



A NOTE ON ARU AND KOTA CINA*

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During recent years there have been a number of archaeological finds in the Deli region of northeast Sumatra.¹ As a result of these discoveries, and in anticipation of additional finds, we wish to present a synopsis of the written history of the area and to comment on the possible implications of archaeological work now being undertaken for furthering our knowledge of the history of this region.

The Major Archaeological Site under Investigation

In 1972, E. Edwards McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar discovered an archaeological site at Kota Cina, a small village situated about eight kilometers inland from the modern port of Belawan (see Map 3). The occupation area appears to cover more than twenty-five hectares and extends along the edge of silted-up estuarine land adjacent to the Sungei [river] Besar and the Sungei Deli, both of which were navigable from the Straits of Malacca into the late nineteenth century.² The finds at Kota Cina, which will be discussed in some detail later in this essay (p. 20), suggest an occupation period from at least the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The density of ceramic material, coins, and domestic debris at the site is exceptional in Island Southeast Asia,³ and this is one indication that it is an especially signif-

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¹These finds are indicated on Map 2.

²John Anderson, who visited East Sumatra in 1823, was told of various "antiquities" in the Deli region. Old forts were said to be situated at Kota Bangun, Deli Tua, and Kota Jawa; and an inscription on a large stone was reported at Kota Cina. Anderson himself saw only the Kota Jawa earthworks; J. Anderson, *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1826), pp. 28, 269. The Dutch official, J. A. M. Cats, Baron de Raet, also noted the fortress at Deli Tua and reported finding an ancient cannon there. See his "Reize in de Battaklanden in December 1866 en January 1867," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Bataviaasch Genootschap)* (hereafter *TBG*), 22 (1875), pp. 173-74.

³This is the opinion of Ian Glover of the Institute of Archaeology, London: "The abundant and varied finds . . . show that this was a rich and important community, perhaps the principal one on the North Sumatran coast during its period of activity. . . . In terms of its extent, wealth of finds, and conditions of preservation, Kota Cina is a site of very great importance which requires thorough investigation by a well-founded team of field archaeologists"; "Report on a Visit to Archaeological Sites near Medan, Sumatra Utara, July 1975" (Roneoed report, privately circulated),



MAP 2. NORTH SUMATRA

icant site which merits careful attention. In addition, the site contained two seated Buddhas, a fact which may throw light on Indian and Sinhalese relations with Sumatra.

According to local legend, the village was once a busy Indian trading settlement at the edge of the sea. Eventually, however, Chinese arrived, and fighting broke out between them and the Indians. The Indians lost, and ran away. But the Almighty had been angered by the fighting and, as a consequence, the Chinese settlement was overcome by a plague of shellfish. The shells completely inundated the Chinese, getting into everything--into their eyes, their noses, their ears and mouths, filling their cooking pots and rice bowls--until the Chinese could stand it no longer and they, too, ran away. Some fled back to China, but others scattered over Sumatra and disappeared. The Chinese who live in the village now are said to be newcomers, having arrived in the last thirty or forty years.

It is our belief that Kota Cina was a constituent of a state called Aru which appears in Chinese, Arab, and Portuguese sources between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. The purpose of this article is to compare the archaeological and written evidence of the region. The article is divided into four sections. Section I states reasons for identifying the toponym "Aru" with the Kota Cina area. Sections II and III are synopses of the historical and archaeological evidence relating to Aru and to Kota Cina. Section IV attempts to estimate the contribution of the archaeological discoveries to our knowledge of the history of Aru.

I. Identifying the Kota Cina Site in the Historical Record

Students of Sumatran history have suggested three toponyms which might have been located in the vicinity of Kota Cina and the Belawan estuary: Pa-t'a, Pa-lin-feng, and Aru.

Pa-t'a: G. E. Gerini believed that Pa-t'a was Pidada, in North Sumatra, but he noted that it might also have been Bedagē (Bedagai, about sixty kilometers south along the coast from Kota Cina).⁴ Hirth and Rockhill suggested that Pa-t'a might be the country of the Batta.⁵ The Portuguese writer Tomé Pires referred to a kingdom of Bata in the vicinity of Aru which produced rattan, pitch, honey, wax, camphor,

p. 2. See also Bennet Bronson, "The Prehistory and Early History of Sumatra" (Roneoed report, privately circulated, n.d.), p. 7: "The sherds of the . . . Kota Cina [site] in North Sumatra are unusual in both abundance and design complexity. Kota Cina is the only Sumatran site so far discovered that promises to make it possible eventually to use unglazed ceramics to establish connections with artefactual sequences in other areas."

⁴G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia, Further India and the Indo-Malay Archipelago* (London: Royal Asiatic Society and Royal Geographical Society, 1909), p. 627.

⁵F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries Entitled Chu-fan-chi* (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911), p. 66 n. 8.

rice, wine, and fruit.⁶ Chao Ju Kua, who wrote in 1226, noted a Pa-t'a which was a dependency of San-fo-Ch'i (Śrīvijaya). He said little about Pa-t'a but noted that it was "of the same kind" as Tan-ma-ling.⁷ He describes the latter country, the location of which is uncertain,⁸ as having a city surrounded by a palisade two or more meters thick and over six meters high. Its officials lived in wooden houses, the common people in bamboo cottages. The native products were "yellow wax, laka wood, the *su* [variety of *gharu*-wood], incense, ebony, camphor, elephants' tusks, and rhinoceros horns." Imports included porcelain basins and bowls.⁹

Pa-lin-feng: Another possible Chinese toponym for the Kota Cina area is Pa-lin-feng or Pa-lin-p'ing, which Gerini believed was Berembang, in Deli.¹⁰ Berembang is only twenty-two kilometers from Kota Cina. Although Gerini argued against the translation "Palembang," he did not explain why he chose this particular Northeast Sumatran site as its location. Pa-lin-feng, like Pa-t'a, was described by Chao Ju Kua as a dependency of Śrīvijaya,¹¹ but he gave no further details.

Aru: The toponym which can be most comfortably associated with the Kota Cina region is Haru or Aru,¹² which was first mentioned in 1282.¹³ Scholars have disagreed on the location of Aru. While Sir Richard Winstedt uses "Aru" and "Deli" (the name of a post-1600 state which included the Kota Cina district) interchangeably in his *A History of Malaya*,¹⁴ the *Encyclopoedia van Nederlandsch-Indië* suggests that Aru Bay, about seventy kilometers north of Kota Cina, was the seat of Aru.¹⁵

⁶A. Cortesão, trans. and ed., *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944), p. 146. This is also probably the "Batech" of Nicolo Conti; see R. H. Major, ed., *India in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1857), p. 9.

⁷Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 67.

⁸For a discussion of the location of Tan-ma-ling, see P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1966), pp. 66-71, 77.

⁹Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 67. ¹⁰Gerini, *Researches*, p. 628.

¹¹Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 62. There is also a "Palimpang" about seventy-five kilometers north of Lhoksuemawe, where fourteenth to sixteenth century ceramic wares have been found on an eroded river bank.

¹²The "Sejarah Melayu" (Malay Annals) refers to "Haru." There can be no doubt that the two names refer to the same state. As we shall see, the "Sejarah Melayu" and Tomé Pires provide similar accounts of fifteenth-century Aru; Pires uses the spelling "Aru." The letter "h" is often pronounced lightly at the beginning of Malay words, and is sometimes dropped in spelling; M. B. Lewis, *Teach Yourself Malay* (London: The English Universities Press, 1941). "Aru," according to Wilkinson, has the meaning "casuarina-tree; Casuarina equisetifolia." It would not be surprising if Aru were named after a tree; "Melaka" is the name of two trees, *Phyllanthus emblica* and *Tetramerista glabra*; R. J. Wilkinson, *A Malay and English Dictionary* (London: MacMillan, 1959).

¹³See p. below. ¹⁴(Kuala Lumpur: Marican, 1968), p. 289.

¹⁵*Encyclopoedia van Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Hague: Nijhoff/Brill, 1919), 3, p. 142. A twelfth or thirteenth century site has been found at Pulau Kompai in Aru Bay (see Map 3).

At the other extreme, G. R. Tibbetts concludes that "the port called 'Aruh' by the Arabs [was] at the mouth of the Panai river,"¹⁶ which enters the straits some two hundred kilometers south of the Kota Cina site.

The available evidence supports Winstedt. Ma Huan, the Muslim translator who accompanied several of the Chinese "Cheng Ho expeditions" to Southeast Asia early in the fifteenth century, described Semudra (Pasai) as Aru's western neighbor and noted that "great mountains" lie to the south.¹⁷ There are no mountains immediately south of Panai, but the description does fit the more northerly coastal areas of Tamiang and Deli, where the Bukit Barisan are visible from the sea. Similarly, Fei-Hsin, who was also involved in the Cheng Ho voyages, placed Aru opposite the Sembilan Islands, off the coast of Perak.¹⁸ Again, Deli appears to satisfy this specification. The Wu-pei-chih charts, which scholars believe were also a product of the first decades of the fifteenth century,¹⁹ provide further reason for associating Kota Cina with Aru. Indeed, J. V. G. Mills, the most recent editor of these charts, notes, "One has only to observe the curious configuration of the Deli Estuary [where the Chinese place Aru] as it is represented in the Chart . . . and compare it with the map in Anderson's *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra* (1826), to realize that the Chinese appreciated the contour of the bay and were quite capable of delineating an identifiable representation of it on paper."²⁰ A final indication that Kota Cina was a constituent of Aru is found in the "Sejarah Melayu" (the Malay Annals). The chief minister of Aru, the Raja Pahlawan, is said to be the *raja* of what appears to be "Serbanyaman" (S-r-i-b-ny-a-m-n),²¹ which is the Batak term used to describe one of the four *suku* (chief-tainships) of nineteenth-century Deli.²²

¹⁶G. R. Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1971), p. 494. The Padang Lawas temple group is in this region, between the Panai and Baruman rivers (see Map 2); F. M. Schnitger, *The Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra, Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 25 (suppl.) (1937), pp. 16-37. For further discussion of the location of Aru, see J. V. Mills, "Eredia's Description of Malacca, Meridional India and Cathay," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (hereafter *JMBRAS*), 8, 2 (1930), p. 124; J. A. van Rijn van Alkemade, "Een Bezoek aan de Aroe-boai," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* (hereafter *BKI*), 42 (1889), esp. pp. 55, 59, 61; M. O. Parlung, *Tuanku Rao* (Jakarta: Penerbit Tandjung Pengharapan, n.d.), p. 494; and Tengku Luckman Sinar, *Sari Sedjarah Serdang* (Medan: n.p., n.d.), pp. 22ff.

¹⁷J. V. G. Mills, *Ma Huan. Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1970), p. 114.

¹⁸W. P. Groenvelde, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca* (Jakarta: Bruining, 1876), p. 95.

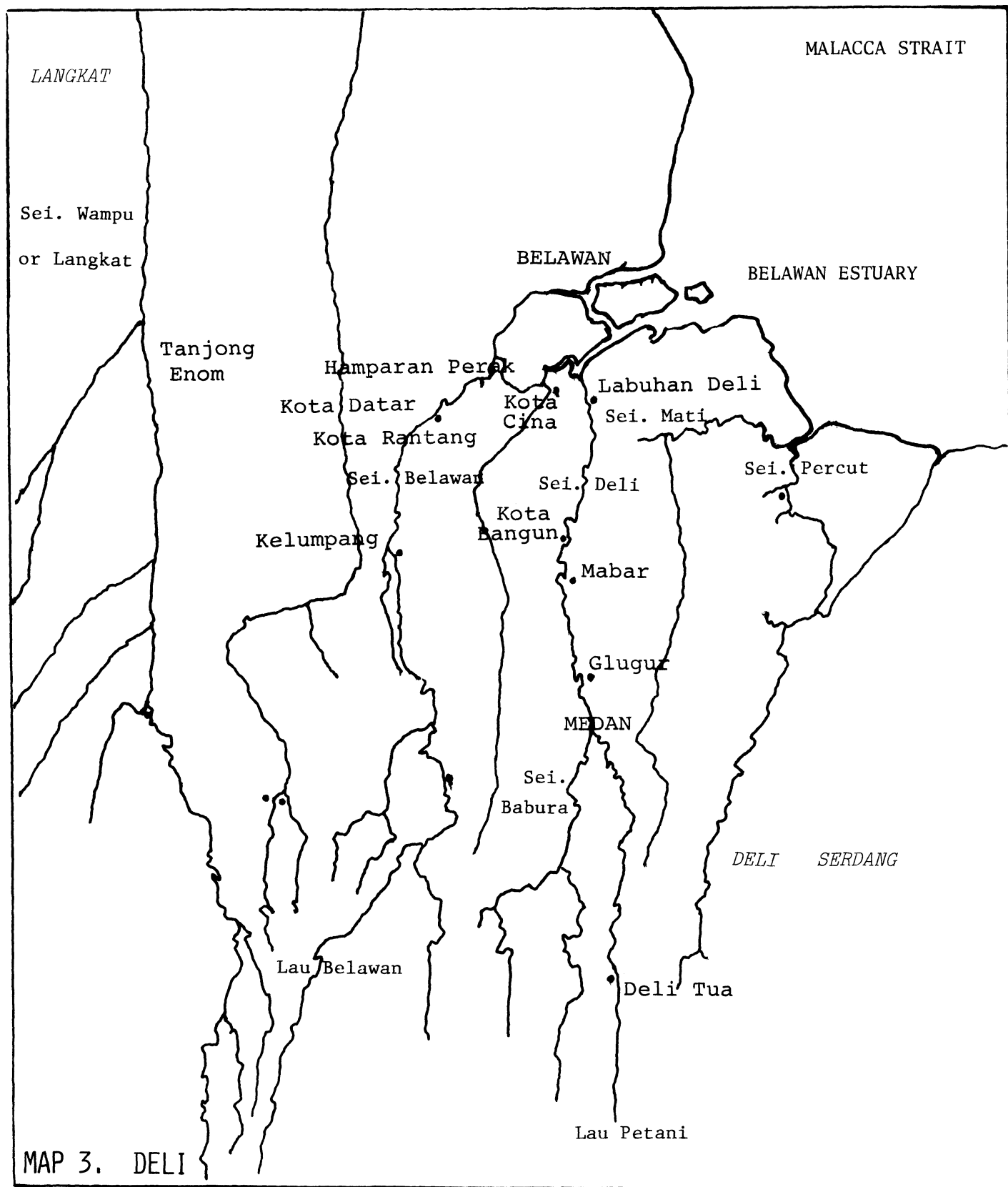
¹⁹J. V. G. Mills, "Malaya in the Wu-pei-chih Charts," *JMBRAS*, 15, 3 (1937), p. 5.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 46. See also Mills, "Malacca," p. 124.

²¹"سري بلمان"; Raffles MS 18, located in the Royal Asiatic Society, London.

Sir Richard Winstedt appears to have misread this word; see his "The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu, the Earliest Recension from MS No. 18 of the Raffles Collection, in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, London," *JMBRAS*, 16, 3 (1938), p. 214.

²²On "Serbanyaman," see H. A. Hijmans van Anrooij, "De Grenzen van de Residentie Sumatra's Oostkust," *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, 2, 1 (1884), p. 321; Luckman, *Serdang*, pp. 118-19. Further encouragement



There are therefore strong arguments for locating Aru in the Deli region, where Kota Cina is situated. We shall see, however, that Aru possessed extensive territories, and, as a consequence, an "Aru period" might have been remembered in the local histories of many places in East Sumatra. Moreover, as shifting capitals were common in the Malay world, it need not be supposed that the rulers of Aru always resided in the Deli region; confusion regarding Aru's exact location may reflect the nature of the polity.

Although Aru was a place of some consequence, it produced no chronicles, and the inscription reported by Anderson in 1873 has not been rediscovered. Unlike Pa-t'a, however, numerous references to Aru are found in Chinese, Middle Eastern, Javanese, and European sources. Because little has been written about the state by present-day scholars,²³ it will be useful to present a short chronological description of its history as revealed in these written records.

