya`qûb b. al-Mujâwir, *Sifat bilâd al-yaman wa-makka wa-ba`d al-hijâz al-musammât târîkh al-mustabsir*, O. Löfgren (ed.). Leiden: Brill, 1951, 81.

the *Tayyi'*, near Najd.¹⁴⁹ However, a separate listing for Mâsil within the *Mu`jam* describes it as being in the ancestral lands of the Banî `Uqayl in Hadramaut, and one may well wonder if Muwaysal is actually a diminutive of the Wadi linking their towns to the Indian Ocean.¹⁵⁰

None of this necessarily entails that the peoples and politics of 'Jâwa' were a widely known fact to 'the Arabs' more generally in the early 13th century, although indications are that Java's harbours were at last coming to the direct attention of Muslim shippers from the west.¹⁵¹ In this process, Qamar (now a more tangible Qumr) was being shifted back to Africa, as can be seen in Yâqût's account, which still maintained a space for ancient and bizarre Zâbaj.

Zâbaj is an island in the farthest lands of India beyond the Sea of Harkand [the Bay of Bengal] on the borders of China. It is said to be in the lands of Zanj and [inhabited by] a people that resemble humans except that their manners are more like those of monsters. There are *nasnâs* with wings like those of bats about which people in their books have recorded wonders.¹⁵² There is to found the muskrat, an animal resembling a cat from which a creamy emission is obtained. From what I have heard from travellers to those parts, the emission is the sweat exuded by a creature when it is hot, and which is then scraped off with a knife. God only knows.¹⁵³

Qumr is also an island in the middle of the Sea of Zanj. There is no greater island than it in that land. It has a few cities and kings, each one differing from the other. On its coasts are

¹⁴⁹ *Jacut's Wörterbuch*, IV, 691.

¹⁵⁰ A modern poem linking the `Aqîl clan of Hadramaut with Jâwa would not sound unusual. One of its most famous descendants who made his fortune in Jâwa in the 19th century was Sayyid `Uthmân (1822-1914). His atlas of Hadramaut shows how the region consists of many torrents that eventually flow into one *sayl* and out into the Indian Ocean. `Uthmân b. `Abd Allâh b. `Aqîl al-`Alawî, *Atlas `arabî*, Leiden, 1886 [reprint].

¹⁵¹ At the very least we have first external confirmation of the Old Malay and Javanese shift in pronunciation from a medial *aba to *awa postulated by Adelaar. Cf. Adelaar, *Proto-Malayic*.

¹⁵² Such wonders figured heavily in the 13th century *`Ajâ'ib al-makhlûqât* of al-Qazwîni. One Farsi version dating from the 16th century provides images of the *nasnâs* in the form of winged maidens harvesting camphor. See L. Or. 8907, ff. 52-9. A century later Muḥammad Ibrâhîm described the *nasnâs* as ape-like bipeds that emitted loud shrieks like women. *Ship of Sulaimân*, 166.

¹⁵³ *Jacut's Wörterbuch*, II, 901. A copy of the *Mu`jam* made in 1784 perfunctorily lists Zâbaj as 'the lands of India on the borders of China' (*bilâd al-hind fî hudûd al-şîn*). L. Or. 295 f 153 verso.

ambergis and *qmâri* leaf, which is a medicine that they call betel leaf (*waraq tânbul*) – which it is not. It is also used to make candles.¹⁵⁴

Certainly there is no question of Sumatra being Qamar when Marco Polo passed through the region ca. 1291-2. At this time the Venetian emissary of Qubilai mentioned the existence of a major island that had eight separate kingdoms. Of these he briefly described six: Ferlec (Perlak), Basma, Samara, Dagroian (Indragiri), Lambri (Lamreh), and Fansur. And although he did not yet mention the town of Samudra, perhaps ruled already by a Muslim called al-Malik al-Salih (d. 1297), Marco Polo commented that Ferlec had been newly converted by the Muslim merchants who frequented the place.¹⁵⁵ These were more than likely Idrîsî's Indian Ocean middle-men, ever ready to serve under non-Muslim patrons, much as was observed on the Malabar Coast by Ibn Battûta (1304-77).¹⁵⁶

However, what the distant al-Idrîsî had seemingly labeled Qamar, Marco Polo only knew as Java Minora. The difference is important. I would suggest that Marco Polo's nomenclature most likely reflects the fact that he sailed with a Sino-Muslim crew conscious that Sumatra's fate was now more tightly bound to both Java and China. Certainly his description of Java Minora fits with what we now know from indigenous sources. According to Mpu Prapañca, composer of the *Deśawarnana*, the

¹⁵⁴ Jacut's *Wörterbuch*, IV, 174. Despite the identification in this passage of a plant of Cambodia (i.e. *qmâri*), the reference to betel (Sanskrit *tâmbûla*; Arabic *tanbul*) shows that the notion of the effects of this nut were known to these Qumr people even if they did not have the plant itself. I would suggest that the reference to *tânbul* here is most likely to the Malagasy *tanbolo* (*Buchnera leptostachya*), a herb used for staining teeth (which is much the effect caused by betel). See J. Richardson, *A New Malagasy-English Dictionary*. Antananarivo: London Missionary Society, 1885. On Qumr see also the much briefer L. Or. 295: 'Qumr is also an island in the middle of the Sea of Zanj. There is no greater island than it in that land. It has a few cities'.

¹⁵⁵ Yule, *Marco Polo*, II, 284. Polo's Samara may well be Samudra as the Malay *hikayat* refer to this polity as having been converted from Perlak. Based on the account of Friar Oderic and the information incorporated into the fictional journey of John Mandaville, three Indonesian toponyms were believed to be of note for travellers coming from the west in the mid-14th century: Lamuri, nearby Samudra, and all-powerful Java, whose king was said to rule over seven other sovereigns and who was credited with having vanquished the great Khan of China. See *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville and the Journal of Friar Odoric*, Jules Bramont (intro). London: Heron Books, n.d. [reprint of edition of 1887], 150-2, 241-43.

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Battûta, *Rihlat Ibn Battûta al-musammât tuhfât al-nuzzâr fî gharâ'ib al-amsâr*, Talâl Harb (ed.). Bayrût: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 572.

Javanese king (of Singasari) had ordered attacks on the 'Bumi Melayu' in 1275 and that, at the time of writing in the 1360s, the lands of Barat, Jambi, Palembang, Lampung and Perlak were still loyal vassals that paid their taxes.

