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Twentieth Century Trengganu: The Royal Birth-Marks of the Melakan Empire

Shaharil Talib

The picture-book Trengganu Sultanate facing the South China Sea experienced overwhelming change in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Its leap into the global industrial economy was spectacular with the discovery of off-shore oil and gas in the 1970s. Massive infra-structure building in recent decades linked this flood-prone Sultanate of 14 river systems with major ports, commercial and administrative centres of east and west coast Peninsular Malaysia. Equally important advances were made in the agriculture sector. Although production capital arrived in the late nineteenth century¹, in 1964 only 20,000 acres were committed to plantation agriculture. Ten years later it grew phenomenally to bring under cultivation a further 210,000 acres and this expansion continued to spiral in the next decade, spearheaded by the massive Trengganu Tengah Development Scheme.²

Standing back from these breath-taking changes, there is yet another unheralded discovery that awaits announcement to the world. The twentieth century Sultanate of Trengganu is the successor of the grand traditions of 15th century Melaka. The cultural heritage of the Melakan trading diaspora never floundered in the marsh-lands of Johor as was made out by leading colonial scholars such as Sir R.O. Winstedt. Indeed, it was only five years ago that an unknown Trengganu Tuhfat al-Nafis (The Precious Gift) manuscript surfaced, which dramatically altered previous interpretations of Malaysian history.³ The discovery of the manuscript placed the Sultanate of Trengganu as the successor of Melaka - the 15th century emporia of the silk route in scholar's attention to the regal traditions of twentieth century Trengganu Sultanate, which distinctly bore the four hundred year-old Royal birth-marks of Melaka.

¹ See Shaharil Talib, *after its Own Image: The Trengganu Experience*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1984.

² *Lembaga Kemajuan Trengganu Tengah. Trengganu Tengah Regional Planning and Development Study. Final Report. Vol. 11, The Resource Base Kuala Trengganu: Hunting Technical Service Ltd.with Shankland Cox Partnership.*

³ Shaharil Talib, Ismail Hussain and Michiko Nakahara, *Tuhfat al-Nafis : Naskhan Terengganu, The House of Tengku Ismail*, forthcoming.

The economic importance of Melaka in the cross-cultural trade routes of the world and its political supremacy in Southeast Asia has been well documented and needs little introduction.⁴ Although its economic and political domination over the Straits of Melaka lasted for little over a century, its cultural legacy permeated and endured through the island world of Southeast Asia. The Melakan Empire built its royal traditions from earlier emporia and this heritage was further enriched in the fifteenth century by drawing from cultures carried along the international trade routes that passed through the Straits. The conquest of Melaka in 1511 merely resulted in a geographical shift of location of the Malay Sultanate to Johor Lama situated at the southern extremity of Malay Peninsula where the economic, political and cultural supremacy of the Melakan Sultanate over the Malay world continued⁵. The Johor Lama Empire of the next 200 years was Melaka reconstituted. Each shift in location carried cultural legitimization in its baggage.

The genealogical prestige of Melakan rulers was claimed through direct descent of ancient Srivijayan (7th- 13th centuries) and Funan (3rd-6th centuries) rulers. The regalia of Melakan rulers, at least those artifacts that survived until present times, hint to its linkages with the international trading economy. The Chura Si-Manjakini (The State Sword) of contemporary Perak Sultanate is popularly held to be the property of Alexander the Great. Malay sources have it that this sword was brought from Palembang to Temasek (the island of Singapore) and then to Melaka. This gold hilt sword is worn by rulers of the Perak Sultanate at their installation. The founder of the Kingdom of Perak Sultan Muzaffar Shah (r.1528-49), was a son of Sultan Mahmud Shah, the last de facto ruler of Melaka. The first Perak Sultan carried with him from Melaka other articles which became the regalia of Perak. They included the Rantai Bunga Nyior (a long gold chain), Pontoh Bernaga (a pair of gold, dragon-headed armlets) and Keris Pestaka (a gold mounted keris). The Perak branch of the Melakan Sultanate never claimed itself as its successor.⁶ The main Melakan regalia moved with the fleeing Sultan Mahmud and his family to Johor Lama.

Migrating royal families were natural conduits of cultural transmission. The Nobat which ceremonially drummed a Melakan ruler upon installation was continued by branches of

⁴ For recent studies see Janet L. Abu-Lighod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A. D. 1250-1350*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989 and Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade in world history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984.

⁵ See R. O. Winstedt, *A History of Johore 1365-1895*, Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Reprint, No. 6, 1979 and Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor, 1641-1728*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1975.

⁶ Mubin Sheppard, *Taman Indera, A Royal Pleasure Ground*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p. 21.

the Melakan court. The Nobat tradition developed during the Melakan period and had its origins from Arabia. It was the most important regalia of the Malay ruler. It was only played by royal command and its instruments were handled by royalty or by a select group of court musicians. The main instruments of the ceremonial orchestra included the Nengkara (a drum that stood upright and had a single face), two gendang nobat (drums that had two faces and were played horizontally), a Nafiri (a Long silver trumpeter) and a serunai (a short oboe). Sultan Muzaffar, the first ruler of Perak was ditabalkan (literally installed to the beat of drums) in 1528. His court migrated to Perak with a Nobat modeled after Melaka. His younger brother re-established the Melakan Sultanate at Johor Lama which retained the original regalia. In the subsequent centuries the Nobat installed all Johor Lama Rulers and in the eighteenth and nineteenth and nineteenth centuries Johor-Rhio-Lingga Sultans.⁷

The cultural edifice of fifteenth century Melaka was more than just the prestige of the Melakan Royal ancestry, its regalia and the nobat. There were Royal court titles; Royal colours; and Royal rites of passage for births, circumcision, reading the Koran marriages, and death ceremonies. Court etiquette, customs and language was the life-style of the ruling class. Music and dance; literature and story-telling; law and justice and above all Islam formed the core culture of Melaka. The fall of Melaka in 1511 was the flight of culture from Straits of Johor Lama.

