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New light on the coming of Islam to Indonesia?

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NEW LIGHT ON THE COMING OF ISLAM TO INDONESIA?*

In two books on South-East Asia which appeared a few years ago (Paul Wheatley's *The Golden Chersonese* of 1961 and Mrs M. A. P. Meilink's doctoral thesis *Asian Trade and European Influence* of 1962) I found the same lamentation as often comes to my lips when I listen to addresses in the field of Western history. This is, that the Western historian is mostly so much better off with regard to his material than those who occupy themselves with Eastern history, and in particular those who are interested in earlier times and in the questions which arise there.

The "Golden Chersonese" which Wheatley describes in his book is the name found in Ptolemy for the Malay Peninsula, and the author is concerned with its historical geography prior to A.D. 1500. Ideally, of course, archaeological and other data available on the spot would have to provide the material for such work, but these are just the things lacking, and on the first page of his book Wheatley speaks with appropriate regret about the devastating effect of the climate, the tropical rainfall, insects, mould and the remarkably quick rate of alluvial deposit, which together annihilate all trace of human activity as soon as man is no longer present.

And so the whole book had to be compiled from literary data which the author gathered together from Greek, Indian, Arabo-Persian and Chinese sources, whereby the last two supplied the lion's share. But neither can this material be used without further ado. "It must not be presumed, however, that these bodies of evidence, intractable and confused as they frequently are, can always be mutually reconciled. Rather are they analogous to photographs of a landscape taken from various positions, and often with different filters, which can be correlated only from external reference points" (*op. cit.* p. VI).

* Translation of a paper read at a meeting of the Oosters Genootschap at Leiden, 27-3-1968.

It is no different with the economic history of the same period, for which knowledge of the historical geography is naturally of the greatest importance, and this also applies to the period from 1500 to c. 1630, which constitutes the subject of Mrs M. A. P. Meilink's doctoral thesis. Discussing the work of Van Leur in her introduction, she says that there could be no question of this economic history's being based on precise statistical data: "The person who enters this territory lacks practically all the aids which an economic historian has at his disposal where European history is concerned and, to quote a somewhat austere pronouncement of Professor C. H. Philips, he is carrying on 'single-handed a guerilla warfare in the jungle'" (*op.cit.*, p. 3).

Those who investigate the coming of Islam in South-East Asia face similar difficulties. "Our supply of factual data on the earliest period of Islam in the East Indies is poor". This is how Snouck Hurgronje began the section of his inaugural lecture at Leiden on 23rd January, 1907 which embodies his view of the coming of Islam in Indonesia.¹

One cannot deny that a number of new data have become available since Snouck Hurgronje stated this poverty,² but the whole investigation into the earliest history of Islam in South-East Asia still suffers from a scarcity of data. One must be grateful when the devastating tropical climate with its excessive heat and abundant rainfall has at least left something in the way of less perishable objects, such as gravestones, to make use of. For these provide us with reliable, if limited information of the past, more reliable, at any rate, than local historiography, in which the memory of the coming of Islam is blurred by legends to such an extent that it is more of an edifying than of a historical character.

It is useful not to lose sight of these unfavourable factors when one deals with the reproach now heard so often in former colonial areas concerning European history-writing of Eastern countries. None of the states which achieved independence is any longer satisfied with descriptions of its past composed by Western historians in the colonial period, which are said — often quite rightly — to contain nothing but the narrative of the activities of foreigners in the country concerned and, therefore, to be incomplete, one-sided, sometimes even biased or,

¹ French translation in *Verspreide Geschriften* IV, II pp. 99-114.

² Snouck Hurgronje's description of the archaeological site on the left bank of the Pase river where the ancient cemeteries are situated, *V.G.* IV, I pp. 402-404; the results of Moquette's investigations *in situ*, *Oudh. Rapport* 1913; *Oudh. Verslag* 2e kw. 1914.

worse still, to have sprung from ulterior motives.³ On all sides people want a national historiography which satisfies a feeling of self-respect by presenting to the new nation a continuous whole in which its own people is the focal point, not the foreigner.

In this connection one frequently finds quoted the well-known tirade of Van Leur, in which he says that Indonesia was observed by the foreigners from the deck of the ship, the walls of the fort, or the verandah of the trading-station. There is, of course, a good deal of mere rhetoric in this, as among both the early Portuguese and the Dutch reporters who wrote about the East one finds some who obviously looked further than the narrow horizon which Van Leur imputes to them. And it is certain that Van Leur omitted to his detriment to acquaint himself with what the early Portuguese reports have to offer.

In the Journal of South-East Asian History from 1960 to 1962 a remarkable debate was carried on concerning the desirability and the feasibility of an independent, autonomous historiography in this part of the world. The rejection of the "colonial" historiography is, however, easier than the creation of a new one, unless new data become available which make this possible. But in many fields the need of more copious information is still badly felt, not to mention the fact that supposedly new data are not always handled with the necessary critical attitude. The report of the meeting held at Medan in 1963, where the problem of the coming of Islam in Indonesia was considered, provided convincing evidence of this, although, on the other hand, proof of a matter-of-fact and critical approach was not lacking.⁴ However, the very fact

³ See e.g. *Risalah Seminar Sedjarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia...* tgl. 17 sampai 20 Maret 1963 di Medan, publ. by Pertjetakan "Waspada", Medan. On p. 88 one reads there: *Dakwaan orang bahwa Islam tidak diterima langsung dari Mekkah dan bahwa "kepertjajaan baru" (Islam) itu hanja diterima dari India, sebagai diterangkan oleh Prof. Snouck Hurgronje, adalah suatu djarum "halus" jang dimasukkan beliau untuk menentang pengaruh Arab jang beliau dapat seketika Atjeh berperang melawan Belanda.* That is to say: The claim that Islam was not received direct from Mecca and that the "new faith" (Islam) came from India, as Professor Snouck Hurgronje declared, is a "fine" needle introduced by him in order to counter the Arab influence which he had found at the time of the Acheh War.

⁴ Thus e.g. on p. 116 where Hadji Aboebakar Atjeh, in connection with H.M. Zainuddin's reading of the inscription on the gravestone found in the Pase district of the Indian Nā'inā Ḥusām al-Dīn ibn Nā'inā Amin, regrets that a reproduction of the inscription was omitted. The year on this stone was in fact already read in 1940 by Cowan as A.H. 823, = A.D. 1420 (T.B.G. Vol. LXXX pt. 1, p. 15 sqq., where a reproduction of the stone and a transliteration are also found), while H.M. Zainuddin reads A.H. 622, = A.D. 1225!

A still bigger discrepancy is signalized (*op.cit.*, pp. 208-209) by Hadji Md.

that interest in historical subjects has been aroused is important, for only when the interest exists can one perhaps expect that the search for new data will be continued and, in this instance, that the further exploration of the antiquities of the Pase district and other places mentioned in early reports — discontinued for more than half a century — will be undertaken again.

For it is here in North Sumatra that Islam first obtained a firm hold in the Archipelago. The memory of this has been preserved in Malay literature, albeit in a legendary form. Two writings tell of the little states which existed here in olden times: the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, the "History of the Princes of Pasai", and the bundle of stories about ancient times in Malay countries known as the *Séjarah Mélanyu*. Which of these two writings is the older has not been definitely established. The fairly general opinion was until recently that the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* had been used in the compilation of the *Séjarah Mélanyu*, but a few years ago Professor A. Teeuw argued the reverse,⁵ and not without good grounds in my view. We know of the *Séjarah Mélanyu* that a certain edition was compiled in 1612, but the material is naturally older. Without fear of contradiction one can state that both works, with some mutual variation, contain the legendary story concerning the beginnings of Islam in North Sumatra which was current in the 16th century in the Malay lands.

