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### **Trade Contacts with the Indonesian Archipelago:**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

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Sea routes from South India and Sri Lanka to the Indonesian islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and beyond appear to have been established by the beginning of the Christian era. Tangible evidence for such contacts appears in the form of Romano-Indian rouletted ware of the first or second centuries A.D. found in the Buni area of West Java (Walker & Santoso 1977) and, more recently, from controlled excavations at Sembiran on the north coast of Bali (Ardika 1989). An early bronze Buddha of Amaravati type from Sulawesi indicates possible connections with Sri Lanka by the c5. Evidence of Indianising influences, from Sanskrit inscriptions written in Tamil Grantha characters of the early/mid fifth century, appears in East Kalimantan and West Java.

#### Monsoons: the crossing of the Oceans.

The monsoon winds, which carried ships across the Indian Ocean, blow for six months of the year in one direction and for the other six in the opposite way. Although the changeover periods are somewhat squally, with unsteady winds, the monsoons themselves provide favorable conditions to blow ships from Arabia to China and back. From the end of October to January or February, the northeast monsoon carried ships from Java and Sumatra to Sri Lanka and South India in relatively fine weather. From late May to August the southwest monsoon, with a greater swell and higher incidence of rain, carried ships from South India to Sumatra, Java and further east. By late May, however, there was danger that a strong current running south by Aceh Head could, when winds were weak, carry a ship down the west coast of Aceh from where it could prove very difficult to get back on course (Tibbetts 1971, 381). It may have been for this reason that the preferred landfall was Kedah on the Malay Peninsula and not Lambri at the northern tip of Aceh. Fourteenth century Chinese writings warn of the dangers of the "Chi shui wan" current in the Surat passage at the approach to Lambri (Rockhill 1915, 144). Once within the Selat Helaka sailing was, perhaps, straighter forward though there were still hazards, with extensive shoals on the Sumatran shore. Here, however, there were other problems, from the late seventh century on outright coercion to put into Sriwijayan ports and in later periods, piracy.

Of the ships themselves, we still know very little. Classical sources indicate that Southeast Asian ships (sanggara = Skt. Outriggers), some of which were very large (kolandiophonta = ships of the K'un-lun), were seen in the harbours of South India and Sri Lanka (Innes Miller 1969, 183). Distinct shipbuilding techniques evolved in South Asia, Southeast Asia and China with a certain amount of hybridization between them as time progressed. Arab and Indian ships appear to have been constructed by a sewn-plank and frame technique and Southeast Asian ships with a lashlug and dowel technique. Arab, Indian and Southeast Asian ships were originally constructed without the use of iron nails. By about the end of the first millennium C. E., however, techniques were changing and more rigid fastening methods were adopted (Manguin 1985). Marine archaeology is gradually filling in some of the many unanswered questions regarding shipbuilding techniques.

Ecological factors favoured human expansion in Central Java where by the c6, Indianising influences appear to have taken root and flourished in areas of rich volcanic soil suitable for agriculture and population growth. Elsewhere, particularly in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and east of Bali, where circumstances limited population growth, valuable natural resources could be exploited by relatively small numbers of people. Despite small populations, many areas of Indonesia became both sources for valuable products and markets in their own right for both long distance inter-regional and local trade.

### Sriwijaya

The first historical records relating to the development of external trade in specifically identifiable areas in the archipelago appear in Chinese sources of the seventh century with references to two Sumatran polities. These were Kumpeh, which may be identified with Muara Kumpeh on the Batang Nari, in Jambi, and the second, Telangbawang in Lampung (Wolters 1967). By the eighth decade of the seventh century both inscriptional and historical evidence indicates that Sriwijaya Palembang had established itself over the Selat Melaka, a key point on the major shipping route between India, Java and China. Inscriptions dating from between A.D. 682-686 from Palembang, Pulau Bangka, Lampung and the Ulu Batang Hari assert Sriwijaya's supremacy over southern Sumatra and the straits of Melaka and Sunda. Kedah on the Malay Peninsula also came under the hegemony of Sriwijaya.

