Aglaia Iankovskaia

AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD OF ISLAM:

MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EYES OF IBN BATTUTA

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

June 2017

AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD OF ISLAM:

MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EYES OF IBN BATTUTA

by

Aglaia Iankovskaia

(Russia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

_____
Chair, Examination Committee

_____
Thesis Supervisor

_____
Examiner

_____
Examiner

Budapest
June 2017

AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD OF ISLAM:

MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EYES OF IBN BATTUTA

by

Aglaia Iankovskaia

(Russia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

_____

External Reader

Budapest
June 2017

AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD OF ISLAM:

MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EYES OF IBN BATTUTA

by

Aglaia Iankovskaia

(Russia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

_____

External Supervisor

Budapest
June 2017

I, the undersigned, Aglaia Iankovskaia, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 20 June 2017

_____

Signature

Abstract

The thesis deals with the accounts of Maritime Southeast Asia by the medieval Arab traveller Ibn Battuta (1304-1368). It addresses two major issues related to the text—its credibility and the conception of the region it represents. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the author discusses Ibn Battuta's description of Southeast Asia from the perspectives of historical geography, literary studies and cultural anthropology, and juxtaposes it with other Arabic and non-Arabic medieval texts. The general authenticity of the traveller's accounts is concluded to be doubtful, yet some particular reports are considered credible. Ibn Battuta's conception of Maritime Southeast Asia is argued to be largely shaped by his perception of the region as the frontier of the world of Islam.

Table of contents

Introduction 3

Chapter I. Arab Travellers in Maritime Southeast Asia 8

A. Merchants and Sailors: Abbasid Seafaring on the Rise 9

B. Cosmographers and Compilers: Post-classical Geographies and the Divergence between Theory and Practice 15

C. Ibn Battuta and the Indian Ocean World in the Fourteenth Century 21

Chapter II. The *Riḥla*: Genre Conventions, Authorship and Credibility 26

Chapter III. Ibn Battuta's Account of the Malay World 38

A. Samudra and its Sultan 40

B. Qāqula 43

C. Jāwa and Mul Jāwa 47

D. Botanical Confusions 52

E. Court Etiquette and Ethnography 54

Chapter IV. At the Edge of the World of Islam: Shifting Borders and the Southeast Asian Other 63

Conclusion 73

Bibliography 77

Appendix. Ibn Battuta's account of Maritime Southeast Asia 82

Introduction

The account of Ibn Battuta (1304-1368), who claims to have visited Maritime Southeast Asia around 1345-1347, stands out among other medieval Arabic texts dealing with the region as one of the few first-hand reports and the first of this kind after 1000. It provides an insight into the life of Malay port-polities, some of them recently converted to Islam, and reflects the state of international commerce in the Straits of Malacca. As an important foreign source on the region, the *Riḥla* of Ibn Battuta is frequently referred to by the scholars of Southeast Asian and Malay medieval history. However, interpretation of Southeast Asian chapters of the travelogue presents certain difficulties in terms of itinerary, chronology and the correlation between fact and fiction. These issues raise the problem of the traveller's credibility, which has been discussed by many scholars in relation to other parts of the *Rihla*. Since a number of Ibn Battuta's accounts have been proven to be borrowings from earlier authors, a closer look into Southeast Asian material might become a contribution to the criticism of the travelogue in general.

The state of research on the matter can be generally described as fragmented. There appears to be no study dealing exclusively with Ibn Battuta's description of Southeast Asia except for the nineteenth-century publication of the text by Édouard Dulaurier.[1] Gerald Tibbetts, the author of the only comprehensive review of the Arabic sources on Southeast Asia,[2] does not give Ibn Battuta much consideration and draws upon the abridged translation by Hamilton Gibb.[3] The rest of scholarship addressing Ibn Battuta's accounts of the region can be divided

[1] Édouard Dulaurier, "Description de l'archipel d'Asie par Ibn Bathoutha," *Journal Asiatique* 9 (1847).

[2] Gerald R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

[3] Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, translated and selected by Hamilton A. R. Gibb (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1929).

into two main categories also corresponding to the fields of Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian Studies. While the historians of Southeast Asia tend to focus on the text's factual content and particular statements relevant to their research, those viewing the *Riḥla* from the perspective of Arab culture and literature usually do not elaborate much on the accounts of Southeast Asia. Another tendency, which is shared by both categories of scholars, is their interest in historical geography rather than issues related to social and cultural history. Focusing on the traveller's itinerary and political history of the region, they often neglect ethnographic descriptions found in the text.

The present study aims to fill this gap through providing a detailed discussion of Ibn Battuta's accounts of Maritime Southeast Asia. It employs an interdisciplinary approach involving the methods of not only comparative history but also historical geography and literary studies in order to examine the text from the perspectives of its literary form and narrative structure, on the one hand, and its factual content, on the other. I also attempt to introduce an anthropological perspective to define the impact of the traveller's cultural attitudes and preconceptions of the Other on his depictions of the region and the spatial paradigm of the *Riḥla* in general. The thesis deals with the two major issues related to the text—its credibility and the conception of Southeast Asia it represents. I suggest seeing various discrepancies in the narrative as a result of compiling, which seems to allow borrowed passages or even fabrications to appear next to authentic accounts. And I argue that the narrative was shaped to a certain extent by Ibn Battuta's perception of the region as a frontier of the world of Islam.

The thesis focuses on the fragments of the *Riḥla* of Ibn Battuta dealing with the so called Malay world—the cultural region that encompasses the Malay Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula but does not include the rest of mainland Southeast Asia. Since of the places

described by the traveller only Sumatra is identified with certainty, others possibly being located in Java or the Malay Peninsula, I generally define the geographical area under discussion as Maritime Southeast Asia. Ibn Battuta's travels in the China Sea and in eastern Indochina are left beyond the scope of this study. Chronologically, I focus on the age of Ibn Battuta, i.e. the second quarter of the fourteenth century, but also address other sources coming from earlier and later periods in order to put the traveller's accounts into a wider context. The evidence involved includes medieval Arabic geographical tradition related to Southeast Asia as well as contemporary Chinese and European accounts of the region and Malay historical chronicles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The passages addressed in this study can be found between Ibn Battuta's descriptions of India and China, as he allegedly passed through the Straits of Malacca on the way to China and back. The account of Samudra on the northern coast of Sumatra is followed by that of a country called Mul Jāwa and its port Qāqula, but on the way back only Samudra is revisited. While the sultanate of Samudra is known from other local and foreign sources, the identification of the latter two place names remains problematic. Different locations in Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula have been suggested, but none of them fully meets the case. In contrast to detailed descriptions of Ibn Battuta's stay in Samudra, the accounts of his further journey through the archipelago appear to be largely inconsistent. Notably, this change in the narrative seems to correspond to the traveller's distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim parts of the region.

Ibn Battuta appears to be the first Arab to mention the Malay sultanate of Samudra-Pasai that existed on the north-eastern coast of Sumatra between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the earliest Muslim states of the region, by the time of the traveller's visit it flourished as a commercial centre and a transit point for the trade in textiles and spices. Ibn Battuta's report represents an important historical source on this polity and contains, among other

things, various ethnographic details related to the court etiquette, wedding rituals, food, clothes and chewing betel. These details appear to correspond to what is known from the local chronicles and later ethnographic sources, and thus seem to confirm Ibn Battuta's credibility. Yet a problem arises regarding the sultan Ibn Battuta claims to have met, Malik az-Zahir, who is supposed to have died twenty years before the traveller's visit. Different explanations have been offered for this chronological contradiction, but the issue remains unclear.

As opposed to Samudra, which does not appear in Arabic texts before Ibn Battuta, Qāqula is a place name deeply rooted in the Arab geographical tradition. References to this port can be found in texts starting from the ninth century, but its location remains under dispute. Different identifications have been suggested, most of them placing Qāqula on the north-eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal. But this point of view disagrees with Ibn Battuta's itinerary, which seems to place Qāqula somewhere down the Straits of Malacca. The only explanation offered so far for this confusion is the displacement of paragraphs and corruption of the original text by the copyists. Compared to Ibn Battuta's description of Samudra, passages dealing with Qāqula seem to be much more inconsistent. They are not always properly related to each other and lack detailed descriptions of the traveller's personal experiences. His accounts of spices contain a number of botanical confusions, while those of local customs do not correspond to what is known of the Malay culture, finding more parallels in medieval Arabic and Western texts dealing with India.

In order to discuss these and some other problems I attempt to place Ibn Battuta's account of Maritime Southeast Asia into a wider historical and literary context through juxtaposing it with a number of medieval Arabic and non-Arabic texts and other sources. The structure of the thesis is designed to proceed from the wider issues of historical circumstances and the literary geographical tradition that produced the account to the closer analysis of its structure

and content and eventually to the discussion of Ibn Battuta's conception of the region. The first chapter outlines the history of contacts of medieval Arabs with the Malay world, starting from the first encounters and up to the age of Ibn Battuta, and describes the general tendencies in the Arabic depictions of the region. The second chapter deals with the *Rihla* as a work of literature and seeks to define its narrative paradigms and techniques used to construct the text. In the third chapter I provide a detailed discussion of the travelogue's sections related to the Malay world, highlighting a number of motifs found in the text and seeking to interpret the discrepancies in the narrative. The fourth and final chapter aims to define Ibn Battuta's conception of the region from the perspectives of his perceptions of the Other and the cultural stereotypes that circulated in the medieval Arabic literature before. The text of the fragments of the *Rihla*, which forms the basis of this study, can be found in the appendix.

Chapter I. Arab Travellers in Maritime Southeast Asia

In the present chapter I address the historical and literary context of Ibn Battuta's account and the journey it describes. I attempt to place it in time and space against the background of political circumstances and trading networks that made the voyage possible and the Islamicate geographical tradition that shaped the travelogue as a text.[4] Chronologically, the chapter covers a period between ninth and fourteenth centuries—starting from the first encounters of Arabs with the Malay world, as they reflect in the early written sources, and up to the age of Ibn Battuta. In terms of space, it deals with the two regions that came in contact in the Middle Ages, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and with the Indian Ocean world as an interlink that brought them together.

The range of contexts discussed in this chapter includes the history of Arab travels and migrations to Maritime Southeast Asia, the body of Arabic texts related to the region and the wider tendencies in the development of medieval Islamicate geography. Through this approach I seek to combine two perspectives of Ibn Battuta's account of the Malay Archipelago, regarding it both as the description of a journey that might have taken place in 1345 and as a narrative inherent in the literary tradition. Ibn Battuta was not the first medieval Arab traveller in Southeast Asia, and his report cannot be examined in isolation from those by other earlier and contemporary visitors to the region. Once put into writing, they contributed to the Arab geographical knowledge of the world and became a part of a bigger picture. And while the content of these accounts can be interpreted in light of its

[4] From this point on in a number of contexts I prefer the term 'Islamicate' introduced by Marshal Hodgson to the word 'Islamic'. Hodgson defines it as something referring "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims." Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 59.

historical context, the way they were written down, rewritten and transmitted belongs to the field of textual studies.

The structure of the chapter corresponds to the much discussed division of Arabic geographical literature into classical and post-classical, which is also clearly visible in Arabic descriptions of Southeast Asia. The first section is concerned with the early encounters and classical ninth- and tenth-century accounts, while the second deals with the era of encyclopaedism. The third section, leaving aside the history of geographical literature, provides a closer insight into the age of Ibn Battuta, i.e. the second quarter of the fourteenth century, and political, economic and social circumstances of the traveller's journey to the East.

A. Merchants and Sailors: Abbasid Seafaring on the Rise

Arabs appear to have been frequenting the shores of Maritime Southeast Asia since the first centuries of Islam, but when they first reached the region remains unclear. While the earliest Arabic accounts of it date back to the middle of the ninth century, the data they contain seems to be older. The first indication of Arab presence in the Malay Archipelago can be found in Chinese chronicles, which mention an Arab colony that existed in Sumatra in 674.[5] Also Yijing, a Chinese monk who visited the island in 671, reports of its commercial relations with the Middle East.[6] The first encounters of Arabs with the Malay world most probably happened before the first half of the seventh century, when a trading colony was already

[5] Willem Pieter Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese sources* (Batavia, 1876), 14.

[6] Uka Tjandrasasmita, "The Sea Trade of the Moslems to the Eastern Countries and the Rise of Islam in Indonesia," in *Studies in Asian History, Proceeding of the Asian History Congress* (Bombay, 1961), 93.

established in Guangzhou.[7] However, the Chinese distinction between Arabs and Persians is somewhat vague, and the Arabness of pre-Islamic Arabs and South Arabians in particular is a complex issue. As the ethnic matter does not seem to be of importance here, it would be more reasonable to speak of pre-Islamic Middle Eastern seafaring to the East in general. Even later, throughout the Islamic period, the population of Persian Gulf ports involved in the Indian Ocean trade and navigation was largely mixed,[8] and geographical texts in Arabic were written both by Arabs and Persians.

According to George Hourani, the first Persian expeditions to China took place in the Sasanian period,[9] which also seems to be confirmed by fifth-century archaeological finds of Sasanian origin excavated in the Mekong Delta.[10] The navigation continued under the caliphate, with more and more Arabs being engaged and finally getting an upper hand on the Chinese trade after the eighth century.[11] Though there have been attempts to date the establishment of contacts between South Arabia and Southeast Asia to the period shortly before the Common Era, there seems to be no strong evidence for that. Tibbetts does not find any indications of Arab presence to the east of India before 500 AD and suggests that the first encounters took place in the sixth or seventh centuries.[12] Indirect connections between the regions apparently existed before, as merchants from East and West could meet and goods be

[7] Ibid.

[8] Al-Muqaddasi reports, in particular, that "the majority of the people of 'Adan and Judda are Persian, yet their language is Arabic." Al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, transl. Basil Collins (Reading: Garnet, 2001), 82.

[9] George F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 46-47.

[10] Alastair Lamb, "A Visit to Siraf, an Ancient Port on the Persian Gulf," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 37 (1964): 12.

[11] See Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean*, 61; Gerald R. Tibbetts, "Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30 (1957): 9, 11, 31.

[12] Gerald R. Tibbetts, "Pre-Islamic Arabia and South-East Asia," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 29 (1956): 204-5, 207.

exchanged in the markets of Ceylon and South India. And this way objects could travel further than people did.

The Umayyads favoured Indian Ocean commerce, but under the Abbasids it flourished as never before. Much of the goods traffic concentrated in the ports of the Persian Gulf, especially Siraf, due to their proximity to Baghdad and Basra. On the other side of the Ocean colonies of Muslim traders grew in South China ports, accumulating wealth and influence. As maritime routes to China passed through the Straits of Malacca and Sunda, ports of the western part of the Malay Archipelago served as transit points and benefited from international commerce and monsoon navigation. They offered local spices and jungle products, harbours to wait for a favourable wind, warehouses to store goods and markets to exchange them. After 879, when a revolt against foreign merchants made them flee Guangzhou and Arab navigation was limited to the Straits of Malacca,[13] Malay ports gained even more advantages. However, by the second half of the tenth century direct commercial connections between China and the Middle East were restored.

By the tenth century Arab traders and sailors had been familiar with Malay port-polities located along the major trade routes through the Straits of Malacca and Sunda—on the north-western and eastern coasts of Sumatra, north-western coast of Java and western coast of the Malay Peninsula. Although there is little direct evidence of the existence of early Arab colonies in the region,[14] it is likely that at that time Southeast Asian ports already hosted settlements of Muslim traders. The expulsion of foreign merchants from Chinese ports in 879

[13] This event is referred to by al-Mas'udi and Aby Zaid. Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'or,* trans. C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, vol. 1 (Paris, 1861), 307-8; Abū Zayd Al-Sīrāfī, "Accounts of China and India," in *Two Arabic Travel Books: Accounts of China and India by Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfī and Mission to the Volga by Ibn Fadlan*, ed. and trans. T. Mackintosh-Smith (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 66-71, 88-89.

[14] Tibbetts, "Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia," 38-40.

and temporary relocation of Muslim trade to Kalāh[15] on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula must have facilitated the emergence of Muslim communities there and in other ports of Southeast Asia. The population of these colonies was probably partly mobile and partly sedentary, due to the travellers' dependence on monsoon seasons.[16] Some traders stayed only until the change of wind, others became permanent residents and intermarried with local population. The ethnic composition of foreign merchant communities in Maritime Southeast Asia appears to have been largely mixed: it included Arab, Persian and Indian Muslims, and possibly Nestorian Christians.[17]

The expansion of Indian Ocean trade and seafaring between the eighth and tenth centuries coincides with the rule of Abbasid Caliphate in the West and the Tang dynasty in the East. In the Malay world it was the heyday of the maritime empire of Srivijaya—a Buddhist Malay polity centred in East Sumatra.[18] Having taken control of the Straits of Malacca and Sunda, it

[15] Kalāh is one of the most frequently mentioned Southeast Asian ports in the Arabic sources, its location being much disputed by scholars. Most of them agree on the north-western coast of the Malay Peninsula and consider two plausible locations: Kedah and Tenasserim coast. On the discussion see: Paul Wheatly, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A. D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961), 224; S. Q. Fatimi, "In Quest of Kalah," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1 (1960); Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 122-28.

[16] On the life of foreign trading communities in Maritime Southeast Asia see: Kenneth R. Hall, "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600-1500," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47 (2004): 245-46.

[17] On the latter see Brian E. Colless, "Persian Merchants and Missionaries in Medieval Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42 (1969): 20-21.

[18] The name and the very existence of Srivijaya was discovered in 1918 by George Coedès who juxtaposed Zābaj and Sribuza of Arabic texts with San-fo-tsi or Shi-li-fo-shi of Chinese sources and those with the state that left epigraphic evidence in the western part of the archipelago, see George Coedès, "Le royaume de Çrīvijaya," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 18 (1918). However, there is a number of issues related to the history of this medieval "empire" that remain under discussion, among them the political structure of Srivijaya, the origin of Sailendras, the reasons and time of Srivijaya's decline and the location of its capital. See: George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968); Oliver W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Šrivijaya* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967); and "Studying Śrīvijaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 52 (1979); Roy

dominated the western part of the archipelago and much of Southeast Asian commerce for almost seven hundred years—from the seventh to the thirteenth century. Under the dynasty of Sailendras, who bore the title of maharajas, the empire flourished and carried on trade with the Abbasids and Tang China. The golden age of Srivijaya reflects in the accounts of contemporary Arab travellers and echoes in the works of later authors. The "Country of Maharaja" or Zābaj is mentioned by most of medieval geographers writing on Southeast Asia, and they seem to share similar ideas about it. They speak of the country's vast territory and large number of islands, abundant spices and gold, dense population, fertile soil, mighty army and fleet, Buddhist temples with golden statues as well as busy markets, settlements of foreign merchants and trade with China and the Persian Gulf.

Srivijaya appears to have influenced Arab imagination significantly, as the tales of its splendour dominate much of medieval Arabic discourse on the region. The accounts of it, as well as of smaller Southeast Asian ports and coastal areas, can be found in a number of medieval Arabic texts of various genres largely classified as descriptive geography.[19] The earliest works dealing with the Malay Archipelago are the anonymous *The Accounts of China and India* and *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* by Ibn Khurdadhbih, both dating back to the middle of the ninth century. Al-Ya'qubi's *Book of Countries*, from the second half of the ninth century, has some references to the region, but unfortunately its third section that contained more data did not survive. Later in the tenth century a body of classical texts describing the world to the East of India were produced, including those by Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Rusta, Abu Zaid as-Sirafi, al-Mas'udi, Abu Dulaf and Buzurg ibn Shahriyar. Also not later

E. Jordaan, and Brian E. Colless, *The Mahārājas of the Isles: The Śailendras and the problem of Śrīvijaya* (Leiden: University of Leiden, 2009).