The *Hikayat* begins with the supernatural descent of the ancestors of the princes of Pase which is known from many a Malay tale; but their fosterfathers, remarkably enough, already bear the Muslim names Ahmad and Muhammad. This ancestral couple had two sons, the elder of whom, Méräh Silu (Silau?), founded the city of Samudra after having become rich in a miraculous way. Pase was later founded from Samudra.⁶ The prophet Muhammad, the story goes, had once prophesied

Said between Ismail Jakub's reading of the year on the gravestone of the Daya princess Siti Hawa at Kuala Daya (sub-district Pulo Raya) and the statement of T. J. Veltman (Nota Gesch. Landschap Pidië, *T.B.G.* Vol. LVIII (1917-'19), p. 45). The former reads 11 Muharram A.H. 460 = 1067, and Veltman 11 Muharram A.H. 962 = A.D. 1554! But a reproduction is not given here either, and also no defense of the reading of the year.

⁵ *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* and *Séjarah Mélanyu*, in: *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday, edited by John Bastin and R. Roolvink, Oxford 1964, pp. 222-234.

⁶ Pelliot was of the opinion that despite the lack of local sources older than ± 1300 the name Pase must nevertheless be older. In his view Pase was probably meant by the kingdom of Pa-hsi, to which three emissaries were sent in 1309, during the Mongol dynasty of China. But in the 11th and 12th centuries the name Po-ssu, with which Persia is generally indicated, may

the foundation of this city, which would bring forth many saintly men, and had left instructions to go and bring the king and his people to the true faith when this had come about.⁷ Therefore the ruler of Mecca, when the existence of Samudra had become known there, fitted out a ship under the command of a certain Sheikh Ismā'īl. The latter was instructed to sail not direct to Samudra but first to Ma'bar, that is the Coromandel Coast, in order to fetch the holy Sultan Muḥammad, a descendant of the first caliph Abu Bakr, and to begin the work of conversion together with him. Their work was facilitated by the Prophet's appearing to Mērah Silu in a dream and spitting into his mouth, so that the next day he was immediately capable of reciting the Koran.⁸ In the *Hikayat* the ship sails from Arabia via Ma'bar direct to Samudra; in the *Sējarah Mēlayu* it first visits a number of other places: Fansur, Lambri, Haru, and Pērlak, then to return to Samudra, which is westward of Haru and Pērlak.

The prophetic dream is an element which apparently is essential in such stories.⁹ The ruler of Malacca also has a dream in which the

sometimes have been employed to indicate a Malay state. "My present view is this: all the texts mentioning Po-ssu before the Sung dynasty refer in all likelihood to Persia But in the 11th and the 12th centuries the same name was sometimes misapplied to a Malay state; this is particularly the case for the Malay numerals of Po-ssu preserved in the *Kōdanshō* of c. 1100" (*Notes on Marco Polo* (ouvrage posthume) I, Paris, 1959, p. 87).

⁷ Still more fantastic is the tale contained in the *Hikayat Asal Bangsa Jinn dan Dewa-dewa* (Cat. Mal. Hss. Mus. Bat. Gen., Batavia, 1905, p. 295), according to which the Prophet informed Abu Bakr on his death-bed that Pase had already accepted Islam. In the time of Zain al-Ābidin, the son of Husain, two sayyids, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, were then sent to the islands "below the wind". They were instructed first of all to greet the Pēndawa Dērmawangsa who lived at Seumawe (the later Pase), but neglected this duty; so they did not dare to return and remained there as royal servants.

⁸ A similar story (appearance of the Prophet; writing of the *basmala* with saliva in the palms of the king's hands) is current in Macassar. See B. F. Matthes, *Boegineesche en Makassaarsche Legenden*, in this *Journal*, Vol. 34 (1885) p. 447.

The miraculous effect of the saliva of the Prophet is also mentioned in Arabic literature; see Ibn al-Tiqtaqa's *Kitāb al-Fakhri*, ed. Ahlwardt, Gotha, 1860, p. 168 Arab., where the remarkable ability of ʻAbdallāh b. al-ʻAbbās as interpreter of the Koran is ascribed to the fact that the Prophet had spoken the *adhān* in his ear and had spat in his mouth (*tafala fi fihi*); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, K. al-ṭibb No. 46, where it is told that the devil who worried ʻUthmān was exorcised by the prophet, who spat three times into his mouth: and the story about Ahmad Kathīr told by Ibn ʻAsākir in his *Description of Damascus* (transl. by N. Elisséeff, Damascus 1959, p. 193).

⁹ The meaning of dreams in the Muslim world is treated in a number of contributions in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. by G. E. von Grunbaum and Roger Caillois, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1966.

Prophet appears to him, teaches him the confession of faith and charges him to go and fetch a man the next day from a ship which will arrive from Jeddā. Upon arising the ruler discovers that he has been miraculously circumcised.

If one wished to uncover in this tale of Samudra a historical core, one could say that in the milieu in which the tale arose people were convinced that Islam had come via the Coromandel Coast. It is very questionable, however, whether one may see reason to be convinced of "the artificial and superficial nature of theories linking the spread of Islam with merchants" in the fact that the ruler of the Ma^cbar Coast resigned the position of king and went with Sheikh Ismā^cil to Sumatra as a dervish, as Professor A. H. Johns has done.¹⁰

We are here dealing with a well-known motif (the legend of the Buddha), which has also become widespread in Islam.¹¹ As far as India is concerned, one can for instance point to the legend, reproduced by T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 268, of Bābā Fakhr al-Dīn, whose grave at Penukonda (Anantapur, Madras) is honoured as that of the bringer of Islam. The story goes that he was a king of Sīstān who gave up the throne, went to Mecca as a mendicant, and was there instructed by the Prophet in a dream to go to India and preach Islam. We think furthermore of the legend of Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, the prince from Balkh, which is also very well-known in Malay literature. Without wishing in the slightest to deny or belittle the significance of the Sufis, the supporters of the mystical trend in Islam, for the spread of this religion in Asia, I believe that Professor Johns disregards the incontestable fact that the Muslim trader is the most common missionary of Islam in foreign parts.

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What now have European researches contributed to this subject? It is obvious that in former times the spread of Islam in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula should have been ascribed to Arabs. Seeing

¹⁰ A. H. Johns, Sufism in Indonesia, in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July, 1961), p. 15.

¹¹ It should be noted, however, that Ṭabarī (ed. De Goeje I p. 853) tells the story of Nuṣmān I, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra (died 418), who resigned his throne and became a dervish. In ancient Arabic poetry, for instance by ʿAdī b. Zāid and Labīd, this pre-islamic ascetic prince, the 'Lord of the palaces of Khawarnaq and Sadir', is mentioned both as an illustration of wealth and magnificence and as an example of the right attitude towards worldly goods. See C. H. Becker, *Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere*, in *Islamstudien* Vol. I p. 508; C. Brockelmann, *Die Gedichte des Lebīd*, No. XLI; Massignon, art. Khawarnaq, in *Enz. des Islām* II p. 1001.

that Islam originated in Arabia it seemed self-evident to seek a link between this religion and the presence of Arabs wherever both Arabs and Islam were encountered. In Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula Arabs were found in many places. So it seemed a foregone conclusion that these were the ones who had brought Islam. But where the Arabs had come from was less clear. It had been observed that the Muslims in these areas followed the Shāfi‘ī school of law, so they must have originated from a country where this was also the case. Thus Professor Keyzer, one of the earliest scholars of Muslim law in Holland, came to look for a link with Egypt, where the Shāfi‘ī school has of old occupied an important place.¹²

The surprising thing about this explanation is that Keyzer, who was a professor at the Delft Academy for training civil servants for the Indies, apparently did not know that practically all the Arabs living in Indonesia originated from Hadramaut, and that the Shāfi‘ī school of law is likewise the dominant one there. Otherwise he would probably have indicated Hadramaut, which, however, would have been just as incorrect, seeing that the immigration of Hadramis into Indonesia is of much later date than the advent of Islam.

Keyzer stood alone in this indication of Egypt as the country of origin of Indonesian Islam. Niemann (1861) and De Hollander (1861) spoke only of Arabs. Niemann did not venture an opinion on the dating of the advent of Islam; on the other hand De Hollander considered that there had perhaps already been Arabs in Java in the 13th century. Veth (1878) also spoke only of Arabs, who acquired influence for themselves by concluding marriages. The observation of Crawfurd (1820), who certainly mentioned Arabs, but also proposed "intercourse with the Mahomedans of the Eastern coast of India" as cause of the "superior instruction" of the Indonesians in religion, had apparently escaped them all.¹³

A step in the right direction was made by Pijnappel, the first professor of Malay at the University of Leiden. In a volume of this

¹² Prof. S. Keyzer was the author of *Précis de Jurisprudence Musulmane par Abou Chodja*, Leiden, 1859.