It is tempting to speculate from Prapañca's text that, following the Javanese raids, independent outsiders (some of al-Idrîsî's 'Turks'?) were appointed in Sumatra's northern ports to oversee the collection of tribute and to protect Chinese shipping, still in the hands of Muslim captains.¹⁵⁷ Indeed a hint to the presence of Muslims may also be found in the margins of the *Deśawarnana*. For much as Mpu Prapañca regarded Bali as being remarkable for their full conformity with Javanese cultural practice, he spoke of communities of evil-doers on Java and of low-born traders and foreigners outside the Javanese social order. He also complained that Buddhist monks were not permitted to go west of Java.¹⁵⁸

From this one might be tempted to see some Muslims on, and to the west of, Java, or even speculate that, in exchange for continued tribute from Perlak and (probably) Samudra, and the facilitation of Sino-Javanese trade in the Indian Ocean, the Śaivite Javanese rulers were not to permit Buddhist missionaries to travel to some ports to reconvert the populations of ancient Zâbaj and beyond. It even seems conceivable that this was the final turning point when the once Buddhist girdle of trade encircling Asia – of which the Malay ports of Java had been a link – was finally effaced by a Muslim dominated ring involving Java.

Importantly, Mpu Prapañca did not name Sumatra as Jawa – perhaps its ports were not to be accorded the honour or be in any way attached to the memory of the island world's foundational state. Yet even if Prapañca only regarded Bali as being in conformity with Javanese cultural practice, to outsiders writing on the western shores of the Indian Ocean there would only be news of one regional power, as we have seen from the *Tarîkh al-mustabsir*, with its reference to 'the region of Jâwa', or with Yâqût's Chinese-influenced Jâwa. This was once more a regional Jâwa where the

¹⁵⁷ To cite a later example in the hope that it might echo earlier practices: such a mode of governance was used in Sumatra in the 16th century when the Sultan of Banten asserted control over Lampung and appointed Javanese, Malays and Minangkabaus to ensure deliveries of pepper. See Ota, 'Changes of regime', chapter 2.

¹⁵⁸ On Prapañca's complaints and mention of outsiders, see Mpu Prapañca, *Deśawarnana*, 35, 82 and 84.

ancient echoes of the Mahârâja would elide with the victories of Singasari and Majapahit, erasing Malayic Zâbaj and making all Southeast Asians Jâwa collectively.

It is therefore no surprise that the word Jâwa seems to have functioned both as a regional toponym and as a collective noun in the 14th century. It was used in both ways by Ibn Battûta when giving an account of his Indian Ocean journeys around the year 1345. Here though the latter, ethnic, sense seems to have predominated in the earlier passages when he describe communities of Southeast Asians at Calicut on the Malabar Coast, and then at a westward point on the Malay Peninsula called Barahnakâr, where he claimed that the local Muslims consisted of a mixture of these same Jâwa people and Bengalis.¹⁵⁹

While much has been made of Ibn Battûta's arrival in Sumatra and his apparent ascription of the name Jâwa to that island, indications within his account indicate that he was still maintaining the ethnonym rather than the toponym based on the reports of other travellers before him, if not from descriptions given to him by proud Sumatrans in Calicut. Hence when Ibn Battûta first lands on Sumatra and identifies it, correctly, as the source of the famous 'Jawi incense' (*al-lubân al-jâwî*),¹⁶⁰ he actually states that he had arrived at the *jazîrat al-jâwa*, which is better read here as 'the island of the Jâwa people'.¹⁶¹ I would argue that it is only his putative return journey from China – where the island world was by now recognized as territory under Javanese sway – that Ibn Battûta (or the source he plagiarized) refers to all the territory below Qâqulla (another peninsular toponym identifiable as Kra) as Jâwa.¹⁶² Certainly this agrees with Thai usage, whereby both Sumatra and Java are glossed as

¹⁵⁹ *Rihlat Ibn Battûta*, 572, 577 and 618. In the case of the first mention, Ibn Battûta lists the Jâwa as the second of the main groups of people that flocked to Calicut (after the Chinese), which he painted as the best attended port in Southern India. The second instance of a mention of Jâwa comes when he returns to India from a voyage to find that his concubines and servants had been taken in his absence by the local head of the Jâwa community.

¹⁶⁰ i.e. benzoin, a word which derives from *[lu]bân jâwî > benjoin*. The 1553 Turkish translation of a navigational treatise by Sulaymân b. Aḥmad al-Maḥrî (ca. 1511) mistakenly makes reference to the Sumatran incense at the commencement of the section on Java. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 216, n. 111.

¹⁶¹ *Rihlat Ibn Battûta*, 617, 619. Such a reading has the same implications for the *iqlim al-jâwa* in the *Târikh al-mustabsir*, which might instead be read as 'the region of the Jâwa people'.

¹⁶² *Rihlat Ibn Battûta*, 649.

Chawa – much as their Khmer predecessors had made little distinction between these isles in the days of Śrīvijaya.¹⁶³

Most interestingly, Ibn Battûta states that this sub-peninsular area of Jâwa included a pagan kingdom of wide spread that was a superior source for all the spices of the archipelago which he called Mul Jâwa. But while Tibbetts nominated Java, accepting the derivation of *mul[a]* as being related to the Sanskrit ‘first’, we are most likely faced, yet again, with East Sumatra. Perhaps then the designation was by virtue of the still-important port of Malayu recognizing the suzerainty of Majapahit; and perhaps being seen by outsiders as the ‘beginning of Java’. Alternatively it may not be too much of a stretch to imagine that local narratives still recalled that it was, in fact, ‘the original Jawa’.¹⁶⁴

Certainly the contention that Mul Jâwa is Java proper makes little sense for Ibn Battûta's itinerary. Rather, the logic of his purported journey, which followed the same path laid out by the geographers of old whom he may well have copied, and his brief description of the kingdom – including the outdated claim that both Qmâra and Qâqula were subject to Mul Jâwa – fits instead with stories of Zâbaj, patterned as it was on the fame of Yava.

Once they stepped ashore within Southeast Asia, outsiders like Ibn Battûta were not insensible to the diversity within the Jâwî lands. Sumatra was still a site of multi-ethnic and multi-religious trade, and by no means integrated within the Muslim world, even if some of its polities would start to look to that world for new orbits of allegiance and patronage.¹⁶⁵ And even if he may not personally have ventured there, the Moroccan seems at least aware that Muslims constituted but a small minority of

¹⁶³ *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, Richard D. Cushman (trans.) and D.K. Wyatt (ed.), Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2000, 9-10.

¹⁶⁴ It may have been from this time that the Khmer would start to use Jvâ interchangeably with Malayu to describe Muslims from the archipelago, as was the case by the 17th century. Cf. Carool Kersten, ‘Cambodia's Muslim King: Khmer and Dutch Sources on the Conversion of King Reameathipadei (1642-1658)’ *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37:1 (2006) forthcoming. It is also curious to note that Cha Va in Vietnamese denotes foreign traders, but that the meaning has expanded to include traders of any nationality, even Indians and Africans.

¹⁶⁵ Marco Polo alleged that the townspeople of Basma, Samara, Dagroian, Lambri and Fansur – not yet Muslim in his eyes – claimed such a relationship to the Great Khan (of China, or China via Java?), but he made no such statement for Muslim Ferlec. Yule, *Marco Polo*, II, 284-99.

