

SUVARNADVÎPA AND THE CHRYSÊ CHERSONÊSOS*

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The title of Paul Wheatley's book, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the historical geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (1961) does not leave any doubt about the author's confidence that the Malay Peninsula indeed represents the Golden Peninsula which features in Ptolemy's *Geographikê Hyphêgêsis* (Manual for Mapping out the Earth).¹ The text of his book conveys the same conviction, adding that, though the Indian *Suvarṇabhūmi* or *Suvarṇadvīpa* (Gold Land or Gold Island) indicated only some indistinct "eastern eldorado," it was somehow especially connected with the Malay Peninsula, since it must have been the matrix of Ptolemy's *chersonêsos* (peninsula). In spite of my admiration of the way in which Wheatley brought together his rich source materials, for which any future historian of Southeast Asia will be indebted to him, I do not share his confidence as to the location of the Golden Khersonese. In this paper I would like to present some of the reasons for my doubts.

I. Suvarṇadvīpa

Suvarṇabhūmi and *Suvarṇadvīpa* are the most common names connected with gold in old-Indian literature, both Sanskrit and Pāli. The adjective "gold" is also used in connection with other geographical features, but in Sanskrit works mostly in the compound *Suvarṇadvīpa*.² It is obvious that these names, as Wheatley rightly notes, only "featured in early Indian folklore as an eastern eldorado where great riches might be won."³ It must be doubted, however, whether this statement remains true when subsequently "ancient Indian folklore" is changed

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1. Ptolemy was a Greek mathematician and astronomer who worked in Alexandria in the second century A.D. His *Geographikê* must have been published between 150 and 160. For this work he depended greatly on an earlier one by Marinus of Tyre, who lived at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, and whose work he tried to rectify. Nothing is known of Marinus except what Ptolemy tells us. See C. Müller and C. T. Fisher (eds.), *Claudius Ptolemaeus' "Geographia": Selections* (5 vols.; Paris: A. Firmin Didot, 1883-1901); L. Renou, *La Géographie de Ptolémée, l'Inde* (VII, 1-4) (Paris: E. Champion, 1925); J. Fischer and P. Franci de Cavalieri, *Clavdii Ptolemaei Geographiae Codex Vrbinus Graecvs 82* (4 vols.; Leyde: E. J. Brill, 1932).
2. S. Lévi, "Ptolémée, le Nidessa et la Brhatkathā," *Études As.*, II (1925), pp. 1-55, 431-32; R. Braddell, "Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya I," *Journal, Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* (*JMBRAS*), XX (1947), pp. 161-86.
3. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 182.

into "the ancient Indians." Poets and storytellers of course used these names merely as an embellishment without caring about their exact location or whether they were connected with any particular location at all. The names, however, did not originate with these poets, but with people for whom they and their exact location were of substantial importance, and who had, moreover, full opportunity to know.

Information about these places was not obtained from the lone voyage of a vessel that managed to return home after being swept by a storm to an unknown coast, whose sailors told fabulous stories that in no way could be checked. There is an increasing conviction that this information was the result of both indirect and direct trade contact which began long before the Christian era and became, at least from the beginning of that era, a regular occurrence along well-known trade routes in which Indian shipping, though slower to start than its Indonesian counterpart, played a prominent role.⁴

A great deal of valuable information about these voyages spread in shipping circles along the coast from Bengal to Ceylon and from there to Gujarat and Sindhu by way of a coastal sea traffic which goes back to about the fourth century B.C.⁵ This information as told by Sindbad the sailor for the consumption of stupefied landlubbers at home may have been mixed with a liberal sprinkling of fairy tales. Pilots, traders and their sponsors, however, whose lives and fortunes were at stake, were less given to spreading and receiving this kind of report. They sought after exact information and knew how to compare and to sift their sources. (As to locations, even primitive sailors like the Polynesians showed an uncanny ability to estimate exact directions and distances.)⁶ Thus, though the Indian sailors were of course unable to define locations according to modern geographical coordinates, they were presumably able to describe their relative positions in terms of directions and normal sailing days.

One might still object, however, that these traders, who came from different parts of India and probably made their own separate voyages, could hardly be expected to invent the same names for the places they chanced to visit. For as far as can be judged from literary sources (whose evidence may, however, be deceptive) they were not interested in using indigenous names, but invented their own, mostly in connection with the principal product of the place (such as gold, camphor, coconuts, or barley) or in commemoration of their own home country (Mala-

4. D. G. E. Hall, A History of Southeast Asia (3rd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 12-24; G. Coedès, Les États Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie (2nd ed.; Paris: E. de Boccardi, 1964), pp. 35-72; J. F. Cady, Southeast Asia. Its Historical Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 21-48; C. Nooteboom, "Sumatra en de zeevaart op de Indische ocean," Indonesië, IV (1950/51), pp. 120-27; O. W. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce. A Study of the Origins of Srîvijaya (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 21, 154; O. W. Wolters, The Fall of Srîvijaya in Malay History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 193; J. Innis Miller, The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire 29 B.C. - A.D. 641 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 153-72.

5. C. Maloney, "The Beginnings of Civilization in South India," The Journal of Asian Studies, XXIX (1969/70), pp. 603-16.

6. R. C. Suggs, The Island Civilizations of Polynesia (New York: New American Library, 1960), especially chapter 7.

yadvîpa, Kalaśapura, Nāgapura, Tonḍi). However, the weight of this argument depends on whether or not there were regular trade routes and a great deal of communication at home and abroad. These voyages lasted for many months or even years. Traders transferred their goods from one ship to another and together awaited the return monsoon at meeting places--where they were more likely to find lodging, safety, companionship and a vessel for the trip home. In these circumstances, an understanding of each other's nomenclature and even a certain uniformity with regard to the principal aims and landmarks of their voyages, such as the "Gold Land" and "Gold Island," was easily obtained. It also seems to me that with regard to precisely these two features we have some explicit evidence to show that during the first century A.D. they were already generally known as two definite and distinct geographical entities.

During the reign of Augustus, an increasing number of Greeks were trading with the west coast of India. They reached the east coast, probably over land, around the middle of the first century.⁷ One of their pilots, who collected his information in the second half of the first century, but whose personal experience did not reach beyond the west coast, wrote a detailed guide for voyages around the Indian Ocean, the *Periplous*.⁸ His account of the exploration of the mouth of the Ganges and beyond is therefore probably based on information which he gathered in ports along the northwest coast of India.⁹ This information contained only vague indications about the exact location of the places mentioned. The writer was told about a mainland region called "Golden," the most eastern continent toward the orient, situated around, above, beyond (*hê peri autên*) the Ganges mouth. Downwards from, opposite to or near the same river (*kat'auton de ton potamon*), however, and also an extreme eastern part of the inhabited world, lying exactly towards sunrise (*hup'auton anechonta ton hêlion*), i.e., due east, lay an oceanic island of the same name.

Whatever the value of these indications as sailing directions, the most interesting feature of this passage is the careful stress put on the different character of the two Chrysês. The first is not simply called *chôra* (place, region, country), as in the work of Ptolemy, but specifically *êpeiros* (mainland, continent). In the same way, the writer is not content to say simply *nêsos*. This Greek word would ordinarily be sufficient, but it was sometimes used for a peninsula (as, e.g., in Pelopponêsos). In order to avoid any confusion he adds "oceanic" (*ôkeanikos*), an adjective which rules out the possibility of a peninsula, since it indicates exactly the opposite of *cherso-nêsos* which means literally "mainland island." Ptolemy, who probably never read the *Periplous*, tried to avoid the same problem by explaining *nêsos* as *chersonêsos*, merely on the strength of the so-called coastlines on his map. Thus he created precisely the confusion he wished to avoid. We will have to return to this question presently.

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7. Sir Robert E. M. Wheeler, Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers (London: Bell, 1954), pp. 141ff.; Max Cary and E. H. Warmington, The Ancient Explorers (London: Meutheun, 1929), pp. 87ff.; George Woodcock, The Greeks in India (London: Faber, 1966), pp. 136ff.; G. Juveau-Dubreuil, "Les Ruines Romaines de Pondichéry," Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (BEFEO), XL (1940), pp. 448-73.
 8. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 129-30; R. Hennig (ed.), Terrae Incognitae (2nd ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1944-56), pp. 335, 389-90.
 9. C. Müller, Geographi Graeci Minores I (Paris: A. Firmin Didot, 1855), p. 285.

If Suvarṇadvîpa (or whatever a Gold Island was called in the language they used) for the pilots of the first century was an island in the strict sense of the word and a particular one, from the end of the seventh century onward there is no doubt at all that this island was Sumatra.¹⁰ The connection is accepted by I-tsing, by the Nālandā inscription and by Nepalese and Arab sources as self-evident.¹¹ This is not contradicted by the fact that Suvarṇadvîp-Zâbaj as a political entity exceeded the limits of Sumatra, as is suggested by Wheatley.¹² Śrîvijaya, Majapahit and so many other kingdoms were not confined to the boundaries of the geographical center that gave them their names. The same identification with Sumatra is suggested in several stories of the *Kathâsaritsâgara* (stories that could have originated well before the seventh century), mainly those about the voyages of the brahmin Candrasvâmin who went in search of his lost son and of the princess Guṇavatî, whose ship was wrecked on the coast of Suvarṇadvîpa while on its way from Kaṭaha to India.¹³ Finally, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was the kings of Dharmâśraya (Upper Jambi) who styled themselves lords of Suvarṇadvîpa and Kanakamedinî.¹⁴

This name for Sumatra was well founded on its rich deposits of gold and silver. It persisted therefore during Portuguese, Dutch and English times, as we will presently see. The Malay Peninsula on the contrary evidently had little to offer in this field. In older Chinese reports gold is not mentioned except in connection with Tan-tan¹⁵ (which might help to show that its location was really outside the Peninsula),¹⁶ and in Chinese reports of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it is referred to only as an import commodity.¹⁷ The Arab writers who glorify Zâbaj for its gold do not mention it in connection with the Peninsula, except for Mas'ûdî, who tells us that there are gold mines in Pahang "which are seldom exploited."¹⁸ According to Urdaneta "an enormous quantity of gold, and that of high quality" was imported to Malaka from Minangkabau, while only a small quantity, and that of poor quality, came from Thailand and Patani.¹⁹

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10. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, p. 267; Coedès, Les États Hindouisés, p. 160.
 11. N. J. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis (2nd ed.; The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1931), pp. 142, 247.
 12. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 182. Suvarṇadvîp is the Arab equivalent of Suvarṇadvîpa. Zâbag/Zâbaj is a port in Southeast Sumatra in the Arab texts. Its identity will be discussed below at p. 38.
 13. Ibid., pp. 180, 182.
 14. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis, pp. 336, 413.
 15. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 52.
 16. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 206-16.
 17. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 74, 87.
 18. Ibid., p. 228.
 19. P. A. Tiele, "De Europeeërs in den Maleischen Archipel," Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BKI), XXIV (1877), p. 348; XXVI (1879), p. 27; M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago 1500-1630 (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 80-81.

Thus, if Sumatra was accepted without question as "Suvarṇadvīpa" since the seventh century, we may suppose that this represented a continuing tradition from long before that time, unless we have conclusive evidence which points to a change. Such evidence does not exist. What indications we have point on the contrary to a continuity. As to the claim of the Malay Peninsula in particular, there is no positive evidence that it was ever, before or after the seventh century, called *dvīpa* (as a whole) or *suvarṇa*. The latter appellation could hardly have been founded on its deposits, but neither is there evidence that it was used in connection with the re-export of gold or with the general idea of rich trade opportunities. There is seemingly one solitary exception, whose solitariness however makes it already suspect, viz., the use by Ptolemy of the word *chersonēsos*. The question is whether this creation was indeed based on original reports or on some interpretation of Ptolemy himself.

II. The Origin of Ptolemy's Chersonēsos

Wheatley states that "In this century . . . writers have, albeit in a rather hesitant manner, usually identified the Golden Khersonese with the Malay Peninsula. The reasons for this seem to me unassailable."²⁰ The first of these reasons is that the coastlines reconstructed on the basis of Ptolemy's data and starting from the Ganges delta, a point whose location cannot be disputed, show "a general agreement" with the present outline of mainland Southeast Asia, which is "too complete to be explained by coincidence alone. The Bay of Bengal, the Burmese deltas, the Gulf of Martaban, the Malay Peninsula, the Gulf of Siam, the rivers of Indo-China, all are clearly recognizable." Thus he reasons that in this general agreement the feature which tallies with the Golden Khersonese is undoubtedly the Malay Peninsula.²¹

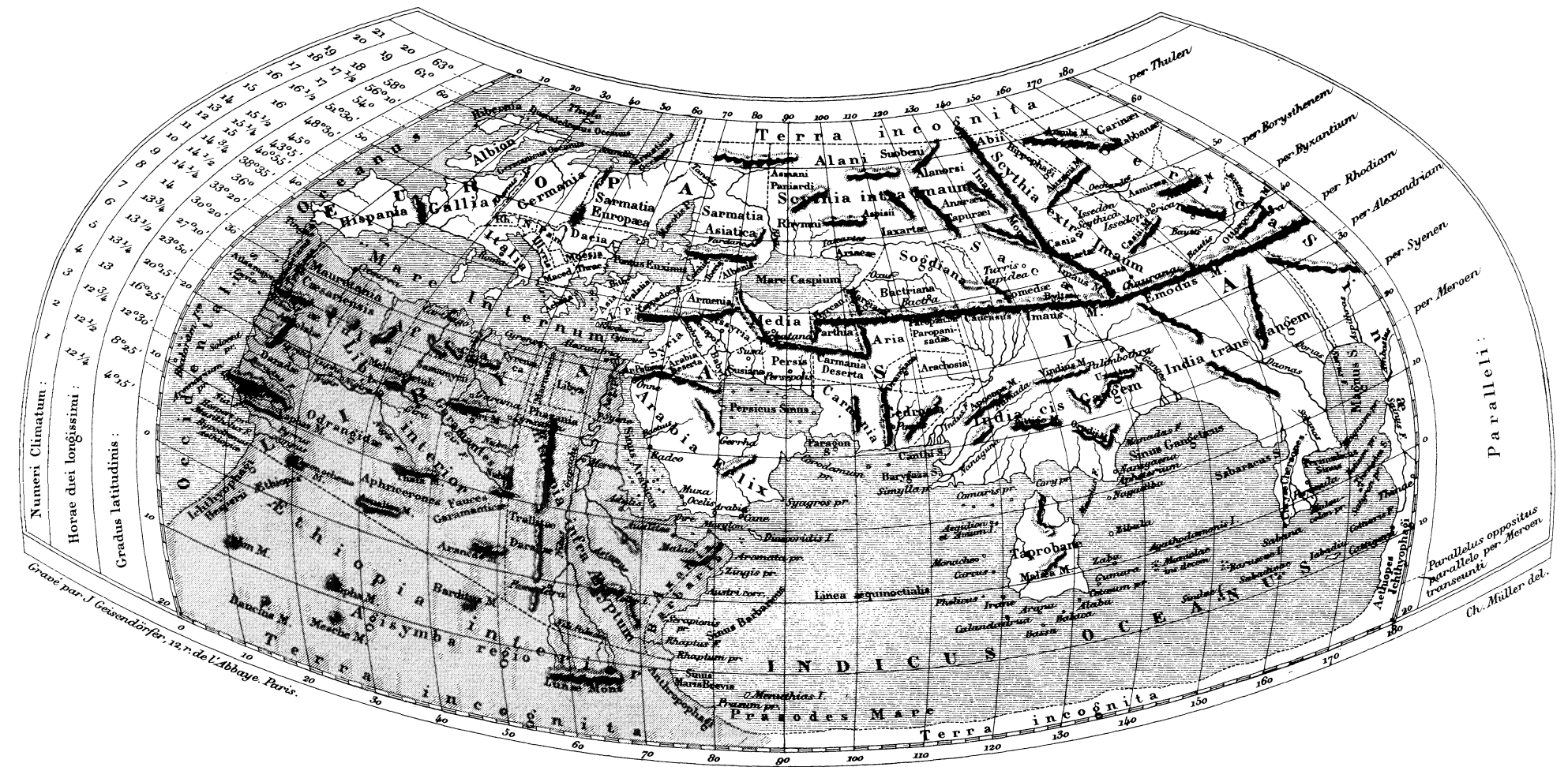
The first thing I want to call in question is whether the lines we see on Ptolemaean maps or their reconstructions can simply be put on a par with "outlines" or "coastlines." Ptolemy's catalogue contains lists of coastal features such as ports of call (*emporía*), indigenous settlements (*poleis*), estuaries, capes, etc., supposedly arranged according to the order in which these were visited or encountered by the seafarer. These places were charted on the maps and connected by lines, and we pretend (as Ptolemy himself did too) that the net result is something like a coastline. But even if the coordinates were more or less trustworthy, these lines would basically only represent sailing routes, which could (and fairly often would) run parallel to a coast. But since the sailors of those days were not bound to coastal shipping, what guarantee do we have that these places were always located along the same coast, that the sailing route did not cross from mainland to island, from island to island or from one mainland to another? What assures us that those who told about their voyages mentioned every crossing and that those who noted down the sequence of places and their distances paid due attention to taxonomic consistency? Thus, in particular, they could have mentioned an island and then places (on that island). Ptolemy, however, or more probably his source, would have lifted this island out of context and placed it with the others in a special "list of islands." Thus no trace of crossings would remain.

20. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 144-55.

21. Ibid., p. 145.

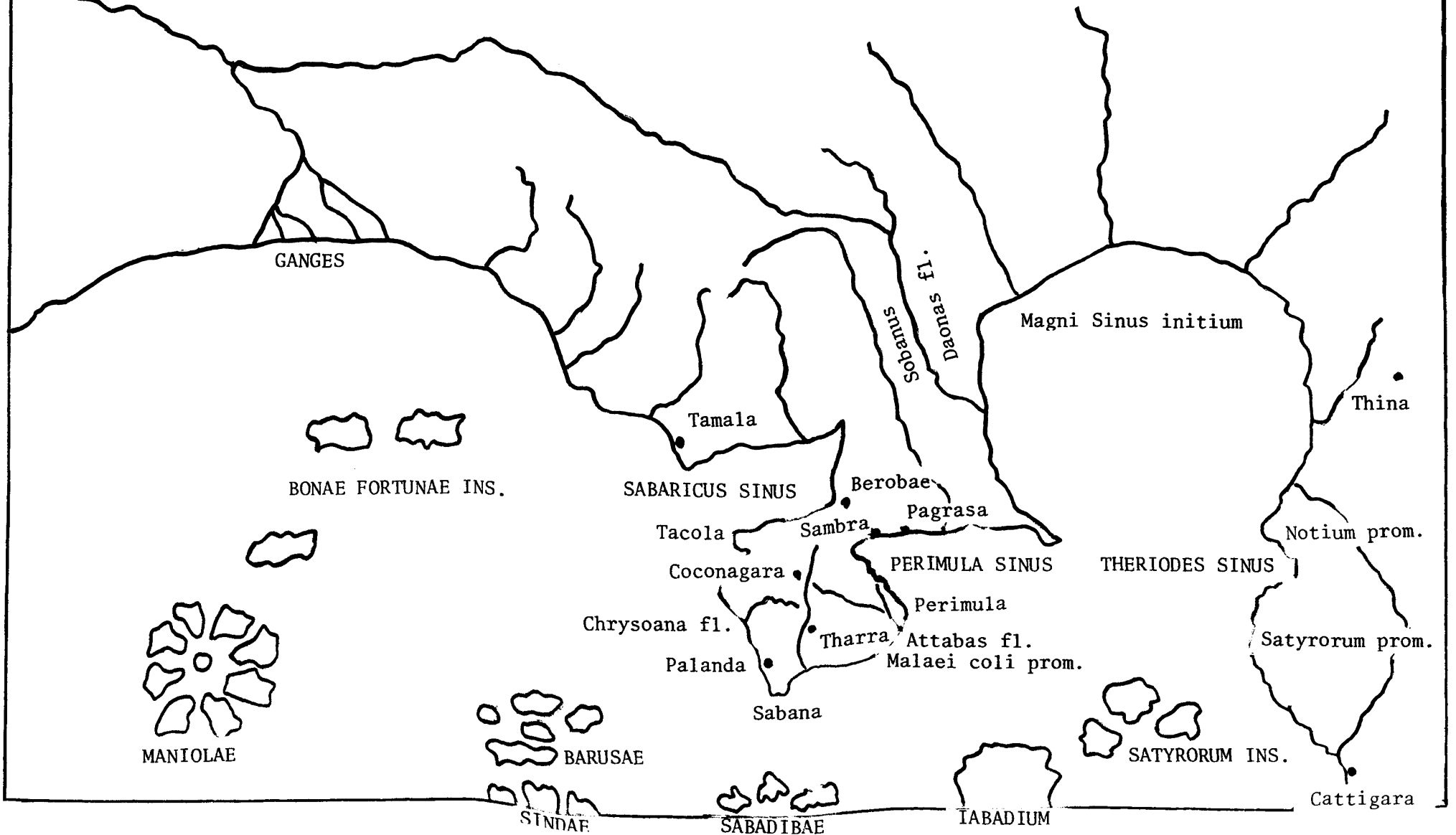
Source: Ch. Müller and C. T. Fisher (eds.), Claudius Ptolemaeus "Geographia": 36 Maps.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY



THE CHRYSÊ CHERSONÊSOS ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY

Source: Adapted from L. Renou, *La Géographie de Ptolémée*. (Map based on the ms. map attached to Ms. Venet. Marc. 516 [R]) XIVth. C.)



It is a pity that the original sources were melted down into the mould of the big Marino-Ptolemaean world-conception and so were lost to us. Some, however, may have escaped this fate: for example, the account of one Alexander, who stated according to Marinus of Tyre that between the Golden Chersonêsos and Zabai, a distance of twenty days, the coast faced south, whence the course lay to the eastward of south for a voyage of some days until Kattigara (see Ptolemy's *Geography* Book 1, Chapter 14, Section 1, hereafter 1.14.1). We do not know who this Alexander was, whether he visited the region in person and whether his words were reported verbatim or only approximately (especially: did he use the term chersonêsos?). It is not clear either whether from Zabai onward the course paralleled a coast or not. Therefore, if Ptolemy came to the conclusion that it did not (the course is not charted on his map), this must have been due to other contradictory reports, rather than to the account itself.

This question is even more pressing for a region abounding in islands. It seems hardly possible that Ptolemy received reports about nine islands or island groups none of which lay on the route of the regular traffic.²² Nonetheless one of these was an "island of Fortune" (Agathou Daimonos nêsos) and another was the large island Yavadvîpa, "fertile and producing a great quantity of gold," which seemed to be, together with Suvarnavîpa, one of the main objectives of the whole movement to the east, and moreover one of the first kingdoms to be mentioned in Chinese sources under an Hinduized name.²³ If Indian literature may be considered as a vague echo of what was going on, it reflects no urge comparable to this quest for gold, which would warrant the supposition that traders pressed on with great eagerness along the mainland shore in order to reach the China coast and left those islands apart.

It is fairly certain of course that in the Later Han period traders from the West reached Tongkin and Canton by ship and that occasionally Chinese set out from these harbors to the West.²⁴ Professor Wolters has shown, however, that whatever trade was going on passed largely through the hands of Fu-nan and its dependencies, who controlled the contacts with southeastern China both by land and by sea.²⁵ It stands to reason that Fu-nan would try to maintain its favorable position as an entrepot, if need be by force. Change came between the end of the third and the beginning of the fifth century, when the Chinese imperial center was forced to migrate to the south and to look for new ways of making contact with the West, and when at the same time it became possible to bypass Fu-nan by crossing the South China Sea directly from Yavadvîpa, and afterwards from Śrîvijaya, to Canton.

This emphasis on the role of Fu-nan, c.q. the Gulf of Siam, as an entrepot is essential in order to understand the course lined out by

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22. E. H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography among the Greeks and Romans from the Earliest Ages till the Fall of the Roman Empire* (2 vols.; New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p. 608.
 23. Ying-shih Yü, *Trade and Expansion in Han China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 177.
 24. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-87.
 25. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 31-48.

Ptolemy. This course does not have to be "turned about" as is advocated, e.g., by Bunbury²⁶ and Hennig.²⁷ The traders did not turn north to Tongkin, but continued from Rabana (Râj Banam or Kurung Banam, Funan) to the southeast across the mouth of the Sinos River (South China Sea) and arrived, after passing Cape Notion (Natuna?), at the Animal Gulf, viz., Datuk Bay at the northwest tip of Borneo. Ptolemy gives the Greek translation *thêriôdês*, which tallies with Sanskrit *tiryagja* and Malay *Binatang*, presently still the name of a market center near the mouth of the Rajang River (in present day Sarawak), while at the coast we still find a Cape Jeriyèh (which may be a corruption of *tiryagja*). Thus they set foot on Yabadiou, whose capital, Argyrê polis or Silver Town, was situated on the most western extremity of the coast, where we still find the river and market center of Selakau (*selaka* means silver), and whose name, Barley Island, probably derived from the Barley River or Sungai Jelai, which empties at Borneo's southwestern corner, the first landfall on the above mentioned direct route from Zabai to Kattigara. This name "Yavadvîpa" (next door to Javadvîpa) of course started to cause confusion long before our time. It did so ever since Java overtook its northern neighbor Borneo in importance. The earlier Javanese kings even added to it by appropriating this celebrated name in their Sanskrit texts.

Since this part of the voyage lies outside our present scope, a more detailed discussion will have to wait. My only concern at the moment is to show that the islands must have been part of the trade route, which is one of the reasons why we will have to reconsider the significance of the connecting lines as merely indicating the sailing course. There is, however, still the important difficulty that on Ptolemy's map no connection whatever is discernible between the location of these islands and the location of the sailing route.

We have to note in the first place that Ptolemy, too, considered his lines to be coastlines, and thus he could not very well put these islands on top of a mainland, whatever his sources might say. But in the second place, the actual reason why these islands were relegated to the places they occupy may have been the quest for symmetry. Ptolemy complains that Marinus, who seems to have felt free to correct his sources whenever they did not comply with some preconceived theory of his own,²⁸ had pushed the Golden Peninsula much too far to the east relative to Cape Kori, which they considered to be the southern tip of India (1.14.7-8). It seems, however, that he left the islands behind, either because this heightened the symmetry of his composition, or because there was no place for them on the eastern continent he had created.

In any case, by taking our bearings from the Gangetic delta and from the Golden Peninsula (whose general location--Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula--may be considered at least approximately certain) we can assure ourselves that no island is or in the historical period ever could have been in the region where they are located by Ptolemy, whatever dimension we attribute to his degrees. Since they professedly belong to "India beyond the Ganges," they will have to be moved at least ten to fifteen degrees eastward (or the Peninsula westward) in

26. Bunbury, A History, p. 606

27. Hennig, Terrae Incognitae, p. 407.

28. Bunbury, A History, p. 537.

order to reach a tenable position in relation to the other data, unless we think, of course, that the sailors saw a whole series of mirages. We may note that it is mainly their comparative longitudinal position which is at fault.

Thus it would seem that there are no a priori guaranteed "coastlines" on Ptolemy's map of Southeast Asia. We may add that if there were, their "general agreement" with an existing coastline would prove nothing. Such an argument could only have some force if the course was continued for long stretches in the same direction and under the same conditions of wind, current, reefs, etc. The frequent and drastic changes of direction and conditions in the waters of Southeast Asia, however, make this comparison as deceptive as the calculations of Berthelot.²⁹ Ptolemy's averages, applied to such varying conditions, must, through prolonging and dwarfing of the real distances, lead to considerable distortion. The only element which may be considered fairly reliable is the indicated direction of the sailing course.

When we come to the particulars as summed up by Wheatley (the Bay of Bengal, the Burmese deltas, the Gulf of Martaban, etc.), the ground does not become much firmer. In later times ships bound for Suvarṇadvīpa did not bother with the Gulf of Martaban and the overland route, but sailed south as fast and as far as they could before the wind turned against them. I-tsing, for example, made it as far as Kedah, where he had to wait from "the first or second month" until winter before he could go on, arriving therefore in Srīvijaya exactly a year after reaching Kedah.³⁰ Ships that went in the opposite direction to Tāmraliptī are reported to have sailed by way of the Nicobar or Andaman Islands. It would seem, therefore, that Ptolemy's "Tamala" had nothing to do with Burma, but was more likely the port of Chetamala (Sanskrit *cetamala*?) on Little Andaman, where ships crossing the Bay of Bengal could also make their landfall. From Chetamala they sailed for the northwest coast of the Malay Peninsula to await the coming of the northeast monsoon. This accounts for the shortening of what is supposed to be the Andaman sea on the Ptolemaean charts.

On their way to the coast of the Peninsula they passed Sabara. The Arabs knew a Nāja Bāra corresponding to Nicobar.³¹ The three names may have been derived respectively from the Sanskrit *caura* (modern Chowra or Chaura), *nacaura* and *niścaura*. The first island (maybe the Chia-lan of the Chinese mentioned by Wolters³²) was apparently known for its piratical activity (Thieves Island), while the rest of the group was considered relatively free of this pest. We may add that the sounds represented by "c" and "v" in modern Sanskrit transcriptions are commonly transcribed in Ptolemy's opus as sigma (e.g., Sēmula = Cemūla, Êragassa = Erakaccha)³³ and bêta. After they crossed the

29. A. Berthelot, L'Asie Ancienne Centrale et Sud orientale d'Après Ptolémée (Paris: Payot, 1930), pp. 273ff.

30. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 227-28.

31. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 243. In an inscription of 1031 this same feature is called Nakkavâram by the Tamils. Ibid., p. 201.

32. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 189, 327.

33. Renou, La Géographie, p. ix; Ph. L. Eggermont, "The Murundas and the Ancient Trade Route from Taxila to Ujjain," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, IX (1966).

