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**THE JOHOR-VOC ALLIANCE AND
THE TWELVE YEARS' TRUCE:
FACTIONALISM, INTRIGUE AND
INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY
1606–13**

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The Johor-VOC Alliance and the Twelve Years' Truce: Factionalism, Intrigue and International Diplomacy

1606–13

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Abstract:

Using published and unpublished documents of Dutch, Portuguese and Malay provenance, the present study explores how news of the Twelve Years Truce in December 1609 negatively impacted politics and commerce at the court of the Kingdom of Johor. Since 1603, Johor had emerged as one of the principal allies of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the region of the Singapore and Melaka Straits, and after 1606 it had proven itself as a worthy ally in the company's war on the Iberian powers across Southeast Asia. It will be argued that confusion resulting from the news of the truce on the ground in Asia exacerbated factionalism at the court. The Johor ruler, Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III, and especially his younger sibling Raja Bongsu, were incensed and evidently felt they had been left to carry on the struggle against Portuguese Melaka on their own. Unable to continue the war effort without Dutch funds, subsidies and ammunition, the pro-Portuguese faction at the Johor court brokered a peace with the Estado da Índia in October 1610. This deal led to the fall of Raja Bongsu and his pro-Dutch faction at the court. This essay provides the political and historical backdrop to the writing and revision of the *Sejarah Melayu*, or Malay Annals, in or around 1612.

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1. Introduction

In the context of early modern history, the Twelve Years Truce arguably represents one of the first—if not the first—European treaty to exert verifiably an impact of a truly global nature.¹ This was almost certainly not the underlying intention of the treaty, but the effects became global because of the nature, geographic expanse and agendas of the signatory powers: on one side the Spanish empire in union with Portugal, and on the other the Dutch Republic and the desire of its merchant elites to conduct trade beyond the shores of Europe. Modern accounts touching on the forging, ratification and implementation of the Twelve Years Truce focus almost exclusively on the treaty within the European theatre. Among the notable exceptions exploring its effects on the East Indies—and beyond—are the learned exposés of Jonathan Israel, as well as the voluminous biography of the Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt published in multiple volumes during the 1960s and early 1970s by Jan den Tex.²

References to the East Indies are not uncommon in surviving publications, such as, notably, a chapter contained in the published dissertation of Jan Somers³—but they are generally marginal in nature, and these authors clearly remain intent on observing developments purely, if not predominantly, from a European perspective. To the best of my knowledge, no author has

¹ This paper in part incorporates evidence presented at a public lecture to the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society on 13 December 2008, at the premises of the Badan Warisan Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. The current version of the text was considerably reworked and enhanced for the international conference commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Twelve Years Truce hosted by the Faculty of Law at the University of Tilburg (22–25 April 2009). I wish to extend my gratitude to the conference organisers, and especially Prof. Randall Lesaffer (Tilburg-Leuven) for inviting me to this event, as well as to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) for their generous financial support. A shortened version of this full paper will be published in the forthcoming conference volume *The Twelve Years Truce and the Laws of War and Peace at the Start of the Seventeenth Century*, Studies in the History of International Law (Leiden: E.J. Brill – Martinus Nijhoff, 2010).

² Israel, J. I., *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606–1661* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, 5 vols. (Haarlem-Groningen: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1960–72). An abridged English translation in two volumes of this Dutch-language biography was published by Cambridge University Press in 1973.

³ Somers, J. A., *De VOC als volkenrechtelijke actor* (Deventer: Gouda Quint; and Rotterdam: Sanders Instituut, 2001), pp. 75–90. Somers has very little to say about the impact of Asia, either in the short term or in the longer term, and also appears to be completely unaware of the articles of 11 April 1608 and their impact in Southeast Asia.

published a focused study touching on the reception and (initial) implementation of the truce in Southeast Asia. The present paper hopes to make a meaningful contribution to filling this lacuna by drawing attention to one of the Dutch East India Company's (VOC's) earliest allies in the Malay world, namely, the Kingdom of Johor.

In the present exposé I seek to present the case chiefly from the vantage point of this Malay kingdom. This shall be achieved by concentrating on two factions that, according to period materials of European provenance, broadly shaped decision-making at the royal court. Raja Bongsu,⁴ the sibling of ruler Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah⁵ who handled Johor's foreign relations and other affairs of state, was "saddened" by the conclusion of the truce and the cessation of hostilities with the Iberian powers it entailed.⁶ As a result, he and his faction at the court felt abandoned by their Dutch allies, especially in their ongoing hostilities with Portuguese Melaka. By October 1610, Raja Bongsu had lost power to, and was marginalised by, the pro-Portuguese faction headed by none other than his own sibling and half-brother Raja Siak. These developments within the Johor royal court also form the immediate historical backdrop to the genesis and revision of the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), as recorded in Raffles Ms. 18 and compiled around 1612–13.

⁴ The name Raja Bongsu, that is, the "young Raja", is the name used in Raffles ms. 18 of the *Sejarah Melayu* and also the preferred "title" used in most Portuguese-language materials, where he is commonly referred to as "Rajabonço" and other (corrupted) orthographical variants. In Dutch sources, such as, notably, the travelogues of Admirals Matelieff de Jonge and Verhoeff, he is commonly named Raja Seberang (the "Raja from the other side") because he maintained his residence in Kota Seberang (also known as Makham Tauhid), which was located at the opposite bank of the Johor River from Batu Sawar. (See appendices 1 and 7.) After the residence of the Johor monarch Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III together with most of the royal court had moved upstream to the newly constructed town named Pasar Raja (also Pasir Raja or Pasar Raya, depending on the source) in or around mid-1609, Raja Bongsu also became widely known as Raja di Ilir (the Raja downstream"—obviously down the river from the vantage point of Pasar Raja!).

⁵ Among the authors of secondary works, there are differences in King Ala'udin's succession status. Rouffaer refers to him as Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah "the Third", while Winstedt and Gibson-Hill refer to him as "the Second".

⁶ It appears that Raja Bongsu dealt with most matters pertaining to what in present terms would be considered foreign affairs, whilst the internal affairs were handled by the *bendahara* [*Paduka Raja*]. This could indeed have been one of the sources of friction between the two men before 1613, not least because Raja Bongsu favoured the Dutch while the *bendahara* under King Ala'udin appears to have been sympathetic to the Portuguese. See also note 55. For other functions exercised by the *bendahara*, see note 34.

2. General Observations on the Evolution of Early VOC Policy in Southeast Asia: “Front-Line” Alliances

Before turning to explore how the Twelve Years Truce was received in Johor, I shall furnish the reader with a synopsis of early Dutch alliance policy in Asia at large, particularly with regard to forging formal ties and alliances with what I call “front-line polities”.

What is meant by the term front-line polity? This expression refers to the perceived front line or front lines in the war between the Dutch Republic (and its plenipotentiary proxy in Asia, the VOC) on one side and the united Spanish and Portuguese empires on the other. Incidentally, the expression front line has nothing to do with local Asian concepts of power or authority, or even with varying ideas of boundaries and borderlands. The front line consists of zones or regions imagined by the VOC, its directors in Europe, and especially its officers on the ground in various outposts across maritime Asia. Polities located in this imagined zone tended to be either small or politically weak. The VOC feared that these would inevitably and irreversibly be drawn into the political and commercial sphere dominated by one of the Iberian crowns.

A range of excellent studies touching on the early VOC have shown that the Dutch company served as the Asian arm of the Dutch Republic’s protracted war against the Iberian powers.⁷ Spain and Portugal were (unhappily) united for about six decades in the so-called Union of the Two Crowns (1580–1640). The focal point of this union was the monarch who ruled as the king of both Spain and Portugal. Below this union (symbolised in the person of the monarch), the two empires continued to function more or less as they had before 1580—namely, as fierce rivals and competitors, especially in the East Indies. There was minimal coordination, if any, between the two. They even faced considerable difficulties in joining forces in Asia to combat their common enemies from Europe. The Treaty of Zaragoza (Saragossa) of 22 April 1529 was stubbornly upheld, as a result of which Spain was legally compelled to access its colonies in the Philippine Archipelago across the Pacific from Mexico and for a brief period also

⁷ Among the more important contributions of recent years, see especially Enthoven, V., *Zeeland en de opkomst van de Republiek. Handel en strijd in de Scheldedelta, c. 1550–1621* (Leiden, Proefschrift, 1996), Ittersum, M. J. van, *Profit and Principle: Hugo Grotius, Natural Rights Theories and the Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies, 1595–1615* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), Veen, E. van, *Decay or Defeat: An Inquiry into the Portuguese Decline in Asia, 1580–1645* (Leiden: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 2000).

Peru.⁸ Trade between Spanish Manila and Portuguese Macao technically remained prohibited, but in practice it actually flourished. Goa and Mexico City were far removed from the two ports in the South China Sea and therefore largely removed from many aspects of official control. The courts of Lisbon and Madrid were even farther removed, literally halfway around the globe, and as a result exerted only very weak, indirect control over their colonial settlements in Southeast Asia. Also, the Spanish and the Portuguese elites were deeply suspicious of each other, especially in Europe. On the ground in Southeast Asia, however, the practicalities of daily life regularly clashed with the maze of regulations, laws and instructions that were successively issued by the monarchs and viceroys. Such regulations and instructions from Europe were generally aimed at protecting markets, marketplaces and merchants at home. However, when it came to generating profits and tax revenues in the colonies across Asia and even beyond, everyone, especially the crown officials, benignly looked away.

The Church, too, acquiesced. It was just poor business sense to let God get in the way of making money. The various orders of the Roman Catholic Church certainly had a hand in creaming off profits generated in the trade with Asian “pagans” and “unbelievers”. High-minded religious ideals were sometimes abandoned completely and in the Southeast Asian context at best took a back seat.

For sure, the Union of the Two Crowns was not a union of partners, let alone equals. The Spanish regarded the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* (the “State of India”)⁹ as politically, financially and militarily weak, and sometimes considered it to be a serious financial and strategic liability. It was, in modern political parlance, the next shoe to drop among the early European colonial powers. The VOC was well aware of the tension between the two Iberian powers in Asia and

⁸ The Treaty of Saragossa divided the world for a second time between Spain and Portugal, and acted as the counterpart to the Tordesillas line of 1494. Although the Tordesillas line did play a significant role in determining the location of the Saragossa line, the compromise ultimately reached between Spain and Portugal did not “divide” the globe into two halves of equal size. On the historical background to the forging of this treaty, as well as its longer-term impact in Southeast Asia, see Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Diplomacy and Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), chapter 4, pp. 137-46; Concerning the treaty of Saragossa in general, the emergence of trans-Pacific trading routes, as well as the forging of permanent trading links between the Spanish Americas and the Philippines, see also Schurz, W. L., *The Manila Galleon*, reprint (New York: Dutton, 1959); A. García Abásolo, “La Primera Exploración del Pacífico y el Asentamiento Español en Filipinas” in D. E. Pérez-Grueso, ed., *Las Relaciones entre España y Filipinas. Siglos XVI-XX* (Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de las Investigaciones Científicas), pp. 21-2, 29-34; and P. Pérez Herrero, “Nueva España, Filipinas y el Galeón de Manila (Siglos XVI-XVIII)” in Pérez-Grueso, ed., *Las Relaciones*, pp. 50-52, 4-7.

⁹ Portugal’s string of factories, outposts and colonial possessions across East Africa and Asia were known collectively as the *Estado da Índia*, or “State of India”. They were governed by, and fell under the auspices of, the Portuguese viceroy in Goa.

recognised the Portuguese as the soft, vulnerable underbelly of the “Hispanic” empire that, together with its Portuguese counterpart, truly spanned the globe.

Shortly after its formation in 1602, the VOC began to identify and single out a number of regions in South and Southeast Asia that in the context of the present paper shall be called front-line regions or front-line polities.¹⁰ With these expressions I collectively refer to polities that the VOC deemed important from the perspective of commerce and/or hegemony but were politically weakened or unstable. These regions or polities were not static, but changed over time with regional developments and the evolving strategic priorities of the VOC. Polities seen positioned at the front line were therefore regarded by the Dutch company as dangerously positioned of being subsumed into the political, commercial and strategic spheres of the Iberian empires. We need to bear in mind that while the *Estado da Índia* was financially and militarily weakened, it certainly remained a diplomatic force to be reckoned with, as the Dutch soon came to learn, and as the case of Johor will also evidence in the present study.¹¹

With reference to insular as well as mainland Southeast Asia, there were several front-line regions closely monitored by the early VOC: the Malay Peninsula is certainly one area, and in the early 17th century there were also the Maluku and Banda island groups, situated in present-day Indonesia. The Dutch company quickly set out to forge military alliances and treaties of friendship with the rulers of these front-line polities, often concluded in conjunction with agreements to supply spices exclusively to the Dutch.¹² The rulers of polities situated at the front line were either already in armed conflict with the Spanish and/or the Portuguese, or had been co-opted by the VOC to fight the Iberians. The Dutch were well aware that not all rulers at the

¹⁰ The term state in the context of early modern Southeast Asia is deliberately avoided here, as the nature of political power in the Malay world differed substantially from the situation in Europe. The choice of the term polity is in line with established and contemporary discourses on political structures and institutions in early modern Southeast Asia.

¹¹ Once the Twelve Years Truce took effect in the East Indies, attention moved away from the Luso-Dutch maritime confrontation. Efforts became focused on interfering with and destabilising each other’s Asian allies and trading partners. On Portuguese efforts to this end, see, for example Tiele, P. A., and J. E. Heeres, eds., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, I, letter from Governor-General Reynst to his brother-in-law J. Nequet in Amsterdam dated 26 October 1615, p. 109.

¹² See, for example, the treaty concluded between Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge and the King of Ternate dated 26 May 1607, contained in Heeres, J. E., ed., “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum. Verzameling van politieke contracten en verdere verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilegiebrieven, aan hen verleend, enz.”, eerste deel (1596–1650), *Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Land-, Taal-, en Volkenkunde* (journal hereafter abbreviated as *BKI*), 57 (1907), pp. 50–3, esp. article 10: “That he [the king of Ternate] shall not be able to sell cloves, no matter from what nation or people the [purchasers] may be, except only to the factor who shall live in Ternate on behalf of the Gentlemen of the States [General] and at such a price as the Gentlemen of the States [General] shall agree with the [said] king.” My translation from the Dutch original. For the broader historical backdrop of this treaty, see also Gastra, F. S., *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, 4th ed. (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002), p. 45.

front line required, let alone desired, their assistance. As a rule, therefore, the VOC did not meddle in the affairs of expansive, land-based, agriculturally rich and militarily strong polities such as Aceh (which at the time covered much of north and central Sumatra), Pegu (which covered much of eastern Myanmar, and parts present-day northern Thailand), Siam and, of course, China.

As the memorial of 11 April, 1608, and later also details of the Treaty of Antwerp (9 April 1609)¹³ trickled into Southeast Asia between February and December 1609, rulers at the front line who had signed treaties with the Dutch were left holding the proverbial bag, that is to say, carrying on the war effort against the Iberian powers on their own. When news of the preliminary and definitive treaty agreements trickled into Asia in 1609, a great deal of confusion was unleashed. It took some time for details of the actual text of the treaty, specific instructions from home governments, and also assessments of the wider implications for colonies and commercial operations in Asia to filter down to the various settlements, factories and outposts. But in some cases, such as Johor, the weeks of confusion and wrangling proved to have far-reaching political and economic consequences. Generally, there was deep dissatisfaction among the Dutch treaty partners across Southeast Asia, unhappiness that quickly spilled over into disappointment, frustration, resentment and, in some cases, restrained anger. Diplomatically—and arguably also commercially—the memorial of 11 April 1608 together with the definitive treaty of April 1609 inflicted a great deal of damage on the VOC's image and reputation. Although in practice the treaties dented the Dutch company's credibility among rulers across Southeast Asia, especially among those who were formally tied by alliance or treaty to the Dutch company, it must be said in defence of the Dutch States General that they intended to include Southeast Asian allies into the truce. A resolution of the States General of 1609 singled out Siam, Banten (Bantam), Johor, Aceh, Pahang, Kedah, Makassar, Banda and Ternate in this context.¹⁴

¹³ The Spanish text of the treaty proper can be found in Usunáriz, J. M., *España y sus tratados internacionales: 1516-1700* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2006), pp. 257-64.

¹⁴ Importantly, the inclusion of allies in Africa and Asia is also mentioned in the memorial of 11 April 1608, see Jonge, J. K. J. de, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië. Verzameling van onuitgegeven stukken uit het oud-coloniaal archief*, 16 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1866–1909) See *ibid.*, vol. III, p. 309, “In stilstand van waepen ofte treves sullen oock weesen alle onse geallieerde vrunden in Africa, Asia ende alle plaetsen in Oost-Indien, die vooralsnu geallieert syn ofte noch met ons zullen in alliantie, vriendschap ende contract comen, gedurende den tyt van twee jaeren nae date van desen off dat wy daeraff de weete ofte advys alhier mogen hebben op half meerte 1611 toecomende.” (The silence of arms or truce shall also include all our allied friends in Africa, Asia and in all places in the East Indies, who are now [our] allies or shall enter into alliance, friendship and contract with us, for the period of two years after its conclusion. We shall receive here particulars and instructions by the first half of March, 1611.). The inclusion of allies in the East Indies was earlier acknowledged by the Dutch States

3. The Twelve Years Truce in Asia

What can be said about the Twelve Years Truce in relation to its applicability in the Asian theatre? As is known from surviving accounts of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of the truce in April 1609, the Spanish were willing to concede full sovereignty to the Dutch Republic in return for a withdrawal of the Dutch from all trading activities in the Indies.¹⁵ This condition was not acceptable among Dutch the political and commercial elites, whose interests were tightly intermeshed. Like the provisional articles of 11 April 1608, the definitive truce arrangements of April 1609 acquiesced to Dutch trade in the Indies, but only in locations where the Iberian powers held no permanent foothold. Technically this rendered all of the Americas off limits, but the East Indies was a different story. The Spanish claimed only the Philippine Archipelago, which can hardly be seen as the jewel in the crown of its colonial possessions. What rendered the Philippines—and specifically the island of Luzon—a desirable possession was the trade conducted by the Chinese in Manila goods from China were trans-shipped across the Pacific to the Americas.¹⁶ As for the Portuguese, the *Estado da Índia* was not a land-based colonial enterprise but rather consisted of a string of forts, factories and ports of differing and uneven legal status tenuously linked to the political and financial umbilical cord in Goa. Intra-Asian trade was far more important than trade with Europe, as the VOC would also quickly learn. There was thus tremendous scope and opportunity for expansion. The Twelve Years Truce was to take effect one year after its ratification in Europe (that is, in April 1610), but in the words of the historian Jonathan Israel, Johan van “Oldenbarnevelt must have known his sincere desire

General before ratification of the Treaty of Antwerp in April 1609. See Archief Oldenbarnevelt (3.01.14), no. 3153, “Extract wt het register der resolution vande Ho. ende Mo. Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenichde Nederlanden. Mercurij 18 Meert 1609 post prandium” (Extract from the register of the High and Mighty Lords, the States General of the United Netherlands, Wednesday, 18 March, 1609, after dinner” “.... [I]n dese onderhandelinge van Trefves soudon mogen werden gestipuleert, dat deselve Coningen, Princen ende volkeren daerinne begrepen worden, als namentlijck den Coninck van Chiam, die tegenwoordich sijnen Ambassadeur alhier heeft, die Coningen van Calicut, Bantam, Johor, Achin, Paham, Queda, Macassar, Banda, Tarranata, ende andere daer Alliantie mede gemaet is” (It shall be stipulated during these negotiations for a truce that the said [East Indian] kings, princes and peoples be included, such as the King of Siam, who currently has his ambassador here, the kings of Calicut, Banten, Johor, Aceh, Pahang, Kedah, Makassar, Banda Ternate and others, with whom an alliance has been concluded). See also Rijperman, H. P., ed., *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal van 1576 tot 1609*, vertiende deel, 1607–1609 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 658.