Jâwa in the 14th century – though naturally he devoted most of his attention to that familiar minority, then ensconced in the north Sumatran town of Samudra (سمطرة).

As Ibn Battûta describes it, Samudra was a settlement four miles upriver surrounded by a wooden palisade with watchtowers.¹⁶⁶ It had a ruler who bore the name al-Malik al-Zâhir, a form that echoes that of his predecessor al-Malik al-Sâlih, who himself had most likely emulated the nomenclature of the Ayyubids of Yemen, and then the Mamluks of Egypt.¹⁶⁷ This Sultan was said to be an avid follower of the Shâfi`î school of law and an enthusiast for forcefully spreading the borders of Islam into the neighboring territories.

There is also the suggestion of the involvement of Iranians, or at least Farsi-literate Indians, in the process of Islamization within Samudra. Ibn Battûta gives the most eminent of the kingdom's jurists Iranian names (al-Shirâzî and al-Iṣbahânî respectively). However such names, and Shirâzî in particular, are also found in the parallel histories of the Islamization of the Swahili Coast and the Comoros and do not necessarily imply Iranian involvement.¹⁶⁸ Either way, Ibn Battûta's intended link with India – where Farsi was the language of the courts – seems confirmed by his description of the Samudran council chamber being titled the *Faradkhâna* (فردخانه). He also alludes to ongoing trade connections with the Sultan of Delhi in whose presence he claimed to have seen the use of the prized aloes woods of the region such as *`ûd jâwî* and *`ûd qmârî*.¹⁶⁹

While Zâbaj had probably faded from the more practical charts of the mariners who escorted Marco Polo and Ibn Battûta – whose accounts subsumed it within the

¹⁶⁶ *Rihlat Ibn Battûta*, 619-22. For translations of the passages on Southeast Asia, and mention of Mul Jâwa with its infidel king, see H.A.R. Gibb and C.F. Beckingham (trans. and annot.), *The Travels of Ibn Battûta A.D. 1325-1354*, Vol. IV. London: Hakluyt Society, 1994, 874-87.

¹⁶⁷ That al-Malik al-Zahir was one of several real persons who maintained the royal epithet seems confirmed by the existence of a tombstone of a daughter of one such king, datable to either 1380 or 1389. M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1300*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993, 4. On the other hand this epithet was used on the coins of many of his successors.

¹⁶⁸ Shirâzî, in this case, may well have been a generic term for 'trader'. See Freeman-Grenville, *Medieval History of Tanganyika*, 32-42, 74-7. By comparison the Shirazis of the 16th century are remembered as being instrumental in the conversion of the Comoros. See G. Rotter, 'Kumr', *EI2*, V, 379-81.

¹⁶⁹ *Rihlat Ibn Battûta*, 470. Al-Idrîsî had already commented on the qualities of *`ûd qmârî*, remarking that that of *Ṣanf* was superior. al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 81.

regional Java recognized by China as the archipelagic power – it was not completely forgotten on the western edges of the Indian Ocean. Distant compilers like Ibn Sa`îd (d.1274), Dimashqî (d.1327), and Ibn al-Wardî (d.1457) had transposed, and would continue to transpose, variant spellings of Zâbaj in their overly comprehensive geographies, or else eased them into what Schrieke once called 'the mists of parageography'.¹⁷⁰

Jâwîs in an Islamizing Ocean

Regardless of whether Ibn Battûta ventured east of India it was only natural that he applied a Persianate regal style to Samudra given that it still fitted into an Indian Ocean world. The Islamizing courts of Southeast Asia still imported teachers from India and beyond, much as their Indianized predecessors had welcomed multi-ethnic expertise to establish their entrepôts in earlier periods.¹⁷¹ By the 15th century, rich Muslims of Gresik, on Java's north coast, and Pasai could even afford to import unfinished grave-markers from Gujerat.¹⁷²

Equally the Jâwî heirs of the Southeast Asians Ibn Battûta had met continued to be active along the oceanic trade routes. The 16th century itinerary of Diogo do Couto (1542-1616), for example, refers to the presence of *Jaos* (i.e. Jâwa) in the ranks of the army of King Raju besieging Colombo in 1587.¹⁷³ And in the decades after their

¹⁷⁰ B.J.O. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies: Ruler and realm in early Java*, The Hague etc.: van Hoeve, 1957, 267. According to Schrieke (p. 263), Ibn Battûta noted that the Sultan of Samudra was the Maharaja of Zâbaj, although no such reference exists in the Arabic edition I consulted nor the translation made by Gibb.

¹⁷¹ Two rather dated articles that highlight the role of Indian visitors in the process of Islamization are G.W.J. Drewes, 'New light on the coming of Islam to Indonesia?', *BKI* 124 (1968): 433-59 and Stuart Robson, 'Java at the Crossroads', *BKI* 137-2/3 (1981): 259-92.

¹⁷² The Pasai connection is somewhat problematic prior to the rise of Aceh in the 1520s, and indications are that the first royal tombs of the 13th century were refurbished in the early 16th – most likely by the dynasty that sought legitimacy from its predecessor. See Elizabeth Lambourn, 'From Cambay to Samudera-Pasai and Gresik: The export of Gujerati grave memorials to Sumatra and Java in the fifteenth century C.E.', *Indonesia and the Malay World*, XXXI, no. 90 (July 2003): 221-89.

¹⁷³ See Donald Ferguson (trans. and ed.), 'The history of Ceylon, from the earliest times to 1600 A.D. as related by Joao de Barros and Diogo do Couto', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, Vol. 20. No. 60 (1909): 1-445, p. 290. This is most likely due to Raju's having concluded some form of alliance with Aceh for his war against the Portuguese (see op.cit. p. 281). Such local identification of Southeast Asians seems to have been fused with Dutch classification of its Southeast

taking of Malacca, the Portuguese still observed Southeast Asians – increasingly Acehnese – traveling with the multi-ethnic crews of Gujerati ships bound for Jeddah, carrying precious loads of pepper for the markets of Cairo and, later, missives for the Sublime Porte that would ultimately result in Ottoman pressure on the Estado da India.¹⁷⁴

The constant commerce of what the Portuguese called the 'Náos de Achem' also drew attention from the people of Hadramaut, whose shores they passed and whose own histories contain mention of Āshî, its vessels, and its religious debates. There is even mention of requests for *fatwās* sent from that kingdom.¹⁷⁵ Indications of such connections were revealed by Serjeant in his studies of Arabic manuscripts relating to the advent of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. In the oldest account presented by him, the *Tārīkh Shanbal*, Serjeant was clearly perplexed by a passage relating to the events of the year 904 AH (1498-99). Serjeant renders this passage thus:

'[i]n this year the infidel Franks appeared off Mogadischo and Sabâdj. Their course ran under the wind, and he (the Frank) made for Kilwah where he built a fort'.¹⁷⁶

Asian exiles, though what the Dutch referred to as Sri Lanka's 'Javanese' community became in time the nucleus of a 'Malay' one under the English. See Adrian Vickers, "'Malay identity"; Modernity, invented tradition, and forms of knowledge', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 31–1 (1997): 173–212, especially 188-9.