[19] Medieval Arabic geography is traditionally divided into mathematical/astronomical branch, strongly influenced by classical Ptolemaic tradition, and descriptive or human geography which also includes travelogues. The larger part of information on Southeast Asia can be found in the second category of literature, since no early Islamicate maps of the region survived and astronomical treatises provide only coordinates of some Southeast Asian ports.

than the tenth century the well-known *Arabian Nights* cycle on Sindbad the Sailor was composed, echoing the flourish of Abbasid maritime trade with the East.

Classical ninth and tenth-century Arabic accounts of the Malay Archipelago seem to be much closer to the oral tradition than later post-classical ones. Largely based on reports of travellers collected in the ports of the Persian Gulf, they contain a considerable amount of original and up-to-date material. *The Wonders of India* by Buzurg ibn Shahriyar is literally a collection of merchants' and sailors' tales, and the *The Accounts of China and India* provides itineraries according to verbal accounts. Also Abu Dulaf describes his voyage through Southeast Asia around 942, being one of the three Arab authors who claim to have travelled to the region in person. Al-Mas'udi appears to be the second, yet his claim is rather dubious. Descriptions of the archipelago in his *Medows of Gold* are more likely to be compilations of various oral and written sources, similarly to the accounts of Ibn Khurdadhbih, Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Rusta and Abu Zaid. Much of the sources used by classical geographers did not survive, but some connections can be determined even within the extant texts. Ibn al-Faqih and Ibn Rusta, in particular, draw upon Ibn Khurdadhbih and *The Accounts of China and India*, while al-Mas'udi repeats some passages from Abu Zaid.

In terms of narrative structure, the so-called authentic accounts do not appear to differ much from those by "armchair" geographers. Travellers tend not to provide details of their experiences, and geographers do not attempt to create a multidimensional picture of the region. Most of the authors and narrators follow a lineal pattern describing islands, countries and towns one by one as they adjoin each other along the trade routes. As different types of geographic objects are often confused and the locations of most of the place names remain problematic, classical Arab geographers' conception of Maritime Southeast Asia can be generally described as fragmented. Neither travellers, nor geographical writers seem to have a clear idea of the region's geography, and their narrative strategies often converge. This is not

to say that no itinerary survived as a separate text but most of them are scattered in fragments throughout geographical compilations. Thus the distinction between travellers' accounts and geographical treatises, suggested by Tibbetts,[20] appears to be somewhat ambiguous.

B. Cosmographers and Compilers: Post-classical Geographies and the Divergence between Theory and Practice

The period between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries saw the decline of both Srivijaya and the Abbasid Caliphate. The fall of the Abbasids and the rise of Cairo relocated the centres of Arab Indian Ocean trade from the Persian Gulf to the ports of the Red Sea, Aden evolving into the major harbour for the ships coming from China. In the Malay Archipelago, the once powerful Srivijaya faced a period of stagnation: after the Chola invasion the capital was allegedly moved from Palembang to Melayu-Jambi, [21] while Java's commercial expansion and the rise of independent city-states in North Sumatra contributed to the empire's decay. However, this decline can be hardly seen from contemporary Arabic sources, as they tend to repeat the tales of Srivijaya's tenth-century glory. On the other hand, these texts do not seem to reflect any developments in the region, as much of the data they contain is outdated. Contrary to what one might expect, they do not demonstrate much extension of Arab knowledge of the archipelago, this fact sometimes being viewed as a sign of interruption of direct contacts between the regions.

For the eleventh century al-Biruni's works appear to be the only significant Arabic source on Southeast Asia, yet they do not show familiarity with the region. Twelfth-century authors al-

[20] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 3-5.

[21] Oliver W. Wolters, "A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century," *Artibus Asiae* 23 (1966).

Marwazi and al-Haraki also provide almost no original data, as they largely draw upon their classical predecessors. In the middle of the twelfth century the fundamental geographical treatise of al-Idrisi brings the first known Arabic map of Southeast Asia. Based on Ptolemaic conception of the Indian Ocean, it shows the coasts of Africa and China close to each other, mixing up the islands of the Malay Archipelago with those located off the East African shore. Al-Idrisi's textual description of Southeast Asia does not add much to the tenth-century knowledge of the region and appears to be derived from the works of Ibn Khurdadhbih, al-Jayhani[22] and other earlier authors. As al-Idrisi's treatise is extensively used by later geographers including Ibn Said, Abu-l-Fida and ad-Dimashqi, it seems to be the link through which the quotes from ninth- and tenth-century accounts of Southeast Asia made it into late medieval Arabic texts.

Thirteenth-century descriptions of the region can be found in two seminal encyclopaedic works: the *Dictionary of Countries* by Yakut and al-Qazwini's cosmography *The Wonders of Creation*. Both authors compile geographical material from preceding texts, citing, among other things, fragments from the travelogue of Abu Dulaf. Ibn Said who composed his geography in the second half of the same century borrows al-Idrisi's ideas of Indian Ocean, but his conception of Sumatra brings together both old and new place names and appears to be rather original. Ibn Said'a and al-Idrisi's descriptions of Southeast Asia are reproduced by the geographers of the fourteenth century: Abu-l-Fida and ad-Dimashqi. Another fourteenth-century author dealing with the region is Mamluk encyclopaedist al-'Umari, who composed his voluminous treatise a quarter century before Ibn Battuta. His extensive quotations from

[22] Abu ʿAbdallah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhani was a Samanid *wazir* in the first half of the tenth century, whose lost work *The Book of Routes and Kingdoms* is quoted by many later geographers.

The Wonders of India of Buzurg ibn Shahriyar contain original accounts of Southeast Asia that are not found in other texts.[23]

As one can see, Arab geographers writing on the region after the tenth century tend to draw less and less upon contemporary oral accounts and increasingly more on outdated written sources. Starting with al-Idrisi, Arabic sources provide very little new information, and even in cases when they do contain some it is difficult to distinguish between contemporary data and that derived from earlier texts which did not survive. Through al-Idrisi's work late medieval Arab geographers borrow data dating back to the ninth and tenth centuries, thus repeating accounts that appear to be almost five hundred years old. Classical texts of the ninth and tenth centuries, therefore, seem to constitute the main body of materials used by later compilers and a basis for the whole medieval Arabic discourse on Southeast Asia. The most frequently quoted texts appear to be *The Accounts of China and India* and the works of Ibn Khurdadhbih, Buzurg ibn Shahriyar and al-Mas'udi, all of them compiled from other extant and non-extant sources as well.

In the light of the scarcity of up-to-date materials in post-tenth-century Arabic sources on Southeast Asia and a lack of geographers' interest in the region some scholars come to the conclusion on the decrease of the role of Arab traders to the east of India. Kenneth Hall, in particular, sees the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a period of decline of Arab commerce in the Malay waters, which he attributes to the coming of Chinese traders to the local markets and to the political instability of the Persian Gulf area. And yet the Red Sea based trade continued, Arab commercial activities, according to Hall, rarely reached beyond the ports of

[23] Jean-Charles Ducène, "Une nouvelle source arabe sur l'océan Indien au X^e siècle: le *Ṣaḥīḥ min aḫbār al-biḥār wa-'aǧā'ibihā* d'Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Rabāḥ al-Awsī al-Sīrāfī," *Afriques* 6 (2015), online journal accessed 23.04.2017. URL : http://afriques.revues.org/1746 ; DOI : 10.4000/afriques.1746

South Asia.[24] However, the lack of data alone does not seem to be sufficient evidence of the decrease of contacts, especially considering general tendencies in the development of medieval Islamicate geography.

Later Arabic accounts' lack of originality as opposed to early authors' "authentic" reports appears to be in line with the post-classical decline paradigm. Originating in the eleventh century, the era of encyclopaedism in Islamicate geography and science in general has been largely criticised for extensive compiling and repetition. Bringing together all the accounts they could access, geographers aimed to contribute to the general process of accumulation of knowledge, its synthesis and retransmission. Not only descriptions of the Malay Archipelago, but all geographical works follow this trend, and the year 1000 as the divide between classical and post-classical geographies seems to be in complete accord with that between ninth and tenth-century original accounts of Southeast Asia and later derivative ones. As far as it can be accounted for post-classical tendencies in Arabic literature, should a lack of original data on a particular region be seen as evidence for the decline of contacts with it?

Speaking of the lack of interest of post-classical authors in Southeast Asia, other aspects of these texts may also be taken into account. One of them is the places where they were composed. While many classical accounts were written down in the ports of the Persian Gulf, most of later authors worked in Egypt, Syria or the Maghrib. If there was some connection between the abundance of information about the East in literature and the proximity of busy Persian Gulf ports to the Abbasid capital and the centres of intellectual life, it must have been disrupted by the relocation of Indian Ocean trade to the Red Sea and of the Arab political and cultural life to the west. Another point is the subject that the geographers were concerned with. It is notable that, except for *The Accounts of China and India* and *The Wonders of*

[24] Kenneth R. Hall, "Trade and Statecraft in the Western Archipelago at the Dawn of the European Age," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 54 (1981): 23.

India, none of the authors makes the Indian Ocean world the main topic of his treatise. After the tenth century material on Southeast Asia can be found only in general geographical works, encyclopaedias and cosmographies, their authors having no special interest in the region and providing data on it primarily for the sake of completeness. If a post-classical text dealing particularly with the East ever existed, it could have demonstrated more familiarity with the region.

In view of the above, eleventh- up to fourteenth-century Arabic accounts of Southeast Asia do not necessary reflect the decline of Arab maritime trade to the east of India, yet they do not exclude it either. However, Tibbetts does not find any confirmation of this decrease in the Chinese sources,[25] and epigraphic evidence throughout the archipelago indicates continuous presence of Middle Easterners in the region. Also in the late thirteenth century the Islamisation of Sumatran port-polities started, which suggests certain involvement of Arabs or Persians. If some reduction of the Arab commerce in the region took place after the eleventh century, it seems to have been restored by the fourteenth century when Mamluk Egypt became a major market for Southeast Asian spices and Chinese goods. But even before this, during the alleged period of decrease of trade between the regions, Arab and Persian merchants most probably continued to settle and trade in the Malay ports, contributing to the gradual and peaceful expansion of Islam to the East.

It also seems plausible that during the post-classical period practical knowledge of the Malay waters continued to be accumulated among the seafarers of the Red Sea ports and South Arabia. This is corroborated by the surprising familiarity with Southeast Asia in the fifteenth-century navigational treatise of Ahmad ibn Majid, who also mentions famous pilots that used to sail to the East in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[26] We do not know whether the

[25] Tibbetts, "Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia," 32.

[26] [Teodor A. Shumovsky] Т.А. Шумовский, *По следам Синдбада морехода: Океанская Аравия* [*In the footsteps of Sindbad the Sailor: Oceanic Arabia*] (Moscow: Mysl, 1986), 41-42.

knowledge of Indian Ocean routes was transmitted across the generations orally or in writing, but it was ultimately this professional tradition that resulted in the up-to-date conception of Southeast Asia described by Ibn Majid. As this conception differs significantly from those of the contemporary followers of al-Idrisi, it can be assumed that there were two bodies of geographical knowledge developing separately after the tenth century. One of them was the scholarly tradition of Middle Eastern intellectual elites, and the other entailed practical information transmitted by generations of professional navigators in South Arabia. But, unfortunately, no pre-fifteenth-century Arabic pilot charts dealing with Indian Ocean have been discovered yet.

Ibn Battuta, an educated jurist and courtier, belongs to the first tradition, not to mention his editor Ibn Juzayy. But he also claims to draw upon his travel experiences, standing out among other late medieval Arab authors and those dealing with Southeast Asia in particular. Except for him and al-Biruni, who probably visited India, none of the post-classical Arab geographers writing on the region are known to have travelled as far as the western coast of the Indian Ocean. Yakut had been to some ports of the Persian Gulf, and Ibn Said and al-Umari could have met travellers to the East at the court,[27] but most of the authors did not get even that close to the places they wrote about. Composed in libraries and archives with limited use of contemporary travel accounts, most post-classical works do not contribute much to the Arab knowledge of Southeast Asia. Ibn Battuta's allegedly first-hand report and his detailed description of his voyage through the archipelago deviates from this tendency, highlighting a gap between his account and those by tenth-century Arab travellers.

[27] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 92; [Ignaty I. Krachkovsky] И. Ю. Крачковский, Арабская географическая литература [*Arab geographical literature*] (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2004), 410.

C. Ibn Battuta and the Indian Ocean World in the Fourteenth Century

The travels of Ibn Battuta (1325-1354) took place in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, covering the entire medieval Islamicate world and beyond. At the time the political landscape was dominated by Mongol states: Yuan China, Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde; also Mamluk and Delhi Sultanates were on the rise. Still threatened from both east and west, the Middle East was recovering after the Crusades and Mongol invasions. With the fall of Baghdad in 1258 and the expulsion of crusaders from the ports of Levant at the end of the thirteenth century the central trade route went into decline.[28] Communication between the East Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean concentrated in the Red Sea and Egypt, and the Mamluks held the key to this route. The Persian Gulf ports continued to operate, but never regained the role they had played in the Abbasid Era. Alexandria and Aden were now the maritime gateways to India and China, and it remained so until the venture of Vasco da Gama.

In the Maghrib, where Ibn Battuta was born, the fourteenth century was a heyday of the dynasty of Marinids which reached the peak of its power by 1350. In 1325 Ibn Battuta left his home in Tangier in order to perform hajj and did not return until 1349. After a series of travels around North Africa and the Middle East, he headed north to the Golden Horde, and from there to Central Asia and India. Having reached Delhi in 1333, Ibn Battuta stayed at the court of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughlaq (1325-1351) for around eight years. In 1342 he joined the sultan's embassy to China, but after suffering shipwreck in a storm decided to go to the Maldives. In 1345 the traveller eventually embarked on a journey from Bengal to

[28] Janet Abu-Lughod distinguishes three major trade routes that crossed East Mediterranean in the thirteenth century and connected Europe with the Far East: the northern route from Constantinople and across Central Asia, the central or middle route through Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, and the southern route through Egypt and South Arabia. See: Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 137-49.

China. On the way there and back he passed through the Straits of Malacca, and in his return voyage sailed from Sumatra to Ceylon. From Ceylon Ibn Battuta returned to the Middle East and then to his homeland in Morocco. There he settled down in Fez at the court of Sultan Abu Inan (1348-1358), who ordered to put the *Riḥla* into writing.

Ibn Battuta's ambitious tour of the medieval world and his journey to the East in particular were possible due to the developed network of trade routes, on the one hand, and a social context that facilitated his mobility, on the other. The traveller joined caravans of merchants and pilgrims, royal corteges and diplomatic missions. But, unlike his famous European forerunner Marco Polo, he was not involved in trade. Throughout the years of wanders Ibn Battuta played many different roles, most of them within the repertoire of the class of *'ulamā'*. He travelled as a pilgrim, student, scholar and a wandering *ṣūfī*, a jurist qualified enough to be a *qāḍi* and an adventurous career seeker. Occasionally a courtier, diplomat or administrator, or simply as an honourable learned guest, he benefited much from hospitality and patronage of different rulers—especially those at the periphery of the Islamicate world.

Ross Dunn distinguishes between the traditional roles of a pilgrim, scholar and *ṣūfī* played by Ibn Battuta in the Middle East and a new type of a "literate frontiersman" that was highly in demand in the growing Muslim communities and recently converted courts outside the Islamic heartland.[29] The expansion of Islam in the late medieval period created a cosmopolitan trans-Eurasian social order that enabled and encouraged the migration of religious and intellectual specialists from the centre of the Islamicate world to its periphery. The borderlands of Islam attracted them with great opportunities, as it is demonstrated by Ibn Battuta's career in Delhi and those of other foreigners he encountered at the court. Most of them were not outstanding scholars and would hardly achieve the same positions back in the

[29] Ross E. Dunn, "International Migrations of Literate Muslims in the Later Middle Period: The Case of Ibn Battuta," in *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Medieval and Modern Islam*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993), 63.

Middle East. As a representative of this class of migratory *'ulamā'* Ibn Battuta was a common social type, not remarkable if not for the extent of his wanderings.

In the age of Ibn Battuta the shores of the Indian Ocean were the frontiers of the world of Islam, but they were also a special world themselves—the world that brought East Africa, Arabia, South Asia and the Malay Archipelago together through intellectual networks and maritime trade. Ibn Battuta's travels to the coasts of Indian Ocean and his accounts of the people he met highlight the mobility of Muslims around the region and the existence of a vast network of Islamic scholars.[30] Also a certain cultural unity of the Indian Ocean world is visible through his descriptions of social practices and etiquette. As he found many of them familiar wherever he went, it suggests the development of a uniform cosmopolitan order that would be not possible without continuous circulation of people around the region.

Another aspect related to this uniformity was the language. It is commonly assumed that besides his native tongue Ibn Battuta had only some limited knowledge of Persian—the court language of the Delhi Sultanate and a lingua franca of the Indian Ocean trade. However, he apparently could do without it, since the role of Arabic as a bearer of Islamic texts and ideas to East Africa, South and Southeast Asia enabled him to move around the region without difficulty. At the linguistically diverse frontiers of the Islamicate world religious conversion went hand in hand with the spread of Arabic as the language of faith and law, and later resulted in the formation of what Ronit Ricci defines as the "Arabic Cosmopolis" of South and Southeast Asia.[31] However, at the time when Ibn Battuta visited the Malay Archipelago the region only began to be absorbed by the expanding world of Islam.

[30] Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), 75-76.

[31] Speaking of the period after the sixteenth century, Ricci describes the Arabic Cosmopolis as a "translocal Islamic sphere constituted and defined by language, literature and religion." Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 4.

Although Muslims had been settling in Malay ports for more than five hundred years, the circumstances for a large scale conversion evolved only by the end of the thirteenth century. By that time the remnants of Srivijaya in East Sumatra almost lost their control of trade routes and vassal port-polities, giving way to the Javanese empire of Majapahit. The city-states of North Sumatra benefited from Srivijaya's decline, as well as from the growth of demand for pepper and the revival of international commerce in the archipelago. In the thirteenth century Chinese merchants entered Javanese and Malay markets, and the trade with the Middle East rose due to the insecurity of land routes and the establishment of Mamluk power on the western side of the ocean. Located at the entrance to the Straits of Malacca, North Sumatran ports flourished as the transit points for spice and textile trade. The decay of Srivijaya gave them an opportunity to strengthen their positions, and conversion into Islam became a step in this direction. However, the economic rise and political independence of Sumatran ports did not last long, as in 1350s—soon after Ibn Battuta's visit—they faced the invasion of Majapahit.

The sultanate of Samudra-Pasai, where the traveller stopped on the way to China, existed from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century and was one of the earliest Muslim states in Southeast Asia. In the fourteenth century it dominated the northern coast of Sumatra as a hub for the export of pepper, camphor and benzoin from the hinterland and a market for exchange of goods from Java and India. Samudra is known from local chronicles and epigraphy as well as foreign written evidence, and is identified with the kingdom of Samara visited by Marco Polo in 1292. As Polo reports it to be pagan,[32] the conversion is assumed to have taken place between 1292 and 1297, the latter being the date of death of Samudra's first Muslim ruler, Malik as-Salih. This sultan, also known under the Malay name Merah Silu, enhanced the state's connections with India, China and the Middle East and unified Samudra with the

[32] Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East,* ed. and transl. H. Yule, vol. 2 (London: Murray, 1875), 274.

neighbouring Perlak through a marriage alliance. Malik as-Salih's successor, Malik az-Zahir (d. 1326), expanded the boundaries of the sultanate with military campaigns and was known for his religious zeal. The court of this sultan and his successors was a home to theological discourses and Arabic and Persian literature translated into Malay.

