

## ***Challenges from Early Modern Source Materials: Melaka and Adjacent Regions***

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[The present appendix forms a side discussion of chapter 1 and addresses some of the major problems of handling early modern sources of European and Asian origin. Special attention is paid to the *Suma Oriental* of Tomé Pires, as well as to printed materials that contain accounts of chiefly Portuguese, Italian, and Malay origin, including Gaspar Corrêa, Duarte Barbosa, Francesco Carletti, Giovanni da Empoli, Manoel Godinho de Erédia, Gianbattista Ramusio, Ludovico de Varthema, as well as the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Undang-undang Melaka*.]

Almost every modern historical account touching on the history of Melaka and adjacent regions during the early modern period has mentioned the *Suma Oriental* of the apothecary and diplomat Tomé Pires. It is now widely believed to have been written between 1512 and 1515.<sup>1</sup> However, work conducted over the past five decades has not only made great headway, but also posed a series of questions about Pires' integrity and the transmission of the text.<sup>2</sup> It is extremely important to display a critical mindset when contextualising and translating the nomenclature and terminology Pires employs,<sup>3</sup> and to the best of the present author's knowledge, no recent studies have cross-referenced the text of the *Suma Oriental* with Pires' published letters of 1512 and 1513.<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, his *rol de drogarias* (1516), a list of pharmaceutical substances used in the context of Asian, specifically Indian, medicine, has evoked very little interest and remains virtually unknown in modern scholarly circles.

Scholars have grown increasingly aware—and wary—of the differences among terms and toponyms between the “Paris manuscript”, published and translated by Armando Cortesão in 1944, and the far shorter “Lisbon manuscript”, edited and first published as a self-standing text by Rui Manuel Loureiro in 1996.<sup>5</sup> The Paris manuscript is thought to date from the second half of the 16th century,<sup>6</sup> while the Lisbon manuscript represents a 16th century copy of the original sent by Pires to the Portuguese viceroy of India, Dom Duarte de Menenzes.<sup>7</sup> Linguistic style, nomenclature and specialist terms found in the latter, shorter text are certainly more authentic, and one cannot help but shudder at Cortesão’s own frank admission, found in the foreword to his English translation, that he sometimes had to “guess” what Pires was trying to say.<sup>8</sup>

Other early Portuguese texts fare little better. Duarte Barbosa serves as a case in point. One has a hard time appraising what parts were frivolously added by Giovanni Battista Ramusio in his collection *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi* to “exoticise” the story for European readers, or alternatively, reconstructing the parts that were censored by the Portuguese authorities from the original manuscript(s) because the text revealed commercially sensitive and therefore classified information.<sup>9</sup> A third classic Portuguese text, the *Declaração de Malacca* by Erédia, is also not without serious problems. First, it dates from a much later period, namely, the early 17th century. A comparison of this text with Erédia’s earlier exposé, the *Informação da Aurea Chersoneso* (about 1597), reveals considerable inconsistency in the way terminology is employed and also in some of the basic insights expounded. Take, for example, what Erédia says about the home of the Malays. In the *Declaração de Malacca* he claims this to be Pahang, but in his earlier text, the home of the Malays is placed unconventionally in Patani.<sup>10</sup> Did Erédia change his mind? Or was there genuinely no consensus on this very issue? Other authors claim that the Malays are from Melaka, Sumatra or Lingga. Who really knew? Although the view may well be sustained

that Erédia's treatise ultimately represents an honest effort, there are several, still inadequately researched, discontinuities of argument (terminological and otherwise) between the text dating from around 1597 and the final version of 1613.<sup>11</sup>

Historians of early modern Melaka as well as the Singapore and Melaka Straits broadly concur that some important accounts have perhaps relied too strongly on Pires and the handy English language translation published by Cortesão at the height of World War II.<sup>12</sup> It is perhaps against the backdrop of this discomfort and acknowledged over-reliance that one needs to specially appreciate the document translations prepared by Manuel Pintado and published by Malaysia's National Archives in the early 1990s.<sup>13</sup> Despite some problems with Pintado's translations, there can be little doubt that his labours represent an important first step in weaning the modern historian away from an over-reliance on Pires to meaningfully broaden the range of early Portuguese colonial sources that are readily available in the English language.