At Johor Lama, from about 1511 to 1699, the reconstituted Melakan court traditions flourished against economic competition from Portuguese and later Dutch intrusions. Although Johor Lama never regained Melakan domination over trade, the Asian trade sector on the international sea-routes were carried by Asian traders across cross-cultural Asian trading Diasporas, in the 16th and 17th centuries other presence⁸. In Johor Lama the rulers traced their ancestry through the Melakan lineage. The Melakan regalia was their source of legitimacy. It was here that the Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals) was written in the early 17th century by Royal command. The Sejarah Melayu reified history to serve the institution that it was written for.⁹

In 1699 Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang was executed by his cousin and Bendehara (Prime Minister) who became Sultan Abdul Jalil (1699 -1721). He moved his capital south-

⁷ Ibid., pp. 17-21.

⁸ Leonard Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka : A History of South Suluwesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century*, The Hague, 1981.

⁹ R. O. Windstedt, « The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu », *JMBRAS.*, Vol.

westerly from Johor Lama to the Rhio islands and significantly took the Nobat will him. The main branch of the Melakan court after almost 200 years at Johor Lama moved again. At Rhio-Lingga the traditions of the glorious Melakan continued for a little over 200 years until 1911 when the last ruler Sultan Abdul Rahman (1885- 1911) was forced to abdicate by the Dutch. Earlier the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 has effectively carved up the old Melakan trading world between Britain and Holland. In 1812 when Sultan Mahmud of Jollor Rhio-Lingga died there was a dispute over his successor. On this occasion the significance of the Nobat and the regalia in installation ceremonies surfaced. One of the late Sultan's widows, Tengku including the Putri Nobat Hamidah, took charge of the regalia, and refused to acknowledge the Bugis favoured second son of the late Sultan. However, the bugis principal princes serving the court threw their weight behind Sultan Abdul Rahman (r.1812-31) over his elder brother Tengku Hussain. It was only a decade later that the Dutch forces from Melaka fort seized the royal heirlooms by force and presented them back to the reigning Sultan of Johor- Jofalay-Lingga. In the meantime Tengku Hussain was proclaimed by the British as the ruler of Johor but the Malays referred him as the Sultan of Selat (1819-35). In 1911 the Melakan lineage ended in the island of Rhio-Lingga and on the mainland Sultan Hussain's dynasty ended with his son and successor, Sultan Ali in 1877. The illustrious Melakan court built on the ancient silk route was buried twice as it were. Once in 1877 and the second in 1911, this was the view held by most scholars until recently.

The significance of the Trengganu version of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* should be seen in the context of the known *Tuhfat* manuscripts. The writing of the *Tuhfat* was the work of two court officials, father and son, Haji Raja Ahmad (1776 -1876) and Haji Raja All (1809-72). The former wrote a shorter version which became a base copy for his son to develop further.¹⁰ These two Bugis court officials served their master, the Bugis Yamtuan Muda in a Malay court and their 200 year account of the history of the Malay world was written from vantage point of the conqueror in the language of the conquered. The text showed a pervasive bias towards the authors Bugis ancestors who propped the prestigious Melakan Empire at Johor-Rhio-Lingga after the act of regicide in 1699 which threatened to disintegrate the social order. In all versions of this manuscript the rulers of the Sultanate of Trengganu were continuously accused in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of undermining the sacred Malay-Bugis contract centred at Johor-Rhio-Lingga. It was inconceivable that such an anti-Trengganu

¹⁰ Virginia Matherson and Babara Watson Andaya, *The Precious Gift, Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1982.

manuscript was copied at the turn of the century for the Trengganu Royal Court. All other known versions were copied for colonial officials such as (Sir) William Maxwell, the British Resident in Selangor who received a copy from the Perak court in 1890. In 1896, A. L. van Hessel, the out-going Dutch Resident of Rhio, was presented with a copy of the Tuhfat. Much later a 1923 text which belonged to Tengku Fatimah, daughter of Sultan Abu Bakar came into possession of (Sir) Richard O. Winstedt, then Director of Education, Malayan Civil Service.

The Trengganu Tuhfat was copied for the Royal Court of Trengganu during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III (1681-1916). The penmanship is far superior to the other manuscript which was copied for foreign officials. The copiest, Haji Abdul Rahman ibni Ishak Long (1834-1914) was Imam of Masjid Seberang, Bukit Tumboh, Kuala Trengganu. He completed his masterpiece on 4 April 1901. The copying of the Trengganu Tuhfat and its retention in the Royal Court of Sultan Zainal Abidin III is a masterpiece in history writing. Without any substantial change to the text, the copyist inserted two enclosures at the end of the text which changed the entire pro-Bugis approach of the manuscript. The first enclosure dealt with the subject of “Sejarah Peraturan Kuturunan Raja Bugis di Negeri Luwu” and runs for 19 folios and incorporates genealogical trees of the relevant Bugis families. The last sheet in this first enclosure traced the main branches of the Melakan ruling families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries after the 1699 historical watershed¹¹. The copyist was writing for his master Sultan Zainal Abidin III. The central argument is that Sultan Zainal Abidin III was, at the same time of copying, the most senior ruler in the Jofalay world - successor to the ancient Funan, Srivijaya, Melaka, Johor Lama and Johor-Rhio-Lingga Empires.