The sultans of Samudra, similar to other rulers of recently converted Islamicate societies, favoured the foreigners of Middle Eastern origin and sought prestige by surrounding themselves with Islamic scholars and jurists, especially those claiming descent from the Prophet. As the Malay sultanates accepted the Shafi'i school of Islamic law, *'ulamā'* belonging to it were particularly welcome. Starting from the thirteenth century the flow of Arab migrants to Southeast Asia increased,[33] both in light of political instability in the Middle East and the rising demand for literate Muslims in the Malay world. While in the previous centuries the majority of Arab visitors to the archipelago were traders or sailors, in the late medieval period a new category of travellers appeared in the region. Ibn Battuta was one of them and the first of this kind who left a written account of his voyage.

[33] Geoff Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (2009): 234.

Chapter II. The *Riḥla*: Genre Conventions, Authorship and Credibility

In the previous chapter I discussed the circumstances of Ibn Battuta's visit to Maritime Southeast Asia and the political situation he must have encountered there. This chapter focuses on the traveller's accounts of the region as a text and a part of a larger literary work. I will deal with the *Riḥla* from the perspectives of its narrative patterns and outline some general features and paradigms that define the travelogue as a whole, as they seem to be of relevance to the understanding of the fragments related to Southeast Asia. The issues addressed in the chapter include the *Riḥla*'s textual history, authorship and genre conventions, as well as the discussion of credibility and authenticity of Ibn Battuta's accounts.

The travelogue of Ibn Battuta came down to us in a text headed *Tuhfat an-nuzzār fi gharā'ib al-amsār wa 'ajā'ib al-asfār* (A gift to those who contemplate the wonders of cities and the marvels of traveling), but most often the work is referred to as just the *Riḥla* (Journey) of Ibn Battuta. The text was completed in 1356 in the city of Fez, after the traveller settled down at the court of Sultan Abu Inan. At the sultan's order, Ibn Battuta dictated his travel accounts to the court secretary Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi (1321-1357), a young Andalusian writer, who edited them and provided a preface and afterword. The *Riḥla* survived in a number of copies, many of them incomplete or abridged and only a few containing the full text of the travelogue. Five manuscripts housed in the National Library of France formed the basis for the nineteenth-

century edition of Charles Defrémery and Beniamino Sanguinetti that, in turn, became a basis for the majority of later translations of the text as well as its publications in the Arab world.[34]

The *Riḥla* of Ibn Battuta did not come to notice during his lifetime, though he apparently gained certain distinction at the Marinid court as a storyteller. A glimpse into the sort of reputation the traveller had is provided by his famous younger contemporary Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406):

> In the times of the Merinid Sultan, Abu 'Inan, *a shaykh* from Tangier, by name Ibn Battutah, came (back) to the Maghrib. Twenty years before, he had left for the East and journeyed through the countries of the 'Iraq, the Yemen, and India. He had come to the city of Delhi, the seat of the ruler of India, the Sultan Muhammad Shah, (the ruler) esteemed Ibn Battutah highly and employed him as Malikite judge in his domain. He then returned to the Maghrib and made contact with the Sultan Abu 'Inan. He used to tell about experiences he had had on his travels and about the remarkable things he had seen in the different realms. He spoke mostly about the ruler of India. He reported things about him that his listeners considered strange. That, for instance, when the ruler of India went on a trip, he counted the inhabitants of his city, men, women, and children, and ordered that their requirements for (the next) six months be paid them out of his own income. When he returned from his trip and entered (the city)… bags of dirhams and dinars were shot out over the people, until the ruler entered his audience hall. Ibn Battutah told other similar stories, and people in the dynasty (in official positions) whispered to each other that he must be a liar.[35]

Yet Ibn Battuta's travelogue did not bring him fame, it continued to be copied and transmitted in the subsequent centuries. In the seventeenth century a certain al-Bayluni substantially abridged the text and published it for the general audience under the title *Extracts from "The Journey" of Ibn Battuta al-Andalusi at-Tanji*. From this point onward the full text of the *Riḥla* was no longer copied, so it was the abridged version that European scholars first came across. A number of manuscripts of al-Bayluni's redaction reached European libraries in the early nineteenth century, and several translations based on them

[34] *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, ed. and transl. Charles F. Defrémery and Beniamino R. Sanguinetti, vol. 1-4 (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1853-55, 1858).

[35] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: Introduction to History*, transl. F. Rosenthal, abridged ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 145.

were published soon after.[36] The full version of the text became available to Western scholars after the French conquest of Algeria when several copies were brought to Paris. Working on their celebrated publication, Defrémery and Sanguinetti compared five manuscripts, three of them incomplete. However, the editors allowed them to indicate only some of the variant readings, leaving most of those beyond the readers' reach. As most of the modern translations and publications are derived from the text compiled by the French scholars, one has to bear in mind their contribution to the version found in printed editions.

Rediscovered by European orientalists, Ibn Battuta achieved distinction both in the West and the Arab world as a great medieval traveller and a Muslim counterpart of Marco Polo. The text of his *Riḥla* was recognised as an eye-witness account of the fourteenth-century world and became a common source of reference for various studies dealing with the medieval history of particular regions, the Malay Archipelago among them. But while the first scholars and publishers of the *Riḥla* did not tend to question Ibn Battuta's credibility, their positive attitude was soon met with criticism directed at different parts of the travelogue. It has been proven that considerable fragments of the *Riḥla* were borrowed from Ibn Jubayr (1145-1217) and al-'Abdari (d. 1291), and a number of other chapters of the travelogue, including those describing Bulghar and even the Delhi Sultanate, bear the traces of compiling.[37] Scholars reveal more and more texts supposedly used by Ibn Battuta (or, as it is commonly assumed, by Ibn Juzayy), coming close to the problem of the general credibility of his accounts. The most radical views on the *Riḥla*'s authenticity have been so far expressed by Ralf Elger who

[36] Including the English translation by Samuel Lee. *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, transl. Samuel Lee (London: Murray, 1829).

[37] See John N. Mattock, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Use of Ibn Jubayr's Riḥla," *Publications of the Netherlands Institute of Archeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo* 4 (1981); Amikam Elad, "The Description of the Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in Palestine: Is It Original?" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1987); Stephen Janicsek, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Journey to Bulghàr: Is it a Fabrication?" *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (1929); Tilmann Trausch, "Rewriting Baranī? The Description of the Delhi Sultanate in the Riḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa/Ibn Djuzayy and the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 64 (2010).

calls Ibn Battuta "one of the greatest liars in literary history", a forger and a plagiarist, and argues that the travelogue was fabricated in cooperation with Ibn Juzayy within the borders of medieval Maghrib.[38] This opinion, however, seems to be far from getting commonly accepted and, along with other critiques, does not undermine Ibn Battuta's general reputation as a traveller and an eye-witness.

The question of whether Ibn Battuta's journey to China actually took place has been addressed by a number of scholars, their opinions ranging from distrusting some of the accounts to disclaiming all his travels to the east of India.[39] If not seen as a sign of plagiarism, various geographical and chronological inconsistencies found in the itinerary are often attributed to the traveller's inaccuracy. Henry Yule, in particular, blames Ibn Battuta for his looseness of observation and a tendency towards exaggeration and misrepresentation.[40] Tatsuro Yamamoto, on the other hand, advocates the traveller's credibility, as he points to a number of Chinese sources and accounts of Marco Polo that correspond to the traveller's statements.[41] Also Gibb argues for the authenticity of Ibn Battuta's travels in China, concluding that the narrative dealing with China, despite its brevity, seems to be genuine.[42] Either way, it appears to be generally assumed that the traveller reached at least the southern coast of China,[43] which means that his accounts of the Malay Archipelago might be still

[38] Ralf Elger, "Lying, Forging, Plagiarism: Some Narrative Techniques in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travelogue," in *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th-20th century)*, ed. S. Faroqhi et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

[39] Henry Yule questioned Ibn Battuta's travels in Northern China, see Henry Yule, *Cathay and Way Thither*, vol. 2 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866), 435; while Gabriel Ferrand argued that Ibn Battuta had not been to China and Southeast Asia at all. On the discussion see Yamamoto Tatsuro, "On Tawalisi described by Ibn Battuta," *The Oriental Library* 8 (1936): 102-3.

[40] Yule, *Cathay and Way Thither*, 433-37.

[41] Yamamoto, "On Tawalisi described by Ibn Battuta," 103.

[42] Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta: Introduction," in *Islamic and Middle Eastern Geographers and Travellers*, ed. by R. Netton, vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 2008), 12-13.

[43] Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveler of the 14th century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 3, 252-53.

reliable. Gerald Tibbetts does not seem to question Ibn Battuta's veracity, as he attributes discrepancies in the description of Southeast Asia to the displacement of passages by a later copyist or the loss of some pieces of original material.[44] This point of view is shared also by Naquib al-Attas who finds the corruption of the text a reasonable explanation in the matter.[45]

The textual history of the *Riḥla*, in any case, should not be neglected when one considers inconsistencies in Ibn Battuta's account of the Malay Archipelago. As any other medieval work, the travelogue passed through the hands of multiple copyists and editors. However, it seems to be a little too convenient explanation for any confusion, and other factors should be also taken into account. These factors include medieval Arabic genre conventions and modes of literary production that shaped the narrative and defined the relation between fact and fiction in the text. Speaking of Ibn Battuta's reports of his visit to Southeast Asia, it is easy to misinterpret them as something claiming accuracy and veracity. Yet they do present themselves as eye-witness accounts, they also form a part of a literary work composed according to a certain genre and intended for a particular audience. As Ian Netton points out, the genre of *Riḥla* in the medieval Arabic literature "is, perhaps, best regarded as an art form rather than a formal geography."[46] And as such, it appears to have dictated its narrative paradigms to the text and modified the so-called original material that forms its basis.

Riḥla, literally "journey", is a late medieval literary genre that flowered in North Africa between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. It usually described pilgrimages from the Maghrib to Mecca and provided the readers with the accounts of monuments, religious institutions and famous personalities found in the great cities of Islam.[47] The most celebrated predecessor of Ibn Battuta in this genre was a twelfth-century Andalusian scholar Ibn Jubayr

[44] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts,* 13.

[45] Naquib Al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (Kuala-Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011), 26.

[46] Ian R. Netton, "Myth, Miracle and Magic in the Riḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29 (1984): 131.

[47] Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, 3-4.

(1145-1217) who made a tour of Egypt, Hijaz and Syria and wrote a book of his travels. His *Riḥla* was popular in the Maghrib and became a model (and a source of borrowing) for subsequent travelogues including that of Ibn Battuta. It is not known whether Ibn Battuta read the work of Ibn Jubayr, but Ibn Juzayy was definitely familiar with it. His desire to use it as a model might have resulted in an attempt to imitate Ibn Jubayr's systematic and precise dating of every section in his travelogue.[48] But Ibn Juzayy apparently failed to reach a similar level of accuracy with Ibn Battuta, as Gibb remarks that "many of the dates give the impression of having been inserted more or less at haphazard, possibly at the editor's request."[49] The chronology of Ibn Battuta's travels poses serious difficulties to the scholars, since in many cases it appears to be untenable.

Although Ibn Battuta, similar to Ibn Jubayr, also had a *hajj* in mind when he left the Maghrib, his routes and motives eventually went far beyond the pilgrimage. The travels of Ibn Battuta surpassed those of his predecessor both in time and space, and their description could be hardly fit into a narrow pilgrim paradigm. However, the focus of the Riḥla is still ultimately defined by religion. In his travels Ibn Battuta barely steps outside the Islamicate world, and much attention in his accounts is given to Islamic saints and shrines. The traveller's preoccupation with Islam is pointed out by most of the scholars, some of them even calling him a religious fanatic who intentionally avoided non-Muslim countries. But, as aptly noted by Nematulla Ibragimov, a professional Islamic scholar would unlikely find livelihood outside the world of Islam and it seems to be natural for a person of his social background to be interested in everything related to religion.[50] One may wonder whether Ibn Battuta's keen interest in Islam was his personal or professional trait, or a common characteristic of his age,

[48] Ian R. Netton, "Basic Structures and Signs of Alienation in the 'Riḥla' of Ibn Jubayr," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 22 (1991): 23-24.

[49] Gibb, "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta," 12.

[50] [Nematulla Ibragimov] Н. Ибрагимов, *Ибн Баттута и его путешествия по Средней Азии* [Ibn Battuta and his travels in Central Asia] (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1988), 42.

but we should not exclude the role of genre factor. Was this preoccupation actually Ibn Battuta's own, or it could also be that of Ibn Juzayy as he understood the purposes of a *Riḥla* and the expectations of the audiences it was intended for? There is a variety of topics covered in the travelogue that demonstrate Ibn Battuta's interest in things other than religion such as food, popular customs, administration, etc.

It is hard to deny the role of genre conventions in the composition of the *Riḥla*, but, the other way round, this role appears to be limited because of the large body of material involved. As pointed out by Netton, the *Riḥla* of Ibn Battuta represents a considerable development upon the earlier travelogues of the same genre, which is characterized by a turning away from the focus on pilgrimage to the author's own interests:

> The *Riḥla* with Ibn Battuta becomes a vehicle or frame within which that author feels free to incorporate a multitude of prejudices, interests and boasts, even to the extent of trying to impress his readers with stories of journeys which he could not possibly have undertaken. It is being used, in other words, in a manner akin to that of the frame stories in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the *Panchatantra*.[51]

It may also be likened to the *Wonders of India* by Buzurg ibn Shahriyar, with the only difference that the *Riḥla* has only one narrator. In case of Ibn Battuta's travelogue the frame story is that of a pilgrimage, but within it one finds a multitude of diverse and sometimes disconnected accounts. The text of the *Riḥla* thus seems to be a result of interplay between its literary format and content, each of them corresponding to the different intentions of the editor and the narrator.

I do not use the word 'author' on purpose, as the problem of authorship is another issue essential for understanding the travelogue's textual history. Yet the role of Ibn Juzayy is commonly acknowledged by the scholars, Ibn Battuta remains the "title" author of the *Riḥla,* "Ibn Battuta reports" being a common way to introduce a quote. But, as noted previously, Ibn Battuta himself has hardly written a word, Gibb even assumes that he did not himself read the

[51] Netton, "Myth, Miracle and Magic," 132-33.

book at all.[52] So should the authorship be attributed to the traveller who provided the factual content, or to the writer who arranged it into a consistent narrative and produced the text? There is obviously no correct answer to this question, since the modern concept of authorship cannot be applied to medieval works. The peculiar pattern of cooperation between the traveller and his scribe / editor / ghost writer can be best described as the distribution of authorial functions between the two.[53] Neither Ibn Battuta nor Ibn Juzayy appears to bear individual responsibility for the structure or content of the narrative. And though the latter attempts to disclaim his contribution asserting that he had reported all Ibn Battuta's "stories and narratives of events without investigating their truthfulness since he himself has authenticated them with the strongest proofs"[54], his authorial role is by no means limited to simply writing the story down.

The composite nature of the *Riḥla* can be seen in the stylistic contrast between the flowery language of Ibn Juzayy and various quotations he incorporated into the text, on the one hand, and the more straightforward manner of Ibn Battuta's first-person accounts, on the other. As the presence of borrowed fragments in the text of the *Riḥla* is a proven matter, the dubious authenticity of the travelogue in general seems to be beyond dispute. However, an outright forgery of the whole story also appears to be improbable, as it is proven that Ibn Battuta travelled and was away from the Maghrib for twenty years. Some of the places he describes, such as Egypt, Hijaz and India, he is likely to have visited, others possibly not. But even the accounts of places that Ibn Battuta had been to appear to contain passages borrowed from other sources. Akin to the majority of medieval Arabic geographical works, the *Riḥla* of Ibn

[52] Gibb, "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta: Introduction," 11.

[53] On the concept of distributed authorship in medieval literary production see Slavica and Miloš Ranković, "The Talent of the Distributed Author", in *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages*, edited by Slavica Rancović (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012). It suggests distributed agency in creating traditional narratives and literary canons that involves not only "authors" and editors, but also archivists, compilers, scribes and copyists whose authorial role is being increasingly recognised by scholars.

[54] Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 41.

Battuta is clearly a compilation of different oral and written sources, the traveller's own reports possibly being one of them.

Compiling was a major technique used in the production of medieval Arabic geographical literature. Geographers used to copy, quote and retell the works of their predecessors and contemporaries, in many cases without acknowledgement. Contemporary material was commonly incorporated into the older one, conflicting statements derived from two distinct sources sometimes put side by side. In most cases the reason for an extensive compiling was the lack of original material and first-hand travel experience. Not every geographer was a traveller, and almost none of them had visited all the places they wrote about. However, in their strife to completeness geographical writers attempted to give as full a description of the known world as possible. Writing of remote and little-known areas, they had to borrow material from any of the available sources which were often scarce and out of date. Could Ibn Battuta or Ibn Juzayy have a similar encyclopaedic desire for completeness that would encourage them to fill the gaps in the travelogue with additional data and routes? Or was it merely Ibn Battuta's vanity and a desire to present himself as a greater traveller than he was?

Whatever the motives of the authors were, it is certain that they used various oral and written sources working on the *Riḥla*. Ibn Juzayy had literary geographical tradition at his disposal, while Ibn Battuta seems to have accumulated in his memory plenty of stories and bits of information he had learned from conversations with people. In some cases Ibn Battuta indicates that he did not witness an event himself but heard of it from another person, following the established Islamic tradition of oral transmission of knowledge. Occasionally a chain of transmitters is provided, but more often the traveller refers to a single authority or unnamed trustworthy sources. Otherwise Ibn Battuta authenticates accounts with his own authority. This authentication appears from time to time in the text expressed by repeated *'iyān* statements such as "I witnessed", "I myself saw" and "I was present". Provided that Ibn

Battuta's direct observation is implied in most of cases, as the narrative is conducted in first person, it is interesting that only in some of the accounts he decides to emphasise his first-hand experience. As suggested by Roxanne Euben, such claims tend to precede the accounts of places, people and events which Ibn Battuta's audience might not have known, and he expected them not to believe him.[55] The *'iyān* statements in the *Riḥla* thus seem to reflect Ibn Battuta's anxiety about being distrusted, and they might mark the stories which were liable to be perceived most sceptically by the Moroccan audiences.

As shown above, both oral and literary traditions of knowledge transmission contributed to the composition of the travelogue. The compiling techniques employed by Ibn Battuta and Ibn Juzayy appear to be highly elaborate, as they certainly cannot be reduced to interpolating borrowed passages into the text. The narrative fabric of the *Riḥla* is woven of various threads—short and long, thick and thin—and one can hardly distinguish where one thread merges into another. The fine line between embellishing and fabricating is also obscure, as it is often difficult to tell whether a true story was complemented by information from other sources, or the story was made up based on them. Elger describes a number of narrative techniques used in the *Riḥla* along with direct borrowing: "borrowing and variation" (or disguised quoting), relocating of narrative elements, and producing an invented story around borrowed motives.[56] But as he himself points out, the cases of direct and indirect borrowing revealed in the Riḥla do not prove "that the whole text of Ibn Battuta is based on lying, forging and plagiarism, but it shows that he, or better he and Ibn Juzayy, did have possibilities to make up the narrative using sources to a larger extent than has been previously acknowledged."[57]

[55] Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shores: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 74.