I Qing , the Chinese monk who travelled to India from Sriwijaya Palembang where he stayed for six months in 672 to learn Sanskrit and then travelled on to Jambi, asserts that "Melayu is now Sriwijaya", a statement taken to infer that Sriwijaya Palembang had subdued the neighbouring polity of Melayu (Jambi). This would suggest that Sriwijaya had taken control of the main point of access to the important alluvial gold sources of the Ulu Batang Hari region. If Kumpeh was indeed the port of Melayu-Jambi, which seems likely, then Jambi was at that time already engaged in a flourishing trade with overseas merchants trading as far afield as India and China. Mo-lo-yu (Jambi) had sent a mission

to China in 644 (Wolters 1967, 230). Inscriptions dating from between 682-686 indicate that Sriwijaya had, however, experienced difficulty in maintaining its control over the region. A stele from Kota Kapur in Bangka, a position that commands the narrow strait between Pulau Bangka and the mainland of Sumatra, indicates that Sriwijaya had also designs on "Jawa that had not submitted to Sriwijaya". Kedah became a "dependency" of Sriwijaya between 685 and 699 (Wolters, 1967, 230). At this time also, the rich gold producing area of Sambas in West Kalimantan probably came under Sriwijayan hegemony, a situation which on doubt was to give rise to further friction with Java. Sriwijaya sent missions to China between about 695 or 702 and 742. There is then, for an as yet unknown reason, a hiatus until 904 (Wolters 1975, 231).

This political and economic expansion of Sriwijaya did not take place in a vacuum. The motivation to control both valuable hinterland resources such as gold and forest produce in Ulu Jambi and Lampung, gold in Kalimantan and the wealth of the sea routes passing through the Selat Melaka to Riau, Bangka and either eastwards to Java or north to China some 40 years after the flight of the Prophet appears to have been occasioned by an opportunist lust for wealth and for power. The "curse" inscriptions of Sriwijaya make it quite clear that within its area of influence, no dissention would be tolerated. Enforcement of the oath of allegiance would be backed with force of arms. Although tangible archaeological evidence of first millennium coastal settlements remains tantalizingly elusive in island Southeast Asia, historical writings show that the stakes in controlling the late seventh century trade in this region were already relatively high in terms of wealth and power. Indonesian and Indian shipping appear to have had long established connections between the subcontinent and the archipelago. Indonesian ships may have been plying these routes long before Persian and Arab ships en route for China began passing through the area, the latter often exchanging imported goods for local produce in demand in China.

Among the early sculpture discovered in the Palembang area are images that relate to the art of Southern India and of Sri Lanka, indicating existing cultural contacts with both these areas. In particular, mention should be made of the Buddha image in Amaravati style from Bukit Seguntang and the Ganesa from near Candi Angsoka in Palembang itself, both of which appear to be datable to the c7. Also noteworthy is an Avalokitesvara image in Sri Lankan style from Bingin Jungun on the middle reaches of the Air Musi above Palembang, also of probably c7 date. In Benqal an inscription of c. 860 at Nalanda refers to a Sailendra ruler of Suvarnadwipa, Sumatra, the "island of gold" (Wolters 1975, 231).

### The Wealth of the Archipelago

Chinese sources give a useful indication of the products and imports at various points in the archipelago. Many of these products were actually re-exports, collected from smaller harbours on Sumatra, Kalimantan and eastern Indonesia. Writing in 1225, Zhao Ru-gua gives a comprehensive list

of the products of Sriwijaya and Java. Of Java (Shop'o) he says it is a broad and level country, well suited to agriculture which produces rice, hemp, millet and beans. They make salt by boiling sea water. There is a vast store of pepper in this country. Among the products of Java listed by Zhao are rhinoceros horns, tortoise-shell, areca nuts, sulphur, and sandal wood. Nutmegs and cloves were imported from the Moluccas and sandalwood from Timor. A small, superior fine grained variety of pepper was produced in Sunda (Hirth & Rockhill 1911, 70). Of Sriwijaya, the list of Sumatran products includes ivory, camphor, gharu wood, and laka wood. Gold is mentioned, but only as being given by foreign merchants in exchange for indigenous products (Hirth & Rockhill 1911, 61).

Wheatley discusses various commodities involved in Song period maritime trade in relation to their probable points of origin and divides them into four major groupings; aromatics and drugs, textiles, metals and minerals (Wheatley, 1959), most of which appear in the Indian inscriptions and to which may be added live animals and forest products such as certain types of valuable timber. He has, however, stated that "it is interesting to note that there is no mention of gold coming from (or more particularly being mined in) Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula or Siam" (Wheatley 1959, 113). There was presumably a good reason for this omission.