The Trengganu genealogical tree pointed out that Sultan Zainal Abidin I of Trengganu (r.1702-33) was a brother of Sultan Abdul Jalil who after 1699 continued the main Melakan Royal branch in Johor-Rhio-Lingga buttressed by Bugis military prowess. Subsequent rulers of Trengganu challenged the legitimacy of Johor-Rhio-Lingga under Bugis tutelage and this explains the strong anti-Trengganu bias of the Tuhfat, which was redressed by this single page of insertion by the copyist. The Trengganu Malay branch of Melakan rulers competed against the Bugis-dominated Johor-Rhio-Lingga Empire. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Trengganu built emporia that rivaled Johor-Rhio-Lingga. During the long reign of Sultan Man

¹¹ See Genealogical Table.

sur (1741-93), Trengganu was the most important commercial centre on the Malay Peninsula facing the South China Sea. His chief concern during his reign was to oust the Bugis from Johor-Rhio-Lingga, prevent Dutch monopoly over his trade and block Thai advances southwards. In the nineteenth century there were two other exceptional rulers in Trengganu. The first was Baginda Omar (1839-76) who rapidly established Kuala Trengganu as the commercial and manufacturing centre on the Malay Peninsula.¹² The other was Sultan Zainal Abidin III, the eleventh Malay ruler of Trengganu in direct descent. He knew exactly the historical importance of the Trengganu Sultanate as the successor of Melaka, Johor Lama and after 1885 Johor-Rhio-Lingga. In that year the new ruler of Johor-Rhio-Lingga, Sultan Abdul Rahman (1885-1911), was the son of the Bugis Yam Tuan Muda of Johor-Rhio-Lingga who had married into the Malay Royalty. The sacred contract between the Bugis and Malays was broken as for the first time the son of a Bugis prince ruled over the Malay world. The Trengganu Royal Family asserted its superior Melakan lineage over the Malay world. A person by the name of Alwi was commissioned to copy the Tuhfat in the Karimun Islands and he completed his task on 6 September 1886. Five years later, the Karimun draft was recopied and presented to Sultan Zainal Abidin III.¹³

In 1901 Sultan Zainal Abidin III could well look back and assert that Trengganu was the last old Malay line of rulers whose ancestry could be traced to Melaka and beyond. The marriages of Sultan Zainal Abidin III and his children were expressions of old alliances built around the Melakan family tree. The Sultan in 1885 married Tengku Long, the daughter of Sultan Ahmad of Pahang whose Bendahara ancestry could be traced back to a more junior line of descent from the Royal Melakan line. Two of his sisters married into the old Rhio-Lingga and Singapore families. The same pattern was continued by his children. The various branches of the Melakan family through Johor-Rhio-Lingga and Singapore and the more remote Pahang Bendahara line married into the Trengganu family.¹⁴ There was a deliberate attempt to keep the Temenggong line who had entrenched themselves in Johor since the early nineteenth century at arm's length. The Trengganu Royalty never married the Johor family. It was suspected that the origin of this strained relationship was the "...feeling that the more

¹² Shaharil Talib, « The Port and Polity of Trengganu During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Realizing its Potential », in ed. J. Kathirithamby Wells and John Villiers, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1990, pp. 213-230.

¹³ Shaharil Talib et. El., *Tuhfat al-Nafis : Nashkah Terengganu*.

¹⁴ Shaharil Talib, *After Its Own Image*.

prosperous but less exalted Johore Maharaja was slow to pay deference to which the Trengganu Sultan considered himself entitled.”¹⁵

In 1909, when the first British officials made their way into the Royal Court, Sultan Zainal Abidin III negotiated for the recognition by Britain of his superior status in relation to all the remaining Sultans in exchange for his willingness to sign a Treaty with Britain. Indeed, the Trengganu Sultanate considered itself to be the spiritual heir of the Sultanate of Melaka. The British ignored his request and the Sultanate refused subsequent Treaty negotiations. Trengganu was the last of the Malay Sultanates on the Peninsula to accept British protection in 1918 and that was done with extreme reluctance and under enormous pressure. The copying of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* in the Trengganu Court is an affirmation of the glory of the Trengganu Malay Royal Family and its court.

The writing of histories and copying as well as creating new literatures is a central tradition of a Malay court. Each work is a manifestation of a world-view situated in time and contextually located in social order. The *Sejarah Melayu* was completed in the Court of Johor Lama; while the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* was written for the Bugis dominated Johor-Rhio-Lingga court. The copying of the *Tuhfat* by the Trengganu Sultanate and the inclusion of a single page Malay *Salasilah* (genealogy) was a brilliant attempt to rewrite history without altering the text. There is no other twentieth century Malay Sultanate that can compare with Trengganu in its vitality of copying the great literary works and creating new pieces. Many of these works are housed in private collections and some are deposited in the Trengganu Archives and Museum. The Trengganu Sultanate continued the Melakan written traditions well into this century. Amongst the new literature written and researched were the *Syair Sultan Zainal Abidin III* by Tengku Kalthum Dalam and *Syair Tuan Humphreys* penned by Hajjah Wok Aishan bte Hj. Nik Idris. There are many others which received little attention such as *Syair Perkahwinan Dahulu Kala* by Tengku Ampuan Meriam and the *Kitab Tib* – a dictionary of traditional medicine commissioned by the Royal Court. Equally important is a large collection of Royal genealogies copied and up-dated by the Trengganu-born Tengku Su bin Tengku Hussian who is grandson of Tengku Abdul Jalil, the eldest son of Sultan Hussian of Selat. Photocopies of these stacks of documents are deposited in the Main Library of the University of Malaya.