[56] Elger, "Lying, forging, plagiarism," 78.

[57] Ibid., 86.

The creators of the *Riḥla* certainly could and did draw upon other sources, but the question is to what extent they did so. I do not see enough reasons to rule out Ibn Battuta's actual experience as one of the sources they used, probably one of the major ones. In view of complex techniques employed to construct the narrative, the only way to evaluate its veracity would be to deconstruct it into micro-narratives and deal with each of them individually. Distinction should also be made between the notions of authenticity and credibility which are often used as synonyms. An authentic or genuine account is supposed to be of the same origin as claimed, i.e. belong to Ibn Battuta who witnessed the event in person and did not distort the facts intentionally while reporting them to Ibn Juzayy. In other words, the traveller believing what he says to be true is what makes his account authentic. As for credibility, it seems to only require a story to be plausible, even though it might have been derived from a different source. A borrowed report of an earlier traveller can be still credible, but not authentic as it does not come from the person who claims it.

Bringing up the problem of reliability of Ibn Battuta's accounts I do not intend to question the traveller's credibility in general, since the categories of authorship and plagiarism in the medieval Islamicate culture are beyond the scope of this paper. However, the issue cannot be left aside as far as the *Riḥla* is used as a source of historical data on Southeast Asia and other regions. Notwithstanding a considerable amount of scholarship on the matter, Ibn Battuta's description of the Malay Archipelago is still often treated as genuine and authoritative, some Indonesian historians even drawing conclusions based on the traveller's reports alone.[58] By no means would I attempt to disclaim the general credibility of the Southeast Asian chapters

[58] Taqiyuddin Muhammad, for instance, seems to include a certain Malik az-Zahir II into the genealogy of Samudra sultans in reliance upon nothing but the authority of Ibn Battuta. Taqiyuddin Muhammad, *Daulah Shalihiyyah di Sumatera: Ke Arah Penyusunan Kerangka Baru Historiografi Samudra Pasai* [The Righteous State in Sumatra: Establishing a new Framework for the historiography of Samudra-Pasai] (Lhokseumawe: CISAH, 2015), 109.

of the travelogue, but rather draw attention to the grain of salt they should be taken with. Whether Ibn Battuta has been to the archipelago or not remains disputed, and a closer look into the structure and factual content of his report might shed some light on the issue. In what follows I discuss the traveller's accounts in detail and focus on some of the motifs they contain.

Chapter III. Ibn Battuta's Account of the Malay World

This chapter looks into Ibn Battuta's accounts of the Malay Archipelago, or, more specifically, those dealing with Sumatra and probably Java or the Malay Peninsula. I will attempt to place the text into a wider context by juxtaposing it with evidence from other sources, both contemporary and distant in time. The structure of the chapter centres around a number of issues related to place names and motifs found in the text. I will discuss the main arguments for historical and geographical identifications and possible interpretations of particular statements or passages. Wherever possible, I will also highlight inconsistencies in the narrative and question the credibility of the Southeast Asian chapters of the *Riḥla*. While evaluating the credibility of any particular statement I will build on the assumption that its conformity with independent sources, such as local and Chinese texts and ethnographic evidence, indicates that the account is likely to be original, while a similarity to motifs found in Arabic literature testifies to the contrary. In respect of the parallels with European accounts, it is difficult to draw certain conclusions, since the correlation between Western and Islamicate geographical traditions remains disputable.

Passages on the Malay Archipelago can be found between Ibn Battuta's descriptions of India and China: the account of the sultanate of Samudra is followed by those of Mul Jāwa and Qāqula, and Samudra is later revisited on the way back to the west. Therefore, I will deal with three distinguishable pieces of text—two related to Samudra and one to Qāqula and Mul Jāwa. The relation between the last two place names remains unclear from the narrative: after leaving Samudra Ibn Battuta arrives at the country of Mul Jāwa of which Qāqula is said to be a part. The description of the country is interrupted by a detailed excursus into spices, which

is followed by two accounts that appear to be somewhat disconnected from each other—those of the arrival at the port of Qāqula and of the visit to the court of the sultan of Mul Jāwa. As there is little to suggest that the sultan of Mul Jāwa could reside in Qāqula, the problem arises of whether it is one or two different places described.

The narrative related to the sultanate of Samudra (Sumuṭra in Ibn Battuta's text) seems to be far more consistent. It starts with the traveller's arrival at the island of Jāwa, which apparently indicates Sumatra or a part of it, and proceeds to a coherent description of the first four or five days of his stay there. Ibn Battuta lands at the port and is escorted by the sultan's court jurists to the capital located inland. They head to the royal palace where the traveller and his companions are greeted by the sultan's deputy, treated with a meal and presented with sets of clothes. After that the guests are taken to a special pavilion where they stay for three days before the audience with the sultan occurs. Ibn Battuta mentions meeting a certain amir Daulasa whom he happened to see before at the court of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq in Delhi. On the fourth day Ibn Battuta meets the sultan at the mosque after the Friday prayer and accompanies him to the audience hall where he observes the ceremony of greeting the ruler. The traveller's stay in Samudra is described in great detail, only two relatively isolated tales falling out of the narrative—those of the sultan and the rebellion of his nephew.

About the rest of the fifteen days spent in Samudra no details are provided. Afterwards Ibn Battuta asks permission to embark, "for it was the season, since the voyage to China is not organized at any time"[59]—it was likely the southwest summer monsoon that he was waiting for. On the way back from China the traveller has to stay in Sumatra longer—for two months, probably waiting for a favourable wind again. However, his account of the second visit to Samudra is brief and mostly deals with the wedding of the sultan's son. Besides that, one can find in Ibn Battuta's travelogue some other mentions of the "Sultan of Jāwa", such as the

[59] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Charles F. Beckingham, vol. 4 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1994), 880.

praise of his knowledge in the closing part and the account of his capture of a ship with Ibn Battuta's slaves and possessions that occurred before the traveller's trip to China.[60]

A. Samudra and its Sultan

Ibn Battuta appears to be the first Arab author to mention the sultanate of Samudra and the first foreigner to report the conversion of Malay states to Islam. Most of what is known of the history of Samudra-Pasai in 1400-1450 is derived from the earliest Malay chronicles of *Hikayat raja-raja Pasai* (Chronicle of the kings of Pasai, second half of the fourteenth century),[61] and *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay annals, fifteenth century).[62] Ibn Battuta's account thus serves as important evidence complementing these texts, along with Chinese and European sources, archaeological finds and epigraphy.

Ibn Battuta describes Samudra as a big city with wooden walls and towers located four miles away from the port. Due to the volatile natural conditions of the North Sumatran coast, the archaeological evidence of the period is scarce and the fourteenth-century location of neither the city nor the port has been identified yet. But it was a common practice for Malay riverine city-states to be located upstream for security reasons and separated from their trading ports on the sea coast.[63] *Sejarah Melayu* mentions a port called Jambu Air where those heading to

[60] *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, vol. 4, 109, 332-33.

[61] See A.H. Hill , "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33 (1960): 1-215.

[62] For the English translation see *Malay Annals*, trans. John Leyden(London: Longman, Hurst, Orme, and Brown, 1821).

[63] Christopher A. Airriess, "The Ecologies of *Kuala* and *Muara* Settlements in the Pre-Modern Malay Culture World," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 76 (2003): 92.

Samudra used to land,[64] and also Ma Huan, a companion of the Chinese admiral Zheng He who visited Sumatra in 1416, reports that "when a ship leaves Malacca for the west […] it first comes to a village on the sea-coast called Ta-lu-man; anchoring here and going south-east for about ten *li* (3 miles) one arrives at the said place. This country has no walled city. There is a large brook running out into the sea, with two tides every day."[65] Notably, Ibn Battuta mentions wooden walls and later says they were built by the current sultan after the revolt of his nephew, but those were probably destroyed by the time of Zheng He's voyage.

Ibn Battuta's report of Sultan Malik az-Zahir (al-Malik aẓ-*Ẓ*āhir in the *Riḥla*, Maliku'l-Tahir in *Hikayat raja-raja Pasai*) corresponds to what is known of Samudra's wars with the neighbouring Hindu-Buddhist rulers and the theological disputes that occurred at its court:

> He is Sultan Al-Malik Al-Ẓahir, one of the noblest and most generous of kings, a Shāfi'ī in *madhhab*, and a lover of jurists, who come to his audiences for the recitation of the Qur'ān and for discussions. He often fights against and raids the infidels. He is unassuming and walks to the Friday prayer on foot. The people of his country are Shāfi'īs who are eager to fight infidels and readily go on campaign with them. They dominate the neighbouring infidels who pay *jizya* to have peace.[66]

The mention of Amir Daulasa's mission to India highlights Samudra's diplomatic relations with Delhi, and the names of the court jurists are confirmed in the epigraphy. However, a problem arises regarding the sultan whom Ibn Battuta's claims to have met, as Muhammad Malik az-Zahir is known to have died in 1326—that is, 20 years before the traveller's visit. The tombstone of this ruler, along with his father's, can be seen in the vicinity of the modern city of Lhokseumawe.[67] Different explanations have been offered for this contradiction, but the issue remains uncertain. As some scholars point out, the name Malik az-Zahir was a

[64] [Elena V. Revunenkova] Е.В. Ревуненкова, *Сулалат-ус-салатин: Малайская рукопись Крузенштерна и ее культурно-историческое значение* [Sulalat-us-salatin: the Malay manuscript of Kruzenshtern and its cultural and historical significance] (St. Peterburg: Peterburgskoye vostokovedeniye, 2008), 185, 200.

[65] Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca*, 85.

[66] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 876-77.

[67] See: *Tinggalan Sejarah Samudra Pasai* [Historical remains of Samudra-Pasai] (Lhokseumawe: CISAH, 2014), 7.

hereditary honorific title borne by several rulers of Samudra-Pasai including Muhammad's son Ahmad (1326-c.1360), and it was most probably this sultan whom Ibn Battuta met.[68] However, the sultan's name is not the only chronological confusion, Amir Sayyid of Shiraz is also known to have been the chief *qāḍi* during the reign of Muhammad Malik az-Zahir.[69]

An interesting explanation for this confusion is offered by Nagib al-Attas who suggests that Ahmad, having ascended the throne at an early age, for a certain period of time after the death of his father and before his own marriage was not officially recognized as a sultan and ruled under the name of Malik az-Zahir. Al-Attas refers to the Malay practice according to which a ruler's son could not inherit the throne unless he fathered a son, and argues that the wedding which Ibn Battuta witnessed was actually that of Ahmad.[70] Nevertheless, a conflict in this speculation cannot go unnoticed: in Ibn Battuta's account Sultan Malik az-Zahir is present at his son's wedding and the two act as separate characters. If Sultan Ahmad was the bridegroom, who was the father?

It is important to bear in mind that the genealogy of Samudra-Pasai rulers appears to be confusing even outside Ibn Battuta's report, as the local chronicles, epigraphy and oral tradition offer conflicting versions of it. The names of Muhammad Malik az-Zahir and Ahmad, the father and the son, belong to the version of *Sejarah Melayu* which is confirmed by an epitaph on a fifteenth-century tombstone. Meanwhile, according to *Hikayat raja-raja Pasai* Ahmad was Malik az-Zahir's grandson, and according to the oral tradition, written down in 1931, his nephew.[71] While the name of Malik az-Zahir is present with minor spelling

[68] A.H. Hill, "The Coming of Islam to North Sumatra," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 4 (1963): 15.

[69] [Tatiana A. Denisova] Т. А. Денисова, "Мусульманские султанаты Северной Суматры" [Muslim sultanates of North Sumatra], in *Очерки истории распространения исламской цивилизации* [Essays on the history of expansion of the Islamic civilisation], ed. U. M. Kobischanov et al., vol. 2 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 259.

[70] Naquib Al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction,* 31-32.

[71] Hendrik K. J. Cowan, "La légende de Samudra," *Archipel* 5 (1973): 256-259.

variations in all the mentioned sources (the sultan's personal name Muhammad is found in the epigraphy and oral tradition only), Ahmad is also called Ahmad Permadala Permala (in *Hikayat raja-raja Pasai*) and Raja Bakoy (oral tradition).[72] Since Ahmad is known to have ascended the throne at a very young age, in 1345 he must have been still young, but Ibn Battuta's account describes a mature ruler, the father of an adult son. As the beginning of Ahmad's rule is derived from the date of the death of Malik az-Zahir, it is not impossible that someone else, probably the Ahmad's father and Malik az-Zahir's son or brother, might have ruled the sultanate in the 1340s when Ibn Battuta visited Sumatra. Alternatively, the traveller has never been there, but someone else met Muhammad Malik az-Zahir before 1326. I would speculate that Ibn Battuta could have met such a person at the Delhi court soon after his arrival there in 1333 (could it be the mentioned amir Daulasa?), or, as suggested by Laffan, the traveller's account might have been "drawn from descriptions of proud Sumatrans in Calicut" or any other South Indian port.[73] An encounter with a Malay community abroad could be arguably enough for Ibn Battuta to get some idea of their customs and pick up information on Samudra and its sultan.

B. Qāqula

References to Qāqula[74] can be found in classical and post-classical Arabic texts starting from the ninth century. There is no agreement whether this place name refers to a port, an island or a country, and sometimes it is also applied to a sea or mountains. Besides Ibn Battuta, Qāqula is mentioned by al-Ya'qubi, Buzurg ibn Shahriyar, Abu Dulaf, al-Idrisi, al-Qazwini and Ibn

[72] Ibid.

[73] Michael Laffan, "Finding Java: Muslim Nomenclature of Insular Southeast Asia from Śrîvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje," in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Duree*, ed. E. Tagliacozzo (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 39.

[74] Or Qāqulla (قاقلة), literally "cardamom". Spice names seem to be typical for medieval Arab topographies of Southeast Asia, as one can find there also lands of pepper, camphor or betel.

Said, and it is often identified with Takola of classical authors and Ko-ku-lo of the Chinese texts. No local sources survived mentioning a similar place name, and scholars have to rely solely on foreign evidence. Arab geographers describe a city-state located at the seashore at a river estuary and relate to aloeswood as its major export commodity. Ibn Battuta's account corresponds to their descriptions of a flourishing port, and his mention of piracy and taxes points to Qāqula's location on a busy trade route. The traveller also mentions a wide stone wall, abundance of aloeswood and large number of elephants:

> We arrived at the port of Qāqula and found there an assemblage of junks prepared for piracy and to fight any junk which might oppose them, for a tax is imposed on each junk. We disembarked and went to the city of Qāqula. It is a fine city with a wall of cut stone wide enough to take three elephants. The first thing I noticed outside the city was elephants with loads of Indian aloes wood which they burn in their houses; it is the price of firewood among us, or even cheaper. That, however, is when they sell it to each other. When they sell to (foreign) merchants a load costs a robe of cotton, cotton being more expensive than silk among them.[75]

Ibn Battuta's voyage from Samudra to Qaqula is said to have taken twenty-one days, although this distance might have referred to that between Samudra and Mul Jāwa. The traveller places Qāqula on the way from North Sumatra to China, which seems to indicate some point in the Straits of Malacca. However, the evidence from other sources is at odds with this. The location of Qāqula as it appears in other Arabic texts remains unresolved, but most of the locations suggested do not correspond to the itinerary of Ibn Battuta. Scholars attempted to identify Qāqula with different places in Southeast Asia, including those in Java, Sumatra and the coastal areas around Kelantan or Ligor. Gabriel Ferrand distinguishes two places of the same name—one on the eastern shore of Indochina and the other on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula.[76] Most of later scholars agree in favour of the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal but a more precise location is still uncertain.

[75] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 882.

[76] Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et texts géographiques arabes, persans et turks relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient du VIII-e au XVIII siècles*, vol. 1 (Paris: Leroux, 1913), iv.

Tibbetts and Wheatley tend to look for Qāqula at the coast of Tenasserim—despite Ibn Battuta's indication of it being southwards from Samudra.[77] As Tibbetts suggests, the accounts of Samudra and Qāqula could have been misplaced in the text by a later editor or copyist, while in the original itinerary Ibn Battuta's visit to Qāqula preceded his stop in Sumatra.[78] Notably, all the identifications placing Qāqula so much to the north appear to be based on the two accounts, one by Abu Dulaf and another by a Chinese source of the eighth century, which locate Qāqula (Ko-ku-lo) on the seashore to the northwest of Kalāh (Ko-lo). Abu Dulaf in his description of the voyage from China puts Qāqula to the west of Kalāh, and the lands of Pepper and Camphor between the two.[79] A Chinese compiler Kia Tan provides similar directions: "On the northern coast (of the strait) is the country of Ko-lo, and to the west of Ko-lo is the country of Ko-ku-lo."[80] The position of Qāqula, therefore, appears to be directly correlated with that of Kalāh, another highly disputable port on the Malay Peninsula coast.

Most of the scholars locate Kalāh in the north of the peninsula or even in Burma, Kedah being the southernmost suggested place, hence the position of Qāqula shifts further north. However, Fatimi's arguments in favour of Kalāh's identification with Klang, a port in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur, should not be dismissed.[81] In light of his speculation, Qāqula could

[77] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 97-98; Wheatly, *The Golden Khersonese*, 228.

[78] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 97-98.

[79] See ibid., 39-41. Abu Dulaf also provides a detailed description of the city:
"I continued my voyage to a town called جاجلى"Jājullā, which is on top of a mountain of which half juts out to sea and half is on dry land. There they have a king like the one of Kalah. They eat wheat and eggs, but they do not eat fish, nor do theн slaughter animals. They have a large house of prayer… They bring cinnamon here and export it to the rest of the world… The inhabitants dress as do the people of Kalah, except that they wear a Yemeni robe (*hibara*) on feast days. They venerate from among the constellations the heart of the Lion (α Leonis). They possess an observatory and have a complete knowledge of the stars, and study their properties assiduously. From there I travelled to Qashmīr." Quoted from Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 40-41.

[80] *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, transl. F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911), 11.

[81] Fatimi, "In Quest of Kalah."

be sought more to the south and appear on Ibn Battuta's way through the Straits of Malacca. Colless accepts Fatimi's identification of Kalāh, and Tibbetts leaves this possibility open as he concludes that it might have been anywhere on the coast between Phuket and Klang. But both scholars still locate Qāqula to the north of Samudra—in Tenasserim or Takuapa.[82] It is fair to say, though, that placing Kalāh in Klang does not seem to solve the problem of Ibn Battuta's itinerary in any case, since the distance between Samudra and any point north of Klang would be too short for a 21-day voyage down the wind.

Except for the conflicting accounts of two travellers, Abu Dulaf and Ibn Battuta, no other Arabic text seems to give proper directions to locate Qāqula. But is it reasonable to identify a port known to the Chinese and Arabs in the eighth and tenth centuries with that visited by Ibn Battuta in 1345? In view of volatile natural and political conditions in the region—silting of coastlines, shifts of trade routes and frequent relocations of power centres—one would hardly expect a flourishing port-polity to remain at the very same place for more than five hundred years. Providing post-classical Arab geographers' tendency to preserve outdated place names it seems to be even less plausible. In this regard, Lamb's remarks on the shifting Indian Ocean entrepots appear to be of relevance to the matter:

> It is quite possible that the toponym *Kalah* became, in Arab literature, associated less with one geographical spot than with a general region in which were entrepots of the *Kalah* type. If the entrepots tended to move up or down the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, so would the location of *Kalah*. The same argument, of course, could be applied to other names in the Arab geographical texts.[83]

Leonard Andaya accepts this point of view and also concludes that Kalāh was one of the names used by Arab traders to refer to any one of a number of ports located along the west isthmian and peninsular coast and serving similar functions.[84] Qāqula could be possibly

[82] Colless, "Persian Merchants and Missionaries", 31, 34-37, 41; Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 128.