II. The Historical Record of Aru

The first reference to Aru appears in Chinese sources. The *History of the Yüan Dynasty* described Aru's ruler as having been ordered to submit to Kublai Khan in 1282, and in 1295 the Aru ruler sent a brother to China with tribute.²⁴ In 1310 the Persian Rasis Ad-Din noted that Aru, Perlak, and Tamiang, all situated on the northeast coast of the island, were "principal towns" in Sumatra.²⁵ During the fourteenth century, the name of Aru is also mentioned in Javanese texts, the veracity of which, however, has been questioned in recent years.²⁶ The

for the view that Aru lay in the Deli region comes from two Dutch accounts. In 1601 Frederick de Houtman wrote of Aru as being some fifty (Dutch) miles beyond Aceh. More than a century later Valentijn described the "Rijk van Delli" as also lying approximately fifty miles from Aceh. "Cort Verhael van Frederick de Houtman" in W. S. Unger, *De oudste Reizen van de Zeeuwen naar Oost-Indie 1598-1604 Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-vereeniging*, 51 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1948), p. 108; F. Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien* (Dordrecht-Amsterdam: Van Braam, 1724-26), 5, p. 10. The Dutch mile was about three English miles; it is not clear where either author considered Aceh's territories to end. Moreover, a Portuguese letter of November 28, 1539 states that Aru is fifty leagues from Malacca. A Portuguese league was (? is) 4.1 kilometers. This description therefore favors Deli rather than Panai or Aru Bay as the location of Aru; L. F. F. R. Thomas, *Os Portugues em Malaca 1511-1580* (Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 1964), 2, p. 306. Finally, it appears significant that not only Aru, but Kompe (presumably Kampai island), Tumihang (Tamiang), and Pane (Panai) are listed as dependencies of Majapahit in the fourteenth-century Javanese text, the "Nāgara-kērtāgama." Aru was evidently not identified primarily with any of these three locations; Th. Pigeaud, ed., *Java in the Fourteenth Century* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), 3, p. 16.

²³Two recent discussions are found in Luckman, *Serdang*, ch. 1, and Mohammad Said, *Atjeh Sepandjang Abad* (Medan: Mohammad Said, 1961), esp. ch. 9.

²⁴O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 44.

²⁵G. Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et textes géographiques arabes, persans et turks relatifs à l'Extrême Orient du VIII^e au XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Leroux, 1914), 2, p. 361.

²⁶See J. G. de Casparis, "Historical Writing in Indonesia (Early Period)," in

"Nāgarakērtāgama" (1365) lists Haru, as well as Pasé, Kampé, Mandahiling, Tumihang, and Sumatra, among the Sumatran tributaries of Majapahit.²⁷ The fifteenth-century "Pararaton" describes Gadjah Mada (the Patih or Chief Minister of Majapahit from approximately 1331 to 1364)²⁸ as having sworn in 1331 to conquer Aru.²⁹

The early records also tell of the area's acceptance of Islam. According to the "Sejarah Melayu" and the Portuguese author Tomé Pires, Aru adopted Islam during the fourteenth century, if not earlier. The "Sejarah Melayu" relates that the ship bringing Islamic missionaries to Sumatra called first at Lamuri (next to Aceh, in the vicinity of Kota Raja):

And the people of Lamuri embraced Islam. And the fakir went ashore taking with him a Koran, which he told the people of Lamuri to read, but not one of them could read it. The fakir then went back on board the ship and the voyage was resumed, until after a time they came to Haru, where all the inhabitants embraced Islam. And the fakir went aboard the ship and returned with a Koran, which he told the people to read but not one of them could read it. And the fakir asked the people, "Where is the country called Semudra?" And they answered, "You have sailed past it." So he went back on board the ship, and they sailed on again until they made a land-fall at Perlak, where the fakir admitted the people to the Faith of Islam. The ship then sailed on to Semudra.³⁰

Pires tended to confirm Aru's importance in the Islamization process when he noted that "the king of Aru had turned Moor before any of the others, even before the king of Pase according to what they say."³¹ The early arrival of Islam in Pasai is attested to in other sources but is difficult to date. In the 1290s, Marco Polo mentioned Muslims in the city of Perlak and simply remarked upon the high quality wine of Pasai;³² yet the gravestone of a Sultan Malik al-Saleh, dated 1297, has been found at Pasai.³³ If the account of Ibn Batuta, the Sultan of Delhi's envoy to China, is accurate,³⁴ Islam was well established

D. G. E. Hall, ed., *Historians of Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 159.

²⁷Pigeaud, *Java*, 3, p. 16.

²⁸G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), pp. 234, 240.

²⁹N. J. Krom, ed., "Pararaton," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap* (hereafter VBG), 62 (1920), p. 36.

³⁰This is C. C. Brown's translation; see "Sējarah Mēlayu or 'Malay Annals,'" *JMBRAS*, 25, 2/3 (1952), p. 42; for the Malay version, see R. O. Winstedt, "Sējarah Mēlayu," *JMBRAS*, 16, 3 (1938), p. 72.

³¹Cortésão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 42.

³²Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 203.

³³J. P. Moquette, "De eerste vorsten van Samoedra-Pase (Nord Sumatra)," *Oudheidkundig Verslag Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch Indië* (hereafter OV) (1913), p. 11.

³⁴Ibid., p. 12. No identifiable thirteenth-century ceramics have yet been found in the immediate area of Samudera-Pasai. So far, all ceramics found there appear to date from the Ming period.

in Pasai by the mid-1340s, as its ruler is described as an adherent of the Shafi sect.³⁵

These accounts of Aru's accepting Islam before Pasai thus place the first penetration of Islam somewhere in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that it was because Aru played an important role on the coast that the state came into early contact with Islam. The fact that the *fakir's* ship sailed directly from Lamuri to Aru³⁶ and had so much trouble finding Pasai, which lay between the two harbors, is further evidence that Aru, like Lamuri, was a prominent state at that time.³⁷

Information regarding Aru becomes far more detailed during the early decades of the fifteenth century. The History of the Ming Dynasty reports that in the year 1411 the ruler Su-lu-Tang Hut-sin (? Sultan Husain) dispatched envoys and tribute to China. During the next year Cheng Ho's expeditions visited the state. In 1419, 1421, and 1423, Tuan A-la-sa (? Tuan Arsat), son of the ruler of Aru, sent envoys and tribute to the Emperor. In 1431, Cheng Ho again sent gifts to Aru, but the latter no longer presented tribute to China.³⁸

The earliest descriptions of Aru that provide any detail were written by Chinese officials who accompanied the Cheng Ho expeditions. The first was that by Ma Huan, a Muslim, who completed his account in 1416 but added more information after his return from the seventh such expedition in 1433. The following is a new translation by J. V. G. Mills:

Setting sail from the country of Man-la-chia [Malacca] and traveling with fair wind, you can reach (this place) in four days and nights. In this country there is an estuary called Fresh Water estuary, where you enter the estuary and come to the capital. On the south there are great mountains; on the north is the great sea; on the west it adjoins the boundary of the country of Su-men-ta-la [Semudra] (and) on the east is flat land.

It is suitable for the cultivation of dry-land rice; (but) the rice-grains are small. Provisions are always obtainable. The people practise agriculture and fishing for a livelihood.

The customs are pure and simple. In this country the marriages, funerals and other such things are all the same as in the countries of Chao-wa [Java] and Man-la-chia [Malacca].

³⁵Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 231.

³⁶Lamuri is described by Chau Ju Kua as a vassal state of Śrīvijaya. Marco Polo visited there and the name is also mentioned in the "Nāgarakērtāgama"; Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 184, 202, 244. See also "The Travels of Friar Odoric of Pordenone (1316-1330)" in H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1908), 2, pp. 146-49.

³⁷Samudera-Pasai may also have been a less attractive harbor than the Deli estuary. Kota Cina was accessible from the Deli estuary; Samudra was a less obvious anchorage upstream on the Krueng-Pasé, south of Lhoksuemawe bay. Also, Ma Huan noted that, on the estuary of Samudera, "the waves are large and ships are constantly sinking"; Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 116.

³⁸Groenveldt, *Notes*, pp. 95-96.

The commodities which they use are few, (but) a cotton cloth called *K'ao-ni*, and rice and grain, oxen, goats, fowls and ducks are very plentiful. Junket is sold in abundance.

The king of the country and the people of the country are all Muslims.

In the mountain-forest there occurs a kind of flying tiger, as large as a cat; the body is covered with ash-coloured hair; it has fleshy wings; like a bat, but the fleshy wing of the front foot grows joined to the back foot; it can fly . . . (but) not far; (and) if people catch it, it will not eat the household food, so it dies.

The land produces such things as yellow *su* incense and *chin-yin* incense. It is but a small country.³⁹

The second author, Fei Hsin, wrote the foreword to his work in 1436. The translation is by Groenveltdt:

Aru is situated opposite to the Sembilan-islands; with a fair wind it takes three days and nights to go there from Malacca.

The customs of the people and the climate differ little from Sumatra. The soil is barren and produces little; the people live chiefly on bananas and coconuts.

Men and women go with the upper part of the body naked⁴⁰ and wear round the lower part a coarse cloth; for their livelihood they fish in the sea, in boats made out of one tree,⁴¹ or they go into the forest to collect camphor and such things.⁴²

The products of the country are crane-nests and camphor, which they sell to foreign traders. In exchange they take coloured silks, earthenware, glassbeads, etc.⁴³

The portrait of Aru presented in these accounts shows that by the early 1400s it was far less important than, for instance, Samudera-Pasai, to which Ma Huan gives a great deal of attention. Moreover, there was evidently little trade at Aru, while at Malacca, according to Ma Huan, there were "twenty bridge-pavilions . . . where all the

³⁹Mills, *Ma Huan*, pp. 114-15.

⁴⁰Karo women often went naked above the waist when working in their fields.

⁴¹The remains of an apparently ancient dugout canoe were reported from Kota Datar in 1971, but were destroyed.

⁴²This statement contradicts the opinion of F. G. Dunn, who writes that in Sumatra, the Peninsula, and Borneo, aboriginal forest peoples were the "primary suppliers of forest products"; *Rain-Forest Collectors and Traders: A Study of Resource Utilization in Modern and Ancient Malaya*, Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Kuala Lumpur, 1975), p. 108.

⁴³Groenveltdt, *Notes*, p. 95. A third text from the Cheng Ho expeditions which deals with Aru is that by Kung Chen; Hsiang Ta, ed., *Hsi yang fan-kuo chih* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu ch'u-pan, 1961). Mills (*Ma Huan*, pp. 5-7) notes that in general Kung Chen follows Ma Huan. Apart from mentioning "yellow thorn incense" and "gold-silver" incense as products of Aru, Kung Chen adds nothing new to the other accounts. For yellow thorn, or yellow *su*, incense, see *ibid.*, p. 106 n. 3; for gold-silver, or *chin-yin*, incense, see *ibid.*, p. 100 n. 5.

trading in every article (took) place."⁴⁴ Later reports imply that Aru's interest turned from commerce to piracy and that in the decades following the Cheng Ho accounts Aru again became a substantial power in the Malay world (see p. 9).

Accounts of Aru's fortunes during the remainder of the fifteenth century are found in Tomé Pires's *Suma Oriental* and in the "Sejarah Melayu." Both sources give most of their attention to the fighting between Aru and Malacca. During the fifteenth century, according to Pires, the quarrel between the two was famous: "Since Malacca began," Pires reports, the ruler of Aru "has always been at war with Malacca and has taken away many of its people. He pounces on a village and takes everything, even the fishermen; and the Malays always keep a great watch for the Arus, because the quarrel is already of long standing and has always remained, whence comes the saying 'Aru against Malacca, Acheen against Pidir . . . etc.,' and all these nations fight one against the other and they are very rarely friends."⁴⁵

Aru did not always fare well against Malacca. Indeed, Pires explained that in the early years of the fifteenth century, soon after the foundation of Malacca, "people began to come (to Malacca) from the Aru side."⁴⁶ Later in the century, Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Malacca (1446-56)⁴⁷ was particularly eager to subdue Aru. He took the "kingdom of Rokan" (south of Aru) from the Aru ruler and "used his powers greatly to see if he could destroy Aru."⁴⁸ Pires explained that Aru was disliked not only because it was seen as an "inveterate pillager," but also because Malacca considered the king of Aru to be "not a true believer in Mohammed."⁴⁹ Sultan Ala'u'd-din (1477-88) was less successful against the "Arus." He "had a quarrel" with them and was "defeated by them at sea."⁵⁰

The rivalry between Aru and Malacca is also described in the "Sejarah Melayu." At least one version of the text admits that Aru was treated with respect, or fear, by Malacca. Letters from Aru, like those from Pasai, were received with full ceremony, because the "Rajas of these two countries were equal in greatness to the Raja of Malacca."⁵¹ In describing the reign of Sultan Mansur (1456-77), the "Sejarah Melayu" related that "no country equalled Melaka, except Pasai and

⁴⁴Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 109. Although trade may well have declined at Aru, it is difficult to accept Fei Hsin's judgment that "the soil is barren and produces little." The Deli-Serdang region has some of the richest soil in Sumatra. But the comment would indeed apply to the Aru Bay area. It is possible that Fei Hsin and Ma Huan were describing different regions.

⁴⁵Cortese, *Suma Oriental*, p. 147.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁴⁷Here and elsewhere the dates for the reigns of the Malaccan sultans are taken from Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, p. 276.

⁴⁸Cortese, *Suma Oriental*, pp. 244-45.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 251. For further comment on sea warfare between Malacca and Aru, see the letters of February 6, 1510, and August 20, 1518, in A. B. de Sa, *Documentação para a História das missões do Padrao do Português do Oriente: Insulindia* (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1954), 1, pp. 22-101.

⁵¹W. G. Shellabear, ed., *Sejarah Melayu or the Malay Annals* (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1950), p. 64.

Haru."⁵² The Malay text gives particular attention to the wars between Malacca and Aru in Sultan Ala'u'd-din's time (1477-88), but its version of events differs from that of Pires. The quarrel, so the text relates, also involved Pasai. Aru sent an embassy to Pasai, but the Pasai authorities insisted on interpreting the letter from the Aru king in a manner which suggested that he was inferior to the ruler of Pasai. Fighting broke out, and Aru attacked Malacca. A battle was fought at sea, and although the Aru fleet was three times the size of Malacca's, the Aru "line of Battle" was broken and its forces returned home. Furious at his defeat, the Aru ruler ordered another attack on Malacca, but his forces were again repelled.⁵³ Regardless of which account is historically correct, it is clear that Aru was a sea power of repute.

Together, Tomé Pires and the "Sejarah Melayu" provide a fragmentary picture of Aru in the latter part of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century. Pires described the Aru he saw in 1515 as "a large kingdom," and its ruler as "the greatest king in all Sumatra."⁵⁴ Along the coast to the south, the "kingdom of Arcat" was his vassal;⁵⁵ and the ruler of Bata, to the north, was the son-in-law of the Aru king.⁵⁶ Aru's territories must also have reached far into the interior: Pires says that "some of the land of Aru is in the land of Menangkabau,"⁵⁷ a general term which he used to describe the Sumatran hinterland and which included the Batak as well as the Menangkabau.⁵⁸ Although its ruler was "the greatest king in all Sumatra," Aru, unlike Malacca or Pasai, was not recognized as a commercial center. Pires does mention that it had "a few merchants,"⁵⁹ and he notes that there were some Aru traders in Malacca.⁶⁰ Several products were also available in Aru--"edible camphor in good quantities"; gold,⁶¹ "a great deal of benzoin," and good apothecaries' lign-aloes; rattan; pitch;⁶² wood; honey; and slaves.⁶³ As in Ma Huan's time, Aru still had "plenty of rice," "plenty of meat, fish and wines," and "fruit in great abundance."⁶⁴ Not all the Aru merchandise was sold in Aru itself; some

⁵²Ibid., p. 124. ⁵³Winstedt, "Sejarah Melayu," pp. 145-47.

⁵⁴Corteseo, *Suma Oriental*, pp. 146-47. ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 148.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 145-46. ⁵⁷Ibid., p. 148. ⁵⁸Ibid., p. 164.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 148. ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 268.

⁶¹Gold may have come from Langkat; see Anderson, *Mission*, p. 247.

⁶²Early in the seventeenth century Commodore Beaulieu noted that at "Dely there is a Fountain of Oil which is said to be unextinguishable when once it is set on Fire"; "The expedition of Commodore Beaulieu to the East-Indies," in John Harris, *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca: or, A Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels etc.* (London: Woodward, 1744), p. 742. Beaulieu does not say in which part of Deli the "Fountain of Oil" existed. The modern source of petroleum in the region is in the Aru Bay area, to the north of Deli, and political connections may have existed between the two regions in Beaulieu's time.

