Aceh as a Muslim-Malay Cultural Centre (14th-19th Century)

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Pasai and the introduction of Islam.

According to his grave monument Sultan Malik al-êâliú in Pasai, considered by many historians to be the first Muslim ruler in the Malay Archipelago, died in 1297. Although the Hikayat Raja Pasai (The Chronicle of Pasai) is not a historical writing in the true sense of the word, it nevertheless gives us a glimpse of the cultural life of one of the earliest Muslim countries in the Malay world.

This story of the descent of the rulers of that country is replete with myths of origin which are a common genre in South-East Asia. The introduction of Islam is explained as a miracle. The Prophet Muhammad had once said to his companions in Mecca that after he passed away there was a country below the winds, named Samudera. If at some time news about this country reached Mecca, a ship should be dispatched with all the requisite royal regalia, and the inhabitants should be converted to Islam. In that country God would create the greatest number of saints. At Ma'abari a faqir should be taken to Samudera.

Some time after the Prophet had passed away the Syarif of Mecca heard about Samudera and accordingly sent a ship there with Syaikh Isma’il as captain with regalia. The ship sailed away and after some time put into port at Ma’abari. Sultan Muúammad of that country, a descendant of Abû Bakr êiddiq (the first Caliph), abdicated and assuming the garb of a faqir boarded the ship bound for Samudera.

In a dream the kng of that country, Merh Silu, saw a man who asked him to recite the Syahadah (the Profession of Faith) which he was unable to do. The person asked him to open his mouth and spat into it. He informed the ruler that his name would be Malik al-êâliú and that he would recite the Syahadah. Syaikh Isma’il’s ship arrived and a fisherman was asked the name of that place and its ruler.

The next day Syaikh Isma’il disembarked and made his way to the ruler. He asked the ruler to recite the Syahadah which he could. The next day the faqir came to present Sultan Malik al-êâliú with thirty jūz’ of the Qur’ân. After this the country was then called Samudera Dār al-Salām.

The Hikayat Raja Pasai quoted above is the first piece of Malay historical writing of the Muslim period in Nusantara, but it is not the first Muslim-Malay work. The paraphrase of the prototype of this hikayat can be found in the Sejarah Melayu (The Malay Annals), the second oldest historical writing of the Muslim period. Originally written in Malacca (fifteenth century), it is highly likely this paraphrase was incorporated in this work at this period. The account of Pasai ends with the death of Sultan Malik al-Dîâhir and the accention to the throne of Sultan Aúmad. As Sultan Malik al-Dîâhir died in 1336, the composition of this version must have been completed not very much later than that year. The other version of the Hikayat Raja Pasai has later additions, probably written after the story of Sultan Aúmad’s son, Tun Beraim Bapa, had become a legend. In either version the Hikayat Raja Pasai became a model for such later Muslim-Malay historiographical works, as the Sejarah Melayu and the Hikayat Aceh.

Court Ceremonies

More about the cultural life on Pasai can be found in the description of the Moroccan traveller, Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah, who visited this country in 1345/46. He presents a vivid picture of its cultural life. What he saw was a thriving Muslim-Malay society with a pious Sultan as leader supported by able dignitaries. When his ship arrived the Vice-Admiral, named

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Bohūz, boarded it to inspect the cargo. Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah and his company were permitted to embark at the harbour, a town on the shore. A road passed through the middle of this town leading to the capital which was four miles away. The Vice-Roy sent a written message to the Sultan informing him of the arrival of Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah. The Sultan dispatched Amīr Dawlāsa accompanied by Qādhī `Āmir Sayyīd, originally from Shirāz, and Tāj al-Dīn from Isphahan with some other learned men to welcome Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah. They brought with them horses, some of them from the Sultan’s own stable, as mounts for Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah and his company.

On horseback they made way to the capital which he calls Sumū‹rah (Samudera). The Sultan, called Malik al-Dlāhir, was courageous and merciful, an adherent of the Syafi`ī school of law. He loved the learned men who came to the audience hall to study and discuss ideas with him. He was very pious. The sultan also waged holy war and his subjects followed him helping to conquer neighbouring countries which had not yet converted to Islam and countries which did not yet pay him tribute. When he went to the mosque for the Friday prayer the Sultan went on foot.

In the procession to the palace Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah saw spears planted on both sides of the road as a sign that visitors should dismount and proceed on foot to the audience hall. Here they met the Vice-Roy, `umdat al-mulk, who arose from his seat to shake hands. Seated once more the Vice-Roy wrote a letter to the Sultan announcing the arrival of Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah. This letter was handed to a page who returned with the answer written on the back of the letter.

Later on another page appeared with a package containing gifts from the Sultan. This was received by the Vice-Roy who opened it. The contents were revealed to be clothes for the envoys from foreign countries. The garments consisted of three pieces of loincloths, one of pure silk, the second of silk and cotton, and the third of silk and linen; three pieces of underwear virtually the same as the loincloths, and three pieces of clothing to wear over the underwear; three items of clothing similar to woollen jubah, one of which was white; there were also three turbans. Other clothes were distributed among his companions.

After a meal of rice and mushroom they chewed a betel quid. Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah was lead to a timber house with a wooden floor strewn with woollen carpets. There were also beds of bamboo decked with silk and cushions. `Āmir Dawlāsa arrived bringing two female slaves and two servants as a present from the Sultan. He humbly begged pardon that this present was so simple compared with that of Sultan Muúammad of Delhi. `Āmir Dawlāsa was not a stranger to Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah, because they had encountered each other in the palace of Delhi when the former was an envoy of the Sultan of Pasai.

Four days later Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah, accompanied by treasurer, was granted permission to meet the Sultan at the mosque. He was given an audience with the Sultan who sat beside Qādhī Amir Sayyīd in a small chamber. After greetings had been exchanged he was invited to sit down on the ruler’s left. The latter asked about Sultan Muúammad of Delhi and made inquiries about Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah’s voyage. After this conversation the sultan resumed his discussion with men learned in fiqh according to the school of Syafi`ī. This discussion concluded with the afternoon prayer. In a small chamber the Sultan divested himself of his robes of state, because on his way to the mosque he wore a jubah.

Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah also describes the procession to the palace after the Friday prayer. The `ulama rode on Sultan’s righthand side. Should he mount an elephant his company mounted horses, and should the ruler mount a horse his company mounted elephants. On that particular day the sultan chose an elephant. Upon reaching a gate the entourage dismounted, only the sultan entered the palace on his elephant. In the audience hall the ministers, princes, officers, scribes, chiefs, army chiefs, sat in rows. The four ministers
and the scribes sat right at the front. Behind them were the princes, the syarīf, descendants of the Prophet, the `ulama, the Sultan’s favourites, the physicians, the poets, the heralds, and the mamluk. Male singers provided entertainment. Ibn Ba <<=ūtah also saw the performing horses, which were caparisoned with silk, brocades and gold. He had only ever seen this kind of performance in Delhi.

On his way back from China (1347) he had had the opportunity to attend the wedding of the Sultan’s son to his brother’s daughter. The bride was seated on a rostrum with singers and dancers, male and female, in front of her. The bridegroom arrived in a howdah on an elephant. Left and right he was flanked by princes in white clothes riding horses. The bride wore a diadem. The crowd had largesse in dinar and derham distributed among them. The Sultan sat on a dais. The bridegroom dismounted from his elephant and kissed his father’s feet. He then turned to the rostrum and approached the bride. She rose, kissed the prince’s hand and then took her place next to him. Singers and dancers brought betel-leaf and betel-nut. The bridegroom took this and put it in the mouth of the bride and she reciprocated. A veil was draped over the bride and the rostrum was borne inside. The guests ate a meal after which they went home. The next day they gathered again and the Sultan declared his son as Crown Prince. Those present testified their allegiance to the prince.

Pasai as a commercial centre

Ibn Ba <<=ūtah’s account gives a glimpse of the greatness of Pasai as the first Muslim-Malay kingdom in the fourteenth century. Its grandeur was only possible because its position as an important trading centre on the Straits of Malacca. Chinese and Portuguese sources provide some details about trade of that place.

This vivid picture of life in Pasai can therefore be supplemented by later Portuguese accounts. They give a description of the capital, the commerce, and the system of government. In the center of the capital stood the citadel in which the Sultan and his court resided. Within the walls of the city, and also in the suburbs, the high nobles or mandaris (menteri) had their residences. The Hikayat Raja Pasai also mentions menteri and perdana menteri. This shows us that the Malay system of government consisting of the four, the eight, and probably the sixteen menteri was already in existence in Pasai.