¹⁵ Israel, J. I., *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World*, p. 8; Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits*, pp. 126-7, 288; Veen, E. van, *Decay or Defeat*, pp. 187–8; Usunáriz, *España y sus tratados internacionales*, pp. 253-5.

¹⁶ Concerning Spain’s trans-Pacific trade between the Philippines and Acapulco, see the now classic study by Schurz, W. L., *The Manila Galleon*.

to see the Truce observed in Asian waters was scarcely more than pious hope”.¹⁷ Still, the 12-month delay in implementing the truce outside the European theatre was intended to give sufficient time to the signatory powers to inform their officials in Asia and issue them with fresh instructions.

As soon as the memorial of 11 April 1608 arrived in Banten sometime around February 1609,¹⁸ the Asia-based servants of the VOC rushed to consolidate positions vis-à-vis the Iberians across the region. This was certainly in line with instructions received from the VOC directors in Europe.¹⁹ Asian-based VOC servants signed a flurry of treaties with several rulers whose polities were situated at or near the front line, with the Maluku and Banda island groups as well as Solor and Timor specifically staked out as the top priority for the Dutch company.²⁰ Where possible, the VOC was to entrench its treaties and alliances with local rulers by gaining concessions to construct fortifications on their territory.²¹ At the same time, the VOC sought to pluck or grab as much as possible from the Portuguese and Spanish before hostilities were to formally cease outside the European theatre by 1 September 1609.²² This latter date was mentioned in the memorial of April 1608. It is against the backdrop of this latter context that we need to understand especially the attacks by Admiral Pieter Willemisz Verhoeff and, on his death, by his designated successor, Vice-Admiral François Wittert, on hard and soft Spanish targets around the Malukus (Moluccas) and later that year in Manila Bay.²³ After a five-month blockade of Manila, Wittert was unceremoniously defeated by the armada of Spanish Philippine Governor Juan de

¹⁷ Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606–1661*, p. 14. Consensus among historians has it that the truce was no longer observed in Asia by 1613. This date roughly coincides with the Dutch attack on Portuguese positions in Solor (near Timor) and their conquest by the VOC.

¹⁸ Jonge, J.K.J. de, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, p. 309; and Opstall, M. E. van ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië, 1607–1612*, II, p. 255. See also Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), p. 56. News arriving in Banten announced the conclusion of a truce between Philip III of Spain and the Dutch States General that was to last for nine years.

¹⁹ Jonge, J. K. J. de, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, esp. pp. 310, 311.

²⁰ Ibid. – For the list and contents of these treaties, see Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), pp. 56–85, which includes treaties with the king of Banten in February 1609, various *negrijen* (the corrupted Malay term *negeri*, or “polity”) on the island of Ambon in March, April and August 1609, Ternate in July and December 1609, Banda and the Tokugawa Shogun Yeyasu (Japan) in August 1609, the king of Sambas (on Borneo) in October 1609 (the economic reasons for which are linked to the diamond trade as is evidenced by notes 32 and 93), the Great Ayia of the Tonda-Mandalam (situated on south-eastern coast of the Indian subcontinent) in March 1610, as well as the “emperor” of Kandy (Ceylon, now Sri Lanka) in April 1610.

²¹ Jonge, J. K. J. de, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, p. 310.

²² Ibid., p. 309.

²³ Ibid., pp. 93–4. Portuguese positions in Solor were attacked and taken over by the VOC in 1613, at a time when observance of the truce had virtually ceased in Asia. See also Borao Mateo, *The Spanish Experience in Taiwan*, p. 12.

Silva in April 1610. Even after the one-year delay in the implementation of the Twelve Years Truce had lapsed, the treaty had little hope of being observed as unfolding events in the Malukus, the Bandas, and in 1613 also Solor²⁴ can easily evidence.

In Europe, peace in Asia was also not on the agenda of politicians and diplomats. In the presence of English and French envoys, the truce agreement was appended by secret clauses shortly after its promulgation in April 1609, and an additional explanation of article 4 of the April 1609 treaty that effectively paved the ground for the continuation of conflict outside the European theatre (see also appendix 6).²⁵ Admittedly, these secret clauses were probably not communicated to VOC agents and servants on the ground in Asia, other than perhaps Governor-General Pieter Both, who was issued comprehensive and detailed instructions in December 1609 and took up residence in Southeast Asia in 1610.²⁶ These instructions, which were written only months after the conclusion of the Twelve Years Truce, charged the new Dutch governor-general with collecting as much information as possible about rulers and politics across Southeast Asia, focusing on those who were allied to the Iberians, and especially to the Portuguese.²⁷ As the implementation of the 1609 treaty was to take effect around the time Pieter Both took up residence in Asia, the instructions evidence that the directors in Europe wanted to temporarily shift attention away from attacking Iberian targets (which had been the company's clear priority until then) to targeting the Asian trading and treaty partners of the Iberian powers.

²⁴ Solor was an important island and post in the trade with white sandalwood from Timor.

²⁵ Clark, G. N., and W. J. M. van Eysinga, "The Colonial Conferences between England and the Netherlands in 1613 and 1615", Part I, *Bibliotheca Visseriana*, 15 (1940), pp. 267–8; Nellen, H., *Hugo de Groot: Een leven in strijd om de vrede, 1583–1648* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2007), p. 92; Van Ittersum, *Profit and Principle*, p. 345, "The secret amendment prohibited any kind of obstruction of Dutch commerce, 'whether on land or at sea' and explicitly favoured the VOC's commercial interests. The inhabitants of the United Provinces should be free to trade with 'all princes, potentates and peoples' who admitted them to their ports and marts 'in whichever place it might be'..."

²⁶ Rietbergen, P. J. A. N. van, *De Eerste Landvoogd Pieter Both (1568–1615): Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlands-Indië*, 2 vols. (Zutphen: Walberg Pers, 1987). The instructions issued to Governor-General Both can be found in *ibid.*, II, pp. 212–27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 214–5. – Developments on the Portuguese side broadly mirror the web of treaties and contracts signed by the VOC with regional Asian rulers. For the full collection of available agreements signed by the viceroy in Goa, see Biker, J. F. Judice, *Collecção de tratados e concertos de pazes que o Estado da Índia Portugeza fez com os reis e senhores com quem teve relações nas partes da Ásia e África Oriente, desde o principio da conquista até ao fim do século XVIII*, 10 vols. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881–87). On the role of treaties with Asian rulers for the *Estado da Índia*, see Saldanha, A. Vasconcelos de, *Iustum Imperium, dos tratados como fundamento do Império dos Portugueses no Oriente: estudo de história do direito internacional e do direito português* (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 1997).

4. The Malay Peninsula as a Front-Line Region: The Case of Johor

One of the front-line regions identified by the Dutch company in the first decade of the 17th century was the Malay Peninsula. This land mass is defined by two important arteries of early modern seaborne trade—the Melaka Strait in the west and the Singapore Strait to the south. To the east, it is bordered by the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. In the north, the Isthmus of Kra (situated in present-day southern Thailand) forms the narrow link with the Eurasian land mass (see appendix 8). In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Peninsula was home to several polities of varying population size and marketplaces of scale. During this period the polities of the Peninsula were torn in a tussle between Johor and Aceh, mainly in their dispute over primacy in the Malay world. In this jockeying for supremacy, Portuguese Melaka sometimes sided with Johor but generally opposed Aceh. With the arrival of the first Dutch ships in the waters of the Singapore and Melaka Straits, and especially after the forging of a formal alliance of war between Johor and the VOC in May 1606,²⁸ the balance of power on the Peninsula tipped in favour of Johor, a situation that lasted for only a few years. It ended at the very latest with the 1613 Acehnese attack on Johor, during the course of which the towns of Singapura²⁹ and Batu Sawar were destroyed.³⁰ During the relatively narrow time frame under

²⁸ The Dutch text version of this treaty (together with the second treaty of September 1606) can be found in the “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, Commelin, *Begin ende Voortgang vande Vereenigde Neerlandsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (source hereafter abbreviated as *BV*), III, pp. 13–4. The text is also found in Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), pp. 42–7; Netscher, E., *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak* (Batavia: Bruining & Wijt, 1870), p. 2; and Valentijn, F., *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën, Vervattende Een Naauwkeurige en Uitvoerige Verhandelinge van Nederlands Mogentheyd in de Gewesten, etc.* (Dordrecht and Amsterdam: Johannes van Braam and Gerard Onder de Linden, 1724–26), part 5, p. 335. For an English translation of the treaty of 17 May, see Winstedt, R. O., “A History of Johore”, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (journal hereafter abbreviated as *JMBRAS*), 10.3 (1932), pp. 31–3. On the broader diplomatic, strategic and commercial setting leading up to the conclusion of this first formal Dutch-Johor treaty, see also Borschberg, “The Seizure of the Santa Catarina Revisited”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (journal hereafter abbreviated as *JSEAS*), 33.1 (2002), pp. 59–60.

²⁹ Singapura was the home of a *shahbandar* loyal to the king of Johor. For this reason, and also on the basis of period European documents describing Johor and the Straits, Singapura should be considered both a viable and functioning port at the beginning of the 17th century. Part of the Johor ruler’s fleet was stationed in Singapura, which could help explain why the Acehnese decided to launch an attack. Although their priority was to knock out Johor’s naval forces in a single blow, they appear to have also destroyed the town in the process.

³⁰ Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Diplomacy and Trade*, chapter 3, pp. 117–36. The town or city of Batu Sawar had been previously known as Tanah Putih. The town was renamed by Raja Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Shah. See Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer? En waar lag Woerawari, Ma-Hasin, Langka, Batoesawar?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 440, 443.

review, namely, the years 1606–13, Johor “bordered” (if this term is even applicable in the context of describing a pre-modern Malay *negeri* or polity) the region controlled, or at least claimed, by Portuguese Melaka in the north and northwest. Reports and maps (of Portuguese origin) draw a “border” around the Muar River estuary, among other locations, but the fact is people, settlements and waterways were the chief concern of Malay rulers of this era, and not the sparsely populated lands that were subsumed by thick and almost impenetrable jungle.³¹ By all accounts, Johor was a front-line polity identified by, and allied to, the VOC. Its ruler commanded the loyalty of subjects across much of the southern region of the Malay Peninsula (broadly corresponding to the present-day Malaysian state of Johor, but not to be confused with it) as well as the province of Riau in modern Indonesia. Also loyal to Johor were the inhabitants of some island clusters in the South China Sea located between the Peninsular mainland and the island of Borneo, such as the Tambelan, Anambas and Natuna groups. Johor’s purview also included people on Borneo, specifically around the Sambas River in the present-day Malaysian state of Sarawak.³² Johor was historically closely associated with Indragiri, Kampar and Aru in eastern Sumatra;³³ Pahang on the Malay Peninsula; and, according to some European reports, also

³¹ Still, in sources of Dutch provenance, Raja Bongsu is thought to have said that he had “twenty times more land than he could populate with his people”, which may very well suggest that Raja Bongsu conceived of Johor as a territorial polity; but this interpretation is by no means conclusive. See Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 12. An additional reference to the king as a territorial lord is found in the travel log of Admiral Cornelis Matelieff titled “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, p. 31: “All the land belongs to the king, and is only sparsely or not cultivated at all. So anyone who wants to have some from him can obtain enough land.” My translation from the Dutch original. – For the relevant European cartographical materials of Portuguese origin dating from the late 16th and early 17th centuries touching on the Malay Peninsula and the Portuguese colony of Melaka, see especially Cortesão, A., and A. Teixeira da Mota, *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1987), IV, plates 411B, 412E, 417C. For Melaka’s self-perception under Portuguese rule and certain issues of territoriality, the ambiguities of nomenclature, and the evolution of early modern European cartography of the Malay Peninsula in general, see also Borschberg, “Malacca as a Sea-Borne Empire—Continuities and Discontinuities from Sultanate to Portuguese Colony”, in Borschberg, P., and M. Krieger, eds., *Water and State in Asia and Europe* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), pp. 35–71; and Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Diplomacy and Trade*, pp. 122.

³² The king of Sambas, who is generally seen by the Dutch as a “vassal” of the king of Johor, was a rival to the ruler of Sukodana. The rulers of both Sambas and Sukodana controlled riverine networks where gemstones and gold were panned. The two Borneo polities count among the most important diamond-producing regions in Asia during the early modern period.

³³ The situation with Aru during this period appears rather murky. For the period preceding roughly the middle of the 16th century, Aru is described as a serious competitor and rival of Melaka and the nascent polity of Johor. See Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), p. 50. According to the late French historian and Sumatra expert Denys Lombard, however, Aru had been taken in war by the king (sultan) of Aceh in 1564, but the researcher cites a period English source that “Aru holdeth with the king of Ior and refuseth subjection”. Aru was again attacked (together with Johor) in 1613 and finally submitted to Acehnese domination. See Lombard, D., *Le Sultanat d’Atjéh au temps d’Iskandar Muda 1607–1636* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1967), pp. 37, 83,

Champa in the south of present-day Vietnam. In terms of geographic expanse, the Johor ruler's authority doubtless had a reach comparable to, or probably greater than, the nascent nation states in Western Europe at the time.

5. Factions at the Johor Court

Given the ethnic and geographic complexity of the Johor kingdom at the dawn of the 17th century, it is no surprise that the political agenda of the royal court was riddled with factionalism. In the period under review, the king and his court were based in Batu Sawar until about mid-1609. After this date, King Ala'udin as well as many high-ranking nobles, such as the *bendahara*,³⁴ transferred their residence to a newly constructed settlement located farther upstream known as Pasar (sometimes Pasir) Raja.³⁵ Raja Bongsu, however, continued to reside at Kota Seberang (also known as Makham Tauhid), which was located across the river from Batu Sawar. Surviving reports of European provenance describe Batu Sawar as a sizeable town.³⁶ It was located on the banks of the Johor River, in the vicinity of the present-day town of Kota Tinggi. The divisions at the Johor royal court(s) can be identified and tentatively reconstructed from a number of period materials of mainly Dutch and sometimes also Portuguese provenance, such as the travelogue of Admirals Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge and Willem Pietersz Verhoeff, as well as from the surviving epistolary chatter between the VOC factors based in Sumatra (notably Jambi), on the Peninsula (such as Batu Sawar and Patani) as well as in western Java (Banten).³⁷ The latter emporium hosted VOC Governor-General Pieter Both after 1610. Dutch reports inform us of deep rifts at (and between) the Johor royal court(s) that had formed around the four

92. With reference to Aru in general, see also Milner, A. C., E. Edwards McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar, "Aru and Kota Cina", *Indonesia*, 26 (1978), pp. 1–42.

³⁴ Commonly identified in many sources as the "minister of interior" and later also the "chief of police". Importantly, the *bendahara* also served as the master of ceremonies who legitimised royal activity through ritual.

³⁵ See note 4 and appendix 7.

³⁶ See appendix 2.

³⁷ Opstall, M. E. Van, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië, 1607–1612*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972); "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China, met elf Schepen door den Manhaften Admirael Cornelis Matelief de Jonge. Inden Jaren 1605, 1606, 1607 ende 1608", in *BV*, III, pp. 1–191. Relevant correspondence between the various Dutch factors can be retrieved in Colenbrander, H. T., and W. Ph. Coolhaas, eds., *Jan Pieterszoon Coen: Bescheiden Omtrent Zijn Bedrijf in Indië*, 9 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1919–53) as well as in the older series Tiele, P. A., and J. E. Heeres, ed., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1886–95).

surviving sons³⁸ of Raja Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil and their respective followers among the Malay nobility.³⁹ The four sons are Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III (who formally held the title of Yang de Pertuan,⁴⁰ that is, “king”), Raja Bongsu (alias Raja Seberang, Raja di Ilir),⁴¹ Raja Siak and finally Raja Laut.⁴² Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah is described as a man of about 40 years, weak and inept, which in turn also serves to explain why he leaned heavily on his younger half-brother, Raja Bongsu, to attend to many facets of political business, especially relating to external alliances and foreign affairs in general.⁴³ It is insufficiently clear from the VOC-based materials which of the Malay nobles actually supported Raja Bongsu's faction and political agenda. It is also not sufficiently clear whether Raja Bongsu's sibling and ruler, Ala'udin, deferred to his choice of co-opting the Dutch as an ally-in-war and treaty partner or, as Carl-Alexander Gibson-Hill has suggested, actually leaned towards the Portuguese.⁴⁴ It was Raja Bongsu who had

³⁸ See Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, II, p. 252; and “Oost-Indische Voyagie onder den Admiraal Pieter W. Verhoeven, *BV*, III, pp. 205, letter from King Ala'udin and Raja Bongsu to the Dutch States General and Stadholder Prince Maurice dated 6 February 1609.

³⁹ According to a letter from Raja Bongsu to the Dutch States General and Stadholder Prince Maurice dated 6 February 1609, there were originally six male siblings. The oldest and youngest were killed at Patani, the youngest brother for committing adultery and sleeping with his oldest brother's newlywed wife, and the oldest brother for killing his new bride, a princess of Patani. Raja Bongsu's letter, which also contains an in-depth explanation of Johor's long-standing rift with Patani, has been reproduced in “Oost-Indische Voyagie onder den Admiraal Pieter W. Verhoeven”, *BV*, III, pp. 204–7; and also in Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 17–20. See also Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 454–5, note 1. With reference to the identity of the four surviving sons of the late Johor ruler Raja Ali Jalla, see “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, pp. 10–11; and Winstedt, “A History of Johore”, *JMBRAS*, 10.3 (1932), p. 52. – Raja Ali Jalla, the father of the four surviving princes, is described by Diogo do Couto as a usurper who seized the Johor throne and was earlier known as Raja Umar (Oemar) of Pahang. See Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 440–1, 442–3, esp. his reference to part 1 of Do Couto's *Década* 10, *ibid.*, p. 443, note 1.