¹⁷⁴ Charles Boxer, 'A note on Portuguese reactions to the revival of the Red Sea spice trade and the rise of Atjeh, 1540-1600', *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10-3 (1969): 415-28; Anthony Reid, 'Sixteenth century Turkish influence in Western Indonesia', *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10-3 (1969): 395-414. The authorship of the Acehnese missives and questions as to the identity of the Acehnese ambassador to the Sublime Porte have been treated recently by Giancarlo Casale, who argues that there was in fact an Ottoman moment in the Indian Ocean between 1550 and 1590. See his 'The Ottoman Age of Exploration: Spices, Maps and Conquest in the Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean,' PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2004.

¹⁷⁵ Serjeant notes how frequently Aceh appears in Hadrami works of the 16th century. See R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian coast: Hadramî chronicles*. Oxford, 1963, 110, n. 3 for reference to the ships; and 168 in regard to *fatwās* being requested of the Qadi of Shihr by Acehnese in AH 943 (1536/7) or perhaps 954 (1547).

¹⁷⁶ Serjeant, *Portuguese off the Arabian coast*, 41. The text itself, ascribed to Sharîf Aḥmad Shanbal `Abd Allâh b. `Alawî (d. 1514), was acquired in the 1940s from the Qadi of Hurayda, `Alî b. Sâlim Āl al-`Attâs. Although I was unable to locate the MS in Serjeant's papers, now held by Edinburgh University Library, it is described in R.B. Serjeant, 'Materials for South Arabian history: Notes on new

However Serjeant admitted his inability to identify any 'Sabâdj' in India, and general confusion about the meaning of the phrase 'below the wind' (تحت الريح).¹⁷⁷ A rereading of the manuscript may well show that the context is of the appearance of the Franks in the Indian Ocean, bounded by Somalia in the west and a dimly remembered Zâbaj in the east. However the mention of 'below the wind' presents us with a problem to which I shall return below.

Whatever those lands were, the shift from fabulous Zâbaj, the source of monsters and spices, to Jâwa, a recognizably Islamizing contact zone, would only be confirmed once Southeast Asians made their presence felt in the Middle East. This would have occurred as they participated in the Hajj or stayed on to study in such towns as Zabid in Yemen and Mecca itself. In fact, the earliest reference to Jâwîs abroad, or at least to an individual so-defined by a familial connection to trade with Jâwa is to be found in a 14th century chronicle of `Abd Allâh b. As`ad al-Yâfi`î (1298-1367). In this work al-Yâfi`î waxes lyrically about a certain Mas`ûd al-Jâwî, whom textual evidence shows to have been active in Yemen, and in Aden in particular, between the 1270s and early 1300s.¹⁷⁸

The next time the name appears is on a grave marker in Pasai for al-Şâliḥ ibn al-Malik al-Ashraf al-Jâwî, dated 1355.¹⁷⁹ It also features in the mystical poetry of Ḥamza al-Fanṣûrî (d. 1527), who was perhaps the last Sufi of note to have visited the court of Samudra before the whole northern end of Sumatra was absorbed by Aceh in the 1520s. From his poems, we can ascertain that he came from Fansur, and that he joined a mystical brotherhood in Ayudhya (known to Iranians like Muḥammad Rabî` as 'the city of the boat'; *Shahr-i Nâv*) before venturing onward to Mecca. Otherwise his poems – which are in Malay spiced with Arabic, and a lesser amount of Persian

MSS from Ḥadramawt', *Bulletin of the School for Oriental and African Studies*, 13 (1949-50): 281-307, 581-60, especially 291-3.

¹⁷⁷ Serjeant, *Portuguese off the Arabian coast*, 41 and 169.

¹⁷⁸ 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.

¹⁷⁹ See Elizabeth Lambourn, 'Inscription as artifact: New perspectives on tombstones and Pasai's ruling elite during the fourteenth century CE'. In press with *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*

and Javanese terms – made reference to Barus as the renowned source of camphor and the starting point of his journey and Jâwî as his outward identity.¹⁸⁰

After al-Fansûrî, the next positive identification of Jâwîs in the study circles of Mecca and Medina comes in the 17th century, when new works were being addressed by Sufi masters, such as Ibrâhîm b. Ḥasan al-Kûrânî (1616-90), to an explicitly Jâwî audience following local interaction with their similarly-named 'friends' (*ashâbunâ al-jâwiyyîn*).¹⁸¹ Indeed al-Kûrânî sat in the teaching circles of Medina with perhaps the most famous of Ḥamza al-Fansûrî's successors, `Abd al-Ra'ûf al-Sinkilî al-Jâwî (ca. 1615-ca. 1693), that is: `Abd al-Ra'ûf, 'the Jâwî from Singkel'.¹⁸²

Even at this time, one must realize that Jâwî was still a term implying wider ethnic resonance for people from beyond the archipelago than those within it. Whether seen from Hadramaut or the Hijaz, such external and all-encompassing notions of identification seem reminiscent of the way that diverse peoples on the fringes of the Roman Empire could have a unitary culture ascribed to them.¹⁸³ Equally, if absorbed Barbarian populations could once have become Romanized – yet still distinct – by adherence to Roman law and participation in Roman culture, the Islamizing peoples of the Western end of the Malay archipelago affirmed the designation Jâwî to describe a bond with Islamic culture, whether as Jâwî Muslims, or by their use of Malay and its distinct modified Arabic script, still known today as *jawi*.

¹⁸⁰ See G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, *The Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*. Dordrecht: Foris, 1986. For an explicit statement of his Jawiness, see p. 89.

¹⁸¹ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern `ulamâ' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2003, 41. On another occasion a request for a *fatwâ* placed before al-Kûrânî is described as emanating from 'some of the isles of Jâwah' or from 'some of the people of Jâwah'. See L. Or. 5660, f. 12 verso. Cf. *al-Maslak al-jâlî fî shâth al-wâlf*, written expressly for a Jawi audience by the same scholar. According to another MS in the British Library, a request is said to have come to the same scholar in AH 1086 (1675-76 CE) from 'one (or some) of the islands of Jâwah of the farthest lands of India' (*min ba`d jazâ'ir jâwah min aqsâ bilâd al-hind*). See BL Or.9768/6, f 30v. With thanks to Annabel Gallop, PC, 12 July 2005.