Portuguese sources also speak of the hierarchy of the government consisted of the temenggung, the syahbandar and his deputy, and the qadhi. In neither the Hikayat Raja Pasai as well as in Potuguese sources no mention is made of a bendahara. Pires speaks of bendahara only in relation to Malacca.

Tomé Pires, who was in Malacca in 1513, observed that Pasai was a rich country with a flourishing trade, especially after Malacca was defeated by the Portuguese and Pidie had declared war on Aceh. The capital had more than 20,000 inhabitants. Among the merchants trading in Pasai were Bengalis, Rumes (Genoese or Venetians?), Turks, Arabs, Persians, Gujaratis, Indians, Malays, Javanese and Siamese. On the way to the interior were large towns, where great nobles and important people who were sometimes at odds with Pasai lived. The country produced pepper, silk and gum benzoin. Rice was cultivated only for domestic consumption.

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3 Ibn Ba <<=ūtah 1975: 706-09.
6 Tomé Pires, Suma Oriental: 142.
Malay becomes the language of Islam and of Muslim-Malay literature

Islam was preached in the vernacular of Pasai. With its religious and other Muslim literature written in or translated into this vernacular, the Malay language became the language of Islam and called the Bahasa Jawi. The literature of Pasai was in high esteem so much so that the language it was written in was called bahasa Pasai. For instance in his religious works Mir'āt al-Mu’mīn (1601) Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai says that he wrote this book in Malay: ‘…because as they have not mastered the the Arabic or Persian tongues most of the distinguished people among my pious brothers read only the language of Pasai…”. Also ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf of Singkel (prolific during the reign of Sultanah Tāj al-ʿAlām Safiat al-Dīn, 1641-1675) also referred in his Mir'āt al-ṣullāb the Malay language similarly as the language of Pasai, Bahasa Pasai. By contrast Ḥamzah Fanṣūri a great Sumatran mystical poet of the sixteenth century, refers to the Malay language Bahasa Jawi (borrowed from the term for Souh-East Asians current in Mecca) as this term had a widespread currency.

Later the Samudera part of the twin-name Samudera-Pasai was applied to the Island of Sumatra adapted to the Arabic pronunciation. When Islam was introduced the country also took the Muslim epithet Dār al-Salām and was called Samudera Dār al-Salām. This epithet was later assumed by Aceh and several other states around the Straits of Malacca and even beyond, as far as Brunei.

The Hikayat Amir Hamzah and Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah, translated into Malay from Persian, were already popular in Malacca. While waiting for the Portuguese attack (1511), the warriors held a vigil and wanted to spend their time in an entertaining manner. Consequently they requested Sultan Aūmad the Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah for reading. Instead the ruler gave them first the Hikayat Amir Hamzah first, fearing that they would not be able to emulate his bravery. After they have appealed again he gave them both the hikayat after all.

Brakel, who edited Hikikayat Muhammad Hanafiah, considers the Persian version to have originated in the middle of the fourteenth century and to have been translated into Malay, in one of the coastal centres of North Sumatra not very much later. It is my believe that Samudera-Pasai is the only candidate for this Muslim-Malay cultural centre. Brakel argues that the Hikikayat Amir Hamzah must have been rendered into Malay earlier than the Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah. From internal evidence in the text of the Hikayat Raja Pasai we can conclude that at the time this work was written the Hikayat Iskandar Dzu’l-Qarnain was already familiar. Brakel discovered that the way certain events are described in the Hikayat Raja Pasai are similar to the way such descriptions are found in the Hikayat Amir Hamzah and Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah, an indication that these works are older than the chronicle of Pasai (1336).

In the first part of the Hikayat Raja Pasai the name Megat Iskandar occurs. The Sejarah Melayu mentions that the last ruler of Singapura left his country after it had been defeated by Majapahit. When Malacca embraced Islam he took the name Iskandar Syah which points to the fact that the story of Hikayat Iskandar Dzu’l-Qarnain was already known in Pasai. It is not impossible that the Malay translation of an Arabic original was made in this place.

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10 Brakel, L.F. The Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah: 56.
11 Tomé Pires 1949: 238.
The language of Pasai written literature can be classified as Pre-Classical Malay as opposed to the Classical Malay of such eighteenth-century works as the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* or the *Sejarah Melayu* (Shellabear edition).

Arabic script as it is used for the Malay language developed from the system of writing achieved by adapting Arabic script to the Persian language. In translating Persian literature into Malay the way Arabic script is used shows that it has already been transformed for Persian use. For phonemes not found in the Arabic alphabet new letters were created by adding a dot or dots to the existing Arabic letters. This script is called the Jawi alphabet.

The oldest Malay religious treatises and stories on the life of the Prophet Muammad and his companions are translations or adaptations from the Persian language. The *Hikayat Nur Muhammad* is, Ismail Hamid claims an adaptation of the *Tarjumān Maulid al-Mu§‹afā* by Sa’d ibn Mas’ud which was translated from Arabic into Persian by his son ‘Affīf al-Dīn (1331). This text which contains only the creation of Nur Muhammad was translated into Malay. The *Hikayat Nabi Wafat*, Ph.S. van Ronkel argues, was translated from the Persian work *Wafāt-Nāmah*. The *Hikayat Bulan Bebelah*, a story about the miraculous power displayed by the Prophet in splitting the moon, was used in the ninth century to disseminate Islam in Malabar as Marrison explained in his article *Persian Influence in Malay Life*13. In a manuscript containing the *Hikayat Nabi Bercukur*, a story of the shaving of the Prophet’s head, there is a note to the effect: *This is the writing of a rafidhi don’t believe it*. A Rafidhi is a heretic, a term often used in Malay literature for Shi’ites14, which could point to the Persian origin of this story. The genre of stories which evolved about the people around the Prophet also consisted of translations from Persian.

**Persian influence on Sunni Islam in the Malay Archipelago**

There were constant interchanges between the states in the area. The son of the Parameswara of Malacca married a daughter of the sultan of Pasai and embraced Islam. There were undeniable interactions between Pasai and Malacca in religious, literary and political fields. Pasai was the place where problems relating to Islam were solved. Such political problems as a palace revolution in Pasai, were arbitrated by Malacca. The *Sejarah Melayu* was written with the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* as model. Pasai was held in high esteem in Malacca, resulting in a paraphrase of the prototype of its chronical being incorporated in the *Sejarah Melayu*. Malay translations of Arabic and Persian literature in Pasai became popular in Malacca.

Given its close relationship with Persia and Muslim India and the presence of learned men at the court hailing from these regions, there are still Shi’ite traces in the Sunnite Islam as practised in latter day Aceh. Although Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah speaks of Syafi’ite Sunnite school of thought prevailing in Pasai, until before the second world-war therewere still Syi’ites elements discernible in Aceh. The commemoration of the ‘Asyūra (Persian: the tenth of Mu‘arram), the death of Iusain, son of ‘Ali and Fātimah and grandson of the Prophet was celebrated. In Persia and Muslim India this Festival of remembrance is observed in a grand manner. In Aceh this day is called *Acura* or *Asan-Usën* (ıasan-ıusain grandsons of the Prophet) and was celebrated eating a special kind of porridge (consisting of rice, coconut milk, sugar, and pieces of such chopped fruits, as pomegranates), which is called *kanji Acura*. It is cooked in a great pan for the consumption of the whole village15. This occasion is also remembered at several other places elsewhere in Indonesia.

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12 Ismail Hamid: 54-5.
Literature of Pasai and Persian influence

On the epitaph of Nā’inā īusām al-Dīn bin Nā’inā Amīn, who died on 9 October 1420, is engraved a poem citing certain verses of the *Tayyibāt*, a work of the Persian poet Musliū al-Dīn Sa`dī (1193-1292) in *ghazal* metre. In translating the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* Persian verses were translated preserving of the metres of their originals.