⁴⁰ “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, p. 10: “... one should note that the old king of Johor, who was a great warrior and also sometimes went into battle against the Portuguese, left behind four sons, of which the oldest is currently ruling over the Malays and is called Yang di Pertuan. This does not appear to be his name, but his title.” My translation from the Dutch original. The passage is also reproduced in Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 445. In Portuguese sources, King Ala'udin is sometimes also called “Raja Rade” (and other orthographical variants or corruptions of this name). For a description of King Ala'udin and his three brothers, see also Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 331.

⁴¹ See also Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 8, 11. Raja Bongsu or Raja Seberang was evidently the ruler of a town or locality situated on the opposite bank of the Johor River from Batu Sawar. See also note 4 and appendices 1 and 7.

⁴² See also Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 331. It is evident that Valentijn used Matelieff's travelogue as his principal source.

⁴³ See appendix 2 for the full description of the four royal brothers. – It transpires from other testimonies of European, and specifically Dutch, origin that in making important decisions, Raja Bongsu regularly convened his “council” of nobles and notables (*orang kaya*). See, for example, the instance during the visit of Admiral Verhoeff in Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië, 1607–1612*, I, p. 250.

⁴⁴ Gibson-Hill wants King Ala'udin to hedge Portuguese sympathies, but I have not found any evidence in the source materials consulted to corroborate this view. Given King Ala'udin's supposedly minor interest in affairs of state, he

entered into an alliance with Jakob van Heemskerck (at the time when he took the Portuguese carrack *Santa Catarina* in the Singapore Straits in February 1603), subsequently dispatched a diplomatic mission to the Dutch Republic,⁴⁵ and later also signed a formal alliance with Dutch Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge in May 1606.⁴⁶ Raja Bongsu was a man with a vision for reviving the flagging political fortunes of Johor, and judging by the surviving descriptions of him, he was also an individual endowed with an almost spellbinding charisma. Like his late father, Raja Ali Jalla,⁴⁷ he had a dream of reviving the Melaka Sultanate from whose line he claims to have descended. He invoked the name and legacy of the fallen Melaka Sultanate and referred to himself variously as the legitimate successor of Melaka's prestige and lands in several communications with the Dutch.⁴⁸ To rally his subjects behind this dream and this cause, around or after 1612 he probably commissioned the revision of a work which today is widely known as the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals).⁴⁹ Pining for the lost, great days of the Melaka Sultanate, the

was probably indifferent to either party; and that would not exactly have rendered him a Portuguese sympathiser. See Gibson-Hill, C.-A., "The Alleged Death of Sultan 'Ala'udin of Johor at Aceh in 1613", *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), pp. 130, 138.

⁴⁵ This diplomatic mission has been mentioned in several studies touching on Dutch-Johor relations in the early 17th century. See Andaya, L., *The Kingdom of Johor 1641–1728: Economic and Political Developments* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 35, note 44; Borschberg, "The Seizure of the Sta. Catarina Revisited: The Portuguese Empire in Asia, VOC Politics and the Origins of the Dutch-Johor Alliance (1602– c. 1616)", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33.1 (2002), pp. 31–62; Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits*, pp. 122, 158; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 7–8, 18; Pinto, *Portugueses e Malaaios*, pp. 112, 119; Rouffaer, G. P., "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?" *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 451; Van Ittersum, *Profit and Principle*, pp. 40–1; and Winstedt, "A History of Johore", *JMBRAS*, 10.3 (1932), p. 30.

⁴⁶ Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Diplomacy and Trade*, pp. 110, 111, 122, 124, 158–9; ; Martine van Ittersum, *Profit and Principle: Hugo Grotius, Natural Rights Theories and the Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies, 1595–1615*; Van Ittersum, "Hugo Grotius in Context: Van Heemskerck's Capture of the *Santa Catarina* and Its Justification in De Jure Praedae (1604–1606)", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 31.3 (2003), pp. 511–48.

⁴⁷ Borschberg, P., "Jacques de Coutre as a Source for the Early Seventeenth-Century History of Singapore, the Johor River and the Straits", *JMBRAS*, 81.2 (2008), p. 90, my translation from the Spanish *Vida de Jacques de Coutre*, written with reference to the situation in the late 1590s: "The king [of Johor] is named *Raxale* [Raja Ali]. His grandfather was the king of Malacca, which was an ancient city [polity] spanning 12 *leguas* [along the coastline]. He gave himself the title 'Emperor of the Malays', which lapsed on his death and has not been revived". See also *ibid.*, note 97, citing the letter from Dom Paulo Lima de Pereira to King Philip II of Spain/I of Portugal dated 28 November 1587: "Raja Ali, King of Johor, who among the kings of the south bears the title 'Emperor of the Malay Kings'." My translation from the original Portuguese.

⁴⁸ Several key documents and log entries from the early Dutch voyages mention the restoration of the original lands of the Melaka Sultanate to the Johor monarch, considered by the Dutch and Johor rulers as the 'heir of Melaka'. This is evident from Admiral Cornelis Matelieff's two agreements of 1606 with Johor, as well as from the recorded discussions between Admiral Pieter Willemisz, Verhoeff and Raja Bongsu in January 1609. For a summary of these records that touched upon, among other issues, the "legacy of Melaka", see esp. Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemzoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, I, pp. 252–3, entry for 19 January 1609.

⁴⁹ Brown, C. C., trans. and annot., *Séjarah Mēlayu or Malay Annals*, with an introduction by R. Roolvink (Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. xxv–xxvi. The original king list was believed to have been written around 1536. The work was subsequently edited and reworked by the Johor *bendahara* (a certain Tun

Sejarah Melayu plots the legendary founding of the sultanate and its conquest by the Portuguese. The *Sejarah Melayu*, however, is more than a look into an ostensibly glorified and idealised past. It is also a glimpse into Johor court politics in Raja Bongsu's own day.⁵⁰

In sharp contrast to his three male siblings, Raja Bongsu is described in overwhelmingly positive and flattering terms, at least in certain Dutch and German language materials that survive.⁵¹ His charm and personality certainly helped sell his idea of a new or revived Melaka to the Dutch, and they evidently bought into it.

Raja Bongsu's rival for power in Johor was his half-brother, known from both Dutch as well as Portuguese source materials as Raja Siak, and from the *Sejarah Melayu* as his brother Hasan.⁵² Apart from the testimony given by Admiral Matelieff, very little is known about this man. He was born of Raja Ali Jalla's third wife and in any case from a different mother than either King Ala'udin or Raja Bongsu.⁵³ Raja Siak was also married to a daughter of the queen of Patani, Raja Hijau, whom he wed in either late 1602 or early 1603. Dutch sources, such as the log of Admiral Matelieff, paint him in a very negative light, describing him as a drunkard and an evil, conniving person.⁵⁴ At the Johor court in Batu Sawar and later also at Pasar Raja, Raja Siak

Mohamad Sri Lanang or Tun Sri Lanang) in or around 1612. The Dutch academic Gerrit Pieter Rouffaer, in an article published in 1921, denies that 1612 is the proper date for the *Sejarah Melayu* and revises it to 1615. See Rouffaer, G. P., "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer? En waar lag Woerawari, Ma-Hasin, Langka, Batoesawar?" *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 1–174, 359–604. The revision of the date of completion of the *Sejarah Melayu* is found *ibid.*, p. 437. On the identity of Sri Lanang, who also held the title of Paduka Raja, see *ibid.*, p. 442. As will be seen later in this study, the date of commissioning and later completing the *Sejarah Melayu* roughly corresponds to the time when Raja Bongsu lost out to the pro-Portuguese faction at the court.

A detailed description of Raja Bongsu by Johann Verken is found in appendix 5.

The log of Admiral Matelieff (the authorship of which has been ascribed to his secretary and one-time Dutch factor at Batu Sawar, Abraham van den Broek), reproduced in volume III of Commelin's *Begin ende Voortgang*, claims that he was a sibling from a different mother. Netscher, who probably used Commelin or another printed edition of Matelieff's voyage as his source, interprets the testimony of Matelieff to mean an illegitimate brother of the monarch Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah. The Standish-Croft Journal recounting Thomas Best's voyage to the East Indies treats him as a brother-in-law. See "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", in *BV*, III, p. 11; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 29; Foster, W., ed., *The Voyage of Thomas Best to the East Indies 1612–1614* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1934), p. 169. On the definitive linkage of Raja Siak with Hasan, see Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?" *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 445, note 1.

"Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", in *BV*, III, p. 11. Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 11. – See also Borschberg, P., "Jacques de Coutre as a Source for the Early Seventeenth-Century History of Singapore, the Johor River and the Straits", *JMBRAS*, 81.2 (2008), p. 88, from De Coutre's brief *Information about Building some Forts and Castles in the Straits of Singapore, etc.*, dating from around the mid-1620s: "This land used to belong to the king of Johor, and the island of Sumatra features a kingdom that was governed by Raja Siak, who was a brother of the said king of Johor. Siak is situated at the entrance of the Strait of Sabam [today: Kundur Strait], and the raja controlled more than 60 *leguas* [more than 300 km] of [Sumatran] coastline. The sultan of Aceh has now occupied all of it." My translation from the Spanish original.

See also the description in appendix 2.

was supported by the *bendahara*,⁵⁵ Sri Raja Negara the *shahbandar* (port master) of Singapura,⁵⁶ as well as the *laksamana* (admiral). Reference to the latter may also be taken as an indication that the fourth male sibling, known as Raja Laut (King or Prince of the Sea), was also sympathetic to the Portuguese. Still, this cannot be taken for certain, nor is it clear whether the *laksamana* and Raja Laut were not possibly one and the same individual. This question surrounding the identity of the two men was also raised by Rouffaer.⁵⁷ Almost nothing is known about Raja Laut, and what sparse information about him survives is very negative indeed. Admiral Matelieff met him at the court in Batu Sawar around August or September 1606, and in the following testimony he is unambiguously disdainful towards him:⁵⁸

From his third wife the old king of Johor [Raja Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Shah] had another son named Raja Laut, that is, the “King of the Sea”, a man qualified for nothing. He only drinks *arak*,⁵⁹ and chews tobacco and betel. Verily, [he] is worthy to be bound by his hands and feet and cast into the sea; a great drunkard, manslayer, and womaniser who knows all that there is to know about these three things.

6. The Dutch-Johor Alliance of 1606

The above were the principal persons and personalities who acted as power brokers at the Johor royal court(s) in the period between 1606 and 1610.

In the following sections, I turn to examine how news of the ratification of the Twelve Years Truce was received at the Johor royal court(s) and what course of events flowed therefrom. In order to provide some important contextual information, I proceed in my account

⁵⁵ Admiral Matelieff’s travelogue suggests that the officer known as the *Stadt-houder van den coningh*, that is, the *bendahara*, was more favourably inclined towards the Portuguese than towards the Dutch, a point that is also noted by Rouffaer. See “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, in *BV*, III, p. 18; and Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 447, 452.

⁵⁶ Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 331; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 9; Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D.?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 402–3; Kwa Chong Guan, “Records and Notices of Early Singapore”, in J. N. Miksic, ed., *Archaeological Research on the “Forbidden Hill” in Singapore*, p. 121.

⁵⁷ Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 488, note 1.

⁵⁸ “Historische Verhael”, p. 11; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 11; Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 446, note 2. See also appendix 2.

⁵⁹ An alcoholic beverage

with the agreement signed in May 1606 between Admiral Matelieff and the Johor co-rulers, Raja Bongsu and King Ala'udin.⁶⁰

Judging by the text and also from the skeletal historical accounts of the negotiations aboard the VOC ship *Orangie*, the Dutch-Johor agreement of May 1606⁶¹ was clearly ad hoc in nature and intention and focused primarily on the division of spoils in the event that Melaka was successfully wrested from Portuguese control. The Dutch were to receive the walled city as a “payment” or “reward” for their participation in the joint military offensive. Johor was to receive the lands controlled by the Portuguese as well as all pieces of artillery that might be found in the fort *A Famosa*. The Dutch were to enjoy a tax exemption on trade, receive limited trading privileges for the future Dutch residents of Melaka, and be granted rights to fell trees and harvest wood. There were also provisions for extradition, jurisdiction over criminals and the hearing and adjudication of criminal cases. The agreement further stipulated that the royal court of Johor should be transferred (from Batu Sawar) to Kampung Kling, provided such a move was both possible and feasible.⁶² There are two provisions that merit more detailed reference in the present context. These are featured in the Dutch-Johor agreement of May 1606 as articles 9 and 10:⁶³

art. 9. Both parties shall assist each other to the best of their ability so that all contacts be severed with the Portuguese and the Spanish, who are their mutual enemies. Should either party enter into war with a party other than the Portuguese and the Spanish, then the other party shall not be bound to lend assistance to the other, unless it be only for defensive purposes.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ King Ala'udin and Raja Bongsu are called “co-rulers” because that is how they presented themselves to the Dutch at the formal swearing of the May 1606 Dutch-Johor treaty. This oath reads: “We, the Yang di Pertuan and Raja Seberang, the kings of Johor, swear herewith to sustain the above written agreement in all of its points and articles and not to undertake anything to infringe it, so help us God.” See Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), p. 50. My italics.

⁶¹ Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), pp. 41–5. A summary of the principal points is found in Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 13–5. See also the original Dutch text and a translation into English in appendix 3.

⁶² Johor's royal court was eventually moved – around the middle of 1609 – to a newly constructed town farther up the Johor River known as Pasar Raja. See also note 4.

⁶³ See appendix 3.

⁶⁴ Valentijn gives this paragraph a slight twist. See Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 332, “9. Beloven ook malkanderen getrouw tegen de Portugeezen en Spanjaarden te zullen bystaan; dog geenzins soo een van beide tegen andre quam te Oorlogen, ten ware alleen om hem te verdedigen. [The (two parties) pledge that they shall faithfully assist one another, but not that one shall wage war against the other, but rather only to defend him.]”

art. 10. Neither party shall enter into peace with the king of Spain without the consent of the other.⁶⁵

According to a surviving but virtually unknown Portuguese account, the assault on Melaka involved 1,400 Dutch soldiers, 16,000 Javanese troops, and the armed assistance of seven neighbouring rulers.⁶⁶ As is known, this show of force would not yield the expected results, and the Portuguese were not dislodged from Melaka. Raja Bongsu (who appears to have been responsible mainly for external relations) and the *bendahara* (who was responsible for internal Johorean affairs) were becoming increasingly nervous. The articles ratified in May were meant only to act as a recorded agreement for the division of the spoils of war and also thwart future disagreements at large. Raja Bongsu ostensibly feared heavy-handed retaliation by the Portuguese, which indeed followed in 1607 with fresh attacks on Johor's riverine settlements, including Batu Sawar.⁶⁷ He succumbed to a sense of urgency to bind the VOC more permanently to the interests of Johor, lest the Dutch were lured away by a neighbouring ruler. Raja Bongsu was aware that Dutch support for his cause at the court, and indeed VOC support against the Portuguese in general, had tipped the balance of political power in his favour. With the aim of tying Dutch interests to Johor and also consolidating the Dutch presence in this "front-line" polity, Raja Bongsu (evidently with the approval of the supposedly Lusophile *bendahara*) consented to the ratification of an additional treaty.⁶⁸ This second agreement was hammered out in September 1606, and the English translation of the short text reads as follows.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 332, "10. Geen van beiden zal met den Koning van Spaanjen ook vrede, dan met beider toestemming, mogen maken." (Neither of the two shall also be able to make peace with the King of Spain, lest this be with mutual consent.)

⁶⁶ Pinto, P. J. de Sousa, *Portugueses e Malaios: Malaca e os Sultanatos de Johor e Achém, 1575–1619* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1997), appendix 16, "*Relação do sucesso que teve a armada do viso-rei Dom Martim Afonso*", p. 294. This Portuguese account contrasts sharply with the testimony in many Dutch sources, and secondary literature, that the Johoreans were reluctant to engage the Portuguese in battle and that the Dutch were effectively left to do the fighting on their own. The campaign supposedly failed because the Dutch attacked from the sea and Johorean troops left the overland trails open to bring in supplies. See, for example, Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 331; Winstedt, "A History of Johore", *JMBRAS*, 10.3 (1932), pp. 34–5; and De Witt, D., *History of the Dutch in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Nutmeg Press, 2007), p. 48.

⁶⁷ "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse ... door den Manhaften Admiraal Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", in *BV*, III, p. 131, reports the Portuguese had attacked Batu Sawar around 1607, forcing Raja Bongsu to flee to Lingga.

⁶⁸ "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse, gedaen ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", in *BV*, III, p. 31. – Some contemporary historians call it a "supplemental treaty" and do not treat it as a separate agreement in its own right. See, for example, De Witt, *A History of the Dutch in Malaysia*, pp. 49–50.

⁶⁹ See also appendix 3.

As it is also necessary that the States [General] establish a safe and permanent base for the benefit of their subjects and for the promotion of trade of the said East Indies, that they may collect and store their goods, merchandise, ammunition, equipment and other such things, and, if need be, also bring craftsmen and servants from their homeland, His Majesty, the King of Johor, shall concede to the States [General] such a place as [they] desire. [This may] be located here on the [Peninsular] mainland, or on one of the islands falling under the authority of His Majesty,⁷⁰ be it as large or as small as the States [General] or their captain may deem fit. *[They shall be entitled] to construct houses and living quarters, and to own these as they [would] in Melaka.*⁷¹ *The States [General] and their subjects shall also be bound to fulfil the articles added to the agreement made at Melaka.*⁷²

The Dutch-Johor treaty of 23 September 1606 evidences that the original ad hoc arrangement to “reward” the VOC for participating in a successful campaign against Portuguese Melaka was now transformed into a standing agreement, as a result of which the Dutch company would take a permanent stake in the political stability and economic future of Johor. The arrangement paved the way for establishing a Dutch presence either on the Peninsula near the Johor River estuary, or on one of the islands situated to the south of the Singapore Straits in Indonesia’s contemporary provinces of Riau (formerly Siak on Sumatra) and Kepulauan Riau (Riau Archipelago). Although the VOC had singled out the Peninsula and the Straits at large as a “front-line” zone, it is important to bear in mind that it was Raja Bongsu who originally mustered the support of the Dutch in 1603, dispatched a diplomatic mission to the Netherlands in the same year, and also forged two treaties with the VOC in 1606. It was Raja Bongsu who co-opted the VOC in support of his cause. By successfully mobilising this support, he also helped tip the factional balance of power at the Batu Sawar court in his favour. The prospect of a permanent Dutch presence in Johor was intended not only to thwart future Portuguese military attacks on this “front-line” polity, but also to stabilise the political scene at the Johor royal court.

⁷⁰ The specific locations mentioned in the discussions between Admiral Matelieff, Raja Bongsu and the Johor *bendahara* at the time included a location around the Johor River estuary, Bintan, Lingga and Karimun.

⁷¹ This is presumably a reference to art. 1 of the May 1606 alliance, which, if implemented, would have granted full possession of the walled city of Melaka to the Dutch.

⁷² My italics. The “agreement made at Melaka” is a reference to the May 1606 treaty.