Sabarikos Kolpos or Gulf of Robbery (*caurikâ*), they disembarked at the trading post of "Bêsinga" or "Babysênga." This toponym may have been derived from the Sanskrit *bahih simhala* (Outer-Ceylon), a name which, for archeological and historical reasons, could very well apply to the coast of modern Takuapa.³⁴ Its Malay name, Ujung Selang, conserved by the Arabs as Urong Salâh³⁵ and by the Europeans as Junk Ceylon, seems to denote it as a place to await the turn of the monsoon.

After the monsoon turned, they took off from a locality called "Bêroba" or "Bêrabai" (maybe the Sanskrit *virâva*) somewhere to the south. The important thing is, however, that they did not continue in the same direction, but made a sharp turn back to the west, evidently aiming at the northern tip of Sumatra.

Thus it seems that their trip around the Chrysê Chersonêsos was the trip around Sumatra, around the "Gold Island" of the Indians and the "oceanic island" of the *Periplous*. But why did they not use the Strait of Malaka? It is unlikely that this strait was then obstructed by a land bridge, as was supposed by many competent Portuguese writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It is unlikely also that the ancient mariners did not know about this thoroughfare. The insistence on the word "island" suggests that both the Strait of Malaka and the Sunda Strait were in existence and were known. It is evident, however, that Marinus and Ptolemy were not aware of this fact, in the same way as they remained ignorant of the crossing to Chetamala, to the Malay Peninsula or to Borneo. For it is difficult to accept that they simply ignored all indications of a crossing. It must have been the organization of their sources with the islands lifted out of the main text that concealed these indications. The logical inference seems to be, therefore, that they used mainly or even exclusively written sources (maybe Alexander's included) and had, for this part of the world at least, little or no oral information from eye-witnesses. There are other indications that corroborate this inference, as we shall presently see.

It is, however, probable that they explained away one crossing that was given to them, though not in so many words. The Greek and Latin writers of the first century knew about a "nêsos" or "insula" connected with gold, but never spoke about a "chersonêsos" or "peninsula."³⁶ Thus it is more plausible that Marinus' and Ptolemy's (Greek or Latin) sources too headed a certain paragraph with the caption "Chrysês nêsou." Because no crossing was mentioned, our authors had the choice of positing one or explaining the word "nêsos" as "chersonêsos," a meaning that it could indeed have. The first choice would have marred the flow of their "coastlines," and would have caused difficulties in charting. The second choice was therefore obviously indicated. This seems at least more probable than the supposition of Wheatley that *dvîpa* also meant "peninsula."³⁷ However loosely the word

34. A. Lamb, "Miscellaneous Papers on Early Hindu and Buddhist Settlement in Northern Malaya and Southern Thailand," *Federation Museums Journal*, VI (1961), pp. 48-55; Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, pp. 195-97; M. Collis, *Siamese White* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), p. 238.

35. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, figure 41.

36. H. Kern, "Java en het Gondeiland volgens de oudste Berichten," *Verspreide Geschriften* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1913-36), V, pp. 312-13; Bunbury, *A History*, p. 364; Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 127.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

was used, especially in esoteric and poetic literature, it is difficult to accept that in the second century it specifically suggested a peninsula. To fall back for that conclusion on word origins seems as dangerous as calling a present-day tenant-farmer a villain.

III. The Island of Fortune

The main reason why the ancient mariners chose the way around Sumatra must have been the fear of pirates. The name "Robber Gulf" applied certainly also to the northern part and very likely to the whole of the Strait of Malaka. This fear is reflected in Fa-Hsien's: "This sea is invested with pirates, to meet whom means certain death." The high seas had their own dangers, but those from pirates were worse, especially in waters where it was difficult to outsail them. On the high seas the expanse of the ocean might be boundless, the ship might be swept at the mercy of the winds for days and weeks, while the crew did not know where they were and, if the sky was overcast, had no notion in what direction they were driven. They might be tossed by huge waves without means to help themselves and if they were swept onto an unknown coast their chances of escape were slight indeed.³⁸ The Strait of Malaka, on the other hand, was an ideal hunting place for sea-robbers. It was full of uncharted and treacherous mud banks, notorious for its transverse and unreliable winds, sudden squalls alternating with doldrums. Any immobilized ship became the defenseless prey of hordes of small indigenous craft, as can be inferred from later descriptions.³⁹

It seems plausible therefore that the frequency of the voyage around Sumatra stood in direct relation to the unsafety of the Strait of Malaka. Even the Dutch ships at the beginning of the seventeenth century preferred to sail *buyten om* (around Sumatra) as long as the Portuguese held sway in Malaka.⁴⁰ Tomé Pires states that "Before the channel of Malaka was discovered, those of Gujarat and Bombay used to trade with Java round the south of Sumatra. . . . It is not a hundred years since they gave up this route."⁴¹ This change may have occurred after Malaka re-established some order in the Malaka Straits, probably after the middle of the fourteenth century, which had been lost since the decline of the older Sumatra-based maritime empire a century earlier.⁴² It is thus a fair inference that in exactly the same way the voyage through the Strait held little attraction before Śrīvijaya was first able to establish a certain supremacy during the seventh century and at least curb unauthorized piracy.

A second reason could have been that the earlier voyages to a considerable degree were animated by the quest for gold. Deposits of this

38. Fa-Hsien, Record of Buddhist Kingdoms, translated by H. A. Giles (Cambridge: University Press, 1923), pp. 110-11.

39. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 89-91.

40. H. Kroeskamp, De Westkust en Minangkabau (1665-1668) (Utrecht: Drukkerij Fa. Schotanus & Jens, 1931), p. 14.

41. D. F. Lach and C. Flaumenhaft (eds.), Asia on the Eve of Europe's Expansion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 20.

42. Meilink-Roelofs, Asian Trade, pp. 18, 22-23.

metal were to be found along the west coast of Sumatra. Voyagers could have obtained gold by entering the east coast rivers, but this may have been too dangerous as far as the more northern portions of the island were concerned, which, according to all reports, were inhabited by a savage kind of people.⁴³ The southeastern parts were different, as we will see, and at the west side they could trade off the coast.

In his third argument (the second will be dealt with presently), Wheatley maintains that "the designation 'golden' agrees well with what we know of the early economic importance of the Peninsula." The reason why it is not an important source of gold today, is because the world supply is so much bigger than it was in ancient times. "The association of the Peninsula with the precious metal persisted into the seventeenth century when Eredia described the mines of Patani and Pahang, and we find it occupying an important place in the accounts of even eighteenth and nineteenth century writers."⁴⁴ We have noted already that in fact the Peninsula's association with gold was a poor one and that this quality was what persisted. It is no coincidence that the same Eredia was one of the staunchest proponents of the story of the land bridge between Sumatra and the Peninsula, evidently because he saw this as the only way to salvage Ptolemy's chersonêsos.⁴⁵ As to the "economic importance of the Peninsula" in general, it was true only of the northern portion, and involved only the fact that this area formed a barrier for east-west traffic and had to be traversed to reach the rich lands beyond.

What really persisted was the association of Sumatra with Suvarṇadvīpa. The Portuguese explorers were under royal injunction to search for the "Gold Island" and reported back that this could only be South Sumatra.⁴⁶ They were barely settled in Malaka when they tried to contact Minangkabau by way of the Sumatra rivers. Moreover, as early as 1600 the Dutch sent van Caerden from Banten to Pariaman, Tiku, Pasaman and Aceh. In 1601 van Heemskerck went to "Monancabo" in order to obtain gold, swords and pepper. And in 1602 they were followed by the English

43. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, p. 195.

44. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 145.

45. Manoel Godinho de Eredia was born in Malaka from a Portuguese father and a Buginese mother. After being educated at the Jesuit College in Goa, he became one of the most energetic and scientifically interested Portuguese explorers and administrators. He wrote his Informação da Aurea Chersoneso in 1599, wherein he gave his own interpretation of Ptolemy's Chersonêsos by postulating a land bridge between Cape Rachado (Malaya) and Pulau Rupa (Sumatra) so that these two territories formed a single unit. His contemporary, João de Barros, already in 1560 gave another interpretation: "This Chersoneso, where our city of Malaca stands, seems to have been given the epithet of Aurea because of the great quantities of gold carried there from Monancabo and Barros (Barus) . . . (that is) why ancient geographers erroneously called the island of Samatra the Chersoneso" (Decadas Da Asia de João de Barros [rev. ed.; Lisbon: Na Regia Officina Typografica, 1777-78], Decada II, Livro VI, Capitulos i). He also looked for a loophole in order to justify Ptolemy's "peninsula."

46. G. Schurhammer, Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer zur Zeit des Hl. Franz Xaver (1538-1552) (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1962), no. 586, 732, 1115a, 1276, 1295, 1821, 1822.

under James Lancaster.⁴⁷ They had the assurance of van Linschoten: "Sumatra, formerly Taprobana, is also called by some historians Chersoneso Aurea . . . and they say that in former times it must have been continuous with Malaka. This island is extremely rich in mines of gold, silver and other ores."⁴⁸ Many disappointments notwithstanding,⁴⁹ the search persisted. Raffles, while in Bangkahulu, wrote: "The Tigabelas Country (Pagerruyung) has always been famous for its produce in gold; indeed to Europeans it has been known as a gold country alone. . . ."⁵⁰ Even the Jambi war of 1902 still had much to do with rumors about rich gold deposits being exploited in the foothills of the Bukit Barisan.⁵¹

Gold and silver deposits are found in the whole Bukit Barisan range from Angkola to Bangkahulu, with smaller deposits in Aceh and Lampung. Large-scale mining, however, is difficult because the veins are small and scattered. Nevertheless the Rejang Lebong mine alone produced about 30 million guilders worth of gold and silver between 1900 and 1910. In 1924 its produce (3,870 kg. of gold and 64,800 kg. of silver) was worth 4.2 million guilders. In 1939 some six or seven European companies were still operative in Sumatra, though with a joint output of only 2,400 kg. of gold and 18,200 kg. of silver.⁵² Thus it seems improbable that the ancient Sumatrans migrated to the Malay Peninsula in search of gold⁵³ "in view of Malaya as a source of gold for the ancient and medieval world."⁵⁴

The "Island of Fortune," the island-eldorado "where great riches might be won," was above all Sumatra. It would seem, therefore, that Suvarṇadvīpa or the Chrysē nēsos leads a double existence in the geography of Ptolemy, first made out to be a peninsula, and, second, left in the shape of an island but with an alternative name, the "Agathou Daimonos nēsos" or "Bonae fortunae insula" as the Latin translations have it. In Hellenistic Greek the "agathos daimōn" was the giver of luck, prosperity and wealth, corresponding to the Roman Fortuna.⁵⁵

47. H. Koeskamp, De Westkust, pp. 14-16.

48. J. H. van Linschoten, Itinerario, Voyage ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer oost ofte Portugaels Indien: 1579-1592, edited by H. Kern (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1910), I, p. 74.

49. E. Hesse, Gold-bergwerke in Sumatra, 1680-1685 (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1931), pp. 62ff.

50. Th. St. Raffles, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, edited by his Widow (2nd ed.; London: John Murray, 1835), I, pp. 406-7.

51. H. H. van Kol, Driemaal dwars door Sumatra en zwerftochten door Bali (Rotterdam: W. L. & J. Brusse, 1914), pp. 136-39.

52. Th. Ligthart, P. Hövig and D. A. Rinkes, De Indische Bodem (Weltevreden: Volkslectuur, 1926), pp. 146-54; Indisch Verslag 1940 (Weltevreden: Landsdrukkerij, 1941), p. 302.

53. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. xxxii.

54. Ibid., pp. 149-50.

55. F. M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (New York: Harper, 1957), pp. 37-39, 98-99.

Since "suvarṇa" means both gold and wealth or fortune, and since two similar names are not known from Sanskrit literature, it seems reasonable to suppose that both names are Greek translations of the same Suvarṇadvīpa, the first one with a peninsula-correction by Marinus or Ptolemy.

It is possible, of course, though less likely, that these two men made up the alternative name "Island of Fortune." If they had several sources mentioning a "Gold Island," one describing a place-to-place voyage starting from the Ganges delta, and another perhaps based on a direct crossing of the Bay of Bengal and enumerating the islands that were to be found en route, adding to its "Gold Island" the explanation "or the island of wealth," they could have regarded this as an alternative and more appropriate name, in order to distinguish it from the genuine "Gold Island" described in their main source, which according to their calculations occupied a totally different place and besides was evidently a peninsula. Explanations were also attached to the names of Iabadiou, the Satyroi and Maniolai islands (7.2.30-31) and others, and the explanation given here would have been an enormous step forward compared with those given by Pomponius Mela's and Pliny's sources, which said respectively that the name meant that the island was paved with gold and that it consisted entirely of gold mines.

The only way to get any confirmation for the identification of the Island of Fortune with Sumatra, would be to attempt to identify other items of Ptolemy's island constellation in its vicinity and to see whether their respective locations produce a picture that sufficiently harmonizes with the distribution of islands on a modern map. Other toponymical data are of course of no avail, because, as we argued, the islands became dislocated from the rest in Ptolemy's account. Ptolemy gives for this Fortuna Island only one set of coordinates without any explanation as to what part of the island is indicated. We may suppose therefore (not a new supposition incidentally) that it refers to the first approach to the island, viz., its northern tip.

If this is correct, we will have to find a chain of islands to the south and somewhat to the west of this point (the exact Ptolemaean coordinates are 145 east and 4.15 north against 142 east and 2 south), called the ten Maniolai Islands. The story told about these islands was that they were magnetic and clutched at ships that were constructed with iron nails (7.2.31). This was a precious piece of information and some scholars have looked as far afield as Mt. Tambora in East Indonesia in search of this magnetism. It seems more likely, however, that the magnetism was contained in the name and not in the rocks. Von Humboldt⁵⁶ already suspected a connection between the name Maniolai and the Sanskrit *maṇi*, which means both pearl and magnet. The original toponym was thus probably *maṇimālā*, a chain of magnets, meant as a pun on the Niassic toponym "Maniēmōla" (my rendering of its pronunciation by students from Nias), which is still the name of a part of South Nias⁵⁷ and was in ancient times apparently given by extension to the whole chain of islands west of Sumatra of which Nias forms a part.

56. W. von Humboldt, Ueber die Kawi-sprache auf der Insel Java (3 vols.; Berlin: Druckerei der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1836-39), p. 31.

57. W. L. Steinhart, Niassche teksten (Batavia: Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1937), p. 7.

To the east and farther south (at 152 east and 5.20 south) and due north of the Sindai islands (152.20 east and 8.20 south) we have to locate the Baroussai Islands. According to these coordinates the Bangka-Belitung group would be the most likely candidate. Is there any connection between the name Baroussai and a toponym on one of these islands? I considered Batu Rusa on Bangka, but rejected this possibility because there are probably very few indigenous names (and only prominent ones such as Malayu) at the base of Ptolemy's nomenclature. All the names we have met seemed to be derivatives from Sanskrit words and I think that this is the general rule. Before applying this theory to Bangka, however, I will try to give it a wider foundation.