In the library of the University of Leiden is kept a manuscript (CodOr 7056) written on tree-bark paper, provenance Lam Pisang (Aceh). The manuscript contains an anthology of mystical verses in Arabic and Persian by famous poets with interlinear Malay translation. The verses consists of an incomplete Arabic poem by Abū Tammām (800-845), a *ghazal* and a *mathnawī* by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-73), a *mathnawī* by Muṣliū al-Dīn Sa`dī, and a *ruba`i* by ʿUmar Khayyām (d. 1132). In my book on the history of Classical Malay literature this anthology is attributed to the Aceh period (1500 and after) because the manuscript was found in Lam Pisang (Aceh Besar), but it could also have been a copy of a manuscript belonging to the literature of Pasai (1300-1524). The defeat of this Sultanate by Aceh (1524) does not mean the abrupt end of the Persian influence on Malay culture; in actual fact the process of decline must have been gradual and continued until the end of the sixteenth. Syams al-Dīn a native of Pasai must have followed his initial studies first in this place, but later went to Mecca by way of Aceh and other places in the Middle East and India. Back in Aceh he became the Syaikh al-Islām at the court of the Sultan ʿAīlā al-Dīn Rī`āyat Syāh Sayyīd al-Mukammil (1578-1603) until the reign of Iskandar Muda (1606-36).

Earlier it has been shown that the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* are translations made in Pasai from Persian originals. In the library of the University of Leiden there is a manuscript of the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (CodOr 3208), formerly the property of the great Dutch scholar H.N. van der Tuuk. Three times in the manuscript (pp 47, 54, 91) it is mentioned that the *hikayat* was composed by Qādhī īasan in the year 773H (1371AD). While a manuscript formerly owned by Gerth van Wijk, the thirteenth story mentions that in the same year it was rendered into Malay by Qādhī īasan into Malay. As a collection these tales go back to the *Sukasaptati*, the Seventy Tales of a Parrot, of which there are two versions in Sanskrit. A Persian version no longer extant was the source of one Malay text. A later Persian version entitled *Tutī-Nāmah* was translated and augmented by Nakshabī in 1329.

But since insight into the sultanate of Samudera Pasai has lately deepened, there is now a better picture of this country reaching its peak in the political, economic, and cultural fields during the fourteenth and early fifteenth century. The account of Ibn Ba‹‹ūtah testifies to the close relationship between the courts of Pasai and Delhi, of which the court language was Persian. Persian literature was predominantly translated into Malay during the heyday of Pasai.

Winstedt rejects the idea that this kind of works could have been translated into Malay in the year mentioned in the two manuscripts. He suggests that this period was too early for the Malay translation of this work and that a Persian version by Abu’l-Fadl (1551-1602), composed at the order of the Emperor Akbar and based on Nakshabī’s work of 1329, could have been the original of this translation. But we can not find any manuscript dating from the seventeenth century, the Aceh period of Malay literature.

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containing the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*. Works of this period generally mention their authors or translators and the date of writing.

**Pasai and its material culture**

One way to measure the rise and decline of Pasai as a Malay cultural centre is by studying its grave memorials. The grave memorial of Sultanah (or Princess) Bahiah Nahrisyah (d. 1428), however, is on a grand scale and is of great beauty, reflecting the prosperity of Pasai at that time.

Pertinently the grave memorial of Sultan Malik al-êâliú (d.1297) as well as that of Naîna iùsâm al-Dîn (d.1420) were commissioned in Cambay, Gujarat, Western India, and transported to Pasai. If the cenotaph of Sultan Mali al-êâliú and that of Naînâ Husêm al-Dîn are compared it is possible to gain a picture of how Pasai had developed in prosperity from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century. While the grave stone of Malik al-êâliú has simple engravings that of Naînà iùsâm al-Dîn is richly engraved. Only the wealth of the court and of the trading community made it possible to commission such beautifully carved memorials from overseas. The wealth accumulated by in Pasai derived from its commercial activities attested to by Chinese and Portuguese sources. In the fifteenth century the Portuguese were the first European nation to appear in the Straits of Malacca.

The most impressive grave memorial in Pasai is that of Sultanah Bahiah Nahirisyah, a daughter of Sultan Zain al-`Abîdin, who died on 27 September 1428.

In spite of the booming in imported cenotaphs from Cambay, there is also a locally made grave-stone at Meunjè Tuj¿h, in the Pasai area. It is peculiar for several reasons that the epitaph is not inscribed in Arabic but in Kawi script (Old-Sumatran writing). The language is Old Malay in contrast to the language of the Pasai literature (*Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and otherworks) written in Pre-Classical Malay. The princess buried there died in 1389\(^{19}\), almost a century after the death of Sultan Malik al-êâlih, whose tombstone bears an epitaph in Arabic and Arabic script. This grave-stone is an extension of the tradition of Old-Malay inscriptions of the Çrivijaya period, but the technique of engraving is Muslim, as are the other epitaphs on tombstones imported from Cambay. The letters are not engraved in the stone as the inscriptions of the Çrivijaya area, but cut in relief like the Cambay epitaphs, an indication that after the introduction of Cambay grave monuments craftsmen began to produce tombstones locally. It was the beginning of a tradition of the production of what in Malaysia is called *batu Aceh*, but in Aceh itself are called *batèe Meuraksa*, after the place at which they were carved. Meuraksa is situated in the Sagi XXVI Mukims nearby Banda Aceh.

An epitaph in Old-Malay with Kawi chracter is also found on a grave memorial of more than a century later at Pengkalan Kempas (Malaysia). This is a grave memorial of Ahmat Majanu who died in the year 1385 Çaka (1463-1464). This Kawi epitaph was of a later date (1467-1468, ‘during the reign of Sultan Manşûr Syah’) and has been provided with a Jawi equivalent\(^{20}\).

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\(^{19}\) Stutterheim 1936: 268-79.

This evidence allows a conclusion that Old-Malay with Kawi script was still in use more than one and a half centuries after the introduction of Jawi script on the Terengganu inscription (1303). It seems that this language was still in use as Kanzlerei Sprache (Chancellery language)\textsuperscript{21}.

An Old Malay epitaph of this kind in Kawi script of this kind is also found at the grave of Ahmat Majanu. The introduction of Arabic script for writing the Malay language had already taken place on the inscription of Terengganu, in Old-Malay and dated 1303 bears witness. Though using Arabic script this inscription is engraved into the stone as are previous Old-Malay inscriptions. Grave-stones produced in Pasai and Aceh are found in Malaysia and as far away as Brunei\textsuperscript{22}.

Towards the end the fifteenth century the importance of Pasai declined. Hoessein Djajadiningrat suggests that this was caused by the competition posed by new upcoming principalities as trade centres along the Straits of Malacca in Aceh\textsuperscript{23}. Sultan `Alī Mughāyat Syāh defeated Samudera-Pasai in 1524 and annexed the country. Its Sultan escaped to exile in Portuguese Malacca but its legacy, the Muslim-Malay culture, lived on and continued to develop further in Aceh Dār al-Salām.

Three principalities united into Aceh Dār al-Salām

The manuscript of Adat Aceh edited in facsimile by G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve contains a genealogy of Acehnese Sultans entitled: Inilah silsilah segala raja-raja yang jadi kerajaan Aceh dalam Aceh Bandar Dār al-Salām (This is the genealogy of all kings who have ruled in Aceh Bandar Dār al-Salām). The genealogy tells us that on Friday, 1 Ramadhan H 601 (Friday, 22 April, AD 1205) Sultan Johan Syāh came from the west to convert the country of Aceh to Islam. He settled down at Kandang Aceh and begot a son named Sultan Aúmad. Johan Syah died in H631/1234 and was succeeded by his son who assumed the title Sultan Ri`āyat Syah. This Sultan died in H665/1267 and was succeeded by his son Sultan Maúmūd Syah. This ruler left Kandang Aceh to build a fortified palace named Dār al-Dunyā. Sultan Maúmūd Syah died in H708/1308 and in turn was succeeded by his son Sultan Firmān Syah. This sultan died in H755/1354 to be succeeded by his son Sultan ManŠür Syah. He died in H811/1408 and was succeeded by his son Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Johan Syah. Sultan `Alā al-Dīn died in H870/1466 and was again succeeded by his son Sultan Iusain Syah. After the latter’s death in H901/1496 he was succeeded by his son Sultan `Ali Ri`āyat Syah. After his death in H917/1511 he was succeeded by his son Sultan ėalāú al-Dīn. This ruler died in H975/1567 to be succeeded by his son Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah al-Qahhār.

If the Silsilah Kandang Aceh is correct – we have no other sources to verify it – this kingdom must have been earlier converted to Islam than Samudera-Pasai. Even if we take into account that the first Muslim ruler of this country died in 1297 at the age of ninety, which is very unlikely, and he was conferred as a child.