⁶³Slaves were perhaps the bounty of war among the Batak. For a useful Dutch report on slavery in the region during the nineteenth century, see E. Netscher, Resident Riau, to Gov. Gen., December 12, 1865, in Gov. Gen. to Kol., July 9, 1866, W7/Y Kabinet 5985 (Dutch Colonial Archives, Schaarsbergen).

⁶⁴When Anderson visited Deli (1823), he commented on the abundance of bamboo, fruit, wood, and fish; *Mission*, pp. 278-88.

was exported "by way of" Pasai and Pedir to the north, and through Baros on the west coast.⁶⁵ But Pires emphasizes that Aru was "not rich through merchandise and trade."⁶⁶ It was not a trading kingdom, its *prahu* (sailing canoes) being built more "for speed than for taking cargo."⁶⁷ The ruler, according to Pires, sought plunder, not commerce. He lived in the marshy hinterland which was difficult to penetrate, and "his mandarins and his people" went "robbing at sea," and "shared [the booty] with him," because "some part of the Armada was paid by him."⁶⁸

Culturally, Aru appears to have had many of the trappings of a Malay state. As we have seen from the Chinese sources, it was Muslim and was ruled by a sultan. According to the "Sejarah Melayu," its officials were designated by such familiar Malay titles as "Raja Pahlawan" and "Sri Indera."⁶⁹ But there are strong indications that non-Malay traditions played an important role. As noted above, Pires recorded how in the mid-fifteenth century the ruler of Aru was thought by some to be "not a true believer in Mohammed," and the "Sejarah Melayu" implies that Islam was less strictly observed in Aru than in Pasai. On finding that the people of Aru, having adopted Islam, were unable to read the Koran, the proselytizing fakir declared: "Where is the country called Semudra?" Once Semudra's ruler had been converted, however, he was able to read the Koran. In the sixteenth century, Aru's reputation as an Islamic state was certainly in question, for Barbosa, writing in approximately 1518, referred to "heathen Aru" with its "eaters of human flesh."⁷⁰

Some insight into the nature of Aru may be gained through the clarification of a short passage in the "Sejarah Melayu." In Brown's translation of the text, it is recounted that "the Raja of Haru in the time of Sultan Ala'u'd-din of Malacca" (1477-88) was Maharaja'diraja, who was "a son of Sultan Sajak who traced his descent from the Rock." The Shellabear edition of the "Sejarah Melayu," according to Brown, adds, ". . . the Rock which seemed to be upstream if one was descending the stream and downstream if one was going up."⁷¹ Another translation of the passage is possible, however. The term which Brown transcribes as "batu" (rock) may also be rendered "bata." Jawi script contains no vowels,⁷² and the last letter can therefore be either "a" or "u." "Bata" in this case would probably refer to the non-Islamic Batak people of the interior. Therefore, the expression "from the *bata* which seemed to be upstream if one was descending the stream and downstream if one was going up" ("daripada bata hilir di-kata hulu, bata hulu

⁶⁵Corteseão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 148.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 147. See also Barros's comment that "the port of Aru was not so well known among the Portuguese as Pacem" (Pasai); M. Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from João de Barros' *Decadas Da Asia*," *Indonesia*, 9 (April 1970), p. 150.

⁶⁷Corteseão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 148.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 147.

⁶⁹Winstedt, "Sĕjarah Mĕlayu," p. 145.

⁷⁰*The Book of Duarte Barbosa* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1921), p. 188. They may have been cannibals by reputation but not in fact; E. M. Loeb says that the Karo Batak were not cannibals. See his *Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 34. See also Anderson, *Mission*, p. 222.

⁷¹Brown, "Sĕjarah Mĕlayu," p. 120.

⁷²Winstedt, "Sĕjarah Mĕlayu," p. 145.

di-kata hilir")⁷³ would be translated as, "from the Batak who were considered downstream people by the upstream people, and upstream by the downstream people." Upstream people, in Malay terminology, are generally "less civilized" people than those living downstream.⁷⁴ The passage is perhaps the Malay way of describing a marginal people who have at best only partially embraced the coastal Malay culture.⁷⁵

This interpretation of a passage from the "Sejarah Melayu" agrees with the description of northeast Sumatra in Portuguese accounts. At least in the early sixteenth century there appears to have been an expansion of Malay Muslim culture in the region. Pires explains that "in these kingdoms there are in the island of Sumatra, those on the sea coast are all Moors on the side of the Malacca channel, and those who are not yet Moors are being made so every day, and no heathen among them is held in any esteem unless he is a merchant."⁷⁶ Moreover, Barros, writing later in the century, noted that the "heathen" on this coast all spoke Malay as well as their own language.⁷⁷ Evidently the Aru people, like those in neighboring states, were undergoing a process of cultural change which involved the adoption not only of Islam, but also the language and probably the customs of coastal Malays. It was a process which continued into the nineteenth century, when Karo, Sime-lungan, and other Batak were reported as having adopted Malay religion and customs.⁷⁸ For example, the chiefs of the nineteenth-century Deli

⁷³Shellabear, *Sējarah Mēlayu*, p. 144.

⁷⁴See, for instance, the comments of H. Clifford, *The Further Side of Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1927), pp. 105, 112.

⁷⁵It is also possible that this passage may be translated as, "the Batak who when they are going downstream, say they are going upstream, and when they are going upstream, say they are going downstream." Unlike the Malay, Batak determined the right and left sides of a river by facing downstream rather than upstream. See, for instance, Resident Riau to Gov. Gen., July 19, 1873, *Mail Rapporten* 31, 1874 (Schaarsbergen). The authors are grateful to Arthur Godman, with whom A. C. Milner discussed this passage from the "Sejarah Melayu." In a recent study, Masri Singarimbun notes that the Karo lowland people in general were considerably influenced by Malay culture; among the highland Karos, further inland, the Karo *adat* is stronger; see his *Kinship, Descent and Alliance among the Karo Batak* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 11.

⁷⁶Cortese, *Suma Oriental*, p. 143.

⁷⁷Dion, *Decadas Da Asia*, p. 143.

⁷⁸For reports of Batak "becoming" Malay see, for instance, Kontrolleur Kroesen to Resident Riau, November 14, 1872, *Mail Rapporten* 818 (Schaarsbergen); M. Joustra, "Karo-Bataksche Vertellingen," *VBG*, 5, 1 (1907), p. 90; and H. H. Bartlett, "A Batak and Malay Chant on Rice Cultivation with Introductory Notes on Bilingualism and Acculturation in Indonesia," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 96, 6 (1952), pp. 629-52. The advance of Malay culture may well have suffered setbacks. The "Hikajat Ketoeroenan Radja Negeri Deli" (a typed manuscript which is located at the Instituut voor de Tropen, Amsterdam), pp. 192-94, mentions a period in Deli's history when the state was ruled by a Radja Karau (presumably a Karo Batak), who tyrannized the people until the return of the true Malay ruler. This tale appears to refer to the eighteenth century; and indeed in Alexander Hamilton's time (the 1720s), Deli may have been predominantly a Batak state, for the inhabitants there were "said to be cannibals"; A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies* (London: Argonaut Press, 1930), 2, p. 67.

province of Hamperan Perak, like the ruler of Aru, traced their descent from Batak.⁷⁹

In the early sixteenth century Aru had three obvious rivals: the Portuguese, who had conquered Malacca in 1511; the former Sultanate of Malacca, which was now based at Bentan; and Pasai, which had attracted many of the Muslim and Indian merchants who had once called at the Malay Malacca.⁸⁰ Aru quickly established good relations with the Portuguese. Aru's ruler went to Malacca, saying he was, in Pires's words, a "slave" of the Portuguese king.⁸¹ Also, Barros later remarked that the Portuguese had "received many favors" from the Aru ruler.⁸² Barros's account indicates that the Aru king ruled Pasai for a short time but was killed by the Pasai people.⁸³ In 1521, however, with the assistance of the Portuguese, Aru sacked Pasai, slaughtering thousands of its subjects.⁸⁴

Aru pursued a less aggressive policy toward its old enemy, Sultan Mahmud, the former Sultan of Malacca. The "Sejarah Melayu" relates that Sultan Husain of Aru, whose strength and valor are described as being more admirable than his manners, traveled to Bentan to seek the hand of the daughter of Sultan Mahmud: "Sultan Mahmud accepted him as a suitor to the hand of Raja Puteh" only after the Aru ruler's "war chiefs came continuously from Aru to join him." "Every day," remarked the Malay author, "brought a ship or two ships. And they all gathered together in number a hundred."⁸⁵

We have no account of this event from Aru's point of view, but the "Sejarah Melayu" provides a hint of how it may have been understood in the Malay world at the time. After the marriage, the ex-Sultan of Malacca is said to have presented his daughter with "jewelry and regalia beyond counting . . . he gave to her everything that he used or wore, so that there remained . . . nothing but a bowl of gold alloy

⁷⁹See "Riwayat Hamperan Perak" (typed manuscript in the possession of Tengku Luckman Sinar). Local traditions relating that Aru was a Batak state also exist. See Van Rijn van Alkemade, "Ein Bezoek," p. 61. Also, place names such as "Kota Bangun" and "Belawan" testify to Karo influence down to the coastal areas of Deli. "Kota Bangun" is said to be associated with the Bangun subdivision of the Perangin-angin clan; "Belawan" appears to originate from a Karo word, *erbelawan*, "to make an agreement or oath."

⁸⁰See Barros's comment on how Pasai attracted such traders; Dion, *Decadas Da Asia*, p. 145. See also Pires (Cortezão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 142), and "Commissionary Justin Schouten's Report of His Visit to Malacca," in P. A. Leupe, "Capture of Malacca from the Portuguese," *JMBRAS*, 14 (1936), p. 100. Pidir and Aceh were also important states, but they were engaged in war with one another in the early 1520s; Djajadiningrat, "Atjeh," p. 147.

⁸¹Cortezão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 282.

⁸²Dion, *Decadas Da Asia*, p. 100.

⁸³Ibid., p. 147.

⁸⁴Ibid., and Faria y Sousa, *The Portugues Asia on the History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese* (Westmead: Gregg International Publisher, 1971 [orig. pub. 1695]), 1, p. 243. The Aru ruler evidently attempted to repay the Portuguese for their assistance when the latter were expelled from Pasai in 1522, but his four thousand men arrived after the Portuguese had already retreated; F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India* (London: Frank Cass, 1966 [orig. pub. 1894]), 1, p. 357.

⁸⁵Winsteadt, "Sejarah Melayu," pp. 206-10.

. . . and the bedragoned sword of Kingship." So much did the sultan give his daughter that the *bendahara* was worried that there would be "nothing left" for the old man's heir.⁸⁶

The Aru ruler, it would appear, obtained a great deal in Bentan. As we have seen, Malacca viewed Aru as something of an uncouth pirate state. The "Sejarah Melayu" records that when Husain visited Bentan he rudely turned his back on Sultan Mahmud and that he later told his mother that the dishes of Bentan "are four times the size of ours."⁸⁷ Aru was evidently a cultural backwater by Malay standards. But with a powerful fleet, and having razed Pasai, its ruler obtained both the daughter and much of the regalia of the man who represented the ancient Malay family which once ruled Malacca. Husain would no longer be seen as a half-civilized prince on the frontier of Malay culture; he may even have hoped to become master of the Malay empire against which former kings of Aru had struggled for a century.

These events must have occurred before 1526, for in that year the Portuguese drove Sultan Mahmud from Bentan. In the early 1520s, therefore, Aru would have been one of the most powerful states on the Straits of Malacca,⁸⁸ and its ruler evidently harbored lofty ambitions. Aru soon met opposition, however, from the developing north Sumatran state of Aceh. The Portuguese archives contain information on two Acehnese attacks on Aru in 1539.⁸⁹ F. M. Pinto, whose observations have been treated with suspicion by historians,⁹⁰ also mentions an Acehnese attack about this time, and adds that Aru unsuccessfully requested the assistance of Portuguese Malacca. Aceh won the war, and the Aru king was killed. His queen, so Pinto relates, sought the help of both Malacca and its former Malay rulers.⁹¹ We do not know to which

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 209.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 208, 210.

⁸⁸Published records do provide a little more information regarding Aru at this time. A missionary document of August 20, 1518, for instance, refers to an attack by Aru on Panai. The Aru forces were repelled, but only with Portuguese assistance; see De Sa, *Insulinidia*, 1, p. 101. The Acehnese appear to have conquered Aru in 1523, but by 1528 Aru was able to attack her former conquerors with a force of 150 *lanchara* (small, swift vessels). This second battle was indecisive, and the Portuguese disappointed the Aru ruler by not supporting him; Tomas, *Os Portugues em Malaca*, 1, pp. 99, 110-11, and 2, p. 248. By the late 1520s, there is little sign of the earlier friendship between Aru and the Portuguese. Portuguese records indicate that the Aru ruler even planned to join Aceh in an attack on Malacca; see Faria y Sousa, *Portugues*, 1, p. 382, and Danvers, *Portuguese in India*, 1, pp. 408-9. Finally, Aru's reputation for attacking and plundering such states as Pasai was well established in the time of Aceh's Sultan Salah ud Din (1530-39); see T. Iskandar, ed., *De Hikajat Atjeh, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, and Volkenkunde*, 26 (1958), pp. 80ff. We may learn much more about this period of Aru's history when further research has been carried out in the Portuguese archives in Lisbon and Goa.

⁸⁹I. A. McGregor, "Johor Lama in the Sixteenth Century," *JMBRAS*, 2 (1955), p. 82 n. 133.

⁹⁰See the comments by I. A. McGregor in "Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia" in Hall, *Historians*, p. 195, and by C. R. Boxer, "Some Portuguese Sources for Indonesian Historiography," in Soedjatmoko, ed., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 224.

⁹¹H. Cogen, ed., *The Voyages and Adventures of Fernand Mendez Pinto, the Portuguese* (London: Dawsons, 1969 [orig. pub. 1653]), pp. 26ff.

queen Pinto is referring, but it is possible that she was Sultan Mahmud's daughter, who married Sultan Husain. The queen's appeals were successful, and in 1540 Johor (the heir to the former Malaccan and Bentan kingdoms) defeated the Acehese fleet at Aru.⁹²

In 1564, however, according to Pinto, Aceh again conquered Aru.⁹³ Aru now appears to have been incorporated as an Acehese province. The Acehese text "Bustanu's-Salatin" relates that a son of Sultan Alaaddin of Aceh (1537-71)⁹⁴ was made "Raja" in "Ghori, that is, Aru" ("Ghori, iaitu Haru").⁹⁵ Also, the Portuguese author D. Couto notes that a ruler of Aru, who was the eldest son of the Acehese sultan, died at Malacca in 1568.⁹⁶ The location of Ghori is uncertain. In maps of the seventeenth century it is generally placed north of Aru,⁹⁷ but the toponym does not appear to have survived.

Again, with the assistance of Johor, Aru was soon free of Aceh. The "Hikajat Atjeh" tells how during the reign of Sultan Ala'u'd-din 'Riayat Sjah Marhum Sayyid al-Mukamil (1589-160?) Ghori "turned away from Aceh" ("paling dari Atjeh") and sought the help of a rajah of Johor.⁹⁸ European authors confirm this tale. J. Davis, writing in 1599, noted that Aru "Holdeth with the King of Ior [Johor] and refuseth subjection" to Aceh.⁹⁹

⁹²Ibid.; see also McGregor, "Johor Lama," p. 82. Faria y Sousa states that "the afflicted widow went to the king of Ujantana, then at Bintan, who . . . offered Assistance, and married her, to have the better title to the kingdom of Aaru" (*Portugues*, 2, p. 6). The events of 1539-40 may be reflected in the tale of Puteri Hijau, which is well known in East Sumatra: Puteri (Princess) Hijau is sought as a bride by the Sultan of Aceh and the latter conquers her kingdom, which is based at Deli Tua (twenty-five kilometers up the Deli river from Kota Cina). Puteri Hijau, however, is unhappy and escapes; see A. Rahman, *Sja'ir Puteri Hidjau* (Medan: Pustaka Andalas, 1962). For further discussion of the Puteri Hijau story, see W. Middendorp, "Oud Verhalen; een nieuwe Geschiedbron," *Feestbundel uitgegeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap* (Weltevreden: Kolff, 1929), 2, pp. 164-76; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Verspreide Geschriften* (Bonn: Schroeden, 1925), 5, pp. 375-83; and Singarimbun, *Kinship, Descent and Alliance*, pp. 6-7.