The major products of the archipelago at this time were:

Gold: Early Indian records testify to the wealth of the Indies in the name *Suwarnadvipa*, "The Island of Gold", by which was meant Sumatra, although Kalimantan (Borneo), which is also a rich source of alluvial gold, was probably also included in this terminology. By the c12, Chinese merchants may have controlled the gold trade and major sources of mercury (quicksilver), much of which appears to have been exported from south China. Gold had no doubt been one of the main stimuli for Indian interest in the region. Both Sriwijaya Palembang and Melayu Jambi controlled vast alluvial gold resources in their respective hinterlands. Gold was also available in other areas of Sumatra such as the hinterland of Meulaboh in western Aceh, the Mandailing/Rao area on the borders of Minangkabau and in Minangkabau itself and to a lesser extent in areas such as the Karo plateau of northeast Sumatra and western Lampung. The Sambas and Sarawak areas of Borneo are also known for their alluvial gold resources. On the island of Java the only known gold deposits are at Cikotok on the south coast of Sunda.

Silver: Zhao mentions the use of silver bars for exchange in Sriwijaya and a silver coinage was used extensively in Java in pre-Islamic times. Silver is more usually obtained as a byproduct of gold mining and may thus have come from sources in Sumatra or Kalimantan. It is quite likely that Sumatran silver found its way into the Indian trade.

Areca (Betel) nut. Noted in the inscriptions, betel (*Areca catechu*, Linn.) appears to have been a major item in great demand in south India. It was also exported from Java to China in the c12. The nut

was chewed in a quid, rolled into a leaf of betel-pepper with lime, a little cutch (catechu) and sometimes gambier and occasionally other additives (Burkill 1966, 224). Zhao Ru-gua notes that the ruler of Silan (Sri Lanka) chewed betel mixed with "plum-flower" camphor and all kinds of precious substances (Hirth & Rockhill 1911, 73).

Aromatic Resins. The most important of these were camphor (*Dryanobalops aromatica*, Gaertn.), benzoin (Styrax benzoin) and the po-ssu pine resin, (*Pinus merkusii* Jungh), all of which came from northern Sumatra. Camphor (*kapur bares*) for medicinal and ritual purposes was an important and very valuable item in oriental trade. The best quality was from the Cinendang valley in the hinterland of Baros in northwest Sumatra, where there are at least two Tamil inscriptions, one dating from the year 1088 C.E. There was considerable mystique related to camphor collection, use of magic was widespread and special languages developed to ensure success in its exploitation (Burkill 1966, 876-881). Benzoin or Gum benjamin (kemenyan) comes from a genus of small trees and shrubs which grow in the Tapanuli area to the west and south of Lake Toba in northern Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula (Burkill 1966, 2, 2139-2144). It was an important substitute for bdellium (myrrh), known in Sanskrit as guggulu. In Sumatra the benzoin tappers are Bataks. It is interesting to note that Indian terms for benzoin are luban, shambirani and kaminian with luban from Arabic and kaminian from Malay. Coincidentally, the name of one of the Batak groups who were involved in benzoin collection is "Sibirani", the "si" being an honorific and "birani" presumably from berani or brave: "he who dares". The pine (tusam) of north Sumatra, which grows in the mountains between Aceh and Korinci in west Sumatra, was probably the source of "false frankincense", important in the Chinese trade from the 6th onward. Wolters has pointed out that in Aceh it is known as sala which derives from one of the Sanskrit names for pine resin (Wolters 1967, 106-110). Camphor and Styrax (as a substitute for bdellium) were important commodities in Ayyavole trade. The latter is mentioned frequently in the inscriptions, and bdellium (? styrax) in that of Shikarpur (Abraham 1988, 159-160).

Beeswax and Honey: Beeswax and honey were reported by Zhao Ru-gua as products of Sriwijaya, Borneo and the islands of the eastern archipelago. Indeed, the Chinese considered that the best quality came from Sriwijaya (Wheatley 1959, 125).

Rattan: The stems of various genera of climbing plants much in demand for lashings, ropes (on ship board) and basket making. Zhao Ru-gua notes that they were exported directly from northwest Sumatra to Arabia.

Cloves and Nutmegs: found their way onto the Indian and Roman markets by the beginning of the first millennium C.E. and were known in China by the 3rd B.C. The clove, the dried flower and bud of *Eugenia aromatica* was produced in the Moluccas in a very limited geographical area. From India eastwards, it was known as lavanga and westwards as karanful. The Malay name is cengkeh from Chinese (Burkill 1, 973-991). Nutmeg (buah pala) (*Hyristica fragrans*, Linn.), also from the Moluccas,

has been an important item of trade since about the beginning of the first millennium C.E. There are, however, inferior local types throughout the archipelago which are utilised in various ways by the indigenous people but which are not as good as the Moluccan buah pala.