The names of the last two rulers of Kandang Aceh are known to us from the Hikayat Aceh as well as from the Bustān al-Salā‹īn. If we put the lists of early Acehnese Sultans, based on the three writings, next to each other we get the following picture.

\textsuperscript{21} Iskandar 1995: 111.
\textsuperscript{22} Ambari 1996: 546-559. Lmbourn
From these genealogical lists we see that according to the *Bustān al-Salā‹īn* `Alī Mughāyat Syah was the first Sultan to rule Aceh and the first to embrace Islam. This work ignores the pre-`Alī Mughāyat Syah period. Commencing with Sultan ēalāú al-Dīn the three lists are in concert, as they are with his successor `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah. ēalāú al-Dīn’s predecessor is metioned in the *Silsilah Kandang Aceh* as `Alī Ri`āyat Syāh, while the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān* calls him `Alī Mughāyat Syah. Probably `Alī Ri`āyat Syah in the *Silsilah* is a mistake for `Alī Mughāyat Syah, which is a common feature for the work copyists of Malay manuscripts.

If we can indentify `Alī Ri`āyat Syah in the *Silsilah* with `Alī Mughāyat Syah in the *Hikayat Aceh* and we compare the genealogies in the *Silsilah* and *Hikayat Aceh* of the pre-`Alī Mughāyat Syah period we see a difference in names of rulers. Two kingdoms are mentioned at the beginning of the *Hikayat Aceh*, those of Makota `Alam and Dār al-Kamāl. The genealogy of Dār al-Kamāl ends with the defeat of this kingdom by Sultan Syamsu Syah of Makota `Alam over Sultan `Ināyat Syah. The victory by Syamsu Syah was obtained with a ruse, in the manner of the Trojan horse. He solicited the hand of `Ināyat Syh’s daughter for his son. During the wedding-procession weapons were smuggled into Dār al-Kamāl and the palace was taken. In spite of this catastrophe the marriage went ahead and the bridegroom according to Acehnese custom (matrilocal system) lodged in his consort’s home. This palace became the seat of the future Acehnese sultans until it was destroyed during the Dutch-Acehnese war (1873-1903). Only after the amalgamation of these two principalities the name Aceh Dār al-Salām appears for the first time in the *Hikayat Aceh*.

Dār al-Kamāl was situated across the Aceh River south of Makota `Alam. The locality of this Sultanate must have been in the region of the later Sagi XXII Mukim. This sagi was flanked by Sagis XXVI Mukim in the north and XXV Mukim in the south, stretching out to the Indian Ocean. Kandang Aceh is situated in the VI Mukim (Peukan Bada) of the latter sagi. This place must have been the capital of the first kingdom to be converted to Islam by Sultan Johan Syah. If this is correct the XXV Mukim must have been the territory of Johan Syah’s Sultanate.

The *Silsilah Kandang Aceh* also mentions that it was Johan Syah’s grandson, Sultan Mu‘āmūd Syāḥ (1267-1308), who moved from Kandang Aceh and built the palace Dār al-Dunyā. This palace was the same as that taken by Samsyu Syah when he defeated `Ināyat Syah. There is a missing link between the dynasty of Kandang Aceh and that of `Ināyat Syah of Dār al-Kamāl. However, there is a possibility that the Three Sagi played an important role during the government of the Sultanate of Aceh Dār al-Salām.

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24 cf. Hoesein Djadiningrat 1911: 143.
It was not Sultanah Nūr al-ʿĀlam Naqiat al-Dīn, as tradition has it, who divided the sultanate into three *sagi*, it was Sultan ʿĀlī Mughāyat Syah who united the three principalities into Greater Aceh. He also conquered such other principalities as Daya, Pidie and Pasai. The three *sagi* had their own chief *kadhi* who bore the title *Qadhi Rabbu‘l-Jalīl* (*Rabdun Jalī*, judge of the Almighty Lord) and their own great mosque. The XXII Mukims had the Meuseugit Indrapuri. As the name and architecture suggest it must have been built on the foundations of a Hindu temple after the introduction of Islam. The same can be said of the mosque of Indrapurwa in the XXV Mukims of which the remnants still exist (?). In the Sagi XXVI Mukims we have the ruins of the mosque called Indrapatra close to Ladong.  

According to tradition the building of these mosques as well as that of the Meuseugit Raya is ascribed to Sultan Iskandar Muda (compare with the tradition that the conversion to Islam of Aceh is ascribed to Syiah Kuala).

It is by no means easy to set the *Silsilah Kandang Aceh* aside, although the Sultans of the pre-ʿĀli Mughayat Syah period can not to be verified with tombstones as is the case with the Sultans in the *Hikayat Aceh* or the *Bustān*. The position of the *panglima* of this *sagi* was equally important to, if not more than those in the other two *sagi*. Towards the end of the Sultanate the three *Panglima Sagi* still were considered as the guardians of the country of Aceh, which was regarded as an ever rejuvenating bride whom they gave in marriage to whomesoever they desired, after deliberation among themselves. They usually chose the bridegroom from the family of his predecessor, but they did not hesitate for the choice of a non-local as sultan. The bridegroom had to pay to each of them bride wealth.

In those days the installation of a new ruler proceeded as follows: first came the *Panglima* of Sagi XXVI Mukim followed by his retinue, Teuku Nèk Peureuba Wangsa of IX Mukim, Teuku Nèk Raja Muda Seutia, *ulèebalang* of Mukim Meuraksa (previously also of VI Mukim), Teuku Nèk Nanta Seutia, who in later days had taken over the VI Mukim from the latter.

The Chief *Kadhi* of Sagi XXV (*Qādhī Rabu‘l-Jalīl*) pronounced the installation formula which was repeated loudly by the *Qādhī Malik al-ʿĀdil*, so as to be heard by the public. At the end of the installation formula *Qādhī Malik al-ʿĀdil* (*kadhi* of the Sultan of Aceh) called the *Panglima* of Sagi XXVI by his title three times in succession, and was answered by the latter and his retinue: *Dèelat* (Your Majesty). The *panglima* retreated to make way for his colleagues, the Panglima of XXV and of XXII Mukim.

This is the order of precedence of the three *sagi* at state ceremonies: Sagi XXVI, XXV, and XXII Mukims. The fact the most important place was reserved for the Panglima of Sagi XXVI Mukims is understandable, because this was the realm of Iskandar Muda and his four female successors (of the Kingdom of Lamri/Makota ʿAlam). Kandang Aceh, situated in Mukim VI (Peukan Bada) of the Sagi XXV Mukims, the first principality to embrace Islam and probably older than Dār al-Kamāl, was the second in rank in the order of precedence.

Aceh Dār al-Salām, its expansion and the adoption of Pasai Muslim-Malay culture.

The *Hikayat Aceh* states that ʿAlā al-Dīn Riʿāyat Syah was succeeded by his elder son Salāū al-Dīn (1530-39). This Sultan was so weak that his mother Puteri Indera Bangsa, daughter of Sultan ʿInāyat Syah of Dār al-Kāmal and now given the title of Paduka Syah ʿAlam, installed an *Agha*, a Persian nobleman, named Kasdīn as *mangkubumi* (prime minister). He had a house built in front of the *daulat khana* (royal abode) and was

26 Snouck Hurgronje 1894: 83, 87, 93.
27 id. : 139.
granted the title Raja Bungsu. Here we observe the continuation of the Pasai tradition in which Persians occupied important posts at the court.

The appointment by his mother of Agha Kasdīn as mangkubumi greatly displeased the Sultan’s brother `Alā al-Dīn, Vice-Roy of Samudera-Pasai. Enraged he left for the capital, killed Raja Bungsu, and imprisoned his mother and brother, and ascended the throne\textsuperscript{28}.

Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah al-Qahhār (1539-1571) was the first sultan who undertook an attempt to drive the Portuguese from Malacca, but he was unsuccessful. He married the daughter of the Sultan of Johor, conquered that country and brought Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah to Aceh as a prisoner. His governorship in Pasai and his avocations in the Malay Peninsula brought him into contact with the system of government of Pasai and Johor. The Undang-undang Melaka or Malacca Legal Digest had been compiled in Malacca as early as the reign of Sultan Mudlaffar Syah (d. 1459)\textsuperscript{29}. From the Undang-undang Melaka developed the Undang-undang Johor. Most probably under the influence of his experiences with the system of government of Johor did Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah al-Qahhār re-organized the system of government in Aceh. Furthermore this Sultan patronized the spice shipment as far as the Red Sea, reaching its peak during the 1560s\textsuperscript{30}.