¹³ G. K. Niemann, *Inleiding tot de kennis van den Islam, ook met betrekking tot den Indischen Archipel*, Rotterdam, 1861.

J. J. de Hollander, *Handleiding bij de beoefening der land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, 2 vols., Breda, 1861-1864.

P. J. Veth, *Java, geografisch, etnologisch, historisch*, 3 vols., Haarlem, 1875-1882.

John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1820.

Journal (1872, pp. 135-158), he devoted an article to the knowledge which the Arabs possessed of the Indonesian Archipelago prior to the coming of the Portuguese.¹⁴ In this he based himself on Renaud's *Relation des Voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et à la Chine*, a booklet which appeared in Paris in 1845, containing the translation of a travel-story¹⁵ from A.D. 851, then still ascribed to the navigator Suleiman. After having given a resumé of Suleiman's information on Indonesia, Pijnappel moves on to speak of Marco Polo and of Ibn Battūta, the Moroccan traveller who visited a large part of the then known world in the first half of the 14th century (1325-1353), and thereby also included Sumatra. Pijnappel says that the question of whence and by which route the Arabs reached the Indonesian Archipelago would be of no interest to us were it not that the origin of their religion is closely connected with it, and that Persian influence seems to exist alongside Arab. He points then to the trade-route from the Persian Gulf along the western coast of India, he names Broach, Surat and Quilon (Kulam) as important commercial centres, mentions the Arab interest in Adam's Peak in Ceylon, where Adam is supposed to have done penance for 200 years after his banishment from paradise, and ends with the conversion to Islam of the king of Calicut, the "Zamorin", a name which also appears later on (e.g. in the Dutch East India Company's documents) referring to the rulers of this area.

Pijnappel ascribes the spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago to these Shāfi'i Arabs of Gujarat and Malabar, especially because these regions are mentioned so frequently in the early history of the Archipelago. The Persian influence would also be explained, partially at least, by this contact with the western coast of India.

Thus the preaching of Islam is still thought of as proceeding from Arabs, but these no longer come directly from the Arab countries, but from India, and in particular from the west coast — from Gujarat and Malabar. Neither the east coast, that is, the Coromandel Coast, called in Arabic Ma'bar (passage, corridor, i.e. between the mainland and Ceylon), North India nor Bengal come into consideration.

After Pijnappel came Snouck Hurgronje.

A colonial exhibition was held in 1883 in Amsterdam and on this occasion scholarly addresses were organized. One of the speakers was

¹⁴ *op. cit.* pp. 135-158.

¹⁵ Sauvaget, who republished the text and translation in 1948, showed that Suleiman was not the writer but was only an informant (*Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde*, p. XIX-XX). The writer is unknown.

Snouck Hurgronje, who was then 26 years old and had taken his doctor's degree three years before; he took the topic: The Meaning of Islam for its Adherents in the East Indies. In this address Snouck first developed the proposition of the South Indian origin of Indonesian Islam. When Islam had once gained a firm hold in the port cities of South India, "the inhabitants of the Deccan, who resided in great numbers in the port cities of this island-world as middlemen in the trade between the Muslim states (i.e. the states of western Asia) and the East Indies, were as if in the nature of things destined to scatter the first seeds of the new religion. Arabs, especially those who passed for descendants of the Prophet under the name of Sayyid or Sharif, later found a welcome opportunity to demonstrate their organizational ability. As priests, priest-princes and as sultans they often put the finishing touches to the formation of the new realms".¹⁶

Hence the idea that Islam was necessarily brought by Arabs has been abandoned here. I should like to add the following.

In the study of Indonesian literatures one sees in the beginning a similar constraint in the idea that everything which is Muslim or has an Arabic title has to come from the Arabic. Later on a Persian origin was assumed for some writings, as people were struck by the numerous Persian words and names¹⁷ encountered in Malay and Javanese stories. Famous Persian names also occur in Achehnese literature, of which Snouck Hurgronje gave a model summary in the second volume of his *De Atjéhers* in 1894, and this is why the writer warns against speaking of Persian influence on the Achehnese. For, he says, by far the majority of Achehnese romances show unmistakable signs of the same origin as the Malay. Very many are definitely based on Malay models, and as cradle of the bulk of romances in both languages one may certainly consider the same part of South India to which the popular mysticism and the popular religious legends of the Muslim peoples of the Indonesian Archipelago also point.

Snouck Hurgronje does not, however, further define which part of South India this is. On the contrary — a little further on he observes that he cannot for the time being indicate the section of South India

¹⁶ Snouck Hurgronje, *Verspreide Geschriften* VI, p. 7.

¹⁷ Sometimes almost unrecognizably corrupted, as e.g. the "peculiar personal name" Meunua Djhō, regarded by Snouck Hurgronje (*De Atjéhers* II: 146 note 4) as having arisen from *benua Djohor*, the land of Johore, but explained by Bausani (Note sui vocabuli persiani in malese indonesiane, in *Annali dell' Instituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, Nuova Serie, Vol. XIV (1964), p. 31) as a corruption of Manūčehr.

where the threads linking the spiritual life of the Indonesians with that country come together. An investigation into the literature of the Muslim population of South India would be required in order to obtain a greater degree of certainty on these questions.

Unfortunately we have to admit that now, almost 75 years later, such an investigation has still not taken place, so that on the Indian side the position has remained unchanged. So it is no wonder that the Italian scholar Alessandro Bausani has again expressed the necessity for this research in an article on Persian words in Malay which appeared a few years ago.¹⁸

Bausani came to the conclusion that at least 90 % of the Persian words in Malay indicate concrete objects, and not even 10 % abstract or adjectival concepts, and that for only a limited number can definite borrowing from India not be established. But then he asks "which part of India?" — only to answer: "Ritengo che uno dei desiderata più urgenti della filologia malese sia uno studio preciso e ben articolato dell'Islam sud-indiano" (*op.cit.*, p. 28). It is obvious that such research would not only be of importance for Malay philology, but also for determining the origin of Indonesian Islam.

Having touched on this subject in 1894 in his discussion of Achehnese literature, Snouck Hurgronje went into it more deeply in 1907 in his inaugural lecture at Leiden which is, in fact, entitled *Arabia and the East Indies*, but of which twelve pages are devoted to the relations of Indonesian Islam with India, and only a mere four to direct influence from Arabia, which only made itself felt when European commerce and shipping had gradually driven the Indians out of the Archipelago.

As the first of the fixed points important for reconstructing the advance of Islam in the Archipelago Snouck Hurgronje mentions the report on northern Sumatra, namely on Pase, to be found in the travel-tale of the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battūta who visited this place in 1345 on his journey from Bengal to China. The fact that he mentions only in passing in a note the report on North Sumatra by Marco Polo from about 50 years earlier will surprise many who recall that many a writer on this subject begins with the Venetian's information. Snouck Hurgronje had, however, already noted in his book on the Gayō country (of 1903) that the significance of Marco Polo's reports on Sumatra was in his opinion very much exaggerated.¹⁹ It will become clear in the

¹⁸ see note 17.

¹⁹ *op. cit.* p. 77 note. In a newspaper article written in 1899 (*V.G.* IV I: 403), however, he had mentioned Marco Polo at a breath with Ibn Battūta.

course of my lecture why Snouck Hurgronje rated the value of these reports so low. His scepticism is far from groundless.

Pursuing his argument he mentions three Muslim gravestones from the first half of the 15th century discovered in the Pase district, of which Ibn Battūṭa speaks. Amongst these is, remarkably enough, the "notice in stone" of the death of an 'Abbāsid prince, a great-great-grandson of the caliph al-Muntasir.²⁰ This "illustrious parasite" found his last resting-place in northern Sumatra in 1407. He had undoubtedly floated in from Dehli, where his father had lived for a long time at the expense of the maharajah of Hindustan.