Asian—and specifically Malay-language—texts, as far as they exist, present the modern historian with a different set of textual obstacles and hermeneutical challenges. First, there are very few sources that date, or claim to date, from the period around the fall of the Melaka Sultanate (1511). Most of these represent later codified version(s) of oral tradition and/or public memory. The meaning and intention of the text is by no means consistent; one may speak here particularly of such texts as the *Sejarah Melayu* or Malay Annals.<sup>14</sup> This text, as it stands today, is believed to date from the period after the fall of the Melaka Sultanate to the Portuguese, and evidence from the 17th Acehese chronicle *Bustan-as-Salatin* (The Garden of Kings) and more recent scholarly contributions hold that the text of the *Sejarah Melayu* dates from 16th up to the early 17th century.<sup>15</sup> The famous ms. Raffles 18 is dated 1612, that is during the period under review in the present book.<sup>16</sup> The core objective of the *Sejarah Melayu* is to rally the Malays

behind the deposed sultan by stressing lineage, providing prophetic statements or testaments, stressing the benefits of mutual obligation as well as employing moral suasion and the language of obedience.<sup>17</sup> Modern historians often find that the *Sejarah Melayu* has the important benefit of being a source of historical geography.<sup>18</sup>

The two legal digests of Melaka, *Undang-undang Melaka* (Laws of Melaka) and *Undang-undang Laut* ([Melaka] Maritime Code), are also of considerable historical interest, but they have until now remained peripheral to studies on Melaka from the late 15th until the late 17th century.<sup>19</sup> Both purport, and are widely accepted, to trace their origins to the period of the Melaka Sultanate. Like any other legal text, these digests now represent different strands of thinking from different periods of time, both pre-colonial and colonial Melaka as well as their claimed successor states. The Malay Concordance Project at the Australian National University traces the origin of both texts to the 15th century but advises caution.<sup>20</sup> On the surface, this caution is justified for the text of the *Undang-undang Laut*, where certain clauses incorporated into the main body of the text bear specific dates from the 17th century. As a digest, the *Undang-undang Melaka* is far less transparent. The editor, Liaw Yock Fang, simply observes that the digest is strung together from different texts and most likely across the reign of several Melaka rulers.<sup>21</sup> The question inevitably arises: Exactly which laws belong to which period? And for a polity that thrived on commerce, why were there “no specific laws to protect the trader and the entrepreneur?”<sup>22</sup>

Liaw, like Winstedt well before him, traces the digest to the rule of Muzaffar Shah (1445–58), a period that may be considered the Golden Age of the Melaka Sultanate.<sup>23</sup> By this stage the erstwhile “pirates lair” of Parameswara<sup>24</sup> (to borrow the terminology from Paul Wheatley) had grown from a fishing village under the influence of Pasai on Sumatra and nominal suzerainty of

the king of Siam<sup>25</sup> to a separate kingdom in its own right.<sup>26</sup> Admiral Zheng He's famous visit, on which occasion the ruler of Melaka's status was elevated from chief to "king", was almost a half-century in the past. Melaka was the emporium that Portuguese and other early European visitors, including also Giovanni da Empoli, described with admiration in their letters and accounts dating from the early 16th century.<sup>27</sup> Wheatley estimates a population of around 6,000 inhabitants in the year 1424, a figure that supposedly had swollen by "later arrivals [of *orang laut*], scavenging along the coast and lured by the promise of early gains. [They] had taken up their preferred site, close against the water's edge".<sup>28</sup> Agriculture was not the preferred activity of the immigrants, and as a result, food remained in short supply.<sup>29</sup> Sago, vegetables and fruit were the staple foods in Melaka at this time.<sup>30</sup> Under Sultan Muzaffar, Melaka also began to expand from a city-state to an "imperial power" - or at least so one is told. The peoples of the western Peninsula, and also Pahang, Siak on Sumatra and the Riau Archipelago are believed to have been absorbed into an expanding polity centred in Melaka.<sup>31</sup>