⁹³In one edition of Pinto, 1564 is cited, in another, 1574. Djajadiningrat believes that 1564 was the correct date, because Couto records the death in 1568 of one of the Sultan of Aceh's sons, who held the title "Sultan of Aru" ("Atjeh," p. 154 n. 6). Faria y Sousa gives 1564 as the date of Aceh's conquest of Aru (*Portugues*, 2, p. 7).

⁹⁴Acehnese reign dates in this article are taken from Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*.

⁹⁵T. Iskandar, ed., *Bustanu's-Salatin Bab 11, Fasal 13* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966), p. 32.

⁹⁶H. Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht van de in Maleisch werken vervatte gegevens over de geschiedenis van het Soeltanaat van Atjeh," *BKI*, 65 (1911), p. 155.

⁹⁷See, for instance, the map in Thomas Bowrey, *A Dictionary English and Malayo; Malayo and English* (London: author, 1701); Joannes Blaeu's map of 1648 and a French map of 1708 [maps nos. 6 and 10 in O. W. Wolters, "Landfall on the Palembang Coast in Medieval Times," *Indonesia*, 20 (1975)], and Sir Robert's map of 1750, British Museum map no. CXVII 31. It may be significant that a "Marhum Guri" is listed among the rulers of Langkat (just above the Deli region) in the *Tambo Langkat*; Said, *Atjeh*, p. 315.

⁹⁸T. Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, p. 72.

⁹⁹J. Davis, "A briefe relation of Master John Davis," in S. Purchas, *Purchas*

By the latter part of the sixteenth century Aru appears to have been a pawn in the struggle between Johor and Aceh rather than a principal actor in the politics of the Malay world. In the opening years of the seventeenth century, however, Aru suffered its worst and final blow from Aceh. Sultan Iskandar Muda, whose rule in Aceh began in 1607, declared in a letter of 1613 that he had taken "seventie elephants and provisions carried by sea" to Aru where "God gave [him] more victory than any of [his] predecessors."¹⁰⁰ An English letter of 1614 also notes that both "Gouri" (Ghori) and "Ara" "belongeth to the king of Achin."¹⁰¹ This seems to be the only evidence regarding the conquest of Aru, but the records contain numerous references to the collapse of a state called Deli. The "Bustanu's-Salatin" (which was written after the death of Iskandar Muda),¹⁰² for instance, notes that Deli submitted to Aceh in 1612 (1021 A.H.),¹⁰³ and Iskandar Muda referred to himself as "Subduer and Governor" of Deli in a letter written in 1621.¹⁰⁴ In 1615 (1024 A.H.), the Acehnese ruler listed the rajah under his authority in a letter he sent to King James of England: he included Besitang (in the Aru Bay area), Tamiang, Deli, and Asahan, and noted that numerous states were subject to Deli.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Commodore Beaulieu reported in about 1620¹⁰⁶ that Deli, although a "place of great strength," "fortified by the assistance and connivance of the Portuguese," and defended by "a Person of great valour and reputation," was defeated by the King of Aceh in six weeks. One hundred elephants were used in the attack and trenches were dug around the fortress.¹⁰⁷

Deli and Aru seem to have been different names for the same area. If Deli were a separate kingdom, it surely would have been listed in earlier records, especially since it was strong enough to resist Acehnese military strength for several weeks. Also, if Iskandar Muda had subdued both Deli and Aru, he could be expected to list both among his dependencies. Significantly, the conquest of Aru is mentioned in the two earlier sources (1613 and 1614), but it is Deli which is named in

his Pilgrimes (London: Stansby, 1625), p. 123. See also W. Warwijck, quoted in Djajadiningrat, "Atjeh," p. 171. In 1601, Aru is also mentioned by De Houtman, but Aru's relationship to Aceh is not made clear; "Cort Verhael van Frederick de Houtman," p. 108.

¹⁰⁰The letter is reproduced in T. Best, "A Journal of the Tenth Voyage . . ." in Purchas, *His Pilgrimes*, 1, p. 468.

¹⁰¹W. G. Maxwell, ed., "A Letter of Instructions from the East India Company to Its Agent, circa 1614," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (hereafter *JSBRAS*), 54 (1907), pp. 77, 90.

¹⁰²See T. Iskandar, "Three Malay Historical Writings in the First Half of the 17th Century," *JMBRAS*, 40, 2 (1967), p. 52.

¹⁰³T. Iskandar, *Bustanu's Salatin*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴Translated in "The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu," p. 736.

¹⁰⁵"Raja yang mengampukan raja-raja yang berratus-ratus daripada pihak mashrak, yang dalam negri yang t'alok ka-Deli"; W. G. Shellabear, "An Account of Some of the Oldest Malay MSS Now Extant," *JSBRAS*, 31 (1898), pp. 125, 127. Shellabear mistakenly gives 1612 as the equivalent of the Muslim date 1024 A.H.

¹⁰⁶D. Lombard, *Le Sultanat d'Atjeh au Temps d'Iskandar Muda 1607-1636* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1967), pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁷"The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu," pp. 743, 745.

later accounts.¹⁰⁸ It is possible that soon after his victory Sultan Iskandar ordered that the name "Aru" no longer be used. His statement that he had more success than his predecessors indicates Iskandar Muda was well aware that Aru had long been a problem for the rulers of Aceh.¹⁰⁹ We know that the destruction of Aru involved removing large numbers of its subjects, for Beaulieu reports that 22,000 people were brought to Aceh from Deli and other places which Iskandar conquered.¹¹⁰ The Acehnese sultan evidently planned to crush Aru, and he may have intended not only to depopulate the state but to obliterate its name.¹¹¹ It was many years before the Aru region of East Sumatra again appears in the records, and when it does so it is as a new state, Deli, whose rulers do not ever refer to Aru in their genealogies.¹¹²

The name Aru survived, however, in various forms. European maps¹¹³ and accounts¹¹⁴ of the seventeenth century continued to use "Aru" in reference to a large part of the northeastern Sumatran coast. There is an Aru Bay some seventy kilometers above Deli, and the Aru Islands lie between the Sumatran coast and Cape Rachado. In the Panai region there is a *suku* Aru, and a Batak *marga* in Asahan is known as Haro. Finally, it may be more than a coincidence that the Batak people in the hinterland of Deli are referred to as "Karo."¹¹⁵ As Bataks once entered and adapted to the Malay Muslim world of Aru, some of them may have reverted to their old customs when Aru was destroyed--similar processes occurred after the destruction of the Malay sultanates in 1946.¹¹⁶

Such is the history of Aru as found in readily available written sources. The archaeological evidence discovered in recent years has been discussed in a number of articles,¹¹⁷ but it will be helpful to

¹⁰⁸The "Hikajat Aceh," like the "Bustanu's Salatin," refers to Acehnese relations with Aru/Ghori, but only in reference to the period before Iskandar Muda became sultan. In both texts, Iskandar Muda is said to conquer Deli, and Aru is not mentioned during his reign. Deli is mentioned in T. Iskandar, *Hikajat Atjeh*, pp. 153, 162, and in idem, *Bustanu's Salatin*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹The last pages of the "Hikayat Aceh" also make clear the longstanding nature of Aceh's problems with Aru, and later with Ghori.

¹¹⁰"The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu," p. 748.

¹¹¹B. Andaya informed the authors that in Perak place names were changed when it was felt that they caused ill fortune.

¹¹²The genealogy of the royal family is related in the "Hikajat Ketoeroenan Radja Negeri Deli" (see n. 78). See also Luckman, *Serdang*, lampiran 17.

¹¹³See, for example, Joannes Blaeu's map of 1648 cited in n. 97.

¹¹⁴Wouter Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie* (Amsterdam: J. Meurs, 1676), p. G47. In the eighteenth century, F. Valentijn also wrote of the Malays of Haru; D. F. A. Hervey, trans., "Valentijn's Description of Malacca," *JSBRAS*, 13 (1884), p. 64.

¹¹⁵Said, *Atjeh Sepandjang Abad*, p. 151. In the Karo language the "h" and "k" appear to be interchangeable.


¹¹⁶One former Malay sultan told two of the authors in 1973 that his former subjects now cited Batak *marga* names when questioned about their identity.

¹¹⁷E. Edwards McKinnon, "Kota China: A Site with T'ang and Sung Period Associations," *Sumatra Research Bulletin*, 3, 1 (1973), pp. 47-52; E. Edwards McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar S.H., "Notes on Further Developments at Kota China," *Sumatra*

present a brief itemization of these finds before discussing their significance for our understanding of the development and character of the Aru state.

III. Archaeological Evidence

Kota Cina

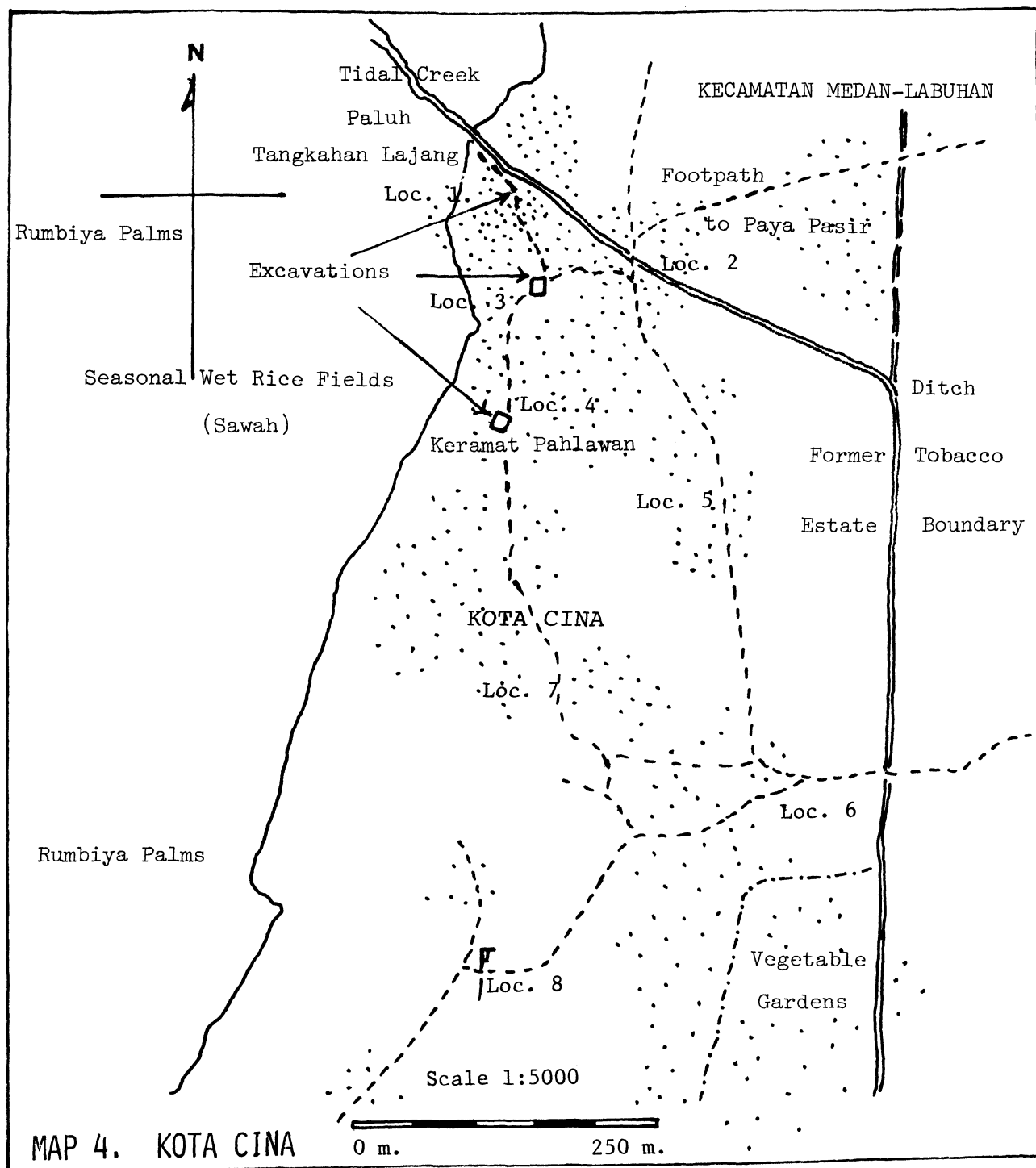
Brick Structures: These have been found at three Localities on the Kota Cina site, two of which are as yet unexcavated.¹¹⁸ At Locality 3, however, three brick structures have been partially excavated: a square building (12.5 meters square); a rectangular building (14 by 6.8 meters) directly to the south of the first building; and a small (2.8 by 1.5 meters) hollow construction six meters from the southwest corner of the first building. The walls of the larger buildings have a maximum of sixteen courses, often less. The absence of large amounts of rubble suggests that their original height may have been 60-70 centimeters. Moreover, the lack of crossties to strengthen the walls indicates that, in the manner of much building in modern Sumatra, this brickwork probably formed the base for a light timber superstructure.¹¹⁹ The small hollow construction southwest of the square building consists of fourteen courses of stepped brickwork. At the foot of this pyramidal structure, between the bricks of the lower course, tiny fragments of gold leaf were found, one stamped with the Chinese characters feng ch'in (). The gold may represent a votive offering hidden in the brickwork, suggesting that this construction was a small shrine or the base of a stupa. The bricks at Kota Cina are distinctively uniform and are similar to bricks of the temples in Padang Lawas (Portibi, Bahal 1, 2 and 3);¹²⁰ the Kota Cina bricks made in two sizes (22 by 14 by 4 centimeters and 25 by 14 by 4 centimeters).

Research Bulletin, 4, 1 (1974), pp. 63-86; E. Edwards McKinnon, "Research at Kota Cina," *Archipel*, 14 (1977), pp. 19-32; and idem, "Oriental Ceramics Excavated in North Sumatra," *London Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 41 (1978).

¹¹⁸The Pusat Penelitian Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional (PPPN, the National Archaeological Institute) has despatched a team led by Hasan Ambari to carry out investigations in Kota Cina during 1977, following up on discoveries made by McKinnon and Tengku Luckman Sinar.

¹¹⁹The technique of mixed timber and brick construction has also been found in buildings excavated in Padang Lawas and Kedah. See, for example, A. Lamb, "Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat: Some Additional Notes," *Federation Museums Journal* (hereafter *FMJ*), 6 (1961), p. 2.

¹²⁰A careful comparison of the Kota Cina structures with those of Padang Lawas and Kedah, for example, could be enlightening. On Padang Lawas, see F. M. Schnitger, "The Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 30 (1937), pp. 16-37, and F. D. K. Bosch, "Verslag van een Reis door Sumatra," *OV* (1930), pp. 133-57. On Kedah see H. G. Quaritch Wales, "Archaeological Researches on Ancient Indian Colonization of Malaya," *JMBRAS*, 18, 1 (1940), pp. 1-85, and A. Lamb, *Chandi*



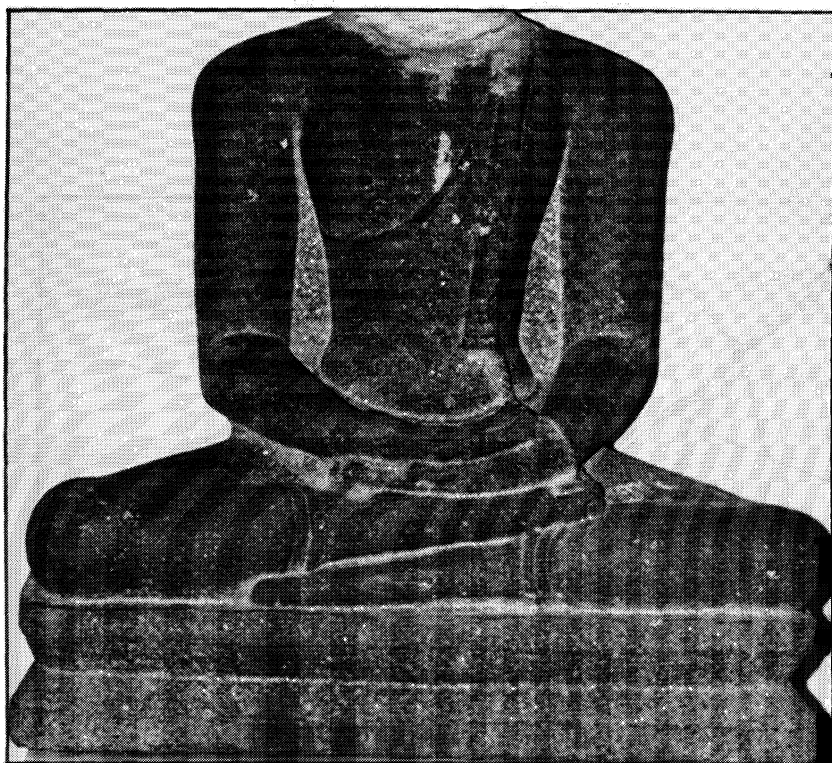


Plate 1. Decapitated Buddha discovered at Kota Cina during the Japanese occupation. (Mrs. Satyawati Suleiman, Director of the Indonesian National Research Center of Archaeology reports seeing a very similar figure at Tanjore, South India.) Height 62 cm.