7. News of the Twelve Years Truce Arrives at the Johor Royal Court

Sources indicate that once Raja Bongsu and the *bendahara* had promised the Dutch a location to “set up shop” and construct warehouses for ammunition, provisions and commercial goods, the raja found it increasingly difficult to fulfil this commitment in practice. At the time of Admiral Pieter Willemsz Verhoeff’s visit to Batu Sawar in January 1609 (which also coincided with the end of the fasting month of Ramadan), talks between Raja Bongsu and the admiral focused on a fresh joint attack on Portuguese Melaka. Verhoeff had been earlier furnished with information by the resident Dutch factor at Batu Sawar, Abraham van den Broek,⁷³ that the Portuguese colony and the fortress A Famosa were well provisioned and defended by 500 local Portuguese *casados* together with their household slaves, by an unspecified number of Malays and Kelings (South Indians, probably Tamils) as well as by soldiers from other “nations” that are not listed by name.⁷⁴ On the basis of this information and intelligence, the admiral ascertained that an attack on Melaka was unlikely to be successful.⁷⁵

A careful dissection of Raja Bongsu’s conversations with Admiral Verhoeff of January 1609 are indicative of two sets of problems at Johor court. The first concerns the war against Portugal. The raja intimated to Verhoeff that the Johoreans did not fear the Portuguese as much as their Dutch guests generally surmised, as it was possible during a Portuguese attack to flee farther upstream where one would be beyond the reach of heavy artillery fire launched from marine and large riverine craft. Was this a subtle hint—confirming widespread rumours circulating at the time—that a peace deal between Portuguese Melaka and Johor was in the works? The second was a sense of disappointment expressed in different contexts that it was evidently not within the grasp and power of the Dutch to restore by war and conquest the

⁷³ Abraham van den Broek served as chief factor (*opperkoopman*) at Batu Sawar between 1606 and 1609 (that is, from the time of Admiral Matelieff’s visit until shortly after the departure of Admiral Verhoeff from Batu Sawar. Van den Broek is also described as having served as the personal secretary to Admiral Matelieff. See Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 444, note 2.

⁷⁴ Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, II, p. 248.

⁷⁵ De Witt, among other modern authors writing about the Dutch in Johor, turns the tables on Johor, citing trepidation among the Johor royals about taking sides with the Dutch for fear of Portuguese reprisals. See De Witt, *A History of the Dutch in Malaysia*, p. 51. This claim is not corroborated by the sources.

“Empire of Melaka”.⁷⁶ Is this, at least from Raja Bongsu’s perspective, a reference to the evident unwillingness of Verhoeff to engage Melaka in a fresh siege of the port and colony?

If the unwillingness to confront the Portuguese in battle was one sore point, disagreements about the wording and validity of the two 1606 treaties was doubtless another. The argument between Verhoeff and Raja Bongsu emerged from the admiral’s request for permission to construct a Dutch fortification on “Johorean soil”.⁷⁷

Some additional background information is warranted in the present context. Admiral Matelieff had already admonished Raja Bongsu to beef up fortifications in Batu Sawar and Kota Seberang⁷⁸ in order to withstand and repel future Portuguese attacks. But any of these recommended enhancements and improvements would have left the fortification under complete Johorean control. Incidentally, security issues also surfaced during the negotiations for the terms of the May 1606 treaty. Whilst Raja Bongsu was willing to cede at least parts of the walled town of Melaka to the Dutch as a residential area, he did not want to relinquish the whole city in perpetuity, and clearly resisted the idea of relinquishing control of the fort A Famosa to the VOC. Raja Bongsu is on record as having protested at this provision set down in article 1, wondering aloud why he would want to drive out the Portuguese from Melaka only to replace them with the Dutch.⁷⁹ These objections are also evidenced by period materials published or cited by Netscher in the second half of the 19th and Heeres in the early 20th century. Admiral Matelieff appears to have skilfully dodged all of Raja Bongsu’s objections, partially with an evasive and non-committal “let us see how things go”, and partially by mollifying his royal counterpart with the promise that all artillery captured from the Portuguese would become Johorean property. This latter arrangement is confirmed by article 6 of the May 1606 treaty. As the unfolding of historical events would show, however, Melaka was not conquered during the joint attack, and consequently, the arrangement governing the division of spoils was not implemented.

The second agreement signed between Admiral Matelieff and Raja Bongsu in September 1606—at least from the vantage point of the Dutch—pursued two distinct objectives.

⁷⁶ Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, II, p. 252.

⁷⁷ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 21.

⁷⁸ The town had been founded by Raja Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Shah, the father of Raja Bongsu and King Ala’udin. See Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 441, 443, 444. For the location of these upstream towns, see appendix 7.

⁷⁹ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 12.

First, it confirmed the validity of the May 1606 treaty, transforming this from an ad hoc arrangement to a blueprint for future collaboration and co-operation. Second, it promised the VOC a plot of land on which it would be able to construct residences, depots and warehouses. During his discussions with Admiral Verhoeff in January 1609, Raja Bongsu insisted that the treaty struck on 23 September 1606 with Admiral Matelieff did not extend the earlier agreement of May 1606 but represented a second, separate treaty in its own right. The objective of the latter was not to defeat the Portuguese, seize the town of Melaka and divide the spoils of war, but rather to give the Dutch a place to proverbially “set up shop”. Permanent Dutch presence in Johor was to ensure the safety of Batu Sawar and commerce of, and between, the Johor River towns.⁸⁰

Now we return to Verhoeff’s request to construct a fortress on “Johorean soil”. Sources indicate that Raja Bongsu was surprised—and indeed taken aback—by this and further requests made by Admiral Verhoeff and his naval council (*breede raad*) in writing.⁸¹ In their remonstrance or petition to the Johor monarch,⁸² Verhoeff proposed a range of articles that sought to ensure for the VOC free trade, exemptions from taxes and imposts in Johor, and the co-operation of the Johor royals in collecting debt from Batu Sawar merchants. Importantly, Verhoeff wanted to thwart an unexpected, backhanded deal between Johor and the Portuguese. The draft articles of the remonstrance or petition state that the monarch need consult with the Dutch on any future agreement to secure peace or a truce with either Iberian power.⁸³ All of the proposed articles were rejected. The raja swiftly retorted that the treaty of September 1606 said nothing about a fortification but only mentioned residences, depots and warehouses for the VOC and its employees, as well as housing for craftsmen and their servants. In his conversations with Admiral Verhoeff, Raja Bongsu also insisted that his personal Malay-language copy of the September 1606 treaty said nothing about confirming the May 1606 agreement.⁸⁴ He even

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 21–2.

⁸¹ The *breede raad* (broad council), an institution of the Dutch navy transplanted into the VOC. This council fulfilled the function both as an advisory body and assumed collective responsibility for certain key decisions. It was comprised of the commanding officers of each of the vessels in the admiral’s fleet.

⁸² See “Oost-Indische Voyagie onder den Admiraal Pieter W. Verhoeven”, *BV*, III, pp. 207–8. The written reply of Ala’udin and Raja Bongsu is printed *ibid.*, pp. 209–9.

⁸³ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 22–5.

⁸⁴ On Raja Bongsu’s claim that his Malay text version of the treaty did not contain the disputed sentence, see Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 21. The opening lines of the second Dutch-Johor treaty read from the Dutch text as follows: “First, herewith are confirmed all articles included in the agreement concluded between the parties made on the 17th of May of this year aboard the ship *Orangie* at anchor in the roadstead of Melaka”. Raja Bongsu

offered to have a copy of the Malay text made and sent to the Netherlands for scrutiny.⁸⁵ Since the Malay-language text no longer survives, it would be little more than speculation to question the veracity of this claim, and it would certainly not be the only time the Dutch and their Malay treaty partners would haggle over linguistic differences of a given agreement. Still, one cannot help but wonder whether Raja Bongsu was now getting cold feet about his close co-operation with the Dutch, which he had so vigorously pursued until that point in time, and also whether he was perhaps already under pressure to mend fences with the Portuguese. The prolonged Dutch absence from Johor for a period of 11 months in 1608 certainly did not help. Why were the Dutch not calling at Johor to trade? Why were they instead calling to trade at Johor's arch-rivals and enemies, Aceh and Patani?⁸⁶

Against the backdrop of these conversations, arguments, deliberations and disagreements we need to understand why Raja Bongsu decided to dispatch a formal letter of complaint to the Dutch States General and Stadholder Prince Maurice of Orange. This bears the date 6 February 1609 and also marks the day when Admiral Verhoeff weighed anchor and set sail from Johorean waters.⁸⁷ The acrimony and sense of frustration brought to paper in this letter focus on the supposedly inconsistent or wavering commitments of the Dutch to Johor, their trade with polities and ports hostile to the kingdom, and the nit-picking of VOC officers over the wording and nature of the two 1606 treaties.⁸⁸

Raja Bongsu was “saddened” by (read: disappointed by, probably unhappy with) the rapidly deteriorating state of Dutch-Johor relations. News of the Twelve Years Truce in late November or early December 1609 only added fuel to the fire. To express his profound

claimed that his version of the treaty did not contain this clause. For the Dutch version, see Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), p. 47.

⁸⁵ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ See De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, pp. 304–5, letter from Jacques Obelaer to the Heren XVII or “Gentlemen Seventeen”, the board of directors of the VOC.

⁸⁷ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 17–20; Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, II, p. 255. – From the passing Dutch vessel *Goede Hoop*, the admiral received news of the impending negotiations in Europe for a peace or truce and that the markets of Asia were now formally open to the VOC for trade. The document brought by the *Goede Hoop* is dated the same day that the provisional truce was signed (11 April 1608). The transitional peace arrangements made in Europe imposed a truce for a period of two years not only on the VOC, but also on its allies across Africa and all regions of the East Indies. For the actual text, see De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, p. 307: “Memorie en instructie aangebragt in Indië met het jagt, de *Goede Hoop*, op den 4. den Mei, 1609”.

⁸⁸ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, letter from Raja Bongsu dated 6 February 1609 (later passed to Admiral van Caerden), p. 18.

disappointment and deep dissatisfaction, the raja dispatched yet another formal letter of complaint to Stadholder Prince Maurice.

In response to a letter from the stadholder (which Raja Bongsu had received in the summer of 1609) beseeching the Johor ruler to amplify or amend existing treaty arrangements with the VOC, Raja Bongsu wrote:⁸⁹

... [O]ur brother [Prince Maurice] asks us in his letter to renew or amplify the existing treaty. Why should this be changed or renewed? It was our desire that our brother send us hither a person of respect and bestowed with plenipotentiary powers and authority so that a treaty may be concluded that could not be broken and would last until the Day of Judgement. Twenty or 30 admirals have come here ... now comes an admiral with whom we strike one good agreement, and then comes another and changes it. Like this, there shall be no end to making treaties!

Raja Bongsu was particularly “saddened” that the “king of Holland” (as Prince Maurice was often called by Asian rulers to whom the concept of a republic was something very alien) had signed an agreement that in the foreseeable future concluded “peace” with Spain and Portugal. He may very well have heard rumours about an impending deal, and it is possible he had seen, or even been briefed about, the memorial of April 1608.⁹⁰ It is questionable whether he had received any news about the truce much before late November or early December 1609, but evidently he was eventually briefed in writing via a letter from The Hague which bears the date 16 September 1609.⁹¹

On 4 May 1609, a sloop arrived in Johor bearing instructions from Banten destined for VOC company servants to carefully prepare the Asian treaty partners and other rulers (referred to as *inlandsche vorsten* or “local princes”) on the impending news of the definitive treaty and truce.⁹² On 10 May, less than one week later, the two resident factors in Batu Sawar, Abraham

⁸⁹ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, letter from Raja Bongsu dated 8 December 1609, p. 27. My translation from the Dutch original.

⁹⁰ “Memorie” in De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, pp. 307–12, instructs visiting admirals and factors across Asia to speak about the ongoing truce negotiations with great caution and discretion as the situation requires. See esp. *ibid.*, p. 307.

⁹¹ See “Oost-Indische Voyagie onder den Admiraal Pieter W. Verhoeven”, *BV*, III, pp. 202–3.

⁹² De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, pp. 82, 307 et seq.

van den Broek and Nicolaas Puijk,⁹³ left for Banten and never returned. They were replaced by Jacques Obelaer as chief merchant (*opperkoopman*), Abraham Willemz de Rijk as his deputy, and one Hector Roos, who is described as a specialist in diamonds (*diamantkenner*).⁹⁴

News of the Twelve Years Truce, which arrived at the Johor court in late November or early December 1609, presented the raja with yet another *fait accompli*. Admiral Verhoeff and other VOC servants in Asia insisted that the May 1606 treaty had been transformed into a standing blueprint for future co-operation in both war and commerce. Indeed, if this was the case, did the ratification of the Twelve Years Truce not represent an open and manifest breach of article 10, which, as has already been seen, clearly states: “Neither party shall enter into peace with the king of Spain without the consent of the other”? Raja Bongsu had never been consulted on the forging of the truce. What were the Dutch really up to? Could they even be trusted? What about Admiral Verhoeff’s request to construct a fortification on “Johorean soil”?

8. Raja Bongsu’s Fall

Materials of primarily Dutch origin account for the substantial challenges faced by Raja Bongsu and his faction immediately preceding, but especially after, news of the Twelve Years Truce arrived at the Johor royal court. These evidence that the Portuguese of Melaka cleverly exploited the growing gaps between arriving and departing VOC vessels to launch a two-pronged offensive on the royal court aimed at breaking the respect and authority wielded by Raja Bongsu’s pro-Dutch faction. One aspect of the new Portuguese forward strategy was to impose a naval blockade in the lower reaches of the Johor River, as a result of which the densely populated upstream settlements along the river, including Batu Sawar, experienced a severe reduction in commercial activity. It is important to bear in mind that the riverine blockade of 1609 (imposed by the Portuguese after the departure of Admiral Verhoeff’s two guard vessels

⁹³ Puijk subsequently resurfaced in surviving VOC materials as the chief merchant (*oppercoopman*, factor) at Ambon. See Tiele and Heeres, eds., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, I, p. 10, letter from Hendrik Brouwer dated 26 May 1612.

⁹⁴ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 17, 26, 27. Batu Sawar had extensive trading links with Sambas and Sukodana on the great island of Borneo, both of which were significant diamond-exporting regions. See also Opstall, Verhoeff, p. 255, note 2.

from the Johor River estuary on 10 May 1609)⁹⁵ dealt a crippling blow to the economy of the upstream towns. This was no mean feat, for several surviving reports touching on the commercial activity in and around the Johor River region claim that there were many in Batu Sawar who lived only on trade,⁹⁶ chiefly in pepper but also in diamonds (chiefly procured from around Sambas and Sukodana), sappan wood, cottons and textiles generally. According to contemporary eyewitnesses, the river was frequented by ships from as far away as Arabia, Persia, Gujarat, the Ryukyus and China. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Melaka at roughly the same time, where—due to the lack of trading activity—local *casados* reportedly fell back on farming to eke out a living.⁹⁷

It is little surprise that the latest Portuguese blockade of the Johor River acted as the final straw for many of the courtiers and *orang kaya* (notables, merchants) at Batu Sawar and other upstream towns. Their dissatisfaction, combined with the prospect of Johor having to wage the war against Portuguese Melaka on its own,⁹⁸ precipitated the sudden—and for the Dutch, clearly unexpected—fall of Raja Bongsu at the Johor court. Admittedly, it is difficult to reconstruct precisely what role the Portuguese of Melaka played in engineering Raja Bongsu's fall, but they certainly did play a role. Lavish gifts and extravagant promises were dished out to those who opposed the pro-Dutch raja, such as, notably, Raja Siak, the *laksamana* (and/or Raja Laut), the *shahbandar* of Singapura (the Sri Negara di Raja), almost certainly the *bendahara*, together with

⁹⁵ Van Opstall, ed., *De reis van de vloot van Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff naar Azië*, II, p. 252. The original plan had been that the vessels hold guard until 1 July. See Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 17. See also the separate log of the two vessels concerned, namely, the *Griffioen* and the *Roode Leeuw*, which have published in the same volume. According to an excerpt from a resolution of Admiral Verhoeff's *breede raad*, the Portuguese had exerted tremendous pressure on Johor ever since the Dutch ships had set sail. See Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 24. See also the map in appendix 5.

⁹⁶ See Borschberg, P., "Jacques de Coutre as a Source for the Early Seventeenth-Century History of Singapore, the Johor River and the Straits", *JMBRAS*, 81.2 (2008), p. 90, quoting from the *Vida de Jacques de Coutre*: "The court of the king is in the city of Batu Sawar, that was constructed after the destruction of Old Johor [that is, Johor Lama]. We now call this city New Johor. It is a port city hosting many ships of different nations. ... There is a beautiful river [that is, the Johor River] and a port with many large and small ships. This land [of Johor] maintains a vast network of trade and produces a surplus of food". See also the close of De Coutre's memorial "Information about Building Some Castles and Fortresses in the Straits of Singapore and Other Regions of the South, etc." Contained in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, ms. 2780, *Vida de Jaques de Coutre*, appendices, fol. 273 recto: "In the aforementioned city of Johor [that is, 'New Johor' or Batu Sawar] there are many people who make a living only from merchandise and □ from □ sailing from one land to another". My translation from the Spanish original.

⁹⁷ Tiele, "De Europeërs in den Maleischen Archipel", part VI, *BKI*, 30 (1882), p. 229, note 2.

⁹⁸ The situation was apparently already desperate at the time of Admiral Verhoeff's visit to the Batu Sawar court in January 1609. See esp. "Oost-Indische Voyagie onder den Admiraal Pieter W. Verhoeven", *BV*, III, p. 208, reply of Raja Bongsu and King Ala'udin to the remonstrance (petition) of Verhoeff and his *breede raad*, stating that "the kings are currently in a state of great despair and poverty", that they came to this precisely because of their alliance with the Dutch, and that they were in genuine danger as they did "not know how to resist the enemy" without "money, ammunition of war, and ships".

an unspecified number of *orang kaya*; in other words, to those men identified earlier as leading members of the Lusophile or pro-Portuguese faction. No doubt, the Portuguese worked on key players at the court, and exploited existing rifts and differences among the four royal brothers and their respective supporters. Most important of all, the Portuguese held out the tangible material benefits that would derive from normalising relations with Melaka and the *Estado da Índia*.