[83] Lamb, "A visit to Siraf," 2.

[84] Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 37, 57.

another such name. Toponyms containing the element *kuala* ("estuary"), assonant to Kalāh and to a lesser degree to Qāqula, can be found all around the Malay Peninsula as well as in the central and northern lowlands of Sumatra.[85] Ibn Battuta might have visited any of them on the Malay or Sumatran coast of the Straits of Malacca and forgotten the proper name, as he stayed there for three days only. Also Ibn Juzayy could insert into the text a place name familiar to Arab audiences, or interpolate the whole story if Ibn Battuta has never been to a place called Qāqula.

C. Jāwa and Mul Jāwa

The *Riḥla* of Ibn Battuta is the only Arabic text where these two place names appear together. Both of them belong to the few toponyms that entered Arab descriptions of Southeast Asia in the post-classical period and cannot be found in the geographies of the ninth and tenth centuries. The country of Jāwa is first mentioned in the thirteenth century by Yakut who locates it at the border of China and states that it "resembles" India.[86] In the same century a detailed description of the island of Jāwa is provided by Ibn Said who manages to incorporate almost all known Arabic place names related to the Malay Archipelago, old and new, into his peculiar conception of the region. He places Jāwa to the south of the Islands of Maharāja (the classical name for Srivijaya) and names a number of older toponyms—Lāmrī, Fanṣūr, Kalāh and the Mountains of Camphor—along with a new one, Malāyur, as the towns or regions located in the island.[87] Since at least three of them (Lāmrī, Fanṣūr and Malāyur) are associated with Sumatra and none with Java, the Jāwa of Ibn Said is most likely to be Sumatra.

[85] Airriess, "The Ecologies of *Kuala* and *Muara* Settlements," 86.

[86] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 55.

[87] Ibid., 58-59.

This also seems to be the case with Jāwa of Ibn Battuta, as he applies this name to the island where Samudra is located as well as to the Muslim country ruled by Malik az-Zahir:

> We left these people and after twenty-five days we reached the island of al-Jāwa, from which Jāwī incense takes its name. We saw it at a distance of half a day's sail. It is green and very well wooded with coconuts, areca palms, cloves, Indian aloes, *shākī*, *bārkī*, mango, *jamūn*, orange, and camphor reeds. These people buy and sell with little pieces of tin or unrefined Chinese gold. Most of aromatics there are in the part belonging to the infidels; they are less common in the part belonging to the Muslims.[88]

Yet this passage creates an impression that the island is divided into Muslim and non-Muslim parts (Muslim north and Buddhist south, or perhaps Islamised coastal areas as opposed to the hinterland), later Ibn Battuta calls Malik az-Zahir the sultan of Jāwa. While Jāwa the island is most probably Sumatra, Jāwa the country seems to refer only to the northern part of it subject to the Muslim ruler of Samudra. The traveller's strong association of Jāwa with Islam can be also seen elsewhere in the text: when he reports of a Muslim community of Jāwa origin residing in a separate quarter in Barahnakār,[89] and when he finds a Jāwa junk with Muslim crew in Guangzhou.[90] Along with the place name Jāwa Ibn Battuta applies the ethnonym *al-jāwī* that seems to indicate people coming from the western part of the Malay Archipelago in general. As a regional notion *iqlīm al-Jāwa* is also mentioned by a thirteenth-century author Ibn Mujawir,[91] and can be thus considered a third case of Ibn Battuta's usage of the place name, the three of them therefore being Jāwa the country (Samudra and its dependencies), Jāwa the island (Sumatra) and Jāwa the region (the part of Maritime Southeast Asia known to Arabs).

Although later Jāwa became associated with Java only, applying this name to Sumatra is not surprising in light of the common medieval confusion between the two islands. Classical

[88] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 876.

[89] An unidentified country on the way from Bengal to Sumatra, possibly located in Andaman or Nicobar islands or at the Burma coast. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 97.

[90] *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, vol. 4, 225, 304.

[91] Laffan, "Finding Java," 47.

Arab geographers used to call both Sumatra and Java Zābaj,[92] and European travellers including Marco Polo referred to Sumatra as Java Minor. With the introduction of Jāwa into Arabic geographical texts older place names began to disappear from them. Laffan assumes that Jāwa replaced Jāba of Ibn Khurdadhbih and argues that it was Javanese spelling of the word that substituted the Malay version.[93] Tibbets also points to the absence of the place name Sribuza in Ibn Said's description of the island[94] that might indicate the decline of Srivijaya and its disappearance from the map. During the thirteenth century the economical role of the Sumatran remnants of the empire decreased, the Javanese taking control of the region's spice trade and eventually subjugating Melayu-Jambi in 1286.[95] Arab ships started to frequent Java, and their older bases in south-eastern Sumatra were now controlled by the Javanese. Hence the appearance of the place name Jāwa in the Arabic sources might have reflected the establishment of Javanese dominance in the western part of the archipelago.

Unlike Jāwa which was coming into use among the late medieval Arab geographers, Mul Jāwa cannot be found anywhere except Ibn Battuta's account and that of a fourteenth-century Persian historian Wassaf who reports of a Mongol expedition to Java.[96] Ibn Battuta thus appears to be the only Arab author to mention this place name, and he describes it as follows:

> Mul Jāwa […] is the country of infidels. It extends for two months' travel. It has aromatics, and good aloes of Qāqula and Qamāra, both places being in the country. In the country of Sultan Al-Ẓāhir, in al-Jāwa, there are only incense, camphor, some cloves and some Indian aloes. The greatest quantity of these occurs in Mul Jāwa.[97]

[92] Some of the Arabic descriptions of Zābaj correspond to Sumatra, others to Java. Most of scholars agree that the toponym indicated not particular geographical area but the realm of Srivijaya in general. See Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 100-116.

[93] Laffan, "Finding Java," 10-11.

[94] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 115.

[95] Hall, "Trade and Statecraft in the Western Archipelago," 22, 26.

[96] Ferrand, *Relations de voyages*, vol. 2, 359.

[97] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 880.

It is notable that Mul Jāwa is opposed to Jāwa in two major aspects—religion and spice trade. In his mention of Mul Jāwa as a place where Malik az-Zahir's nephew fled, Ibn Battuta calls it a country of infidels, and later he repeats that the sultan of Mul Jāwa is an infidel. Muslim Jāwa thus seems to be clearly contrasted by "infidel" Mul Jāwa. At the same time, Muslim and non-Muslim lands are also compared in terms of the amount of spices available and the laws regulating ownership of the trees, which appears to reflect the interests of the Muslim trading community. Also notably, the opposition of Muslim and non-Muslim lands in relation to the ownership of the trees is repeated in Ibn Battuta's accounts of India.[98]

Due to the lack of data on Mul Jāwa in other sources, the identification of this place name can be only derived from Ibn Battuta's account alone. The traveller's description of a vast infidel (apparently Hindu or Buddhist) country extremely rich in spices and located east of Samudra best corresponds to the Javanese empire of Majapahit. But the problem of the relation between the port of Qāqula and the country of Mul Jāwa adds much confusion. Qāqula, along with Qamāra (Cambodia), is said to be a part of Mul Jāwa or belong to it. As both places appear to be in the mainland Southeast Asia, Mul Jāwa could be identified with the Malay Peninsula. However, "belonging" to a country can be understood in terms of allegiance, which does not necessary imply adjacent territories. Ibn Battuta's report of his arrival at Mul Jāwa is followed by the description of the port of Qāqula, and the latter—by passages on the sultan of Mul Jāwa and his court. But as Tibbetts points out, Ibn Battuta never calls Qāqula the capital of the country, and he never mentions the sultan in the passages on Qāqula.[99] Therefore there seems to be no need to see the two places as one. The account of Qāqula can be simply out of place, or, what is more plausible, part of the original text is missing.

[98] Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shores*, 76.

[99] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 132.

The first scholars of the *Riḥla* used to identify Mul Jāwa with Java,[100] until Yule brought forward arguments in favour of the Malay Peninsula.[101] Tibbetts returns to the earlier point of view and locates Mul Jāwa in Java,[102] as does Brian Colless who assumes that Ibn Battuta visited the western part of the island.[103] However, west Javanese ports still seem to be somewhat off the shortest way to China, while Ibn Battuta's voyage to the Far East is often criticised for its brevity. Furthermore, the traveller's statement that they sailed along the shore of the country of Malik az-Zahir until they arrived at Mul Jāwa can be interpreted as indicating that they did not cross the Straits of Malacca or Sunda, and the next stop could be still on the same island.

In this case the port visited by Ibn Battuta could be sought on the eastern coast of Sumatra, possibly in the kingdom of Melayu-Jambi[104] at the estuary of Batanghari River where a massive Buddhist temple compound of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries has been excavated. At the time of Ibn Battuta's visit Melayu was a subject to Majapahit and, at the same time, as an heir of Srivijaya, it might have still claimed some nominal control over the ports across the straits of Malacca.[105] It could be thus Majapahit, together with its dependencies, that was meant by a country of two months' journey length. The Mul Jāwa of Ibn Battuta, similar to

[100] *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, transl. S. Lee, 201; Dulaurier, "Description de l'archipel d'Asie," 244; *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, vol. 4, 239.

[101] Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, ed. H. Cordier, vol. 4 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1916), 155-57.

[102] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 151.

[103] Colless, "Majapahit Revisited: External Evidence on the Geography and Ethnology of East Java in the Majapahit Period," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 48 (1975); Colless, "Persian Merchants and Missionaries in Medieval Malaya," 33-34.

[104] Probably Malāyur of Ibn Said. Cf. Marco Polo's account of a kingdom called Malaiur: "The people have a King of their own, and a peculiar language. The city is a fine and noble one, and there is great trade carried on there. All kinds of spicery are to be found there." Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 261.

[105] There is indirect evidence that in the late thirteenth century Melayu still claimed lands in the Malay Peninsula. Colin Jack-Hinton, "Marco Polo in South-East Asia: A Preliminary Essay in Reconstruction," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 5 (1964): 59.

the Zābaj of classical authors, could be identified with the Javanese empire as a political entity, but not with Java, Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula as geographical regions.

D. Botanical Confusions

Passages dealing with Southeast Asian spices and fragrances occupy much of Ibn Battuta's description of Mul Jāwa. They follow the first introductory lines and seem to be the first and most important of what the traveller has to say about the country. Notably, these accounts are preceded and concluded by *'iyān* statements. At the beginning Ibn Battuta speaks in first person plural: "We shall relate about them (spices) what we have seen ourselves, have examined with care and verified." And at the end of the section he repeats this claim again, emphasizing his own personal experience: "I have seen all this and been witness to it." The four aromatic plants described by Ibn Battuta are benzoin, camphor, aloes and clove. Some of the accounts contain plausible details, but others appear to be bewildering.

The accounts follow a similar pattern: they provide a description of the plant and sometimes information on its qualities, ways of extraction, availability in the Muslim lands and different varieties coming from different regions. All the four fragrances and spices were traded in the archipelago, but it is interesting that pepper is not mentioned at all. Ibn Battuta's description of incense is not that of the incense proper, found in East Africa and Arabia, but of the so-called incense *al-jāwī*—a name commonly used by Arabs for Sumatran benzoin.[106] Otherwise the account seems to be correct, but the same cannot be said about Ibn Battuta's description of the camphor tree (Cinnamomum camphora) which is said to be a reed:

[106] [Edward H. Schaefer] Э. Шефер, *Золотые персики Самарканда: Книга о чужеземных диковинах в империи Тан* [The golden peaches of samarkand: A study of T'ang exotics] (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1981), 228.

> The camphor tree is a reed like the reed of our country, except that the hollow tubes in which the camphor is found are longer and thicker. When a reed is broken the camphor is found inside the tube shaped like it. The wonderful mystery about it is that there will be no camphor in the reed until some sort of creature is killed at its root: if this is not done there will be none at all. The best kind, which attains the greatest degree of cold, a dirham's weight of which is fatal because it congeals the breath of life, is called among them *hardala*. A human being is killed beside the reed. Young elephants replace human beings.[107]

Camphor was extracted from an evergreen tree abundant in the north-west of Sumatra and was exported to the Middle East from as early as the sixth century AD.[108] Ibn Battuta's misinterpretation can be attributed to the medieval practice of packing camphor intended for export into pieces of bamboo stalks.[109] Or, as suggested by Yule, he might have confused camphor with a different substance, *tabashir*, which was extracted from bamboo-joints.[110] As for the sacrifices, he may refer to some local ritual practices related to the collecting of camphor, and he may be exaggerating.

The account of camphor is followed by that of Indian aloes (*al-'ūd*)—the tree of the *Aquilaria* genus that produced aromatic wood widely used in the Middle East as a fragrance:

> The Indian aloes tree is like the oak; except that the bark is thin. Its leaves are exactly like oak leaves. It gives no fruit, the trunk does not become very large, and the roots are long and extend far. The aromatic smell is in the roots; the wood of the trunk and the leaves have no aroma. In Muslim country every tree is private property, but in infidel country most of them are not. Those that are privately owned are in Qāqula and these are the best aloes. It is the same in Qamāra which has the best kind of aloes. They are sold to the people of al- Jāwa for cloths. From Qamāra comes a kind on which an impression can be made, as if on wax. The roots of the *'aṭṭās* are cut off and buried in the earth for months; they retain their strength and are some of the best aloes.[111]

The fragrant resin occurs both in the roots and trunk of Aquilaria trees, but Ibn Battuta's description corresponds to the general state of things. Aloes *al-qāqulī* is also mentioned by

[107] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 881.

[108] Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree*, 374-75.

[109] [Schaefer], *Золотые персики Самарканда*, 225.

[110] Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, , vol. 4, 99.

[111] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 881-82.

al-Ya'qubi.[112] However, the last botanical passage in this section appears to be much less reliable:

> The clove trees are of a great age and huge. There are more of them in infidel than in Muslim country. They are not privately owned as they are so common. What is brought to our country is the wood. What people in our country call 'the flower of the clove' is what falls from the flowers and is like orange flowers. The fruit of the clove is the nutmeg, known among us as the perfume nut. The flower that is formed within it is mace.[113]

While nutmeg and mace do actually originate from the same plant, the clove tree has nothing to do with them. According to Yule, Ibn Battuta might have picked up this popular botanic knowledge in India where a similar legend attributing cinnamon, clove and nutmeg to the same tree survived up to the nineteenth century.[114] Indeed he could have picked up other accounts in India as well, since in Mul Jāwa he spent three days only and is not likely to have seen any plants in the wild. Alternatively, he might have learned of them in Samudra or from his travel companions on the ship. What he most probably saw, either in the Malay Archipelago or in the Indian markets, were ready products for sale, hence his claims to have witnessed and verified everything appear to be somewhat doubtful.

E. Court Etiquette and Ethnography

Both Ibn Battuta's accounts of Samudra and Qāqula contain data on local customs, etiquette and everyday practices, but the former has much more of it. Passages dealing with the traveller's stay in Samudra contain, among other things, various ethnographic details related to greetings, food, clothes, material culture and social relations as well as the description of a marriage ceremony and insights into the court etiquette. Some of the practices described by Ibn Battuta appear to be common for the courts of the medieval Islamicate world in general;

[112] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 30.

[113] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 882.

[114] Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, ed. H. Cordier, vol. 4, 102.

others are typical of the Malay states and references to them can be found in Malay historical chronicles.

Ibn Battuta's arrival at the sultan's palace is a glimpse into the courtly routines:

> When we went towards the Sultan's house and were near it we found spears fixed in the ground on either side of the road. This is a sign that people should dismount and no one riding should go any further. We dismounted and went into the audience chamber where we found the Sultan's deputy... He rose and greeted us. Their form of greeting is shaking hands. We sat with him and he wrote a slip of paper to the Sultan informing him about our coming, sealed it and handed it to one of the pages, who brought the answer written on the back. Then a page brought a *buqsha*, which is a clothes bag. The deputy took it in his hand, took me by the hand and took me into a little apartment they call a *fardkhāneh* […] It was his daytime rest room because it is the custom that the Sultan's deputy comes to the audience hall at dawn and does not leave it till nightfall. It is the same with the Wazīrs and great amirs. From the *buqsha* he took three aprons, one of pure silk and linen, three pieces of clothing which they call underwear, of the apron type, three pieces of different types which they call 'middle-wear', three woollen mantles, one of them white, and three turbans. I put on an apron in place of my trousers, according to their custom, and one of each kind of clothing. My companions took what was left. Then they brought food, which was mostly rice, then a kind of beer, and then betel, which is the signal for departure. We accepted it, we rose, and the deputy rose when we did.[115]

Dismounting as a sign of respect to a ruler was common practice in the medieval East and West,[116] as well as royal gifts of honourary robes. In the Malay world ceremonial exchange of textiles and clothes also had important ritual and social functions: it bestowed spiritual protection and well-being on the receiver and cemented social relations and hierarchy.[117] Frequent references to and detailed descriptions of textiles, their exchange and ceremonial display can be found both in *Hikayat raja-raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu*. In the sultanate of Malacca the presentation of honourary robes came with ceremonies of appointment to high positions and reception of diplomatic missions, the number and quality of pieces of clothing

[115] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 877-78.

[116] [Ibragimov], *Ибн Баттута и его путешествия по Средней Азии*, 116.

[117] Kenneth R. Hall, "Upstream and Downstream Unification in Southeast Asia's First Islamic Polity: The Changing Sense of Community in the Fifteenth Century 'Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai' Court Chronicle," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 44 (2001): 213-16.

depending on the receiver's rank.[118] As one can see from Ibn Battuta's account, his companions got different sets of clothes. The traveller also indicates the well-known Malay custom of wearing sarong (*fūṭa*) instead of trousers.

Another cultural element that played a significant ritual and etiquette role in the Malay world was the practice of chewing betel. A mixture of betel leaves, areca nuts, lime and optional spices was served after feasts and official ceremonies as well as regular meals. As a sign of honour and hospitality betel was offered to guests not only in Southeast Asia but all along the shores of the Indian Ocean. In the Middle Ages this practice spread beyond its cultural homeland up to South Arabia and Hijaz, as it is reported by al-Mas'udi.[119] By the time of his arrival at Sumatra, Ibn Battuta was long familiar with betel and apparently chewed it more than once in India and other places. His travelogue outlines the extent of the spread of betel chewing in the fourteenth century, as it contains multiple references to it not only in India, the Maldives and Southeast Asia but also in East Africa and the Mashriq. Betel first appears in the *Riḥla* in relation to one of the ports of South Arabia[120] and later on continues to be

[118] [Revunenkova], *Сулалат-ус-салатин*, 117, 216.

[119] Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'or,* ed. and transl. C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, vol. 2 (Paris, 1863), 84.