¹⁵ Colonial office 273/459 : Young to C. O., 10 January 1917, desp. 11, f. 26.

The tradition of writing in Trengganu is closely related to the knowledge of natural dyes and forest produce. The black ink used for penning a manuscript was a mixture of paper ash, arang belanga and cuka nipah. The quality of the work was enhanced by applying a black lecture to the script by adding the latex from janggus to the ink mixture. Striking colours further enriched the quality of the manuscript. Red was extracted from buah kesumba keeling, while shades of purple were derived from biji kundang and asam jawa. In some manuscripts gold motifs were embossed through a process that was similar in the making of Kain Teliput. The knowledge of natural dyes helped develop the Trengganu Sultanate in the nineteenth century as one of the finest weaving centres in the region. The weaving industry was based on the putting-out in the region. The weaving industry was based on the putting-out system which involved a number of separate tasks ranging from the making of dyes, setting of patterns and actual weaving. It is significant that the designer in this industry was the merchant who knew the markets. It was the widely travelled merchant who had intimate knowledge of the diverse markets within the culturally defined trading diasporas that dominated the manufacturing industry. The Trengganu kain songket industry based on the out-putting system survived twentieth century's trade depressions, wars, competitions from cheap manufactured cotton textiles and more recently State intrusion which attempted to bureaucratise the industry.¹⁶

There are another elements in twentieth century Trengganu that can be tracked be down to a Melakan tradition. The history of the Melakan Sultanate and Islam are intimately related. Each major migration of the Melakan Royal Family from the Sultanates of Johor Lama to Johor-Rhio-Lingga and finally to Trangganu was a movement of the major Islamic centres of learning. The religious leaders were the scholars and intellectuals of the Sultanate and were drawn from Sayyids who besides their ancestries had grounding in religious law and doctrine. The Trengganu Sultanate since its establishment in the early eighteenth century down to the early decades of the twentieth century was dominating by three Ulama families. They patronized the Royal Family and were in (...)

The first of these Ulama lineages was that of Syarif Abdul Malik bin Abdulah, better known Tukku Pulau Manis. He became Sultan Zainal Abidin I's father-in-law, teacher and adviser. This Ulama trained in Aceh and Mecca the masjid Syarif Abdul Malik at Pulau Manis, which is still in existence until today. The religious centre at Pulau Manis was eclipsed

¹⁶ Maznah Mohamad, «The Malay Handloom Weavers: A study of the Growth and Decline of Traditional Manufacture». Ph. D. thesis , Departement of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya, 1990.

in the mid nineteenth century by Pulau Duyong under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah and his relative Sheikh Abdul Kadir. They traced their ancestry from the Sultanate of Patani, further north. The founders of the religious centre at Pulau Duyong were granted land by Sultan Baginda Omar. At the end of the nineteenth century yet another religious centre emerged at Paluh under the leadership of Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Mohamad Al-Idrus. His father was a Javanese trader who married a local Sayyid's daughter. The family of Tukku Sayyid Paluh was held in very high esteem and their religious centre was an object of constant visits of people. Sayyid Abdul Rahman and his brother married the daughters of Sultan Ahmad II. The various trading routes that led to Trengganu brought the ancestors of the founders of these religious centres¹⁷. They enhanced the glory of the Kingdom.

The trade routes also brought carpenters, artisans and others who left cultural forms reflecting distinct styles. In 1720 the Royal palace at Trengganu was the most impressive building in a town of 1,000 houses. The labour force of several hundred Malays was brought from Kelantan territories, north of Trengganu, to build the structure. Kelantan was at this period a part of Terengganu's domain¹⁸. The architectural style that developed in the Sultanate was destroyed in a great fire in 1882 which burnt down the ruler's istana (palace) and 1,600 other houses. In 1890 the Sultan built another palace called Rumah Tengah which bore a distinct style that soon came to be identified with Trengganu. The Rumah Limas (Shallow type of house) had a broad low roof, with a low functional gable at either end. Sultan Zainal Abidin III pioneered the new form adapted from the Rhio islands. He was asserting the significance of his Sultanate in relation to the others. He could not afford to copy the high-roof style which was already popular amongst Kelantan and Patani royalties. Inside the palace each door and window had a delicately carved and gilded panel above it with Koranic inscriptions. The design of these motifs was the inspiration of Haji Abdul Rahman who acquired the skills in Istanbul.¹⁹

Inside the Trengganu palace the rites of passage ceremonies and social life re-affirmed the significance of the Trengganu Royal lineage. The first ruler of Trengganu was installed by the playing of the Nobat. The Bugis sources have it that they tabalkan the ceremony was performed by the ruler of Patani. In playing the Nobat instruments, each tune has its own significance. Trengganu rulers were installed to the sound of Ibrahim Khalilullah (Abrahan,

¹⁷ Shaharil Talib, « Port and Polity of Teregganu During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries ».

¹⁸ Shaharil Talib. « The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Late Nineteenth Century », JMBRAS, Vol. 50. Pt. 2, 1977, pp. 25-47.

¹⁹ Mubin Sheppard, op. cit., P. 35.