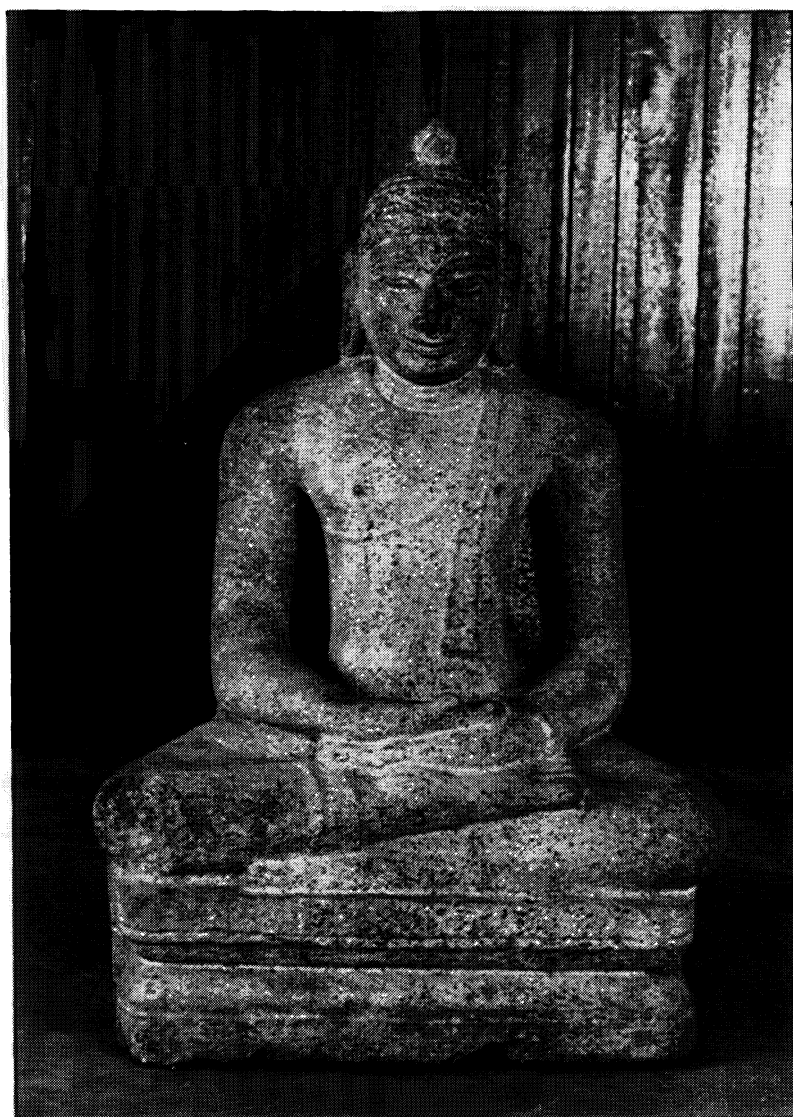


Plate 2. Buddha discovered at Kota Cina in 1973 and now in the office of the Kabin Permuseuman Medan. Height 86 cm.

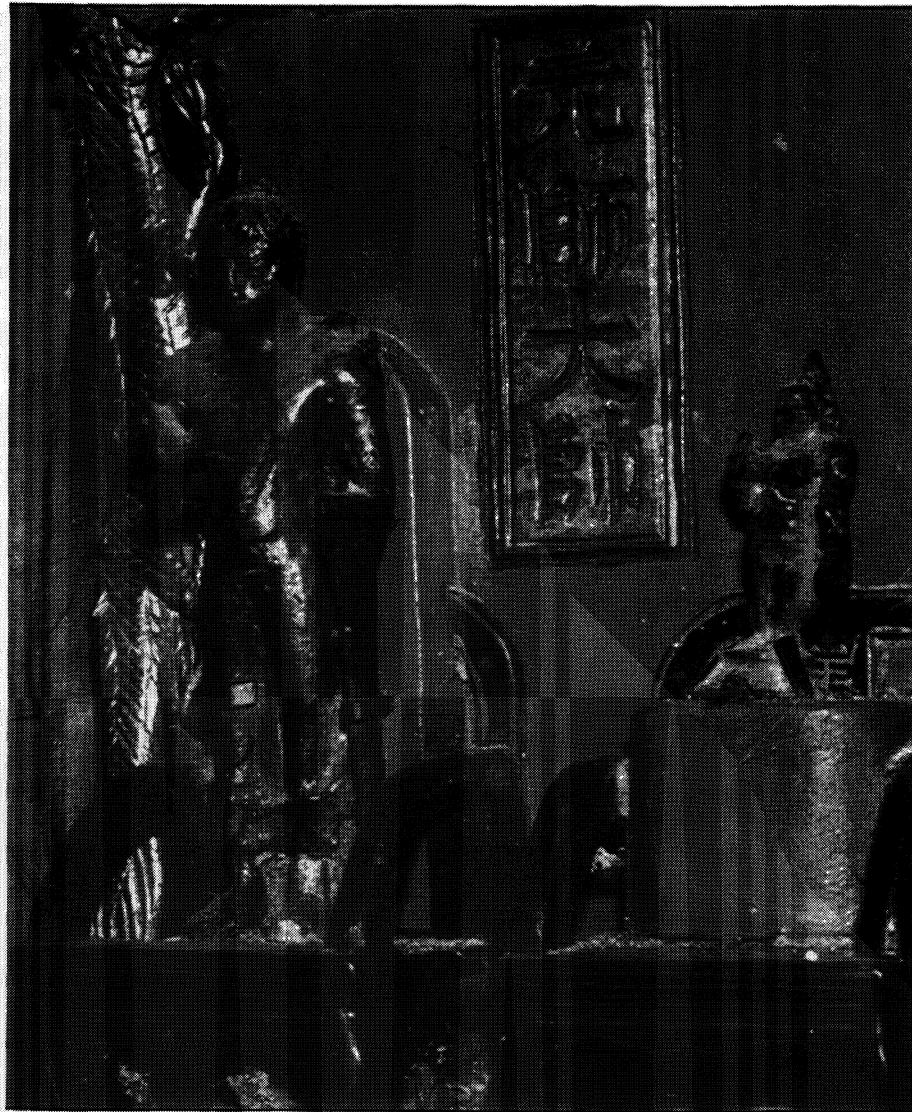


Plate 3. Bronze Statuettes from Kota Cina, Location 4
 The buddha, standing, has his right hand raised in *vijakhyanamudra*, the "gesture of explanation or argumentation." The left hand is missing at the wrist, but it seems likely that this was in *varadamudra*, the "gesture of granting wishes." Traces of an aureole remain on both shoulders. The diminutive figure on the right of the photograph would appear to exhibit South Indian influence.

As both figurines are part of a Chinese family shrine it was not possible to examine either of them in close detail. According to the owner, both had been discovered in a field immediately east of the Keramat Pahlawan.

Two Seated Buddha Statues: One, made of black granite and now headless, measures 62 centimeters from the base of the pedestal to the point where the neck is broken (Plate 1); the other, carved from white granite, is 86 centimeters in height (Plate 2). Both are seated in the *patma asana* posture with *samghati* (robe) over the left shoulder and falling over the left wrist. The treatment of the hands is similar in both cases except that the black statue has a star carved on the palm of the right hand. The stone from which these statues are carved has not been found in northern Sumatra; the nearest source for material of this type is probably Penang or Bintan (in the Riau archipelago). Both in iconography and in style these images have much in common with twelfth and thirteenth century Buddhas from Chola South India or Ceylon.¹²¹ The statues were found at Locality 8, within 30 meters of each other and within an area encompassed by a buried brick wall.

Hindu-Śivaite Sculpture: A granite block measuring 90 by 90 centimeters having a circular inset and an opening or drain on its outer edge (suggesting its use for libations) was discovered near Locality 4 (Keramat Pahlawan). This appears to be a *yoni*. Also at Locality 4 was found a circular pedestal with a square inset cut into the center of its upper surface. This may be another *yoni*, constructed to support a *lingga*. A stylized *lingga* was found between Locality 3 and Locality 4. There are also small, circular, sectioned pieces of smashed granite, some with a highly polished surface, which may be fragments of *lingga* or other statuary.

Metal Objects:

Bronze: There are two major figurines. The first is a roughly cast, standing robed Buddha, 12 centimeters in height, with the remains of an aureola behind its shoulders. This bronze appears to be similar to one found in the Musi river near Palembang, described by Schnitger.¹²² The

Bukit Batu Pahat (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1960). Lamb has also compared Kedah and Padang Lawas; see *Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat*, pp. 1ff. As yet, the present authors have been unable to distinguish any strong similarity in ground plan between the Kota Cina structures and those at Kedah or Padang Lawas.

¹²¹The art historians S. J. O'Connor and J. E. van Lohuizen de Leeuw have suggested that the images share many features in common with twelfth-century South Indian ones. A. B. Griswold notes that the "sparing use of the supernatural anatomy," and the manner in which it is rendered suggest South Indian or Singhalese traditions (personal communication to A. C. Milner, August 2, 1975). For similar images from Negapaṭṭinam, see T. M. Ramachandran, "The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum," *Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum*, 7 (1954), Plates 1-3. Senarat Paranavitana, *Art of the Ancient Sinhalese* (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1971) contains pictures of seated stone Buddhas which are also similar to those at Kota Cina and which Paranavitana believes date from the twelfth century (Plates 76 and 77). See also R. LeMay, *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), Fig. 131. A statue pictured in H. Munsterberg, *The Art of India and Southeast Asia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970), p. 74, also is reminiscent of the Kota Cina images. It is described as being a ninth-century South Indian piece. S. Suleiman (PPPN, Jakarta) informed McKinnon that on her visit to South India in 1976 she saw a statue from the Tanjore area of Madras which was strikingly similar to the Kota Cina images.

¹²²Schnitger, "Hindoo Sumatra," Plate 6. A similar statuette, said to come from Bonthain in South Sulawesi, and to date from the twelfth century, was on view at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in 1976 (private collection).

owner of this image unfortunately will not permit a thorough examination of it. The second is a seated Buddha figure, poorly cast, seven centimeters in height. There is also a diminutive figure which appears to be a female deity made in South Indian style.¹²³ Various other bronze artifacts were discovered, including the remains of small vessels, circular mirrors, a lamp, fishhooks, rings, and a small bell decorated with a script which is as yet undeciphered. These objects have not yet been analyzed in detail.

Iron: To the south of the Kota Cina site, below Locality 8, is what appears to be a small platform of iron slag. Numerous pieces of slag have also been found at Locality 1. This slag, together with a crucible-like earthenware object found near Locality 3 suggest the presence of ironworking.

Metalsmiths' Artifacts: Apart from the crucible-like object, a section of a mold for a triangular object, possibly an ornament, was found near Locality 3.

Ceramics: Although sherd material was found throughout the site, there are varying concentrations of sherds at all localities except Locality 8. Sherds are found to a depth of approximately one meter. They include both coarse low-fired earthenware and high-quality stoneware and porcelain. Some of the high-quality ware are equal in standard to ware of so-called Chinese Imperial quality.¹²⁴

The range of imported ceramics at Kota Cina appears to be wider than that described at any single site yet reported in either Indonesia or Malaysia.¹²⁵ Most of the ceramics are from the kilns of Southern China. They include Che'kiang and Lung ch'üan celadons (some of the latter have definite Northern Sung affinities in glazes and decoration),¹²⁶ amber glazed ware, *ch'ing-pai* ware, early Tê 'Hua ware, Temmoko ware, and green (lead) glazed ware. Some material may originate from places as diverse as Persia¹²⁷ and Vietnam, and from other

¹²³Again, the present owners will not permit close examination, as the image is part of a family shrine.

¹²⁴An excavation at Locality 1 (10 by 11 meters to a depth of 1 meter, at which sterile subsoil was exposed) revealed that the finest ware is below the coarser material. This stratification pattern tends to confirm the general view that Chinese ceramic exports deteriorated in quality over time, as the amount produced increased.

¹²⁵This is the impression the authors have gained after discussing Kota Cina with those engaged in research on Borneo, the Peninsula, and Sumatra. For a report on Pengkalen Bujang, Kedah, see A. Lamb, "Research at Pengkalen Bujang: A Preliminary Report," *FMJ*, 6 (1961), pp. 21-37. Some Bornean finds are discussed in C. Zainie and T. Harrison, "Early Chinese Stonewares Excavated in Sarawak, 1947-67," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 15, 30-31, N.S. (1967), pp. 30-90.

¹²⁶McKinnon, "Oriental Ceramics," suggests that these northern types could have come from as yet unidentified kilns in the Lung-ch'üan (Che'kiang) area and may date from the twelfth century.

¹²⁷Certain unglazed, low fired pottery with an extremely fine paste is similar to material excavated in the Gubayra area of the Persian Gulf. This may be of twelfth- to fourteenth-century Persian origin, especially that decorated with an incised *sgaffiato* technique common on some Islamic pottery.

as yet unidentified Southeast Asian kilns. The dating of these ware has been discussed in detail elsewhere.¹²⁸

Most of the glazed imported ceramics, however, appear to be Southern Sung (1127-79) or Yüan (1280-1368). The style of some small pieces of green and yellow glazed low-fired earthenware vessels suggests the T'ang period (615-905), but they appear to have been manufactured in the Southern Sung.¹²⁹ With one exception, Ming (1368-1644) blue and white ware has not been found at Kota Cina. A Sung Yüan dating for the imported ceramic material is confirmed by the carbon date (1200 A.D. \pm 75 years) recently given to charcoal (woodash) found in association with sherds from the site.¹³⁰ Also, the flecked amber glaze of the neck of a *kendz* (spouted water jar) from Kota Cina is identical to that of a Liao Dynasty (907-1125) plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Base sherds of some of the coarser Che'kiang (celadon) wares have Chinese characters impressed on their centers. One of the legible stamps reads, "Ch'in yü man t'ang" ("Gold and Jade-Filled Hall"), which is a Taoist good luck formula¹³¹ and which is identical to a stamp from Phoenix Hill at Hang-chou, the capital of the Southern Sung. Fragments of what may be Middle Eastern blue glazed faïence are found in various places on the Kota Cina site. One fragment of faïence is very similar to material from tenth century Mesopotamia.¹³²

Large quantities of low-fired earthenware fragments are found in most parts of the site and constitute the majority of the ceramic wares at Kota Cina. Much of this material may have been produced locally. There is still a small village pottery industry operating in Sentang, Batu Bara (Asahan province), some 120 kilometers south along the Sumatran coast, which even today produces wares similar in quality to those found at Kota Cina.¹³³ One kilometer west of the site is an area known as "Tanah Priok" ("cooking pot earth"), a toponym which may indicate that clay from this locality was once used in making earthenware cooking vessels.¹³⁴ Some of the earthenware types at Kota Cina, as well as

¹²⁸McKinnon, "Oriental Ceramics"; idem, "Research at Kota Cina."