[120] At this first mention Ibn Battuta provides a description of betel's qualities and way of consumption: "Betel-trees are grown like vines on cane trellises or else trained up coco-palms. They have no fruit and are grown only for their leaves. The Indians have a high opinion of betel, and if a man visits a friend and the latter gives him five leaves of it, you would think he had given him the world, especially if he is a prince or notable. A gift of betel is a far greater honour than a gift of gold and silver. It is used in this way. First one takes areca-nuts, which are like nutmegs, crushes them into small bits and chews them. Then the betel leaves are taken, a little chalk is put on them, and they are chewed with the areca-nuts. They sweeten the breath and aid digestion, prevent the disagreeable effects of drinking water on an empty stomach, and stimulate the faculties." Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, 114.

The account seems to demonstrate a much closer familiarity with the custom than that of Marco Polo, who presents an outsiders observation: "All people of this city, as well as of the rest of India, have a custom of perpetually keeping in the mouth a certain leaf called *Tembul*, to gratify a certain habit and desire they have, continually chewing it and spitting out the saliva that it excites. The lords and gentlefolks and the King have these leaves prepared with camphor and other aromatic spices and also mixt with quicklime. And this practice was said to be very good for the health. If any one desires to offer a great insult to another, when he meets him he spits this leaf or its juice in his face." Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 358.

mentioned without further remarks. Ibn Battuta reports multiple cases of being offered betel, and it can be assumed that he adopted the practice during his long stay in India or at least joined in on social occasions. Throughout his accounts one can also notice the similarity of betel etiquette all around the Indian Ocean world and its general association with communication and hospitality. A different function of betel specific to Malay culture is described in Ibn Battuta's account of the royal marriage ceremony:

> I was present on the day of the unveiling of the bride. I saw they had erected in the middle of the audience hall a big tribune and spread it with pieces of silk. The bride came on foot from within the palace with her face visible. With her were about forty ladies, wives of the Sultan, his amirs and his Wazīrs, who held up her train. They were all unveiled. Everyone present, whether high or low, could look at them. This was not their practice except at weddings. The bride climbed onto the tribune. In front of her were musicians, men and women, playing and singing. Then the groom came on an elephant caparisoned, with a throne on its back with a canopy over it as over a palanquin. The said groom had a crown on his head. To his right and left were about a hundred sons of maliks and amirs, dressed in white, riding caparisoned horses, and with caps on their heads encrusted with precious stones. They were of the same age as the groom and were all beardless.
>
> At his entry dinars and dirhams were strewn among the people. The Sultan sat on a raised place from which he saw it all. His son dismounted, kissed his foot, and climbed the tribune to his bride. She rose and kissed his hand. He sat beside her and the ladies fanned her. They brought areca nuts and betel, which he took in his hand and put into her mouth. Then the groom took a betel leaf in his mouth and then put it in hers, and this was all done in the public eye. Then she did what he had done. Then she was veiled and the tribune with both of them on it was carried into the palace. The people ate and went away. Next day his father assembled the people and made his son heir apparent. The people swore allegiance to him and he gave them profuse gifts of robes and gold.[121]

In what appears to be a detailed ethnographic description Ibn Battuta depicts recognisable elements of Malay wedding ritual, among them a Hindu practice of enthroning the bride and the groom on a tribune. Betel also plays a part in Malay courtship and marriage ceremonies, as it is traditionally presented during the betrothal and has an explicit sexual symbolism.[122] However, this particular ritual described by Ibn Battuta cannot be found in modern Aceh and,

---

[121] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 912-13.

[122] Anthony Reid, "From Betel-Chewing to Tobacco-Smoking in Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1985): 533.

to my knowledge, is not mentioned in other sources, the closest practice to it apparently being that of Javanese bride and groom throwing betel leaves at each other.[123] Providing that another common element of Hindu-influenced Malay weddings is the bridal couple feeding each other turmeric rice, it could be assumed that Ibn Battuta's account features a variant of the ritual that did not survive to the present day.

The traveller's claim that recently converted Sumatran women covered their faces except at weddings is somewhat confusing, but this might be attributed to the sultan's religious eagerness and limited to the high rank ladies at the court. Otherwise Ibn Battuta might be misrepresenting this in his desire to depict the sultanate as a stronghold of Islam. However, the majority of ethnographic details he provides on Samudra seem to be accurate. They correspond to what is known about the Malay culture from local chronicles and later ethnographic sources, and thus either seem to confirm Ibn Battuta's credibility as an eye-witness, or at least his credibility as a reliable transmitter of some knowledge of the Malay world acquired from other sources.

As far as can be seen from the narrative, the traveller does not seem to have experienced cultural shock in Samudra. His reception there did not differ much from those experienced in other parts of the Indian Ocean world: Ibn Battuta was greeted with presents, betel and honourary robes and introduced to the local community of *'ulamā'*. Some of the local customs he finds interesting or unusual, since he considers them worth noting, but still appears to perceive them as acceptable variations of the normal. As opposed to this tolerance in the accounts of Samudra, in the few brief paragraphs dealing with the court of Mul Jāwa Ibn Battuta is surprised by local mores at least twice: in regard to the sultan's habit to sit on the bare ground and after witnessing a ritual suicide. The traveller's interaction with the sultan is defined by certain cultural miscommunication and lack of mutual interest: the ruler

[123] Ibid.

laughs in reply to the guest's amazement at the local practices and expresses his surprise in turn.

The language barrier seems to have contributed to the cultural one. After greeting the sultan with the traditional formula *As-salām 'alā man ittaba'a l-hudā*,[124] Ibn Battuta concludes that those present could understand nothing but the word *salām*. He mentions an interpreter who assisted their brief conversation with the sultan, and says he could not understand the speech of the man who killed himself in front of the sultan, so that a person from among the courtiers had to explain it. The account of a ritual suicide at the assembly is perhaps the most confusing part of Ibn Battuta's description of the Malay world. The traveller himself defines it as *'ajība*—a wonder:

> In this Sultan's assembly I saw a man with a knife like a billhook. He laid it on his neck and spoke at length what I did not understand. Then he took the knife in both hands and cut his own throat. His head fell to the ground because the knife was so sharp and his grip of it so strong. I was astounded at what he had done. The Sultan said: 'Does anyone do this among you?' I said: 'I have never seen this anywhere.' He laughed and said: 'These are our slaves and they kill themselves for love of us.' He ordered the body to be carried away and burnt. The Sultan's deputies, the state officials, the troops and the common people went out to the cremation. He granted ample pensions to his children, wife and brothers, and they were highly honoured because of what he had done. Someone who had been present at that assembly told me that what the man had said had been an affirmation of his love for the Sultan, and a declaration that he was killing himself for love of him, as his father had killed himself for love of the Sultan's father, and as his grandfather had done for love of the Sultan's grandfather.[125]

There seems to be no evidence of Malay or Javanese practices of suicide in the name of a ruler, or that of royals sitting on the ground. However, most of the motifs that appear in Ibn Battuta's description of Mul Jāwa can be found in medieval Arabic and European accounts of India. Elger highlights the parallels between the two above mentioned motifs (suicide and sitting on the ground) in the *Riḥla* and Marco Polo's description of Ma'bar and assumes that

[124] "Greetings to whoever follows the true guidance," a formula used to address non-Muslims. Ibn Battuta. *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, 367.

[125] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 883-84.

Ibn Battuta must have transferred them from one place to another.[126] One more motif can be also added—that of the absence of horses, as it is present in both sources.[127] This, however, does not mean that Ibn Battuta borrowed from Marco Polo directly, since similar motifs related to India appear to have been circulating in both Western and Middle Eastern medieval literature. An account of religious suicides, very similar to that of Marco Polo and also related to Ma'bar, is provided by Odoric of Pordenone (c.1286-1331).[128] But what appears to be much closer to Ibn Battuta's version is the report of another European, Jordan of Severac (c.1280-1330), who writes about the Greater India (apparently Hindustan):

> In this Greater India many people worship their idols the following way: if a man falls ill or gets into trouble he vows to the idol and swears to keep the oath in case he recovers. After recovery these people… parade to the idol singing and dancing… and while worshipping it they have in their hands a two-handled knife, similar to those used in currying leather; and after having celebrated enough, one places the knife behind his neck, pulls it with force and cuts off his own head in front of that idol.[129]

Both travellers mention a special knife used by the fanatics. Yule reports at second hand that this crescent-shaped instrument called *karavat* could be still found in Bengal in his time.[130] Suicides in performance of religious vows are known to have occurred in different parts of India, but the one described by Ibn Battuta is different as a deity is replaced by the king. Self-

[126] Elger, "Lying, forging, plagiarism," 83. The two respective accounts in the Book of Marco Polo are as follows: "All of them, great and small, King and Barons included, do sit upon the ground only, and the reason they give is that this is the most honourable way to sit, because we all spring from the Earth and to the Earth we must return; so no one can pay the Earth too much honour, and no one ought to despise it." Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo,* 325. "When a man is doomed to die for any crime, he may declare that he will put himself to death in honour of such and such an idol… When they come to the place of execution he takes a knife and sticks it through his arm, and cries: "I slay myself for the love of (such a god)!" Than he takes another knife and sticks it through his other arm, and takes a third knife and runs it into his belly, and so on until he kills himself outright. And when he is dead his kinsfolk take the body and burn it with a joyful celebration." Ibid., 324-25.

[127] Ibid., 324.

[128] [Yakov M. Svet] Я.М. Свет, *После Марко Поло: Путешествия западных чужеземцев в страны Трех Индий* [After Marco Polo: The travels of Western outlanders to the lands of Three Indias] (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1968), 181.

[129] [Svet], *После Марко Поло*, 148-49.

[130] Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo,* 334.

sacrificing for kings is also mentioned in medieval texts dealing with India, including that by Abu Zaid,[131] but is usually said to be performed by people throwing themselves into fire. The two motifs might have converged in Ibn Battuta's account, or they converged before he borrowed it from an unknown source.

The same can be said on the confusion between Malay and Indian customs: before blaming Ibn Battuta or Ibn Juzayy for replacing motifs in order to conceal borrowings it must be noted that mixing up accounts related to India and Southeast Asia was common to Arab geographers already in the classical period. Classical authors and those who copied them do not tend to clearly distinguish the two regions, which is hardly surprising providing the extent of Indian influence in the archipelago before the advent of Islam. While Ibn Battuta's accounts of Mul Jāwa most probably contain motifs derived from other texts, it is still not impossible that these rituals, along with other Hindu cultural elements, could be adopted and practiced in Southeast Asia at that date.

Paraphrasing Gibb, by exactly the same kind of reasoning it can be proved that though Ibn Battuta undoubtedly was in the Malay Archipelago he never went there.[132] Unless strong evidence of fabrication is discovered, I would give him the benefit of doubt—to the same extent as to other medieval travellers who report very similar stories. As admitted by Ibn Khaldun, "it often happens that people are (incredulous) with regard to historical information, just as it also happens that they are tempted to exaggerate certain information, in order to be able to report something remarkable… Therefore, a person should look at his sources and rely upon himself... He should distinguish between the nature of the possible and the impossible. Everything within the sphere of the possible should be accepted."[133] Back to the

[131] Syed Muhammad Husayn Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India* (Calicut: Other Books, 2011), 93-94.

[132] Gibb, "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta," 12.

[133] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* 146.

issues of authenticity and credibility of Ibn Battuta's accounts, I would conclude that the former seems to be highly doubtful since it was possible to construct the description of the archipelago without actually going there. But the data used by the authors appears to be still credible, as they probably drew upon some reliable oral sources.

Chapter IV. At the Edge of the World of Islam: Shifting Borders and the Southeast Asian Other

This final chapter aims to discuss Ibn Battuta's conception of the Malay Archipelago and the image of the Other represented in his accounts. As distinct from the previous chapter, it will focus not on what Ibn Battuta knew about the region but on how he perceived it and built it into his general picture of the world, or at least how he and Ibn Juzayy presented it to their audiences. Speaking of a conception, I do not mean something articulated and deliberate that existed in the authors' minds, but rather the way they interpreted Ibn Battuta's experiences and shaped the narrative in view of the paradigms that mark the *Riḥla* as a whole. I will attempt to define some general patterns, as far as they can be distinguished by a modern reader, in Ibn Battuta's description of the Malay Archipelago and juxtapose them with the ideas of the region that circulated in earlier medieval Arabic geographical texts.

Arab geographers' conceptions of Southeast Asia were described in the work of Tibbetts, who divided them into three categories: a Ptolemaic conception, a Classical Arab conception, which evolved in the texts of the ninth and tenth centuries, and a modern conception that began to appear in the works of later authors from the court of Ilkhans and fully developed in the navigational writings of Ahmad ibn Majid and Suleiman al-Mahri.[134] But Tibbetts, like the majority of scholars dealing with medieval Arabic sources on the region, focuses on particularly geographical data and topography. As Ibn Battuta's contribution to the geographical knowledge is insignificant and his interest in people rather than places is

[134] Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 17, 66-99.

commonly pointed out,[135] his conception of Southeast Asia might be better understood from the perspective of human geography. Introduced by André Miquel to define medieval Islamic geography in general, as opposed to the modern notion of physical geography,[136] this term is basically applicable to most of Arab authors writing about the region. Indeed the cases of Zābaj, Kalāh and many other place names demonstrate that topography in their accounts is closely related to social realia, since the toponyms appear to be associated with certain political or economic functions more than with geographical position of a place. Rather than attempting to spot the points of Ibn Battuta's itinerary on the map, it might be more rewarding to define invisible social and cultural boundaries he imposed on it.

Travel has always been seen as a quest for the Other and eventually a way to redefine and rediscover Self. Ibn Battuta's description of the Malay Archipelago is remarkable in so far as it captures a rare moment when the traveller steps out of the world of Islam, crossing a critical cultural border and encountering the non-Muslim Other. But was the traveller's curiosity and interest in human beings that universal? Was he open to any encounter, or only to those of a certain kind? Marlène Barsoum argues that Ibn Battuta did not seek the exotic Other, and his striving for knowledge was limited to the Islamic world—a cosmopolitan but still homogenous society. She describes his cultural worldview as rooted cosmopolitanism, as the traveller had a luxury of covering vast territories without facing truly foreign reality in terms of religion, language or social organisation.[137] Euben also observes Ibn Battuta's largely negative attitude to Christians and Jews and his failure to differentiate between

[135] This preoccupation was highlighted by Gibb and is pointed to by many other scholars. Gibb, "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta," 11.

[136] André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusq'au milieu du 11^e siècle* (Paris: Mouton, 1973), 1-2.

[137] Marlène Barsoum, "The traveller and his Scribe: In the footsteps of Ibn Battuta and their rendering by Ibn Juzayy," *The Journal of North African Studies* 11 (2006): 197-98.

Hindus and Buddhists in India, resulting in his frequent references to undifferentiated "infidels".[138]

In most cases encounters with the religious Other do not seem to challenge the traveller's cultural comfort as they occur within the Islamicate lands, the non-Muslims being subjects to the Muslim rule. Ibn Battuta's voyage to China thus presents an exceptional situation when he traverses an ultimate border leaving the world of Islam behind. The only other similar occasion appears to be his visit to Constantinople where the traveller "experiences the city as a succession of multiple if unseen barriers: he is hemmed in by the unwelcome peal of church bells, nonplused by pictures of "creatures, both animate and inanimate," and denied entry to the Hagia Sophia."[139] Neither did Ibn Battuta feel at home in China as he describes his feelings as follows:

> I was deeply depressed by the prevalence of infidelity and when I left my lodging I saw many offensive things which distressed me so much that I stayed at home and went out only when it was necessary. When I saw Muslims it was as though I had met my family and relatives.[140]

Otherwise Ibn Battuta's cosmopolitanism and ability to embrace cultural complexities is remarkable. But as soon as he crosses an invisible barrier somewhere on the way from Samudra to Qāqula certain discomfort and anxiety seem to evolve. In the country of Ṭawālisī he tries to avoid attending a banquet "for they are infidels and it is not lawful to eat their food".[141] The traveller does not mention though how he dealt with this issue later on during his stay in China. Also some traditional tales of exoticism come to the scene, contributing to the image of a barbaric and mysterious world. As pointed out by David Waines, the

[138] Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shores*, 77.

[139] Ibid., 78.

[140] Quoted by David Waines, *The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer* (London: Tauris, 2010), 194.

[141] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 885.

description of China is framed by two tales of the exotic and the monstrous, i.e. those of the female-ruled Ṭawālisī and of the ship's encounter with the Rukh, which precede and follow the China story and both occur in an unknown sea symbolically separating China from the rest of the world.[142] The Malay Archipelago lies still before this water barrier, in between Muslim lands and outer space, and thus appears to play the ambiguous role of a frontier.

Apart from this role of the eastern edge of the world of Islam, mirroring Ibn Battuta's homeland in the west, Southeast Asia does not seem to be of much interest or significance to the traveller. It was not his travel destination but a transit point on the way to his old-established goal—China. The fact that he originally intended to reach China by land indicates that Ibn Battuta was most likely not interested in the Malay Archipelago per se. Of the benefits reserved for *'ulamā'* only Samudra could offer him some, and he enjoyed the hospitality of Malik az-Zahir for a while; but in Mul Jāwa he did not overstay more than needed for the ship to prepare for the next passage. Of the four searches of Ibn Battuta distinguished by Netton—those for the shrine, knowledge, recognition or power, and satisfaction of his wanderlust[143]—non-Muslim Southeast Asia could fulfil the last one only, and the indifferent hospitality of Mul Jāwa's ruler would hardly encourage the traveller to stay. However, Ibn Battuta was still eager to satisfy his basic curiosity and add some more routes to his ambitious travelogue.

The image of the Southeast Asian or, more precisely, Malay Other in the *Riḥla* can be viewed as derived from two principal sources—Ibn Battuta's experiences of encounter and his (as well as Ibn Juzayy's) preconceptions that defined the interpretation and representation of those experiences in the text. Since images of the Other are constructed in opposition to the

[142] Waines, *The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta,* 191.

[143] Netton, "Arabia and the Pilgrim Paradigm of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa: A Braudelian Approach," in *Islamic and Middle Eastern Geographers and Travellers*, vol. 3, ed. by I.R. Netton (London: Routledge, 2008).

Self, Ibn Battuta's own identity was one of the major factors that informed his perceptions of foreign cultures. Throughout the *Riḥla* the traveller identifies as Arab, Maghribi, Muslim, Sunni, Maliki and white (and more implicitly as male, *'ālim* and urbanite). Miquel concludes that Ibn Battuta's Sunni identity prevailed over the Maliki one, as his attitude to all the four schools within the Sunni block seems to be positive.[144] Also the repertoire of identities appears to vary depending on where the traveller went: as aptly noted by Euben, the closer Ibn Battuta came to the borders of the world of Islam, the broader allegiances were involved.[145] Once he reached a frontier, regional and sectarian divisions of the Islamic heartland faded into insignificance, and the oppositions between Muslims and non-Muslims, black and white came into play. Needless to say, the Sunni and Shafi'i sultanate of Samudra at the very edge of *umma* felt much more safe and pleasing to the traveller than neighbouring non-Muslim Malay states.

A source of preconceptions that might have shaped Ibn Battuta's description of Southeast Asia, apparently through Ibn Juzayy, can also be found in the Arab geographical tradition related to the region. Notwithstanding Jacques le Goff's statement that for medieval Arabs the Indian Ocean was a forbidden and unknown world,[146] it is clear from the works of Abu Zaid and Buzurg ibn Shahriyar that Arabs demonstrated a strong interest in it starting from the first centuries of Islam. Along with India and China, Southeast Asia constituted the Islamicate world's own Orient, rich in luxury trading commodities and inhabited by exotic peoples. Similarly to the later Orientalism of the West, the medieval Arab fascination with the East was initially informed by Greek representations of India as a marvellous wonderland and a home for various mythical creatures. With the extension of Arab geographical

[144]Miquel, "L'Islam d'Ibn Battûta," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 30 (1978): 75-77.