Reports of European provenance touching on the Johor royal court(s) indicate that Raja Bongsu and King Ala'udin's (joint) leadership was never uncontested. Rumours had been circulating as early as 1607—that is, in the year immediately following the unsuccessful joint attack on Melaka—that factions at the court were pushing for a peace with the Portuguese. Admiral Matelieff even attests to having seen draft peace clauses with his very own eyes.⁹⁹ It is uncertain, however, whether these draft clauses were ever formally accepted. With the promulgation of the Twelve Years Truce in Europe, and its subsequent implementation in Asia by April 1610, the Dutch and Portuguese would attempt to make the Johor court their new battleground. This was a new war, fought not with artillery, weapons and the latest military tactics, but with gifts, bribes, promises and also some hard-nosed diplomatic manoeuvres. It was a very different kind of warfare, which, with the benefit of hindsight, the Dutch quickly lost. Instrumental to Portuguese success was the dispatch of a senior, experienced negotiator to Johor known from Portuguese sources as João Lopes de Morero, whose name in certain other documents is also spelled “Lopes d'Amoreira” and “Lopes de Morere Tonbongon”.¹⁰⁰ This Portuguese envoy is described in various documents as a citizen of Melaka, the Portuguese colony's *temenggong*¹⁰¹ placed in charge of foreigners, as well as an old friend of Raja Ali Jalla, the late father of King Ala'udin, Raja Bongsu, Raja Siak and Raja Laut.¹⁰² Lopes de Morero

⁹⁹ See Rietbergen, *De Eerste Landvoogd*, II, p. 207. “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijcke Reyse ... door den Manhaften Admiraal Cornelis Matelief de Jonge...”, *BV*, III, p. 131, also alludes to a peace agreement that followed attacks on Batu Sawar in 1607.

¹⁰⁰ See also Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 27–8; and Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 451. The name “Tombongon” evidently represents a corruption of the Malay title “Temenggong”.

¹⁰¹ The *temenggong* or *tumenggong* is a high Malay official placed in charge of (internal) security.

¹⁰² Bulhão Pato, R.A. de, and A. da Silva Rego, eds., *Documentos Remettidos da Índia ou Livros das Monções*, 10 vols. (Lisbon: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias and Imprensa Nacional – Casa de Moeda, 1880–1982), esp. vol. 4, p. 315; Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 451–2, note 3.

arrived in Batu Sawar in October 1610 to forge a peace treaty with Johor. Raja Bongsu's power base at the court was now in a tatters, his downfall at the court almost complete.

The approximate date is noteworthy. The Twelve Years Truce had come into effect in the Asian theatre only six months before. The Dutch factor in Batu Sawar watched aghast as Raja Siak and his Lusophile faction engineered Raja Bongsu's fall with Portuguese assistance.

According to the testimony of the resident Dutch factor in Batu Sawar, Jacques Obelaer, the Portuguese envoy named João Lopes de Morero arrived at the court to finalise a peace deal with Johor on 16 October 1610. Less than one week later, on 22 October, the treaty was also endorsed by the governor of Melaka, Dom Francisco Henriques, in the presence of Archbishop Dom Frei Cristóvão de Sá e Lisboa and two unnamed Johorean envoys.¹⁰³ According to the historian Manuel Teixeira, Johor's ruler Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah himself ventured to the Portuguese colony of Melaka in order to attend the signing ceremony, but Raja Bongsu was, in any case, conspicuously absent.¹⁰⁴

At a formal level, the administrative apparatus of the *Estado da Índia* ensured further delays in the full ratification of the Luso-Johor peace. According to the period testimony of Dutch Admiral Stevin van der Hagen, the Portuguese viceroy in Goa, Rui Lourenço de Távora, objected to the wording of specific clauses and delayed the full ratification and implementation of the treaty until the objectionable passages had been either altered or deleted.¹⁰⁵ It is uncertain whether this was ever accomplished, especially since no copy of the 1610 Luso-Johor treaty survives, a problem that the historian António Saldanha has also noted.¹⁰⁶

How the peace deal of October 1610 was eventually handled in the notorious "red tape" of the *Estado da Índia*'s Goa-based administration is admittedly of little concern to the main thrust and argument of this exposé. Far more important to my present focus—and this is especially true for the marginalisation of Raja Bongsu and his supporters in Batu Sawar—were the events that *immediately* began to unfold on the ground. According to a letter from Obelaer dated 25 November 1610, Raja Bongsu paid a visit late at night to the premises of the Dutch

¹⁰³ De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, p. 304, letter from Obelaer dated 25 November 1610; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 27–9 passim; see also Teixeira, M., *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore*, I, "Malacca" (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1961), p. 242, which contains a superficial and utterly confused account of this episode.

¹⁰⁴ Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions*.

¹⁰⁵ Tiele and Heeres, ed., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, I, p. 129, letter from Admiral Stevin van der Hagen to the Heren XVII dated 10 March 1616. See also Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore*, I, p. 242.

¹⁰⁶ Saldanha, *Iustum Imperium, dos tratados como fundamento do império dos portugueses no Oriente*, p. 371, note 10.

factory in Batu Sawar.¹⁰⁷ This letter probably yields the strongest testimony yet that the raja had been marginalised by some of the powerful courtiers and was forced to lend his approval to the peace with Portuguese Melaka.¹⁰⁸ Not surprisingly, Raja Siak and his supporters are named as the instigators. But Raja Bongsu's problems ran deeper than the political manoeuvres at the Johor court. He evidently caved in to a deal for another reason mentioned in Obelaer's written communication: there was a real danger of an imminent popular uprising, but it is not exactly clear what the people were rising up against. There was certainly a great deal of pent-up resentment against the dire economic state inflicted on the upstream towns by the latest riverine blockade. It appears that many identified Raja Bongsu's anti-Portuguese, pro-Dutch stance as the principal source of Johor's economic plight.

Johor had been successfully tugged into the greater sphere of Portuguese mercantile, political and hegemonic interests. The battleground was not the Johor River or even the streets of the riverine towns, but the royal court itself. With his authority broken in court circles, Raja Bongsu must have been deeply "saddened" to see the rapid changes taking place after October 1610.¹⁰⁹ As we are informed by Dutch factor Obelaer, the inhabitants of Batu Sawar who had been starved of supplies by the periodic riverine blockades—and especially the blockade of 1609—were almost overnight strutting around in the latest Luso-Indian fashions. Once the deal with Melaka had been sealed—with or without the Portuguese viceroy's objections—the merchants of Melaka quickly descended on the riverine towns to sell their wares, mainly cloth pieces, finished clothing and also preserved food. To the average man on the street, the abundant wares and food provisions in the riverine towns of Johor amounted to those tangible benefits the pro-Portuguese faction had so deeply desired from the forging of peace with Melaka. These material benefits defused the heightened threat of a popular uprising. The fall or marginalization of Raja Bongsu and his pro-Dutch faction at the court was now complete.

¹⁰⁷ De Jonge, *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, III, p. 306, letter from Jacques Obelaer dated 25 November 1610.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 305, quotes Raja Bongsu as having claimed that he was driven by "poverty", that is, "necessity", into signing the agreement with the Portuguese. This could be an indirect reference to the crippling blockade imposed on the Johor River and the upstream towns in 1609. See also Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, pp. 27–8.

¹⁰⁹ David Bassett does not see Raja Bongsu as having been "abandoned" by the Dutch, but argues that he felt "inadequately supported". His comment makes little sense against the backdrop of the Twelve Years Truce and its provisions. See Bassett, D. K., "European Influence in the Malay Peninsula, 1511–1786", *JMBRAS*, 33.3, (1960), p. 16: "... the sultan of Johore felt himself to be so inadequately supported by the Dutch Company that he made peace with the Portuguese in October 1610".

9. Acehnese Intervention of 1613

No account of this important period in the history of the Johor Kingdom would be complete without making two additional observations about the Luso-Johor peace of October 1610 and its medium-term aftermath.

First, it is important to step back and assess the nature of Luso-Johor and Dutch-Johor relations from a longer-term perspective. Prior to the arrival of the Dutch in Johorean waters in the final weeks of 1602 or the beginning of 1603, relations with the Portuguese were very fluid, an oscillating on-again, off-again situation that was not exactly uncommon in the world of Southeast Asian politics. Luso-Johor relations remained in a state of flux, despite the severe political, economic and demographic shocks suffered as a result of the Acehnese invasions of 1613 and 1615, and also despite the subsequent reversal of fortune for Raja Siak and his Lusophile faction in the wake of the 1613 Acehnese invasion.

The second observation concerns the “political comeback” of Raja Bongsu. By the close of 1610, his position among the high-ranking courtiers had been severely weakened. The unexpected reversal in Raja Bongsu’s fortunes took place against the backdrop of the Acehnese invasion in 1613, during the course of which the upstream towns, including Batu Sawar and also Singapura,¹¹⁰ were burned to the ground. The royal residence was garrisoned by Acehnese troops, and members of the court were brought to Aceh.¹¹¹ There are mixed reports about the fate of King Ala’udin. Some claim he was brought to Aceh as well, but a far more credible story

¹¹⁰ Carl-Alexander Gibson-Hill held that the settlement of Singapura went up in flames in 1613. See Gibson-Hill, C.-A., “Singapore Old Strait and New Harbour, 1300–1870”, *Memoirs of the Raffles Museum*, no. 3 (1956), p. 20. The Singapore-based archaeologist John Miksic has identified the Portuguese as the culprits behind the destruction, which is certainly incorrect, not least because Johor and the *Estado da Índia* were, according to the evidence presented in the present article, at peace in the year 1613. See Miksic, J. N., *Archeological Research on the “Forbidden Hill” of Singapore: Excavations at Fort Canning, 1984* (Singapore: National Museum, 1985), pp. 33, 34.

¹¹¹ Foster, W., ed., *The Voyage of Thomas Best to the East Indies 1612–1614* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1934), pp. 58–9; Standish-Croft *Journal* entry for 28 June 1613, pp. 169–70: “... for his [that is, the king of Aceh’s] army was returned from Joar, and had brought the King prisoner ... But the younge King of Joar yielded, and they were taken and brought hither to Achen prisoners, mariners and merchants, to the number of 20”. See also the letter from Thomas Best to Thomas Aldsworth dated 12 July 1613, *ibid.*, p. 257: “... the Kings armada of frigatts came from Joor, bringinge the kinge thereof, with his brother, many of their people, and 22 Dutch prisoners ...”. See also Lombard, *Le Sultanat d’Atjéh*, p. 92; and Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 449, esp. note 1.

had him flee to the Riau island of Bintan, where he passed away around 1615.¹¹² Meanwhile, Raja Bongsu, who had been brought to Aceh in June 1613 with other leading members of the Johor court,¹¹³ was married off to an Acehnese princess (rumoured to be the sister of the ruling Sultan Iskandar Muda)¹¹⁴ and returned in September or October 1613 to Johor, where he ruled as Abdullah Hammayat Shah until his death on Tambelan Besar (Great Tambelan Island) in March 1623.¹¹⁵

Once returned to Johor as the new monarch, the former Raja Bongsu sought almost immediately to mend fences with the VOC. A lot had changed with regard to the Twelve Years Truce, and by that point in time (that is around 1613-14) it was pretty much a dead letter in the Asian theatre. But important changes had also taken place in the regional balance of power. Melaka—and the *Estado da Índia* at large—were, from the perspective of the new Johor ruler, no longer the principal threat to heed and guard against. The power to watch was now Aceh, which had expanded rapidly and aggressively on the great island of Sumatra as well as on the Malay Peninsula during the late 16th century and the beginning of the 17th. King Abdullah tested the willingness of the VOC to revive their alliance with Johor in the wake of the major setback brought on by the pro-Portuguese faction and the subsequent devastation caused by Aceh. The Johor ruler simply restarted the conversation with the Dutch where they had effectively ended at their last meeting with Admiral Verhoeff in 1609.¹¹⁶ The Dutch company dispatched Jan Gommerszoon Cocq and Adriaen van der Dussen to hold discussions with King Abdullah. The reported purpose of this mission was to retrieve ten thousand Ryals-of-Eight belonging to the Dutch factory in Batu Sawar which had been buried as a precautionary measure in the wake of Aceh's 1613 attack. But it is also clear that discussions with the monarch covered a much broader range of issues, including revival of talks to construct a Dutch fort on "Johorean soil". Jan Gommerszoon Cocq passed away shortly after arriving at Batu Sawar, leaving Adriaen

¹¹² Gibson-Hill, C.-A., "The Alleged Death of Sultan 'Ala'udin of Johor at Aceh in 1613", *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), p. 128.

¹¹³ Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 30.

¹¹⁴ Coolhaas, W. Ph. ed., *Pieter van den Broecke in Azië* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), journal entry of 10 August 1618, p. 175; Gibson-Hill, C.-A., "The Alleged Death of Sultan 'Ala'udin of Johor at Aceh in 1613", *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), pp. 130–1, 139.

¹¹⁵ Gibson-Hill, "The Alleged Death of Sultan 'Ala'udin of Johor at Aceh in 1613", *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), p. 134. The island identified by Gibson-Hill is "Great Tambelan". See also Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?" *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 441, 449, 453.

¹¹⁶ Tiele, P. A., and J. E. Heeres, eds., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, I, letter from Jan Pieterszoon Coen to the Heren XVII dated 10 November 1614, p. 68. See also Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Diplomacy and Trade*, 39, 44, 108-11, 123-6, 130.

van der Dussen to conduct the negotiations for the VOC on his own. After inspecting several sites along the banks of the Johor River and also along the northern coast of Bintan, he settled for the north-eastern tip of Karimun Besar (Great Carimon).¹¹⁷ It was, in many ways, an ideal strategic location for monitoring shipping between Java, Makassar, the Maluku and Banda Islands, to Timor, as well as to and from all ports east of the Malay Peninsula through the Singapore and Melaka Straits. Because the island was, according to the report of van der Dussen, only seasonally inhabited, the location on Karimun Besar also satisfied the concerns expressed earlier by the Johor monarch, who did not want the Europeans living among his people.¹¹⁸

As late as January 1611, the VOC administration of Governor-General Pieter Both was toying with the idea of establishing its permanent Asian base and operations in Johor. This is referred to in period documents as the *rendez-vous*. This was to be a port or location where VOC ships could assemble to take on provisions, await the shifting of the monsoon winds, and then sail in convoy back to Europe.¹¹⁹ In the light of unfolding events, however, especially the fall of the pro-Dutch faction in Batu Sawar, the idea of selecting a *rendez-vous* in or around the Johor River estuary and the Singapore Straits was quickly abandoned. Johor's political instability had been exacerbated by news of the Twelve Years Truce; the on-again, off-again relations with Portuguese Melaka; together with the Acehnese invasion of 1613. These developments ensured that the construction of the Dutch fortress on "Johorean soil" would never materialise.

10. Ms. Raffles 18 and the Revision of the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) c. 1612

It was during this interlude between the fall of Raja Bongsu's pro-Dutch faction (end of 1610 or latest by early 1611) and the Acehnese invasion in May 1613—a period of just over two years—

¹¹⁷ Tiele, P. A., and J. E. Heeres, eds., *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel*, I, pp. 70–9, report on his mission to the Batu Sawar court titled *Cort verhael* filed by Van der Dussen on 10 November 1614. According to a letter from Jan Pieterszoon Coen to the Heren XVII, which bears the same date as Van der Dussen's report (ibid., p. 68), the Johor ruler had offered the Dutch a location of their choice on Karimun, around the Johor River estuary, or any other location of their choice.

¹¹⁸ This "concern" was previously aired and also expressly addressed in the remonstrance (petition) of Admiral Verhoeff and his naval council (*breede raad*) addressed to the Johorean royals Ala'udin and Raja Bongsu, dated January 1609, in Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 23: "Concerning the difficulty that his Majesty has, that our people, just like the Portuguese, will take an interest in their women, property, and more ..." Translated from the original Dutch by the author.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

that the copy of the *Sejarah Melayu* recorded in ms. Raffles 18 was supposedly commissioned and/or completed.¹²⁰ It is not the objective of the present study to delve into the detailed historical background to, or the literary qualities of, the *Sejarah Melayu*. What this exposé can contribute, however, is a synopsis of the developments at the Johor court and the region of the Straits and the Peninsula at large against which the genesis of this important work of Malay literature and “history” can be immediately placed. In keeping with this agenda, I wish to highlight a number of connections that can be drawn from the commissioning and revision of the *Sejarah Melayu* in or around 1612, and the wider political and diplomatic developments addressed and discussed in this article.

Text-critical analyses conducted during the past century on the *Sejarah Melayu*, such as by Brown, Roolvink, Shellabaer and Winstedt, have added considerably to our understanding of the work, in terms of its structure and evolution from a Malay king list into a comprehensive “story” or narrative.¹²¹ Crucial for the revision of an earlier core into the text of ms. Raffles 18 in or around 1612 was a *hikayat Melayu yang dibawa orang dari Goa*, or a “Malay *hikayat* [story, or, liberally, “history”] brought [by someone] from Goa”.¹²²

Two observations are worth making in the present context. The first concerns the name “Goa”. In the early to mid-20th century, a number of prominent authors on Malay history and literature, such as Rouffaer and Gibson-Hill, took the name “Goa” as a reference to the capital of Portuguese India. By contrast, Winstedt contended that the name “Goa” did not in fact refer to the seat of the Portuguese viceroy in India, but to another town that was situated in Bugis-controlled region of Sulawesi (Celebes). In a similar vein, Linehan saw “Goa” as a corruption of

¹²⁰ Brown, *Sējarah Mēlayu*, pp. xxv–xxvi; Winstedt, R. O., “The Date, Author and Identity of the Original Draft of the Malay Annals”, in *Sejarah Melayu. The Malay Annals. Raffles ms. 18*, new Romanised edition, compiled by Cheah Boon Kheng (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1998), pp. 47–56, esp. pp. 47–8. – Rouffaer suggests that the *Sejarah Melayu* was most probably commissioned on the occasion of a *majilis* (*kroonraad* in Dutch), held every six years on the Prophet Mohammad’s birthday, that is, on 13 May 1612. This would place the commissioning of the work, rather than its completion, in 1612. See Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 446, 450.

¹²¹ See also Hj. Mohammed Khalid-Taib, *Sastera Sejarah in the Malay World: A Structural and Contextual Study of Folkloristic Elements in a Transitional Genre* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Indiana University, 1981), p. 126: “It has now been generally agreed among the Malay Studies scholars that the *Sejarah Melayu*’s prototype was a king list. This king list was a very sketchy compilation which emphasized the genealogical relationships of the Malacca royal dynasty”.

¹²² Brown, *Sējarah Mēlayu*, p. xxiv; Gibson-Hill, C.-A., “The History Brought from Goa”, *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), pp. 185–8; Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 467. In some surviving manuscripts of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the name of the person who brought the “history from Goa” is indicated as one “orang kaya Sogoh”. See Winstedt, R. O., “The Preface of the Malay Annals”, in *Sejarah Melayu. The Malay Annals. Raffles ms. 18*, new Romanised edition, compiled by Cheah Boon Kheng (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1998), pp. 57–73.

“Guo”, but treated this as a reference to a town in Pahang. Although the interpretations of Winstedt and Linehan amount to little more than guesswork, their positions are readily and often uncritically embraced by authors of Malay language and history today. The name “Goa” may very well refer to the capital of Portuguese India. With a view cast on the broader developments staked out in this study, two reasons stand out for revisiting this older, now clearly unfashionable interpretation: one, there can be no doubt that the Portuguese were in possession of certain Malay “texts” or, in the case of Tomé Pires, Affonso d’Albuquerque, João de Barros, Diogo do Couto and Manoel Godinho de Erédia, of recorded oral traditions.¹²³ The Portuguese chroniclers, especially Barros and Do Couto, incorporated passages from these Malay narratives into their important *Décadas da Ásia*, which were published successively after 1552.