God's confidant) and moved in procession to the accompaniment of Iskandar Shah (King Alexander the Great). The present Trengganu Nobat instruments are of Johor-Rhio-Lingga origins. In 1885 the ancient wooden Nobat drums of Johor-Rhio-Lingga were replaced by three large silver drums crafted by Malay silversmiths in Batavia.²⁰ In 1911 when the last ruler of Rhio-Lingga abdicated he transferred the collection to Trengganu, thus acknowledging that Sultanate as the spiritual heir of ancient Melaka.

The Trengganu regalia consists of seven articles that must be carried on the day of the Sultan's installation. Trengganu sources claim that these were gifts of the ruling Queen of Patani to the first ruler of Trengganu upon his installation. Some of these articles according to the claim were part of the Melakan regalia which was obtained by the rulers of Patani who had earlier underwritten the economic difficulties of Johor Lama. The return of these articles to Trengganu was seen as an acknowledgement of its independent Malay status as opposed to the Bugis controlled Johor-Lingga court. The seven articles included the jewelled gold mounted Sword of the State, the gold mounted State Kris, two gold mace (one spiritual and one temporal); a gold war club, an ornamental gold Betal box and a gold cuspidor.²¹

The gamelan music and dance that was performed in the Trengganu court in the twentieth century was performed in the Trangganu court in the twentieth century had Johor-Rhio-Lingga origins. The gamelan orchestra and dancers, like the Nobat, were part of the Trengganu regalia. In the case of the gamelan it was regarded as *Alar Kelengkapan Permainan Diraja* (Royal musical instruments for entertainment). The gamelan consisted of 8 musical instruments which included xylophones (one gamban and two sarun), a keromong (10 smaller brass gongs), a kenong set of three giant gongs and a gendang (double-ended barrel drums).²² It was usually managed by female members of the Royal Family.

The gamelan was known to have existed in the Joho-Rhio-Lingga court and one set travelled to Pahang in 1811 through a marriage between the Royal Family of Johor-Rhio-Lingga with the daughter of the Bendahara of Pahang. The gamelan traditions once again travelled through the marriage of Tengku Ampuan Meriam of Pahang with Tengku Sulaiman bin Sultan Zainal Abidin III. The playing of the gamelan in Trengganu was at its height during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman (1920-42) where all the dancers and musicians were under the charge of Tengku Ampuan Meriam – possibly the most artistic of all Royal consorts

²⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

²¹ Ibid., p.24

²² Ibid., pp. 92-93

on the Malay Peninsula in this century. In the 1920's a new gamelan set, copied from the Pahang model, was obtained from Indonesia and according to Pak Mat, the leading gamelan and nobat player, in an interview with the writer, it was Sultan Sulaiman who personally tuned the gamelan and gave it a distinct Trengganu flavour that distinguished this set from the others in Pahang and Joho-Rhio-Lingga. In the court of Sultan Sulaiman and his consort gamelan dancers and musicians were trained to perform a repertoire of over 30 different dances to the accompaniment of the orchestra.

There were other dance forms that were of fifteenth century Melakan origin that eventually migrated to Trengganu through the different Royal court centre. In a recent study on the Zapin, Anis Mohd. Nor stumbled on the similarity of ancient zapin Malay dance forms in Lengah, Johor (on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula) with that performed in Trengganu. In contrast to the gamelan performers who were all females, the zapin dancers were all males. It was played in and out of the inner sanctuaries of the palace. The zapin is a manifestation of Malay-Islamic cultural evolution and was performed on ceremonies such as Maulud Nabi and marriages. The musical instruments are the gambus (lute or 'ud), marwas (hand drums) and dok (long drum). The dance originated from Hadramaut and developed in Johor after the fall of Melaka into a distinct Malay style. This form contrasted with the Arab style which was much more robust with high leaps and skips. The zapin Melayu found its way into the Malay courts wherever in Pulau Penyegat, Pulau Bintan, Siak, Indrapura, Serdang, Deli and Kual Trengganu.²³

The court titles of old Melaka were retained in the twentieth century Trengganu. Sultan Sulaiman (1920-42) made a conscious attempt to research the Sejarah Melayu for suitable titles which may be bestowed in his court. It was significant that the son of Sultan Zainal Abidin III did not want his court to lose its Malay character. He went on to suggest that the titled individuals be paid a special allowance outside their regular income.²⁴ The proposal of allowance was rejected by the British on the ground that many of the old Malay titles were archaic, that the revival of such titles would lead to future claims when the title fell vacant and that most of the present title holders (14 in number) drew some form of State income.²⁵ However, the Sultanate continued to bestow the titles based on ancient Malay court usage to members of the court. Although holders of these titles did not perform the functions that were

²³ Mohd, Anis Md. Nor, «The Zapin Melayu Dance of Johor: from village to a National Performance Tradition », Ph. D. thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Southeast Asian Studies and Musicology, 1990.