Furthermore Snouck mentions that, as Van Ronkel had first observed, these three gravestones from northern Sumatra show a striking resemblance to the gravestone in Gr̄esik of Malik Ibrahim who died in 1418 and belongs to the eight or nine chief saints of Java who are recorded in tradition as the bringers of Islam. Moquette had then not yet made his discovery that these stones were imported ready-made, but without names and dates of death, from Gujerat.

Then Snouck proposes the year 1200 as the earliest date for the "first serious steps" toward inclusion of the Indonesian Archipelago into the territory of Islam; these steps are supposed to have been taken by Muslim merchants from India, with which the Archipelago had been in contact for centuries. Finally there follows Snouck's well-known explanation of the first penetration of Islam — which has in it nothing surprising for those who know how it has often happened in India and how Islam still gains ground in many areas — that is, by traders' and dealers' settling and marrying women native to the place where they have settled. So it was a penetration which proceeded peacefully and apparently soon led to the foreigners' becoming related to prominent families of the land and occupying important posts in the running of the port such as that of *shahbandar* or *bēndahara*.

Before long more light would be thrown on the gravestones mentioned by Snouck Hurgronje. In 1910 Van Ronkel already expressed the surmise that the old gravestone found at Gr̄esik would prove to be of Indian origin.²¹ In 1912 Moquette then came with the important

²⁰ This must be a lapse; al-Muntasir died in 247/861. The last 'Abbās. caliph was called al-Mustac̄̄sim; his predecessor was al-Mustanṣir, who died in 1242. The latter was probably meant, but without further research it cannot be said whether the stone permits this reading; graphically there is only a slight difference.

²¹ *Tijdschrift Batav. Gen.* Vol. LII (1910), p. 599.

discovery that many of the gravestones found in the Pase district as well as those of the grave-complex of Malik Ibrahim in Grésik originated from Cambay in Gujerat. Thus relations with Gujerat were here placed beyond any doubt *for a certain period* — the gravestones referred to all being from the 15th century and later.²²

Gravestones have also been discovered in the Pase district with earlier dates than those of the 15th century mentioned above, e.g. that of Malik al-Salih, assumed to be the first Muslim ruler of Pase, who according to Moquette's reading of the Arabic epitaph died in 1297. This gravestone is of another type than those imported from Cambay. Nevertheless Moquette assumed an Indian origin for this stone too, although he added that it must have been placed on the grave some time after the death of the ruler.²³ Apparently he considered the gap in time between 1297 and 1407-1428, the years of the stones described by Snouck Hurgronje, too large to be able to decide in favour of importation at this early time. He evidently did *not* consider the striking difference in form so important.

Then comes the confusion. People ignore Moquette's hesitation expressed in his suggestion of later placement and conclude that the oldest known gravestone comes from Gujerat — so Islam also comes from Gujerat. This can, for example, be read in R. A. Kern's contribution in Stapel's large history of the Netherlands Indies (Vol. I, p. 313) and in the little book *De Islam in Indonesië*, in which the following words are found on p. 9: "The gravestones erected on Malik al-Salih's grave were brought in ready-made from Cambay. This is then, where we must look for the source of the spiritual and material links which joined Samudra to the world of Islam".

Later investigators could not help but discover the mistake in this theory, which over the years had come to be known as the specifically Dutch one, as if it was held by all Dutch scholars without exception. In 1951 there appeared a short article by G. E. Garrison in *J.M.B.R.A.S.* (pt. 1, pp. 28-37) in which it was argued, in agreement with the Malay tradition of a South Indian origin of Indonesian Islam, that Marco Polo describes Cambay in 1293 as a city still Hindu, and that Gujerat came under Muslim rule only in 1297. Garrison argues further that

²² *ibidem* Vol. LIV (1912), p. 208; 536. See also his article *Fabriekswerk in Notulen Batav. Gen.* Vol. LVIII (1920), pp. 44-46. For that matter, the *Séjarah Mélanyu* tells us that tombstones were imported from 'bénua Keling'; *vide* the story of the strong man Badang (*S.M.* ed. Djambatan 1952, p. 56).

²³ *Rapporten van den Oudheidkundigen Dienst in Ned.-Indië*, 1913, p. 9.

the Muslims had already been established for centuries in South India, without having gained political power, before the expansion of the Dihli Sultanate at the beginning of the 14th century. Here he points to the Moors of Ceylon, the Moplahs of Malabar and the Maracayars of the Coromandel Coast (Ma^cbar), which are ethnic groups of mixed blood whose members are still traders and seamen. The Moplahs claim to descend from Muslim immigrants from Iraq who had fled to India from the cruelty of al-Hajjāj toward the end of the 7th century; there is in northern Malabar a Muslim grave from A.H. 166/ A.D. 782/83 which makes such an early settlement seem not impossible.²⁴ Another tradition speaks of the conversion to Islam of the ruler of Cranganore, to the north of Cochin, in about 815 — another ruler who resigned his position, this time to be able to travel to Arabia and return as a preacher of Islam.²⁵ This ruler has the title Perumal, which according to the *Ht. Raja-raja Pasai* was also borne by one of the early rulers of Pase.²⁶ Finally Garrison argues that the Shāfi‘ī school of law was not the dominant one in Gujarat, but was in South India; that the whole *Ht. Raja-raja Pasai* has a background strongly coloured by South India (Tamil are mentioned in it repeatedly; both Tamil merchants and Tamil jugglers and wrestlers appear on its stage), and that the spiritual influence of Gujarat is not evident before the first half of the 17th century, when Nuruddin al-Raniri came to Aceh.

Consequently the study of Islam in South India appears to him absolutely essential.

Nowhere can it be seen from Garrison's article that he is acquainted with a book in which neither Gujarat nor South India are named as the source of Indonesian Islam, but Bengal. I refer to the English translation which appeared in London in 1944 of the book of Tomé Pires, the *Suma Oriental*, so very important for our knowledge of South-East Asia at the beginning of the 16th century.

Tomé Pires was a Lisbon apothecary who was sent out to India in 1511 at about the age of 40 as "agent for drugs". He had not been working a year at Cannanore and at Cochin on the west coast of South

²⁴ Cf. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*², London, 1913, p. 263, note 3.

²⁵ Cf. Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-65, for a summary of this story as it is found in Zain al-Dīn's *Tuhfat al-Mujāhidin*. Garrison does not apparently share Arnold's scepticism concerning the value of this tradition.

²⁶ Namely Sultan Ahmad, in the *Ht. Raja*² Pasai called a great-grandson of Malik al-Salih, who was the father of the legendary hero Brahim Bapa mentioned in the Acehnese *Hikayat Malém Dagang*. Cf. H. K. J. Cowan, *De "Hikayat Malém Dagang"*, 's-Gravenhage, 1937, pp. 35; 102-104.

India when he was sent to Malacca by Alfonso d'Albuquerque in a more responsible position. During his posting at Malacca he made a trip of several months to the north coast of Java. In 1515 he was back in Cochin, where he completed the *Suma Oriental* — as the title-page of the English translation says: "An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan". Because of his ability selected to go to China as head of a mission, he sailed via Pase and Malacca to Canton where he arrived in 1517. This was a journey from which he would never return. The reception in China was far from friendly; this, it seems, had something to do with the complaint which the ruler of Malacca, conquered by the Portuguese in 1511, had lodged with the Chinese emperor, his suzerain. There are hints that Pires, after being held captive for some years, was finally released and died in China as an exile at about the age of 70.

Apart from his professional interest in oriental drugs, Pires also shows much interest in every other item of trade, its origin, sale and destination. His book thus became an extremely important contribution to knowledge of the movement of commerce in the East at the beginning of the 16th century, and it is no wonder that Pires is quoted so often in Mrs M. A. P. Meilink's doctoral thesis.