As has been evidenced by this essay, Johor and Portugal were “at peace” in 1612. When negotiating for the Luso-Johor peace agreement of October 1610, Portuguese Melaka made sure to select and dispatch a senior, experienced hand who not only had a sound command of the Malay language, but is also described in period sources as an old friend of the late Raja Ali Jalla. Is it not conceivable that among the gifts passed to the courtiers, João Lopes de Morero presented a copy of a “Malay” manuscript? Would this not have been a means not only of deepening formal and personal ties, but also of impressing on the Portuguese envoy’s Malay hosts: “We know all about you[r past] and understand you”?¹²⁴ Could the date of this

¹²³ The most authoritative text of Pires is the critical Portuguese-language edition published in 1978. See *A Suma Oriental de Tomé Pires e o Livro de Francisco Rodrigues*, ed. A. Cortesão (Coimbra: Por Ordem da Universidade, 1978), and separately the text of the Lisbon manuscript in Loureiro, R. M., *O Manuscrito de Lisboa da ‘Suma Oriental’ de Tomé Pires (Contribuição para uma Edição Crítica)* (Macao: Instituto Português do Oriente, 1996). See also Pires, T., *Suma Oriental*, trans. A. Cortesão, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944); Ramusio, G. B., *Delle navigationi et viaggi in molti luoghi corretta, et ampliata nelle quale si contengono da descrizione dell’Africa, & del paese del Prete Ianni, con varij viaggi, ...* (Venice: Stamperia de Giunti, 1554); Erédia, M. Godinho de, *Malaca L’Inde Méridionale e le Cathay: Manuscrit original autographe de Godinho de Eredia appartenant à la Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles*, trans. M. Léon Janssen (Bruxelles: Librairie Européenne C. Muquardt, 1882); Caminha, A. L., *Ordenações da Índia do Senhor Rei D. Manoel, etc.* (Lisbon: Na Impressão Regia, 1807) [This source contains the original Portuguese-language edition of Erédia’s *Informação da Aurea Chersoneso, ou Peninsula, e das Ilhas Auríferas, Carbunculas e Aromaticas*]; the most recent Portuguese edition is: Erédia, M. Godinho de, *Informação da Aurea Quersoneso*, ed. R. M. Loureiro (Macao : Centro Científico e Cultural, 2008) ; Albuquerque, A. de, *The Commentaries of the Great A. Dalboquerque, Second Viceroy of India*, trans. Walter de Gray Birch, 4 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1875–95); and Barros, J. de, and D. do Couto, *Da Ásia, Dos feitos que os Portuguezes fizeram no conquista, e descubrimento das terras e mares do oriente* (Lisbon: Na Regia Officina Typographia, 1778).

¹²⁴ Gibson-Hill, “The History Brought from Goa”, *JMBRAS*, 29.1 (1956), p. 185, esp. note 4: “according to Rouffaer, the mission of 1611/12 which returned the Annals was headed by an envoy named de Amoreira. MacGregor is searching for Portuguese sources for further details of the presents carried by the mission to Johore.” The reference to Rouffaer is almost certainly his well-known article “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 469.

presentation—October 1610—also have been of any significance? Was it a coincidence that the presentation of the text would have taken place roughly on the centenary of the fall of the Melaka Sultanate to the Portuguese?

The second observation concerns the text that was brought from “Goa” and used for the revision of the *Sejarah Melayu*. If we accept that the “*hikayat* from Goa” does not refer to a manuscript brought from “Goa” on Sulawesi, or “Guo” in Pahang, but to a manuscript given by the Portuguese to the Johor court as an official gift in October 1610, then the question invariably arising is this: What manuscript might that have been, and do any copies survive today? As a means of fuelling a debate on this issue, it is worth repeating the deliberations of Rouffaer on this very issue.¹²⁵ After identifying four Malay manuscripts that were all modelled on Persian (or Moghul) originals and were likely used during the revision of the *Sejarah Melayu*,¹²⁶ Rouffaer narrows down the list of possibilities and singles out the *Hikayat Koris* as the probable text from “Goa”.¹²⁷ Citing from the introduction (p. viii) to Wilkinson’s Malay-English Dictionary of 1903, Rouffaer underscores:¹²⁸

The *Hikayat Koris*, which is exceptional in that it contains many local references, clearly belongs to the period of the Portuguese rule in Melaka ... It was probably written in the Peninsula as it contains descriptions of the Semang and Pangan aborigines, ... and it shows a friendly spirit to Europeans, a rare thing in those days. The Dutch are not mentioned. ... The *Hikayat Indera Mengindera* approaches the *Hikayat Koris* so closely in point of style as to suggest the same authorship or at least the same school of authorship.

If Rouffaer’s deliberations can be deemed correct, then the *Sejarah Melayu* was revised on the basis not of a single major manuscript, but using three *hikayats* that were based on a Persian or Moghul model; together with the *Hikayat Koris*, which had been brought “from Goa”;

¹²⁵ Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 464 et seq.

¹²⁶ The four texts identified by Rouffaer are the *Hikayat Iskandar*, *Hikayat Sajidina Hamzah*, *Hikayat Huhammad Hanifijah* and *Taju as-Salatin*. See *ibid.*, pp. 464, 465, 467.

¹²⁷ See Ricklefs, M.C. and P. Voorhoeve, *Indonesian manuscripts in Great Britain: a catalogue of manuscripts in Indonesian languages in British public collections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 114, under mss. 3771 and 3774.

¹²⁸ Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 genaamd Malajoer?” *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 468.

as well as an unnamed family *hikayat* plotting the “family tradition” of Si-Guntang, Palembang, Singapura and Melaka.¹²⁹

If commentators disagree over the text from “Goa” as well as the range and number of sources underlying the revised text, there is a clear consensus that the revisions were undertaken by the (Lusophile) *bendahara Paduka Raja*, and that the project was clearly the brainchild of Raja Bongsu. Given the immediate historical backdrop of the raja’s shifting fortunes among Johor’s high-ranking courtiers, as well as his vision of the “New Melaka”, the motives for revising the *Sejarah Melayu* in or around 1612–14 become clearer. The project can be placed within the context of the deepening divisions among Raja Bongsu’s siblings and their respective followers; the raja’s fall from power in the wake of the Luso-Johor peace deal; as well as the Acehnese attack on Johor in 1613.¹³⁰ The work also serves as a reflection of Raja Bongsu’s “vision” to reclaim the Melaka legacy for himself, as he had already done well before the events that brought him down after October 1610.

11. Conclusion

What was the role and significance of the Twelve Years Truce in the Asian theatre? To answer this question we can look at the impact of the truce from two different vantage points, namely, the bigger picture in Asia as a whole, as well as the specific context of the Kingdom of Johor.

As an agreement for silencing the arms between the VOC (as the Dutch Republic’s proxy in Asia) and the Iberian crowns of Spain and Portugal, the truce was a failure. There was no willingness among the politicians, diplomats and VOC directors in Europe to make it work. Plundering the Iberian enemy—especially Portuguese trading vessels outbound from Japan and China—significantly helped the bottom line of the VOC in the first years of its corporate lifespan. On the ground—that is, at the temporary VOC headquarters in Banten—as well as in the VOC factories and outposts across Asia, the truce was greeted with a mixture of confusion and consternation. When the memorial of 11 April 1608 announcing the provisional terms of the truce arrived in Asia in February 1609, the VOC agents on the ground scrambled to grab and

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 468–70.

¹³⁰ Aceh finally brought Johor’s ally Aru into complete submission by 1612. See also note 29.

consolidate their position. They did this by signing treaties with Asian rulers and also by launching attacks on Iberian targets across Southeast Asia. As a trigger for devising and executing new forward strategies in Asia, the provisional truce of 1608 proved to be of greater significance to the servants of the VOC on the ground in Asia than the Treaty of Antwerp promulgated on 9 April, 1609. It was not the (attempted) silencing of arms that rendered the provisional truce so important, but rather the formal opening to the Dutch of all markets across Asia where the Iberian powers held no direct or indirect control. This provision would have marked a clear break from earlier Spanish and Portuguese policies aimed at creating an exclusive trading preserve for the Iberian powers by forcefully impeding, obstructing and excluding their European competitors. By contrast—and this is an important point to bear in mind—Asian princes and traders had until then had not been singled out as a principal target of obstruction or exclusion by the Portuguese and the Spanish.

The Twelve Years Truce left its most lasting mark on the VOC's treaty partners across Asia, but specifically among allied rulers in “front-line” polities. The kingdom of Johor stands out as a remarkably well-documented case. In this study, attention has been focused on how news of the truce immediately impacted developments on the ground at Johor's royal court(s). The Portuguese were quick to exploit existing divisions at the court to bring this strategically located and commercially important polity out of the Dutch sphere of influence and into their own. The Portuguese in Melaka allied with friendly factions in Johor to hammer out a peace agreement and engineer the downfall of Raja Bongsu and his pro-Dutch supporters. The pro-Portuguese faction subsequently held sway until the Acehnese invasion of Johor in May and June 1613. Importantly also, the present article yields the immediate political and historical context for the revision of the *Sejarah Melayu* in or around 1612. But important questions linger: How does this new context change our interpretation of the authorial intentions behind the text? To what extent, if at all, does the *Sejarah Melayu* mirror politics, factions and divisions prevailing at the royal court(s) during the period 1603–1613 at large? The debate continues.

Appendix 1

Description of Batu Sawar, Kota Seberang and the Surrounding Region, by Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge, 24 August, 1606.¹³¹

[Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge set sail with his fleet from the Netherlands in 1605 and arrived in the waters of the Melaka Straits the following year. He signed a treaty with the Johor monarchs in May 1606 and unsuccessfully attacked the Portuguese-held fort and city and engaged the Portuguese armada off Cape Rachado in the course of May through August, 1606. Matelieff proceeded to the Johorean capital Batu Sawar to discuss a range of security and co-operation matters with Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III and his sibling Raja Bongsu. This is a rare period eyewitness description of the capital and royal residence Batu Sawar. Its smaller sister settlement, Kota Seberang, was situated on the opposite bank of the river. This testimony is important for understanding how the VOC officers on the ground, such as notably Admiral Matelieff, assessed the security situation of the Johorean capital. This was subject to periodic attacks by the Portuguese during the first decade of the 17th century, and after 1613 also by the Acehnese.]

Dutch original

De Stadt Batusauwer leydt op de Revier van Iohor, ontrent vijf oft ses mijlen van der Zee. De Revier is seer schoon, breed ende diep, vloeyende tot voor de Stad toe op ende neder, doch voor de Stadt is sy versch. Het isser meest al laech lant. Het volck woont meest langs de Revier. De huysen staender op staken. Dat men de fortresse heet, is tweederley, het een Batusauwer, het ander, leggende op d'ander zijd' van de Revier, heet Cotta Zabrang. Batusauwer is ontrent 1300. treden in't ront, een vierkante plaetse, met hooge Palissaden van 40. voet langh dicht by den anderen gevoecht, hebbende eenige flanckeringen, doch niet wel gemaect. Leyt op een effen velt, dicht by de Revier. De naeste bergen leggender een quartier mijls van daen. Men konde de

¹³¹ “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijkcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, vol. III, pp. 30-1. A paraphrase of this historically important description of the Johor capital and royal residence Batu Sawar found in the travel log of Matelieff de Jonge is also reproduced in François Valentyn’s *Nieuw ende Oud Oost-Indiën*, part V, p. 335.

Revier daer lichtelijck rondom brengen. Binnen is sy heel dicht bewoont met stroo huysen, behalven dat men den Coningh ende die van eenige Edelluyden, welcke van hout zijn. Daer zij by gissinge soo in Batusauwer als Cotta Zabrang wel tusschen de drie ende vier duysend weerbare mannen, doch buyten de sterckte woont het meeste volck, dewelcke, alsser noot is, hare huysen altemael afbranden, ende loopen na de sterckte, want connen haest weder een huys maken elk met sijn Slaven. Het lant hoort alle den Coningh toe, ende is weynich of niet geacht, so dat wie 't maer van hem eyscht, Landts genoeg kan krijgen. Nochtans schijnt het heel vruchtbaer te wesen, want staet vol gheboomte ende men gaeter tot den buyck toe in 't gras, doch wort niet bearbeyt, want indiense haer tot landtbouwinge begaven, soudén van alles overvloedich hebben, daer sy nu veler dingen gebreck lijden. ... Cotta Zabrang mach ontrent vier of vijf honderdt treden in't rondt hebben, ende is mede vierkant. Daer en woont niet veel volcx in, ende aen de zijde van de Revier daer sy wonen, ist oock met Palissaden beset. Het lant is laech, ende loopt met alle springh-vloeden onder, soo dat men der geen geschut voor kan brengen. Den Admirael ordeneerde haer in 't eerste drie bolwercken, om also langs de mueren te flancqueren, het welck haer wel behaghde, maer ontsaghen den arbeydt.

English translation

The town of Batu Sawar is situated up the Johor River, approximately five or six [Dutch nautical] miles [that is about 30-35 kilometers] from the sea.¹³² The river [there] is very beautiful, wide and deep,¹³³ [and depending on the tide] flows either up or down along the banks before the city,¹³⁴ but here the the water is fresh. The land is mostly flat. The population generally lives along the river. The houses stand on stilts. There are two fortresses, one is Batu Sawar and the other situated on the opposite bank of the river is called Kota Seberang. Batu Sawar measures about 1,300 paces in circumference, is square in its layout, and feature high

¹³² A copy of this Dutch-language description of Batu Sawar and Kota Seberang with commentary is also found in Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer? En waar lag Woerawari, Ma-Hasin, Langka, Batoesawar?", *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 482-3.

¹³³ See Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium", p. 483, where the depth of the water is given at 5-5.5 meters and the width of the river at about 90 meters.

¹³⁴ This observation implies that the waters of the Johor River at Batu Sawar were influenced by changes in the oceanic tides, but the location was too far removed from the sea for salt water to enter the river with the incoming tide. See also See Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium", p. 483.

palisades that are closely lined up against one another and measure 40 feet high [that is about 11 to 12 meters]. There are some [blocking positions at] the flank,¹³⁵ but these are not well constructed. It is situated on a level plain close by the river. The closest hills are situated about a quarter of a [Dutch sea] mile [or about 1-1.5 kilometers] from there. It is easily possible to divert the river around the city. Inside, the city is densely populated featuring *atap* houses, except for the residence of the King and of some other noblemen, which are constructed of wood. In Batu Sawar as well as in Kota Seberang are an estimated three or four thousand males capable of bearing arms, but most of the population lives outside the walled city. In times of danger, these people burn down their houses and head into the walled city, because they are able to quickly rebuild a house, each man with his slaves. All the land belongs to the King, and is only sparsely or not cultivated at all. So anyone who wants to have some from him can obtain enough land. It still appears to be very fertile, for it is full of trees and the grass reaches up to the waistline. But this land is not worked, and if the residents would engage in farming, they would have abundance of in all those many things that they now suffer shortages in. ... Kota Seberang measures about four or five hundred paces in circumference and is square in its layout. Not many people live here, and there are also palisades along the river bank. The land is flat, and is submerged during all spring tides, so that it is not possible to station any artillery. Admiral [Matelieff de Jonge] ordered the residents to construct three bulwarks that would also run parallel to the walls. The residents liked the idea, but refused to work.

¹³⁵ Reference is here most probably to outposts at the flank, similar to the ones found at the archeological site in Johor Lama, that block blind spots at the fort Kota Seberang (also variously known as Makham Tauhid), probably because of a bend in the river or another natural feature. Concerning the bend in the Johor river near Batu Sawar, see Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer? En waar lag Woerawari, Ma-Hasin, Langka, Batoesawar?", *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 438-9.

Appendix 2

A description by Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge of the four Johor Rulers: Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III, Raja Bongsu, Raja Siak and Raja Laut, 1606.¹³⁶

[During his visit to the Batu Sawar court in August 1606, VOC Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge met many of the nobles and especially the four sons of the late Johor ruler, Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil.¹³⁷ The following excerpt taken from his travelog, provides a frank and candid assessment of the late Ali Jalla's four surviving sons. This document evidences that the Admiral, like many other senior VOC officers who visited the court of Batu Sawar during the first decade of the 17th century, greatly respected Raja Bongsu, who was also known as Raja Seberang or Raja di Ilir.]

Dutch original

Den 17. May kreeg den Admirael tijdinge, dat de Coning van Iohor alreede by de Schepen was met zijn Galeyen ende Fusten, waer op hy in alles mocht hebben ontrent 300. man, meest slaven. Het was Raya Bonsu, oft Raya Zabran, de selfde die de Gesanten in Hollandt ghesickt hadde met het present aen zijn Ex.ti. Om wiens gelegentheyt te beter te verstaen, men weten moet, dat den ouden Coningh van Iohor, die een goet krijghsman was, ende oock dickwils tegen de Portugesen gheoorlocht heeft, 4. soonen heeft nagelaten, waer van den outsten met tegenwoordich regerende van de Malayen ghenoecht wort Ian de Patuan, het welck nochtans niet zijn naem maer zijn tijtel schijnt te wesen. Van een ander vrouwe heeft hy gehad Raia Siacai t'welc te seggen is Coning van Siaca, dat een leen is van de Croon van Iohor. Dese heeft getrouwt de dochter van Patane, zijnde een man van kleynen bedrijve, ende niet met eenige Coninglicke deugden verciert, maer een slecht bloet, die hem altyt hout binnen Siaca, enn weynich komt tot Iohor. De Coning Ian de Patuan is oock een persoon van weynich bedrijs, gewoon tot by den middag te slapen, dan te eten en te wasschen, ende voorts droncken te drincken, so dat na den middagh met hem niet en is te handelen, want men moet al mede met hem drincken, enn droncke-mans dingen doen. Hy bemoeyt hem geen dingen, maer laet het al op de Edelen ende

¹³⁶ "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijckke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", *BV*, III, pp. 10-11.

¹³⁷ Winstedt, "A History of Johore", *JMBRAS*, 10.3 (1932), p. 52.