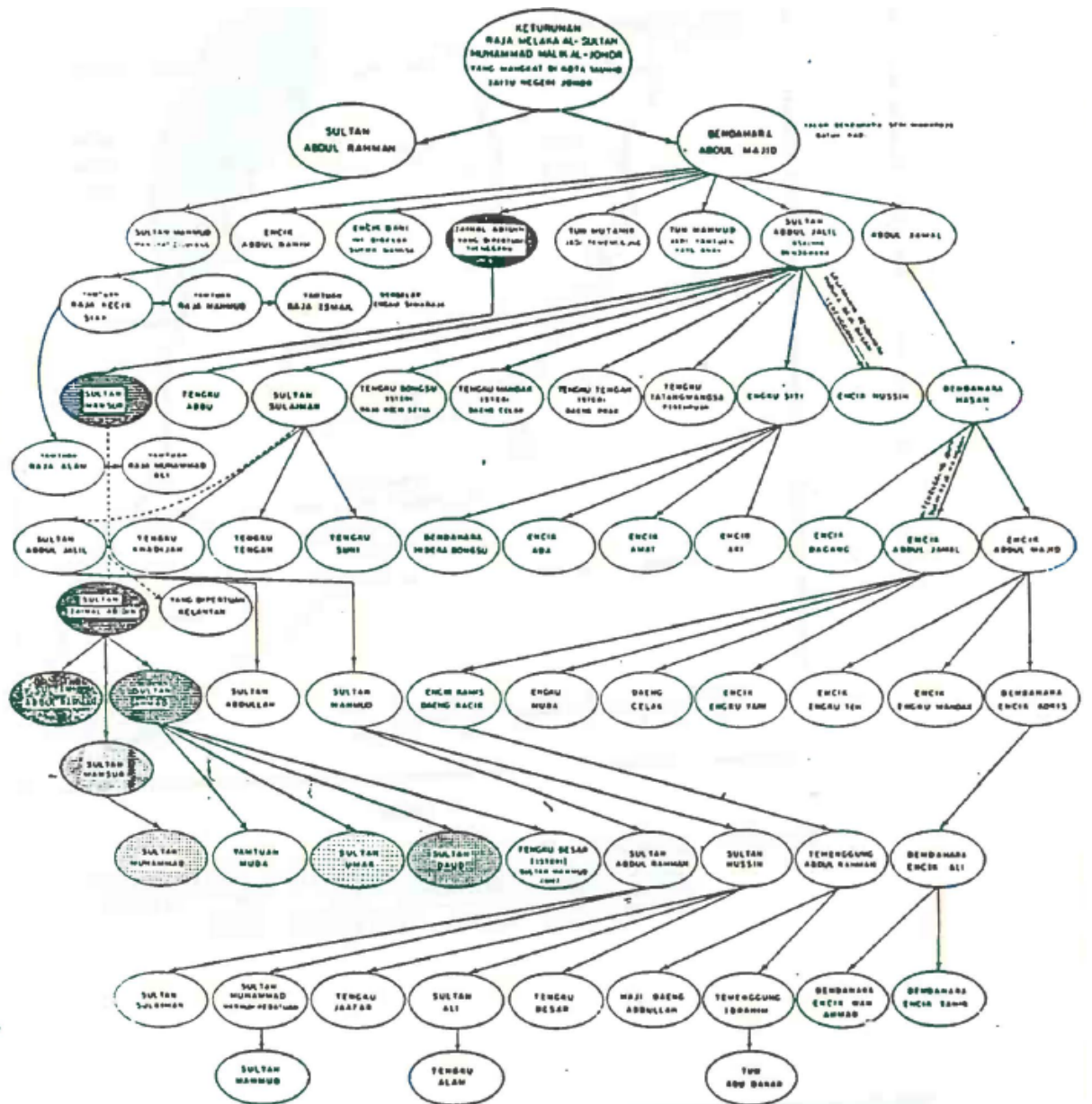
²⁴ Encl. 1, Sultan Sulaiman to M. B. D., 17 January 1921 in M. B. O. 245/1339

²⁵ M. B. O. 245/1339 : J. L. Humphreys to M. B. O., 16 February 1921.