¹⁸² On al-Sinkilî, see: P.G. Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition: `Abd al-Ra'ûf al-Sinkilî's rendering into Malay of the Jalâlayn commentary*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

¹⁸³ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The medieval origins of Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Al-Fanṣūrî certainly made the ecumenical importance of Malay as Jawi clear in the introduction to his *Sharab al-`âshiqîn*:

The wretched Hamza Fansuri wishes to set forth the way to God and gnosis of Him in this book in the Jawi language. God Almighty willing, all God Almighty's servants unacquainted with Farsi and Arabic will be able to discuss the contents of this book.¹⁸⁴

The concept of Jâwî being a hybrid cultural or linguistic ascription, rather than a purely ethnic one, is strengthened if we take on Reid's suggestion that Chinese immigrants to the archipelago could gain the appellation Jâwâ or Jâwî by intermarriage with indigenous Southeast Asian Muslims, or at least local birth among them. In the 13th century Marco Polo already seemed to refer to walled settlements of Chinese on the coast of Sumatra (Idrîsî's white-skinned Turks?),¹⁸⁵ and Reid has suggested that, between the 15th and 16th centuries, assimilation of those communities led to their identification by the Portuguese as hybrid *Jaḏas* or *Iauijs* respectively.¹⁸⁶

Whereas the former term might be tied to a perception of Javanese-ness, the Malayo-Sumatran variant is both a tribute to the notion of connection to a Southeast Asian Islam and the very hybridity that it facilitated. Once Islam became the norm, rather than the exception, or else lacking the overwhelming presence of a non-Muslim Other, notions of Jawiness would begin to lose their exo-Islamic salience, even if echoes remained. For example, Raffles, writing in 1818, treated *jawi* as a term for hybridity, though it was still richly infused with notions of Islam and an attendant Arabness.

Jahwî ... is the *Malay* term for anything mixed or crossed, as, when the language of one country is written in the character of another it is termed *B'hâsa Jahwî*, or mixed language; or, when a child is born of a *Kiling* father and a *Malay* mother, it is called *Anak Jahwî*, a child of mixed race. Thus the *Melâyu* language, being written in the Arabic character, is termed *B'hâsa*

¹⁸⁴ See Abdul Hadi W.M., *Hamzah Fansuri: Risalah tasawuf dan puisi-puisinya*. Mizan, 1995, 59. (Cf. Drewes and Brakel, *Poems*, p. 227, for the Javanese version which specifically identifies Jawi as Malay). Similarly, in 1601, Shams al-Dîn al-Samuṭrâ'î, announces that he has written his *Mir'ât al-mu'min* 'in the Jawi language' in order to render words of the religious sciences for those people who do not understand Arabic or Farsi'. Quoted in George Henrik Werndly, *Maleische spraakkunst: Uit de eige schriften der Maleiers opgemaakt*. Amsterdam: Wetstein, 1736, ii.

¹⁸⁵ Miksic, 'Classical cultures', 248.

¹⁸⁶ Anthony Reid, 'Hybrid identities in the fifteenth century straits', forthcoming in Geoff Wade and Sun Laichen (eds), *Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century: The Ming Factor*. Singapore University Press.

Jahwî; the Malays, as a nation distinct from the fixed population of the eastern islands, not possessing any written character but what they borrow from the Arabs.¹⁸⁷

Jâwîs Below the Wind

Have you not seen the wind between Muwaysal and Jâwâ?

As it settles upon you it heals ...

I have suggested above that, more than being a term for the undoubted hybridity of the people of maritime Southeast Asian ports, Jâwî was both a pan-ethnic ascription used by Arabic-speaking outsiders cognizant of the importance of Java in the 13th and 14th centuries, and an Islamic cultural one for insiders. In the case of the former, the term is related to a geographical locus that places Jâwî peoples in necessarily Jâwî lands. For their own lands and seas though, peoples of Austronesian background continued to refer to their own names, usually based on their estuarine capitals.

But, as Reid has also pointed out, many of the Southeast Asian polities described in his *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* invoked the concept of being a community of lands 'below the winds' (Malay: *bawah angin*). Still, this framing, like that of Jâwî, is also connected with the indigenous flows of Islamization from the 14th century. Such flows were once more driven by Malay courts breaking free of Java, linking up with the more easterly courts of the archipelago that had perhaps already come in contact with Islam through contacts with the mercantile communities of Southern China. Regardless of this, I would argue that it was the western, Malay conception of a region below the winds would start to be accepted by some of the Muslim peoples of the Indian Ocean.

When I commenced this essay, I cited a Farsi echo of the phrase employed by an Iranian in Siam in the 17th century. However his 'below winds' (Zîrbâdât – زیربادات) was a much expanded version of a term used by his predecessor, `Abd al-Razzâq Samarqandî who, in an account of 1442, used the more limited Zîrbâd (زیرباد) in a way that aligns with a Malay sense of region. In Hormuz, `Abd al-Razzâq had

¹⁸⁷ T.S. Raffles, 'On the Melâyu Nation, with a translation of its maritime institutions', *Asiatick Researches*, 12 (1818): 102-158, 127-8.

noted the presence of the merchants of *both* Java (چاوة) and the 'cities of Zîrbâd' (شهرهاي زيرباد), but in Calicut he wrote of those of Zîrbâd alone.¹⁸⁸

Whereas scholars of Malay and Farsi have pointed in each other's direction when seeking the origins of *bawah angin* and *zîrbâd*,¹⁸⁹ the widespread usage of the phrase in Malay texts suggests that the concept is of long standing local origin. And although no Malay text can be physically dated before the late 15th century, two of the oldest, describing matters in the 14th and 15th – the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and the *Sulalat al-Salatin* – use *bawah angin* to describe maritime Southeast Asia as a community of (largely Malyo-Muslim) rulers stretching from North Sumatra to the Moluccas.¹⁹⁰

The earliest direct evidence of local usage that I have seen so far is from the Moluccas in a letter from Sultan Said of Ternate to the Dutch king in August 1599. This states that it was sent 'from the land below the wind' (*dari tanah di-bawah angin*), and notes the arrival of 'W. Branderwaik [sic.], a trader of land below the winds' (*saudagar dari tanah bawah angin*), who had just met 'the King of Maluku, the possessor of the clove trees that were so famous in the land above the wind' (*telah sampailah kepada raja Maluku yang empunya pohon cengkeh yang terlalu masyhur di tanah atas angin*).¹⁹¹ A more famous example of a sub-aeolean designation comes three years later, in 1602, when the Acehese ruler, Ala' al-Din, issued an English

¹⁸⁸ My attention was first drawn to the term Zîrbâd(ât) and its implications by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Notes on circulation', 22. Thus far I have found no occurrence of *zîrbâd* in the accounts of previous Islamic navigators. Steingass's *Persian-English Dictionary* simply notes that Zîrbâd is 'the name of a country', while the Leiden MS of Yâqût's *Mu`jam* gives Zîrbâd as 'an island in the vicinity of Fars'. L. Or. 295, f.159 verso. By comparison the Wüstenfeld edition appends the history of some other kingdom not identifiable with Southeast Asia: *Jacut's Wörterbuch*, II, 966. For an English translation of the travels of `Abd al-Razzâq, based on the edition of Quatramère (1843), see 'Abd er-Razzâk', in R.H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*. London: Hakluyt, 1857.