IV. Ptolemy's Nomenclature

Some accounts like that of Cary and Warmington⁵⁸ create the impression that the Greeks discovered the trade winds across the Gulf of Bengal and sailed to the East in considerable numbers. For these authors, the Greeks might just have well have been the only people present. Archeological evidence of their presence in Southeast Asia, however, is actually very scarce and the Chinese reported this presence evidently as a curiosity. They evidently did not build up a trade of their own with their own ships, entrepôts, nomenclature, etc. It is far more likely that they joined as traders in the existing traffic and mixed with the Indian (and probably partly Malay) crews, with traders and other passengers, trying to communicate in whatever language was commonly spoken, for interpreters who knew Greek must have been very scarce. Afterwards they told their story, if the good daimôn gave them his protection and they returned safely home.

If Ptolemy's *Geography* was based on their reports, it may strike us as curious that a considerable number of the names they remembered as being used in this maritime commerce were Sanskrit. Yet it seems undeniable that many names are just that. Coedès⁵⁹ already had a general feeling that "la nomenclature géographique, pour l'Inde transgangaïque, est déjà remplie de toponymes à consonance sanskrite." Eggermont feels sure "that Pliny as well as Ptolemy availed themselves of excerpts from an extensive Greek text that showed Sanskrit words accompanied by their Greek translations,"⁶⁰ a remark that is true in relation to Ptolemy's basic text for both India and "India beyond the Ganges" (Southeast Asia).

For the region beyond the Ganges we have three instances where the Greek translation is placed alongside the original Sanskrit toponym. Precisely because "Iabadios" was said to mean "Krithês Nêsos" or Barley Island (7.2.29) scholars were able to recognize this toponym as a corruption of the Sanskrit *yavadvîpa* (or maybe the hybrid *yavadîvu*). In the same way it seems evident that Nangalogai, translated as "land of the naked" (7.2.18), and Aginatai, said to mean "naked people," go back respectively to the Sanskrit *nagna-loka* and *nagnaṭa* (naked mendicant). In addition, the story about the Maniolai contains the Greek translation of the word *maṇimâlâ*. Eggermont (l.c.) also gives "Kakobai"

58. Cary and Warmington, The Ancient Explorers, pp. 104-5.

59. Coedès, Les États, p. 43, note 2.

60. Eggermont, "The Murundas," p. 277.

(7.2.19) as a derivation of the Sanskrit *kakubh* (summit) in connection with Pliny's translation "Capitalia." We may presume therefore that the nine other Greek translations in Ptolemy's text, given without the original, go back on Sanskrit words. This is fairly certain in the case of Chrysê Chersonêsos (7.2.5 ff.) and probably also for "Notion Akron" and "Thêriodês Kolpos" (7.3.2) as we showed above.

With regard to those appellations that are not translations, we can point to a few, besides cetamala, caura and bahiḥ-siṃhala, that are obviously also Sanskrit derivatives. Thus the "Maiandros" mountain (7.2.8), that took the name of a Greek river, is not a translation, but a corruption of Mahendra, a Sanskrit name for various ranges. Another mountain range is called "Sêmathênos" (7.2.8) because it forms the border (*semâ*) with Thinai or Cina (Semacaina). "Aganagara" (7.2.7) is pure Sanskrit for "Mountain City." The "Dorias" river (7.2.11) was obviously "connected with a gate (*dvarya*), probably the same gate that was afterwards guarded by Dvâravatî (the Portress or Gate-City), viz., the Three Pagoda Pass. The "Bassarai" (7.2.19) were the "aromatic-raisins-people" (*vâsanara*), who were, according to Eggermont, called Basatai by the *Periplous* and Nareae by Pliny. "Kirradia" (7.2.16) was obviously inhabited by notorious robbers (*kîrâtâ*).⁶¹ An inland town in the Chrysê Chersonêsos is aptly called "Kongkonagara" (7.2.25), that is Kakanagara or Gold Town.

These few examples do not yet prove that all Ptolemy's names are derived from (meaningful) Sanskrit appellations. They prove, however, the existence of a phenomenon which would seem to raise several questions. Is it possible that in the first and second centuries Sanskrit names were already in regular use among traders, sailors and adventurers, and that some of these names persisted until later times, even up to the present? Who were the authors of these names and how did the names get accepted by the common local traders so as to allow their Greek colleagues to present them as "the" names they used to hear? Were there so many literati among the people who went east that they could dominate the traders' usage? For it is of course impossible to explain the whole phenomenon without inferring a dominant influence exerted by people who knew Sanskrit.

It is indeed likely that it did not take long for Buddhist missionaries and scions of the higher castes to interest themselves and to take part in the trade voyages to the East. Interest in these voyages is in any case already evident in Indian literature of the first centuries A.D. It may have stimulated various kinds of enterprising clerics, adventurers, and fugitives from justice or paternal authority (we have already seen Candrasvâmin frantically looking for his vanished son--see p. 4), to whom this "colonial" world offered a wide range of opportunities and the prospect of fabulous riches. When the king of "Yeh-tiao" (Yap-div) sent an envoy to China in 131 A.D., he certainly did not use this name at the instigation of his native sorcerer. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain this Chinese phonogram is derived from the Sanskrit Yavadvîpa. It could have originated from some Prakrit dialect the sailors used, and was transmitted by them to the Chinese. We can only note that it would be a rather unique case of

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-81, 287.

Prakrit influence in Southeast Asia.⁶²

Nevertheless, it seems very unlikely that such an array of Sanskrit names as are suggested by the *Geography* could have been in general use in Southeast Asia at that early time. Do we have, therefore, to refer the text of Ptolemy to a subsequent age? The arguments that are put forward in support of the conventional date (shortly after 150 A.D.) of Ptolemy's opus as far as India beyond the Ganges is concerned, e.g., by Jack-Hinton⁶³ and Wolters,⁶⁴ seem fairly conclusive. The fact, moreover, that Ptolemy's text is ignorant of a direct crossing of the Chinese Sea from south to north and leads us only as far as Oc-eo, points to the same conclusion. What other kind of explanation, then, can be proposed?

Earlier we pointed out that certain confused ideas of Marinus and Ptolemy suggested that they did not have oral reports by eyewitnesses, but relied mainly, if not exclusively, on written texts. (In any case, the catalogue of names could not, as it is, have been reported from memory.) These written texts would have contained not only "Sanskrit words accompanied by their Greek translations,"⁶⁵ but also untranslated Sanskrit appellations. One possibility is that they were actually translations of an original Sanskrit text, wherein names were sometimes translated or explained. Supposing that such Sanskrit texts once did exist, they could easily have found their way to the Mediterranean through the mediation of Greek traders or of Indian traders and literati, of whom a good many were settled in Syria and Egypt at the time.⁶⁶ These literati would have been able to provide Greek translations and transliterations. Though the names in these manuscripts would have referred to existing places, their use (in Sanskrit form) must have been still limited to a small circle of literati, except maybe in the case of names denoting a few much-frequented centers. A number of the others may have spread and obtained recognition and official status in the course of the Hinduization of Southeast Asia centuries later (in the same or variant forms). Others again fell into oblivion with the decline of the centers that they indicated. It is in any case very unlikely that the names used by Ptolemy could have been picked up by Greek traders from their Indian colleagues. These Indian traders might have recognized some of the Sanskrit names used in Ptolemy's itinerary, viz., those of the general meeting-places mentioned above where resident clerics might have resided.

The authors of such Sanskrit manuscripts--lists of names to which were added the distances between the places they indicated--could have been those clerics who joined in the voyages and composed a diary or

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62. Sanskrit is the religious-literary language of Brahmins and partly of Buddhists. Prakrit is a collective noun for the diverse popular dialects of India. K. Bhattacharya, "Recherches sur le vocabulaire des inscriptions sanskrites de Cambodge," *BEFEO*, LII (1964), p. 6.
63. C. Jack-Hinton, "Marco Polo in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, V, No. 2 (1964), pp. 69-70.
64. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 57, 277.
65. Eggermont, "The Murundas."
66. Woodcock, *Greeks in India*, pp. 156-58.

itinerary in Sanskrit, either during their voyage or after they settled in some *kampung Keling* or returned home. Fa-Hsien's diary of his visits to the holy places in India may be cited as an example, for want of an Indian counterpart that escaped destruction. On the other hand, the authors could have been Indian colleagues of Ptolemy, who stayed home and collated reports from travelers, translating them, names and all, into Sanskrit, if need be with the help of interpreters. In that case it would have been necessary, however, that the manuscripts were known to Brahmins or Buddhist monks, who took them along when they went abroad and settled in diverse centers of Southeast Asia. Thus the use of these names could have been promoted centuries after they were recorded in Ptolemy's *Geography*.

There is, however, still another possibility, namely that the basic manuscripts were the work of Greek travelers, who composed a complete or partial *Periplous* of the far-eastern seas. In that case it would have to be postulated that they made the voyage in the company of literati who supplied them with a Sanskrit version of the names or that they met with these people in certain centers. This also would imply, however, that some literate tradition of geography was already in the process of emerging. But whatever the origin of the more or less extensive texts that traveled to the West in the course of the first and second centuries (though Marinus or Ptolemy probably used one rather complete principal source), the only trace that remains of them is the *Geography* itself, which seems inexplicable without some such substratum.

If our supposition is true, we may wonder what are the chances of reconstructing the Ptolemaean odyssey on the base of the names that are mentioned. Regarding those appellations, that at the time or later became regular names which were used also by other sources or are even now extant, the difficulty is not more or less than elsewhere. For those few appellations that became real names, i.e., were universally used and recorded in sources of diverse provenance (Southeast Asian, Chinese, Arab and others), the chance that they can be recognized and located is in any case there, especially if the names, albeit in corrupted form, are still used *in loco*. But what about the others? Maybe the great majority? Must any search for them a priori end in failure? This seems to me by no means certain, since their choice was by no means arbitrary. Some of the examples whose original form and meaning can be suggested were apparently connected with the products of the place (gold, copper, silk), with the condition or occupation of their inhabitants (naked, robbers, raisin-gatherers) or topographical position (at a boundary, on a hill, coming from a pass). Such indications can become relevant as elements of a series: i.e., if a certain plausible location seems corroborated because neighboring elements fit in with this location, the more so if other sources also point in the same direction.

Other examples, however, seemed to have a direct connection with the sound or the meaning of an indigenous name. "With the sound" does not mean that the Ptolemaean toponym is simply a more or less successful rendition of the indigenous name, such as can be found in Chinese texts or on Portuguese or Dutch charts. It means that an attempt was made to link the sound of the indigenous name to a Sanskrit word by making it the subject of a wordplay, sometimes accompanied by an implausible yarn. An extensive example of this kind of game is the

(Tamil) Tanjore inscription of 1030.⁶⁷ Another example might be the name Kedah whose sound is "translated" into the Sanskrit *Kaṭaha* and Tamil *Kadaram*. Among the Ptolemaean toponyms, we met with such a wordplay on the Miassic name Maniēmōla, accompanied by a yarn which only made sense in the framework of this wordplay. Still another example, made more difficult to decipher because Ptolemy gives only the Greek translation of the name, is the Satyroi Islands (7.2.30) and Cape (7.3.2). The denizens of the islands are supposed to grow tails, Ptolemy reports, and are said to have the appearance of satyrs. Their appearance has nothing to do with that of apes, except that both have tails and both live in the woods. Now satyrs were imagined by the Greeks as having the feet, ears and tail of horses or jackasses. Furthermore they "played the ass," liked tomfoolery, tricks, drunken bouts and laziness.⁶⁸ The Sanskrit words for ass and jackass are *khara* and *kharî*. In India, too, these animals are thought of as "playing the ass" (*kharaya*, *kharayita*) and of performing mad (*matta*) tricks. Biological abnormalities or folkloristic performances that conform to some of the above "satyric" qualities are easier to find than magnetic rocks. Nevertheless, we have to remember that we are not dealing with a seaman's yarn, but rather with one composed by the "literati." The story then may well be simply an elaborate wordplay on the name Karimata (*kharî-matta*), an island off the southwest corner of Borneo.

We have also met, however, with instances where the Sanskrit appellation seems connected, not with the sound, but with the meaning of the indigenous name. Such instances were, e.g., Yava/Jelai, Argyrê/(Rûpya)/Selaka, Thêriodês/Tiryagja/Binatang/Jeriyèh and Râj(Banam)/Kurung(Banam). The practice of translating indigenous names into Sanskrit certainly existed in Hinduized Southeast Asia. The practice is known from Fu-nan.⁶⁹ The Raktamṛttika (Red Land) inscription of Kedah may refer to an indigenous Tanah Merah or Tanah Abang.⁷⁰ The same practice is found in Java, not only in the time of Majapahit, but also much earlier.⁷¹ We shall thus have to reckon with the possibility of its application by Ptolemy's sources.

It may appear that only Malay names (or at least those that admitted of a Malay explanation, which of course says nothing about the real etymological origin) and a few of Khmer origin (such as *kurung-*) were translated. This could mean that Malay was already starting to become the "lingua franca" for Southeast Asian commerce, so that to

67. See, e.g., Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, pp. 199-201. The Tanjore inscription proclaims the victories of the Cōla-king Râjendra in various parts of Sumatra and Malaya. Each name is accompanied by a wordplay based on its sound. So Talaitakkōlamis said to be praised by scholars, because in Tamil "talai" means science and "takkor" scholar; Malayûr has a strong mountain for its rampart, because "malai" means mountain in Tamil and "ur" a stronghold, etc. These applied meanings based on similarity in sound with Tamil words have of course nothing to do with the real meaning of the originals.

68. *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1961), p. 797.

69. Coedès, *Les États*, pp. 74-75.

70. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 33.

71. W. J. van der Meulen, "Keradjaan 'Ho-ling', Tjarita Parahyangan dan Rahyang Sandjaja," *Basis*, XV (1965-66), pp. 41, 166.

some degree the maxim of van Linschoten: "Whoever in India cannot speak Malay is not allowed to be of the party"⁷² was already operative. It is in any case reasonable to suppose that the Indians recruited Malays (or half-castes) as guides and interpreters, and even as members of their crews.⁷³ Besides, the kind of people who composed these itineraries might be expected to have had the intellectual curiosity to inquire about languages and the names during their long voyages and stops.

In view of the nature of Ptolemy's toponyms, it seems essential to adhere to the serial pattern laid down in the text. No identification, whether of the name or especially of its location, can be accepted outside the context of a sufficiently continuous and connected series of places of which the names and positions fit the pattern of names and course directions in the text (distances are of not much use and are even apt to confuse) as well as the geographical and historical peculiarities of a particular region. There is no certainty that a toponym ever existed *in loco* in that form. If every toponym had been translated into Greek, we would have to search continuously for a plausible connection of its meaning with some locality it could indicate, and no similarity of sound would help us. (Fortunately only a few names were translated.) But the Sanskrit names were also superimposed (maybe as translations) and are only partly better--in that there is a chance that they later became accepted local names. When and where this was the case, however, cannot be determined a priori or by means of other sources, though the latter are, of course, indispensable for confirmatory evidence. Thus single identifications, based on similarity of sound with extant names or those found in other sources, or on a similarity of geographical configurations, have proved to be as deceptive and disputable as the suppositions on which they were based.