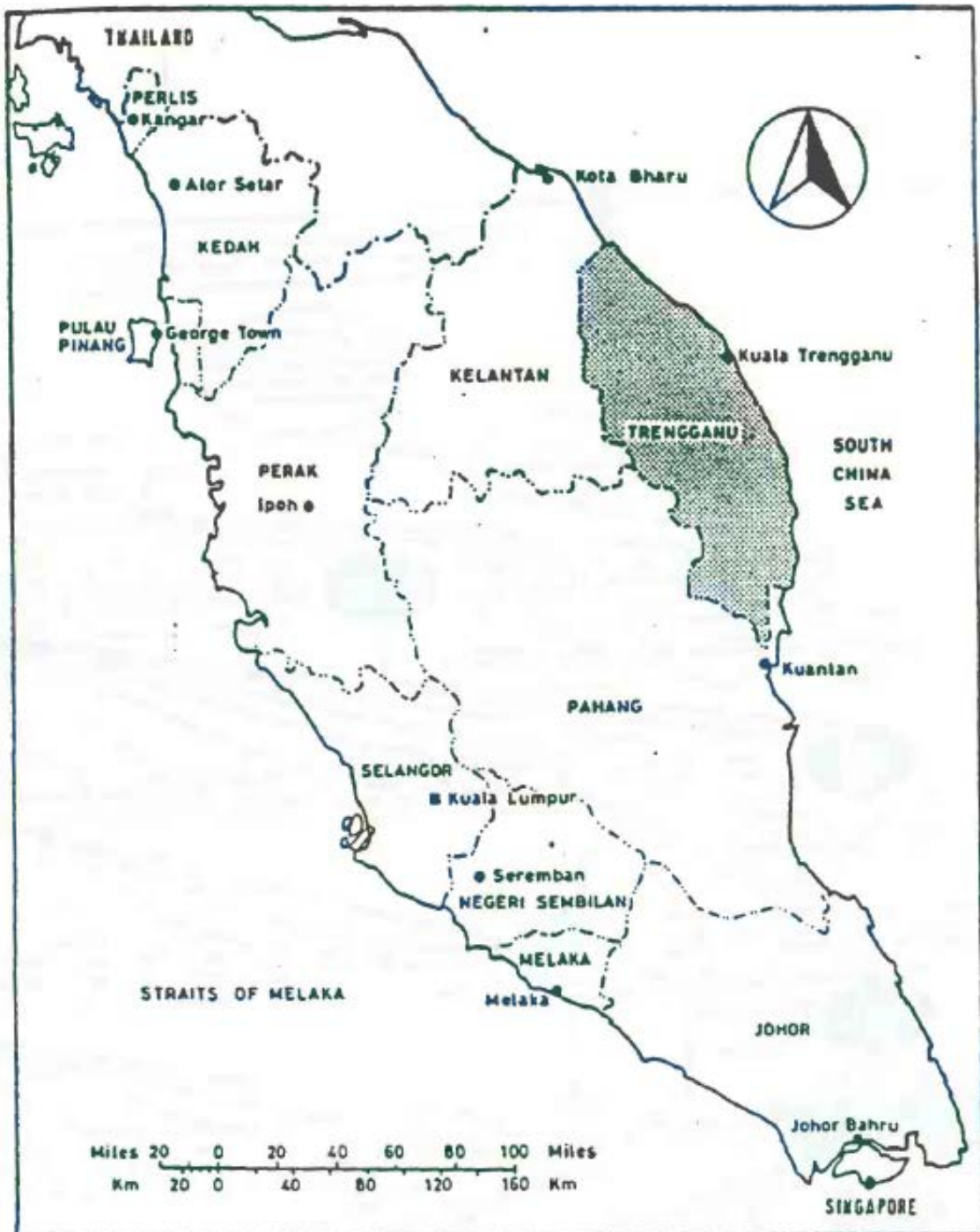
associated with the positions, its continued bestowal in the twentieth century had great cultural meaning.

The most recent cultural milestone in this century was the presentation of the Nafiri last year to the reigning Sultan of Trengganu on his birthday. This way the Nafiri that was part of the 1812 nobat collection of Johor-Rhio-Lingga Sultanate which fore-stalled the proper installation of Sultan Abdul Rahman presented the nobat instruments to Trengganu after his forced abdication in 1911, the nafiri stayed in a private collection. The return of the nafiri completes the ancient nobat collection which historically installed Malay Sultans since 15th century Melaka through Johor Lama, Johor-Rhio-Lingga and finally the Trengganu Sultanate where it rightfully belongs.