While intellectual and spiritual life was dominated by Persian influence during the Pasai period, the situation in Aceh would later change. As we have just seen, during the reign of Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`āyat Syah al-Qahhār (1539-1571) Aceh made a vain attempt to defeat the Portuguese in Malacca. In order to be able to confront this first European nation with its superior navy and weapons in the waters of the Straits of Malacca he ordered an envoy to go to Turkey to secure aid. The Turkish Sultan directed a Red Sea fleet from Egypt to Aceh, but because of a rebellion against Turkey in Yemen the fleet had to be redirected to that country\textsuperscript{31}. Only two ships arrived in Aceh carrying military engineers, cannon-casters, and shipbuilders. The upshot was that Aceh could now build forts, cast large calibre cannons and construct big ships. The story of the embassy to Turkey inspired the author of Hikayat Hang Tuah to send his hero to that country as envoy of the sultanate of Malacca\textsuperscript{32}.

The Bustān mentions five of his sons of which `Abdu’llah became Vice-Roy of Ghorı (Aru) and another Vice-Roy of Mughal (Pariaman), an indication that Minangkabau was under the control of Aceh. `Alā al-Dīn’s son Huṣain succeeded him on the throne under the title Sultan `Alī R`āyat Syah (1571-1579). It was in his reign that learning began to flourish. It was then an Egyptian scholar, Muūammad Azhari, who bore the title Syaikh Nūr al-Dīn, came from Mecca to teach `ilmu ma`qulat (logic). This scholar remained active in teaching until he died in Aceh.

Sultan `Abdu’llāh, Vice-Roy of Aru, as well of Sultan Mughal, Vice-Roy of Pariaman, were envious of the position of their brother as ruler of Aceh. That is why they conspired to dethrone him. They sailed to Bandar Aceh to execute their plan. The way the Hikayat Aceh describes the reception of Sultan Mughal by Sultan `Alī Ri`āyat Syah unequivocally shows that the latter was the younger brother\textsuperscript{33}. The Hikayat Aceh says that when Sultan `Abdu’llāh arrived in the bay of Aceh, the Sultan sent his vizier to stop him from landing: ‘Do not allow my elder brother (du-abang) to land’. Here we see a case, perhaps for the first time, of a younger brother on the throne of the realm and his elder brother a mere

\textsuperscript{28} Hikayat Aceh, ed. Iskandar 1959: 79-85.
\textsuperscript{29} Winstedt 1952: 31-33. Andaya & Andaya 1982: 50.
\textsuperscript{30} Reid 1975: 46.
\textsuperscript{31} cf. it is not clear whether Abangta Raja Pariaman is his name or his appointment as deputy raja (viceroy) of Pariaman; abangta, = bangta, = banta (cf. Hoessein Djajadiningrat’s dictionary).
\textsuperscript{32} Iskandar 1970: 42-51.
\textsuperscript{33} mendakapi dan meciumi saudaranya, he embraced and kissed him.
Vice-Roy of its dependencies. By means of a ruse, the followers of Sultan Mughal were able to enter the palace grounds, but during the ensuing struggle Sultan Mughal was killed.

After his death, `Ali Ri`ayat Syah was succeeded by Sultan Muda, a four month old son, who the Bustān says died seven months later. Thereafter Abangta Raja Pariaman,34 ruled under the title Sultan Seri `Alam. The Bustān says that this ruler was ruthless, but the Hikayat Aceh described his lavishness towards the chiefs of Fanṣūr (Barus, a district under the jurisdiction of Pariaman where he had previously been Vice-Roy). After plot hatched between the Maharaja35 and Malik al-Dlahir36 Seri `Alam who was still a child was deposed.

He was succeeded by Sultan Zain al-`Ābidin (1579), son of Sultan `Abdu'llāh Vice-Roy of Ghorı (Aru), son of `Alā al-Dīn Ri`ayat Syah al-Qahhār, who fell in Malacca in the battle against the Portuguese.37 Zain al-`Ābidin was fond of amusements. He had a passion for elephant-fights (tame and wild elephants) and he had people killed by these animals. When he sought his pleasure in the park near the palace and if any cows, buffaloes, sheep or goats should happen to come along, he had them killed. He was also cavalier in his treatment of state officials. This was the reason he was dethroned, according to the Hikayat Aceh, by Syarīk al-Muluk Maharaja Lela. At the Malay court the Maharaja Lela was an official rather like a chamberlain at a European court, who stood at the side of the ruler to see that His Majesty’s orders were executed. Any opposition to the ruler would be punished by the Maharaja Lela, who could even resort to execution. In this case it was this man himself who dethroned the ruler. He planned a dzikir (praise of God by reciting of certain texts) at the palace, and brought him later on to Makota `Alam..... (a gap in the Hikayat). The Bustān speaks of an assassination but because of the missing pages the Hikayat Aceh does not mention the reigns of `Ala al-Dīn of Perak and of Makota Buyung, Prince of Inderapura (a Sultanate in the South of Minangkabau). It goes strait on to the ascension to the throne of Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Ri`ayat Syah Sayyīd al-Mukammil (1589-1604).

After two palace revolutions and two rulers of the Makota `Alam dynasty had been dethroned and assassinated, a Sultan of non-Acehnese descent came on the throne for the first time. Manṣūr, a prince of Perak (Malaysia), became ruler under the title Sultan `Ala al-Dîn Manṣūr Syah (1579-86). After the Acehnese invasion of Perak the widow of its sultan and her children were transported to Aceh. Her elder son married an Acehnese princess.38 The Bustān calls him Sultan `Ala al-Dîn of Perak son of Sultan Aúmad.

This sultan was very pious, god-fearing, and just, but firm in his government. He ordered his subjects to obey the rules of Islam and forbade them to drink arrack. His officials were obliged to don the Arabic dress. It was in his reign that education, which had commenced under the reign of Sultan `Ala al-Dîn Ri`ayat Syah al-Qahhār, began to flourish. He favoured learned people and many `ulama arrived in Aceh during his reign. In 1582 came from Mecca Syaikh Abū ‘l-Khair ibn Syaikh Ibn îajar, author of al-êaif al-Qā‹i’ (The Cutting Sword), discussing a’yān thābitah, in the field of dogmatics and mystics. He also taught fiqh. The same year came Syaikh Muúammad Yamānī, an expert

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34 Abangta Raja Pariaman; abangta, bangta, banta, deputy (of the sultan or ulèebalang), acc. dictionary of Hoesein Djajadiningrat.
35 therefore in the Hiayat. Aceh; for the sake of completeness he is called Maharaja Seri Maharaja, Prime Minister.
36 previously called in the Hikikayat Aceh: qadhi or Qadhi Malik az-Zahir, forerunner of Qadhi Malik al-`Adil (?).
37 Hoesein Djajadiningrat 1911: 159; Mohammad Said 1961: 115.
38 Hoesein Djajadiningrat quotes here a Perak tradition; Hik. Aceh has here a lacuna and does not mention this ruler.
on 'ilm al-u§ul, doctrine of faith. The two syaikh held a disputation on the problem of a’yān thābitah without reaching any conclusion, so they sailed away.

Later Syaikh Muuammad Jilāni ibn iasan ibn Muuammad iamīd, who hailed from Ranīr and was an adherent of the Syafi‘i school of thought came from Gujarat. In Aceh he taught logic, rhetoric, bayān badda‘i, 'ilm al-u§ul, and fiqh. But when students were eager to study the şüfi doctrine and metaphysics he asked for a respite and sailed away to Mecca.

Sultan ‘Ala al-Dīn Man§ūr Syah died before his time (termadlum). The Hikayat Aceh which usually describes the reign and death of individual rulers in more detail has a gap here because a number of missing pages in the original manuscript. The story leaps on to the ascension to the throne of Sultan ‘Alā al-Dīn Ri‘ayat Syah Sayyīd al-Mukammil (1588-1604).