Dammar: Several genera of forest trees produce useful resins which are collectively known as dammar which are useful as illuminants, and for caulking boats. Agathis (Kayu damar) produces a resin suitable for a soft copal varnish. It was also used by the Malays as a liniment (Burkill 1966, 1-62-65, *Dipterocarpus spp.* (keruing), useful structural timbers, produce both thick and thin oleo-resins, sticky oily substance known as minyak keruing and used from time immemorial for caulking boats together with bark or tow, in torches and for medicinal purposes. The Indian name is garjan (from eastern Bengal) (Burkill 1966, 1, 851-859). *Shorea spp.*, to which the various types of meranti belong, also produces resinous timbers which are useful for torches but otherwise the resin has little commercial value (Burkill 1966, 2, 2037- 2060).

Pepper: When pepper was first grown in the Indies is not clear. It appears as a major export to China from Java in the c12, but was presumably established much earlier than this. It is among the commodities noted to have been among imports and exports from south India, although some undoubtedly came from Sri Lanka. Archaeological evidence may yet provide an answer to the problem of when and where pepper was first cultivated in the archipelago.

Tin: Found on the Malay peninsula and the offshore islands of Bangka and Billiton, tin was noted as a re-export from Lambri in Aceh to Murbat in Hadhramaut in the c13 (Wheatley 1959, 117) o Tin and lead ingots have been found in shipwrecks and at sites such as Kota Cina. Base metals were important for the alloying of copper (and gold). The most important use of tin was to make bronze and it was presumably imported into India from Southeast Asia for that purpose. The most important source of tin imports for Iran was Kedah, but as noted above, tin was also found in the Sumatran port of Lambri. Zhao Ru-gua also mentions Kampar, which seems unlikely. This could be an error in confusion for Kumpeh (Jambi). How early the tin deposits of Bangka and Billiton is not yet known though Dutch sources suggest that they commenced only in the c18. Tin could also have been used to make pewter. Copper, zinc and lead appear as commodities mentioned in Indian inscriptions.

#### Markets in the Archipelago: Sriwijaya, Java and elsewhere

Wissemann suggests that the East Javanese Mananjung inscription of the late c10 or e11 indicates several types of goods that were important in early trade in the Brantas area (Wissemann 1977, 207). Rice is the most important, followed by pepper, salt, beans, dyes and medicines. Zhao Ru-gua stated that Sriwijaya in the early c13 imported rice (Hirth & Rockhill 1911). Initially, prior to the end of the first millennium C.E. imports appear to have been limited to relatively small quantities of prestige goods (Wissemann 1977, 204).

Ceramics: Chinese stoneware's datable to the c8 (and possibly slightly earlier) have been found in Palembang and along the northern coast of Sunda and Central Java. By the c9, a variety of Guangdong green glazed and Changsha wares appear in Central Java and southern Sumatra, Sri Lanka and, I understand, have lately been recovered in southwest India. These high fired glazed stone wares were of a better quality and more attractive aesthetically than any of the earthenware pottery available locally and played an important role in long distance trade. Due to their uniformity of style, material and distribution, they are highly diagnostic and particularly useful for dating purposes in ancient sites. Chinese ceramics were not, however, the only wares to have been in demand throughout the archipelago and indeed elsewhere in Southeast Asia. A type of fine white earthenware, which may have come from eastern Java provides a possible link between Kota Cina in northeastern Sumatra and the Brantas (Miksic and Yap n.d.). Red earthenware pottery of a type common in medieval south India and Sri Lanka has also been found at sites in Sumatra (Edwards McKinnon 1984).

Cloth: In the late c7, I Qing observed that the inhabitants of Sriwijaya wore cotton sarongs (Takakusu 1896) which, considering the importance of both fine and coarse cloth as an export from Coromandel in later times may have been imported from South India. In the eighth century, regular contact appears between Sri Lanka, Sumatra and Java. At Ratubaka near Yogyakarta in Central Java, an inscription dated to the year Saka 714 (792/3 C.E.) announces the foundation a vihara named the Abhayagiri Vihara, a name duplicating that of a famous establishment in Sri Lanka, indicating that there was a connection between the two (De Casparis 1961, 248). De Casparis also mentions the term *wdinan sinhal* that appears in a number of Old Javanese inscriptions from the end of the c9 on, referring to presents given to authorities on ceremonial occasions. He suggests that this is a type of textile named after its country of origin and that consequently it would be evidence for the import of "Sinhalese" textile into Java in ancient times (De Casparis 1961, 245). Conceivably, however, such textiles may have been reexports from South India through ports in Sri Lanka.