The limited number of names from India Cisgangetica that can be identified⁷⁴ does not provide us with much guidance about the way in which the transliteration of Sanskrit names into Greek script was effected. Centuries of copying mutilated nearly all names, especially the more intricate ones. But there may also not have been much uniformity from the start. Thus a Greek "zêta" may stand for a Sanskrit "J" (Ozoamis/Ujjayinî) or "Ś" (Zadaros/Śatadrû; in the *Periplus*, Muziris/Muśiri). The Sanskrit "C" is commonly transliterated as sigma (Cemûla/Sêmula; Erakaccha/Ēragassa; Ahicchattra/Adisadra; in Arrianus,⁷⁵ Candragupta/Sandrakottos or Sandrakypotos; in Pliny, Prâcyâ/Prasii) and once as tau-iota (Caṣṭana/Tiastanes). The Greek omikron (or omega) may stand for "O" (Goariś/Godâvarî), "Ā" (Prapiṭtai/Paripâtra), "A" (Modura/Mathurâ; Dosara/Daśârṇa; Kognandaua/Kâkanâva), "AV" or "VA" (Aroades/Airâvati; Osthā/Vatsa), "Ū" (Soraisangga/Śûrasena) and "U" (Ozoamis/Ujjayinî). Thus there is more possibility than regularity. The reason why some of the names were translated into Greek is also far from evident. It may be that Ptolemy's main source gave no translations at all, but that he found some in other manuscripts.

72. Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, p. 74.

73. F. von Richthofen, *Vorlesungen über allgemeine Siedlungs- und Verkehrsgeographie* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1908), p. 25.

74. Renou, *La Géographie*, p. ix; Eggermont, "The Murundas," pp. 257-96.

75. A Hellenistic scholar (c. 95-175 A.D.) who wrote a history of Alexander the Great's exploits.

It will be evident from all that has been said so far that I do not share Wheatley's confidence in his second argument, where, with much assurance, he locates two of Ptolemy's toponyms on the Malay Peninsula.⁷⁶ This is done on the base of "the combined testimony of references in early Chinese, Indian and Arab accounts." The subsequent text is, however, less explicit. Moreover, this combined testimony, if it existed, would be of no avail as long as "The whole pattern of settlement as set forth in the *Geography* is strangely anomalous in the historical geography of Malaya."⁷⁷

In his *Early Indonesian Commerce*, Wolters identifies the five Baroussai Islands with the place Barus and with Vâruṣaka (the region of Barus) on the basis of the resemblance in sound and a general opinion about the respective location of the diverse parts of Ptolemy's geographical structure.⁷⁸ That Barus-Vâruṣaka is a port or region and the Baroussai are described as a group of islands is not so important. Any little known coastal region was liable to be viewed as broken up into islands, as in the case of the Sindai and Saba(*dibai*) islands. Similarity of sound may be an indication, the more so because in this instance the name Barus does not have an obvious meaning. Therefore the unknown authors of the Sanskrit source might have looked for a Sanskrit sound-synonym as in the case of the Maniolai and Karimata Islands. The position of Ptolemy's Baroussai Islands relative to Fortuna Island and the Maniolai, however, does not fit with Barus. For one thing, it is too far south, and the Barus-position would entail the necessity of drowning some interesting islands that are supposed to be to the west and south of it in the Indian Ocean. The Sanskrit word nearest in sound to Ptolemy's Baroussai is *paraṣa* (once substituted by Lévi for Vâruṣaka on the basis of its Chinese transcription⁷⁹). This word means "stiff," "rough," "knotty," and is the exact equivalent of the Malay *bangka* or *bangkar*. Though we already noted a few examples of plausible translations of indigenous names, we may still consider this similarity of meaning a curious coincidence, and leave it at that until the phenomenon in conjunction with other data becomes too much of a coincidence.

V. The Voyage along the West Coast

Accounts of and directions for navigation along the west coast of Sumatra only became plentiful in the West from the seventeenth century onward. From the beginning of that century Dutch, English and French ships visited up and down the coast. The Dutch came from Banten and Batavia, or made a stopover on their voyage from the Cape of Good Hope and sometimes from India.⁸⁰ From before that time we have only fragmentary evidence. Pate Unus (Sabrang Lor of Demak) led his fleet around Sumatra (1512) in order to spring a surprise attack on the

76. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 145.

77. Ibid., p. 159.

78. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 186, 326.

79. Ibid., p. 326.

80. Koeskamp, De Westkust, pp. 14-16, 26-27, 132; E. B. Kielstra, "Onze kennis van Sumatra's Westkust omstreeks de helft de 18e eeuw," BKI, XXXVI (1887), pp. 499-560; BKI, III (1855), pp. 106-141. See also Geographical Handbook Series Naval Intelligence Division, Netherlands East Indies (2 vols.; Washington: Office of Naval Intelligence, 1944), pp. 110-11; and Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch Indië (2nd ed.; 8 vols.; The Hague: Nijhoff, 1917-39), pp. 172-73.

Portuguese in Malaka.⁸¹ A Chinese map in the *Wu-pei Chih*, probably based on the voyages of Chêng Ho early in the fifteenth century, lists a good many places along the coast.⁸² We noted already the statement of Tomé Pires that people from Gujarat used to trade around Sumatra until the end of the fourteenth century.

I ventured the opinion above that, apart from special objectives, the choice of this route was generally influenced by the degree of security which existed in the Straits of Malaka. Foremost among the special objectives were the search for gold, camphor, and later pepper. The second commodity is especially known as *kapur Barus* and appears (we are going back in time from the sixteenth century) in ninth and seventh century Chinese literature as respectively *ku-pu-p'o-lu* and *p'o-lu* perfume (compare the Acehnese pronunciation *kaphō Barō-ih*). Barus itself did not produce camphor. It was merely a reasonably sheltered roadstead at the mouth of the Batu Garigis or Camphor River, protected by a protruding spit of rock. But it had something that along this coast was truly exceptional and important, namely rather easy access to the interior, here the Kalasen region. Only in this mountainous and heavily-wooded part of Sumatra, and confined to a comparatively small area, were to be found the very old giant trees (*Dryobalanops aromatica Gaertn.*) that produced an excellent kind of camphor,⁸³ Marco Polo estimated that it was worth its weight in gold or silver, and even in the nineteenth century it still fetched about a hundred times the price of ordinary camphor in the Chinese market.⁸⁴

Its main export route was by way of Barus, but some of it reached the coast further south through the hinterland of Tapanuli Bay and through the Angkola Mountains. To the north there was also a longer and more difficult route to the Simpang region and Singkel. In the sixteenth century a virtual monopoly was established by Aceh, which exported the camphor by way of its own markets. The Dutch, who did not like monopolies except their own, occupied Barus. After it transpired that some of the camphor still reached Aceh by way of Singkel, they stationed their fleet north of this place, which did finally stop all traffic.⁸⁵

From at least the ninth century the Arabs traded by way of Barus, though they had their own trade center further inland at Pansur, a name that replaced Barus in the Arab accounts. The oldest Arab compiler, Ibn Khurdādhbih (844-48 A.D.), still mentions "Balus" as a source of

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81. Pate Unus (or Yunus) is the name the Portuguese gave to Pangéran Sabrang Lor "who crossed the sea to the north," elder son of the first prince of Demak, Radèn Patah. H. J. de Graaf, Geschiedenis van Indonesië (The Hague: van Hoeve, 1949), p. 82.
82. Ma Huan, Ying-yai Sheng-lan (The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores), translated and with an introduction, notes, and appendices by J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge: Hackluyt Society, 1970), pp. 281-82.
83. E. G. J. Mohr, De bodem der tropem (Amsterdam: De Bussy, 1937), II/3 (Sumatra), p. 390.
84. Col. Sir Henry Yule (trans. and ed.), The Book of Ser Marco Polo, 3rd ed. revised by Henri Cordier (2 vols.; London: J. Murray, 1903), II, pp. 299-306.
85. Kroeskamp, De Westkust, pp. 149-50.

excellent camphor. The next oldest, however, the author of *The Relation about China and India* (851 A.D.), tells us: "In this sea (of Harkand) . . . (lies) among others an island called Lambri, wherein are many kings. . . . There is found much gold, and a certain place, Fantsur, that produces a mass of first-class camphor." A neighboring island is called "Niyan" (Nias).⁸⁶ Ibn Sa'id (thirteenth century) mentions Lâmuri, Fančûr and Jâwa as three separate ports of call.⁸⁷

Other foreigners, such as the Chinese and Marco Polo, followed this usage, while the indigenous traders held to the name Barus, as we learn from the *Nâgarakṛtâgama*, the Acehnese and Tomé Pires, who explained this to his readers. That different peoples traded at different places up the same river and even fortified their respective factories, was still common in the nineteenth century. For example, in Natal the Acehnese had their fortification, called Kuta Malaka, near the mouth of the river, while the Malays had theirs at Lingabaya, one day's journey inland.⁸⁸ This must have been the situation at Barus as long as the port was not monopolized by one single group. To illustrate that the situation at Barus was similar to that at Natal in later times, the Tamils probably occupied the site of Lobu Tuwo, as may be inferred from the inscription of 1088 erected by a Tamil trading corporation.⁸⁹

Wolters points out that in the seventh and eighth centuries Chinese sources located Barus somewhere on the north coast of Sumatra.⁹⁰ This mistaken identity can easily be explained if, during the ascendancy of Śrîvijaya and the reopened navigation through the Straits of Malaka, some still little-known place had seized the opportunity to monopolize the camphor trade and to centralize the export of the famous product in its own harbor (as was later done by Aceh). This hypothesis seems to be corroborated by the name Lang-p'o-lu-ssu used by the *Hsin T'ang* for the northern half of Śrîvijaya. The first syllable probably represents (as is suggested by Wolters) the word *Lam* (village) as found, for example, in *Lam-uri*, the form of the name used in the *Nâgarakṛtâgama* and the *Sejarah Melayu* and is thus most likely the right form. The second part certainly represents Barus.

"Lam" may indeed be an abbreviation of the subsequently famous Lam-uri (Lambri, Lan-wu-li, etc.), a place very aptly located by Teuku Iskandar⁹¹ slightly east of Kutaraja, about 18 kilometers inland at a spot now called Lamrêh. Thus Pires was probably right in saying that it "stretched inland," though he did not mean "as far as Fansur,"⁹²

86. J. Sauvaget, Ahbâr as-Sîn wa'l-Hind: Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde rédigée en 851 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1948), p. 14.

87. G. Ferrand (ed. and trans), Relations de voyages et textes géographiques arabes (Paris: E. Leroux, 1913-14), II, p. 343.

88. Kielstra, "Onze kennis," p. 516.

89. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "A Tamil Merchant Guild in Sumatra," Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (TBG), LXXII (1932), p. 326.

90. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 179-96.

91. Teuku Iskandar, "De Hikajat Atjeh," Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (VKI), XXVI (1958), pp. 28-29.

92. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, p. 193.

which is quite impossible since the latter for all practical purposes could only be reached by the sea road. Thus the name "Lang-p'o-lu-ssu" seems to point to a composite unity. It is possible that after "Lam" became a town its name acquired an extension. Cowan explains the name as Lam-puri, which is, however, rejected by Lombard.⁹³ We may note that *uri* in Acehnese means "a magically-protected boundary,"⁹⁴ which could indicate that it was surrounded by ramparts. It seems more probable, however, that the Chinese thought the name Lang-wu-li-p'o-lu-ssu was too long for a barbarian kingdom and shortened it, as was their custom. In the time of I-tsing the name Lam had not yet come to the fore at all (as occurred after the ninth century) and he did not want or was not given the opportunity to visit the place himself. Thus he contented himself by simply indicating it as P'o-lu-shih.

Again according to Wolters,⁹⁵ the name Barus was used in the fifth century for a region in North Sumatra, while in the sixth century it became connected with camphor, and still later with a port. Apart from the scantiness of the evidence, which may well testify to the necessarily confused ideas of authors who never went near the places they described, it seems exceptional that a place inherits the name of a (vanished) region, though the reverse is very common (Borneo from Brunei, Sumatra from Samudra, etc.). That the hinterland of Barus constituted a "cannibal" area tells us nothing new. The population lived behind its mountain barriers and in forests far from the coast, appearing only occasionally to barter small quantities of the precious camphor for Indian fabrics (especially the more expensive ones), iron tools, gold and salt, as in the time of the VOC.⁹⁶ They even may have practiced silent barter, as was still done by some Batak tribes in the nineteenth century.⁹⁷ The king that is mentioned can hardly have been anything but: either the head of the Lamurian or Acehnese colony at the coast, who styled himself king, or a proto-Singamangaraja in the interior, who had some charismatic influence amongst the Ginting tribes of Kalasen. While the place itself was certainly not attractive, its produce was, and that was evidently what counted.

We left our Ptolemaean sailors after they took off from the coast of the Malay Peninsula at a place called "Bêrabai," which may have been Ra Way, at the southern tip of Pulau Bukit, or Kerabi, a little to the southeast, and headed back west. After passing the northern extremity of Sumatra, they made a sharp turn southward. At a certain point, however, probably to the south of Simeuleue, the "hog-island" of the English sailors, the course becomes southeast. Evidently they started to feel their way coastwards through the Banyak Islands and one of the passages in the barrier reef. Their aim was a place known for its trade opportunities and called "Takôla" by Ptolemy. It is the first station on the voyage around the Golden Chersonêsos.