[145] Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shores*,76.

[146] Quoted by Nizar F. Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 23.

knowledge to the east, the Malay Archipelago was included into this Indian discourse, and later the expansion of Islam to Hindustan dislodged the most fantastic motifs to India's eastern borders and to the China Sea.

Classical Arab geographers do not seem to distinguish Southeast Asia from India, viewing it as part of a larger cultural zone of *al-Hind*.[147] This zone was considered to cover a vast area up to the borders of China, and its inhabitants were generally referred to as Indians. Similar climatic conditions and evident Indian influence in both maritime and mainland Southeast Asia perhaps contributed to this point of view. The majority of Arab writers place the "Indian islands" at the eastern margins of *al-Hind* adjacent to China and acknowledge their similarity with India proper. At the same time, the archipelago is also frequently put close to or even mixed up with Madagascar and other islands off the eastern coast of Africa—partly due to the Ptolemaic conception of the Indian Ocean, partly to the copyists' confusion between Zanj (East Africa) and Zābaj, Qumr (Madagascar) and Qmār (Cambodia).

The depictions of the islanders sometimes also mix up, featuring various stereotypes of savagery and barbarity attributed to the peoples of the extreme South. In this regard representations of Southeast Asians seem to be somewhat affected by the Mediterranean-centric deterministic theory that implied the distortion of human mores as a result of peoples' exposure to extensive heat or cold.[148] Medieval Arab perceptions of black Africans are commonly defined by various markers of barbarity, while Indians, along with the Chinese,

[147] According to Hodgson, Arabs followed the Iranian tradition of dividing the inhabited world into seven great realms—those of Arabs, Persians, Romans, Indians, Turks, Africans and Chinese (the list could vary). Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, 456.

[148] See John O. Hunwick, "A Region of the Mind: Medieval Arab Views of African Geography and Ethnography and Their Legacy," *Sudanic Africa* 16 (2005): 124-31; Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Barbarians in Arab Eyes," *Past & Present* 134 (1992): 8-11.

are generally respected as possessing a high level of civilisation.[149] The Arab geographers' confusion of Southeast Asians with these two groups (but never with the Chinese) thus seems to contribute to the ambiguity of their depictions. Adjacent to India and China and somehow associated with Africa, Southeast Asia of medieval Arabic sources leaves an impression of a vast and largely uncharted transit zone between the Arab lands and China, between the known and unknown world (if one considers the eastern limits of the archipelago), and between civilisation and barbarity.

Medieval Arabic depictions of Southeast Asians combine the images of developed cultures with those of savagery and cannibalism.[150] Busy ports and markets, numerous villages, city walls, marble temples and knowledge of astronomy are referred to along with the stories of encounters with naked savages.[151] As Arab travellers were likely to come across both high Indianised civilizations and wandering forager communities of the region, their observations conformed to the existing cultural stereotypes and could be interpreted in light of those. Neat and plausible ethnographic descriptions can be found in these texts side by side with semi-fictional tales of the marvellous (*'ajā'ib*). In a constant circulation of micro-narratives the travellers' accounts fed imagination and folklore reshaped the original reports, so that the image of the Southeast Asian Other in Arab geographies can be best described as a blend of actual observations and universal features attributed to peoples of the borderlands.

It was not until the fourteenth century that Southeast Asia started to be recognized as a separate cultural zone, and the image of a liminal space and a wonderland gave way to the

[149] Al-Azmeh, "Barbarians in Arab Eyes," 7-8.

[150] Though cannibalism is indeed known to have been practiced in some islands of the Malay Archipelago, Arab writers also tend to attribute it, as an ultimate marker of barbarism, to many other peoples including Africans, Turks and Slavs. Ibid., 12-13.

[151] Thus, according to Yakut, in Zābaj "the inhabitants look like other men but their customs are like those of savage beasts." See Tibbets, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 55.

new conception of the region. This new move appears to be related to the expansion of Islam in the archipelago and the introduction of the new ethnonym *al-jāwī*. In the earlier Arabic texts no special word for Southeast Asians can be found, as they are usually referred to as the people of a certain island or country. The earliest mention of a person identified as *al-Jāwī* is found in a Yemeni chronicle and dates back to the 1270s-early 1300s, while another one appears in 1355 on a tombstone in Pasai.[152] At the same time Ibn Battuta applies this word as an adjective on different occasions in his *Riḥla*, giving the impression that it came into general use.

Laffan defines *al-jāwī* as "a pan-ethnic ascription used by Arabic-speaking outsiders cognizant of the importance of Java in the 13th and 14th centuries, and (increasingly) an Islamic cultural one for insiders".[153] The introduction of this ethnonym thus marks the Islamisation of the archipelago, on the one hand, and the Arab rediscovery of Java and the region in general, on the other. Furthermore, it suggests not only an increasing presence of Arabs in Southeast Asia, but also that of Southeast Asian Muslim pilgrims and students in Yemen and Hijaz:

> The shift from fabulous Zâbaj, the source of monsters and spices, to Jâwa, a recognizably Islamizing contact zone, would be confirmed only once Southeast Asians made their presence felt in the Middle East.[154]

With the thirteenth and fourteenth-century developments the Malay Archipelago becomes closer to the Arabs, as both the limits of the known world and the frontiers of the world of Islam shift to the east.

Further Islamisation of the region and the establishment of the new conception of Jāwa in the Arab picture of the world continued for a long time after the *Riḥla* was written down. In the

[152] Laffan, "Finding Java," 40.

[153] Ibid., 43.

[154] Ibid., 40.

age of Ibn Battuta these processes were still at an early stage. Only the western extremity of the archipelago entered the world of Islam while the rest still remained outside, but the campaigns of the Samudra sultans slowly pushed the barrier forward. For Ibn Battuta, as the first Arab to report the advent of Islam in the region, Southeast Asia was no longer a foreign land at the edge of the known world. It was now a constantly negotiated borderland, and this feeling of a frontier appears to have informed the opposition of Jāwa and Mul Jāwa in Ibn Battuta's account. In his conception of the region the binary of Muslim/"infidel" plays a major role, bringing along related patterns and cultural stereotypes. This opposition can also be generally interpreted as that between the Muslim Self and the non-Muslim Other, since the traveller seems to identify with the vast and cosmopolitan world of Islam and alienate the space beyond.

The country of Jāwa—unspecified Muslim lands subject to the sultan of Samudra—is described in a positive and realistic way as a stronghold of Islam: its wars with neighbouring kingdoms are unequivocally presented as *jihād*, and the sultan is praised for his religious knowledge and piety both in the Southeast Asian chapters and at the end of the *Riḥla*. In some cases Muslim categories seem to be superimposed, among them *jizya* collected not from the people of the Book, and Malay women veiling their faces. The "infidel" Mul Jāwa, alternatively, is depicted through the traditional *topoi* of classical Arab accounts of Southeast Asia, such as descriptions of spices and bizarre customs of "Indian" people. The contrast between Ibn Battuta's representations of the two countries can also be seen in the very structure of the narrative and even its credibility: while the account of Samudra is detailed, fashioned to create an impression of plausibility and indeed finds many parallels in local sources, the passages dealing with Mul Jāwa and Qāqula are brief, inconsistent and more likely to contain borrowings.

Another point worth mentioning is Ibn Battuta's perceptions of local customs and etiquette. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, the traveller does not demonstrate any signs of cultural shock in Samudra, as he seems to have found many practices familiar and belonging to the cosmopolitan cultures of Islamicate and Indian Ocean worlds. In Mul Jāwa, on the contrary, he expresses amazement with local mores acting in the best traditions of *'ajā'ib* literature. Bearing in mind that, despite Samudra's recent conversion, medieval Malay states described by Ibn Battuta must still have been culturally very close, I would question whether the difference was that tangible. The religious and language barriers appear to have been much more significant for the traveller, and they apparently provoked the alienation of non-Muslim parts of the archipelago as a whole. Bringing up the classical discourse of exoticism, in this light, seems to be nothing but a narrative technique aimed to outline the invisible border which was, perhaps, more real for Ibn Battuta than for contemporary Malays.

Conclusion

Standing out among late medieval Arabic texts dealing with Maritime Southeast Asia as the only original account, Ibn Battuta's description of the region, at the same time, appears to be an inherent part of the post-classical tradition. A considerable number of chronological discrepancies, geographical confusions and other misrepresentations found in the text can hardly be explained by the corruption of the text by later editors and copyists alone. Along with the general discontinuity of the narrative structure they seem to indicate the involvement of compiling methods and interpolation of material from different sources. And although there is no particular medieval text I could point to as Ibn Battuta's source of borrowing, a number of indirect parallels with Arabic and European accounts and the proven presence of borrowed paragraphs and motifs in other parts of the *Riḥla* make it highly possible that the traveller's description of the Malay Archipelago contains a certain amount of second-hand data.

I would argue that Ibn Battuta's account of Southeast Asia is not likely to be authentic, in a sense that he did not witness everything he reports on. However, a number of statements and details provided by the traveller still appear to be credible, leaving room for the possible incorporation of his own observations or at least information derived from a reliable oral source. This applies particularly to Ibn Battuta's description of the sultanate of Samudra, which contains ethnographic and other details corresponding to Malay historical chronicles and to what is known about traditional Malay culture in general. The accounts of Mul Jāwa and Qāqula, on the contrary, have nothing to offer in this regard and could most probably have been compiled from some earlier written sources including those related to India. Questioning Ibn Battuta's credibility in case of Qāqula but giving a benefit of doubt to his

visit to Samudra, I assume that the presence of borrowed data in an account not necessarily discredits it as a whole and does not exclude authenticity of other parts of the narrative. As demonstrated by many post-classical Arab geographers, compiling outdated and contemporary accounts was a very common practice.

In view of the above, there seems to be no point in discussing whether Ibn Battuta has been to the Malay Archipelago or not. He might have gone all the way to China, visited only Samudra and turned back, or just never ventured to the east of India, but in any case other sources could have been used in his report. The only way to draw any conclusions about the credibility of his account thus seems to be to deconstruct it into a number of micro-narratives, each of which should be evaluated disregarding the veracity of the other. Direct references to Ibn Battuta's authority as an eye-witness, scattered throughout the text, do not appear to be of much reliability as they often introduce somewhat doubtful statements and might have been used to conceal the borrowings. The compiling techniques employed by Ibn Battuta or Ibn Juzayy seem to be much more elaborated than those usually practised by classical and post-classical geographers and cannot be limited to mere copying without acknowledgement. They apparently involve adding second-hand data to original accounts or even constructing stories based on borrowed materials, i.e. applying methods that verge on fabrication. Attempting to evaluate the credibility of Ibn Battuta's travelogue, in this light, can be best compared to tracing the sources of historical fiction.

Whether the account is original or not, the traveller's conception of Maritime Southeast Asia represents an interesting case of imposing invisible cultural borders on the map. The different ways Ibn Battuta describes parts of the Malay Archipelago that have already been or have not yet been converted to Islam are revealed through the opposition of Jāwa and Mul Jāwa in his narrative. While Muslim Jāwa is described in a positive and realistic way, the "infidel" Mul

Jāwa remains a scene for traditional tales of "the wonders of India" with its exotic spices and bizarre customs. In Jāwa Ibn Battuta seems to feel at home, recognising many elements of cosmopolitan Islamicate culture, but in Mul Jāwa he is constantly amazed by the local mores. The religious and language barrier encountered by the traveller was perhaps much more tangible for him than for local culturally and linguistically homogenous Malays, and it made him perceive the cultural differences as more intense than they were. Consequently, the recently converted Samudra was depicted as a normalised space and a stronghold of Islam, while the image of its non-Muslim neighbours accumulated various cultural stereotypes and preconceptions reserved for the exotic Other.

Ibn Battuta's conception of the Malay Archipelago can be viewed as a display of the intrinsic spatial paradigm of the *Rihla*, on the one hand, and as an inherent part of the Arab geographical tradition of describing the region, on the other. The second perspective can be referred to his employment of the place names of Qāqula and Jāwa, the former belonging to the classical geographies and the latter representing the newly evolving conception of the region. With the introduction of Jāwa and the ethnonym *al-jāwī* into Arabic discourse the western part of the archipelago gained recognition in the Middle East as a separate cultural zone. Ibn Battuta was among the first authors to apply these names, hence his accounts appear to mark the initial stages in the development of the modern Arab conception of the Malay world. As the new place name was associated with Muslim islanders, Ibn Battuta's report also marks the beginning of the expansion of Islam in the archipelago and the region's piecemeal incorporation into the *umma*.

The opposition between Jāwa and Mul Jāwa is unique to the *Rihla* and is remarkable as an instance of bordering the world of Islam. This conception does not appear either in earlier or in later Arabic texts, and perhaps reflects the temporary historical situation when the frontier

crossed Sumatra. Indeed, with the Islamisation of Java and the fall of Majapahit by the early sixteenth century, the Mul Jāwa of Ibn Battuta, as a powerful "infidel" state controlling the spice trade, ceased to exist, and the new Muslim Java became Jāwa. But as long as it was still there, Majapahit was an heir to all the *topoi* and the discourse of exoticism previously associated with Srivijaya. Ibn Battuta's description of the archipelago can thus be seen as a transitional phase in the development of a new Arab conception of the region, which marked the expansion of the Islamic world further to the east and the dislodging of the classical geographers' ideas of the "Indian islands" beyond its borders.

This perspective of Ibn Battuta's accounts of Maritime Southeast Asia brings up a question about the extent medieval geographical narratives could be shaped by cultural perceptions and images of the Other along with actual knowledge of physical geography. As I believe to have demonstrated in the present study, the representations of the region in the *Rihla* appear to be based to a great degree on the contemporary political and religious situation and its interpretation by the traveller. The religious border produced a cultural barrier, and the latter affected Ibn Battuta's narrative. Misrepresenting Muslim Northern Sumatra in familiar terms, the traveller accepted it as the periphery of the world of Islam; and, othering non-Muslim parts of the archipelago, he alienated the space beyond. The feeling of a frontier could have been all the more critical as it mirrored the western edge of the *umma* which Ibn Battuta left behind. In this respect, his conception of Southeast Asia constitutes a part of the general spatial paradigm of the *Rihla* and can be put into a broader context of geographic and ethnographic discourses in medieval Islamic culture.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Airriess, Christopher A. "The Ecologies of *Kuala* and *Muara* Settlements in the Pre-Modern Malay Culture World." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 76 (2003): 81-98.

Andaya, Leonard Y. *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Historical Fact and Fiction*. Kuala-Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2011.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. "Barbarians in Arab Eyes." *Past & Present* 134 (1992): 3-18.

Barsoum, Marlène. "The traveller and his Scribe: In the footsteps of Ibn Battuta and their rendering by Ibn Juzayy." *The Journal of North African Studies* 11 (2006): 193-203.

Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi. Translated by Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill. St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911.

Coedès, George. "Le royaume de Çrīvijaya." *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 18 (1918): 1-36.

Coedès, George. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968.

Colless, Brian E. "Majapahit Revisited: External Evidence on the Geography and Ethnology of East Java in the Majapahit Period." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 48 (1975): 124-161.

———. "Persian Merchants and Missionaries in Medieval Malaya." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42 (1969): 10-47.

Cowan, Hendrik Karel Jan. "La légende de Samudra." *Archipel* 5 (1973): 253-286.

[Denisova, Tatiana A.] Денисова Т.А. "Мусульманские султанаты Северной Суматры" [Muslim sultanates of North Sumatra]. In *Очерки истории распространения исламской цивилизации* [Essays on the history of expansion of the Islamic civilisation], edited by U. M. Kobischanov et al., vol. 2, 255-263. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002.

Ducène, Jean-Charles. "Une nouvelle source arabe sur l'océan Indien au X^{e} siècle: Le *Ṣaḥīḥ min aḫbār al-biḥār wa-'aǧā'ibihā* d'Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Rabāḥ al-Awsī al-Sīrāfī." *Afriques* 6 (2015). Online journal, accessed 23.04.2017. URL: http://afriques.revues.org/1746; DOI: 10.4000/afriques.1746

Dulaurier, Édouard. "Description de l'archipel d'Asie par Ibn Bathoutha." *Journal Asiatique* 9 (1847): 93-134, 218-259.

Dunn, Ross E. "International Migrations of Literate Muslims in the Later Middle Period: The Case of Ibn Battuta." In *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in*

Medieval and Modern Islam, ed. Ian Richard Netton, 75-85. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993.

———. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveler of the 14th century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Elad, Amikam. "The Description of the Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in Palestine: Is It Original?". *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1987): 256-272.

Elger, Ralf. "Lying, Forging, Plagiarism: Some Narrative Techniques in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Travelogue." In *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th-20th century)*, edited by S. Faroqhi, R. Elger and Y. Köse, 71-88. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.

Euben, Roxanne Leslie. *Journeys to the Other Shores: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Fatimi, S. Q. "In Quest of Kalah." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1 (1960): 62-101.

Ferrand, Gabriel. *Relations de voyages et texts géographiques arabes, persans et turks relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient du VIII-e au XVIII siècles*. Vol. 1-2. Paris: Leroux, 1913-1914.

Gibb, Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen. "Selections from the Travels of Ibn Battuta: Introduction." In *Islamic and Middle Eastern Geographers and Travellers*, vol. 3, edited by Ian Richard Netton, 5-34. London: Routledge, 2008.

Groeneveldt, Willem Pieter. *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese sources*. Batavia, 1876.

Hall, Kenneth R. "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600-1500." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47 (2004): 213-60.

———. "Trade and Statecraft in the Western Archipelago at the Dawn of the European Age". *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 54 (1981): 21-47.

———. "Upstream and Downstream Unification in Southeast Asia's First Islamic Polity: The Changing Sense of Community in the Fifteenth Century 'Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai' Court Chronicle." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 44 (2001): 198-229.

Hermes, Nizar F. *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

Hill, A.H. "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33 (1960): 1-215.

———. "The Coming of Islam to North Sumatra." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 4 (1963): 6-21.

Hodgson, Marshall Goodwin S. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. Vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Hourani, George Fadlo. *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Hunwick, John O. "A Region of the Mind: Medieval Arab Views of African Geography and Ethnography and Their Legacy." *Sudanic Africa* 16 (2005): 103-136.

Ibn Battuta. *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*. Translated and selected by Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb. London: Routledge and Kegan, 1929.

Ibn Khaldun, Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muhammed. *The Muqaddimah: Introduction to History.* Translated by Franz Rosenthal, abridged edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

[Ibragimov, Nematulla] Ибрагимов Н. *Ибн Баттута и его путешествия по Средней Азии* [Ibn Battuta and his travels in Central Asia]. Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1988.

Jack-Hinton, Colin. "Marco Polo in South-East Asia: A Preliminary Essay in Reconstruction." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 5 (1964): 43-103.

Janicsek, Stephen. "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Journey to Bulghàr: Is it a Fabrication?" *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (1929): 791-800.

Jordaan, Roy E. and Brian E. Colless. *The Mahārājas of the Isles: The Śailendras and the problem of Śrīvijaya.* Leiden: University of Leiden, 2009.

[Krachkovsky, Ignaty I.] Крачковский И. Ю. Арабская географическая литература [*Arab geographical literature*]. Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2004.