It is unlikely that Sriwijaya produced its own cotton cloth in any quantity although coarse cotton, produced from kapok (*Ceiba pentanadra*, Gaertn.) is thought to have been woven in the archipelago. Chinese cotton imports from Srivijaya were reexports. Wheatly notes that the chief producer, both in respect of quantity and quality was peninsular India, particularly the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar, with Gujerat another second important source (Wheatley 1959, 35). Numerous Guild inscriptions in South India testify that by the c14, but possibly very much earlier, cloth was clearly an important element in Tamil overseas trade (Abraham 1988, 162/164).

Unfortunately, however, cloth is unlikely to have survived in an archaeological context although identifiable impressions of cloth wrappings are found occasionally impressed into corrosion on bronze artefacts.

Gemstones and beads: Among the imports to Sumatra from India which can be dated to the early first millennium C.E. are beads of semi-precious stone, such as carnelian and agate from South India. Gemstones, probably from Sri Lanka, such as the delima or ruby and sapphire have been recovered either as surface finds or in excavation at archaeological sites in Sumatra. Semi-precious stone beads are very common at coastal sites in Sumatra and elsewhere. Glass beads are also found in quantity in many such sites.

Glass: Although it was not a major item, South Indian glass and glass beads also featured in c.12 to 14 Tamil commerce. Indian bead manufacturing techniques are distinguishable from those of contemporary Chinese materials and differences in chemical composition of the glass are also indicative of Indian material at Sumatran sites (Edwards McKinnon & Brill 1986). Evidence of c.14 glass making in Tumasek has been found at Fort Canning, Singapore (Miksic pers. comm.).

Horses: Traders introduced the horse to Sumatra and Java but it is not known whether these were direct imports from Arab lands or indirect by way of south India. Horses, together with elephants are mentioned as being traded by Tamil guilds.

Iron: The high carbon steel known as “wootz” was in all probability exported to the archipelago and would have been in demand for items such as keris blades. Traces of iron working were discovered at Kota Cina but no technical analysis has been carried out on material from this site.

Salt: Mentioned in guild inscriptions; it is not likely that salt was a major item in long distance international trade as it could be produced from seawater in coastal areas by relatively simple means. It seems possible, however, that it was carried on Indian ships between different regions of the archipelago. In northern Sumatra for example, the pelanja sira or "salt carrier" played an extremely important role in carrying forest produce down from the hinterland and bringing back salt for use in mountain communities.

The passenger trade: Numerous small, mainly Buddhist, bronzes, stylistically linked to the subcontinent have been discovered at many sites in the archipelago. These were presumably brought in by pilgrims who, together with artisans, missionaries and other travellers were probably regular passengers on ocean-going ships. Indonesian style bronzes have also been discovered in India, for example at Nalanda. Not only were small bronze images carried across the oceans, there were also gifts and images taken for specific purposes, endowed to temples set up on foreign shores such as the Cola Buddha images at Kota Cina. A c.9/10 Bodhisatva head discovered in Aceh, relates stylistically to a small bronze Cunda image from Polonnaruwa and may have been another such image. Its presence in Aceh infers a religious connection between Sumatra and Sri Lanka at that time. A bronze dipalaksmi in provincial South Indian style was recovered from the riverbank at Koto Kandis, an early second millennium port site on the riverbank at Koto Kandis, an early second millennium port site on



the Batang Hari in Jambi (Edwards McKinnon 1984, 62) and is evidence of continuance of the tradition of donations to temple foundations at overseas sites. Religion presumably followed in the wake of trade.

Abraham has pointed out the possibility of Tamil merchants picking up on existing Sri Lankan trade following the conquest of Polonnaruwa and the likelihood (despite an apparent lack of archaeological evidence) of the existence of a west coast river port near Trincomalee (Abraham 1988.). The Sri Lankan emporium par excellence from about the c4 to c10 was, of course, Mahatitta at Mantai.