¹²⁹The view that this ware is merely a survival of a T'ang style in Southern Sung times is argued by McKinnon in "Oriental Ceramics."

¹³⁰The analysis was carried out at the British Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, sample HAR 1423, with a grant from the University of Durham. The authors are grateful to I. L. Legeza, who was instrumental in obtaining this grant.

¹³¹This formula is still in use today. It was included, for instance, in a poster in an exhibit of Taoist art at the University of Durham, 1977. The authors are indebted to I. L. Legeza for translating the characters.

¹³²R. Pinder Wilson of the British Museum suggested that this material could originate there.

¹³³On Batu Bara pottery, see H. H. Bartlett, *The Labors of the Datoe and Other Essays on the Bataks of Asahan*, Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia (Ann Arbor, 1973), pp. 155-57. (This essay was first published in 1929.)

¹³⁴J. Miksic reported that clay from the bank of the Deli river at Pulau Brayan is currently used for making pottery and also that Javanese villagers at Sunggal on the Belawan river are using clay from the banks of this river for making good-quality earthenware flower pots.

later Chinese porcellaneous wares, are similar to those reported by Lamb from Kedah.¹³⁵ One group of fine paste wares with a reddish or ochre slip has an Indian or Middle Eastern appearance, but its origin has not yet been ascertained with certainty.

Vegetable Remains: A significant quantity of fragrant resins has been found in association with sherds. The local people refer to the resin as *damar*. Analysis of organic matter adhering to a potsherd at Kota Cina indicated that the substance was the remains of a fatty acid substance found in the genus *myristicaceae* (nutmeg).¹³⁶

The remains of numerous wooden posts are preserved in waterlogged soil adjacent to Locality 1. At Locality 1 itself, excavations have revealed that wooden remains have almost entirely rotted away, leaving a pattern of postholes in the undisturbed subsoil.

Mineral Remains: Calcium carbonate (lime) has been found adhering to the insides of small broken vessels dating from the Sung and Yüan periods. This lime may have been mixed with betel nuts (*sirih*) for chewing.

Glass: A large number of glass fragments, some of which are of very fine quality, were found. Most of the glass is undecorated and consists of bases, sides, and necks of small round vessels and the bases of larger flask-like bottles. The Kota Cina glass is very similar to certain types from Kedah and Takuapa which Lamb suggested were of Middle Eastern rather than Chinese origin.¹³⁷ The remains of a melted glass bottle were found near Locality 1 at a depth of 40 centimeters on the exposed side of a ditch.

Beads: Unlike at Pengkalan Bujang, there have been relatively few glass beads uncovered at Kota Cina to date, though *mutisalah* (opaque reddish glass) and other beads have been found, including some of carnelian and agate. Lamb has described similar beads from Malayan sites, and he suggests that the materials from which they were manufactured came primarily from South India.¹³⁸

¹³⁵McKinnon examined sherds deposited by Lamb at the Muzium Negara, Kuala Lumpur. They comprise mainly small pieces of Lung ch'üan celadon and earthenware (Lamb, "Pengkalan Bujang," p. 25). He also examined the collection of Pengkalan Bujang material at the Östasiatiska Museet in Stockholm, and some of the impressed designs and earthenware rimsherds there are very similar to the Kota Cina material (see *ibid.*, pp. 24-26 and Plates 50-54). The collection included Lung ch'üan and Che'kiang celadons, white wares, and grey stonewares which appear to be of late Sung or Yüan provenance; it also contained types similar to the Kota Cina Vietnamese wares.

¹³⁶This analysis was performed by the National Gallery Laboratories, London, with the assistance of J. S. Mills. On "myristica," see I. H. Burkill, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula* (Kuala Lumpur: Governments of Malaya and Singapore, 1966), 2, p. 1547.

¹³⁷A. Lamb, "The Bases of Glass Vessels from Kedah and Takuapa Compared," *FMJ*, 6 (1961), pp. 56-63.

¹³⁸A. Lamb, "Some Observations on Stone and Glass Beads in Early Southeast Asia," *JMBRAS*, 38, 2 (1965), pp. 87-124.

Coins: Literally thousands of coins have been found, but only a very small proportion have been cleaned and identified. Of the identified specimens, about 10 percent are T'ang or earlier, 10 percent are Southern Sung, and the rest represent every reign of the Northern Sung, in particular those of Jen Tsung (1023-63) and Shen Tsung (1068-85). Nine Sinhalese coins have also been discovered--eight are of Sahasamalla (1200-1202) and one of Queen Lilavati (1197-1200 and 1209). Some of the Chinese coins are fused together in a sausage-like form, which would suggest that strings of cash were buried or left lying.

Miscellaneous Small Finds: Five small carved stones with pointed ends were found which are similar to the pieces of pointed stone that Lamb found at Pengkalen Bujang. These may have been gaming pieces, as they are not long enough to be used as pins to hold anything together. An elongated nephrite die was also uncovered, with depressions cut into each side: seven on each of the two square ends, and seven, fourteen, twenty-one and twenty-eight respectively on the four elongated sides. Seven is a Chinese lucky number, but as yet nothing conclusive is known about how the die was used.

One half of a stone pendant charm with Chinese characters inscribed upon it was also found; the characters have yet to be deciphered.

Inscriptions: John Anderson, who visited Deli in 1823, reported the presence at Kota Cina of "a stone of a very large size, with an inscription upon it, in characters not understood by the natives."¹³⁹ This stone has been lost.¹⁴⁰

Other Sites: Kabupatèn Langkat

1. *Pulau Kompei*, Aru bay: Sung and Yüan sherds, particularly Che'kiang and ch'ing-pai ware. Three coins of Emperor Shen Tsung (1068-85). A number of other T'ang and Northern Sung coins. Hundreds of small glass beads of various colors, numerous carnelian beads, and four gemstones, including a garnet.¹⁴¹ Bricks and shaped granite similar to those found at Kota Cina.

¹³⁹Anderson, *Mission*, p. 294.

¹⁴⁰According to an old villager, the stone was still at Kota Cina in the early 1930s. It is said that a group of Chinese from Medan showed unusual interest in the stone and planned to move it. Apparently, the villagers learned of this plan and decided to hide the stone by rolling it into the mud of a nearby creek (possibly somewhere near Location 4). Today no one remembers where the stone originally stood, or where it was buried. Considering the name of the site, and the interest of Chinese in the inscription, it is possible that the inscription was in Chinese characters. We know that Chinese inscriptions were set up elsewhere in the Malay archipelago; see, for instance, W. Franke and Ch'en Tieh-fan, "A Chinese Tomb Inscription of A.D. 1264, Discovered Recently in Brunei," *Brunei Museum Journal*, 3, 1 (1973), pp. 91-99.

¹⁴¹Two (almandine-pyrope) garnets, both of which have holes at one end for hanging. One of the stones is marked, which may have been an attempt at decoration. The third stone is a type of tourmaline known as indicolite which was polished by tumbling. The last is a bluish-white stone, possibly a type of sapphire. All four, the largest of which (a garnet) is 11 millimeters in length, were found on the beach at Kompei in 1975.

2. *Pulau Sembilan*, Aru bay: sherds of Ming blue and white ware.
3. *Cinta Raja*, on the Sungei Wampu, near Stabat: Ming and Sawankhalok sherds.
4. *Paya Kangkong*, on what is probably an old course of the Sungei Wampu, near Stabat: fine quality Southern Sung ch'ing-pai, early Té Hua and green (copper) glazed wares, and Lung ch'üan celadons.

Kabupatèn Deli/Serdang

1. *Kota Bangun*, on the Sungei Deli: Sung and Yüan celadons and earthenware. Caches of ceramics were found in 1970/71 when an irrigation ditch was being dug through this area.
- 2./3. *Kota Datar and Kota Rantang*, near Hamperan Perak: sherds of early Ming blue and white, celadon, Sawankhalok, and Vietnamese ware. One Ming coin of 1403.
4. *Kelumpang*: An Islamic grave of an *ulama* named Imam Saddik bin Abdullah (Sja'ban 23, 998 H, A.D. 1590).
5. *Tandam Hilir* (Tanjong Enom), upstream from Kota Rantang, an occupation site in an area now cultivated as rice paddy: Yüan/Ming sherds, Sawankhalok, and a considerable amount of locally produced earthenware. Also, beads, glass, bricks, and iron slag.
6. *Kota Jawa*, on the south bank of Sungei Deli (now known as Tanjong Mulia): traces of an ancient earthwork mentioned by Anderson in 1823.¹⁴² Sherds of Yüan/Ming ceramics, including celadons, blue and white wares, and various other stonewares.
7. *Mabar*, on the south bank of the Sungei Deli, near Kota Bangun: early Islamic gravestones associated with Datuk Mabar, sherds of Yüan and Ming ceramics.
8. *Mertubong*, near Kampong Bahari, on the south bank of the Sungei Mati (Sungei Sempali): sherds of Ming and Yüan ceramics (celadons and stoneware). Small bronze pendant of double figure (front, woman dancing; reverse, man playing a drum) which appears to be of twelfth century East Javanese style. This figure is in the possession of the finder, a local farmer.
9. *Percut*, just south of Belawan: Ming celadon, and coarse blue and white export wares. Also, Sawankhalok, Sukhothai, and Vietnamese wares.
10. *Deli Tua*, 30 kilometers inland from Belawan: a series of strong defensive earthworks surrounded by a ditch, strategically placed above the Lau (river) Petani or Lau Tani (which is the Karo name for the upper reaches of the Sungei Deli).¹⁴³ Late Sung and Yüan celadon, Ming

¹⁴²Anderson, *Mission*, pp. 293-94.

¹⁴³Anderson noted that at "Delli Tuah, or Old Delli, there are the remains of an old fort, with large square stones, the walls thirty feet in height, and two

blue and white and celadon sherds, as well as Sukhothai, Sawankhalok, and Vietnamese ware. A coin of Emperor Hui Tsung (1111-18). The tail end of a small iron cannon with a handle. Twelve cannon shot with tin or lead coating. A nineteenth-century Dutch official also reported the finding of a very old cannon at Deli Tua;¹⁴⁴ one account states that this cannon is inscribed with the word "Haru."¹⁴⁵

Kabupatèn Asahan

1. *Sungei Silau*: Sung/Yüan celadon has been reported at Simpang Empat, Simpang Kawat, an area near the Hessa estate.

Kabupatèn Tanah Karo

1. *Siberaya* in Tanah Karo, inland of Deli Tua: Yüan celadon and ca. fifteenth to sixteenth blue and white wares, Swatow blue and white and enameled wares, Sawankhalok, and Sukhothai wares.

2. *Kabanjahe*: A Yüan period early blue and white jarlet reported from this location. Yüan celadon has also been described as coming "from the hills."

IV. Comparing the Archaeological Evidence with the Historical Record

The archaeological discoveries at Kota Cina, and at sites in neighboring regions, are particularly illuminating for the period prior to and just after Aru first appears in the written sources (1282). Neither the coins, nor the sherds, nor the statuary, suggests that the site's terminal date is later than the end of the Yüan Dynasty (1280-1368). And yet, there is little indication of settlement before the twelfth century. The variety and number of finds clearly show that Kota Cina was a place of some consequence.

Kota Cina's commercial aspects are immediately apparent. The stratigraphy and context of the sherds, which are mixed with shells, bones, and other domestic trash, suggest that the ceramic material was kept in storerooms or houses and does not come from burials.¹⁴⁶ And

hundred fathoms in circumference" (ibid., p. 293). There are in fact two separate fortified complexes, consisting of earthen ramparts and a surrounding ditch.

¹⁴⁴J. A. M. Cats, Baron de Raet, "Reize in de Battaklanden," pp. 173-74.

¹⁴⁵Said writes that the Jawi inscription is "Sanah 1104 Alamat Balun Haru." The Muslim date 1104 is approximately A.D. 1691, but Said notes that the figures are not clear. The authors have not examined the cannon, which is reportedly in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta. It is possible, however, that "balun" ought to read "belawan," since *wau* in Jawi may be either a "w" or a "u." Belawan Deli has been the port of Deli since the late nineteenth century. See Said, *Atjeh*, p. 151.

¹⁴⁶At the time of writing, however, no burials have yet been found at Kota Cina or in the immediate area. It is logical to expect burials to be at a greater depth than the occupation layer, but the high water table makes deeper investigations of the area difficult.

the variety and quantity of coinage imply that it was used for commercial rather than for ritual purposes. Archaeological finds elsewhere in the East Sumatran region suggest the type of trading network in which Kota Cina may have participated. The presence of sherds similar to those found at Kota Cina, though in far smaller quantities, in areas such as Stabat Kota Bangun, Deli Tua, and Siberaya (in the Karo region) indicates the possibility of commercial connections between the coastal Kota Cina and the hinterland.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, the eleventh century coins and Sung and Yüan ceramic material at Pulau Kompei imply that commercial relationships existed between coastal entrepôts. Kota Cina also clearly had trading links that extended beyond Sumatra. The glass, Sinhalese coins, Indian or Sinhalese statuary, and Middle Eastern wares attest to the likelihood that the settlement had contacts to the west as well as with China. And a trade may well have existed with Peninsula settlements such as Pengkalan Bujang and Nakhon (Tāmbra-linga),¹⁴⁸ where quantities of Sung porcelain and coins have been found.

The archaeological evidence regarding Kota Cina's imports--the ceramics, beads, and coins--confirms European and Chinese reports regarding the type of merchandise imported by Sumatra. As we have seen, Fei Hsin noted that fifteenth-century Aru received earthenware and glass beads, as well as more perishable merchandise such as silk;¹⁴⁹ the Sung annals record that at the end of the tenth century trade with such places as Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula involved gold, Chinese cash, carnelians, and porcelain ware;¹⁵⁰ and, in the thirteenth century, Chau Ju Kua described similar products being sold in "San-fo-Tsi" or Śrīvijaya.¹⁵¹

There is little archaeological material available which might indicate the nature of Kota Cina's exports, though the absence of evidence might be explained by the tendency of vegetable material, which apparently formed the bulk of local exports, to decay. Nevertheless, quantities of forest resins have been found in association with ceramic material, indicating that the "fragrant resins and such things" which Ma Huan found at Aru in the early fifteenth century were also prevalent during the Kota Cina period. These products would certainly have found eager buyers among Chinese traders. We know from Chinese sources of

¹⁴⁷Trading in Chinese ceramics between coastal markets and interior peoples has been noted in Borneo and the Philippines. See, for instance, A. Lamb, "Kedah and Takuapa," *FMJ*, 6 (1961), pp. 84-85.

¹⁴⁸See for instance, A. Lamb, "Research at Pengkalan Bujang"; H. G. Quaritch Wales, "Langkasuka and Tambralinga: Some Archaeological Notes," *JMBRAS*, 47, 1 (1974), pp. 15-40; and also Lamb's brief comments on Pengkalan Bujang and Kota Cina in "Tom Harrisson and Indian Influence in Early Southeast Asia," *JMBRAS*, 50, 1 (1977), p. 11.

¹⁴⁹On the importance of silk in China's export to Southeast Asia, see P. Wheatley, "Sung Maritime Trade," *JMBRAS*, 32, 2 (1959), p. 35. Salt was probably imported, also. Seventeenth- and nineteenth-century records, for instance, report that Deli imported salt; see F. de Haan, ed., *Dagh Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1896-1931), August, 1680, p. 575; and J. Anderson, *Acheen* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971 [orig. pub. 1840]), pp. 200-205.

¹⁵⁰Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 19.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 61.

the Sung period that wax and resins such as camphor and benzoin were in demand in China.¹⁵²

The inhabitants of Kota Cina are likely to have been involved in production as well as commerce. The quantities of iron slag, the molds, and the crucible-like object do suggest the existence of metal working, and some, if not most, of the abundant low fired earthenware may have been manufactured locally.