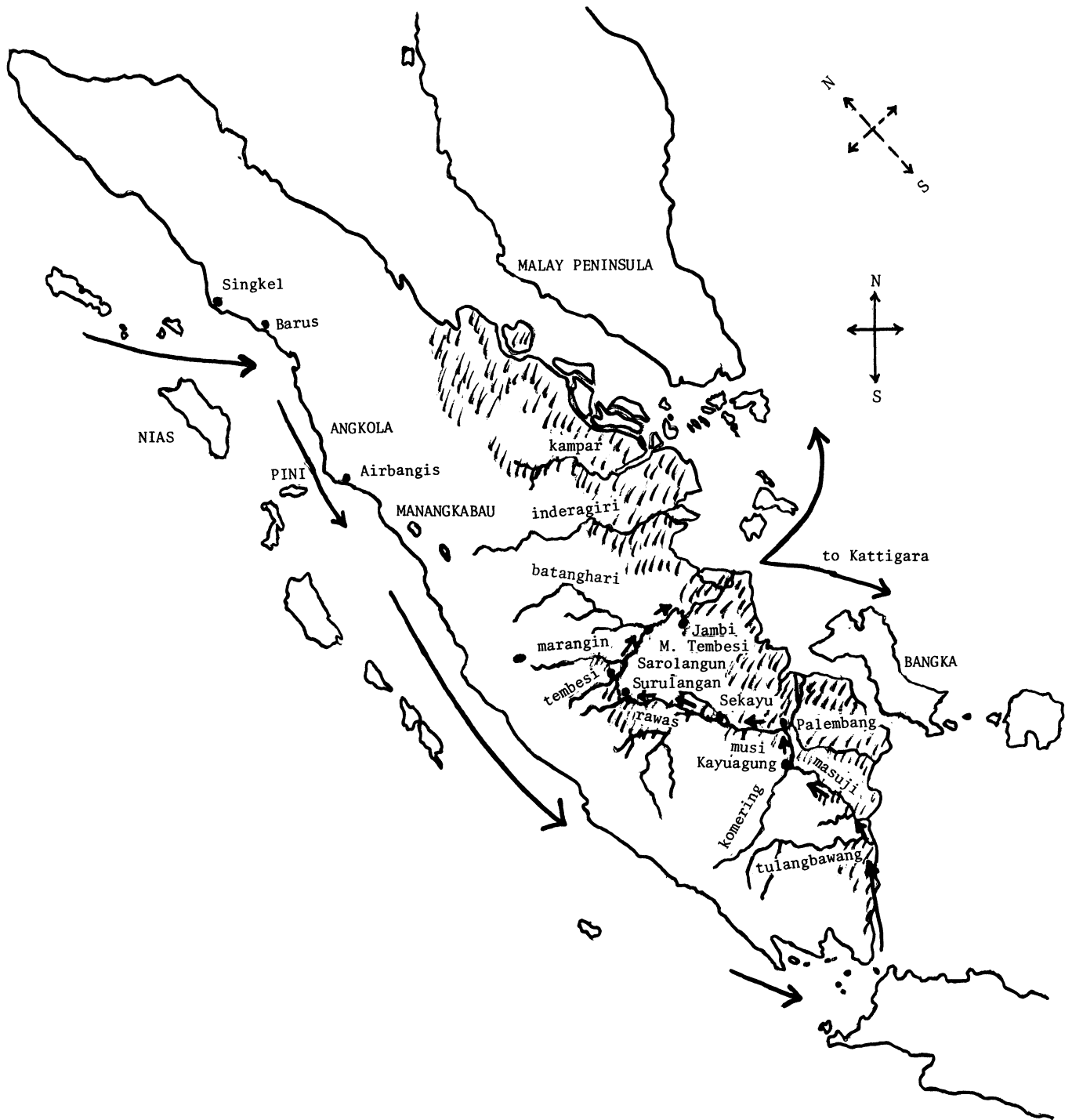
93. D. Lombard, Le Sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda 1607-1636 (Paris: Ecole française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967), p. 31.

94. Hoesein Djajadiningrat and G. W. J. Drewes, Atjêhsch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek (2 vols.; Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1934).

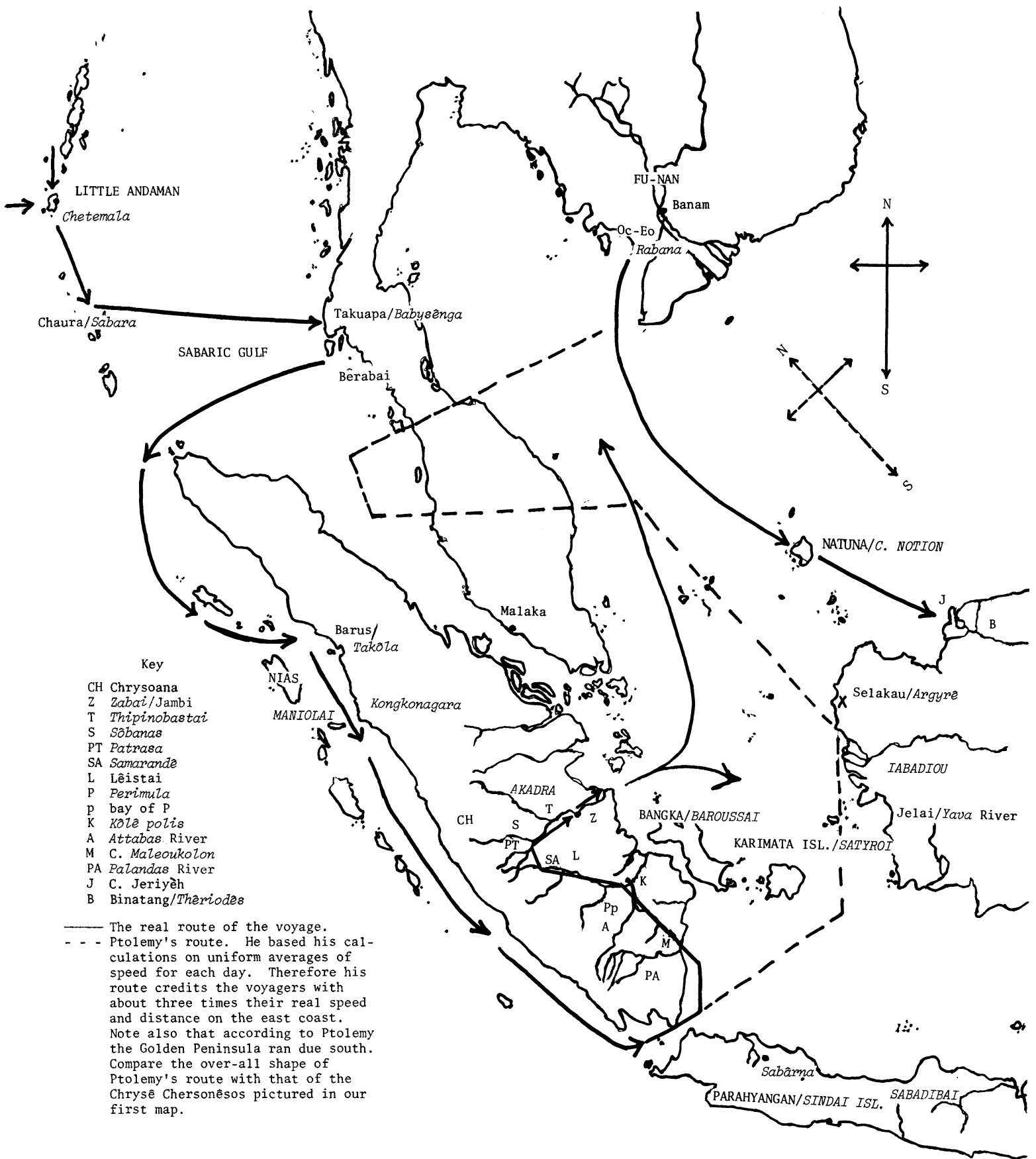
95. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 184-85.

96. Kroeskamp, De Westkust, pp. 149-50.

97. L. de Scheemaker, "Aanteekeningen gehouden op eene reis naar de marktplaats (pedagangan) der Lima Laras," TBG, XVII (1869), pp. 412-30.



THE SAILORS' ROUTE



- Key
- CH Chrysoana
 - Z *Zabai/Jambi*
 - T *Thipinobastai*
 - S *Sōbanas*
 - PT *Patrasa*
 - SA *Samarandē*
 - L *Lēistai*
 - P *Perimula*
 - p bay of P
 - K *Kōlē polis*
 - A *Attabas River*
 - M *C. Maleoukolon*
 - PA *Falandas River*
 - J *C. Jeriyēh*
 - B *Binatang/Thēriodēs*

— The real route of the voyage.
 - - - Ptolemy's route. He based his calculations on uniform averages of speed for each day. Therefore his route credits the voyagers with about three times their real speed and distance on the east coast. Note also that according to Ptolemy the Golden Peninsula ran due south. Compare the over-all shape of Ptolemy's route with that of the Chrysē Chersonēsos pictured in our first map.

THE SAILORS' ROUTE

The name Takkola probably had a short-lived popularity in Indian literature, since it is mentioned in the *Milindapañha* (first century) and *Mahāniddesa* (second or third century). It could have been unearthed from an old Tamil epic by the author of the Tanjore inscription in the eleventh century, or its use may have been continued in Tamil maritime circles. This could explain why the inscription does not mention Barus. The mysterious "Qāqullah" of the earlier Arab adventure stories is, at least by Buzurg, given a location far distant from Fanṣūr⁹⁸ and thus from the location of Takōla.

With regard to this location we seem to have two indications apart from the route outlined by Ptolemy. The first is that it is the beginning of a gold-bearing country, the Chrysē Chersonēsos, and that at the same time its name conveys "the idea of some aromatic plant such as bdellium, sandalwood, camphor or cardamom."⁹⁹ This rather unique combination of a site famous for a certain aromatic product exactly at the beginning of an equally famous gold belt, is the very situation existing along the Tapanuli coast. The second indication is that here is found the most likely name in Southeast Asia to have given rise to or to be connected with the Ptolemaean toponym. The location of such a toponym has sometimes been decided upon on the basis of a far less convincing similarity. The name Angkola or Akkola, which also in India is known as a place name (like Takkola) and the name of a tree¹⁰⁰ may indeed have provided people in search of an appropriate Sanskrit name that was both an allusion to an existing name and to its product, with a satisfying solution. Without the incentive of a double-entendre, they would hardly have named the place after such a general and apparently not very common word for aromatics.

Exactly what point of the Tapanuli or Angkola coast they visited, however, is not very clear. The features mentioned along the whole of this coast are few and far between, viz., apart from Takōla one inland town and one river mouth. Besides, though Ptolemy goes on calling his features emporion, town, etc., their names, in contrast to those along the southeast coast, point to vague entities and look like generic names, as if no real centers were in existence and the travelers took pot-luck at a certain portion of the coast where they knew that indigenous praus would come out to them and where wind and tide at that moment made access and shelter possible.

After passing a "promontorium" at two degrees south of Takōla, which must have been the twin headlands of Ujung Tuan and Biang right before the bight of Air Bangis, the voyagers came abreast of an inland town, which occupied the same longitude as Takōla. If the comparative bearings of Ptolemy are about right, this must have been the Rao country. The name of this "town" is "Kongkonagara," which we considered above to be the equivalent of "Kanakanagara" or Gold Town (compare 7.1.50 Kognandaua for Kākanāda or Kākanāva, an old name of Sānchī).¹⁰¹ The name calls to mind the Kanakamedinī (gold country) of the Dharmāśraya

98. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 224-28.

99. Ibid., pp. 268-72.

100. J. F. Dastur, Useful Plants from India and Pakistan (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala, 1964), p. 16.

101. Eggermont, "The Murundas," p. 263.

inscription (Minangkabau) and especially the Kanakapurī on an island in the Dvīpāntara of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.¹⁰² In order to go there one had first to approach the king of Utsthaladvīpa. Batak legend knows a "Raja Uti" who had a boar's head and lived on an island off the coast of Barus. All rulers, the Singamangaraja as well as Tuanku Barus and the king of Pagerruyung, had to offer him presents.¹⁰³ We may also point to the Chinese name "Gold Island" for Pulau Pini off Air Bangis.¹⁰⁴ The name Kanakanagara may indicate the residence of a proto-Tuanku Rao, who claimed a portion of all the gold that was mined, but we do not have any real evidence to confirm the existence of any single prominent center in these parts at the beginning of our era.

One degree south the voyagers passed the mouth of a river (or its delta; Ptolemy always uses the plural *ekbolai*). Though no great store can be set by Ptolemy's distances, we may nevertheless conjecture that it must have been the Masang or Antokan River. Its name is "Chrysoana" or "Chrysoanas." It would seem that the corrupting influence of gold is felt even in the text of Ptolemy. The name could be explained as an, according to the standards of normal Greek, impossible or at least curious, combination of *chryso-*, golden, and *ana* or *ano*, an adverb which means upwards, above, on high, up country. Another curious thing is, however, that its Greek -as ending is declined with the Doric genitive -a (*Chrysoana potamou ekbolai*), which commonly is used in non-Greek names. This would mark it as a pseudo-Greek word, formed from a Sanskrit or Prakrit name by a copyist who was impatient to see some gold emerge. It could be, therefore, that its matrix either had something to do with gold (e.g., *girisuvaṇṇa*, mountain-gold river, a general name for all rivers along this coast), or had nothing to do with it (e.g., *ghṛishyārṇa*, pounded river, Antokan). Since it is possible that some stretching had to be done in order to obtain the desired gold-effect, it will be difficult to decide anything on the basis of this toponym alone.

The end of the voyage to the south comes at Sabara (other manuscripts have Sabana, Sabala, etc.), for here the course makes a sharp turn to the east and even to the northeast. We may note that in nearly all variants of the name the element "Saba" remains constant, and that this element is also found in the name of the "Sabadibai" or Java Islands to the east of the Agathou Daimonos Island. The second part may derive from Sanskrit *-arṇa*, stream, strait, sea (compare Dosara = Daśārṇa, the present Orissa and the Desarena of the *Periplus*).¹⁰⁵ This Śabārṇa, Java Strait or Sea, would have been a sensible appellation for the modern Sunda Strait and even for the northwest coast of Java.

That it was an "emporion," a place or coast where customarily barter was going on, is in any case evident from the archeological remains in and around the Sunda Strait. Han ceramics have been found in Bangkahulu, Lampung, Tulangbawang and West Banten, next to other pre-

102. S. Levi, "'K'ouen-Louen et Dvīpāntara,'" *BKI*, LXXXVIII (1931), p. 623.

103. J. H. Neumann, "Pustaka Ginting," *TBG*, LXX (1930), pp. 92-93.

104. Ma Huan, *Ying-yai*, p. 282.

105. Eggermont, "The Murundas," pp. 269-70.

T'ang ware in Kerinci, Bangkahulu, West Lampung and South Sumatra.¹⁰⁶ A great number of so-called "Roman beads" were unearthed in Lampung, not in an isolated hoard, but in connection with megalithic burial sites and bronze artifacts.¹⁰⁷ These conditions seem more in line with the area being the principal gateway to the archipelago and more apt to lead up to the Hinduized kingdom of Târumânagara and the fifth century trading communities of South Sumatra mentioned in the Chinese annals, than the desolation and late development of the Malaka Strait.¹⁰⁸

Against the identification of the name as the Java Strait, it might be objected that Ptolemy interposes three Sindai Islands between Fortuna Island and the Sabadibai. We may note in the first place, that the identification would be sufficiently justified by the fact that it gave access to the north coast of Java. But secondly, this interposition may in reality have to be taken with a pinch of salt. It is very unlikely that Ptolemy's Sindai can be connected with Sunda as a whole. The latter name does not make its appearance before the eleventh century and is thought by Berg and Gonda¹⁰⁹ to be derived from *śuddha*, "white" or "bright," originally an epithet of the sacred Sunda Mountain. Sindai would thus more likely correspond with *siddha*, the blessed spirits who have "arrived" and have been admitted amongst the semi-deities.¹¹⁰ They are the *nènèk moyang* or *rahyang* of the Indonesians. The Sindai must, therefore, most probably be located in the region of Pa-rahyang-an.¹¹¹ We may note that the toponym "Siddhapura" is not only known to the author of the *Aryabhaṭīya*,¹¹² but occurs also in the topography of India.