¹⁸⁹ Compare the entry '*angin*' in Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary* (wherein the Persian 'up' and 'down' are confused) with 'Zirbad' in Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: being a glossary of Anglo-Indian colloquial words and phrases, ...* etc. London: John Murray, 1886.

¹⁹⁰ See the Malay Manuscript Pages maintained by Ian Proudfoot.
<http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/ahcen/proudfoot/MCP/>.

¹⁹¹ Letter held in the Dutch Royal Archives, KHA 13 XII-B-2. A photograph of this letter is to be found in: Rita Wassing-Visser, *Royal Gifts from Indonesia: Historical bonds with the House of Orange-Nassau (1600-1938)*. Zwolle: Waanders, 1995, 26.

captain with a Malay translation of a trading permit to be used in his territories as 'the lord in power here below the winds who holds the throne of Aceh and Samudra and all the countries appended thereto'.¹⁹²

Then again, even if the indications are that *bawah angin* was recognized by Muslims within and beyond the region, it is not always found where one would expect it. In two Arabic letters to a Portuguese captain in 1520, Zayn al-Dîn, lord of 'Shamûtra' (شموطرة), writes to the new rulers of Malacca in the hope that they might rein in one of their piratical captains, promising the benefits of trade in return in the form of the goods of Barus or payment with the money of Bengal.¹⁹³ The only thing that Zayn al-Dîn claimed to be 'under' was 'the authority of the Lord of the universe' (*taht amr rabb al-`âlamîn*).

Whereas we do not have direct evidence that Malayo-Muslim rulers employed any equivalent of *bawah angin* in their letters to European rulers before ca. 1599, there are clear suggestions that this was the case with earlier correspondence with the Middle East. The first hint is admittedly tentative, but is all the more logical given that it is bound up with the trade that linked Sumatra to the Indian Ocean. In the account of a Syrian physician of the late 9th century, as well as an attribution to a pharmacological text by Ishâq al-Qayrawânî (d. 907), an explanation is given for why the camphor of Fansur was called *riyâhî* (رياحي). According to these authors, this was because this form of camphor was first discovered by a king of Fansur called Riyâh (رياح).¹⁹⁴ Riyâh is a known term in Islamic onomastics related to the Yemeni

¹⁹² *Aku raja yang kuasa di-bawah angin ini yang memegang takhta kerajaan negeri Aceh dan negeri Samudara dan segala negeri yang ta'alluq ke negeri itu*. Bodleian Library, MS Laud Or. e.5. This letter, which commences with the announcement that it is 'the Jawi version', is reproduced and discussed by W.G. Shellabear: 'An account of some of the oldest Malay MSS. now extant', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 31 (1898): 107-51.

¹⁹³ I base my reading here on the transcriptions of G.F. Pijper (1893-1988), who seems to have examined two letters in the Portuguese archives. Leiden University Library, OLG, Pijper Collectie. An amicable deal seems to have been concluded, and the Portuguese had a small garrison in Pasai to protect their factory until their expulsion by Aceh in 1524. Ricklefs, *History*, 33.

¹⁹⁴ Ferrand, *Relations*, 112-3. When working on the text of Dimashqî (ca. 1325), who cited both earlier sources, Ferrand noted that the scribes now used *ribâh* and *ribâhî*, and that he was unsure of which reading he preferred. *Relations*, 368-9.

tribe of Tamîm according to one of its members, Abû Sa`îd al-Tamîmî (d.1166).¹⁹⁵ Interestingly though it is also the Arabic word for 'winds'.

Attention to the *rîyâhî* – Fansûr link was first made by Dulaurier in 1846, though he did not attempt to tie it to 'winds'.¹⁹⁶ Based on his transcription of MSS of Avicenna (980-1037) and Ibn al-Baytâr (1197-1248), it seems that Rîyâh was later understood as a separate toponym, or at least as another source of camphor (الكافور) (اصناف الفنصوري والرياحي). Further there is a suggestion in Ibn al-Baytâr's encyclopedia, quoting the *Murshid* of (the very same Abû Sa`îd?) al-Tamîmî, that an aromatic plant that smelt of camphor (ريحان الكافور) was additionally known as 'the camphor of the Jews'.¹⁹⁷

One may wonder if the origin of the story of a 'King Riyâh' came from a letter brought to a commercial hub by a merchant charged to express the authority of a Malay ruler extending 'below the winds'. He might even have wanted himself called 'the King of the winds' (ملك الرياح). The subsidiary Jewish link could even be a function of the Fatimid attempt to take the Indian Ocean trade in spices away from the Abbasids in the 10th century.¹⁹⁸ Goitein's studies of the Geniza papyri have shown that a large part of this trade would be carried by Aden-based Jewish merchants and their local partners based in Kra and Fansur.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ See Abû Sa`îd `Abd al-Karîm b. Muḥammad b. Mangûr al-Tamîmî al-Sam`ânî, *al-Ansâb*, 5 vols. Beirut: Dâr al-Jinân, 1988, III, 111.

¹⁹⁶ M. Dulaurier, 'Études sur l'ouvrage intitulé: Relation des voyages ... dans le IXe siècle de l'ère chrétienne', *Journal Asiatique* (août-septembre 1848), esp. 217-9.

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Ferrand, *Relations*, 274-5. Cf. Dulaurier, 'Études sur l'ouvrage intitulé', 218-9. The potential link with a Tamîmî of Yemen is additionally interesting. We know from the Geniza documents that Yemen, and Aden in particular, figured in the spice networks. By the 13th century a fortress within the walls of Zabid was known as *Kâfûrî*. See G.R. Smith, *The Ayyûbids and Early Rasûlids in the Yemen*, 2 vols. London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1974-78, II, 169.

¹⁹⁸ Bernard Lewis, 'The Fatimids and the Route to India', *Revue de la Faculté des Sciences Economiques de l'Université d'Istanbul*, XI (1949-50).

¹⁹⁹ On the Jewish role in this trade, see S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: Economic foundations*. University of California Press, 1967, 153-5, 315. References to the spices of Southeast Asia imported to Cairo and then Alexandria are documented in the Geniza papyri. Deaths of two Jewish merchants in Kra and Fansur were recorded in letters from the 13th century. See S.D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 227-9.

Once again though we are faced with the orthographic and etymological problems of Zâbaj. Tibbetts argues that *riyâhî* is most likely an erroneous reading for *zabâjî*, based on the variant Zabâj (زباج).²⁰⁰ But, to my knowledge, this adjectival form never appears in the texts, nor is it a name recognized by al-Tamîmî. Thus I would suggest that both *riyâh* and the singular *rîh* (ريح) could just as easily be an additional source of confusion over what the very *regional* and *Malay* sense that Zâbaj and its cognates entailed, but after being once again warped to conform to the Greek Zâbai or harmonized with local Malay and Chinese pronunciations of Yavadeś.