If one compares these insights with information gleaned from early Portuguese colonial documents and chronicles, one scarcely fares any better. Certainly, the claim advanced by Corrêa in his *Lendas da Índia* that Melaka was a great trading city since the eighth century A. D. cannot be sustained by any stretch of the imagination. Medieval Arabic sources reproduced by Gabriel Ferrand certainly make no mention of the entrepôt.<sup>32</sup> Nor is it expressly mentioned by Nicolò de Conti in the account of his voyage to the East (1414–39), *Historiade Varietate Fortunae*. However, the fact that Fra Mauro of Venice made two entries on his world map of 1459 for Melacha (Melaka) has led to some speculation that de Conti shared his first-hand knowledge of the East personally with Fra Mauro. Certainly, Fra Mauro perused de Conti's written account which, in the words of curator Piero Falchetta, was available "to the reading public" by 1447.<sup>33</sup>

The *Mohît* (or Muhît), an Ottoman-Turkish rutter for the Indian Ocean, may have synthesised geographic knowledge of the region compiled anytime between the 14th and 16th centuries,<sup>34</sup> but the two surviving manuscripts in Istanbul and Vienna date from 1554 and 1558 respectively, and they acknowledge the incorporation of information gained from the Portuguese.<sup>35</sup>

Nor should one give much credence to the testimonies of so many of Europe's scholars from the age of Renaissance and Humanism, especially those who were mentally shackled by the tenuous and mostly unverifiable names linked to Ptolemaic geography, dating from the second century AD, or even Isidor of Seville's voluminous *Etymologies* dating from the early seventh century. Erédia's widely acclaimed *Declaração de Malaca*, and perhaps also his earlier *Informação da Aurea Chersoneso*, should be mentioned in this context. Rather, one should be drawn to the more sobering scholarly enquiries of Rouffaer, Obdeijn and later Wheatley,<sup>36</sup> none of whom opine that Melaka was much more than a fishing village—in fact, little more than a wretched “pirate's lair”—before the eve of the 15th century. Melaka early on was a marketplace for all sorts of merchandise, including the ill-gotten ones, and it was only after the marriage of Melaka's ruler with a Pasai princess,<sup>37</sup> and later the arrival of Chinese merchants following the Zheng He expeditions, that the port polity emerged to great regional prominence.

As has been argued in the case of Singapura, early modern sources are not always clear what they mean when they mention “Melaka”. Is it a reference to the port, city and emporium? Is it a reference to a territory, an *empire*, a cultural sphere or the complex economic relationship between centre and periphery? Is it a reference to the whole of the Malay Peninsula? The level of confusion raised by early modern source materials is considerable. Still, Melaka is celebrated as one of the prized possessions of the *Estado da Índia*, an emporium unlike any other in Asia and probably the world.<sup>38</sup> Correspondingly, early Portuguese colonial sources show a propensity to

harp on the grandeur and glory of Melaka, and also provide figures that are hardly credible. Rui de Araújo estimates the number of households at 10,000, a number that was probably as great as many of the largest European settlements of the 16th century. Corrêa estimates the population at well over 200,000 (elevating Melaka to the largest city in “all of the Indies”).<sup>39</sup> According to Pires, Melaka could muster 100,000 men-at-arms, which of course implies a population significantly greater than 200,000!<sup>40</sup> Castanheda gave a more modest estimate of 120,000. Perhaps this is a reference to the whole Malay Peninsula and not just the city. Describing the period of the sultanate, Damião de Goes estimated the population of Melaka town at 30,000, while the eyewitness Rui de Araújo spoke of 10,000 households.<sup>41</sup> Then again, at any one point in time, there were reportedly many craft and ships of various sizes plying the waters of Melaka harbour and the river. Contemporary commentators have confused estimates of maximum capacity with actual figures of maritime activity. True, Giovanni da Empoli estimates that the harbour of Melaka could accommodate two thousand vessels – and more still in the river. But his estimate of one hundred sail actually in port together with an unspecified number of smaller vessels that he calls *calaluzi* (kelulus, an oared vessel) and *ciamparie* (sampan) and yet more craft of still lesser significance yield far more sobering estimate of maritime trading activity at Melaka at the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>42</sup>