Alongside interest in commercial products Pires also had an interest in the harbour-towns where these products were shipped from and in the petty harbour rulers who were in authority there, as well as in the life and activity of the people who lived there. On these things he gives all kinds of interesting information, and when he speaks from his own experience and observation there seems no reason to doubt his information. But one must not expect of him more than he can give. For a good deal of his historical data he had to rely upon his indigenous informants; hence what he gives on these is at best a reflection of the picture of the past which his informants possessed. This says nothing about the correctness of the picture — sometimes Pires is even demonstrably wrong, as for example, when he says that it was about 300 years ago that the kingdom of Cambay was seized by the Muslims from the heathens. In fact Cambay came under Muslim rule only in 1297,²⁷ and even in Pires' own time the trade was still mainly in non-Muslim hands, as he himself says. Another instance is when he reports that Pase still had a heathen king until about 160 years before then — hence till

²⁷ On the conquest of Gujerat during the reign of Alauddin Khilji of Dihli (1296-1316), see: S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *South India and her Muhammadan Invaders*, 1921, p. 84.

about 1355 — while we know from the gravestones of the earliest princes of Pase that Malik al-Salih, who died in 1297, was already a Muslim. And this being the case, what value is to be attached to his statement that the king of Aru was said to have "turned Moor before any of the others, even before the king of Pase" (*op. cit.* II: 245)?

But Pires had more to say about early Pase, perhaps the cradle of Islam in Indonesia. He describes it as a rich city where many Moorish and Indian traders lived, among whom the Bengalis were the most important. He distinguishes further Rumis, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Gujaratis, Klings, Malays, Javanese and Siamese. The population consisted mainly of Bengalis or people of Bengali origin, however, and since the heathen king of the country had succumbed to the "cunning of the merchant Moors" the latter were supposed to have appointed a "Moorish king of the Bengali caste". The countryside was, however, still heathen, although Islam was progressing daily. Just as in Bengal the "law of the jungle" went here too. Whoever could topple the king would, providing he was Muslim, succeed in his place, without bringing about any disturbance in the city. Thus it happened that emissaries arrived in Malacca from Pase twice in three months in order to declare allegiance to the Portuguese in the name of the new king and to ask their help, "and they keep on coming to ask this as other kings succeed".

This information of Pires' is the starting-point of the argument that Islam in Indonesia was imported from Bengal, contained in the book which the Pakistani Professor S. Q. Fatimi devoted to this question in 1963.²⁸ Fatimi begins, as do many, from Marco Polo's report that in 1292 Pěrlak was already Muslim as a result of the religious fervour of the Muslim traders, but that the people of Samara, where he had to wait five months for favourable winds, were still heathen. He disputes the latter statement on the basis of the fact that a Chinese report from 1282 mentions the meeting of a Chinese traveller at Quilon with an official from Su-mu-ta (= Samudra), in which the former urged that the ruler of Su-mu-ta send envoys to China. That must have happened soon afterwards, and these envoys from Su-mu-ta bore the Muslim names Hasan and Suleiman.

In this connection Fatimi quotes with approval Professor P. E. de Josselin de Jong, who said in a broadcast on Radio Malaya that this Chinese report made it probable that Pase (Samudra-Pase is a dual

²⁸ *Islam comes to Malaysia*, publ. by the Malaysian Sociol. Research Inst. Ltd., Singapore 1963.

entity) was already a Muslim state before Marco Polo's visit in 1292, although it had perhaps not yet officially adopted Islam. The Muslim community must already have been important, seeing that two of its members were assigned this foreign mission.

Some reflection is called for here. The identification of Marco Polo's Samara and Basma(n) with Samudra and Pase, which is already found in Valentijn's Description of the Indies, has always been a disputed point. Cowan pointed to this in his review of Kern's essay in Stapel's History of the N.I., in my opinion very rightly, and he came back to it again in an article in the *Tijdschrift van het Kon. Aardr. Genootschap*, Vol. LXVII.

Both Snouck Hurgronje and R. A. Kern doubted the identification of Basma(n) with Pase. Van der Tuuk and, following him, Schrieke, sought Basma(n) in Pasaman on the *west* coast of Sumatra,²⁹ which appears geographically unacceptable as this lies outside the sea-route. Pelliot, though wrongly placing Pasaman on the south-west coast of Sumatra, acknowledged this objection, but added: "Polo attached to his description of 'Basman' details of the rhinoceros which can only be those of an eye-witness; as to his monkeys made up to look like pygmies nobody has yet offered an explanation . . . Although I am not positive on the point, it may be that Polo gave his description of the rhinoceros when speaking of a kingdom in Sumatra of which he had only heard, and from which his monkey-pygmyes were said to come. In such a case, Pasaman would have a fair chance of being 'Basman', and that is the reason why I have adopted this spelling in preference to 'Basma'".³⁰

Even so it remains strange to come across a place located on the west coast of Sumatra in an enumeration of harbour towns on the north coast. So Cowan wishes to identify *Basma(n)* with Peusangan at the mouth of the large river of that name, the valley of which forms the main link with the Gayō country of the interior. This Peusangan

²⁹ Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Gajō-land*, p. 77; R. A. Kern in *Geschiedenis van Ned.-Indië* ed. by F. W. Stapel, 1938, I, p. 310; Van der Tuuk in Von de Wall's *Maleisch-Ned. Wdbk.* under Pésaman; Schrieke, *Het Boek van Bonang*, p. 3 note 1.

³⁰ *Notes on Marco Polo* (ouvrage posthume) I, Paris, 1959, p. 88. Pelliot was of the opinion that Basma could have originated from Basmā = Basman (*op. cit.*, p. 86), and that Port. Pacem (= Pase) could not be connected with this, because this name is only an example of the Portuguese tendency to nasalize final vowels, as was already noted by (*inter alios*) Blagden (in N. M. Penzer, *The Most Noble and Famous Travels of Marco Polo*, London, 1929).

passes in Malay tradition as the place where Mērah Silu alias Malik al-Salih, the first prince of Samudra and founder of that city, came from. *Samara* according to Cowan is the present-day Samalanga, which is spelt Samarlanga in older works in Arabic script. Both places are situated on the north coast of Acheh (Samudra also lay on the north coast and there is still a kampong of that name). Why Marco Polo did not mention Samudra, is, Cowan says, a pointless question; he was on his way westward and had of sheer necessity to wait at Samara for a favourable wind.³¹

Further one can point to the fact that the use of the services of worldly-wise foreigners for overseas assignments of some weight is not unusual in Indonesia. This still happened in the 19th century. The father of Abdullah b. Abd al-Kadir Munshi, the author of the famous *Hikayat Abdullah*, who was of Arabo-Indian descent, acted as messenger of the ruler and the *raja muda* of Malacca to various little states in the Malay Peninsula and was entrusted with missions to Riau, Lingga, Pahang, Trengganu and Kelantan.³² We need not conclude from this that the group to which they belonged was important and influential — they themselves had to inspire confidence and be equal to their task.³³

The consequences of Cowan's identification for the appreciation of Marco Polo's report are clear. If Basma(n) is not Pase, then Marco Polo was never in Pase. The town was indeed not situated on the sea, but a certain distance upstream in the hinterland. If Samara is not Samudra, then all relevance to the Islamization of Samudra-Pase disappears — although this was a fact in 1297 in view of the gravestone of Malik al-Salih and, therefore, was considered to have come about between 1292 and 1297.

Meanwhile Fatimi is of the opinion that the year A.H. 696/A.D. 1297 after the "moving" of the Prophet which occurs on the gravestone

³¹ Cowan's last remark is directed against Krom (*Bijdr.* Vol. 100 (1941), p. 17) who though finally deciding in favour of Samudra, was of the opinion that still "a lance could be broken" for Cowan's identification with Peusangan and Samarlanga.

³² *Hikayat Abdullah*, ed. R. A. Datoek Besar and R. Roolvink, Amsterdam, 1953, p. 8.

³³ The Hindu ruler of Calicut (the Zamorin) sent a Muslim as emissary to the Timūrid Shāhrukh Bahādur (died 1447), which brought about the journey, known in Europe already in the 17th century, of Abd al-Razzāq al-Samarqandī to Calicut to convert the Zamorin. This is described in his *Matlaq al-saṣ-dain wa-majmaṣ al-bahrain*. See T. W. Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 266; *The Caliphate*, Oxford, 1924, p. 113; *Enc. of Islam*², p. 91.

should perhaps not be taken, as Moquette and everyone after him have done, as the year 696 of the Hijra, the Muslim era which begins with Muhammad's exodus to Medina, but as 696 years after Muhammad's death. For the usual word *hijra* is not there, but instead *intiqāl*, a verbal noun deriving from *intaqala*, to emigrate, to pass over, and this same verb *intaqala* is used to indicate the death of Malik al-Salih. So the same word would have to be interpreted in the one sentence in two ways. If one does not accept this, Fatimi reasons, then one must assume, seeing that Malik al-Salih definitely died in the year 696 after the *intiqāl* of Muhammad, that his death occurred 696 years after the Prophet's death, hence in 1307. It is clear that this year supplies a more acceptable period for the transition from the abject heathendom said to have been encountered by Marco Polo to Islam, and so fits excellently into Fatimi's conception.