Raya Zabrang staen, mach van geen swaricheyt hooren, ende als men hem aenspreekt van yet te doen, als volc op te brengen oft diergelijcke, so swijght hy al, en al vraegtmen hem 2. oft 3. mael, het is al 't selfde. In somma is nergens min bequaem toe, als tot Coning te wesen, denckt noch op Rijck noch op onderdanen, als hy slechts wijn heeft en vrouwen. Noch heeft de Coningh van Iohor by sijn tweede vrouwe gehadt Raya Bonsu, die nu werdt ghenoeemt Raja Zabrang, dat is Coning van d'ander zijde, door dien dat hy over d'ander zijde van de Rivier woont tegen over de Stadt Battusabar, daer hy oock een sterckte heeft ende een deel Ondersaten, doch is leen-man van Ian de Patuan, een man van ontrent 35. jaer, by nae wit, de grootste niet, maer discreet, langmoedich, niet colerijck, ende verre siende, een vyandt van de Portugesen, neerstich in sijn saken, die hy ooc wel hart drijven soude, indien hy macht hadde, in somma weerdich Coning van Iohor enn Malacca te wesen, by wien oock de hulpe die men aen hem besteden soude, wel erkent soude worden, ende die soo veel men aen hem vermercken konde den onsen heel was toe gedaen: sijnen broeder Ian de Patuan altijd respecterende, die ooc veel van desen hout, doch heymelijck en laetter niet al wat jalousie by Ian de Patuan te wesen. Bij sijn derde vrouwe heeft den ouden Coning van Iohor een sone genaemt Raya Laud, dat is Coning van der zee, een man nergens bequaem toe, als om Tabac en Arack te drincken, en Betele daer op te eten, ja waerdig handen en voeten gebonden in in Zee gesoncken te worden, een grooten dronckaert, dootslager, een hoereerder, die alles wat an die 3 puncten dependeert van buyten geleert heeft. Alle de broeders drincken wijn, uytgenomen Raya Zabrang, die noyt wijn noch stercken dranck geproeft heeft, enn gelijk de Heer is, so sijn oock de Edel-luyden van alle dese Coningen.

English translation

On 17 May the Admiral received news that the King of Johor had already arrived at the ships with his galleys and foists, on which he might have had about 300 men, mostly slaves. It was Raja Bongsu, also known as Raja Seberang, the same one who dispatched the envoys to Holland with a present for his Excellency.¹³⁸ In order to understand the situation better, one should note that the old king of Johor, who was a great warrior and also sometimes went into battle against

¹³⁸ The following passage concerning King Ala'udin is also featured in Dutch text in Rouffaer, "Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?", *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 445.

the Portuguese, left behind four sons, of which the oldest is currently ruling over the Malays and is called Yang di Pertuan. This does not appear to be his name, but his title. From another wife he had the Raja of Siak, that is to say the King of Siak, which is a fief belonging to the crown of Johor. This raja is married to a daughter of [the queen of] Patani. He is a man of little ambition, and is not endowed with any royal virtues, but is an evil person, [a fact] which holds him back in Siak and he rarely comes to Johor. The King of Johor is also a person of little ambition, who is accustomed to sleeping until midday, then washes himself and proceeds to drink himself drunk. As a result, after noon it is not possible to negotiate with him [anymore], for one has to drink along with him and do the things drunken men do. He does not care about anything, but places responsibility all on the nobles and on Raja Seberang. He does not like to hear of any difficulties, and when you approach him to do something, such as to muster people, he just remains silent. And even if you ask him two or three times, it is all the same. In sum, there is nothing less he is qualified to be than king, [for] he thinks neither about his empire nor about his subjects, as he only wants wine and women. The [old] king of Johor had from his second wife [another son], Raja Bongsu, who is now called Raja Seberang, that is the King of “the other side”, because he lives on the other side of the river across from the city of Batu Sawar.¹³⁹ He also has a fortress and a part of the subjects there.¹⁴⁰ Still, [Raja Seberang] is a vassal of the Yang di Pertuan and is about 35 years old, almost white,¹⁴¹ not the tallest, but intelligent,¹⁴² tempered, not choleric, far-sighted, an enemy of the Portuguese, [and] diligently engages in his affairs, which he would vigorously pursue, if he [only] held [formal] authority. In sum, he is worthy to be King of Johor and Melaka, and will also recognise the help offered to him, as can be easily seen, and as far as one can ascertain is well disposed toward us. He always respects his brother the Yang di Pertuan, who also thinks highly of him, but secretly arouses a certain degree of jealousy with the Yang di Pertuan.¹⁴³ From his third wife the old king of Johor had another son named Raja Laut, that is

¹³⁹ The following description of Raja Bongsu, alias Raja Seberang, is also reproduced in Dutch in Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?”, *BKI*, 77 (1921), pp. 445-6.

¹⁴⁰ This fortified settlement is described in more detail in appendix 1.

¹⁴¹ This is a reference to his skin colour, as is also mentioned in the German-language description of Johann Verken of Meissen. See appendix 5.

¹⁴² This understanding of the Dutch term “discreet” suggested by Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?”, *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 446.

¹⁴³ The interpretation of the Dutch wording “en laetter niet al” as “ontbreekt er niet geheel” is based on the interpretation suggested in Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?”, *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 446.

the “King of the Sea”, a man qualified for nothing.¹⁴⁴ He only consumes tobacco, drinks arak, and downs betel over that; verily, he is worthy to be thrust with bound hands and feet into the sea; a great drunkard, manslayer, and womanizer who knows all that there is to know about these three things. All the brothers drink wine, except for Raja Seberang, who has never consumed strong drink and is like a true lord. The nobles [in the entourage] of these princes are [much] the same.

¹⁴⁴ This description of the Raja Laut is also found in Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, part 5, p. 331; Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 11, and Rouffaer, “Was Malaka Emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajoer?”, *BKI*, 77 (1921), p. 446, note 2. Rouffaer concluded that the Raja Laut is almost certainly the same individual as the *laksamana* or “admiral” of Johor. See *ibid.*, p. 488, note 1.

Appendix 3

Two Treaties Signed between Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge and Ala'udin Ri'ayat Shah III together with Raja Bongsu, the joint Rulers of Johor, 17 May and 23 September, 1606.¹⁴⁵

[This appendix features the full treaty in Dutch with a new English translation of the treaty signed between Admiral Matelieff de Jonge, Ala'udin and Raja Bongsu (here called Raja Seberang), the latter two who in the oath are jointly titled “the Kings of Johor”. The treaty was ratified before launching the land and sea-borne attacks on Portuguese positions in and around Melaka. At the request of Raja Bongsu and the *bendahara* of Johor, the treaty was confirmed and appended after the unsuccessful attempt to pluck Melaka from the Portuguese in September 1606. The treaty of May 1606 together with the supplementary articles of September that year are important for understanding the dynamics of relations and trade between the VOC and Johor in the first two decades of the 17th century. The alliance with Johor was one of the reasons why the VOC directors at one stage seriously considered Johor as a possible location for a *rendez-vous* and as a permanent base for their operations in Asia.]

¹⁴⁵ “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijkcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, pp. 13-4. The two treaties are also found in Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), pp. 42-7 and in Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, p. 2, and Valentyn, *Nieuw en Oud Oost-Indiën*, part 5, pp. 331-2. (This source only reproduces the treaty of 17 May and not the extension of 23 September, 1606). For an earlier English translation of the treaty of 17 May only, see Richard O. Winstedt, “A History of Johore”, *JMBRAS*, 10.3 (1932), pp. 31-3. The following transcript represents the text version as found in Commelin’s *Begin ende Voortgang*. Only significant variations in wording have been indicated to capture the different text versions of the treaties. The present transcript ignores the numerous differences in orthography, capitalisation and punctuation. The treaty of the text broadly follows an established format pledging to sustain hostilities against the Iberian powers, making specific provisions for the felling or harvesting of wood (evidently to facilitate the repair of ships and the gathering of firewood), exclusion of foreign traders in the territory under contract, as well as the extradition of criminals. For a very similar text in both wording and spirit, see the treaty signed between Admiral Matelieff de Jonge and Aceh dat. 17 June, 1607 found in Heeres, “Corpus Diplomaticum”, *BKI*, 57 (1907), pp. 48-50. Concerning the wider diplomatic, strategic and commercial backdrop leading up to this first Dutch-Johor treaty, see also Borschberg, “The Seizure of the Santa Catarina Revisited”, *JSEAS*, 33.1 (2002), pp. 59-60. The Current texts reads as printed in Commelin; H is the variant text in Heeres’ *Corpus Diplomaticum*. Valentyn’s *Nieuw en Oud Oost-Indië*, part V, pp. 331-2, does not actually reproduce the text of the treaty verbatim, but only paraphrases the individual articles in a loose manner. Major variants and readings of special interest are indicated with V.

Dutch original

Accoordt ghemaect tusschen den Admirael Cornelis Matelief de Ionge, uyt den name ende van wegen de Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden ter eenre ende den Doorluchtighen ende Machtigen Coningh van Iohor ter ander zijde, desen 17. May 1606, in't Schip Orangie, leggende op de reede van Malacca.

1. Indien eersten belooft denselven Admirael,¹⁴⁶ {uyt den name als boven, ten versoecke van den selven Coningh},¹⁴⁷ hem te helpen innemen ende overweldighen de Stadt van Malacca uyt handen van de Portugesen haer beyder vyanden, waer toe elck sijn uyteeste vermogen sal employeren, om de selve daer uyt te verdrijven. Welck exploit met Godes hulpe volbracht zijnde sal de selve bemuyrde¹⁴⁸ Stadt, {gelijckse tegenwoordigh is binnen haer wallen ende muren blijven in vrijen eygendomme eeuwelijck, sonder eenige belastinge nochte Overheyt te erkennen},¹⁴⁹ aen de Heeren Staten voorsz.,¹⁵⁰ het welcke den voorsz. Coninck {midts desen tot eenen loon van den krijgh is gevende},¹⁵¹ Ende sal voorts het geheele Landt onder subjectie van sijne Majesteyt blijven, {wel verstaende, dat de Heeren Staaten voorsz. oft haeren Capiteyn¹⁵² geoorloft sal wesen,}¹⁵³ alsoose de Stadt meenen te verstercken,¹⁵⁴ soo veel landts tot de selve te nemen als haer geraden sal duncken.
2. Sullen de voorsz. Heeren Staten oock vermogen in alle des Coninx lant¹⁵⁵ hout te halen enn te houwen tot bouwinge van Schepen enn nootdruftigheyt vande Stadt.

¹⁴⁶ V: Zee-Voogd.

¹⁴⁷ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁴⁸ V: omits word.

¹⁴⁹ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁵⁰ V: Algemeine Staten.

¹⁵¹ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁵² H: capiteijnen.

¹⁵³ V: omits text in brackets. V only speaks generally of “wy”, that is we, the Dutch, without mentioning any specific institution or officer.

¹⁵⁴ H: verstrecken – evidently a typographical error.

¹⁵⁵ H: landen.

3. Sullen {oock}¹⁵⁶ alle Vasallen van de Heeren Staten voorsz. hare Schepen ende goederen {’t zy van wat plaetse datse comen, oock gehuerde Schepen, Joncken ende Prauwen}¹⁵⁷ in de voorsz. Stadt mogen lossen, sonder {dat de Coningh daer yet op te seggen sal hebben, noch}¹⁵⁸ eenigen tol daer af genieten in noch uyt.
4. Sal de Coningh oock niet toelaten, datter eenige Hollanders, Europische volckeren {oft hare nakomelingen},¹⁵⁹ in eenige van sijne landen sullen mogen handelen, of sullen moeten bescheyt hebben van den Gouverneur¹⁶⁰ van Malacca, ende ’t selve niet hebbende, sullen als vyanden vervolgt ende gehouden wesen.¹⁶¹
5. Hier teghen sal sijne Majesteyt de Voor-stadt Campo Clin, die nu afghebrandt is, peupleren ende regieren, sonder datter de Heeren Staten yet op te seggen sullen hebben, {ende}¹⁶² soo ’t moghelijck is sijne residentie¹⁶³ aldaer nemen, ende de selve doen¹⁶⁴ versterken, waer toe hem de Heeren Staten voorsz. met raedt behulpelijck sullen wesen.
6. Sal sijne Majesteyt naer [de]¹⁶⁵ veroveringhe vande Stadt ghenieten alle het geschut datter in ghevonden wort, waer af sy¹⁶⁶ vermoghen sal deene helft datelijck wegh te nemen, ende d’ander helft sal gehouden warden¹⁶⁷ in de Stadt tot defensie van deselve te laten, soo langhe tot datse by de Heeren Staten geprovideert word.
7. ’t Gene in de Stad sal gevonden worden van koopmanschap, gelt, waren enn andersins, sal komen in eene helft tot profijt vande Vasallen van de voorsz. Heeren Staten deser Vlote, ende d’ander helft aen sijne¹⁶⁸ Majest. voorsz.

¹⁵⁶ H: omitted.

¹⁵⁷ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁵⁸ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁵⁹ V: omits text in brackets.

¹⁶⁰ V: Land-Voogd.

¹⁶¹ H: (reverses the wording) gehouden, ende vervolgt worden.

¹⁶² H: omitted

¹⁶³ V: verblyf.

¹⁶⁴ H: daer.

¹⁶⁵ H: word added

¹⁶⁶ H: hij

¹⁶⁷ H: wesen

¹⁶⁸ C: aensjine – evidently a typographical error.

8. Alle koopmanschappen niet toebehoorende de Vasallen van de Heeren Staten voorsz. sullen gehouden wesen te¹⁶⁹ lossen onder des Coninx gehebiet in de Voorstadt, alwaer de Vasallen van de Heeren Staten vry sal staen de selve te komen koopen neffens andere, ende de selve in de Stadt te brengen.
9. Sullen voorts¹⁷⁰ malkanderen by staen enn helpen met alle macht enn na uysterste vermogen, om de Portugesen enn Spaenjaerden harer beyder vyanden alle mogelijcke afbreucke te doen. Enn so yemant van de partijen oorloge aennam tegen yemant anders als Portugesen enn Spanjaerden, sal d'ander partije niet gehouden wesen den selven te assisteren, dan alleenlijck in defensie.¹⁷¹
10. Sal oock geen van beyde de partijen pays mogen maken met den Coning van Spanjen, sonder beyder consent.
11. So wie eenig schandael in religions saken geeft, sal aengeklaegt enn gestraft worden by sijn Overheyt daer hy onder sorteert, so wel van d'eene als van d'ander sijde.
12. Soo eenige personen van d'een of d'ander partije yet om den anderen hadden te seggen, van schult oft andersins, sal de verweerder voor sijne Overheyt gheroepen worden.
13. So der yemant van de Hollanders overliep by den Coninck van Iohor, om eenighe {quade delicten}¹⁷² of andersins,¹⁷³ oft van des coninckx volck by de Nederlanders, sullen de partijen gehouden zijn den wech-gheloopenen aen sijne Overheyt in handen te leveren.

Forme van den Eedt daer mede de voorgaende Artijckelen aen weder-zijde besworen zijn.

¹⁶⁹

H: de

¹⁷⁰

H: voorschreven.

¹⁷¹

V: ... dog geenzins zoo een van beide tegen andre quam te Oorlogen...

¹⁷²

V: bedrevene misdaden.

¹⁷³

V: (adds) zich daar wilden verbergen.

Wy, Ian di Patuan ende Raya Sabrang Coningen¹⁷⁴ tot Iohor, beloven midts desen t'onderhouden dit boven gheschreven Accoordt in alle sijne poincten ende articulen sonder daer in eenigher manieren teghen te doen, Soo waerlijck moet ons God helpen.

Ick Cornelis Matelief de Ionge, uyt den name van de Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenigde Nederlanden, belove midts desen alle de bovengeschreven Artijckelen in alle hare deelen naer te komen, sonder daer in eeniger manieren tegen te doen, So waerlijck moet my God [almachtigh]¹⁷⁵ helpen.

Tweede Accoordt tusschen de voorgenoemde twee Partijen gemaect op den 23. Septembris 1606. inde Stadt van Bathasauwer.¹⁷⁶

Inden eersten worden geconfirmceert alle Artijckelen begrepen in 't accort tusschen Partijen ghemaect in date den 17 May deses jaers in 't schip Orange op de reede voor Malacca.

Doch dewijl dat het God [de Heer]¹⁷⁷ Almachtig niet en heeft belieft, dat wy de stad enn Fortresse van Malacca tot noch toe hebben kunnen veroveren, waer deur eenige Artijckelen van weersijden niet en kunnen worden onderhouden,¹⁷⁸ als namelijk het besitten van de Stadt voor de Heeren Staten, ende van de Voor-stadt, mitsgaders het geheele Lant voor de Coningh van Ihor, willen sulcx tot naerder gelegentheyt uytstellen, dat Godt {de Heere}¹⁷⁹ de gratie sal believen te geven tot veroveringe der selver, door neerstigheyt vande Heeren Staten enn den Coning van Ihor.

Enn also 't noodig is, dat de Heeren Staten voor haer Ondersaten tot bevordering van de negotiatie van de selve in Oost-Indien een versekerde ende vaste plaets hebben, om hare goederen, koopmanschappen, ammunitien, toerustinghen ende andersins te versamelen ende

¹⁷⁴ H: Coning. N: Coningen.

¹⁷⁵ H: adds word.

¹⁷⁶ H: (reads) "Tweede accoordt gemaect tusschen den heer admiraell Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge uyt den name en van wegen d'Ed.en Mogende H.ren Staten generaell der Vereenighde Nederlanden ten eenre ende den doorlugtigen en manhaften Koningh van Johor ter andere zyde desen 23.e 7.ber jnt jaer onses Heeren Hesu Christij 1606 jn de stadt Batosauwer." (Second agreement concluded between Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge in the name and on behalf of the High Mighty Gentlemen, the States General of the United Provinces on the one side and the great and manly King of Johor on the other, [on] this day the 23 of September in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1606 in the city of Batu Sawar.)

¹⁷⁷ H: omits words in brackets.

¹⁷⁸ H: onderhouden worden.

¹⁷⁹ H: adds words in brackets.

bewaren,¹⁸⁰ oock, des noot zijnde, ambachtsluyden ende huys-gesinnen te mogen brengen uyt haer Lant, Sal sijne Majesteyt de Coninck van Iohor aen de Heeren Staten oft haeren Capiteyn geven sulcken plaets als sy sullen begeeren, 't zy hier aen het vaste lant, oft in eenige Eylanden onder 't gebiet van sijne Majesteyt, wesende soo groot ofte klyn als de Heeren Staten ofte haren Capiteyn sal goetduncken, om aldaer hare huysingen ende wooningen te mogen bouwen, ende die besitten als Malacca.

Des soo sullen wederom de Heeren Staten ende hare Ondersaten gehouden wesen te volbrengen de Artijckelen in 't accoord voor Malacca gemaect begrepen.

Aldus gedaen in Bathasauwer, ten dage ende jare als boven.

English translation

Agreement concluded between Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge, in the name and on behalf of the High Mighty Gentlemen, the States General of the United Provinces on the one hand, and the great and mighty King of Johor on the other, this day the 17th of May, 1606 on the ship *Oranje*, laying at anchor at Melaka roadstead.