Yet the overly generous if not exaggerated numbers for Melaka quickly found their way into print, such as on the two world maps of Martin Waldseemüller and Laurent Fries that feature special explanatory text boxes in both the German and Latin editions.<sup>43</sup> It would be foolish to take these sources uncritically and at face value, as some authors have done in more recent decades, but what they do express are the views of foreign observers who were evidently impressed. Over time, Melaka appears to have diminished in size and population. The Flemish

diamond merchant Jaques de Coutre, who lived in Melaka at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries, reports that it was still possible to identify stakes or poles from former houses. Orchards that once surrounded residential areas extended some “two or three miles” from the Portuguese city centre. This area, where evidently a larger and more expansive city had once stood, was overgrown with tropical thicket. De Coutre estimated that a couple of hundred craft of various sizes called annually at the port.<sup>44</sup>

Francesco Carletti, the intrepid merchant from Tuscany whose travels at the eve of the 17th century brought him to the port of Melaka, and indeed around the world, explains to his readers that the houses of this city of spice and commerce were constructed of wood and located under shady trees.<sup>45</sup> This description does not differ significantly from Chinese accounts written one and a half centuries earlier.<sup>46</sup> Carletti also observed how the sailors of vessels at anchor spent the night on board, rather than on shore. This does not differ significantly from the observation Varthema made towards the end of the Melaka Sultanate’s life span. According to Carletti’s fellow Italian, the merchants at Melaka faced considerable dangers, and Varthema may have spoken the truth when he claimed that during the Melaka Sultanate, scores of merchants were killed in cold blood, “like dogs”.<sup>47</sup> It can be presumed that with so many ships arriving and departing, and with the *orang laut*, *Bajau*, *Aru* and *Batak* scouring the waters outside the port, merchants had to be very alert.<sup>48</sup> In any case, the Portuguese authorities—just like their Malay counterparts around Sumatra and the Peninsula—reportedly sealed off the waterfront every night by trawling a series of logs linked by chains across the mouth of the port.<sup>49</sup> This was to stop merchants from setting sail under the cloak of darkness without paying their dues, and also to prevent ships from vanishing into the night without a trace. The logs and chain may also have served the purpose of forestalling an attack on the port facilities from the sea by *orang laut* and

rapacious tribes that—so one is told—regularly engaged in plundering and slave raiding.