Nonetheless it is still surprising that the year should not have been calculated from the *hijra* but from Muhammad's death, and I do not believe that is necessary to assume this. It is established that the word *intaqala*, with which the death of Sultan Mansur Shah of Malacca (died A.D. 1477) is likewise indicated on his gravestone (see *T.B.G.* Vol. LIX, 1921, p. 604), was used in the sense of "to pass over", "to die" in Arabic epitaphs in the Malay world. The reason for this is, it seems to me, obvious. People simply reverted to the Arabic original of the Malay term *bērpindah* as a refined expression of "to die", which literal rendering of an Arabic term must therefore have been already in vogue at that time. *Bērpindah* is in fact an abbreviation of *bērpindah kē-nēgēri yang baka*, the Arabic *intaqala ilā dār al-baqā'* (*dār al-ākhira*), to pass over (lit. move house) to the dwelling of eternity, the hereafter.³⁴ For the Malay reader with a command of Arabic it was quite clear that this "passing over" of the king meant something different from the "moving" (*intiqāl* = *hijra*) of the Prophet. So I stick to A.H. 696.

Fatimi derived further from the Chinese report of 1282 found in Parker³⁵ concerning the meeting of the Chinese and Sumatran travellers in Quillon in South India the fact that the title of the king of

³⁴ Cf. al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013), *Insāf*, ed. Muh. Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Cairo, 1369/1950, p. 55:*nubuwwāt al-anbiyā'**lā tubṭalu wa-lā tankharimū bi-khurūjihim* *‘ani l-dunyā wa ‘ntiqālīhim ilā l-ākhira*. Death is only a *nuqla min hāhunā*, a removal from this world, as Ghazālī says in 1. 20 of his poem on death (See: Johs. Pedersen, Ein Gedicht al-Gazālī's, in: *Le Monde Oriental*, Vol. XXV (1931) p. 235.

³⁵ E. H. Parker, The Island of Sumatra, in *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 3rd series, Vol. IX (1900).

Su-mu-ta (Samudra) was *ta-kur*. This is apparently the same word as the Hindi *thakur* (Skt. *thakkura*) which means lord or master but which occurs in many North Indian languages, sometimes in other meanings,³⁶ and is also used as suffix after the name of Rajput nobles. In its anglicized form we know it in the name of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore.³⁷

Well then, Fatimi deduces from this title *ta-kur*, too, that the Pase dynasty must have been of Bengali origin. With one exception I shall leave the remaining arguments which he produces, because the author himself notes that they are only conjectures "which in their present form require an imagination equal to that of the writer of the *Hikayat*, if they are accepted".³⁸ For Fatimi merrily juggles with place and personal names and he recoils least of all from wild conjectures. On one point, however, he is right: that is, where he points out that from ancient times, long before Islam, relations existed between Bengal and the Archipelago. There was sea traffic from the port of Tāmralipta in Bengal, as well as overland. It was from Bengal that the Śailendra realm received the form of Mahāyāna Buddhism which was dominant for centuries in the Archipelago. In about the middle of the 9th century the Sumatran Śailendra king Bālaputra Deva founded at Nālanda in Bengal a Buddhist monastery and set aside for its maintenance the five villages granted him by the then ruler of Bengal. The late Professor Bosch in 1925 devoted a fascinating and lengthy article³⁹ to the inscription from the great monastery of Nālanda in which this is laid down.

Bengal was overcome by the Muslims and Islamized in about 1200, thus a century before Gujarat and South India. "It is not improbable", says Fatimi, "that this revolutionary change brought about a chain-reaction in North Sumatra, which was at the southern end of the Bay of Bengal" (*op. cit.*, p. 19). He considers this effect all the more acceptable, as the history of Islam in India mentions many great mystics

³⁶ Turner, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages*. No. 5488.

³⁷ In *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 915 there is a quotation from the travels of Pyrard de la Val from 1610 which says that in the Maldives the nobles also attach *Tacourou* to their names. Perhaps we may connect this with the Bengali origin of the ruling family, which is mentioned by Ibn Battūṭa (Mahdi Husain, *The Rehla of Ibn Battūṭa* Gaekwad Or. Series No. CXXII, Baruda, 1953, p. 204).

³⁸ *op. cit.* p. 29.

³⁹ In the *Tijdschrift van het Kon. Bat. Genootschap*, Vol. LXV (1925), pp. 509-588.

who went to Bengal and there demonstrated great missionary fervour which even carried them to distant lands such as China. Why not then to Sumatra, which was so much closer, he wonders (*op. cit.*, p. 23).

With this ascription of Islamization to the preaching of Sufi holy men and great mystics Fatimi falls into line with Professor A. H. Johns, who wrote an article in the *Journal of South-East Asian History* of July, 1961 (Vol. 2, no. 2), entitled *Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History*, and in a later article returned to this subject yet again.⁴⁰

Not wrongly in my view, Professor Johns opposes the conception he ascribes to both Schrieke⁴¹ and Wertheim,⁴² that the coming of the Portuguese may have contributed to a large degree to the spread of Islam in Indonesia. That process had, in fact, been going on for some centuries, and Islam was a growing power already before 1500. Professor Johns alleges that some local potentates even attempted to resist the spread of Islam by uniting with the Portuguese. One can indeed see in the instance of the heathen king of Sunda who signed a treaty with the Portuguese in 1522 an indication of the growing power of Islam on the north coast of Java before the Portuguese arrived.

It can, however, be seen from Pires' information that Pate Bubat, the Muslim lord of Surabaya who was involved in continuous strife with his heathen neighbours further to the eastward in Java, likewise sought friendship with the Portuguese, that Islam needed be no barrier to friendly relations with the Portuguese. The fact that the situation was different in the Moluccas, and that Muslim activity was intensified there, was due to the efforts of the Portuguese at Christianization.⁴³

⁴⁰ Muslim Mystics and Historical Writing, in *Historians of South-East Asia*, ed. D. G. E. Hall, London, 1961, p. 40.

⁴¹ As it would seem to me, in this respect more justice should be done to Schrieke, who certainly would not have endorsed the words of Wertheim quoted in the next note. In Schrieke's opinion Islam was a steadily increasing force in the Moluccas already before the coming of the Portuguese (mid 15th century), but the activities of the Roman-Catholic priests who followed in their wake contributed to the intensification of Muslim feeling. See his *Indon. Sociolog. Studies* I: 33.

⁴² *Indonesian Society in Transition*. The Hague, 1959, p. 1967: "one can sustain the paradox that the expansion of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago was due to the Westerners". This opinion is likewise opposed by Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas in his book *Rānīri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Aceh*. Singapore, 1966.

⁴³ H. Djajadiningrat, *Critische Beschouwing van de Sadjarah Banten*, thesis Leiden, 1913, p. 73; Pires, *Suma Oriental*, p. 196; Schrieke, *Prolegomena*, p. 155 (in *T.B.G.* Vol. LXV, 1925).