The commercial prosperity of Aru in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as revealed in the Kota Cina finds, is not reflected in the first written accounts of the state. Although the Chinese and Portuguese descriptions of fifteenth century Aru note resin exports and imports of "earthenware, glass beads etc.," they clearly indicate that the state was little concerned with trade at this time. The earlier Kota Cina prosperity, however, was more typical of the history of the region. Aru lay in an area which possessed enormous natural advantages, the commercial importance of which had been noted in earlier centuries and would later be recognized by Dutch and English writers. The mouth of the Deli river is the only sheltered bay between Aru Bay in the north and Asahan to the south; and Kota Cina stood between the vital Straits of Malacca which link the Far East and the West with the fertile highlands and foothills of North Sumatra.¹⁵³ Even in the eighth century, the Deli coast was known to Chinese geographers;¹⁵⁴ in the ninth century, sandalwood, cloves, and nard appear to have been obtainable there.¹⁵⁵ In the 1600s, the Dutch came to purchase rice, wax, and horses.¹⁵⁶ Anderson, traveling the coastal area of East Sumatra in 1823, remarked that he "did not know so productive a country" as Deli.¹⁵⁷ In particular he described the pepper, rice, and tobacco cultivation, and he noted a "wide range of timber," "great quantities" of shellfish, and "a vast variety" of herbs, roots, and leaves.¹⁵⁸ From

¹⁵²Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, pp. 193-94, 198-99, 201-2, 238-39; Wheatley, "Sung Maritime Trade," pp. 35, 55, 101, 125.

¹⁵³C. A. Fisher, *Southeast Asia* (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 218-19.

¹⁵⁴W. Wolters, "Molluscs and the Historical Geography of Northeastern Sumatra in the Eighth Century A.D.," *Indonesia*, 22 (October 1976), pp. 9-17.

¹⁵⁵See the observations of Ibn Khurdadbiḥ referred to in Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, p. 179. Nard is a fragrant ointment, derived from the plant *Nardostachys jatamansi*.

¹⁵⁶See, for instance, the *Dagh Register*, October 1642, p. 170; May 1644, pp. 125-26; February 1653, p. 18; and November 1677, p. 415.

¹⁵⁷Anderson, *Mission*, p. 278.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 278-89. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Deli and neighboring areas were known as the *cultuurgebied*, and the region attracted large numbers of European planters of tobacco and other crops. At the end of the colonial period the region became, in D. S. Paauw's words, the Republic of Indonesia's most important producer of export commodities; D. S. Paauw, *Prospects for East Sumatran Plantation Industries: A Symposium*, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies Monographs (New Haven, 1962), p. vi. See also "Deli" in the *Encyclopoedia van Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1917); K. J. Pelzer, "Western Impact on East Sumatra and North Tapanuli: The Roles of the Planter and the Missionary," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 2, 2 (July 1961), p. 67; and K. J. Pelzer, "Preface" to C. E. Cunningham, *The Postwar Migration of the Toba-Bataks to East Sumatra*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies Cultural Report Series (New Haven, 1958).

the perspective of these Dutch and English reports, therefore, archaeological evidence of a thriving commercial center during the twelfth and thirteenth century in the Deli region is not surprising.

The archaeological material, however, is not helpful merely regarding commercial matters. It also adds to our knowledge of Aru's contacts and horizons. As we have noted, the granite Buddhas appear to be of South Indian or Sinhalese origin. The Sinhalese coins, the bronze statues, and the carnelian beads provide further evidence of contacts with both lands, and we know that Ceylon and South India had important relationships with other parts of the archipelago at this time. The South Indian Colas, for example, claimed that an expedition of 1025 conquered Panai (situated in the area of the Padang Lawas or Padang Bolak), to the south of Kota Cina, and Lamiri, to the north.¹⁵⁹ An inscription from Lubo Tuo (near Baros) in West Sumatra, dated 1088, records the presence there of a Tamil merchant guild,¹⁶⁰ and a Tamil poem of the early twelfth century notes a Cola conquest of Kadaram or Kedah.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, South India is well remembered in the Malay world. The "Sejarah Melayu" tells of a conqueror from India with the name "Shulan," which Winstedt suggests must be the dynastic name of the Colas of Negapaṭṭinam.¹⁶² Similarly, the "Hikayat Raja Pasai," much of which may have been written in the fourteenth century,¹⁶³ is rich with references to Tamils,¹⁶⁴ and a Minangkabau ruler of the same century wrote an inscription in a South Indian script.¹⁶⁵ Ceylon's

¹⁵⁹Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 142-43.

¹⁶⁰K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "A Tamil Merchant Guild in Sumatra," *TBG*, 72 (1932), pp. 314-27. Most of the stone is in the Jakarta Museum, the rest at Lubo Tuo. McKinnon made a surface collection of Chinese stoneware sherds and glass beads from an earthwork situated in the area where the stone is supposed to have been discovered. The collection is currently being analyzed but appears to be mainly eleventh to twelfth century material.

¹⁶¹Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, p. 93. On South Indian relations with Sumatra see also Bosch, "Reis Door Sumatra," pp. 147-48; F. M. Schnitger, *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), p. 102; Schnitger, *Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra*, p. 24; and Krom, *Hindoe Javaansche*, p. 304. On Tamil influences at Takuapa on the Peninsula, see A. Lamb, "Three Statues in a Tree: A Note on the Pra Narai Group, Takuapa," *FMJ*, 6 (1961), pp. 64-68. The first Sultan of Deli (who probably reigned in the early seventeenth century) was supposed to have come from India; "Hikajat Ketoeroenan Radja Negeri Deli," p. 1.

¹⁶²R. O. Winstedt, "Kingship and Enthronement in Malaya," *JMBRAS*, 20, 1 (1947), p. 129. Winstedt also notes the mention of Negapatam in his *History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 158.

¹⁶³A. H. Hill, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," *JMBRAS*, 53, 2 (1960), p. 40; and Winstedt, *Classical Malay Literature*, p. 156. See also P. L. A. Sweeney, "The Connection between the Hikayat Raja Pasai and the Sejarah Melayu," *JMBRAS*, 40, 2 (1967), pp. 94-105.

¹⁶⁴G. E. Marrison, "The Coming of Islam to the East Indies," *JMBRAS*, 24, 1 (1951), p. 36.

¹⁶⁵Schnitger, *Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra*, p. 13. Also, several of the names of the Karo Batak clans in the hinterland of Deli are clearly of South Indian derivation. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *History of Sri Vijaya* (Madras: University of Madras Press, 1949), p. 16. For the role of Tamils in Malacca, see M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 53, 341.

relations with the Malay world are also documented. The century commencing with the reign of King Vijayabahu (1070-1110) has been described as "in many respects the apex of Sinhalese glory."¹⁶⁶ Ceylon at this time "participated vigorously" in "Southeast Asian politics";¹⁶⁷ King Parakrama Bahu I (1153-86), for instance, sent a punitive expedition to Burma.¹⁶⁸

That these images remind one of the sculpture of both South India and Ceylon is to be expected. There was considerable interaction between Ceylon and South India during this period,¹⁶⁹ and the relationship was not simply one of war and conquest. Although Buddhism had gradually been replaced in South India by the Hinduism of the Bhakti saints, some Buddhist monasteries, such as Negapaṭṭinam, functioned in Cola times,¹⁷⁰ and S. Paranavitana has explained that after the eleventh century "there was frequent intercourse between the Buddhists of Ceylon and their co-religionists" from southern India.¹⁷¹ That Aru should have been connected in some way with the Buddhist activity in India and Negapaṭṭinam would have been quite possible. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Theravada Buddhism was not restricted to such mainland Southeast Asian states as Mon Thaton. Early in the twelfth century, for instance, a Sinhalese monk is reported to have been engaged in propagating Buddhism in Tambarattha and Tāmbraṅga (Ligor, on the Malay Peninsula),¹⁷² and in the mid-thirteenth century King Parakramabahu II invited divines from Tāmbraṅga to visit Ceylon.¹⁷³ The rulers of the Malay world, such as those of Śrīvijaya and Kataha (Kedah), took an interest in the upkeep of Buddhist monasteries in South India.¹⁷⁴ In the Kota Cina period, therefore, Aru, like Kedah and Tāmbraṅga, appears to have played a part in the Theravada movement¹⁷⁵ which, although it was eventually displaced by Islam in the Malay world, came to dominate much of mainland Southeast Asia.

¹⁶⁶S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 93. See also H. C. Ray, ed., *History of Ceylon* (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1960), 2, chs. 3-8.

¹⁶⁷Arasaratnam, *Ceylon*, p. 93. ¹⁶⁸Ray, *Ceylon*, p. 474.

¹⁶⁹Ray, *Ceylon*, 1, Book 3, and 2, Book 4.

¹⁷⁰Ramachandran, "Nāgapaṭṭinam," p. 14. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 418-19.

¹⁷¹S. Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Polannaru Period," in Ray, *Ceylon*, 1, p. 565.

¹⁷²Ibid. See also S. Paranavitana, "Negapatanam and Theravada Buddhism in South India," *Journal of the Greater India Society*, 11, 1 (1944), p. 24.

¹⁷³Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Period," in Ray, *Ceylon*, 2, p. 746.

¹⁷⁴Sastri, *History of South India*, pp. 84-85; Paranavitana, "Negapatanam and Theravada Buddhism," p. 20.

¹⁷⁵It may be more than coincidental that the Kota Cina Buddhas are in some ways coarser, less graceful versions of the "P'ra Sihing" or "Sinhalese Buddha," which is said by the Thais to have been brought from Ceylon to Sukhothai in the thirteenth century via Nakhon Si Thammarat (Ligor) on the Malay Peninsula. The "P'ra Sihing" is identified by the Thais with the "purified Hinayana doctrine" which arrived in Thailand from Ceylon; LeMay, *Concise History*, pp. 116-17, and Fig. 131, 132.

Kota Cina's ties with China are obvious. Indeed, a Chinese community appears to have existed at the site: the presence of Chinese settlers is not only remembered in the local legend associated with Kota Cina but is indicated by a number of the finds. The numerous celadon wares stamped with Chinese characters (some of which appear to be Taoist), the inscribed gold leaf votive offering, and the stone charm are more likely to have been used by Chinese than by Indonesians. In particular, the vast number of Chinese coins suggests that Kota Cina was not solely an indigenous settlement dealing with Chinese products and occasional Chinese merchants. Although Crawford in the mid-nineteenth century asserted that Chinese currency was "the only coined money of the Archipelago before the arrival of the Europeans,"¹⁷⁶ the documentary records suggest that Chinese coins tend to be found only where there was a concentration of Chinese.¹⁷⁷ In the thirteenth century, Chao Ju Kua noted that "chopped off lumps of silver" were used in Palembang in business transactions,¹⁷⁸ and he does not report Chinese coins at the peninsular commercial center of Langkasuka.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, Wang Ta Yüan makes no mention of Chinese currency in Palembang, Jambi, Brunei, or Sulu.¹⁸⁰ In the early fifteenth century one seldom finds Chinese coins used commercially in the region. In Malaccan trade transactions, for instance, ingots of tin were used.¹⁸¹ In Palembang, however, the situation had changed; Ma Huan reported that for "trading in the markets . . . copper coins of the old country" were the local tender.¹⁸² But the character of Palembang had also changed since the thirteenth century: "Many of the people" there were now "rich and prosperous" Chinese who had "fled" their homeland.¹⁸³

The presence of a Chinese settlement at Kota Cina would not be surprising in light of our historical knowledge of the region. Not only were there substantial numbers of Chinese living in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Palembang, but in the 1330s and 1340s Wang Ta Yüan found Chinese dwelling "side by side" with the "natives" in the islands south of the peninsula.¹⁸⁴ An Arab author of the mid-twelfth

¹⁷⁶J. Crawford, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971 [orig. pub. 1856]), p. 94.

¹⁷⁷Java may be an exception; see W. W. Rockhill, "Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coasts of the Indian Ocean during the Fourteenth Century," *T'oung Pao*, 16 (1915), p. 237 n. 4; B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1966), 1, p. 247.

¹⁷⁸Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 60.

¹⁷⁹Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*, p. 68.

¹⁸⁰Rockhill, *Notes*, pp. 134, 265, 271.

¹⁸¹Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 111. A truncated pyramidal block of lead of this type was found in a ricefield at Kota Cina.

¹⁸²Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 102.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, pp. 98-99. See also Groenveltdt, *Notes*, p. 71, and Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, pp. 73-74. There was also Chinese currency in fourteenth-century Pasai, but here too there is strong evidence of the existence of a Chinese community; see Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade*, p. 25.

¹⁸⁴Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*, p. 82. For the role of Chinese in late fourteenth-century Gresik, North Java, see Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 89; and Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade*, p. 107. On Chinese living in thirteenth-century Cambodia, see Chao Ta

century, Edrisi, provides a possible explanation of the presence of Chinese at Kota Cina and elsewhere in the region. "It is said," he relates, "that when the state of affairs of China became troubled by rebellions and when tyranny and confusion become excessive in India, the inhabitants of China transferred their trade to Zabag (Śrīvijaya) and the other islands dependent on it, entered into relations with it, and familiarized themselves with its inhabitants. . . . It is because of this that this island is heavily populated."¹⁸⁵

Even at this early stage of archaeological research, therefore, the historian begins to obtain a glimpse of the Aru which appears only briefly in the written records of the late thirteenth century. Kota Cina was evidently a busy commercial settlement with a foreign community which consisted of Chinese and perhaps some Indians or Sinhalese. Situated between the rich hinterland of Sumatra and the Straits of Malacca, the community that lived at what is now Kota Cina probably acted as a distribution center. "Fragrant resins" and other native products from the interior would have attracted traders from China and probably India as well. The ceramics, beads, and silk which were imported into the entrepôt would then be sent into the interior of Sumatra or to other smaller settlements along the coast. As we have seen, however, Kota Cina was not merely a commercial center. The presence of Buddhist statues in an area which was both encompassed by buried brick walls and free of ceramic debris suggests the existence of a sacral center which may have complemented or been an alternative to the small shrine at Locality 3. Moreover, the existence of these Buddhas indicates that Kota Cina possibly was influenced by the expansion of Theravada Buddhism, one of the major religious developments of that time. With its Buddhas, emblems of Śivaism, and votive offerings stamped with Chinese characters, Kota Cina has a distinctly eclectic religious character. Both culturally and commercially, its horizons were broad.

There are many questions which are as yet unanswered. It is unclear, for instance, whether Kota Cina was the heart of the Aru kingdom or simply a cosmopolitan port, possibly under the suzerainty of a ruler situated somewhere in the immediate vicinity or further inland. Overlords might have been located at such places as Hamperan Perak, Kota Bangun, Deli Tua, or even the Wampu area to the north. These centers might also have acted as subdistribution points for Kota Cina's imports and gathering stations for her exports. On the other hand, we know little about the functions of the various brick structures at Kota Cina. Further excavation needs to be carried out¹⁸⁶ and the results analyzed by specialists with experience of similar sites. Kota Cina's relationship to other locations containing much Sung period debris, such as Pengkalan Bujang on the Peninsula,¹⁸⁷ also requires investiga-

Kuan, *Notes on the Customs of Cambodia* (Bangkok: Social Science Association, 1967), p. 40.

¹⁸⁵Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 168. For a brief discussion of developments in twelfth- and thirteenth-century India, see A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), pp. 73-76.

¹⁸⁶See note 118.

¹⁸⁷Some of the sites likely to be of particular interest to the student of Kota Cina and of Aru history are discussed in H. G. Quaritch Wales, "Archaeological Researches on Ancient Indian Colonization in Malaya," *JMBRAS*, 18, 1 (1940), pp. 37-38;

tion. The nature of the society and government in the Kota Cina region may never be known. If inscriptions were found, or if further lingga or Buddhas were discovered in strategic locations in the Deli area, some guesses might be made regarding the social structure and ethos of thirteenth-century Aru. At the present stage of exploration we can do little more than explore possible commercial links and speculate as to the spiritual orientation of the port.