After Sultan ‘Ala al-Dīn Man§ūr Syah the Bustān takes a different tack and mentions the reign of Makota Buyung under the title Sultan ‘Alī Ri‘ayat Syah ibn Sultan Munawwar Syah. This succession did not run smoothly. Another party under the leadership of ‘Alā al-Dīn Ri‘ayat Syah was in favour of the under age grandson of the assassinated Sultan ‘Alā al-Dīn. This prince was a son of his daughter by the Sultan of Johor destined to sit on the Acehnese throne39. That is the reason why after three years on the throne Sultan Makota Buyung, was assassinated. This Sultan was the ruler of Inderapura’s son, who came to Aceh as a prince to visit his sister, Raja Dewi, who was married to a prince of Aceh40.

After the death of Makota Buyung, however, ‘Alā al-Dīn Ri‘ayat Syah, son of Firmān Syah and grandson of Sultan ‘Inayāt Syāh of the rival dynasty of Dār al-Kamal, seized the sultanate for himself, abandoning his former protégé. The reason European sources tell us that he was very old when he assumed the throne is that he was namely of the generation of Sultan ‘Alā al-Dīn Ri‘ayat Syah al-Qahhār (1539-71). On the throne he assumed the title Sultan ‘Alā al-Dīn Ri‘ayat Syah. During his life he was addressed as Syah ‘Ālam and after his death he was named Sayyīd al-Mukammil.

From Persian to Arabic cultural influence

Persian influence was decreasing during the time Aceh functioned as the Muslim-Malay cultural centre (1524-1900). Nevertheless an Arabic grammer was translated from a Persian original by ‘Abd al- Jamāl in 1582. A manuscript of Acehnese provenance (CodOr 1666) is kept at the Leiden University Library. Furthermore, two well known authors around this time wrote their works by using Persian sources. ‘Amzah Findūrī composed treatises on mystics and created mystical poems in the sixteenth century. And secondly Bukhārī al-Jauhāri also compiled the Tāj al-Salā‹īn (The Crown of Kings, 1603), A Mirror for Kings, by using Persian texts.

European sources depict ‘Alā al-Dīn Sayyīd al-Mukammil as a cruel monarch, perhaps there is some truth in this as they observed his attitude to the Orang Kaya, who had so far been so powerful that they could arbitrarily depose Sultans and choose their successors. However because the stability of his government cultural activities flourished again. Before his reign ‘Amzah Findūrī had already won fame as a great author and mystical poet. It was he who introduced the sya’ir, a metre which he developed from the Malay pantun (already found in Hikayat Raja Pasai), the Persian ghazal (carved on the tombstone Na‘īnā iusām al-Dīn of 1420), and the Arabic syi‘ir. The sya’ir is a quatrain

39 Hoesein Dajjadiningrat, 1911:168.
40 id.                         : 164-65.
ending with –a, –a, –a, –a, which is still popular in Nusantara today. îamzah wrote a number of treatises on mysticism and a great number of mystical poems. His greatest sya`ir is the Sya`ir Burung Pingai which was inspired by the Man-iq a <$ayr by the Persian poet Farid al-Dîn `A<$âr (around 1230). The sya`ir had immediately had a tremendous impact in the Malay world.

By the end of seventeenth century this metre had been used to write the history of a war (Hikayat Perang Mengkasar by Encik Amin). In the eighteenth-century Palembang it became a medium to render Javanese Panji stories into Malay and write romances. In Brunel there is an epic in sya`ir metre. In he nineteenth-century Riau romances with Middle-Eastern background were composed in sya`ir form. In twentieth-century Malaysia pamphlets carrying political protests circulates in sya`ir form. Scholars are not certain of the time this great poet had lived because he never mentions the date of writing in his works, as authors after him did. Syed Naguib al-Attas estimates that îamzah was prolific before and during the reign of `Alâ al-Dîn Ri`ayat Syah Sayyid al-Mukammil (1588-1604)41, Drewes and Brakel opt for around 159042. Until recently this was the general opinion, but an article appears by Guililot and Kalus: La stèle funéraire de îamzah Fanšûrì discloses a report of 1934 on the existence of a grave-memorial of Syaikh îamzah bin `Abdu'llâh al-Fanšûrì at Mecca bearing the date of his death as 152743. Braginsky who had previously written an article in the same journal on the biography of îamzah44 drew the conclusion that it is possible to assume that the poet had frequented the court of `Alâ al-Dîn and was still alive in 1621 (during the reign of Iskandar Muda). He rejects the idea that the grave at Mecca was of îamzah45. Whatever the case may be the fact is that îamzah Fanšûrì irrefutably belongs to the generation of authors who embodied the Pasai tradition, so replete with Persian intellectual and spiritual influence.

`Alâ al-Dîn Ri`yat Syah al-Mukammil’s reign

In the Library of the University of Leiden is a manuscript containing an Arabic grammar in Persian with interlinear Malay translation written by Abdu'l-Jamâl (1582). This manuscript was previously owned by D. van der Vorm (in Indonesia 1688-1731). It is impossible to imagine any origin of this manuscript other than Aceh, the intellectual and spiritual Malay-Islamic centre of that period. Eight years later, in 1590, a Malay interlinear translation from Arabic of the `Aqâ`id of Nasafî (religious treatise) appeared. Naguib al-Attas considers this not surprising, in view of the fact that the translation of the text coincided with Muuammad îamīd al-Ranîrî’s second visit to Aceh (1589). He postulates that this work is a product by one of al-Ranîrî’s pupils46.

Sultan `Alâ al-Dîn reorganized the court ceremonies and trade regulations. This was essential move to cope with the expanding trade with more foreign traders. Besides the Portuguese, other European nations, among them the Dutch, the British, the Frech, and the Danes now sailed to these island worlds to earn money in the spice trade. In his quest for good government, `Alâ al-Dîn commissioned Bukhâri al-Jauharî to compile the Tâj al-Salâ‹în (Crown of Kings), a mirror for princes (1603). Most likely Bukhâri was the last important author who made use of Persian writings for his work during the reign of `Alâ al-Dîn. In his introduction he mentions the following Persian sources he used: Akhlak-i-Muhsînî by îusain Wâ`idz al-Kâsyifî (1494), Tanbîh al-Ghafilîn by Siraj al-Dîn `Ali Khân (1489), Siyâr al-Mulûk by Ważîr Nidzâm al-Mulk (1608?), Tuhfat al-Wuzarâ’,

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43 Guililot, Claude and Ludvik Kalus: 3-24. If this is true Hamzah must have lived during the reign of `Ali Mughâyat Syâh (1516-30).
44 Braginsky, Vladimir I. 1999: 135-75.
45 Braginsky, Vladimir I. 2001: 21-33.
46 Naguib al-Attas 1988: 34.
Kitāb al-Asrār by Abū ʿIamīd ibn Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm Farīd ʿAshār (d. 1230), Māmūd wa Ayāz by Fakhīr al-Dīn ʿAlī Sāfī (d. 1532/34), by Anīsī (d. 1605) or by Zilālī (d. 1593 or 1615). Khusrāw wa Sīrin by Fakhīr al-Dīn Asʿad Iḍāmī, Yūsuf wa Zulaikha either the version by Firdawsī, Abū-l-Muʿayyad or that by Bakhtyārī (tenth c.).

The Tāj al-Salām consists of twenty-four chapters. This treatise remained popular among rulers in Nusantara until the twentieth century. In Java this treatise was reprinted three times in the nineteenth century. There are also Javanese translations of the work. In Yogyakarta and Surakarta this book was not only read and studied by monarchs and dignitaries, but also by common people. In Brunei the edition by P.P. Roorda van Eysinga (1845) was praised in the Syaʾir Rakis by Pengiran Indera Mahkota, who as Vice-Roy of Brunei was ousted from Serawak by James Brooke (1845). `Abdu'llāh bin `Abd al-Qādir Munsyi read T.S. Raffles’ character on the basis of the science of physiognomy as set forth in Chapter 19 of this treatise.

Of these two famous scholars during the reign of `Alā al-Dīn al-Mukammil the Hikayat Aceh mentions only Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai, in his capacity as Syaiḫ al-Islām of `Alā al-Dīn al-Mukammil. He was also the mentor of Iskandar Muda during his childhood. Therefore it was not surprising that, when this prince later became ruler of Aceh, he relied on him as his counsellor.

He was not a qādhī or muftī as many researchers suppose, but a learned man and religious advisor who would sometimes also comment on political matters at the court. He was always present at court ceremonies. As the chief qādhī of the Sultanate was Qadhī Malik al-ʿĀdil.