A century later the situation was no different. Writing on the Islamization of Macassar Noorduyn has stated that it was not prompted by political reasons and did not hamper friendly relations with the Dutch.⁴⁴ C. R. Boxer even observed that the real growth of Portuguese trade and influence in Macassar "occurred, oddly enough, after the Islamisation of Goa in the years 1605-07, and that, in later years, the rapprochement between the Muslim Macassars and the Catholic Portuguese was strengthened by their common dread of the growing Dutch power in Indonesian waters, and, more particularly, by their dislike of the Dutch efforts to monopolise the spicetrade of the Moluccas".⁴⁵

However, when Professor Johns postulates a kind of world-wide Muslim mission, and in the spirit sees Muslim preachers going on board amid merchants with bales of produce "to attend to the spiritual needs of the craft or trade guild they were chaplain to, or to spread their gospel", then I cannot go along with him. It appears to me that in his efforts to expose what he calls "the internal dynamics" of Islam he has accorded the legendary tales of saints and preachers of Islam too great a significance. Since Snouck Hurgronje it is actually nothing new that Islam in Indonesia has had a strong mystical turn from the earliest times — and similarly with the significance of the mystical brotherhoods, although one must beware not to assume for Indonesia everything said by some to be associated with these in the Middle East. We know that Muslim scholars and saints travelled a lot, also in Indonesia, and not always for purely spiritual ends. Malay literature repeatedly mentions their arrival and the problems which were presented to them for solution. But nothing is known in Indonesia, to me at least, of "traders belonging to Sufi trade guilds, accompanied by their Sheikhs", and I cannot find in Professor Johns' paper any defense of this hypothesis. He does not produce new data which might have given his idea support.

* * *

No mention has been made above of the report from the History of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279), book 489, quoted by Groeneveldt in his well-known Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese Sources (*V.B.G.* Vol. XXXIX, 1876). This reads that it is five days' sailing from Java to the Tazi, which Groeneveldt wishes

⁴⁴ In this Journal, Vol. 112 (1956), p. 262.

⁴⁵ C. R. Boxer, Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo, A Portuguese Merchant-Adventurer in South East Asia, 1624-1667. *V.K.I.* Vol. 52 (1967), p. 3.

to take as Arabs on the west coast of Sumatra (*op. cit.*, p. 15 and note 2), whom he considered to have settled there very early.

An older report from the New History of the T'ang Dynasty (618-906), book 222, Chap. 2, contains a tale of a "prince of the Arabs" and a queen of Bali who was called Sima and may have come to the throne in 674.

It is understandable that those who would have Islam come direct from Arabia find these reports very important. But there is reason to doubt this, when one pays attention to what Groeneveldt says (p. 14, note 4), namely, that some Chinese authors confuse the west coast of Sumatra with Arabia, and one even has Muhammad make his appearance on the west coast of Sumatra. I support the view that the Chinese reporter, who was apparently telling a tall story about a land far, far away, simply made something out of it. Such an early settlement of Arabs in the Archipelago is confirmed nowhere else, though perhaps from time to time some Arabs may have strayed away from the usual Eastern trade route.

Neither have we yet mentioned the earliest Muslim inscription of Java on the renowned "stone of Léran", which is written in late Kufic script and according to Moquette contains the year A.H. 496/A.D. 1102. The name on the stone was read by Moquette as Faṭima bint Maimūn, a lady of whom nothing more is known; Ravaisse, however, read the name as: celle qui se garda du péché, qui fut à l'abri de la faute, la fille de Meimūn etc., and the date as 7 Rajab 475 = A.D. 1082.⁴⁶ Now this is a very early date for a Muslim gravestone in Indonesia. Moquette, who was very expert in the matter of gravestones, found it unacceptable that this inscription, shallowly incised in a soft type of stone, should have defied the damp tropical climate for so many centuries, so that he doubted very much whether this stone actually belonged in Java. He was inclined to assume that it had been brought to Java from an arid region, for example Arabia or that part of the world. In any case there is no connection with the second stone found at Léran which bears the chronogram 1313 (= A.D. 1391), and which in Javanese legend is supposed to cover the grave of a Putri Suwari together with the first mentioned stone. Neither is there any connection

⁴⁶ De oudste Mohammedaansche Inscriptie op Java, n.m. de Grafsteen van Léran, in: *Handelingen van het Eerste Congres voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Java*, Solo 25-26 December 1919. Weltevreden, 1921, pp. 391-399; Paul Ravaisse, L'Inscription coufique de Léran à Java, *T.B.G.* Vol. LXV (1925), pp. 668-703.

with the Malik Ibrahim mentioned on a gravestone at Gr̄esik from 833/1419, as legend would have it.

And thirdly there is also the stone of Trengganu, situated in the north of the present-day Malaya on the east coast. This is not a gravestone but an edict in which a Muslim ruler promulgated Muslim regulations in Malay and urged that they be observed. The inscription is the oldest Malay text in Arabic script; unfortunately the date is not established, as the stone is damaged at that spot. The English Malay scholar Blagden, who edited and translated the text, believes, rightly in my opinion, that the words *tujuh ratus dua* (702) could very easily be a *fragment* of a date, and thus by no means guarantee that the stone was erected in 702. Other words giving numbers could, of course, easily have followed the *dua* (2). Every scholar of Malay will back him up on this. Blagden himself decided in favour of the latest possible date, A.H. 788/789, = A.D. 1386-87; even so this is a full century before the Islamization of any state in the Malay Peninsula. Fatimi, however, settles for 702, = A.D. 1303. He constructs a second line of penetration of Islam in Indonesia, namely from China (where Arab colonies and Muslims were to be found centuries before) via Champa, which some consider to have been Islamized as early as the 11th century,⁴⁷ and the east coast of the Malay Peninsula to East Java. This penetration on the eastern flank would then explain both the very early year 1102 of the stone of Léran as well as the year 1303 of the Trengganu stone.

It seems to me a hypothesis for which too many uncertainties have been taken as firm facts. As far as East Java is concerned one can, for example, point to the fact that the Gujeratis called at Gr̄esik up to the beginning of the 15th century; Pires tells that a ship left by them would have stayed there for a long time after that. At about the same time Ma Huan wrote that the population in East Java was non-Muslim. So the Gujeratis had made no proselytes to speak of, though there will have been Muslims among them. The stone of Malik Ibrahim in Gr̄esik from 1419 is thus most probably that of a foreign Muslim trader. That is to say, Muslims did live in or come to Gr̄esik, but Islam had definitely not yet made much progress amongst the Javanese. This is evident only later in the 15th century, when there is mention of relations with South-East Asian Muslims, as appears from the marriage of a king of Majapait with a princess from Cēmpa (Champa).

⁴⁷ On Islam in Champa see the item "INDO-CHINA" by A. Cabaton in the *E.I.* A critical discussion of the question is given by Kōdō Tasaka in *Tōhōgaku* (Eastern Studies) of July, 1952, pp. 52-60.

Nevertheless it can be seen how difficult it is to speak with any certainty here from the thorough investigation which the French scholar L. C. Damais conducted on the gravestones of Trålåyå present at an Islamic burial-place just south of the spot where in all probability the kraton of Majapahit stood.⁴⁸ The stones have been known for a long time. They are mentioned, for instance, in the first edition of Veth's *Java* (1878). People had ascertained that there was Arabic script on them and L. W. C. van den Berg had read the inscriptions, and stated that the Arabic script was not beautiful, or at least much uglier than that on the stones of Grésik and, therefore, had to be of a later date. As a consequence he had come to the conclusion that one was dealing with inscriptions which must have been made in comparatively recent times on stone fragments of old temples which happened to bear a date.

One will understand where the shoe pinches here. According to current Javanese opinion, the realm of Majapait fell in 1478, and in the second half of the 19th century no reason had been found to doubt the correctness of this dating. *Because* Majapait had thus not yielded to Islam before 1478, there *could* not have been any Muslim grave-stones in Majapait from before 1478, and so the inscriptions on the stones of Trålåyå had to be of a later date.

In Brandes' edition of the *Pararaton* (1896) the Trålåyå stones and their years are likewise enumerated without, however, any mention of the Arabic inscriptions, but Rouffaer says cautiously in the article on chronology in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (IV, 1905, p. 457): As long as the inscriptions of Léran, Trålåyå and Samudra have not been studied the earliest Arabic date to be found in the Archipelago is on the stone of Grésik (that of Malik Ibrahim). In the second edition of the *E.N.I.* we again find, however, in the article on "Mohammedan Antiquities" (III, 1915, p. 203), which was written by Moquette and Hoesein Djajadiningrat, the idea of Van den Berg, just as in Krom's *Inleiding tot de Hindoejavaanse Kunst* (1920; second edition 1923).