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- <sup>1</sup> Tomé Pires, *A Suma Oriental*, ed. Armando Cortesão (1978), p. 3; Armando Cortesão, *A propósito do ilustre boticário*, pp. 4, 8, 9; A. C. Correia da Silva, *Um boticário na história da expansão*, p. 21. For a modern biography of Pires, see Cortesão, *Primeira Embaixada Europeia à China*.
- <sup>2</sup> Some of the most noteworthy publications in this respect include Armando Cortesão's new edition with foreword of the *Suma Oriental*, Tomé Pires, *A Suma Oriental* (1978), Cortesão, *A propósito*, pp. 1–15. Cortesão, *Primeira Embaixada*, Rui Manuel Loureiro, “O Sudeste Asiático na Suma Oriental de Tomé Pires”, *Revista de Cultura*, 4 (2003), pp. 107–23. Ronald Bishop Smith, *A Projected Portuguese Voyage to China in 1512*. A. C. Correia da Silva, *Um boticário na história da expansão*. A. da Costa Torres, *Breve Notícia de Tomé Pires*. A. da Costa Torres, “Tomé Pires na Intimidade”, *Journal dos Farmacêuticos* (1943), pp. 5–31. See also the edition of the Lisbon manuscript featured in note 3 below. Tomé Pires, along with an account of his activities as an apothecary and diplomat, is encountered in several period sources of Portuguese origin, including significantly Galvão, *Tratado dos Descobrimentos*, pp. 182-3 and Barros. Concerning the latter, see his *Décadas da Ásia*, déc. III, liv. II, cap. VIII; déc. III, liv. V, cap. X; déc. III, liv. VI, cap. II; déc. III, liv. VI, cap. II; déc. III, liv. VIII, cap. V; déc. IV, liv. I, cap. VI.
- <sup>3</sup> To the best of the present author's knowledge, the best textcritical analysis of the *Suma Oriental* can be found in Wolters' chapter “The Founder of Malacca”, in *The Fall of Srivijaya*, pp. 108–27, where the insights of Pires are juxtaposed and critically analysed against the backdrop of Asian sources, such as notably the *Sejarah Melayu*. An in-depth

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textcritical analysis focusing on the internal consistencies and differences among the manuscripts of the *Suma Oriental*, however, is still missing. See also note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony C. Milner, “Who Created Malaysia’s Plural Society?” *JMBRAS*, 76.2 (2004), pp. 1–24. Pires’ letters of 7 November 1512 and 10 January 1513, as well as his *rol de drogarias* of 1516 preserved in AN/TT, can be found in Torres, “Tomé Pires na Intimidade”, pp. 9–14, 24–9.

<sup>5</sup> Cortesão takes the variant readings of the Paris and Lisbon manuscripts of the *Suma Oriental* into consideration in both his 1944 and 1978 editions of the text, but otherwise has little to say about the implications of these alternate readings. Some basic differences between the two manuscripts are also mentioned in Cortesão, *A propósito*, pp. 8–9. See also Cortesão, *Primeira Embaixada*, pp. 30–1. The Lisbon manuscript was published as a self-standing text by Loureiro, *O Manuscrito de Lisboa da ‘Suma Oriental’ de Tomé Pires*.

<sup>6</sup> According to Cortesão, the Paris manuscript came into the possession of Bishop D. Jerónimo de Osório around, but in any case before, 1580. See Pires, *A Suma Oriental*, pp. 5, 7.

<sup>7</sup> For Cortesão’s verdict on the Lisbon manuscript, see *SO*, I, pp. 65–7. The shorter text of the Lisbon manuscript is explained away (p. 66) as being a “preliminary draft which Pires sent off [to the Viceroy] not long after his arrival in Melaka”. He reckons that manuscript (p. 66) is a “copy of a some original now lost”. Both hypotheses remain unproven. Also Correia da Silva, *Um boticário*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> For Cortesão’s statement, see *SO*, I, p. xvi: “The present copy of Pires’ *Suma* is not the original he himself wrote, and the copyist has left only too many instances of his own

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carelessness. Pires' style is far from clear, and this, added to the transcriber's mistakes and the most anarchic punctuation, or absolute lack of it, makes the interpretation of the text often extremely difficult; sometimes the translation has to be very free, perhaps even more of a guess than anything else". Cortesão also describes the original Portuguese text of the Paris manuscript as "very difficult and etymologically very interesting".