`Alā al-Dīn’s reign ended in a coup devised by his son, Sultan Muda. After two years reign the Sultan died and Sultan Iskandar Muda came on the throne (1606-36). This ruler was the son of Sultan Muda’s sister Puteri Indera Bangsa married to Mansūr Syah. This prince was the son of Abangta `Abd al-Jāhil, son of Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Rīʾāyat Syah al-Qahhār. With the accession of this Sultan Aceh Dār al-Salām again fell into the hands of the Makota ʿĀlam dynasty, and it was under this ruler Aceh Dār al-Salām reached the apex of its greatness.

Iskandar Muda and the Malay Dependencies

Beaulieu, the French admiral who visited Aceh during his reign, witnessed the strength of Iskandar’s army. At sea he commanded a great number of warships, on land he had the infantry reinforced by elephants. In three places, the harbours of Aceh, Daya, and Pidie, warships were moored. The Bustān enumerates us the series of conquests by Iskandar Muda. In 1612 he annexed Deli, in 1613 he defeated Johor. Thereafter (1614) he sailed to Bintan and in a battle near Baning, he captured many ships and took captive a great number of Portuguese. Then he successively defeated Pahang (1617), Kedah (1620), and Nias (1624/25).

Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai played an important role in the life of Iskandar Muda. He was his teacher and mentor during his childhood and counsellor after he had mounted the

48 the Syaʾir Rakis is written by Pengiran I. Mahkota as a protest against the lenient policy of Brunei towards the British and therefore was assassinated.
49 Winstedt 1939: 96.
50 Iskandar 1959, Hik. Aceh: 164.
51 id. 164-203.
52 Mohammad Said 1961: 181.
53 Hoesin Dajajadingrat 1911: 179.
This learned man was a prolific author and started writing already during the reign of Alā al-Dīn I-Mukammil. His Mirʾāt al-muʾmīn (Mirror for Devotees), a religious treatise was written in 1601. Twelve works can with certainty be attributed to Syāms al-Dīn. There is some doubt about the authorship of seven other works. He has also four treatises in Arabic.

Although īamzah and Syāms al-Dīn both were followers of the heterodox pantheistic mysticism, waúdat al-wujūd, Van Nieuwehuijze described their difference in personality. While īamzah was wanderer in constant search of unity with God, Syāms al-Dīn was more the type of a teacher, a philosopher, a thinker who had the need to fathom the universe. This is why Van Nieuwehuijze considers Syāms al-Dīn as the greatest thinker of his time in the Archipelago.

The Adat Aceh which had been amended during the reign of Alā al-Dīn was enlarged during Iskandar Muda’s rule. He was deeply involved in the compilation of these revised state regulations that his name is now forever inextricably linked to the Adat Meukuta Alam as the Adat Aceh is popularly known. Marhum Makota Alam is the posthumous title of Iskandar Muda. A pious man himself, he also encourage people to be good Muslims and obeying the rules of Islam. He built many mosques, including the Bait al-Raúmān.

The system of government instituted by Iskandar was known as far as Brunei. There is a relationship between the Adat Aceh or Adat Meukota Alam and the Kitāb Risālat al-Marhūm fi `Adat al-Marhūm or Adat Sultan Muúammad īasan. Certain topics and articles are similar. Iskandar’s strong style of ruling was taken by the Brunei ruler as his model. In one place the ‘Adat al-Marhūm says: And it was Sultan īasan whose reign followed the rule of Sultan Makota (Alam). In another place it says of Sultan īasan: He was the ruler of Brunei without any equal except Sultan Makota Alam.

The Bustān recounts that the conquest of Pahang a prince of that country, then seven years old, came to Aceh. He married Iskandar’s daughter Puteri Seri ´Alam. While his only son was still alive the Sultan declared his son-in-law Raja Bungsu his successor in the presence of Syaikh Syāms al-Dīn and other dignitaries. Before he died, unable to tolerate the latter’s misconduct, he had his son put to death. In the history Aceh there are many more cases of a ruler executing a son for reprehensible conduct. Sultan Alā al-Dīn al-Qahhār (1539-71) had his son Abangta Ditangkap executed, according the account the Bustān because he was stronger (cruel?) than his brothers.

In the past it had been the Orang Kaya who had taken the initiative in choosing a foreign-born prince as successor. Their choice was politically motivated. A foreigner would not be likely to have many strong indigenous supporters so that the real power would remain concentrated in their hands. However, in making his choice Iskandar Muda must have had other considerations. He had a great deal of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula under his rule and wanted to sustain this status quo. Would it not be wise to appoint a prince, preferably the strongest of the dependencies, with a lineage stretching back to the rulers of Malacca and Iskandar Dzu’l-Qarnain, as his successor? It seems plausible to conclude that Iskandar Muda’s aim was to consolidate the territory under his rule.

The policy of consolidating Aceh with other Malay states is mirrored in his letter to King James I of England in which he calls himself ruler over territories with which God had blessed him. On the east coast: Lubuk, Pidir, Samarlanga, Pesangan, Pasai, Perlak, Besitang, Tamiang, Deli, Asahan, Tanjung, Panai, Batu Sawar, Perak, Pahang and Inderagiri; and on the west coast the territories Calang, Daya, Barus, Pasaman, Tiku.

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54 Van Nieuwenhuijze1945: 30-31.
55 Id. : 33.
Pariaman, Salida, Inderapura, Selebar, Palembang and Jambi owed him allegiance. With the exception of Palembang and perhaps part Jambi, all these territories for a longer or shorter period were under the sway of Aceh. The goal of Aceh under Iskandar Muda was not only to sustain the rather Malayness as Andaya says, but more than that, his strive was Pan-Malayanism (Pan-Melayu).

The pursuit of this ideal was not always successful. Aceh’s war with Malacca in 1629 ended in a catastrophe. The Acehnese army was destroyed. The Bustān attributes this disaster to the dispute between the two commanders: Orang Kaya Maharaja Seri Maharaja and Orang Kaya Laksamana. Syaikh Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai died in 1630. Iskandar Muda fought his last war to subdue Pahang which with other Malay states sided with the Portuguese in 1635.

Iskandar Thani and the development of culture

After Iskandar Muda’s death, Raja Bungsu came on the throne under the title Sultan Iskandar Thānī ʿAlā al-Dīn Mughāyat Syah (1636-41). At the end of May 1637 Nūr al-Dīn, who hailed from Ranir in Gujrat, arrived in Bandar Aceh Dār al-Salām. He already had three religious treatises in Malay to his name: Sirāt al-Mustaqīm (The Correct Path) which he started writing in 1634 but did not finish, and two other religious treatises: the Durrat al-Farā’idh bī Syarh al-ʿAqāʾid, which he mentions in his next work; the Hidāyat al-īabīb fī'l-Targhīb wa'l-Tarḥīb (1636). Most likely he had written these books in Pahang (Malaysia) before he ever came to Aceh. The first book was finished in Aceh (1644) and became a compulsory textbook at madrasah in the Malay world. This work is until today still used at certain religious schools. In this book he condemns the Hikayat Seri Rama (Rama Story) and the Hikayat Indera Patera as pernicious fables and says that their manuscripts were fit only be used as lavatory paper.

It was probably because of his links with the Pahang royal family that he was held in high esteem by Iskandar Thānī and thus was therefore appointed the successor of Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai. He utterly opposed the pantheistic mysticism of ʿīamzah Fanṣūrī and Syāms al-Dīn. After his debate with ʿīamzah’s and Syāms al-Dīn’s students they were condemned to be burned at the stake.

Immediately after his arrival at the Acehnese court he was commissioned to write the Bustān Salāʾīn which was to become the biggest book in classical Malay literature. In his introduction he mentions that he had used the Arabic sources: ʿAjāʾib al-malakūt (by al-Kisāʿī, eleventh century), Daqāʾiq ʿiaqāʾiq (by Sibt al-Māridīnī, 1484), Mīrsād al-ʿibād (Persian introduction to mysticism by al-Rāzī Najm al-Dīn Dāya, d. 1256; did he use an Arabic translation?), Tafsīr maʿ ʿālim al-tanzīl (by al-Baghawī, d. 1117), Tafsīr al-Wāʿūdī (by Wāʿūdī, d. 1075), Raudhat al-Rayāūn (by al-Yāfiʿī, d. 1367), Uns al-Munqaʿiʿīn (by al-Mawṣili, d. 1233), Raudhat al Manādzīr (by Ibn al-Syiūna, d. 1412), Durrat al-Farāwī (by al-Farāwī, d. 1137), Nuzhat al-Akhyār fī Mahāsin al-Akhbār (by Al-Nawājī, d. 1455), Jawāmiʿ al-Kalim (by al-Muttaqī al-Hindi, d. 1569).