### Bhumi Jawa and the East

By the late c10 Javanese relationships with Sriwijaya deteriorated to the extent that a Javanese envoy to China reported that this country was continually at war with Sriwijaya. The aggression appears to have come from Java (Coedes 1968, 132), irked by interference with expanding trade and a desire to control the markets of the archipelago (Wisseman 1977, 207). A Javanese raid on Sriwijaya took place in 992. In 1016 Srivijayan subversion appears to have created mayhem in east Java, and it was not until 1035 that Airlangga, heir to the throne of Mataram reestablished his full authority in Java. By this time, however, Sriwijaya had already succumbed to the naval power of the Colas.

The ports of the Brantas estuary and the north coast of Java were in a good position to control trade from the east, in particular the spice trade from the Moluccas, source of nutmeg and cloves and sandalwood (from the eastern islands). Java itself produced a surplus of rice and various kinds of timber. Gold was always in continual demand for ritual purposes.

Inscriptional evidence for the presence of numerous foreign merchants in Java indicates that from the c9 onwards, there was a growing market for imported products (Wisseman 1977, 205; Coedes 1968, 146). An inscription of Airlangga, dating from 1031 testifies to the presence of Cola, Dravidia, Pandya, Karnatika, Keling and Malayala from south and eastern India and Arya merchants from the north in eastern Java, together with others from Burma, Khmer, and Campa (Coedes 1968, idem). As early as 850 C.E., Javanese inscriptions attest the presence of banigramā (Sanskrit vaniggrama), merchant guilds, which, like their counterparts in south India, functioned as tax collecting agencies. One or other of the Tamil Guilds were no doubt taking advantage of the changed situation in the Selat Melaka. Indeed, the Tamils may have been able to take advantage of an already unsettled situation and the discord between Sriwijaya and Java to provoke Cola action in the area.

Possibly due in part to the threat from Java during the late c10 and at the beginning of the 11th, the rulers of Sriwijaya appears to have been particularly concerned with relations with South India. Maravijayo-ttungavarman, Sailendra Lord of Sriwijaya and Kataha (Kedah) endowed a Buddhist vihara at Nagapattinam, presumably for the use of Indonesian sailors visiting the Coromandel (Ma'bar)

coast. A gift was presented to the temple deity in 1014-1015, another gift in the time of Rajendracola and another in c.1018 included Chinakkanakan, Chinese gold (Subramanya Aiyer 1933, Abraham 1988, 138). This is interesting in the light of the discovery of gold leaf bearing impressions of Chinese characters in association with a Siva temple at Kota Cina in northeastern Sumatra. It is yet another indication of Chinese involvement in the Southeast Asian gold trade by the 11th c. The vihara, known as the Paduveligopuram remained visible from the coast until 1867, when it was finally demolished. The establishment of contemporary or slightly later Tamil religious establishments overseas is evidenced by South Indian Buddhist imagery discovered in northwest and northeast Sumatra. Earlier, c.9th Saivaite imagery has been found with an inscription of the Manigramam at Takuapa on the Thai peninsula (Abraham 1988, 29). There was also a South Indian Vaisnava endowment at Quanzhou in China itself. It seems, however, that Indian interest did not extend to Brunei on the northwest coast of Kalimantan as there is little or no evidence of Indianising influences in this area where Chinese influences predominate (Bellwood & Omar 1980).

The Cola raid of 1025 appears to have completely upset the balance of power in the Selat Melaka and dealt a blow to Sriwijaya Palembang from which it never recovered. By the mid 11th c, the centre of power in southern Sumatra had reverted to Melayu Jambi and by the c.13th Javanese power appears to have imposed itself upon the Straits.

#### The Fall of Sriwijaya and the Tamil Guilds

The impact of the Cola raid had one extremely important consequence for Indian, particularly South Indian, merchants. By the mid 11th c, the way was clear for them to establish permanent trading bases replete with religious foundations in the more lucrative coastal areas of Sumatra. Access to Sumatran harbours was no longer controlled by a powerful overlord. Cola missions appeared in China in 1077 and 1079 C.E. carrying goods which they had acquired en route (Abraham 1988, 143).