- <sup>9</sup> *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, ed. Mansel Longworth Dames. For the most recent Portuguese-language edition, see *O Livro de Duarte Barbosa*, introduction and notes by Neves Águas. The relevant passages on Melaka cover Barbosa, *O Livro*, pp. 164–8.
- <sup>10</sup> Erédia, "Informação da Aurea Chersoneso" in Caminha, *Ordenações da Índia*, p. 76. For a short biography on Erédia, see Jorge Faro, *Godinho de Erédia, cosmógrafo*, and the introduction in Erédia, *Suma de Árvores e Plantas da Índia Intra Ganges*, ed. J. G. Everaert, J. E. Mendes Ferrão and M. Cândida Liberato, pp. 28ff.
- <sup>11</sup> Erédia, *Malaca*; the earlier draft of this work appeared significantly earlier as Erédia, "Informação da Aurea Chersoneso" in Caminha, *Ordenações da Índia*, pp. 95ff.
- <sup>12</sup> See classically Basset's criticism of Meilink-Roelofs in D. K. Bassett, "European Influence in Southeast Asia, c.1500-1630", *JSEAH*, 4.2 (1963), pp. 135-6, "Meilink-Roelofs may have accepted Pires' descriptions of Malay-Indonesian society, trade and government with fewer reservations than a historian trained in more politically-documented fields would approve. Even a historian of South-East Asia, I suggest, would prefer to apply more stringent tests to the internal evidence of the *Suma Oriental* than Dr. Meilink-Roelofs has done."

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- <sup>13</sup> *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, I, 1509–11, collected, translated and annotated by Manuel J. Pintado, esp. pp. 210ff.
- <sup>14</sup> Concerning the “historicity” of the *Sejarah Melayu*, see especially the deliberations of Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya*, pp. 84–5.
- <sup>15</sup> Winstedt, “The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu”, *JMBRAS*, 16.3 (1938), pp. 34, “One thing is certain: The bulk of the ‘Malay Annals’ was written at least eighty years before 1612”; Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 158; P. L. Amin Sweeney, “The Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai and the Sejarah Melayu”, *JMBRAS*, 40.2 (1967), p. 104. Miksic, *Archeological Research on the “Forbidden Hill” in Singapore*, p. 23.
- <sup>16</sup> Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, pp. 158-9; and Roolvink’s objections in his introduction to *Sějarah Mělayu or Malay Annals*, pp. xxiv-xxv.
- <sup>17</sup> Hj. M. Khalid-Taib, *Sastera Sejarah in the Malay World*, p. 126: “It has now been generally agreed among the Malay studies scholars that the *Sejarah Melayu*’s prototype was a kinglist. This kinglist was a very sketchy compilation which emphasized the genealogical relationships of the Malacca royal dynasty”. See also Walls, *The Legacy of the Fathers*, pp. 15, 17–8, 22, 27, 40–7, 91, 95, 117–20; Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya*, pp. 84, 91.
- <sup>18</sup> Josselin de Jong, “Malayan and Sumatran Place-Names”, p. 61.
- <sup>19</sup> *Undang-undang Melaka: A Critical Edition*, ed. Liaw Yock Fang, Proefschrift University of Leiden; R. O. Winstedt and P. E. de Josselin de Jong, “The Maritime Laws of Malacca. Edited, with an outline translation”, *JMBRAS*, 29.3 (1956), pp. 22–59. On the question as to whether the *Undang-undang Melaka* and *Undang-undang Laut* represent actual legal

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codes or digests (compilations), see Liaw Yock Fang, “The Undang-undang Melaka”, in Singh and Wheatley, *Melaka*, I, pp. 170, 181, 183.

<sup>20</sup> See also Lombard, “Le sultanat malais comme modèle socio-économique”, in Lombard and Aubin, *Marchands et hommes d’affaires asiatiques*; Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 167.

<sup>21</sup> Influence is also traced to Indian or Hindu laws; see Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies*, p. 63, note 12; Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 168.

<sup>22</sup> J. Kathirithamby-Wells, “Ethics and Entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia, c. 1400-1800” in Sprengard and Ptak, *Maritime Asia. Profit Maximisation, Ethics and Trade Structure*, pp. 178-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Undang-undang Melaka*, p. 38; Liaw, “The Undang-undang Melaka”, ed. Singh and Wheatley, *Melaka*, I, pp. 182, 185; Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 167.