Laffan, Michael. "Finding Java: Muslim Nomenclature of Insular Southeast Asia from Śrîvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje." In *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Duree*, edited by E. Tagliacozzo, 17-64. Singapore: NUS Press, 2009.

Lamb, Alastair. "A Visit to Siraf, an Ancient Port on the Persian Gulf." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 37 (1964): 1-19.

Maçoudi. *Les Prairies d'or.* Edited and translated by C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille. Vol. 1. Paris, 1861.

———. *Les Prairies d'or.* Edited and translated by C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille. Vol. 2. Paris, 1863.

Malay Annals. Translated by John Leyden. London: Longman, Hurst, Orme, and Brown, 1821.

Mattock, John N. "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Use of Ibn Jubayr's Riḥla." *Publications of the Netherlands Institute of Archeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo* 4 (1981): 209-218.

Miquel, André. *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusq'au milieu du 11^{e} siècle*. Paris: Mouton, 1973.

———. "L'Islam d'Ibn Battûta." *Bulletin d'études orientales* 30 (1978): 75-83.

Al-Muqaddasī. *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*. Translated by Basil Collins. Reading: Garnet, 2001.

Nainar, Syed Muhammad Husayn. *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India*. Calicut: Other Books, 2011.

Netton, Ian Richard. "Arabia and the Pilgrim Paradigm of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa: A Braudelian Approach." In *Islamic and Middle Eastern Geographers and Travellers*, vol. 3, ed. by Ian Richard Netton, 147-159. London: Routledge, 2008.

———. "Basic Structures and Signs of Alienation in the 'Riḥla' of Ibn Jubayr." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 22 (1991): 21-37.

———. “Myth, Miracle and Magic in the Riḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29 (1984): 131-140.

Pearson, Michael. *The Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Polo, Marco. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*. Edited and translated by Henry Yule. Vol. 2. London: Murray, 1875.

Ranković, Slavica and Miloš. “The Talent of the Distributed Author.” In *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages*, edited by Slavica Rancović, 52-76. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012.

Reid, Anthony. “From Betel-Chewing to Tobacco-Smoking in Indonesia.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1985): 529-547.

[Revunenkova, Elena V.] Ревуненкова Е.В. *Сулалат-ус-салатин: Малайская рукопись Крузенштерна и ее культурно-историческое значение* [Sulalat-us-salatin: the Malay manuscript of Kruzenshtern and its cultural and historical significance]. St. Peterburg: Peterburgskoye vostokovedeniye, 2008.

Ricci, Ronit. *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

[Schaefer, Edward H.] Шефер Э. *Золотые персики Самарканда: Книга о чужеземных диковинах в империи Тан* [The golden peaches of Samarkand: A study of T'ang exotics]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1981.

[Shumovsky, Teodor A.] Шумовский, Т.А. *По следам Синдбада морехода: Океанская Аравия* [In the footsteps of Sindbad the Sailor: Oceanic Arabia]. Moscow: Mysl, 1986.

Al-Sīrāfī, Abū Zayd. “Accounts of China and India.” In *Two Arabic Travel Books: Accounts of China and India by Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfī and Mission to the Volga by Ibn Fadlan*. Edited and translated by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, 3-159. New York: New York University Press, 2014.

[Svet, Yakov M.] Свет Я.М. *После Марко Поло: Путешествия западных чужеземцев в страны Трех Индий* [After Marco Polo: The travels of Western outlanders to the lands of Three Indias]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1968.

Taqiyuddin Muhammad. *Daulah Shalihiyyah di Sumatera: Ke Arah Penyusunan Kerangka Baru Historiografi Samudra Pasai* [The Righteous State in Sumatra: Establishing a new framework for the historiography of Samudra-Pasai]. Lhokseumawe: CISAH, 2015.

The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. Translated by Charles Fraser Beckingham. Vol. 4. London: Hakluyt Society, 1994.

The Travels of Ibn Batuta. Translated by Samuel Lee. London: Murray, 1829.

Tibbetts, Gerald Randall. *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

———. “Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia.” *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30 (1957): 1-45.

———. “Pre-Islamic Arabia and South-East Asia.” *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 29 (1956): 182-208.

Tinggalan Sejarah Samudra Pasai [Historical remains of Samudra-Pasai]. Lhokseumawe: CISAH, 2014.

Tjandrasasmita, Uka. "The Sea Trade of the Moslems to the Eastern Countries and the Rise of Islam in Indonesia." In *Studies in Asian History, Proceeding of the Asian History Congress*: 92-97. Bombay, 1961.

Trausch, Tilmann. "Rewriting Baranī? The Description of the Delhi Sultanate in the Riḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa/Ibn Djuzayy and the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 64 (2010): 139-172.

Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah. Edited and translated by Charles Francois Defrémery and Beniamino Raffaello Sanguinetti. Vol. 1-4. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1853-55, 1858.Wade Geoff. "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (2009): 221-65.

Waines, David. *The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer*. London: Tauris, 2010.

Wheatly, Paul. *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A. D. 1500*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961.

Wolters, Oliver W. "A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century." *Artibus Asiae* 23 (1966): 225-39.

———. *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Šrivijaya*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1967.

———. "Studying Śrīvijaya". *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 52 (1979): 1-32.

Yamamoto, Tatsuro. "On Tawalisi described by Ibn Battuta." *The Oriental Library* 8 (1936): 93-133.

Yule, Henry. *Cathay and Way Thither*. Vol. 2. London: Hakluyt Society, 1866.

———. *Cathay and the Way Thither*. Edited by H. Cordier. Vol. 4. London: Hakluyt Society, 1916.

Appendix. Ibn Battuta's account of Maritime Southeast Asia

We left these people and after twenty-five days we reached the island of al-Jāwa [Sumatra], from which Jāwī incense takes its name. We saw it at a distance of half a day's sail. It is green and very well wooded with coconuts, areca palms, cloves, Indian aloes, *shākī*, *bārkī*, mango, *jamūn*, orange, and camphor reeds. These people buy and sell with little pieces of tin or unrefined Chinese gold. Most of aromatics there are in the part belonging to the infidels; they are less common in the part belonging to the Muslims. When we reached the harbour the people came out to us in little boats bringing coconuts, bananas, mangoes and fish. It is their custom to make a present of these to the merchants and each of the latter gives what recompense he can. The vice-admiral also came on board. He inspected the merchants who were with us and gave us permission to land. We landed at the port which is a big village on the seashore with houses called Sarḥā about four miles from the town. Then Buhrūz the vice-admiral wrote to the Sultan informing him of my arrival. The Sultan ordered the amir Daulasa to come to meet me with the noble qāḍī Amir Sayyid of Shirāz and Tāj al-Din of Iṣfahān and other jurists. They came out accordingly and brought a horse from the Sultan's stables and other horses. I and my companions mounted and we entered the Sultan's capital, the city of Sumuṭra, a fine, big city with wooden walls and towers.

Account of the Sultan of al-Jāwa. He is Sultan Al-Malik Al-Ẓahir, one of the noblest and most generous of kings, a Shāfī'ī in *madhhab*, and a lover of jurists, who come to his audiences for the recitation of the Qur'ān and for discussions. He often fights against and raids the infidels. He is unassuming and walks to the Friday prayer on foot. The people of his

country are Shāfī‘īs who are eager to fight infidels and readily go on campaign with them. They dominate the neighboring infidels who pay *jizya* to have peace.

Account of our entry to his house and his generosity to us. When we went towards the Sultan's house and were near it we found spears fixed in the ground on either side of the road. This is a sign that people should dismount and no one riding should go any further. We dismounted and went into the audience chamber where we found the Sultan's deputy, who is called 'Umdat al-Mulk ['Support of the Kingdom']. He rose and greeted us. Their form of greeting is shaking hands. We sat with him and he wrote a slip of paper to the Sultan informing him about our coming, sealed it and handed it to one of the pages, who brought the answer written on the back. Then a page brought a *buqsha*, which is a clothes bag. The deputy took it in his hand, took me by the hand and took me into a little apartment they call a *fardkhāneh*, a word like z*ardkhāneh*, except that the first letter is *f*. It was his daytime rest room because it is the custom that the Sultan's deputy comes to the audience hall at dawn and does not leave it till nightfall. It is the same with the Wazīrs and great amirs.

From the *buqsha* he took three aprons, one of pure silk and linen, three pieces of clothing which they call underwear, of the apron type, three pieces of different types which they call 'middle-wear', three woollen mantles, one of them white, and three turbans. I put on an apron in place of my trousers, according to their custom, and one of each kind of clothing. My companions took what was left. Then they brought food, which was mostly rice, then a kind of beer, and then betel, which is the signal for departure. We accepted it, we rose, and the deputy rose when we did.

We left the audience hall and mounted. The deputy rode with us and they brought us to a garden enclosed with a wooden wall in the middle of which was a house, built of wood and spread with the cotton velvet carpets they call *mukhmalāt*, some of them dyed and some not.

In the house were beds of bamboo on which were counterpanes of silk, light quilts, and the cushions they call *balishts*. We seated ourselves in the house with the deputy. Then the amir Daulasa brought two slave girls and two male domestics. He said to me: 'The Sultan says to you that these are in accordance with our means, not those of Sultan Muḥammad.' The deputy then left and the amir Daulasa stayed with me.

We knew each other because he had come to Dihlī as a messenger to the Sultan. I said to him: 'When should I see the Sultan?' He said: 'It is our custom that a newcomer does not greet the Sultan for three days, so that the fatigue of the journey has gone, and he has recovered his faculties.' We stayed for three days; they brought us food three times a day, fruit and delicacies evening and morning. On the fourth day, which was a Friday, the amir Daulasa came to me and said: 'You will greet the Sultanin the *maqṣūra* of the mosque after prayers.' I came to the mosque and prayed the Friday prayer with the chamberlain Qayrān. Then I went to the Sultan. I found the qāḍī Amir Sayyid and the men of learning on his right and left. He gave me his hand, I greeted him, and he made me sit on his left. He asked me about Sultan Muḥammad and my travels. I replied. He then resumed the discussion on jurisprudence according to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. This lasted till the afternoon prayer. After praying he went into a room where he removed the clothes he was wearing. These were jurists' clothes which he wears when he goes to the mosque on Fridays on foot. Then he put on his royal robes which are tunics of silk and cotton.

Account of his departure for his house and of the ceremony of greeting him. When he left the mosque he found the elephants and horses at the door. The custom is that when the sultan rides on an elephant his escort ride on horses, and when he rides on a horse they ride on elephants; the theologians are on his right. That day he rode on elephant and we rode horses. We went with him to the audience hall. We dismounted n the usual place; the Sultan rode in.

The Wazīrs, the amirs, the secretaries, the officers of state and the army commanders were ranged in ranks in the audience hall. The Wazīrs, of whom there were four, and the secretaries made the first rank. They greeted the Sultan and withdrew to their places. Then came the rank of the amirs, who greeted him and passed on to their stations. So did each category of people. Then came the sharifs and the jurists, then his personal favourits, the scholars and the poets, then the army commanders, then the pages and the mamluks. The Sultan remained on his elephant opposite the pavilion for assemblies. Above his head a parasol encrusted with precious stones was raised. There were fifty caparisoned elephants on his right and as many on his left. There were a hundred horses on his right and as many on his left. They were Nubian horses. His privy chamberlains stood before him. Then male musicians came and sang before him. Then came horses with silk coverings, gold anklets and gold-embroidered silk halters and they danced before him. I wondered at their performance; I had seen something similar before the king of India. Towards sunset the Sultan went into his house and the people went home.

Account of the rebellion of his brother's son and the reason for it. His brother's son was married to his daughter and he made him governor of a province. The youth fell in love with the daughter of one of the amirs and wanted to marry her. It is the practice there that if one of the people, whether an amir or a commoner or whatever, has a daughter who reaches marriageable age, he asks for the Sultan's orders in respect of her. The Sultan sends a woman who examines the girl and if the description she gives of her pleases him he marries her; if not, he leaves her alone and her relations marry her to whomever they wish. The people there are eager for the Sultan to marry their daughters because of the prestige and honour they acquire thereby. When the father of the girl whom the Sultan's nephew loved applied to the Sultan he sent someone to examine her, and then married her. The youth's passion became violent and he saw no way to obtain her. Then the Sultan went on campaign; the infidels were

a month's journey away. His nephew rebelled against him and entered Sumuṭra which at the time was without walls. He laid claim to the kingdom. Some people swore allegiance to him; others refused. His uncle learned of this and returned. His nephew took what possessions and treasure he could, and the girl he loved, and made for the country of infidels in Mul Jāwa. This is why his uncle built the walls round Sumuṭra.

I stayed in Sumuṭra with him for fifteen days. After that I sought permission to travel for it was the season, since the voyage to China is not organized at any time. The Sultan prepared a junk for us, stocked it with provisions, and was most generous and kind, May God reward him! He sent one of his companions with us on the junk. We sailed along his country for twenty-one nights. Then we reached Mul Jāwa, which is the country of infidels. It extends for two months' travel. It has aromatics, and good aloes of Qāqula and Qamāra, both places being in the country. In the country of Sultan Al-Ẓāhir, in al-Jāwa, there are only incense, camphor, some cloves and some Indian aloes. The greatest quantity of these occurs in Mul Jāwa. We shall relate about them what we have seen ourselves, have examined with care and verified.

Account of the incense. The incense tree is small, as tall as a man or less. Its branches are like those of the artichoke, its leaves small and thin. Sometimes they fall and the tree is left with none. The incense is a resin occurring in the branches. It is more plentiful in Muslim country than among the infidels.

Account of the camphor. The camphor tree is a reed like the reed of our country, except that the hollow tubes in which the camphor is found are longer and thicker. When a reed is broken the camphor is found inside the tube shaped like it. The wonderful mystery about it is that there will be no camphor in the reed until some sort of creature is killed at its root: if this is not done there will be none at all. The best kind, which attains the greatest degree of cold, a

dirham's weight of which is fatal because it congeals the breath of life, is called among them *hardala*. A human being is killed beside the reed. Young elephants replace human beings.

Account of Indian aloes. The Indian aloes tree is like the oak; except that the bark is thin. Its leaves are exactly like oak leaves. It gives no fruit, the trunk does not become very large, and the roots are long and extend far. The aromatic smell is in the roots; the wood of the trunk and the leaves have no aroma. In Muslim country every tree is private property, but in infidel country most of them are not. Those that are privately owned are in Qāqula and these are the best aloes. It is the same in Qamāra which has the best kind of aloes. They are sold to the people of al- Jāwa for cloths. From Qamāra comes a kind on which an impression can be made, as if on wax. The roots of the *'aṭṭās* are cut off and buried in the earth for months; they retain their strength and are some of the best aloes.

Account of the clove. The clove trees are of a great age and huge. There are more of them in infidel than in Muslim country. They are not privately owned as they are so common. What is brought to our country is the wood. What people in our country call 'the flower of the clove' is what falls from the flowers and is like orange flowers. The fruit of the clove is the nutmeg, known among us as the perfume nut. The flower that is formed within it is mace. I have seen all this and been witness to it.

We arrived at the port of Qāqula and found there an assemblage of junks prepared for piracy and to fight any junk which might oppose them, for a tax is imposed on each junk. We disembarked and went to the city of Qāqula. It is a fine city with a wall of cut stone wide enough to take three elephants. The first thing I noticed outside the city was elephants with loads of Indian aloes wood which they burn in their houses; it is the price of firewood among us, or even cheaper. That, however, is when they sell it to each other. When they sell to (foreign) merchants a load costs a robe of cotton, cotton being more expensive than silk

among them. Elephants are very common; they ride on them and use them as beasts of burden. Everyone ties up his elephants at the gate. Everyone who has a shop ties up his elephant beside it, and rides it to go home and to carry goods. It is exactly the same with all the people of China and Khiṭā.

Account of the Sultan of Mul Jāwa. He is an infidel. I have seen him outside his palace before a pavilion sitting on the ground with no mat. The state officials were with him and the troops paraded before him on foot. Nobody has horses there except the Sultan. People ride elephants and they fight on them. The Sultan learnt of me and summoned me. I came to him and said: 'Greetings to whoever follows the true guidance.' They understood only the word *salām*. The Sultan welcomed me and ordered a cloth to be spread for me to seat on. I said to the interpreter: 'How shall I sit on a cloth when the Sultan is sitting on the ground?' He said: 'This is his custom. He sits on the ground as a mark of humility. You are a guest and you have come from a great Sultan. You must be treated with honour.' I sat down and he asked me about the Sultan (of India). His questions were terse. He said to me: 'You will stay as our guest for three days and then depart.'

Account of a wonderful thing I saw in his assembly. In this Sultan's assembly I saw a man with a knife like a billhook. He laid it on his neck and spoke at length what I did not understand. Then he took the knife in both hands and cut his own throat. His head fell to the ground because the knife was so sharp and his grip of it so strong. I was astounded at what he had done. The Sultan said: 'Does anyone do this among you?' I said: 'I have never seen this anywhere.' He laughed and said: 'These are our slaves and they kill themselves for love of us.' He ordered the body to be carried away and burnt. The Sultan's deputies, the state officials, the troops and the common people went out to the cremation. He granted ample pensions to his children, wife and brothers, and they were highly hohoured because of what

he had done. Someone who had been present at that assembly told me that what the man had said had been an affirmation of his love for the Sultan, and a declaration that he was killing himself for love of him, as his father had killed himself for love of the Sultan's father, and as his grandfather had done for love of the Sultan's grandfather.

When I had left the assembly the Sultan sent me three days' guest rations. We set sail and after thirty-four days reached the Sluggish or Tranquil Sea.[155]

***

Two months after that day we reached al-Jāwa and landed at Sumuṭra. We found the Sultan al-Malik al-Ẓahir had arrived after one of his expeditions and had brought many prisoners. He sent me two boys and two girls and lodged me as usual. I was present at the wedding of his son with his brother's daughter.

Account of the wedding of the son of al-Malik al-Ẓahir. I was present on the day of the unveiling of the bride. I saw they had erected in the middle of the audience hall a big tribune and spread it with pieces of silk. The bride came on foot from within the palace with her face visible. With her were about forty ladies, wives of the Sultan, his amirs and his Wazīrs, who held up her train. They were all unveiled. Everyone present, whether high or low, could look at them. This was not their practice except at weddings. The bride climbed onto the tribune. In front of her were musicians, men and women, playing and singing. Then the groom came on an elephant caparisoned, with a throne on its back with a canopy over it as over a palanquin. The said groom had a crown on his head. To his right and left were about a hundred sons of maliks and amirs, dressed in white, riding caparisoned horses, and with caps on their heads encrusted with precious stones. They were of the same age as the groom and were all beardless.

[155] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 876-84.

At his entry dinars and dirhams were strewn among the people. The Sultan sat on a raised place from which he saw it all. His son dismounted, kissed his foot, and climbed the tribune to his bride. She rose and kissed his hand. He sat beside her and the ladies fanned her. They brought areca nuts and betel, which he took in his hand and put into her mouth. Then the groom took a betel leaf in his mouth and then put it in hers, and this was all done in the public eye. Then she did what he had done. Then she was veiled and the tribune with both of them on it was carried into the palace. The people ate and went away. Next day his father assembled the people and made his son heir apparent. The people swore allegiance to him and he gave them profuse gifts of robes and gold.

I stayed in this island for two months and then embarked in one of the junks. The Sultan gave me a great deal of aloes, camphor, cloves and sandalwood, and dismissed me. I left him and after forty days I reached Kaulam.[156]

[156] *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, transl. Beckingham, 912-13.