Salasilah Keturunan Raja Melaka

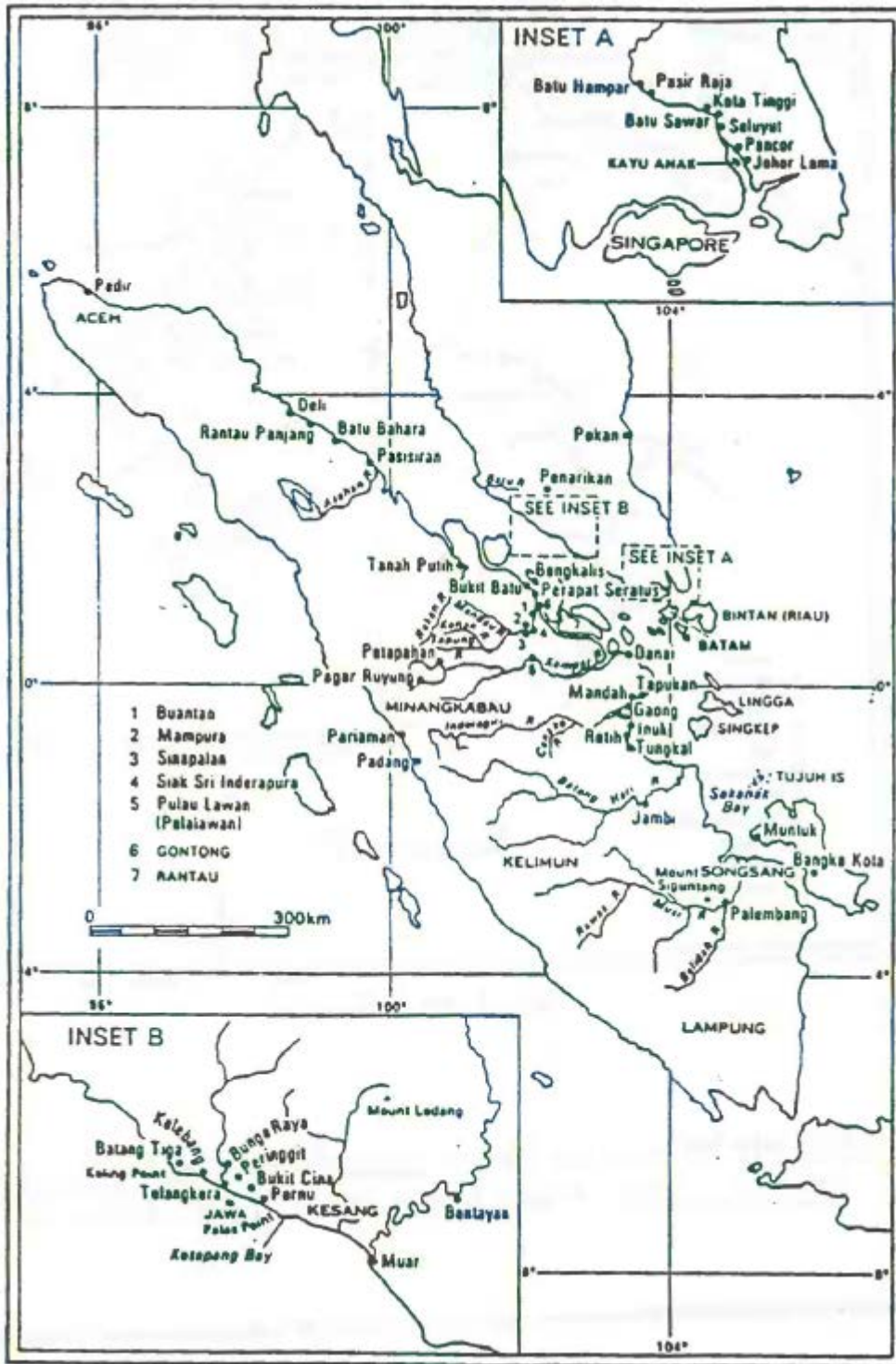


Source: Shaharil Talib, After its own Image: The Trengganu Experience 1881-1941, Oxford University, Singapore, 1984.



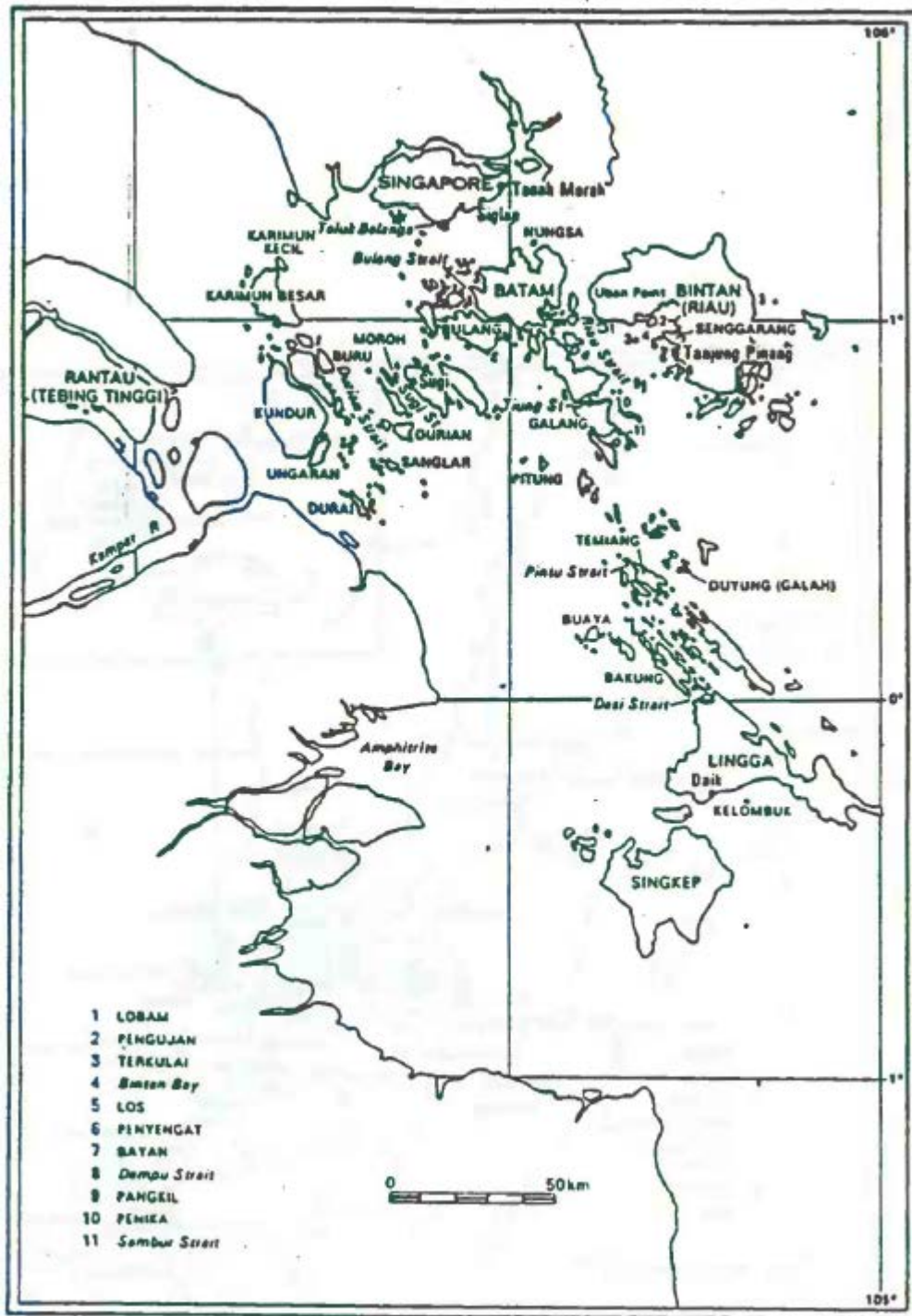
1. Malaya

Source: Virginia Matheson and Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Precious Gift Tuhfat al-Nafis*,
Oxford University Press Kuala Lumpur 1982



2. Sumatra, Malacca, and Johor

Source: Virginia Matheson and Barbara Watson Andaya, The Precious Gift Tuhfat al-Nafis,
Oxford University Press Kuala Lumpur 1982.



3. Riau-Lingga archipelago