<sup>24</sup> Parameswara and his band of thieves and hoodlums are described as having been previously very active around Singapura (where he lived for six years and later murdered his host) and then Muar, with 2,000 men; see Anonymous, *Held-dadige Scheeps-togt*, pp. 202–3. The anonymous text is attributed by the curators of Leiden University Library to the Portuguese chronicler and historian João de Barros. See also *SO*, II, p. 232: “[Parameswara] remained there [Muar] for six years, and there he planted things to live on; and they [i.e., Parameswara and his men] used to fish and sometimes robbed and plundered sampans ...”. See also *SO*, II, p. 233. Van Stein Callenfels, “The Founder of Malacca”,

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*JMBRAS*, 42.1 (1969), pp. 63-4. Similar sources were evidently used in Teixeira, *Portuguese Missions*, I, p. 17; Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya*, pp. 108–10, 117–8; Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 222–3; Winstedt, “The Malay Founder of Medieval Malacca”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 12.3-4 (1948), pp. 726–7; and Kwa, “Records and Notices of Early Singapore”, in Miksic, ed., *Archeological Research on the “Forbidden Hill” in Singapore*, pp. 122-3 for accounts by Pires and Barros on the relation between Parameswara and the *orang laut*.

<sup>25</sup> See also the Chinese testimonies of Fei-Hsin (1436) and Ma-Huan (1451) reproduced in translation by Wheatley in his *Golden Khersonese*, pp. 321–5, where it is reported that Melaka (evidently even after the chief was elevated to the position of king by the Chinese emperor) paid an annual tribute to Siam of “40 taels” in gold (Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*, pp. 321, 324). On the origin of this tribute, see also *Held-dadige Scheeps-togt*, p. 206. Unlike for the case of Siam (... *el rey de Sião ser senhor de muyta terra ...*), Castanheda does not claim that Melaka itself represented a great territorial empire, but only that the king of Melaka no longer obeyed Siam by 1509. The 16th century Portuguese chronicler opens his chapter on Melaka (book II, chapter CXII) with the following words: “Esta cidade de Malaca esta na costa de hum grande reyno chamado Sião situada na boca de hum pequeno rio ....” [This city of Melaka is situated along the coast of a great empire named Siam, and situated at the mouth of a small river]. See Castanheda, *História da Índia*, II, pp. 458, 459; Barbosa, *The Book*, II, p. 178; J. Hageman, “Geschiedenis der Verovering van Malakka en der Oorlogen Tusschen de Portugezen en Maleijers”, *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 24 (1852), p. 11.

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- <sup>26</sup> On the origins of Melaka, see also Wheatley, *Impressions*, pp. 119–76; Wilkinson, “The Malacca Sultanate”, *JSBRAS*, 61 (1912), p. 67-8.
- <sup>27</sup> See *The Itinerary of Ludovico de Varthema*, trans. John Winter Jones from the original Italian edition of 1510 and ed. Norman Mosely Penzer; Bausani, *Lettera*; Spallanzani, *Giovanni da Empoli*. In Portuguese sources, including the *Décadas* of Barros, Empoli is referred to as “Joanes Impole”. See, for example, Barros, *Décadas da Ásia*, déc. II, liv. X, cap. VIII; déc. III, liv. I, cap. I; déc. III, liv. II, cap. VI and VIII.
- <sup>28</sup> Wheatley, *Impressions*, pp. 132–3. Also *Held-dadige Scheeps-togt*, p. 203.
- <sup>29</sup> *Held-dadige Scheeps-togt*, p. 204, where for Melaka a form of *convivencia* is described between the *orang laut* (celates) and the Malays.
- <sup>30</sup> Barbosa underscores that food was brought into Melaka from “outside”, but that the city “abounds in fruit and good water”. See Barbosa, *The Book*, II, p. 178. Still, given the city’s dependence on outside supplies the cost of living remained high, see MacGregor, “The Portuguese in Malaya”, *JMBRAS* 28.2 (1955), pp. 7-8 and esp. also his extensive source references in notes 17 and 18.
- <sup>31</sup> See also Wheatley, *Impressions*, pp. 140–2.
- <sup>32</sup> Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et texts géographiques Arabes*.
- <sup>33</sup> For Conti’s influence on Fra Mauro, see Geneviève Bouchon and Diane Ménard, *Le Voyage aux Indes de Nicolò de Conti*, p. 86, and generally the definitive study by Falchetta, *Fra Mauro’s* pp. 59–69, 232, 233.
- <sup>34</sup> As is known from published research on Ottoman maritime policies and endeavours, the “age of exploration” is not a phenomenon limited to the European or even Iberian powers,