VI. The Bay of Perimula

From Sabara the voyagers coursed to the northeast until they met with the delta of the Palandas river (*Palandou potamou ekbolai*), where

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106. E. W. Orsoy de Flines, Gids voor de keramische verzameling (Batavia: Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1949), and Orsoy de Flines, passim in Jaarboek Batavia Genootschap (Bandung: Nix, 1937-38), IV and V.
107. A. Th. à Th. van der Hoop, Megalithische oudheden in Zuid-Sumatra (Zutphen: W. J. Thieme, 1932), pp. 92, 133-39; van der Hoop, "De Praehistorie," in F. W. Stapel (ed.), Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië (Amsterdam: N. v. uitgevermaatschappij 'Joest van den Vondel,' 1938), I, pp. 70-73; R. Broersma, De Lampongsche districten (Batavia: Javashe Boekhandel & Drukkerij, 1916), pp. 321-22; G. P. Rouffaer, "Waar komen de raadselachtige moetisalah's vandaan?" BKI, L (1899), pp. 409-674.
108. See Lamb, "Miscellaneous Papers," p. 72.
109. J. Gonda, Sanskrit in Indonesia (Nagpur: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1952), p. 223.
110. A. Daniélou, Hindu Polytheism (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), p. 303.
111. That Sindai could have been mistaken for islands was precisely because it was not situated at the thoroughfare but on the barely accessible south coast, accidentally visited by an unhappy vessel that was blown past the thoroughfare and wrecked on the shore.
112. Kern, "Java en het Goudland," p. 308.

somewhere inland the kampung Palanda was situated. Both the masculine (-as) and the feminine (-a) endings are simply Greek finishings, corresponding respectively to *potamos* and *polis*. That here the genitive -ou is used, does not mean, however, that we are necessarily confronted in Palandou with a Greek name. The name derives most probably from the Sanskrit *palāṇḍu* which means onion and is thus the equivalent of Malay *bawang*. A petty kingdom of this name is credited with considerable diplomatic activity by the Chinese imperial annals around the middle of the fifth century. Its whereabouts cannot be determined, because the name can be found wherever an Indonesian language is spoken. When, however, in later sources a seventh century To-lang-p'o-wang (Talangbawang) is mentioned, it is thought to be the former Bawang with an expanded or completed name; it could, moreover, with probability be considered as an inexact transcription of Tulangbawang, the name of a river in South Sumatra.¹¹³ If the name Bukit Bawang Ujung north of the Semangka Bay has any historical significance, the Bawang principality may have stretched across the whole of South Sumatra. At the end of the seventh century it probably became a part of Śrīvijaya, since the latter also placed on the south coast one of its famous inscriptions. But Ptolemy's voyagers may still have known it only as a river and an indigenous settlement.

Passing by for the moment the Maleoukolon cape, we go on until we reach the delta of the third river the Chrysē Chersonēsos, the *Attaba potamou ekbolai* or the delta of the Attabas river. Though the compound may be a bit uncommon, Sanskrit *āttāmbhas* means "without water," which equates Malay *kering* or *kumering*. Though according to Kern¹¹⁴ the Malay infix "um" was already "dead" at the time of the Śrīvijaya inscriptions, it is still a living element in this name. For the Komeri river, in contrast to its rival, the Ogan, has indeed "periodic" spells of dryness, which makes it one of the less useful waterways for inland travel. But where did those voyagers pass its mouth? For at the present the river empties itself not in the sea, but in the Musi river, nearly opposite the town of Palembang. Between the time of Ptolemy and the present, however, the yearly silt deposits of the rivers have added a marshy strip that in some places may measure about a hundred kilometers across.

Nevertheless, the path our sailors took is still a common way for sailing craft. It consists of a combination of channels through the marshland which runs from the mouth of the Masuji at the southern end to the mouth of the Komeri at the northern. The first river comes from the southwest and, taking a sharp turn behind Talang Batu, empties in this channel creating in the act its southeastern extension to the sea. The latter empties in the same way in this channel near Kayu Agung and has appropriated the last part of the gully as its own outlet into the Musi. In the time of Ptolemy this channel must already have existed (with the exception of the end part of the Masuji), but as an uncharted gully through the coastal mangrove belt. Both these rivers emptied in this gully, which for all practical purposes meant into the sea. Since these gullies were no doubt difficult to locate and subject to changes, the sailors may have used local guides (from

113. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis, p. 111; Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 162, 202, 206.

114. R. A. Kern, "Enkele aanteekeningen op Coedès' uitgave van de Maleische inschriften van Śrīvijaya," BKI, LXXXVIII (1931), p. 510.

Bawang?), lest the ship should run aground on submerged mud shoals.¹¹⁵

Thus after they passed the mouth of the Komering at Kayu Agung, they continued along the coast until they reached the estuary of the Musi, which at the time was located not much less than 100 kilometers inland of the present mouth. They turned into this estuary at a point between Plaju and Sungaigerong, where once a ship with Buddhist missionaries may have come to grief, since in the present mouth of the Komering a collection of ancient Buddhist statues were dug out of the mud.¹¹⁶ Here they were confronted by Kôlê polis. The name Kôlê is probably derived from Sanskrit *kûla*, "hill" (with a Greek feminine ending corresponding with polis). Kampung Bukit or Hill Town is the name of the most ancient site of Palembang.

When our voyagers turned into the estuary, they saw across the water a spit of higher wooded land (both the land and the settlements on it are called *talang*) jutting out into the sea, and on it a row of hillocks of which the highest (26 meters, an enormous height in this kind of country), the sacred Bukit Siguntang, was the birth place and cornerstone of Malay leadership, according to the tradition incorporated in the *Sejarah Melayu*. When this text was written, and still at the time of Marsden (1783) the lower part of the Musi was called the Tatang River, while "upstream of its mouth" the Malayu River emptied into the Tatang. On this Malayu River lay the Siguntang Hill. It can therefore have been none other than the small rivulet that is now called the Tatang and which takes its rise from the Siguntang. At some time in the eighteenth or nineteenth century it must have taken over this name and lost that of Malayu River. Part of it had been canalized, probably long before this change, in order to facilitate access to the hill. This part is called Kedukan Bukit or Hill Canal.¹¹⁷ It connected Kampung Bukit with the Musi estuary.

From here our voyagers continued in a northeasterly direction to Perimula and subsequently to the bay of the same name. We are not informed about the character of Perimula, whether it was a town, or trading center, etc. From similar instances we are still to meet, we can be reasonably sure that such an unqualified name indicates a region. The name is most probably derived from the Sanskrit *prî* or *priya* (lovable, pleasant), and *mula* (root, foundation, beginning). In Malay, which uses a reverse word order, the second notion is aptly rendered by the word *mal* (socle, base), and the first by *ayu* (pleasant). We repeat that it is immaterial whether this explanation is etymologically correct or not. We need only point out that the older form is evidently

115. See Geographical Handbook, pp. 84, 98-99; R. Sukomo, "Geomorphology and the Location of Çrivijaya," Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia, I (1963), pp. 79-92; Mohr, De Boden, pp. 555-56.

116. Amerta. Warna warta kepurbakalaan (Jakarta: Archaeological Department of Indonesia, 1955), p. 10; F. D. K. Bosch, "Verslag van een reis door Sumatra," Oudheidkundig Verslag, (1930), pp. 153-57.

117. Sedjarah Melayu menurut terbitan Abdullah (annotated by T. D. Situmorang and A. Teeuw) (2nd ed.; Jakarta; Djambatan, 1958), p. 22; Sedjarah Melayu compiled by W. G. Shellabear (revised edition) (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 20; L. C. Westenenk, "Boekit Segoentang en Goenoeng Mahamêroe uit de Sedjarah Melajoe," TBG, LXIII (1923), pp. 212-226; F. M. Schnitger, Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1939), pp. 7-8.

Malayu, and not Melayu. This seems to be confirmed by an inscription of 870, though its Malayu is the name of a *deśa* on the Dieng plateau.¹¹⁸ The same form is used for Sumatra by the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*. Besides, the "mauli-" element of royal names in the Dharmāśraya inscriptions¹¹⁹ may be connected with a similar interpretation as that given by the "moula" of Ptolemy.

The course which we have to follow in order to reach this Malayu seems plain enough. Ever since Rouffaer wrote his article,¹²⁰ the city of Jambi has been the undisputed seat of Malayu. Besides, Ptolemy's course points straight northeast. The answer is, however, not as simple as that. Of course, the whole of Sumatra north of the Lampung districts and south of the Batak mountains was or became part of the "tanah Malayu" and each part could at one time or another have played a prominent role. This could, however, hardly be the tanah Malayu which is meant here, nor for that matter the Malayu region I-tsing was speaking of. This was a more limited feature that for some reason was especially entitled to this name, probably because it was considered to be the cradle of the race. According to I-tsing it was distinct from Śrīvijaya and on the way between this royal residence (*kedatuan*) and Kedah.¹²¹ Before 685 it "had become" Śrīvijaya. If he and his compatriots Ch'ang Chin and Wu-hsing took the present usual way by sea, there would be some reason to think about the environs of modern Jambi, but did they? For there is scarcely any other substantial evidence to connect this place with the original Malayu.

Every tradition there is points to the banks of the Musi. Śrīvijaya may have tried to replace the name Malayu with the new "international" name of its *kedatuan* and to force this innovation on the semi-independent neighboring *demang* and *datu*, centralizing in the process the organization of the state and fortifying its "royal" authority, traditionally a shared affair, along Hindu lines of magical deification. This Buddhist-backed enterprise enjoyed an enormous success in the international (especially Buddhist) press. But it left no trace whatever in Malay tradition, which has completely forgotten its name as if its memory was obliterated on purpose. Its twentieth century restoration had to be unearthed from other sources. It is only mentioned in the Sundanese *Carita Parahyangan* in connection with the expeditions of Sañjaya, but as Siwijaya (*sic*), a king alternately of Malayu and Keling.¹²² Thus Śrīvijaya itself may not have lasted very long, though the name remained in use for representative purposes.

What really lasted was Malayu. It did not "become" Śrīvijaya, as I-tsing boasted, but soon thoroughly shed the name that was forced upon it. Apart from the just-mentioned *Sejarah Melayu* tradition which con-

118. See the review of Poerbatjaraka's "Riwayat Indonesia" by L. C. Damais in BEFEO, XLVIII (1957), p. 627.

119. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis, pp. 335-37, 414-16.

120. "Was Malaka emporium vóór 1400 A.D. genaamd Malajver?" BKI, LXXVII (1921), pp. 1-174; 359-604.

121. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 42-45; Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 185, 207-9, 227-28, 263.

122. Poerbatjaraka, "De Batoe-Toelis bij Buitenzorg," TBG, LIX (1920), p. 403.

nects the origin of Malayu with Bukit Siguntang and Palembang, we have some traditions from Palembang itself, related by Westenenk.¹²³ One says that before the Muslim period Palembang was under the domination of four princes. Along with the Demang Lebar Daun of the *Sejarah Melayu* are mentioned: a raja of Gunung Mahameru, a raja of Bukit Siguntang who resided in Malayu, and a demang of Tambun Tulang. Another tradition comes from the people along the Rawas River, who maintain that the region around Muara Limun and the Asai River (the habitat of the so-called Batin tribes) is the authentic Malayu. Schnitger on the other hand points to a district Tanah Malayu along the lower reaches of the Musi and an island Pulau Wijaya between this region and Palembang.¹²⁴ This is probably the "Tana Malayu" meant by Pires and Barros,¹²⁵ which is located north of the Sekampung (Cacampom, Sacampam, and the Acampar of Descelliers) and of the Tulangbawang (Tulimbavam, Tulumbauan) country.

The maps of Diego Ribeiro (1529) and Descelliers (1546) note, some way south of Palembang, the legend "Salida (de)l Canal" and "Saida du Canal" (Exit of the Channel), while Diego Homem (1568) also depicts some kind of channel going inland. It seems likely that this is the channel we described above, and at whose entrance (or exit) the Maleoukolon Cape must be located. For Maleoukolon means most probably Malayu Channel (from Sanskrit *kulyā*; the -on ending is again a Greek feature corresponding with *akron*, "cape"), the channel that conveyed the voyagers directly to Malayu and the Gulf of Malayu. The cape which at the time must have marked its entrance is the high ground around present-day Talang Batu. Thus, though the evidence on the position of Malayu may not yet be absolutely convincing, we are prepared to chance sailing up the Musi River (as was probably done by I-tsing) in the hope that the voyage itself will add its own evidence.

VII. From Kôlê Polis to Zabai

Today the Musi "carries a tongue of marshy land 25 kilometers wide far inland to Sekayu, over 200 kilometers from the mouth of the river, but still only 9 meters above sea level."¹²⁶ For the time of Ptolemy we have to cut down the length by nearly 100 kilometers, so that after a voyage of some 100 kilometers through the region of Malayu, the traders arrived at a bay that is currently called Sekayu. This name is most likely a contraction of Suak-ayu, Pleasant Bay, though if Ptolemy's information was right, its original name must have been Suak Malayu. On the other hand, if the Chinese "Wên" bay¹²⁷ can be identified with this same feature, the present name may be of ancient origin, because *wên* represents also, *inter alia*, the idea "well-ordered, pleasant."

Ptolemy announces that this is the end of the Chrysê Chersonêsos and moreover assigns Perimula to the same latitude as Takôla. We may

123. Westenenk, "Boekit Segoeatang," p. 223.

124. Schnitger, Forgotten Kingdoms, p. 8.

125. M. Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from João de Barros' 'Decadas da Asia,'" Indonesia, No. 9 (1970), p. 145.

126. See Geographical Handbook, p. 82.

127. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, p. 52.

wonder, however, whether he based the announcement on his sources and then determined the latitude, because the Greek insistence on symmetry required that both sides of the Peninsula should match, or whether according to his calculations he had attained the same latitude and concluded that therefore this must be the end of the Chersonêsos. The last sequence seems the more probable one. His calculations were the result of his custom to allot for every sailing-day reported by his sources the same amount of stadia, i.e., the amount he considered to be a fair average (516 stadia a day). What, however, were the consequences of this kind of calculation? It is most likely that the voyagers sailed along the west coast starting early in the year in order to profit from the prevailing northeast to northwest wind so that they covered the distances between stops in a relatively small number of days until they reached Strait Sunda. There the difficulties would have started, because they would have met with a strong current to the southwest. Having conquered this slowly, probably by hugging the Java coast, they could have waited (dependent on their objectives) in some sheltered spot, most likely on the northwest coast of Java, until the turn of the monsoon wind, and then continued their voyage up the Sumatra coast. If, however, they needed the rainy season when the rivers were much easier to navigate, they could have continued at once under protection of the coast and navigated the vital Malayu channel. Although this last part of the journey covered many days and few stadia, the voyagers were nevertheless credited with a large amount of stadia for each day. Thus when they arrived at Palembang, Ptolemy imagined them to be at a latitude corresponding with Takôla and (on the other side of Sumatra) with some spot that in reality was not far south of Medan. Going on at the same rate, Jambi (and the south end of the Malay Peninsula) would have to be placed north of Aceh. This process of prolongation of the east coast northward was of course reinforced by the corresponding shortening of the west coast (though maybe not in the same measure) and consequently the shifting of the southern tip to the north. This same miscalculation must also have been the main reason for the enormous displacement of the Great Gulf northward to the latitude of the Ganges mouth and thus to what we now know to be South China.