Wolters notes that the first seaborne Arab mission to China occurred in 724, implying that the ambassadors must have called at a Śrîvijayan port, from whence they most likely took camphor as a gift they obviously regarded as precious.²⁰¹ Doubtless in the report of their return journey they would have relayed messages from the Śrîvijayan authorities – however their claims may have been expressed, whether as sons of Yavadvîpa, Jabades, or perhaps even as lords of the winds. But these could easily have been read by officials with a better knowledge of what Ptolemy had declared than what they heard or yet saw on paper.

Certainly, much as the Chinese or Malay Jabades can harmonize with the Greco-Arabic Zâbaj, the handwritten 'below the wind' (تحت الريح) is readily warped into any number of the scribal possibilities, not least of which is 'the throne of Zabaj' (تخت الزبج). As Tibbetts observed, both the *alif* and/or the initial diacritical point was often left off MSS renditions of Zâbaj, which led to variant readings such as Rânaj or confusion with the African Zanj; as was apparent in al-Idrîsî's account or the 9th century map seemingly commissioned by al-Ma'mûn. Furthermore, as we have also seen from al-Idrîsî's text, it is remarkable how few scribes recognized Zâbaj at all after the 10th century, even if it may have stuck in the parlance of the China-bound mariners for the Malay lands as a whole.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, 100, note 2.

²⁰¹ Wolters, *Śrîvijaya*, 26 and 39. Wolters also notes that camphor had already been introduced to China from Southeast Asia after 441, and was thus not regarded so highly by its recipients.

²⁰² There would also seem to have been some attempt to redress the long-term misunderstanding in later periods. For some reason, one scribe gave al-Idrîsî's Dhabîhât as *al-rîhât* (الريحات). al-Idrîsî, *Opus*, I, 69-70.

Whatever the roots and potential confusions of 'below the wind', much as Zâbaj became the accepted designation for the region from the 9th until the early 13th centuries, *bawah angin* ultimately found acceptance – but first in the Persian Zîrbâd. It also seems that such recognition could only be gained after Malay voices were being properly heard as Muslims – perhaps in the letters of their Qadis seeking *fatwâs* from Yemen, from conversations with their merchants in the Indian Ocean harbours, or in councils with their students in the teaching circles of Aden, Zabid and Medina. Even so, this did not mean that it was always used.²⁰³

The first clear hint of any Arabic acceptance of this nomenclature outside the archipelago, and one that aligns in any way with a sense of region, is found in the *Târikh Shanbal* when a direction is assigned to the departing Portuguese in 1498. What makes this identification problematic is that after heading 'below the winds', the Portuguese built a fort on the Swahili Coast. This idea need not be seen as incompatible when we consider that while the designation 'below the winds' would be placed within the continuous world of the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. The usage in the *Târikh Shanbal* may well reflect the same configurations that still linked Africa to Asia much as Zâbaj and Jâwa had floated together in the texts alongside Zanj, Sarandîb and Qamar.

Setting aside such speculation on early usage, we are on firmer ground from the 16th century. Ala' al-Din Riayat Shah of Aceh (r.1540-67) must have wanted the Arabic version employed in letters to the Ottoman Sultan, given that a reply sent from Constantinople in the 1560s refers to him as 'the sultan ruling below the winds'.²⁰⁴ We have also seen that the Acehnese document of free trade of 1602 that mentioned 'below the winds' was a translation of a concept intended for an Islamicate audience. Still it was one that could incorporate the Europeans, much as the Raja of Ternate could count a Dutch merchant as a trader of that shared world.²⁰⁵

Indications are thus that in the expanding world of the 17th century, the Malayo-Muslim notion of a region 'below the winds' was apparently spreading. On

²⁰³ Although Azra's syntax suggests that the notion was also found in the prelude to a *fatwâ* requested by `Abd al-Ra'ûf from Ibrâhîm al-Kûrânî, ca. 1675, there is no reference to 'above the winds' in the MS he cites. Compare Azra, *Origins of Reformism*, 64-5 with L. Or. 5660, fols 12 recto-12 verso.

²⁰⁴ تحت الريح حاكمي سلطان. Giancarlo Casale, personal communication, 18 March 2004.

²⁰⁵ In a letter of 1669, the Sultan of Jambi refers to the Governor General as the ruler 'who governs all the Dutchmen above the winds and below the winds'. See Shellabear, 'An account', 135-9.

the one hand, there is a clumsy Arabic letter written to James I in 1605 from the future Abu'l-Mafakhir Mahmud Abd al-Qadir (r.1624-51), in which the Bantenese ruler was styled, like his English counterpart, as a Raja, and no mention is made of lands below winds.²⁰⁶ On the other, there is a fluent missive, dated 9 January 1665, from Sultan Abu'l-Fattah (Ageng Tirtayasa) – whose court was in regular touch with Aceh and Mecca.²⁰⁷ Here the Bantenese ruler acknowledges receipt of cannon already requested from Charles II, and refers to trade ‘below the wind’ and the treachery of the Dutch towards ‘the people below the wind’ (اهل تحت الريح); whom context furthermore implies includes the inhabitants of Java, *bilâd jâwî* (بلاد جاوي).²⁰⁸

With the conscious inclusion of Java into the lands below the winds – a process set in train with the rise of the north coast Muslim state of Demak in the 15th century and the related sultanates of Cirebon and Banten – there would have increasingly been an awareness in the Middle East of new, non-Malay Jâwa. Perhaps for this reason `Abd al-Ra'ûf al-Sinkilî is more specific in his *Mir'ât al-tullâb* than his predecessors about the alignment of Malay and Jawi when he writes that he takes recourse to 'the *Sumatran* Jâwî tongue',²⁰⁹ implying that there are other Jâwî languages in circulation in the Islamic ecumene.

We have also seen from Muḥammad Rabî's usage, mentioned at the very beginning of this essay, that the expanding notion of lands below the winds was reflected abroad in the 17th century, with the Farsi form expanding from the Malay Zîrbâd to the Southeast Asian Zîrbâdât. Further, its adjectival form, Zîrbâdî also mirrors the older Arabic Jâwî in terms of ethno-religious ascription, suggesting that Iranians must have seen Zîrbâdîs in Burma and Siam much as Arabs would have recognized Jâwîs in the same places and similar faces. Echoes of this nomenclature were still to be found in the 19th century. Much as the mixed-race Muslims of Singapore were known as *Jawi peranakan*, in Burma *Zerbadi* was used to describe

²⁰⁶ PRO SP 102/4/8. See also Annabel Teh Gallop, 'Seventeenth century Indonesian letters in the Public Record Office', *Indonesia and the Malay World*, XXXI, No. 91, November 2003, 412-39. Abu'l-Mafakhir would only use the title of Sultan after sending a mission to the Sharif of Mecca in 1638.