Even the archaeological evidence available at present, however, permits some conjectures regarding the early history of Kota Cina and Aru. It is curious that a site so rich with sherds and coins from the Sung Dynasty should only first be mentioned in written records in 1282. One possible explanation is that the area of Kota Cina may have been known by some other name. In the early thirteenth century, as we have seen, Chau Ju Kua mentioned the place-names P'a ta and Pa-lin-feng, both of which Gerini suggests were located in the Kota Cina region. It is not impossible that an Islamized P'a ta assumed the name "Aru," and P'ata (Batta) came to be used in a more general sense in reference to the pagan people of the interior.¹⁸⁸

Our present knowledge of archipelago history, however, suggests another explanation of Aru's absence from twelfth- or early thirteenth-century records. Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, not only Deli, but the whole northeast coast of Sumatra is not mentioned in the Chinese sources, and it has been suggested that the region was dominated by Śrīvijaya during this period.¹⁸⁹ This kingdom, probably based in South Sumatra, brought to an end the fragmentation existing in the Malay world after the disappearance of Kan-to-li in the sixth century, and its position was bolstered by a special relationship with China.¹⁹⁰ As a tributary of the Middle Kingdom, Śrīvijaya was a great entrepôt in island Southeast Asia and was "able to keep Asian communications with China open."¹⁹¹ The absence of any reference to the Kota Cina region before the thirteenth century, therefore, might be because it formed a part of the Śrīvijayan empire. Just as products from Tan-ma-ling were sent in tribute to Śrīvijaya,¹⁹² so Kota Cina would have been tied both commercially and politically to that empire.

A. Lamb, "Research at Pengkalan Bujang," esp. p. 32; and Quaritch Wales, "Langkasuka and Tambralinga," pp. 15-40. Jitsuzo Kuwabara, "On P'a Shou-keng," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 25, 2 (1928), pp. 25-27, discusses the various locations of Sung coin hoards. Lamb comments on some apparent similarities between Kota Cina and Pengkalan Bujang in his recent article, "Tom Harrisson," p. 11.

¹⁸⁸Loeb explains that the name "Batak" was "probably an abusive nickname given by the Mohammedans and signifying pig-eater"; *Sumatra*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁹Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, chs. 2, 4.

¹⁹⁰Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, ch. 14.

¹⁹¹Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, p. 39.

¹⁹²Gerini, *Ptolemy's Geography*, p. 628. Gerini understands Chau Ju Kua as saying that "China collects" the gold and silver wares of Tan-ma-ling and offers them to "San-fo-chi." China's role is not mentioned, however, in the translations of either Hirth and Rockhill (*Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 67) or Wheatley (*Golden Khersonese*, p. 67). At our request, J. W. Cushman kindly examined a Chinese edition of the text; she believes that the translations of Wheatley and Hirth and Rockhill are correct.

By the time Aru first appears in Chinese sources (as having submitted to Kublai Khan in 1282) the situation in the Malay world had altered radically. The Southern Sung Dynasty (1127-1279) depended on the sea for all foreign trade; the Chinese merchant marine expanded, and Chinese ships began visiting many of the outer regions of Śrīvijaya.¹⁹³ As a result, the prosperity of the central entrepôt must have declined, and control of dependencies, especially distant ones, would have declined as well. It is in this period that Aru and other "restless vassals"¹⁹⁴ in the region, such as Tamiang, are first mentioned in the Chinese, Javanese, and Arab sources.

The Kota Cina finds certainly suggest the possibility that Aru had been a restless vassal; her trading and cultural contacts, which had been developing at least since the eleventh century, might well have aroused the ambitions of the local chiefs. Moreover, the archaeological evidence confirms that Aru's period of greatest prosperity and influence was probably from the mid-twelfth to the fourteenth centuries--at the time when Sung ships were trading with Śrīvijaya's vassals, just before Aru attracted the attention of Kublai Khan.

The archaeological remains imply that Kota Cina was possibly sacked and clearly abandoned in the fourteenth century. Occupation of the site certainly ended during the Yüan Dynasty (1279-1368). The fact that no Yüan coins have been found at the site does not necessarily indicate an earlier terminal date. Yüan sherds are present at Kota Cina, and it is well known that the Yüan Dynasty vigorously opposed the export of Chinese copper money and issued paper money in its place.¹⁹⁵ Wang Ta Yüan, traveling during the 1330s and 1340s, found paper currency circulating in both India and Southeast Asia.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that the occupation of Kota Cina continued into the Ming period. Although Ming ware has been discovered in several parts of East Sumatra, it is notably lacking at Kota Cina. The evidence therefore suggests that the site was vacated during the latter part of the Yüan Dynasty.¹⁹⁷ (There is evidence of reoccupation

¹⁹³Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, p. 42. See also Wheatley, "Sung Maritime Trade," pp. 24ff.

¹⁹⁴Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁵H. F. Schurmann, *Economic Structure of the Yüan Dynasty*, Harvard Yenching Institute Studies (Cambridge, 1956), p. 135; W. Vissering, *On Chinese Currency* (Leiden: Brill, 1877), pp. 17ff.; Lien-sheng yang, *Money and Credit in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 63ff.

¹⁹⁶Rockhill, "Notes," 15, p. 424. An active Mongol interest in the Malay regions is suggested by the fact that they sent a mission to the Singapore area in 1320; Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, p. 78. For the Mongol expedition to Java in 1293, see Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 200.

¹⁹⁷The Kota Batu site in Brunei is one example of a settlement which continued into Ming times. It has yielded T'ang, Sung, Yüan, and Ming coins, and the ceramic material is predominantly Ming; see Barbara Harrisson, "A Classification of Archaeological Trade Ceramics from Kota Batu," *Brunei Museum Journal*, 2 (1970), pp. 114-88. Kota Batu also contained a Chinese settlement; see Y. L. Lee, "The Chinese in Sarawak (and Brunei)," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 11, 21-22 (1963), p. 176; W. Franke and Ch'an T'ieh-fan, "A Chinese Inscription of A.D. 1264 Discovered Recently in Brunei," *Brunei Museum Journal*, 3, 1 (1973), pp. 91-100; and G. Earl, *The Eastern Seas* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971 [orig. pub. 1837]), p. 370.

in the early nineteenth century and of increasing disturbance of the archaeological strata as time passes.)

Moreover, there is tentative evidence that the settlement was not abandoned peacefully. Numerous coins have been found adhering together in a sausage-like fashion, suggesting that strings of cash were buried. It is known that valuables were buried in times of attack or danger.¹⁹⁸ At the present stage of excavation there is no indication of a carbon layer which would imply that the settlement was burned, but two lumps of bronze, perhaps the remains of lamps or statues, have been discovered in a fused state. They were found in a context which appears to coincide with the end of the occupation period.¹⁹⁹ They give indications of having been melted in a conflagration, and lay on top of brickwork. The archaeological evidence of a dramatic turning point in Kota Cina's history receives some confirmation in the written sources. Although Aru is mentioned in Chinese and Arab texts in 1282, 1295, and 1310, its existence is not noted by Wang Ta Yüan in 1349; nor is Aru referred to by Ibn Battuta, whose work suggests that Semudra (Pasai) was the principal state in the northeast of Sumatra during the 1340s.²⁰⁰

Any number of circumstances could have led to the fall of Kota Cina. Tension may have existed, for instance, between the foreign community and the indigenous people. The legend that fighting between Chinese and Indians took place at Kota Cina still exists, and such ethnic disputes are certainly implied in the records of fifteenth-century Malacca.²⁰¹ Kota Cina may also have been attacked by another polity. Aru could have suffered, for example, at the hands of the expanding Semudra/Pasai. There is, as we have seen, some Javanese evidence that Aru was conquered by Majapahit. According to the "Pararaton,"²⁰² the Patih Gadjah Mada, whose term of office lasted approximately from 1331 to 1365, swore to subdue the state,²⁰³ and in 1365 Aru was described in the "Nāgarakṛtāgama" as a Majapahit dependency.²⁰⁴ Although the accuracy of Javanese historical texts has been a matter of considerable

¹⁹⁸See, for example, the "Hikayat Pahang," p. 28. The authors are grateful to the Arkip Negara, Malaysia, for permitting Milner to consult a romanized recension. The practice of burying valuables in times of danger was followed as recently as World War II.

¹⁹⁹A farmer at Kota Cina recounted that he found the lower portion of a human skeleton when planting yams near Location 1. The bones were at a quite shallow level, perhaps an indication of hurried burial or a corpse left lying where it had fallen.

²⁰⁰Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche*, p. 395.

²⁰¹Sultan Ala'u'd-din (1477-88) considered it necessary to warn his son, who became Sultan Mahmud Shah, to be wary of foreigners and that the "Malays are your clay (*ketuhaan*)"; Winstedt, "Sejarah Melayu," p. 150. Also, the foreigners in Malacca told Tomé Pires that Sultan Mansur (1456-77) was the best of the Malaccan kings, as he "granted liberties to the foreign merchants"; Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 249.

²⁰²A version of the "Pararaton" may have been written in the early years of Gadjah Mada's ministership; C. C. Berg, "The Javanese Past," in Soedjatmoko, *Indonesian Historiography*, pp. 92-105.

²⁰³N. J. Krom, "Pararaton of Het Boek der Koningen van Tumapel en van Majapahit," *VBG*, 62 (1920), p. 36.

²⁰⁴See note 27.

debate in recent years, there are other indications of Javanese activity in fourteenth-century Sumatra. The "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai" tells of Javanese conquests in "Pulau Percha" (Sumatra) during the time of Patih Gadjah Mada,²⁰⁵ and important connections certainly existed between Majapahit and the Minangkabau region during the mid-fourteenth century.²⁰⁶ Finally, residents of the Deli region relate tales of a Javanese conquest. In the early nineteenth century, John Anderson noted a "Lalang Kota Jawa" which he was told was the "remains of an old Javanese fortification."²⁰⁷

Whatever may have been the reason for Kota Cina's demise, it is unlikely that the Chinese returned to the site. Had they done so, it would be difficult to explain the scattered presence of so many Chinese coins. Copper currency was again used in the Ming Dynasty, and coins of earlier periods appear to have retained value.²⁰⁸ Returning Chinese, therefore, would probably have put the hoards into circulation again. Moreover, if a Chinese community had either resettled or continued to live in the region, it is surprising that the reports of the Cheng Ho expeditions of the early fifteenth century do not mention them. The people of Aru are simply described as Muslim.

The location of the prominent center or centers of Aru after the traumatic events of the fourteenth century is also uncertain. In the early 1500s, Pires described Aru as being situated in the hinterland; but, like many other Southeast Asian states, Aru's territorial focus may have changed over time.²⁰⁹ After the fall of Kota Cina, a settlement may have been founded in the Kota Datar/Kota Rantang area, where Ming sherds and coins have been discovered. Deli Tua, however, appears eventually to have become the capital of Aru. Located some 25 kilometers inland from Kota Cina, it was once, according to legend,²¹⁰ the

²⁰⁵A. H. Hill, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," *JMBRAS*, 33 (1960), pp. 93ff.

²⁰⁶Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 232.

²⁰⁷Anderson, *Mission*, p. 272. Crawford also quotes De Barros as noting that the Sumatrans themselves say "the Javanese (Jaös) had been once masters of their great island" (*Dictionary*, p. 253). Pires remarked that, up until approximately the end of the fourteenth century, Java "had almost all the island of Sumatra under its dominion"; Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*, p. 174. Kota Jawa is now known as Tanjong Mulia. Remains of the old earthwork are still visible beside the road between Medan and Belawan.

²⁰⁸Evidence at the Kota Batu site in Brunei seems to support this notion. T'ang, Sung, and Yüan coins, as well as Ming, are found in association with a ceramic assemblage which is "Ming oriented." See Harrisson, "Kota Batu," p. 118.

²⁰⁹The successors of the Malaccan sultans, of course, changed their "capitals" many times. For the early sixteenth-century shifts, see C. C. Brown, "Sejarah Melayu," chs. 23ff. L. Y. Andaya refers to a move of the capital from Johor Lama to Riau in the 1670s; see his *The Kingdom of Johor 1641-1728* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 109. For a note regarding the shifting of capitals in Burma, see G. E. Harvey, *A History of Burma* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), pp. 295-96.

²¹⁰According to one version of the Puteri Hijau story, Deli Tua was the capital of "Gasip," and an earlier capital was located further toward the coast. As we have seen, the tale relates that Deli Tua, like sixteenth-century Aru, was conquered by Aceh; see Rahman, *Sja'ir Puteri Hidjau*. According to Tengku Luckman Sinar, another version of the tale gives the name "Aru" to the state based at Deli Tua; *Serdang*, p. 28.

capital of a great state. In the mid-sixteenth century, Pinto explained that Aru was near the river "Panetican,"²¹¹ a term possibly referring to the Sungei Petani, which is the Karo name for the upper reaches of the Deli river. Deli Tua was not a new settlement: the few Sung and Yüan sherds there indicate occupation in the years of Kota Cina's prominence, and it may even have served the coastal entrepôt as a distribution and collection center. Fourteenth- to sixteenth-century sherds, however, have been found at Deli Tua in considerable quantity, and their provenance--in association with earthworks, cannonballs, and weaponry--suggests that by the sixteenth century this was an important occupation site.

A general shift inland was possibly connected with the change in Aru's orientation which is revealed in the written sources. In the late fourteenth century, the Aru rulers probably hoped to revive the commercial prosperity which existed before the fall of Kota Cina. The Ming victory in China, and the promise of a restoration of the tributary trading system which it offered, would have aroused excitement in the Malay world.²¹² Aru, like Malacca²¹³ and Pasai,²¹⁴ sent envoys to China in the early 1400s, and it is possible that the rulers of all three regions hoped to inherit the tributary entrepôt status once held by Śrīvijaya. Aru, however, evidently fared badly in the contest for trade. Quantities of blue and white, Sawankhalok, Sukhothai, and Vietnamese ware at Deli Tua, and Ming sherds at places such as Hamperan Perak and Kota Rantang/Kota Datar, imply some degree of success. But the apparent absence of concentrations of Ming sherds and coins in the Deli region confirms the impression given in reports from the Cheng Ho expeditions that Aru's commercial achievements were limited after the fourteenth century. By that time, it would appear, the presence of a vigorous Chinese merchant community was no more than a memory; the China trade had shifted to such kingdoms as Pasai²¹⁵ and Malacca.²¹⁶

Aru's failure to attract trade is difficult to explain. It is quite possible, though, that the port may have begun to silt up to the point where the river was no longer easily navigable. The East Sumatran coast has changed considerably even in recorded history. Many toponyms refer to "dead rivers,"²¹⁷ and locations far inland are recalled as having once been ports.²¹⁸ The silting-up of rivers continues today, but it is uncertain when the process began to hinder navigation. We do know that a sixteenth-century Arab writer complained about Aru's shallow harbor.²¹⁹

²¹¹Cogen, *Pinto*, p. 38. ²¹²Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, ch. 5.

²¹³Ibid., pp. 145-46. ²¹⁴Groenveldt, *Notes*, pp. 86, 89.

²¹⁵Wolters, *Fall of Śrīvijaya*, pp. 187-88.

²¹⁶See, in particular, Ma Huan's description in Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 113.

²¹⁷"Sungei Mati" (dead river) is a common place-name in East Sumatra. Numerous dried-up riverbeds are visible from the air in the Medan region.

²¹⁸J. A. M. Cats, Baron de Raet, was told that even Deli Tua was once accessible to the sea; "Reize in de Battaklanden," p. 174. A cataract in the river at Deli Tua presents the first real obstacle to small boats in the ascent from the coast.

²¹⁹Sīdī 'Alī Celebī (1554), quoted in Ferrand, *Relations de voyages*, 2, p. 510.

The records imply that, faced with commercial failure, Aru's Malayo-Batak rulers adopted a new strategy. After 1423, they no longer sent embassies to China;²²⁰ rather, they appear to have shifted their interests from what is sometimes called "legitimate trade" to piracy. In these circumstances, Deli Tua must have been an ideal capital. The Aru rulers would readily have appreciated the strategic advantages of Deli Tua compared to a site such as Kota Cina. Lying in the middle reaches of the Deli-Petani river, which rises near Berastagi in the Karo lands of the interior, surrounded by jungle, Deli Tua must have been, as Pires suggests, a relatively inaccessible place from which the Aru ruler might organize pillaging in the Straits of Malacca. The contrast between Kota Cina and Deli Tua, even at this early stage of archaeological investigation, is dramatic. The relatively small quantities of ceramics and coins at Deli Tua, its cannons, and its earthworks suggest that the settlement was--as the written sources state--geared for war rather than commerce.

* * *

Further research at Kota Cina and other East Sumatran sites will no doubt enlighten the historian of the region in numerous ways not discussed here. It is the hope of the present authors that the information presented here will inform interested scholars of the existence of a potentially important area for both archaeological and historical research and encourage cooperation among members of the two disciplines.

²²⁰See the Ming Annals, quoted in Groenveltdt, *Notes*, p. 96.