The development of established South Indian merchant activity is indicated by archaeological evidence. An Ayyavole Tamil inscription with a date equivalent to 1088 C.E. and a Buddha torso were found at a fortified settlement site at Lobo Tua near Baros on the west coast of Sumatra. Buddhist and Saivaite remains found at Kota Cina on the northeast coast near Belawan Deli indicate that Tamil merchants (possibly with Sri Lankan connections) set themselves up in permanent coastal bases to exploit the valuable products of the Sumatran hinterland. South Indian style red ware pottery has been found at both Baros and Kota Cina and other sites. Iron working has been identified at Kota Cina. Inscriptional evidence of trade materials from South India indicates that cloth, iron and salt were major items. Superior earthenware (of a type which I have referred to as Fine Paste Ware) from Java and/or the Thai peninsula (Miksic & Yap n.d.) may also have been a fairly important item of trade at this time and may yet be identified in Southern Indian sites.

A bilingual Old Javanese/Tamil Grantha inscription at Bandar Bapahat in West Sumatra, an area which is yet another source of alluvial gold, also suggests a Tamil presence in that area in the c14 (Schnitger 1937, 13). By the late c.13<sup>th</sup>, Javanese influence in southern Sumatra had largely eliminated indigenous rulers. An inscription at Rambahan on the upper Batang Hari with a date equivalent to 1386 C.E. indicates the presence of a mission from Singosari in East Java at Dharmasraya in *Suvarnabhumi*, “the land of gold” in the territory of Melayu. At the same time, the impact of the Javanese expedition of 1275 and the weakness of Sumatran polities allowed the Thai to encroach upon the Malay peninsula and, by the mid/late c14., deal a deathblow to indigenous Hindu Buddhist authority in Sumatra.

Other evidence of a direct Tamil involvement in northeastern Sumatra is found among the Karo Batak Sembiring people who proudly retain sept names such as Celia, Pandya, Meliala, Brahmana and Mukham: names which I consider to have derived from a close association with Tamil traders seeking aromatics (benzoin and camphor) and gold and perhaps other produce such as ivory from the hinterland. Coincidentally, these same names appear in the twelfth century inscription of the Ayyavole Guild at Shikarpur (Abraham. 1988, 120/121). Later historical evidence suggests that camphor, benzoin and gold were carried across the mountains of the Bukit Barisan range over a network of footpaths to points on the east coast, such as Kota Cina (Edwards McKinnon 1984). Folk tales, ceremonies and village names, such as Lingga, Kubu Culia and CingKam also suggest Dravidian involvement in the Karo area and indeed elsewhere. Stein mentions the Tamil word ur, a village in nucleus areas of South India run by sudra, lower class peasants, and urom, the assemblies which governed such villages (Stein 1965, 54). The Karo word urunq, meaning an association of villages would appear to derive from this term and from Tamil activity in the Karo area. In 1925, a small bronze Krisna Image in South Indian style was found at the village of Ajibuhara in the Karo highlands. Later ethnographical evidence suggests that items such as cloth, iron, salt and horses, products all mentioned in the South Indian inscriptions, were in constant demand by inland mountain people. The nineteenth century regular weekly markets in Karoland, held at certain places on certain days, may well stem from much earlier institutions. Tamil involvement in northeast Sumatra has left its mark, but by the late c14, however, Kota Cina, like Baros was abandoned.

Family and place names in the Panei area of northeastern Sumatra, one of the toponyms listed as subject to the Tamil raid of 1025 C.E. in the Tanjore inscription, suggest connections with northeastern India. The Mandailing Batak marqa name Daulay originates from a place name in Orissa and the village of Senamandala near Gunung Tua in the Padang Lawas also infers a connection with the same area. The Padang Lawas region, on the headwaters of the Barunun/Panei river which flows into the Straits of Helaka at Labuanbilik, acted as a collection area for benzoin from the region southwest of Lake Toba and for gold from alluvial deposits in the Mandailing and Angkola areas of the Bukit Barisan range, as well as for gold from Rao on the borders of Minangkabau to the south.

Brick-built biaro, temples dedicated to Tantric gods testify to close connections with Bengal in the c11-14.

#### The Coming of Islam: old faces in new guise

By the late c13 or early c14, Gujerati merchants, adherents of Islam and Arabs appear to have increasingly dominated the archipelago trade. The Tamil Guilds disappear from the scene, either as a result of wars on the Indian subcontinent or due to the destruction of their island bases by Javanese or Thai incursions into the Straits of Melaka. By the late c13 Islamic Samudera Pasai, on the northeast coast of Sumatra sup ceded Kedah on the peninsula as the focus for shipping in the Salat Melaka, only to lose its supremacy to Malacca at the beginning of the c15. The ever-changing distribution and redistribution patterns of trade and connections with India, both north and south continued. In India itself, however, the focus had changed. By the c13th, trade with the West through Egypt had increased to a degree whereby pepper and spice exports had risen to unprecedented amounts.