²⁰⁷ PRO Ext 8/2, folio 126. The letter in question has the Islamic date of 16 Jumada II 1075 (3 January 1665), but the English dated it as 20 or 26 December 1664.

²⁰⁸ The original Arabic request for weapons is Ext 8/2, folio 45.

²⁰⁹ اللسان الجاوية السمطرية; L.Or. 1633, pp. 4-5.

mixed-race Muslims or local converts to Islam.²¹⁰ Both communities nonetheless regarded themselves primarily as Southeast Asians by place of birth. However, it would appear that by the early years of the 20th century Zerbadi had pejorative implications for Burmese nationalists, much as identifying oneself as part Arab came to carry a stain of disloyalty in Java in the 1930s.²¹¹

Equally to be identified as Jâwî was no longer viewed with enthusiasm by immigrant communities themselves, and especially with the encouragement of colonial regimes of racial classification. With the advent of steam transportation no longer subject to the whims of the winds that had defined an Islamizing region, greater numbers of Hadramis immigrated to a zone that would now be seared into their collective consciousness as Jâwa: the land of wealth, ease and distraction.²¹² As such, there was a market for genealogies for Jâwa-born Hadramis whose leaders began to establish schools to emphasize 'their own' Arab language and ethnic identity within a Jâwî archipelago. Mandal argues that some Hadramis, forced into ethnic cantonments by Dutch colonial policies, also began to make use of a rhetoric in which they presented themselves as the 'natural leaders' of their Jâwî coreligionists.²¹³ Some even began to speak of (and at times for) the Jâwa in the new forums of international Islam; newspapers and printed books, but that is another chapter in the ongoing story of the negotiation of cultural difference and affinity between the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

In Ptolemaic and Han times, the western reach of island Southeast Asia in which the entrepôt state of Yava sat was a key transitional point for the India-China trade. The murmurs ultimately heard in the Mediterranean of a parallel sea of interrelated polities

²¹⁰ The etymology of Zerbadi and its relevance in Burma is discussed in Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: The study of a minority group*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972, 33 ff.

²¹¹ Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace*. Flamingo, 2000, 240; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942*. Cornell: SEAP, 1999.

²¹² Engseng Ho, 'Hadhramis abroad in Hadhramaut: The *muwalladîn*', in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*. Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1997, 131-46, especially 134 and 143.

²¹³ Sumit K. Mandal, 'Natural leaders of native Muslims: Arab ethnicity and politics in Java under Dutch rule', in Freitag and Clarence-Smith, *Hadhrami Traders*, 185-98.

subsumed under variant understandings of its name, whether as Zábai, Sabadibae or Iabadiou, gave rise to the idea of the Javas. This was much what later European travelers, as the new claimants to the intellectual heritage of Greece and Rome, expected to find when they came to the region. Doubtless it was an identification confirmed as they sailed with Muslim pilots into the seas of what was *their* regional Jâwa.²¹⁴

One of the great intervening stories bracketed by these different (but ultimately shared) Javas is of the rise and submergence of Śrīvijaya – itself a claimant to the memory of Yava – that occurred over the long period of trade between the West and China. In this period, the regional Jaba of old that had been subsumed by Palembang was increasingly designated as Zâbaj. Intriguingly the latter term was spelt in Arabic with the potential to elide with another, probably more localized, conceptualization of space in terms of the winds that brought the traders to their harbours.

With the loss of Kra, the Tamil raids of the 11th century, and enduring notions beyond the archipelago that mainland and maritime Southeast Asia were linked, the Śrīvijayan-patterned Zâbaj would be replaced by more limited Qamar and Melayu before a Javanese ascendancy papered over 600 years of Straits history. This, in turn, would seed a new name in the Middle East for the Islamizing world of maritime Southeast Asia. And even if Java had always been on the intra-insular routes, it was only now that it would feature on the charts from the west, which certainly raises questions once more about how Islam came to Java and when, and to treat more seriously texts that seem on the margins of scholarly respectability.²¹⁵

We should also continue to reread indigenous and exogenous sources in the light of developments in archaeology. Whereas new international impulses have stimulated a need to know of the lands between India and China – whether with the globalization of Buddhism, the perhaps surprising appearance of Southeast Asians in Arabia, or the later scourges of the Franks in the continuous Afro-Asian Ocean –

²¹⁴ Tomé Pires, using 'Moorish charts', called the Eastern islands of Indonesia 'the Javas', Armando Cortesão (trans. and ed.), *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1944, lxxxii. Later an Englishman, Ralph Fitch, used the same term for the entire archipelago ca.1591. See Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, 259.

²¹⁵ H.J. de Graaf and T.G.T. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th centuries: The Malay annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, M.C. Ricklefs (ed.), Clayton: Monash University, 1984.

Southeast Asian expressions of those international currents have usually been obscured in the transmission of information or the underlying assumptions of its visitors. In Indian literature, Suvarṇadvîpa and Yava were a vague source of gold before they became a recognized part of the Sanskrit ecumene, just as Jâba and Zâbaj were first sources of exotic spices and tales of the bizarre in Arabic literature. It often seems today that people in the region are still trying to make their presence felt seriously as a part of a 'Muslim World' in a process well beyond the confusion of Zâbaj below the winds, and complicated instead by the politics of nation states and discourses of authenticity.

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Fig. 1 –
Some of the wonders of Zâbaj, depicted in a Persian copy of Qazwîni's *'Ajâ'ib al-makhlûqât*. Here merchants are greeted off the coast of Lamreh by black and white women seeking to trade. Leiden Or. 8097, f 55 (Courtesy of Leiden University Library)



Fig. 2 –
 Monstrous beast and winged civet cats. Leiden Or. 8907, fol. 52b (Courtesy of
 Leiden University Library)



Fig. 3 –
 Nâsnâs harvesting camphor. Leiden Or. 8097, fol. 53a (Courtesy of Leiden
 University Library)

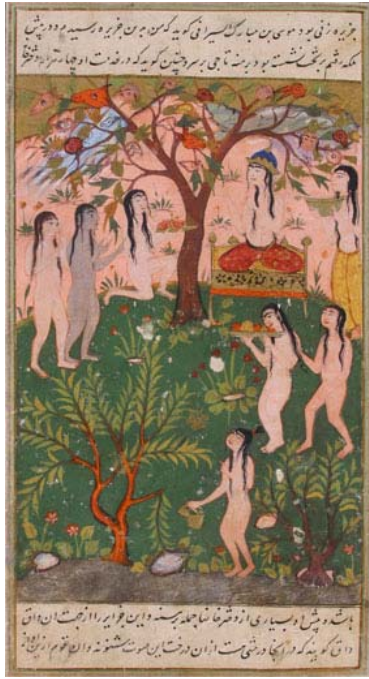


Fig. 4 –
Wearing a gold crown and seated on a gold throne, a king takes his rest in Southeast Asia surrounded by naked women (or *Sida sida*?) Leiden Or. 08907, fol. 54a (Courtesy of Leiden University Library)