Thus, Ptolemy's statement notwithstanding, we continue to the northeast up the Musi River until its junction with the Air Rawas, and from there up the latter river to Muara Rupit (*rûpîta?*) and Surulangun. During the rainy season, the Musi is navigable even by small steamers for about 300 out of its present total of 553 kilometers. Several of its tributaries are navigable too; the Rawas, for example, is open to sailing craft up to Surulangun, a voyage of 15 days reckoned from Palembang.¹²⁸ We must note that about 35 kilometers north of this Surulangun (or Sorolangun), we find a place with a nearly identical name, Sarolangun, at the confluence of the Asai and Tembesi rivers. These twin places lie thus on different river systems, the first on that of the Musi and its tributaries, the second on that of the Batanghari-Tembesi. The land between them forms a trough, an example of what has been called a "sub-Barisan depression,"¹²⁹ low and marshy, and moreover, for the greater part of its length traversed by a tributary of the Asai, which descends into it at about 8 kilometers distance from Surulangun.

128. Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië, vol. IV, pp. 192-94, vol. III, pp. 556-57.

129. Geographical Handbook, p. 82.

Though at the moment water-traffic of any significance along this trough is impossible (but so is land-traffic; the road runs along the western foothills) and there seems to be no oral tradition about a crossing in former times (the sparse population are fairly recent immigrants from elsewhere), nevertheless these twin names seem very much like signposts indicating such a crossing. No sensible indigenous derivation can be given (Sarolangun is derived by the people from *saro-* or *saru-melangun*, and said to mean "to migrate wretchedly"),¹³⁰ while a Sanskrit *saro-laṅgana* (pool or marsh crossing), that fits both names and the situation, presents itself as rather obvious. These two names are not on Ptolemy's map. He notes, however, a Samarandê (*samara-nadî*, "battle river"). The region itself, on the other hand, conserved the district name Penegah (adversary, contester) between the two signposts of the crossing. Ptolemy's Samara-nadî may thus have been the translation of Air Penegah, "the river that was difficult to conquer." We may note that Samarandê is again given without any qualification and therefore is meant to indicate a region.

It would be false, however, to think that the voyagers were completely lost in the backwoods. The foothills to the west were famous for gold, a fame that still held good at the time of the Jambi War (1902). Since the Dutch found no crossing, they built the road along the foothills in order to create access to this part of the country. At the time of Śrīvijaya, however, this crossing may still have been of vital strategic importance: this is the more likely because one of its decrees was found at Karang Brahé, some way north of this area on the bank of the Marangin, which we will meet presently. It may have marked the subjection of this part of the Malayu heartlands and be included in I-tsing's laconic annotation.

Having conquered this crossing, the voyagers entered another region whose name seems badly garbled in the manuscripts and is given variously as Patrassa, Pagrassa, Paprassa, etc. Tentatively we conjecture that these were floundering efforts to reproduce the Sanskrit compound *prataptâsa* (gold dust), the more so because they had indeed arrived in the Mas-urai (gold dust) country at the foot of the Masurai mountain from which the Tembesi River (the river they had just entered) originates. In the framework of this estimate of their voyage route, the mouth of a certain Sôbanas river which they passed on their way downstream must have been the mouth of the Batang Marangin or "Windy River" which we mentioned above. It comes down from Lake Kerinci and is the main northern tributary of the Tembesi. Its Ptolemaean name Sôbanas may have been derived from the Sanskrit *śobhâna* (luck or lucky). In that case its connection with Malay *berangin* is far from obvious, except maybe for those incorrigible optimists who like to believe that every wind is *angin baik* (a good wind, a windfall, a piece of good luck).

Continuing downstream they arrived at an emporium whose name by the most trustworthy manuscripts is rendered as Thipinobastai. We will leave them for the time being to their negotiations, however, and inspect first the next item, which is again a region and is called "Akadra" or "Akandra." The kappa could be a substitute for a Sanskrit aspirate in the middle of a word for which the Greek alphabet has no graph, the more so since the Latin manuscripts generally read a "chi" (Achandra or Akhandra). Whatever the origin of the compound Batanghari,

130. Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië, p. 705.

its components are undoubtedly *batang* (staff, pillar, tree-trunk, etc.) and *hari* (day). In Sanskrit, using the reverse order, this could be rendered as *aha(n)* (day) and *dhara* (bearing), with the latter element maybe containing an allusion to *dhârâ* (stream), the special meaning given to the word "batang" in the Central Sumatran dialects.

It seems likely that this "Pillar-of-the-day" country was, under the variant form *Ahandharî*, also mentioned by the *Liang Shu*, where it was transcribed as *Kan-t'o-li*, a country that by Ferrand, Przyluski and Coedès¹³¹ was located in the region of Jambi, and by Wolters¹³² at least along the southeast coast of Sumatra. Its recollection may even have been preserved by Diego Ribeiro who notes on his map, between *purobahala* (Pulau Berhala) and *andaragire* (Inderagiri), not Jambi but *manderika* (*ahan-dhârikâ* means "pillar of the day"). The same may be true of the present name of the river Mandahara, though tradition ascribes its origin to immigrants from Johore.¹³³

Returning from the Batanghari region (Ptolemy does not mention a kingdom) to Thipinobastai, we are certainly confronted with one of those "typonymes à consonance sanskrite," though it is difficult to know which. The -ai ending may be a Greek plural as in the names of peoples, or may (like -ê) represent a Sanskrit -î as in *Bōlinggai/Bhauṅgî*.¹³⁴ The initial t(h)- could derive from Sanskrit c- as in *Tiastanes/Caṣṭana* and in the Thinaï polis of the *Periplous* and Ptolemy (though they speak about a different polis), which is undoubtedly the Sanskrit *Cīnanagara*, the city of the Chinese. This does not lead us to any Sanskrit word that, as far as I can see, could (even if we take into account possible deviations of copyists) have been the matrix of Thipinobastai. A compound with *dvîpinî-* (river) would at least make sense, but the common transcription of *dvi-* and *dva-* seems to be simply *di-* and *do-*. If therefore errors by copyists have to be taken into account (something that in a name of this length may certainly be expected), my best guess would be an original *Diptinâbhasî* (light in [from] the sky). Though at the present no place name *Hari* (day), *Matahari* (sun), *Dinihari* (dawn) or the like appears on the map, it is possible, however, that a trace of the Sanskrit name itself has been preserved in (Muara) Tembesi, a name of which the origin is in any case obscure.

After the voyagers left the Bay of Perimula, they sailed through a region which, according to Ptolemy, was inhabited by the *Lêistai* people. These were clearly forest-dwellers, who had "the appearance of animals, lived in holes or caves and had a scaly skin that could not be pierced by arrows" (7.2.21). The region they crossed, starting from the Rawas and the Struggle River, is indeed the millennia-old rightful domain of the Kubu tribes. Some of them still fitted the above description less than a century ago, though their "scaly skin" was more realistically attributed to inveterate scabies and to the coat of dirt that

131. Coedès, *Les États*, p. 108.

132. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 211-12; *The Fall of Śrīvijaya*, pp. 181-83.

133. *Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. VIII, p. 1859.

134. Renou, *La Géographie*, p. ix.

habitually covered their bodies because they were as afraid of water as they were of strangers. The name is said to be derived from (dialectal) *ngubu*, "to hide" (behind trees, etc.).¹³⁵ Ptolemy's source, however, seemingly provides another explication of the name (since he did not know the local dialect). The Sanskrit *leṣṭas* (slight, cursory, fleeting) portrays exactly the furtive ways of these people and the fleeting glimpses the voyagers sometimes had of these silent barterers. Moreover, it is the exact translation of the Malay *kubit* (*sekubit* means "slightly," *mengubit* "touching cursorily," "appearing fleetingly").

The very last item of the voyage is Zabai. Since it is supposed to be still inside the territory of the Lêistai, it will have to be located somewhere in the estuary of the Batanghari and not on the islands across the Berhala Strait. It is a simple polis, an indigenous settlement, probably not of forest-dwelling Kubu, but a fishing village of boat-dwellers somewhere in the middle of the mud flats, who may occasionally have functioned as guides through the shallows. Ptolemy's toponym could represent the name Jambi. Nasalization or de-nasalization of borrowed words is common enough.¹³⁶ From the fact that the name appears in a text ascribed to the pilot or trader Alexander one could conclude that the indigenous name was already well known and that the authors of the source might waive a sanskritization. If they did not, however, the Greek transcription would probably be the same, since they had to look for a sound-simile, the word "jambi" having no meaning in common Malay. They could have made a compound with *śambin* (rower, boatman), such as *śambîpura* (the Greek zêta can, as we noted, represent both "j" and "ś"). The reason for this supposition is that the P'u-lei chou of the third-century Chinese sources¹³⁷ can then be given a location. It lay to the north of the Wên bay and was evidently inhabited by "boat people" as the name indicates. Its naked black people with white teeth "look for ships passing by and come flocking to them with fowls, pigs and jungle fruit (which they offer) in exchange for metal articles." In that case Ko (-ying)¹³⁸ could not have been far off. The name might indicate Aha(-pura), a variant of *Dîptinâbhasî*.

We may wonder what could have motivated the traders in choosing this way through the interior, which took about a month to accomplish? In the first place, we don't know what alternatives were available to them. Through the absence of a direct channel like the one that led to Palembang, the road by sea would have been, if not longer, in any case more difficult and dangerous because of the prevailing winds, the uncharted shoals and the danger of pirates. It is probable that what made this coast "most favoured" was as much the peaceful attitude of its agrarian, gold-washing and forest-products-selling population than its geographical position. In the second place, if they had to wait for a change of monsoon, no better use of this time could be made than by trading in the interior for gold, silver, lignum aloës, yellow wax, benzoin and other products and accomplishing part of their voyage into the bargain. Whether the traders used their own ships or made use of

135. G. F. van Dongen, "Een en ander over de Koeboes," *BKI*, LXXXVIII (1931), pp. 538-42.

136. Gonda, *Sanskrit*, pp. 233-34.

137. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 52-53.

138. *Ibid.*

indigenous river craft, while the ships tried to manage the sea route, is a matter for speculation. I-tsing's itinerary¹³⁹ and later Chinese accounts¹⁴⁰ seem to point to the second possibility. In any case, the fact that the ports at the mouths of the Musi and Batanghari commanded the entrance to the interior may, more than anything else, have initiated their rise to prosperity and power.

In regard to the controversy about the location of Śrīvijaya, the Jambi-party seems to me to hold all the geographical trumps¹⁴¹ while the Palembang-party commands the historical arguments.¹⁴² This impasse arises because both parties start from the same premise, i.e., the Strait of Malaka as the main thoroughfare. Without the Sunda Strait, Palembang could not have taken the lead. By opening the Straits of Malaka for safe traffic it undermined its own position, though it could still maintain its lead for nearly two centuries. Then it had to step aside for Jambi-jaya, which was known to the Chinese as San-fo-ch'i (Śambī-jaya or Śam-vijaya, the "victory of welfare"?) and to the Arabs as Zābaj. Many royal compounds left their names in the entitlature of subsequent courts. Thus "jambi" or "jamba" was used as a title for certain leading poets and magicians (*mantri bhujangga*) at the Majapahit court.¹⁴³ If the supposition of Pigeaud¹⁴⁴ is true, that *rajajambi* consists of an honorific ra- and -jajambi, the second syllable would seem to be the common abbreviation of *jaya*. In any case the Ming annals are fairly explicit in affirming the continuity between Kan-t'o-li and San-fo-ch'i,¹⁴⁵ while both the Sung and Ming annals report that the king and his residence were called Chan-pi (Jambi).¹⁴⁶ It was there apparently that Bālaputra (who called himself Suvarṇadvīpadhipamahārāja like the later kings of Upper Jambi) and the Śailendra dynasty put up their residence around the middle of the ninth century. Besides, the Arabs do not leave any doubt about the distinct and superior position of Zābaj with regard to both Śrīvijaya and Kalāh.¹⁴⁷

We still have to inspect the inland features of the Golden Chersonēsos. Ptolemy asserts that his "Peninsula" was dominated by various anonymous mountain ranges. The rivers flowing out of these mountains merged with one another further south. So far nothing unexpected. He goes on to explain, however, that these united rivers formed first the Attabas (the most northern according to his calculations), secondly the

139. Ibid., pp. 207-8.

140. W. P. Groeneveldt, Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya, Compiled from Chinese Sources (Jakarta: C. V. Bhratara, 1960), p. 73.

141. Sukmono, "Geomorphology," pp. 81-84.

142. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce, pp. 208-9, 227.

143. Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, Java in the 14th Century (5 vols.; The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960-63), V, p. 376.

144. Ibid., IV, p. 373.

145. Groeneveldt, Historical Notes, p. 68.

146. Ibid., pp. 63, 72-73.

147. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis, pp. 112, 134, 204, 254, 304.

Chrysoanas, and last the Palandas. Because his sources mentioned no other outlets, he took it for granted that only these three existed. This may have been a reasonable assumption for an Egyptian, but if he had known anything about the region he was charting, he would have seen that such an assumption was quite absurd in relation to any part of Southeast Asia, even those parts that can boast of a large main river with a mighty delta. It seems moreover, as far as can be deduced from the rather obscure and probably corrupted text, that his Nilotic frame of reference led him to imagine that the streams first all united into one river which subsequently split in three branches. This makes the whole outlay too fantastic to be anything but an abstract interpretation on paper. It was, however, the best Ptolemy could do in his circumstances.

Of the "inland towns" we have tried to locate Kanakanagara and Palându. The other two, i.e., Kalongka and Tharra, are either in the Batanghari region or south of Palembang, dependent on whether their position was originally determined in relation to the west coast or the east coast data. With nothing definite to start from, an attempt at identification seems unpromising. The two places lack the first and fundamental requisite, namely that their position is upheld by the names before and after them and that the whole pattern fits in with a known geographical and historical framework.

It is evident, therefore, that the most definitive element in tracing the course of the Ptolemaean voyagers is not the interpretation of names or a fixation on "coastlines," but an interpretation of the "pattern of settlement as set forth in the *Geography*"¹⁴⁸ against the background of the historical geography of Southeast Asia. The names may be helpful, but their interpretation will always be subject to misgivings. This is especially true in connection with "the most favoured coast of early Indonesian commerce."¹⁴⁹ The Malays were evidently less than interested in literary Sanskrit substitutes for their own names. They were very likely more concerned with commerce than with "culture" and may have felt themselves equal to these intruders on sea routes they had dominated long before the appearance of the Indians. Hindu cultural influence seems in any case to have been more restricted here than in other regions. The first inscriptions of Śrīvijaya were not, as elsewhere, in Sanskrit, but in Malay, though mixed with Sanskrit words. Even the Sanskrit name of the kingdom was eliminated by Malay tradition. Nevertheless I think that with the help of the original Malay names most of Ptolemy's appellations found their appropriate place. It is somehow more satisfying, however, if the sound of the appellation seems to fit the name, in spite of the many false identifications which in this way have been made. It is possible that along the east coast of the Malay Peninsula and along the rest of the Great Gulf Sanskrit names were more easily received and had a more tenacious life than along the coast we just left. A study of the voyage in the Great Gulf area may be the subject of a later article.

148. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese.

149. Wolters, Early Indonesian Commerce.