His masterpiece consists of seven books of which the first two books contains world history after the tradition of such Muslim historians as Abū Jaʿfar al-ṣabarī (b. 839) in his Taʿrikh al-Rusul waʾl-Mulūk. Book I recounts the story the creation of Heaven and Earth. Book II then continues with world history beginning with: a) the patriarchs, the prophets and rulers of the earliest period; the history of the Sassanians; the era of Muhammad and the first four Caliphs, the history of the Umayyads and the history of the ʿAbbassides. The Bustān adds to this: b) the history of Hindustan with its capital in Delhi

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57 Andaya 2001: 64-65.
59 Ms. Raffles Mal. 42: 3.
from Sultan Syihāb al-Dīn (1316-21) to Syāh Jahan (1627-1658); c) the history of Malacca and Pahang from Iskandar Dzu'l-Qarnain to Sultan Maūmūd Syah; d) the history of Aceh Dār al-Salām from Sultan `Alī Mughāyat Syah (1516-31) until the accession to the throne of Sultanah `Ināyat Zaqiat al-Dīn Syāh (1678-88).

In its survey of the period of history from the patriarchs up to the `Abassids the Bustān mentions the sources, but those for the history of Hindustan have been omitted. For the history of Malacca and Pahang the author mentions only the Sulalāt al-Salā‹iñ (Sejarah Melayu) by Bendahara Paduka Raja (Tun Seri Lanang) as reference. Again in the chapter on the history of Aceh there are no sources. The Hikayat Aceh must have already been in existence, because it had been written by Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai who was dead by then. He also ignores the Hikayat Raja Pasai even though he had visited that place when he accompanied Iskandar II on a pilgrimage to the graves of its former saints and rulers60. Was this a deliberate oversight as this book contains retellings of such Hindu myths and local legends as the Hikayat Seri Rama? It is noteworthy that many Malay historical works after Ranīrī like the Misa Melayu (History of Perak, 1756-77) or the Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei (Genealogy of Brunei Rulers, 1735), exclude the mythical origins of rulers.

His description of court and other ceremonies is lively. One interesting highpoint is his account of the Taman Ghairah (Garden of Desire). The Bustān relates that it was Iskandar II who laid out a garden with such a name. Through the middle of the garden flowed a river, Dār al-`Isyqi. On its left bank was a square, called Medan Khairani, with marble as gravel. In the middle of this square stood an artificial mound, which bore the name Gegunungan Menara Permata.

The Bustān does not specifically mention that the Gunongan or Gegunungan Manara Permata was built by Iskandar II. It is my believe that the Gunongan already stood there before this ruler planned his garden. All in all the garden was about 1000 fathoms wide, and contain structures as the Gunongan, a mosque called `Isyqi Musyahadah, and a number of pavilions (Balai Cermin Perang, Balai Rekaan Cina, Balai Keemasan, Balai Kumbang Caya). There were such carved stone structures as Kembang Seroja Berkerawang, and Petarana Kembang Berukir. It was also embellished with a fountain in the shape of two dragons. Ranīrī mentions all kinds of trees, including fruit trees. The garden was walled (berdewala). On the side leading towards the palace stood a gate called Pintu Biram Indera Bangsa.

Such a grand and spacious garden could not have been built in the five years reign of Iskandar II. There is also mention of a park in the vicinity the Acehnese palace in the Hikyat Aceh in conjunction with the deposing of Sultan Zain al-`Ābidin (1577). This Sultan was dethroned because he neglected his duties as a ruler, and amused himself in the park by killing any animals which happened to pass by, and destroy the plants. As well as neglecting his duties, he was cruel to people.

Oral history and the Hikayat Malém Dagang (History of Malém Dagang) and Hikayat Meukuta Alam (History of Makota Alam) do tell us that Sultan Iskandar Muda built the Gunongan for his consort, the Princess of Pahang, because she was homesick for the mountains of her native land. The Hikayat Malém Dagang recounts that two princes of the Malay Peninsula, Raja Si Ujut and Raja Radén, brought Putroe Phang to Aceh. They came to Aceh to seek judgement from Sultan Iskandar Muda involving quarrel between them. Iskandar found in favour of Raja Radén, and received from him Putroe Pahang. For her relaxation he built the Gunongan.

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In his article *State and Statecraft in Southeast Asia* Brakel argues that Taman Ghairah displays many features typical for the royal gardens in Java, Bali and Lombok. I would suggest that the garden in Aceh described by the *Bustān* is an Islamic garden as postulated by Christopher Thacker in the chapter on *Persian and Islamic Gardens* of his book *The history of Gardens*. In particular the sketch of Akbar’s Mausoleum made by Peter Mundy shows a strong resemblance.

It seems that Ranīrī was not in favour of a woman ruler as we can observe in the *Bustān*, Book II, chapter 10, in which he describes the enmity between Hārūn al-Rasyīd and the Byzantines. In a letter to Harūn al-Rasyid Nicephorus wrote, according to Ranīrī, that he had deposed the woman ruler of Byzantine (Irene) as she behaved like a pawn in a chess game, because a woman is weak and has less intellect.

**Aceh after Iskandar Thānī**

With the death of Iskandar II (1641) his widow, Safiat al-Dīn, came on the throne. And when an adherent of Syāms al-Dīn of Pasai came back after concluding his studies in the Middle-East. A confrontation broke out between him and al-Ranīrī. In a debate Saif al-Rijāl could rally the crowd behind him. He was summoned by the ruler and met with an appraisal.

An outstanding scholar and prolific author, `Abd al-Ra’ūf of Singkel, became the successor of al-Ranīrī at the court of Sultanah Tāj al-‘Ālam Safiat al-Dīn Syah and remained in this position under the reign of her successor, Sultanah Nūr al-‘Ālam Naqīat al-Dīn Syah. He had written six religious treatises and a mystical *sya’ir*. His two important works are the *Mirāt al-$ulāb*, a supplement to the *Sirāt al-Mustaqīm* by Ranīrī, and the Malay translation of the *Tafsīr al-Jalalain*, Surah 1-10.

However during the reign of the four successive women rulers, whose relation with outside world were restricted, the Orang Kaya were able to again exert their power. After the reign of the last woman ruler a fatwa came from Mecca, which forbade a woman ruler on the throne. Badr al-‘Ālam Syarīf Hāsyim Jamāl al-Dīn, the first Sultan of the Arab dynasty came on the throne. At the death of the fourth ruler of this dynasty (1727) there was again dissension around the succession. For the first time the Three Panglima Sagi intervine by choosing their own candidate. He was Maharaja Lela Melayu, the first ruler of the Bugis dynasty under the title Sultan `Alā al-Dīn Aúmad Syah. Though from time to time there were attempts by claimants from the Arab dynasty to seize the throne, the Bugis dynasty prevailed in maintaining power until Aceh was defeated by the Dutch. Nevertheless, the precedent that the three Panglima Sagi should choose the candidate ruler was never altered.

Assailed by succession disputes and other internal troubles, Aceh’s power economically and politically declined. Nevertheless its literary activities in the field of Islam remained in tact, although at an unassuming level. In the eighteenth century eleven athors whom we know by name produced eighteen religious works. The most important of them, Jalāl al-Dīn bin Muñammad bin Kamāl al-Dīn of Tarusan, was the most prolific. In three other works the authors’ names are not mentioned.

From the nineteenth century only five authors are known. The most prolific of them was `Abbās ibn Muñammad al-Āsyī who has six titles to his name. An anthology of Arabic poems in Malay translation bears no author’s name. `Abdu’llah bin Isma’īl al-Āsyī

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63 See also the painting of a Persian garden of 1396: 26-27 and 30.
64 *Bustān*, MS Raffles 42: 172.
compiled an Arab-Turkish-Malay-Acehnese dictionary which was printed in Mecca (1900).\(^{66}\)

With this dawn of a new century, this paper ends its attempt to give a brief account of the rise and decline of Aceh as a centre of Muslim-Malay culture.

\(^{66}\) I have seen a copy at the Library of the University of Amsterdam, Department of Manuscripts
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