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but part of a much broader development that spanned Europe, Asia and the coastal regions of the African continent. On the Ottoman-Turkish developments coinciding with the European age of exploration of the 15th and 16th centuries, see especially Brotton, “Disorienting the East: the Geography of the Ottoman Empire”, in *Trading Territories*, pp. 87–118; Hess, “The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire”, *The American Historical Review*, 75.7 (1970), pp. 1892–1919.

<sup>35</sup> Bittner and Tomaschek, *Die Topographischen Capitel*. For a general background on the development of Ottoman cartographical science and its use of knowledge gained by European maritime powers such as the Portuguese and the Catalans in general terms, see Brotton, *Trading Territories*, pp. 87–118.

<sup>36</sup> Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór A. D. 1400?” pp. 168-9, 383ff; Obdeijn, “De oude zeehandelsweg”, pp. 751ff; Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, pp. 306–25; Wheatley, *Impressions*, see pp. 119–76.

<sup>37</sup> Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya*, p. 160; M. Hashim, *The Malay Sultanate*, p. 185. Winstedt contended that Iskandar Shah and the legendary founder of Melaka, Paramewsara, are one and the same individual, explaining that Parameswara had taken on a new name on his conversion to Islam. See Winstedt, “The Malay Founder”, p. 727. On this claim, and the problems surrounding the Melaka ruler Xarquem Darxa mentioned by Pires in the *Suma Oriental*, see the excellent forensic exposé by Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya*, pp. 108–27.

<sup>38</sup> Pintado, *Documents*, para. 96, p. 233: “Malacca is the most populous town in the Indies ...”; para. 185, p. 255: “This is the principal town in these parts, rich in trade ...”; also Pintado, *Documents*, para. 304, p. 281: “[Melaka is] the greatest trading centre in the

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- world”. Similar statements can be gleaned from other early Portuguese sources, including Barbosa. See Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, II, p. 175.
- <sup>39</sup> Pintado, *Documents*, para. 216, p. 261. See also Hageman, “Geschiedenis der Verovering van Malakka”, p. 4.
- <sup>40</sup> *SO*, II, p. 279.
- <sup>41</sup> Pintado, *Portuguese Documents on Malacca*, p. 117, parag. 14 (De Goes); p. 131, parag. 2 (De Araújo).
- <sup>42</sup> Bausani, *Lettera di Giovanni da Empoli*, p. 132.
- <sup>43</sup> Petrzilka, *Die Karten*. On the historical background to the de Vries map, see Johnson, *Carta Marina: World Geography in Strassburg, 1525*.
- <sup>44</sup> *AA*, pp. 426-7.
- <sup>45</sup> Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, pp. 51ff. See also Hageman, “Geschiedenis der Verovering”, pp. 4, 9.
- <sup>46</sup> On this point see also Ptak, “Reconsidering Melaka and Central Guangdong”, in Borschberg, *Iberians in the Singapore Melaka Area*, p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Varthema, *Itinerary*, p. 84.
- <sup>48</sup> *SO*, I, pp. 145–7. On the *Bajau* in Melaka, see Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, p. 3.
- <sup>49</sup> On this practice in the Malay world, see especially Heng, “Reconstructing Banzu”, *JMBRAS*, 75.1 (2002), pp. 71, 84–5. Note especially his claim on p. 84 that “Malacca, for example, was not recorded for having a [chain] boom”.