The archipelago continued as a source of valuable spices, aromatics used primarily for ritual and medicinal purposes, and precious metals. Abraham and Wisseman have shown that much valuable information can be gleaned from inscriptional evidence in India and Indonesia. It is now, however, up to archaeology to provide answers to the many questions of what, where, when and how relating to early foreign involvement in the trade of the archipelago.

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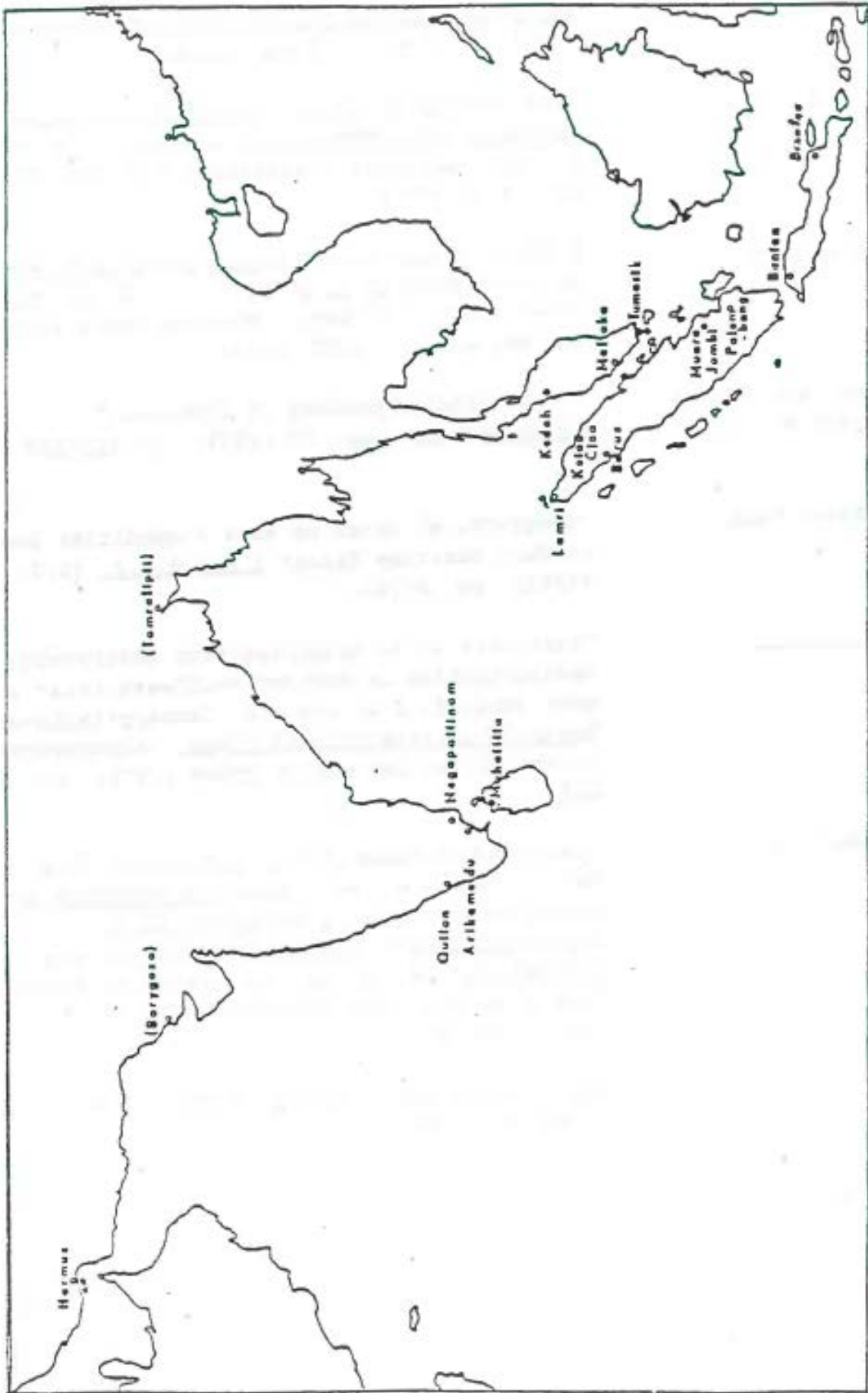


Fig. 1. India, Southeast Asia and China