Damais rejects this idea altogether. It would indeed be very remarkable, he says, if so often old stones from temples had been found which bore a year in such a way that a gravestone could be made from them with the year exactly in the place required.

The years on these gravestones are, with one exception, all in the

⁴⁸ Etudes javanaises I. Les tombes musulmanes datées de Trålåyå, in *B.E.F.E.O.*, tome XLVIII (1956), pp. 353-415.

Šaka era. They run, according to the decipherment of Damais, who was an experienced epigraphist, from 1298 Š. to 1397 Š., that is, from A.D. 1376 to 1475. One stone is of later date, i.e. from 1533 Š., = 1611. The stone with a Hijra year is from A.H. 874, = 1391/92 Š., = A.D. 1469/70. While the stones with Šaka dates all bear only verses from the Koran and pious formulas, the one with the Hijra year mentions the personal name Zainuddin — hence an Arabic name, but which could very well have been borne by a Javanese.

According to Damais' interpretation there were thus already Muslims of Javanese race in the capital of the realm in the time of Majapait's greatest prosperity under Hayam Wuruk. The influence of Islam in the interior, which until now could not be established before the year 1370 Š. on the grave which is ascribed to the princess of Cěmpa (a Muslim wife of one of the kings of Majapait), is thus already demonstrable more than 70 years earlier.

Seeing now that Islam must have penetrated the interior via the ports on the north coast of Java — perhaps mainly via Tuban, which although Muslim always remained on a good footing with Majapait — we must indeed accept (if we agree with Damais) that Islam had already gained a firm hold there in the 14th century, in about the middle or still earlier. Hence the long time between the earliest evidence of the presence of Islam in northern Sumatra and that of its presence in Java is considerably shortened.

To summarize my final impression after having read all these discussions, I come to the conclusion that their value lies more in that they have broken through the fascination with ideas which seemed well established, or even sacrosanct, than that they have provided acceptable new solutions. The only thing left of Marco Polo's report is that Pěrlak was Muslim in 1292. From Malik al-Salih's gravestone, the year of which can indeed be kept as 1297, it appears that Samudra-Pase had a Muslim king in that year. But the basis for the idea that the Islamization of this state must have been completed between 1292 and 1297 has disappeared. It is at least uncertain whether Malik al-Salih's gravestone came from Gujerat, and according to Fatimi even wrong. Hence a Gujerat origin for Indonesian Islam comes to stand on a very rickety footing. But Pires' information that the land of origin was Bengal is, if only because of the difference in school of law, not immediately acceptable and what Fatimi produces to refute this argument

cannot stand scrutiny.⁴⁹ Possibly Pires' informant was a Bengali from Malacca who claimed a Bengali origin for Islam in the Archipelago *ad maiorem gloriam* of his home-country. No support for this assertion can be found in Malay tradition or literature.

It is not impossible, though, that among the first Indian Muslims calling at Sumatran ports the Bengali element was much in evidence, since relations with Bengal were of long standing and this country was Islamized at an early date. But should these Bengalis have displayed proselytizing activities, then no traces of these have been left. On the other hand it is not without significance that the expert on religious matters is called *lēbai* in Malay. As was pointed out by Van Ronkel⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Thus Fatimi believes that he can conclude from the Achehnese term *balé' meudeuhab* that the Achehnese once belonged to the Hanafi school of law, because this expression is used to indicate the acceptance of a section of the teachings of the Hanafi school in some cases; see Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjēhers* Vol. I, pp. 376 sqq.; Juynboll, *Handleiding Moh. Wet*⁴, pp. 22, 23; 176. But Ach. *balé'* does not mean "to return", as Fatimi (*op. cit.*, p. 34) assumes on the basis of Mal. *balik*, but "to change". *Balé' meudeuhab* hence means no more than: to change rites, to follow another rite than the usual Shāfi'i. There is no question of a "return".

On p. 38 great value is attached to a report in the highly unreliable *Annals of Acheen* (the chronicle published and translated by Dulaurier in the *Journal Asiatique* of 1839) that on Friday 1st Ramadān 601 (A.D. 1204) Sultan Johan Shah "came from the windward and converted the people of Acheen to the Muhammadan faith. He married the daughter of Baludri at Acheen and by her had a son, etc.". The fact that this "daughter of Baludri" must be understood as Ach. *aneu' baludari* = Mal. *anak bidadari*, hence a heavenly nymph, as H. Djajadiningrat already noted in *B.K.I.* Vol. 65 (1911), p. 142, note 3, certainly makes the report no less incredible than it already was. As is known, the *Bustan al-Salatin* ascribes the Islamization of Acheh to the founder of the realm, cAli Mughayat Shah, who died in 1522. Whether one doubts with Djajadiningrat the correctness of this report (*op. cit.*, p. 152, note 2) or not, the conclusion can be none other than that in Rāniri's time (first half of the 17th cent.) in Acheh nothing was known of this early origin. The report concerning it will belong to the "learned conjectures of certain of the Achehnese" from a later period.

⁵⁰ *T.B.G.* vol. LVI (1914), pp. 137-142. Note 9 on p. 5/6 of Fatimi's book, in which the views of Van Ronkel and T. W. Arnold on the derivation of *lēbai* or *labbai* are assailed does no justice to either of them; moreover, the article on Java in the *E.I.* is ascribed to C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, whereas its author is A. W. Nieuwenhuis. Van Ronkel did not derive Malay *lēbai* from "labaigem or merchant". Evidently Fatimi has fallen a victim to a printer's error in the English edition of the *E.I.*, where indeed one finds (IV: 551 b) "labaigem merchant" (without "or"). This is obviously a misprint for "labaigem merchant", as is shown by a comparison with the text of the German edition, where it says "labaigem, Juwelier". Neither did T. W. Arnold derive *labbai* from *carabi*. He merely quoted popular opinion on the origin of this word by saying (*E.I.* IV: 1) "Tamil, *ilappai*, said to be a corruption of *carabi*".

more than half a century ago, this clearly demonstrates the fact that not the Bengalis but rather a category of people known as *lēbai* had a hand in the propagation of Islam in the Malay area.⁵¹ Now Mal. *lēbai* = Tamil *labbai* (written *ilappai*). It is irrelevant to the question under discussion whether one interprets this word as denoting the class of South Indian Shāfi‘ī Muslims called Labbai, who have their centre at Nagore on the Coromandel Coast, or as "merchant", "jeweller", according to its wider connotation. For in any case it bears testimony to the important rôle played by people from South India in the spread of Islam in the Archipelago.

Furthermore, Fatimi has produced no substantial arguments for his theory about two channels of Islamisation, a westerly and an easterly.

Marrison's article brings the matter back to the line which was indicated by Snouck Hurgronje. Where Snouck Hurgronje speaks only of South India, Marrison narrows it, however, to the Coromandel Coast, although Islam obtained the supremacy no earlier here than in Gujarat. He rightly stresses the importance of the study of Islam in South India.

Bausani came to the same conclusion, but along quite a different path.

Fatimi points to the strong Sufi turn of Islam both in Bengal and in Indonesia. There is, however, no evidence in Malay literature of acquaintance with Bengali saints and mystics. Elsewhere too Indian Islam had a distinct mystical tinge and the Malay poetry of the 16th century Sumatran mystic Hamza Fansuri does give evidence of a close acquaintance with Arab and Persian mystics. But at that time the initial period of the spread of Islam lies far behind and the relations with the Muslims of the ports of the West Coast of India, where Arab and Persian influence was of long standing, were well-established.

In a nut-shell: the investigation has been reopened, but without new data it seems that the results will as yet be scanty. Resumption of the archaeological research in North Sumatra and painstaking study of Islam in South India — for which a thorough knowledge of Tamil is indispensable — appear to be primary requirements, as well as a revised and enlarged edition of Groeneveldt's *Notes . . . from Chinese sources*.

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⁵¹ In the *Hik. Hang Tuah* it is told that Hang Tuah knew the *bahasa Kēling* and had acquired proficiency in this language owing to the fact he had been taught to recite the Qur‘ān by a Kēling *lēbai* in Majapait. One may have one's doubts about the place, but the rôle of the South Indian merchant as a teacher of religion stands out clearly.