1. First, the said Admiral in the name of the aforementioned Gentlemen and at the request of the said king, shall lend assistance to the latter in taking possession of and delivering the city of Melaka from the hands of the Portuguese, their mutual enemies. To this end each party shall undertake all efforts to drive out the Portuguese from [the city]. When this objective be achieved with God's assistance, the said walled city as it presently stands inside its stone walls and earthen ramparts shall perpetually remain the free possession said the States [General] without the need to pay taxes or recognise an overlord. This the said king grants as a reward for the [successful conclusion of] the war. Further, all of the land shall remain under the subjection of His Majesty in the understanding that the said States [General], or their captain, shall be defended. Should a reinforcement of the city be

¹⁸⁰ H: bevaeren – obviously a copying error.

necessary, they shall be entitled to take as much land as they deem proper [to fulfill this end].

2. The said States [General] shall be entitled to fell and harvest wood on all of the King's lands for the construction of ships and to satisfy the needs of the city.
3. All the vassals of the said States [General], no matter where they may arrive from, shall be entitled to unload their ships and cargoes, including hired, ships, junks and prahus, in the said city. The king shall not be able to interfere in this matter, nor shall he be able to enjoy the revenue from any tolls levied on these.
4. The King shall not permit that any Dutchmen,¹⁸¹ persons of European origin or their descendents to trade in any of his lands, lest they should have permission from the Governor of Melaka, and should they not have this, they shall be deemed and prosecuted as enemies.
5. His Majesty, however, shall [be able to] repopulate and rule in the suburb Kampung Kling, which has been burnt down,¹⁸² without any interference from the States [General]. If possible, he shall assume his residence here, and fortify the settlement, to which end the States [General] shall lend him useful advice.
6. After the conquest of the city, His Majesty shall enjoy all the artillery found therein. The [Johoreans] shall be able to take half away immediately, and the other half shall be retained for the defense of the city for as long as the States [General] deem appropriate.
7. Half of all the trade, merchandise, money and other goods that are found in the city shall be attributed to the vassals of the said States [General] belonging to this fleet, and the other to His Majesty aforementioned.

¹⁸¹ The original term "Hollander" is taken to mean any subject of the Dutch Republic, not just a person from the province of Holland.

¹⁸² In fact, according to the travelog of Admiral Matelieff, most of the lands surrounding the town of Melaka had been devastated by fire deliberately et by the Portuguese of Melaka, See "Historische Verhael Vande treffelijkcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge", *BV*, III, pp. 9, 15.

8. All the trade that does not belong to the vassals of the said States [General] shall be unloaded in the suburb placed under the authority of the King. The vassals of the States [General] however shall be free to come and purchase these, and to take [purchased] wares into the city.
9. Both parties shall assist each other to the best of their ability so that all contacts be severed with the Portuguese and the Spanish, who are their mutual enemies. Should either party enter into war with a party other than the Portuguese and the Spanish, then the other party shall not be bound to lend assistance to the other, lest it only be for defensive purposes.
10. Neither party shall enter into peace with the king of Spain without the consent of the other.
11. Should there be any scandal committed on the grounds of religion, then the culprit shall be accused and punished by his own respective overlord, this being applicable to the one as well as the other side.
12. If some persons from the one or the other party have something to report about the counterparty, be this about debt¹⁸³ or another matter, [then] the defendant shall be called [to appear] before his respective authority.
13. Should one of the Hollanders defect to the King of Johor, on the grounds of some serious crime or otherwise, or should one of the King's subjects [defect to] the Dutch, then either party shall be bound to repatriate the defector to his respective overlord.

The oath by which the aforementioned articles were confirmed by the two respective parties

¹⁸³ The Dutch term *schuld* is multi-faceted and could also be translated more generally as “guilt”.

We, the Yang di Pertuan and Raja Seberang, the kings of Johor, swear herewith to sustain the above written agreement in all of its points and articles and not to undertake anything to infringe it, so help us God.

I, Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge, in the name of the aforementioned High Mighty Gentlemen of the States General of the United Provinces, herewith swear to fulfill all the above written articles in all their parts, and not to undertake anything to infringe them, so verily help me God.

Second agreement concluded between the two aforementioned parties, ratified on the 23 of September 1606 in the city of Batu Sawar.¹⁸⁴

First, herewith are confirmed all articles included in the agreement concluded between the parties made on the 17th of May of this year aboard the ship *Orangie* at anchor in the roadstead of Melaka.

As it has not pleased God the Lord Almighty that until now we have been in a position to conquer the city and fortress of Melaka and as a result of which certain articles concluded by the two parties cannot be sustained, such as notably the possession of the city for the States [General] and the suburb together with all the land for the King of Johor, we shall postpone these until further notice. May God grant us the grace to conquer the aforementioned with the effort of the States [General] and the King of Johor.

As it is also necessary that the States [General] establish a safe and permanent base for the benefit of their subjects and for the promotion of trade of the said East Indies, that they may collect and store their goods, merchandise, ammunition, equipment and other such things, and, if need be, also bring craftsmen and servants from their homeland, His Majesty, the King of Johor shall concede to the States [General] such a place as [the States General] may desire. [This may] be located here on the mainland, or on one of the islands falling under the authority of His

¹⁸⁴ Raja Bongsu and the *bendahara* of Johor are said to have pushed for the drafting and implementation of this second agreement. See “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijkcke Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, p. 31.

Majesty,¹⁸⁵ be it as large or as small as the States [General] or their captain may deem fit, to construct houses and living quarters, and to own these as they [would] in Melaka. The States [General] and their subjects shall also be bound to fulfill the articles added to the agreement concluded at Melaka. This done in Batu Sawar on the day and in the year mentioned above.

¹⁸⁵ “Historische Verhael Vande treffelijckce Reyse, gedaen naer de Oost-Indien ende China ... door ... Cornelis Matelief de Jonge”, *BV*, III, p. 31. Discussions between Admiral Matelieff, Raja Bongsu and the Johor *bendahara* identified as possible locations the region around the Johor River, Bintan, Lingga and Karimun.

Appendix 5

Description of Raja Bongsu by Johann Verken, 1609.¹⁸⁶

[Johann Verken was a member of Admiral Verhoeff's crew who visited the region around the Singapore Straits, the Johor River estuary, and the upstream towns of Batu Sawar and Pasir Raja, the latter which was still under construction at the time. The larger ships belonging to Verhoeff's fleet lay in anchor around Johor Lama, while smaller craft brought the admiral and some of his officers to the capital Batu Sawar for discussions with King Ala'udin and Raja Bongsu. Verken was a member of the crew that remained on the ships at Johor Lama. His diary or log was first published in German as part of De Bry's famous and illustrated travel series where it is printed in full within the German language *Neundter Theil Orientalischer Indien* or "Ninth Part Concerning the East Indies", published in Frankfurt am Main in 1612. It is the oldest German-language text generated from among the VOC employees and has been acknowledged as an important contribution to the story of Admiral Verhoeff's voyage to the East Indies, his assassination on the Bandas, as well as of the events which unfolded on the islands immediately after the Dutch admiral's death.]

German original

Was aber den regierenden König von Goer, genannt Ratispontus, belanget, derselbe is noch ein junger Herr, ungefehr etlich unnd driessig Jahr alt. Al ser an die Schiff kam, hatte er ein weiß Baumwollen Hembd an, so jm biß auff die Knie reichet, unnd umb den Leib hatte er ein schön farbig gestreiffet Baumwollen Tuch gewickelt, welches jhm dann biß halb auf die Füße reichet, sonst war er am Leibe und Beinen gantz bloß, aber an seinen Füßen hatte er ein Schwartz par sammete Pantoffeln an, umb seinen Kopf hatte er ein schwartzen seydenen Schleyer gewickelt, an seinem Halse hatte er drey güldene Ketten hangen, welche voller Edelgesteine versetzt waren, um seinen lincken Arm hatte er zween dicke güldene Ringe an den Fingern stecken, deßgleichen hatte er einen Dolch an seiner Seyten stecken, auff ein fast seltzame Art gemacht, welche sie den

¹⁸⁶ Verken, J., "Molukkenreise 1607–1612", in *Reisebeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der Niederländisch West- und Ost-Indischen Kompanien, 1602–1797*, ed. S. P. l'Honoré Naber, II (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930), pp. 58–9. My translation from the German original.

Cris nennen, dessen Häfft sampt der Scheyden war von klarem geschlagenen Golt gemacht, mit vielen Diamanten und Rubinen und Saphieren versezyet, also daß derselbe Dolch von den Holländern, auff die etlich und funffzig tausend Gülden geschetzt worden. An Gestalt und Farben war er ein fast wol geproportionierte Person, einer ziemlichen Länge, und sitsamer Rede, fast gantz weißlecht am Leib und Angesicht ...

English translation

As for the king of Johor, however, who is also known as Raja Bongsu, he is still a young man in his 30s. When he came aboard our ship, he was wearing a white cotton shirt that reached down to knee level. Around his body he wore a beautifully coloured, striped cotton cloth, which reached halfway down to his feet. Otherwise, he was bare on his body and legs. He wore on his feet a pair of black felt slippers, and around his head he had wrapped a black headpiece of silk. Around his neck he wore three golden chains, which were completely inlaid with gemstones. Around his left arm he wore two thick golden rings, and around his right arm [another] one. On his fingers he wore six precious rings. He also had a dagger at his side which was made in a very strange manner, and which they [the Malays] called a 'kris'. The handle and the blade were made of pure, clear wrought gold and were studded with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. ... [Raja Bongsu] was in his appearance and body a well-proportioned person, rather tall, soft-spoken, and fair-skinned both on his body and on his face.

Appendix 6

Concerning the Secret Clauses Appended to the Treaty of Antwerp (April 1609)¹⁸⁷

[The following document forms part of the collection of papers touching on the Anglo-Dutch maritime and colonial and Conferences held in London 1613 and The Hague in 1615. The English-language document reproduced below appears as annexe 94 and represents a report written by the English delegation at the close of the discussions in The Hague at the end of April, 1615. The English delagation reports that the Dutch counterpart sought to co-opt the English into reentering the war with the “Iberian” Empire (that is the combined Empires of Spain and Portugal) and jointly attack positions in the Indies. The English clearly failed to see the benefits of such a joint enterprise. The report closes by stating that the English delegates had departed from the Hague on 30 April 1615 and returned to London on Wednesday, 3 May.]

Having considered of this writing and finding their scape and end was to draw us into a warr against the Spannyard in the Indies, wee prest them further by conference to declare them selves cleerley therein. And thereuppon, after they had withdrawne them selves a while, they kowld not alter from what was contayned in that writing, that nothing could be undertaken by us, for th’advancement of the common utillytie in those parts but by joyning with them in a vigorous & preventing warr against the Spannyard. To which purpose there was dellivered us from Mons.^r Barnavile¹⁸⁸ a coppye of an Artykle made after the truce was concluded, together with an explanacon of the [fourth] Artikle of the treaty,¹⁸⁹ by both which His Majesty was ingadged (as they sayd) to warrant them a free treade in the Indies, and to protect such Indian Kinges and people as were any way mollested by the Spannyard for trading with the Hollanders, and theruppon finding them firmly to insist uppon suche poyntes as were directly against the purport of our instructions, we brake of the treatie, and parted farely one from the other.

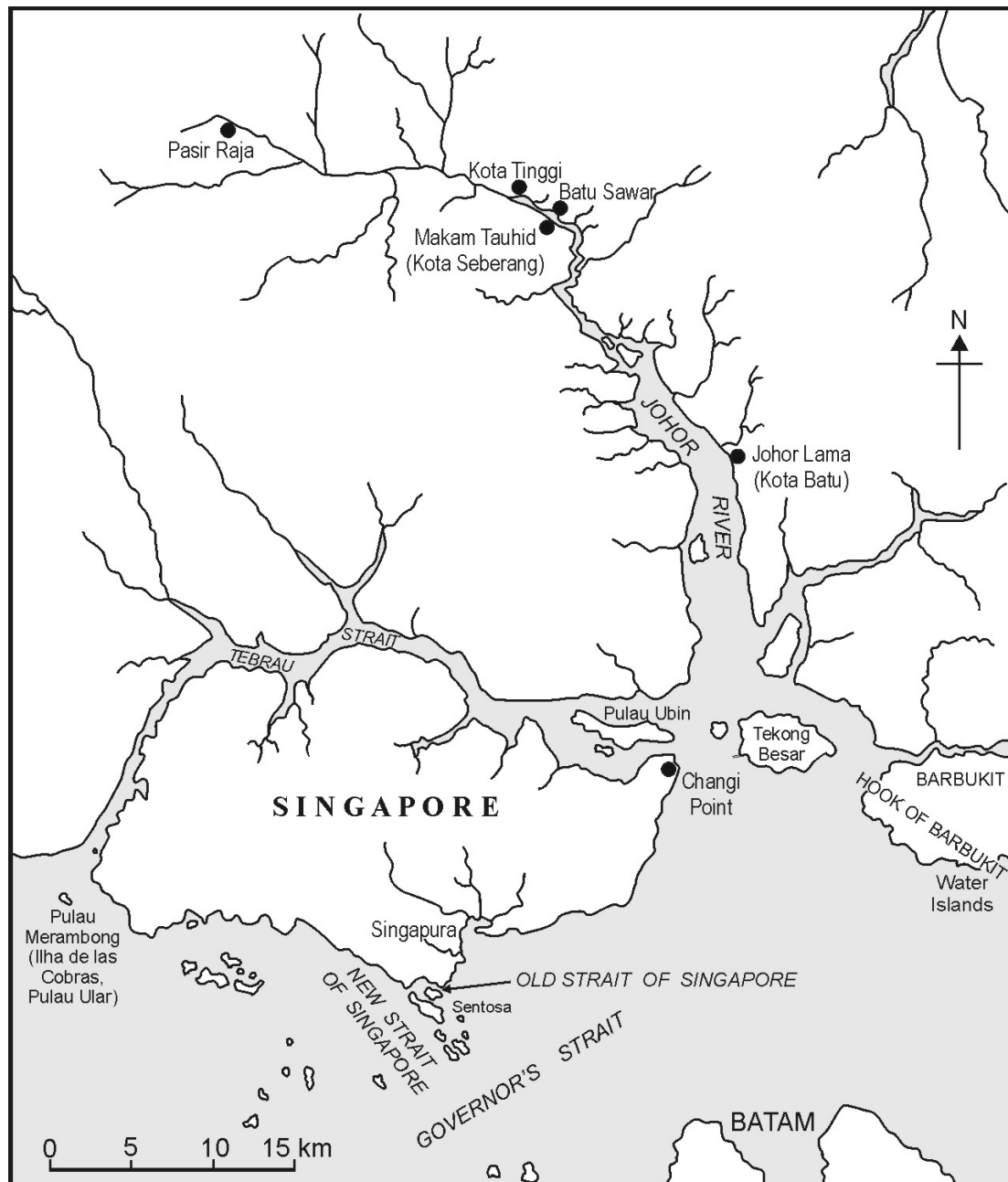
¹⁸⁷ Clark and Van Eysinga, *The Colonial Conferences*, pp. 267-8, Annexe 94. Rapport de la délégation anglaise à partir du 7 avril 1615. Extraits du British Museum Hss. Harleian 147.

¹⁸⁸ That is Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the Land’s Advocate.

¹⁸⁹ That is the Treaty of Antwerp (April 1609).

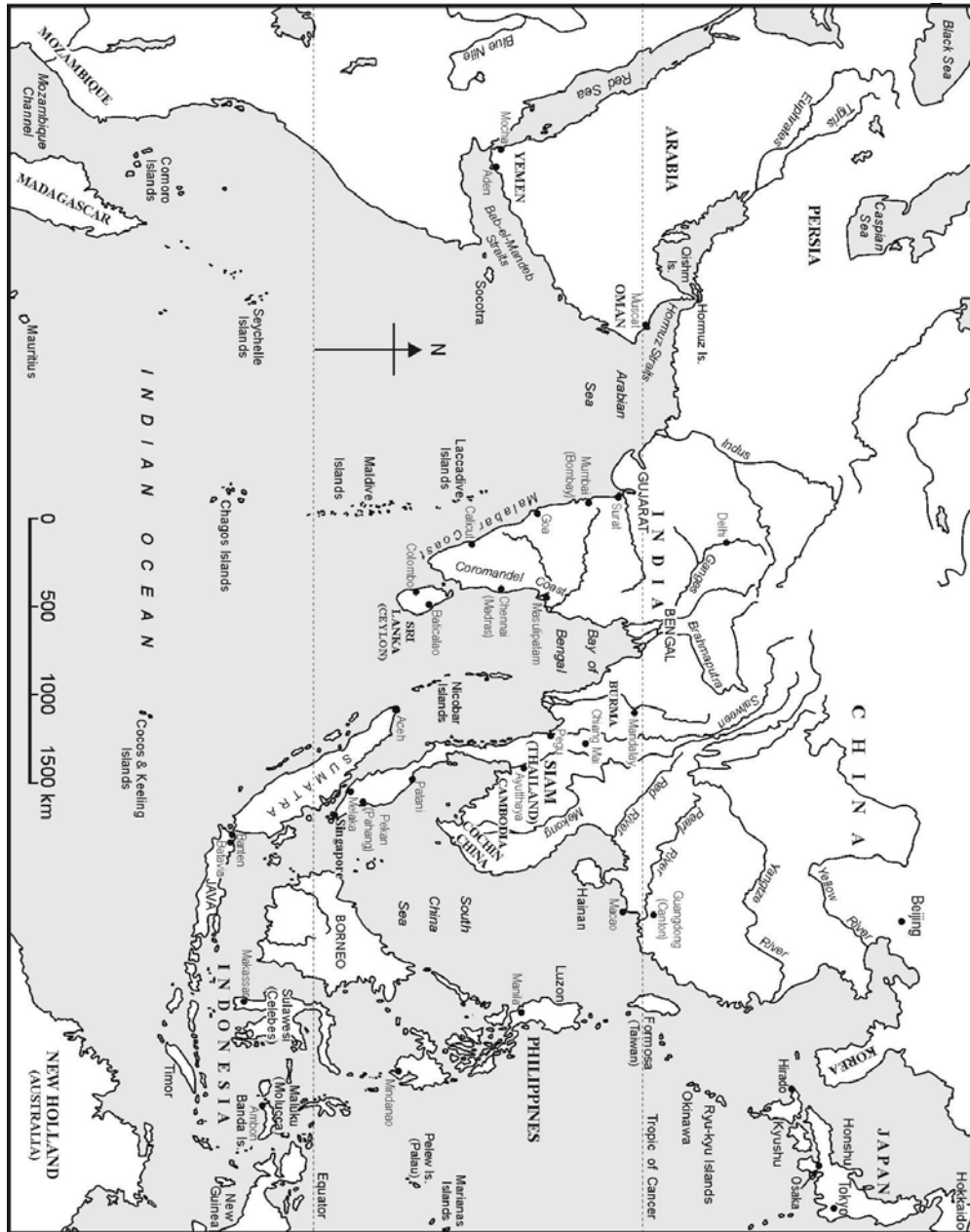
Appendix 7

Map of the Singapore Straits and the Johor River Region



Appendix 8

Map of East, Southeast and South Asia Featuring Historic and Modern Ports and Politics



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